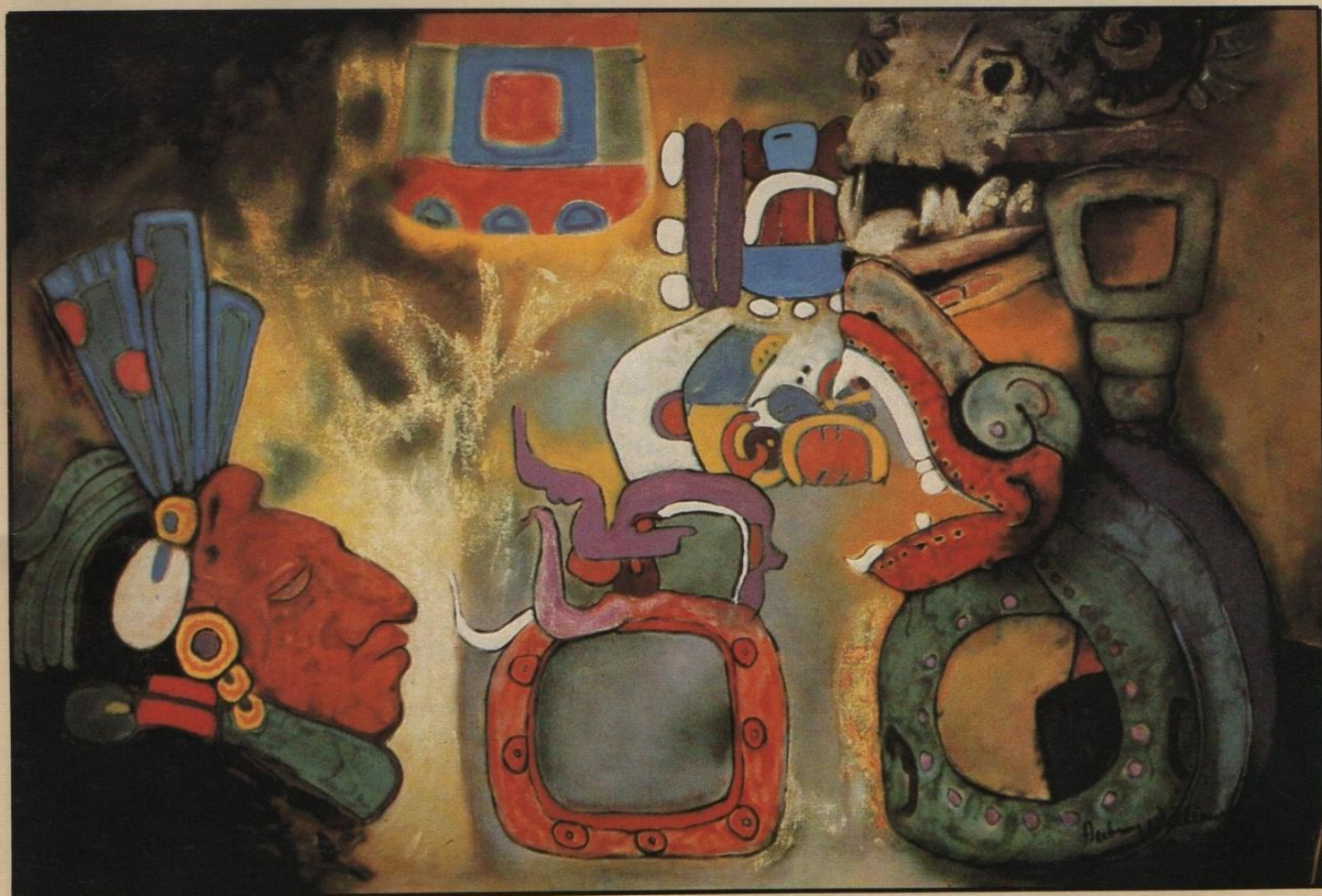


ARTRAGE

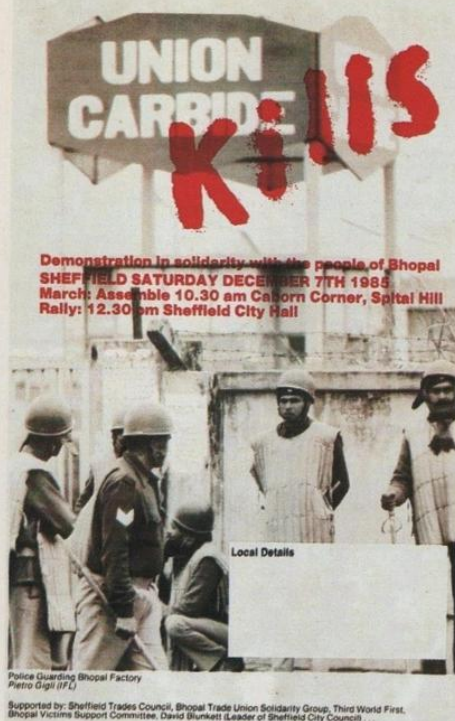
Inter-Cultural Arts Magazine



Artrageous: stories, photographs,
poems and visual art

Guyanese Focus: Wilson Harris and
Aubrey Williams

plus news, views and reviews



Demonstration in solidarity with the people of Bhopal
SHEFFIELD SATURDAY DECEMBER 7TH 1985
 March: Assemble 10.30 am Castlem Corner, Spital Hill
 Rally: 12.30pm Sheffield City Hall

Police Guarding Bhopal Factory
 Pietro Gigi (IFL)
 Supported by: Sheffield Trades Council, Bhopal Trade Union Solidarity Group, Third World First, Bhopal Victims Support Committee, David Blunkett (Leader of Sheffield City Council)

FUNDRAISING FOR THE ARTS SHORT COURSE

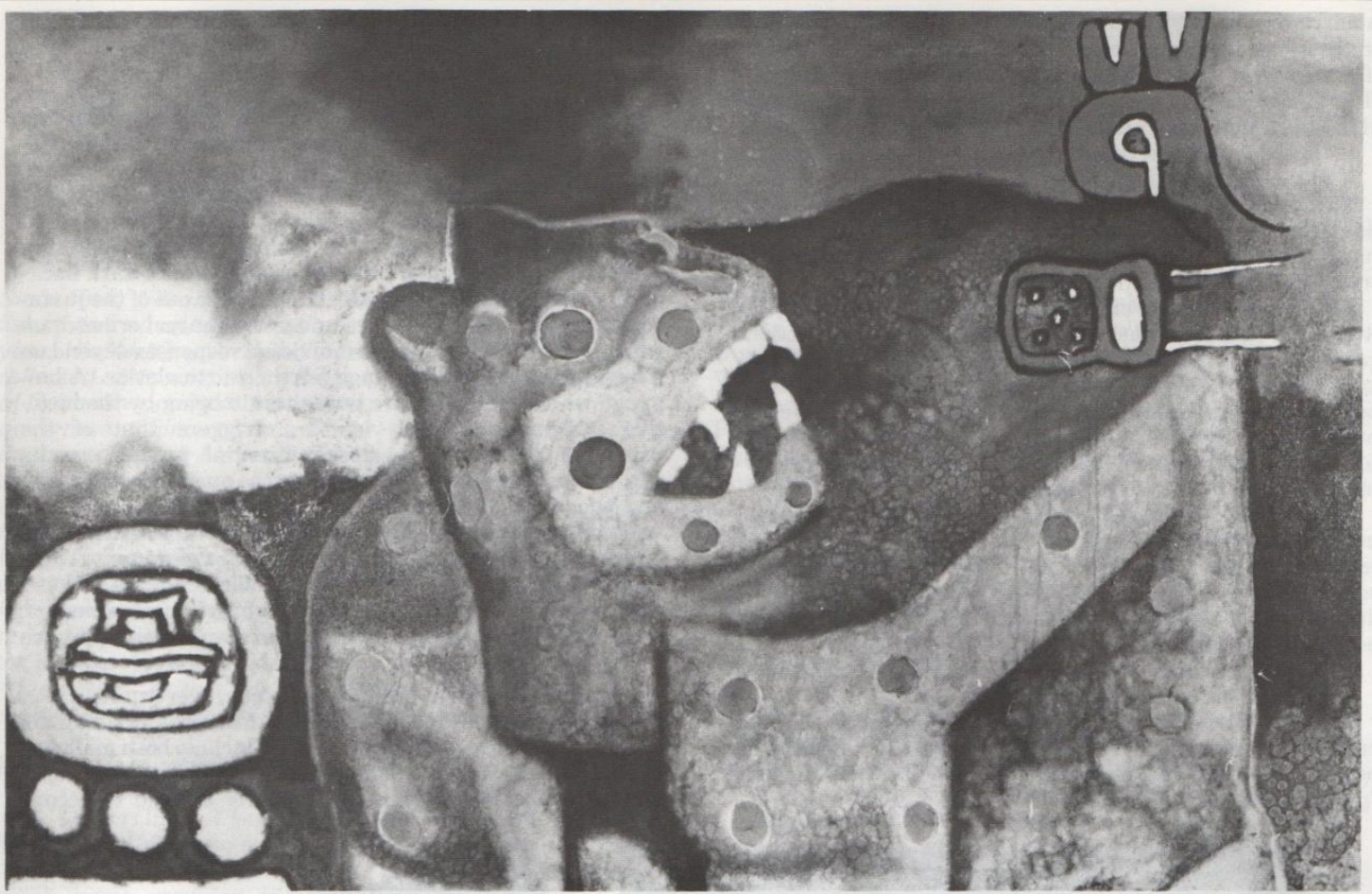
An intensive four day course in Fundraising for the arts will be held on 18-21 November 1985, and 2-5 December 1985 at the Polytechnic of Central London. Jointly sponsored by the Minorities Arts Advisory Service and the Polytechnic of Central London, this course is designed for black arts administrators, individual artists, arts groups, or youth and community groups who are involved in arts, crafts, or the media. This will be a participatory workshop where groups will: 1) review their specific funding needs 2) learn general funding techniques 3) identify resources for arts funding 4) practice written applications 5) learn strategies for long term funding and business sponsorship. There will be an opportunity to meet representatives from funding bodies. Video playback will be used to improve oral presentations. There is no fee for this course, but spaces are limited. Book as soon as possible, call Makeda or Beverley on 286 1858 or 286 1854.

MAAS Conference
 30th November 1985 at the
 Africa Centre, 38, King Street,
 London W2

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PARMINDER VIR ARCHIVE
 WORKING FOR BLACK & ETHNICITY
GLC
 1981-1986



Hymn to the Sun I, 48" x 70" oils by Aubrey Williams

AUBREY WILLIAMS

Aubrey Williams is one of the most outstanding artists to have come out of the Caribbean and his latest major exhibition, at the Commonwealth Institute Gallery, testifies to his remarkable energy and dedication. Born in Guyana in 1926 where he received his early education, he joined the Civil Service and during service in the North West Jungle of Guyana, he lived for two years with the Warrau, described as a primitive Indian tribe. During this time he maintained his early interest in painting and developed an interest in Pre-columbian art and artefacts which he has sustained during his entire working life as an artist and which has provided the philosophical framework for his art. His interest in art intensified during this period, and on return to city life, he studied with local Guyanese painters DeWinter and Burrowes, and participated in the Working Peoples' Art Group. He came to Europe in 1952 and travelled extensively before settling in London in 1954 where he studied at St. Martins School of Art. During the late sixties and early seventies he was an active and leading member of the Caribbean Artists Movement, which was founded in London and which exerted a powerful impact on the work of Caribbean poets, novelists, painters and intellectuals.

Over the last thirty years he has had numerous one man and group exhibitions in Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, the USA and Canada. He has also received a number of prizes, honours and awards including the Commonwealth Prize for Painting in 1964, the Golden Arrow of Achievement Guyana in 1970, nomination as Academic of Italy with Gold Medal in 1980. His work has been purchased by a number of public institutions such as the University of the West Indies, the Arts Council of Great Britain, Olympia Art Centre in Jamaica, Guyana House of Assembly and St. Catherine's College Oxford among others.

Although Williams has spent much of his working life in Europe, the scale and epic quality of his paintings owe much to his early affinity with the civilisations that flourished in central and south America. In this respect he shares the same outlook and broad concerns with novelist and fellow Guyanese, Wilson Harris who writes of the "profound myth that lies apparently eclipsed in the largely forgotten so-called savage cultures". Both men have devoted their working lives to the painstaking excavation and re-creation of this "profound myth" which has become a source of inspiration for their art.

Such appropriation they see as a natural prerogative of their inheritance of a 'new world' with the unique creative and artistic possibilities that it embodies. Harris's retreat from the 'novel of persuasion' which he sees as inadequate to the needs of the region is matched in spirit and essence by Williams's elemental and magical canvasses. Both men have experienced the vast Guyanese interior and their physical penetration of this hinterland can be seen as a metaphor for their spiritual penetration of the mysteries that lie at the heart of the pre-Columbian cultures that found such expression in the culture and art of the Mayas and Olmecs.

Over the years, Aubrey Williams' vision has steadily forged its way to its present clarity and power. His exhibition at the Commonwealth Institute titled *'The Olmec-Maya Now'* can be classified into two broad categories – the exclusively abstract works and those which have a figurative element. The more figurative works suggest concrete anthropological reference points to Olmec/Mayan myth and cosmology through the introduction of figures, faces and fragments of Mayan emblems and symbols. This represents a new development in the work of Aubrey Williams.

THE OLMEC MAYA CIVILISATIONS

'These people also made use of certain characters or letters with which they wrote in their books their ancient affairs and their sciences, and with these and drawings and with certain signs in these drawings they understood their affairs and made others understand them and taught them. We found a great number of these books in these characters, and, as they contained nothing in which there was to be seen superstition and the lies of the devil, we burnt them all, which they regretted to an amazing degree and caused them affliction.'
Bishop Lander (contemporary witness of the Conquest.)

1. Ceramic figure Remojadas style from the Vera Cruz region.
2. Olmec terracotta figure
3. Olmec stone figure
4. Stone relief – Maya Classic period (Palenque)



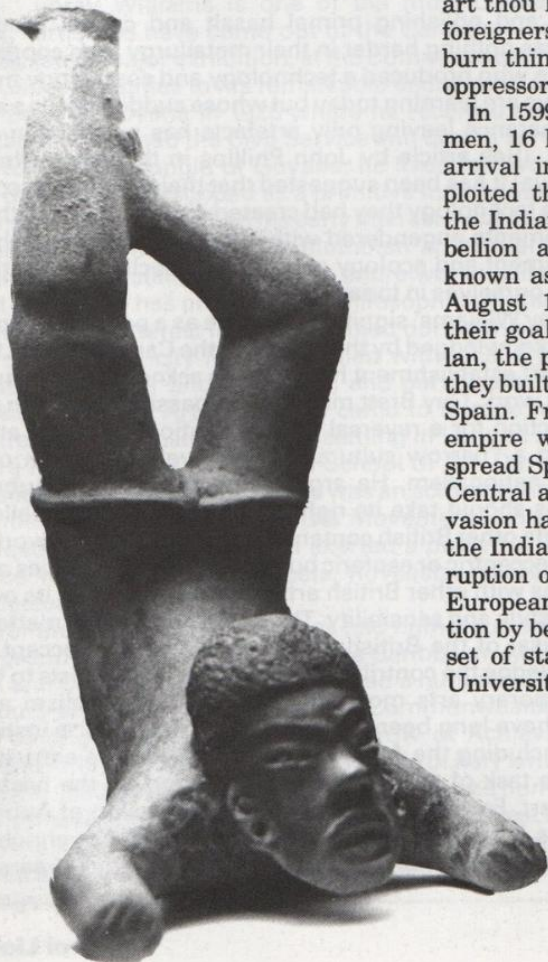
Every year, for hundreds of years, the Quiché Maya who live in the highlands of Guatemala perform a play which re-enacts the invasion of their lands by the Spanish Conquistadores. As the Quiché King Tecúm Umán fights Alvarado a chorus chants, "Mighty Volcano, fertile mountain, why art thou humiliated by the weapons of foreigners? Throw forth the flames that burn thine entrails and consume thine oppressors with fire."

In 1599 Cortés left Cuba with 550 men, 16 horses and a few cannon. On arrival in Central America they exploited the internal conflicts between the Indian nations and organized a rebellion against the dominant group known as the Mexicans or Aztecs. By August 1521 they had succeeded in their goal. From the ruins of Tenochtitlan, the principal city of the Mexicans, they built Mexico city, the capital of new Spain. From there they expanded the empire which they had usurped and spread Spanish influence over much of Central and Southern America. The invasion had disastrous consequences for the Indian peoples. The large scale disruption of war and the introduction of European diseases reduced the population by between 60 and 90 percent. One set of statistics produced at Berkeley University suggests a population for

Central America of 25 million falling to 2½ millions by 1600. Whilst Sanders and Price suggest a population of 15 million.

The survivors were subjected to a wholesale restructuring of family village and religious life and were put to work as slaves. In 1545 slavery was officially abolished and replaced by a system of debt slavery which still persists today. In the process of conquest thousands of villages and cities were reduced to ruins and all religious buildings, idols and manuscripts were destroyed. Only three books or codices are known to have survived. One conquistador Zumarraga claimed to have been personally responsible for the destruction of 500 temples and 20,000 idols between 1525 and 1531. Not surprisingly, very few artefacts from the 16th century Indian cultures exist. The great majority of art and craftwork known as Pre-Columbian belong to the civilisations which had disappeared long before the arrival of the Spanish.

The colonial period lasted for about 300 years until national liberation movements in the early 19th century established the modern political boundaries. These movements, however, did little to change the lives of the majority of Indians. A survey by the Pan American Health Organization shows that the material well-being of the Maya was higher before 1524 than it has been at any time since. Recent developments in agricultural production and transportation linked to the first world's ever increasing search for natural resources have only worsened the situation. Multi-nationals and large scale farming interests have begun to encroach on lands which were traditionally considered inhospitable and consequently left to the Indians. In some areas this led to the growth of guerilla movements and subsequent retaliation by government forces seeking to destabilise the population. This process has been particularly acute in Guatemala where Indians form the majority of the population. Statistics for the North Western highlands of Guatemala have been compiled by church and human rights groups. They show an Indian population of 2,580,000 before 1979 and a population of 1,300,000 in 1984. An estimated 1,000,000 people fled the area to other parts of the country, 155,600 fled into exile in other countries, 20,000 were murdered and 54,000 remain unaccounted for. Those who remained were relocated into 'model villages' used by the U.S. in Vietnam, styled on the protective hamlet system used by the US in Vietnam.





have not yet had the chance to sit down in a huge meeting and decide what name best describes us". Rigoberta Menchu (1982)

The term Precolumbian is used to describe the cultures which predate the Spanish invasion. It does not tell us anything about these peoples beyond the fact that they lived before the important thing which is being named, that is, Columbus. The term also has political ramifications. It creates a distinction between the Indian people who lived before the invasion and those who lived subsequently. It helps to establish a view that the 'precolumbian' Maya were an 'intelligent and highly civilised people' quite distinct from their modern descendants who can be considered 'lazy, deceitful and uncivilised.'

This notion finds expression at the political level when the Guatemalan government spends thousands of dollars

manicuring archeological sites such as the one at Tikal whilst at the same time practising genocide on the Indian population. The general system of classification of PreColumbian art exhibits similar misnomers. The categories are pre Classic 1500 BC to 300 AD, Classic 300 AD to 900 AD and post Classic 900 AD to 1521. Two of the periods are identified in respect to whether they predate or postdate the central notion Classic. This category was in turn borrowed from an alien system because some of the cultures found in the classic period produced works which have a strong correspondence with European classicism. The term is not even used to denote a particular style, it has been extended to denote a historical period and is used to describe all works produced within that period irrespective of their style or circumstance. Another form of misnomer has occurred when archeological sites



"None of the names given to us -'Indian', 'Indigena' 'naturals' are ours. We know the Spaniards gave us the name Indian because they didn't know where they were; but many of us have realised that at this point the word Indian captures our history and our identity. There is real history in the word Indian and we do not want to separate ourselves from our history so we call ourselves Indians although we Indians

have been attributed to the tribe currently occupying the territory in which the site was found. Thus, for example it becomes necessary to distinguish between the Olmec who are a tribe currently living in the Gulf region of Mexico and a group of cultures referred to as Olmec who occupied the same region some 2000 years ago.

The Olmecs are generally considered to be the 'Mother culture' from which the latter Indian societies developed their various arts, sciences and social systems. Relatively little is known about them. The first Olmec site was explored as recently as 1946, and there is considerable debate as to whether the existing categories are too broad. Many archeologists are beginning to speculate whether a number of cultures and ethnic groups could have been responsible for the work which is currently classified Olmec. The hot and humid conditions around the Gulf coast, where these people lived, are extremely unfavourable to the preservation of items such as wood and cloth. The acidic soils have even destroyed all traces of bones. Consequently, there are no skeletons to deduce the physical characteristics of the Olmecs and no everyday objects which would provide important cultural details about their lives. All that remains are a large number of stone sculptures and a number of earthworks at their ceremonial sites.

One theory suggests that the Olmecs constructed their religious centres from mud dredged from the swamplands in the building of canals. This theory proposes that a symbiotic relationship would have existed between agriculture and religion. As the land was drained and made agriculturally useful so the surplus soil was deposited in mounds which became both the symbol and centre of the agricultural achievement. As more land was drained so the size of the religious monument became correspondingly larger. The Olmec site at La Venta has a pyramidal mound with a diameter of 125 metres and a height of 31.5 metres. At the time of its construction it was probably the largest man made construction on the American continent.

The Olmecs were certainly great agriculturists. Through a long process of selective farming they developed many varieties of the maize plant from strains of wild grasses. This sustained agricultural process, aimed at producing an ever more fruitful yield had inevitable social consequences. As levels of food production rose, so ever larger numbers of the population could become free from basic food production and able to participate in religious affairs. This eventually resulted in the formation of a theocratic nobility. This class in turn created systems of writing, mathematics etc which ensured its bureaucratic control over the peasantry upon which it was materially dependent. The co-ordination of large numbers of workers is clearly evidenced in the scale of Olmec monumental projects. One type of sculpture found at a number of Olmec sites is a colossal head with African-like features. The largest of these stands 3.4 metres high and weighs about 65 tons. It is thought that the blocks from which these heads were carved were transported over many miles by raft and rollers and finally manoeuvred into position by a workforce of between one and two thousand workers.

The physical characteristics of Olmec sculpture are extremely varied; some, like the colossal heads are African-like whilst others show distinctly Oriental features. The scale of these sculptures also varies enormously. Many small highly polished jade figures and masks have been found as well as a number of highly polished concave mirrors. It is thought that the mirrors were used to concentrate the sun's rays and thus create fire during religious ceremonies. Yet archeologists are baffled as to how

craftsmen working, 3,000 years ago with stone tools were able to create such absolutely smooth surfaces with perfectly regular concavities.

The Olmec Pantheon also remains a mystery but it is generally thought that religion centred around the worship of the sun and one theory points to the colossal heads as representations of the sun deity. Another group of sculptures represent a jaguar mask whilst others show a human-like figure with facial features which blend human and jaguar characteristics. It has been suggested that as the jaguar is a nocturnal animal it could represent the sun deity in its night time aspect.

The Olmec culture existed for around 1500 years. Its influence spread westwards to the highland region presently occupied by Mexico City and as far south as El Salvador and Guatemala. Then suddenly around 50 BC its last centres were mysteriously abandoned. One theory put forward by Michael Coe suggests that a southerly migration took place. He believes that the Maya cultures which developed in the early centuries AD represent a direct line of des-



cent from the Olmec. Many parallels exist between the two cultures such as their numerical and calendar systems, the Jaguar motif and the worship of a sun deity.

Classic Mayan cultures spread over a large area of lowland central America between around 300 AD and 900 AD. Their centres reveal an urban revolution based on the use of lime mortar to cement together stones and the invention of a corbelled arch to create stone roofing. Their sciences and mathematics were extremely complex and their computation of time was phenomenal. For example their calendar units ranged from 1 kin representing 1 day to 1 alantun representing 23,040,000,000 days or just over 63,000,000 years. The majority of classic Mayan sites are to be found in dense tropical rain forests and for many years archeologists have been puzzled as to how such large and complex social systems could have developed and been maintained in such inhospitable conditions. However recent discoveries now suggest that these regions looked very different 1500 years ago. An aerial surveillance technique

known as Synthetic Aperture Radar was developed by N.A.S.A. in the late seventies.

SAR can scan the landscape from an altitude of 10,000 feet, penetrate thick cloud and forest cover and accurately map the terrain below.

The use of SAR over the jungle of Guatemala and Belize has revealed a complex system of inter-connecting canals and ditches along river valleys. These used to drain the land. So far this system is known to have covered an area of about 14,000 kilometres. Examination of fossil pollen from these regions shows that they were recently covered by a grassy swampland. It has therefore been suggested that the Maya drained the valleys for agricultural use and that after the collapse of their societies this drainage system disposed of the regular river flood waters which had held the jungle at bay and thus allowed the rainforest to spread.

No one is quite sure how or why the classical cultures ended. Various theories exist which range from ecological disaster to invasion to internal class conflict revolution and social disintegration. Similar patterns are found in both the Highland classic cultures such as Teotihuacan and the lowland such as the Maya.

From around 900 AD onwards urban centres began to change. Fortifications begin to appear and a new social phase begins. These are the post-classic cultures which it is suggested placed great emphasis on military conquest and the creation of empires.

The emergence of these cultures is generally seen by western historians as "proof that the great pre-columbian civilisations were in a state of decline long before the arrival of the Spanish." It is a version of history which probably merits a high degree of scepticism and one which would be fiercely opposed by the leaders of today's Indian communities. ●

For anyone interested in pursuing this subject further, the following books may be of interest.

Guatemala in Rebellion: Unfinished History Ed. Feied, Gettleman Levenson and Peckenham (Grove Press 1983)

Indian Guatemala L. Frank, P. Wheaton (EPICA Task Force 1984)

Dollars and Dictators A Guide to Central America T Barry, B Wood, D Preusch, (Zed Press 1982)

I... Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala Ed. E Bargas-Debray (Thetford Press 1984)

The Maya MD Coe (Penguin 1971)

The Art of the Maya from the Olmecs to the Toltecs Stierlin (Macmillan 1981)

Mesoamerica: Evolution of a Civilization Sanders and Price (Random House 1963)

John Phillips

5. Pyramid at Chichen Itza (Toltec-Maya, post classic period)

This photograph was taken at sunset on the summer solstice. At the base of the stairway on the left of the photo (Northern face) can be seen the carved head of a serpent. As the sun sets on the summer solstice shadows are cast by the west face of the pyramid onto the side of the stairway. These shadows create the illusion of a serpent body which ascending from the carved heads to the temple at the top of the pyramid. As the sun rises at the winter solstice a similar illusion is created but on that occasion the slowly moving shadows give the illusion of a serpent body descending the opposite side of the northern stairway.



JANUWA MOJA'S WORLD OF INFINITY FASHIONS



It was a discussion about fashion as art – not to be confused with vanity. About style, not to be misjudged as programmed and well packaged fad. About our peoples mind, body and spirit being renewed through the creative reflection of our arts and crafts. About liberating ourselves in order to embrace our African self, without apology, without restriction, and with a boundless and reborn imagination.

It was a reasoning with Januwa Moja, a gifted and conscious designer of African contemporary clothing and accessories. For fifteen years, she has fused her life, work and love into a powerful and no less exquisite statement of African inspired dress sense. She aptly calls her artistic weapon "Infinity Fashions". Her trademarks: designs that are colourful, comfortable and cultural.

Using colours that are rich and alive, patterns that are assertive and bold, and textures that beg to be felt, Januwa sculpts her designs to the flow and

the form of the thinner and fuller figure. You don't have to be a tall thin model to look good in her clothes. She works within the African tradition of space, movement and vitality in dress.

*She spoke of beauty and values
Culture and tradition*

*Positive images – still needed
Countless imitations – not yet heeded*

*Creativity from the source
Elevation to the heights*

*A complete circle of African identity
made real in the here and now*

*Where ever our babylon
We carry our souls
We carry ourselves*

*We carry our power and beauty
our art and our struggle*

*Brightening alien lives
Disarming alien lies*

Conjuring spirits of infinity's magic

African roots however don't stop her creative spirit from roaming freely. You might spot her in second hand shops in Washington D.C., where she lives, searching for bargain fabrics from India, the Far East, or the Mediterranean. Or launching a line called "rebel wear" where she uses camouflage material "to reflect the times".

A self-taught seamstress, she graduated from Maryland Institute, majoring in designing craftsmanship, gaining skills in fabric design, jewellery making, fiber arts, ceramics, sculpture, painting and drawing. Her handiwork features prominently in her designs, whether it's a two-year-in-the-making rainbow coloured shawl that also doubles as a skirt and was recently highlighted in the Women Artists of America Show or a hand painted coat trimmed with black boa that details symbols of African magic and religion.

In spite of her talent, Januwa's cultural approach to style has kept her outside the main stream of the European-American market that would rather co-opt Black creativity than honour it. This has forced her to become more resourceful in order to maintain a path of artistic self-determination.

This cultural bias undoubtedly influenced her selection as one of four African-American designers to stage shows at Festac '77, the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in Lagos, Nigeria. Although a few of her Nigerian models were briefly disappointed because she had no 'hot pants' and the like in her collection, the experience of Pan-African solidarity and celebration was a high point in her development accented by the Nigerian Museum requesting one of her designs for display.

Isn't it ironic that in these times, we still need to be reminded, even persuaded, of the intrinsic beauty and value of our cultural reflections. How many of us of African descent have more than an adequate wardrobe, and still haven't thought to buy one African orientated ensemble? How many others will wait for Vogue's quasi-African imitations before acknowledging and appreciating an African fashion tradition?

Januwa challenges Black designers to reclaim their cultural heritage, not only as a source of inspiration but also as a subtle statement of positive image building. "When a man or woman wears my garments, the person and the design concept become an artistic and highly personalized form of self-expression. I am working from an African frame of reference. I am inspired by our poets, dancers, artists, musicians, and historians. These are our image makers. The more I see and learn of our rich culture and heritage, the more I am able to create. My work is a reflection of our people."

Parminder Vir OBE
Makeda Coaton
GLC
1981-1986
Working for London
archive.parmindervir.com

HIP-HOP AND THE ROLE OF THE ZULU NATION



Zulu Nation is a youth movement formed of people who are into dance, music and a life-style totally different from anything else ever existing. It is a sub-culture with its own special values and ideals. The Nation was originally a street gang called The Black Spades. Africa Bambaataa, a young aspiring DJ from the south east side of the Bronx, from the Bronx River Project (a housing estate) was one of the most influential leaders of The Black Spades. When a shooting took place in which his closest friend Soulski was killed, he began to form ideas for the creation of The Zulu Nation. Along with others like Kool DJ Herc he created a lifestyle and culture which in later years would become a world wide phenomenon which everybody wanted to get involved with.

HIP-HOP IN THE UK

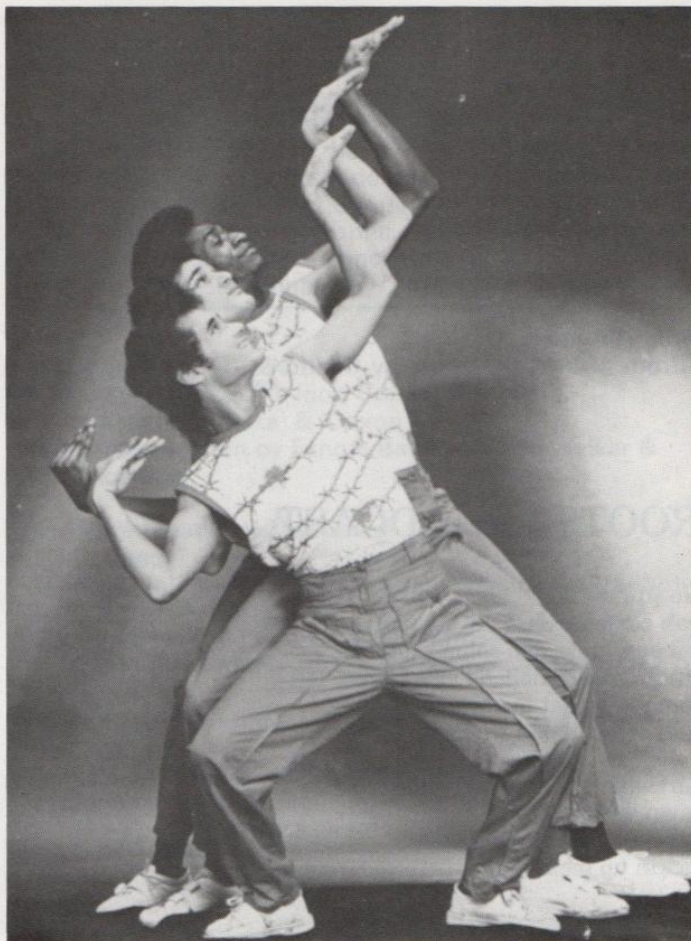
The British hip-hop scene has grown and grown since 1981 but, despite its popularity it is still plagued by lack of resources and money. None of the club owners wish to put any effort into signing up any hip-hop performers and there is constant infighting within the British hip-hop scene. In spite of all this hip-hop is still growing with the advent of the break dance films such as *Breakdance 1* and *2*, *Beat Street* and the most accurate film to date, *Wildstyle* and *Style Wars*. The intervention of the outside world and media has been a constant source of annoyance. They wish to destroy or over-exploit what is relatively the newest form of black creativity within the last ten years. The movement i.e. Zulu Nation and a new organization called The Hip-Hop Alliance have constantly tried to stimulate the interest in hip-hop. There is so much wasted talent which could be put to better use in the entertainment fields of recording, art, and dance.

The Zulu Nation is basically a black organization but has no racial barriers. Quite a few of its members are white but they understand the heritage of black people and are treated on an equal footing. Notables include Eskimo and Zackidee, two young graffiti artists from Chrome Angels, one of Britain's top graffiti crews both of whom are white also Darnell, a young popper. The Nation wants fair and equal treatment of all hip-hop performers who are constantly being used and abused by the media world and through TV, clubs and major shows in which the artists themselves are poorly paid. The media world wants the talent but is not prepared to pay for it. It is constantly using hip-hop as a means of cornering the youth market. It has made a lot of money from this once viewed as a craze now a serious dance form and art form.

Special mention to all Zulus, the talented live-to-break Sipho, the Human Beat Box, Yankee, DJ Cosmic Jam, Cookie Crew, DJ Fingers, Flipski of London All Star Breakers, Mama Zulu Fay and Legend, leader of British Zulus and to all young hip-hoppers everywhere. Remember, no matter how hard they try they can't stop us now. Peace Aki, Zulu!

**Article by Mark Tuitt, (18 yrs),
a young Zulu keeping hip-hop alive in '85**

Contact Mark on 808-9615 for Live to Break, crew available for tours, performances and workshops.



Phoenix

Phoenix Breakdancers and body poppers, not to be confused with Phoenix contemporary dance company, was one of the exciting young groups who performed in a series of free foyer performances in the Royal Festival Hall which presented a showcase for new dance. This company combines excellent presentation with innovative choreography. Contact for Phoenix is Richard Meyers, 126 Abbeville Road, Clapham Common, London SW4 9LR Tel: 671-1291.

VISION AND VOICE

A visual arts conference will be held on Tuesday 3rd December jointly hosted by The Cave and WMEMAS and co-ordinated by Errol Lloyd of MAAS. Speakers include Gavin Jantjes, Rasheed Araeen, Jean Ambrose and Linton Kwesi Johnson of Creation for Liberation, David Bailey and Sonia Boyce. Gallery representatives will include Michael Tooby of the Mappin Art Gallery and Shakka Dedi of The Black Art Gallery amongst others. Representatives of Regional Arts Associations and the Arts Council are also invited. Coach trip to Birmingham planned. Contact MAAS for further details. Tel: 01 286 1854/8.

GLC

1981-1986

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Parminder Vir OBE, GLC & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE

A TOAST

Who gwine
tek we hope
gaf fe be a Mydas
an rope de sun
do wha Icarus
neva don

Fred D'Aguiar

(from *MAMA DOT* pub. by Chatto & Windus Aug. '85)

ROOTS BROADCAST

No sun
nah come up dese days
yet sun muss deh some weh
shinin pan somebody else back
wen all we gat is hevvy cloud
redy fe bruk pan we head

An memry of how sun wuk
cawn dead
fo dis ya roots broadcast
pickin up pickin up

Fred D'Aguiar

(from *MAMA DOT*, pub. by Chatto & Windus Aug. '85)

THE FIRST TIME

Shushila stood stiffly, trying not to shake with anger. With more force than direction, she started to throw pebbles into the lake, watching the ever-spreading ripples.

She hated him. She absolutely detested him. How dare he! She started shaking again. She wasn't about to let him make her life miserable. No! She'd been down that path before. She wasn't going to re-live her mother's life... Thank God there were no children. Thank God for the pill!

Her father would kill her when he found out that she wanted a divorce. Her mother would die a little more. Always fading a little bit more, each time something went wrong. Well Jay was going to find out that the mother's daughter was made of stronger stuff.

