

2001

## Documentary photography/postmodern commodities

Allan Radich  
*Edith Cowan University*

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*Untitled, Korea.*

AR 2001.

**Documentary Photography/  
Postmodern Commodities.**

**Allan Radich**

**Faculty of Communications, Health and Science.**

**School of Communications and Multimedia.**

**Edith Cowan University.**

**November 2001.**

## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

## **Abstract**

This honours project is divided into two parts. Part one is the written thesis. Part two is the photographic component.

Part one discusses some of the practices and discourses associated with 'documentary' photography. Some documentary practices and discourses of the past can be seen to be culturally divisive. These practices and discourses were based on being, white, male and European. This ideology and its discursive modes are in conflict with contemporary photographic practices and the relevant social and cultural theories that define it. The thesis defines the discourses and practices of the modernist and postmodernist documentary photographer. It highlights the discursive modes and locates a common link. In the consumerist postmodern world, the image, whether it is modernist or postmodernist becomes a commodity.

Part two is a photographic book called 'roses'. The book component works with the notion of the 'commodity', forming a link with the written thesis.

*I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:*

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;*
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or*
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15/03/2002

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and curves, positioned to the right of the date.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge and thank a number of people for their help in this project.

I would like to thank my supervisor Norm Leslie for his help, his knowledge and his patience, all of which were greatly appreciated. These attributes were instrumental in helping me to form the final product.

Max Pam for his photo editing, Paul Godfrey and Mike Grey for their technical assistance and to my family and friends, dead or alive, for their unconditional love and support.

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### ***Part 2.***

***'roses' (Separate document)***



## **Introduction.**

The modern and the postmodern are culturally light years apart. The modernist past was white, homogenous, reserved and assumed cultural superiority. This assumed cultural elitism was represented in photography and through discursive practices. Conversely the postmodern is gregarious, embraces diversity and hybridity, or as Poster (cited Rowe, 1998, p.12) writes, "the postmodern world will be one of multiply realities". Photographically, postmodernism is eclectic, and rejects the past and assumed cultural elitism. Where the two cultures meet is in the commodification of the images. The aim of this thesis is find a common link between past and contemporary documentary photographic practices. I feel that in a postmodern consumerist society the common link between the practices and their respective discursive modes is that the end product is a commodity. The thesis is broken into four chapters, which I will briefly outline.

The first chapter examines various documentary photographic practices, their discursive modes, cultural history and the relevant discourses that define them. Although the history of photography is over 150 years old, I will mainly deal post 1970 when semiological analysis was applied to photographic documents and 'truth values' were acknowledged to be ambiguous. The term 'documentary' is a wide classification and at some stage most photographs can fall under that classification. According to Price (2000, p.74), John Grierson coined the term in 1926 when describing a type of 'naturalistic' cinema. Price (2000, p.75) also describes documentary as not possessing a unique style or method, a common definition is that documentary is linked to some type of social investigation.

My photographic component of the project was based in was East Asia – Japan, Hongkong and the Republic of South Korea. A documentary category to suit my photographic practice could be called ‘Tourist/travel Documentary’.

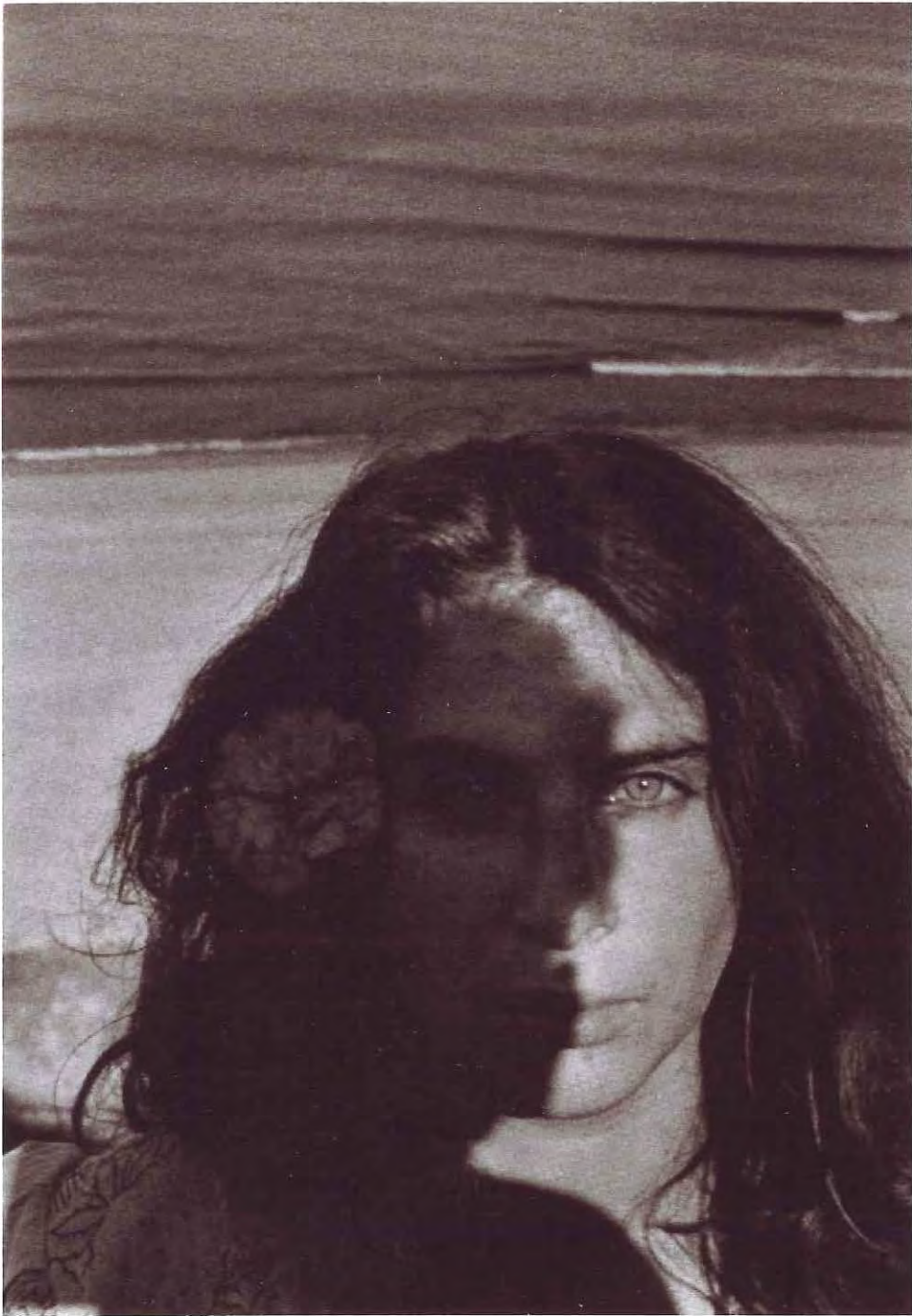
There has been a volatile history between Asia and Europe. This has been described as an East/West binary, where the West has not accepted the East as an equal partner. Due to this history there has been hegemonic, stereotypical photographic representation of the East, or anything non-Western. The terms ‘East’ and ‘West’ are not positions in geography but rather positions in power. With this definition, the region that I traveled in could be called ‘West’ rather than ‘East’, but to review hegemonic, stereotypical representation the second chapter explores post-colonial discourse.

