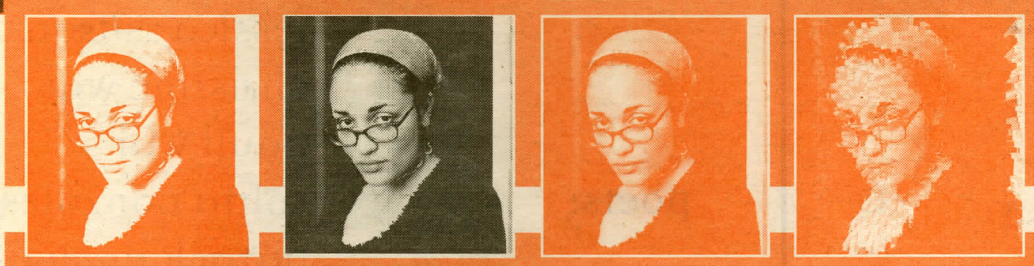


Viva la Difference

An Inter-racial, Inter-cultural Magazine

volume 1, no. 1

Spring 2000



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Race as a Rearview Mirror

Dear Reader,

Race is made into both too much and too little of an issue.

Too much because we are loudly racialized into icons of political constituencies by Asian-, African-, Latino-American social action blocks. In the smaller sense too, we are quietly ethnicized into carriers of homogenous ethnic identities. In that way, racial and ethnic boundaries are set up to ensure the safe survival—in the form of collective political power and distinct cultural character—of a people.

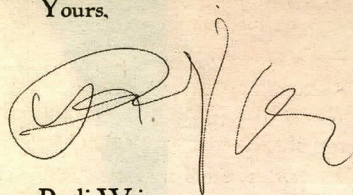
Too little because, we have too many wee preoccupations with whether we belong or not, whether we are "in" or "out" of a group. In being conscious like this, we lose precious sensitivity to the elusive quality of racial identity. We lose touch with the peculiar places in us that give individuality to our racial identities. As something private and unique, racial identity should vary from individual to individual, not just from group to group. Because racial identity is so central to self-identity. And because that ungraspable self-identity is built on a dual combination of our innate personality and our environment. Essentially, self-identity is never simple—it is a consistent core combined with a shifting composite of social factors. These social elements, in turn, are embedded in a cultural matrix of family, religious, socio-economic, geographical spheres of influence. There we have it. The degree of variance between racial identities has to do with the degree of variance between the social experiences an individual passes through. Well, the more our own individual experiences differ, the wider our racial identity diverges. To understand a person's racial identity, we should contemplate on the specific experiences—historically and personally—the individual emerges from. We can then find out how both incredibly easy and insurmountably hard it is sometimes to relate to each other's racial backgrounds. In other words, we should look into the particular, before we either write off or take for granted those points of connection we have with people of a different race or ethnicity.

Generally speaking, we talk about race and culture, and rarely race versus culture. But our multicultural experiences tell us that the race we were born with does not determine the culture we grow up with. To some extent then, we all agree that we were not born into any one race or ethnicity that makes us automatically be down with any one culture. Actually, an amalgam of cultural elements—beyond an accident of birth or a straw of individual preference—sets us up to identify with one racial/ethnic group over another. Nothing defines the case for us, certainly not birth. We know we had to have gone through some kind of acculturation process. We are conditioned by three levels (out of many) of cultural forces that gently nudge us over to a racial or ethnic group. And depending on which level is on top, we have three scenarios: we identify, or think we identify, or choose to identify with one culture

and not the next. (1) We do identify: We grew up in a certain cultural environment, so we relate better to those who were raised in a similar milieu. (2) We are pushed to identify: Based on our physical appearance, we are expected to belong to a certain group—"those Asians", or "those Blacks"—so we settle for it. If we were to go against these expectations under other people's eye, we would have to deal with the added dimension of self-consciousness. (3) We make ourselves identify: Sadly, since society places higher value on those who ascribe to the norms of the culture in power, we talk-think-act like the dominant culture. By de-emphasizing certain aspects of minority culture that are different from the majority culture, we establish common grounds with the majority culture, earning affirmation and respect for ourselves. In doing so, we prove to others and to ourselves that we are no different from them, so please, they can accept us now.

These psychological tendencies drive our impulses to either assimilate, retreat, or simply become torn and confused. But in spite of this dynamic interplay, we are still fixated on racial and ethnic labels. They fix us in our places, blunting our perceptiveness towards the interesting nuances, in our cultural identities, that wash around inside us. These nuances are not pre-determined. Perpetually changing, they develop out of both passive absorption and active understanding of the cultural influences around us. The latter calls for the time and energy of concerted effort. Prepare yourself in this respect when you open the premiere issue of this publication. Get out of that little racial box and rise to the occasion.

Yours,



Pauli Wai
Editor-in-Chief



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on the cover ...

Author, Zadie Smith, pictured on the cover, is an English writer whose thick and dream-like prose gently satirizes issues of migration and cultural identity. The 23-year-old's first novel, "White Teeth," will be published next month and has already won rave reviews from the likes of Salman Rushdie.

Smith, the daughter of an older English father and Jamaican mother, studied literature at King's College, Cambridge, the university where E.M. Forster studied. We chose Smith for our cover because she represents the new cultural experiences our magazine wishes to examine. Drawing equally from established traditions, her mixed heritage, and her multi-ethnic identity, she is a young writer trying to make sense of our generation, our world, both constantly renewing itself. We can only hope to do the same.

Photo Courtesies

A. Magazine - pg 14
ARTnews Magazine - pgs 8, 9
Artlink Magazine - pgs 8, 9
Blaze Magazine - pgs 3, 11
Colorlines Magazine - pg 14
I.D. Magazine - pgs 8, 9
National Geographic - pg 6
The New York Times - pg 14
The New Yorker - pgs 1, 8, 9

New Hip-hop Rooted in Afro-Urban Culture

"In the beginning was the word
and the word was made flesh,"

— KRS-One

By MINH-HUYEN NGUYEN

And flesh it was made indeed. It was the awakening of an old Africanist practice. The evocation of *Nommo* catches the eye of business entrepreneurs, who then catapults the blossoming culture of a marginalized people into the money hungry, shark infested ocean of American capitalism. In over 25 years, hip-hop has gone from rags to riches under the scrutinizing eye of the mass media. Hip-hop culture developed because resources and opportunities were denied to urban youth growing up in the ghetto. But nowadays, the portrayal of hip hop by the mainstream media is the representation of the materialistic aspects of a culture that has little connection to the socioeconomic problems that had once been an integral part of the culture. Nevertheless, though the capitalistic market has commercial-

ized hip-hop into a profitable commodity, an anti-thetical form of hip-hop surfaces. The emergence of "independent" or "underground" hip-hop into the public arena not only challenges the capitalistic regime, but also encourages a closer examination of the social and economic policies that perpetually oppress and control marginalized urban communities.



Dead Prez's "revolutionary" album *Let's Get Free*

Firmly rooted in the streets of South Bronx, New York, hip-hop culture flourished out of the impoverished neighborhoods that housed thousands of African Americans as well as Latinos. Geniuses like Grandmaster Flash, Afrika Bambaataa, Kool Herc, Crazy Legs, Mr. Wiggles, Devious Doze, and Lady Pink were at the forefront of the hip-hop scene at the stage of its inception. Hip-hop then consisted of four main components: rapping, deejaying, breakdancing, and graffiti art. Using menial resources, whether they be homemade mixers or flattened pieces of cardboard, hip-hop's founders made lemonade out of lemons. Reinventing art, music, dance, and speech, hip-hop offered its own modes of self-expression. Rapping, deejaying, breakdancing, and graffiti art all incorporated cultural aspects of the Africanist tradition of *Nommo*.

As the physical transformation of the word into verbal movement, *Nommo*¹ ties hip-hop culture to its African roots. Hip-hop's hybrid framework rejects European-American conventions of artistic expression. American consumers knew how to play a record on a turntable but the hip-hop DJ would take it to a whole different level. Deejaying involves the manipulation of recorded sounds on two turntables. Grandmaster Flash, one of the old school DJs, used his technical skill in order to create a switch that would allow him to sample a record while listening to the other one simultaneously. Breakdancing breaks down the stylized movements of upper-class dance culture such as ballet and ballroom dance. Instead, breakdancers (known as b-boys and b-girls) would create a circle formation, akin to that of ancient African rituals, and "[outdo] one another with out-

rageous physical contortions, spins and back flips, wedded to a fluid, syncopated, circling body rock done close to the ground."² Rapping or emceeing issues a call and response dialogue that reflected its roots in the ancient chants among African tribes.³ Rap quickly gained popularity among youth because it "was a verbal skill that could be practiced and honed to perfection at al-

most anytime."⁴ Unlike its European-American counterpart, the articulation of voice is not limited to those who could train their voices to hit certain notes. Tricia Rose breaks down hip-hop music to be, "at once deconstructive (in that they actually take apart recorded musical compositions and recuperative), because they recontextualize these elements creating new meanings for cultural sounds that have been relegated to commercial wastebins."⁵

Graffiti art, a part of the hip-hop culture, is the true post modernist form of visual expression. Already rebellious in nature, graffiti artists literally hit the streets, claiming public walls and fences as their canvases. Once required as tools of European-American art, canvases, tube paints, and brushes are replaced by affordable



Hip-hop activist and musician Dead Prez performs at a "No on Proposition 21" Rally in Oakland, on February 21, 2000.

photos by Patrick Jimenez

spray paint cans. The same edging-on dialogue characteristic of the other elements of hip-hop is also practiced among graffiti artists, encouraging each other to go further and on more surfaces. Hip-hop redefined the conventions of dominant cultural practices.

With its Africanist characteristics, the original hip-hop form was an artistic outlet for minority youth growing up in the ghetto. Hip-hop culture grew as a response of a generation of youth growing up to "a context of disintegration of traditional social structures and norms, of the diminishing regulatory function of politics and growing fears of economic, environmental, humanitarian and regional crises."⁶ Hip hop offered an alternative lifestyle to victims of a capitalistic society that kept

poor minorities at the lowest prong of the socioeconomic ladder. Hip-hop crews, the gangs making their own noise, vied for the title of dopest emcee, DJ, b-boy/girl, or graffiti artist. "The driving force behind all these activities was people's desire to be seen and heard."⁷ The battles that broke out were with words, body movements, sounds, or spray paint. After all was said and done, crews remained unified by their one common bond: hip-hop. The hip-hop community thrived on a shared, collective experience that enacted a cultural revolution that had never existed before.

Jump to the year 2000, hip-hop has become a commodified, mass produced, made-to-sell product that is oftentimes far removed from the nature of its origins. Hip-hop's history has been displaced in the current commercialism of its capitalist market-

place. Negating the dj, breakdance, and graffiti elements of hip-hop, because they cannot be commodified profitably in the capitalistic market, entertainment conglomerates have instead chosen hip-hop's most lucrative component: rap music. Hip-hop journalist, William Upski Wimsatt, points out: Rap music's identity crisis is a reflection of our individual identity crisis. To ask what rap stands for is to ask ourselves what we stand for. And if rap stands for nothing then it has no protection against the forces that are infiltrating it and making it theirs. As a mere reflection of the larger society, it falls easy to prey to society's problems. The failure of rap to define itself according to its own standards is the central crisis of rap today.⁸

Mainstream media has altered rap in such a way as that renders it no longer viable as a source of community empowerment. The marketing tactics that have been employed by the music industry purposely avoid the mention of problems that still exist in American society. Instead, what is presented are images

of material wealth. The corporate monster neglects to tell the whole story, avoiding the seedier side of the music business that transgresses the people's community. Entertainment industries persuade consumers to buy into the individualistic belief that personal success has more priority over community upliftment. Since the very

"When rap lyrics attack the dominant group, they are discredited through censorship. However, when black on black crime is discussed...it is seen as the lesser evil."

continued on page 11

The Sound and Fury Outside and Inside Cal Student

Days of being wrapped in anti-American hate protests in Beijing, China

By SCOTT HONEY

MAY 8, 1999

While I was sitting on the lawn of the foreign student dormitories, I saw two large buses full of students pass by. When I asked a friend what the buses were all about, he told me: A US plane bombed the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia. These buses were probably taking to protest in front of the American embassy downtown.

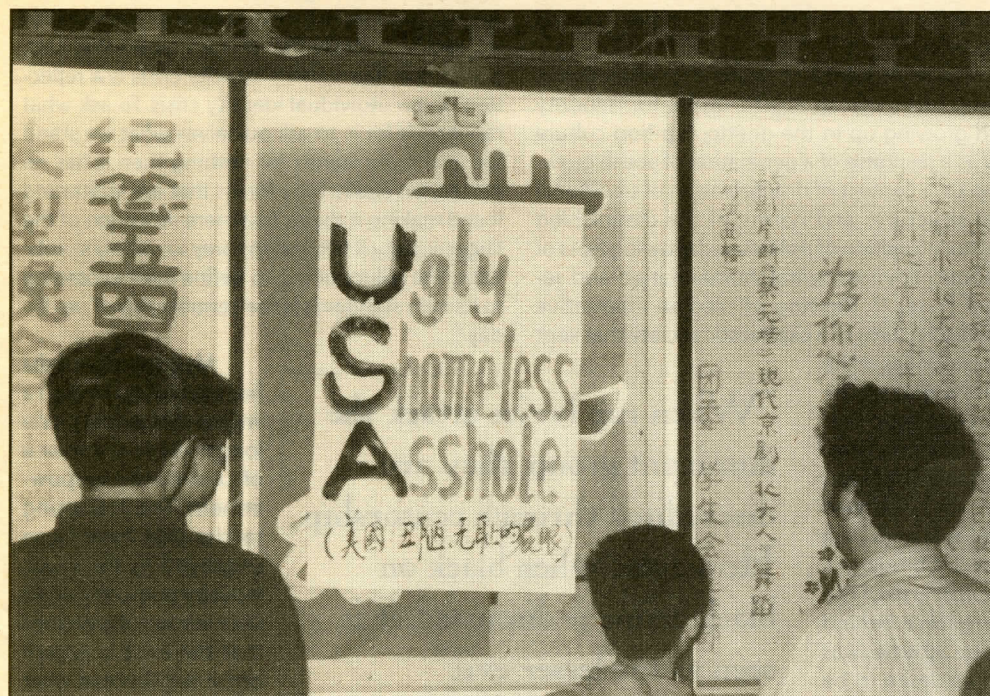
Wanting to know more, I went to Sanjiaodi, a large triangular patch of billboards that made up the "speech zone" on campus. It was almost nighttime, but there were lots of students milling around – both reading and posting posters, and forming big groups to talk. There I saw two types of posters: simple student made posters, with large brush strokes on butcher paper or with open letters written in hurried script; and complex official ones, usually the front page of a newspaper

didn't know if he was afraid that I'd look like a reporter and get people in trouble, or if he was worried about my personal safety, or if he was embarrassed that I had to see so much hate directed against my home country.

Standing on benches, I saw students carrying a hand-made banner march out of the South gate of the university. In tacit approval, the usually half-closed and guarded university gates were flung open, allowing students to flow out onto the streets.

The crowd marched through the busy streets of the university district, singing the Chinese national anthem and shouting "Down with American imperialism!" and "Chinese people – rise up!" while groups would run ahead to pedestrian overpasses and cheer the crowd on as they passed underneath.

I kept to the side as the students marched –



designed by computer. The red poster that really stood out showed pictures of the bombed out building and the people who died during the bombing. This particular poster was special – during the days ahead, when it would be covered by other posters, they were torn off to keep the original visible.

I bumped into a Chinese friend, and he told me to stay away and not talk to Chinese people. I

still unsure of the facts and not wanting to attract attention in protesting. As the only "American" (read: white) protester, I would've been asking for attention.

Being there, hearing the students scream, seeing the banners waving – it was intoxicating. I felt like I was watching history take place, and that anything, anything, could happen. I wanted to witness everything that could happen.