Angrily she threw in another stone. The grey lake seemed to match her mood. The trees still and silent, waiting for spring to come. Like she'd been waiting all her life.

Slowly the ripples settled into a picture reflected in her mind. She became still; her eyes deep. A blankness settled over her features whenever she remembered the first time she had become aware of the other side of her father. The cruel and thoughtless side of him.

Yes. She'd been playing with her favourite doll. The pink and white one with curly golden hair, called Suzanna. Bina had taken the other one, the plump black one with tight black curls. She remembered that she had cried the first time that they had got the dolls, because she wanted both. She remembered thinking that dolls never had long black straight hair like hers.

She had been playing with Suzanna, she must have been seven or eight. She became aware of raised voices; with her head tilted to one side, her doll abandoned, she had listened fearfully. Frightened, she had timidly gone into the next room. Her mother was there lying on the sofa, her stomach swollen and taut like a drum. Father was sitting on one end of the sofa. They stopped arguing when they saw her enter.

"Goodi (doll) sit down and read," her mother said to her. Shushila picked up the 'Crimson Book of Fairy Tales' and sat down pretending to read. They had started arguing again, going from loud whispers to shouting. Shushila's head jerked up as she heard the blow and a whimper of pain, quickly suppressed. Her father was up

with his back to her and her mother's face was distorted with pain as she limped out of the room, clumsily pushing her ungainly body through the doorway.

Shushila stared at her father unbelievably, trying hard not to cry in sympathy with her mother and at the strangeness of it all. Her father turned around and looked at her. Seeing her stricken face, he had smiled and made a feeble joke and tried to give her money to buy some sweets. She had looked at him wide-eyed. This was not her father, her loving father. This was someone else. She felt bewildered and frightened. "Didn't he know that the nurse had come that morning, because of the new baby coming soon and Mummiji's sore, infected thigh, which had to be bandaged up? How Mummy had winced with pain when Nurse had touched her there. Why did he hurt Mummy like that?" Scared that he would touch her she had stared at him with fearful eyes, until discomfited, he turned away. His eyes refusing to meet hers, flinching in her presence. "Go then and play with your doll."

The thought of her mother crying and alone had sent her quickly to the top of the stairs. Holding her breath in front of the bedroom door she had tried to hear if any voices were coming from within. Finally, she had knocked on the door, "Mummy, can I come in please?" A faint "Yes", came through the heavy wooden door. She had entered slowly and fearfully. Her mother was lying on the bed, her stomach big like a mountain before her, impeding her view. Going round to the side of the bed, revealed her mothers' eyes - red and swollen. "It's only my stomach hurting me a little", her mother had said to the wide-eyed silent girl. "Why don't you go and play with Suzanna, be a good girl."

Shushila had obediently gone downstairs to get her doll. She had sat on the bed beside Mummy playing or pretending to play, knowing all the time that something was wrong. Knowing that Mummy needed her. But she felt lost, didn't know what to do. She had hidden behind silence. Things seemed so strange, like a bad dream, what with Nurse, mother looking so different and father looking so funny and smelling of drink. Her little world had been shattered that first time, that afternoon. And she had hidden behind silence, not even able to cry.

But that had just been the start. Growing up she had soon realised that Father drank. Never at home, but always outside, coming in at the weekend, late afternoon, to argue and frighten everyone. Later on he hadn't even needed to drink to set him off. He would get angry at the slightest thing and his face would look as if it would burst. She and Bina had learned to avoid him. But mother never could and always got the worst of it.

Shushila stirred, it was getting colder, there would be frost tonight. Maybe the lake would freeze over. What did it matter anyway? "I wish Bina was still here", she thought, it would be nice to have her support. Somewhere to go to and stay while she and Jay got things sorted out. As it was there was nowhere now. "Why didn't I stay single? I didn't know when I was well off" she thought.

Life had been pleasant only for a short time. Both she and Bina had escaped, had gone away from home, got jobs. Then Bina had got married and she had seemed happy, very happy. Which had surprised Shushila and made her wonder whether she ought to get married. Was she missing out on something? Anyway it would make mother and father happy. And so she had got married too, to Jay.

But last year Bina and Jit had gone away to Canada. And here she was alone. "Okay", she told herself as she walked home, "So I have to go back. But he's not going to touch me again. Just let him try! I'm a fighter too", she thought as she fingered the bruise on the left side of her face. She had learned to live with it in her parents house. But there was no way it was going to happen in hers. ●

Abida Parveen
(Asian Womens' Writers' Workshop)

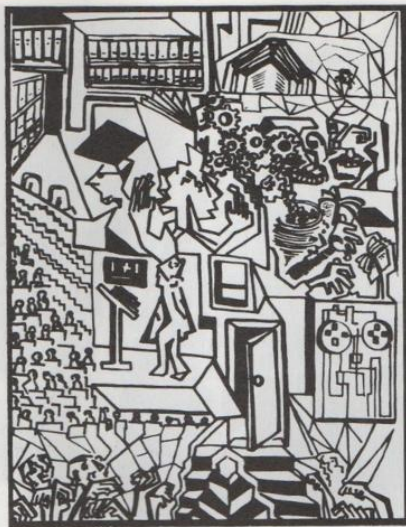


Artwork by Jean Campbell Photo by Brenda Agard

1981-1986

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SLAP STICK

Sunday morning
the churchman has pounded
my brain
shaken my mind
with words

on my bunkie
under the Jackaranda tree
talking to this joppa
from Geranium Street

waiting for the Sunday meal

milk of white kindness
sourred by apartheid

Ney jong
say something better than nothing

waiting for the Sunday meal

but nothing's what we got
wrapped in nice words
iced with coloured cream
and holy water

a pudding for the Sunday meal
mealie meal wrapped in brown skin

while the tongue tastes the saliva
and the mind imagines more

a grey dark vision
in the strong bright sunshine
BONTE HEUVUL
where the flies are free

Coloured cream from the
milk of white kindness
and the pay is good

But front men get killed
in first attack

sitting on a bunkie
under the Jackaranda tree
watching men with cream on their face
trying to set me free

John Hendrickes

372. I am a 29 yr old attractive,
intelligent mother of three. I
have lost faith in my black
brothers, and am on the verge
of crossing over to the other
side. I do not want to do this,
so restore my faith. Genuine
replies with photographs. No
pretentious skankers incidentally.
I am a professional lady.

Once I admired your Afro.

Enjoyed going to the local Community Hall
to listen to 'Shaka' & 'Coxon'
Read books written by Fanon, Baldwin, Alice Walker &
Toni Morrison.

discovered that once there were great 'African
Civilizations'
(and you told me that Africa is the cradle of civilization)

But then I started to dislike your Afro –
found the Community Centre boring and the music
too loud.

Began to read 'Harpers & Queens' & listen to Barry
Manilow.

Enjoyed having dinner at the most expensive
restaurants in town –

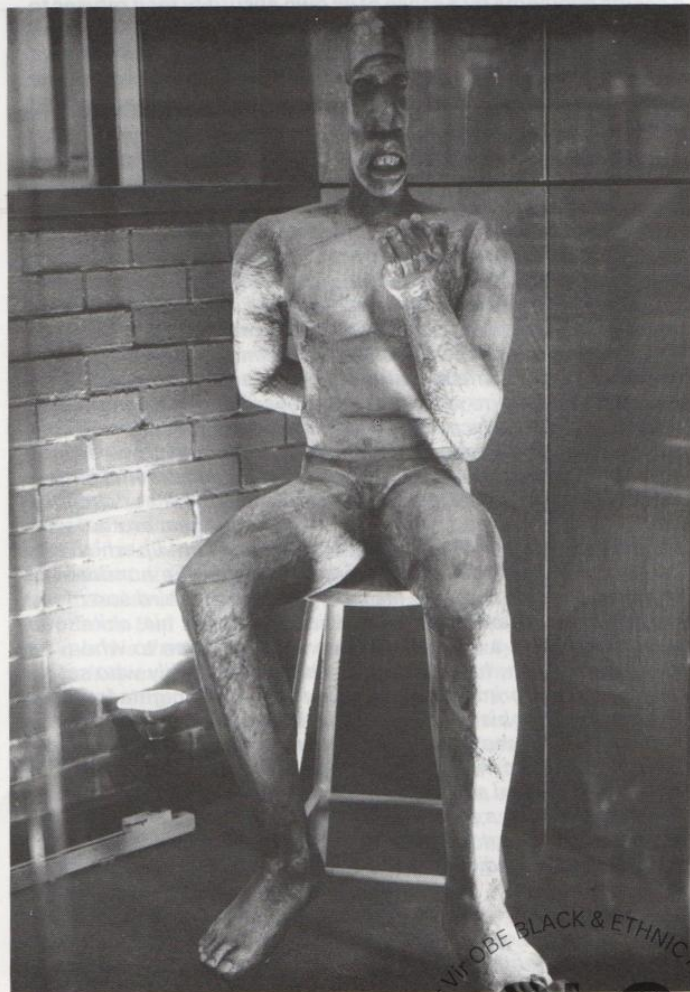
Flowers through Interflora.

Perfumes.

Weekends in Paris.

I'm crossing over.

10.5.82
D.E.



Ernest Wood/dyed 6' by Bill Ming Photo by GN Morton

Parmindervir OBOE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
GLC
1981-1986

INDIAN DIARY

This is an extract taken from the diary of an Indian girl, born and brought up in England, who at the age of twenty, returns to India for the first time. At this point in the diary she has been in New Delhi for about two weeks, living with her father's huge extended family in a busy quarter of the city. On this occasion, however, she has been allowed to stay with her favourite Uncle and his family for a few days, whilst gradually her childish, romantic memories of India are beginning to give way to a more clear-sighted understanding of her Motherland.

MONDAY DECEMBER 6

There is a crescent moon, like a sliver of luminous finger-nail, right above the balcony where I am sitting in my auntie's wicker chair, whilst opposite me, just visible above the white flat roof tops, the sun quivers, suspended by threads of gold which extend outwards and across, pulling at the sky so it stretches taut like the skin over a stitched wound. I am writing in these last, lingering minutes of the day when light and dark are momentarily balanced, when the sun and moon occupy the same space which is vaulted, liquid and endless. These Indian nights are dangerously romantic; even here in Munirka, suburban and genteel, the Milton Keynes of New Delhi with its private apartments set in wide, leafy roads, with its street bazaar at one end of the estate and a brand new, air-conditioned shopping complex at the other, complete with fashion boutique, delicatessen, and four prosperous, well-stocked video shops. The whole complex stands as a tribute to the malingering after-effects of the Raj, where Western clothes, food, music and films can be bought in bulk, still status symbols for those who equate "European" with progress, style and culture. Yesterday, in the balmy midday heat, we purchased a miniature Christmas tree and all its glittering fittings for Sumit, my little cousin who still preserves a seven year old's sense of occasion, and stood it on top of their video recorder in the lounge. It seems overcome by a sense of its own absurdity for it refuses to stand straight and proud like any self-respecting tree. To get the festive atmosphere going, I suggested to Sumit that we should sing a few carols, but the only English song he knows all the words to is Abba's "Nina, Pretty Ballerina", so we sang that instead.

It feels blasphemous to say it, but it is such a relief to be here with Uncle Deshi and Auntie Inthu, and away from my grandpa and my huge extended family who revolve around him like satellites round a star. He is a dear, funny man, with the face of a placid tortoise and fingers of long brown twigs, but he, and all of them, love me too much, if that is ever possible, wanting me every moment of the day as if, through hard work and lots of kisses we could together make up for the twenty years that I have been away. Thank heaven for Deshi – he is a find, an uncle amongst uncles, a crash-helmeted saviour to whom I run for sustenance each time I hear him phut-phutting towards my garden gate on his clapped out old scooter. I spent the morning with him, riding side saddle at his back as we plunged in and out of crowded side streets in the old part of the city, and above the din of the shrieking pavements celebrated our joint status as the black sheep of the family flock. He is my father's second youngest brother with papa's swooping nose and wide-brimmed bottom lip which tilts and pouts in generous curves, bringing to life the hundreds of characters which populate his speech; he is the third son of my grand father who defied all advice to marry his childhood sweetheart, then a widow with two small children to whom he clings as his own; he is the fourth child of his family who set up his own radical printing press at sixteen, worked nights for three ffeears to pay for his training as an actor and now produces films; he is my real chacha who knows where the greenest and sweetest kulfi can be found in Connaught place, and who touches me with a warmth as round and full as the word, "avuncular". In short, he keeps me sane in a place which is one moment a familiar landscape which I seem to have never left, and in another a mass of impossible contradictions, too huge and tangled for a stranger like me to solve.

I suppose that I cannot forget the incident I witnessed this evening, it left me with a sour taste in my mouth. We went to visit some very distant relatives on my auntie's side who live in one of the more exclusive quarters of the city. I was told that this uncle, (all elder male friends of the family immediately become uncles,)



Untitled sculpture by Tapfuma (Moses) Gutsa Photo by Lance Watson

owned a few garages. Garages must be holding up the Indian economy if this house was anything to go by; marble pillars, high ceilings, low sofas, and French court furniture, solemn and altogether grotesque in such a light, airy house, nothing more than polished tent pegs pinning down the canvas of the night air. Attached to one of the marble pillars and looking extremely uncomfortable about it, was a brute of an Alsatian wearing a red jacket and baring a nasty set of teeth.

"Don't worry, didi," Sumit assured me, "Amitabh is quite friendly really." "Amitabh?" "Yes, you know, after Amitabh Buchan, the film star." "Oh." Following the formal introductions and the handing round of elaborately prepared hors d'œuvres, I was introduced to them. 'They' were the two daughters of the household, young, beautiful, fashionably dressed, and moving with that sense of confidence that accompanies those who have known from birth which side of their chapatti is buttered. Sonu and Gurdee regarded me with a cool indifference, visitors from England held no kind of novelty for them, but they perked up considerably when I mentioned that I worked in the theatre. "So you must have worked in films then. Have you met any of our stars over here?" (They actually said "stars".) Before I had time

I am a Filipino

Do not laugh at me.
I am a Filipino –
Great, great grandson of the braves
Who crossed yet uncharted seas
In search of a home,
Carvers of the mountain rice terraces.
The blood of different races
Courses through my polluted veins
Clogged by 7,100 bleak islands
Blown apart by unrelenting typhoons
Both from without and from within
Torn asunder by earthquakes
Real and unreal,
Divided by unlike beliefs.

How can you laugh at me
When you do not know
Who I am or what I am?
I am a Filipino –
Fruit of centuries
Of treachery and servility,
Nurtured only by a never-ending
Hope for hope
Which kept me alive
Through years and years.

If you see me quiet
Take every beating meekly,
If you see me weep for a cause
Which hurts me deeply,
Do not mock me.

I am a Filipino –
I, too, know the value of truth.
If you see me carry on
Even if weighed down by
Tons of repression
Blind, deaf, dumb
The answer lies in my fear
Of losing what precious
Little freedom I have left
However limited
However unbearable,
Which my forebears
So hardly fought for.
I am a Filipino –
I live as I will die
As destiny dictates.

When you hear my wails of anguish
Reverberating from the orient's pearls,
When you smell the stench
Of my decaying flesh
In the heat of the Arabian desert sands,
When you catch a glimpse
Of the dull brilliance
Of my dried stinking sweat and saliva
On the dried-up shores
Of the unfriendly Americas,
When you stumble across
My forgotten, discarded dreams
In forgotten, discarded cathedrals
On the dark plains of Europe,
Then you will know that
I, a Filipino –
Live and breathe.

When freedom fighters are shot or maimed,
Felled in a hail of traitorous bullets
Or innocent stones,
And you see tears in my eyes,
Do not laugh.
I am a Filipino –
You do not realize my loss.
When Lincoln, when Ghandi,
When Martin Luther King,
When Jara, the guitarist,
When the wordsmith Smith,
When the priest at the Vatican,
When Rizal,
When they blew Aquino's head off
As a welcome on his homecoming,
When they send friends or foes to hell,
When they bury good men and dead
Beneath unidentifiable human remains.

When I shout, "Down with the Marcoses"
And you feel the pain within me within you
And you realize that I am shouting
In unison with 50,000,000 stifled voices
From halfway across the globe,
Then why not join my choir?
I am a Filipino –
I welcome you in my struggle.

When I raise up arms
Wave a handwoven flag
As red as the flames of the sinking sun,
With fists clenched and
A crucifix on my breast,
Then beware, beware
I am a Filipino –
My time has come!

Gene Alcantara

to answer, I was dragged off to their bedroom and had to sit through a whole album of photographs which charted their acquaintance with a well-known romantic lead of the Hindi film world. "This is Sunil and I on our houseboat in Kashmir – such a crazy fool he is, so drunk, wasn't he Sonu?" "That's bullshit, Gurdee, that was the time he had that ganja, don't you remember, and he threw Charan Singh into the water, with his uniform and tray and all!"

Both dissolved into giggles, clutching at each other and swiping at one another with their embroidered dupattas. "Er, this Charan Singh," I asked, "is he a film star as well?" I had obviously said the wrong thing, because this provoked first an intake of breath and then whoops of glee as the two women rushed downstairs. "Daddyji! Daddyji! She thought that Charan Singh..." "No, let me tell it, she thought he was..." And then both together, "A film star!" The adult company received this with a little more decorum. "Did you hear that, Charan Singh?" their father shouted to the kitchen, "So tell us, when is your next feature coming out?" Laughter. "Will you get us free tickets?" Squeals. "Maybe you'll get to kiss Rekha after all!" Mayhem. I was feeling desperate, not even knowing who this Charan Singh was. Out of the kitchen emerged an absurdly young boy in immaculately pressed kurtha pyjama. He fixed me with a stare that was neither judgemental nor reproachful but held my attention with the eyes, two circles of pure black ringed by two circles of pure white, and I drowned in their dignity. I couldn't eat my meal. With each mouthful I was aware of him standing silently behind me, waiting to serve up the next course, the same age as my brother and credited with less feeling and significance than Amitabh in his red jacket.

Below me, as I write, there is a wedding in full swing. The multi-coloured tent, erected especially for the occasion, is billowing in and out with the breeze like the belly of some huge, festive giant whose breath is hot with spices and gentle laughter. I am particularly entranced with a group of older women whom I keep seeing in glances as the tent flap opens and shuts with the wind. They are dancing in a circle, clapping their hands and singing in loud, joyous bursts and, best of all, I know those songs, they are

the songs that all my aunties sing back home in Birmingham. I can't make out the words, of course, I never could, but the rhythm, the tunes, the whole feel of their togetherness is achingly familiar. I love their loudness and warmth and energy, the way that they burst out of darkened corners in their multi-coloured plumage, hands clapping, teeth clicking, breasts heaving, unashamed of the patches of sweat forming under their arms, not embarrassed to be female but celebrating their femininity in these orgiastic parades of flesh. Back in England, these moments of celebration are isolated ones, perhaps at a wedding taking place in some draughty church hall which has been hired for the day; here, there is no need to hide, to apologise for the fact that we need to sing our own songs in our own language, at our own pace and volume, and it takes place where it was always meant to take place, out in the open, vocal chords stretched wide to meet the wind. My Uncle Deshi has just now joined me on the balcony. He is watching the festivities down below and smiling that mock-quizzical smile of his, eyebrows hooked into question marks, his head to one side like a bird. Earlier we talked. I told him of my discomfort at Grandpa's house, how all the relatives constantly pinch and stroke me, change my hair style and feed me all these rich foods that are playing havoc with my diet, never mind my bowels. He then explained how love, especially of a kind that is difficult to express, will here very often take the form of feeding and grooming, a visible display of duty done, a gesture of remembrance to the brother lost overseas. "Through you, they are feeding your papa, you somehow fill the gap that he left." After he said that, I had the feeling that for some time, I have been looking through the wrong end of a telescope, measuring up my relatives to my Western points of reference, not fully realising that in a country full of Charan Singhs and dancing aunties and long/lost relatives all the old definitions of right and wrong, proper and improper, must be thrown away. I came here with the vague intention of learning something about India; perhaps I should begin by unlearning all the preconceptions I packed in my suitcase and brought over with me. It is getting chilly now. The wedding goes on. Tomorrow I will go and see Grandpa. ●

Feroza Syal (Asian Women's Writers' Workshop)

1981-1986

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DIGGING

The name of the island has been lost, forgotten; in the basement, Sarah (I am satisfied with the name, I worked it out my way) is still being tortured: her screams are muffled but I can hear them. What is puzzling is that they do not keep me awake. I hear them, as it were, fleetingly, or in moments of inattention. I am speculating about what I have become, giving myself the benefit of the doubt.

"It's nothing," she says, my companion, anticipating me. "Go to sleep".

She is getting careless, not thinking me mad, but having to pretend, to keep up appearances; and willing to let me know it.

"I am not mad", I say, ritually, no longer alarmed how unimportant it is to say the wrong thing.

And I can hear her down there being tortured.

I'm surprised how transparent I've become. She counters my thought "Don't let Sarah come between us. Leave her where she is." This is delivered entirely without venom. "We haven't got a basement."

If we did have a basement, though, and I could still hear what I was hearing down there, I – well, I would go down wouldn't I, and investigate (I don't know this for sure, but there's only one way to find out: mould that (little?) area of uncertainty into something firm and resolute and go down digging...) Too purposeful, this shaping of my thoughts, belying the suspicion that for most of the time they were disorganized and drifting, of no more interest than rainclouds. Anyway, out of this came the reality of the basement, or at least the possibility of dating the enterprise.

"When will you start digging your little hole?" she asked next morning, still managing to retain the same crazy thread.

I agreed I meant to start digging (the agreement was almost as good as the act). She created the usual little difficulties, but choosing her ground carefully, knowing I would reciprocate in a condescending but gentle way – like with the fears of a heavily-pregnant wife – she pointed out the problems of trying to find out what was 'down there' of how far down was 'down there'. "Wouldn't we lose contact with the house if we were forced to probe too far? Wouldn't we end up demolishing the house?"

I understood her fears, and tried to give chauvinistic assurances about the house. Later, she ridiculed the notion, crude and arrogant, of demolishing the house: she had expressed fears, she claimed, that I would end up *destroying* (not the same, is it?) the house. I took little interest in the distinction, and conceded. Others were to revive this dilemma generations or centuries later.

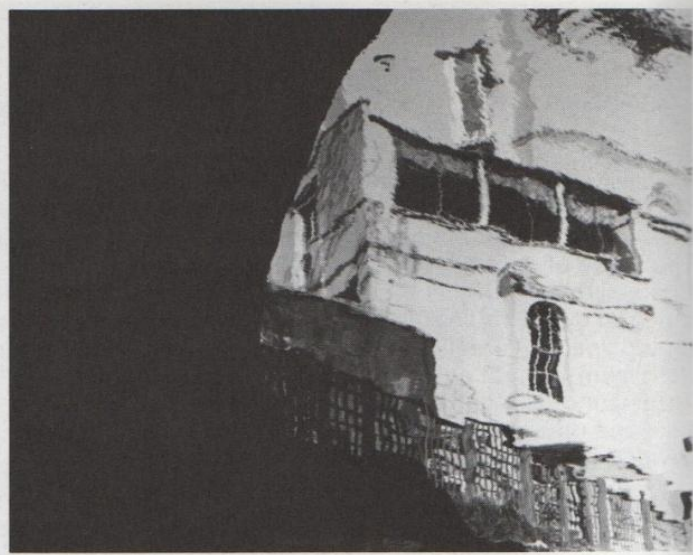
Here we go again; a good idea, you see, getting its way; and I'm ready to pursue it now. A word of explanation: I am in another time but my purpose is identical with the one I'm claiming to be (the original died: murdered, I think, with his companion). I continued digging. I hoped to return to the original concept of the basement, but the project by the time I came along, had already accommodated itself to the idea of *hole*: a minor casualty, but we learn to live with them. The work progressed or regressed over the (years or centuries?) years or centuries, whenever I (and there appears to have been a few of me) happened to come along on successive years or centuries; not only me; perhaps, but any chance hole-worshipper or subterranean necrophile. The present digger earns his legitimacy by taking over the name, the personality, the *obsession* of the one who started it all after he heard Sarah being tortured. It worked.

It worked too well; for consciousness not only suffused me, but faithfully recreated that very first companion who had scoffed.

"It's taking such a long time, your little hole," she now said, careful not to criticize: she spoke rather to her priests, her dog, never to me. From time to time I would register, not pleasure of course, but satisfaction as the skeletons of dogs and maybe priests told us we were on the right track.

I had perhaps lost my vanity. I took no credit in having breathed ancient life back into the woman. My idea had merely been to make myself fully conscious of the *genesis* of the hole, the basement; and that, alas, included the lady who had not heard Sarah, or had forgotten, or had played the part to humour me, or... Naturally, I was now paying for this success.

She recognized me, of course, as the one who had started the hole (not the basement, but never mind). She took no notice of the centuries of reconstruction (If she had even challenged me on this, to plead that years only, had passed, not centuries, I'd be prepared to discuss it). But this was as it should be, a bitch to perfection: she, my creature, reaching over the gap to our first companionship.



Married Life – Kentish Town Under the Bridge – Regents Canal

There were enough ego-traps there for me to fall into, to solve my problems (as my ancestors, I'm told, had done), but ego had, I think, been put to other use. The wreck of our house proved some sort of point for her. She continued to obstruct me, to work against me, using kind words, in the end even unleashing a school of Philosophers to distract me: all this helped to confirm my status of *digger*.

Her house-wifely jibes were now oven-baked in jargon or crumpled and directionless like the weekly washing. She called to me from the top of the hole, having accepted advice that the last-heard mutually-shared sound was the one to pierce, to annihilate the gap, the space, the *wilfulness* separating what *was* and what *is* between us, in this grand scheme of ours. Every day (year, century) she offered new suggestions.

She offered me: the sound of a child being childlike.

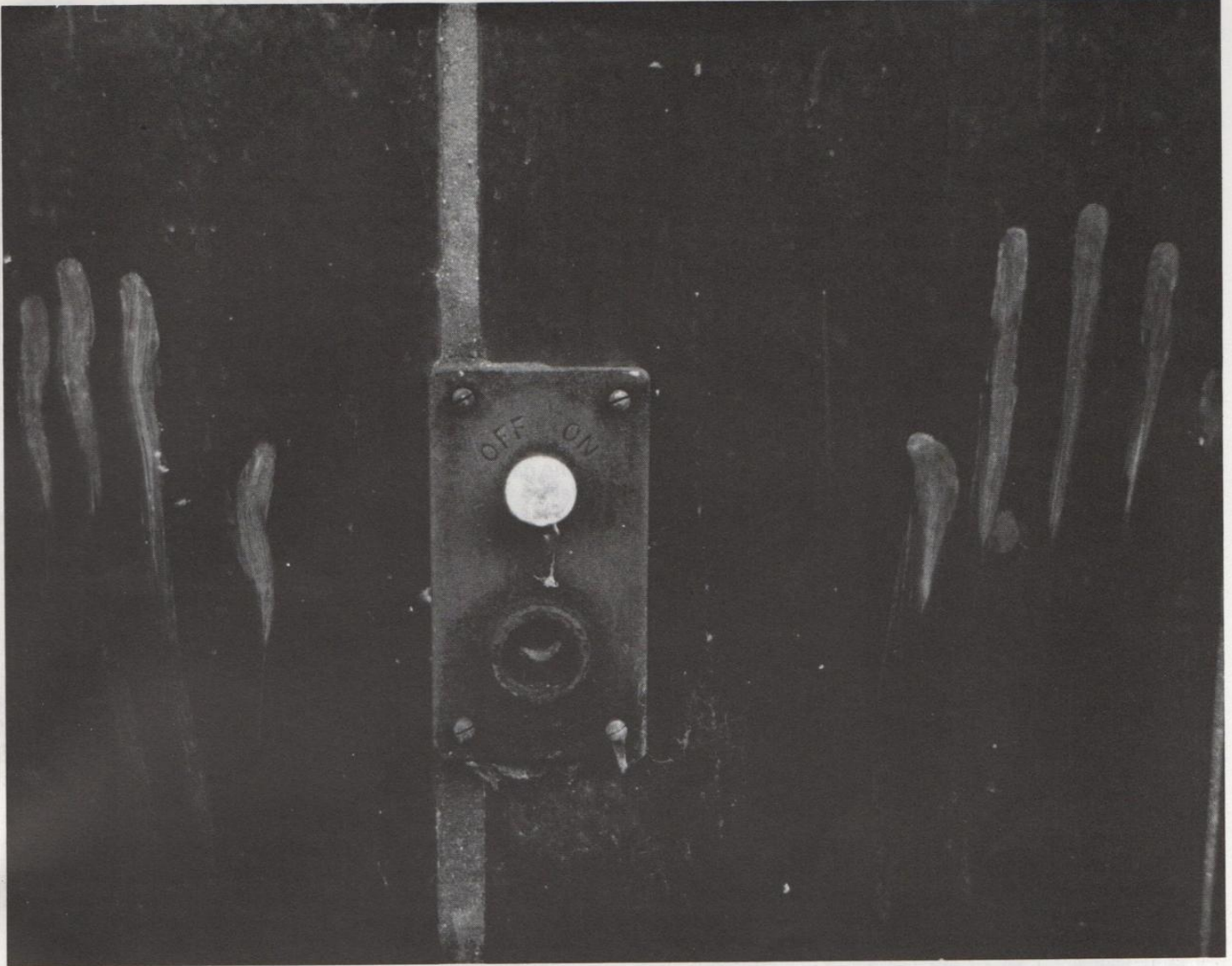
She offered me a *word* built to last, impossible to decode, but nevertheless, seeming to admit progress towards its solving.

She offered me (in the form of a priest) a full-stop. The object/subject remained curled in his foetal position for let's say decades, urging forth the *sound* of the full-stop, impressive in its calm, knowing, as we all did, that it was working against, well, some sort of clock.

Yet another lifeline was the sound of dog lapping (milk?) or licking (face?). She built up a reputation of being *good* to me.

It was difficult, you see, to proceed. The lady, as I've said, was no part of my plan, and she, with her cunning, obscured the sound of Sarah being tortured. For a time we had to invent Sarah to give ourselves a reason for going on; but even this began to pall and I suspect we might have shelved the project altogether if Sarah hadn't opportunely returned, more anguished than before as if making up for lost time, plaintive, accusing and *near*. It is said by some of the cynics that the lady herself somehow managed to impersonate Sarah to keep us going, but I do not know, I no longer knew what she was capable of.

The rains came and came (or prolonged myself ridiculously



Stars and Stripes – Regents Canal Photographs by Norman Anderson

on a wet day) and drowned out the voice again, so I yielded, like others, and shifted ground till it came back (we denied trying to prove something about the immortality of Sarah or the logic of holes). Anyway, we found the voices; several diggers now, each tracking his own voice. There was the problem of crowding, the opportunists tending to drift towards an advanced hole, only to be repulsed. Generally, they took it well enough and went elsewhere to prospect. But there were always the odd desperate few who continued to dispute your rights of ownership and started up holes nearby with the constant threat of renewing their claims to yours, whenever it suited them.

Naturally, with the growing number of diggers, with the proliferation of holes, supplementary considerations crept in, till the slow corruption of our purpose was legitimized: the shape, size and depth of holes was the subject of study, sabotage and finally a system of awards. Voices in the holes (always retreating as you approached them) were recorded on a machine, the efficiency and accuracy of which were argued over (It was the nearness and not the volume that mattered) and prizes were given. Soon all leisure pursuits consisted in identifying and imitating the buried voices. All musical instruments were returned to their pitch; then after a decent interval, destroyed, the better to immortalize the memory into Myth.

In spite of protestations, we secretly welcomed these developments, for our blanket opposition to them had the effect of giving our quest a coherence, a widely accepted validity it never quite had. Also, it gained protection and awe, as any institution does which trades on being uncompromising. We even went along with popular rumours that animals, birds and insects (and who knows what else?) would vanish if the sound, in one or another of the holes, wasn't forthcoming: i.e. if they all ceased at once, even for an instant. Odd cranks and philosophers came through to testify that they had witnessed this phenomenon, often late at night, or while on solitary walks etc.

The fact is that very soon all the sounds that mattered were receptive to the shape, depth and size of the holes; so it was

agreed that we who were digging, who had something to live for (who were in tune with the whole?) had outgrown awards; that digging was enough.

The philosophers were becoming redundant. They now clung to the hope that in the right hole, a perfectly-carved grafted mango-tree was to be found. With two philosophers under it. The mango-tree philosophers were holding their breath ready to release it on a deserving world, to quell for ever the conscience of the tortured voice: it would release the diggers. But this would happen only (and on this they were insistent) if the diggers managed to unearth the treasure unharmed. Should the least bruise, scratch or chip be inflicted on the trinity, the absolving breath could never be released (or would turn malignant) and the diggers would have to toil on downwards for centuries maybe, till another layer was reached where the philosophers sat under the mango tree.

Occasionally, the sceptical, or those who felt they had been conned, put the prophesying-philosophers to death. Increasingly, sympathisers (those who held out no hope of being diggers) joined them: martyrdom was second best. Others, to maintain their self-respect, or to stimulate their curiosity, or to present their credentials as lovers of beauty and Truth, as victims of sensibility, massed at the edges of the deepest caverns, and waited for the lure of the sound; and hurled themselves over, giving a voice-accompaniment as they fell: these were solemn occasions, there was no element of competition. The perfect fall was an end in itself.

But corruption was hinted at. Soon all falls were perfect, the dying voices indistinguishable from each other, indistinguishable from Sarah. It was rumoured that in outlying holes, brutal and competitive sessions were being held, under the most alien of conditions; and only those who passed that test were allowed to graduate to the real holes.

Well, perhaps. But we couldn't really tell. They were all very good. Life was perfect. ●

THERE WAS CRUELTY ON RECORDS

*bismillah
once again
bismillah
forty brave men
forty nights in darkness
held their breath
for forty nights
for love for love
for our resurrection*

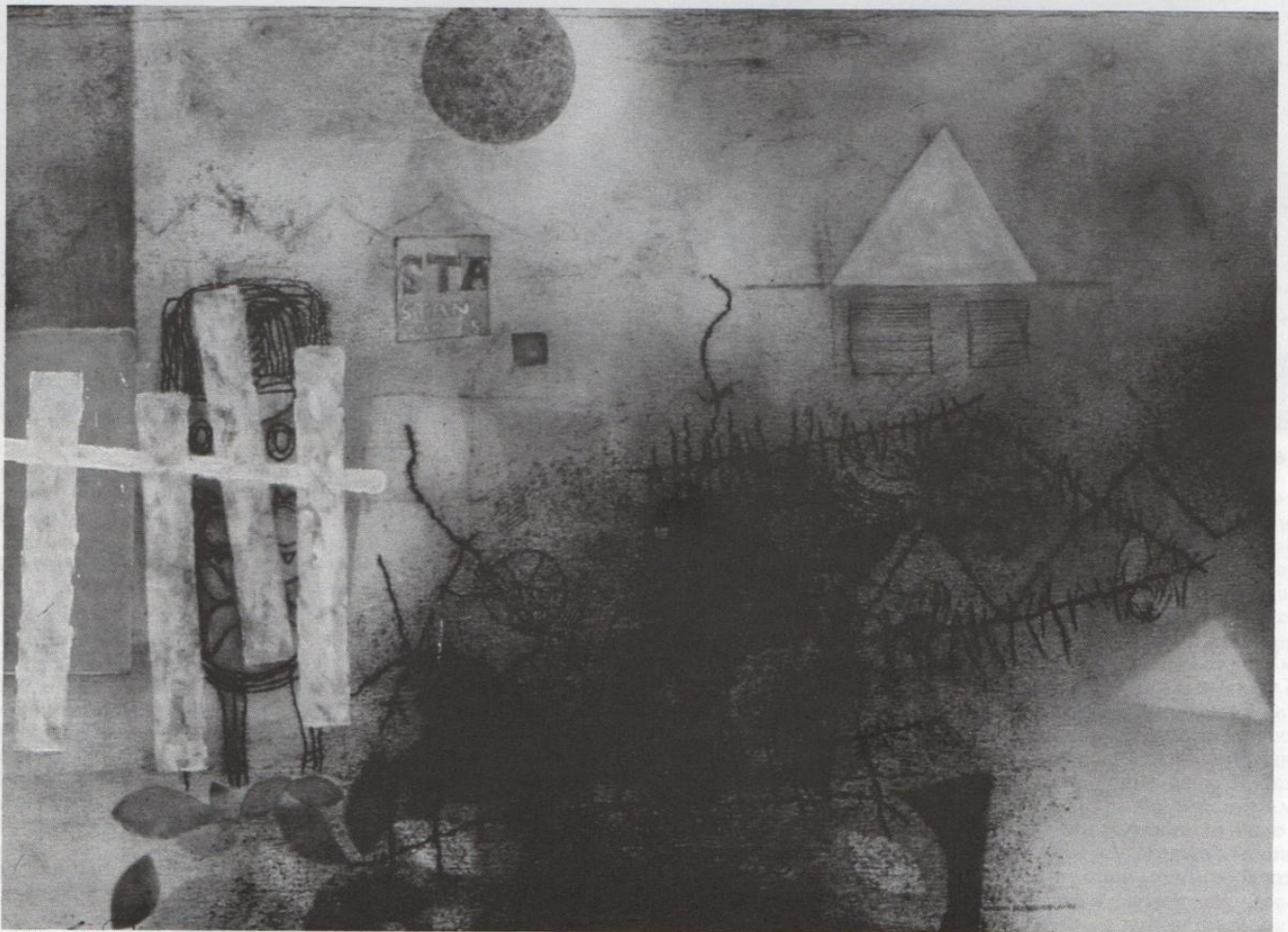
*the earth in turmoil
things fall apart
at night we spoke of violence
forty men in ankara terminal
sentenced to absentia
our fingers yellowed with loneliness
bismillah
forty took up arms for
revolution on earth*

*being lost in thought
being ibrahim
with no doubt
our brave acceptance of faith
being a travelling ibrahim*

*our name
on evils records
declared as traitor
at party congresses, yet we fought together*

*renewed our faith
forty brave men
prosecuted in default
charged against tyranny
in the name of
Allah*

tâvus husâmeddin



Stan Eclipse by Louis Maqhubela

THE GUN

There was only the sound of their naked feet beating the asphalt road.