Information technology dominates the post-modern world. Local, cable and satellite television and the World Wide Web are totally intertwined within our daily life. Mobile workforces and relatively cheap air travel allows for large-scale travel and tourism. The world is changing from the previously insular and homogenous, to the globalized - a hybridity of cultures and nationalities is forming. Cultural critics are acknowledging this, formulating new cultural and academic discourses. To acknowledge this change the third chapter explores globalization, hybridity and tourism.

We live in a capitalistic image saturated post-modern world. Advertising is an image-based industry, which has a purpose- to sell a product or commodity. The nature of some of this advertising, when portraying the people of the non-Western world is important, as

there is a tendency to evoke the cultural and colonial stereotype as an aid to the sale.

Stereotypical photographic representations of the other are sometimes used as a lure to sell newspapers. These photographs may be recycled into advertising or they may be hung on gallery walls as fine art and offered for sale. The final chapter explores the way the 'constructed other' is used in advertising and how that image is commodified. It also links the previous three chapters and helps to galvanize my aims and conclude.



*Mary, 1954*

**Robert Frank**

## **1. Documentary Photography**

## **1. Documentary Photography.**

The meaning of a photograph, like that of any other entity, is inevitably subject to cultural definition. The task here is to define and engage critically some thing we might call the 'photographic discourse'.  
(Sekuka, 1982, p.3)

For the past thirty years or possibly much longer there has been vigorous debate within photographic, cultural and academic spheres as to the validity of documentary photography, its practices and more specifically its 'truth value'. The debate centers on the premise that the photographer and viewer are not only dealing with the representations of people and vistas, but the signs, signifiers and connotations that are enclosed within the photographic frame. Both Burgin (1976) and Green (1985) write that the image is a document with an encoded message. How that image may be read or decoded relates to the viewer's cultural experiences and discursive practices. The interrelationship between the viewer, the image, the signs and inferred meanings with respect to power and language forms the basis of what Seluka calls the 'photographic discourse'.

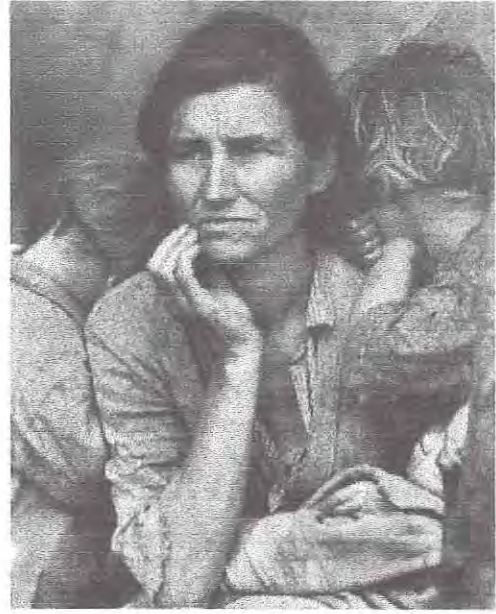
Hamilton (1997), when commenting on French Humanist documentary photography, defines documentary as discursively located between objective representation and subjective representation. Rather than two modes of photographic practice, Hamilton writes of the changes in the interpretation of the photographic document. Objective representation evoked a nineteenth century aesthetic and subjective representation acknowledged the changing cultural practices of the twentieth century and how this affected the production, reading and power of photographs within culture.

The concept of objective representation was based in early discourses on photography that stressed the 'infallibility' of science and technology over human sentiment and viewed the mechanical reproductive nature of the camera as the 'true and exact' rendition of the subject. This in turn gave legitimacy to the notion of the photographic document as proof or truth, so that the object portrayed by the lens was simply what it was, a person, a car or a glass jar. Subjective representation acknowledges that there are other processes at work especially that photography is a process of narration. As Coleman (cited Hamilton, 1997, p.84) writes, "we are becoming visually sophisticated enough as a culture to realize that photography is not a transcriptive process but a descriptive one".