Students forming discussion circles at "free" speech zone Sanjiaodi.

all photos by Scott Honey

I was amazed at how well the marchers were received – the police were out to direct traffic around them, and there were video cameras filming the students protesting. Most surprising, however, was the sudden appearance of 9 big buses (larger than a BART car, able to fit around 100 people) that parked in a row on the Third Ring Road. After walking for 2 hours, the students were more than happy to take a bus the rest of the way.

Since Adam and I are both "Euro-Americans", getting on the buses would have taken some explaining. Even if we were able to get on, we had no idea what was happening at the embassy, and we didn't want to be dropped off in a mob of people shouting "blood for blood!"

At all of the major intersections there were groups of policemen sitting in cars; the closer we got to the embassy, the more policemen and cars. I expected to be turned back or escorted home at every intersection, and my mind was spinning with clever schemes and excuses to weasel our way out of trouble, but we were never once so much as questioned by anybody.

MAY 9, 1999

After waking, I heard that there was a mini-protest outside of the foreign dorms earlier in the day, and that a New China News Agency video team was roaming the hallways, looking for foreign faces to interview for TV news. Ironically, after interviewing one of my friends, a reporter asked her if she'd like to be her language exchange partner.

When we first got back to the speech zone, Sanjiaodi, people were going crazy: one guy was talking about how far Chinese missiles hit in the American heartland; some economics professor from People's University was talking about how

the US deliberately keeps China from developing because it knows Chinese people are very smart, and will overtake the US; and several people were supplying historical and scientific reasons why "Anglo-Saxon are barbaric."

As we drifted to saner discussions, we started talking with the protesters. I kept stressing that people should stop saying "Americans think ... ()" when they should be saying "the American government thinks..."

"When people force their opinion on you, it's one thing, but when people tell you what you're supposed to be thinking, it's ridiculous."

It may seem like a fine line, but it's unbelievably frustrating when everybody around you is pointing their finger at you and telling you what "Americans think" when you don't think like that, and you don't know anyone who thinks like that. When people force their opinion on you, it's one thing, but when people tell you what you're supposed to be thinking, it's ridiculous.

While talking, we kept trying for a calm dialogue, even as one student told my friend forcefully, "You're not an American. If you were



Paint thrown on U.S. Embassy in Beijing by angry protesters.

an American then you wouldn't dare come out and talk to us like this."

The Chinese view on the embassy bombing was straightforward: the US did it on purpose. It was a violation of Chinese sovereignty. The explanations and motives that they came up with to support this varied considerably, but these two facts were inviolable. In the newspapers, this was an unquestionable assumption, and the students do a good job of following the newspaper line. The newspapers were filled with reports on the bombing and stories glorifying the student protests, but none mentioned the American apology so far.

There were a lot of hard looks and reporters to dodge, the only things that scared me. A group of protesters were shouting "Down with American Imperialism!" when they caught sight of me. The leader called out "Down with that blonde guy over there!" and everybody echoed.

The protesters chuckled to themselves afterwards, and we both realized that they were, well, just enjoying themselves.

The American embassy was much more serious. The building itself was a mess, the flag stained by ink, hung limply, the door open, windows broken, walls stained, and lots of bottles and rocks on the ground. Although I support flag burning, seeing the flag there despite the so-called "bombs bursting in air" touched something deep inside of me. Remembering that the rights to free expression and assembly – to do what the students were doing – is an American tradition gave me perspective on the Chinese protests.

MAY 10, 1999

Being a foreigner in Beijing no longer had the advantages that it used to. A couple of days ago a cab wouldn't take me because of my NATO-

white face, and one of the internet cafes was not letting foreigners use the computers unless they show their passports and sign a declaration that the US-led NATO forces were evil.

The UC Study Center was expected to tell us that we could withdraw without penalty, and I knew several people that were considering it. People were getting spooked – last night while I was away there were tearful phone conversations with parents back in the US, and a big group of Americans worrying together.

Perhaps they were right – after hearing about the western reporters that got assaulted near the embassy, I decided to stay on campus for the day.

That night, I went down to Sanjiaodi to listen to

the students talk. Things were heated but organized. A older student had a bullhorn, and he was using it to stop the discussion about "being willing to die for your country"; he asked everybody to sit on the ground instead of crowding. Sheets of newspaper to sit on were passed around, and the leader moderated the discussion. When someone brought up the Tiananmen Square incident, the response was, "We must have a united front against the outside, and not start discussing China's internal problems. We can talk about those later." As the discussion turned more into cheerleading, one student said, "America is just trying to take advantage of our internal situation, but remember, America's internal problems are even worse!"

When the discussion broke up, I picked up my sheet of newspaper and placed it in my pocket. As I left I heard a commotion behind me, and I stopped for a second to listen. One of the guys near me had seen me pick up my trash while the majority of the Chinese students had left their newspapers behind. He made a disparaging comment about his fellow students and their manners, and then said, "Look at that American that was sitting over there; he picked up his trash when he left."

Since America, and by extension, Americans, were absolutely evil, the students around him got upset. "It's not that what you said is wrong, it's just the way you said it."

"He's right, though, we do need to study the good things from foreigners."

I left before people noticed me.

I liked to get as close as possible to the students without being an actual participant, but this wasn't always possible. Once at Sanjiaodi, a Chinese classmate of mine asked my opinion, and before I got done with a few sentences, I was surrounded by students talking at me, 4 rows deep.

MAY 12, 1999

On today's trip to the embassy, things were under strict control. The embassy block was completely sealed, with the restricted zone extending a city block in all directions. On campus

things have died down too, with occasional advertisements for English schools and GRE prep classes papered over the protest signs, and with crowds no longer meeting at Sanjiaodi.

A couple of nights ago when I was at an Internet cafe reading the news, one of the workers sat down next to me and asked me if we could talk. He had seen me at Sanjiaodi, and he understood why I walked away from a crowd that was pressuring me to talk. But now that it was 4:00am and there was only the two of us, he wanted his chance to talk.

He had just come back from the US embassy, where he had cut a large X into his forearm in a "blood for blood" protest. After talking for a little while, he kept asking why America would want to hurt China.

On the brink of tears, he looked at me and said, "My country; it is not less than your country."



Handmade sacrifice altar for the three who died in the Chinese embassy bombed by the U.S.

what should we do?

Dear fellow PKU protesters and marchers, I honor you!
Dear hot-blooded fellow PKU students, I honor you!
Dear fellow PKU students filled with love for your country and people, I honor you!

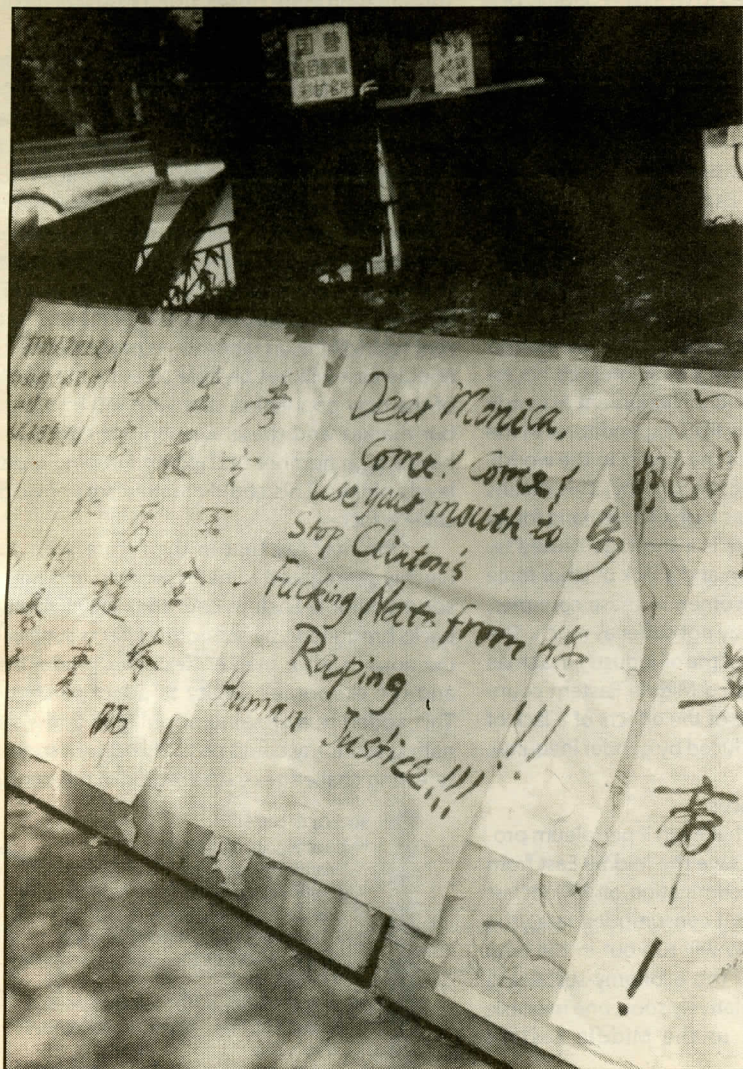
BUT, "Down with American Imperialism!" "Long Live the Chinese People!" -- these slogans do not measure up to our level of intellect and rationality. We are stepping into the 21st century, is this all we can do? Repeating the tragic outcries of pain of our forefathers eighty years ago? No, we are the revolutionary Peking University! We are the progressive Peking University! Eighty years ago, we marched and threw stones! Are we capable of only doing that much? Aren't we going to reflect and draw on the experience and lessons of eighty years of China-US relations?

Dear fellow countrymen, is shouting in protest the way to show the strength and intellect of our PKU tradition? Even with the strength and intellect on our side, why is that we still let ourselves go, screaming on top of our lungs: "Fuck you, America!"

After our indignation, pain, passion has subsided, what do we propose to do?

I bid you: all those who love your nation. Demonstrate your intellect, demonstrate your rationality, demonstrate your critical thinking skills, and ask ourselves: What should we do to?

A peking university graduate student
5.9.99



Economics, Demographics, and women

How the Three Play Out to Harden Gender Differences in Middle-Eastern Countries

BY ERICA R. FAGNAN

Given the situation with OPEC in recent history, the Middle East has come into the spotlight in an increasing number of news stories. Many of these features focus on skyrocketing oil prices, but the remainder cover a number of issues including cultural differences between the Western world and the Middle East (Johnson). Among these is that of women's status in such countries. Much of the current discourse indicates that the women's situation in the Middle East is an issue of human rights concern. As such, various questions come up in the course of this debate, including inquiries as to what the long-term effects of such a condition would be.

With the harsh circumstances faced by women in the Middle East, one may wish to see how other indicators are affected, such as labor participation rates among women. In turn, it may be useful to see how this is correlated with population growth and dynamics (Johnson). This article aims to analyze some of the demographic data that has been produced on Middle Eastern countries in order to construct some possible insights into these matters.

I. Labor Participation Rates

The average portion of the labor force that is female in the world is around 38.14%. The average for the Middle East is about 26% (www.worldbank.org). This is significantly below

"One would think that, given the extremely strict rules regarding gender roles in the Middle East, it would suffer from inefficiencies that would lead to weaker economic performance. In looking strictly at the economic data, this does not seem to be the case."

the mean, and it is the lowest female labor force percentage for any group in the world, exceeding even the very poorest regions. This can be attributed to many interpretations of the Islamic Law, which says that women cannot work or cannot leave the home and so forth (Johnson).

The women who do work are concentrated in agriculture (mostly field work), industry and services respectively. Of the women who have jobs, 55% work in agriculture (farming), 11% work in industry (manufacturing and construction), and 29% work in services (anything from wholesale and retail trade to community and social services). (www.worldbank.org) The percentage working in agriculture is similar to Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia, in that it makes up the bulk of the women participating in the labor force.

These low percentages may be linked to low education and literacy rates among women in these countries. In Middle Eastern countries, the percentage of college pupils who are female is

around 29% as compared to world rates that are fairly close to 40% (www.worldbank.org). Another factor to add is the number of women teachers in schools in the Middle East, since they serve to encourage female students and to reduce female dropout rates. These numbers are also a bit below average, even in the primary school levels. In fact, the percentage of female teachers in tertiary level schools is only around 24%, which is lower than the average of 30% by a few percentage points (www.worldbank.org).

II. Population

It would seem clear that population growth for the Middle East would be a bit higher if most of the women are not working or going to school, which is exactly the case. On average, there are 27 births per 1000 people as compared to an average of 23 for the rest of the world and 13 in higher income regions.

Further, population growth rates are a bit higher as well, and are more similar to low-income countries than middle- or high-income countries. In fact, from 1980 to 1997 the growth rate in the Middle East was 2.7, second only to Sub-Saharan Africa, which had a population growth rate of 2.8 (www.worldbank.org).

The population for the Middle Eastern countries as an oil conglomerate is typical of lower income countries. There is a large number of children (below 14) with a smaller number of adults. The life expectancy has been rising in these countries with the rest of the world, so there is a slightly larger number of the elderly than in very low-income countries. And the large number of young people indicates that the population will grow at a steady pace, and is expected to reach 481 million by 2030 (www.worldbank.org).

III. Economic Indicators

With that, looking at the Middle East's economic indicators is a little bit misleading. One will notice that the GNP per capita is not too far below that of other middle income countries, and is

"In Middle Eastern countries, the percentage of college pupils who are female is around 29% as compared to world rates that are fairly close to 40%."

higher than other developing parts of the world. In fact, the average GNP per capita of these countries of around 6,000 PPP adjusted dollars per capita puts it firmly in the middle income countries. For some of the wealthiest oil producers, GNP per capita is almost 20,000! (www.worldbank.org)



Detailed extensively alongside World Bank data is an analysis of labor force liquidity and how countries with strict gender segregation/restrictions suffer in terms of measurable economic indicators such as GDP per capita (www.worldbank.org). One would think that, given the extremely strict rules regarding gender roles in the Middle East, it would suffer from inefficiencies that would lead to weaker economic performance. In looking strictly at the economic data, this does not seem to be the case.

Normally there is a great deal of market pressure on countries to have a fluid labor force, and to have a large number of educated people with a low level of discrimination. The majority of the output in the Middle East is from oil (in fact, it makes up almost 60% of its GDP). (www.ameinfo.com/facts/economy) Oil production is highly capital intensive, and does not take as many laborers as other endeavors, such as industry or service. Also, most of the technology used to extract oil is already implemented, necessitating less research and development expenditures (maybe this is why R&D expenditures in the Middle East are some of the lowest in the world). (www.ameinfo.com/facts/economy) This means that there may not be as high of a demand for laborers, and thus if there is a shortage caused by both a lack of education and a lack of labor force participation among women in these countries, their GDP per capita may not suffer as much. The nature and dominance of the oil industry, in a small sense, may have insulated Middle Eastern countries from feeling some of the effects of a lack of fluid labor supply (produced by gender inequity).

IV. Possible Consequences

The fact remains that even if petroleum production has helped to save the Middle East from the effects of sexual discrimination, oil will not last forever. In fact, at current consumption rates, the oil supply we have now will run out in the next hundred years or so. If this economy-sustaining resource will run out relatively soon, one may ask, what might happen to the Middle Eastern

economy in the very long run?

As noted, the Middle East has high population growth, and this growth is scheduled to remain steady until at least 2030 (www.worldbank.org). The region has birth rates that should remain relatively high, which will work to decrease capital stock per worker and have effects on a number of macroeconomic variables. From an economic perspective, one can look at this situation more closely using the Neoclassical Growth Model.

If this standard model is an accurate representation of the future, the Middle Eastern nation will face these problems with strict social standards that enforce severe inequalities. Such inequalities have deep-seated disadvantages from an economic point of view. Hence, the Middle Eastern economies may face the difficulties of a growing population without a flexible labor force that can produce enough output to sustain a high level of consumption. At the same time, with current restrictions on labor force participation the Middle East will not be able to absorb a portion of the new population (the women) into the labor market, and these women will continue to have a high number of children, keeping growth levels higher. This could create a sort of vicious circle effect.

One may say that in the future, with such harshly segregated roles for women and men in society, Middle Eastern countries may suffer setbacks brought on by economic effects such as reductions in labor market flexibility, productivity, and the economy's ability to adapt to change. This, added to a growing population and a stagnating economy, could possibly present some interesting challenges to the region in this century.