The man in front walked steadily on, unaware, it seemed, of the rapid pattering of smaller feet behind him. He was no more than a big, featureless form striding resolutely forward in the early morning. For they had left in the wee hours when sleep was still a warm blanket over the village.

The man walked; the child followed. The light, chill air – strident with the sound of insects – rubbed itself like a cold hand against her body. Every now and then she faltered, adjusting the strap of the

crocus-bag she'd been given to carry on her shoulder.

Once, when they'd passed the St. Paul's Junction and home was miles behind, the form in front had – without pausing or breaking stride – asked in a brusque, dry voice:

"You tired?"

"No", the answer came, in a thin, tremulous voice, no different from the tinny chittering of the crickets in the roadside grass.

The child followed the heavy footsteps in front, blind to everything except the need to keep the rhythm; the exact pace, and distance of five steps behind the man.

Now that the sky was becoming lighter, the unpleasantly stony road to the Mardi Gras mountain begun, he shortened his stride somewhat not because of her, but because the climb was getting steeper and his breathing heavier.

"C'mon", he grunted, leaning his body forward the better to take the climb.

He held the gun across his front, with both hands. The muzzle was held in his left hand, the rest of the gun slanting downward to where he clasped the stock in his right. It was wrapped carefully in a canvas bag; done in a way to conceal the shape of the rifle from outside eyes. The child had watched him oil and polish it many times, always in the secrecy of the bedroom where only wife and sons were allowed during those hours of cleaning.

The gun was a .303 rifle furnished during the days when he was a police. He'd never used it, he said during the Big Riot, years ago, when the police did terrible things to people. He'd never used it at the time of the change-over when the people came to avenge their lost ones.

That was not what people said. Even Mother, when he spoke this way about himself, said nothing; she simply looked down at her feet and was silent. There was that same look on her face when, sometimes at night, he woke up in a screaming sweat and she had to hold his head and calm him.

He'd kept the gun; hidden it when the new police came searching. And Mother said nothing because his eyes were on her and she was afraid of him because of what he would do to her if she told.

Yesterday, Mother was also afraid when he told her:

"Tomorrow, I takin' Gi-gi wit me".

"Where!" Mother's eyes were frightened as she asked him.

"Matti Gras. We goin' mountain-huntin. Dis is the season for monkey. Monkey-meat is the best wild meat. You dunno that?"

"But you can't take the child with you. Huntin is man' work. Why you don' take one of the boys as you accustom to!"

"The likkle girl wan' to go. She tired harass me, man. I don' know what the hell a likkle girl wan' to be goin huntin for. So don' ask me."

"She can't go. You not takin' her!"

"Who goin' stop me? You!? She comin' wit' me because she ask me to. If that is the way she have to learn that huntin' is not for likkle girls then let her learn the hard way!"

"You takin' the gun?"

"Shut you' blinkin' mouth, woman! You want everybody to know my business?"

"I say she not goin nowhere with you!" Mother was close to tears.

"If I hear you say that again, I shove this hand right down your throat."

Ma shut-up because she knew he was serious.

The sun was up, her bare feet aching as they began climbing the foothills.

The child's father skipped sure-footedly over the stones of the slippery mud-path. She stuck doggedly at his heels, her eyes fixed on his ragged, sweat-soaked, khaki shirt and his stained rolled up trousers.

"You tired?" he asked again, turning this time to watch her.

"No", she fluted, her large, soft eyes brushing his hard, weathered face. 'Cruel', she thought, remembering the word she'd learnt in school the week before: that was what teacher Claire had called the boy who bullied all his classmates! She'd kept the word in mind, remembering her father.

"Eat", he commanded, handing her the wild guavas he snatched from the low branches. They were picking their way up a narrow ravine thickly covered with guava trees and wild nettle. To avoid the lurking needles of the overhanging 'pickah trees', she strived to put her foot exactly where he had placed his.

He sweated profusely now, his man-smell filling her nostrils. It was neither pleasant nor unpleasant. It depended. There were times he came home drunk and raving and the scent of him filled her with dread. At other times when he was in a laughing mood, she was content to sit and watch him romp in the yard with her five brothers. He never played with her.

When all the houses, near and distant, had disappeared; swallowed up it seemed, by the intense greenery; when there was nothing but the sound of dripping leaves and bird-noises way up in the canopy of branches he stopped.

"Shhh", he hissed. Though she hadn't made a sound. He listened then began to unwrap the rifle.

With his bare feet, he stirred the carpet of dead leaves and revealed what might have been smooth lumps of soft, dark earth.

"Droppings", he grunted. "Manicou droppings. They been eating land-crabs from the ravine down there. Now if you look close, you goin' see some of the crab-shell still in dey droppings". his demeanour was more relaxed.

The gun, now exposed, was quickly loaded with cartridges taken from the same wrapping. The child wondered for the thousandth time, her eyes glued to the weapon, whether it was true - what had been whispered about her father.

"C'mon girl, we don' have all day."

The child jumped; began following the man uphill.

They were soon surrounded by a small plantation of wild bananas. Bunches of wild fruit hung from the pendulous stems thrown out by the trees. The chill air was sweet with the scent of ripe bananas. Gi-Gi stuffed herself.

The man was exultant. The girl had never seen him so happy before. He cut a grappe of the largest fruits down and said it was for their return home. It was the bunches of ripe bananas that really thrilled him.

"Look at that!" he grinned. "A lot of monkey around here. How I know that? Hah! Monkey eat ripe fig like people. They pick them off the bunch and peel them. Throw the skin on the ground like children. If was manicou day woudda eat *into* the bunch. Look at that! If you didn' know better you woudda say it was a human-been who throw them skin on the ground. Not so?"

The child nodded.

She crept through the undergrowth behind him, her mind crowded with thoughts of the monkeys. Where were they and what did they look like? Her father had always brought them home skinned and quartered. Granny had told her once, that monkeys were caught by cutting small holes in pumpkins and placing food there. They put their hands in but could not take them out when their fists were closed around the food. Monkeys, she said, did not ever let go of the food in their hands.

They crawled through the bushes until they were looking across and downward at the banana trees. The child stooped and listened with the man; not knowing what she was listening for. She listened until she thought she heard something. The man drew the gun from beside him; lifted it; pulled the bolt at the side back and she was sure.

It came: an increased stirring in the bushes just beyond the bananas almost like a wind approaching, then a sudden burst of high-pitched chatter very much like children water-fighting at the stand-pipe by the road at home.

"They comin'", he said, raising the gun to his shoulder levelling it.

The child shivered, not knowing whether it was the mountain-chill or the fear beneath her anticipation.

A crowd of long-tailed, black and white creatures tumbled out of the trees. They swarmed into the banana grove and began feeding, scolding and nudging each other noisily aside. The child was seized with shocked wonder at those white faced creatures covered with tufts of what appeared to be incredibly soft hair, eating bananas as she would with her bare hands. As she had eaten them not too long ago! Some of the largest animals, she noted, had young ones clinging to their backs and undersides.

The man was flat on the ground, his cheeks pressed tightly against her rifle.

The child was not prepared for the sudden thunder of the gun going off. She fell clean on her back, the forest itself seeming to capsize with her. Then she heard what must have been the animal her father had caught... but then, she was not sure if it were the monkey or herself that had screamed.

She sat up blinking confusedly at her father's face. What the girl saw there confirmed for her, with a certitude that belied her ten years that all of the whisperings about him were true.

He'd lifted the gun again and the child saw why. The monkeys had all disappeared, as suddenly as they had come. Except for one which stood in the clearing between the trees. In a moment it turned and the child realised why it hadn't run. It held a young one close against its chest, having lifted it gently off the ground. The gun was steady in her father's hand.

Then it happened: the animal turned searched the bushes with its eyes and found them. Its gaze was direct as it lifted both arms out and up; the young one held out to them; its eyes imploring.

"Look!" The child choked. "It sayin' - It saying..."

But the man had seen. He shuddered violently, groaning the way she'd heard him groan on those nights he had his bad dreams. He dropped the gun and went careering down the hill; the little girl following as best she could. ●

Jacob Ross

Parminder Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE

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Backyard

For Dauna

Dark night
Nobody talk
Nanse story
No more
Silence hangs
Like jus'-pick chicken
Nothing is ever
Really quiet

Dark night
Rich people dawg
Howl their rabid cries
Into the night
Into the echo
Of limping
Politician voices

Dark night
The rustling cane blade
The slishh of swish blade
A moan strained
By the dry bone
Tear of flesh
A groan trapped
In a prayer
Of escape from flesh

A drop ah rum
A drop ah dice
A drop ah big drum
A drop ah wata wid ice

Dark night
Walking with you
Hand in hand
Fingers teasing
We sat for hours
On the sand
And watched
The moonlight
Bathe across
The waves of sea
Washing up against
Our voices
Cushioned in the salt
Splinters of night air

This place
Holds many secrets
Well known
Ignored forgotten faces
Our footprints
Buried in silence
At daylight leaves
The white sand
Beach clean
For tourist

Imruh Bakari Caesar

LOVE IN ARCHWAY

I saw him first across the one-way system
As he wiped the dust and litter from his hair
he paused... A piece of grit caught in his contact lens
And I knew he was mine.

I watched him mincing down towards St Gabriels
Scraping something sticky from his shoe
but his trousers were too tight for him to walk in
He was a little on the short side too
He cursed as a Kentucky box struck him
Across the lips, and I knew.

One windy afternoon I chanced to sit beside him
He stuttered softly spitting in my ear
"I could drive you home" O happy day.

I watched him as he squeezed between the dustbins
The sultry scent of cabbage on the stair
I slipped because there weren't any lightbulbs
So he led me bruised and limping to his lair.
He talked for hours of a lifetime spent in Archway
His piercing eyes of blue bloodshot with grime
I smiled and said I really must be going
But I liked him so we'd talk another time.

*Giraffe by Anthony Jadunath
Animals by Anthony Jadunath*

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The Land of Stories (Extract)

India is the land of stories. People and places, animals and plants, everything and all things have their stories. The large square wicker and wood armchair in which my great aunt sits may well have a legend of its own. The tie dye cushion from Rajasthan on which her back rests, is rich with multiple meanings hidden within its colour scheme and pattern. And the 1958 diary, which she covers all over with 'ram, ram, ram,* or the old Parker biro – surely too have many untold tales. "Come, come, sit, sit." Bibiji† greets me as usual without raising her head from her industrious writing. "Did you sleep well? Will you have breakfast now? Was it a good party at Usha's?"

"Oh yes! It was very nice."

"Good good." My aunt continues writing. "And Usha dropped you home?"

"No, she didn't. Se sent me with a friend of hers."

Bibiji raises her eyebrows questioningly.

"A Raj Swarup." I reply.

"Hmm. Raj Swarup... Swarup? Anand Swarup's son? Is his father a chartered accountant?"

"I forgot to ask him what his father did Bibiji" I tease, "But I think he said he was a journalist."

"Ah yes, that's it. It must be! I remember, Anand Swarup's son is a journalist. And his mother is called... Nita. Yes yes, it must be the same." She pauses, the small reminiscing smile which lights up her face briefly flashes into a definitely mischievous look. Her eyes sparkle, her single tooth gleams. She throws me a quick glance still continuing her writing.

"Now Auntie. Tell me. What's the story?"

"No, no! Why nothing" She declares. She looks at me with wide eyed innocence. The sun even conspires to make her silver hair shine like a halo.

"Now, now, auntie tell me. There's a story... tell me the story."

She writes away and struggles to contain the flickering smile, the mischievous tooth... and hold down the flood of recollections. I know that soon the story will emerge. I coax it.

"You know how I love stories... and how I'm never here for long enough."

"First you have your breakfast" She states like a punctuation and proceeds to issue the necessary instructions in a loud voice in the direction of the kitchen door, all the time continuing to write 'ram, ram, ram' in her old diary.

"Well darling, she begins, 'In the old days, in Lahore...' I close my eyes for an instant and smile inwardly; 'yes, yes, this is how the good stories begin...'

"...well, the young men would have to be sent off to England to study. Naturally it was always a big event. And even though we knew it had to be done and was in the best interests of our boys, the families would be worried and upset. After all, they were going far away. In those days there weren't any aeroplanes so it often meant a separation of three or four years and more if they went for medicine or law. So we, all the women, would pray, do paat, puja, feed the fish, and in this..."

"Feed the what?" I interrupt.

"Feed the fish." As I still look bewildered she explains:

"Why yes. Didn't you know? Well, we would make a big *degchi* (vessel) of cooked sweet rice and carry it down to the nearest river and feed the fish with it. So that the fish in the sea would safeguard our boys and ensure their safe voyage. Then we would come and pray for their happiness, that they should be successful in their

studies and then..." She pauses to find the appropriate formulation, "You know, come back and settle down in India."

'Settling down', I knew meant getting married. I smile at my aunt to indicate that I understand and sympathize. She looks relieved and puts away her notebook and pen.

"Of course now times have changed... changed a great deal from those days. You young people have much more control over your lives, but in those days things were different. We all lived in big joint families. The British were our rulers and life in England too was very different. We were naturally anxious; our boys were going far away, they might be lonely, exposed to different ways and temptations of all kinds, and then... in their loneliness might get engaged in an... well you know, an unsuitable match." She quickly stops. Since her self image and dignity will not allow her to be accused of narrow mindedness, she hastens to add; "Of course it was not always unsuitable. Sometimes, many times in fact, it worked out very well. For instance look at Helga Das, Narpal Das's wife, you know, Arun's mother, I mean, how well she has fitted in, and she even speaks Hindi without an accent. Or take your aunty Mavis, who married your uncle Giri. No! no! sometimes it worked out very well. But still, for us women-folk, especially our mothers, it was always a worry, and a fear, because you see, a lot of the older women didn't even speak English." She stops being defensive and adds indignantly. "It was hard enough having our own boys coming back, behaving like sahibs and telling everyone what to do!"

By the time breakfast is cleared away, Bibiji, now well launched, settles back more comfortably in her chair. "Now, Anand Swarup's father, that's to say your Raj's grandfather, was the doctor to our family, as well as to many of the other big Lahore families. And he was really very bad! I'm not saying he wasn't a good doctor, but so wicked! He would chide people about their sons' departures, come and tell the ladies that they should start learning English in preparation to meet their daughters-in-law! He would frighten them with all sorts of made up stories about life in England. Really, his mocking was in very bad taste. So bad in fact that when your uncle was in England we would think twice about calling the doctor sahib when we were ill in case we felt worse after his visit!"

She shakes her head indignantly as she remembers.

"Then, one day, we heard that the doctor sahib had not been seen around. And then the news spread around Lahore that the doctor sahib's son Anand, that's your Raj's grandfather, had disappeared – eloped – with a Christian girl." She stops for effect.

"Now the doctor sahib had already taunted all his friends beyond endurance so it was unlikely that anyone would show him much sympathy. In any case he didn't show his face around anywhere. He wasn't seen at the club and his assistant attended to all the calls. We heard that he had locked himself up in his house and then, do you know what we heard?"

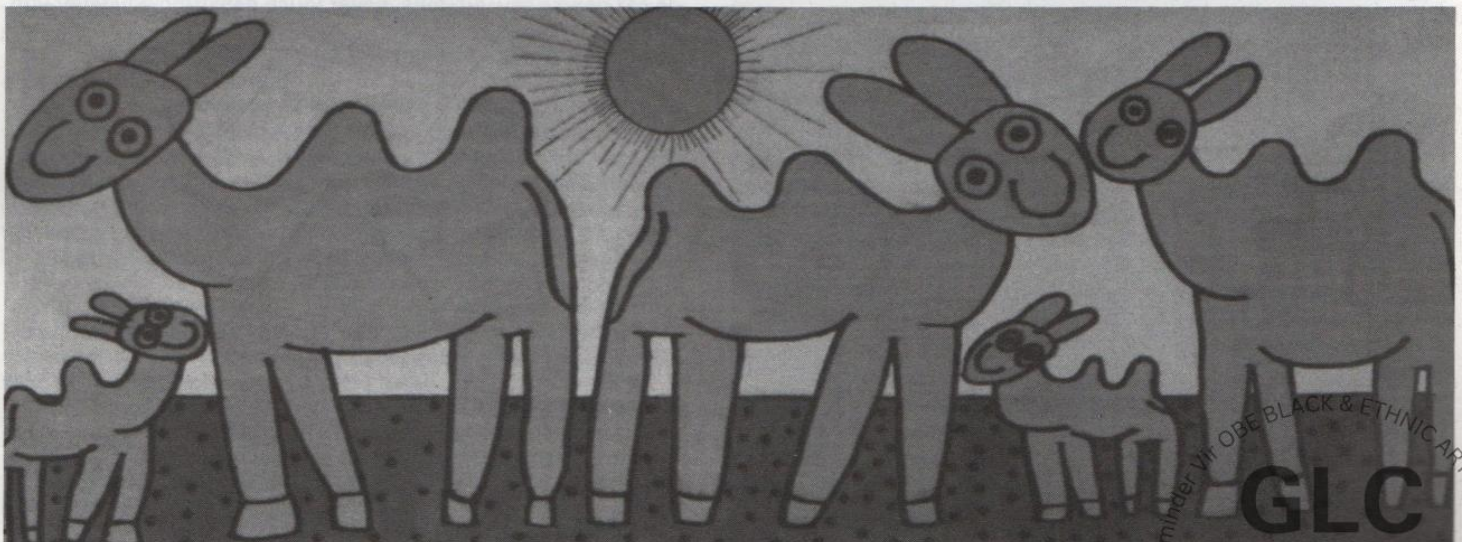
I shake my head.

"Well, we heard that the doctor sahib was so upset, that he was neither eating nor drinking – just crying, and as he had no-one to give him any sympathy, he would sit in front of a big mirror and cry and cry and then stop – and console himself..." My great aunt's face beams with an unabashed smile of satisfaction, which, to my surprise she doesn't even try to hide as she reaches out for her diary and pen and starts, once again, to write, "ram, ram, ram,".

*ram, ram: one of the names for the divine which means: 'one who dwells in all.'

†Bibiji: nearest translation: 'respected lady'

Leena Dhingra (Asian Womens Writers Workshop)





Halloween 1985 pastel and spectra colour on wall by Sonia Boyce
Photo by Edward Woodman

"THE DWEN"

In the country village of L'Anse Noire in Trinidad, there lived a couple, Fayliss and Albertina. They had an only daughter, called Umilta. Fayliss was a labourer on a cocoa-estate, and Albertina was a seamstress. They lived in a three-roomed wooden house with a small kitchen at the side. Umilta was sixteen years old, and her mother was teaching her dress-making trade. Umilta was also a very pretty girl, the prettiest in the village. Her parents were very strict with her, she was not allowed boy-friends, she was warned against speaking to men. She was a gentle, quiet girl, who obeyed her parents at all times, and she attended church everyday. All the men in the village were attracted by her beauty. Everybody in the village thought highly of her, and spoke kind things about her. When she was not learning to sew, she was doing household chores at home. She never complained, never got angry, and was always respectful to everyone.

One day, her mother said to her, "Umilta, me girl, yuh mustn't worry yuh head 'bout boyfriend an dem t'ing, yuh still young. When yuh get to be a big woman like me, yuh go meet a nice respectable, good man jus' like yuhself, and de two a you go fall in love at de right time, an yuh go get married. All yuh har to do is keep yuhself decent and good at all times, an yuh go meet such a person. Meanwhile, yuh mus' take in all me teachin' yuh 'bout dressmakin' an yuh go be alright".

Umilta was scrubbing an iron-pot, she kept nodding her head, saying, "Yes, Mama, me hear what yuh sayin'".

"Me ent tellin' yuh no 'ting wrong", said her mother. "All de men an dem in dis village don't get no ambition", said the mother, frowning, "one day yuh go meet some nice man from another place".

"Me don't talk to none a dem, mama", said Umilta shyly. "Me always listen to what you an papa tell me".

"Me know yuh is a good girl, Umilta", the mother smiled. "Me proud a yuh all de time".

"Ah don't even look at any man in dis place, mama", said Umilta with a sigh.

"Dat's takin' it outa proportion, girl", the mother laughed. "Yuh can look at dem, but is when yuh talk to dem, dey does get fresh an put all kinda questions to yuh".

"I know, mama, me is always careful", replied Umilta.

One night, Fayliss was going home, when he heard the wailing of a baby. At first he thought that it was coming from a house in the village, but he soon realised that the cry was actually coming from the forest which is not far from the road. He decided to follow the sound, he rushed through the bushes, and on the ground between two rotting logs, he saw a baby wrapped in blankets, screaming. Fayliss' heart was thumping, his face was covered in sweat, and he became very angry.

"But who in de name a God put dis child here", he said, trembling with rage. "Some women really worthless, yes. Dey throw away de baby in de bush. Come, little one, me go take yuh back to de village an fin' out who was de heartless peson who put yuh here". And he took up the baby, nestled it to his chest, and came back to the road. What Fayliss did not realise was that the baby was a Dwen, the ghost or jumbie of an unchristened child. When he got back to the road, the baby had grown older and bigger, when he was a few yards from his home, the baby had grown to a child of about seven years old.

Fayliss swayed a little, and said, "Oh God, I so tired, yuh feeling so heavy all of a sudden. I can't understand it, man". he called to his wife, "Albertina! Open de door! Come quick!" Albertina came to the door, and said, "What happen! What yuh have dey, boy?"

"Girl, I was comin' home an I hear dis child cryin' de bush", said Fayliss, walking up the steps. "Some wicked woman leave de baby in de bush".

Albertina stared in horror, for her husband was carrying a child of about twelve years old in his arms. "Man, yuh mus' be mad or what, dat nuh no baby, dat is big child yuh have dey, yuh blij' or what".

"Well, I notice, it gettin' heavy as I was comin' along", said Fayliss, panting heavily. "Me didn't see too good, 'cause it dark, man. Me de t'ink I was jus' tired out from runnin' round de bush lookin' to see where de cryin' was comin' from".

"Fayliss, boy, dat is Dwen, yuh ent know dat", Albertina was shaking all over. "Yuh have to carry it back way yuh fin' it, yuh can't bring dat t'ing in de house. Yuh shouldn't a bring it in front a we house at all. I mean, yuh mus' know 'bout dem t'ing, man. Yuh want to bring curse on we, well, I never see more". And she made the sign of the cross.

"Oh God, yes, I see what yuh mean", replied Fayliss, breathing heavily. "Me wasn't t'inkin' to tell yuh de truth, I feel so sorry for de little one. Oh God! Oh God!"

Just then, Umilta came up behind her mother, looked out, and said, "What it mean, mama?"

Albertina turned quickly, pushed her daughter back inside, saying, "No, Umilta, don't come here an look, go in yuh bedroom an keep quiet". Umilta went to her bedroom.

Fayliss took the child back into the forest where he found it. The child screamed all the way back, getting smaller all the time, when Fayliss reached the spot between the two rotting logs, it was a baby again. Fayliss placed it down carefully, made the sign of the cross, turned and ran all the way home.

The following day, Albertina said to her daughter, "Girl, I don't know what make yuh father bring dat t'ing here. 'E musta been blin' drunk. An yuh shouldn't peep out behin' me. Dem t'ing does put all kinda curse on people. yuh father does get on crazy sometimes, yes".

"Well, mama, papa have a good heart", said Umilta, a little withdrawn.

"I know 'e have a good heart", replied Albertina sternly, "but de old people say yuh mus' never touch dem t'ing whatever yuh feel in yuh heart".

"Not'ing go happen, mama" said Umilta, "'cause de Lord go keep we safe".

"I hope so, me girl", said Albertina sorrowfully.

Days and weeks went by, Albertina, Fayliss and Umilta with difficulty, had pushed the incident of the Dwen from their minds.

Early one morning, Umilta started feeling dizzy, tired, and complained of pains in her stomach.

"What happen, girl, maybe is somet'ing yuh eat too quickly", said Albertina. "Go an lie down for a while, I go make yuh some bush-tea."

Albertina made the bush-tea, but when Umilta drank it, she vomited. Albertina grew worried. Umilta was twisting and holding her stomach in anguish on the bed.

"Oh God, mama, I go dead", Umilta's face was contorted. "Me din't eat not'ing quick, me belly achin' bad".

"I don't t'ink is wind", said Albertina sadly. "Maybe yuh does work too hard. Anyway, lie down an res' yuhself".

Suddenly, Umilta screamed! Albertina jumped and became frantic.

"Mama, oh, mama" wailed Umilta.

Parma...
GLC
1981-1986
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"I have to take yuh to doctor, girl," said Albertina. "Come, come let we go to de hospital".

Albertina left a note for her husband, then she took Umilta to the hospital. She was alarmed and angry when the doctor told her that Umilta was pregnant. All the way home on the bus she kept thinking and worrying about it, and reproaching her daughter. When they got back home, she said to Fayliss who was also alarmed and angry, "Man, I surprise as hell, de girl makin' baby. I try to bring she up good an decent an dis is de thanks I get, she gone behin' me back in secret an take man".

Fayliss was sprawled on a chair, his face strained and twitching. Umilta's head was bowed.

"But she ent have no boy-friend, no man, how she makin' baby", said Fayliss.

"Man, Fayliss, yuh stupid or what", said Albertina roughly. "Me sure she have some man in secret. An all dis time, me t'ink she carryin' sheself decent. I feel to give she a damn good lickin".

"No, yuh can't do dat, man, in she condition", answered Fayliss, his voice was a little shaky. "Now, Umilta, who is dis fellar yuh makin' baby for?"

Umilta looked at her father with tears in her eyes, and replied, "Papa, me didn't go wid nobody, me ent have no boy-friend. I don't know how it happen, dat is de gospel truth".

"Yuh see, she lyin' to we face, like she ent have no shame".

"Umilta, we always tell yuh to tell de truth always", said Fayliss calmly. "All we want to know is, who is de man dat put yuh in child?"

"Papa, me go swear on de Bible", Umilta sobbed, "is de truth me tellin' yuh, me ent lyin', papa."

"Yuh t'ink we stupid or what", Albertina raged, "yuh mus' have a man, yuh can't get in dis way if yuh ent have a man".

"Mama, me ent lyin'", Umilta was frightened. "Me don't know how it happen".

"I goin' to Old man Joshua, tonight, an ask 'im 'bout dis", said Fayliss, looking intently at his wife. "E go tell me de whole truth, I sure a dat".

Old man Joshua was an obeah-man who lived in a hut in the bush.

"Yuh can do dat if yuh want to", said Albertina, "but I certain she lyin' an' hidin' somet'ing from we, an I feel to beat it outa she".

"If she lyin', we go know", said Fayliss, waving a hand. "old man Joshua go know de truth of de matter".

Fayliss went to see Old man Joshua and told him about Umilta's condition. Old man Joshua looked at Fayliss from head to foot, and said "Yuh daughter speakin' de truth, she ent have no man. Is a jumbie on she, it take over she womb, de t'ing is, how it get dey".

"But... I... dont understan' dat, man", stuttered Fayliss. "How jumbie on she, she is a good girl, she always carry sheself decent an careful".

"Yuh sure, yuh tellin' me everyt'ing 'bout all yuh life", said Old man Joshua, his eyes searching Fayliss' face. "How 'bout you an yuh wife, anyt'ing strange happen to all yuh at anytime before yuh daughter get wid child?"

Fayliss bowed his head, wringed his hands, and answered, "Well, yes, somet'ing happen... to me". And he told Old man Joshua about the incident with the Dwen.

"Ah, yes, I see, now me know yuh trouble", said Old man Joshua with a heavy voice. "De baby yuh daughter have in she belly, is de same Dwen."

"Oh God, me wife did say, it go bring curse on we", Fayliss' voice trembled. "What I go do, please help me, Mister Joshua, please".

"Yes, me go help yuh", answered Old man Joshua. "Now, yuh daughter mus' have dis child".

"Man, how yuh can say dat", replied Fayliss with a hoarse voice. "Can't yuh gimme somet'ing for she to take to get rid a it?"

"Listen, what me tellin' yuh, man", answered Old man Joshua. "What me sayin' is, yuh daughter mus' have de baby at de place in de bush where yuh fin' de Dwen. So when de time come for she to have de baby, you an yuh wife mus' take she dey to give it birth. Den, yuh mus' leave it dey an go home".

"Me still don't understan' what yuh sayin'", said Fayliss.

"Yuh mus' do what me tell yuh", said Old man Joshua, "'cause, if yuh let de baby born in yuh house, yuh never go get rid a it, an yuh go have a curse on yu all de time, an I wouldn't able to help yuh wid dat".

"Alright, I go do what yuh say", and Fayliss felt a violent ache in his stomach. "Oh God, me go do it as yuh say".

Old man Joshua waved his hands, and said in a commanding voice, "Even if is in de day, yuh mus' carry she dey to have de baby, yuh understan' what me sayin'?"

"Yes, I understan' what yuh sayin'", replied Fayliss, cringing.

"Alright, dat is all", said Old man Joshua.

When Fayliss told Albertina what Old man Joshua had said and instructed them to do, she became very angry with her husband.

"Yuh see, I de tell yuh, yuh shouldn't a bring de damn t'ing in front a we place", she said viciously. "Yuh does get on so blasted foolish sometimes, like yuh is a little boy".

"We been through dat already, girl", said Fayliss.

Look, how yuh mess up de girl life", snapped Albertina. "I bring she up so decent, but like yuh ent care what happen to she at all".

"Tina, girl, me make a mistake, me sorry for dat", said Fayliss pitifully. "Now we go correct me mistake".

"Dat's not de point, man!" Albertina shouted and sucked her teeth.

Umilta never went outside her home, Albertina and Fayliss made sure that she remained indoors. When the neighbours and friends asked about her, they made up all sorts of silly excuses.

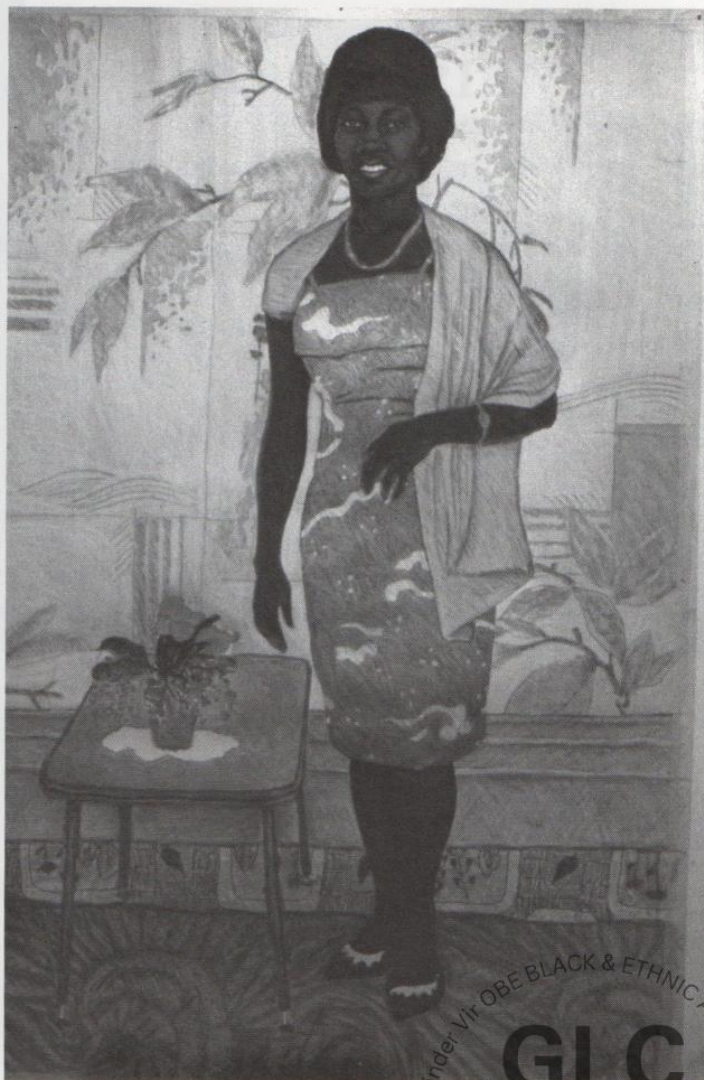
On a Saturday, about midnight, the time came for Umilta to have the baby. Fayliss and Albertina took her to the forest to the spot between the two rotting logs, and Umilta gave birth to a baby-boy, Albertina wrapped it in blankets and placed it between the two rotting logs, and Fayliss carried Umilta home. The baby screamed! And as they came away from the spot, the screams changed into a kind of chant, "Hoop! Ooop! Hoop! Ooop! Hoop!" And Albertina said, "Yuh hear dat, is Dwen bawl dat. Old man Joshua right, now de jumbie gone from we".

"Praise de Lord" said Fayliss, and he kissed Umilta on her fore-head.

The next morning, Miss Simpson, the postmistress, was passing the forest on her way to the post office when she heard the wailing of a baby. She decided to follow the sound.... ●

Faustin Charles

Portrait by Sonia Boyce



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BHOPAL

Photographs by Zak Ove

The night of December 2nd/3rd 1984 was a night Bhopal and its 700,000 citizens can never forget. The injury has been enormous, the insult even greater as governments, both American and Indian, debate the finer points of a 'legal settlement'. The people of Bhopal have been forced to remain silent and powerless throughout – the survivors of the world's worst industrial disaster.

The Indian press described what happened:

"... As slumbering citizens of Bhopal reeled under the effects of the gas around 1 am on the morning of December 3, mothers woke up to find their children beside them dying, or already dead. Husbands woke up to find that their entire families had been gassed to death... Deserted streets suddenly came alive with the exodus of thousands of people moving out of the city. To the railway station. To the bus terminal. Into the hills. Into the open spaces. Anywhere, but away from Bhopal... The avenues of escape were not open. At the station, the crowds found that all rail traffic to and from the city had already been halted. Buses and cars were full as traffic jammed the roads leading out of the city... Soon people were falling like ninepins on the roads. And also in the hospitals. Especially Hamidia hospital, where doctors had to scour the lawns to segregate the victims who had died awaiting treatment, from those who could still be treated. It was not yet dawn."

The Illustrated Weekly of India December 30, 1984



- 1) Shopkeeper in Jaya Prakash Naga opposite Union Carbide stands coldly staring at his surroundings as he does probably every day. Bitterly thinking back to how life was before the massacre or to what his life has become – who knows? Photo by Zak Ove.
- 2) The train from Bhopal. A man and his wife with their son are seen here leaving Bhopal probably for good wondering what the future will bring. Photo by Zak Ove.
- 3) Early morning at Union Carbide. Children of the Jaya Prakash Naga shantytown wandering outside the Union Carbide factory which is directly opposite their homes. The children stooping in the background shit outside the factory as a small show of their feelings towards Union Carbide. Photo by Zak Ove.

Another Indian journalist says:

"... it is logical to predict that the Bhopal gas walk will not be the system's last: it was not the first, neither was it even the worst. The worst environmental disaster in human history was the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, conceived and designed by men of science. Scientists colluded with politicians to eliminate a section of the Japanese population, while simultaneously testing the technology, and impact, of their new toys. The same rationality requires the production of pesticides to wage unlimited war on other species, declared as enemies by agricultural science, or the

production of lethal gases without adequate safety precautions among a population too defenceless to react except in pain... With the growth of industry the world over, the threats of death and destruction have loomed large over an unsuspecting humanity. While nature's resources are slowly throttled by chemical waste, the populace is poisoned by the deadly gases these industries pump into the atmosphere. Bhopal is not an isolated case."

From: 'The Fate of the Earth – Claude Alvares *Illustrated Weekly of India* December 30, 1984.



Photos by Armet Francis



THE BLACK TRIANGLE

The Black Triangle is a collection of photographs by Armet Francis which deals with the people of the African diaspora. The pictures shot in Kingston, Harare, New York, London and Mombasa amongst other places illustrate the diversity of this experience. The comprehensive introduction by Ron Ramdin provides the historical and contemporary background to the Black Triangle and places the photographs in context. The axioms and quotations of Kwame Nkrumah and Yosef Ben Jochannan, the maps, poems and a chronology from 4000BC - AD 1885 featured in the book illustrate some of the manifestations of the legacy of slavery and colonisation in the African diaspora.