According to Hamilton subjective representation requires a mediator to transmit the narrative. An example is a first person account whether it is written, filmed or constructed by photographic stills. It has a narrative quality that is personalized by the photographer or narrator. In a broad sense, you are to see what the photographer sees, to feel the same emotions as if you were there. It is regarded as personalized view of the event and acknowledges that documentary images are mediated by the decision making processes and choices of the individual photographer and these choices are influenced by cultural determinates. The American photographic social document 'The Farm Security Administration Project' is an example often cited. According to Daval (1982), the photographers selected for the project were encouraged to cover the events in their own way. This allowed for the production of a personalized narrative and highly emotive document.



**Figure 1.** Arthur Rothstein, *Son of a farmer in the dust bowl area, Oklahoma*, 1936, from Daval (1982).



**Figure 2.** Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California*, 1936, from Pultz (1995).

According to Hamilton subjective representation gained prominence during the 1930's and 1940's. The advent of smaller cameras produced faster and more intimate results and importantly gave the photojournalist freedom to travel. The popular photographic essay magazines of the day provided photojournalists with a large and ready market for their work. The subjective documentary probably reached its zenith in the 1950's and 1960's but the incoming television culture superceded the photographic magazines as news sources and popular entertainment. Consequently the magazines have faded from their former glory or folded altogether although they did regain some prominence during the Vietnam War. Nguyen Kong's photograph of a young girl seared by napalm and Eddie Adam's 'execution of a terrorist suspect' amongst many, many others haunted the public and the public reacted.



Figure 3. Nyugen Kong, *Misdirected fire bomb*, South 1972, South Vietnam, from Evans (1978).



Figure 4. Eddie Adams, *Execution of terrorist suspect*, 1968, South Vietnam, from Evans (1978).

So powerful were the documentary photographs of the Vietnam era that subsequent governments changed their policies of access to wars and battlefronts, limiting coverage only to what they felt was necessary for the public to view. This way only the information the governments wanted shown could be photographed or filmed, and consequently the public, via its opinions could be controlled. Jolly (1991), when commenting on the Gulf War states,

And the restriction on journalistic activity goes beyond mere censorship. Rather it is a bureaucratised [sic] management of images.... As outlined by Paul Virilio. 'It constitutes an expansion of the 'theatre of war' into domestic space and a direct and tactical enlistment of public opinion. It declares a state of emergency in the domain of images and suspends the sanctity of journalistic truth.' (p.20)

The narrative style of documentary photography is still practiced today and it forms the basis of modern photojournalism. Photographic agencies Magnum, Sygma and others are the prime examples. These agencies pride themselves in having a photographer at the site of conflicts so that they may relay their first hand experiences of that flash point or news item. But as Fulton (cited in Hamilton, 1997) points out,



the documentary nature of photographic journalism, whether for a newspaper, magazine or book, is essentially interpretative. The representations that the photographer produces are interpretations of the events and subjects that he or she chooses to place in front of the camera lens. However, they are assumed to have some 'truth value' in the sense that they allow the viewer privileged insight into the events they depict. (p.85)

Sarup (1996) explains that narrative is tied to identity with social and psychoanalytical ramifications. He claims narrative can never be totally complete as the author will narrate parts to keep a continuum, while omitting (censoring- self or authority) the parts he or she feels detracts from the total narrative. The narrative is also fixed in time and space and removal from that time and space can alter its context. He explores the relationship between identity and narrative, identifying two models, of which one, the traditional view is of use here. The traditional view identifies class, race and gender operating simultaneously to produce a fixed identity. The documentary photographer in the past has been predominantly white, Western and male or working for a Western agency that services the developed world. Despite their best intentions, they carry cultural baggage with them on their photographic expeditions, especially when dealing with the Third World. Vreoge (1988) notes, more often than not the gaze of the documentary photographer is pointed at the symptoms of a news event and not the cause. According to Jolly (1991), a possible cause is European imperialism. He goes on to state,

Many of the conflicts of world politics are the result of European imperialism. The concerned writers and photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have only followed in the footsteps of the Sahibs and Bwanas of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The spectacle of the Third World struggle is stripped from the strugglers within the same power structure as their raw materials were stripped before (and still are being stripped). (p.17)

The analysis of documentary photographs is very much dependant on context.

Fulton (cited in Hamilton, 1997, p.85) writes, “that while the photographer carefully constructs and frames his subject to ‘give testimony’ to the unfolding events, a ‘double construction occurs’.” The films are relayed back to the relevant agencies. Once back with the agency or news outlet the contact sheets are screened for the right shot or sequence of shots, possibly cropped and fixed with text or captions to suit the requirements of the ‘market’. This “gives the viewer/reader a complex representational construction.” [Hamilton (1997, p.86)]. The same photograph can be used in many different outlets, with differing captions and inferred meanings.

Barrett (1990, p.81) gives a simple example. Robert Doisneau’s photograph: ‘*At the Cafe, Chez Frayssse, Rue de Seine, Paris, 1958*’ has appeared in at least six different contexts, with or without differing texts and captions, (see figure 5). The photograph has been used in articles about cafes, prostitution and as an illustration for a temperance league. It has been mass printed for wall decorations and hung as an object of art in a museum. It has been used as the object of a speculative interpretation by photographic curator John Szarkowski and has served as an example in the reworking of context in Barrett and in this paper. Taken from its original place in time and space its meaning has become speculative, manipulated or just ambiguous.

According to Burgin (1976) another mode of representation can also be employed. This is called (twinning or the third effect and the use of contrast(s) within the frame. Twinning involves placing two photographs side by side or juxtaposed in a book or magazine. this often imparts new or ambiguous meaning to the photographs. The original context can be

enhanced or diminished by the opposing pair. A similar effect can take place within the frame of a photograph, where opposing actions or expressions can induce ambiguity or 'strangeness'. The Dianne Arbus photograph of identical twin girls is a famous example.