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the Road from Social Reality to Social Utopia

Book Follows Che's Fifty-Year-Old Dirt Tracks

BY STEPHANIE LEE

The legacy of Che has touched the whole world in some way. He is used both by the capitalistic market as a fashionable, trendy statement, and by the guerilla armies in South America who are implementing his socialist ideology. Che's classic trademarks are his black beret, mustache, and chin length wavy black hair. We can only understand Che's ideological reason and beliefs for a socialist South America by exploring the land he

lived in, seeing how its particular political, social, economic, cultural, and geographical situations influenced him.

I attended a reading at the Graduate School of Journalism at UC Berkeley by the author, Patrick Symmes himself. So the following is his story, now passed on to you.

Patrick Symmes is a regular contributor to Harper's, The New York Times Magazine, Outside and New York, and teaching fellow at the School of Journalism at UC Berkeley.

He documented his travels in his travel/adventure book, *Chasing Che: A Motorcycle Journey in Search of the Guevara Legend*. He followed Che's journey through South America, visiting the same places Che did. In Symmes's motorcycle ride through South America, one gets a view of the politics, culture, geography and society that contribute insight into the rationale of socialism.

Using Che's diary as a map, Patrick traced the motorcycle journey that Che took 50 years ago through South America. Che was 24 years old in 1952 when he embarked on the journey. He was a medical student who left school with the proposal to research leper villages. During his motorcycle trip, Che admired the relaxing and beautiful landscape of South America, developing a socialist utopia-like vision that revolutionized South America. 50 years later, Patrick Symmes, on his own motorcycle, pursued Che's ghost and legacy. Symmes traced Che's tracks through the breathless beauty of Argentina, Peru and Bolivia. He saw the same spacious mountains surrounding an expansive steel blue lake, pristine Patagonia, and experienced the abundant nuances between cold and hot fog. He putted along on his motorcycle through the same muddy roads that Che had.

According to Che's diary, he visited the leper villages, instigating his desire for a socialist society that would make him the political and historical figure that he is today. The lepers, living in dire poverty, suffered intensely from lack of sanitation,

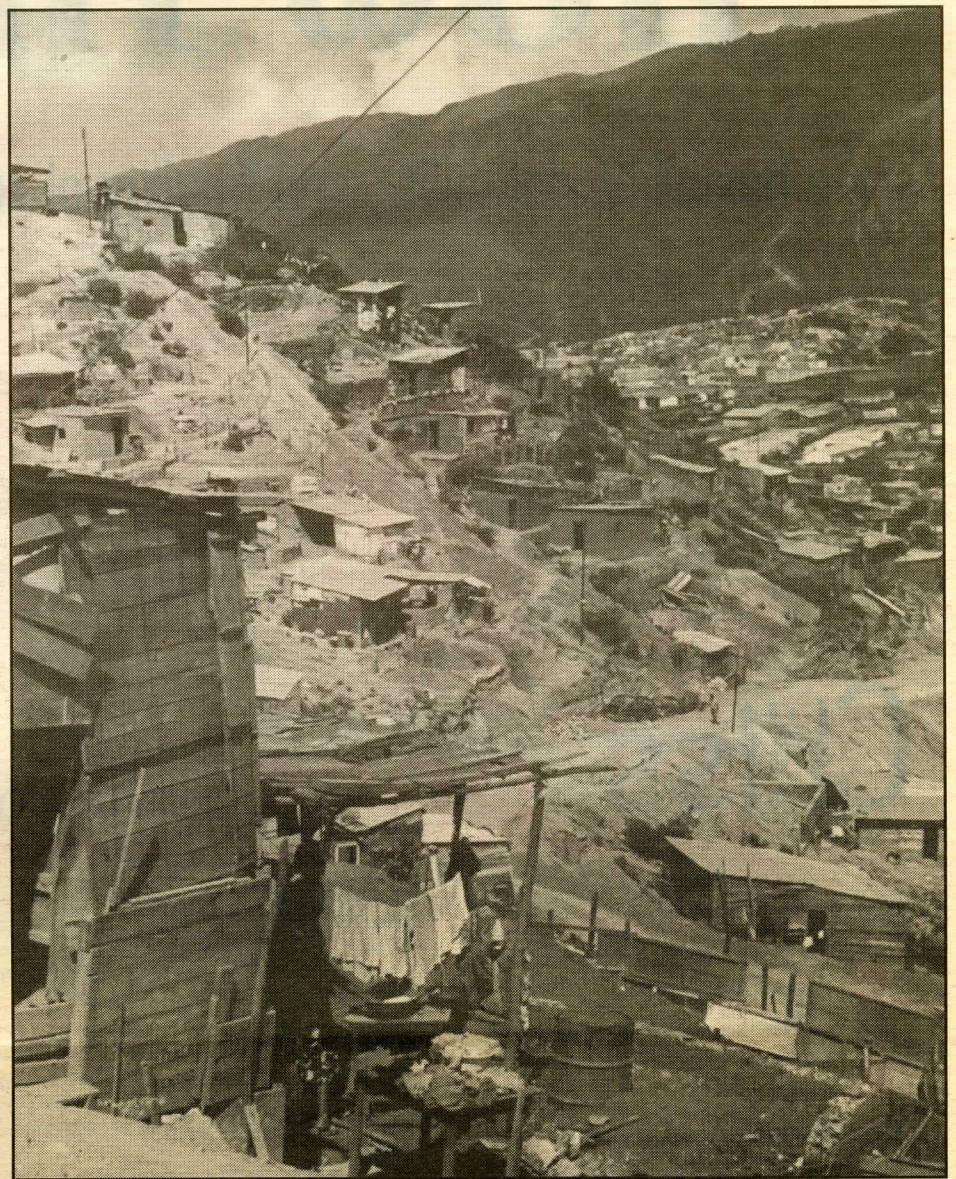
food, and love. They were banished and left to die for the betterment of the healthy society. Here, Che first became aware of these people's misery, and the inherent social injustice of their mistreatment, which stirred compassion in him for the oppressed lepers. He bravely and calmly shook the incomplete and rotting hands of the lepers. He played soccer with them, interacting with them as though they were average healthy people without the gruesome disease. He noted that interaction with other members of the com-

munity gave them a sense of belonging that benefited the lepers much more than medicine could. Che conceived of his socialist ideals through his encounter with members of the leper village, who demonstrated such strength in solidarity.

Fifty years later, author Patrick Symmes traveled to the same leper village that Che went to, and discovered that the lepers still talked endearingly of Che. When Symmes was in the Peruvian mountains, he saw a group of Indians

walking towards him in the far distance. To his surprise, he was the Indians' destination. The Indians repeatedly said, "Good Evening" to Symmes respectfully. One woman knelt down and kissed his hand, addressing him as Father. These humbly clothed people had walked miles for days, many of them barefooted in extremes of cold and hot, in hope of meeting the priest who was traveling to different towns. From afar Symmes looked like a priest since his black leather motorcycle jacket and black pants blended together to look like a priest's serious and humble smock. And, most priests that did come were Anglo-Saxons. Symmes, with his 6'2" build, long legs, blue eyes, and creamy peach skin, radiated the divine message of God.

Although the Indians did not find the right man, Symmes could not crumble their hope be-



cause he knew how arduous their pilgrimage was. For many people in Peru who suffer from being barely able to make enough food to sustain themselves, Christianity and God is their redeemer from poverty and oppression. Symmes resolved the dilemma by telling them he was the priest's assistant and that the priest was in the village below.

Symmes also visited a guerilla jail, a legacy of Che's. Che instigated the guerilla uprisings

was a morbid scene. Blood was scattered on the grass, the land of the people, symbolizing the power of the guerillas. A lay women witnessed the killing, demonstrating the society's embracement of the guerilla movement.

Symmes traced Che to southern Bolivia, where Che had died. By traveling and interacting with the villages that Che visited, it became obvious to Symmes that Che's love for all people, including the dregs of society, was their source of

salvation on this Earth. Che was humanistic in his socialist ideology but became increasingly violent in his application of it. Symmes noted that, in the beginning, when he began his quest for uniting all members of society, he would rationally listen to other people's opinions. But

"Fifty years later, author Patrick Symmes traveled to the same leper village that Che went to, and discovered that the lepers still talked endearingly of Che."

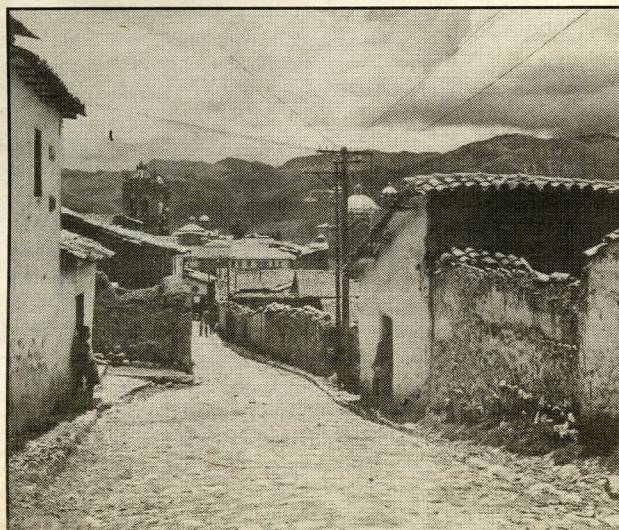
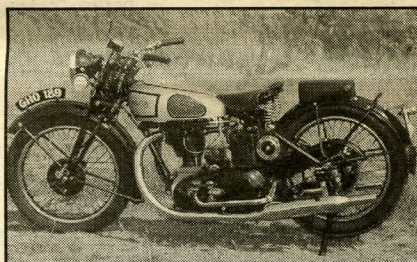
against the dismissive and apathetic government. Later in his years of popularity, Che became increasingly violent, believing that only through physical force could social justice be obtained. The guerilla members followed Che's later desire to exterminate the evil government. They segregated themselves from other prisoners and marched in guerilla style inside the jail. They even managed to smuggle machine guns in their cells. Symmes described the prisoners as being "psychotic."

They sold guerilla paraphernalia, as shown in his slides. One of the slides show a violent, graphic action model, decorated and painted as colorfully in bright green, red, blue, and black as a child's toy. Two guerilla members were in the act of assassinating a politician in front of a limosine, symbolizing the rich and exclusive status of the politician in contrast to the guerillas. It

progressively, despite advice from others, he would believe in violence because he thought it was the only way to achieve social justice and harmony for the lower classes.

After this reading, I learned more about the social and political situation in Latin America, and also about the notorious life of Che. I have many unanswered questions about Che, but at least I have learned what his motivations were for beginning the socialist movement. No longer recognizing Che's face as a mere trend, I at least have an idea of who he was historically. Symmes' line of journey strung together the places, incidents, and people that help us make sense of Che's aura.

All photos on this page are taken from the book The Motorcycle Diaries: A Journey Around South America



How they do it.

the flexibility, durability, and fragility of cultural binding between agile inter-cultural couples



CrissCROSS

interracial voices, more than the two of ours

VIVA LA DIFFERENCE

Brian: one-quarter Japanese, three-quarters Caucasian.

Sarah: one-eighth Thai, three-eighths Chinese, one-quarter Spanish, one-quarter Filipino.

The Internment - *Where's the culture?*

BRIAN: My mom is Caucasian, from Kentucky. She got a lot of crap for marrying my dad, who is half-Japanese and half-white. When we traveled to the south, people would give us stares because of the way my dad looked—tall and dark-skinned. Even though my grandmother is a full Japanese immigrant, my dad has never considered stories about ethnicity important,



since at the time he was growing up, the fifties and sixties, it was important for immigrants to assimilate. Even now, he's living in that frame of mind. It goes back to how, I'm sure, the internment experience overall had an effect on how much Japanese culture he was brought up with. Though my grandmother was never interned, the Japanese as a group were stigmatized, so it was hard to be proud of being Japanese. My dad, more Caucasian now, never tried to instill the culture in me.

Besides, kids of mixed heritage don't really hear anything. What can parents really pass on to me when

they don't have common experiences to relate to each other? Ethnic heritage—well, bits and pieces come but I'm sure a more complete culture can transfer better.

There are times when I realize I don't have the luxury of having a "my-type of people" going on. The luxury is a resource. People find it comforting—a sense of belonging. It seems kinda nice, I guess, but I don't feel like it's missing. Actually, I can't really relate with any group of people in terms of race and ethnicity, ever, in my entire life, other than my sister [also three-quarters white].

The Immigrant - *Different Struggles*

SARAH: My dad's three-quarters Chinese, a quarter Thai. He came to the States when he was eighteen. He took up odd jobs, learned English and how to drive, and made some money to establish himself. My mother's half-Spanish, half-Filipino. She came here in her twenties to get her masters in computer science. Back in the Philippines, she already had a B.A. in Accounting.

Sarah's Roots - *How much of me do you understand?*

BRIAN ABOUT SARAH: Sarah is a balance in between her parents' cultures. She grew up in two ethnic backgrounds basically—her parents couldn't really indoctrinate her one or another. But her parents are immigrants, whereas my parents are only children of immigrants. That's the difference. She's gotten more out of her parents culturally than I have. Talking about cultural weight, she's more Thai, in the sense that she eats Thai food and expresses more interest in the history and culture of Thai, but she never bothered to learn Tagalog. Even so, because she looks Filipino, she is accepted by Filipinos.

SARAH ABOUT BRIAN:

It's not an issue with me that Brian can't relate to me because I'm more Asian. When there are certain celebrations going on in my own culture, I would just inform him about it. You know, he picks up certain things.

Extended Identity - *What's she saying about me?*

BRIAN: I won't be accepted by the whites from the South. My mom's sister would say shit like Japanese Nigger. My sister and I would never be accepted by my mom's relatives.

SARAH: Both sides of my relatives would say that I don't understand certain things, because I'm only half-Thai, or only half-Filipino. I'm like, gosh, so I'm only half a person?

Marginalization - *Forget it, I'll deal*

BRIAN: I was a minority in my high school: seventy-five percent of the school was Asian. Growing up white was definitely not something valued. There, being white was not something you took pride in, it's just

what you were. Some whites started a European culture group that was laughed out of existence very soon. When I was there, I spent a lot of time thinking about my ethnicity. Because of the racial quotas in my magnet school, which were used to recruit more non-Asians, you hear things like, oh, the only reason you're here it's because you're white. The white people I hung out with definitely felt marginalized, especially by the Korean super power, an exclusive social clique that was thirty-five percent of the class population. But I wouldn't call that reverse discrimination. You're somewhat marginalized in school for only six hours a day. I just had to put up with shit until three o'clock, then I was out of there. I feel more comfortable here in Berkeley than back in my high-school.

Here, a white fraternity would accept me, but still, I identify more with minorities in whatever situation I'm in. Or at least I don't identify with the white people who didn't grow up in a multi-ethnic environment like my town Cerritos (upper-middle class, 70% non-white). Cerritos white is a different kind of white—there's no white supremacy there. But the whites I worked with at Knott's Berry farm would make fun of the Asian guys and would have more slurs amongst themselves.

SARAH: I went to a Catholic School that was mostly Filipino. The Filipinos there and I had different interests: I didn't dye my hair or wear dark lipstick, so I didn't fit in. I hung out with a full Vietnamese, a full Thai, and a half-Filipino—I don't know which group of people I belonged to. The four of us looked really funny walking around. The full Thai is a basketball athlete, the half-Filipino wore death metal black, and the full Vietnamese was into the hip-hop scene. I can just imagine what goes through people's head when they see us walking down the street together: "God, what brought them together." We had different things going on, but we got close anyway, since we were going through the same thing. We were all kinda shunned in junior high with all the backstabbing going on, so in high school, we wanted to start over.

Out Interracial-ness - *Take it or leave it*

BRIAN: She's more of a up-and-running type. She gets me to make plans—it's a good thing. She encourages me to actually get to whatever I want to do, since she knows I don't put decisions in stone. She's just a doer of things...I appreciate that of her.

In terms of common interests with Sarah, I basically have an interest in everything she does. We have the same sense of humor. We are both critical and tolerant about the same things. We always agree on the fundamentals—so we comment on a person the same way. Because what we value is the same, so is what we see in people.

