

Cultivated Colonies: Notes on Queer Nationhood and the Erotic Image

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RÉSUMÉ

LE CONCEPT DE NATIONALITÉ A REFAIT SURFACE DANS LE DISCOURS POLITIQUE GAI, ET PLUS RÉCEMMENT À TRAVERS L'APPROPRIATION DE L'ÉPITHÈTE "QUEER". SE BASANT EN PARTICULIER SUR LES TRADITIONS HISTORIQUES TRANSNATIONALES DES IMAGES ÉROTIQUES EN PHOTOGRAPHIE ET EN CINÉMATOGRAPHIE, QUI ONT SOUVENT ÉVOLUÉ EN CONTRABANDE À L'INTÉRIEUR DE L'ÉTAT NATION MODERNE, CE TEXTE EXAMINE LA PERTINENCE DU CONCEPT DE NATIONALITÉ DANS L'IMAGINAIRE SUBCULTUREL DES COLLECTIVITÉS GAIES. DEUX TRADITIONS DANS LA REPRÉSENTATION DE CES COLLECTIVITÉS SONT DISTINGUÉES, ET DISSÉQUÉES: CELLE DE "L'AILLEURS", UNE SENSIBILITÉ COSMOPOLITE MINORISANTE CONSTRUITE SUR DES DYNAMIQUES UTOPIQUES DE DIFFÉRENCE, ET CELLE DU "PARTOUT", UN ORDRE DU JOUR IDÉOLOGIQUE DE RESSEMBLANCE UNIVERSALISANTE. QUELQUES RÉFLEXIONS SUR LE RÔLE MODERNE DES IMAGES ÉROTIQUES EN TANT QUE MONNAIE NATIONALE DE L'ÉCONOMIE MASCULINE GAIE SONT SUIVIES D'ANALOGIES PAR RAPPORT À LA PROBLÉMATIQUE DE L'EXPRESSION CULTURELLE CANADIENNE. SI LE CONCEPT DE NATION S'AVÈRE UTILE POUR COMPRENDRE CERTAINES DYNAMIQUES COLLECTIVES DE L'IMAGINAIRE DU DÉSIR GAI, CE CONCEPT DEMEURE PLUS PERTINENT DANS UNE ACCEPTION MÉTAPHORIQUE ET IDÉOLOGIQUE QUE SCIENTIFIQUE.

Part I "Image & Nation"

"... Ces descendants des Sodomistes, si nombreux qu'on peut leur appliquer l'autre verset de la Genèse: «Si quelqu'un peut compter la poussière de la terre, il pourra aussi compter cette postérité», se sont fixés sur toute la terre, ils ont eu accès à toutes les professions, et entrent si bien dans les clubs les plus fermés que, quand un sodomiste n'y est pas admis, les boules noires y sont en majorité celles de sodomistes, mais qui ont soin d'incriminer la sodomie, ayant hérité le mensonge qui permit à leurs ancêtres de quitter la ville maudite. Il est possible qu'ils y retournent un jour. Certes ils forment dans tous les pays une colonie orientale, cultivée, musicienne, médisante, qui a des qualités charmantes et d'insupportables défauts ..."

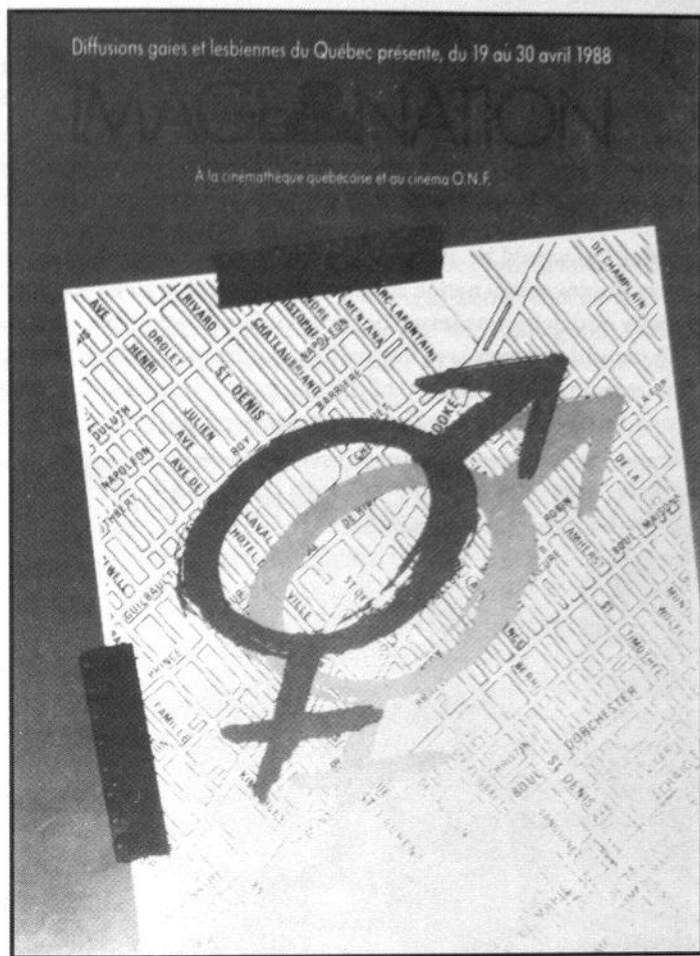
—Marcel Proust¹

These notes explore the concept of nationhood in relation to the fragmented but continuous histories of (homo-)erotic subcultures that I have been researching for my book-in-progress, *Hard to Imagine: The History of Gay Male Erotic Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall*. I originally offered these ruminations as a plenary lecture at the Film Studies Association of Canada conference on the theme of "Nationhood" (held ominously in Charlottetown in 1992.) Based on several dozen slides and film excerpts from the period of approximately 1900 to 1969, I was one among several considering sexuality and nationality as overlapping matrices of culture, politics and identity. A slide and film lecture organized around clusters of primary visual materials from archival sources cannot easily be pressed into linear article form. But these notes, together with the small number of illustrations possible, can hopefully point to some of the issues of reconstructing a cultural history of gay collectivities from visual artifacts with seemingly little in common but their illicit status, their erotic vocation and their mostly anonymous authorship.

Exhibit 1: Two catalogue covers for "Image & Nation", our annual Montreal lesbian and gay film and video festival. (Figures 1 & 2) The festival title, a graceful bilingual pun, evokes both representation and identity, twin cruxes of our minority politics. It also says, in both languages, "imagination", a concept that has become, thanks to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, the starting point for recent cultural theorizations of nationhood, nationality, and nationalism.²

The first cover, from 1988, offers as its illustration a map centering on the "Village de l'Est", the Montreal gay ghetto that emerged in the 1980s as the commercial hub of Québécois gay "culture". Three years

FIGURE 1



later the cover offered allegorical portraits of the presumed inhabitants of that village, collaged photos of a composite gay man and lesbian, not interacting with each other but both wittily incorporating signs of cultural, ethnic and sexual diversity within our "communities". These figures turned out to be so politically apt (if not politically correct—ageist and able-bodiedist as they are) that they now grace the cover of an international anthology on lesbian and gay film and video (edited jointly by a Toronto white gay man, a New York white lesbian and a British-Asian lesbian.)³

But what does the "nation" of the posters and the festival refer to, geography or demographics or both or neither? It certainly cannot mean the nation state defined by Anderson:

In the modern conception, state sovereignty is fully, flatly and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated community.⁴

This definition would be all the more inappropriate since for most of its history the sovereign nation state has been at war with its sodomites, whether by outlawing our sexual behaviours, invalidating our "families" through tax and property law, disqualifying us from "national" military service, or jamming our circuits of culture and communications—when it has not simply resorted to the prison, stake or gallows.⁵

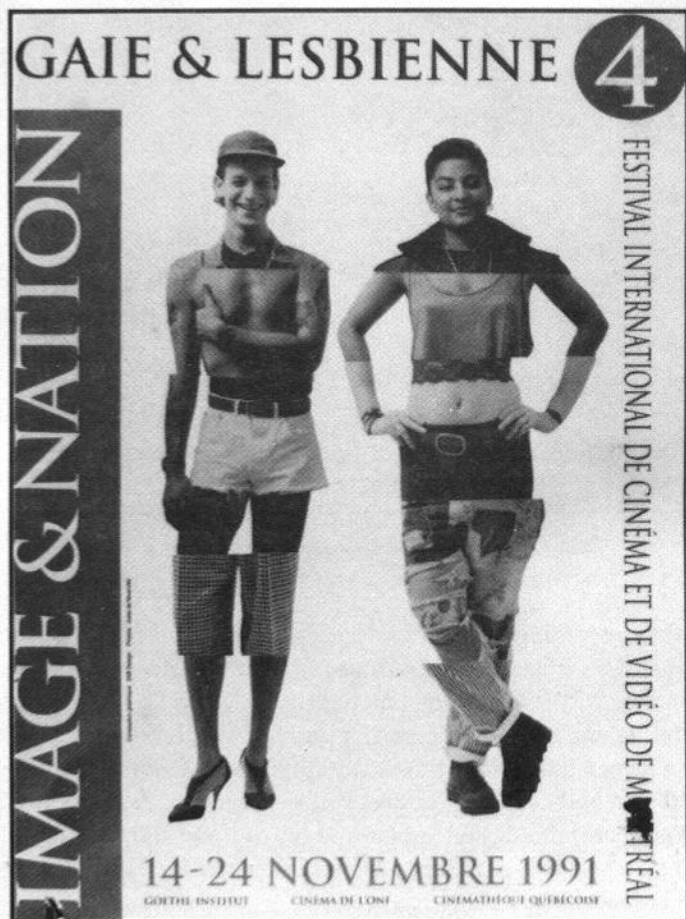


FIGURE 2

For this essay in particular, I dwell primarily on cultural texts that were historically in conflict with the nation state and its homophobic and erotophobic codes of indecency and obscenity, that is, "erotic" imagery from the century or so ending in that landmark year for North American queers, 1969.⁶ Throughout this period gay and lesbian cultural activities were deployed across, around and underneath the ever ineffectual borders of the sovereign nation state.