Figure 5. Robert Doisneau, *At the café, Chez Fraysse, Rue de Seine, Paris 1958*, from Barrat (1990).



Figure 6. Diane Arbus, *Identical Twins, Roselle, N.J., 1967*, from Arbus (1997).

Hamilton (1997) acknowledges this ambiguity in documentary and states,

far from being a mere recitation of visual facts, social documentary turns out to be mode of representation deeply coloured by ambiguities, and generally representative of the paradigm in which it has been constructed. (p.87)

Burgin goes on to state that all communication is carried out by a system of signs whether audible or visual and the photograph is a series of signs and messages encoded in the image. According to Price (2000) the single most important influence on documentary photography after 1970 was the use of semiological analysis, where photography was treated as text in order to investigate the sign systems encoded in the work. Price (2000) states,

the point of concern was not whether the work accurately revealed or reflected a pre-existing reality, but the way particular signifying systems impose order and created particular sets of meaning. Inscribed within the photograph, then was not some little likeness to reality, but a complex set of technical and cultural forms which needed to be decoded. Far from being innocent transactions of the real, photographs were treated as complex material objects with the ability to create, articulate and sustain meaning. (p.102)

The use of semiological analysis weakened the position of objective representation. As Price states the question is not the reflected reality but how those objects are reflected in systems of culture and what values are placed on them. Furthermore the objective 'truth value' can be seen to represent the systems of power/knowledge or the dominant culture. This leads to a commonly asked question: 'whose truth?' Michael Foucault (cited in Green, 1985) states,

truth is a thing of the world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish between true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (p.123)

'Truth values' can and do vary within our society, from culture to culture or between cultures. Furthermore Foucault states 'truth values' are related to power, or regimes of power so that the speaking position of the photographer is now in question especially when viewing photographs concerning class, race, gender or our colonial past. While objective representation has been shown as flawed, subjective representation may still marginalize the represented bodies in the photograph. Tagg, (cited in Price, 2000, p.96) questions the identity and motive of the photographer and viewer with respect to

positions of power. He and other cultural critics employ two terms: 'the spectacle' and 'surveillance'.

Surveillance may be described as any dominant culture or dominant echelon of society viewing the marginalized or the oppressed as a tool in their continued social, economic and political suppression while the spectacle is that representation. Surveillance as Green (1985, p.124) states, "is above all an exercise in hierarchical observation". Hall (1997) writes that marginalization not only takes place in the upper/lower class binary but within class or social boundaries. So that the spectacle may include stereotypical representations of minority groups and gender representations that are made within class or social boundaries.

The terms, 'the spectacle' and 'surveillance' are terms used in discussing power and can be found in the writings of Michael Foucault. According to Green (1985), Foucault sees power, not wielded by a particular dominant faction but embedded or internalized within systems of culture in a society. Power is exercised in all levels of a society through hegemonic truths and discursive practices. Price (2000), writing on Foucault states,

Power resides in all aspects of a knowledge system: in the construction of archives, the codification of information and the communication chains through which knowledge is disseminated... truth and power are also intertwined. Each society has constructed its own 'regimes of truth', elaborating frameworks, institutions and discourses which validate particular procedures. (p.107)

In the case of photography, some photographers have internalized stereotypical truths and reproduced them as conventional practice or possibly their societies' regimes of truth.

Documentary photography has problems with its initial premise: representing the real. So much so that according to Price and Hamilton the documenting of the 'common place', 'the ordinary' let alone the 'exotic' has become problematic. The photographer in his or her earnest endeavors to document the world and its problems only makes representations of themselves by noting and recording difference. For example, Seluka (cited in Barrett, 1990, p.134) claims that Eugene Smith's book *Minamata* may be seen as a journal of his compassion for the mercury poisoned people of Minamata rather than a photographic record of their struggle against a large corporate polluter.

Price adds, if documentary photography could not express the real without expressing one's identity, then the next stage of documentary photography simply acknowledged this phenomenon and used it to formulate new narratives in social and cultural politics. The new documentary became 'stage managed'. The photographer's identity with regard to subject and subject material was on full view. There was less ambiguity, if lesbian photographed lesbian, then identity and political motives were transparent and clear. The 'truth' became the political agenda with a direct approach rather through the 'impartial mediator'. Equally Turner (1987) states that some photo-journalists reflected this change, rather than being the impassive observer, photographers became increasingly political. Sebastiao Salgado, Giles Perres, Eugene Richards, Mary Ellen Mark, Susan Meiselas and others often displayed their social and political views. Working in the non-Western world they photographed social, economic and political situations or natural catastrophes with

political and social agendas in mind. This also reflected a school of photography based in liberal humanism and the Magnum Agency is the prime example.

Both Pultz (1995) and Hamilton (1997) call Sebastiao Salgado the role model for the 'committed photojournalist' in the liberal humanist tradition. Salgado photographs the poor, the disenfranchised and those unluckily caught in natural or man made disasters.



Figure 7. Sebastiao Salgado, *Refugees, Korem Camp, Ethiopia 1984*. From Salgado (1990), *Uncertain Grace*.

The people represented in the photographs live in the underdeveloped world. Brazilian by birth his work encompasses the Southern or Latin American countries, Africa and Asia. The themes of his work deal with the poor and disenfranchised. The landless in *Terra: Struggle for the Landless*; the diminishing use manual labour in *Workers: An Archeology of the Industrial Age* or *An Uncertain Grace* which chronicles

famine and drought in the 1980's that took place Latin America and Africa. The books carry introductory texts with simple notes explaining the context of the photographs and essays that reflect the monetary and social injustices that exist between the developed and underdeveloped worlds. The photographs are political and supported by text. They are photo-essays in the tradition of Eugene Smith and resemble the North American social photographic document *The Farm Administration Project* in narrative style. According to Coleman (1990), the photographs become part of exhibitions after they have out lived their purpose in the popular press.

