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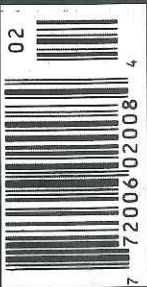
ISSUE
NO. 40
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**NAN GOLDIN
DOING DRAG**

**Waking up with Fidel Castro
Sleeping with ELI Langer**

lezzie lit and sports dykes + zapatistas on the Net



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Editorial
No. 40

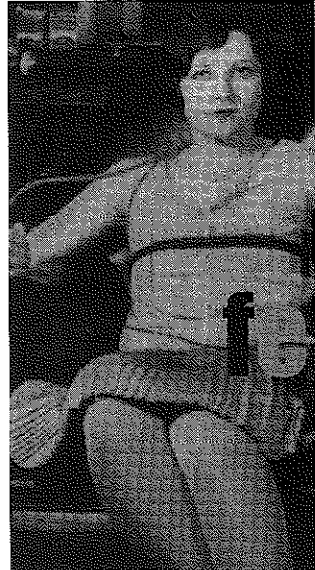
A DAY WITHOUT BIG MACS

Imagine a day without Big Macs. That's what Britons experienced as one of the early effects of the mad cow crisis which has decimated a centuries-old way of life and has sent shock waves around the world. That this human and cultural tragedy should have a silver lining is a cause for hope; McDonalds, the ultra-rational super corporation with its global "let them eat burgers" mission, was unable to sell its iconic product, the Big Mac, for a day. This interruption of "business as usual" demonstrates the limits of the "freedom" of the market. For one day, the market was not free. British "burgers" of McDonalds, the global supra-state, were denied the ability to eat the freedom burger. All was not right. And, for a moment, the Mad Market was exposed as a fraud.

So called "market freedom" had created the crisis. The deregulation of the treatment of "feed" under the Thatcher government, enabling farmers to reduce their costs and corporations to get cheaper beef, was an exercise in "market freedom." That this should set off a process that would poison the entire British herd over fourteen years is a cause for concern. How will we pay for the relaxing of other industry regulations in the decades to come? How many more people should die, how many cultural ways of life should be decimated for some blue suit to turn a buck?

Fortunately, there is a silver lining in all this. As "consumer confidence" shatters in the wake of the mad cow crisis and other similar crises, confidence in "market freedom" and other euphemisms of the Right will wane with it. A day without Big Macs may be the beginning of the end for the control the Right has exercised for far too long. /Michael Hoechsmann

Special thanks to co-editors Stan Fogel and Julie Jenkinson and also to Ida Fong.



features

- 5 Geoff Bunn**
Constructing the Suspect: A brief history of the lie detector
If you can't trust the machine, who or what can you trust?
- 10 Julia Creet**
Sleeping With Eli
A personal look at the art of Eli Langer

articles

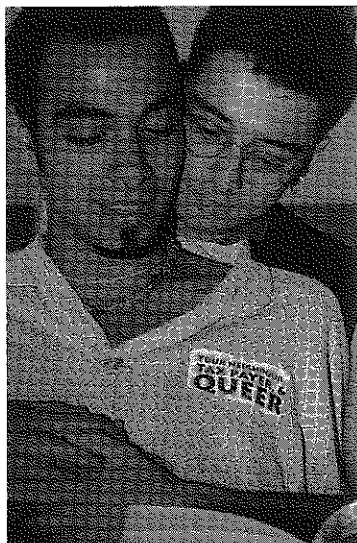
- 15 Stan Fogel**
Fidel Wakes Me Every Morning
On revolutionary fervour, or lack thereof, in Cuba
- 22 Michael Hoechsmann**
Revolution goes Global: Zapatistas on the Net
Guerrillas in Cyberspace
- 26 Moustafa Bayoumi**
MY Passport, MYself
"Terrorism," travel and immigration
- 40 Francisco Ibanez**
Artesania on High Heels, Art That Heals
Doing drag...not theorizing drag

feature column

- 18 M. Nourbese Philip**
White Man's Burden
How the mainstream media try to equate racism and anti-racism

interviews +

- Cathy Busby, Bridget Brown and Thyra Nichols Goodeve** 31
a symposium on memory
- Rob Teixeira** interviews **Shannon Bell** on the London 36
Pornography case



hooks

- Robyn Gillam** on **Questions of Community: Artists Audiences Coalitions.** 52
- B/L List** 55

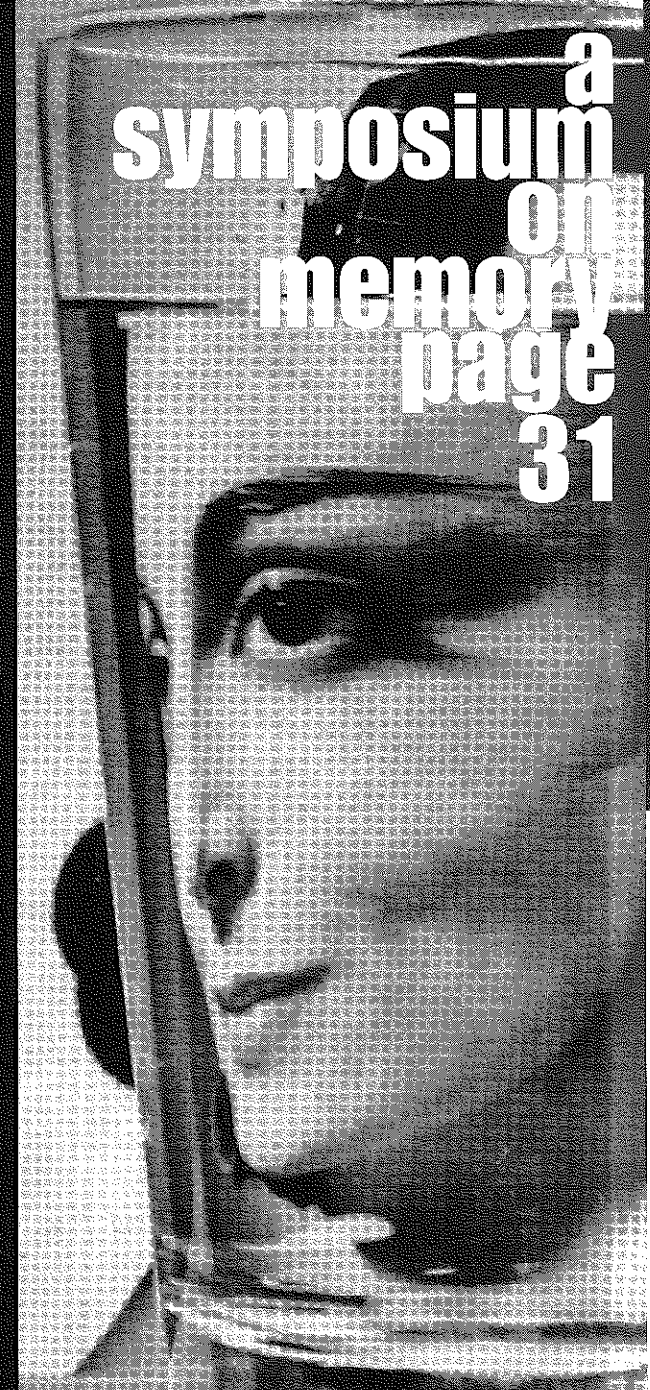
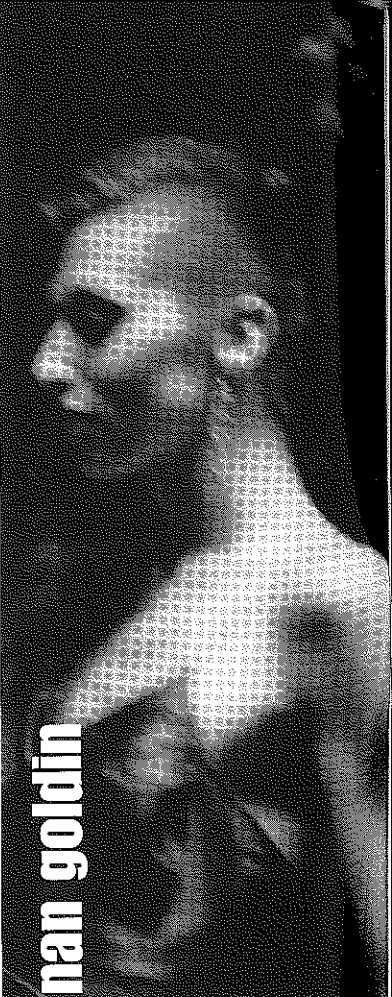


sports

- 46 Gary Genosko**
Girl Jocks
Revenge of the Pigskin
The Louisville Lip

literary corner

- 48 Marusya Bociurkiw,**
Forrest Gump
is Alive and Well and Living in Moose Jaw



art
no. 40

- Nan Goldin
 - Eli Langer
 - Jorge Lopez
 - Paulina Hermsillo
 - Julie Jenkinson
 - David Maltby
 - Lori Millan
- Cover:** Nan Goldin, "Ivy in the Boston Garden," 1973.
Inside front cover: Detail from a photo by Marcell, "Champion Lady Steer Roper," Winnipeg, 1913. From the book *Indian Princesses and Cowgirls: Stereotypes from the Frontier*.
Inside back cover: Nan Goldin, "Marlene modeling in the Beauty Parade," Boston, 1972.
Back cover: Anonymous, "Two lovely breasts, round and full," 1910. From the book *1000 Nudes*.

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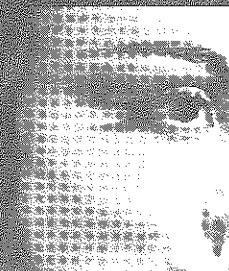
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Dear Border/Lines,

All that M. Nourbese Philip argued ("How White is your White?" 38/39) is paralleled by the trial here in England of Frederick and Rosemary West. The Wests were not rich; they were solidly middle class denizens of Gloucester in central, solid England. Nowhere in the trial was the threat of white middle class crime raised because here there is also an evacuation of all this. Instead, it is called "evil." The Wests were "evil," she of course a sort of witch, he demonic, satanic and so on. Meanwhile, there are innumerable deaths of non-whites in prison, non-whites expelled as inadequately brutalized refugees, non-whites causing "us" all sorts of problems, and the long, constant diatribe about the "dangerous black," the "threatening Asian," etc.

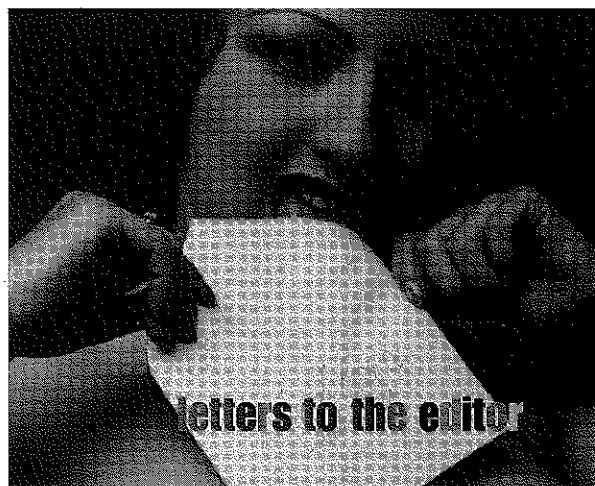
Within a wider symptomatology of the "New Middle Ages" we are supposed to be entering, what is happening is the creation of wider and wider categories of the disposable, the "unwanted." The majority of human beings alive are defined by their NOT-ness (and I recognize that we have joined in this with all our "Other" talk): the non-white, the non-male and the non-normal (however you measure this).

The Wests, an "ordinary" man and an "ordinary" woman, kidnapped, terrified, violated, tortured, killed and dismembered/interred many young women over a very long time period. Nobody noticed, despite the screams and the burials. Turn the dial a little — as Laurie Anderson wisely suggests — and you might listen to the Serbian (much mentioned) and Croatian (almost unmentioned) genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina. And what of the almost wholly unmentioned fourth or fifth world peoples, whose genocides routinely go unremarked because they can be blamed on the group/victims with no nameable perpetrator?

None of this is a criticism of

Nourbese Philip, but is a reminder to your readers that there are so many deaths and that it is hard to know which is an avoidable death. To "map" the geopolitics of death is to recognize that more "certain people" die needlessly. As you read this, 300 million people in Africa alone are hungry, more than ten times the population of Canada. Today, tonight, some of them will die. That too will go unrecorded.

Philip Corrigan, Bristol, England.



Dear Border/Lines,

Perhaps against my better judgment, I feel compelled to respond to Raj Pannu's letter to the editor in the last issue because it seems to me to be all too emblematic of the current crisis of the "left" (a term I use here loosely). It is indicative of the manner in which a certain self-defeating spleen-venting takes the place of engaged, critical dialogue which, in the face of the current neo-conservative onslaught, is more necessary than ever amongst marginalized communities.

There are several issues raised by Pannu's letter.

1. While I didn't see the issue in question, it does seem to me that Pannu is justified in raising the question of the relation between her texts and the visual images to which she strongly objects.

Rather than conjuring false demons of racism and sexism, however, Pannu should have addressed herself to these important issues in a constructive way. Anything short of such a discussion contributes to an unfortunate trivialization of these same issues.

2. Pannu seems to think that the collective consists exclusively of "fellas." If she had taken the time to glance at the mast head she would have learned otherwise. For Pannu's information, Julie Jenkinson, the managing editor, is also the designer.

3. Pannu most emphatically has the right not to participate in S/M. She does not, however, have the right to cast racially-tinged aspersions on people who do. Pannu seems to think that only the "Children of Columbus" engage in such "morally degenerate" behaviour. Living in San Francisco, in which there are many racially diverse sexual sub-cultures, I can assure Pannu that it ain't just white people who like to tie each other up. Where, moreover, does this type of knee-jerk denunciation leave Mestizo/a peoples who are quite literally "Children of Columbus"?

4. While Pannu apparently values B/L as a place which "provides a forum for those people whose voices are seldom heard in the mainstream media," she doesn't stop to consider the potentially devastating effects her allegations of racism and sexism might have on the magazine and, by extension, on those same people for whom it serves as a forum. Has it completely escaped Pannu's notice that, in an era of globalization, governments at all levels are hungrily looking for ways — unsubstantiated charges of racism and sexism, for instance — to legitimize their slash and burn policies?

In the face of such neo-conservative cynicism we can either stand together or fall apart.

Samir Gandesha, San Francisco

Constructing the suspect:

A brief history of the lie detector



"What sentimentalists men of science are!" exclaimed Father Brown, "and how much more sentimental must American men of science be! Who but a Yankee would think of proving anything from heart-throbs? Why, they must be as sentimental as a man who thinks a woman is in love with him if she blushes!"

- G.K. Chesterton,
The Mistake of the Machine

on January 30th, 1995, not long after O.J. Simpson had released his book *I Want to Tell You*, the TV show *Hard Copy* told their viewers that they had subjected Simpson to a lie detector test. The former football star and murder suspect had recorded himself on tape, reading aloud various passages from his book. "I want to state unequivocally that I did not commit these horrible crimes," he declared. *Hard Copy* hired Ernie Rizzo to use the Psychological Stress Evaluator to subject Simpson's voice to stress analysis. According to the show's Hollywood reporter Diane Diamond, the Psychological Stress Evaluator can "separate fact from fiction" because there is "no cheat-sheet for this kind of test." Used by the police, the military and big-business,

The
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she told us, this type of lie detector has been shown to be "95 percent accurate." As a result of his analysis, Ernie Rizzo concluded that O.J. was "one hundred percent deceitful." "He is one hundred percent lying," said Rizzo, pointing to the graphical evidence as it issued forth from his machine.

One week after the *Hard Copy* deception test, the supermarket tabloid the *Globe* also subjected Simpson's voice to stress analysis. "Veteran investigator" Jack Harwood used "Verimetrics," "a high-tech lie detector test," to analyze the very same tape-recording of Simpson that the TV show had used (*Globe*, 7th Feb., 1995). "After painstakingly reviewing the results of his sophisticated lie test, which is also favored by police investigators," said the *Globe*, Harwood proclaimed Simpson "absolutely truthful"; the "lie test shows O.J. didn't do it!"

Thus we have one type of lie detector, a single suspect, but two equally vehement yet contradictory verdicts. When he said, "I would take a bullet for Nicole," "the former football hero was being completely honest," said Jack Harwood; but according to Ernie Rizzo he was "absolutely lying." How can two experts both claim scientific validity for their respective instruments, yet simultaneously reach completely different conclusions based on their analyses of exactly the same material? Are we simply dealing with a classic "pseudoscience," whose illegitimacy must be exposed, and whose scientific credentials must be disputed? Or do we have before us a scientific instrument — a "truth-telling machine" — for which the task of telling the truth is in fact only a minor concern?

After all, as the story of these lie detector tests given by the tabloids to O.J. Simpson suggests (O.J.'s lawyers F. Lee Bailey and Johnnie Cochran, despite their media savvy, did not insist their client take a polygraph test), here is an instrument whose cultural presence is so assured that it can afford to expose itself to potentially embarrassing invalidations with impunity — invalidations which might well inspire demands for its censure and prohibition. But, as Nietzsche suggested, "it is certainly not the least charm of a theory that it is refutable: it is with precisely this charm that it entices subtler minds" (*Beyond Good and Evil*). This article will leave the chore of refuting the theory of the lie detector to more subtle minds — a task embraced admirably and consistently by psychology — and will instead explore some of the machine's other seductions. My ambition is to present a brief history of the lie detector that, following Nietzsche, attempts to scrutinize this notorious instrument "beyond good and evil."

Despite constant criticism, ridicule, government prohibition, Papal condemnation, and a widespread belief that it can be beaten, the lie detector just won't go away. It was recently seen on *The Jerry Springer Show*, "You're a Liar!" Among others, viewers were introduced to Roxanne,

who suspected husband Walter of marital infidelity; and Saul, accusing his girlfriend Tiffany of being a pornographic movie star. The lie detector expert whose task it was to discern the truth of the various allegations was none other than *Hard Copy's* Ernie Rizzo. "Ernie, you are the holder of truth," said a somewhat melodramatic Jerry, as Ernie prepared to make public his assessment of the validity of Walter's denials; "if he's lying, he's out the door."

Luckily, Walter was proclaimed truthful by Ernie and his machine, and the marriage was saved, although Roxanne's response — "How much you pay him?" — suggested that she was unconvinced of the lie detector test's integrity. Perhaps we could be forgiven for believing that Ernie's admirable attempt to solve marital problems with the lie detector was a novel historical development, a well-intended but ill-advised overture from the over-zealous "polygrapher to the stars." But this was exactly the use to which the lie detector was put by one of its most enthusiastic early pioneers over half a century ago.

In 1938, an article in a popular magazine began with the following words:

From the field of crime, the "Lie Detector" has entered the fields of love. It now tells whether or not your wife or sweetheart loves you—or you, her. Dr. William Moulton Marston, the inventor, reports success with his device in solving marital or other domestic problems, and adds that it will disclose subconscious secrets of which the subject is utterly unaware...In the hands of a psychologist these instruments become disinterested truth-finders (*Look*, 6th Dec., 1938).

The magazine described the psychologist's successful resolution of two difficult cases: "the neglected wife and her roving husband," and "the boy and the girl who were in love, but were engaged to others." The article concluded: "Dr. Marston believes the course of true love would run much more smoothly if more deception tests were applied in such 'triangle cases.'" In his book *The Lie Detector Test*, Marston expanded on his ideas about the role the machine could play in discovering the truth about relations between the sexes.

Women, agree masculine sages, are the worst liars. But are they? Treatises have been written—by men — to prove that women lie more frequently because they are the weaker sex and must deceive continually to protect themselves...The Lie Detector now supplies a method for scientific comparison between male and female truthfulness.



Blondes
lose out
in film
love test;
Brunettes
far more
emotional,
psychologist
proves by
charts and
graphs.



Having surveyed his experimental data, Marston concluded that "men are more dishonest in business and women in society." Thus when it came to "money, or important and valuable property, women employees are far more honest than men." Although members of "the more loving sex," however, tell innumerable lies "to enliven social conversations and to manipulate other people for various petty purposes or oftentimes just for the fun of it." Thus although Marston advocated the lie detector as a tool for challenging the myth of female untrustworthiness, his work merely reasserted the stereotype and gave it scientific credibility.

After graduating from Harvard with a Ph.D. in 1921 (claiming to have "discovered" the lie detector six years earlier) Marston took various university teaching jobs before accepting a position in Hollywood at Universal Pictures as Director of Public Service. His task was to ascertain audience emotional reactions to movies and to advise the producers accordingly. His "love detector" was perfectly suited to this research. One experiment, appropriately conducted in New York's Embassy Theater, involved testing the emotional reactions of blondes, brunettes, and redheads to various movie clips. The findings were reported in the *New York Times*:

**BLONDES LOSE OUT IN FILM LOVE TEST;
Brunettes Far More Emotional,
Psychologist Proves by
Charts and Graphs;
THEATER A LABORATORY
(31st Jan., 1928).**

Although Marston's research was eccentric from the standpoint of psychology, it was not atypical as far as the developing science of the detection of deception was concerned. Science and sex, technology and theater, and magazines and movies have been consistent accomplices to the lie detector throughout its short but ignoble career. A 1938 newspaper report on a Chicago psychology exhibition was illustrated with a photograph of a young woman performing a lie detector test on another. "It really understands women" explained the caption; "when a girl submits to the Darrow photopolygraph her emotional life becomes an open book."

Newspaper articles about the lie detector habitually featured a picture of a female subject being interrogated by a *male* examiner. A 1935 *New York Times* report on Leonarde Keeler's latest polygraph successes depicted the criminologist attaching his device to a young woman. While Keeler fiddled with his instrument, watching the woman from behind her back, she herself gazed impassively into the distance. "Keeler polygraph tests have been applied to 4,000 suspects in criminal cases," the piece claimed.

Son of a Hollywood scriptwriter, Keeler had built his first lie detector under the supervision of the energetic Berkeley police reformer, August Vollmer, in 1921. After securing the position of chief polygrapher at Chicago's Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory — which had been set up in response to the St. Valentine's Day massacre — Keeler went on to have a widely celebrated career. He subjected Al Capone's gangsters to lie detector tests and received a medal in 1931 for making a most outstanding civic contribution to Chicago; a confession obtained during one of his examinations in 1946 led to the recovery of a hoard of priceless jewels and historical relics looted by the Nazis during

the war. By 1947 he was so famous he could play himself alongside Jimmy Stewart in *Call Northside 777*, a movie which told the true story of a newspaper reporter who employed the new sciences of polygraphy and forensic photography to help free a wrongly convicted man from jail.

The classic image of a male examiner observing a female suspect, employed by Marston, Keeler and many others, has now become a standard feature of many polygraph training handbooks. It can be found in Wilhelm and Burns' *Lie Detection with Electrodermal Response* (1954); Reid and Inbau's *Truth and Deception* (1966), a key text widely regarded as the polygrapher's "Bible"; and James Matté's *The Art and Science of the Polygraph Technique* (1980). Representing ideal testing situations for trainee polygraph operators, such images depict the ideal suspect-examiner relationship. The examiner should be masculine, rational, technical and objective, while the suspect should be feminine, emotional, human and subjective. The examiner is preferably unseen and laconic, the suspect observed and verbose. The deviant constructed by lie detection is therefore devious by virtue of the fact that she *is* female; because femininity is itself suspicious, as far as polygraphy is concerned, femininity signifies ideal suspect characteristics.

If femininity is the subject of the polygraph examination, then it must be supervised by a masculine ethos. The testee is subjected to a whole series of scrutines: behaviour symptoms are noted both before and after the test is performed; every gesture and nuance of expression is recorded by cameras behind two-way mirrors and by muscle-tension detecting chairs; talkativeness and enthusiasm are noted in order to be incorporated into the examiner's final diagnosis of guilt.

But while such a social psychology of the testing situation clearly occurs, reminding us that no lie detector examination can take place under laboratory conditions divorced from the broader social context, certain semiotic indicators also allow us to unpack those values that underscore the polygraph exam. What better symbol of mobile professional patriarchal power than *The Briefcase*, that mandatory accessory of every polygrapher? From the briefcase comes *The Chart*, that graphical calculus of guilt, a sacred scroll upon which the truth has been inscribed. Consider also *The Chair*, both a diabolically paradoxical throne, a seat for the sovereign-subject with whom no eye contact must be made, and a constraining device, a potential instrument of torture. Testees need to be reassured that not only will the psychogalvanometer attachment not give them an electric shock, but also that the red ink graphically tracing out their heartbeats and blood pressure is not, in fact, their own blood.