Both of us are not easily offended: we've just heard

too much crap to get easily offended by words. We both been made fun of, although, I have to say, she probably gets more abuse in life, just on the streets or at supermarket. She doesn't get upset with my words, even though people always took my harsh words to be purposely mean. She has a positive attitude about stuff. Even when something's not great or cool, well, we both think there's something to learn from it...so we experience things together. We don't have any hobbies per se, but we experience things the same way—we're both children of an interracial couple. We grew up in interracial households—interracial couples aren't necessarily the same when they haven't grown up in interracial households.

We don't argue—it's gonna sound unreal. Neither one of us is so inflexible we can have a serious argument ever. No one believes me. We resolve things before we come to a fight—we don't press issues. It comes down to: if we just have different opinions, we never argue to the point where we try to hurt each other. I am confrontational, but (for some reason), just not with her.

The Humanistic - *We're each other's*

SARAH: Oh, we get along excellently—there are so few people you can become close to—with him I can talk about anything, I can cry and laugh. There's emotional support...he makes my life better, he enhances my life.

We do have common interests, like, going traveling to see things; he likes to read, I like to read too. We like certain TV shows, we both enjoy a good night's sleep. Shopping...spending time with each other is a common interest. Actually...we have common opinions and attitudes more than common interests.

We have the same values—you can kinda tell when you can both go "oh my god how can the movie do that to the kid." With differences, hmmm, you take differences for granted. I didn't really think it's [the differences by nature are] interracial; we're just two people.

Conflicts— we both talk when something doesn't feel right, well, we don't yell, throw things or get into vicious arguments. It's more like working things through—it brings people closer together. I'd say we're both pretty tolerant and accommodating.

Commitment: being there for the person, letting the person grow, and still loving that person for who they are, being together for the long haul, talking things through—why throw everything away together because of one little thing—being each other's best friend, being honest.

Racial Prejudice - *They think they know me*

BRIAN: I didn't even know Sarah's background

Coming out of Culture Cozy

considerations between a chinese and an american homosexual.

BY CHRISTINE SAIDINE WAI

Cramped in the backseat of a rickety taxi, Cathy yelled at one of her friends, Darrel, a white American gay, "Hey, P @E AE MH, where do you want to go eat?" Before Darrel had a chance to answer, their mutual friend, a mainland Chinese called Jonathan, asked incredulously, eyes opened wide, "She called you what?" Darrel stated matter-of-factly, "Homosexual lover." Jonathan blinked his eyes in disbelief, firing question after question at Darrel about what it is like to be gay. From then on, the relationship between Darrel and Jonathan went beyond a friendship of simple camaraderie, subtly changing to something more elusively complex.

It was attraction, if not love, at first sight. When Darrel met Jonathan through their mutual friend Cathy, he was instantly attracted to Jonathan's handsome baby face and "beautiful body," he said. Darrel was impressed to hear Jonathan speak exceptionally fluent English, and Jonathan even more overwhelmed to hear Darrel, a white American, speak impeccable Chinese. Though there are many foreigners enrolled in Peking University to learn Chinese, it is rare to see an American speak Chinese like a native, and even more uncommon for a local Chinese student who has never traveled outside of China to speak such fluent English. The absence of a language barrier between Jonathan and Darrel made them ease into a good friendship at once.

Though Darrel himself is an openly homosexual American foreign exchange student, he was unsure of Jonathan's sexual orientation, because Jonathan might be shrouded by a blanket of stigmatism at the prestigious Peking University, where homosexuality issues are rarely, if ever, raised on campus. Darrel was unsure about how to interpret the gestures of Jonathan: as expressions of reciprocal romantic feelings or as brotherly affection? He was fully aware that he might interpret them in a very Western and Eurocentric way, which might breed misunderstanding. Whenever Jonathan would put his arms around his shoulders or touch his knees, Darrel would wonder whether that was a brotherly gesture or a romantic suggestion of express interest. Worries and uncer-

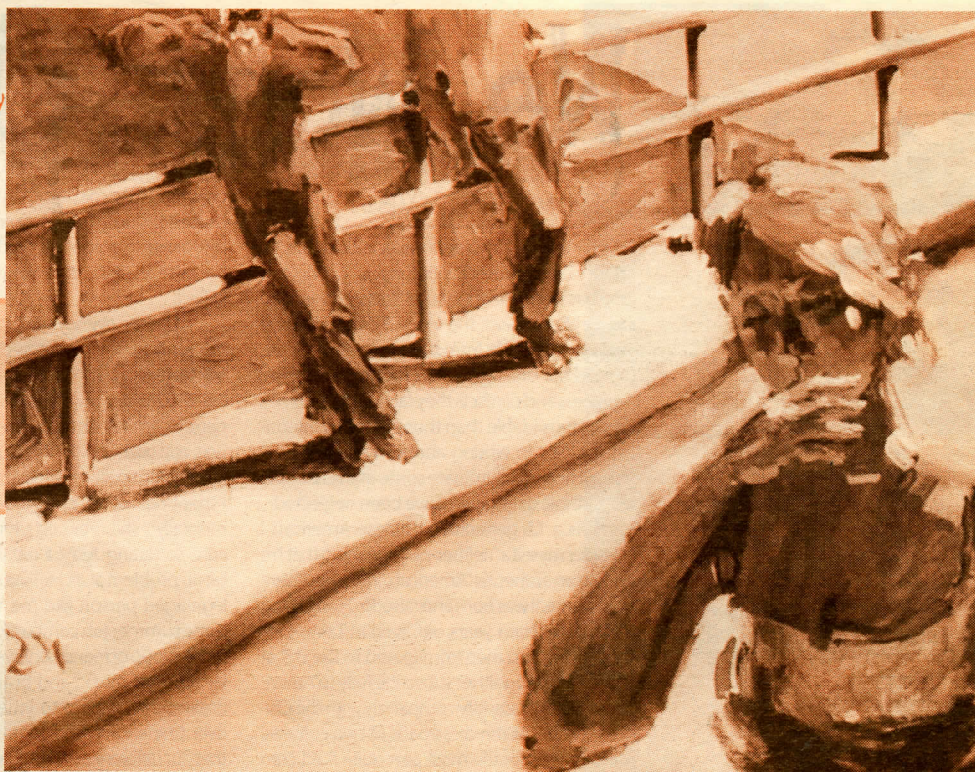
tainties aside, Darrel and Jonathan remained good friends, punctuated as their relationship was by bouts of romantic beckoning: Darrel would send Jonathan pretty chocolates, and Jonathan would leave Darrel poetic messages on his pager.

The ambiguous courtship ended one night when Jonathan finally vented his frustration at Darrel. "You're evil," declared Jonathan to Darrel. He then confessed that he was extremely upset and torn, accusing Darrel of casting a spell on him. "You've captured me—I'm attracted to you," Jonathan proclaimed passionately, his cool facade falling to pieces for the first time. He had never been attracted to another male before, but already, he was feeling the weight of the moral disapproval of the entire Chinese society upon him. But nevertheless, their passions overrode their concerns about societal pressure. They embraced and sealed their commitment to each other with a kiss.

Their sweet relationship for the next ten months was one long honeymoon, according to Darrel. They traveled together everywhere in China, visiting the relatives of Jonathan that were scattered across the vast country. In Beijing, they frequented discos and bars in Sanlitun Street, a street lined with western bars and packed with expatriates and foreigners every night. Armed with a good exchange rate and generous contributions from his parents, Darrel was able to spend life in Beijing worthy of an emperor. He took Jonathan to tea houses that served drinks with prohibitively high price tags, bought VCDs by the dozens, and traveled extensively throughout China riding on "soft sleepers" trains reserved for foreigners and wealthy businessmen.

At first sight, Darrel might appear to be playing the part of a Western colonialist rescuing a Chinese native from the dungeons of poverty, introducing him to the neon lights and riches of the Western life. But that was not really the case, Darrel said. Though Darrel would pay for almost everything on dates, Jonathan was still regarded by his peers to be someone with means. As a doctorate student, Jonathan received a monthly stipend from the government that allowed him to live comfortably by Chinese standards.

Furthermore, Jonathan was not bought into developing a penchant for Western tastes. The reason is,



Kevin Sinnott paintings

though Jonathan was fascinated by all the Western quirks and bars that Darrel introduced him to, he had no desire to be part of the bar culture. Discos and drinking bars remained essentially foreign concepts to him, as he would not go out of his own accord, except to accompany Darrel.

In contrast, it was Darrel who felt patronized by an unimpressed Jonathan in the relationship. Though Darrel was the one with the monetary means, he was on foreign soil as a guest, in China, learning the Chinese language, while Jonathan was the host, playing the role of an authority on the Chinese culture and language. Jonathan would say, "Well, I'm older than you, so you should listen to me." Following such didactic sessions, Darrel would feel that Jonathan was treating him like a younger brother, ignorant of what is the proper Chinese way of doing things.

Even though Darrel openly acknowledged Jonathan to be his romantic boyfriend in front of other American friends, Jonathan could not admit to his Chinese friends that Darrel was his lover. Jonathan referred to him as a "very good friend." Jonathan's friends never found out about the true nature of Jonathan's and

Darrel's relationship, since physical intimacy between males was culturally accepted as the norm. It is commonly accepted in China for men to put their arms around each other, hold hands, or touch knees as gestures of friendly or brotherly affection. Because contemporary Chinese culture dictates that there be a clear separation of the sexes, males showed physical affection towards each other in a way that fosters a culture of mutual camaraderie and brotherly love. When Darrel and Jonathan trekked all over China to visit Jonathan's multitude of relatives, the relatives would always prepare one bed for both of them without the slightest hesitation.

Although Jonathan never picked up on the bar culture, nor had Darrel gotten over the feeling of being patronized, the intimacy they shared transcended the cultural differences between them. And Even though Jonathan had to conceal Darrel's true identity in his relationship with him, he did step beyond the stigmatism imposed on him by Chinese society by admitting Darrel into his romantic life. And Darrel, despite his economic superiority in China, laid down his sense of cultural arrogance to be humbled by another cultural authority.

Ocean DEEP

diving into the big blue of mine culture

BY A SHY HAPA

I would say I am 80% Japanese looking, and 20% Caucasian looking. My nose is not as flat as my Japanese relatives, and my face is not as round. But my eyes give it away, with the "epicanthal fold" quite obvious. I've been mistaken as a Filipino, Hawaiian, Native American, even Latina and Peruvian. Asians almost always know that I am Asian, and can usually figure out that I am

part Japanese. My skin is a sort of a "light au lait" color, but I can get pretty brown in the sun. My hair and eyes are brown.

My mom is Caucasian, of Swedish and English descent. My dad is third generation Japanese Sansei.

Amorphous Identity:

growing up on the margins

Growing up in a predominantly white neighborhood, I did not gravitate towards the whites at school, curiously enough,

because I did not feel altogether comfortable around them. But the discomfort probably had its source in socio-economic, as well as racial, differences. My private Catholic school had eighty percent blacks on scholarship from East and West Oakland, as opposed to the twenty percent whites sent by their parents from the Oakland hills. Despite my middle-class background, the case was still: what would I be doing hanging about those rich, white kids? Though the majority of my friends were black, I wasn't simply hanging around them by default. I loved the Black Americans. Because they were so warm and accepting, I loved being with them. They somehow sensed that I was struggling too, so while my physical whiteness stood out, no tension occurred between us.

Shuttling back and forth my black school and white neighborhood, I still experienced a sliver of Japanese culture from my father. He sent me to a language weekend school. Together, we went to cherry blossom festivals, Japanese-American bazaars; and even my grandmother made Japanese food. The cultural threads were barely distinguishable. But they were there. But the most I could do, despite all else, was vibe on the cultural atmosphere, instead of participating in the actual culture.

Agonizing Over Identity:

dating inter-culturally on boot-search

When I dated Caucasian guys, I was caused to feel un-white. They would utter

comments Asian guys would never say: "oh you're so Asian, you're so pretty." When I dated Caucasian, the Asian side of me was not embraced; and guess what, when I dated Asian, the white side of me was not any more embraced. When it comes to Japanese-Americans specifically, I didn't receive the feeling of thorough acceptance from them either: it was missing. No matter whom I'm with, I'm there with them somewhere, looking out the window—there's always some part of me being looked at that is not being embraced. I felt displaced in this way, and when I did, I dated two Korean guys, who in some sense, felt displaced as I. The Koreans...there were certain things they understood without explanation.

In terms of attraction, I am drawn to individuals strongly rooted to their culture, regardless of which. But while they are so, they are dealing with their own issues of cultural limbo, because they are forced to learn the art of juggling their home culture with their practical lived experiences in America. Not only am I dealing with my cultural issues, they are too. It takes an enormous amount of emotional and intellectual energy to learn another culture. But you need to learn the culture—in tandem with the cultural issues—of an individual, so that you may correctly understand that individual. You'd be quadrupling the cultural energy. I have to learn the home culture, along with the American-specific cultural issues, of that other individual; and he has

to grasp my cultural duality, and simultaneously, the difficult imbalance of my duality. Faced with all this, I use my flexibility to figure out the places I *meld* with people of different cultural orientations. I go, and discover the places that are fundamentally humanist, but oftentimes, I settle with the realization that no matter how essentially human we are, the humanist is always set within a cultural context.

Even if I were to ignore the layers of complexity we both bring in, I'm still left with roots of another person, not necessarily mine. I wanted roots I can call mine: I didn't hope to be unfeeling and blind to them. Keeping that in mind, I wouldn't date Japanese-Americans, only because they are thoroughly devoid of their culture, having been put through this emasculation process, however unwillingly.

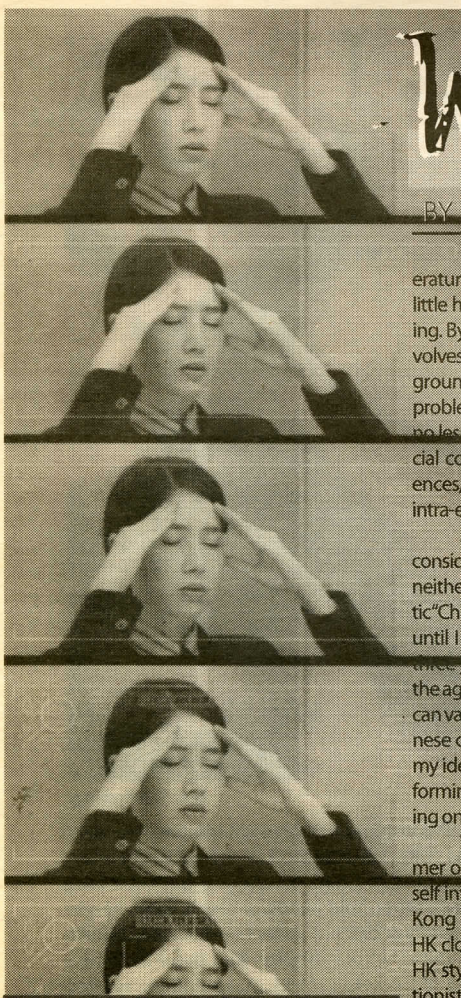
Living the Japanese Identity:

found roots in Japan

I was going from one culture to the next, starved for roots. I was all primed up, completely able to shed everything and absorb everything in Japan, on a trip there last July. When I dropped all pretenses, plain dropped this thing about "I know everything as an American," I had the richest experience, unimagined, or indeed, unimaginable.

continued on page 13





We Won't Overcome

reflections on intra-ethnic dating fiasco

BY XIAO WEI WEI

The majority of popular media and literature have focused on interracial dating, but little has been mentioned of "intra-ethnic" dating. By that I mean the kind of dating that involves two people from the same ethnic background, but different cultural backgrounds. The problems and conflicts they face are sometimes no less formidable than those faced by interracial couples. In writing about my own experiences, I hope to illuminate some of the issues in intra-ethnic dating that have been neglected.

As a 1.5 generation Chinese American, I consider myself a "neither-nor," meaning that I'm neither an authentic "American," nor an authentic "Chinese." I was born and raised in Hong Kong until I was seven years old; lived in Taiwan for three years; and then immigrated to the U.S. at the age of ten. I neither subscribe fully to American values nor identify completely with the Chinese culture. At the crossroads of two cultures, my identity is for the most part quite fluid, conforming to the norms of each culture depending on circumstances.