Few would argue that the "nation" of the Festival means either that geographical/cultural (but not sovereign) entity usually signified in Québécois nationalist rhetoric (although this ambiguous possibility doesn't hurt ticket sales in Montreal), or the commercial gay male ghetto of the Village, ground stamped by relatively few lesbians (although a global lesbian/gay village is perhaps suggested as a po-mo McLuhanesque update of Proust's network of sodomite colonies.) Even the idea of the "nation" as demographic collage is problematical, so uncomfortably close are these hieratic composites of micro-identities to the official mosaic of multi-cultural Ottawa and, ironically, Canadian Forces ads. Ultimately, though both maps and allegorical figures are common logos of nationhood, the exact meaning of "Image & Nation" remains conveniently fluid and blurred. Little taxonomical clarification is provided by the festival's selection of films and videos: an international, multi-cultural and eclectic mix of the marginal and the mainstream, the grainy and the slick, and, as far as history goes, the canonical and the reclaimed, with almost no overlap between lesbian and gay male programming, not to mention English and French.

The moniker "Image & Nation" may or may not have been influenced—as my own title *was*—by "Queer Nation". This New York City activist group, formed in the 1980s to revive lesbian/gay identity politics around homophobia and hate violence, was reacting against the perceived dilution of gay specificity within ACT UP-style AIDS coalitions. Since that time, "queer" has become the politically fashionable minority tag because of both its defiant reversal of ancient stigma and its umbrella inclusiveness across internal boundaries of sexual orientation and gender, both biological and cultural. The platform attached to the word is variously anti-assimilationist, transgressive, prescriptive, and in general seems to revive some of the anarchist rhetoric of early gay liberation ideology (when gay groups in New York, Paris and Montreal were called "fronts"). (For those of us in Academia who have spent the last generation convincing engineering deans to say the respectable phrase "lesbian and gay" without gasping, the advent of "Queer" is causing no end of trouble.) In any case, my appropriation

of "queer" for pre-1980s gay historiography in the North may seem unnecessarily polemical (a taunt, I hope, to the exclusivity, ahistoricity, dogmatism and even philistinism that sometimes enters the name games.) I may be more inclusive than the official usage of "queer" in trying it out retroactively and anachronistically, and in some cases interchangeably with "gay".⁷ But my usage of "queer" is also less inclusive since I am speaking primarily of gay male cultures: the lesbian and gay alliances of the last twenty-five years have usually been more the result of street-level tactics and legislative agendas than of the sharing of the "imaginary" erotic territory that is my topic, and in any case not all lesbians are happy with their inclusion under the rubric "queer" by any means.

"Queer Nation", eventually branchplanted to Toronto and Montreal (the latter as "Queer Nation *rose*"), was not the first to come up with the notion of a gay national identity. Way back in pre-Queer 1985, the Australian Dennis Altman, a principal ideologue of the international gay movement in the 1970s, wrote:

The past decade and a half has seen the creation of a gay and lesbian 'nation', much as the nineteenth century saw the creation of Czech and Romanian 'nations'. To be gay has taken on meanings that go far beyond sexual and affectional preference, binding us through a whole set of communal, religious, political and social activities with other gays.⁸

His predecessor, Harry Hay, chief ideologue of the homophile movement of the postwar generation, the Mattachine Society⁹ offered a different version, restoring the cultural terms omitted by the political scientist Altman, and offering somewhat more rhetoric than was present in either Altman's account or Proust's wry parable:

We have been a separate people, drifting together in parallel experience, not always conscious of each other ...yet recognizing one another by the eyelock when we did meet, down the hundred thousand years of our hag and faerie history...here and there as outcasts, here and there as spirit people who mysteriously survived close contact with violent nature forces, in service to the Great Mother—acting as messengers and interceders, shamans of both genders, priestesses and priests, imagemakers and prophets, mimes and rhapsodes, poets and playwrights, healers and nurturers, teachers and preachers, tinkers and tinkerers, searchers and researchers. And always almost all of them were visionaries, almost all of them were described from time to time as speaking in tongues and in voices other than their own—possessed, as it were; always almost all of

them were rebels, against the straitjackets of the hetero(sexual) conformities controlling and manipulating the given status quo—whatever the regimen and wherever the region. A separate people coming together—one by one—down the hundred thousand years of our journey.¹⁰

From the prose of social science journalism to the mysticism of radical faerieland, from the sense of a nation as socially constructed and historically observable to an essentialist trans-historical self-definition, the assumption of a distinct collectivity is common (certainly in relation to gay identities as they have evolved in the North). At the same time, two traditional ways of imagining this collectivity can be distinguished and cast in the following way: "Elsewhere", that is as a minoritizing cosmopolitan iconography built on utopian dynamics of difference; and "Everywhere", that is as an ideological agenda of universalizing sameness.

I will offer some thoughts and images on these two interlocking historical conceptions and practices of "queer nationhood", before looking at the modern role of erotic images as our "national" currency and then concluding by a specifically Canadian tie-in. Along the way, the metaphor of "nation" will be tested to determine its applicability to the collectivities constituted by the imagery of gay male desire.

Part II Elsewhere

...the relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation. To be the same is really boring...

—Michel Foucault¹¹

Exhibit 2: *Le ménage moderne du Mme Butterfly* (sic) is a classic stag film (clandestine hetero-erotic narrative film) made in France in the early 1920s.¹² To opera queens, the essential plot of the stag movie is familiar except for its happy ending ("So long girls, I'll drop in again next year.") and same-sex narrative twists: Butterfly, in Pinkerton's absence, engages in lesbian activity with her friend Soosooky; Pinkerton has a Japanese servant/fuck-buddy Pinh-Lhop who accommodates his naval master fore and aft, spies on the geishas for him, and masturbates voyeuristically behind an Oriental screen when Pinkerton, Butterfly and Soosooky do threesomes. Since the original French inter-titles and their American translations are both visible on the existing print, the spectator can also distinguish the cultivated and literary pretensions of

the original from the even more dirty-minded and racist American version. The film has a matter-of-factness about its same-sex content that is a relatively common occurrence in European materials but a serious taboo in North American ones. All the same, *Butterfly*, the opera and the stag, constitute a case study in how European high culture and illicit erotica are situated on the same colonialist continuum of the sexualized Other.

All Northern sexuality is quickened by the dream of Elsewhere and the Other, whether hetero or homo, whether the dream is simply intra-occidental (*Ilse She-Wolf of the SS*) or specifically orientalized. *Le Ménage moderne du Madame Butterfly*, this American version of the French retelling of an Italian opera based on a British play about American-Japanese economic, cultural and sexual "exchange", traffics busily in representations of the Other—stereotypes, idealizations, fetishizations, and layerings of national sexual mythologies.

When originally circulated, *Butterfly* the stag was no doubt appropriated by secret queers within an undifferentiated homosocial audience whose turn-on included the spectacle of sexual as well as cultural alterity. Now, a retroactive appropriation of the film as a kind of historical contraband allows a probing of the queer undercurrents within the homosocial institutions at play in the original story: the geisha milieu and the U.S. Navy. Within this appropriative reading, the Puccini lineup reorganizes, with the "boy" becoming the real tragicomic hero(ine) of the story. Pinh-Lhop, the only character engaging solely in same-sex activities, quadruply exoticized through class, race, age and sexual function, acquires the role of abandoned outsider previously performed by Butterfly, and her climactic *seppuku* aria becomes his frantic hidden self-pleasure. "Just a Japanese hand man," says the racist American intertitle, but the jokiness can't hide this uncomfortable convergence of narrative/sexual climax with an erratically shifting point of view. The "queer nation", then as now, has its own stories of internal imperial domination and disavowal.