How ironic then, that for the science of pupillometrics—the detection of deception by recording changes in pupil size—the gaze of the *suspect*, and not that of the examiner, became the important characteristic of the lie detector test. Developed during the Second World War by psychologist F.K. Berrien, pupillometrics becomes the basis of the Voight-Kampff Machine used by Bladerunners in the eponymous sci-fi movie to determine whether a suspect is a human or not. Scrutinized by the ocular gadget, Rachael knows only too well that lie detectors seek to uncover more than just the immediate truth when she asks "Is this testing whether I'm a replicant or a lesbian, Mr. Deckard"? Because Sharon Stone's character in *Basic Instinct* passes a polygraph test by disinhibiting her emotions, the implication is that, like Rachael, she must likewise be less than human.



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Considering the potent mixture of fact, fiction, and fetishism that is the lie detector, it should come as no surprise therefore to learn that one of the instrument's early advocates, the psychologist William Moulton Marston, was responsible for creating and developing the comic book character *Wonder Woman*. Crippled with polio, Marston devoted the last years of his life to pop-psychology and his self-proclaimed feminist icon. In nostalgic recognition of his earlier work with the machine, he equipped *Wonder Woman* with a portable lie detector of her very own: a golden lasso of truth. Like the scientific instrument, the golden lasso also promised liberation through the discovery of the truth. But freedom came at a price: the lie detector, like *Wonder Woman*'s bracelets of submission, and her golden lasso of truth were instruments of bondage.

After working for many years at the Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory, Leonarde Keeler went on to establish his own lie detector training school, and a polygraph practice bearing his name still operates in Chicago today. His biography, *The Lie Detector Man*, was published in 1984 by his sister Eloise. "This is a memoir of an extraordinary man," she wrote in the foreword, "my brother, Leonarde Keeler, developer and pioneer of the polygraph." Never having found enough time between notorious cases and celebrity parties to write the definitive polygraph handbook as he had always hoped, he died in 1949, two years after his great rival William Marston.

Whereas Marston created *Wonder Woman*, the antics of Keeler's Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory inspired the creation of *Dick Tracy*. Although Marston was the first to present the lie detector to an American court (inadvertently establishing the legal criterion of admissibility for scientific evidence in the process), it was Keeler who secured the first patent on the instrument. The professional careers of the two men coincided when the convicted Lindbergh baby kidnapper, Bruno Hauptmann, pleaded for the opportunity to take a lie detector test in 1935. Hauptmann's wife asked Keeler to give her a test, to see if the instrument could help in her husband's case. Marston conferred with the State Governor about the possibility of testing Hauptmann,

everybody who mattered in and against giving the safely. The resulting hostile pub- s Hauptmann's chances of

of the century" to the 1995 the lie detector has been con- erican popular culture. From , from *Wonder Woman* and ner, from *Call Northside 777* een made real by the mass vies, magazines and TV n the lie detector has been f the machine's creation. ific instrument because its eded its invention. It is a gless the notion of the "pop- rtual science, it quintessen-

In seeking a concluding symbol of the lie detector's qualities then, we need look no further than the 1970s US TV show *The Lie Detector*. Hosted by a charismatic lawyer who had supported himself through law school by conducting private polygraph tests, the show was a potent mixture of theater, sex, science and money. Guests were invited to be grilled by a panel of experts while strapped to the "disinterested truth-finder." A Spanish version of "the Truth Machine" — *La Máquina de la Verdad* — was Spain's most popular TV show in 1994, thanks to a wave of corruption scandals that inspired viewers to suggest that various politicians might like to submit to polygraph tests. Perfectly encapsulating the lie detector's salacious history, one of last season's most enthusiastically received guests was John Wayne Bobbitt, the man for whom the lie detector's marital guidance abilities came woefully too late.

Perhaps it was the success of the American version of the show that inspired Eloise Keeler to ask its lawyer-cum-TV star host to write an explanatory chapter for her brother's biography, *The Lie Detector Man*. His introduction includes the following lines:

**The polygraph technique
is neither voodoo nor magic...
it is extremely useful,
and far and away
the best test of credibility
known to man.**

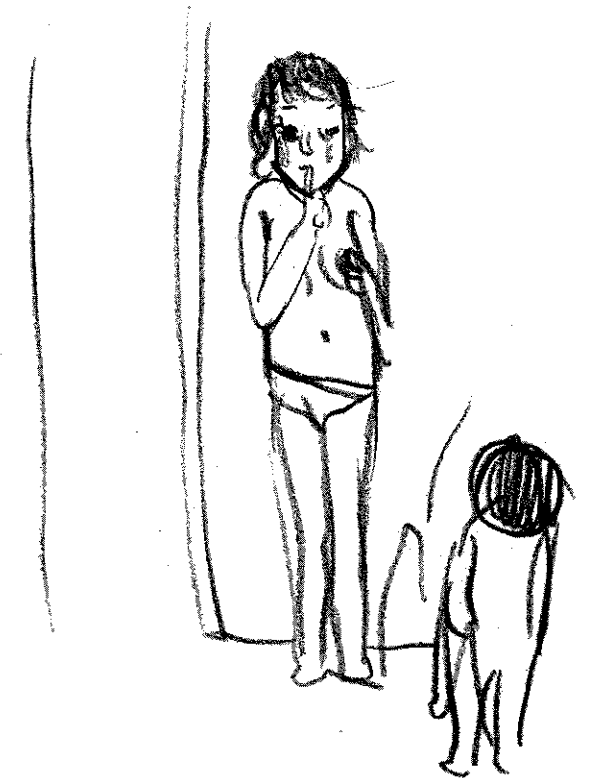
These words were written by none other than F. Lee Bailey, TV show host, polygraph expert, publisher, and most recently, one of O.J. Simpson's lawyers. Given his belief in "the best test of credibility known to man," how strange then, and how wise, that the attorney would not insist his famous client take a lie detector test. But perhaps after forty years of intimate experience of the lie detector, F. Lee Bailey understood only too well what Nietzsche meant when he warned of "the hazards of the will to truth"?



Drawings by Eli Langer

Sleeping WITH ELI

The impact of
Eli Langer's art
instead of his
court case



“What makes these art?”

I asked Claire, as she freed Eli Langer's sketches from their bubble-wrap. “Because they are framed? Does framing something make it art?” I reacted badly to the first few sketches; the build-up to seeing Langer's work produced disappointment. The sketches were scribbles really, bearing no evidence of the polish or composition of drawings. The consistency of the white 8 by 11 frames gave the drawings authority, but they looked as if they had been produced in thirty second or minute-and-a-half scribbles. Scribbles, tossed off and framed. They were exactly the kind of work that was likely to elicit that handy criticism: “My kid could do better than that.”

by Julia Creet

Yes, these drawings do look as if they have been done by a child—but that's the point. They attempt to provide access to that preconscious place in which the child in us rules.



Had my friends, Sharon Switzer and Claire Sykes, whose aesthetic judgement I trusted, been duped by the hype of Eli's status as a controversial artist? Had the confiscation of his paintings and drawings by the Toronto Police and the subsequent trial given him a bigger reputation than his work deserved? Why did Sharon and Claire want to curate a show of these drawings when the work seemed so unimpressive? And, perversely, in London, home to the province's most enthusiastic division of the pornography patrol Project "P." (See also in this issue Teixeira's article, "Antidote to Hysteria: The Men and Boys of London.")

Claire continued to unpack the sketches. The rudimentary form obviously allowed for prodigious output. The sheer volume said something. Speed. It was there in the movement of the lines. You could almost see the sketches being drawn as you watched. And the figures too were caught in motion, blurred or not quite recognizable. Dream-like suggestions, bodies floating in space, not anchored in time or context. We stacked the twenty-two sketches on the dining room table, where they sat rather precariously. I don't know who thought of it first, who came up with the idea that given the size of the gallery — small — and the bareness of my bedroom walls, a trial hanging for the exhibit could be done in the room I stay in a couple of nights a week.

A week later, back in London. Claire and Sharon have hung the sketches while I've been away. I love the pattern of the frames on my walls, walls on which there was nothing in the six months I have been staying in this room. Lying in bed, I can see the drawings to my right but not the ones above my head. I wonder if they will affect my dreams. They have nightmarish qualities. The dreamlike figures are suspended in space; they float through the frames. Yet their presence has a disquieting solidity. They bear the insistence of childhood fantasies, of fleeting moments that shape the years that follow, and of twisted dreams changing in the early hours of the morning.



Langer has rendered visible the processes by which children come to know themselves as (sexual) beings, while working through his own shame of having to prove the worth of his "artistic" gifts.

Yes, these drawings do look as if they have been done by a child—but that's the point. They attempt to provide access to that preconscious place in which the child in us rules. That place where violence and pleasure mix in unpredictable and unrepresentable ways. The violence of these sketches is emotional more than physical. A child watches a man in a tantrum; a child watches a woman half-naked; a child cringes in front of headless eyeballs. The sketches are populated by children with haunted eyes already witness to adult pain. And the pleasures are both innocent and already regulated by shame. They remind me of the opening lines of Monique Wittig's first book, *The Opopanax*, a story of childhood, for which she won France's highest literary award, the Prix Medicis, in 1964. It begins, "Robert Payen comes into the classroom last, crying, who wants to see my weewee-er? who wants to see my weewee-er?" The book was both violent and sexual. I feel this way about the drawings. I can hear Eli behind them, "Who wants to see my weewee-er?" Unfortunately, the response is shame. "You're laughing!" reads the caption of one drawing.

Back in London again. Above my pillow floats a tiny worried child's face tucked into a sheet of white paper. The power of these drawings derives from the evocative simplicity of the line and the intensity of the pencil mark. Haunted dense black dot eyes convey sadness and terror. And in the frightening blackened opening between bunk beds, a body dangles. Gravity works in mysterious ways in these upside-down worlds. A man hangs bat-like, his penis droops. In another, a girl stands beside him, looking. A little boy stands beside the bedside of a withered woman; the caption, which might be a plea for rejuvenation, reads "lift up cunts and pricks." Spots of emphatic density mark the emotion of these drawings, while their strange spatial orientations seem to function as commentary.

In another mark of reversal, clothes rather than nudity have the potential for obscenity. A woman half-clothed stands before a child signalling silence. The detail of her underpants is in distinct contrast to the vague and faceless figure of the child. Her half-nakedness is obscene; she is in a state of half-undress, her veiled sexuality half-



exposed. But there is little desire anywhere in these drawings, even on the part of the adult figures. Many drawings suggest the abuse of power: a kneeling child is held by his hair, an adult towers above him. Power emerges from the dimensions of proportion and perspective. And yet here, in this topsy-turvy world, it is the larger figures who are exposed as perversely vulnerable, and the child-like figures are charged with the responsibility of witnessing.

One theme unites both children and adults in these pictures: shame. One drawing in particular tells a vivid story. The scenario is captured in the time it takes an anguished child to cry "You're laughing!" This drawing is undated, but is, as are the others, part of the aftermath of the trial. Langer's drawings and paintings were saved from destruction because of their artistic merit, yet the humiliation of having to argue for their worth is written into this drawing and others. A laughing adult, her (I think) eyes rolled sideways, covers her mouth in a gesture of weak restraint. Her mirth is obvious. Before her stands a child whose shame is captured in the powerfully gestural frustration of hands thrown upward towards the unreachable laughing face. Beside these two stands another figure, who does nothing to help the child. Behind this trio two ducks fuck. They are partially scribbled over, as if to hide their shame, the shame of their creator, and to protect the observer from embarrassment. The drawing speaks to a child's fascination with sexuality and adult embarrassment about one of the few places children are allowed to see sexual activity—among animals. Every active element of this drawing expresses shame.

Two weeks later, after March break. The drawings are gone from my room. The exhibition opens this week and the drawings are now hanging in the gallery. The leftover nails make the walls seem emptier than they were before. I miss the intimacy of the drawings. I miss the way they drew me in; each time I came back I found myself looking at them more closely. In some, I saw things that I hadn't seen before. Only after several weeks did I see that the child cringing in front of the eyeballs was shitting. A child's pride in his bodily products, the gift of shit, has turned, once again, to shame.

Shame has come to explain how I understand the melancholia of these drawings. Eve Sedgwick has written that shame is "integral to and residual in the processes by which identity is formed." She argues that shame is an integral part of both childhood formations of self (shame produces self-consciousness) and later political identities (shame is the precondition for "pride"). I see both instances of shame in Langer's work. He has rendered visible the processes by which children come to know themselves as (sexual) beings, while working through his own shame of having to prove the worth of his "artistic" gifts. The regression to a child-like figurative quality constitutes a method and a challenge.

Eli is coming to town for the opening and to give a talk to a drawing class. We have arranged to meet at the bus station; he will be arriving and I will be leaving, with few hours in between. Langer is a sweet, edgy, interesting man. He has brought slides of all his work, including the paintings and drawings that were seized by the police. He asks me if I can pick them out. They are quite obvious, and I am glad that I have not been faced with the task of writing about them. Sharon and Claire have carefully chosen a sanitized selection of the less offensive drawings, no children and adults in blatantly sexual positions. He tells me about the humiliation of leaving the courthouse with his artwork under his arm, about the shame of having been publicly slapped on the hand. He does not think that the publicity has launched him as an artist; he has given away far more of his work than he has ever sold. But, he has been given a Canada Council "B-Grant" this year, so somebody has taken notice.

Eli talks about the fun of drawing and the speed with which he produced these sketches. Looking through his slides, I find what I want to see: his paintings show signs of strong talent in their colour and form, and there is no question that he knows how to draw. I feel much more comfortable about the artistic merit of the scribbles. Some of the paintings are, in his words, "smut." He's not shy at all about his sexual imagination or about admitting that these are images that give him sexual pleasure, but he is also adamant that he has never used models to paint his scenes, and that much of the imagery is non-representational. He is not advocating anything; he is only trying to work through the things that float through his mind. Outside of his circle of friends, there has been little discussion of his work beyond the sexually-explicit content. He has recognized that the content has become a liability.

The last painting I look at is of a girl squatting beside a pond. It has the hallmark intimacy of his other work, but the pastel colours and the soft, blurred lines are serene. The sensuality is hard to pin down to the content.

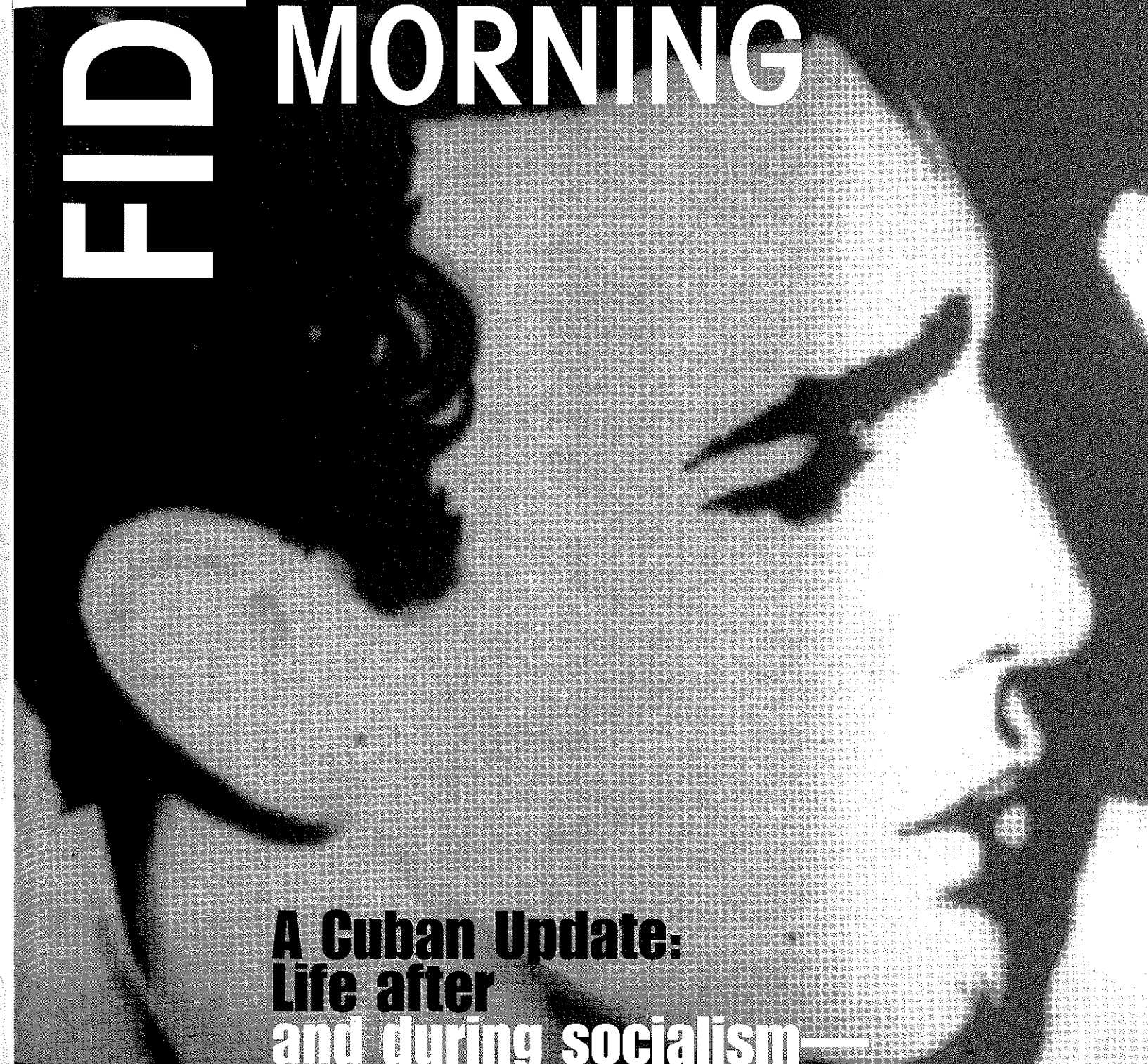
As we put away the slides, he laughs about wanting to spend the night in a downtown hotel with an overnight girlfriend; the fantasy seems so playful in contrast to his troubled and troubling images. I put him on the bus to campus. I get on the bus to Toronto. He spends the night in my room.

Eli Langer's drawings were exhibited in London, Ontario at the Palace at 4 a.m., February 27 to March 9, 1996. They were part of a joint exhibition with Shary Boyle called "Drawing From Memory," curated by Sharon Switzer and Claire Sykes.

Scanning of Eli Langer's drawings courtesy of Claire Sykes.

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WAKES ME EVERY MORNING



**A Cuban Update:
Life after
and during socialism—
both at once.
BY STAN FOGEL**

"Da, da, los niños, ba ba, ba, da dum."

Peering out between the slats of my bedroom window around 8:30 a.m. I see about fifteen four-year-olds shrieking what I've since been told is a patriotic hymn to Fidel. They're in a semi-circle around a smiling but strict woman, who, my friends say, has been leading children such as these in this song for about thirty years. The performance isn't for me — it's not as if, a North American, I am assumed to be with the CIA and am being assaulted with a deliberate display of socialist devoutness. It just so happens that my bedroom wall doubles as a day care's boundary.

During some months in Havana, my eyes and ears haven't registered anything else nearly as celebratory of Fidel. It's not that things aren't appreciably better than they were even two years ago when I last

lived in Cuba. Then, blackouts occurred four or five nights per week, reminding everyone that Soviet Hydro, or whatever the name was, had pulled the plug here in order to light the post-communist way there. Now, the lights only go out once a week...or whenever the wind wallops the aging electrical equipment.

Then, cars — storied fifties' vehicles mainly — were a rare sight, like the spotting of a Japanese soldier from World War II wandering out of hiding into the future imperfect. Now twenty-four hour gas stations are scattered throughout Havana; the mandate, though, is still, "fill 'er up...and push." My recent return to Marti Airport was a classic: a classic '48 Chevy was waiting for me and waiting for me to push it, by-passing a starter that only occasionally helped start the car.

Then the only green to go with beans and rice was...envy — and some okra, in Spanish "kim-bo-bo," which to some signified Fidel, green (military suit) on the outside, a white saliva-like substance (recalling his propensity for speech-making) within. Now, cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes and onions are

being sold in farmers' markets that have sprung up all over the island. Not incidentally, Fidel's saliva still circulates: a few nights ago both Cuban TV channels broadcast his complete two-and-one half hour address to a science convention. If you by chance missed it, it was repeated in full in *Granma*, the communist party's daily dispenser of all the good news — about the harvests — fit to print. (The North American version of this — a tribute to our accelerated pace — is to view the same, brief executive sound-bite over and over on CNN or CBC Newsworld.)

Then, the only restaurants one could go to (and find food — lots of restaurant facades still existed in '93 with nada on the menu and ditto in the fridge) were official tourist ones, complete with haute cuisine lists and cafeteria presentations. Now, paladares (a neo-logism from the Spanish word for palates) have been legalized — to a maximum of twelve seats so that no one gets rich and exchanges a chef's hat for a green Commander-in-Chief's cap. My favourite paladar — hereby producing the first Cuban restaurant review since former dictator and American lackey, Batista, feasted on Cuba's then sizable underclass — is "El Pescador" in Santa Fe, the old fishing village, now suburb, just west of Havana. Mom grills what her locally famous fisherman son, nicknamed "Barracuda," catches. For \$2 U.S. you can, if that day "Barracuda" was luckier than Santiago, Hemingway's old man of *The Old Man and the Sea* fame, eat shark snatched, as it were, from the jaws of one-week package tourists consigned to eat at hotels just down the road. (I'll bet neither R.O.M. chef, Jamie Kennedy, nor any member of his family has ever fished for shark.)

Interestingly, one of the hotels close by is called "The Old Man and the Sea" (and is managed by a Canadian firm). The Hemingway industry in Havana, like Toronto's movie industry, has produced a celebrity signature on just about every bar stool in town. Thieves, evidently less sentimental than ersatz big-game/big fish hunters, have become a nuisance at the Hemingway finca (farm), purse-snatching from the bushes that grow up around it, then melting like the snows of Kilimanjaro into the wilderness. Papa wouldn't have noticed; evidently, he kept his nose in a daiquiri while being chauffeured from the finca to the coast, so his view wouldn't be burdened by the locals.

Havana, though, is a safe place to wander in — women I have spoken to say they hitch-hike and/or bicycle safely throughout the day and night. The city is also sophisticated, showing up the Florida mall culture in which most Cubans seem bent on window-shopping or minimum-wage working. The desire to "get out" is exemplified by the following: last year a Canadian who fell in love with a Cuban woman arranged to meet her just offshore on his yacht. When others on the specified beach saw the woman and her family swimming to the boat, they too spitized out, one might say, hoping to be included in the extended family. Mayhem ensued, one of the yacht's propellers sliced someone to death and the police, alerted by the fuss, carted the

Canadian off to jail. Despite the urge of Cubans to go "thataway," lots of tourists are coming "thisaway." Think of the stock joy of fleeing winter, another (for some) stock joy of not encountering many Americans and the burgeoning (for many, I hope) pleasure of ducking our own Canadian version of the Bay of Pigs, a.k.a. the Ontario Cabinet as it grunts and snuffles its despicable way to Ging-riches. Momentarily, I would think, the tourism industry and the laws of the state, which try, for the most part, to keep tourists drinking officially produced daiquiris and otherwise out of private spaces (which drain the public purse), have made it difficult for hookers to ply their trade. The prostitutes have been bounced from the streets, discos, etc., on the whim, one hears, of Raul Castro's wife.

Whim, it seems, can generate policy as easily as "scientific socialism" does. This year, Christmas trees were decreed not to be flagrant violations of socialism, until a senior bureaucrat ordered them taken down from the one or two public places in which they stood. When Fidel returned from Vancouver, among other places, he is reported to have said "What happened to the Christmas trees?" One particularly large tree was purportedly raised, lowered and then raised again as quickly as ads rotate on billboards at Toronto Blue Jay ball games.

Curiously, the life one leads here passes in a kind of Commie Disneyland. If you're tired of — or even more astutely, never could stomach — polyester have-a-nice-days in middle America's notion of fun, Orlando's official and capitalist Disneyland, then this fantasyland should stimulate you (as much as it does me). With "socialismo o muerte" [socialism or death] painted hugely at your back, you can engage in some face-to-face bargaining for food, companionship, lodging, etc. To give the commerce added piquancy, the money that talks is Uncle Sam's — who only metaphorically, then, gets the boot as he does on one conspicuous billboard in Havana.

The richness of Cuban cultural and intellectual life — it should be noted — can be traced to state funding, a state Ontarians can only remember nostalgically as their own cultural life turns to Mush(inski, Ontario's misappropriated minister of, among other things, culture).