When I landed in Hong Kong in the summer of '98, I was determined to transform myself into a native "HongKie" (read: native Hong Kong person) again. I bought the most trendy HK clothes, dyed and cut my hair to the latest HK style, and found a job working as a receptionist at an upscale residents' club house. However, my efforts to look Hong Kong was futile when I wasn't able to act Hong Kong. I couldn't mask my identity with a facade of looks. I would still insert some English words while speaking Cantonese, or pester my co-workers with questions about what some of the Cantonese slang words would mean. My colleagues quietly chided me for sitting crossed-legged on the chair with my shoes on, something a Hong Kong person would never do.

While they talked about the latest Cantopop singers and hottest HK movie stars, I would sit there mute, totally clueless about who is who in the HK entertainment arena, unable to join in the conversation. Once, after we watched the Chinese movie, *A Man Called Hero*, I bagged on how awful the movie was, how there was no plot, how the personalities of the characters were not fully developed, and how the special effects were so fake. Little did I know that my colleagues loved the movie because it was based on a comic series they grew up with as

children. To them, the movie was endearing because it brought back their common childhood memories. Despite my hard work at trying to become an authentic HongKie, I seemed to be failing.

Luckily, my saving grace materialized in the form of Jerry. Admittedly, at first I was attracted to his good looks and tall athletic build. His wry humor, and his sweet and considerate nature captivated me. But more importantly, he was my gateway to the quintessential Hong Kong youth culture. I thought that even though I spent part of my childhood in the US, fundamentally I still retained Chinese values at the core, so dating Jerry, a native HongKie, would be no problem at all. He was a hardworking college-aged person like me. We worked at the same summer job company, hung out with the same group of friends, enjoyed listening to similar types of music, and both of us loved, and dreamt of, traveling to little-known places all over China. Only later in retrospect did I learn that our differences in language, socioeconomic class, culture, and family were too great to overcome, and those differences, far from being a celebration of cultural diversity, were in actuality the driving force behind our eventual break up.

Our language difference was a fundamental obstacle between us. Having left Hong Kong at the age of seven, I am no longer fully fluent in Cantonese, and given the volatile and ever changing nature of colloquial Cantonese, my spoken Cantonese is archaic at best. When I started dating Jerry, my misinterpretation of certain slang words was a constant source of amusement for him and an embarrassment for me. Though we spoke essentially the same language, our conversations were continually interrupted by constant explanations. He would use what I considered esoteric slang words and I would unwittingly weave seemingly confounding English words into my Cantonese. He called me one time before going out with some other friends, "Meet me at Seven," he said, "7pm?" "No, 10pm at SeVEN." I was confused, "huh?" "I mean 10 pm in front of the convenience store Seven Eleven, okay?" "Oh ... sorry, I didn't know 711 is called 'seVEN'" Another time, he was telling me about what he did the night before, "Oh, not much, just went to a bar to 'blow water' with a few friends of mine." I was confused again, "Wait, blow what? Why blow water? You mean bubbles in the drinks?" He retorted, "(impa-

tiently) No ar! 'Blow water' means 'shooting the breeze' with my friends." "Oh...I see."

On the whole, we were unable to hold a deeper or more intellectual conversation because it was impossible for us to talk without interrupting each other for footnotes and clarifications. He did not have the entire gamut of English vocabulary at his disposal, but neither did I the Chinese vocabulary to discuss any philosophical, social, and personal issues in depth. He might start talking about some political development of the Hong Kong legislature, and although I would understand perfectly what he said, I lacked the sophisticated vocabulary to respond. All I could muster was, "uh-huh, good point, I agree." We might as well have been speaking two foreign languages.

It seemed like we spoke different languages also because of our different education levels. It was frustrating because, given my education at Berkeley, my analytical skills just don't stop at being able to nod or shake my head in agreement or disagreement. I can analyze and present an issue, and articulate a well-supported argument in English. I relish in thoughtful and mind-opening discussions with my friends in college, and I read voraciously to satisfy my insatiable appetite for learning. Jerry could not understand how I could study for twelve hours straight in the library, and that I meet up with friends not only to hang out, but also to study. The education system in Hong Kong emphasizes rote memorization, and students are rarely given the opportunity to develop independent thoughts on an issue. And so Jerry would study just enough to pass an exam, rarely questioning the status quo or prevalent beliefs. I found our conversations mundane, uninteresting, and cliché, revolving more often about the weather than about the World Trade Organization. Our different levels of ambition and education deprived us of a common base on which to hold a thought-provoking conversation, rendering it difficult for us to connect with each other on the same intellectual plane.

Even more fundamental than education, our economic difference in a class-conscious Hong Kong exacerbated this tenuous relationship from the very beginning. Even though my family would be considered the quintessential middle class nuclear family in the U.S., in Hong Kong, my family is part of the elite upper-middle class, because the poverty gap in Hong Kong is much wider than it is in the US. Jerry comes from

a very typical working class family. His father works in a factory, his mother is a housewife, and his little sister is still in high school.

I felt that I always had to watch my language for fear of uttering some remark insensitive to the plight of the lower class. Once, I was complaining to him, "Ugh!! I feel so restricted and claustrophobic in my parent's apartment. It's so small compared to what I'm used to in the US!" In reality, a 700 square-foot apartment in Hong Kong is considered quite a luxury already, considering how a four to five person household typically inhabits a 400-500 square foot apartment. So what was a seemingly harmless complaint turned out to be a grossly insensitive comment. Whenever I would commit similar social gaffes, Jerry would say in a bitter tone, "Aiya, well of course, your family is so rich anyway...." and I would know better and shut my mouth. End of conversation. Next topic please.

There was always this tension, a nervousness I felt because I had to protect his ego and pride when it came to this difference. Raised in a more egalitarian, middle class society in the US, at first I had a hard time understanding the class consciousness seeped deep into the mentality of most Hong Kong people. During the second summer after we started dating, I worked at the prestigious Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, and all the people I met at work were the big shots of the HK financial empire. Meanwhile, Jerry was working at the swimming pool of a government subsidized housing estate, and the people he met were mostly lower income people from his class background. On my job, I was able take a day off and go shopping with my friends, knowing that my British co-worker and my Canadian educated manager would cover for me. In contrast, Jerry worked 13 hours a day, six days a week, and if he took half a day off, his paycheck, the bread and butter he earns for his elderly parents and younger sister, would be cut accordingly. So often times, I hesitated to ask him to take even a few hours off to go watch a movie with me, even though he worked such long hours that I didn't get to see him very much.

Culture in Hong Kong also dictates that when a couple goes out together, the guy pays most of the time. So accordingly, Jerry would never let me pay my share of the movies, dinners, or taxi fares unless I adamantly elbowed

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"As his girlfriend, I had unparalleled access to the insides of the underground Hong Kong youth culture, and by association, his friends accepted me into their clique even though I came from a vastly different cultural and class background."

Third Eye NON-BLIND

BY YELILE SACA AND VLD STAFF

"It was his smile that really got me," whispered Julia, when savoring her fiancée, "but the way he makes me feel after a long day at school—they exchanged a tasty kiss—"is why I consider myself so lucky." In a tight embrace, they were the icon of happiness of a typical college couple. On this wet afternoon, none of the passer-bys heading home took notice of his ebony hands caressing her cinnamon complexion, but the light of the penetrating attraction they radiated was too much to shy away from.

This image, though worth a thousand words, was not always as sweet as it appears. While she maintained her Catholic practices, he embraced the Muslim religion. Julia admitted that bringing Anthony home to meet her Filipino and strictly Catholic family was a concern since she had essentially no way of knowing how her parents would react to her African-American Muslim boyfriend.

"My parents were a little apprehensive at first, but when Anthony started playing with my little cousins, the tension subsided, so that now they see him as an extension of the family," confided Julia to Yelile.

The challenges of maintaining an interracial relationship might seem daunting, yet when long distance was factored in, the strain could potentially be overwhelming:

"At first it was hard not being able to hold her after I'd come home from work, I really missed her. So we decided to take turns flying up to Berkeley or down to Long Beach so that we could spend some time together," said Anthony. The quality time they had shared in honoring their commitment

friend's appraisal of interracial couple

to each other has allowed this relationship to culminate nicely in their recent engagement.

Between the two of them, the phone bill would rack up to \$1000 a month. Julia had to resort to taking out a loan to pay for the titanic phone bill. They took turns flying up and down the coast every other week. The mutual desire and necessity to emotionally connect made them write pages long everyday, so much so that Yelile, their interviewer, also their good friend, said facetiously, "It's sick."

Yelile characterized her best friend Julia briefly, but with deep-felt appreciation, "She's so empathetic, she's been with me through all my shitty stuff. With my other friends, I can't bawl after a break-up and go 'That was our song.' She listens, sobs, cries for you, all the while giving you really good advice. She hand-made a coupon book for me with coupons like 'This coupon entitles you to a girl's night out at a café, etc.'"

As far as the extent to which Yelile understands Anthony was concerned, she said affirmatively: "He's very generous in the way he financially helps out his sister, who is a single mother. His situation sensitizes him to women." Julia would concur as much: during a time when her life was rocky to a point where she considered withdrawing for a year, he was supportive of her school career throughout.

While Julia and Anthony had strong individual interests—Hula and basketball respectively—their other interests overlap in such a way that their lives were latticed. They are both huge movie buffs. Yelile said, "He can quote lines like crazy." Both are entirely down with dancing to hip-hop.

On a more foundational note, their family values was one overarching commonality in which their otherwise separate identities are grounded. As Yelile averred, "The way they conceptualize mother and father roles together gives off

complete synergy." Though Julia had to introduce Anthony, who was accustomed to a tiny family, to her large-sized Catholic family, he saw the fulfillment, through her eyes, that a lively and dynamic family could bring. Now they could both see a future with a ton of kids. Struck by her friend Julia's premature projections about marriage, Yelile exclaimed, "But you're only twenty-one!" Having teased her, Yelile showed her understanding of Julia, who had gone through the mill of less suitable relationships. Ultimately, Yelile approved of their ideals: "She said Anthony is the kind of man I want for a father and husband. It's so innocent and tender. They're not like some couples, where you're like, 'get a room, please.'" Yelile reflected on Julia's ready acceptance of Anthony: "For girls, you don't know really know you're looking for qualities of a potential husband, until it comes to you, dropped from the sky."

Committed as they were, the passion did not stagnate. Yelile said that the one big overriding "common interest" the couple had was their soaring romanticism. She said, "They are both hopeless romantics. They're both very into poetry and sensuality." With animate eyes, Yelile waxed excited about a relationship that had surprise elements built in: "For the month of December, they flew three times altogether. She wanted him to go to a big Filipino family dinner, and it's a thing where it would be wrong to have her be somewhere else, i.e. going down to see him. But he said because of his sister, his budget was running low, so he couldn't make it. On the day of the dinner, she kept complaining how she doesn't really want to go to the dinner because it's stupid without Anthony. The door bell rang. Her mom told her to get the door. She said why I'm in the middle of curling my hair. She opened the door, and he's in a tux! She did the same thing,

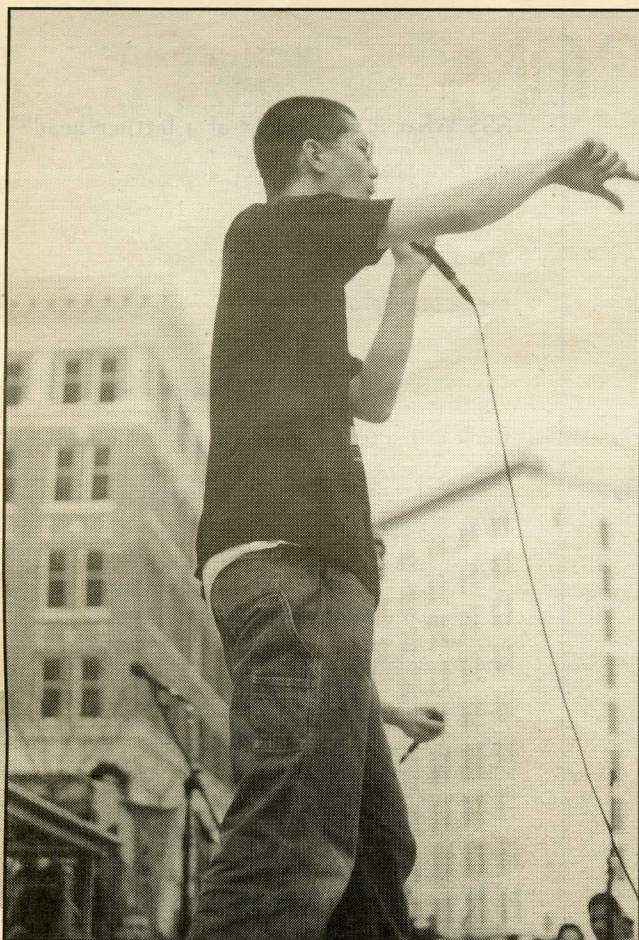


She got into his apartment through his sister to prepare this big elaborate dinner on the sly. She sat mischievously at the table when he comes in from work."

Indeed, Julia and Anthony are living proof that there existed a love strong enough to endure any obstacle that life might thrust in their way. "Yeah, we get looks sometimes like at his basketball games or at my hula performances. I remember last year, this girl had the nerve to declare that Anthony was too good for me. I was enraged, but I simply walked away," confided Julia to Yelile. Despite these incidents both have found that this relationship provides them with the support and love that inspired them to dream about their future together. As Julia interviewed for jobs in Long Beach, where Anthony had already purchased a home, they knew that there was no problem they can't tackle as a team.

Rather than seeing their cultural differences as hindrances, they embraced them with the single purpose of enhancing each other's existence.

As the interview drew to a close, Julia said that her half court shot had gotten better, while Anthony's hips were still stiff from hula practice. "But, that's okay," she laughed, "I don't care if he never competes in hula, just as long as he loves me enough to try. That's all I really need."



Member of
Company of
Prophets at
the "No on
Prop 21"
Rally.

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definition of success in America is associated with financial success, corporations can easily sell the "American dream" (a.k.a. get rich) to their consumers, including urban youths.

In the same way that African slaves were dehumanized and stripped of their cultural voice, entertainment industries have stripped hip-hop of its cultural essence. As bell hooks points out in *Talking Back: Thinking feminist, Thinking black*: Appropriation of the marginal voice threatens the very core of self-determination and free self-expression for the exploited and the oppressed peoples. If the identified audience, those spoken to, is determined solely by ruling groups who control production and distribution, then it is easy for the marginal voice striving for a hearing to allow what is said to be overdetermined by the needs of that majority group who appears to be listening, to be tuned in.⁹

While rap music's entrance into the capitalist arena has allowed hip hop to be recognized internationally as an influential element of American culture, corporations are actually selling a dehumanized version of hip hop to consumers at large. Mass media identifies hip hop as something that comes from the *other* people of the *other* culture. Hip-hop's only appeal depended on the mass corporation's empty model of the rap star.

For instance, the DJ is removed from the center of attention in mainstream rap music. The DJ is a vital element to hip-hop music. He or she is the most quintessential hip-hop persona at any event. Nowadays, it is the emcee that takes center stage. For rappers like Puff Daddy and Master P, whose fame and notoriety has been built on their individual super-images, one cannot even recall, much less name, the DJ. This is most evident in the use of DJs in mainstream rock bands. Groups like Sugar Ray and Korn use DJs as tokens. In the context of the mainstream boy

rock arena, they are often both regarded as and used simply for novelistic purposes. Hip hop music used to require that the emcee exists only if the DJ exists also. If there was no DJ then there could not have been an emcee.

As a result of the adaptation of hip-hop culture to the capitalistic social structure, the deliverance of rap music itself becomes diluted and artificial. Hip-hop begins to lose one of its most identifiable characteristics: the personal relationship of call and response interaction. Many popular rap performers have acquired celebrity status by adopting European-American modes of presentation. These performers are regarded as super-humans. Contrary to hip-hop's Africanist traditions, the spectator no longer can be a participant in the event. Susan Willis observes the transformation of folk culture into pop culture and ultimately mass culture.