Gay erotic dreams of Elsewhere and the Other may not always be so obscure in provenance or complex in iconography as the reappropriated *Madame Butterfly*. In the early, relatively more "innocent" period of Empire that is the focus of my research, and for the most visible and most privileged Euro-American gay subjects, gay exotic fantasy was often situated within a social order different not only in skin colour and cultural decor, but also specifically in its social organization of gender. For those subjects, situated within the heterosocial nuclear family and the industrial workplace, within the socio-sexual regime which had just identified and pathologized the "homosexual", one

perceived iconographical advantage of Southern societies was their pre-industrial codes of gender segregation and male supremacy, their perceived pastoral intimacy with a Nature that Northern societies had presumably left behind, and above all their ambiguity about the continuum of male friendship and male sexual exchange. This network of utopian male-male desire tied homosexual subjects of the industrial North to the homosocial Other of the Mediterranean littoral, the Islamic Orient, the Hispanic pedestal of the Americas, and the African diaspora: Taormina, Tangiers, Tijuana, Havana...Harlem. Of course, it must be repeated, this imagined community was unidirectional and knit by blunt economic and political power.

The dividing line between individual erotic fantasy and collective sexual utopias is seldom clear. Alongside the erotic fantasies of the exotic homosocial Other, queer collective histories have always invested ideologically in imagined homelands situated elsewhere in time and space. Slightly more historically minded than Proust or Harry Hay but equally in search of the justifications of Elsewhere, our 19th century intellectual ancestors made it through the Victorian era with scholarly and not-so-scholarly constructions of classical Athens (John Addington Symonds), the South Seas (Edward Carpenter), and the sensuous "Sotadic" zones of the "Orient" (Sir Richard Burton.) Our awakening twentieth century queer consciousness continued in a similar vein with its series of cultural and geographical meccas: Edwardian and Georgian Bloomsbury, Weimar Berlin, Greenwich Village of the 1950s, Copenhagen of the 60s, San Francisco of the 70s, Amsterdam of the 80s. In the cultural sphere, Elsewhere provided a continuous stream of havens for the gay male artist and intellectual: Herman Melville and Somerset Maugham went to Polynesia, Pierre Loti went to Turkey, E. M. Forster and J. R. Ackerley to India; the thirties saw F. W. Murnau in Tahiti, S. M. Eisenstein in Mexico, Sam Steward in Paris, Christopher Isherwood in Berlin, W. H. Auden and Federico García Lorca in Manhattan, Herbert List in Greece, Charles Henri Ford in Italy, Norman McLaren in ... Ottawa; after the War, Paul Bowles, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Claude Jutra, Joe Orton, Roland Barthes and Rainer Werner Fassbinder all came to North Africa, James Baldwin, Ned Rorem, Dirk Bogarde and Kenneth Anger to France; Pasolini took his restless camera through Palestine, Morocco, Turkey, India, Tanzania, Yemen, Eritrea, Iran, Nepal and the Middle Ages; Tobias Schneebaum found himself on the Amazon, Noel Coward in Jamaica, Michel Foucault in San Francisco, and Robert Mapplethorpe in the internal third worlds of New York City. Cultivated colonies indeed!

Elsewhere also became a tourist industry for the non-artist. Twentieth-century gay men became the roving travellers of the age. The descendants of the cosmopolitan sodomites whose Grand Tour included a stop in Sicily to buy homo postcards from Baron von Gloeden were now the ordinary middle-class tourists with disposable incomes. Our Montreal gay archives are full of beefcake photo trophies acquired by Canadians at every point in the itinerary: from the Riviera to Bangkok.¹³ (Figures 3 and 4) The gay traveller becomes the cross-border shopper par excellence, the smuggler. The commercial gay tourist guides, in existence since at least the fifties, provide the essential consumer rating for every place on the planet, the location of the underground, and the legal status of the traveller's sexual tastes, even the places where capital punishment is still enforced. Not that Libya and Iran are the only danger spots: Montreal bar raids have, since the fifties, routinely trapped traumatized gay tourists, from Vermont and New Delhi, in the crunch of local politics, often irredeemably damaging their lives in the process. The archives also house the travel scrapbooks, alternating postcards of nude statuary in Italian museums with cryptically autographed snapshots of students met on a Baltic beach. The gay traveller is also a pilgrim, coming to San Francisco to see the Castro, to Greenwich Village to see Sheridan Square, to Hollywood to see Judy's footprints in cement, to Washington to see the Quilt, stopping by Amsterdam to see the Pink Monument on the way, as eager bridegroom, to Denmark. He is finally an exile, a refugee, fleeing not only cultural supremacism like Baldwin, or state terrorism (as in last year's landmark Canadian cases of refugee status for gays from Argentina and the Middle East), but also from that totalitarian mini-state, the nuclear family, whether in Detroit or Caracas.

Working-class, minority or teenaged queers who lacked the economic power to travel in style took the Greyhound, enlisted, applied for scholarships, or, like Holly Woodlawn, hitchhiked and hustled her way to Times Square and beyond.¹⁴ What were the destinations of working class travellers, sparsely documented in our archives? a one-way-ticket to big-city anonymity, a new life and a new name, as with Woodlawn? or simply the body-building contest in the next state, the military tour of duty, the YMCA weekend, the bar over the border or the beach around the bend?

For those who stayed at home, movies offered a kind of sexual tourism in the cultural sphere. Much has already been made of gay audiences' special relationship with Hollywood.¹⁵ As for "foreign" films, festivals and arthouse exhibition in the postwar period expanded on a solid gay urban constituency. The scores of lesbian and gay film festivals

FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4



mushrooming in the last fifteen years have become in themselves one of our communities' most solid cultural institutions (it would be interesting to trace the influence of gays active within foreign/art film culture, like the late Richard Roud of the New York Film Festival, for example.) For gays of the modern period, exemplary cosmopolitans who became exemplary postmoderns, travelling is not only geographical but metaphorical, from underground to above-ground, between mainstream and ghetto, salon and slum, from one identity to another, from Puccini's Japan to Dorothy's Kansas, from Michelangelo's ceiling to Muscle Beach.

Needless to say, dreams of the Other and the Elsewhere obscure, compensate for, or otherwise answer the reality of the Same, the Here and the Now. As Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick says of Oscar Wilde's exoticist discourses in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the fantasy can involve both expression and camouflage, can be both "gay-affirming" and "gay-occluding":

the very patency of Wilde's gay-affirming and gay-occluding orientalism renders it difficult to turn back and see the outlines of the sexual body and the national body sketched by his occidentalism. With Orientalism so ready-to-hand a rubric for the relation to the Other, it is difficult to resist seeing the desired English body, on the other hand, as simply the domestic Same.¹⁶

Tourist meccas fit well in the closet, can coexist with domestic dynamics of difference that are never discussed; fantasy homelands are safer than lobbying for law reform, or getting arrested or blackmailed or coming out. As Sedgwick adds, the turn of the century saw the shift in the homoerotic sensibility away from the "classicizing pedagogic/pederastic relation" towards "a conception of male-male desire based on sameness."¹⁷ However, the image of sameness, "slim rose-gilt Dorian's inescapably narcissistic mirror-relation to his own figured body in the portrait" is as visually and dramatically static as a Bruce Weber photograph of blonde aristocrats at the swimming hole—"boring", to use Foucault's word. Exotic elsewhere can thus be seen as a replacement for the pederastic one, and other iconographic genres of difference also joined the struggle against the new regimes of sameness, most importantly class difference (Wilde and his "panthers", Pasolini and his ragazzi, Gus van Sant and his hustlers...) but also gender affinity (effeminacy, for example.)

Class often becomes the major dynamic of erotic fantasies of domestic homosocial institutions like the military, the school, the prison and the ranch, with the covert queer point of view of the outsider-insider

rendering them either proletarian-exotic or peer-group-familiar. Weber's Marky Mark with his uncouth working class aura takes over with a vengeance the crypto-queer male fashion iconography from the regime of sameness. In short, the Elsewhere is an essential structural component of difference in visual and dramatic representations of same-sex desire, compensating for genital symmetry within a culture anchored profoundly in sexual difference, but its domestic equivalent, class difference, sometimes exposes those faultlines of the present that the Exotic covers over.