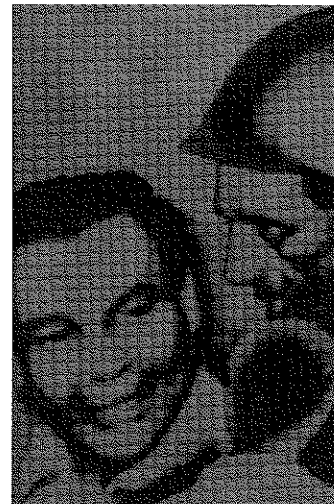
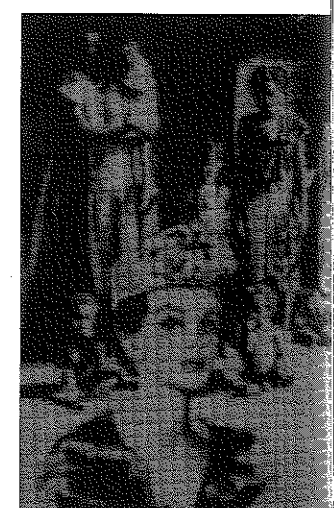
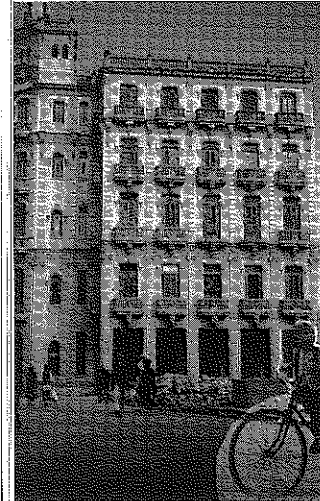
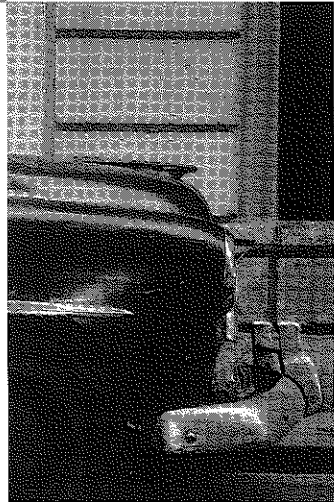
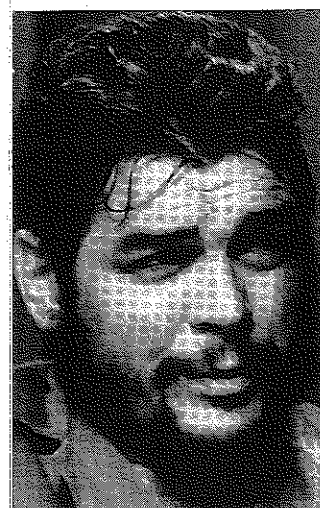
I have been giving lectures at the Instituto Superior de Arte, once the exclusive Havana Country Club. (It is ironic to contemplate the beauty of a university that has grown — and grown over — magnificently from a golf course, while "sub-par" Mike Harris bogeys on Ontario's publicly printed green(back)s.) The finest and most creative young artists — musicians, painters, writers, dancers, actors — in Cuba take classes at ISA; afterwards, instead of flipping burgers to pay their inflated tuitions the way Canadian kids must, ISA's progeny, whose tuition is free, can flip pages...or disperse onto the lush campus, née fairways, to practice their instruments, steps or gestures. From my shared office, a few doors down from what once was Richard Nixon's bedroom and is now the Rector's office, I can hear Cuban conga drummers, a cappella singers, flautists. As far as I'm concerned, it is the most beautiful university in the world, as far away from Sterile U., otherwise known as the purposeful,

earnest Canadian university factory, as the lush red flowers that fleck the campus are from footnotes.

Sadly but inevitably, anger has accrued here from a few years of shortages and many more of top-down direction. Lack of toilet paper forces most Cubans to reach for *Granma* as a substitute. The paper's dogma, though, may have done more damage than deprivation has, producing disbelief upon reading before relief upon wiping. The state's giving to the arts, for instance, is undercut by its taking away: a student art exhibition at ISA had its display suddenly reduced by one, when one piece, it was felt, transgressed on the sanctity of the state's ruling party.

Disgruntlement was even evident on December 30, 1995, the anniversary of the Revolution. Just a few years earlier I had gone to the Plaza of the Revolution along with a few hundred thousand others to celebrate Fidel's victory over Batista. On this thirty-seventh anniversary, maybe five or ten thousand people were on hand — mostly young people drawn by the hip music being performed onstage. The crowd contained only one flag-waver.

Nonetheless, no one that I know, even the friends who are adamant that the rhetoric of socialism and revolution should be abandoned, want an invasion by burger-franchising Americans to solve Cuba's problems. None wants Fidel displaced by Mas Canosa, the right-wing Cuban American lobby's big cheese(burger). The bicycle-riding, vegetarian lifestyle that appeals to a North American of a certain temperament, such as myself, grates on a population for which it is for the most part, insisted upon. Regardless, Fidel, the "sign," still holds sway and is still exciting. One night around 2 a.m. some visiting Canadian friends, some Cuban friends and I were in that good ol' '48 Chevy on our sleepy-inebriated way home. At a stoplight we were suddenly waved on and into another lane by a policeman. One of the Cubans said this signalled one thing: Fidel's flotilla of black Mercedes-Benzes. Sure enough, soon after three such cars zipped by. All of us were immediately awake — including the '48 Chevy whose driver floored it so that we could, for a moment, inhale Fidel's leaded fumes. Amazingly, after all these years, he can get anyone's attention, benignly or not, day or night. *Hasta luego.*



WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

"The media serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity...their choices, emphases, and omissions can often be understood best and sometimes with striking clarity and insight, by analysing them in such terms."

Herman and Chomsky

The media's coverage of high profile events such as the recent arrest for murder of two young African Canadian men, Adrian Kinkead and Rohan Ranger, often starkly illuminates their role as efficient and indispensable conduits of the "special interests dominat(ing) the state," particularly as they pertain to racial issues. Analysing their coverage of less spectacular events, however, can at times prove more useful in seeing how "choices, emphases and omissions" are made in furtherance of what Teun A. van Dijk describes as the "moral mission" of the "predominantly white institutions and business corporations" which constitute the mass media - namely pleading the cause of the "white Western group."

Two articles which appeared in *The Toronto Star* last Fall present such an opportunity for analysis. These articles

appeared on November 22, 1995 and December 2, 1995 by Peter Goddard and Andre Alexis respectively. They concerned an ongoing dispute between myself and the radio station CFRB 1010 arising out of a broadcast by Michael Coren on September 7, 1995.

During this broadcast Michael Coren first recounts a story he read about a Pakistani woman who had killed her young child and removed its eyes and kidneys for sale. This was proof, he states, that Canada was a far better place to live than the Third World. He expresses surprise that the woman was not in Canada as a refugee, heading up an organization like the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. The present head of this organization is herself a South Asian woman. Coren then expresses strong objections to my being awarded the 1995 Toronto Arts Award in Writing and Publishing. He makes inaccurate comments about my activities, about the award, as well as racist and disrespectful comments about my clothing and my appearance. In a word his objections were scurrilous, racist and sexist and constituted an attack on me as an African Canadian woman.

In his November 22, 1995 article Peter Goddard repeats Coren's unsavoury comments about my clothing. He does not report, however, that Coren specifically linked his demeaning remarks about my clothing to my race and ethnicity. Neither does he mention that Coren sets up an us/them paradigm: them being people like myself who have come to this country. Immigrants like Coren himself. Except that I am Black. After repeating, virtually verbatim, Coren's comments about me, Goddard then describes me as "every bit as outspoken as Coren."

As evidence of my outspokenness Mr. Goddard cites three examples:

1. "The usually controlled author June Callwood swore at her." The implication here is that I had to have done something to cause the "usually controlled June Callwood" to swear at me. What I did is never specified. This is how Joey Slinger describes this same "usually controlled"

June Callwood in an April 4, 1993 Toronto Star article: "Indignation has always been the gas in Callwood's tank." This was his attempt to explain why June Callwood swore at me. I am tempted to say, will the real June Callwood please stand up. Which of these descriptions is true? The fact is I offered June Callwood a leaflet in response to which she swore at me. But why let the facts get in the way of a good story?

2. "In 1990, Philip bluntly criticized the *Into the Heart of Darkness* show at the Royal Ontario Museum." Goddard's Freudian slip was clearly showing: the name of this exhibit was *Into the Heart of Africa*, but hell Africa, darkness - it's all the same isn't it? This statement is untrue and once again Goddard fails to identify the specifics of this "blunt criticism."

3. "Two years ago, she urged school boards not to send children to *Show Boat*..." Once again this statement is untrue and, as in the previous examples, the specifics are missing. Which school boards? Where? In Toronto? Across Ontario? And how did I urge this? And the *coup de grace*:

4. One of my "writer friends disagrees with the way (I do) things." The identity of this *alleged* writer friend is withheld; the specifics of *how* I do things missing. "Few properties of news," van Dijk writes, "are as revealing about the practices of news-making as quotations. They show not only with whom reporters have been talking, who have special access to the media, which news actors are found important and credible enough to be actually quoted, who are allowed to give their own opinions, but also how the journalist evaluates quoted opinions."

What is ironic here is that while the *alleged* writer friend was "important and credible enough" to talk to I was not. On Tuesday November 21, 1995 Goddard called my home and left a message on my answering machine to the effect that he had been speaking with one Ayanna Black (the mysterious *alleged* writer friend perhaps?), that he had heard about the Coren matter and would I give him a call. He

also understood, he stated, that there was a transcript which he would "love to see." At no time did Goddard indicate that he was writing a piece or that he was seeking my views on the matter. On November 22, 1995, before I had an opportunity to return his call Goddard's article appeared in *The Toronto Star*. Given that the Coren broadcast had occurred some three months earlier, urgency was certainly not a factor in the publication of this article.

What is striking about Goddard's piece is how it works on the basis of omission. Beginning with the most egregious omission mentioned above: the details of Coren's racist statements. Indeed, as Van Dijk writes: "it is sometimes more important to specify what is **not** said by the text than what is actually expressed. In many respects, media texts are ideological icebergs, of which only the tip is visible to the reader."

By implication and innuendo Goddard manages to convey to the reader that there is something amiss in what I have done and that this somehow justifies Coren's attack. And since we are, according to Goddard at least, both "outspoken" our mutual outspokenness cancels each other out.

If we follow Goddard's argument it goes something like this: being "outspoken" gives others the right to make racist, sexist statements about you. Or put another way, if someone makes racist statements over the largest private radio station in Canada, the gravity, import and impact of those statements are cancelled out if the person about whom the statements are made is perceived to be "outspoken." The fact that much of my non-fiction writing has been devoted to challenging racism in cultural practices, and the fact that Coren made an inaccurate and vituperatively racist broadcast about me on September 7, 1995 are seen to be equal. Could it be, however, that for Goddard merely writing critically at all on the subject of racism has the effect of transforming one into a being "every bit as outspoken" and, therefore, worthy of attack?

What the *The Toronto Star*, ably represented by Goddard, has done is protect Coren and make him out to be virtually harmless. A not-so-bad guy after all. This is, in fact, the reverse of what the media do in reporting of crime by people of colour, and particularly African people. Theirs is a "powerful role..." writes van Dijk "in the

reproduction of racism in Western societies." And herein lies the link between an issue that appears far removed from the arena of criminal activity - culture and the arts - and what can only be described as media overkill concerning the recent arrest of Adrian Kinkead and Rohan Ranger.

On October 20, 1995 Coren made certain on-air "retractions" concerning his September 7, 1995 broadcast. Goddard refers to the transcript of this broadcast in his article. Coren prefaces his retractions with the following words: "I have since had communication from Miss Philip through her solicitors that she considers a number of the statements that I made during my broadcast to be untrue." Coren was forced to make a "retraction" on October 20, 1995 as a consequence of him being served with a Notice under the Libel and Slander Act. Under Goddard's pen Coren's "retractions" mutate into his "attempting to defuse Philip's own charges somewhat." What charges? Not only does Goddard fail to describe accurately the context and nature of Coren's "retractions," but he misconstrues my defense of Coren's inaccurate statements as "charges." The result? The gravity of the situation - that only under threat of legal action did Coren correct egregious inaccuracies - is minimised. And, finally, by using the word "charges," Goddard suggests and implies that this is a situation in which there are charges and counter-charges between Coren and myself. Goddard also fails to tell his readers that Coren, having had an opportunity to do so, did not retract any of his demeaning and racist comments. The upshot of all this is that Coren's image is further protected.

The single most disturbing and problematic aspect of Peter Goddard's article, however, is that three of the four examples which he cites as proof of my "outspokenness" are the very same examples which Michael Coren used to base his scurrilous, racist attack on me: the PEN incident involving June Callwood; the *Into the Heart of Africa* exhibit and the Livent production of *Show Boat*. The very examples that Coren on October 20, 1995 was forced to "retract" because they were inaccurate and untrue. Indeed, Goddard refers to Coren's admission of "certain factual errors" on air, but he himself then proceeds to use these very examples to make equally untrue statements about my

involvement in these very incidents.

Not content to let things be, however, *The Toronto Star* published yet another article on December 2, 1995: "Larger Audience, Greater Responsibility." By a "brother" no less - one Andre Alexis. In the ninth paragraph of the piece, Andre Alexis writes that I "demonstrated against" the *Into the Heart of Africa* exhibit. As in the case of Goddard his Freudian slip was also showing - he identifies the exhibit as *Out of Africa!* Don't these journalists ever do research? But Alexis probably has his own reasons for wanting *Out of Africa*. Further, since he knows nothing about my activities, I must assume he bases his statement that I demonstrated against the exhibit on Coren's statement. The same statement that Coren was forced to retract on October 20, 1995. But then neither truth nor accuracy is of concern to Alexis.

Like Goddard he is far too concerned with indulging, if not defending, Coren's actions. He too repeats, in even greater detail, Coren's demeaning and racist remarks. Next he writes that my writing is not "hateful in the way neo-Nazi propaganda is hateful." What a relief! Then he dismisses Coren's racist attack as "so much schoolyard racism. It's not thuggery so much as the baiting of the thug's enemy by one of his puny hangers-on." Who is the thug? And who the enemy? Am I the one who is being bated and, therefore, the thug's enemy? And is Coren the "puny hanger-on"? Really! Albeit with a "potentially great" audience! Alexis does not explain how or when "schoolyard racism" (and, therefore, according to him dismissible) matures and becomes racism which should be taken more seriously. Contrary to what he implies the schoolyard is not the harmless place he believes it to be. It borders on the platitudinous and trite to say that children eventually grow into adults, and a child who is allowed to express racism in the school yard without being corrected will grow into an adult who does the same. This appears to have escaped Alexis.

However, while Alexis dismisses Coren's comments as "so much schoolyard racism" he does admit to being worried by the size of his audience. But if it is merely "schoolyard racism" why is he worried? Logic and Alexis, however, appear to be complete strangers.

Alexis accuses me of writing "as if Canada were a monolithic, racist culture; as if there were a "white Canada" made up solely of people who would take comfort in Coren's words." To do other than let my writing speak for itself is to pander to a gross and deliberate misreading of my work which borders on the absurd and reveals either profound malice or an abysmal lack of comprehension of issues I have written about. (This is not the first time either that Alexis has misread and misquoted my work.) The dedication page of my collection of essays *Frontiers* reads: "For Canada, in the effort of becoming a space of true true be/longing." The introductory essay to that work ends with the following words:

Whichever direction we take, it behooves us to remember that "our opponents are our co-creators, for they have something to give which we have not." This is the challenge facing all Canadians - African, Asian, European and Native - finding out what we can offer and accept from each other. It is the only way we will transform this place from a stranger place to one of true be/longing.

Alexis' omissions are as significant as Goddard's: like the latter he does not mention that it was Coren who in his broadcast set up the paradigm of the "monolithic" us and them. Goddard describes me as being as "outspoken" as Coren; Alexis as being as "ignoble" and my words as "racist." Evidence of this? A quotation from a review of mine of Neil Bissoondath's *Selling Illusions*. (See *Border/Lines* 36) The lengthy paragraph from which Alexis culls his quote attempts to grapple honestly with the complex ten-

sions that beset African/Asian relations wherever the two groups live side by side.

"Every bit as racist as Coren's broadcast and just as slipshod" is how Alexis chooses to categorise this effort. Note the similarity, however, between his tactics and Goddard's. Writing on the effect of racism and identifying racism in cultural practices makes you as "outspoken" as someone who makes racist attacks on others. Attempting to look seriously at the racial dynamics between Africans and Asians makes your words "as racist" as those of an individual who in one and the same broadcast describes South Asian women as being child murderers and an African woman as being dirty, unclean and dishonest! Such is the power of the media.

Having argued that what I had written was "every bit as racist as Coren's broadcast," Alexis concedes that "the pronouncements [mine and Coren's]...don't have equal weight...they can't really be compared." Why is he comparing them then? And if they can't be compared how does my statement become "every bit as racist"? Isn't that a comparison? In his madly illogical way, however, Alexis then rushes to suggest that somehow because Coren has a wider audience than I do, he should have a "greater sense of responsibility." In other words, because I write in small "academic, leftist magazine(s)" (Yeah for *Border/Lines!*) I should have a lower level of responsibility! It's an argument so fundamentally flawed - both morally and logically - as to leave me speechless. Surely, whatever the size of one's audience, a writer must bear responsibility for her words once she publishes them. And surely the size of one's audience ought not to be the determining factor in how one assesses the moral content of one's writing. According to Alexis' type of reasoning a neo-Nazi writer advocating race hatred who has a small audience, such as a classroom, or who writes in an obscure magazine or journal should be held to a lower standard of responsibility by virtue of the size of his audience.

Alexis' article may appear to be more critical of Coren than Goddard's; it serves the same purpose however: to exculpate Coren of responsibility for his words.

These articles serve a larger agenda - that of pleading the cause of symbolic elites: "Those groups...who directly address

public opinion and debate, such as leading editors, TV program directors, columnists, writers, textbook authors and scholars in the fields of the humanities and social sciences," whose job, according to van Dijk, is to reproduce consensus and racism.

Essentially these articles make it far easier for individuals like Coren to continue to do the work they do so well: under the guise of reporting or critiquing his broadcast they provide fundamental support for his activities. Both Goddard and Alexis were far more concerned with showing how much like Coren I am, rather than presenting the facts. In both instances the pattern is the same: to play down what Coren said, while at the same time saying that he did do something, because only then can they say that I am just like him.

The opinions of Peter Goddard and Andre Alexis that I am as "outspoken," "ignoble" and "racist" as Michael Coren lead to the inexorable conclusion that Michael Coren is justified in attacking me as an African Canadian woman in the venomously racist way he did. No amount of pusillanimous pussyfooting by Alexis changes that. Both these articles are tantamount to saying that I deserved to be attacked by Michael Coren: that is both their text and sub-text. They reveal an attitude which in other contexts is disturbingly familiar - that, for instance, women through their actions invite attack either through wearing revealing clothing, or being seductive or even being sex workers. The overwhelming message of both these pieces is that what Coren did was not that unacceptable after all, and, further, that I somehow encouraged and deserved what I got.

My non-fiction work addresses issues of racism and culture in Canada; it is engaged in the struggle to make Canada a society in which Africans, Asians and First Nations people feel a sense of belonging. This work has, almost exclusively, been published in small progressive magazines and by alternative presses. Michael Coren's views, opinions and writings - primarily conservative and right wing - have been embraced by the powerful organs of the mainstream media. Such is the power of the media, that I am represented as being as powerful as he is. But then again the white man's burden has always been a heavy one and many - the Goddard's, the Alexis', Black and white alike - are drafted into its service.

Revolution GOES GLOBAL: ZAPATISTAS ON THE NET

Now is the time
for hope to
organize itself and
to walk forward in
the valleys
and the cities.
And on the
computer
networks.
CONNECT.

by Michael Hoechsmann

Changing technologies bring with them a succession of new cultural practices and social relationships. The internet, originally developed by the U.S. army as an infallible wartime communications technology, has now been adapted by social activists as a rapid and effective means of organizing international solidarity. The horizontal power relationships of the internet, which allow both senders and receivers the same opportunity to transmit and receive messages, have created the conditions for the emergence of a global network of information distribution. The implications of this new technology for people struggling for social justice and democracy worldwide are enormous.

In the current context of a globalizing economy, it is becoming clear that the power of the sovereign nation state has diminished and that global money markets and multinational corporations have unprecedented power to affect social policy across most of the world's borders. Given these global conditions where the push and pull of regional political and economic developments can be felt worldwide, it is increasingly important that social activists be in close contact across international boundaries, even in the post-imperial global North, where for the balance of the century the Keynesian social contract has helped to localize much of the struggle for social change within the parameters of the nation state.

While the development of any new medium of communication always brings with it both utopian aspirations and dystopian forebodings, in the early going at least, the internet appears to be fulfilling its utopian promise. If the fax machine, another recent addition to the communications toolkit, cut its activist teeth in Tiananmen Square, the activist implications of the internet have been most forcefully rehearsed in Chiapas, Mexico by the EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army). After a brief armed uprising during January 1994 in opposition to the consolidation of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), the local political actions of the Zapatistas in Chiapas have been largely limited to crisis management with the many peasant communities that were uprooted by the army and some limited negotiations with the Mexican government. On a broader level, the Zapatistas have succeeded in forcing their political agenda (indigenous rights and social justice in general) onto the national stage, to a great extent thanks to the international exposure their claims have had on the internet. Despite the efforts of the Mexican government to localize the conflict, some of the widespread discontent of the Mexican populace in the wake of the disastrous effects of NAFTA has coalesced around Zapatismo.

The Zapatistas have turned a new page in guerrilla warfare, demonstrating the effectiveness of minimal low-intensity armed conflict combined with high-intensity media activism. Dressed in their trademark ski-masks, the Zapatistas made sure that what little time that they had during their armed uprising would make good media copy. The uprising took place on January 1, 1994 just as the Mexican ruling class was sleeping off the effects of celebrating the new dawn of NAFTA. Some of the graffiti painted in San Cristobal was in English for the benefit of international press corps. Most significant, however, was the rapid deployment by the Zapatistas of press releases on the internet. The first posting, made on Jan. 1, was translated the same day and posted on bulletin boards worldwide. Like many subsequent postings, it was published in the Mexican daily *La Jornada* and made available to international newspapers. After the one-sided, carefully choreographed and televised Gulf War, the immediate availability of the postings from the EZLN constituted an important turn-around for insurgent forces around the globe. As communications theorist Deedee Halleck put it: "This was war news in real time" (1995).

The Zapatistas continue to plot strategy and take refuge from the hostile advances of the Mexican army deep in the Lacandon jungle of south-eastern Mexico. In dialogue with his pet beetle Durito, Subcommandante Marcos, the political and spiritual leader of the EZLN, regularly issues his political/philosophical musings to national and international audiences. Marcos has become a respected figure despite (and/or because of) his unorthodox ways. As the story goes, Marcos writes on a lap-top computer, plugged into the cigarette lighter of a truck, and the disks are smuggled out of the jungle into the wait-

ing hands of contacts who post the material on the internet (*The Globe and Mail*, 1995). In his postings, he is equally at home quoting from Shakespeare, Cervantes, the Beatles or from Mexican soap operas. He demonstrates his historical and political savvy in long open letters to foreign intellectuals such as John Berger and Eduardo Galeano. He recounts oral fables—some presumably gathered from his Mayan hosts—and he issues sharp press releases as the events require them. His semi-mythic status has not been broken despite the discovery of his identity, one Rafael Guillen, a philosophy grad and son of a salesman from northern Mexico. Apprised of these details, the Mexican government gleefully, but—as it now appears—prematurely, announced that "the Marcos myth is over."

Subcommandante Marcos, whom Guillermo Gomez-Pena describes as "the quintessential postmodern guerrilla," has an alter-ego writing partner, Durito the beetle, who keeps him on his toes. The Sancho Panza to his Don Quixote or vice-versa, "Don Durito of the Lacandon, errant knight for whom SupMarcos is shield-bearer," pokes fun at Marcos' writing style: **Three points in a single paragraph, three dense points similar to pozol (corn meal). This is the style of the Sup: murky concepts, and difficult ideas to understand and more difficult to digest** (Subcommandante Marcos, 1995).

Among many other matters, Marcos displays a keen interest in media analysis. He speaks of the tautological way in which power reproduces itself, "ad infinitum in that bouncing of images from one mirror to another," and he points out that while the image may say "'the well being of your family,' it shows scarcity, unemployment and the fall of economic indicators" (EZLN, 1995a).

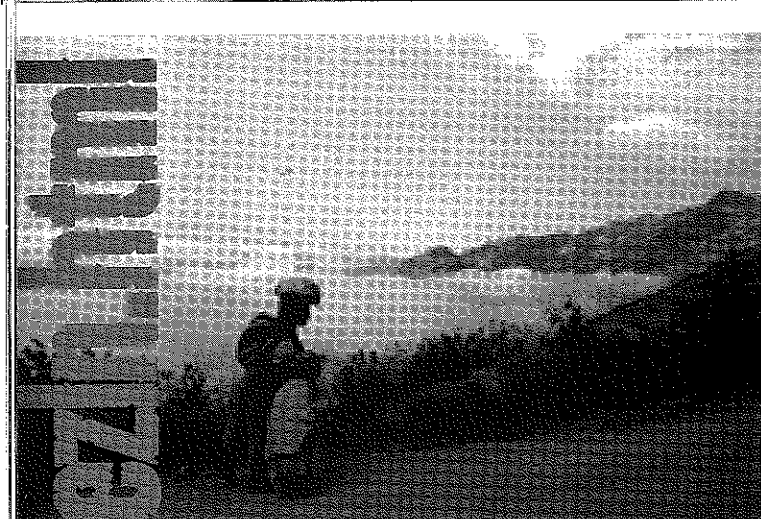
In an open letter to John Berger, Marcos describes the photo of Alvaro, a dead young combatant of the Chiapas uprising. Marcos discusses the possible multiple readings of this photo which can allow some foreign viewers to distance themselves from the problems "over there" in strife-torn Chiapas:

This did not happen here, . . . this is Chiapas, Mexico, a historical accident, remedial, forgettable, and . . . far away (EZLN, 1995b).