Production is now controlled by unseen organizers and owners of venues, while the spectator becomes a consumer, wholly removed from the possibility of ever being challenged or "called out" to join in the production of culture or to question the racially defined separation between performers and spectators.¹⁰

These defined roles between star and fan continually separate the community from the performer. It is ironic that this occurs since, oftentimes, it is the community that nurtures and supports the artist before he or she "makes it big." The greater divide between the upper and lower classes of American society manifests itself in hip-hop's entry into the capitalistic pop culture. Hip-hop is only profitable in the eyes of the mainstream media if it reflects the values of the dominant paradigm (e.g. capitalism, sexism, classism, etc.). When rap lyrics attack the dominant constituencies, the words are discredited through censorship. However, when black on black crime is discussed, whether it is from the point of view of the transgressor, victim, or bystander, it is seen as the lesser evil. Corporations

will promote and market fake gangstas as long as they rap about the things that are allowed by majority officials.

As hip-hop began to address specific social and economic problems of a racist and classist social structure, America's mainstream media responded by trying to silence the rap artists as well as the hip hop community. The mainstream media has managed to control the marketing of hip-hop culture while simultaneously targeting it (particularly rap music and graffiti) as a source of society's ills. Rap group, NWA, released "Fuck the Police" in 1989, sparked a debate about police relations with urban communities of color. The FBI issued an official letter expressing their "concern" about rap's role (as perpetrator) of increasing violence. As George Lipsitz notes in the controversial case:

The FBI might have had more credibility in its complaints about NWA's "Fuck the Police" if it had a better record responding to the 47,000 police brutality cases reported to the Department of Justice between 1986 and 1992, of which only 15,000 were investigated and only 128 designated for prosecution.¹¹

Rather than face their own statistics of debauchery, America's police authorities turn the other way and blame NWA for perpetuating crime and promoting police brutality.

The growing disappointment over the exploitation of hip-hop in mainstream media has produced a new wave of hip-hop. This emergence of hip-hop, referred to as the underground or independent hip-hop, because of its rejection of mainstream and capitalistic practices, reclaims hip-hop for the community. The establishment of independent institutions that cater to hip hop artists, whose works structurally resemble the original hip-



Artists Big Tyme explore the commercial image.

hop at its inception, has been able to reverse what corporations had done to hip hop. Independent groups such as Latyrx, Jurassic 5, and the Living Legends, have all been able to acquire a devoted fanbase without the aid of corporate industries. Gaining insight from the rise and fall of many hip-hop artists, due to capitalist appropriation, independent records labels are able to approach modes of production and distribution in savvy ways without compromising their artistic integrity. In this instance, it is *quality*, not quantity

that matters.

Often times, independent labels and artists are not very concerned about high-scale deliverance. Rather, a solid loyal fan base makes for a lasting and consistent audience. Instead of playing to thousands at large arenas, independent rap artists tend to perform at smaller venues and clubs. This allows shows to be affordable and hence accessible. Unlike large-scale productions at big concert halls, smaller shows tend not to fall victim to violence and body searches, simply by

"Hip-hop crews...vied for the title of the dopest emcee, DJ, b-boy/girl, or graffiti artist. The battles that broke out were with words, body movements, sounds, and spray cans."

virtue of their small scale. A smaller close knit audience brings back the relationship between performer and spectator. Their roles once again become interchangeable. Other elements of hip-hop like breakdancing can occur without fear of being reprimanded for forming a "suspicious" circle.

The distribution of independent hip-hop music can occur on a very local basis. Places such as Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, California, have been home to many tape vendors. Independent artists have control over their distribution, because oftentimes they are the ones selling the tapes on the streets. This method allows them to maintain ties with the community as well as to share their art, with the middlemen eliminated. According to Beni B. of ABB Records and the Bay Area Hip Hop Coalition,

There's a change in the structure of something being independent as opposed to being corporate. For independents, the boundaries are more of a continuum, whereas in a corporate structure, things are more clearly defined. So at a label, you might have a promotions department, a sales department. At the independent level, everything tends to overlap.¹²

By having the control over distribution and production, hip-hop artists are able to prevent hip-hop from being exploited. This overlapping of roles also carries over to the roles of hip hop artists in the community.

By returning to their status of a member of the community, an independent or underground hip-hop artist is able to be influential without being unreachable. They are able to do more than just create and promote hip-hop culture, they are also able to pilot hip-hop activism. As more independent hip hop artists take active positions in leading causes and organizations for social change, industry entities are being held accountable to their own communities. Bill Stephney of StepSun Records states:

Puffy and RZA are putting together economic concerns that are being studied as revolutionary at the highest levels of business schools such as Wharton and Harvard. People are starting to realize that it's not about 'How can we save the kids in the projects?' but how can they save us...We're always talking about 'pro-

tecting the poor'—well that's *dismissive*. If they can create a \$5 billion industry from nothing, what else can they create?¹³

The transformation of hip hop into hip hop activism takes the original goals of hip hop further. Hip hop's return to its roots repositions it once again as an alternative to crime and as a vehicle for creative expression. Not only does hip hop allow the voice of the marginalized to be heard, hip hop culture is now able to actively change the socioeconomic problems in the community.

As hip-hop moves away from the exploitative images that capitalism has modeled it into for the commercial market, it ceases to be isolated and exclusionary. It has had a profound effect on society, encouraging professors to explore hip hop culture at top universities, and

inspiring young urban youths to take control of their neighborhoods and the policies that affect them. Although hip-hop still has a long way to go as far as eradicating the structural inequalities that still exist in American society, it has proved that the voice of an oppressed peoples will not be silenced. As Stuart Hall says,

However deformed, incorporated and inauthentic are the forms in which black people and black communities and traditions appear and are represented in popular culture, we continue to see, in the figures and the repertoires in which popular culture draws, the experiences that stand behind them.¹⁴

Hip-hop is the artistic voice of a marginalized people. It is rebellious but not without a conscience. It is genius but not without skill. It is reactionary but not without action. Hip-hop's resilient refusal to become a mere cash cow in the capitalist marketplace proclaims its status as a culture of critical permanence in America.

endnotes

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- 12 Eric K. Arnold, "Underground Is A State of Mind," Electronic version from: <http://www.sfbg.com/AandE/34/17/lead.html>.
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"Untitled"
 left alone between two beds
 bodies in both
 seven feet close
 but sixty-seven years apart
 to my left lay's helpless
 catatonic state
 will you wake
 that was the question i
 held in debate

grasping a frail hand
 calling his name
 damn grandpa they got
 you tied down strapped
 trapped restrained

that's what you get for taking
 a swing at some nurses
 what
 you gonna bring em pain

tell me
 how can i relieve your pain
 how can i make your situation
 change
 i'm hoping god will have
 your soul to claim
 putting to rest this frustration
 backed with agony i know
 through death your peace
 will be gained

unfortunately that road had not
 yet been breached

so i sit
 and i wait
 waiting for the night to pass
 which was only nine hundred
 seconds in the starting
 my eyes darting
 my emotions and realization
 at hand parting
 mix the two and i'd just
 be confused possibly hurting

i stare through the closed
 eyes of that weathered pasty
 colored worn thin face
 walk through his past with
 no sense of time
 set my own pace
 i can still see the place
 that once bred unjust hate
 giving out free beatdowns
 like opinions cause they
 were of brown shin race
 zuit suitors to him must
 have been an american disgrace

that was his past

a past that he could never speak on
 because regret was using
 his bare shoulders to ride
 upon
 yeah

that was his past

at my right is one
 african descent and
 male gender
 i only heard stories about
 this one
 its been so long its a shame
 his name i don't remember
 yeah it had been a while
 year was 96
 month was november

i went ahead and gave him a new
 title for him to hold in
 my yesterdays and my tomorrow's
 bearing not even the name he
 knew of across his chest

strength-hero-courage

it was those three he presented
 to keep at bay the names of
 pain agony and hell
 created by a disease that
 formed cycle shaped cells

oh did i mention anemia
 in case you don't understand
 or maybe i'm getting ahead

of ya
 the torment is comparable to
 lets say twenty-seven knives
 in the back along with suicide
 attempts from paranoia

meaning the suffering was
 mental just as it was in the
 sense of physical

now do you see what i mean
 he has at his command
 portable on wheels endless
 supply of morphine
 snap of his finger's
 and its entered his
 blood stream
 i catch his eyes roll and
 see the gleam
 a sigh escapes from his
 lips to express relief
 so maybe now he
 can dream

until the next day that is
 of course ill be gone
 never to see the two
 again

-patrick jimenez

ŠŠŠ"What is the weight of a lettuce head?"

Con cariño para mi mamá

1:16 dark n raining
 me, a bundle of blanket
 pillow y
 calientita memoria,

think of home
 the tap tap of richmond rain
 hace floreser un recuerdo
 y es como si saliera el sol
 of mom n dinner after work
 she by el comal
 n the puffing flour tortillas
 that we both love
 but complain about the fat

"rain is so soothing!
 me encanta ver llover atravez de mi ventana"
 I say with a big shiny smile
 mom glimpses at me and replies

"that's because you don't work in the fields
 your fingers don't get numb with cold and bee stings
 n my smile gets as flat as the tortilla she just flipped

"i also love the sun"
 digo tontamente y sin penzar
 n she reveals with heavy voice
 "that's because your eyes don't sting
 with sweat n
 your neck don't peel"

n i shrink n feel guilty in my seat
 as she stands
 stands after 10 hrs of mud
 10 hrs of numb but fast moving fingers

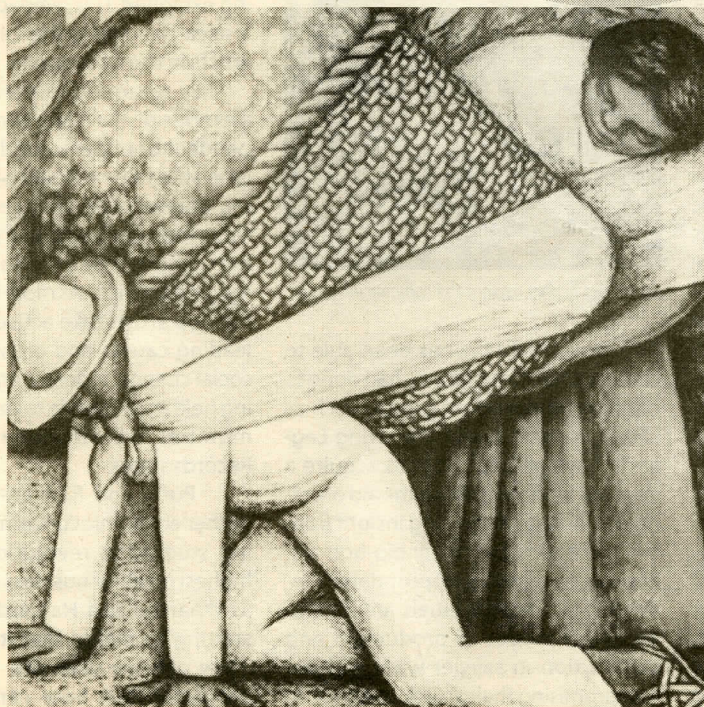
i look down at my steaming beans
 and warm soft tortilla
 y le digo con voz que apenas se oye
 "sientate mama
 yo caliente"

only mom
 with her small hands and thin fingers
 knows the real weight
 of a lettuce head

-agustín palacios

well versed

student poets reach down-to-earth to get
 a feel for their roots



"Not Nick-at-Nite"

Sometimes I feel more at home
At my best friends' houses
Where I can put my feet on the table
Or have an all-American meal with their families
And talk about the government or baseball
Rather than talk about family, money, or nothing at
all

A friend comes over once and says my house feels like
Mexico

I nod because I think so too
Even though I went there so long ago
I don't remember

And even though nothing in my house resembles
What I see on the nightly telenovelas on channel 67

When friends come over, my mom speaks in Spanish
And they cannot understand
They ask what she says
And I sometimes lie
Because they can't tell the difference

At my house, we don't eat dinner as a family even
though we are one

And, my father cooks his usual high in fat meal of
rice,

Beans, and beef of some sort
And he sticks a leaf of lettuce on my plate
Because he doesn't want me

To have high cholesterol like he has
And sometimes I complain about not eating more mashed
potatoes

Pizza or even meatloaf
Even though it would not feel right
If my dad ever cooked it

And what would I do without my mother's over-decorated
living room

Or her obsession with Last Supper Frames, and blankets
over couches

My home looks nothing like the ones on Nick-at-Nite
But, I don't mind much anymore

And, although my parents speak in a tongue foreign to
my friends

I know that I can always understand
And I can keep it to myself

-Lolita Gonzales

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first, I've just gotten along better with her than the average
people I meet. I've never dated anyone not Asian, or, not half-
Asian. No one I've dated is purely anything - they're all mixed.
Maybe those are the people who accept me/who I get along
with.

I don't date white girls. They assume that I'm Caucasian
and they'll do little things that will offend that Japanese part
of me. What they do makes you flinch a little, cuz that's a fourth
of me - a substantial part of me. Hey, a mixed Asian's never
gonna say shit about your Japanese grandmother. Yeah, whites
definitely make fun of people walking by, cuz they think that
they can relate with me more, but, it actually kinda hurts my
feelings more, even though my outside characteristics did not
ask for it. I can't tolerate being made fun of. I reject the preju-
dice so strongly.

Still, I get funny looks from mostly Asian guys when I go
on trips with Sarah. I see some people looking a little pissed...it
doesn't bother me that much, I think it's kinda funny. But...I
still want to tell them "hey what you're you looking at." I was
surprised at those looks: because I never recognized the trend
that white guys go for Asian females more often. First of all,
my sister is this white girl who always dates Asian guys. And
she never felt this all-encompassing opportunity with Asian
guys (even though she's three-fourths white), so I don't think
white women have more chances with Asian guys. Second of
all, don't forget my white mom and half-Japanese dad. Third
of all...in high school too, all the white girls went with Indian
and Asian guys.

Ethnic Pattern - *Just happened so*

SARAH: Pattern of Dating - me, usually a guy who's Japa-
nese. Full-Japanese or half-Japanese. It's just them individu-

ally. It's just coincidence. (Sarah can't explain for it).

Religious Differences - *Didn't matter to them, why me?*

BRIAN: Sarah considers herself Catholic—she doesn't go
religiously, but every so often, she participates in Lent. I make
fun of it sometimes about it...I don't buy it. Her mom's Catholic
and her dad's Buddhist. They married anyway because they were
both immigrants so they related in those terms instead; there
probably weren't Catholic Filipinos around.

My dad's Protestant: he reads the bible a lot, but he's anti-
establishment. He goes to a Chinese church. It kinda makes sense
since he's half-Japanese while there are very few Japanese Chris-
tians. My mom grew up in a fire-and brimstone-type church. It
all adds up to: religious difference is not that important for me.

Core Values - *As long as you have them*

SARAH: My mom's a Catholic, my dad's a Buddhist. The
basic values of both religions are the same - they want the kid
to be good and honest. So, religion was never an issue.

Open-Mindedness - *We have it, so what?*

BRIAN: Having parents of different backgrounds is more
important than what, specifically, those backgrounds are. It just
sets you up to be more open-minded. Little kids have to accept
the different ways both parents do things without making an
issue out of it, if that's the kind of thing you grew up in. If you
were to ask me point-blank, I guess I would say yes to the ques-
tion that I would find people of a pure race more set in their
views.

Hey, but maybe I do have that Asian fetish thing where I
like Asian girls because they're more submissive or whatever,
and I'm just rationalizing my choice with my multi-racial back-
ground, so you gotta be careful about attributing things to race
or racial background. Everyone I've met defies stereotypes;
everyone's always complex. Their characteristics could come
from their parents' profession or what-not you know.



Hacer el amor es
to make love is to

hacer poesía
make poetry

tocar, punto, pausa
touch, pause

una pierna que se
a leg that crosses with

cruza con la coma.
a comma.