Eugene Richards works in similar vein to Sebastiao Salgado but he is North American



Figure 8. Eugene Richards, *Untitled*, 1994, From Richards (1994), *Cocaine Blue, Cocaine True*.

and correspondingly sources much of his work there. As Salgado photographs the disenfranchised, the poor and the wretched in the Latin Americas, Richards does the same with the dispossessed in the North American cities and poverty stricken rural areas. These people are Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans and the



poverty stricken Caucasians but the difference is that they reside in the margins of the developed world.

In the middle to the late 1980's and onward documentary practice was again redefined. The prevailing commodity culture produced mountains of repetitive images used in advertising and commerce, any original context was blurred or lost. Mass use of video and film by the seemingly infinite number of television stations whether local, cable or satellite and the information laden World Wide Web again pressed the documentary photographers for their traditional space and the recreational time of the public. The public was saturated with images and more than likely now living in a 'smaller world' or the 'global village' became indifferent to the photo essay. Cable and the satellite gave instantaneous coverage to any world event and around the clock news stations were started. Another strand of documentary emerged, the postmodernist document.

The postmodern photographer questioned the validity of 'truth values' made on such a grand scale and the morality of working in cultures not of their own. They recognized that changing cultural theory and discourse was being reflected in documentary practice. They acknowledged that the 'truth' was partial and was imbedded in the systems of culture and power. What were once an all encompassing universal statements became identity based singulars reflecting only the truths that were known to them. They worked closely with the subject material they knew and were familiar with. The 'other' was not a non-Western exotic, or the poverty stricken, and what appeared to be catastrophe prone people of the under developed world. The 'other' lived in Western society and may have been drug dependant or enhanced, a terminally comatose alcoholic or a battered woman.

Directed and stage-managed with film like qualities, the other from within, came out. Although the levels of 'surveillance' may have diminished the 'spectacle of the other' remained and was often enhanced. Society's margins; women, homosexuals, the economically and politically disadvantaged amongst many others, added their voices to the mainstream. Intimate portrayals of friends and family became the new subject material.

Sally Mann is a good example of the schism between the modern and the postmodern.

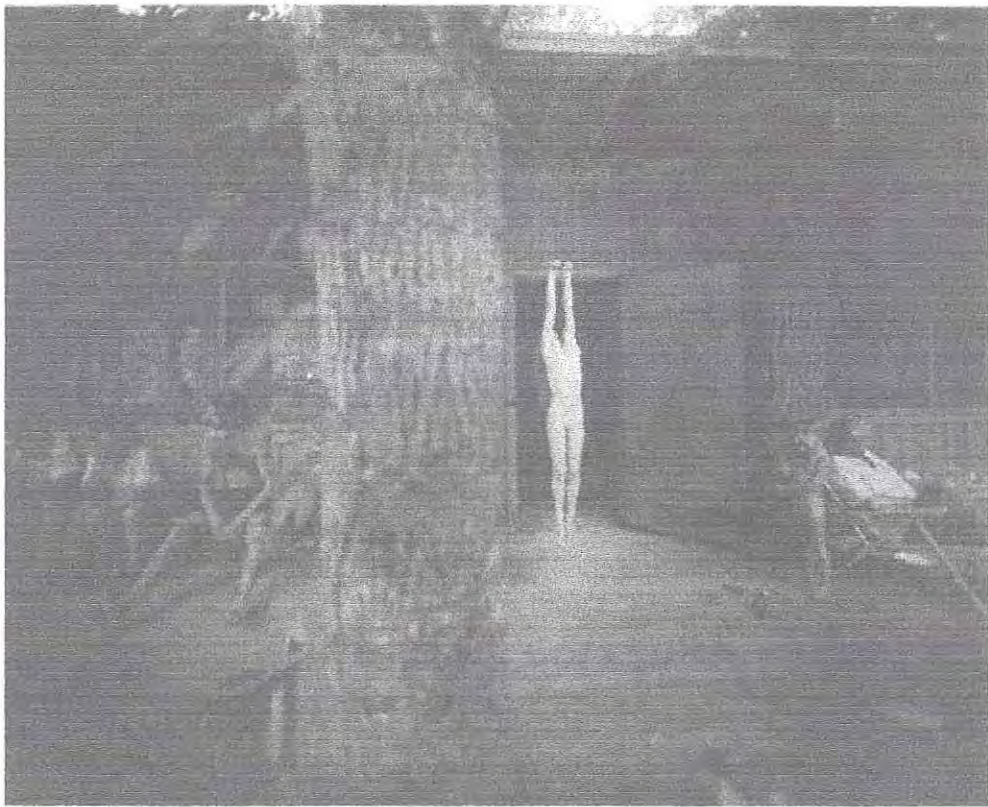


Figure 9. Sally Mann, *Hayhook*. From Mann (1992), *Immediate Family*

She studied and photographed child and adolescent sexuality within the confines of her family and home. Mann photographed her children as they approached pubescence but made no references to the world outside her immediate family. She photographed her

family in what appeared to be a photojournalistic narrative style. Although resembling candid reportage the photographs were carefully staged and taken with a view camera. Where the modernist was removed and detached in trying to find 'the truth', Mann is self-consciously involved and according to Putz (1990, p.145), Sally Mann's book *Immediate Family* "offers no privileged window onto any reality or truth, but rather is a staged exploration." Similarly Coleman (1990, p.150) states, "this body of work is not a critique of society; it's simply a door opening into one small corner of an alternative universe."