Marcos points out that it may strike some other viewers as an indictment:

I am Alvaro, I am an indigenous, I am a soldier, I took up arms against being forgotten. Look. Listen. Something is happening in the closing of the 20th century that is forcing us to die in order to have a voice, to be seen, to live (EZLN, 1995b).

What is present in both readings, according to Marcos, is "the new division of the world, with the democratization of death and misery, with the dictatorship of power and



images from ezln web site



money, with the regionalization of pain and despair, with the internationalization of arrogance and the market" (EZLN, 1995b).

While Marcos, the postmodern guerrilla hacker whom Deede Halleck calls "the first super-hero of the net" (1995), woos international support for the EZLN with his reflective and reflexive prose, he has also gained the attention of the Mexican government and the international media. *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek* and CNN have all commented on the effective use of the internet by the Zapatistas. Jose Angel Gurria, the Mexican foreign minister, stated that the Zapatista rebellion was a "war of ink, of written words, an Internet war" (*The Globe and Mail*, 1995). Laneta, the major internet provider in Mexico, went down for awhile, fueling charges of conspiracy. This test to the activist potential of the internet proved minor, however, as the Zapatistas had little problem finding alternate routes for its postings, "proving to many that it is not easy to censor the internet" (Halleck, 1995). As well as having their postings distributed on a number of solidarity lists, the Zapatistas have their own homepage, Ya Basta (Enough Already), where net surfers can even catch a glimpse of the elusive Marcos (<http://www.peak.org/~justin/ezln/ezln.html>).

David Ronfeldt, a researcher for the military-industrial Rand corporation, wrote a major brief on the use of the internet by activist

Birrell, 1995). This leakage sparked international outrage which helped to force the Mexican government to negotiate with the EZLN and fueled domestic support for their cause. In the US the issue was picked up by both Republicans and Ross Perot to put pressure on the Clinton administration, and it prompted Chase Manhattan to fire the memo's author, Riordan Roett. The significance of this series of events for the Zapatistas cannot be overstated; they have now become a recognized political force in Mexico. As Harry Cleaver states, it was all "the result of one small act of 'guerrilla research.'"

Given the dramatic potential of the internet for social activists organizing around social and economic issues worldwide, it comes as no surprise that there are attempts being made to enforce some restrictions. Greatly exaggerated reports on the dissemination of pornography are an attempt to begin to control the flow of information through the internet. Philip Elmer-Dewitt, a *Time* magazine editor, admitted in an interview published in *Harper's* magazine that the cover story on child pornography which caused a great uproar last summer was produced under the constraints of strict deadlines and that he erred in not including some criticism of the study it was based on. This arti-

have raised national and international awareness of the plight of the poor Mayan communities in Chiapas. The brazen exploitation of the Maya by Chiapas landowners goes unmatched anywhere in Mexico. With the trend to large-scale agri-business further stimulated by the passing of NAFTA, it was only the dramatic and courageous efforts of the Zapatistas that alerted the world to this relatively isolated region. While the carefully staged armed uprising brought the global press corp running and momentarily fixed the spotlight of global media attention on the EZLN, it was the ongoing and sustained use of the internet which has allowed the Zapatistas to advance their political agenda and to block disinformation efforts. As a communications tool for activists located in far-flung corners of the world but united in the struggle for social justice in the brave new global economy, the internet is a powerful new technology. In thanking his many supporters around the world, Marcos stated that those playing even a small role on behalf of the Zapatistas can say: "I struggled for Mexico at the end of the 20th century" (Wehling, 1995).

Given the dramatic potential of the internet for social activists organizing around social and economic issues worldwide, it comes as no surprise that there are attempts being made to enforce some restrictions.

groups and suggested that the internet had provided immediate international pressure on the Mexican government to negotiate with the Zapatistas and not simply to defeat them by force. Ronfeldt makes some compelling arguments for the activist potential of the internet. States Ronfeldt:

... the information revolution ... disrupts and erodes the hierarchies around which institutions are normally designed. It diffuses and redistributes power, often to the benefit of what may be considered weaker, smaller actors

(In Jason Wehling, 1995).

According to Ronfeldt, the "heaviest users" are "progressive, center-left, and social activists" who deal with "human rights, peace, environmental, consumer, labor, immigration, racial and gender-based issues." While Ronfeldt may seem to overstate the actual political implications the internet has had for social activists, he appears to believe that the horizontal power relationships of the internet privilege grassroots organizational structures. The intention of his brief was to confront these structural considerations and to develop more effective uses of the internet for his employers.

The most significant contribution to Chiapas solidarity efforts in the US was the disclosure of a Chase Manhattan Bank memo which was exposed by Alexander Cockburn to the limited readership of *Counterpunch* but then made widely available over the internet. The Chase memo, dated January 13, 1994, stated that "the [Mexican] government will have to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and security policy" (in Neil

cle was in turn cited by the US Senator Grassley without his questioning its veracity in his submission to Congress (*Harper's Magazine*, 1995). US Bill S314, the Communications Decency Act, was proposed to the US Congress to prohibit "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy or indecent" messages on the internet. If passed, this Act would give authorities the powers to impose fines or jail terms and to shut down internet sources who disobey it (Wehling, 1995). It appears that the moral panic surrounding the distribution of pornography is the thin edge of the wedge of internet control. Once the mechanisms are put into place to regulate the internet, then other political forces can come into play. The US Congress is considering an Omnibus Counterterrorism Act, a bill which would give the government and the President executive powers to detain and deport "aliens" without criminal charges and without having to disclose any information in support of their actions. It would give the government the right to freeze the assets of organizations "detrimental to the interests of the US" and would prohibit US citizens from supporting the non-violent, legal activities of any group which has been labeled as a "terrorist organization" (EFFector Online, 1995). US citizens who support so-called "terrorist organizations" would be subject to fines and prison terms. The implications of this far-reaching legislation are enormous, not only for the rights and freedoms of US citizens and those present on US soil, but also for the political future of small insurgent groups such as the Zapatistas.

The actions of Subcommandante Marcos and the EZLN

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This article is the product of postings received over a 9 month period from Chiapas95, coordinated by Harry Cleaver, Dept. of Economics, University of Texas at Austin [owner chiapas95@undo.eco.utexas.edu].

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MY Passport, MYself

**by Moustafa
Bayoumi**

In the aftermath of the World Trade Centre bombing, Bayoumi writes about his reception by airport customs officers... and the implications of immigration, movement and displacement.

I fear flying. The reason is simple, and it has nothing to do with a fear of the air or of being airborne. In a sense I was myself air born, my parents both coming from Egypt, and me being born in Switzerland, then transplanted to Canada, now studying in the United States. My fear remains on the ground, neither sacred nor sublime. It rests on those points of departure, within those little private cities that spot the globe, on the outskirts of major centers.

If you are suspected long enough of something, you will eventually believe yourself guilty of it. In a Western airport—those are the airports I know best—I am the itinerant terrorist. I do not know exactly when this metamorphosis takes place, whether it occurs somewhere on the way, in the train or the taxi, or with my first step into the airport (often through wall-less doors of metal-detecting equipment). Or perhaps it occurred sometime earlier, during the 1970s, entering my body like a dormant and undetected virus, only to bloom with my facial hair. Regardless, it has arrived (and continues to arrive) at unscheduled times and with all the extra baggage that such an arrival portends.

What then does it matter, say, what passport I have? Identities are even easier to counterfeit than passports. My passport marks me nationally (I am what they call a *naturalized citizen*), but those sly security folk at airports know that names reveal a far deeper nature than passports ever will. And if the name falls blandly flat (they too can be naturalized and neutralized), take a good look at the face. I must admit, I don't often remember *their* faces, the whiteness usually only reflecting the garish airport lighting, and I can only speculate what they remember of mine. Their expressions, though, remain. It is a little drama that is played out every time, with varying degrees of melodrama (different countries, after all, produce different schools of acting), but repeated so often as to produce and reproduce its own absurd theater of cruelty. The movement to suspicion is something I've so often seen now that if I don't fall victim to it, I become suspicious.

February 26, 1993. An explosion tears into the concrete fabric of lower Manhattan. Unforeseen, unprecedented, this event in the social fabric of corporate America threatens the media machine's ability to produce information and to monopolize the production of meaning. The event is itself charged with too much meaning, too little information. Anyone could have done it, for too many reasons. Within minutes multiple meanings are thrown into circulation—Serbians, Palestinians, Bosnians—but the lack of one singular mean-

tem. A year later in L.A., when the verdicts were handed down, the system desperately tried to regain its ability to pass judgment, instead of being the object upon which judgment is passed. The state expects a rebellion with the new verdict. But the state once again merely shows its own inability to comprehend the power of rebellion. Once the state can expect something, it is back in control. But for the moment—before the analysis—a bomb explodes. Communities rebel. Too many causes for their effects. Six people die tragic deaths. Other minority communities suffer. In the meantime, all the King's horses and all the King's men will do all they can to put the production of meaning in their hands again.

Who are the victims of the WTC bombing? Certainly the most immediate victims belong to the class of new immigrants, some of the fatalities belonging directly to this class; new immigrants as hotel-workers, drawn to the imperial metropole for their livelihood. But even after the event new immigrants suffer. The surreptitious nature of an event like this virtually authorizes the state in all its royal machinery to create its own enemies at will. We were not let down. The industry of manufacturing the enemy (a highly lucrative field in this country) was able to produce an astonishing narrative of suspicion, whose players lurked in shadowy corners of storefront *masjids*, conferenced in lower-class apartment blocks, and hid nests of hate in unassimilated facial hair.

In the sedentary world, movement has become something almost purely symbolic or purely terrifying: politicians travel for no real purpose, tourists travel in memory of colonialism and in hopes of placing themselves on postcards.

ing means no meaning is being produced at all. For the moment.

For Jean Baudrillard, information has destroyed meaning. Information has become that which masks and stands in for the profound loss of meaning in our communication. But if

Baudrillard subverts the information-produces-meaning tautology, then an event such as the WTC bombing reverses even Baudrillard. The radical quality of the event is evident at the time of its happening, before it becomes history, when it is still in a kind of pre-mediated, unnarrativized state. Here, too much information does not destroy meaning; rather, there are too many cracks in the shell, pressure points giving way to the lies our state tells us. Their profound disruption comes not so much from their violence as from their element of surprise. The producers of meaning are surprised and are caught with their pants down. The system will have to work overtime, producing meaning (narratives, characters, histories) out of an event in order to compensate for their lack of prescience and power.

It happened almost a year before, in L.A., when a spark erupted into a fire that burned away all the fat around the lies and deception of one of our systems of social control—the justice sys-

Armies, which at one time seemed almost obsolete with long-range nuclear missile technology, have become today's travelers.

Like rats, everything about this cast of characters was dark, hidden, and, like the bomb explosion site, underground. At least since the Gulf War, we know that this underground quality marks it as separate from the royal machinery. This has little to do with firepower and even less to do with morality, but it has everything to do with perspective. The royal machinery looks from top down, like the hundreds of thousands of sorties flown over Iraq during the War, and this perspective becomes valorized. A way of viewing the world. For others, perspective is limited to those things beside oneself, in greater and greater circles but with no vanishing point. To look from top down or from bottom around—these are the options. To be a helicopter or a taxi cab. To be a hawk or a mole.

This is not just about movement, not even about the speed of movement, but about the place of movement. Both immigrants and imperial states are masters at manipulating the machinery of movement, yet their paths rarely cross as they fly at different altitudes.

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people are much concerned with all kinds of pleasures They are accustomed to luxury and success in worldly occupations and to indulgence in worldly desires Therefore their souls are colored with all kinds of blameworthy and evil qualities The more of them they possess the more remote do the ways and means of goodness become to them Eventually they lose all sense of restraint Many of them are found to use improper language in their gatherings as well as in the presence of their superiors and womenfolk They are not deterred by any sense of restraint because the bad custom of behaving openly in an improper manner in both words and deeds has taken hold of them Bedouins may be as concerned with worldly affairs as sedentary people are However such concern would touch only the

necessities of life and not luxuries or anything causing or calling for desires and pleasures The customs they follow in their mutual dealings are therefore appropriate As compared with those of sedentary people their evil ways and blameworthy qualities are much less numerous They are closer to the first natural state and more remote from the evil habits that have been impressed upon the souls of sedentary people through numerous and ugly blameworthy customs Thus they can more easily be cured than sedentary people This is obvious & will later on become clear that sedentary life constitutes the last stage of civilization and the point where it begins to decay & also constitutes the last stage of evil and of remoteness from goodness Clearly the Bedouins are closer to being good than sedentary people

The Bedouins on the other hand live apart from the community They are alone in the country and remote from militias They have no walls or gates Therefore they provide their own defence and do not entrust it to or rely upon others for it They always carry weapons They watch carefully all sides of the road They take hurried naps only when they are together in company or when they are in the saddle They pay attention to the most distant barking or noise They go alone into the desert guided by their fortitude putting their trust in themselves Fortitude has become a character quality of theirs and courage their nature They use it whenever they are called upon or roused by an alarm When sedentary people mix with them in the desert or associate with them on a journey they depend on them They cannot do anything for themselves without them This is an observed fact Their dependence extends even to knowledge of the country the directions watering places and crossroads Man is a child of the customs and the things he has become used to He is not the product of his natural disposition and temperament The conditions to which he has become accustomed until they have become for him a quality of character and matters of habit and custom have replaced his natural disposition If one studies this in human beings one will find much of it and it will be found to be a correct observation

Text from *Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* by Ibn Khaldun, translated and edited by Franz Rosenthal, abridged by N.J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) 94-95. Graphic by Moustafa Bayoumi.

Who would have understood this but Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth-century Arab Muslim scholar of social formations and philosopher of history. Social organization exists in many stages for Ibn Khaldun, with the Bedouin or nomadic being opposite of the sedentary lifestyle. His marvelous and secular mind is able to process so many events of social organization into an understanding of the codes of civilization—with neither prejudice nor sentimentality (though with a guiding sense of morality).

The sedentary propensity for luxury attracts with it the desire for scholars and their various jewels—like Ibn Khaldun himself (very aware of the conditions which gave him the opportunity to write), like the opportunity for my more tarnished musings here—in order that they may give some legitimacy to the royal machinery.

In the sedentary world, movement has become something almost purely symbolic or purely terrifying: politicians travel for no real purpose, tourists travel in memory of colonialism and in hopes of placing themselves on postcards. Armies, which at one time seemed almost obsolete with long-range nuclear missile technology, have become today's travelers.

Opposite these movements are the movements of immigrants, refugees, exiles. No wonder they drive you round and around the city. They know how to move a life.

I am looking at a picture of my mother, dated June 23, 1956. A significant date. Significant not only because it was exactly one month before Gamal Abdul-Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal.

(War would come later, and my mother told me how she and all her classmates in the school of pharmacology wanted to do something to help and worked as voluntary nurses in the hospitals around Cairo—working for the new nation, caring for the wounded.)

In this picture, my mother is a scant twenty years old. Younger than I am now.

There is another woman in the photograph, behind my mother, waiting her turn, shrouded in widow's black. My mother, at the table, in dark glasses and rolled up sleeves, is writing on a piece of paper. She tells me, "This small photo documents the first time women had the vote in Egypt." My mother, in Upper Egypt, voting on a forgotten referendum in the constitution. Eight men, some of them in suits and ties, most wearing the more traditional *gellabaya*, are watching the two women vote.

Egypt in the fifties. A popular coup d'état looking for legitimization in the ballot box. The men in the suits are most likely outsiders to the region, government officials overseeing the election. Everything is coded in this picture. A coexistence between traditional ways and Western ways. Some observers may want to see the juxtaposition between my mother and the widow as that between the West and Islam; just take a look at the clothes. Yet each of these women is doing nothing but adapting herself to all the codes around, both new and old. A society in transition, everything in Egypt at this moment is being contested. But this is hardly unique to new nations. All societies are in a constant state of flux, the contestations between codes and values a daily phenomenon.

Structures of authority exist in order to lay order, to produce the codes by which things make sense. The state, organized religions, as well as university seminars all rationalize their orthodoxy. I can well believe that a certain kind of Islam can produce, as can all orthodoxies, a rational code in order to produce what is in effect an irrational event. And after the fact? More rationally, refining of codes and definitions. What a refusal of living!

Don't bother looking for me after you have read this. You won't find me. I will be spying on those dangerous imams with the brilliant sight of an eagle; I will be growling with the voice of a lion at the border guards; I will be licking injuries of the wounded with my rough and salty tongue. I will be prowling against your codes, and will jump without any warning.

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LIKE RATS, EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS CAST OF CHARACTERS WAS DARK, HIDDEN, AND, LIKE

THE BOMB EXPLOSION SITE, UNDERGROUND.

But their growing desire for luxuries and false legitimation will ultimately spell their decline. Dynasties, royal machineries, state formations all come and go; yet all operate under a set of codes which are continually expanding in order to underwrite the existence of a social formation that is being *undermined* by its very growth and arrogance.

New immigrants watch carefully all sides of the road. They take hurried naps only when they are together in company or when they are in the saddle. That is, when they don't have a fare. Low to the ground, in constant movement, almost all New York City cab drivers are from the new immigrant class (though let's not fall into a position of liberal guilt, where all new immigrants become cab drivers). Our cast of characters has its own share of cab drivers, something which perhaps strikes fear into many. My cab driver, a terrorist? But immigrants, refugees, exiles understand movement differently than do the sedentary peoples. For the sedentary, movement is walking with a mobile phone, movement is the walkman, movement is only a fax of a movement. Within days of the WTC bombing, AT&T announced that temporary offices and special phone lines were established in order not to incapacitate the silent machinations of electronic capital (not in so many words). The idea of the twin towers has now become a total farce, their closure barely affecting any change in the flows of capital. At one point they indicated the end of competition; now, in addition, they're virtually just a nostalgic reminder to those days of movement; movement of capital, movement of people. Architecture as the site of congregating has become passé.

THE POLITICS AND ANXIETIES OF MEMORY

Two camps battle over memory. Should it or should it not be TRUSTED?

A symposium featuring Cathy Busby, Bridget Brown and Thyrza Nichols Goodeve.

THYRZA NICHOLS GOODEVE:

"Memories—light the corners of my mind, misty water colour memories—of the way we were"

Barbra Streisand

If one's memory of any given situation is multiform and its many forms are situated in place and time from the perspective of the present... memory has a history, or more precisely histories. The claim that memory is historical is itself subject to shifting historical boundaries.

Nathalie Zemon-Davis

The truth is, memory is a loaded concept to engage, formed as it is from the residue of wounded time. As such, the major ruse which any study of memory has to struggle with is the slippery, solipsistic, quite fierce susceptibility of memory to time and experience. While infinitely retrospective—memory *is* the past isn't it?—any reminiscence gains its identity and style from its life in the present, a present understood to exist only *because* of its ability to call upon, and use, this undead past. Rather a heady conundrum we have going here, but it is what makes memory such a compelling category for cultural analysis. I'm less interested in the perception of it as a sacred form (memory as redemptive, capable of saving the individual or the culture) than the manner in which it has become profane, nearly a profanity or blasphemous threat (memory as suspicious, mendacious, even destructive because of its vulnerability to interpretation).

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, memory was the major dimension of literary modernism (Joyce, Woolf, Proust), and culture (Bergson, Freud), yet in Fredric Jameson's depiction of the present, it is one of the very relics of the past whose loss marks the passing into post-modernism. As he puts it, it is "the waning of the great high modernist thematics of time and temporality, the elegiac mysteries of *durée* and memory"

which characterizes postmodernism (a cultural mode dominated by categories of space not time). Yet any perusal of popular magazines, talk shows, scientific studies, contemporary art or Hollywood films, reveals the omnipresence (not absence) of memory, even if memory appears dressed in the guise of a number of besieged and bizarre costumes: false memory syndrome; multiple personality disorder; recovered memories of alien abduction and satanic ritual abuse; Holocaust denial and the attack on memory; or the fragile nature of memory in the culture of AIDS. These various forms of millennial memory (appearing as they have in the last quarter of the millennium) are incidents of a particular kind of memory — traumatic memories induced by events which may never have happened (alien abduction, satanic ritual abuse, false memory syndrome) or which are of such force and confusion as to re-organize the very nature of the individual (multiple personality) or the possibility of memory itself (technoculture and AIDS). Along with the disturbing collection of social and individual traumas that Cathy's and Bridget's work will focus on, memory itself must be seen as undergoing its own bout of heady traumatization. Under attack,

while debunking alternative therapeutic practice, claiming that "recovered memory therapists... have become to the study of the mind and behavior what astrologers are to the scientific study of the stars and the planets. They have engaged in an enterprise based not on science but on impressionistic insight, myth, metaphor, and the powerfully persuasive nature of the therapy setting." The story fails to mention, however, the various metaphors memory scientists rely on. The oft quoted "memory expert," Elizabeth Loftus of Washington State University, counters what she sees as the myth that all memories are neatly filed away in the mind. She suggests: "Think of your mind as a bowl filled with clear water. Now imagine each memory as a teaspoon of milk stirred into the water. Every adult mind holds thousands of these murky memories. Who among us would dare to disentangle the water from the milk?" Of course anyone who has experience with dairy products knows that the folk-chemistry of separating milk from water has long existed. Compare this to the depictions of the mechanics of memory neurosurgeon, Dr. Wilder Penfield, relies on in his 1967 best seller *I'm Ok, You're Ok*: "...the brain functions

the basis of recovered memory without "objective evidence." Professor John Morton, an "expert on memory" from the Medical Research Council in London, who recently chaired a commission on recovered memory for the British Psychological Society, says he is confident that the community of psychologists in Britain is too sensible to follow the example set by Americans. "We are determined that with respect to the relations between clinical and experimental psychologists, and with respect to the prevalence of particular memory recovery techniques, we will not follow the U.S. We are not complacent, but we feel there is no need for panic." In concluding "True Lies," John Cornwell claims that the trend of convicting an abuse defendant on the strength of a plaintiff's recovered memory alone suggests the American justice system is regressing to the superstitious practice of "discernment," used in the Middle Ages to distinguish good from evil spirits. I do not want to suggest that recovered memories make good legal testimony per se, but to point out how they heat up the debate in psychiatry, psychology, and the law.

effort to fill in anxiety-inducing memory gaps — to account for what they call "missing time." It is only through hypnotic regression that abductees can know "THE TRUTH" about what happened to them, can locate and name the source of their free-floating anxieties and black moods. Feelings of powerlessness in the face of the unknown are augmented by their own powerlessness to control memory, to shape and articulate personal histories. For it is the expert "doctor" — not unlike the technically proficient alien itself — who controls the process of forgetting and remembering, who can manipulate the memory of the "ordinary person." In the end, the professional intervention that is central to their recovery involves the very control over memory that abductees feel they themselves lack, or by which they feel they have been victimized.

And yet once remembered, the extraterrestrial alien gives a name and a face to unidentifiable bad feelings — feelings of dislocation and dissociation. Remembering the alien is one way of coming to terms with the micropolitics of power in our everyday lives, a way to give form to, and ultimately treat, feelings of powerlessness that might otherwise not seem "treatable."



"Think of your mind as a bowl filled with clear water. Now imagine each memory as a teaspoon of milk stirred into the water."

called into question, susceptible to Satan, aliens, and remarkable stagings of falsity, memory is hounded from a scientific point of view, from a popular culture point of view, from a personal and familial point of view. It is characterized as something people don't quite know how, or whether, to trust. What does this say about our sense of historical agency at this moment, and our ability to use memory to challenge and provoke history, especially if it is, as Cathy Caruth calls it, a history "of experiences [we have] not yet fully owned"?

CATHY BUSBY: Last spring I happened to flip through a copy of the *London Sunday Times* magazine, and stopped at the feature story, "True Lies," about Joe and Sheila Skitt who had been accused of sexually abusing their daughter. The article expressed rage at the woman therapist who had worked with the depressed Jill. The Skitts' sense of ruin — "our future has been destroyed, our past poisoned" — set the tone of emotional loss on the part of the parents, while Jill's pain is not part of the story. The discrediting of Jill and her therapist continues as the story conflates recovered memories of child abuse with Elvis Presley visitations, and alien abduction memories. Mid-way through "True Lies," American psychologist Richard Ofshe invokes the inter-stellar

as a high-fidelity recorder, putting on tape, as it were, every experience from the time of birth, possibly even before birth." Which depiction of "memory" are we to believe here?