What of the subjectivity of the Other in all of this? Silenced for generations, the Other increasingly talks back and looks back at the looker in the postcolonial era. If he often feels an erotic attraction that matches that with which he is seen, it is increasingly troubled and problematized. Filipino-American Dom Orejudas, a mail order physique artist of the 1950s and 60s who marketed graphics beefcake under the names of "Etienne" and "Stephen", enjoyed strangely displaced masochistic fantasies of the occidental bottom (Figure 5) as well as more innocent tableaux of intercultural power dynamics. The pain is rawer and less buried generations later, in the 1980s, when the ever recyclable *Butterfly* is overhauled, by postcolonial queer Asians this time, as David Henry Hwang's Broadway hit *M. Butterfly*. The queer Asian in the story, now a transvestite, dislodges the racism of the original, this time explicitly, smears its transgressions on the face of queer Europe, and overturns its internal hierarchies of narrative, power and desire.¹⁸

In film, a whole generation of third world and minority artists has joined Orejudas and *Butterfly* in the 1980s in coming back to taunt Pinkerton and his privileged descendants, to reverse the traffic from here to Elsewhere, to expose the illusory homogeneity of the queer nation. (Figure 6) The list would include the Filipinos Lino Brocka (*Macho Dancer*, 1988) and Nick Deocampo (*Revolution Happens Like Refrains in a Song*, 1988), the Caribbean-British Isaac Julien (*Looking for Langston*, 1989; *Young Soul Rebels*, 1991), the Asian-British Hanif Kureishi (*My Beautiful Laundrette*, 1985), the African-American Marlon Riggs (*Tongues Untied*, 1989), the Taiwanese Yu Kan-Ping (*The Outsiders*, 1986), the Argentine Manuel Puig (*Kiss of the Spider Woman*, 1985), the Brazilian Hector Babenco (*Pixote*, 1981), the Egyptian Youssef Chahine (*Alexandria Why?*, 1978; *Adieu Bonaparte*, 1985; *Alexandria, Again and Always*, 1990), and the Tunisian Nouri Bouzid (*Man of Ashes*, 1986.)

As for "art" photography, the African-British critic Kobena Mercer appropriates both the ambiguities and paradoxes of photographer Robert Mapplethorpe's figuring of African-American men—queer national

solidarity across racial lines in the face of the Right?—but at the same time underlines the blatant objectification and silencing of the Other.¹⁹ Postcolonial photographers such as Rotimi Fani-Kayode and Sunil Gupta join in the counter discourse. Most of these voices foreground, at least in part, sexual relations between the Northern white queer and the postcolonial subject, but it is a sexuality charged with conflict and anguish, as this excerpt from the poetic voice-track of Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* makes clear:

In California,
I learned the touch and taste of snow,
Cruising whiteboys I played out adolescent dreams
deferred.

(Lemme touch it/lemme taste it/lemme lick it/lemme suck it...)

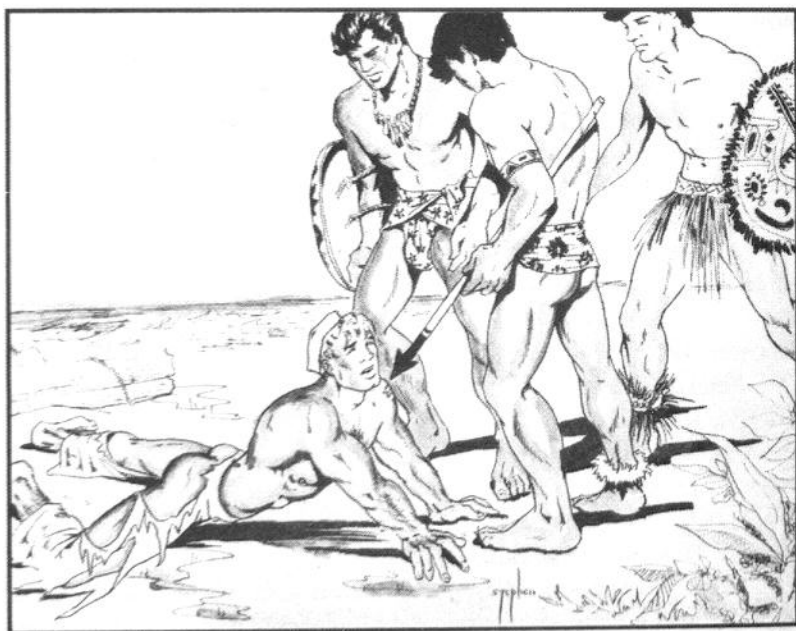


FIGURE 5

Maybe from time to time
a brother glanced my way.
I never noticed.
I was immersed in vanilla.
I savored this single flavor,
one deliberately not my own...

Searching I discovered something I didn't expect,
something decades of determined assimilation
could not blind me to:...

I was an alien, unseen, and seen, unwanted.
Here as in Hepzibah,
I was a nigga, still.

I quit the Castro
no longer my home, my mecca
and went in search of some place better.²⁰



FIGURE 6

The desire of *this* queer (third) national is more self-conscious, less innocent; it interrogates difference as well as being drawn to and repelled from it, less sure of labels and ideological agendas. Affirming the Other as the self and repudiating the Self as other, his voice is still somehow engaged in a discourse of Elsewhere, "in search of some place better." Yet, for all the urgency and sudden influence of these postcolonial voices, the corridors of communication are seldom intra-South, but seem always to have to pass through the metropolitan market, through the great gay vanilla mecca.

Part III Everywhere

Exhibit 3: *One To Many* (*sic*) is a 10-minute "physique movie" by Dick Fontaine, circulated via mail order around 1960 from his Los Angeles base. A bachelor's pad is presented with its occupant, a strapping young man of everyday glamour, lounging about in bikini briefs reading bodybuilding ("physique") magazines. Alas he is prevented from concentrating by a stream of late night callers, acquaintances who ring the bell one by one and ask if they can crash for the night—a couple of sailors, a Marine, an apparent cowboy (from Santa Monica Boulevard?). The hero assents and impatiently returns to his image consumption, while each house guest in turn showers—sometimes the traffic in the shower is so heavy that they have to double up. All the house-guests return to the living room, in 1950s posing straps for the most part, to wrestle a bit and lounge all over the place with magazines before collectively turning in. All the men are young, white and in decent shape, tattoos aplenty. The dénouement arrives with the original bachelor's roommate coming home from work: either a cop or a biker with cop accessories, he finds his pad "looks like a flophouse", and throws everyone out. The two "roommates" finally get their own joint turn in the shower in preparation for bed.

The cosmopolitan discourse of Elsewhere was minoritizing, the queer subject bypassing his isolation and fragmentation by looking abroad. Difference was named, categorized, rendered visible but safely filed away. A counter-discourse, concurrent and symbiotic with Elsewhere, but ultimately superseding it, goes in the opposite direction—no less utopian—towards the Everywhere, towards both universalization and invisibility. One commercial manifestation of this shift was the robust cottage industry in bodybuilding beefcake after the War, with Dick Fontaine at its centre when his film was made. This mail order traffic in photos, magazines and movies like *One to Many*, featured the mature athlete as pinup star, though sometimes as many models seem to have worked out at (of?) the Greyhound terminal as at the gym. His

iconography is one of ordinariness—the extrovert smile, the proud pectorals, the brushcut or Brylcreem ducktail and the aura of belonging. With Everywhere, the exotic Other now became the Same, Joe Barbell next door, not a matador or pearl fisher but a "bachelor" "physique enthusiast" with a "workout partner" or, better still—that other operative code of fifties gay culture—a "roommate".

Fontaine's 1950s private space, complete with hi-fi, becomes the privileged site of homo desire.²¹ Straight identified to the outside world, every man is now both the potential subject and object of erotic exchange. Dr. Kinsey made it official in 1948, at least for the 37% of adult white American males who experience some degree of same-sex contact sometime in their lives. Kinsey's sliding scale from one to six made homosexuality a matter of degree or momentary impulse rather than an exotic, exclusive label. With this dream of the Everywhere and the invisible Everyman, no wonder the postwar world was the heyday of McCarthyite queerbaiting paranoia.

With Everywhere, the earlier demographics of Elsewhere—cosmopolitan elites, bohemian avant-gardes, urban undergrounds and ghettos, networks of colonial male bonding—yielded to above-ground identities and cultures, civil rights aspirations and their democratic agendas of integration. *One to Many's* populist network of guys just want to read magazines and relax at home, invisibly integrated into the outside world, a bit like Ward Cleaver. And like the sitcom and all American populist dreams, the physique ideal papered over differentials of class, race and economic power—much more successfully than the images of Elsewhere.

The nerve centres of this international smut ring, as the cops and the media used to say, were the two fortresses of still criminalized sodomy, Britain and America. But physique studios thrived everywhere, from liberated Scandinavia, France, West Germany and Holland to Mexico, Brazil, and South Africa. In Canada, Toronto, Hamilton, Winnipeg and Vancouver all made their contributions, but it was wide-open Montreal that dominated the market with its half dozen studios. The Montreal outfit "Mark One" was so busy that it opened cross-border business addresses and promoted its French-Canadian models around the world.