Although not similar in style or content Nobuyoshi Araki also acknowledges his personal involvement in his work. Nobuyoshi Araki is more known for his photographs of urban



Figure 10. Nobuyoshi Araki, *Restaurant Scene, Tokyo Story*. From *Oppositions... Netherlands*, (1990).

landscapes and erotica. His work is an autobiographical (sometimes real, sometimes fictitious) narrative based on his fetishes. Araki is included for his staged reportage rather than his erotic work, which would suffer at the hands of a Feminist critique. The book *'Tokyo Story'* is tame by his standards. Here the aspects of a large city, are displayed as aggression, change, eroticism, repressed sexuality and urban street life in stage-managed photographs, rather than a representation of the real, Araki invents the scene. Araki explains (cited Unknown, 1990, p.84) "*Tokyo Story* is not my daily life in present day Tokyo; it is rather the expression of my impermanence. All photographs are personal-scapes for me."

According to Barrett the dawn of the postmodern era saw a reappraisal of the past, or strictly speaking a rejection of the past with its strict moral aesthetics and cultural superiority when applied to art and popular culture. Some of the photographic and cultural practices of the past were based on assumed Western cultural superiority, where the West's regimes of truths constructed non-Western society as a cultural inferior and represented them as constructed stereotypes in photographic practice. Some of these practices will be explained in the next chapter.

Unlike the past, the postmodern represents diversity. Postmodernism is an umbrella of theories and discourses on culture and society that attempts to deal with a complex world busily engaged in living the life of mass consumerism. Poster (cited Rowe, 1998, p.12) writes, "the postmodern world will be one of multiply realities, little narratives, cyberorganisms and nonlinearities." Not all critics embrace postmodernism and

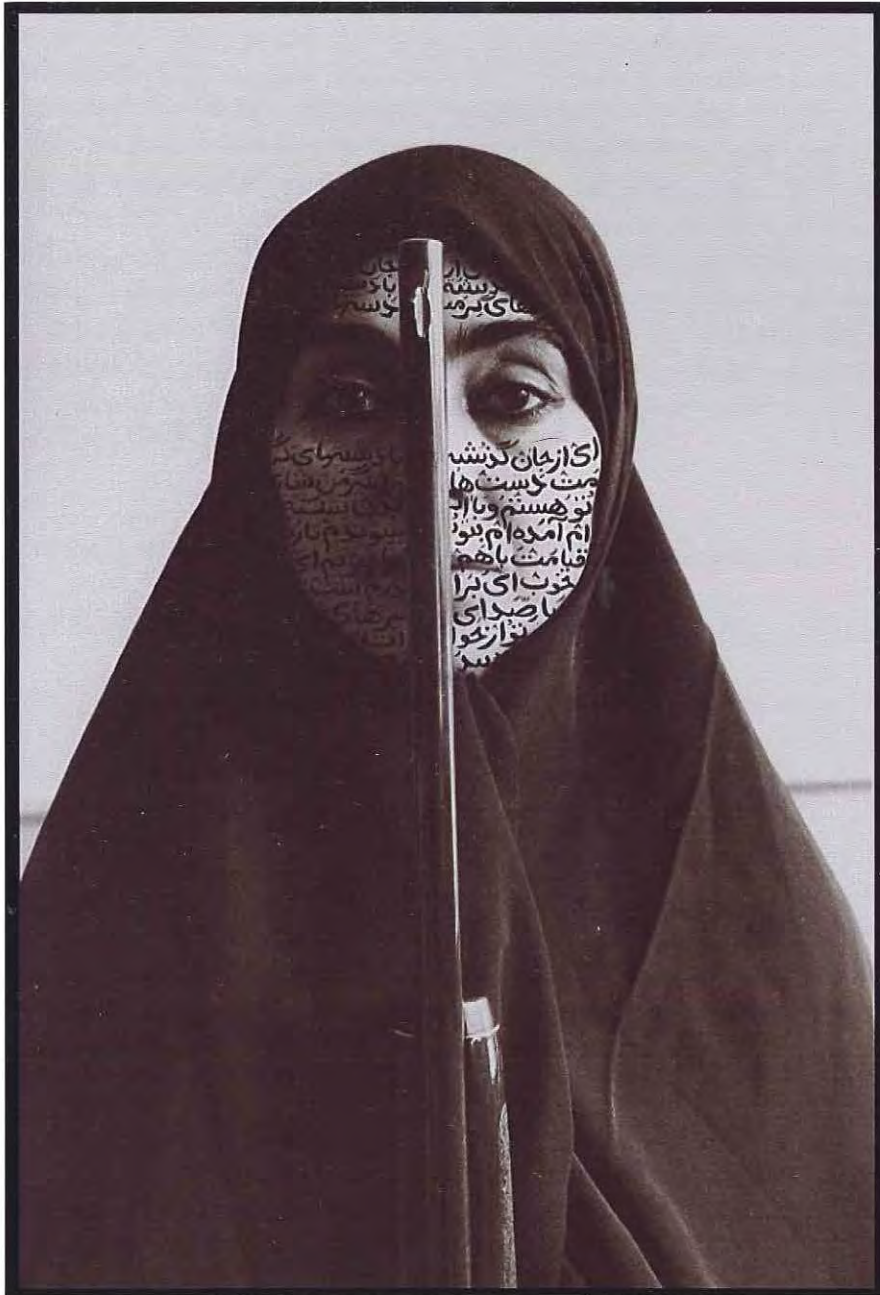
postmodern practices. Marxist realist photographer Allan Sekula (cited Barrett, 1990)

criticizes the postmodern as

'a cynical and self-referential mannerism' which he calls 'a chic vanguardism by artists who suffer from a very real isolation from larger social issues'. (p. 134)