The book is a remarkable collection of photographs with many social and cultural dimensions which bear testimony to the diversity and power of the black experience.

Armet Francis is an established photographer who has been working since the late sixties covering reportage, fashion and advertising. His most recent exhibition was at the Photographers Gallery.

Ron Ramdin is the author of 'From Chattel Slave to Wage Earner' and 'The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain'.

The book 'The Black Triangle, The People of the African Diaspora' is available at a cost of £9.95 (US\$14.95) for paperback and £19.95 (US\$29.95) plus £1.50 per copy for postage and packing (Inland Overseas Surface Mail) from: **Seed Publications, PO Box 852, London W11 4RY, UK**

**UK Trade Orders, wholesale and retail direct to:
Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Road, Birmingham
B11 1RD.**



Trinidad 1983 African Mas Photo by Zak Ove

THE BRAVE

Carnival Tuesday! Everyone going in town to see big mas! Red Indians, bats, sailors, marines, Germans, gladiators, Romans, African warriors and Cow-mas! Everybody in town today!

Since six o'clock Boyie had been up and ready to go. His mother, annoyed, complained that "The boy turning all about, chattering, not giving people in de house a damm chance."

The other children, his two younger brothers and elder sisters, did not have an easy time with him either – particularly the two little boys. The whole morning, from the time they woke up, he deliberately teased them with dramatic descriptions of the mas in town. He laughed at their cries of fear. It was the first time they were going into town to see mas. He had gone twice before and he was doing the same thing his sisters used to do to him. All they had to do was say "Look ah mas!", and Boyie would run. He would come out from where he was hiding – in the latrine or under the bed, only when his mother came to fetch him.

They took their baths under the pipe outside, fighting and shrieking over the soap. Boyie continued teasing them, risking more scolding from his mother later, but this time with silent versions. However, once inside, at the sight of new pants, shirt and shoes lying on the bed his attention shifted. They all got dressed under mother's supervision. He teased them while they waited to go. The two little ones ran about shouting and complaining to their mother and twice Boyie was threatened: behave, or stay home. But he only giggled and made faces at his brothers and his mother, behind her back.

Out of ear-shot, he told them about the bat-men. He liked to frighten them with that one. The black and brown bats – men really; in tights, with long wings and grotesque heads and faces, long red-tipped fangs in mouths agape and wild rolling eyes. He arched his body, spread his arms, fanning them up and down, imitating the bats' movements at the same time hissing and hooting the way they do to the accompanying screams and bawls of his brothers.

In the bedroom his mother was refereeing a fight between his two sisters over a pair of ribbons. So he carried on, this time about the cow-mas. Even though he had never seen one, he was very imaginative and his brothers large frightened eyes propelled him on. From hearsay he spoke about their green costumes, horned heads and rope whips cracking the air with bullet like noises. He spoke as if he was seeing them before him. He was relishing their fear when his mother called them to eat.

In the kitchen, as they ate, his mother packed the basket with the pigeon-peas pelau, mauby, sweet-bread and a small flask of rum for herself. A feeble voice called from outside and Boyie rushed to the door. He grinned when he saw the 'ole mas', in an old, tattered, oversized dress and hideous mask. It was his friend Albert. On time as they had planned.

"Who is it?" shouted one of his brothers, mouth stuffed with sweetbread.

Boyie told him to come to the door. They came running sweetbread in hand, only to turn around with the same speed and run back, screaming and bawling, to hide between their mother's legs. He bent over in a fit of laughter – the plan had worked well. His mother could only look at him cross-eyed stifling her laughter. She gathered them together – they were leaving for town. A large crowd waiting at the bus stop was gay and tingling with life – the Carnival spirit in each one of them. Cheap talk, gossip and liquor passed freely. Men roared with laughter, womens' laughter rang out as if they had been touched on their rum sweetened souls. One or two teenaged couples stood aside, whispering secret plans to each other for the day.

Boyie stood there among them with his brothers and the other children. That was big man and big woman thing. His thoughts were in town, where the mas was. Now and then, two or three masqueraders passed him. He like the red Indian mas in particular – and gazed longingly at them until they boarded a taxi and were out of sight. Afterwards he pictured himself as a Red Indian brave – howling and dancing with a hatchet in his hand as his band was passing the spectators in town.

The bus ride was noisy and happy as was the wait. Boyie sat quietly in his seat with his brothers and did not even tease them. It was always this way with him during the bus ride into town for the Carnival. He just sat there lost in his thoughts, staring into the sea of faces in the bus, not seeing anyone. His mother sat behind, engrossed in a lively and laughing conversation with a buxom woman in the opposite seat. He could not communicate his feelings with anyone. Mingled with the sensation of excitement was apprehension. At this time his brothers giggling and horse play annoyed him. He smiled wickedly to himself – thinking how they would run and cry when they saw the real mas.

The blazing mid-morning sun and the throng of people brought out a hot stillness and stickiness in the bus. Now and then the atmosphere became quiet but not for very long. Someone was bound to inject the Carnival spirit into the crowd again.

The bus neared the outskirts of the city, Boyie strained his neck trying to catch a glimpse of masqueraders as they passed. Sometimes the bus was forced to halt by a group of masqueraders or by one of the magnificent floats forging ahead to town. With his excited brothers almost on his back trying to see too, Boyie stared in awe at these creative wonders – they never failed to amaze him.

The bus stopped two blocks away from the heart of the city and everybody got out having to walk the rest of the way.

First he saw the Butterflies, their band banner swaying gloriously in the strong midday breeze. He counted about fifty and more different colours and shapes of butterflies. They were resting along the road, excited at the sea of costumes and jostling people milling past. Greek soldiers, Viking, Hawaiians, See-bees, Robbers – Boyie's heart was pounding in his chest. He was in town! This is Carnival!

Dazed by the splendour, he followed his mother and the others up and across streets to reach their usual viewing spot where everybody knew everybody. His mother ordered him not to go wandering off, so that she would not have to ask the police to find him. Once he had done so but luckily one of his uncles found him before he had gone far.

From that spot – a good strategic view point – Boyie's Carnival evening passed colourfully by. Mas of all description, colour and style and size passed before his eyes capturing his heart. Big banners with big names: "George Bailey presents, 'The Splendour of Africa'", people crowding and shoving him "Cause Cito Velasquez band coming up de road"; badly behaved Kings Sailors throwing powder on anyone and everyone; greasy devil mas running down people to smear them with grease. Fun, fun fun! Pure fun – even the occasional scimmages and fights between friends or total strangers. Large bands, small bands, brass bands and steel-pan bands. Sometimes Boyie would sneak away or was permitted, to his mother's amusement, to jump up and dance to the sweet pulsating calypso tempos. He saw and met "long-time-no-see" cousins, uncles, aunts, god-fathers, god-mothers on that spot, that evening. He would call muddy, greasy painted masqueraders and bats to frighten his brothers and his sides hurt from laughing as they ran and hid behind their mother's dress. He ate and drank all that he was given, he was feeling good-tired but happy. The evening had been long and vibrant and in a while he knew they were going back home.

The sunset slipped its way in among the bands of masqueraders. His mother began to pack up. It was a while now since a band had passed by; she felt they had had enough for the day. Boyie could not argue with that. She packed the things away, and was bidding farewell to her friends, Boyie was looking up the street at a group of men and women gyrating against each other, drunk with rum and sweet calypso music. Suddenly the cracking bullet-like sound of whips startled him. He spun around. Only to see three green clad 'Cow-mas' approaching.

They came up the street prancing wildly. Large cow-bells ringing noisily around their necks. They were ranting and raving. And cracking their rope whips to complete the act.

His two brothers immediately raced for their mother's legs and hid under her dress, screaming and in tears. She pulled at them teasingly to see the 'cows'. Laughing, she called them to see how Boyie was not afraid of the cow-mas. They looked, in time to see Boyie's small body – with his head high in the sky, elbows rucked in his sides, and screaming more than the two little boys – sprinting up the street for all he was worth. ●

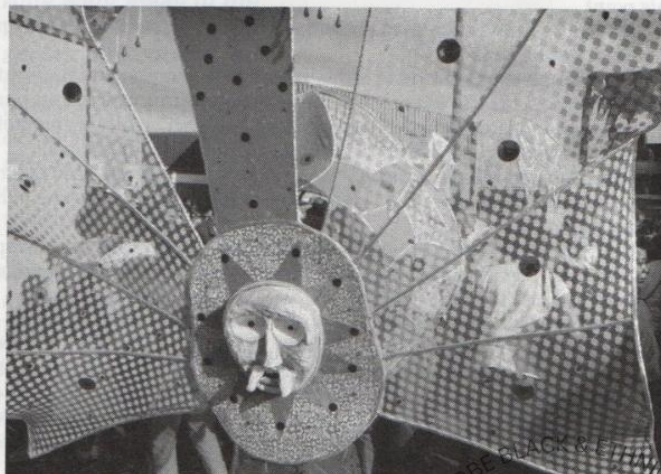
Fenwick Joseph Francis
(Three Pens Workshop Carenage Trinidad)

FROM YOUR MOUTH (for Black Women Writers)

*from your mouth
comes the
fire.
your pen cuts like
a laser
carving
our existence
permanently
into the future.
your typewriter hurls
healing
onto pages of
pain
and passion
pours forth
punctuated by
the sound of
your fingers kissing
the keys of your
word processor.
you shout us
into the future
with your
laughter
after washing us
for tomorrow
with your yesterday
tears.
your poems push us
to peace
and your plays
pull us toward our
best performance.
our enemies
stagger away
bleeding*

*trying to
escape your essays
and your stories
instruct us to
return
to ourselves
to save a world
while your
songs
lead us
back to love
to save a
people.
from your mouth
comes the
fire
and from the
fire
we will rise
again.*

Michael Simanga
From the book *DECLARATION!*
1985



London Mas 1985 Photo by Garth Price

GLC

1981-1986

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Parminder Vir Dave JACK & ETHAN ARTS ARCHIVE



Proposal for giant suit and sewing machine props (stage) by Lindi Hudson

seamstress

*my mother is a seamstress
a humble stitcher/joiner
of things*

*first she cuts the pattern
from paper lays it on the
cloth probably a loud cotton
thing Edna wants made for an
anniversary*

*then she chalks it up and down
a curve for the neck and arms
a little off the waist
a little on in Edna's case*

*then she cuts the goat from
head to toe and
blows the flame alight and
soaks and sprinkles
white pepper black pepper
salt time thyme
cash-and-carry curry and
coconut cream for the rice and
peas*

*she leaves a note for Janet on
the door "finish the dinner tell
Tony do the dishes empty the dust-
bin behave till i come
Mum"*

*she goes off to work on a red eighty
five seat nineteen fifty three double
decker bus five pound weight steel
ticket popper strapped across the
brace of her back and
London Transport thanks
her*

*when the pounds shillings and pence
and octagonal-headed three penny
bits are counted and the last bus
checked she can leave*

*next the pattern must be pinned and
hung around the dummy standing in
the corner of the room*

Leslie Anthony Goffe
'Cooly G'

BROOM STICK DANCE

Some of us don't have a rhythm
Some of us can't dance
I remember my grandmama teaching me
How to do the broomstick dance
Nearly every day I have to learn how to dance
The broomstick dance
Sometimes my grandfather would say to my grandmama
"Why don't you leave the boy alone?
Give the boy a break. Give the boy a chance."
Grandmama kissing her teeth saying,
"Come here, grandson, and do the broomstick dance."
So she'd turn on the radiofusion
And hand me the broomstick.
"Boy, listen to the music, and dance the broomstick dance."
Then you'd see me dance with the broomstick
Dancing the broomstick dance.
My grandfather would start laughing
Seeing me moving like a crazy
My body stretching to the music's melody
Dancing the beat, doing the broomstick dance.
My grandmother would start dancing
Showing me some fancy foot-steps
Seeing her doing them dips, making them spins,
As she moved gracefully
It was beautiful to see
My grandmama doing the broomstick dance.
Well, I tell you, my grandfather would shuffle his feet
And make them sagaboy moves
Well, I tell you, you should have seen my grandmama
and grandfather doing the broomstick dance.
Well, the music has changed its tempo
From calypso, to a classic, to a waltz, to a samba
To a rumba, to a foxtrot, even to jazz and
boogie-down tunes too
If you see me dance with the broomstick
Dancing the broomstick dance...
Can you remember those days
When you had to learn how to dance
Did your parents or a close relative or good friend
Or a neighbor ever show you how to
Dance with a broomstick
Dancing the broomstick dance
Yes I remember those days
Dancing the broomstick dance
Dance, dance, the broomstick dance.

Nkemka Asika

"A DIFFERENT IMAGE"

*Alile went away in the
winter after
snows had cooled
before the rains
whispered in and washed
out windows sills spotted
dry with salt*

*when i see her i will know her
by the gold ring piercing in her
left nostril
i will know her by her hot hands
and by her*

*eyes or her slippers toes
will turn will pierce in like a
gold ring in flesh
or jasmine or magnolia will say "look
here this scent wafting through the air
it
is me"*



Screen impressions by Dave Lewis

A SONG FOR AZANIA AND I LOVE YOU TOO

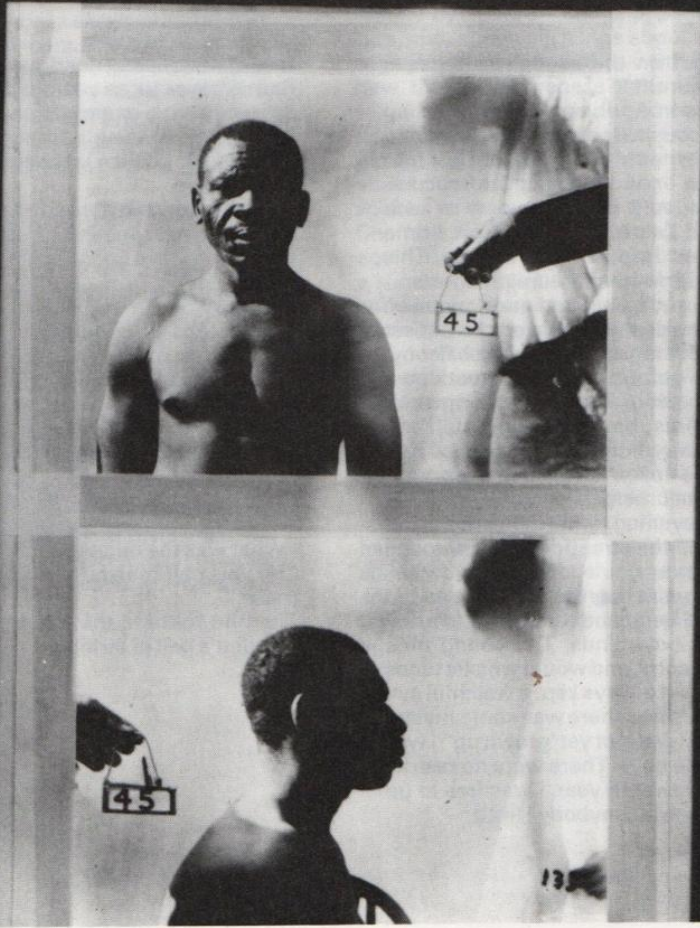
I am a name
 on a piece of paper
 lying at the bottom
 of logs of wood in the fireplace
 I am a lean figure
 with a big bold brown head
 ready to be struck
 to light fires of change
 You are no match for me
 modern day vampire in camouflage fatigues
 for I am all those you killed reborn
 and all those who rush to take
 their place
 on battle lines
 I am fire
 a blank cheque of the sun
 You drunk with the gasoline of power
 watch out.
 I begin....

Pitika Ka Ntuli

Bob & Me by Dave Lewis

The Flag by Dave Lewis





WISDOM

*The tree
stood
massive
like a fat grand-parent*

Laughing buddha

*Teaching young leaves
to jostle in the breeze
play with the sun.*

Shanta Acharya

*Sculpture by Druva Mistry
from exhibition at Kettles Yard.
Photo by David Runnacles*



rites of spring

I

“**A**nd don't forget to put on the sandalwood paste, tomorrow.” said my aunt.

It was early evening in April, and we were sitting on the balcony of our house. My cousin Benu, had just begun to wear saris for the first time, and my aunt was initiating her into the mysteries of natural cosmetics – sandalwood paste, cucumber paste and fresh turmeric. My aunt was an expert in such things, and my cousins, Benu and Kumu, spent hours at a time with their faces and arms covered in paste and creams. This treatment was regarded as essential for their future prospects.

I always enjoyed those evenings in spring and early summer. After the heat of the day, the breezes that followed the sunset cooled the warm air. I would sit with my cousins on the balcony, talking together and watching the goings-on in the street down below: the people who lived on the pavement cooking their evening meals on open charcoal fires; hawkers selling kulfi and iced-water; young men on their way home from work, buying flower chains and bunches of tube-roses for their wives or girlfriends. The noise, smoke and smell merged into a vibrant restlessness which lasted until late evening, when the shops and stalls drew down their shutters and the street-dwellers unrolled their bedclothes along the pavements.

On the evenings when my aunt went out, there was an added sense of relaxation among us, and Benu and Kumu would often send me with messages to their boyfriends. The young men would wait just underneath our balcony, and would whistle tunes from the latest Hindi movies. My aunt always kept a watchful eye on my cousins. They were grown up and there was some mysterious fear about boys and men. But I was not yet 'grown up'. I was still allowed to go out and talk to the boys. There were no restrictions for me. Until that April in my twelfth year, I was free to go anywhere I wanted. I was free to be with anybody I liked.

II

One of my closest friends up to that time was my cousin Ramesh. Ramesh was three years older than me and was working for his school-leaving examination. He seemed to me extremely knowledgeable. He knew a great deal about everything and anything. One evening, when we were talking together on the balcony, he had told me:

“I am going to go abroad after I leave college.”

“What do you mean?” I asked him, – “You're going to leave home and leave Calcutta?”

“Of course.”

“Where will you go? Will you go to England?”

I had heard of people who had gone to England to study, or looking for work. Often, they had not returned – and I had a sudden sense that I might lose him.

“Oh, no,” he said, “I am not going to England.”

It was not Buckingham Palace nor the pigeons in Trafalgar Square that Ramesh wanted to see.

“I am going to Greece. I want to see the palace of Knossos on Crete. I want to see the throne-room and the underground maze where the minotaur was kept.

“What was the minotaur?” I asked.

“He was half-man and half-bull, and he lived at the centre of the maze.”

Then he told me the whole story of Agaeus and Theseus and Ariadne's ball of string.

III

Ramesh loved reading and borrowed books from wherever he could. He would often show me pictures in them of famous buildings, or pictures of sculpture and paintings from Greece and Italy. There is a large museum in the centre of Calcutta devoted to Indian antiquities, and Ramesh spent a lot of time there too. He used to tell me about various things he saw there – old coins, ancient musical instruments, stone statues of gods and goddesses, bronze swords and shields. He was so enthusiastic that, in the end, I asked my aunt to let me go with him on these expeditions.

We used to take a tram down to the city centre. The trams had certain seats reserved for women, but I would sit next to my cousin up at the front. To begin with, I would be asking him lots of questions, but once the tram picked up speed, our conversation was lost in the clanking of the wheels in the grooves of the rails, and I would be forced to look out of the window. The tram-route ran alongside the Maidan, and, in Spring, the edge of the Maidan was aflame with the red and yellow blossoms of Krishnachuria.

When we got off, opposite the Museum, we stepped into a crowd of hawkers with trays full of clay-statuettes or with elaborate displays of folk-paintings spread out on the pavement. The first time I saw this display, I was intrigued by a small, ornate clay-model of a horse. The hawker picked it up to let me see it more closely, but my cousin dragged me away:

"You'll see the real thing, inside," he said, angrily. He hurried me into the museum and up the big central staircase. There, in a side gallery, was a small, exquisite stone horse. The pose had been copied in the model I'd seen outside, but the proportions and detailed-work were immeasurably finer.

"You see now," said my cousin, "Why I want to go to Greece. I want to see what things are like, for myself."

Until the April of my twelfth year, I had the freedom of this friendship. And we spent long hours talking together on the balcony or making expeditions into the city centre.

IV

That evening in April, my aunt was busy with preparations for the New Year Festival that was to take place in three days time. She had made various sweets – coconut balls, nut slices, *gulab jamun* – and now she was turning her attention to us. She had instituted a programme of creams and pastes to improve Benu's complexion, and scalp-massage with coconut-oil for Kumu's hair. I escaped this treatment, but all three of us came in for another kind of attention. In March, I'd gone with my cousins to the Spring Festival, and she hadn't forgiven us yet for what had happened in the street on our way home.

We'd gone to the celebration in the front court of a local merchant, whose family were devotees of Lord Krishna. The place was full of women dressed in the usual yellow and orange saris, with flower-chains in their hair. The men were singing spring songs, and everyone was throwing red and pink perfumed powder at his neighbours. We left the garden at mid-day. The streets were crowded, and groups of young men waited at street corners with syringes of coloured water to squirt at the girls going past. We could have taken another route and gone through the back-streets, but we all felt very excited and it seemed silly not to join in the festival. As we struggled to get past one group, our faces were rubbed with red powder, and our clothes were soaked with water. My cousins seemed to enjoy this rough game. They laughed and giggled, as they struggled to free themselves, and their wet saris clung to their breasts and hips. But I soon began to feel irritated by it – particularly when I realized that the front of my dress was a mess of damp, red stains.

V

The New Year celebrations were held in a school-hall not far from my aunt's house – just a short walk down the main road. Before we set out, my aunt made sure that we were all respectably dressed. She checked that my cousins weren't wearing lipstick or low-necked blouses, and that my dress wasn't too short.

"Put the end of your sari properly over your shoulder," she said to Benu. Benu had flung the end of her sari over her left shoulder so that it hung down fashionably behind her. My aunt took up the loose end, where it trailed along the ground, and draped it demurely round Benu's right shoulder. Kumu and I smiled. My aunt put the end of her own sari over her head, and we set off together under her watchful eye.

In front of the school-hall, a group of young men were selling new-year magazines and programmes for the evening's celebrations. While my aunt stopped to buy our programmes, my cousins exchanged glances with the young men. One of them thanked Benu for taking an interest in the celebrations – which I thought was rather nice. But my aunt obviously thought it was unnecessary. She complained –

"Why so much talk? Try to be lady-like. I don't have to remind you what happened at the Spring Festival."

We became quiet immediately, and allowed ourselves to be steered, unresistingly, into the hall.

The hall was packed with people. Children were running up and down the aisles shouting and blowing whistles. We managed to find some seats at the back, and settled down to wait for the show to begin. The proscenium arch was decorated with chains of small, white flowers – jasmine and tube-rose. A red clay pitcher stood on the steps at each side of the stage, with a small, green coconut in its mouth – as a symbol of good-luck. A sitar was playing in the back-ground. Then the red curtains drew back, the house-lights went down, the noise and chatter stopped. The choir at the back of the stage began to sing –

"O come, new year, come.

Blow the dust of the old year away."

and a group of girls rushed out, like a wave, onto the stage.

As I watched the dance and listened to the songs, I felt myself undergo strange, rapid fluctuations of emotion. The songs were mainly by Tagore – songs praising youth and summer and nature, and, above all, songs about love. Songs of yearning, songs of separation, songs of re-united lovers. My mind filled with a new, thrilling awareness of the mystery of love.

Before the celebrations had ended, I felt a sudden need to go home and to be on my own. For the past few days, I had been feeling slightly prickly and feverish – and I had often felt depressed for no obvious reason. I had wondered if I had 'flu, and I had spoken to my aunt about it but she had seemed embarrassed. She had told me not to worry, that I would be all right. Now, again, I was feeling suddenly unhappy. The singers were singing a summer song about bees and flowers, but my enjoyment had suddenly evaporated. I felt alone, cut off from the atmosphere of festivity that surrounded me. I leant forward towards my aunt:

"I don't feel well," I whispered. "Can I go home on my own?"

She put her palm across my forehead to feel my temperature.

"You are slightly warm," she said. "Perhaps it's the heat of the room."

"Can I go home then?" I insisted.

"Be careful in the streets," she replied.

As I walked the few blocks back home, I felt again that prickly, feverish sensation, and a curious ambivalence of mood: vaguely happy and vaguely morose at the same time. I couldn't understand what was happening to me, but I had the impression of some mysterious change taking place within myself, and I had the vague premonition that things would never be the same again.

Sibani Raychaudhuri
(Asian Womens' Writers' Workshop)

THE KILLINGS AT TONOSÍ

In ceramic the Cuna Indians trap fire, make its motion solid, so it is by nature cold and golden. Then they make up the frozen face of fire with their paints to conceal the unspeakable life which it goes on living, a life which is and is not like our own lives, our own consciousness. There must have been ceramic present in that rainy season, tiny immeasurable suggestions of ceramic, implications which would later join with fire and earth to express them. The ceramic in the rainy season fed the stream which fed the plate. I felt it keenly then, as a small child in Tonosi, south of the Rio Blanco, hearing of the plate's prophesies of the coming of ice. The plate was cold and of golden hue.

The plate lingered a few hours before dusk, pliant as the reeds, over the Sunday morning pebbles of the stream near our little wooden house. It suffered Natcho's taunts and blows with mute persistence as the Cunas have suffered the taunts and blows of Northerners for centuries. Natcho would stand, his bare feet immersed in the reeds, holding a bunch of pebbles over the crests of the water with the other. As the pebble struck and shattered the plate, he would shout abuse at it with frustrated rage, only to watch it inexplicably reform itself from a thousand dancing fragments when the waters had become still and silent.

With ceramic in the rainy season anything could happen. The thick and humid forest lay in a tangle around the stony path that led from our house to the stream. When we turned our backs on where we had come from, we were never certain if it would be there when we turned around again. Nothing was certain.

Papa came back from the village with a mousing Tom. He took a ladder with him and opened the trap-door to the attic watched by Uncle Toñito, who shook his head. Uncle Toñito had his hair slicked back and wore the thinnest moustache over a pair of sensual lips in which he lightly squeezed a slim Havana cigar. He liked being in shirt sleeves and braces and always seemed to sweat profusely.

The two young men argued about the farm workers' union as Papa tied a rosary around Tom's neck and left it in the attic, telling it to rid us of the plague of rats. That night, over a supper of beans, rice and tomato ketchup with sliced, fried plantain we heard the Tom howling. Mama Grande would not let Papa and Uncle rise from the table till they had finished their meal, though the two men were beside themselves with impatience. Mama came to the rescue and said a quick prayer before desert, but by then the shrieks had stopped.

We eventually found the Tom. It had been scratched, bitten, scared and strangled to death. Mama Grande nodded and said it was another omen. The disease will eat the cure.

By the main road we had to cross before going down the stony path that led to the stream, a wrinkled Indian woman from the Cuna tribe would be selling her wares on crosses made with cane and old shoelace. She sold *raspao*, Cuna trinkets and *molos* (pieces of abstract embroidery). All the kids who went down to play in the stream, usually my brother Natcho, his friend Richard, me and cousin Linda with Uncle Toñito and Monica tagging behind for reasons of their own – loved *raspao*. *Raspao* is made with mashed ice with different flavourings like banana and pineapple – topped with cream. It is served in a cone and fills a child with cool gladness on a hot, humid day.

The Cuna women had tiny, guarded eyes and a bad cough and she shivered with God knows what affliction under her humid, rotting poncho. She wore a lustreless ring through her nose. Sometimes she would come to our house, when the boards were creaking and the insects were announcing the coming of the plate before dusk. She would sit under the shade of our roof.

As was the custom, many people from nearby villages had come on foot, many summers past, to help my grandparents build the roof. This was when all was green and the villagers were still villagers and their souls had not been invaded by the mad hungry city.

The Cuna woman would sometimes sit on a stool drinking *chicha* (sweet rice water drink with ice) while Mama Grande pulled up her rocking chair and asked Uncle Toñito for one of his cigars. The two women would then sit smoking and talking in hushed voices about herbs, cures for snakebite, local legends and anecdotes and the different ways of seeing into the future. When they spoke of the coming of ice most of the men and younger women laughed at them. Their session ended, the Cuna woman would stand and sing a song or recite a verse then cross herself. Long life, they would both say. Mama Grande, who (till the age of sixty-five) could fire a rifle from a bare back trotting horse, would wait apprehensively till the woman disappeared. Then she would burn the stool she sat on and go upstairs to say the 'Our Father' back to front. 'Just in case', she said to me one day.

There were snakes around the house, dragging their bellies over the stone path coming out of the forest. Large and deadly, they would appear of a sudden in unexpected places – more often than not curled up inside the stone wash basin next to the pump in our back yard. Rattlesnakes and pythons, thick and powerful and indifferent to Monica's screams and Mama Grande's incantations. How well I remember Monica, brownskinned and bare foot, waving a broom with both hands to corner one of our chickens for the kill. I would run after her, occasionally grabbing hold of her spinning bell skirt and screaming with the buzz and anarchy of the chase. Her blouse was made of *molos* from the old Cuna woman and she was as pretty and full of fire as the creatures of the forest.

When she caught the chicken, she would wrap her slim brown hands round the lower part of its head and the upper part of its breast and snap its neck. Then she would slit a vein and hang it upside down, wiping off the blood from her fingers and the knife on the side of her skirt.

Monica had an uncontrollable temper. She was reputed to have taken the edge of our first table cloth, with all the cutlery and crockery of the household on it, and pulled it violently to the floor.

I adored Monica; I was earth and she was flame: only Mama Grande and I did not fear her. Mama Grande would get up calmly when Monica was in one of her rages and fetch a long thin stick with which to switch her legs while I looked on crying.

Monica was found near the forest with the three holes in the back of her head and a life un-lived, the second sign of the terrible loneliness which would steal away our hearts. Her life means for me the warm years, when there were still many of us, and we were flourishing, before the coming of ice.

It was down by the stream that I got the first inklings of the meaning of ice. Everyone was buying revolvers and no one would say why. Everyone except Uncle Toñito. We walked down the stony path, the air still ablaze with the memory of the last lightning and thundercrack from a dying storm. I said to him, 'Papa has a gun and you don't. Is it because you're still not a man?' (I was a smart child).

Uncle Toñito tugged hard at my ear (I do not think he liked me) and replied, 'I never want to hear you talking about Papa's revolver again. Not even to family, but especially not to strangers'.

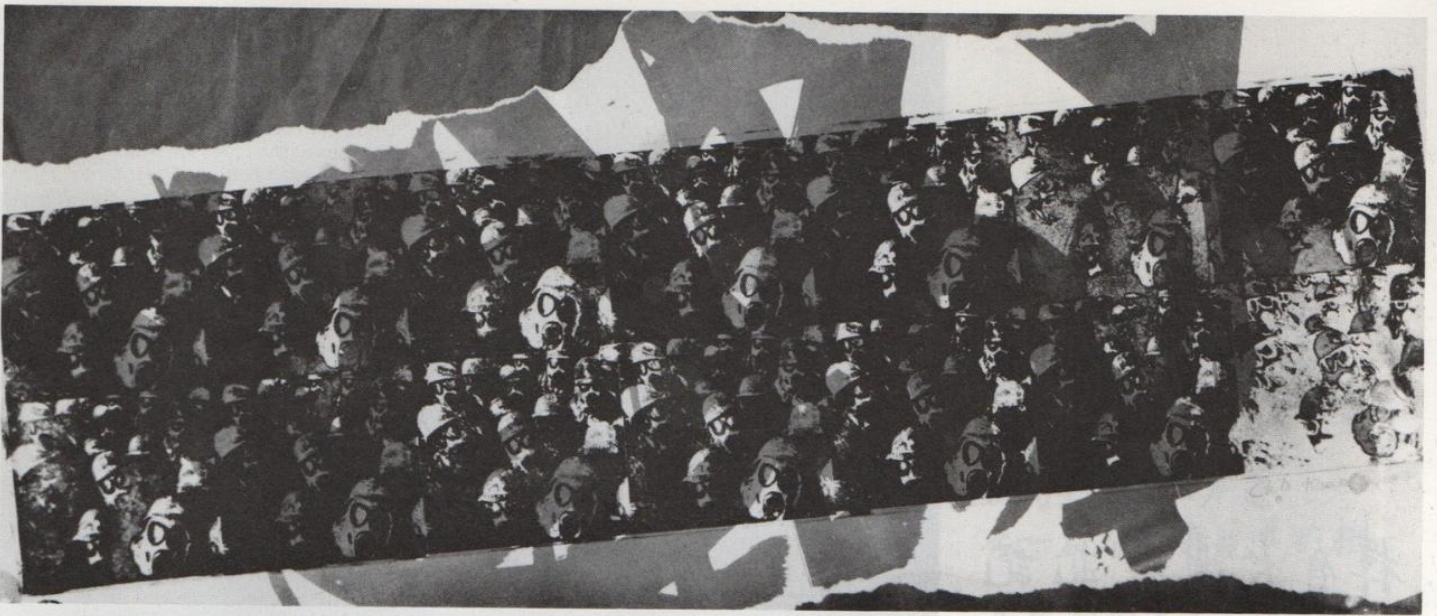
The raindrops began to fall by the stony path, and I hung back disturbed by Uncle Toñito's words. Then I saw the old Cuna woman. She had gathered up her wares into a straw carrier a bit like a stretcher and she now sat smoking a pipe and drinking Indian *chicha*. Indian *chicha* is raw and strong, and she was tipsy; humming and swaying as she squatted.

'First the gringo runs, with his hand covering his face. Then the elders follow. Now the little child. I can read you people like I read the stars and the forest. To imagine the future you have to dream but to dream you must be asleep'. She coughed and shivered. 'If you are asleep, you will miss the knowledge of wakefulness. Fools and false prophets.' She seized me by the collar before I could jump away. I was trembling with fear and cold. Her eyes were like blank emeralds. 'Many of you will die. Do not mourn your dead, move on. When you die, you become but suggestions of what you were and later, you reform to express again. So Mama Chi has revealed. Drink.' I took a sip but spat it out. She let me go. As I ran up the path, I could hear her resume her humming and chanting.

How could we have known that Natcho's life would be ruled by a plate? A bruised golden plate that rippled when the water rippled, rose when it rose and which apparently shattered into a thousand fragments when hit by one of Natcho's stones. I know what made Natcho rage, though, for I sat with him all one afternoon and looked at the supposed fragments after a stone had hit them. If you look really closely, you do not see a part of the plate but a tiny replica of the whole – the plate is in fact indivisible, no matter how much you break it up. This is not what we were taught in school.

They found Natcho in the middle of a stream, head ducked down, a white stiff tongue still licking the water, his belly bloated as a woman's before birth, the rest of his body swollen and cold as ice. When they opened him up, his belly was full of earth and stones. No one would tell me – as with all the subsequent deaths – who did it or why. I figured out however that it must have been the plate which became active in the rainy season and lured him into the stream, defied him as he tried to grasp its fragments in his hands and killed him, slowly with the vengeance that ceramic knows.

My remembering is all a vortex now, each memory a circle that turns and turns into a dizzying centre – the wheel of Pepe's cart which brought the supplies for Mama's store – the revolving barrel of Papa's gun – the wheels of the army jeep that brought the first squad of plainclothes National Guardsmen – the large, blue eyes



Print by Chila Kumari Burman

Richard's father as he called Uncle Toñito a communist – the turning up in the hills as I ran with Linda in my arms and then the whirlpool wheels of a train and the wheel of a car, in a city far away, and now I feel this pain in my head and I cannot receive or see clearly.

The golden plate is also round, as is the earth as it tumbles through the firmament, or the ball of fire people call the sun. ●

Gus Guillen

PICTURES OF JEAN RHYS

One day I felt ready to go and catch
my brother the sun,
and I cussed that cold halibut my skin
to feel the meridian
of his solider comrade rascality,
twisting my tongue
out of its closed element of thought.
Four hundred years of this would make me
bond to a willing slavery.
But I write from a dark pool of ink
shaded from habit
under a broad tree.
Gone close to the roots, Brer Sun.

★

So I knew the brown woman who covered her desires
with masks, with bluegreen folds of
Caribbean water, drowning the unfree images
of her disparate faces, fallen unadored
as under waves.

With how much repetition
school holds down those, all those
loving mouths each lover at midnight is given
breathy with other languages,
their speak-at-home,
their other private englished africas.
O I must make a hole in all this water, up
to meet a man with his divining rod.

★

Considering then my life as movie
'the people there were like upholstered ghosts'.
England was heroine in The Imperial Rape:
sing: Mr. Beg and Trust is dead,
Mr. Borrow ran away,
Mr. Cash takes over.
Always trailing her grey leaves in the water.

★

Then she took her horn and then
she blows that horn again.

In the cotton tree lives spirit.
Racial pride grows on her head.
Locked in the red living earth, all creatures.
Saved int he watery dark, our great dead.

Listens to the warrior ants
at work under the pepper trees.
No man or lover coming through this green
could worry her in history more than these.