-agustín palacios

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able before. I didn't sport my torn jeans, doing my
best not to appear rebellious. I left all this stuff in
Berkeley.

I completely changed. Right after. I was
much quieter, I was not sarcastic - there was no
need to be sarcastic. There was no outside force
to reckon with, like I do here, so there was no need
to set up a barrier by acting sarcastic towards you
before "you even have your chance." Deep inside,
I wanted to be harmonious. In Japan, there's less
arrogance going on among people than in
America. I felt their humility. I felt humble there,
along with them, instead of just humbled by their
achievements. There is freedom in the humility.
There's a certain beauty also to their culture: the
simplicity, duty, respect, and cleanliness. Japan is
a big powerful country with computers and gad-
gets, but people there harbor a kind of inherent
beauty. Beauty they don't even know they carry!
The natural beauty...I was overwhelmed. Your
heart aches thinking about the beauty of it all, so
much so you can cry.

I felt at home there. It's ironic: here I expect
to be accepted, I'm not; in Japan, I don't expect to
be accepted, yet somehow I manage to be ac-
cepted. One important discovery: I was Japanese
enough, enough for me to appreciate what a cul-
tural foundation is all about. With a common cul-
tural binding, you didn't have to reacclimate. The
communication was so efficient—the channels
were not confusing. Here in Berkeley, there's more

nervousness in the air. With cultures jostling
each other here, people don't know what to do,
because everyone is trying to be sensitive to cul-
tural elements they're more or less clueless
about.

Building Identity:

Learning Japanese ways to date, Japanese

My dream is to live in Japan, though it's go-
ing to be a huge undertaking. Hello, I don't know
the language and I'm a half-white American. I
also have a tough time reconciling myself to the
gender expectations for Japanese woman to
play the more subservient role. But I don't want
to confront the problem with my American way,
arrogant, feminist, blah blah blah. When I live
there, I'm ready to be re-raised, to grow up all
over again. There's an innocence in that. It will
take me five years of getting immersed there,
all as part of the education, before I can date a
Japanese man. I'd get with the program, under
the tutelage of some Asian not from Japan, so I
wouldn't constantly be subordinated under the
tutelage of a culturally more versed counterpart.
Over the years, as I learn, I would already be a
Japanese. But it would still be ignorant of me to
expect to be Japanese, because I would have to
have been born and raised in Japan. All I can ever
hope is feel comfortable there, and harmonize
with the ways of the people there.

By then, I would have built up this respect
within me that enables me to see another cul-
ture for what it is without trying to exploit it and
to bring it into myself.

police takes beating from READER'S ROD

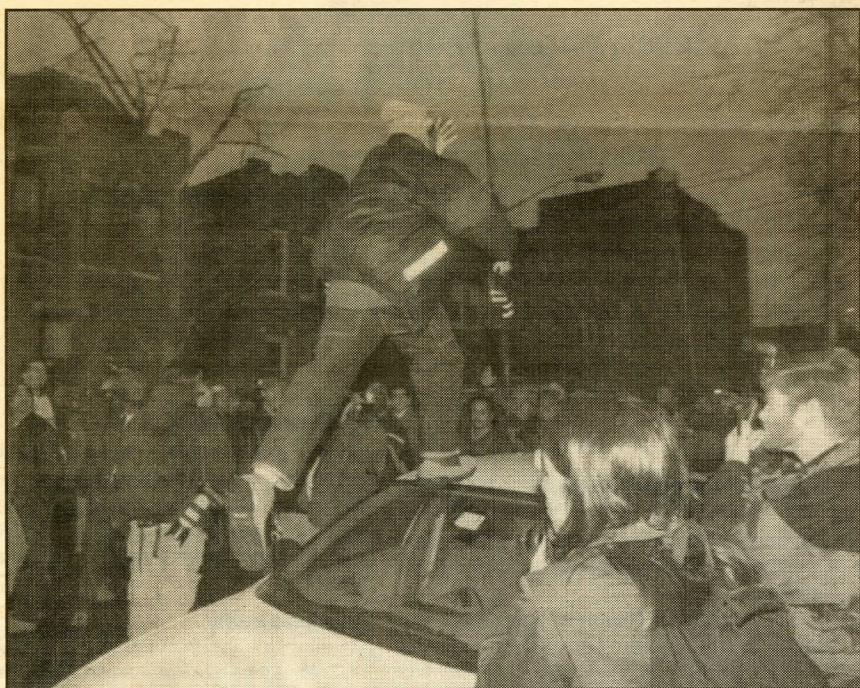
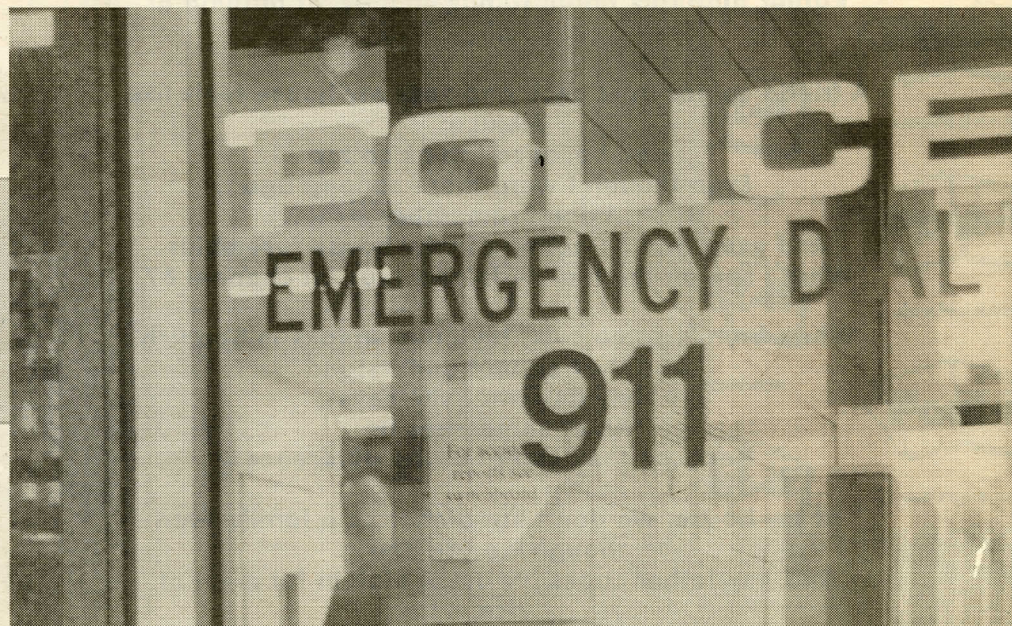
Sharp Eyes Rip Open Media Representation of Police Brutality

BY PAULI WAI

On campus grounds, the youth crime issue on campus grounds had been politicized. It made the plight of crime-ridden communities land on the laps of Cal's little academic circle. Bathroom doors, lecture seatbacks, and tack-holed bulletin boards all sport evocative images that propagandize the message "No on Prop. 21, Schools Not Jails." The intellectual debate circle is suddenly galvanized into political action. It is, after all, within everyone's capacity to punch

TION of the same issue of police brutality in the multi-racial magazine *Colorlines*, the *New York Times*, and the Asian American magazine *A.Magazine*. Instead of editorializing the issue by expounding on any one position, I will look at how the presentation and perspective of each article are influenced by who writes it, and for whom. The moral and aesthetic value of this exercise lies in looking at how the writing's stance and tone might clue us in on the motivations behind the story.

The Winter 1999 *Colorlines* article, en-



a "no" on the voting ballot.

As a public institution, Cal is vulnerable to political turmoil. It is hard not to be influenced, even battered, by state-wide political campaigns rocking a community's conscience. We are pushed to align ourselves politically, striking yes or no decisions. We cannot afford the luxury of examining race relations outside a political context. The political charge surrounding key issues, such as affirmative action or propositions, either stirs us or alienates us. Few of us have the critical distance and social concern to do justice to the nuanced complexity of social situations.

Police Brutality. The term conjures up a slew of powerful associations with riots, trial verdicts, and racial profiling. The emotional content of the term encourages action or reaction, rather than rational inquiry. But in this article, I will focus on the REPRESENTA-

titled "The Economics of the New Brutality," opens with a violent scene graphically captured. The opening dramatizes, moment-to-moment, how a gang of cops crashed into the innocent privacy of an East Oakland resident. It is innocent, as the article emphasizes with the lines:

"The local cops descended on Melinda Cosby's house...to investigate what turned out to be the false allegations of credit card fraud by Ms. Cosby. Her husband, Nathan, lay dead on his bedroom floor, shot in the back of the head through a window by an officer..." (*Colorlines*, Winter 1999, 21).

The opening achieves two things: inspire disgust at the police, and create indignation for the wronged resident. The emotional strings, when pulled like this, sway audience sympathy to the side of the community. The undue violence depicted, while damning the police, also victimizes the resi-

dent in a way that shocks the senses out of readers. This shock, unfortunately, defers reader impulse to defend the victim through well-researched facts and well-reasoned arguments.

The *New York Times* Feb. 26, 2000 article, under the heading "Verdict Elicits Sharp Feelings On Both Sides," starts the discussion from a more removed point of observation than *Colorlines*. This time, the video camera is shut off, and the writer's pen is employed to describe the internal feelings of individuals affected by the acquittal of officers who killed a crimeless black immigrant.

"Strong and deeply polarized emotions—anger, bitter indignation and stunned disbelief on one side, and expressions of relief and vindication on the other—rippled across the metropolitan area..." (*NY Times*, Feb. 26, A1).

This journalist captures emotions instead of images. But the way he spans across emotional differences establishes his authority as an insider in communities on each

"The opening achieves two things: inspire disgust at the police, and create indignation for the wronged resident."

side of the fence. The virtue of this kind of presentation is that it strives to be objective and inclusive. But its faults are implicit in the way it dwells on the level of airborne emotions, out of touch with where people are coming from.

In the December 1999 issue of *A.Magazine*, an Asian-American "Behind the Wall of Silence" speaks up against cops picking on Chinese youths. Another scene of violence, with the police implicated and the minority targeted, is thrust in front of the reader's face. But this time, we hear the minority speak: "Peter Yew, a 27-year-old engineer, didn't like what he saw and spoke up. Before he knew it, Yew found himself arrested, beaten, dragged into the local police station and beaten again."

This particular opening treats the po-

lice-minority dynamics in a matter-of-factly way that is decidedly different from the senselessness of *Colorlines'* pulp-fiction scenario, and the loftiness of *New York Times'* helicopter survey. The portrayal of this catalyst event quickly transitions into a long shot view of community organizing: "In the ensuing weeks, several thousand Chinatown residents marched onto City Hall demanding justice. Meetings were held between the mayor's office and Chinatown leaders" (*A.Magazine*, Dec. 1999, 38). The emphasis on the minority voice and minority action admits readers into the confidence of the minority community. The reader is poised to explore the inside situation of a self-empowering community. Neither righteous fury nor cold distance are there to get in the way of understanding.

While *Colorlines* also places the integrity of the community on the line, the article's analysis of police brutality is primarily class-based. Taking a step back, the article portrays the police themselves as instruments used by higher officials to implement high-flown plans of revitalizing inner cities. For example, the article marshals sociological terms to explain the self-interests of decision-makers: "New York City, in its effort to forge an identity as a safe cosmopolitan community welcoming to the professional and managerial class, has led the way in the last five years in criminalizing a broad swath of pub-

lic activities that has led to unprecedented harassment and detention of poor, working class, and homeless people by the police" (*Colorlines*, Winter 1999, 23). The city is personified into a monolithic block. But somehow, powerful as it is, it still has its "identity" at stake. Single-purposed or not, the city, as the article purports, is economically consolidating, so it has to ferret out unwanted elements. In this way, the city is pitted against disparate groups lumped together, despite notable distinctions between the working class and the homeless.

The *New York Times* article commits a similar error of cleaving the community into half, sneaking in alternative viewpoints only on the sidelines. If read between the lines, the writing's condescending tone can be detected. The patronizing attitude shows

through the cracks of the dichotomy: "Much of the reaction was predictable: the black and Hispanic communities in Harlem denouncing the acquittals as a travesty, while a mixed response was more apparent in [other neighborhoods]. 'It was a horrible accident, and the cops deserve to go free'" (Feb. 26, A13). The journalist presumes to already know the feelings of minorities, perhaps forgetting that, it takes the impact of a portending event stamped into reality for emotions of a more intense order to actually kick in. Besides, the "mixed response" represented is anything but mixed, since the speaker quoted virtually avows his allegiance to the police. The only statement of concern for social justice is tacked onto the tail end of the article, with a quote from Senator Bill Bradley: "I think that it shows that when racial profiling seeps so deeply into somebody's mind, a wallet in the hand of a white man looks like a wallet, but a wallet in the hand of black man looks like a gun" (NY Times, Feb. 26, 2000, A13). From the mouth of a high authority, this statement supposedly carries more validity. But to have this understanding reached by an educated white, instead of by someone of color, raises interesting questions. How can minorities voice the same claim, taking issue with racist double standards, without sounding vengeful and offensive?

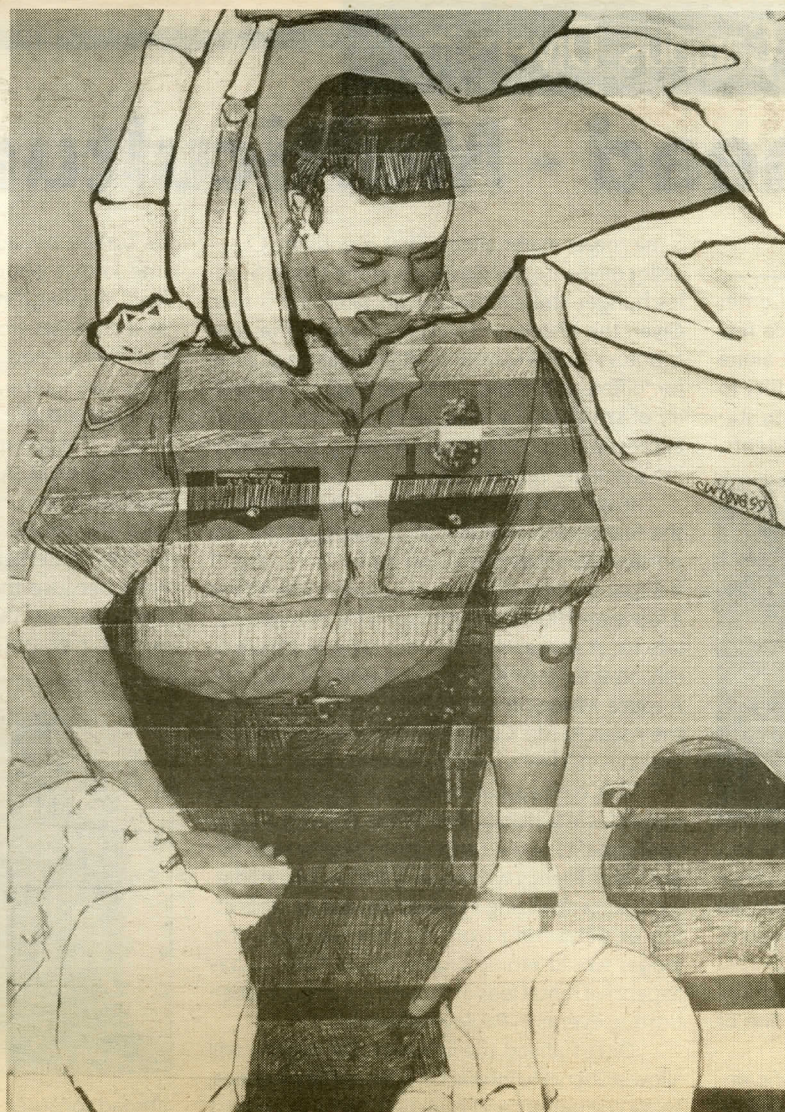
A Magazine does just that. The article chronicles the diversification of the police force to protect minorities from having to take a beating from discriminatory police practices. But having entered the police force through civil rights lawsuits, an Asian-American po-

lice confronts a more insidious obstacle. Speaking from inside the police department, an Asian-American police officer exposes the bias from within the ranks, "There is a stereotype that Asian can't cut the job, or that we have no communication skills" But Fred Lau, the chief of police is contrary to the stereotype. He says, "Police chiefs are associated with strong, assertive, male images.... People are amazed that a Chinese American can be the police chief of a major city. My response is, 'what's the big deal?'" (A Magazine, Dec. 1999, 38).