The fantasy constructed by *One to Many*—the domestic rather than the cosmopolitan, the couple rather than the orgiasts tossed out into the night—was largely taken up by Post-Stonewall gay culture. The Everywhere rather than the Elsewhere is at the core of the populist realist aesthetics of the crossover festival film hits of the 1980s, *Taxi zum*

Klo, *Parting Glances*, Michel Tremblay's *Le Coeur découvert*, *Longtime Companion*, and *My Beautiful Laundrette*. All are updated renditions of Fontaine's 1950s nestfeathering fantasy—with the latter standing out from the group only insofar as an inter-racial couple join in a bittersweet updating of the British dream and a domesticized laundromat stands in for the warm lived-in apartments of the other films (all with active bathtubs and showers of course).

"We are everywhere!" went the territorial slogan of Gay Liberation in the seventies. In this sense, the analogy with the 19th century Czechs would be less apt than metaphors of diasporic dispersion and invisible infiltration. Zionism was pondered by Proust's self-loathing narrator as an option for sodomites (though eventually rejected because the malicious sodomites he knew lacked team spirit), but a whole list of new diasporic possibilities spins off, some with more camp in cheek than others: the Chinese secret self-defense society, the Tongs, proposed by William Burroughs seventy years after Proust?²² Freemasons? the Homintern?²³ an invisible network of Friends of Dorothy?²⁴ recognizable only by the eyelock, through gay-dar, by the pectorals?

Part IV The Image Currency

I'm not sure that we have to create our own culture. We have to create culture.

—Michel Foucault²⁵

Exhibit 4. *Chant d'amour*. Jean Genet's legendary 1950 film issues literally from the illicit underground of pre-Stonewall Europe and has now completed its peripatetic rise to queer scriptural status (quoted by everyone from Derek Jarman, Todd Haynes and the Québécois Michel Langlois to the latest generation of student filmmakers.)²⁶ Anticipating many of the themes I have been exploring, this open narrative follows horny prisoners compensating for their isolation through various devices of inter-communication, self-pleasuring and fantasy, all the while spied on by—and performing for—a sad, sadistic and repressed guard, no less horny.

Queer nationhood rises out of the text in a plethora of allegorical readings, with overtones of both Elsewhere and Everywhere. On a literal level, *Chant d'amour's* prisoners are all fixated on various elsewheres, whether the space of the next cell, the outside world or the world of fantasy. Furthermore, the erotic sensibility of the film is shaped by the exoticism of criminal and lumpen masculinity, especially from the point of view of its intended constituency, the queer Euro-American

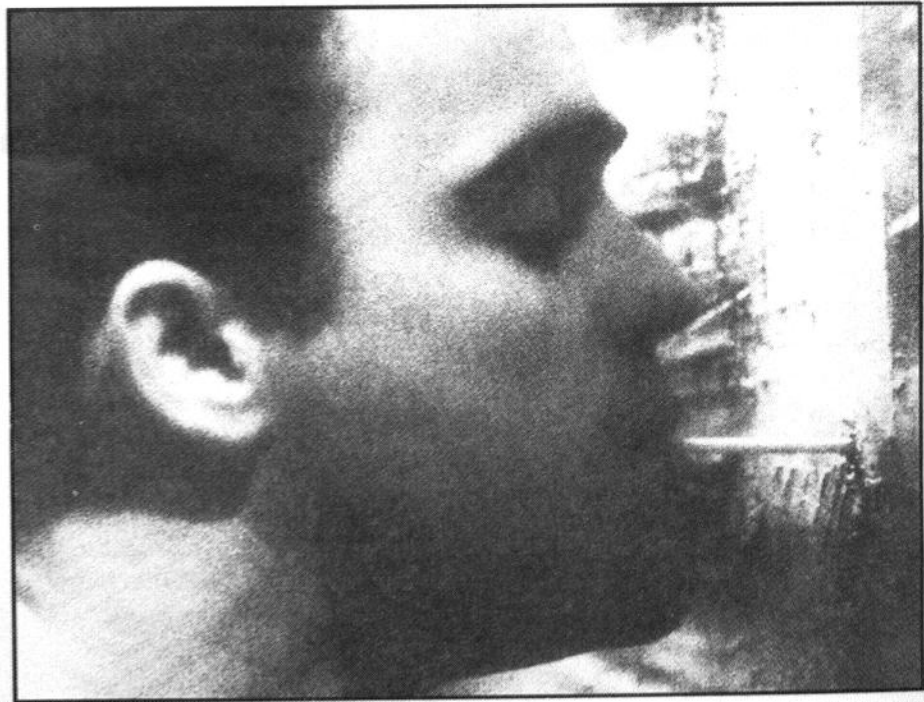
intelligentsia (Ned Rorem, American gay traveller-composer, saw the film "everyone" had been talking about in Paris in 1953, privately projected by another artist friend.)²⁷ The inclusion of two racial "others" within this communal bomber-crew portrait also enters into play, all the more so since they are seen at least in part through the eyes of the white uniformed authority figure, the guard: one of the two main characters whose dark, hirsute sensuality suggests his Mediterranean origins (the actor was a Tunisian butcher), and secondly a black minor character whose dervish-style dancing no doubt reflects his origins in a Paris nightclub.

At the same time, *Chant d'amour* envisions Everywhere, in the sense that Genet's own personal knowledge of the prison milieu adds an insider documentary aura to this societal microcosm. Labels aside, every man participates in the sexual bonding of this homosocial community. A collectivity is constituted through a mystical simultaneity of desire; it is stitched through parallel editing, permeating the prison walls, dissolving barriers of sissy and trade and black and white, and even complicating power relationships between jailer and jailed.

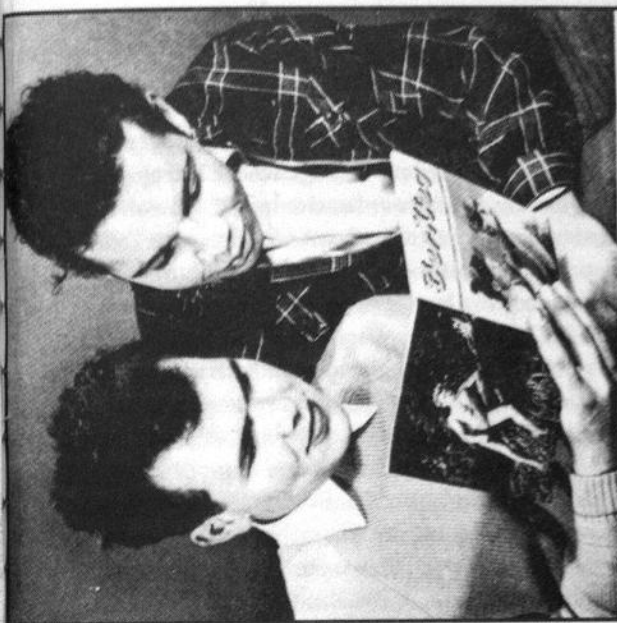
Most important for my purposes, *Chant d'amour* backs up Hay's stress on the multiple cultural vocations of the queer nation, from "imagemaker" to "rhapsode" and "tinkerer". The hoary stereotype of the sensitive artist nowhere in sight,²⁸ the film seems, nonetheless, to dramatize the urgency of cultural reproduction and visualization within social networks that are both invisible and unshaped by any common socialization. "Imagemakers" admittedly do not appear in the film in the literal sense since the only "image" within Genet's narrative universe is one prisoner's bicep tattoo of a female figure, which turns out to be both his badge of "trade" status and a partner for his onanistic waltz. Yet the film is replete with symbolic representations and activities of other kinds. On a primary level, it is usually recognized that communal bonding is articulated through the power relations of seeing and being seen that run through the film, suggestive in both their Foucauldian and Freudian sense. But it is also expressed through cultural forms, through the production, reading and sharing of representation: firstly, through each prisoner's dances and other erotic performances in the isolation of his cell, presented for the guard and in tandem with the other prisoners; secondly, through an erotic fantasy of sylvan dalliance apparently shared clairvoyantly by the tattooed and Tunisian prisoners; thirdly, intermittently, through Genet's constellation of phallic icons, a) the flowers, devoured together in the "chiaroscuro" strand of the narrative and swung repeatedly from from one cell

window to the next, finally to reach the grasp of the beloved's hand; b) the sadistic gun placed by the guard in the mouth of the Tunisian; and lastly c) the straw through which the tattooed and the Tunisian prisoners share their exhaled cigarette smoke thanks to a chink in the artificial borders of the prison walls. All of these intradiegetic representations, whatever other resonances they have, are first and foremost cultural mechanisms for reaching out sexually and socially: the image as communal currency.