Deeds more strange than mannish waters
must (in time) be properly sung.
Each day tree-rat by the house-wall snaps
one more delicate hibiscus tongue.

Then she took her horn and then
she blows that horn again.

★

She tears banana leaves, their silk
shedding the stars. Their milk falls like a powder
to kindle the life of a nerve,
and shadows only the moon makes.

Miss Queen of Hearts,
her heart so cumbersome she could hardly move
in the dark masquerade.

Tell Mr. Sun
who thought I was happy in his hot shirt
to dance for ever like a child, that when he comes
behind cold clouds,
checking the coin he'll give, looking at his watch,
to meet me by a Paddington hotel,
I scribble in notebooks bound for the shoebox only
and my days are 'ghosts of other lovelier days'.

PARMINDERS OF THE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
GLC
Stephen Brook

北島

擇自太陽城札記

生命

太陽也上升了

生活

網

by Bei Dao

Extract from **Notes from the City
of the Sun**

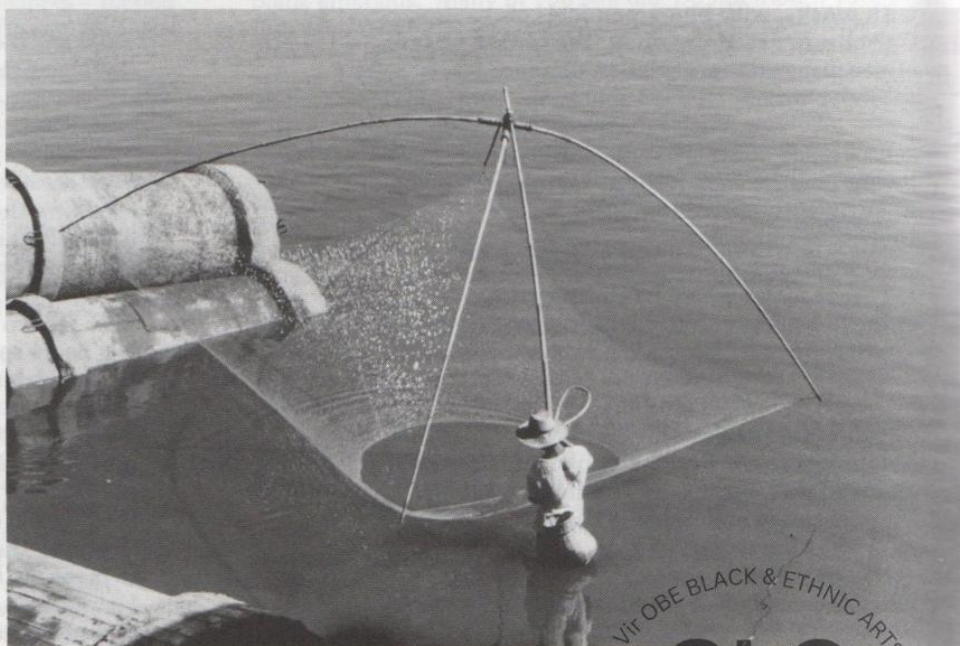
Life

The sun has also risen

Life

A net

Mumtaz Karimjee is a British photographer of Indian origin resident in London. Much of her photographic work has centred on the Peoples Republic of China. She has exhibited her work at the Battersea Arts Centre, Drill Hall, School of Oriental and African Studies and Tricycle Theatre and during the GLC Spring Festival. Here contemporary Chinese poetry translated by Mumtaz is juxtaposed with her own photographs. Bei Dao and Gu Cheng whose poems are presented here are contemporary Chinese poets of the generation which has grown up since the founding of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949.





界限 北島

我要到對岸去
 河水塗改着天空的顏色
 也塗改着我
 我在流動
 我的影子站在岸邊
 像一棵被雷電燒焦的樹

 我要到對岸去
 對岸的樹叢中
 驚起一隻孤獨的野鴿
 向我飛來。

The Boundary by Bei Dao

I want to go to the other side
 The river changes the colour of the sky
 It also changes me
 I am wandering
 My shadow stands at the edge of the bank
 Like a tree scorched by lightening
 I want to go to the other side
 From the thicket on the other side
 A solitary wild pigeon rises in surprise
 And flies towards me

古城

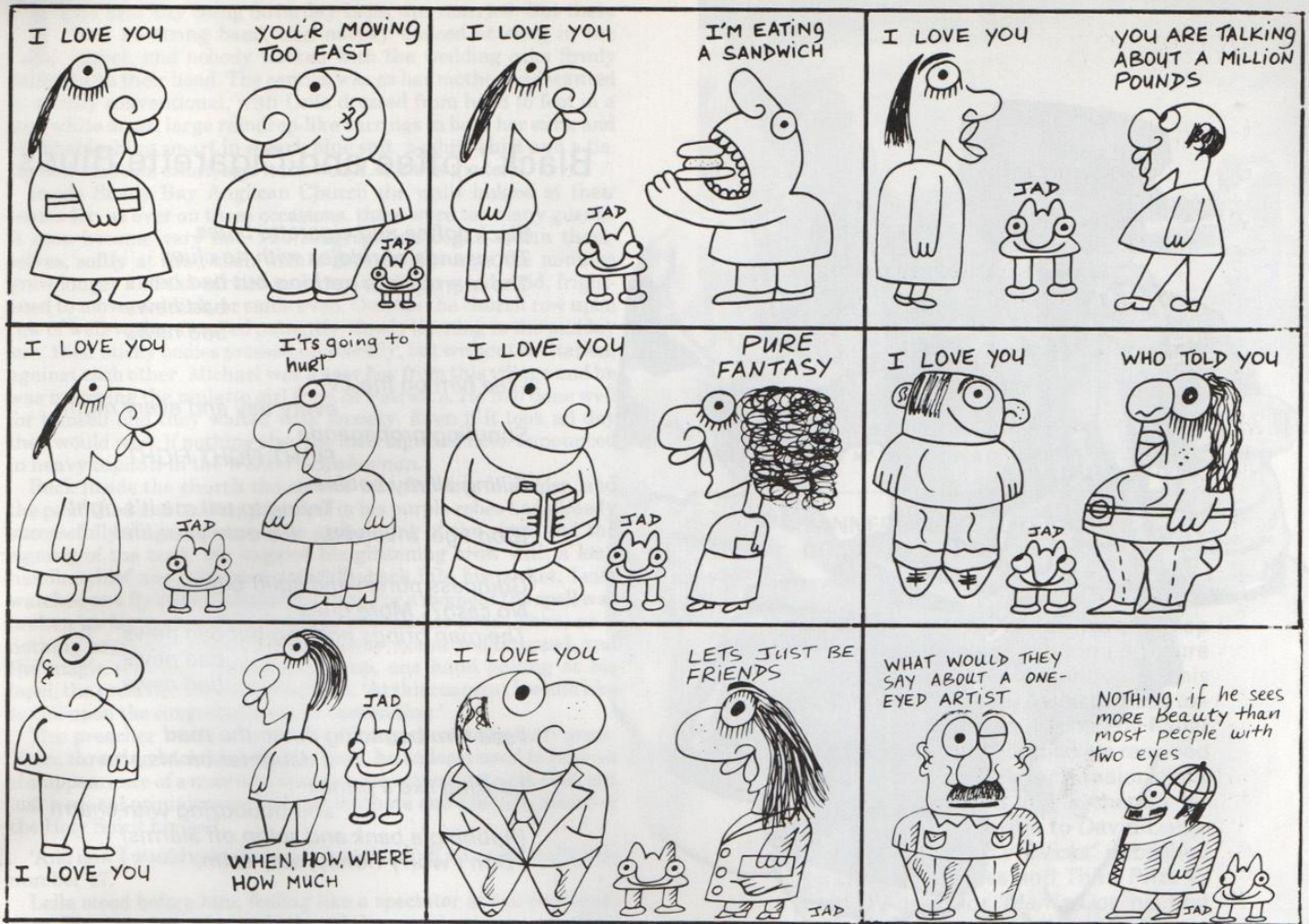
一代人

黑夜给了我黑色的眼睛
 我却用它尋找光明

A Generation by Gu Cheng

Dark nights have given me black eyes
 I use them to seek light





Cartoons by Anthony Jadunath

X

& suppose someone were to ask you
to turn your eyes away
& ignore
the dreams woven through your nights,
the ones that rush through my blood
& within every finger
of your hand...

Would you agree?
Would you forget
that which you have yet to loose?
Did you listen
When They asked for your sweat
& your blood
& the smile
that crosses your sky?
Will you agree to give up
that which is rightfully yours,
that which you laid claim to
Only because you fashioned it
with the twist
of your frail shoulder?
Is life so young?
Can no one be believed?

XI

& suppose we forgot how to remember
& agreed
that this hour belongs to us,
this long hour filled with innumerable days
& nights sunk in
crevices and spiders of all varieties,
& suppose memories were to become like birds
& fly away,
& red became more
than the colour of our blood,
& that this world belonged to everyone again...
Would your lips cross the void?
Would your whisper
blind my eyes?

XII

& suppose they decided that there is no tomorrow,
& yesterday could not be carried forward;
What would we do?
How would we walk?
& suppose we could not suppose
& ifs were to disappear
& nos and apologies of all sorts,
& that only yes was allowed....
What would you do?
How would you answer?
What would you ask?

The next day being Saturday Leila was married. But there was no string band, and nobody danced or sang in the street, and nobody walking with the wedding cake firmly balanced on their head. The service was as her mother had wanted it, strictly conventional, with Leila dressed from head to foot in a lacy white dress, large raindrop-like earrings in both her ears; and Michael looking smart in a dark blue suit, a white shirt and a tie. He had made an effort, and it showed. Leila was grateful.

Inside Sandy Bay Anglican Church the walls bulged at their seams for, as ever on these occasions, there were too many guests. It soon became very hot. The congregation began to fan themselves, softly at first, then with a greater vigour as the minutes grew longer and the service more trying. Leila stood rigid, frightened to move, or blink, or smile even. Outside the church row upon row of well-wishers waited patiently, slowly burning in the midday sun, their sticky bodies pressed up warmly, but without invitation, against each other. Michael was a poor boy from this village and he was marrying the mulatto girl from St Patrick's. He had done well for himself and they waited with anxiety. Even if it took all day they would wait; if nothing else, the marriage had been announced in heavy capitals in the *Worker's Spokesman*.

Back inside the church the service was drawing to a close, and the paunched and balding preacher in his purple robes had already successfully stage-managed the exchanging of the rings and the signing of the book. He mopped his glistening brow with a loud handkerchief and pushed it manfully back into his pocket. Leila watched as a fly buzzed around his ears. For a moment the spell was broken as his eyes rolled aimlessly around his head. Then, as if nothing happened, the fly swerved away, bored and fatigued, and the magic returned. Straightening up, one hand pulling at his lapel, the preacher's voice boomed out: 'At this moment I would like to call upon the congregation to be upstanding.'

The preacher made a large skyward gesture with both arms. Then, throwing back his bull-like head, he endeavoured to take on the appearance of a man who was in constant contact with God, not just a casual acquaintance, but an intimate and life-long friend of the Holy Spirit himself.

'And now I would ask you to join together and sing with me hymn number 47.'

Leila stood before him, feeling like a spectator at her own wedding. Then the organ burst forth and the preacher began to bellow out the words to an unfamiliar hymn, a hymn which curved upwards in search of an understanding heaven.

The church hall was cluttered with neither pew nor altar, idol nor performer. Around its perimeter there lay, neatly arranged in a correct rectangle, the tables which laboured under the burden of the food and drink. Plums, mangoes, sugar cakes, rice and meat, pears, ginger beer, soursop, lemonade, rum; the tables were laid as if for a country feast. At the end of the hall the double doors were thrown wide open, allowing a fresh breeze to circulate and the sweet smell of the food and drink to sting the afternoon air. Immediately outside the door the wispy grass swept down towards the trees of a cool coconut grove where the land was even grassier. From there, like tall thin legs, the trees marched without discipline towards the placid turquoise sea. Beyond the sea the soft gentle peaks of the smaller sister island, today light green and definite in their outline, sulked on the horizon.

The open doors allowed guests to slip outside into the sun and talk there if they wanted to, before coming back in for more food and drink. Some did so but, at least to start with, most stayed inside.

Leila, her body small and hot beneath her gown, felt assailed on all sides by well-wishers and those who just wanted to feel the cloth. She kept mixing up false smiles with real ones, 'I'm very happy's' with 'Thank you for coming's', the kissing of some people on the cheek with the shaking of other people's hands. Everybody was too polite to say anything when she got things wrong, and when they had finished they just stood back and gazed at her. Leila pretended not to notice the number of eyes on her, but inside she panicked, feeling that maybe her white bridal gown was really black to their eyes, or else something was hanging from her hair, or an earring was about to fall out. But she was not able to examine herself, knowing that once she started she would merely descend into a paroxysm of twitching and scratching, checking and double checking, so she stood transfixed as her temperature rose by the minute, easily outstripping the temperature of the air in the hall.

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Tides that Bind 3' x 5' Floor piece by Bill Ming

WINNERS OF GLC LITERATURE COMPETITION

Playwright Caryl Phillips has won top prize in the Greater London Literature Council literature competition for his first novel *'The Final Passage'* (See extract in this issue), published by Faber and Faber earlier this year. He received the Malcolm X prize for a major piece of published work and a cheque for £2,500, 2nd Prize went to David Dabydeen for *'Hogarth's Blacks'* published by Dangerous Press and Third Prize to Fred D'Aguiar for *'Mama Dot'* his first collection of poetry published by Chatto and Windus. The awards were presented by James Baldwin in a ceremony at the Royal Festival Hall.

Section B for unpublished work:

Mahatma Gandhi Prize for unpublished novels

- 1st Balraj Khanna, *Partition*
- 2nd Beryl Gilroy, *Frangipani House*
- 3rd Angus Richmond, *Open Prison*

CLR James Prize for unpublished plays

- 1st Barry Reckford, *London's Burning*
- 2nd Jaqueline Rudet, *Basin*

3rd Munawar Nizam, *Immigrant Widow*

Mary Seacole Prize for unpublished short stories

- 1st John Wood, *The Girls and Yanga Marshal*
- 2nd Mike Phillips, *The Smell of the Coast*

3rd Anjali Paul, *Visions and Revelations*

Sarojini Naidu Prize for unpublished poems

- 1st a-dZiko Simba, *Black Coffee and Cigarette Blues*

2nd Alexander Baron, *Rebel*

2nd Leslie Anthony Goffe, *The Seamstress*

3rd Roland Gurney, *The Ghetto Girl*

3rd Jennifer Jones, *My Lover*

Paul Robeson Prize for criticism

- 1st Rita Alfred, *Chicken Soup*
- 2nd Mervyn Weir, *Carnival is Over*
- 3rd Claire Shepherd, *The Cosby Show*

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Paintings
by
Sharon
Lutchman

INDIA

Inderjit is the name. In-Der-Jit if you're English. Intherjeet with the double ees dragged out if you're Punjabi. India if you're a friend.

We were having our first row. He wanted to pay for our meal but I said no, that I should pay because he paid last time. He said he never had been able to stand those Indian scenes where everyone insisted on paying for everyone else and argued for hours before paying the bill.

"We should do what the English do and just pay for ourselves," he said.

I said, 'That's right, so I'll pay this time.'

"Women don't pay," he replied.

"Well this one wants to."

"This one soft in the head", his hand ever so gently brushing my hair away from my eyes.

"It should be fifty-fifty," I insisted, "you shouldn't pay all the time."

"I only do it because I know I'll make a profit on it," and the look in his eyes made mine look away and tighten every muscle in my body to stop the blush spreading over my face. Oh God! He'll think I'm really naive. What was the saying "... be as bold as brass". "I think everything should be shared," I said looking at him dead centre, straight in the eye. "If I pay for this you can pay for the video film." His grin spread all over his face.

We were going out together. At last! If you could call meeting in the back part of a café, walking 'together' on opposite sides of a street, pretending great surprise when we happened to be at the same place at the same time, 'going out'. We'd say wasn't it a small world and for the benefit of anyone eavesdropping we'd talk as though we hadn't met for years and years and exchange all sorts of news and ask after all sorts of people we'd never met, giving them names like 'gangerene-ganges-wallah', 'nose-picker-nosy-parker', 'Nina-never-been-kissed'. Stupid and childish? Yes it was, but it was a crazy time, a technicolour time, a shifting from black and white to colour TV time, from living in whispers to talking out loud time. I'd read about how love makes people think they're walking on air, sing about stars and sunshine and go around with perpetual Cheshire cat smiles on their faces. Goofy I used to think. Round the bend and bonkers with it.

I wouldn't say I'm in love like, wouldn't use that word, don't care for it. Feels like its been through all the second hand shops in town; you never know who's grubby hands have touched it. Even if I can't

bring myself to say the word out loud I think I've got all the symptoms. Goldfinger said it to me, but I know he'd said it to all his other girlfriends too.

"You're different, Injun", my heart used to go all soft and gooey when he called me that. "I didn't feel like this for the others."

Would you believe me if I said I believed him?

I'd had my eye on Goldfinger ever since last year when he'd had a big thing with Christine Chambers who sat two desks away from me. Christine was a cliché come alive: white, tall and beautiful with long blond hair. The opposite of me you might say, if you were inclined to be that unkind.

"Thick as two planks", my friend Suman used to say to console me. Didn't help. Christine had Goldfinger, I didn't.

I don't know when he first got called Goldfinger but it was on account of the amount of gold he wore; rings on practically every finger, chains around his neck, a gold watch and it was said even his cigarette lighter was gold. Those who didn't like him, like Suman, called him Fort Knoxious. Hurt me that did, whenever heard it. His Dad was the richest Indian bloke in town owning shops and property all over the place. My Dad said you couldn't trust someone like that, they couldn't have made all that money by being honest. "Why didn't you go to private school?" I asked him once.

"You don't pay for something you can get free. How do you think me old man made his dough?"

Christine caught me looking at him once, and smiled a horrible pitying smile. After that she started taking a really friendly interest in me: dragging me along with them, talking to me about Indian families, inviting me out with them.

"Why're you always with that gruesome twosome?" Suman asked.

"I'm tagged on for effect. You know, like you don't know what's beautiful until you know what's ugly. Right?"

"You're an idiot. You're a manic obsessive. Why don't you try a white boy. Boys are all the same. If you've had one, white or black, you've had them all." Suman had done all her experimentation last year and was now a self-declared cynic; "Super Cynic Suman. That's me," she'd announced. I'd pretended to know what it meant. Wasted all my break searching under 'S' in the dictionary didn't it.

I didn't agree with her, I didn't see how boys could all be the same. And it wasn't as if I had a choice. I didn't think I could ever love anyone except Goldfinger. Sounds fatalistic doesn't it? Like Karma and all that. My Mum would really scoff at me if she could hear my thoughts; she says you've got to work for everything in life, things don't come from out of nowhere on a silver thali. OK so how was I going to get him to stop loving Christine?

Let's be honest, I said to my mirror that night, turning my face sideways, up and down, around as far as I could. Eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, cheeks, chin, ears and neck. All the right things in their right places. Put them together and add them up and the total is wait for it folks you're not going to believe this the total is indisputably — Plane-Jane-India! Why didn't they total up to Beauty like Christine's? We do our jobs they said, we're functional, we help you eat, talk, breathe, look and sleep. What more do you want? I don't want you sticking out like the rock of Gibraltar I said to my nose, trying to push it back, so the skin wrinkled like the folds of a mountain, or these colonies of blackheads, I said, leaning forward and scratching at them. Suman had offered to squeeze them once and if she hadn't been my best friend for years and years I would have suspected her motives in mentioning them out loud to a public like she did, just as we were queuing up for dinner.

I held my breath, sucking in my 'well rounded' stomach and folding up the excess skin at the sides with my hands I walked around on tip toe, feeling tall, curvacious and glamorous. By the time I'd circled back to the mirror, my breath had seeped out, my hands had loosened their hold and my stomach was back resting on its folds and my heels were on the floor bringing me back to my short square shape. The mirror don't lie and I said I'd be honest.

At the Xmas Disco, Goldfinger was with Precious, her black fingers intermingling with his and I asked Christine what had happened. "He's into multi-culturalism." She looked down at me with another one of her awful pitying smiles, "hand around his neck and he-may-even-get-around-to-you." He did too....

Extract taken from INDIA by Ravi Randhawa. INDIA will be included in an anthology to be published by Piccadilly Press in October 1986 entitled There is more to life than Mr Right: Stories for young Feminists (Price £5.95p)

Ravi Randhawa
(Asian Womens' Writers' Workshop)

1981-1986

Working for London

archive.parmindervir.com

THE INNER SANCTUM

It is a struggle to see the relevance of a reinterpretation of the Last Supper 'from the point of view of those who have done the cooking through history'. However, this is how Judy Chicago conceived her much acclaimed exhibition, *The Dinner Party*, and it is an apparently welcome and accepted reinterpretation, if whispers within the inner sanctum of the exhibition were heard and interpreted correctly by me.

An exhibition which attempts to show the contribution of women to Western civilisation using a triangle banqueting table strewn with altar cloths, 39 place settings representing 999 women grouped together according to common experience, achievement, historic period or place of origin within the context of a sacramental celebration, in my opinion is doomed to failure. The representation of each group of women by a plate beautifully crafted as a vagina conjures up the same old misconception of women's sexuality, that of offering not taking. Judy Chicago may pose the problem 'why are there no images of flying vaginas in art?', but her exhibition fails to provide any answer or analysis and compounds the problem by placing the vagina on an altar cloth and putting it figuratively in the control of the 'church'.

Judy Chicago's use of thousands of unpaid volunteers also begs serious questions, especially in the light of the fact that it is Chicago's name that rests as a figure head on all publicity, and Chicago's analysis that seemingly pervades the work. It serves the purpose of such an exhibition to speak of the 'bringing together of women and skills' for one objective and a 'collective approach' to developing the project further. It also serves Judy Chicago's interests to set herself up as the mentor of unpaid workers, whose skills she needs. But it is Chicago who takes the credit for their work, and refers to their support in the most patronising and unspecific terms. The overall dominance of one woman effectively undermines and negates the purpose of such a work.

The role of black women in the project and the representation of black women in the work itself is another area of real concern. Of the thousands of volunteers in the project apparently only one of them mentioned is black, and her involvement was for a couple of months within the ten years of work.

The first series of place settings at the *Dinner Party* are metaphysical representations of women, portrayed as mythical characters. The rest relate to real women in history. On both planes the relevance of black women is undermined. A huge proportion of the mythical characters who present an analysis of the 'essence' of woman are black. These are the deities whose roles in mythology provide the basis for contemporary religions. However, unlike the latter part of the exhibition where black women are described as such, no reference is made to the fact that these characters are black. If the *Dinner Party* is attempting to address

setting, the remaining four are incorporated into three other settings. The ceramic plate that sums up black women's contribution to Western civilisation is the only pictorial plate in the exhibition and the only one portraying a negative image. This artificial grouping of black women under an image of a black woman weeping goes against the grain of an exhibition intending to celebrate women's contributions to Western civilisation. In addition, it is an example of the patronising attitudes of white feminists to black women's achievements, and their inability to see the historic contributions of black people in any other context but slavery.



the misrepresentation of women in history is should have taken a clear position on issues relating to the portrayal of black women. Instead it takes an inconsistent approach where black women are described as black women from the eighteenth century to the present day, and no statement is made about women who are part of ancient civilisations and their mythologies. This inconsistency is an example of the West's refusal to accept that those ancient civilisations on which its culture is based were black.

Twenty-four historic black women are represented in the rest of the exhibition, all are American. Twenty of these women are grouped in one place

The place setting is a token gesture and offers no challenge to the dominant historians' view of black people and black women.

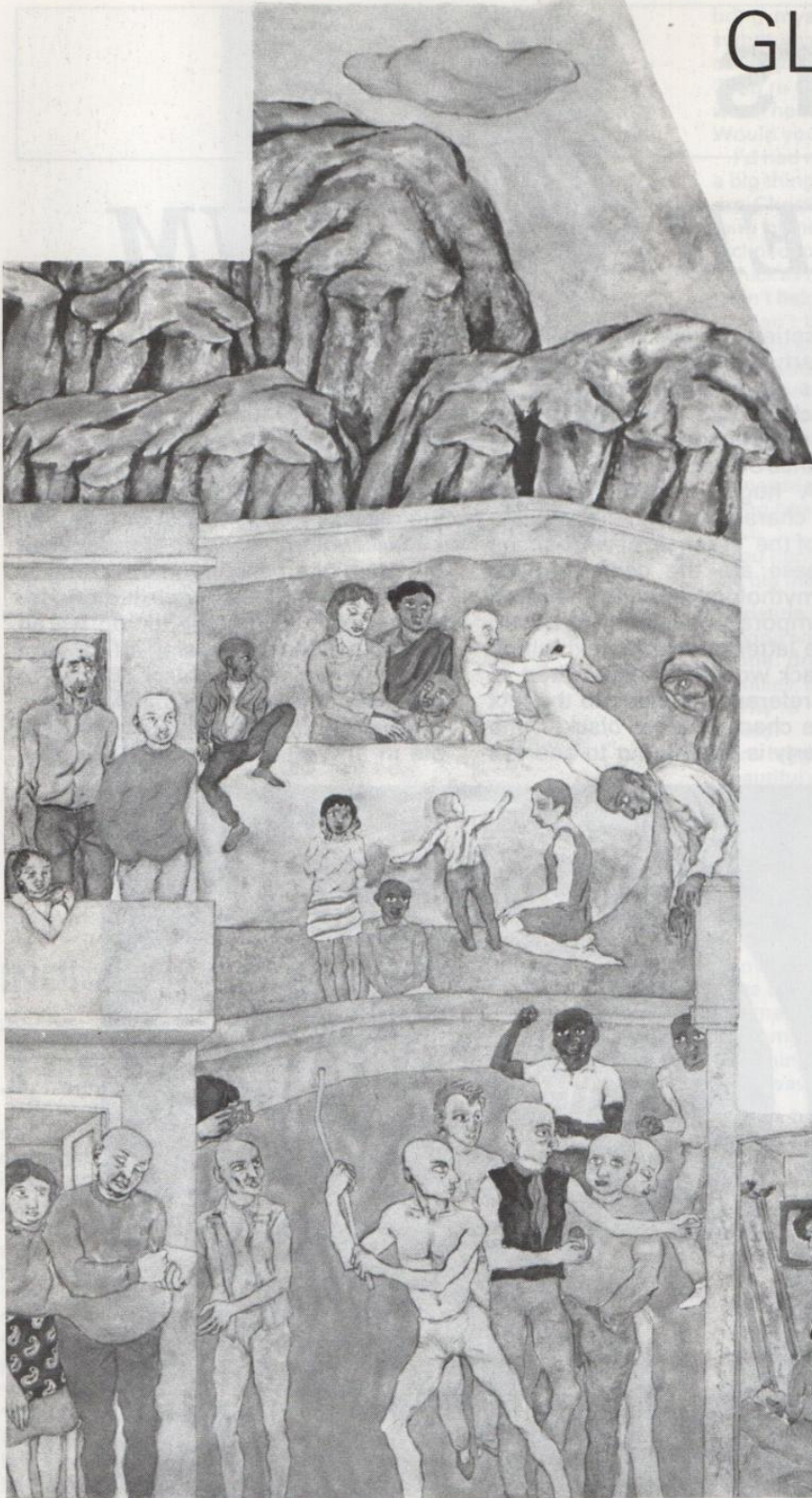
Judy Chicago's insistence that the *Dinner Party* should be seen as a work of art and not a political statement undermines the reason for its existence. It is this lack of political analysis and political motivation that has created such a superficial and inconsistent exhibition. The *Dinner Party* is a shrine to an unknown woman; a woman whose colour, sexuality, class, struggles and achievements are without political context.

Parminder Vir, Black & White, Visual Arts Archive
GLC
Karin Woodley
1981-1986

GLC ANTI RACIST MURALS

The first of four murals commissioned by the Greater London Arts Council has been completed and was opened by Paul Boateng in Brixton. Completed in just two months, the mural called 'The Dream, The Rumour and A Poet's Song', was designed and painted by artists Gavin Jantjes and Tom Joseph. The mural is twelve feet high and overlooks the public open space of Dexter Square on Brixton's Railton Road and measures over 75 feet in length by 12 feet covering approximately 118 square yards. The other murals are to be completed in Southall, East London and Notting Hill by Keith Piper and Chila Kumari Burman, Shanti Panchal and Duska Ahmad, Lubaina Himid and Simone Alexander respectively.

The murals have been painted in four areas of London which either have a large black and ethnic minority community or have experienced racial conflict. They are intended to provide a political statement on as well as a visible record of the past struggles and future aspirations of these communities. The content of the murals has been finalised following consultative meetings with the local communities and local firms have also been involved with the preparation of the sites.



Above Mural by Shanti Panchal and Duska Ahmad Below Mural by Gavin Jantjes and Tom Joseph



Parliament House
 GLC
 1981-1986
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 archive.parmindervir.com



Banner by Shakila Maan Photo by AS Phull

HOUNSLOW ASIAN VISUAL ARTISTS COLLECTIVE

Review of an exhibition by HAVAC at the Hounslow Civic Centre, Laughton Rd. Hounslow

This was the first visual arts exhibition organized by HAVAC, which is part of the theatre group Hounslow Arts Co-operative (HAC). The exhibiting artists included Ferha Farooqui, Chila Burman, Satjit Kaur Heer, Amarjeet Kaur Gurjal, Shakila Maan, Allan D'Souza and Amarjit Phull. It was a well thought out exhibition reflecting the growing consciousness of Asians in Britain. The artists inform us that art is in the service of the community which expresses itself through the shouting and singing voices which are its armoury. The themes range from the miners' strike, the British occupation of North-

ern Ireland and the colonialist exploitation of India as in the works of Allan D'Souza, the banner by Shakila Maan commemorates the fifth anniversary of the murder of Blair Peach at the hands of the police. These are issues of common concern to black and white people. There are other themes which are of particular relevance to the Asian community itself, for instance, the calligraphy work on cloth 'Don't Divide Us' by Amarjeet Kaur Gurjal which cautions against communalism. The subject matter chosen by Ferha Farooqui is the depiction of Asian life in the style of Indian miniatures. Her detailed drawings display both humour and sadness and she succeeds in, as she says, turning the idealistic visions of Indian miniatures on to working class Asians who live a far from idealistic life.

Two works have been censored by the Tory controlled local authority for being "too provocative to the 'indigenous community'" – referring to the white people of the borough. HAVAC, to their credit have made it a rallying call to the community pointing out that the Council allows fascists to hold meetings in its premises but censors the creative expression of the black community – we will have to wait to see if anything changes as a result of the protest.

All in all, this is a fitting start to a collective committed to work with the community, who believe that as artists, unless they speak for their communities they have no voice. ●

Bahaudeen Latif



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EDUCATION

Minorities' Arts Advisory Service North West Resource Project was set up in December 1983 – with 'one-off' funding from Gulbenkian Foundation, Granada Foundation, Marks & Spencer, Arts Council and North West Arts – to respond to the need for educational materials in ethnic minority arts. There has always been a shortage of teachers in these arts in the North West. The communities had pressed for the schools system to provide and to take their arts seriously in schools. The schools responded that they lacked the resource materials needed to do the job. The Resource Project was therefore set up – with one worker for 2 years – to provide the necessary.

Our first task was therefore to look at the experience of ethnic minority arts in schools in this country in recent years – to look at the biggest, most widespread things that had been happening and to listen to what those artists, teachers and educationalists most involved had to say about these developments as well as where they thought provision of resource materials could make the greatest impact.

We found that education authorities operate with certain criteria on arts education within the curriculum: it should relate to regular, live experiences of such performances and largely consist of pupils' involvement in performance. This has to be at a very rudimentary level – especially as the present curriculum area towards which the most involved authorities are looking is primary schools.

All this made sound educational sense but it raised two big problems for ethnic minority arts. Firstly, 99.9% of the available performers and teachers are based hundreds or thousands of miles away. Secondly, for schools, it must involve education for all children. This raises the problem of how one teaches 'arts as a second language' – especially where we have to teach formally what is normally absorbed informally from the child's cultural environment.

The two areas of arts education in schools which we ended up taking on board were African music/dance/song and Asian music/song. Companies like Steel n Skin, Ekome, Lanzel, Delado, Wantu Wanzuri, Danse de l'Afrique etc. have made the biggest impact in schools in recent years and the lack of resource materials to link short-term residencies (very often, a day or less) with regular classroom work was severely holding up progress.

With Asian music, it is the lack of success in schools up to now which generates the demand for new mate-

rials. We have found widespread and genuine desire by teachers to involve Asian pupils more fully in curriculum arts as well as to integrate Asian arts into the curriculum. The most experienced teachers felt that this could be done through the medium of music and language together – e.g. by concentrating on vocal rather than instrumental music.



George Dzikunu holding a workshop

Our first task in each area was to secure the basic materials at the level at which they were available. We then worked on the recordings and teaching methods to make them suitable for the lowest possible ability level. Having got this, we are now evolving materials which will develop the abilities necessary to start on each course of training. For such rudimentary training packages, we are trying to use authentic basic materials. Often, either these are not available or some adaption is needed but we feel this is no obstacle because the aim here is simply to take the child up to the stage where (s)he can start on the (authentic) main training package.

For the African project, we went to George (Kwami) Dzikunu from Ghana for the basic materials. Most of the repertoire taught by the companies in schools in recent years has been taught to the companies themselves by George – e.g. the dances Kpanlogo, Gahu, Agbekor, Tokwe, Damba and Takai.

The first production using these materials (reference Inter-Vox IVX-1) was an 80-minute cassette pitched at the ability level of the company member – i.e. requiring familiarity with this type of performance and the musical instruments involved. Side A (40 minutes)

contains the full music accompaniment to six dances as they are heard in performance. On Side B (also 40 minutes), each musical instrument in turn plays for 1 minute on the right channel of the stereo recording before returning to the mix of all the other instruments on the left channel and there are no voices. Right channel alone thus gives all the instrumental parts in succession. Left

channel alone gives the accompaniment to practice these parts against. Both channels together demonstrates how each part fits with all the other parts.

The second production using the George Dzikunu materials – reference Inter-Vox IVX-2 (cassette) and IVX-2B (booklet) – was a 40-minute learning cassette and (so far) 30-page booklet pitched at secondary school level for use by the specialist music or dance teacher. This deals solely with the Kpanlogo materials. The booklet (IVX-2B) is a teachers' handbook, which we continuously up-date on the basis of the feedback which we receive from teachers.

We have commissioned an education specialist to produce a class booklet (reference IVX-2C) for schools which should bring the ability level down to non-specialist teachers. We plan at least 4 similar cassettes (with teachers' text and class text) covering the other repertoire items in IVX-1 and a rudimentary package as introduction to the whole series.

For the rudimentary package, it has been suggested that African children's games play a significant rôle in development abilities demonstrated in music, dance and song. We would be interested

in hearing readers' views and practical suggestions on this. We are also considering the importance of linking both packages to the vast amount of modern, recorded music from Africa which has become available in this country in recent years – possibly with a separate package. Again, readers' views are welcome on this.

For the Asian project, we were lucky to have a ready-made first package on our doorstep which could provide a concrete focus for discussion with teachers, artists and schools. Tridib and Reba Bhaduri, who lived in Manchester, had made a recording of 8 different types of North Indian vocal music (Dhrupad, Dhamar, Kheyal, Tappa, Thumri, Ghazal, Bhajan and Baul) and Tridib had drafted texts (in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali), translations, musical outlines, brief histories and introductions to the concepts of 'raga' and 'tala'. Tragically, Tridib died unexpectedly in December 1983 and it was some months

before Reba could help us prepare the final draft.

The 55-minute cassette and 36-page booklet produced from these materials ('Introduction to North Indian Vocal music') has been available since October 1984. It is at 6th form/college and specialist teacher level. Feedback from schools indicates that, by adding the musical outlines to the recording, we can bring the ability level down to general secondary/specialist or non-specialist teacher.

For the Asian rudimentary package, we have already recorded some Urdu songs and rhymes suitable for primary schools and we are considering some Punjabi songs. For developing the basic skills of using the sargam (Indian tonic-solfa) system and basic metrical appreciation, we are looking at the South Indian Sarale Varase exercises and Gita-s by Purandara Dasa as probably the best method but reckoning that the scale-type for the exercises will have to be

changed to the North Indian Bilaval (South Indian equivalent is Shankarabharana). We are approaching language learning through numbers initially – using Allama Iqbal's (Urdu) teaching rhyme – and incorporating this into metrical appreciation work. Again, we welcome readers' views on these points.

It will take 3 to 5 years to bring all this work to a conclusion. Our funds will be exhausted by March 1986. If readers feel that the work of the Project is sufficiently valuable to merit completion, we would be grateful if they could write to us (at the address given below) in support of the Project in order to assist us in fund-raising. We are also seeking to expand our network of advisors within schools and local education authorities and would be interested to hear from readers wanting to pilot and evaluate our materials.