"True Lies" was not surprising in its approach of putting therapeutic practice on trial, claiming it was ruining innocent families. The American press, with the Canadian press close behind, has been at it since early in this decade — for example Carol Tavris' "Beware the Incest Survivor Machine," *The New York Times Book Review* (January 3, 1993), which was reprinted in *The Montreal Gazette*. In 1991 disclosures of memories of child sexual abuse by Miss America 1958, Marilyn Van Derber Adler, and television star, Roseanne, lent celebrity attention to this subject. It was also the year *The False Memory Syndrome Foundation* was formed, an organization representing those claiming to have been falsely accused of sexual abuse. The organization constructed a pathology called false memory syndrome and acted under the assumption that repressed memories are not truth, thus aggravating the split between believers and non-believers in accounts of memories of child sexual abuse.

The *Sunday Times* article suggests that going the way of the Americans would not be "cricket." Unlike some celebrated American cases, British courts have been reluctant to convict on

BRIDGET BROWN: In October 1994 Dr. Ruth Faden, chair of the President's Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, revealed that systematic effort to gain knowledge of the effects of radiation from experiments on humans had been planned at the highest levels of the U.S. Government. In a carefully worded public statement, Faden assured Americans that the official act of remembering and restructuring this unseemly slice of history was now underway: "We are now piecing together the story of the past, an unsuspected past, to help inform the future on these questions." In the rhetoric of the Clinton administration, Faden seemed to be saying, "We feel your pain. We will retrieve the nation's repressed, unsuspected past and narrate it into public memory." At the same historical moment the number of alleged abductees continues to grow. Hundreds of thousands of Americans struggle to remember being technologically violated: strapped to metal cots, drilled, probed and tagged. As they struggle to reconstruct individual unsuspected pasts, they are relegated to the New Age fringe, to talk show spectacle.

The process of remembering the alien is a painful one for most abductees. Alien abduction has, for them, come to be understood in terms of trauma, repressed memory, and recovery. Abductees often begin their painful therapeutic journey with the

Once abductees have remembered drilling, probing, even vivisection at the hands of this concretized, present cause, they can find a support group and commence recovery. And yet treating the traumatic memory of abduction as a private and personal issue reaffirms, in a sense, our powerlessness in the face of less tangible social forces. The therapeutic rhetoric of abduction narratives suggests that we can only confront our anxieties about government secrecy and the surveillance of human bodies on an individual level. Concern with the symptoms of alien abduction enables us to overlook political, cultural, historical sources of the sort of collective anxiety that these stories reflect. It also enables us to ignore the sort of collective, ideological hunch that these stories constitute — a hunch that the powers that be — those perceived to be in control of knowledge, power, technology, perhaps the government itself — might be somehow victimizing the "ordinary people" of this country.

Let me close with a couple of questions for discussion: First, to what extent is memory — as methodological alternative to history — a tool of contestation? In what ways does it enable us to "bear witness," to testify to past (and perhaps present) atrocities? Second, and perhaps more importantly, can memory account for events that matter so that, as George Lipsitz has noted, we do not lose track of "who's boot has been on who's neck"?

Discussion

THYRZA: The seminal case in the memory debates is the Eileen Franklin case. In 1989 — as an adult mother — she remembered witnessing her father rape and murder her childhood friend Susan Nason. Both girls were eight at the time. Eileen's memory was used as the primary evidence in a case brought against her father for the murder. The case is an important one to study because much of it revolved around whether memory — especially a recovered memory — was worthy as evidence. Experts were brought in to testify on both sides. Among the most prominent was Elizabeth Loftus who presented her work on the malleability of memory. It is based on experiments she conducted with her graduate students at The University of Washington; for her research she has become an internationally famous memory expert. She has just published a book with Katherine Ketcham called *The Myth of Repressed Memory*. On the other side was Dr. Lenore Terr, author of the wonderful *Unchained Memories: True Stories of Traumatic Memories Lost and Found*, who believes in the veracity and meaning of recovered traumatic memories. In her work she actually reads a person's present life in relation to "lost" traumatic memories. In 1990, George Franklin was found guilty of the murder of Susan Nason. In other words, at that time Eileen's repressed memory and such work as Lenore Terr's on traumatic memory were regarded as demonstrable evidence of the father's guilt. Subsequently, because of the wide currency of false memory syndrome the case was reviewed and the verdict overturned. Traumatic memory, at that point, lost its power as evidence.

CATHY: This reminds me of the abundance of films and videos, such as *To A Safer Place* by Beverley Shaffer (1987) and *Family Secrets*, Lorna Boschman (1989), both produced by The National Film Board of Canada, that document memories of child sexual abuse. The first documentary follows the protagonist returning to her childhood home and leading the viewer to the basement where the abuse took place. Visiting the physical site is part of the woman's process of remembering and recovering, while for the viewer it is a matter of witnessing the process. In the second film there is an uneasy recreation of an abusive grandfather taking his three or four year old granddaughter canoeing, while the voice of the adult daughter tells the story. These films are examples of private stories becoming public documentation, not in the sense of a relic, but as representations of memories.

THYRZA: It's as though memory's association with the private becomes a way to undermine it. In other words precisely because alien or false or satanic "memories" are of *individual* memories — not state secrets — then the phenomenon of these reminiscences is seen as the problem. It goes to what Bridget said in her opening remarks. There are clearly social, collective, and individual traumas experienced in a wide range of communities that have made people susceptible to stories which have become internalized as personal, private traumas.

LISA DUGGAN: Which brings up how sexual abuse — what started as a feminist critique in the name of victims of sexual abuse — has been taken up by the right wing which takes these memories, cut off from national narratives, and reinscribes them into a reactionary framework. Narratives that have been cut off, deemed private or crazy, are rewritten as, "well yes, your memory is the truth about the government, and the government is the jack-booted liberal thug, and it is the truth about your childhood and it was satanic child abuse daycare centre workers."

DAVID SERLIN: While Cathy, Bridget, and Thyrsa were talking, I was thinking about the differences between public memory and private memory, and how differently these are constructed. I'm thinking of public memorials, war memorials, statues or monuments that commemorate national events or heroes, and of course controversial places like the Vietnam Memorial or the Holocaust Museum. How different is it for a state, or a nation, or a group to memorialize an event than it is for an individual and their private memories? Recent books, such as G. Kurt Piehler's *Remembering War the American Way*, try to make sense of some of these issues. Who owns journals, photographs and documents or dictates them into narratives of collective memory that represent the nation, let alone "what really happened"?

JAMES POLCHIN: Interesting too in the case of the Holocaust Museum is that in one of the last parts of that museum, there's this big screen where people are talking about their remembrances and the last image on the wall that you see as you walk out is the American eagle with a sign worded something like "Remember the importance of freedom." So you move from the personal experience of the Holocaust to the national symbol of what this museum is really doing.

DAVID SERLIN: The other interesting thing about the Holocaust Museum is that it manipulates so many different kinds of media to try to get at that intersection of public and private memory. There are whole rooms filled with nothing but shoes or photographs, with very little textual description, the idea being that the non-verbal holds its own sense of collective identity, memory and authority. I think that it is in these objects that the intersection of private and public becomes so political. Last summer, I met a historian who worked as one of the academic consultants to the Holocaust Museum, and he told me that the museum at Auschwitz had donated all of this human hair. There was a huge debate between the historians and Holocaust survivors who sat on the board of directors about whether or not to make an exhibit using the hair. The survivors said, "We don't want that, it's terrible, it's not the kind of memory that we want to represent in this museum."

BILL BURNS: I make scale models and a lot of small objects. I meet a lot of folks in the supply shops and their hobbies are, in many ways, more ambitious than a lot of artists. For instance, they are members of large model-railway cults in industrial malls in the suburbs where people, mostly men, construct these models in groups. They build gigantic rail lines and their project is to reconstruct the halcyon days of the American railway, recon-

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structing old-time urban and rural landscapes. Along with this tradition is a militia tradition that recreates civil war battles and Middle Ages battles. And with this I was thinking you can have simultaneous memories that are from the Middle Ages and from contemporary events. This is exactly what the militias are trying to do when they create a medieval battle; they are actually trying to create this kind of memory for themselves, so there is a kind of monument within their person, within their memory.

MARC SINGER: Public memories, it seems to me, often contain aspects that are private. If you are planning a Vietnam memorial, for instance, you're considering the public aspects of the war, the patriotism, the sacrifice of self for one's country, but you're also thinking about individual suffering, death and the family's loss. But what strikes me about this kind of private memory and how it is different from the kinds of private memory we've been talking about here is that these memories — of heroism in battle, for instance — contain a little kernel of what we want to uphold as our national ideals: a positive national self-image, the things that hold us together as a country, an example being the American eagle over the Holocaust Museum. Memories of UFO abduction and child abuse, on the other hand, are classified as entirely private because they reveal gaps in this national unity. They break unity down: instead of saying "Remember the cause of freedom," they say, "Remember fear, or paranoia, or sexual dysfunction, or powerlessness." And so a lot of these memories come to be subversive in a way, going against unity, but also sowing doubts about the established order more explicitly, as when UFO memories gradually transform themselves into government conspiracy theories.

THYRZA: That's great because it shows the productive aspect of memory at this point. What Marc is getting at is the productive story these memories tell which isn't about their truth or falsity. It's as though memory's shift from something perceived to be sacred and redemptive into something blasphemous is a way for people to explore a collective ambivalence about the family, the State, the public sphere itself. At a moment when political agency is at an ebb, the push is not toward a utopian future but a nightmarish confabulated past, which is really only a ruse — a politically unconscious one — for remembering the politically messy state of the present itself.

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WITH
SHANNON
BELL

sexuality and drugs that have primarily galvanized "moral agents" who then provided the authoritative concepts designed to polarize sentiment into two camps: the "morally good" whose universalizing values are then bolstered by crucial institutions, like the family, state,

ROB TEIXEIRA "frames" the evidence in the London 'Pornography' case.

London, Ontario has been the setting for a police and media sponsored moral panic involving a series of arrests of teenage hustlers and gay men. Local presses have been ablaze with inflammatory articles outlining the so-called depraved practices of gay men who allegedly hunt down boys in order to have their way with them. By March 1995 there had been 45 gay men arrested and 371 charges brought down. Half of these charges involved the solicitation of sexual services of a person under 18—teen prostitution. There was one charge of making child pornography and 20 of possessing it. London Police Chief, Julian Fantino, used the media and public meetings to stir up public hysteria over a large "kiddie-porn ring" in London. This spectre was used to justify the creation of a province-wide investigation authorized by the Solicitor-General, under the name Project Guardian. By October 1995 there were over 60 arrests by Project Guardian in London and Toronto. Fantino has repeatedly engaged the pernicious demon of "pedophilia" in order to disqualify his detractors' opinions. It is of course a tactic of intimidation and an effort to silence dissent.

This kind of hyperbolic rhetoric is symptomatic of a moral panic. Such hysteria has, historically, attached itself to "unseemly" sexual practices; witness the regime of social hygiene and the concern over prostitution and venereal disease at the turn of the century; and more currently, the hysteria surrounding HIV/AIDS and the rhetoric of containment and segregation promulgated by some U.S. public officials. The discourse of a moral panic reduces the specific sexual activity to a singular locus in the social nexus, whereby unusual powers of causality are then attributed to it. The fallout from such collective paranoia is an exaggeration of sexual peril, attributing acute malignancy to specific sexual behaviour and in addition assigning them an exaggerated pervasiveness: undesirable sexual acts are "everywhere" and have unusual powers to "corrupt" and subjugate others. Moral panic can be seen as a crisis of identity of the dominant group. When identities are based on insecurities, there is a marked propensity to guard jealously "borders" of identity.

A moral panic is concerned about advancing a specific set of clearly defined values—values which seem threatened by a set of projections of moral danger. In the first place, a sexual scandal is attractive both to the media and to the public. The readiness to exploit these issues betrays our deep cultural insecurities about sexuality in the West. Historically, it has been

judiciary, and police; and the "morally repugnant" whose actions and values are seen to have no "redeeming social value" and conflict with the dominant mode. Consequently those marginalized find themselves with little or no institutional support and thus little power in which to legitimize alternative or oppositional social values.

When sexuality is connected to youth then the underlying fears of the "corruption of youth" and of destroying the country's future take on particular force. These are the words of London Police Chief Julian Fantino, heard on *Ideas*, commenting on the men arrested: "it's an enterprise that's victimizing the most vulnerable of our society, very young, helpless children, and turning them to a life of crime." The fear is that these "children" have been forever "broken" and that the whole social fabric will unravel.

Most conspicuous in the London fiasco is the systematic silencing of the voices of the youth involved. If their voices are invoked at all, it is always by way of interpretation through social welfare agencies and the police, which invariably name them as passive victims of unscrupulous adults. Important realities which contextualize their lives are left out—abusive and dysfunctional families, poverty, survival prostitution, and queer youth sexuality.

The complex and contradictory ways in which young gay men who are faced with a myriad of social barriers, negotiate and experience their sexuality in a homophobic world is rarely part of the discourse surrounding this case.

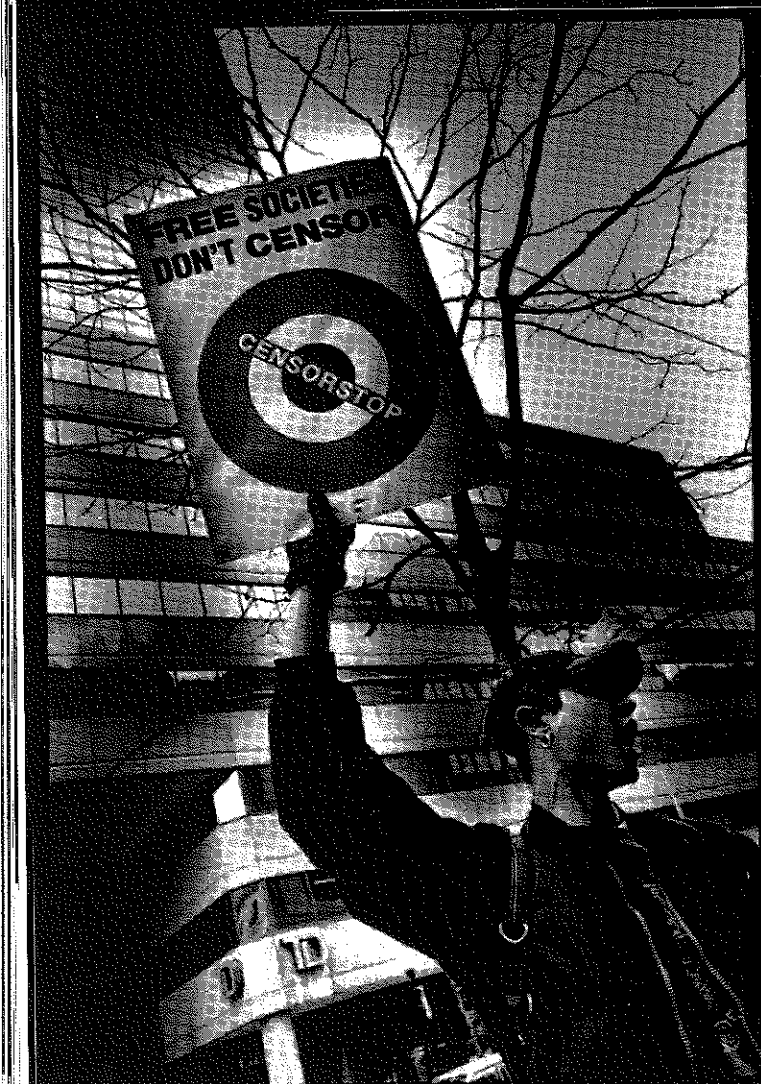
Max Allen, a CBC radio producer, aired one of the first critical shows on this case, entitled, "The Trials of London." It was researched in part by a young gay journalist, Joseph Couture, and was broadcast on CBC's *Ideas* in October 1994. Gerald Hannon's *Globe & Mail* article, "The Kiddie-Porn Ring that Wasn't" (March 11, 1995), and John Greyson's television documentary, "After the Bath," all contributed to presenting a much needed forum for the perspectives of the youth and men. Their efforts, along with those of other journalists, artists and activists, continue to challenge the official reports of the media and police. They have provided a counter-discourse to a powerful ideology perpetuated by police and most media.

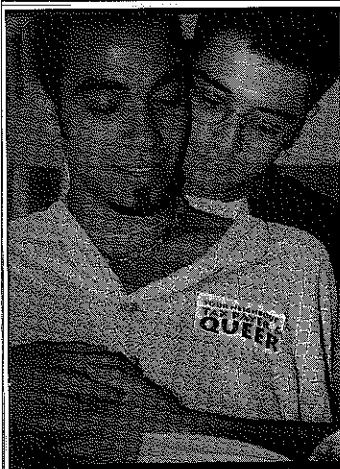
One person who has worked on the campaign to "Repeal the Youth Porn Law" is postmodern feminist, author, and activist, Shannon Bell. She is the author of: *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Indiana, 1994); *Whore Carnival* (Autonomedia, 1995); and with Brenda Cossman, Becki Ross & Lise Gotell, *Bad Attitude/s: Feminism, Pornography and the Butler Decision* (forthcoming, 1996).

ROB TEIXEIRA: Can you comment generally on what's been happening in London, in terms of how the "Child Pornography" law is set up and who it's targeting.

SHANNON BELL: It's targeting intergenerational sex; it's collapsing the categories of child, youth and young adult so that you find, that a lot of the people referred to as "children" are actually 15 year old guys.

Photographs by David Maltby





The complex and contradictory ways in which young gay men who are faced with a myriad of social barriers negotiate and experience their sexuality in a homophobic world is rarely part of the discourse surrounding this case.

RT: Aren't some of them actually older?

SB: Yes 16, or 17. Not 18 because then it's legal. So partly it's got to do with the exchange of money, partly it's got to do with this very strange category they've created of "child" when it really refers to young adult. Also we know that the police were forcing the guys that they photographed off the videos to give statements on their customers in exchange for no sentences, and for getting on victim compensation.

RT: The police are giving these guys money?

SB: Yes, it is legitimate money they could use to get their lives in order; it's a social service program, but there are strings attached. I feel one of the problems is, until Max Allen did the *Ideas Series* on CBC, there wasn't really a forum for these guys to say anything. I think it's important to make distinctions among child pornography, sexual representation of young people, people who are forced into having sex, and young people who are having sex for money. The law is targeting gay men mostly—but that doesn't mean it's any better if it starts targeting heterosexual men and young prostitutes.

RT: Their definition of "child" is a specific problem. We're definitely seeing a subtle shift in categories, where even the age of 21 can be regarded as "child." I'm not talking about a legal definition, but in terms of a general discourse surrounding child welfare agencies and social services where the age is creeping up, maybe not legally but in terms of how we think about it. Social service agencies are becoming more conservative in that regard; I don't know why, maybe it's a reaction against child abuse discourse being more prevalent today?

SB: I'm not sure. One of the things that they tend to do, and it was done at the Meese Commission on pornography in the States in 1985, is the mixing of images. They would use what some people would see as really objectionable pornography mixed in with really banal images. In the London and related newspaper articles they tend to give the impression that they are children, when often these are people who can make their own decisions, so they collapse the categories. I don't know why they do that. I think it gives people the idea that the police and morality squads are really doing something, somehow.

RT: In order to justify police budgets as well, it seems.

SB: Yes, to justify police budgets. Also, it's much easier to target people in the streets rather than in their homes which is where a lot of abuse actually takes place.

So one of the things we did in terms of attempting to repeal the Youth Pornography Law was make an image which would challenge the prohibition against dressing up. It was one of the least contentious images that I have ever done. I mean, it's considered child pornography if you are, for instance, my age, which is 39, portraying someone who is a child; so we used the codes of the teddy and T-shirt and came up with this shot of me holding a teddy in front of me with my finger on my clit.

RT: Fantino, remarking on the pictures that they took from the videos they fished out of the river, said, "Pictures don't lie, it's all in there," which is, of course, a very literal reading.

SB: Pictures tell many different stories. For example, if you actually have never seen representation of anal intercourse or sex between two men, when you see it, especially when you are socialized to be heterosexual, chances are you may find it offensive, and that's part of the whole thing. Similarly, we are all socialized to accept sexual representation between persons of similar ages.

RT: The so-called Child Porn Law seems set up in a way which makes it very difficult to criticize and challenge. You have very emotionally charged and sensational issues to confront. What kind of strategy can we use to fight it?

SB: It was rushed through the last days of the Conservative government, we all know that. The police benefited from this new law in terms of Project Guardian—a joint forces operation involving the London police, Metropolitan Toronto police and the Ontario Provincial Police—so the law is really good for police budgets.

It's a difficult thing to fight because very few people are going to come out and say, "I'm pro child pornography" and to attack the law it's almost like you put yourself in that position. People don't want to do that because they know they are going to be slammed or they have something at stake. Instead, you can talk about things like people are not children when they are 14—depending on the person—some 14 year olds are still children but a lot of 14 year olds aren't. Fifteen, certainly 16, 17 and 18 are not children. Many people 15 to 18 years old are having sex and are capable of making decisions. Now what this law means is that they can't have representations of themselves having sex.

I think the reason that there's been such little visible resistance is because the people who know what it's all about and who would resist are exactly those who are being targeted, such as gay men who are having sex with men who are under 18. Much of the gay community is also a bit worried about their representation in the press as being really pro-intergenera-

tional sex. I think since this came up at the same time that spousal benefits were a big issue, it really managed to splinter the energy of the gay community. You've got the whore community and you've got some aspects of the queer community and you've got a very interesting coalition with the Trotskyites. They've been very active. And then you've got different individuals from various universities who are very active in terms of free speech and things like that.

RT: In terms of coalition activity around this whole issue, how has the Child Porn Law created new coalitions between such groups as the gay community and sex trade workers?

SB: I think that coalition was already there. The people attending some of the demos were pretty much the same people. I think it has solidified a coalition and made it more public. You see, the sex trade workers are really busy right now fighting some of the pending sex laws. They are under major duress as well and they don't really have any sort of coherent policy set out right now on the so-called Child Porn Law. Also, most of what they have to say is geared toward the young guys that are working and not toward their clients, and it's the clients who are really taking the shit on this. Partly all this is tied up with the issue of intergenerational sex and the exchange of money for sex.

RT: Are you finding a split in attitudes around what's happening under this new law between artistic production and sex trade workers? I've noticed in terms of media coverage, even in the alternative press, an exclusion around the plight of sex trade workers and their clients.

SB: Yes, that is something that has been overlooked. Eli Langer has made the connection himself; he's quite good. I think there are more social stigma and more jail sentences for hustlers and their clients than for artists. In London the ones that ended up taking it were the clients. But I know also that Eli has suffered a lot; his work was confiscated.

RT: The Child Porn Law is situated within a context of moral panics which historically have pivoted primarily around gay men and the spectre of the "pedophile." Examples include a 12-year old shoeshine boy, Emmanuel Jacques, who was found sexually assaulted and murdered on the roof of a Yonge St. body-rub parlour in August 1977. A deplorable crime which also brought deplorable incidents of homophobic furor, such as calls for capital punishment to be reinstated, or more police power, and the elimination of gay people. It was clear that the whole gay community was being implicated. This led to raids on the offices of the *Body Politic*, a Toronto gay liberation newspaper, and a subsequent court battle. During this time as well, there was the Dade County anti-gay rhetoric of Anita Bryant. Here we are in 1995-96 and this is happening again. Why?

SB: Yes, it keeps resurfacing as moral panic. And it also resurfaces at a time when conservative forces have regrouped. I think it's a lot stronger this time because you've got "family values" being really strong in terms of governmental policy with the so-called Republican revolution. As well, there is a real move toward criminalization; a real move now toward putting more people in prison, stronger laws and harsher sentences along the lines of "getting tough with crime." When you consider that up to half the people in prison are there for drug charges, not major drug charges, you've got a very criminalized society.

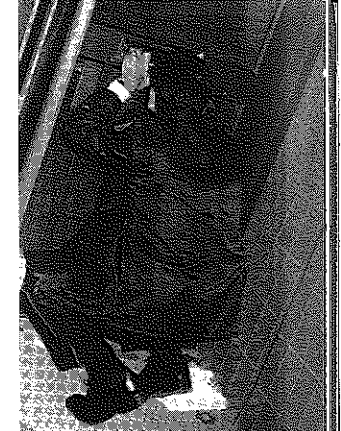
When you actually start to break down the word "pedophilia" you start to uncover the reality of what is going on. When you read something that says "pedophile," unless you're aware you actually think they're talking about somebody who is having sex with someone or sexually touching or molesting someone who is a child, rather than someone who is a teenage man or woman. And one of the clever things Max Allen does on *Ideas* is when he talks about how a London cop had forced sex with a young woman who was seventeen; he calls her a "girl." Max then talks about how ridiculous that sounds. As women we fought very hard not to be called girls, even at seventeen. Max brought attention to how ridiculous it sounds to call her a girl; it is just as ridiculous calling guys that same age "boys."