Genet's picture of the queer nation as producers and sharers of symbolic discourse can be drawn out even further.²⁹ The famous straw establishes the cultural and sexual link through its function as a primitive technology of communications. (Figure 7) The image of this fragile wand and its affect on the two men suggests metaphorically a technological process I have identified in my research into the development of gay cultural and erotic networks. I have already suggested how image-making technology was a response to social invisibility, but the transmission of the erotic image in particular throughout communities in which sexuality itself is the stigmatized and repressed common denominator was of devastating transformative import. (Figures 8, 9)



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FIGURES 9 & 8

Anderson has stressed the determining effect of various stages of communications technology on the gradual emergence of European national states, and striking analogies with *our* "nationhood" spin off.³⁰ Anderson's model of Christendom prior to the advent of print capitalism and the state is a starting point. Constituted through a sacral language (Latin) mediated to vernacular culture by networks of bilingual literati, Christendom was also bonded by visual languages, the prescription of a "universal" iconography and architecture interpreted locally in each instance, and no doubt reinforced by touring icons and relics. Here one is struck by parallels to early gay networks as I have cast them, with their coded postcards and magazines, their clandestine iconographies and interpretative strategies in relation to official culture, circulating through mediators conversant in both mainstream and minority codes. These networks being largely underground, they were too unorganized, sporadic and local (in the absence of a queer Rome) for above-ground queer nationhood to enter explicitly into public discourse: the well-thumbed obscene photo bought from under an overcoat sparks a knowledge of a continuum of producers, models and other image-consumers, but a knowledge that is seldom articulate. Anderson's major thesis about the era of print technology and literacy in Europe, and soon the newspaper, providing the necessary conditions for the rise of the modern "imagined community" of the nation state, also has its parallel. Modern above-ground queer political networks would only emerge *after* the period of unorganized image circulation yielded to organized media and systematic cultural exchange. It is very tempting to apply to surfacing queer collectivities in the era of mail order beefcake and the magazine Anderson's picture of the morning newspaper as a communal daily sacrament:

...each communicant [newspaper reader] is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion... What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned? At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life.³¹

Since the invention of photography then, the queer nation has had a privileged relationship with image technology. One way of looking at the transition from the pre-Stonewall underground to contemporary

gay cultural networks is one of the surfacing of these image cultures, from the straw of *Chant d'amour* to the magazine-strewn bachelor pad of *One to Many*. A nation of imagemakers and image-sharers emerged from clandestine generations as smugglers, hoarders and furtive prisoners to thrive, for better or worse, as merchandisers and consumers of mass media. In the evolution of a collectivity of queer image-sharers, each new "advance" in imagemaking technology triggered an analogous flurry of nation formation. The advent of self-developing polaroid photography, for example, was a critical milestone at the very peak of the McCarthyite repression—finally an escape from censorship by that bedfellow of the state, the multi-national photo-processing cartel. Similarly, decades later, it might be argued, home video arrived just in time to help us survive the Reagan/Thatcher/Mulroney era. Recently, satellite TV and especially computer networks have sparked technoteological claims that the increasingly porous borders of the state are gone forever: even Beijing can no longer deny queer stirrings within the heart of its territory.

Yet does technology provide all the communal tools necessary for producing, reading and sharing our national imageries? Does it dispense with the pre-technological communications apparatus, the fabric of oral culture which includes but is not limited to the unjustly demeaned activity of gossip? How exactly did "everyone" know that *The Wizard of Oz* was a cult movie, or that the YMCA was an international queer caravanserai, or that this park was cruisy, or that night crawling with cops?? Gossip provided the image-sharer with production tips ("That model is TBH."³²), circulation tips ("Here's how to make an inexpensive dupe in your own makeshift darkroom,") and interpretative strategies ("That treeborne wanker in this dim image is *really* James Dean!"). Could technology alone allow for the irrepressible pleasures of linguistic code games or of the longwinded queer-spotting lists that have sprouted throughout these notes?

Here Anderson's interest in the nation-forming function of "gossip" is once again of direct relevance. Citing the description in the first Filipino novel written in the vernacular of

news [that] coursed like an electric shock through the community of parasites, spongers, and gatecrashers whom God, in His infinite goodness, created, and so tenderly multiplies in Manila,

Anderson notes

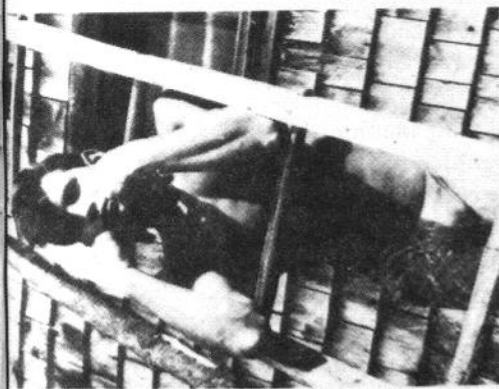
that right from the start the image (wholly new to Filipino writing) of a dinner-party being discussed by hundreds of unnamed people, who do not know each other, in quite different parts of Manila, in a particular month of a particular decade, immediately conjures up the imagined community.³³

The echoes of the life-critical role of gossip on the traditional gay underground are no less immediate. As José Sarria proudly asserts "Tell a queen and you tell the world."³⁴ At least you tell the "nation." Ultimately, queer image-sharing must be characterized by the complementary co-existence of different levels of cultural technology, with the primordial role of oral culture never losing its force: along with the straw there is the tapping on the prison wall.

Part V Our Homo and Native Land

Exhibit 5: Shot by the Chicago physique studio Kris, an ad for black and white glossies of a trouserless Mountie of dubious authenticity, dated from the mid-to-late 60s, flashing a certain well-hung pleasure in the recent legalization of frontal male nudity in the U.S. mail order market. (Figure 10) Foucault may well have established that law and order is sexual—and *vice versa*—but the Mountie as pinup? Canadians, invisible to themselves even in their own movie theatres and TV channels, are accustomed to think of themselves as alienated, provincial and allegorical, but as exotic? In the 1960s, American hetero softcore king Russ Meyer saw the Mountie as a wimp in a tunic, unable to satisfy his nympho wife *Vixen*, but in the same decade a Montreal physique house was marketing sexy lumberjacks in New York (Figure 11), Mr. Canada was an American beefcake star (Figure 12), and Kris undressed the Mountie to discover the gay icon. The erotic folklore of men in uniforms has been around a long time, both queer and straight, but now that queers can officially wear the Canadian Forces uniform and Sikhs can wear the scarlet, complete with multi-cultural turban, the icon of the Canadian in uniform needs re-vamping.

Shortly after the making of *Chant d'amour*, our own version of Genet's sadistic guard, the Mounties, cleverly undertook to derail our fifth column threat to Canada's fragile security by manipulating our passwords. As our vigilant media revealed forty years after the fact, the RCMP, in cahoots with a Carleton University psychologist, developed a "fruit machine" for testing physiological responses of suspected queers to words like "circus", "blind", "sew", "bagpipes", "fish", "camp" and



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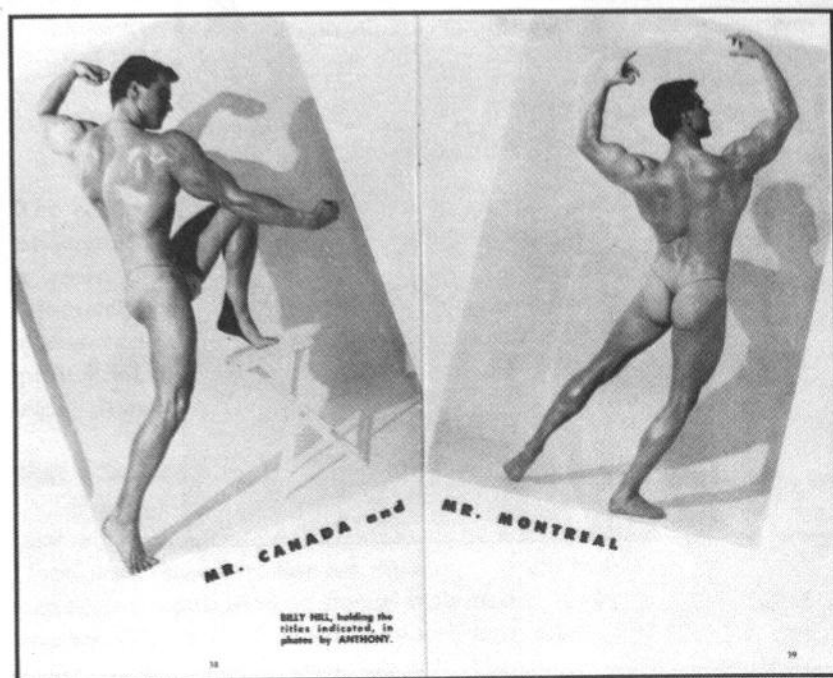
ROGER JALLE

Canadian Royal MOUNTIE

SET 101



FIGURE 12



"restaurant" (the latter two being the only ones that evoke a response from any queer nationals I have tried it on in the 1990s.) No doubt the Mounties were spurred on by American hysteria about the deviates they were rooting out of the State Department and British humiliation about their own nationals who had belonged to both Homintern and Comintern since the 1930s. The Mounties distinguished themselves from their imperial mentors only in the blundering inefficacy of their activities. Nevertheless this early official recognition of the queer nation through its subcultural forms is a chapter in a comic opera around the regulation of desire and the colonization of culture that somehow seems peculiarly Canadian. Was there a French list of fruit words too for bilingual and bicultural queer spies? Were "bagpipes" and "fish" aimed at a queer Nova Scotia espionage cell in the spirit of regional development?