In the course of the article, attention turns from individual breakthroughs to community dialogue. It turns out that the perception of immigrants towards the police hinges on the home-country experiences of these minorities. Distrust for the police runs as high as in the other two articles, but this article goes to the source of discomfort.

"The community still has images of the police from Korea.... And most of that image is negative. Back home, the police force was used by the power structure to manipulate citizens.... In China, the penalty for drug possession is twelve days: you are detained for eleven days, and killed on the twelfth.... If someone arrived recently from China, how do you expect that person to call the police?" (A Magazine, Dec. 1999, 82). Instead of displaying minority emotions as alien in either their excess or insularity, this article's sensitive approach places feelings in a historical and community context, so that understanding takes priority over combat.

Neither ambitiously analytical like



Colorlines, nor patronizingly authoritative like NY Times, the article ends with confessional honesty. The dilemma for minority officers is internal yet powerful: "You have to understand that if

you're the only Asian person in a station, you need to be able to fit in. If issues of discrimination come up, then you are jeopardizing your career. That's a part of our culture." (Dec. 1999, 82).

"Instead of displaying minorities' emotions as alien in either their excess or insularity, this article's sensitive approach places feelings in a historical and community context, so that understanding takes priority over combat."

There is no finger-pointing, but the implications of these remarks are chilling. The stress and impact of racial discrimination on a minority's psyche are singularly felt.

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him out of the way. I would have to think twice before suggesting we go to a certain place to eat. I would ask myself, would it be out of his price range at this restaurant if he's going to pay for everything? I always felt that going out and having fun with him meant digging deep into his wallet and dissipating his hard earned wages. How could I tell him that I liked going to parties and Carnegies and Manhattan Club, the English pub and dance club frequented by a crowd of mostly yuppies and affluent expatriates? It seemed necessary to hide a part of me, the part that enjoys the opulent expatriate life, in order to protect his ego and pride. Though I do enjoy street food and simple things, would he be cynical and think that I'm putting on a show to appear like a rich, spoiled person trying to look humble and down-to-earth? These questions and concerns perpetually lurked in the back of my mind.

The nuances of cultural differences were significant annoyances in my life. Before we started going out, it seemed to me perfectly fine to make a move on the guy first. But my co-worker Monica asserted that it was "cheap" for a girl to pursue a guy. Ridiculous I thought, but I couldn't help but subscribe to that guy-must-go-after-girl-first culture, lest I scare him off. Everytime we went out, he would see me to my home first even if it was totally out of his way. He would be considered inconsiderate in his culture if he did not see a girl home, even though I thought that it was rather restraining as an insult to my independence. Sure it's nice to have someone see you to your door, but you don't have to do it every time, I can find my way home by myself. Sometimes I almost felt like I was being stalked.

And there was also a lurking pressure imposed on us by the society at large. My friends questioned my motives in dating Jerry, "Why are you dating someone below you," they asked, "He's from a lower class than you." To Jerry's friends, he was a "sell-out," because he was dating someone coming from a higher class.

Did he get together with me because he wanted to elevate his status in front of his friends? Did I get together with him simply for his good looks? In retrospect, it was essentially a mutually beneficial, but unhealthy, relationship. Jerry was my gateway to the youth culture in Hong Kong, acting as my conduit of culture exchange. As his girlfriend, I had unparalleled access to the insides of the underground Hong Kong youth culture, and by association, his friends accepted me into their clique even though I came from a vastly

"It seemed necessary to hide a part of me, the part that enjoys the opulent expatriate life, in order to protect his ego and pride. Though I do enjoy street food and simple things, would he be cynical and think that I'm putting on a show to appear like a rich, spoiled person trying to look humble and down-to-earth?"

different cultural and class background. And I was Jerry's gateway to a higher stratum in society. To him, I symbolized a world of elite Western education, ski resorts, five star restaurants, and parental monetary support. And by association, he could "climb" up the social hierarchy and identify himself as someone belonging to a higher social class.

Class differences aside, we had a common Chinese heritage that gave us the similar experience of living with a close-knit nuclear family within a larger network of extended families. We both have over

twenty aunts, uncles, and innumerable first cousins.

During Chinese holidays, we would find ourselves eating dinner with the relatives, listening to the mundane family gossip. However, Jerry is definitely more Chinese in the sense that his family values are a lot stronger than mine. Whereas my parents leave me with wide discretion as to what I choose to major in and what I want to do after I graduate, Jerry was tied down with family responsibilities. His parents expect him to graduate, find a job, and help pay off the family's housing mortgage; consequently, he bears a heavy burden on his shoulders to honor the wishes of his parents by supporting the family. As for me, I really don't give a damn about filial responsibility because my parents are the ones supporting me, and their pension funds and savings will support them after retirement. I will never understand the pressure he faces from the responsibilities that his family, extended family, and society place on him. And he will never understand how I can be so insensitive to my family in not wanting to live with my parents and support them while exploring the international job market. In short, our future plans diverged significantly. We were incapable of being forward-looking through a common goal.

As the eldest grandson in the family, Jerry's grandmother placed all her love and hope in him, expecting that one day she would have the opportunity to attend the graduation ceremony with him wearing the black square graduation cap. One might think that I don't value my college education as much as he does because college admission has virtually been handed to me on a golden spoon by dint of the relatively elite education I got from kindergarten to high school. I couldn't empathize with what he felt when he couldn't deliver his family's and grandmother's wishes of going to a "good" college in Hong Kong.

When he shared his childhood stories with me, I could only identify with him up to the similar cartoons we watched till we were seven years old. He would tell

me about how he and his cousins had to beg their aunts and uncles for a few coins to buy candy. Living in cramped, badly ventilated government housing, he and his cousins almost burned down the entire building complex playing with firecrackers. While I listened with interest, I couldn't conjure up the images he painted for me through words. Even though I spent part of my childhood in Hong Kong, I lived in a spacious, upper-middle class apartment complex, my protective parents would never allow me to go near anything as explosive as firecrackers, and my generous relatives would give me whatever I ask for. At the end of the day, he would feel that he was not getting any response from me after having opened himself up, thinking that I was an unfeeling and unresponsive listener, when in fact the problem was simply that I could neither understand nor identify with his childhood.

Because of these difficulties and differences that we experienced, we grew further and further apart. Until one day, Jerry told me that he was having a hard time devoting himself to the relationship because he was having the overriding difficulty of communicating with me. "Let's break up," he said. And my heart sank to my feet. What went wrong, I asked myself. How did those speakers at interracial conferences and forums manage it? How did the Montagues and Capulets manage it? My relationship wasn't even an interracial one, and god forbid, our families weren't feuding either. How come I couldn't handle our differences? But the forces were too formidable to overcome, and I accepted my crushing defeat. Instead of making us stronger in our ability to appreciate our differences, the attempted synthesis of our two different cultures in reality stripped us of a common ground on which to base a solid relationship. Our communication channel was marked by staccatos; our class difference strained our sense of self-worth; and we used each other's cultural status to achieve our own selfish ends. And all these things were true, in spite of our same ethnicity.

Space Ahead - Multicultural Center Opens

VIVA LA DIFFERENCE

April 6, 2000, the Cal Multicultural Center opened with a bang. A small bang, since few white and Asian students knew about, let alone showed up at the celebration. Out of the fifty to sixty attendees, less than ten Asian-looking students, and even less white-looking students, could be included in the head count. The common perception among them is that Berkeley is already, more or less, one big multicultural center anyway.

They are partially right in that Berkeley is a space where a plethora of ethnic groups co-exist alongside each other. But the mixture is by no means even. The presence of diversity itself does not guarantee an equal sense of belonging or equal access to resources between the groups. Some groups still feel marginalized enough to struggle for a space they can call their own without hedging the line of perpetuating the practice of exclusion.

The center grew out of a tradition of campus activism calling for the development of programs essential to the needs, invisible or visible, undeniably felt by minorities. The demand for a multicultural center goes back to 1969, when twLF (Third World Liberation Front) called for, among other things, an Ethnic Studies Department and a Multicultural Center.

While the ES Department has developed into a venerable institution, the multicultural center

has never materialized. That is, until the Chancellor gave into the demands of the Ethnic Studies hunger strikers thirty years later last spring. Given the history of the center, one of the contributors said he locates multiculturalism as a site for "different histories." He continued, "The reality of struggles, he says, gives way to authentic expression, not consensus. A happy, hand-holding place the center is not."

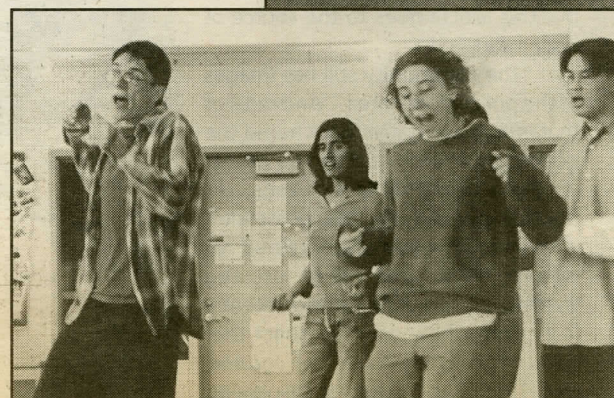
Instead, the center establishes its identity on the foundation of inter-racial dialogues. An important aspect of this vision is physical space. It is a space where students can explore identity as a loose and fluid concept, ready for others to relate to. A space where students do not have to rely on their own ethnic community to feel safe. A space where, for example, students not part of the Asian Pacific Council and Black Board Meetings can still learn what issues they face.

This conceptual need for a center leads to translates into its practical needs. About the practical benefits of the center, one planner said, "Logistical efficiency will increase also by consolidating and centralizing services instead of replicating or detracting from existing services. No longer would ethnic organizations have to pay expensive rental fees or move the furniture when hosting events in Pauley Ballroom."

Once fulfilled, the function of the center will allow students to interact at cross-racial meetings, share computers and bulletin boards, or co-host events and lectures.

Only then will dialogue and understanding have their place in the center. Another contributor from AISEC (International Work Exchange Placement Agency) said the center should correct inadequate cultural awareness about foreign countries. Not all countries are equally promoted, she said, for example, "No one ever wants to go

to Turkey because no one knows about Turkey." A foreign student said students from under-developed countries can "come speak and get rid of stereotypes." A returning EAP (Educational Abroad Program) alumna also said she found re-adjusting to Berkeley life hard because the conversation on culture, which her daily life



TOP: Indus Dance Performance won smiles and laughs with their gracefully playful choreography.
LEFT: Diverse a cappella group Decadence hit a chord among the audience with a song by Berkeley alumn composer. all photos by Jason Hsu

abroad consisted of, had to be dropped when she came back. The center can provide an on-going conversation by bringing in EAP panels to share their incredibly rich inter-cultural experiences for everyone, and not just for future generations of EAPers.

The easy flow of information and experiences will hopefully foster a kind of dynamic interaction that will attract Asians and Whites as

well, beyond the African-, Latino, and Southeast-Asian Americans already stationed in Cesar Chavez Center.

The Multicultural Center Office and Lounge are in 289, 290A Cesar Chavez Center. It has a \$75,000 annual budget from the Vice Chancellor's Discretionary Funds for job salaries, computer supplies, and lounge supplies. The lounge is a red carpeted room with a couch, attractive art deco, a Mac Computer, a printer, and a phone.

Opinion-Editorial

Lolita
Gonzales

Tolerance is Enough, Diversity Later

While Propositions 21 and 22 have been long out of the limelight, the issues that these propositions have raised continue to affect us today. These propositions exhibit more than just political divides in California; they expose the fine line between tolerance and acceptance. In a presidential campaign where one campaigner visits an Anti-Catholic institution while announcing he has a "Latino sister-in-law," and another campaigner uses a racial epitaph while blasting the religious right for being "breeders of intolerance," the confusion between acceptance or tolerance, versus diversity is evident. We can see how these propositions are necessary then, even though we are at a time when diversity is presumably being celebrated.

What is so interesting about Propositions 21 and 22 is that they only reinforce existing California practices, thus rendering the initiatives unnecessary. While Proposition 21 expands the penalties for gang-affiliated offenses to those that try 14-year old juveniles as adults for murder and other crimes, California has tried youngsters as adults for years. And Proposition 22, which bans California

from recognizing same-sex marriages, was passed while the current law already states that marriage is only recognized between a man and a woman.

Propositions 21 & 22 were passed overwhelmingly, by a margin of 61% in favor of to 39% against. While counties such as San Francisco, Alameda, Marin and Santa Cruz opposed the initiative, more conservative areas such as Orange, Palmdale and Escondido voted overwhelmingly in favor of Prop. 22.

Having viewed a Pro-Proposition 22 flyer, I was amazed at its deceptive simplicity in the way it featured happy couples and the words "Only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California." California already recognizes marriage only between heterosexuals, but apparently someone still sees the need to explicitly take issue with the current unmarried status of gays. Prop. 22 was sponsored by Republican Senator "Pete" Knight from Palmdale, who is estranged from his gay son. The proposition is simply a pre-emptive measure that bans California from recognizing same-sex marriages that are legalized in other states. What is so di-

visive about this measure is not what it says but what it doesn't say. It doesn't reveal the underlying fear that California might follow other states' practices. As a motivation for initiating the proposition, this fear is enacted to simply breed hate. If same-sex couples are having hard enough of a time attaining basic rights such as health benefits, hospital visitations, inheritance laws, adoptions, etc. Prop. 22 presents a worse obstacle for homosexuals to gain the same rights. This was simply an impulsive measure meant to erode any legal protection of gays and lesbians, emphasizing the "otherness" of homosexuals by explicitly excluding them.

Once Proposition 21 was passed, former Senator Pete Wilson, originator of the measure stated "Californians... have sent a clear message acting decisively to re-take neighborhoods, schools and businesses from vicious street gangs, who for too long have hidden behind a lenient and outdated juvenile justice system" (SF Chronicle, 3/8/00). But where can youths hide in a state that ranks 41st in its pupil expenditures in school while shelling out \$4 billion per year on prisons? California

seems to emphasize that there is more profit in prisons than in education or prevention, as the state seeks to increase youth incarceration rate, which is already twice the national average, while national juvenile homicide arrests have actually fallen 50% since 1990.

While Proposition 21 passed on the premise of being anti-crime, it entraps colored youth in a cycle of crime and punishment. The proposition demonstrates how California is quick to punish youths rather than correct their behavior while they are still young. Prop. 21 does more than try youth as adults for violent crimes, as it increases both the time served for non-violent crimes, and the penalties for being a gang member. But what determines gang status? Given the history of police racial profiling, it would be easier to convict colored youth for being part of a gang. Police officers are more likely to send to jail four colored kids dressed in baggy clothing than four white kids dressed in Abercrombie doing underage drinking. At any rate, who wouldn't vote for this Juvenile crime initiative, when we are bombarded by images of gun-touting teen-

agers on television? However, we should focus on the deterioration of the public school system, truancy problems, drugs, poverty, and violence that victimize youths before we criminalize them.

It seems like diversity and acceptance of those who are different from us is overshadowed by a less tolerant reality, as shown by California's recent tradition of exclusion (i.e. Props. 187, 209, 227, 22, 22 etc). Former President George Bush's advisor states, "A lot of Americans just believe in tolerance and think that [presidential nominee, George W.] Bush is intolerant" (SF Chronicle, 4/13/00). It is hard for me to think that Americans can only believe in tolerance when they are pushed to believe in diversity and multiculturalism. However, the passage of these propositions does force us to recognize the recent legislation, passed under the guise of protecting the native-born, heterosexual, English-speaking population. The passage entails intolerant attitudes towards those that do not fit into this generally-known-to-be more privileged category. We should give up holding the line of diversity, when tolerance is enough.