RT: I guess I'm surprised that there isn't more vocalization coming from within the gay community.

SB: There's fear. They're scared in the sense that the gay community doesn't want to be targeted as pedophiles, with the meaning that is read into the term "pedophile." They have quite a bit to lose, which is why there are few people speaking up. The people who are speaking up tend to be political activists, but they're keeping fairly quiet too. If you take a look at *Xtra* (Toronto's gay and lesbian bi-weekly) often when they run an article that's supportive of the men and boys in London they tend to get a lot of letters against it.

Sky Gilbert's opening play, *More Divine*, for the new Buddies in Bad Times Theatre (Toronto) was targeted. The play is about Foucault and a number of different things, and one of the things that is included is a reference to man-boy love. Well, immediately the press picked that up and talked about how again, yet again, taxpayers' money was going to support a theatre company that does stuff on "pedophilia." I think this label is used really to terrorize groups, so as a strategy for survival, groups end up softening their support in a way.

It's really important to make distinctions. If people tell you that at 15, 16, 17 or any age for that matter, they are being abused, then I think you really have to listen to them. But it's a different thing when you've got social services and the cops telling them to say that.



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ARTESANIA ON HIGH HEELS, ART THAT HEALS

BY FRANCISCO IBANEZ

"The stage is hers, but she is not yet ready. He knows his audience awaits. What will she say? This queer, this queen, this radical black sissy-fag won't shut up. Of course, Miss Girl will have to read somebody; that's part of the performance we all expect. But can she transcend the well-rehearsed roles she and her audience (sister and fellow performers yourselves) so naturally slip into? Can

I/you transcend our mutual masks — the easy, witty, critical rhetoric with which we so deftly camouflage our deeper mixed emotions, ambivalences, aversions, secrets?"

— "Unleash the Queen,"
Marlon T. Riggs

photo by author

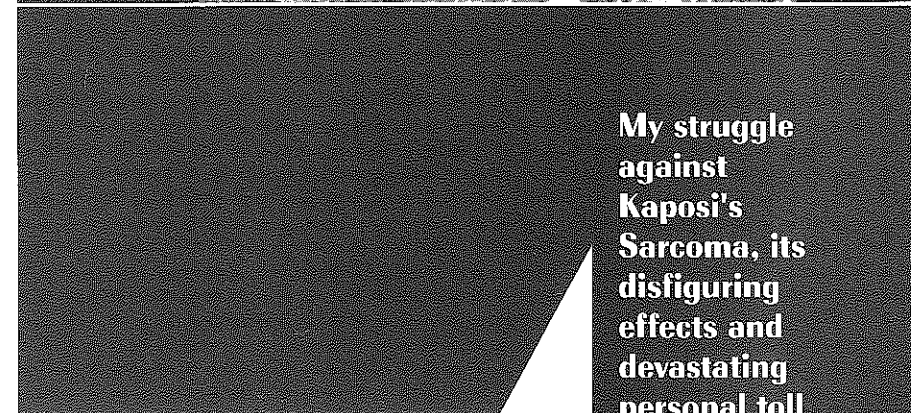
doing drag is *artesanía* which in Spanish means decorative art such as quilting, cross-stitching, or modeling clay. Doing drag is preparing for a self-indulgent masquerade the way thousands of Brazilians prepare all year long to let loose and flaunt their costumes during the carnival. My struggle against Kaposi's Sarcoma, its disfiguring effects and devastating personal toll have made me think about the reasons that make us clothe and paint ourselves and about the liberation and healing of

doing drag. Doing drag is autobiographical: take Holly Woodlawn's *A Low Life in High Heels* (1991) and RuPaul's *Lettin' it all Hang Out* (1995) as two cases which might not be exemplary of great literature but can be seen as a form of testimony. RuPaul says: "I speak for the individual. For anyone out there who's ever had a dream... I'm about the politics of the soul. I transcend the gay community. I speak to everyone with pain in their heart. I am here for all of them."

In *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature*, Shoshana Felman offers the following definition: "In the testimony, language is in process and on trial, it does not possess itself as a conclusion. As a performative speech act, testimony in effect addresses what in history is *action* that exceeds any substantial significance." Drag queens, to give Felman's insight specificity, have become witnesses to the HIV plague even more so than their antithesis (and mirror effect), the leather man. But, not all of the scene is romantic and profound. In fact doing drag is above all caustic fun; it employs the tools of the desperate: sarcasm and irony.

The persona of the drag queen coyly resists only being the object of inevitable close-ups: Where's the dick? What is it... a man or a woman? We are not men, but we are not women either, and sure as hell we are not angels. In *To Wong Foo* one of the final lines delivered by Stockard Channing is, "I don't think of you as a man, I don't think of you as a woman either, I think of you as an angel" to which Swayze responds "That's healthy." I can hear the emasculating chop-chop of Hollywood scissors from miles away. Paglia, a suspect advocate for the Other, spits out:

My model of dualism is the drag queen, who negotiates between sexual personae, day by day. Queens are "fierce" in every sense. Masters of aggressive, hawdy speech, they know the street and its dangers and fight it out without running to authority figures, who would hardly be sympathetic. Queens, unlike feminists, know that woman is dominatrix of the universe. They take on supernatural energy, when ritualistically donning their opulent costume, the historical regalia of woman's power. Prostitute and drag queen are



sexual warriors who offer a pagan challenge to bourgeois gentility, now stultifying modern life from corporate boardrooms to academia to suburban shopping malls.

When I do drag shows I introduce myself as *Clarita Cruz-Montt*, my alter ego, and explain how it feels to be that way. I invite the audience to bring out the drag queen in each and everyone of them; none of this in-ner-child crap. Clarita is a pastiche of Latina divas: Eva Perón (the political power), Maria Felix (the silver screen

My struggle against Kaposi's Sarcoma, its disfiguring effects and devastating personal toll have made me think about the reasons that make us clothe and paint ourselves and about the liberation and healing of doing drag.

halo, Lola Flores (the feline body) and Celia Cruz (the voice and the rhythm). Drag is a prêt-à-porter identity that is not without risks. It is bound to offend sensibilities camouflaged in family values and by concerned-citizen overtones. At this point drag queens get their feathers ruffled and things are no longer the way Za-Za describes them in "La Cage Aux Folles": Marabú and Shalimar.

Go and occupy your place on the witness stand, you tramp! First, there is the minor charges of vulgarity that "can be enjoyed dispassionately" because, John Bayley has written, it has little to do with the spectators and does not demand anything "except our broadmindedness, our humanity, our readiness to be pleased." Such charges are forever slapped on us like bad mascara. Pardon me while I play the grand piano.

In "Boys Will Be Girls: The Politics of Gay Drag" (*Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*), Carole-Anne Tyler offers a rigorous academic critique that still doesn't articulate drag's performative power. She acknowledges that internalised homophobia of embarrassed "straight acting, straight looking" gay men who want to distance themselves from the stigma of promiscuity, be it sexual or symbolic, and she announces that "camp has been rehabilitated with a vengeance." Female impersonation, she writes, is progressive, "partly because of a long-standing link between femininity and masquerade in psychoanalysis... and partly because femininity, unlike masculinity, is thought to involve non-phallogocentric ways of relating to the body, to language, to desire and to others." Doing drag is linked with gender confusion (you say dysphoria, I say euphoria, you say tomato...); it is also connected to the practice of whites in blackface in minstrel shows. A representation of the feminine it sustains "phallic identities by figuring the lack man repudiates in himself through the regressive defence mechanisms of projection, sadism, voyeurism, and fetishism." Drag for Tyler is an example of "the gynephobic/misogynist representations of women," and "self-dispossession as castration." Tyler concludes

The exuberant public procession of queens reminds me of Catholic pilgrimages with strong working class *morenos* carrying *La Virgen del Carmen* (in Chile), *de Guadalupe* (in Mexico) or *del Cobre* (in Cuba) on their strong working class shoulders (now, that is a fantasy, isn't it?). In Latin America the drag queen embodies an eerie aspect of the virgin/whore duality, one of our cherished cultural themes. Send in the clowns. The drag queen enters into our North American public imaginary with her usual flair, sure of her lines, in different cinematic vehicles such as Almodovar's *High Heels*, Divine's *Pink Flamingos*, *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, *The Crying Game*, and *Farewell my Concubine*, in plays such as *M Butterfly* and *The Torch Song Trilogy*, in documentaries such as *Paris is Burning* and *Wigstock*, in Saunder's *Absolutely Fabulous*, in *The Dame Edna Experience*, in novels such as Puig's *The Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and in the public works of San Francisco's own Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. A gallery of drag queen icons should include people as disparate as Boy George and Liz Taylor; beware, we are everywhere. However, watch out; straight boys have smartened up and they have clued in that the 90s sensitive guy, single father, geeky type is "in." They are getting the drag queen roles in movies like *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar*. The film, sporting a "multicultural" cast of Swayze, Snipes and Leguizamo, is likely to be criticized for being homophobic and coopting one aspect of gay culture. I think it is not relevant enough to stand any accusation. It is one more example of fancy packaging and no content. However, the question remains as to why these stereotypical aspects of male queer culture still mesmerise us. Have you noticed the increase in the number of funny kisses on the mouth butch buddies are giving each other on camera? Suddenly straight boys are open-minded (Dan, Roseanne's wife, is getting there); some of us are not amused, particularly if we are familiar with closets. We know they had it in them to begin with (check

the soccer games and other male spectacles). I wonder, though, where the baseball bat is hidden.

You would be, nonetheless, flummoxed by the ranging repertoire of desires that drag queens have. The louder the queen the bigger the surprise!! Drag insolently interrupts the flow of normality; look what the cat

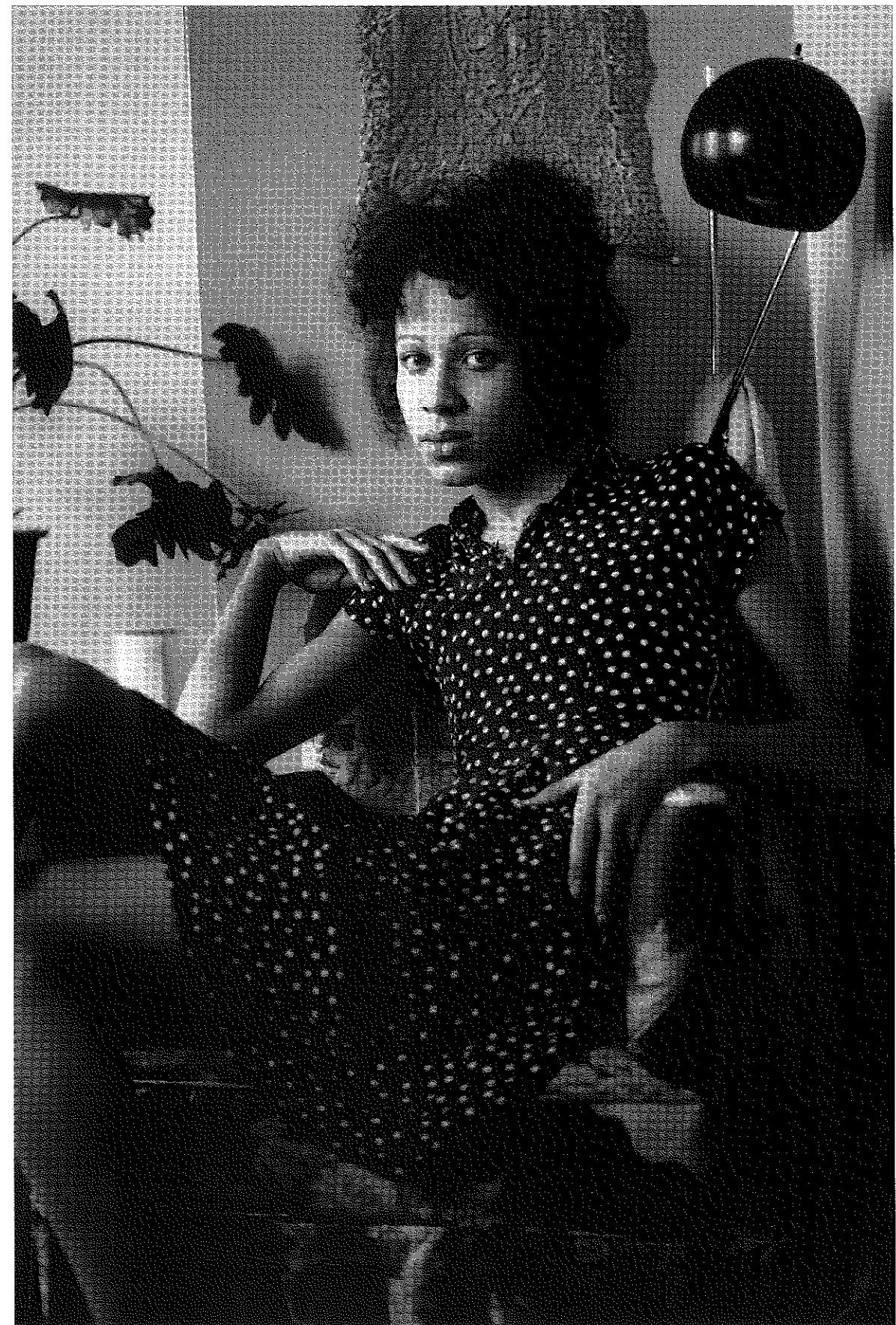
dragged in! It reminds us that hell on earth is just around the corner: outbreaks, violences, viruses. Drag queens seem to be the catalysts for a volatile alchemy because we step over racial, class and sexual boundaries.

I've realized that I don't like doing drag for gay men. It's a hard room to sell, but drag queens traditionally are sprites of hostile environments. I prefer mixed audiences; they are less sheltered, they check each other out. It's like going to church. Clonish gay men intimidate me and make me self-conscious about my lesioned skin, my accent, and my sexual energy. Among gay men I feel I'm never enough. We are after all a cynical, jaded and scared bunch. I do drag mostly in my second language, English, and I choose to employ some black cultural elements, many Anglo and Latino ele-

"When I do drag shows I introduce myself as Clarita Cruz-Montt, my alter ego, and explain how it feels to be that way. I invite the audience to bring out the drag queen in each and everyone of them; none of this inner-child crap."

that "Camp (like mimicry) functions complexly by dragging in many differences at once that are all too easily articulated with phallic narcissism in a symbolic which is really a white, bourgeois, and masculine fetishistic imaginary."

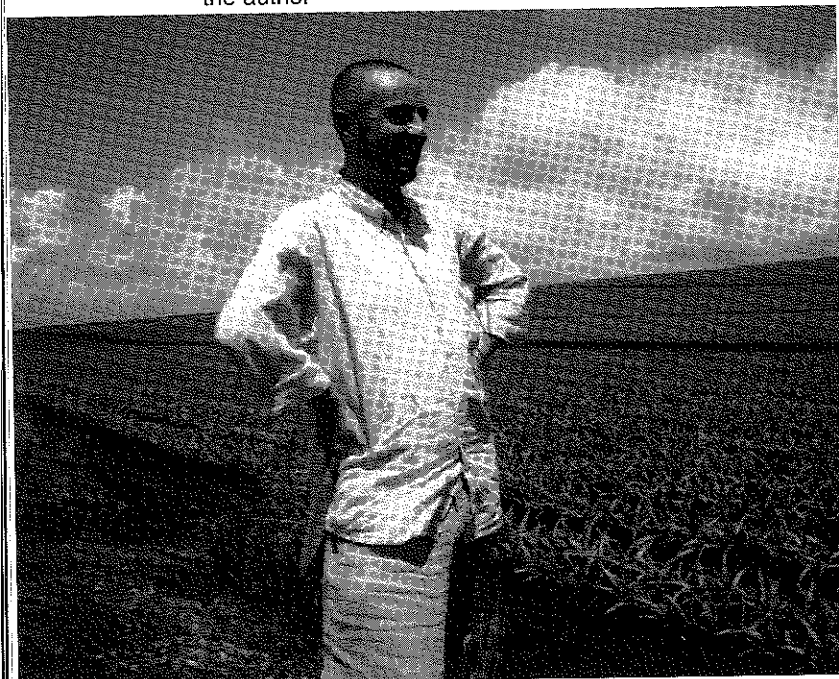
A plebeian question lingers: so what? Once again, theory doesn't meet practice. I say drag queens are a mockery of "normal" men as much as of women. Some performers choose to be misogynist and aggressive and I don't justify that. I understand that if one is evidently queer, one also has to be defensive (and offensive) if one wants to keep one's ass intact. Drag queens play up the absurd, ambiguous and contradictory in our lives. They are a jukebox of interplaying motives, assumptions and stereotypes; they stir up our closeted contradictions.



NAN GOLDIN

Roommate in her chair, Boston, 1972.

the author



ments. As Bakhtin writes, "Language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and other. Consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of having to choose a language." I dress myself up in borrowed grammar, phonetics, and sense of humour. Having to appropriate artifacts and practices all the time gives us some insolence: no I've not been invited, deal with it. I think of La Lupe, the Cuban singer who is said to have gone mad and disappeared on the streets of New York in the 1960s, because she used her broken *Spanglish* fertilized in the Bronx and said things like "¡¡Ahí no mas!!" "It's not what's happening, it's what gonna happening!!" and "Give me some soul now!!" all in one exuberant and loud breath.

Snap-swish-and-dish divas have truly arrived, giving Beauty Shop drama center stage, performing the read-and-snap two-step as they sashay across the movie screen, entertaining us in the castles of our homes — like court jesters, like eunuchs — with their double entendres and dead-end lusts, and above all, their relentless hilarity in the face of relentless despair. Negro faggotry is the rage! Black gay man are not.

The current interest for drag in North America will probably be short-lived. Trendy media constantly sell old ideas wrapped in crinkling cellophane. People rarely know that *Berdaches*, *Vestidas* and *Hijras* (and probably dominatrixes, masters and slaves) have been around longer than Barbie dolls and Madonna. I grew up gay in a Catholic ecology cohabited by sissies [*maricas*] and butch bullies [*machos*]. The *entendidos*, the ones "in the know," spoke to each other in feminine terms. In the privacy of our extended families we still address each other as Maria or Anita. I must have been 15 when I saw my first drag show. Long before that I had seen the impoverished prostitute drag queens, *las locas*, on an infamous street in Santiago, Chile, called *San Camilo*. (Drag and poverty often go hand in hand.) It had to be a

holy name. Long before open zoos — surely modelled after human behaviour — became popular, people flocked in caravans to watch these creatures from the shelter of their cars. *Las locas* would come around yelling and laughing to let us touch their bodies and when they realised we were *maricones* they would get angry and threaten us with their pocket knives; we were the same but called each other by different names.

The vastness of the metropolis provides loneliness, anonymity and street wisdom — none of this safe space crap — and drag queens flourish like dandelions in the cracks of the cement of despair. So what happens then when they are dragged, no pun intended, under the bleaching spotlight? I think they lose their underworld edge; they become one more Heather Locklear on display. That is why I participate cautiously in the current fad, always aware where the exit is because, in the middle of the war that is being waged against the poor, free speech and migration, anything can happen. Clutch your pearls, darling, the way Shelley Winters did in *The Poseidon Adventure*.

When my lover, Philip, began to die in 1993 I spent most of my time in Seattle where he lived with a close friend of mine. Together we discovered the healing potency of doing drag. Sounds West Coast, doesn't it? We thought of this when we were almost totally consumed by caring for Philip. Every ounce of his life expelled by his body, every bout of nausea and torrent of vomit was sweeping in its undertow a bit of our life. I had to deal with the doctors' and nurses' gringo pep talk that softly whispered: "take it easy, die quietly, don't fight." One day while I was witnessing a particularly painful hospital procedure being done on my man I thought of our incursions into S/M, tenebrous drag performances; I realized the main purpose was to delay the end, just like in doing drag. Leather folk and drag queens have had a long standing public friendship and I can understand why. If I had never seen a man crying out of pure lust I would have never been able to face Philip's pain and the puzzled look in his oceanic eyes.

My dear friend and I concocted a drag show during those long summer evenings. We rehearsed them in the basement when Philip was sedated. One day we were trying outfits and make-up when we heard Philip throwing up upstairs. We ran up in our high heels to help him. He was a bit started but smiled widely as we cleaned him and told him about our little project. Luck had it that his father showed up at the door, which was always unlocked, and froze at the sight of these deranged nurses. Soon he collected himself, turned on the denial warp, and muttered hello as if nothing had happened. Drag was starting to erode silence, denial and intolerance.

Anyway, we took our show on the road across the border, rehearsed each one of the songs at the top of our lungs on our way to Vancouver, told the astonished Canadian customs officer that we were preparing for Halloween in advance to account for all those dresses, wigs and make-up he saw in the trunk. Our drag show was a fabulous success. I recalled my Cha-Cha Queen alter ego, *Clarita Cruz-Montt*, an irresistibly pretentious name, a nom de plume (and guerre) with which I was baptised during my adolescence by my gang of flaming *locas* as I walked up and down the cruisy blocks, smoking with flair, talking fashion, dreams... and men. I lip-synched to a torch song sitting on the piano in a short Sharon Stone-eat-your-heart-out sequin dress, a garçon

bleached blond coiffure, long and heavy dangling earrings and pale Nancy Sinatra make-up. The audience adored us and they gave generously to the Latin American AIDS group fund. It was our therapy, our way of saying we are desperate and our friends' way of showing us love and support.

Drag shows have been done by people living with HIV and AIDS for quite some time now. Creating a mythic character and putting it out on display is empowering. I have friends in Montreal who get together and do a show when the going gets tough. In Cuba when HIV positive people were taken to *sanatorios* they were encouraged regularly to put on drag shows for guests. Certainly, the assumption prevails that drag is done by extreme individuals: homosexuals or super-villain movie stars like Terence Stamp and Patrick Swayze. It is not the individual who is extreme, however, it is the circumstances. Remember Klinger in M.A.S.H.? In such situations — the war, the plague, the poverty, the loneliness — we unleash the queen. Drag is mostly inflicted upon oneself. In Chile in 1994 I saw an emaciated drag queen who has had a show for over ten years perform, precariously stilted on her bone structure. AIDS wasn't going to stop her. *La que nace chicharra muere cantando*.

Lip-synching is what drag queens do. An act of conformism as lame as reciting "good to meet you," or "have a nice day." It is

ventriloquism that takes a turn for the perverse, thespianism gone mental, a spectacle supported by a dental prosthesis of snappy come-backs and one-liners, a cornucopia of references to popular culture. Doing drag revisits the excess of carnivals cluttered with masks, glitter, bells and whistles. We often gloss over indecent exposures, contain the rivers of bodily fluids, and turn off the currents of sexual energy in the name of misguided collective well-being. We magnify pity to the status of epic and heroic art — the AIDS artist, the innocent victim — and reduce the brutal mercy of doing drag and other forms of resistance and coping to *artesanía*. In its carnivalesque sense — Mardi Gras and Rio — doing drag does not strive to be creative, although many times it is; it appears a chronicle of popular culture, junky, self-referential, campy, and kitschy. Doing drag is as transforming (and less disfiguring) than the gym-redesigning of human bodies. Doing drag is like Seinfeld, a show about nothing, and yet it seems less empty than wearing red ribbons, having phone sex, and crying at candlelight vigils. Different people might give conflicting interpretations to the same act of doing drag. Be my guest. For the general population it might be funny or peculiar; for drag queens themselves it is guerrilla camouflage for survival.