Available from: Inter-Vox
25 Swan Street
Manchester M4 5JQ

Cheques payable to "MAAS-NW"

IVX-1	80 minute cassette by George Dzikunu	£5.45p
IVX-2	40 minute learning cassette (Kpanlogo dance)	£4.45p
IVX-2B	Teachers Notes on Kpanlogo (booklet)	£2.50p
	'Introduction to North Indian Vocal Music' (cassette + booklet)	£5.63p

(all prices include post & package)

Gordon Geekie
Resource Worker
MAAS North West Resource Project.

Issue Number 42 October 16th-31st 1985

BLACK ARTS

IN LONDON

Listings Guide to: Black Theatre, Film, Dance, Visual Arts, Literature and related events in London.

REPORTS ON: A NEW ASSOCIATION FOR BLACK ARTISTS IN LONDON
THE LONDON ARTS LOBBY PUBLIC MEETING
AND A CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE FUNDING OF VOLUNTARY GROUPS IN CAMDEN.

Black Arts in London is published fortnightly by Arts Media Group and MAAS.

The Journal of NATESLA

Language Issues

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO ADULTS

There are numerous journals for English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners which deal with issues of second language learning and use. However, these do not provide a forum for English as a Second Language (ESL) practitioners to share ideas on language teaching and learning specific to their field. Furthermore, none of the existing journals covers the political and social implications raised by second language learning and teaching of adults who may be members of settled ethnic minorities, refugees or migrant workers and their families.

Language Issues, the journal of NATESLA, aims to fill this gap by exploring the 'middle ground' between academic research and ESL classroom practice. For example:

- ★ inter-ethnic communication, bilingualism and discourse studies;
- ★ disseminating good ESL practice in teaching, training and organising;
- ★ keeping practitioners informed of current political and social issues related to the field;
- ★ publishing reviews of books and materials relevant to the field.

Language Issues will be published twice a year (Autumn and Spring).

Editorial Convenor, Rakesh Bhanot
Please send to Robin Sinha Roy, 4 Hauteville Court Gardens,
Stamford Brook Avenue, London W6. Tel: 01-748 6663.

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DANCE

WAVES MAKES WAVES

Waves came to the Royal Festival Hall in a display of dancing which took in contemporary dance, body popping, roller skating and belly dance and left the audience bemused but calling for more. This large young company was formed by Shimon Braun and is based in Philadelphia. The style of the company reflects the dynamism of street dance and embraces a range of popular youth dance forms to create a quirky and entertaining if technically uneven effect. The first number **Into the Beat** was perhaps the least effective and also the closest to straightforward contemporary dance but **Streetwise AM** performed by Richard Girola, Orlando Rodriguez and Clewin Williams – a mixture of popping and breaking brought the audience back to the street, while **Fly**, danced by Master Jay on roller skates and Lis Braun on points provided a witty comment on the state of dance today. Musically, the range of material was eclectic ranging from Jean-Michel Jarre to The Jacksons. Overall Waves gave the audiences an experience to remember. ● Fay Rodrigues.



YOUNG BLACK DANCERS TO TRAIN IN NEW YORK

The Chair of the Greater London Council, Tony Banks MP (centre, left), and the Chair of the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee, Peter Pitt (centre, right), bids farewell to dancers Samantha Webb and Paul Baily, at County Hall recently. Samantha, from Streatham, and Paul, from Brixton, are among five young black dancers to receive a £60,000 grant from the GLC to train with the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Other dancers selected were Adam James, Gregory D'Aguiar, and Ade Akinleye. On completion of their one year training course with the New York company the dancers plan to return to London to hold dance clinics at local community centres and dance schools.



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THEATRE

ANCESTRAL VOICES

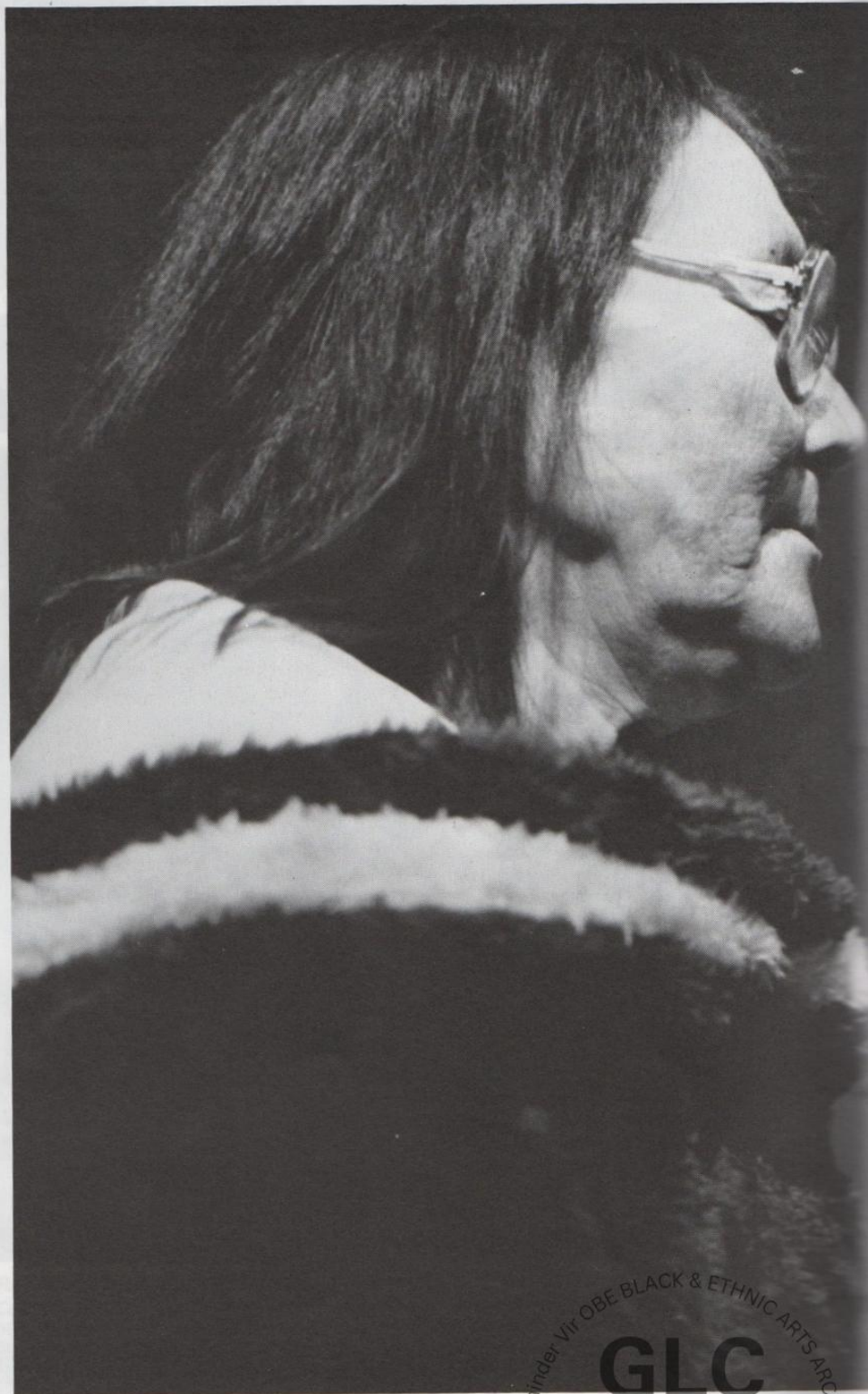
Alasi Alasuak and Nellie Nungak are two Inuit Eskimo sisters who live in the village of Povungnituk on the eastern shore of the Hudson Bay, Northern Quebec. Many of the 700 or so inhabitants of Povungnituk still spend their time hunting and fishing to survive the harsh environment of the Canadian Arctic, but some are engaged in artistic pursuits, producing carvings and stone-prints of international repute. Alasi and Nellie are artists too but in a different medium – a form of communication known to Inuits as “Katadjait” and to Canadians as “throat singing”.

Recently the two sisters appeared at the Commonwealth Institute as part of Ancestral Voices 3, the Institute’s third festival of traditional arts which this year focused on “Spirit Mediums, Storytellers and Shamans”. With Timothy Talkritok and Meg Kuksuk, drum dancer and singer from Eskimo Point on the Western coast of the Hudson Bay, they brought the remarkable sounds and rhythms of Inuit music to a London audience who, although initially ignorant of the powerful evocation that is Inuit music, were by the close of each performance, totally spellbound.

“Throat singing” is performed only by women standing close together, face to face. Throwing their voices towards each other’s throat, they deliver fast, rhythmic sounds which come from deep within the diaphragm. Humming, breathing and singing simultaneously they produce a mix of different noises, each singer chasing the other’s utterance to produce a mix of rhythm and sound seemingly impossible to create with just two voices. The songs consist of sounds not words, but the sounds evoke the physical tones and timbres of the arctic environment and the tenacity of the people who live there. Natural sounds such as the wind rushing across the snow, the call of the geese and the course of running water are magically reproduced to create an aural landscape which is literally breathtaking. To us the sounds appear to be repeated throughout the song with only the melody changing, but to another Inuit each repeated sound is very slightly different so that even a quite lengthy story can be told in one song. Inuits are far more orientated towards sounds than

sights, and space or events are described by the noises they make rather than what they look like. A popular throat song tells of a strange goose who came to the North in winter instead of spring when the people were living in igloos instead of the tents they occupied in warmer weather. When the goose looked inside the igloo he was very surprised and made a strange sound and it is this sound which becomes the “throat song”.

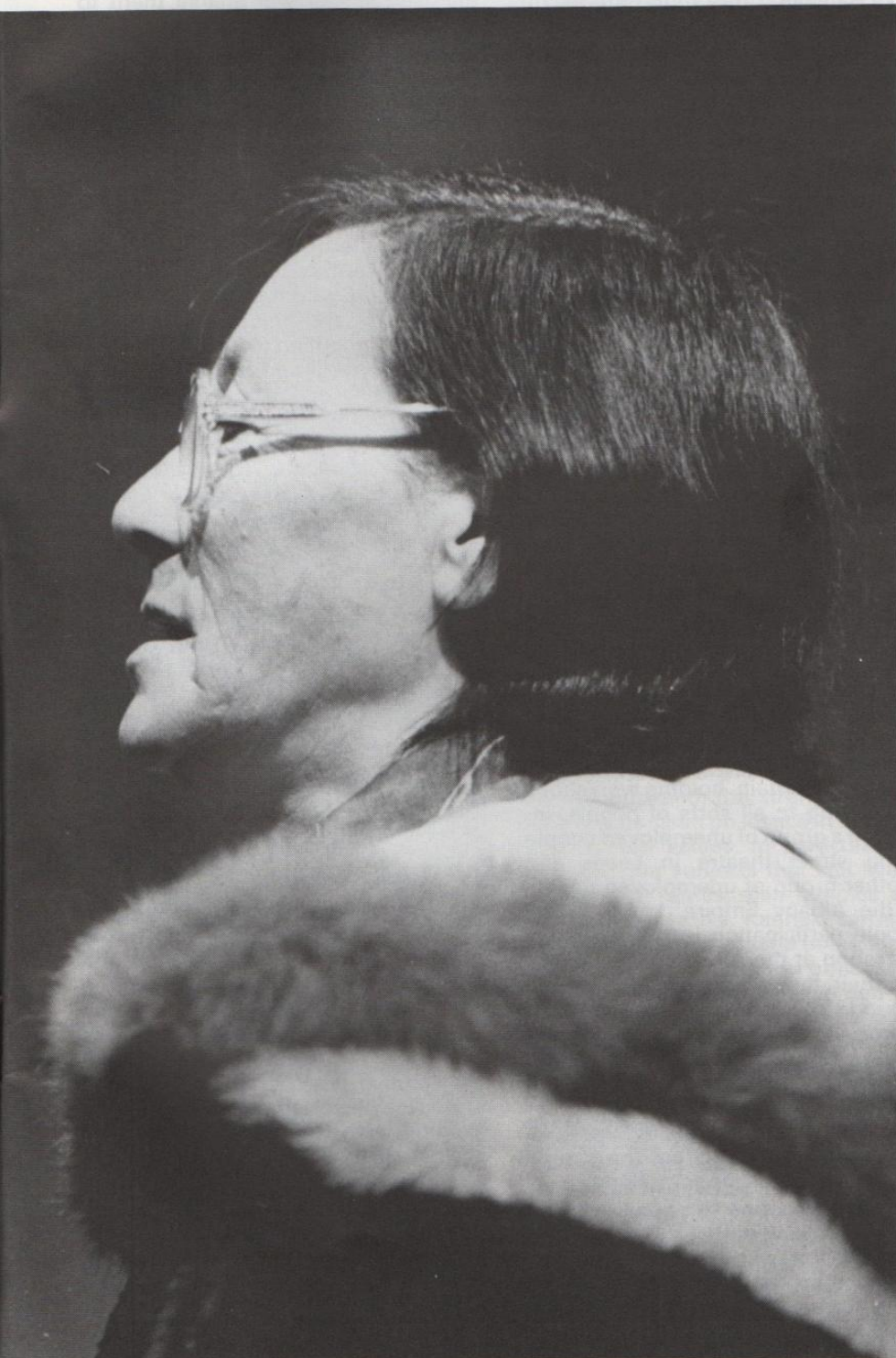
Alasi and Nellie no longer live in igloos or tents but they remember well the hardships they suffered when they did. They are both now in their late sixties and live relatively comfortable lives. Since their brother, an Anglican minister, taught them the ancient art of “throat singing” some thirty years ago they have become firmly established as the best throat singers in Canada. The criteria for judging the skill of throat singers rests in their ability to perform



Timoty Talyritok
Meg Kuksuk
Nellie Nungak
and Alasi Alasuak
(1 to r)



Alasi Alasuak (left)
and Nellie Nungak
perform 'throat
singing'



with endurance and strength, to remember the repertoire and keep pace with each other, and to use the most imaginative images and sounds. As the eldest of the sisters, Alasi tends to dominate their songs but Nellie has developed a fine method of occasionally speeding up a song to disconcert her partner, a skill which reduces her sister into a fit of wicked giggles.

Inuits are well-known for possessing a strong sense of humour but the rapid economic and cultural changes which have overtaken the traditional Inuit way of life have left many of them feeling uneasy and dissatisfied. Problems of pollution and employment, and interference from Government and other imported organisations cannot be met simply with a smile, and recently radical forces amongst the Canadian Inuits have joined forces with Inuits from Greenland and Alaska to fight for greater control over their own destiny. The successful growth of Inuit cooperatives and increased involvement by Inuits in the politics of the "South" have helped to restore some of their independence whilst the revival of traditional Inuit culture and the introduction of Inuit broadcasting have helped considerably to rebuild "Inusivut" – "the Inuit Way".

The Inuits who visited the Commonwealth institute were all concerned that the London audience should get a glimpse of their lives apart from the music and dance. The four performers do not speak English but, with the help of their sensitive translator, Charlie Adams, they told us how they make their tough, but beautifully decorated caribou skin parkas and how they are specially designed for carrying one or more babies inside. The dancer Timothy, (who is also a fireman), told us about his six husky dogs which he now prefers to a skiddoo because dogs can take a hunter home in a storm, while the mechanical skiddoo, although very speedy has not yet developed a homing device.

Throughout their performance the Inuits kept asking the translator to thank the audience for coming. Their disarming modesty evoked an unusually warm response from audiences who recognised both the skill of their performances and the strength of their belief in Inuit culture. The Inuits all claimed to enjoy their visit to London but disliked the noise, the pollution and the crowds. They were concerned too at the way everyone rushes madly around never stopping to think, or perhaps more importantly, to listen. As Alasi and Nellie said after their last song, "It is a very good thing for you to come and hear us sing." ●

The Inuits appeared at the Commonwealth Institute 6-8 June 1985 as part of the festival Ancestral Voices 3 "Spirit Mediums, Storytellers and Shamans" 30 May – 15 June, organised by Prakash Daswani, Commonwealth Institute.

THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Badal Sircar is one of India's leading playwrights. A thin, wiry man, he is one of the initiators of an alternative political theatre, or Third Theatre as he calls it, in Bengal, India's most lively theatre region. Veering away from the trappings of commercial theatre his group, Satabdi, do not charge for their performances (although a 1 Rupee [7 pence] donation has become normal), the members are not paid for their efforts and the productions have been stripped of the traditional elements of proscenium arch plays with their costumes, elaborate sets, lighting, make-up etc. Instead Satabdi performs in a room or in the open air with a minimum of extraneous efforts. Their sole concern is getting a message across. A kind of poor people's theatre, you might say, poor in that it costs very little to put up, fulfilling Sircar's aim of creating theatre for the people which is direct, flexible, portable, inexpensive and if need be, free.

Sircar, for whom theatre is a tool for nudging complacency and creating consciousness, writes mainly about contemporary problems of individual and collective existence. His audience is made to confront the struggle for existence of the lower middle class in Calcutta (but it could be any other Indian city) – the bad transport, the power cuts, the corruption and the bureaucracy that pervades daily living – and the indifference to the grinding poverty in the rural areas. His plays do not contain any propaganda for a party, or any political jargon. Nor do they offer magic solutions. Sircar seeks to shatter the ability of the haves to look on endlessly, without doing anything about the sufferings and tragedies of the have nots.

His play 'Evam Indrajit' (And Indrajit) has been acclaimed and extensively performed and translated into many other Indian languages. It deals with the predicament of the middle classes and their response to the poverty they see around them daily.

Indrajit: One day at the bus stop a boy of about seven started pestering me, wanted to polish my shoes he said. But he had a child on his waist and it was playing with the polishing rag... I didn't get my shoes polished. I chased him away. If he had bothered me I would have probably beaten him.

Manasi: But why?

Indrajit: I don't know who should be beaten. I know I shouldn't hit him – still I would have. I could not accept him. I can't accept the rule either – the rule by which a boy of eight with a child in his arms has to go polishing shoes.

Amanda Goodall, Paul Thomas and Mike Hancock, three young Britons on a long visit to India, became familiar with Badal Sircar and were impressed by his work. Amanda Goodall, now a voluntary worker in the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign says "You have such a lot of emphasis on the work that organisations like Oxfam, Christian Aid etc are doing in India but nothing is said about people like Badal who are using different methods for development. We thought it would be useful to bring Badal across, for him to meet groups concerned in development and theatrical work and discuss approaches to social problems and the role of cultural action. So we borrowed money from a friend and sent off a ticket to Badal. And wrote to various groups here asking if they would be interested in meeting him and doing a workshop with him. The response has been very good. We don't charge anything for it but if they donate something we use it to pay back the expenses. He is a person of complete integrity, not sponsored by anyone, he doesn't have to conform to any organization line. There has been no aid, no government help and yet he has years and years of experience."

Hence Badal Sircar has been travelling around Britain, holding workshops and talking to all sorts of people, including a group of unemployed people doing street theatre in Leeds and another group of unemployed people at the Albany Empire, London. The people participating in the three-day workshop at the Albany were keen to get their theatre group BUG off the ground. The idea of Oscar Watson, Drama Animator at the Basement Youth Arts Project, Watson said "When I arrived here to work I found out that there was a 60% unemployment rate among people between 18-26 and thought these are the people with whom I must do something."

Sircar describes the workshop he has been taking with the BUG and the other groups as "a subtractive process rather than an additive. Through games, trust exercises – the participants become aware of their natural selves, attitudes and finding a way to

express what they feel. It is aimed at removing psychological blocks and fosters community involvement and team work."

Sircar does not pretend to have the answers. He just feels that through theatre and the workshops people are able to confront their own problems and ultimately create a theatre for themselves that will enable them to understand and shape the conditions of their lives.

Julie Kinney, 24, unemployed for two years and participant at the Albany workshop said "The company has given us something to get up in the mornings for. Everyone has a routine, a pattern, people get up, go to work, come back, only the unemployed don't have a pattern – you can go to the 'Drop-In' centres but there you meet other people who have nothing to do. The group and this workshop has given us something to work towards. It is not our livelihood but it gives us a way of life."

Sircar, when not taking workshops, has been talking about the theatre scene in Calcutta, a city which boasts approximately 5,000 drama groups (many of which are only one play groups) and the only Indian city whose commercial theatres have performances four times a week. Calcutta theatres, which stage plays in the proscenium arch theatres have their roots in the English colonial past and mark a clear break from the traditional indigenous culture which has flourished in the rural areas. Hence Sircar's name for his theatre, Third Theatre, which attempts to create a link between the two.

Theatre to Badal Sircar, is like social work, working for development. "Theatre by itself can't change things but it becomes a consciousness thing for the actors, the audience. That is why our members in Satabdi are first interested in our philosophy and then they learnt acting and not the other way around. Form is dictated by the content." Whatever controversies it may arouse, it is good to see, just for a change, a person from the Third World holding lectures and workshops with the people here. And it is heartening to see that it has been made possible by individual initiative.

Further information about Badal Sircar and his workshops/lectures available from Amanda Goodall at 30-31 Compton Terrace, London N1. Tel: 354 0844.

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CHILLAPATHIKARAM

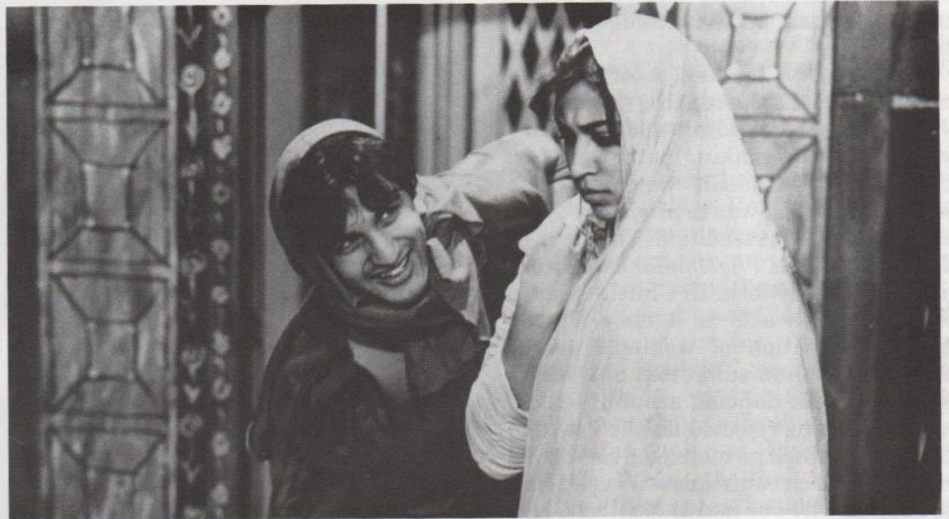
Chillapathikaram is the latest production by the Tara Arts Group. It is adapted from a play by Ilanko written in the first century. The original story concerns Kovalan, a merchant and the husband of Kannaki, who leaves her for a dancer and prostitute, Madhavi, and squanders all his money on his new found love. After a period of absence, he returns to Kannaki who has waited for him. Her love for him has not changed and they leave for another city, Madhurai, in search of a new life. Kannaki's gold anklets are their only remaining fortune. On their arrival in Madhurai, Kovalan seeks to sell one of Kannaki's anklets. He meets the Queen's goldsmith who has stolen the Queen's anklets, which look similar to those of Kannaki. Kovalan is accused of the theft and he is summoned to the palace and killed. Kannaki, on hearing this, demands justice and provides proof that the anklets were hers. The Pandya king who has failed his citizens in this dispensation of summary justice, collapses and dies in shame. Kannaki's anger is unsatisfied and she continues to rage against the kingdom. She curses the kingdom and plucks off her breast hurling it over the city causing Madhurai to burn to ashes.



Tara's production, although it closely followed the original story, exaggerated the historical trade link with Rome. It also introduced a Roman merchant into the play who Kovalan is supposed to have met in Rome. He later becomes the ruler/protector of Madhurai. Thus Tara's adaptation introduces a prior link between the couple and the king who brings forth chaos. The introduction of the Roman into the story also brings in the aspect of colonialism. Though there is evidence of trade between Rome and South India during that period, Ilanko conducts his story within South India.

Why adapt a classical play? This is the second adaptation of a classical play by Tara. There are many possible reasons...

- ★ To introduce the main themes of the original story relevant to the contemporary.
- ★ To re-tell the story in the light of new information available about the social and political systems of the period.
- ★ To re-produce the same story and themes in contemporary story telling forms eg. Kurosawa's Shakespeare.
- ★ To choose elements of the original story and build around a character who best conveys the contemporary relevance.
- ★ To popularise classical works unknown to audiences today.



While it is the prerogative of a playwright to present 'classical' plays as he/she feels appropriate, the presence of an audience with a knowledge of the original work changes the dynamic. While such an audience may welcome experimentation it also expects a convincing adaptation.

Ilanko's Kannaki and her message to the world is that of the love of a woman for her husband, the strength of that love and its claim on justice in the kingdom. These values, in particular her strength, are subjects that still live in the lives of Tamils, their temples and their literary works. Kannaki carries a strong symbolic message in the ideology of Tamils. She is the goddess of Justice and Anger when women are abused. Adapted to today it is needless to say whom she represents. The consistent nature of black womens' struggles (at least until the advent of Ken's GLC) and their anger over injustice is the message of Kannaki today. Ilanko's Kannaki drives through the play in a progression of sparks to fire in the end. Tara's Kannaki failed to achieve this. Apart from a lack of courage, perception and clarity in the appraisal of black womens struggles, the introduction of other elements into the play produced a poor adaptation and betrayed the essence of the original.

Firstly, the use of lepers throughout the play as symbolic reminders of the evils in society and the contrast between rich and poor is intrusive. Their presence is made cheap and comical and dominating. They totally change the atmosphere of the play. Secondly, Kovalan was played as a comical character. This affected the development of the Kannaki character. Thirdly, the strength and seriousness of the portrayals of Madhavi and the Roman detracted attention from the central characters Kovalan and Kannaki. The use of remote historical detail to suggest colonialism and economic and political exploitation like the lepers, though interesting, get in the way of what would have been a strong message from women to the world at least as the character evolved in the Tamil world

and its symbolic status representing Tamil women.

All these factors combined with the inappropriate use of Tamil and other cinema songs spoil the atmosphere of the theatre that Ilanko created. Ilanko's story was an epic and the characters and period were grand, rich and ceremonious. He wrote a story of epic proportions to challenge the system. He saw no other appropriate way to challenge the system. Challenging the system is no joke. The company failed to grasp the complexity of the characters and the situation. One the one hand they failed to understand the seriousness of the original work and on the other they showed a theatrical immaturity by using a jocular style which showed a shallow understanding of the work. Tara has miserably mishandled an epic of Tamil literature and in so doing, not only betrayed the Asian community it also abused a subject that symbolically stands for the struggle and strength of women as it evolved through the lives of Tamils. ●

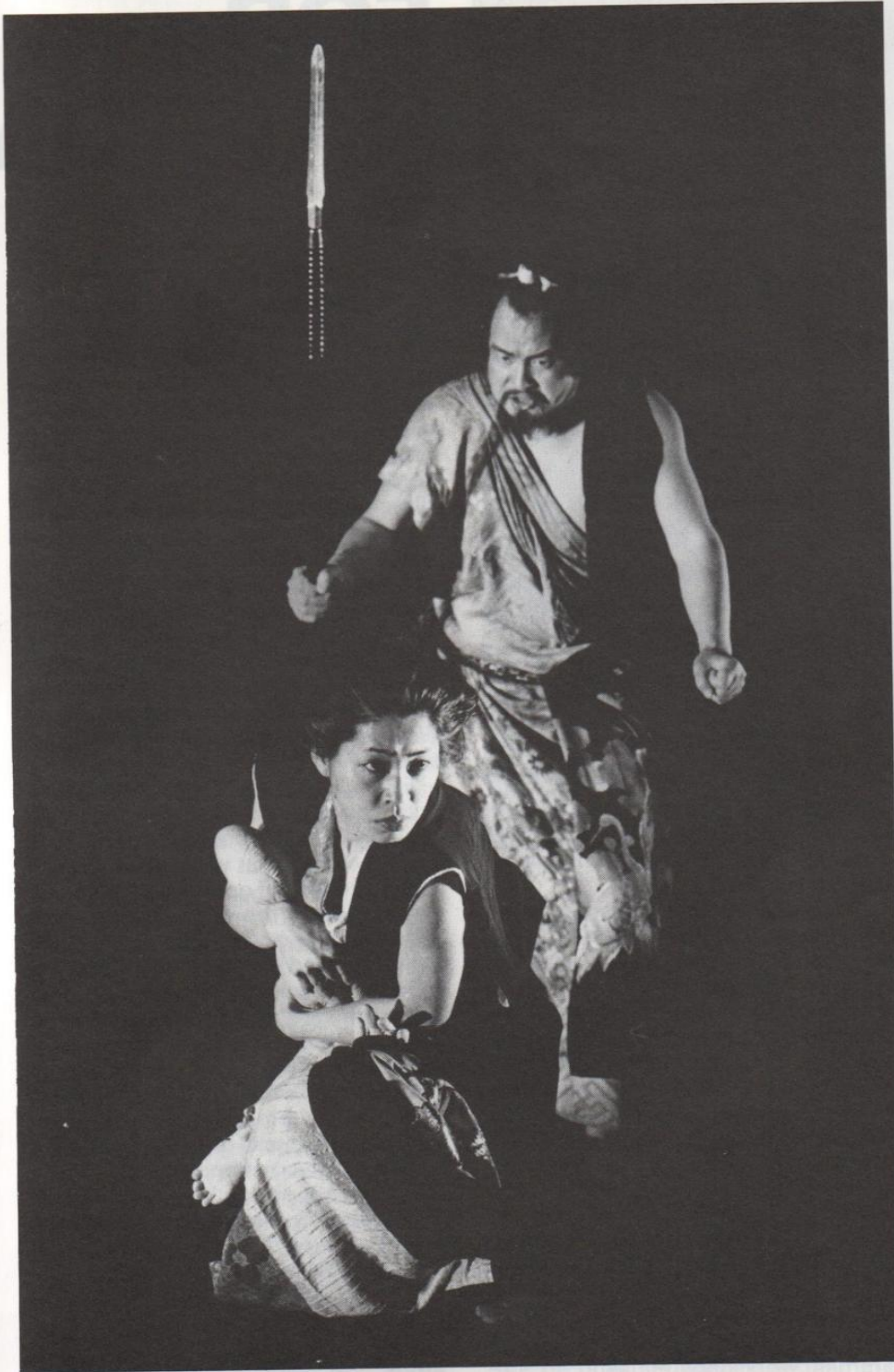
Sabes Sugunasabesan

left: Sudha Bhuchar as Madhavi Photo by Chris Harris
 Right: Ajaykumar - Hunchback and Naushaba Khan as Kannaki Photo by Chris Harris

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THE TROJAN WOMEN

The Suzuki Company of Toga Riverside Studios



This renowned company, led by Tadashi Suzuki, presented their version of Euripides' *The Trojan Women* for one week at Riverside Studios.

Over some 20 years of work, this company has perfected Suzuki's vision of theatre as, fundamentally, a physical communication. Drawing upon traditional Japanese theatrical forms of Noh and Kabuki, Suzuki's method makes for highly intense physical acting, allowing him, in a sense, to sculpt human forms on stage.

The Greek tragedy of women who were the real losers of the Trojan War –

as of any war – was set in the aftermath of the Second World War in Japan. Not knowing this particular play in depth, I decided quite deliberately, not to read the synopsis that accompanied this production. Decided, in other words to let the performance fill my lack of knowledge. At the end of an hour-and-quarter of the show. I admit to have been none the wiser about the story itself. So, this re-interpretation of an ancient classic passed me by. There is, I believe, too great an assumption made in the arts world that classics are known, or ought to be known by all theatre lovers. Making such an assump-

tion leaves producers, one feels, free to indulge in 'artistic' experiments.

What of the show itself? Suzuki claims he is striving to "restore the wholeness of the human body in the theatrical context". I saw sculptural forms on a darkened stage, visually stunning, physically audacious. Take for example the Buddhist deity, who remain standing in one pose for close on an hour, intensely concentrating on the actors before him. Or the chorus that moved rapidly every so often, and then was acting in still-images. The sculptures of the brutality of war, of rape, of the denial of the deity... these linger in the memory. An eclectic choice of music and touches on costumes could not really be appreciated by me. To a large extent this was due to the manner in which Japanese dialogues and monologues were used; only in places was the language physically expressive enough to convey a clear mood, and therefore act as a guide to the understanding of action. Too often lengthy declamations made it extremely difficult to follow sense.

Perhaps I should have read the synopsis before the show. But if Suzuki claims for his theatre a physical communication, then I can only partially agree. Upper class traditional Japanese theatre – Noh and Kabuki was the equivalent of Sanskrit court theatre – married to an intensely 'artistic' approach, which appears to be artistic for art's sake alone, can prove effective as a communication only to those who are already tuned to that vocabulary. Physical theatre, as I understand it, is the usage of physical expression as another theatrical language, able to communicate itself to any audience. I am reminded here of Habib Tanvir's *Charan Das Chor*, which certainly fits that description.

What, then is there to learn from seeing Suzuki's *Trojan Women*? Discipline and Audacity. An acute sense of discipline, that permeates not only every aspect of the actors' armoury but also of the lighting, the design and the music. A discipline without which any production is an exercise in futility. Audacity, it can certainly be argued, is what Asian Theatre needs in gallons. Seize upon the classics of world theatre, tear them apart and re-construct them with an Asian eye. (To avoid the pit-falls of artistic indulgences).

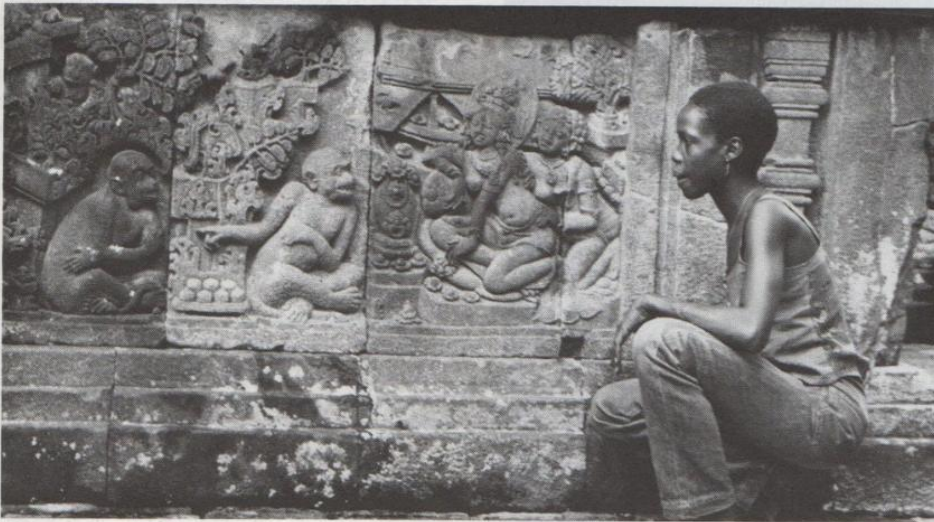
By the way, this company's visit was the last act of David Gothard, Artistic Director of Riverside until March, when he was ousted. Gothard has been responsible for bringing the best of Indian Theatre to this country – from the Pune Theatre Company to Habib Tanvir – as well as the excellent dance and music exponents from India that were seen in the Summer of 1982.

Jatinder Verma
(Reprinted from *Asian Theatre Newsletter* No. 3)
1981-1986

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OPINION: DEVELOPMENT THEATRE

My heart aches when I see black people swan laking across a stage. When I look at the direction that theatre/performance is taking today, I feel a great sense of loss, loss of self, loss of identity, loss of originality. Theatre and Dance will remain a mimicking platform if we lose touch with our own resources which enable us to express our creative selves. We will remain puppets on the ends of the director's strings performing other people's material.



Merle van den Bosch

Each person has the capacity within him/herself to fully contact his/her dreams, fantasies and fears and transform them into writing and performance. Performance changes into a sharing celebrating experience. The audience becomes witness. We *can* get stuck in only expressing social issues and reducing our world to scream, blame and use the stage as a platform. The issues change but we need to be careful that we do not allow them to kill our creative pulse. I feel that we, as black artists, risk being burnt out before ever creating the space within ourselves to contact our individual creative process. This does not mean denying the social and political realities of the world.

As we feel a sense of disconnectedness and anger within ourselves we look for new ways to become connected and experience a sense of belonging. We find new ideas, new support systems, and we find ourselves in groups which are singing the same tune, feeling the same pains and struggles and all seems well with the world for a while, but it is only for a while. This has created a group trap, the individual is still lost but within a group. In an effort to reclaim ourselves we try to learn how to express ourselves. We gain a technical skill of acting but to master this art we pay a high price because it entails a total denial of our true creative selves – we disembodied ourselves and leave our raw flesh and pulsation behind and separate into self

and false self to become the perfect actor, dancer or performer. Art is a level of awareness that evolves from total integration with the self. The creative process is within, not bought or achieved at Drama school.

In western society there is a fear of spontaneous expression – it has to be controlled and polished out. Art colleges are adept at suppressing these uncontrolled instincts in the young student. All spontaneous energy must be removed before he or she receives his/

her award. The result is the perfect artist and it will require a strong will to resist this process.