This comic opera has been treated in detail by Gary Kinsman in a study called in fact *The Regulation of Desire*,³⁵ and it suffices here to suggest a few associations in the domain of cultural production and the image. If the bottomless Mountie is not yet a resonant image of Canadian culture, a tradition of bicultural heterosexual couples that operate allegorically as sexual images of Canadian "identity" may be

closer to "national" pulses. I am not referring to Joyce Wieland's or Marian Engels' images of women coupling with bears, sculptural and literary respectively, nor to Pierre and Margaret, but to Canadian film. The series of films built around allegorical couples is surprisingly long, and ranges from the canonical to the crass: *Le chat dans le sac*, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, *Kamouraska* (in Quebec versions, symptomatically, the Anglo is often an American), *L'Ange et la femme* (Anglo as angel?), *Suzanne*, *The Far Shore*, *Gabrielle*, *Mother Tongue*, *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* (a lesbian variant with Anglo naïf and Franco sophisticate), *H* (Confederation as addictive, co-dependent, dysfunctional and fatal?), *Noces de papier* (Allophone replaces Anglo in this Québécois encounter with the postcolonial subject), even *The Black Robe* (colonization brings the missionary position to the savages), *Montréal vu par...* and *Gerda* (the *fédéraliste* elite brought down by allophone female desire?).

Yet for me, 1970s queer variants of the allegorical couple within our two cinemas are just as close to the mark: *Outrageous* (1978) and *Il était une fois dans l'Est* (1973). Both films posit a transvestite hairdresser as the standard-bearer of national identity (minus the bi-cultural consort) and translate national dilemmas of multiple identity into sexual symbologies, thereby setting up special intertexts between queerness and Canadian-ness. *Outrageous*'s drag queen Robin strives to make it in New York through impersonating American media stars, all the while nursing a schizophrenic refugee from the asylum whose child will be still-born; Hosanna, Robin's Montreal analogue in *Il était une fois dans l'Est* (and in Michel Tremblay's stage play named after her), strives to make it through impersonating Elizabeth Taylor on the Main, all the while supporting her traitorous do-nothing butch boy-friend Cuirette. The symbolic aptness seeped outside the text as *Outrageous*, directed by an expatriate queer traveller, burst into the Canadian cinematic canon and, even more importantly, into the box office only after making it, like Robin, in New York. Meanwhile *Il était une fois* edged out the heterosexual version of Montreal allegories, *Duddy Kravitz*, to represent Canada at Cannes in 1974, not without some homophobic criticism wondering whether queers could effectively "represent" the "national" sensibility for international film audiences.³⁶ (Not that our two national cinemas should be conflated for that decade nor any other, nor that "national" meant "Canadian" within the resolutely PQ framework of Tremblay's film: after all did Tremblay not say that he felt more oppressed as a Québécois than as a queer,³⁷ and was *Outrageous*'s cheery ebullience not in sharp contrast to the bitter downer of *Il était*?)

In any case, though both *Outrageous* and *Il était* were more preoccupied with the scars of sexual humiliation and the epidermises of identity than the celebration of community, pleasure and desire, they helped pave the way for the 1980s in which Canadian films and videos at the international festivals seemed not only preoccupied with sexuality—its political discourses and its emancipatory potential—but, as often as not, resolutely queer. American audiences could hardly believe that our national standard-bearers were so often queer filmmakers, state-financed to boot, from John Greyson to Léa Pool, while queer independent filmmakers and video artists like the Asian-Canadians Paul Wong, Midi Onodera and Richard Fung, stirred up by the desperate censorship fiascos of the rump Tories in Ontario, were overwhelming video festivals from Los Angeles to Venice. Even the straight 1980s festival and Genie hits, like *Le Déclin de l'Empire américain*, *Ninety Days* and Jean-Claude Lauzon's two features, and the not-so-straight ones, like *A Winter Tan*, *The Wars*, *Mothers Meat Freud's Flesh* and *The Adjuster* had sex obsessively and deliriously on their minds—they were not erotic nor about pleasure, to be sure, but were all caught up in a peculiarly Canadian discursive excess around sex.

Meanwhile, with the fall of the Big Blue (censorship) Machine in Queens Park, and the simultaneous burgeoning of the home video industry, Canada Customs branch of the Tory family state tried to outdo the fruit machine in detecting subversion, trying to plug the cross-border queer image leaks, single-handedly undertaking to stall the importation of pictures of anal penetration into our missionary-position land. Canadian lesbians and gays had long been raising the alarm on Canada Customs, but in the ominous wake of the Butler decision (we must be a nation if we have national community standards!), even the Civil Liberties associations are now waking from their long long naps.

Lecturing in Winnipeg once on the historic evolution of gay male erotic film, I was accused by a fellow dual national (Canadian and queer) of being a lackey of American imperialism. Taken aback, I hadn't ever thought that the two roles were incompatible nor that our tradition of being a net importer of queer images was necessarily non-Canadian. The recent prurient activities of Canada Customs and Project P promises that the two roles, Canadian nationalist and queer nationalist, will become increasingly intertwined and mutually exclusive at the same time, and the ludicrous epic of the Canadian struggle over (queer) sex will continue unabated.

Part VI Nation as Metaphor

In this paper, I started out exploring the sexual as national, but have ended up, within Canadian film/video culture at least, with the national as sexual as well. To what extent is cultural and economic colonialism experienced like sexual marginalization? No doubt the Canadian and the queer find themselves in many of the same postmodern quandaries, twin hairdressers in anguish over whether they want stardom or love. Both collectivities are engaged in an imaginary bonding consolidated and undermined by the same communications systems, both caught up in an addictive cycle of simultaneously importing images for consumption and exporting images for colonial legitimation, both tearing down and setting up "national" image borders at the same time. For both queer and Canadian, imagined communities are representational battlefields of multiple identities, the traumas of invisibility and marginality, and the internal abuse of power.

I have also ended up, quite predictably, with an overall sense of inadequacy of the terms of nationhood as a grid for dealing with both queerness and Canadianness. Does Canada's legal status as "nation" really ensure us any more or less validity to our imagined community than queers' own extra-legal cultural dynamics of community formation? And as for the metaphor of queer nation, is the violence required to yoke together a historical mosaic of subcultures, intercultural and multi-cultural, image-producers, image-smugglers and image-sharers, travellers and prisoners, under the essentialist rubric of nationhood really worth the effort? No, yes and maybe.

Proust's, Altman's and Hay's queer nations, whether ancient or contemporary, were obviously less queer and less national than claimed, reflecting both imperial subjectivity and postcolonial redress, and finding metaphoric commonality only when dictated by the strategic collective or personal imperative of the moment. With all three authors referring to the nation as people, real or mythological, "*Image & Nation*" '91 was seemingly onto something with its allegorical figures, and my construction of the "nation" has been as historical subjects as well. But what about the map of "*Image & Nation*" '88? The map may have been of genuine urban real estate, but the territories/spaces conjured up in these notes and in the "exhibits" I have presented have been largely metaphoric. Anderson's "imagined communities" too involve historical people living in metaphoric territories. The usefulness of an image, whether the metaphor of nation or the black and white imprint of queer desire, is determined by the process of translating metaphor into

historical space for the historical subject, by whether the idea of "nation" is used to deny history or understand and transform it.

Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore. Where are we? Where are you from? Where are you between?³⁸ We're here, we're queer, get used to it. (Pace Frye), where is here? Where is queer? Elsewhere, Everywhere, Japan, Athens, ghettos, villages, undergrounds, diasporas, borders, closets, prisons, utopias, meccas, homelands, nations, Oz... Sodom. *Il est possible qu'ils y retournent un jour.*

NOTES

1. *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Vol. V, *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 35-36. ("...These descendants of the Sodomites, so numerous that we may apply to them that other verse of Genesis: 'If a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered,' have established themselves throughout the entire world; they have had access to every profession and are so readily admitted into the most exclusive clubs that, whenever a Sodomite fails to secure election, the black balls are for the most part cast by other Sodomites, who make a point of condemning sodomy, having inherited the mendacity that enabled their ancestors to escape from the accursed city. It is possible that they may return there one day. Certainly they form in every land an oriental colony, cultured, musical, malicious, which has charming qualities and intolerable defects...." Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncreiff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Vintage, 1983), vol. 2, "The Cities of the Plains," 655.)
2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London & New York: Verso, 1991).
3. Martha Gever, John Greyson, and Pratibha Parmar, eds., *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 1993).
4. Anderson, 19.
5. Yet the alignment of the modern nation state with the so-called nuclear family—whether we are talking about the U.S. Republicans' fixation on "family values", the Canadian Tories' "family" lobby or the U.K. Clause 28 disallowing the promotion of gay and lesbian "pretended families"—has in fact a history as short as the concepts of "homosexual" and "heterosexual" themselves.
6. 1969 was the year of the Canadian decriminalization of [certain more respectable kinds of] sodomy and the watershed American uprising known as Stonewall (not to mention the death of Judy Garland the same month).
7. Historians of minorities who update the preferred self-designation every generation don't have it easy. Gay historiography has to choose a comfortable place somewhere between the extremes of John Boswell's provocatively anachronistic subtitle (*Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*,

in *Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) and say, the temptation of sensitive historians of the African diaspora in North America, who use different nomenclature for every generation, from "coloured" to "Negroes" to "Blacks" to "African-Americans", etc.