PARAGRAPH

THE CANADIAN FICTION REVIEW

Timothy Flaherty, Gail Scott, Michael Ondaatje, M.C. Vasquez, Jeanette Armstrong, Nino Ricci, Mukada Sheera.
ANNOUNCING PARAGRAPH'S SHORT FICTION CONTEST
Daphne Marlett, M. Maribea Philip, Jane Urquhart, Ven Sogunskrá, Patrick Keegan, Katy Chan, GJ Adamsen, Curie Corbett, Margaret Atwood, Ruby Slipperjack, Aron Mukherjee, Robert Knutson, Diane Schwenker, Matt Cohen, Sandra Birchall, Voices: Canadian Writers of African Descent, Yvonne SASE to: King, Bank Street, Mark Collett, Lee PARAGRAPH CONTEST Awards, John Steffer, Steven Haighton, 137 Birmingham Street Jeffrey Canton, Clint Korman, Libby Stratford, Ontario Scholer, Richard Truhler, Cary Fagan, N5A 2T1

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SPORTS

by

Gary Genosko

GIRL JOCKS

"The equation," Victoria A. Brownworth explains in her contribution, "The Competitive Closet," to *Sportsdykes*, "has always been simplistic: sports are masculine; women in sports are masculine; therefore, women in sports are lesbians." Simplistic, but not simple: sports training masculinizes women's bodies, but this does not make them lesbians. The simplistic logic of the argument (and the punitive models of femininity it implies) has fuelled the dyke-baiting which has haunted women's sports for decades. Consider the LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association), which has been the target of such baiting and misogynist ranting since its inception in 1950. The LPGA continues to be stigmatized by the male sportswriting establishment because one of its founders, Babe Didrikson, had well-known affairs with other women on the tour. Today, nothing has changed, if one considers the recent example of CBS golf analyst Ben Wright, whose homophobic and misogynist rants were widely reported. Mary Jollimore, in *The Globe and Mail*, thought it sufficient to let him implicate himself with his own words, thus missing the opportunity to expose the fact that opinions like his — not to mention decisions like hers — have been replayed for some five decades. One

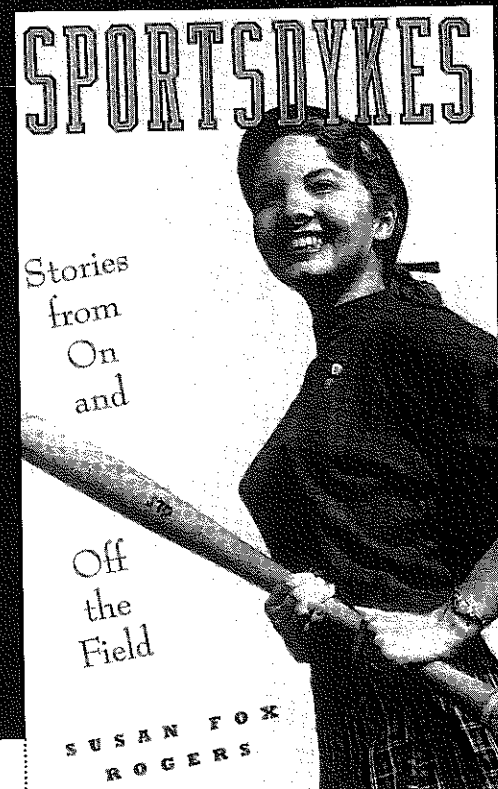
positive lesson is that an episode like this one puts into relief the significance of *Sportsdykes* in which several of the contributors directly confront the deleterious effects (on the careers of individual women and, ultimately, on everyone in the sportscape) of all kinds of sexual stereotyping of women athletes.

While one never tires of revisiting the quite different episodes of the coming out of such stars as Martina Navratilova and Billie Jean King, *Sportsdykes* maps out the personal meanings of these events for spectators and young athletes alike. An entire section is devoted to "Our

Heroines, or, Martina." It is here, too, that Joan Hilty's comic strip, "Viva Barcelona," appears, first published in *GirlJock* magazine — an important source for material — telling the story of a viewer who becomes a spike-head dur-

"Why, you might ask, would a man give up a promising literary career - there were some good notices - to become a sportswriter?"

Richard Ford, *The Sportswriter*



ing the summer Olympics. Falling in love with the US women's volleyball team, she feels she has to be discreet, which wouldn't be necessary if there were more openly gay athletes. But this would require a revolution in sports and the sooner, the better, as the contributors to *Sportsdykes* testify. □

REVENGE OF THE PIGSKIN

THE LOUISVILLE LIP

After the sterling vulgarity of Super Bowl Sunday — a spectacle designed, after all, for those denied access to the *jouissance* of capitalist elites, and an event highly productive of a wide range of personal problems, making it a boon to the caring professions as well as to advertisers — it is therapeutic to reflect on the football experiences in Don DeLillo's *End Zone*. Enigmatic running back Gary Harkness, whose strange behaviour, at other, major colleges, qualifies him, in the eyes of the coach, to be a leader at the tiny and obscure Logos College, has a passion for scenarios of nuclear destruction. These scenarios are closely related to pass and defense patterns on the gridiron, which he treats with theological concern. *End Zone* is the portrait of a footballer as a young metaphysician. One day, the kicker, Bing Jackman, relates a strange insight to Harkness — the only one to whom such an unbelievable thing could be told: "I sensed knowledge in the football. I sensed a strange power and restfulness. The football possessed awareness. The football knew what was happening. It knew. I'm sure of it." The real question, Harkness adds, is not whether the football was aware of its footballness, but whether it was aware of its awareness. Self-awareness is set against the football's objecthood in DeLillo's post-modern theory of the object. Stop joking around, Jackman says. This is not the alienation of commodity fetishism, but what makes the game seductive: the discovery of a hidden rule.

This is the only compensation there can be for Super Sunday. □

In a previous column I mentioned Elliott Gorn's lament for the lack of attention given to sports by students of cultural studies. With the publication of his edited collection, *Muhammad Ali: The People's Champ*, he comes across with the goods. Ali may have believed that Jack Johnson is the greatest fighter of all time, but for Gorn Ali is truly the greatest. It needs to be kept in mind that Miles Davis's soundtrack to William Clayton's documentary of 1970, *Jack Johnson*, is a jazz fusion juggernaut that has no equivalent in the Ali camp — at least not yet. Ali once refused an offer to play Jack Johnson in a Hollywood version of his life story.

Ali's career remains a contested text. His athletic accomplishments were political issues, sometimes provocations. His personal life was a political minefield. The explosions began when he changed his name upon converting to Islam. Let's not forget that with the murder of Malcolm X in 1965, Ali became the most visible minister of the Nation of Islam, even if Elijah Muhammad would suspend him in the late 1960s just as his boxing career was being revived. It wasn't until the mid-1970s that Ali was accepted back into the Nation's fold. Indeed, Ali was not alone, given that major black sports figures such as Lew Alcindor (basketball) and Bobby Moore (football) did the same upon converting to Islam. Ali also raised the political consciousness of black athletes during the Olympic boycott/protest of 1968 directed against the participation of South Africa. Perhaps most significantly, Ali's opposition to the Vietnam War precipitated a legal struggle with the American government

that lasted five years (1966-1971) and, for a time, cost Ali his heavyweight championship. He returned to the ring in 1970 to defeat Jerry Quarry, dubbed "the great white hope." Thus began his ascent to the title that he would recapture in 1974 with his stunningly orchestrated defeat of the younger and larger George Foreman. It was then that Ali, speaking to James Earl Jones, who played the part of Johnson in the film *The Great White Hope*, understood that his experience was parallel to that of Johnson's, and that the sixty-odd years that separated them had not changed the racism they encountered. (Johnson had to defend the heavyweight title he won in 1908 against a "white hope" contender.) Yet Ali had eschewed, for religious and political reasons, the flamboyant lifestyle that Johnson adopted in his acquisition and display, as one contributor notes, of "white prerogatives." Ali's sexism, his work for the Reagan campaign, and even his efforts to "re-gender" boxing, with claims of his own prettiness and the poetry that issued from his busy lips ("float like a butterfly, sting like a bee") — all are brought into critical focus in Gorn's book.

What these readings of Ali teach — despite the misgivings of one of the contributors — is that boxing is not removed by any representational device, whether it is by reflection or refraction, from race politics. The "race card" is not played in relation to boxing as if it was somehow separate. Boxing is a political medium and race (alongside death) is one of its constitutive features. □

Books and Articles Mentioned:

- Don DeLillo, *End Zone*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1972.
- Richard Ford, *The Sportswriter*. New York: Vintage, 1986.
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- Mary Jollimore, "Wright in trouble again over lesbian comments," *The Globe & Mail* (Dec. 4, 1995).

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"Forest Gump..." is from *Halfway to the East*, a prospective collection of linked stories on ethnicity, sexuality and Canadian identity.

BY Marusya Bociurkiw

1 a.m. in Toronto: clear skies and a chance of frost (Vancouver, cloudy with periods of rain). Zoe, in Vancouver, lies in bed with the Saturday *Globe and Mail* weather page spread out on her lap. Out of a combination of habit and need, her bedside clock-radio is set to Eastern Standard Time. She figures Sonya is probably sleeping right now, mouth set in a tight line the way it is inclined to do in sleep, like a child who has said NO a hundred times. Outside Sonya's apartment, at the Mr. Donut Shop near Bathurst and St. Clair, there

is sure to be lots of emotional action going on. The booths are probably probably full of cops and drunks ordering crullers, and watery coffee for under a dollar, and talking about the referendum results as though they had been a narrow victory for the Blue Jays. It occurs to Zoe that a major difference between eastern and western Canada is not necessarily politics or architecture, but rather, that you can't find Mr. Donut shops out here, you can't locate that particular combination of vinyl, formica, sour cigarette smoke, and an endless wall display of crullers.

Everything here is a Starbuck's franchise, all the words are in faux Italian.

Zoe wants to call Sonya, but she doesn't have a crisis big enough, or a piece of good news exciting enough to warrant that shocking ring of the phone at 2 a.m. The referendum results don't quite cut it, and besides, her exact position is unclear. She would have voted no, but she isn't exactly a Forrest Gump character, the mid-point of Canadian identity, who seems to be alive and well and living in Moose Jaw. The kind of guy who does a really good pretend Québécois accent at parties, yet couldn't pronounce a non-anglo name if his life depended on it. The type who boards the Unity Plane with a big old Maple Leaf flag he got from the Kiwanis Club, goes to Montreal for the first time in his life, gets drunk, walks around with his Saskatchewan buddies shouting in English about what a great country Canada is, then comes home and sits in front of the TV with a beer, watching the referendum results (while his wife does the dishes in the kitchen), going Yess!

Zoe wants to describe this vision to Sonya, warn her somehow. But it isn't enough of a story to interrupt the pale blue membrane of her girlfriend's dreams, that surely encircles her at this very moment. And it is no substitute for the scent of that intimate vapour of sleep, that only lovers get to breathe.

11 p.m. in Vancouver, muses Sonya absently, the time-differential a bothersome jingle she can't get out of her head. She and Eliza are sharing a joint, leaning against a makeshift bar at a King & Dufferin speakeasy: a post-referendum blow-out, organized by a gang of francophone dykes and their friends.

The huge warehouse studio is full of old televisions, piled up in corners or lying face-up in the middle of the floor. Pre-taped CBC News footage plays on them: Peter Mansbridge peering through monitors that have *oui* or *non* painted on the glass. Very retro, very Nam June Paik. Sonya knows about Nam June Paik, 60s installation artist, from her lover Zoe, who isn't here, but should be. Zoe has left town in search of work, and Sonya was laid off from her medical technician job three weeks ago. These days, she finds herself circling the city in

search of an idea, some new way to be.

She is watching a performance piece by Joyanna Silver, video-performance poet and ex-lover-four times-removed of Zoe's. Joyanna, who is anglo, and the writer Manon Bernier, who is franco-phone, are having sex on the up-ended monitors which are made up to look like a bed, with pillows and a thin sheet through which Peter Mansbridge's innocent face can be seen. After an elaborate, performative orgasm (Manon screaming, "*Oui, oui, oui...*"), Joyanna smears a *fleur de lis* on Manon's back with menstrual blood. Sonya figures the blood is faked, but can't get close enough to tell. It, too, is retro, a throwback to the early eighties when you couldn't enter an alternative gallery without seeing somebody's stained tampon hanging on the wall.

Then, another performance begins. A *corps de ballet* of women with nylon stockings over their heads runs around, delicately brandishing hand grenades. The semi-famous painter Nick Stavropoulos pirouettes through the room, a Pierre Trudeau mask on his face, and his dick dangling away, shouting in a falsetto voice, "Just watch me! Just watch me!" An all-dyke chorus line huddles around a mike, snapping their fingers and chanting: "*Poutine aux Québécois, poutine aux Québécois...*" Guys in army fatigues aim toy rifles at people in the audience, who laugh haltingly, nervously. It seems to Sonya that this performance has moved past the boundaries of anglo good taste, even with this hip crowd, and that that is what is exciting about it.

Sonya goes to get another beer. For some reason, she starts thinking about her one and only trip to Québec, when she was a kid. Her mom took her and her sister, Kat, for Expo 67. Sonya would have rather gone to Lourdes, France, but this was a good second choice. Her favourite tourist site was St. Joseph's Oratory, the big church on Mount Royal. Sonya was in her religious phase then, and found it stirring to watch old women climb the steps to the church on their bare knees, and to see the petrified bones of saints preserved in jars. Also, she remembers that whenever she tried to speak French, people would say to her that she was *anglaise*, and her

After an elaborate, performative orgasm (Manon screaming, "*Oui, oui, oui...*"), Joyanna smears a *fleur de lis* on Manon's back with menstrual blood. Sonya figures the blood is faked, but can't get close enough to tell.

ma would always go, no, no, no, we're not English. But if they weren't English what were they?

Midnight in Vancouver, and Zoe is wide awake, remembering the time she and Sonya first made love. It was raining at the time, you could smell the wax crayon aroma of wet pavement from the window. There was that late-night purple big-city sky. There was Sonya, studiously working away at Zoe's cunt, trying to make her come, but Zoe never came the first time. There was her, Zoe, flipping Sonya over, confident, tough, like a boy, then sliding her hand down Sonya's body in a sleazy kind of way, and watching expressions pass like clouds on Sonya's face. There was the way they curled against each other afterwards, ferns in a forest, listening

Zoe is wide awake,
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to the rain, the kind of perfectly comfortable fit that doesn't happen very often. There was a glass of water by the bed, a Silence Equals Death poster on the wall, a book of Ukrainian fairytales that had fallen to the floor. There was a cat who jumped on top of them when they were finished, wanting dinner, and a phone that rang over and over again in the next apartment.

Zoe pulls herself back, looks at the unfamiliar pattern of city lights outside her window. The memory is good, maybe too good: it's like a drink too early in the day, it will get you later. She looks around her room, white walls, blue sheets, a strange, low ceiling, and tries to breathe in the smell of rain mixed with what she imagines to be the very faint, comforting salt smell

of ocean, or is it just the memory of Sonya's cunt?

The atmosphere in the room is really wired, giving Sonya energy. She feels like a tourist in her own town. There is something comforting about that. Since coming out, Sonya has organized her world into a simple us and them configuration, *us* being lesbians, *them* being everyone else. Lesbians are good, lesbians are supportive of women. Lesbian relationships are better, safer.

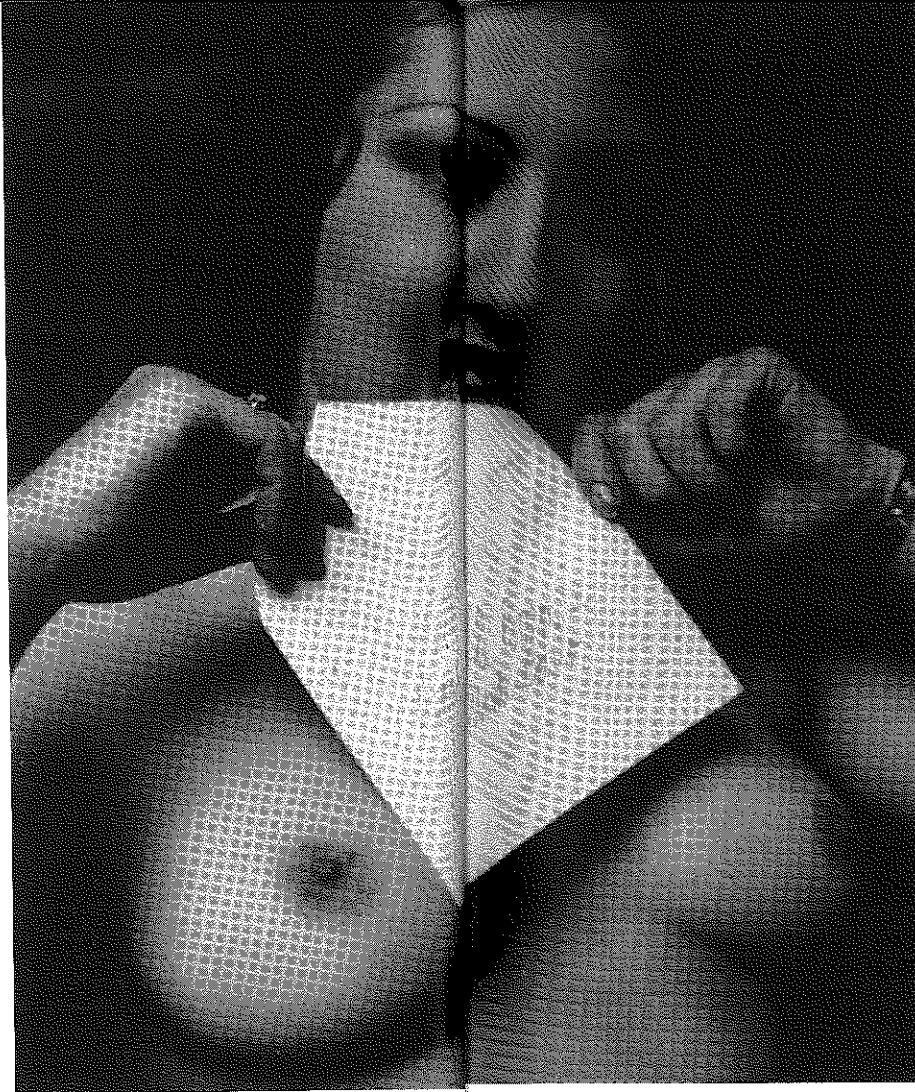
But now, looking around, she begins to doubt her own dogma. There seems to be a lot of fawning over the few gay men who have shown up, especially the semi-famous ones, like Nick. There is some kind of unspoken definition of who is hot and who isn't, so that some dykes form a kind of popular girls' circle, and other dykes hover around them. There is the exoticization of dykes of colour, with the most anglo, upper-class white dykes vying for how anti-racist they can be, since they have been brought up on power and they realize that, right now, that is where the power lies. There is a lot of tension, a lot of stress about clothes and haircuts and getting invited to parties. Maybe being so good and pure had just gotten too boring for words.

1 a.m. in Vancouver. Zoe turns on the radio, needing that crackling wall of sound. It's been wall-to-wall referendum coverage, now it's wall-to-wall cutbacks. The federal government is going to get mean, get even, get lean. Zoe listens to pollsters and government officials being interviewed by benign, soft-voiced CBC interviewers. What people are saying is horrific: less money for single mothers to feed their kids. People on welfare having to pay for their medical prescriptions. A new head tax for immigrants, and then, in some provinces, not getting any social assistance for three months, just so the immigrants can toughen up and prove they really deserve to be in Canada. All of it spoken in a low, modulated, common sense kind of voice, so that Forrest Gump can pay less taxes and occasionally give to the food bank. This is Canada. Zoe keeps thinking about that Gump-guy in Saskatchewan waving his Kiwanis Club

flag, how malleable, how hopeful, how desperate he is.

The rain stops. 1:10 a.m. clicks into place on the clock radio.

The thing is, you have to figure out something besides despair. Zoe moved to Vancouver to escape Toronto's hard edge, and to get just ahead of the tide of conservatism that's been sweeping westward, like bad weather. She's doing hack work on American feature films, moving furniture, hanging drapery, driving around town looking for 30s Depression glassware, 50s formica tables, or 70s shag rugs. She wears a beeper like all the other crew, and she keeps crazy hours, on call all the time, and talking endlessly about work on her days off, about how stupid each director is and how sexist most crews are, about how imperialist the whole thing is, with the Canadian actors playing extras and being told not to get in the way of the American stars.



But there is a kind of satisfaction in it, that she doesn't admit to. She likes working with people, each with their own specific job. She definitely likes getting paid, and she likes being part of something bigger than her own artistic imagination. She is always tired, always eating takeout, always avoiding her own film work. She wonders if she will ever make art again, and is fine with that thought. There is a whole myth about how art is this transcendent thing, that gives hope. She knows this isn't true anymore, and maybe never was. Art is just hard work, like everything else.

4 a.m. in Toronto: Sonya imagines herself on a cloud above the party, transcending all the nasty things about it, like the Blessed Virgin Mary she prayed to so fervently as a child. Someone hands her a joint, she feels a bit dizzy, her head not quite connected to her body. But it might not be the joint. It

might simply be that she has seen too much, and now needs to close down.

Sonya's sister Kat once told Sonya that she has the ability of seeing through most people and their transparent self-deceptions. "You have x-ray eyes, like Superman," Kat had said. "You better watch it, kiddo. Most people don't like that."

It is true that Sonya can see through Joyanna Silver as though she is a piece of film, with all the cloudy compromises Joyanna has made with herself to get ahead. Like dots of malignant blood cells visible in an otherwise pure bloodstream, Sonya can see Eliza's deep, self-hating need to align herself with male power, even though Eliza is a dyke and supposedly a feminist. Like a lung with clots all over it, she can see how Zoe has curtailed her ambitions, just so she can feel safe, and how moving to B.C. is a running away, which never really works. And worst of all, she can see how the lesbian community is doomed if it doesn't find some infrastructure to let it take care of itself in the long-term, because it is poverty, rather than AIDS, which is going to kill most of them, in the end.

The thing about seeing through people, the problem with it, is that it leads to existential despair. It's true that everyone has big, dirty clouds obscuring their x-rayed souls. But it suddenly occurs to Sonya that there is something very Catholic in the way she wants everyone to have a pure unblemished soul, when she thought she had left all that Catholic crap behind.

Zoe gets up and stands at her kitchen window for awhile, listening to the wind and the distant howl of foghorns. Her apartment is on a rise of land, so that from her kitchen she can see Burrard Inlet and the curved line of lights that is Lion's Gate Bridge. In the daytime, on a clear day, she is surrounded by a blue half-circle of mountains. When it's windy, the apartment shudders like something alive, and she likes that. Toronto is a city with no horizon, no natural referents. And Toronto is a place she will always be referenced to, her compass needle constantly

spinning without the CN Tower to get north and south in line.

She won't be able to push furniture around on film sets forever. Will she be able to turn to art again for hope?

The party beaks up at 5 a.m. Sonya ends up in a cab with Joyanna and Eliza. Eliza's head flops against Sonya's shoulder, while Joyanna keeps up a running commentary about the party, who said what about whom, and the technical fuck-ups that happened during the performance, including some problem with the congealing of menstrual blood. From that she segues into her upcoming retrospective in Banff, the cool and famous people she met recently in San Francisco, and a book deal in the offing with a British publisher. Sonya can hardly follow what Joyanna's talking about, but she senses that Joyanna is trying desperately to make everything happen before she gets old or before all the arts grants dry up, whichever comes first.

When they get to Queen and Spadina, Joyanna helps Sonya get Eliza safely into her apartment before she totally passes out. It's a woman thing, making sure they each got home safe.

Sonya gets back in the cab and Joyanna hands over most of the cab fare. "It's too much," says Sonya. "That's OK," says Joyanna. "It's Ontario Arts Council money. Gotta spend it before it gets repossessed." Joyanna walks off along Queen Street, her pink vinyl raincoat catching the neon. And Sonya heads north to Bathurst and St. Clair in that smooth, luxurious movement of a taxi on a nighttime road late at night. Flashes of idealized beauty and flares of paranoid fantasy alternate in her head like carnival lights. A spark of truth, either way.

When Sonya gets to her apartment the phone is ringing. She glances at her watch, calculates: 2:30 a.m. in Vancouver. Zoe, probably, getting home from a film shoot. But the ringing has stopped by the time she gets to the phone.

Photographs from the book *1000 Nudes*.



Mike MacDonald, *Fireplace* 1993

book REVIEW

BY Robyn Gillam

Diana Augaitis, Lorne Falk, Sylvie Gilbert and Mary Anne Moser, eds., *Questions of Community: Artists Audiences Coalitions*. Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for the Arts, 1995.

“The central point to coalition politics is the concept of local or community control. In cultural terms, this politics would argue for community-based cultural production where people have local control of cultural resources. Given the incursions of information as currency through free trade agreements, a living culture that has any relevance to people’s lives could go the way of the forests and the east coast fishery real fast.”

Carol Conde and Karl Beveridge, “Some Thoughts on Art and the Labour Movement”

This is a beautiful little book with its board covers, cloth spine and endpapers of handmade Japanese paper. As I open it and leaf through the tastefully composed semi-glossy pages with wide margins and carefully considered assemblages of picture and text, I reflect that it is indeed an artistic work, both in the sense that it is the work of artists, and that it represents by its form a pre-industrial, “artisanal” form of production where things are made “by hand.” But do not be too sure.

Anyone expecting a tasteful stroll through the “olde crafte” world of the artist will be disappointed and uncomfortable as the editors and authors of this collection seek to confront the post-industrial society in which they find themselves, as well as question directly the sources of funding that have sustained them in a subsistence state for the last forty years.

Questions of Community grew out of *Community*, a ten week residency programme in visual arts at the Banff Centre. It consisted of four programmes in visual arts (photography, ceramics, studio and gallery) and four community groups. These groups were Pauktuutit, representatives of the pan-Arctic Inuit Women’s Association; Second Decade: AIDSCommunityTelevision, a group of artists producing public service announcements about AIDS and HIV; Mekarn, artists exploring language and culture; and A New Generation, An Old Culture, consisting mainly of Japanese ceramic artists. Other artists in residence included M. Nourbese Philip, Carol Conde and Karl Beveridge, Chris Creighton-Kelly and Dot Tuer.