Developmental theatre is dedicated to liberating the artist within the individual, to articulating the language of the body. The emphasis is on personal process and ridding oneself of stylistic habits with the aim of integrating oneself through performance. Each person carries within himself a resources which is bursting to be liberated – the capacity for natural expression. This needs to be acknowledged and nurtured in a supportive environment. Developmental theatre creates a place to identify what inhibits the personality from creative expression and celebrates the human potential of the individual.

For information on training programmes, workshops etc send an SAE to: Merle Van den Bosch, 22A, Topsfield Parade, London N8 8PP

Merle Van den Bosch, born in Trinidad, is a university lecturer, photographer, psychotherapist and independent group leader and staff member of the Skyras Centre in Greece. Her work is inspired by her contact with the people of Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. She is a graduate of the San Francisco Dancers Workshop in California, trained with Anna Halprin, and Luwig Flasen of the Gro-towski Theatre Laboratorum in Poland.

Merle Van den Bosch

BLUES FOR RAILTON

Dramatists are generally interested in depicting social upheavals and ever since the uprisings of Easter 1981 in St Pauls, Brixton and Toxteth among other places, rebellion has been a particular theme of black writers. Brixton itself has become something of a metaphor for the dissent of black people and the rebellions of 1981 have gone down as a watershed in the histories of black people in Britain. 'Blues for Railton' is about some inhabitants of Brixton's Railton Road, also known as the 'Front Line' which has its equivalents in other parts of London, such as Ladbroke Grove's Frontline. The element of conflict contained in such a term is unmistakable.

Felix Cross, who co-wrote the play with David Simon, (author of the novel 'Railton Blues' on which the play is based) said, 'What we're dealing with is the question of oppression.' First the oppression of the dutiful and patient wife Winnie who is bullied by her rascally husband Toffee. Winnie and her neighbours want to hold a street party, but are thwarted by Toffee, who tries to prevent the elected organiser, Winnie, from participating, and also by the authorities who refuse to grant a licence. The idea of the street party is used within the context of the play to suggest collective action. The play is an allegory of oppression and resistance.

The backdrop to the main action is the history of the island from which Toffee and Winnie come, Carricou. We are transported back one hundred years to Carricou in the 1860's when the island was ruled by a white governor. We witness the struggle of another woman, 'Mad Elsa' whose husband Preacher Sheddy, also seeks to oppress and control her. There is a spiritual bond between Winnie and Elsa, the latter a born revolutionary who tries to rouse her fellow slaves to insurrection. Past and present are juxtaposed and the parallel experience of women from the two eras is emphasised, 'Nothing done change, Lord' is the lament. The Bible is still as potent a tool of oppression as it was in 1881 when Preacher Sheddy denounced Elsa as a devil to silence her. In 1981 Winnie seeks wisdom and consolation in religion to help her cope with her husband's beatings.

This connection of the contemporary black woman to her ancestor was illuminating and enriching. Winnie's hankering for her heritage she and Toffee left behind when they came to England and the disappointment they faced on arrival in the 'Motherland' is shared by many and the frustrations involved are felt by a generation without direct experience of the Caribbean or Africa. When Winnie finally stands up to Toffee the audience burst into loud spontaneous applause. In many ways there was the kind of audience participation that we associate with the arts of Africa and the Caribbean.

Several elements of Greek drama are successfully employed, such as the use of a Chorus to comment on events and express the will of the people. The use of live torches also contributed to a sense of the unearthly. There was an incantatory feel to many of the songs and ritualistic elements were also evident in much of the action. The polemic of the central theme was controlled and delivered in a poetic and stylised way. The set constructed by Martin Potter and Steve Kolodziejski, was evocative of a small, idyllic Caribbean island. The cast was excellent. Norman Beaton played Toffee with his usual (though long unseen) comic flair, Vivienne Rochester played Winnie with dignity and restraint. The motley Railtonians were ably represented by Felix Cross, Sandra James-Young, Beejaye, Eamonn Walker (fearsomely zealous as preacher Shedly) and Jeillo Edwards. Unfortunately, Jeillo Edwards portrayal of Mildred as a grotesque caricature of an African woman, stomping about the stage, rolling her eyes, and collapsing into fits of crazed laughter at the slightest provocation marred my enjoyment of the play. But on the whole the play was effective for its innovative approach to the presentation of protest and showed how and why ordinary people take up arms against their sea of troubles with conviction and flair.

NB There are plans to put the play on in the West End. Contact the Albany for further details. Tel. 691-3333

Ade Solanke



LA TARUMBA

"LA TARUMBA" is a Chilean Theatre Company whose artistic scope deals mainly with work within some social context. It seeks to show the political reality in Chile and Latin America in such works as "The Social Pyramid"; in mimes, as "Life Upside Down", "The one said yes... and the one said no" by Bertoldt Brecht.

Nevertheless, it does also care about the theatrical message for children as in the Pantomime "The Scarecrow who wanted to Dance", written for children by the director including songs, dances and mime.

Clowns and Puppets is another area of "La Tarumba" in its ample repertoire of Latin American culture.

At the present this company is working on a theatrical piece based on an Aymara (native people of the Andes Culture) story called "The Day in which the Serpent Bit its Tail" and another play "The passion according to St John in prison" by Alfredo Cordal, Chilean play writer, and music by Angel Parra Chilean folklore singer and composer.

"La Tarumba" originated as a means of expression of the children and young students in the College of Artistic Education in Arica, Chile, under the auspices of the Popular Unity Government in 1970-73.

Its main objective was to help implement the aims of E.N.U. (Comprehensive National School, during the presidential period of Salvador Allende). It aimed to attain a comprehensive development of the Chilean Children and Young people in the two educational levels of the Curriculum, Scientific-Technical and Cultural-Artistic levels. We formed part of the latter one.

Since its initiation "La Tarumba" have worked in three different countries: Chile, Peru and England. It was first composed by ten Chilean students whose artistic work was carried out locally; to support TUC, communal culture tasks as well as those of Youth and Children's organizations. Even since it started, the company has been directed by a Chilean Theatre director, Luis Emilio Blanco Carvajal.

While in Chile many Chilean Children's stories were collected. Besides the director attempted to find a new form of expression for Chilean Children's Theatre and interesting attempts were achieved within the classical Spanish Theatre in which children and youth participated.

Director: LUIS BLANCO
53 Meridian Walk
Tottenham, London N17
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MEDEA, Almeida Theatre, London, 7-15 May.

Presented by Leicester Haymarket Studio Company. Directed by Nancy Meckler, with Frank Baker, Linda Bassett (Medea), Vincent Ebrahim, Hazel Ellerby, Kate Fitzgerald, Michael Mears, Bernard Strother, Adrienne Thomas

The themes of the ancient Greeks' tragedies came from their mythology. The lives of gods, semi-gods and heroes, Heracles, Theseus, Jason etc, provided rich material for the ancient Greek poet. What is important, is that they presented on stage those heroes and gods not as perfect beings, but full of weaknesses and mistakes. Their criticism was of course directed at their own contemporary heroes and rulers.

Euripedes' (484-407 before our chronology) Medea is an Asian princess who flees her home with Jason and the Golden Fleece. She marries Jason and in order to help him to the throne of his city, she killed the king. Jason and Medea, along with their two children, are banished and arrive in Corinth. The play is about Jason's abandonment of Medea in order to marry the Corinthian princess. Medea's revenge is devastating. She kills the princess, her father and her own children.

Medea is the Other of Jason. A foreign woman brought to 'civilised' Greece she is told by Jason to be grateful to him for just that. He uses the laws of the society and Reason to prove his good intentions. His sophistry turns bad into good, wrong to right, as the state's power is on his side.

Medea's methods, terrible and unthinkable to 'civilised man', are the methods of magic, the pure uncontrollable power of Nature.

Through the confrontation of Medea/Jason, woman/man, foreign/Greek, magic/reason, Euripedes leads us to the essence of the play, to the fundamental conflict of Society and Nature, or more precise, the laws of society and the laws of Nature.

This conflict is of course at the centre of ancient Greek drama (Antigone, Oedipus Rex, the Oresteian play of Aeschylus etc) and therein lies its appeal and universality.

The Leicester Haymarket's production, although well-crafted, presented us with only the man/woman conflict. Ms Bassett's powerful performance was wasted in a rage against Jason as a crooked man. Consequently, her logic was too similar to Jason, too 'Greek'. Medea's revenge is not based upon the laws of society (Greek) but on other laws, Nature's, that is why she uses 'magic' (ie something beyond our comprehension, illogical the opposite to Jason's Reason). Medea is protected—despite all her terrible doings—by the Sun-God, the giver of life. The production failed to draw from these ideas essential to ancient Greek Drama.

The Haymarket also failed to capitalise on the very obvious parallels in the play (imperialism, racism) with contemporary Britain, which betrayed the very limited practices of modern British theatre. ●

N. Axarlis

Othello

Othello in Wonderland is a satirical play which has been written by Gholam Hossein Saedi, a leading Iranian playwright and directed by Nasser Rahmani-Nejad, a well known name in the progressive school of modern Iranian theatre. Recently the Iranian Community Centre presented this play, performed by the Iran Theatre Association in Hammersmith. Company, writer and director are all based in Paris in exile following the notice issued by the office for Islamic Prohibitions (a branch of the so-called Ministry of Islamic Guidance) after April 1982 which established a two-tiered system of censorship relating both to the text and the manner of the performance. These draconian measures led many of Iran's artists and writers to leave the country.



Othello in Wonderland outlines this situation by focusing on a theatre company which is rehearsing 'Othello'. As a result of the strictures of the Islamic state, they are forced to seek a licence to perform and official approval by subjecting themselves to a modern inquisition which is carried out by four officials in all, watched over by a zealous guard armed with a sub-machine gun. The Director of the play is an anxious, harassed man who is driven to desperation by his attempts to placate both his outraged actors and his censors. Eventually the demands of the official Minister of Guidance and his two Art and Culture specialists aided by a Zeinab sister, a female Islamic guide, become so ludicrous that the women in the cast leave the stage, disgusted by the proceedings. The actor playing Othello begins reciting a revolutionary ballad and the other actors join him—the curtain falls on the violent confrontation of actors and soldiers.

The acting of the cast was overall very good with a strong performance from Nasser Rahmani-Nejad who also directed the play. Although the play was performed in Farsi it was intelligible to non-Farsi speakers while the reaction of the majority of the audience left me in no doubt as to the relevance and accuracy of the play's theme.

LITERATURE

Call Me Woman

Ellen Kuzwayo, *Call Me Woman*, London: The Women's Press, 1985, 266 pp.

Ellen Kuzwayo's autobiography reads like a miniature history of South Africa. Four propositions give the work this unique quality. She was born during the first quarter of this century, a period when the whole world had hopes of a bright future, based on newly discovered technologies. She has been around long enough (seventy one years to date) to witness the birth of many dreams and the stifling of many more. Her experiences are varied; from mother to actress, to civil rights leader. The unassuming style of her prose is the fourth quality which elevates Ms Kuzwayo's story from being merely a personal record to being the story of a nation.

The author's recollection of life in South Africa in the 1920's is that of beautiful landscapes, and a culturally integrated society. In that society black people played a dignified role in the scheme of things. Some were successful farmers like her family who owned acres of farmland, and produced food for their own consumption, and who also sold crops for cash. In addition to the family's economic success, her grandfather was active in the political life of his community and became the Secretary to the Native National Congress (now the African National Congress (ANC)). Her grandmother was an outspoken and industrious woman who was a match for any progressive of the age.

With the coming of the 'Group Areas' legislation, South Africa underwent a rapid change from a society which provided equal opportunity for its citizens to one in which increasingly discriminatory legislation was levelled against its black population. In 1913, the 'Native Land Act' left ownership of the land in the hands of the whites. When this Act failed in its desired effect, to drive the black country folk to the city, the 'Poll Tax' was introduced. Faced with the prospect of going to jail for failure to pay tax, and unable to raise money in the country, black men were forced into the mines. In the 1930's community land in the countryside was declared 'Trust Land' and removed from the control of black people. Farm lands were declared 'black spot' areas, and blacks prohibited from even living there. 'The Groups Areas Act' denied black people the right to trade within the city of Johannesburg.

And to monitor their movement and ensure that they are employed only in areas of the economy which best suits the ruling class, black people have by law to carry a pass. With one callous piece of legislation after another, attempts are made to render black people homeless, stateless wanderers in the land of their birth. When one considers that these beleaguered people who form 75% of the population cannot even vote at elections, it becomes quite clear that white South Africa has decided to make itself the graveyard of the democratic process.

Ms Kuzwayo informs us that although cornered by law, constricted by regulation and trapped by legislation, black people in South Africa have refused to submit and turn the other cheek. Their methods of protest have included direct confrontation with state police, sit-ins and strikes. The women especially have been adept at combating South Africa's climate of fear. They have habitually made *burn-fire* of their passes. And the Skokian queens with their secret strategies have in their unique way undermined the racist government's economic system.

With the departure of the men to the mines, the burden of looking after the family became that of the women. As Ms Kuzwayo puts it, the woman 'became overnight, mother, father, family administrator, counsellor, child-minder, old age caretaker and overall overseer of both family and neighbourhood affairs in a community which had been totally deprived of its active male population' (p 13). Ellen Kuzwayo's story is the proof that some of the women met this awesome challenge admirably. She has been a teacher, secretary of the Youth League of the African National Congress (ANC), social worker, youth worker, General Secretary of the Young Women Christian Association, member of self-help groups, member of community economic projects, and head of a single parent family following the death of her husbands.

The protests of the past, such as the June 16, 1976, unrest in Soweto, the author reminds us have taken a new and sharper focus. The African National Congress (ANC) has stepped up its attack against South Africa's economic life-lines. Children are once more taking to the streets and embarrassing the government. Black stooges of South Africa's apartheid have become ostracized by their own people. All indica-

tions implies Kuzwayo, that the tinder box is about to explode.

Ellen Kuzwayo tells her story through the narration of communal experience, and is eager to share the limelight with others; Nelson Mandela, Winnie Mandela, Steve Biko and some of her own colleagues who are not such famous public figures are equally commended. The title of the book, *Call Me Woman* suggests an assertion of womanhood and all that it entails; mother, custodian of tradition, defender of human rights, victim in a male-dominated world, one most able to turn a deficit into an asset. The book ends with the type of selfless concern which characterizes this sensitive work; a prayer for mother Africa.

Nkosi Sikelel'i Afrika
God Bless Africa.

All we can add is our gratitude to the writer for giving us this autobiography of hope.

Re leboga Ramasedi go bo o re fi'le Basadi ba ba tshwanang le Ellen Kuzwayo.

Thank God for women like Ellen Kuzwayo.

Adetokunbo Pearse

THE TIGER AND THE WOODPECKER STORY BOOK

'*The Tiger and the Woodpecker*', a beautifully illustrated childrens book which retells an ancient Indian fable in contemporary style fills a serious gap in teaching materials available for multi-cultural education. Produced by Middlesex Polytechnic, the dual language book is available in English with Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Greek or Turkish. The book helps to bridge the gap between home and school, enabling parents and children to share the same story. The contemporary version of the story is told by Aruna Ajitsaria, and illustrated by Judy Cobden. The book is the fruit of collaboration between parents and teachers, encouraged by the Reading Materials for Minority Groups project at the Middlesex Polytechnic Multi-cultural Study Centre.

'*The Tiger and the Woodpecker*' is available at £1 inclusive of postage and packing from Jennie Ingram, Research Fellow in Education, Middlesex Polytechnic, All Saints, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR.
Tel: Mark Smulian 886 6599

1981-1986

THE FIRST BATTLE CRY

A review of *Community Arts and the State: Storming the Citadels* published by Comedia Press.

Owen Kelly has recently attempted a remarkable feat. He has written two books and published them disguised as one. The first is called *Community Art and the State*. It purports to be a hard nosed look at the political economy of some recent radical art practices. The second is called *Storming the Citadels*. This text is a Burroughs-like thriller about the emotional conflicts experienced by a group of ageing hippies – people like Kelly and myself – who have been forced to live inside a monstrous machine humiliatingly disguised as its cogs.

The book's dynamic tension and appeal spring from the manner in which it authentically communicates the confusions of many people working within community arts. Kelly's brilliance and vulnerability lie in his ability to express this confusion. Any blame for the book's short-comings should not be placed at his door alone. Its short-comings are faults endemic to the community arts movement.

Storming the Citadels is a story about a group of young people. Together they swallow a potion mixed from sex, drugs, rock and roll and a couple of pages of Che Guevara's diary. They are then initiated into an obscure cult known internally as CA. The group, armed with little more than their own trumpets, disguise themselves by dressing and acting just like everybody else. Then, they slip unnoticed into the citadel and set up shop organizing scratch orchestras among the locals. At a given signal these isolated bands are to unite, whereupon the entire edifice of capitalism is supposed to descend like the ill-fated walls of Jericho.

Not surprisingly, not everything goes smoothly. Once inside the walls these latterday interpreters of the Trojan Horse Plan A are turned, by a gorgon-like monster, into petrified equestrian statues. The only remaining hope is that one of them might raise a battlecry loud enough to get the rabble talking so that the true revolutionaries will at last be able to recognise each other. *Community Arts and the State* is this battlecry. Its resonance is so loud that *Storming the Citadels* is virtually obscured. It lives on only in the margins and between the lines.

Community Arts and the State opens with a very good "partial history of community arts". It describes community arts' nascent days in arts labs, claimants unions, street theatre, the

black panther movement, the women's movement and rather surprisingly, the appointment of David Hockney as town artist in Glenrothes, Scotland. The mind boggles at the possible Presbyterian response to Hockney's paintings of the time. They were all about gay propaganda. Unfortunately Kelly has his facts wrong, David Harding was the artist appointed and his rugged appearance and celtic-inspired concrete sculptures have little in common with Hockney.

Kelly goes on to describe the machinations of the Arts Council as well as the growth and failings of the Association of Community Artists. Of the A.C.A. he writes "it was a very *aquarian* organization, pushy and powerful when dealing with simple practical matters but eclectic to the point of sloppiness when it came to questions of theory". These words could be used equally well to describe the brand of community arts which the A.C.A. promoted. They could also be used equally well to describe *Community Art and the State*. Kelly is pushy and powerful, even passionate, when dealing with simple practical matters. The section of murals is excellent, whilst his general theory looks as though it has been stitched together from an end of term book sale at North London Poly. He witters on about the production of sliced bread and its relevance to the production of art. Yet he displays all the best intentions. He argues coherently against the use of mystifying terms like artist, preferring to replace them with qualifiable ones like painter, photographer or even gardener. He attempts an over ambitious overview on subjects ranging from the State, to Imperialism, to the nature of creativity and authorship, to the age of Aquarius, back to sliced bread and on to community and art.

He argues *against* the "naive romanticism of the purely politically motivated" and *for* "a well argued theoretical framework which provides a basis for questioning lazy 'common sense' assumptions." His analysis is, he admits, materialist. It is not, unfortunately, dialectical as well. "The arts", he writes, "are a class specific subdivision of pleasure... Historically they are the descendents of court arts, through the patronage of which the royalty and the nobility amused themselves and demonstrated their prestige and power." What he fails to recognise is the genuine and frequent subversion enacted by countless arts workers who have chosen not to flatter their patrons.

Kelly's analysis of art does not challenge the notions of art that have been developed under capitalism – it perpetuates them. When he argues that the pro-

duction of art can be likened to the production of sliced bread or model railways he is relying upon recent aesthetic positions, most notably those of late modernism. In this atmosphere, frivolous and irrelevant acts have been elevated to grandiose heights. This has not made them any less frivolous or irrelevant. Kelly's main concern is in the systems of reception and distribution within which cultural forms are produced and received. He argues against the mass market and for the locally significant.

What he omits to study, in any real depth, is precisely how these cultural forms could change within this process. The Tate Gallery might have been willing to exhibit tins of artists excrement packaged by Manzoni. Manzoni might be called an artist. But it does not follow that democratically controlled shit packaging by a local community will lead any of us anywhere. What does matter is that the arts differ from all other areas of production. Through their practice human emotion can be articulated and clarified. The arts are our means of revealing our dreams to ourselves and others. The devaluation and distortion of art practices, whether it be by market forces, popes, or community arts will not destroy them, it will simply impoverish our emotional lives.

Community artists have placed two important items on the cultural agenda. They have claimed that everyone has by birthright the potential for creative expression and they have demanded funds from the State to enable experienced workers to explore ways in which this might be achieved. Kelly's analysis of the frustrations of this experience lead him back to the market place and away from grant aid. I don't think that it is a path that many will be prepared to follow. Whether he likes it or not, public funding of arts centres and phenomena like community arts will continue (for a while at least).

Inevitably people will use such institutions and will attempt to create within them voices which are authentic to themselves. This process could be aided by a much more vigorous analysis of the arts themselves and especially an examination of which practices enable genuine collaboration and which ones spurn it. But for the time being, we will have to make do with Kelly's battle cry *Community Art and the State*. ●

John Phillips

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THE UNBELONGING: VICTIM SYNDROME?

The *Unbelonging* is the first novel by Joan Riley, published by Womens Press. It tells the story of Hyacinth, a young girl who is forced to leave the security and warmth of her aunt's home in Jamaica to join her father and his family in England. She is faced with cruelty and hostility both at home and at school. Her step-mother and father ill treat her and her teachers and fellow pupils are openly racist and vicious. The trauma of isolation and dislocation is compounded by her father's sexual assault on her. She runs away and is put in a childrens' home where she suffers further abuse and aggression. Somehow she makes it to University and eventually she returns to Jamaica where her nostalgic view of the past is shattered.

The title of the book is prophetic for this is a story about a young girl who is unable to form any kind of relationship with other human beings. Misery is piled on misery and there is no relief from the grinding pain of her existence. Hyacinth is a persistent bed-wetter, obsessed with self-hatred and a fear of other people – unloved and unlovely. For a character who is supposed to be academically bright she is remarkably blinkered, insensitive and self-indulgent. The book is full of Hyacinth's assertions and prejudices about 'red neaga', 'white people', 'Indians, Africans but mostly black men. The sheer accumulation of negative adjectives and descriptions relating to black people engenders first disbelief, then irritation.

and finally anger. For Hyacinth never grows – she never changes her perceptions and her development as a character is completely unconvincing.

At the end of the book she asks 'Why did everyone reject her?' The answer could be that the book is written without affection and there is little in the character to encourage the reader to empathise with her. The extremity of her experiences only serves to underline the absence of emotion and conviction in the writing. Even the central theme of incest, a compelling and recurrent theme in womens literature, is reduced to bathos as Hyacinth pondering on the phrase 'Incest flourished where the roads were bad' remarks to herself after her narrow escape from her father 'And the roads wasn't even that bad.'

The book is written in an immature and naive style. With the exception of the characters Perlene and Charles there is little that is redeeming in either character or plot. It reads as a disturbing and depressing diatribe against black people. Perhaps more depressing and disturbing is the inept and insensitive way that the book has been edited and the fact that this is the first novel by a black British writer to be published by the Womens Press. The book offers no insight or depth. It is a joyless exercise which seems to have been written with a voyeuristic and unaware audience in mind.

It is a complete disappointment. ●

Fay Rodrigues

BOOKS

Theatre has always been related to the community from which it originates. Think of the dances and ceremonies of primal societies – and of the Greeks! Yet "community theatre" is often viewed as something strange. This is because theatre is now a fairly minority interest in an ethos which divides "high" and "low", "serious" and "popular". How have these divisions affected contemporary theatre? How were they encountered by the post-war generation as it entered the theatre in the last two decades? How may these divisions be overcome? Steve Gooch, well-known for his work in "alternative" and "community" theatre, tackles these questions in *All Together Now* (Methuen pb £3.95): his style is dense, but he examines in a most stimulating way the relationship of the theatre product to the methods by which theatre is produced and to its reception by audience as well as by critics.

Those interested in a full, rounded social history of acting as a profession will find Michael Sanderson's *From Irving to Olivier* (Athlone Press hb £14.50) a rich and fascinating study of actors' training, work conditions, pay, trade union, and social and religious interests over the last hundred years; and his discusses too music hall, the World Wars, and the movies and TV.

Robin Gwynne's *Huguenot Heritage* (Routledge, hb £15.95) is published on the 300th anniversary of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. This inaugurated the final persecution of Protestants in France, which led many thousands of them to emigrate. Gwynne's detailed history of their arrival and gradual absorption into Britain has much to teach us. Though they were white, they suffered, three centuries ago, some of the prejudice blacks suffer in Britain today; they were mainly craftsmen or merchants and played a major part in the development of bank-

ing and government finance in Britain from 1690 – but that did not protect them from religious prejudice or economic jealousy!

The Jews, who came next, had a harder time, here as almost everywhere else; and there is much to inspire and educate in Abba Eban's *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews* (Weidenfeld, hb £14.95). An excellent one-volume "Source Reader" by the same title, edited by William Hallo *et al* (Praeger pb £18.95) provides annotated excerpts from *Genesis* (the first book of the Bible) to important Jewish documents up to 1967.

Now that the arts are receiving some attention in education generally, there needs to be a move to link black British art more firmly with the notions of multicultural and anti-racist education: the recent Swann Report does not address itself to the importance of the arts in developing a curriculum suitable for contemporary Britain. Teachers, artists and activists should therefore acquaint themselves with such works as the expanded edition of *Multicultural Education* (BBC Publications, pb, £3.75) and Jon Nixon's *A Teacher's Guide to Multicultural Education* (Blackwell, pb £5.95) to understand what is being thought and said, so that bridges can be built.

Viv Broughton of *The Voice* has produced a well-researched and beautifully presented illustrated history of *Black Gospel* (Blandford, pb, £5.95); histories of black music tend to over-emphasize the American and the past, but Broughton is up-to-date and includes a British perspective.

The wide-ranging *Harper Handbook to Literature* (Harper & Row, pb £7.95) complements the new edition of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Oxford University Press, hb £15): the first takes a wider range of material for its province. In our primary areas of interest, therefore, you will not find, for example, an entry for Afro-American Literature in the *Oxford Companion*, but you will find it in the *Harper*. Conversely, the *Harper* does not have an entry on Black British Literature, but the *Oxford* does. The *Harper* includes an entry for Commonwealth Literature, while the *Oxford* has individual entries on various black writers. These are signs of a new interest rather than any attempt at comprehensive or representative coverage of black and Third World literature, even that written originally in English. The lack of essays on African, South Asian and Caribbean literature is particularly striking. ●

Prabhu Gupta

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MUSIC

ARTS COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO 'ETHNIC' MUSIC IN BRITAIN — A CON

June 1980 – Arts Council of Great Britain decides to take 'action' regarding 'ethnic' music in Britain.

November 1985 – the Arts Council's Music Panel agreed to mount an internal inquiry.

March 1985 – a press release is issued informing the public that an inquiry has been set-up and that it will undertake extensive consultation with organisations and individuals involved in 'ethnic' music.

Names and Faces

Chaired by *George Pratt*, Senior Lecturer in music at Keel University and a past Chair of West Midlands Arts, the inquiry included:

Madhu Anjali, Assistant Education Officer for Berkshire, who was involved with a Department of Education and Science study of in-service teacher education in a multi-cultural society;

Viram Jasani, a performer of Indian music and a lecturer at the Guildhall School of Music and the City University;

Alex Pascall, presenter/producer of BBC Radio London's 'Black Londoners' programmes and Chairman of the Nottinghill Carnival;

Dorothy Wilson, Assistant Director of West Midlands Arts with responsibility for 'ethnic' music and the Regional Arts Associations' representative on the Arts Council 'Ethnic Arts Working Group'.

Consultation

The inquiry's 'extensive consultation' exercise took the form of 4 so-called large meetings to which selected groups, considered to represent a cross-section of views and specialisations, were invited, 2 even more selective meetings and 2 open meetings on May 8th 1985.

Methods

Having been briefed to look into the presentation and performance of Afro-Caribbean and South Asian music in Britain the inquiry attempted to identify main areas of concern and ignorance in the Music Panel; discuss and help each area with practitioners; identify matters needing specific recommendations.

The Public Meetings

On the morning of the only public meetings to be held during the inquiry the ACGB issued two documents totalling 22 pages in length, one a draft report outlining the inquiry's recommendations the other a series of profound criticisms of the inquiry's methods, attitudes and assumptions written by two of the three black people on the inquiry – *Viram Jasani* and *Madhu Anjali*.

From the outset the Chair attempted to manipulate the meeting and generally confuse the issues at hand by suggesting that delays caused by critics of the report would result in inactivity and implying that the people gathered together as part of the *final stage* of the inquiry were invited to perform a rubber-stamping function only.

The mainstay of the totally inadequate draft report was a number of superficial recommendations of the education/communication variety that funding bodies and government agencies use so readily to cloud issues relating to the black communities.

The draft report failed to acknowledge or address the issue of racism; failed to examine definitions and terminology; failed to challenge notions of Western cultural dominance; failed to analyse the work of the Music Panel in relation to the work of other panels or the Arts Council as a whole; and failed to make any budgetary recommendations.

The whole of the first open meeting on Afro-Caribbean music was a fight to persuade the Chair to take these criticisms on board and deal with the issue of institutional racism. The meeting finally drew up a number of introductory recommendations addressing these issues for inclusion in the report.

The second open meeting on South Asian music was presented with a report so similar in content as to defy separate consideration and the Chair was persuaded to combine the recommendations into one report.

The total inadequacies of the inquiry's consultation exercises; the racist attitudes and ignorance of a Chair – who having sat through seven months of research failed to know what part of South Asia the inquiry was dealing with; the total inability to see the ACGB as more than just a Music Panel; and narrow expectations and perceptions of the Music Panel, the music officers and the Chair make the whole inquiry a farce. The very brief for the inquiry – an 'examination into the presentation and performance of Afro-Caribbean and South Asian music' – suggests a cursory piece of research into the styles of music as opposed to an inquiry into the reasons why the Music Panel has such an appalling record of funding black groups and is unable to establish the criteria to assess applications.

This inquiry is absolutely no indication that the ACGB is attempting to challenge its racist assumptions or that it is committed to addressing the needs of black artists in Britain – following on from the facile policy document 'The Glory of the Garden' – it adds insult to injury. The Arts Council is incapable of instituting an inquiry into its own affairs and should be lobbied to mount an external inquiry into its whole structure, policies, practices, perceptions and above all its racism. As part of this lobby I would like to see the Arts Council inundated with applications, enquiries and criticisms from black groups in Britain if only to stop them denying that the demand is there.

For further information about the progress of the inquiry, the Music Panel's response to the report, and funding, contact John Muir, The Music Department, Arts Council of Great Britain on (01) 629 9495 ext. 388 and MAAS.

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WOMEN MCS AT THE DRILL HALL

In early May the Drill Hall saw an evening of exciting performances by some of London's leading MCs. Great sounds were provided by sister Culcha with appearances by Ranking Anne, Olive Ranking, Cinderella, Lorna Gee, Lady Sheree and Pepi amongst others.

The evening brought some violent extremes. It is frightening that black women still have to publicly fight against negative and racist attitudes to their sexuality as in Cinderella's 'I am not a prostitute'. However, more disturbing aspects of Cinderella's performance were her portrayals of the black community as thieves, muggers and woman-bashers feeding directly into this society's stereotyped and reactionary views and her frequent references to 'Pakis and Paki-Shops'. Unfortunately, though predictably, the majority ignored the protests of the few and these issues were not tackled.

Ranking Anne, the best received MC of the night, brought a more positive and dynamic militancy to the proceedings commenting on positive aspects of women's experience, and attacking the present government in 'Police Bill' and 'Right to Fight'.

Ranking Ann and Lorna Gee were by far the most experienced and slick MCs, but Olive Ranking stole the show for me with a stage presence, voice and satirical humour that makes her a potential leading force in the world of women MCs.

The exciting power and creativity of black women in this country was proved by the evening's performances, all that is needed now is for the record industry to sit up and take note and for women MCs to be given more opportunities to perform. ●

Karin Woodley



KODO: HEARTSTOPPING

The Kodo Drummers from Japan are a magnificent company of drummers performing a range of pieces which demonstrate both the subtlety and sheer athleticism of the company. At times the intensity and precision of the drummers was unnerving, so closely did it resemble a technological feat of co-ordination but the range of pace and tone redeemed the humanity of the company. Interspersed with the drumming were a number of elegant and gentle dance/mimes which though lacking the immediate force and impact of the drumming provided visually stimulating reflective pieces. The group live in a

tight knit spartan community on the Japanese island of Sado and dedicate their lives to keeping the ancient folk art of Japanese drumming alive. Rigorous in the extreme, their daily existence begins with a 12 mile run before settling down to the long hours of practice. The drums vary in size from the small shime-daiko found in classical Kabuki theatre to the massive O-daiko weighing nearly 1000 pounds which is played with sticks the size of small logs. Particularly entrancing was the music of the Japanese equivalent of the banjo - a small stringed instrument.

Amir Hamzavi

Shakka Deddi's single 'inta-view' (Nubia Records) is certainly musically quite competent. 'African Heartbeat' complements Deddi's style well and clarinetist Ric Harris produces a charming and effective solo at just the right moment. Deddi's topic is racism in employment and he presents this rather adroitly through the medium of an employer/applicant conversation: 'A Levels? - just di two (Butta undastuhd dhat wan wuhd do)'. This is undoubtedly an area of Black experience that requires exploration and it's good to see Deddi applying his talents to it.

The flip side contains two short tracks ('Down ah Gulli' and 'African Heartbeat') and a longer piece ('Survival Song'). I confess I preferred this side 'Survival Song' in particular has a pleasing tempo and carries a worthwhile message.

This said, I was inclined, after listening to this record to wonder just where Shakka Deddi's music is going. While 'inta-view' is a laudable piece of work, it is not, as the sleeve suggests, 'Pan-African music at its best'. Deddi invocation of African oral tradition seems rather vague and lacks the force of, for example, Fela Kuti. Still, this brand of poetry is more dynamic than Billy Bragg's and it's nice to know that for Shakka Deddi the struggle continues.

Etienne Dwumah

The Black Music Association U.K.

*"The Right to Play -
The Right to Earn -
The Right to decide":*

A fact often noted, but more often ignored is the historic exploitation and appropriation of black music by the white music industry. The newly founded Black Music Association U.K. has been set up to address this issue and tackle head-on racism in one of the world's largest industries: an industry in which the financial stakes are so high it can afford to acknowledge and accept its exploitative practises; thank black music for its contribution to the culture and coffers of the West; and then turn over and sigh exasperatedly because the issue reared its tedious and picayune head again.

In July this year the BMA U.K., founded by Root Jackson, Gaspar Lawal, Kofi Dako and Byron Lye-fook, held its inaugural conference stating that it aims to provide opportunities for musicians to exchange views and ideas; campaign against racism in the industry; and provide advice, assistance and training on all aspects of the industry including production, distribution, marketing and copy right. The Conference, attended by over 350 people from the industry, declared its support for the initiative and a programme of action was agreed including the organisation of national seminars, conferences and a Black Music Gala.

For more details about the Association and membership forms contact: B.M.A., 110 Mill Lane, London NW6. Tel: (01) 960 1375. ●

TALKING BOOK VOLUME ONE: AN INTRODUCTION

The 'Talking Book' series has been planned and produced by the W.O.M.A.D. (World of Music Arts and Dance Foundation), a Bristol based educational charity dedicated to promoting world music and multicultural arts, funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Manpower Services Commission.

This first album in the series is designed to 'provide a lively and informative introduction to the world of music'. It comes in the form of an L.P. record sleeved within the pages of an accompanying magazine that alleges it presents 'well-researched and accessible background information on all the music appearing on the L.P.'.

The excellently presented 'multi-cultural multi-media' pack includes beautiful examples of music from a number of African countries, Bali, Trinidad, Colombia, the Aborigine Nation, Ireland, the U.K., and Pakistan. It also includes some of the most obnoxious ethnomusicological literature one can hope to find.

The L.P. is, like most compilation albums, tantalisingly fragmented but stands as an introduction to a series intending to focus on particular continents, countries and traditions with examples of traditional and contemporary music.

Having listened to such lovely examples of the world's music I turned with expectation to the magazine to see what this potentially exciting and necessary educational resource had to offer. I found myself bombarded with the same old anthropological analyses, patronising comparisons with the West, manipulative interviews and racist assumptions that constitute the bulk of the most widely used multicultural music-education material.

The notes accompanying a track of kora music performed by Amadu Jobarteh explain Jobarteh is a griot. An extract from Geoffrey Gorer's 'remarkable' book *African Dances* written in 1935, goes on to describe griots as people 'looked down upon by the rest of the population... lower than the meanest servant and often richer and more powerful than the master' and informs us that they are, amongst other things, 'Family jesters ... buffoons ... women's hairdressers ... official boasters'. Gorer does however, concede that griots are the 'spiritual mentors and guides of the young' - given the previous description - WHY?