8. Dennis Altman, "What Price Gay Nationalism," in Mark Thompson, ed., *Gay Spirit: Myth and Meaning* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 19.
9. According to Harry Hay, the Mattachine Society was named after a French medieval-Renaissance society: "These societies, lifelong secret fraternities of unmarried townsmen who never performed in public unmasked, were dedicated to going out into the countryside and conducting dances and rituals during the Feast of Fools, at the Vernal Equinox. Sometimes these dance rituals, or masques, were peasant protests against oppression...." Interview with Jonathan Katz, in Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Crowell, 1976), 412-413.
10. Harry Hay, "A Separate People Whose Time Has Come," in Thompson, 279.
11. Bob Gallagher and Alexander Wilson, "Sex and the Politics of Identity: An Interview with Michel Foucault," in Thompson, 31.
12. Archives of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction, Indian University, Bloomington. The author has discussed same-sex stag films from this period at greater length in "Homeroetic Representation in the Stag Film 1920 - 1940: Imagining an Audience," *Wide Angle*, Vol. 14, No. 2: "Gay & Lesbian Production & Reception," 4-21. Is the stag's producer, apparently a prolific porno producer named Bernard Nathan, a queer national? Nathan, one of the few relatively known auteurs of the stag film, was fond of bisexual twists in the plot, especially when he himself played, as he is said to have done in this film, the insertive bisexual character. Let us say that he may have had dual citizenship and in any case queer nationality is often honorary and retroactive.
13. Collection of the *Archives gâies du Québec*.
14. Holly Woodlawn with Jeff Copeland, *A Low Life in High Heels: The Holly Woodlawn Story* (New York: Harper, 1992). In addition to the bestselling memoirs of Woodlawn, of working-class Puerto-Rican Jewish extraction, a classic source of working class and minority queer histories is the film *Word is Out* and its book version, Nancy Adair and Casey Adair, eds., *Word is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives* (New York: Delta, 1978), while three interesting recent contributions to the genre are Kevin Porter and Jeffrey Weeks, eds., *Between the Acts: Lives of Homosexual Men 1885-1967* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), James Gardiner, *A Class Apart: The Private Pictures of Montague Glover* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1992), and John Preston, ed., *Hometowns: Gay Men Write About Where they Belong* (New York: Penguin, 1992).
15. For example Richard Dyer on Judy Garland in *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: BFI, 1987), 141-194, and Boyd McDonald, *Cruising the Movies: A Sexual Guide to Oldies on TV* (New York: Gay Presses of New York, 1985).
16. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Nationalisms and Sexualities in the Age of Wilde," in Andrew Parker et al., eds., *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 241.

17. I have explored this shift as a passage from the ephebe to the muscleman in gay photographic and cinematic iconography in "Strength and Stealth: Watching and (Wanting) Turn-of-the-Century Strongmen," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1992), 1-21.
18. Marjorie Garber has analysed *M. Butterfly* in detail in *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Routledge, 1992) 234-266.
19. "Skin Head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary," in Bad Object-Choices, eds., *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 169-222.
20. Marlon T. Riggs, *Tongues Untied*, 1989.
21. It should not be construed that physique movies all participated in this agenda of Everywhere: an important concurrent tendency towards the Elsewhere was in symbiotic relation with movies like *One to Many*, as is suggested by titles like *Aztec Sacrifice*, *Sailor and the Natives*, etc.
22. William S. Burroughs, "Thoughts on a Gay State," in Thompson, 20-24.
23. According to Thompson, this witty appellation was coined by poet Harold Norse in 1939 and later appropriated by W. H. Auden, 4.
24. There are various theories about how and when the *Wizard of Oz* became a gay cult movie and sparked the tradition of this in-group self-designation, the latest wrinkle of which is Randy Shilts' report that U.S. naval intelligence on a 1980s queerhunt were looking for a woman named Dorothy for help with drawing up a list of suspects. *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Military* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).
25. Gallagher and Wilson, 29.
26. The most extensive analyses of the film are Richard Dyer, *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film* (London: Routledge, 1990), Chapter 2 "Shades of Genet," 47-101, and Jane Giles, *The Cinema of Jean Genet: "Un Chant d'amour"* (London: BFI, 1991).
27. Cited by Giles, 23. *The Paris and New York Diaries of Ned Rorem 1951-1961* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983), 118.
28. The author has traced a 75-year tradition of the queer artist figure in gay cinema in "The Third Body: Patterns in the Construction of the Subject in Gay Male Narrative Film," in Gever, Greyson and Parmar, eds.
29. I am grateful to Ross Higgins for his concept of "discourse sharers" in his social anthropological analysis of gay male urban cultures and communities of the 1950s, a helpful means of avoiding the dread reifying C-words: "Significant Locales: Gay Bar as Symbol, Discourse Site and Place to Meet," paper to the Canadian Sociological and Anthropological Association, Charlottetown, June 1992.
30. Anderson, 22ff, 37-46.
31. Anderson, 35-6.
32. "To Be Had", traditional British gay slang revealed by Gardiner, 52.
33. Anderson, p. 27, citing José Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* (1887).
34. José Sarria, "Children of Paradise: A Brief History of Queens," in Thompson, 49-68.
35. Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1987).

36. Jean Leduc, "La représentation d'un milieu donné, *Cinéma Québec*, Vol. 3, no. 6-7 (avril/mai 1974), 43-44.
37. Christian Bédard and Robert de Grosbois, "Tremblay Talks." *The Body Politic* (Toronto), No. 70 (February 1981), 25-27.
38. The essential postmodern question for James Clifford, whose article "Traveling Cultures" inspired some aspects of my model of the queer traveller. Lawrence Grossberg et al., eds., *Cultural Studies* (New York and London, 1992), 96-116.

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FIGURES AND CAPTIONS

1. "Image & Nation 1988": The *Village de l'Est*, queer nation as a neighbourhood map. The adjoining territories of two of the worlds of Michel Tremblay, the Red Light district of the "Main", and the francophone working-class Plateau Mont-Royal are thrown in for good measure.
2. "Image & Nation 1991": Queer nation as composite collages of micro-identities. Courtesy *Diffusions gaies et lesbiennes du Québec*. Graphic design by Zab Design, photos by Jules de Niverville.
3. Queer national as tourist: a Dutchman acquired this photo trophy in the mecca of Weimar Berlin in the 1920s. Courtesy Paul Snijders.
4. Queer national as tourist: a Montrealer acquired this photo in Havana in the 1950s. Courtesy *Archives gaies du Québec*.
5. Dom Orejudas's orientalist beefcake with a difference, or the occidental bottom, c. early 1960s. Courtesy Charles Renslow.
6. The postcolonial Other looks/talks back: the Asian-Canadian gay subject and a discursive backdrop of white beefcake. Still from videotape *Chinese Characters*, Richard Fung, Canada, 1986. Courtesy the artist.
7. Jean Genet's *Chant d'amour*, 1950: the straw as cultural technology.
8. Queer national as image-sharer: ad for *Der Weg*, major West German physique/gay magazine c. 1950s.
9. Queer national as image-producer: cover of *Freond*, West German physique/gay magazine, c. 1950s.
10. The Canadian as exotic: Kris's trouserless Mountie, c. 1967. Have queer nationals fetishized men in uniform, not only because of inextricable links to codes of masculinity and historical conditions of availability, but also because of the thrills of fifth column subversion? Envious of the queer mythology accumulated

by U.S. Marines and British Guardsmen, could and should Canadian queers mythologize their own multi-cultural, integrated peacekeepers? Courtesy Charles Renslow.

11. The Canadian as exotic: Desfossés, a spinoff of Montreal's thriving "Mark One" studio, was marketing sexy lumberjacks in the U.S. magazine *Muscleboy* in 1966.
12. Billy Hill, Mr. Canada, Canada's most stellar beefcake export in the early 1960s, ran a gym in Montreal's East End. Gossip, the pre-technological nerve system of the gay underground, had it that Mr. Canada was not above bi-cultural allegorical coupledom of his own, and his early death of a drug overdose added to his mythological stature. Photos by New York physique photographer Bob Anthony appeared in *MANual* (Washington), No. 13 (May 1960).



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