In the opening essay in the collection, “Parables of Community and Culture for a New World (Order),” Dot Tuer examines the possibilities for the existence and survival of community in the “New World Order” of universal penury and servitude to post-industrial capitalism. Tuer begins with a dictionary definition of community, which she proceeds to deconstruct with reference to how settler societies in North America have used the idea of community, first, to justify the destruction of Native societies in the name of Christianity and, second, to undermine the surviving groups in order to promote Christian values. Tuer concludes that community, a flawed and tainted term, is nevertheless appropriate to describe a North American landscape that is spiritually damaged.

The *Community* project was financed through the usual channels such as government grants and contributions from a few private foundations; also some of the

groups invited to participate were artificially constituted for the event. The contradictions inherent in this kind of situation are explored by Chris Creighton-Kelly in “Bleeding the Memory Membrane: Arts Activism and Cultural Institutions.” This incisive, disturbing piece, one of the strongest in the collection, explores the situation of a former arts activist working for government granting bodies; he anguishes over how the notion of community is stretched in trying to accommodate his own former artistic community as well as his colleagues at the office.

Using Stuart Hall’s theory of audiences/communities as either adversarial towards or accepting of political/cultural hegemony, Creighton-Kelly tries to unpack these tensions and to suggest solutions to the impasse. He concludes that artists are best served by cautiously and continuously negotiating their position with arts councils and funding bodies. He also tries to make sense of his own position as a former arts activist working within a government agency by suggesting that people who work within the system must facilitate the process of negotiation and force it to change.

Another major theoretical essay in this volume is “Who’s Listening? Artists, Audiences & Language,” by M. Nourbese Philip, reprinted from her collection, *Frontiers* (1992). Nourbese Philip examines the possibility of broadening the audience for diasporic Black culture in Canada without compromising artists’ messages and/or titillating a white, mainstream audience. Philip also stresses the need for negotiation that takes the form of alliances among various communities to create different, more aware audiences. Take for example, the Black-Feminist-Lesbian nexus; merging different sites of oppression enables a sharing of feelings and experiences that have a common base, an act that Philip sees as essential to any connection between artist and audience. The performativity of Black art forms such as Dub has influenced conventional literary forms such as poetry and made possible their embrace by the commercialized, multimedia market place. In the end, however, Philip admits the difficulty of being allowed a place to stand in the white literary landscape. Also addressing race is Aruna Srivastava’s “The Labour of Anti-Racism,” which takes the form of a letter

to one of the editors. Srivastava takes as her starting point Patricia Williams’ *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: The Diary of a Law Professor*, to assert that a non-racist sensibility is formed by working hard, by crossing boundaries, by being prepared to feel uncomfortable and by taking personal risks. Srivastava maps out the road to this conclusion through the personal rather than the theoretical.

The pieces in this volume that document personal experiences were written at different times from varying perspectives, but there runs through them a theme that, like an iron braid, binds them together into a narrative, or if you will, a novel. The novel has a plot, and it has characters such as those who make up Minquon Panchayat, the Calgary chapter of a coalition of Native Artists and Artists of Colour formed at the

The theme of racism and community is also taken up by Pauktuutit who tell the story of their persistence through creativity in the face of cultural genocide. Ruby Arngna’naaq describes how the women in her group are conceptualized by settler society as artists having an unusual aptitude, although in her culture producing art, which is to say, making things, is a normal everyday occurrence. Rhoda Karetak, speaking in Inuktitut, tells of the erasure of community through technology, relocation and education/indoctrination. Her speech is recorded in a bilingual text.

In “Wataboshi means wool cap, a plant gone to seed,” Bruce Kanabara chronicles a different search for the idea of community. The artists who were part of A New Generation, An Old Culture were either *sansai* (third generation) Japanese Canadians

“The demand of Queer activism to be recognized and not just tolerated is an important model for community politics as a whole.”

1994 Meeting of ANPAAC, just before that unfortunate organization imploded, partly, if not wholly, under the weight of the concerns that the Coalition was formed to address. Although not part of the Community Project, Minquon Panchayat resided at the Centre in 1994 and engaged in what it termed a guerrilla campaign designed to show that racism was inherent in Banff as an institution. The success of the campaign is demonstrated by the uproar that it generated at the Centre and by its documentation in a series of anonymous computer postings that make up its contribution to this volume. Srivastava fears that they may appear too anarchic to be recognized as an effective coalition, but recalls them “with love” and in relation to her own struggles in this area. Minquon Panchayat sums up its position with a quotation from Trinh Minh-ha, “If your coalition is comfortable, it’s not wide enough.”

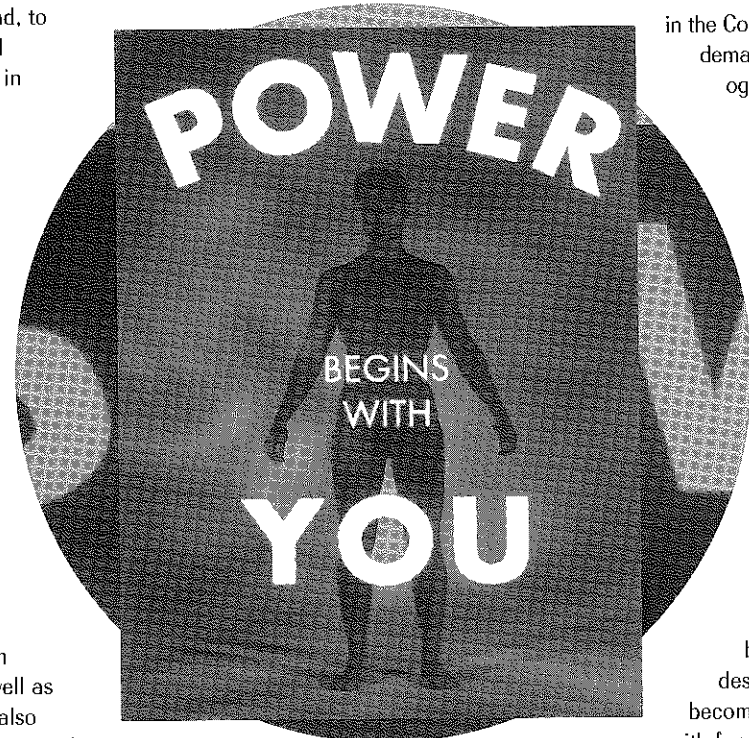


Shawna Dempsey in *Mary Medusa* a performance by Dempsey and Lorri Millan

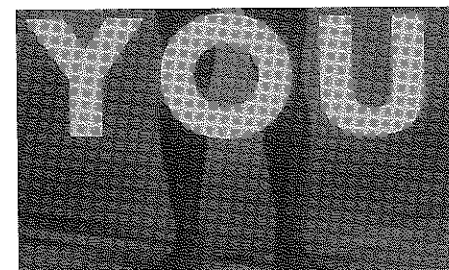
or artists who had left Japan and, to some degree, its culture behind them. What they decided to do in their residency in Banff was to establish links with the local Japanese community, which, due to outside pressures, kept a low profile. Overcoming barriers of distrust and even of language (the *sensei* were exclusively anglophone), the group was able to set up joint activities and projects (a kiln firing and photographic documentation of the community) as part of the exhibition. Kanabara's piece takes the form of a diary in which he defends the idea of community as based on socializing and friendship as well as organized political action. He also tackles the problem of how artists working within a western avant-garde framework can communicate with the more traditional members of their own community.

This problem was also faced by Henry Tsang when he and Lorraine Chan set up *Self Not Whole*, an exhibition at the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver. Tsang realized that open communication was essential in trying to address an audience that, although connected by ethnicity, was separated from the artists by cultural and language barriers. The traditionalist and populist sentiments of the people who ran the centre meant that one particular installation had to be changed and that a special effort had to be made to reach an audience that could not read the English texts. The negotiations of these difficulties encouraged Tsang and filmmaker Karin Lee to embark on an even more ambitious project, *Racy Sexy*, a multimedia arts project focussing on AIDS education and sexuality that targets young people from different cultural backgrounds. This project was situated in different community centres in the Vancouver area, but shopping malls, which should have been an ideal venue for this kind of work, refused to display the exhibit's material on the grounds that it promoted homosexuality.

Such ideological barriers were made explicit by the activities of *Second Decade*



which created public service announcements about AIDS education for television. Although none of their ads was sexually explicit, their lack of judgmental fear-mongering and of heterosexist bias condemned them to the art gallery. Even more explicit hostility greeted the artists' coalition, *Average Good Looks*, when they put up a billboard in Winnipeg targeting homophobia. The virulence of the messages to the group's 1-800 number left them in fear for their personal safety and the poster was vandalized by the Ku Klux Klan. These events led to the formation of Queer Culture Canada (QCC) which organized interventions into mainstream events like the multicultural Folkarama festival and the historical Festival du Voyageur (retooled as Festival du Voyeur). Like Minqon Panchayat's guerrilla art at Banff such activities challenge established notions of what community is. The activist politics of *Second Decade* and *Average Good Looks* continually push the boundaries of taste and comfort and refuse the instinct for compromise and harmony recognized as so constraining by some groups



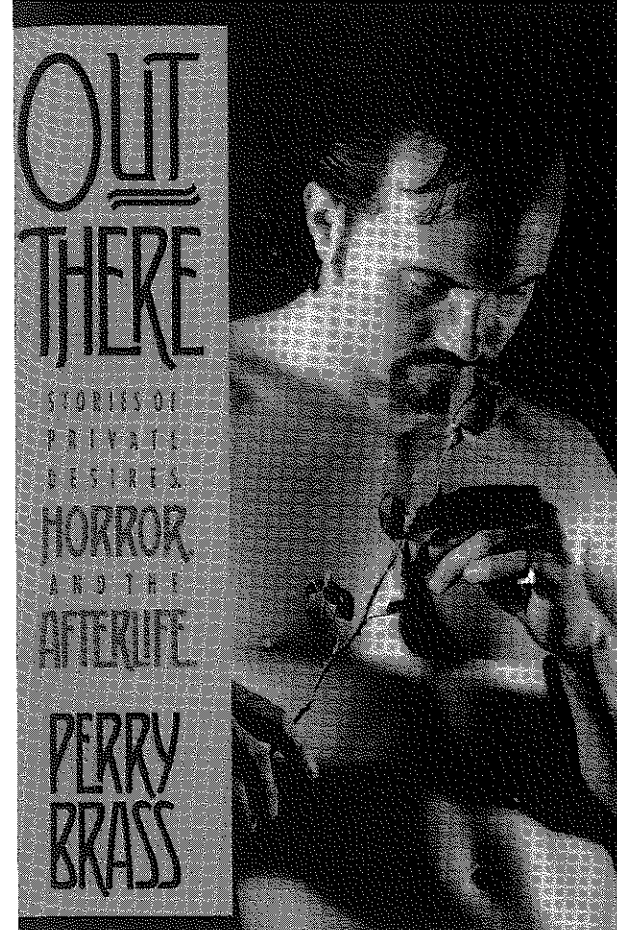
in the Community residence. The demand of Queer activism to be recognized and not just tolerated is an important model for community politics as a whole.

A fundamental problem with this collection is highlighted by Chris Creighton-Kelly's pivotal essay. While for the last forty years, much cultural activity in Canada has been government-sponsored in one way or another, one of the effects of the New World Order described by Tuer is the imminent disappearance of this source of funding.

The kinds of negotiation between artists and bureaucrats described by Kelly may soon become a thing of the past, along with funding for institutions like the Banff centre and community centres and institutions of the kind described above. As we have seen the market-driven and ideologically inflexible commercial media are not willing to give scope to artists with messages that challenge normative notions of morality or ideology.

In an era of increasing corporate influence over culture and social life, "community" is sometimes an abused term. As noted in the contribution by Karl Beveridge and Carole Conde, pulp and paper industries might allow workers to participate in staged-managed community consultations, but they make sure that their voices are strategically drowned out.

What we see in these essays is a shift from theory to personal experience, as exemplified in the inset coloured decal (above). This decal depicts a recognizably male, but at the same time, rather androgynous figure that is partly in shadow but illuminated from the side and from behind by many colours. This figure, which seems to symbolize a juxtaposition of race, sexuality and gender, is labeled "Power Begins With You." The editors remind us that all coalitions and communities are made up of particular people and invite us to take part and to act for change, starting with the display of the decal, a small piece of artistic activism.



fiction

Perry Brass, *Out There: Stories of Private Desires, Horror, and the After-Life*. Bronx, New York: Belhue Press, 1994.

Brassy Perry Brass: "He had smoked Gaulois in Paris and *kief* in Paul Bowles' Tangier casbahs. He had been an *enfant terrible* in New York's shark-infested advertising world. Finally... he discovered gay liberation." And wrote poetry, essays, science fiction and short stories, some of which are collected in *Out There*. Brass sounds like a guy in a hurry. His stories read like he writes in a hurry — but the love, mystery, violence and fantasy in *Out There* are not restricted in a "one note" way. "Alligator Men," for instance, has Rob, a typical New Yorker, rebuffed by his boyfriend while Rob is on business in Orlando. He tries to hustle a bartender at his hotel, is drugged by the guy who then sells him to a couple of guys who in turn sell him to some four-toed swamp people. All in a few pages — and a long way from *Remembrance of Things Past*. For a while Rob misses things past (the *Times*, urban times). The four-toed present, though, gets to be quite alluring. Sort of. Wild eh? The other stories, a little less rushed, are only slightly less compelling. They are as the *San Francisco Bay Times* said of another of Brass's works, "a shot of adrenaline to the creative centers of the brain."

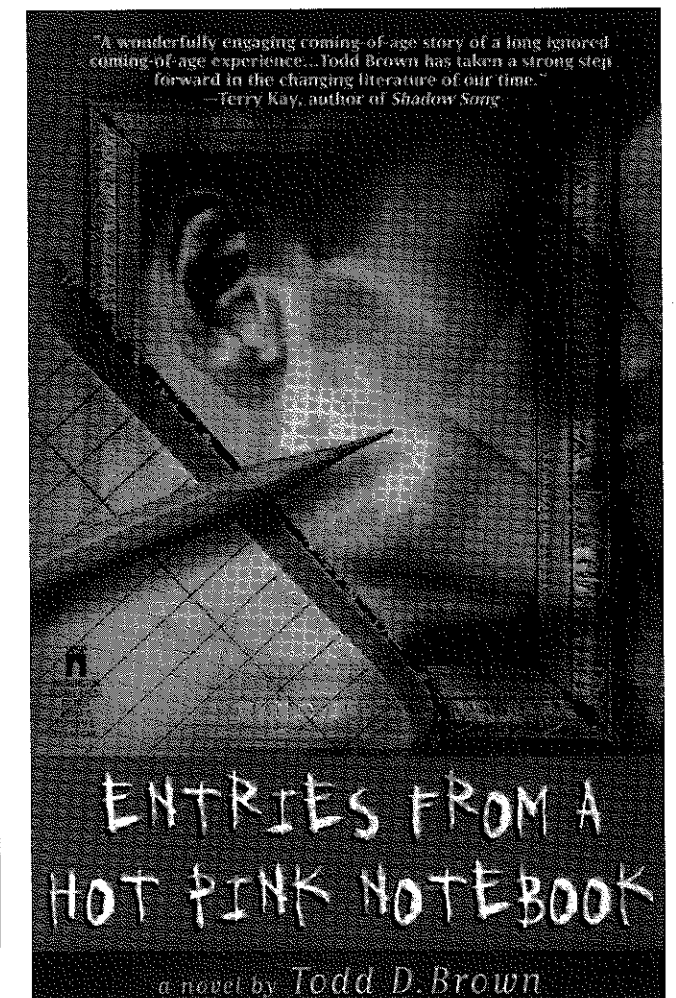
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B/L List

Todd D. Brown, *Entries From a Hot Pink Notebook*. N.Y.: Washington Square Press, 1995.

High school crushes, dysfunctional parents, sports 'n homework 'n proms: just another in a long line of "life sucks/life's cool" novels about growing up. What's different, of course, is that Ben likes boys. Todd D. Brown does for young, males what Rita Mae Brown does for young females — gives 'em models other than the asexual ergo heteronormative pair of Chip Hilton and Nancy Drew. Written in a lukewarm pink style in a hot pink notebook, *Entries*, possibly because it records few "entries," may be what some liberal parents should give their kids if the latter wanna read pulp instead of watch *Pulp Fiction*. Done as a diary covering Ben's first year of high school *Entries* provides an easy read. The author bio reveals that Brown studied at NYU Film School and "developed a special interest in...screenwriting." *Entries*, indeed, would be right for Hollywood if that film city weren't pushing Damme family values. Ben and Aaron playing with each other's penis: with petroleum jelly on the camera lens and Andre Previn as background music, you'd be — as it were — eating out of the director's hand.

/S.F.



William Gass, *The Tunnel*. New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

On his reason for writing Gass once commented, "I want to rise so high that when I shit I won't miss anybody." Spleen oozes out of *The Tunnel* the way waste spills out of a sewer after a storm. Bile and metaphor — and metaphors about bile: these are the major components of a work twenty years in the making.

Gass, once the feature writer about fiction and theory of fiction for *The New York Review of Books*, produces metaphors as blithely as he breathes. Disappointment is written elegantly and innovatively: "I felt the smile I'd penciled in above my chin fade like the line beneath the last rub of an eraser." If as homeostatic process breathing is effortless, it is laboured when the world is engaged. Only the narrator's farts are expelled happily: "As if my buttocks did my breathing!"

Otherwise, Gass's wily protagonist, also named Willie, a.k.a. the eminent Professor Kohler, carps at length about everything and everyone: colleagues, family, students (with the exception of those who have affairs with him). Wishing, as Gass wrote on another occasion, for another cunt from which he'd come, Willie (Kohler) decants rage, most mercilessly, onto his alcoholic mother. Nonetheless, he saves some vituperative performances for a wife whose breasts are sagging in consonance with the belly bulging over Willie's wee weenie.

This personal history, featuring "my life in a chair," takes place, for the most part, alongside the Wabash River in Indiana. It gains a greater resonance, though, from Kohler's employment as a professor of history — area of specialization, Nazi Germany. This allows Gass to weave together history and History, tunnels winding under both, contrarily promising both escape and destabilization.

Kohler's static odyssey is situated, the references are loaded if unspecific, at Purdue University, where Gass taught and I studied. With his disdain for "new criticism" (the transparent reading of texts) and his excessive, bravura prose, Gass, twenty-five years ago, helped shape my aesthetic. He was the one who defined metafiction (fiction which articulates theory of fiction) and made it easy for many of us to move towards a deconstructive or postmodern engagement with literature. If hyperthyroid *Gravity's Rainbow* is pomo's and metafiction's apogee, then hyperthyroid *The Tunnel* is its death knell. The pyrotechnics of Gass's novel are the stuff of an earlier *academic* revolution against modernist meanings. Now, the prose that is prominent in tunnels is the graffiti in subways, the codes of other (sub-)cultures.

It shouldn't be forgotten, though, that Gass's flamboyance and insight were part of, as the historian Kohler might have it, the avant-garde's (continual) putsch. /S.F.

non-fiction

David Morley & Kuan-Hsing Chen (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

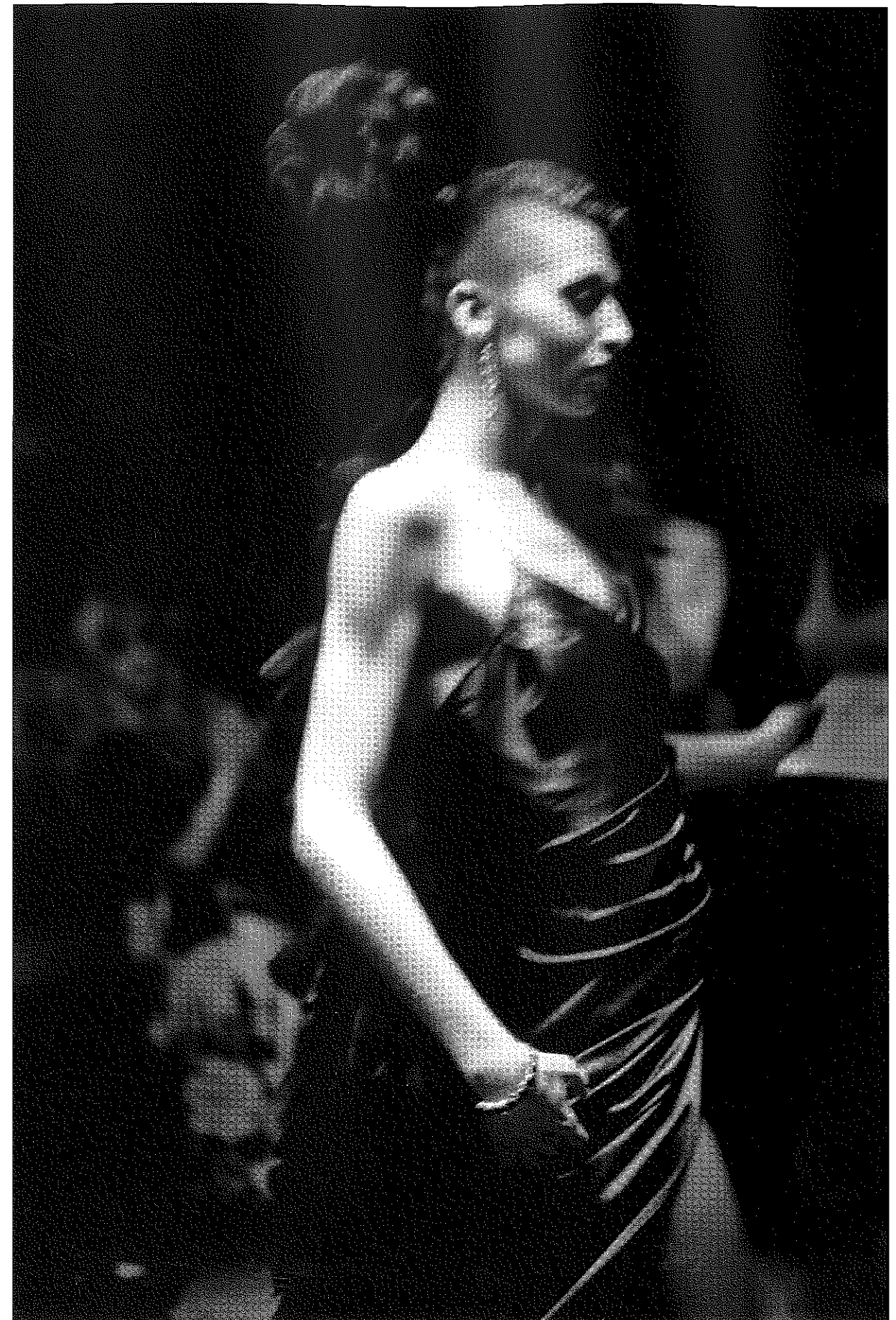
This one should sell like hotcakes. First, there's Stuart on the cover, nattily dressed in a still from Isaac Julien's *The Attendant*, exhorting the reader on in his sartorial splendour. Second, this collection doesn't disappoint: made up of articles by Hall and many of the people he has worked closely with over the years, this book tracks the brief history of cultural studies through Hall's work and demonstrates the dynamic interplay of Hall's sometimes path-breaking work with the important contributions made by others who have pushed Hall to revise and develop his own ideas. This volume takes off from the well-known special issue of the *Journal of Communication Inquiry* (1986), vol. 10 no. 3, edited by Chen, but pushes the envelope far beyond those modest beginnings. /M.H.

Neil Larsen, *Reading North by South: On Latin American Literature, Culture and Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

When Northern intellectuals of European descent turn en masse to postcolonialism, is it a "fad," a shift of perspective which allows the humanities to regenerate themselves, or is it a serious engagement with other literatures and, more importantly, other social, historical, cultural and theoretical matrices? Both an intellectual autobiography and an important critique of literary and cultural politics, Larsen's *Reading North by South* is an antidote to prevalent "readings" of the South by Northern intellectuals. Larsen asserts that "much of what the North reads and writes of the South... continues to derive its authority from [the] wellspring of colonial 'common sense.'" Commenting on the reception of the Latin American literary "boom" in particular, Larsen argues that Northern intellectuals were willing "to recognize the legitimacy of southern texts but only insofar as this did not require the reader to question the legitimacy... of the high modernist canon itself." Whether Larsen has succeeded in avoiding this trap, or whether he has simply provided a legitimating narrative for his own romp through Latin American perspectives on literature, postmodernism and cultural studies is a question left to the reader. /M.H.

Reviews by Stanley Fogel and Michael Hoehsmann

B/L List



NAN GOLDIN

Marlene modeling in the Beauty Parade, Boston, 1972