The album then whisks over to Bali with an example of Gamelan music and a commentary that explains that "Great classical pieces are not passed down intact, as in Western music, but compositions gradually shift and change their form with each new performance... there is no concept of 'progress' so prevalent in Western thought". Apart from the obvious contradiction, the commentator is allowed to imbue his analysis with anthropological hype. A community in which every individual is assumed to be a potential artist, which passes on traditions with the expectation that they will be re-interpreted in order to meet contemporary needs, and remains responsive to the moment of performance should not, and cannot be defined patronisingly, by Western criteria. (I hate to include another comparison with the West - but what about James Joyce and the aleatoric works of Berio, Cage, Stockhausen, Lutoslawski et al?)

The commentary to Explainer's 'Lorraine' reports accurately that Explainer and Arrow are aiming to make their music part of the international music scene, and quotes them in a straight-forward way without any descriptive embellishment. However, Chalkdust's assertion that Calypso was born of protest, and that in order to maintain this tradition he cannot work in the mainstream, sparks off a knee-jerk reaction by the commentator which is amazing to encounter: "Chalkdust began aggressively at our interview, accusing the foreign media of taking from the country and never giving anything in return. Matters were not helped by the arrival of his mangy dog which has a psycho-

pathic streak and engaged in a campaign of harrassment. Happily both the dog and Chalkdust settled down and the latter proved most articulate and pleasant". Not only is the report patronising and manipulated in order to associate Chalkdust with a mangy, psychopathic dog, it goes on to use the words of both Arrow and Explainer to imply that Chalkdust is not a professional musician (needless to say, in 'Western' terms), that he is behind the times and as a teacher (one of the middle-classes - sitting pretty), disinterested in the future of Calypso and its impact on the world community.

Having been thus directed to assume that WOMAD's aim is to bring uncontroversial, mainstream highlights of the world's music to the West, I was confused to find Aborigine artists, discussed under the title 'Primeval Music In Australia', criticised for allowing themselves to become Westernised, aspiring to the mainstream, and producing work motivated by alien considerations - those of market forces.

This document of racist and destructive commentary is to be abhorred. However, I don't doubt that it will become a widely used, well-marketed education resource, if only as a result of the high quality of the L.P. itself. £6 will buy you this introductory album, £15 the first three issues of the Talking Book series. Write to the WOMAD Foundation, Third Floor, 85 Park Street, Bristol BS1 5JN if you want to see an example of the work that the CRE supports. ●

Karin Woodley



HUMAN TO HUMAN

This is potentially, an easy cross between country rock, which comes complete with a lead guitarist, reminiscent of Mark Knopfler and (groan) wailing, distorted guitar (perhaps a little nervously mixed down) and the heavier more resilient dub sound somehow works. Which means Rauf Adu is either an innovative musician or that there was an initial connection between country and reggae which he has unpacked for us in *Human to Human* (Modtone 1985) an originally if coolly sung single where a man gets down to a serious 'human to human' talk with a woman who is uninterested in his advances. I was taken with the reggae elements particularly the mix which was tasteful, sparse and showed good timing in the best dub tradition, ooh that percussion and that stodgy bass and that funky dance floor synthesiser. Adu is an artist in movement discovering our new cross over, rediscovering old connections; the unrequited lovers rock.

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THE ARTS COUNCIL CALLS FOR £161M 'INVESTMENT' IN THE ARTS

At a Press Conference on the 17 September at the Fortune Theatre, in London the Arts Council revealed that it would be asking the Government for £161m 'investment' in the arts for 1986/7. The Council explains its case in a lavish prospectus titled 'A Great British Success Story'. £120m is what the Council 'justifiably' asked the Government for last year - it got £106m. Added to that sum is £6m for inflation and £35m 'to secure the future of the many organisations which they (GLC and the five Metropolitan authorities) currently support.'

ETHNIC FILM AND TELEVISION ADVISER AT BFI



The British Film Institute has appointed Jim Pines as its first Ethnic Film and Television Adviser.

Pines, who took up the post at the beginning of July, has worked at the Commonwealth Institute since 1983. Here too he occupied a new post (set up jointly with the BFI) involving the development of programming non-European film and TV at the CI's cinema.

Now he plans to provide a necessary focus for independent, ethnic films within the BFI and is liaising with all sections - particularly Distribution, Funding, Education, NFT - to this end. He also plans to initiate in-house training for film programmers, to conduct research work about black and Third World film and television and to encourage new ethnic groups (as well as those already established in the film and video workshop field) to explore other areas of funding to augment the support already provided by BFI and Channel 4.

Jim Pines is not a newcomer to the BFI: he worked in the Education Department in the 1960s. Since then, the nature of his work has meant that he has maintained close contact with many areas of the BFI. ●

On the basis of the indisputable fact that the Arts in Britain return some £75m to the Treasury through taxation against the £106m provided by central Government, the Council appealed to the economic sense of Mrs Thatcher by presenting the Arts as an enterprise well worth further investment. It is understood that the prospectus is the product of Anthony Blackstock, the Council's new finance director. The whole approach of the Council is based on so-called economic facts.

Both Sir William Rees-Mogg, Chairman, and Luke Rittner, Secretary General, used the language of stock-brokers, bankers and speculators as they talked about sales, productivity and dividends. The two men are, of course, well versed in that kind of language. Sir William Rees-Mogg started at the *Financial Times*; Luke Rittner was appointed to the Arts Council straight from the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts. The present leadership of the Arts Council has continually advocated a monetarist approach to the Arts. Its obsession with productivity and dividends is the same one that guides the present policies of the Government.

It was the Arts Council which invited Professor J K Galbraith, leading USA monetarist and Reaganite, to speak on 'Economics and the Arts' (Cottesloe Theatre, January 1983). The professor stated then that,

'My purpose in this lecture is to assert the interrelationship between economics and the arts - to risk the charge of philistinism and esotericism in asserting that there is an important, mutually necessary and reciprocally advantageous relationship between the two.'

In March 1984, the Arts Council published the 'Glory of the Garden' which imposed huge cuts under the pretext of distributing finance to the Regions outside London. The Council's policy was discredited as it was quite obvious that £3m provided to the regions could not remedy the neglect and deprivation of decades. 'The Glory of the Garden' was also rejected by the vast majority of artists and arts administrators. Sir Peter Hall branded the Council 'the arm of Government in the arts' and a national convention of theatre directors passed a motion of no confidence in the Council.

In March 1985, Sir William Rees-Mogg delivered another Arts Council lecture on 'The Political Economy of Art'. 'Mrs Thatcher', he stated, 'has committed herself to the maintenance of the welfare state including, of course, arts spending.' One can envisage the kind of maintenance Sir William Rees-Mogg speaks about when one looks at the continuous closures of hospitals. In the lecture he advised artists that 'The qualities required for

survival in this age will be the qualities of the age itself. They include self-reliance, imagination, a sense of opportunity, range of choice, and the entrepreneurial action of small professional groups.' Not a word about aesthetics, artistic quality or experimentation. Survival depends on how good an accountant you are not how good an artist you may be. This distorted logic has led the Arts Council to refer to audiences of arts events as 'customers'. Luke Rittner did however, admit that in real terms the Arts Council's income from Government had been reduced by 6% since 1979.

The Arts Council has set a dangerous precedent by using such an economic approach. No one can dispute the importance of economics, and arguments based on economic realities are extremely valuable. But the Arts, by their nature, are not capitalist enterprises but creative processes, historically dependent upon patronage for their survival.

Sir Peter Hall's comments at the press conference were pertinent. He saw little likelihood of the present Government changing its mind and asked what the Council would do when the Government rejected the Council's case. Sir William Rees-Mogg answered that he would think about it when such an occasion arose.

On the very same day of the Arts Council's press conference, the new Arts Minister, Richard Luce said at an ASTMS meeting that the Government had 'absolutely no commitment' to meet any short fall resulting from the dissolution of the GLC and the other Metropolitan authorities. Luce resigned as a junior Foreign Minister along with Lord Carrington at the time of the South Atlantic war. He has been brought back by Mrs Thatcher to replace Lord Gowrie who resigned because he said that his salary of £33,000 was impossible to live on in Central London. It is arguable that Gowrie was pressured to resign following the reaction to his arts cuts. Interestingly, Nicholas de Jongh in the *Guardian*, Profile of September 4 1985, has nothing but praise for Lord Gowrie. The ex-Arts Minister is described as 'the most useful Arts Minister we have ever had, and also the most modern and artistic'. This is sheer nonsense. As an Arts Minister, Lord Gowrie imposed cuts upon arts institutions, organizations and museums. He failed to introduce any legislation for the benefit of the public through the arts. His 'successes' have resulted in an era of fear and uncertainty in the arts world and an unparalleled level of unity in the arts world in mobilising opposition to the present policies of the Arts Council and the Government.

GLC
Nick Axarlis

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TARA ARTS CENTRE RENOVATED

Following the completion of extensive renovations, the TARA ARTS CENTRE will be re-opening in September with a packed year's programme of performances, recitals, workshops, films, talks and debates.

The autumn season focuses on 'CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS IN ASIAN ARTS'. It will feature international and UK-based artists whose work is both vibrant and innovative. They will be sharing their ideas and approaches with professionals and the public in workshops and performance projects specially commissioned by THE CENTRE. One of the commissioned projects will feature ASTAD DEBOO, a contemporary/Kathakali dancer from Bombay. SHOBANA JEYASINGH will be performing a new piece devised with a resident Bharata Natyam dancer. There will be an opportunity to see a unique combination of Indian dance and African drums with FLORA GATHA and TUUP in 'THE TELLERS OF TIME'.

THE CENTRE also houses two theatre companies TARA ARTS GROUP's Touring Company and TARA IN EDUCATION, both of whom will be launching their latest productions in October at THE CENTRE. The season opens with a recital and workshop by ANUP BISWAS, the virtuoso cellist, featuring his own inimitable blend of music.

This is only a small sample of the activities planned at THE CENTRE. For further details contact SIMON DOVE, the Activities Programmer on 871 1458/9/0.

[Tara Arts Centre, 356 Garratt Lane, London SW18].

ARTS COUNCIL'S APPOINTMENT

(The following press release was issued by MAAS on 4 April 1985)

The Arts Council's recent announcement that its Combined Arts Officer, Pippa Smith, is to take on responsibilities for 'ethnic minority arts' is a totally inadequate response to criticisms that have been made of the Council's funding policies and attitudes to black and non-Western artists. The Combined Arts Officer's new duties are primarily advising and monitoring. There is no budget, department, panel or advisory structure for the Officer who will report directly to the Secretary General.

This gesture of support is cosmetic and tokenist and leaves the Council present bankrupt policies regarding black and non-Western arts intact. This move comes in the wake of widespread opposition to the policy document 'The Glory of the Garden' which pays lip-service to the notion of 'black and Asian arts' while implementing the devolution of most of the black arts groups receiving funding from the Council.

No real progress will be made until there is a radical re-appraisal of the terminology, criteria and assessment procedures used by the Arts Council. In practice, most black and non-Western artists are excluded by the Arts Council's present terms of reference and there is no indication that any funds will be ear-marked for the development of these arts or that the Arts Council considers black and non-Western arts to be of any national significance.

The grafting on of additional responsibilities for this area onto an existing Officer will be interpreted as a sop to criticisms which have been levelled at the Arts Council in recent months concerning its policies which many critics consider racist. Pippa Smith is quoted as seeing an important part of her new role as 'internal education, organising seminars, lectures and workshops within the Council'. This should force the Arts Council to confront its own outmoded values and attitudes in this vital field of arts activity.

BLACK WOMEN IN THE ARTS CONFERENCE

A national conference on Black Women in the arts is being organised to take place in London in January 1986. The conference, which is for and about women of African, Caribbean and South Asian descent, will look at the nature and level of Black Women's participation in the arts in Britain, focusing in particular, on how racism and sexism in education discourages and restricts our full participation.

The aims of the conference are:

1. To bring together African, Caribbean and Asian women who have an interest in the arts, and who share a common concern about the development of Black Women's art.

2. To provide a platform for the discussion of issues which relate to and affect the position of Black Women in the arts, such as the manner in which arts education is currently practised.

3. To work towards increasing Black Women's awareness of the various arts assisting agencies (eg. funding bodies) that exist, and to enable them to make more use of these bodies.

4. To look at the portrayal of Black Women in the arts, both by Black Women and others, and to critically assess the various roles and images on offer.

5. To establish a national organisation which will work to challenge racism and sexism in the arts, and act as a networking body for Black Women in the arts by, providing advice, information and support.

6. To look at current funding provision for Black women in the arts and discuss ways in which investment can be attracted.

Black women interested or involved in any arts field are encouraged to join in the organisation of the conference. A steering group has been set up, and a series of open meetings are being organised from which a support group will be formed. Notice of dates and venues will follow. It is important that there is as much involvement from Black Women in the regions as possible. We are in the process of gathering information about Black Women's arts groups and centres around the country; if you know of any group or individual who might be interested, please contact the Steering Group.

Further information is available from:

Ade Solanke,
Arts Media Group,
90 De Beauvoir Road,
London N1 4EN
Tel: 249 0994 or 254 6256;

Patricia Hilaire,
Theatre of Black Women,
PO Box No 6,
136 Kingsland High Street,
London E8
Tel: 249 1660;

Karin Woodley,
Minorities' Arts Advisory Service,
Beauchamp Lodge,
2 Warwick Crescent,
London W2 6NE
Tel: 286 1854/8

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS

The Riverside Studios, one of the most important Arts Centres in London has made two new appointments – Charlie Hanson, founder of Black Theatre Co-op and director, producer of *No Problem* TV series, has become Programme Director and David Donaghue will be the Marketing Development Consultant responsible for the overall marketing of the Studios. Studio 2 at the Riverside will become a TV/film studio.



Since the late seventies the Riverside has been acknowledged as one of the most innovative Arts Centres in London presenting new and original work of a high standard and staging experimental work by international companies. Black Theatre Co-op, Tara and other black theatre groups have presented their work along with companies from India, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Eastern Europe. David Gothard, the former Artistic Director, was largely responsible for the Riverside's programme which broke down the insularity of the British theatre and introduced theatre groups of many styles and disciplines. The Riverside's Gallery has exhibited many new and young artists, albeit mainly American and European modernists.

However, in a period when central government is driving arts expenditure down and advocating the Victorian values of melodramas and theatre entrepreneurs the experimental character of the Riverside attracted some criticism. First the Tory/Liberal Hammersmith and Fulham Council withdrew its grant accusing it of being 'elitist'. The Council's contribution at present is free rental. The Arts Council followed suit with criticisms of the financial administration and withdrew its grant. That left the GLC to sustain the Studios with a 1985/6 grant of £½ million.

A new Board (Riverside Trust) plans to make the Studios more open and ac-

cessible to the community. New dance work is going to be presented and in November there will be the Dance Umbrella festival. The New York La Mama theatre is scheduled to appear with a Samuel Beckett play in the autumn.

Riverside will continue and will expand its workshop events and meetings. There are workshops in poetry and literature, and there will be rock concerts for young people and specific events for school students. Riverside is keen to attract the local community and youth into the centre. Charlie Hanson is aware of the Studios responsibility to reach the black communities and open the centre to black artists. He believes that much more can be done by the Riverside in the support for black arts and regards it as a priority area. Although the main bulk of the 1985/6 artistic programme is completed he is still looking for interesting events that can be staged at the Riverside for the benefit of the community and Londoners in general.

The Riverside Studios opened the new season with an exciting September programme highlighted by the appearances of AMANDLA for two weeks, 11-22 September. AMANDLA is the African National Congress (ANC) cultural ensemble of actors, musicians, singers and dancers.

At a press conference Dr Francis Mele (ANC London representative) said that the ANC set up AMANDLA as part of the defence of Azania's culture which has been crushed by the apartheid régime. He called on all British theatres and cultural institutions to implement the United Nations cultural boycott and to give direct support to the cultural aspirations of the black people.

The Artistic Director of AMANDLA Jonas Gwangwa spoke about the ensemble's brief but eventful history and elaborated its artistic policy. AMANDLA, he said, are using all performing art forms, traditional and urban. AMANDLA present on stage the story of the

South African peoples from the advent of colonialism to present day. Its programme changes as to incorporate the present day revolutionary struggles in Azania. Mr Gwangwa emphasised the plurality of AMANDLA's material drawing from the cultural practices of all different national groups.

The Deputy Artistic Director of AMANDLA, Mr Ndonda Khuze, made an appeal for the release of Azanian artist Benjamin Moloise who faces execution in South Africa.

AMANDLA are using drama and music, dance and song to portray the culture of Azania. All members of the group are political exiles living in Angola. The group was formed in 1977 following the Festival of Art and Culture in Lagos and they are all professional. AMANDLA have performed all over the world and they have arrived in Britain, for their first ever tour, from the Youth Festival in Moscow. Their performances at the Edinburgh Festival were sold out.

In collaboration with the Roundhouse, AMANDLA will lead a series of workshops. These are taking place on September 10-27 and November 4-10 at Riverside and other venues. Advanced and beginners classes in dance, movement, drumming and singing. For information contact Irene Cullinane at the Roundhouse, Chalk Farm Road, London NW1, 01-482 1510.

A most important event at the Riverside from 24-28 September is GOSPEL JOY a week of Gospel music presented in association with The Voice newspaper. All the leading Gospel music names are taking part and ARTRAGE will carry extensive report in our next issue.

In the Foyer of Riverside Sonia Boyce is working directly on the wall with pastels reproducing a powerful narrative set. Don't miss it; is on view until October 6 ●

Nick Axarlis

THE LONDON FORUM OF ETHNIC ARTS OFFICERS & MAAS

The Forum was established in June 1984 and its brief is Black Arts development within the London Boroughs. Its membership is made up by the Black Arts officers of London Boroughs, representatives of those Boroughs who have no appointed one yet, GLA's Equal Opportunities Officer, the GLC's Race Equality Unit, and the MAAS London Co-ordinator. The Forum meets regularly to discuss and assess Black Arts in London and organised, last February, a successful conference at the Commonwealth Institute which was attended,

among other delegates, by arts Officers representing 23 London Boroughs.

The Forum is now preparing a Document, *Plan of Action*, to be put for consideration and implementation to London Councils. The Document will be launched at a special conference in December.

Any information concerning the activities of the Forum contact the MAAS London Co-ordinator, 01-286 1854/8. ●

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BANDUNG FILE

The Bandung File is the generic title for a series of films by the newly formed Bundung Productions Company which has included so far an explosive documentary on racial murders of Arabs in France, an inside view of the immigration service and a programme dealing with the Labour Party's relationship with black voters and party members in particular Roy Hattersley who has been an outspoken opponent of black sections.

Next year there will be a profile of Viv Richards – cricket superstar. A series which is not to be missed.



THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENT ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

The lecturers of the Theatre Arts Department of Addis Ababa University are appealing for donations towards the costs equipment needed desperately for their department. Set up five years ago the department has contributed greatly to the theoretical and practical development of theatre in Ethiopia. The department is one of the few centres for experimental research in the country and require either finance or equipment to enable them to set up a basic lighting and sound rig. The cost of transportation will be met by the University.

For specific details of their requirements and information about how you can assist contact Tony Humphreys at the Africa Centre, 38 King Street London WC2 E 8JT Tel: (01) 836 1973

SIGNS OF EMPIRE IMAGES OF NATIONALITY

A slide tape text on nation, race and the Colonial encounter. An audio visual engagement with the mythologies around which presence(s) are secured: the conglomeration of signs which structure the narratives on national identity. An investigation of a monumental symbolic order.

By the Black Audio Film Collective, 89, Ridley Road, London E8.
Tel: 01- 254 9536

SAVACOU CARIBBEAN WRITERS DIRECTORY

Savacou is preparing a Directory of Caribbean Writers and is seeking information from writers in Britain. Further information from: Edward Kamau Braithwaite, Department of History, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston 7, JAMAICA.

APHRA VIDEOS

Aphra Videos is a womens cooperative community video project. We make tapes for campaigning, education, enjoyment and discussion and have worked with groups throughout the Greater London area. We also cover conferences, meetings, special events, etc and run short courses in VHS video for women and girls. We operate a sliding scale of charges according to the means of individual groups.

Please contact us at:
Aphra Videos
245a, Coldharbour Lane,
London SW9 8RR
Tel: 01-733 7207



BEATS OF THE HEART

A series of films by Jeremy Marre dealing with the musics of the world and covering Chinese Music, Salsa, South African Music among others. The fourteen part series is being shown on Saturday nights and there is an excellent accompanying book *Beats of the Heart* published by Pluto Books which contains further information and pictures from the series.



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ARTS WORLDWIDE

In November Dauda Omowura and his ensemble from Nigeria perform Nigerian apala – a major influence on Afro-American music. The music is performed by Nigerian musicians from south west Nigeria and the instruments used include the iyaalu talking drum, large and small conga drums, a bead-strung gourd rattle sekere and a thumb piana agidigbo. In addition to solo and ensemble drumming and dancing the ten strong ensemble will perform responsorial songs in the flowing and ornamental style that characterise apala.

In December Fodis Athanasiades and his musicians from the wild and lonely region of Epiros in north west Greece will tour Britain. They play tunes of

scarcely controlled joy, they also play sad and mournful laments.

The music is dominated by the clarinet which replaced the simple shepherd's pipe a century ago. As the notes merge together in dramatic leaps and plunges the clarinet is joined by the violin, tambourine and long-necked lute to reveal the distinctive Epiros style. As the people of Epiros move away from the harsh terrain, they take their music with them. It's Eastern influence and improvisational spirit is now heard in Athens and Greek communities abroad. In December British audiences will have the opportunity to hear this traditional music.



Proposed schedule for Nigerian music project

November 1985

Sun 3	NEWTOWN	evening performance	Theatre Hafren
Mon 4	COVENTRY	children's demonstration	Coventry Centre for the Performing Arts
	WARWICK	evening performance	Arts Centre University
Wed 6	MANCHESTER	children's demonstration	Royal Northern College of Music
Thu 7	NOTTINGHAM	evening performance	
Fri 8	LONDON	children's demonstration	Logan Hall
		evening performance	Camden Centre
Sat 9	LONDON	workshop (adults)	The Place
		evening performance	Camden Centre
Sun 10	OUNDLE	evening performance	
Mon 11	NORTHAMPTON	evening performance	Derngate Centre
Tue 12	SHEFFIELD	evening performance	The Leadmill Arts Co-op
Wed 13	NORWICH	evening performance	Norwich Jazz Festival

TOUR DATES: GREEK EPIROT MUSICIANS

November December 1985

November

Wed 27	S. YORKS	evening performance	
Thu 28	STAMFORD	evening performance	Stamford Arts Centre
Fri 29	NORTHAMPTON	evening performance	Derngate Centre
Sat 30	LONDON	evening performance	Camden Centre

December

Sun 1	LONDON	workshop (adults)	The Place
Mon 2	LONDON	children's demonstration	Logan Hall
Tue 3	COVENTRY	children's demonstration	Coventry Centre for the Performing Arts
	WARWICK	evening performance	University Arts Centre
Wed 4	S. YORKS	evening performance	
Thu 5	S. YORKS	evening performance	
Fri 6	MANCHESTER	children's demonstration	Royal Northern College of Music
		evening performance	Camden Centre
Sat 7	LONDON	evening performance	Wyvern Theatre
Mon 9	SWINDON	evening performance	

ARTRAGE LISTINGS

IMAGES OF BLACK WOMEN – A ONE DAY SEMINAR

The CAVE IS ORGANIZING A ONE-DAY SEMINAR: "Images of Black Women" to look at black women in writing and to tackle some of the issues that surround this field. The seminar on January 25th 1986, will take place at the CAVE, 516 Mosely Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 9AH, Tel: 021 440 3742 from 10am to 5.30pm.

The African Dawn presents SERIOUS BIZNESS

As part of the Bradford Black International Festival Serious Bizness, a music duo made up of JARIBU and NGOMA HILL performing music crossing Gospel, Blues, Rhythm and Blues, and jazz and combining political awareness with the best traditions of black music will perform with African Dawn a group of artists performing dramatised poetry fused with African Music.

Date: Sunday October 27th

Venue: Communal Building, University of Bradford at 1pm

Tickets: £2.00/£1.50 Tel: 0274 722 996

West Midlands Arts: ASIAN DANCE RESEARCH PROJECT FOLLOW UP CONFERENCE

Following their research project designed to investigate the range and extent of dance practise from the Indian Sub-Continent in the West Midlands, West Midlands Arts have organised a conference to be held at the Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham on November 3rd from 10.15 to 4.30. The conference is intended to address several issues related to West Midlands arts' role in the development of Asian dance within the region, looking at training opportunities, opportunities for professional performers, and ways to increase the available resources.

'PRIMITIVISM' AND MODERN ART AND FIVE SCULPTURES

Sheffield City Art Galleries

The Museum of Modern Art in New York recently mounted a spectacular and controversial exhibition entitled 'Primitivism in 20th century Art' and subtitled 'Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern'. Has Western art in this century progressed formally through the borrowing of the devices and styles of 'primitive' art? All these terms 'progress' in art, 'formalism', 'borrowing', 'primitive' are all now subject to new appraisals by artists and art historians. The display from the permanent collection will draw on works by Gauguin, Henri Laurens, Eric Gill, Leger, Paul Nash, Henry Moore, Emil Nolde etc, as well as the more recent questioning of cultural traditions in the work of young black artists working in Britain today such as Keith Piper. A Study Day on 'Primitivism' and Modern Art will take place on 19th October. Speakers will include artists and art historians and the three displays of Miniature African Sculptures from the Herman Collection, German woodcuts in the 20th century and 'Primitivism' and Modern Art will provide the backdrop to the day. Full details available from Sally Goldsmith, Sheffield 734791



FINYE: THE WIND AT ICA

Souleymane Cisse is one of the most popular African film-makers and FINYE: THE WIND his latest film has won acclaim internationally. Ostensibly a study of the relationship between two students, one of whom is the grandson of an impoverished former chief and the other the daughter of a repressive military Governor, FINYE deals with the forces that shape a continent, but treats that continent with understanding, sensitivity and humour.

THE WIND opens at the ICA CINEMA on OCTOBER 18 for a two week run. Further enquiries to the ICA on 10-930 0493.

BLACK ARTISTS AND WHITE INSTITUTIONS

Conference dealing with employment, Programming and Training in mainstream arts institutions to be held at the Riverside Studios on NOVEMBER 4th 9.30 - 6pm at the RIVERSIDE STUDIOS organised by the Race Equality Unit of the GLC. Further information from 01-633-2611.

INDRA OPERA

Indra Opera presents 'An Indian Evening' at the Rosslyn Hill Chapel Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead NW3 on Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th October 1985 at 7.30pm. The company will perform music by two Western composers, Gustav Holst and Maurice Delage who were deeply moved by Indian thought and philosophy. The climax of the evening will be the performance of Holst's chamber opera 'Savitri' which is based on a sanskrit story. The other two works to be performed will be Four Hindu songs by Delage and choral hymns from the Rig Veda by Holst. Tickets are £5 (concessions £3 for under 16's. Senior Citizens or UB40's) available in advance from:

Indra Opera,
Basement Flat,
16d, Hampstead Hill Gardens,
London NW3 2PL.

DANCE UMBRELLA '85 October 9 - December 1

The seventh season of dance featuring companies and dancers from USA, Canada, Holland, Italy, France and Britain.

SURAYA HILAL: EGYPTIAN DANCE October 30 - November 2 at THE PLACE. Suraya Hilal presents a special programme with an ensemble of six Egyptian musicians playing classical instruments: Kanoon, Nai, Kamanga, Accordion, Tabla and Req. She has devised a programme to include both classical and 'baladi' (urban folk) dances... there is a tribute to the great Egyptian singer Um Kalthoum and Suraya's innovative interpretation to new compositions for Raks Sharki. This exciting new programme highlights the vivid interplay between dancer and musicians and the thrill of improvisation. There will be Arabic food and refreshments available at The Place Theatre on each evening of this series.

THE PLACE THEATRE, 17 Duke's Road, London WC1. Tel: 01-387 0031 Also at THE PLACE ON OCTOBER 27 PHOENIX DANCE COMPANY.

NEW PRODUCTION BY BTC

The Black Theatre Co-operative is touring a new production 'Ritual' written by Edgar White and directed by Gordon Case. The play deals with Barzey, a West Indian, who finds himself at a crisis point in his life when he must make a choice between the purity of his vision or his girl-friend/fiancee. The crisis is made more acute because he is soon to turn forty - 'the time when a man is either already successful or finished.' This inner conflict causes him to be haunted by a spirit which only he can see. The greater his fear, the greater his dependence on this ghost. The play examines all the rituals which black people in Britain undergo daily. Rituals of survival, both physical and spiritual. Barzey attempts to discover what the implications of the journey mean. The play is touring throughout the autumn:



Further information from Nick Owen, Administrator, Black Theatre Co-op, Unit 1, Second Floor, 61-71, Collier Street, London N1 9BE
Tel: 01-833 3785

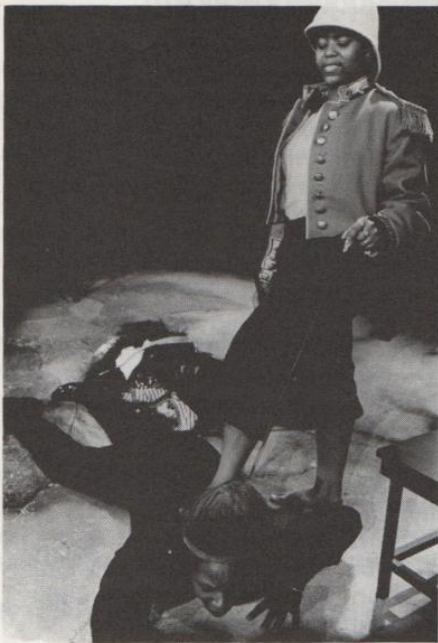
LOS JAIVAS; Inca Rock

Latin American Cultural Centre presents Los Jaivas in concert in a tribute to Violeta Parra on Friday 25th October 1985 at 7.30pm at the Royal Festival Hall. Los Jaivas are a six-man outfit from Chile comprising who play a fascinating mixture of quenas (vertical flutes), rondadores (panpipes) and the charango armadillo-shell strumming guitar combined with Moog synthesisers and electric guitar a unique style.

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ARTS ARCHIVE



PROPHETS IN THE BLACK SKY by John Matshikiza

Prophets in the Black Sky is Bristol Express's first co-production with Coventry Belgrade Theatre, directed by Andy Jordan and John Matshikiza. It is the first play by John Matshikiza, a South African actor and poet. The play offers a new historical perspective on South African life seeing it largely through the eyes of two female characters, Makana and Ntsikan, real life prophets at war for the soul of the Black Nation. A modern perspective is added drawing parallels between leaders of the present day, like Nelson Mandela and Bishop Tutu, and those of the past like Makana and Ntsikana, but by the conflict of two contemporary characters, Zodwa and Nora, actresses in a 'Black Consciousness musical about Shaka and the Zulus'. A particular feature of the production is the use of the prophets' own works and music plus original songs and music by Sophie McGina who starred in and wrote the music for Poppie Nongena. The play is touring London, SWindon, Bristol, Brighton, Reading, Bridgewater, Newcastle, Darlington, Grantham, Barton-on-Humber and Coventry from October to December. Owing to the interest created by the show, the company is extending the tour. Please contact Michael Monaghan or Sarah Maddocks for further details on 01-435 3874.

THE GREAT WHITE HOPE

Tricycle Theatre presents a new play about the career of Jack Johnson who became the first heavyweight champion of the world in 1908. The play will run from 31st October to 7th December. Further information from Sally Lycett on 01-328-4732

MEMBERS NEEDED FOR THE COMMON THREAD

Six new collective members are needed for the Common Thread. We are aiming to produce a collection of writings by working class women. The work involves a commitment to a weekend meeting the first weekend of each month; fundraising; publicising the project; answering correspondence; public relations work and starting to organise reading of contributions in December. Energy and commitment are more important than formal skills. You don't have to be a writer to be in the group. We want the collective to represent the wide variety of working class lives. If you are interested please contact Kate, 9, Bridge Ave. London W6 or Linda on 01-806 7096.

SEMINAR ON BLACK DANCE SATURDAY 16th NOVEMBER

Black Contemporary Dance in Britain is the second of two one-day seminars which will examine the various styles of contemporary dance in Britain including Afro-Caribbean and Asian influenced styles. The seminar will take place at THE CAVE, 516 Moseley, Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 9AH Tel: 021-440 3742. Speakers will include Corinne Bougaard, Carl Campbell and Hilary Carty. The cost of the seminar is £7.50 and includes tea and coffee as well as Caribbean style lunch.

SWISS COTTAGE COMMUNITY PRESENT THE ERITREAN CULTURAL GROUP.

Performances take place at the Swiss Cottage Community Centre 19 Winchester Road, London NW3 3NR Tel: (01) 586 5272 on Friday 15th and Friday 22nd of November.

The CAVE Autumn Programme:

November –
 Friday 8th "All You Deserve" Temba Theatre Co. 7.30pm
 Tuesday 12th "Black Women Then and Now" – featuring Pepsi Poet and Dark-movers 7.30pm
 Friday 22nd "Black and Blue" – the Griot workshop with Levi Tafari a fusion of poetry and music 7.30pm
 Thursday 7th "Syvilla – They Dance to her Drum" Film portraying the life of a Black concert dancer 8.00pm
 Thursday 14th "Illusions" a film showing the conflicting realities for a Black woman taken for white in Hollywood because she is fair skinned 8.00pm
 Thursday 21 "Blood Ah Go Run" an account of 1981 which started with the tragic death of 13 young people in New Cross (Film) 8.00pm
 Thursday 28th "An Indian Story" – an enquiry into the suppression of human rights in the world's largest democracy (Film) 8.00pm

December –
 Friday 20th "In Other Words" from Trinidad Roi Kwabene – an Afro-Trinidadian poet also working with drumming and chanting plus Flaming Crescent 7.30pm
 Saturday 21st Leicester Afro-Caribbean Arts 8.00pm
 Tuesday 3rd Black Visual Arts Conference – a national one-day conference phone for details.
 Thursday 5th "Revolution on a Rice Bowl" can Third World countries solve food supply problems through the 'green revolution'? (Film) 8.00pm
 Thursday 12th "Rue cases Negres" – a film looking at the French Colonial presence in the Caribbean 8.00pm
 The cave also run many regular workshops in various forms of black dance, theatre, oral traditions, literature. For further details about the programme contact:
 THE CAVE, 516 Mosesly Road, Balsall Heath, B'ham Tel: 021 440 3742/0288/0388

AMANDLA; CULTURAL ENSEMBLE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Formed in Angola in the aftermath of the Soweto Uprising, this group of young artists fuses traditional and modern music and dance to reflect the rich cultural wealth of South Africa. November 4th they will perform at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Tel: (01) 928 3191
 November 5 and 6 the perform at The Albany Empire, Douglas Way, Deptford London Tel: 691 3333

UNHEARD WORDS; Women and Literature in Africa, the Arab World, Asia the Caribbean and Latin America (Allison and Busby £4.95)

UNHEARD WORDS is the first book to provide a basic introduction to the growing literary achievement of women in the third world. It contains a clear and useful introductory essay on each area plus an indepth interview with one writer. In addition each section starts with a list of proverbs, which present in compact form some of the problems women face. Unheard Words is edited by Mineke Schipper

SOL Y SOMBRA – A MAJOR SPANISH RETROSPECTIVE AT THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

Sol Y Sombra (Sun and Shade) is the most complete retrospective of Spanish cinema ever to be shown in an English-speaking country. 85 Spanish films will be shown in six seasons from October 1985 to December 1986. Spanish Directors, producers and critics will travel to London to discuss their films and the seasons will be documented by programme notes and a book on the Spanish Cinema since Franco. National Film Theatre, South Bank, London SE1 8XT Tel: 928 4114/437 4355 x 413 414

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The Association of London Black Artists

"Black Arts In London - What Next?" was the title of a workshop organised by African Dawn at Ujima Finsbury Park Project, at which the decision to set up a London-wide association of black artists, groups and organisations was made. A number of follow-up meetings have taken place since, an Interim Committee of black artists and representatives from groups and organisations formed, and a draft constitution drawn up. The association would have three primary functions:

- to develop critical and aesthetic perspectives
- to act as a properly mandated campaign body
- to provide opportunities for collaboration and facilitate skill and resource sharing.

An open meeting to which all London-based black artists groups and organisations are invited, will be held on November 15th 7.00pm at CEDDO Film and Video Workshop Former Seven Sisters School, Seaford Road London N15 5EU.

For further details contact: Karin Woodley (MAAS) (01) 286 1854; Kwesi Owusu (African Dawn) (01) 240 9850

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LEWISHAM THEATRE is to be made available to anyone who can raise funds for the Ethiopia Appeal. Contact the Public Relations Unit, Lewisham Town Hall, London SE6 Tel: 690 8236 (24 Hour Service (01) 690 4343)

THE HEART OF THE RACE : BLACK WOMEN'S LIVES IN BRITAIN by Beverly Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scaffa (Virago Press £4.50)

The Heart of the Race records what life is like for Black women in Britain. Grandmothers talk of being drawn to the 'mother country' in the 1950s young girls describe their schooling, working women tell of their commitments to their families, jobs, communities.



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