On the other hand Barrett (1990) describes the postmodernist as

Those embracing postmodernist art generally recognize that art exemplifies the political, cultural, and psychological experience of a society; they are aware of and make reference to the previously hidden agendas of the market and its relation to museums, dealers, and critics; they are willing to borrow from the past; they have returned to the figurative in art; they embrace content over form, and they represent a plurality of styles. (p. 133)



*Untitled, from Women of Allah series 1997.*

**Shirin Neshat**

## **2. The Other and Post-Colonial Discourse**

## 2. The 'Other' and Post-Colonial Discourse.

'In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful....' the exordium, spoken with hands joined before him like a book, comforted part of him, made another, larger part feel uneasy – '....Praise be to Allah, Lord of Creation....' – but now Heidelberg invaded his head; here was Ingrid, briefly his Ingrid, her face scorning him for this Mecca turned parroting; here, their friends Oskar and Ilse Lubin the anarchists, mocking his prayer with their anti-ideologies – '.... The Compassionate, the Merciful, King of the Last Judgement!....' – Heidelberg, in which, along with medicine and politics, he learned that India – like radium had been 'discovered' by the Europeans; even Oskar was filled with admiration for Vasco da Gama, and this was what finally separated Aadam Aziz from his friends, this belief of theirs that he was somehow the invention of their ancestors.  
Rushdie, (1983, p. 11)

This chapter deals with the representation of the 'Other' when discussed in colonial and post-colonial discourses, or as Bhabha (1983, p.19) asks, 'what is that mode of representation?' The West has stereotyped the 'colonial other' along racial, religious, political, cultural or economic lines and in terms of gender and sexuality. Hall (1992) and Said (1991) state this is an on going set of historical constructions resulting in the perpetuation of the colonial stereotype as a hegemonic truth. This can be seen to be an application of Foucault's 'Power/Knowledge', where the regimes of truth are Western constructions and the colonial stereotype is a 'normalized' projection of that truth. Post-colonial studies critiques the power regimes placed by the Western colonial powers on to the subjected states or the colonized that resulted in the perpetuation of stereotypes that are still in use today. The seminal text on this process is Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

In the past the European known world was centered at Greece and accordingly maps showed Greece as the center of the world. What is important here is not what is portrayed

at the center, but what or who is portrayed or inferred at the edges. The map edges, in a mixture of fact and fantasy, represent the unknown, the mysterious, the forbidden, and the end of the known world. This is where the 'Other' lives. The 'Others' were represented, and still are as, mysterious, sensual, foreboding and dangerous; never to be fully trusted and definitely not civilized when compared to 'Western civilization'. Greece was a dominant power in the region and was often in conflict with the powers to the East and South. According to Said, how these people were to be portrayed became the initial repository to the 'archives' that the West has used in the stereotyping of the peoples of the East.

As Greece was the major power of its time, the West is the major power of today. Hall (1992) writes that the concept of the 'West' was formed, shaped and perpetuated by predominately the British, the French and in the latter half of the last century by the North Americans. Hall (1992, p.277) goes on to state, "the term 'Western' is used to describe a society: that is developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular and modern." The West or highly industrialized developed world also includes Australia and New Zealand and according to Hall, 'technologically' speaking Japan. The term West or Western is not a position in geography but a position of cultural, economic and political power.

According to Said (1991) the geographic locations of 'East' and 'West' are 'locational constructs' invented by the dominant Western European power structure. The East is the 'Other' and the opposite of the West. Where the West is deemed advanced, cultured,



noble, trustworthy, and are good God fearing Christians, the East is its complete opposite - backward, uncultured and barbaric, untrustworthy, dirty, lecherous and has a heretical religion as its spiritual base. There is also a sexual component involved, where the West has a secret sexual fascination for the East or its other and considers it highly desirable. This continual projection of a mixture of lust, fascination and denigration allowed the West to construct a negative stereotype. Over the centuries that stereotype became normalized and hegemonic. Aiding this construction was a large predetermined cache of knowledge, formed first by the Greeks and continued by the each succeeding generation of Orientalist scholars, writers and politicians. Hall (1992) states,

Said argues that, 'In a sense Orientalism was a library or archive of information commonly... held. What bound the archive together was a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective. These ideas explained the behaviour of the Orientals: they supplied Orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; most important, they allowed the Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics.' (p.297)

According to Hall (1992) the West only sees 'difference' because it continually compares other cultures to its self. Both Said (1991) and Bhabhar (1983) state that the West constructed the Oriental as a cultural and racial inferior invoking a pre-known or hegemonic stereotype that was simply a projection of West's regimes of truths. Bhabha notes this continual negative representation of the colonial body is a facility to aid in colonial appropriation. Bhabha (1983) states,

The object of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. (p.23)

Sarup's (1996, p. 15) models for identity and narrative are again of use. The second model states: "identity is a construction or fabrication". This is important when dealing with the terms: 'the other' and 'stereotypes', as narrative identities they have been created or fabricated for a purpose. According to Bailey (1988) the term 'stereotype' is a form of abuse. Bailey (1988) states,

It is commonly used to push people we do not value into subordinate positions. ...stereotypes are not natural or inevitable. They are socially constructed and reproduced through photographic practices. They can function to serve the interests of the dominant groups in a particular society.... There is a complex ambivalence in operation. This is a concept in psychoanalysis based on 'otherness' and difference. Here the stereotype derives from an underlying fear of the subject, which is combined with desire and fascination. (p.36)

According to Bhabha, ambivalence is a fetishistic practice of disavowal, whereby the colonial body is treated with fear, scorn/contempt and derision but is secretly desired or coveted as a sexual object: desire and disavowal. Bhabha (1983) when commenting on the construction of the 'other' as a perpetuated, ideologically constructed stereotype states,

Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. Likewise the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known and something that must be anxiously repeated. (p.18)

The Oriental or the colonized, being the subordinate partner, is talked to, spoken about, but never speak for themselves. Said (1991, p.56) states, "further more in the case of the

Oriental he is 'contained and represented' by Europe and only speaks through and by virtue of European imagination." Said (1991) makes a simple and effective analogy.

she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. He spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was 'typically Oriental'. My argument is that Flaubert's situation of strength in relation to Kuchuk Hanem was not an isolated instance. It fairly stands for the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient it enabled. (p.6)

Said writes that the large-scale industrial revolution in Western Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century gave rise to a scramble for resources and the main resources to be had were foreign lands. Western Europe, mainly the British and the French annexed many lands in Africa and in Asia for their resources and 'for their own good'. 'For their own good' can be seen as the West imposing itself on other cultures so that they conform to the 'superior' Western religious, political and cultural values. Furthermore, Hall (1992) writes that the West has never accepted a different culture as an equal. It only sees an inferior race or culture that needs to be converted to 'Western' cultural values. The West's insatiable desire to convert or 'civilize' the other is often termed the 'white man's burden'. The West, armed with its stereotypical hegemonies, its regimes of truth and assumed cultural superiority, pressed on with colonization as its 'God given right'. The West had decided that these lands were unable to govern themselves because they were either too backward, if not backward then barbaric, despotic or feudal.

Said contends that in the last century with the advent of the World Wars, the old powers of Europe lost some of their colonies and their corresponding power. They still wield considerable influence by virtue of being wealthy and 'Western', but the major military, economic and political power became the United States of America. The Americans and the West still dominate the East with the possible exception of China and Japan. This domination takes the form of overwhelming political and economic power and assumed cultural superiority. The Orientalist scholars have gone only to be replaced by 'analysts' and 'area experts', who seem to echo the thoughts of the previous school by stereotyping, pigeon holing and racially disparaging Arabs and the East alike. Abel Malek (cited in Said 1991) calls this,

'the hegemonism of possessing the minorities' and anthropocentrism allied with Europocentrism: a white middle-class Westerner believes it his human prerogative not only to manage the non-white world but also to own it. (p. 108)

With the advent of free market economics and globalization the West has placed a stranglehold on the under developed world, as they must develop in relation to the West or not develop at all. This only reinforces the economic, political and cultural domination of the 'West' over the 'Orient' and the rest of the developing world. Said (1991, p.109) states, "the West is the spectator, judge and jury over every facet of Oriental behavior."

Bhabhar and Said share many similarities: the colonial body as 'always known as a fixed identity'; that body as 'an object of fascination, desire and derision'; and the perpetuation of negative stereotypes as discursive strategies to facilitate colonial appropriation. But the similarities end as Bhabha's work also involves resistance to the imperial power through

'mimicry'. As Foucault states, where there is power there is resistance and power circulates eventually forming new knowledge and discourses. Mimicry according to Bhabha is a form of resistance that subverts colonial power, whereby the colonized represent or mimic the colonial agency. The colonial agency sees a menacing distorted reflection of the self that in turn creates fear and uncertainty. Bey (2000) explains,

They are authorized versions of otherness...now producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence, de-stabilize the colonial subjectivity, unsettle its authoritative centrality and corrupt its discursive purity...in a form of menace [rather] than resemblance. (p.2)

Bhabha (cited in Young, 1990, p.141) contends that Said creates numerous binary systems. On one side is the system of learning and the opposite is the fantasy of the 'Other'; desire and derision; the power and the powerless. This he feels does not allow for alterity in the arguments or that Said has created a series of polarizing arguments that allows "Europe to freely possess the Orient". This, Bhabha writes, does not allow for resistance. Bhabha (cited Hall, 1997, p.261) states, "Power not only constrains and prevents: it is also productive. It produces new discourses, new kinds of knowledge." According to Bhabha, resistance to the colonizer through mimicry creates the hybrid of the colonized other with the native self. This subverts the colonizer's discursive practices and leads to new knowledge and discourse.

Young (1990) claims *Orientalism* has problems in theoretical methodology and critiques Said with respect to critical distance. Young feels that Said, an American Palestinian is too close to the subject material described in the text of *Orientalism* and cannot effect

critical distance. Young does acknowledge that maintaining critical distance is difficult, if not impossible.

The detractors of Orientalism are not only Western Europeans. As the Asian region develops (along a Western global vision), the people of the region are restating their identities. They are formulating their own discourses in (post) colonial history and evaluating history from their perspective. By discussing and debating Orientalism we begin to understand the complexities of representation and the dangers of assumed representation. The political and ethnic variety of the region coupled with the internal ethnic diversity within each separate country makes assumed representation extremely dangerous. The plight of authors Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy are two high profile examples. Their perceived crimes were to 'speak for' another Asian culture (Rushdie) and Roy similarly upset a majority group within her own country.

Orientalism has flaws but is still an extremely valuable discourse when applied in its primary position of analyzing East/West relations and equally when used as a template for application to a number of the world's power differential problems. Orientalism has been adopted and adapted to the many marginalized or victimized groups of people. Feminist groups identify with Orientalism. They feel female history has been constructed by the Western, white, paternal male. They have not represented themselves, but have been spoken for, stereotyped and objectified. Abigail Solomon-Godeau (cited, Barrett, 1990, p.135) states, " Central to feminist theory is the recognition that woman does not speak for herself: rather, she is spoken for and all that implies: looked at, imagined,

mystified and objectified.” Equally the indigenous peoples of Africa, Australia, the French Pacific and the Americas could claim the same injustices and could easily identify with Orientalism as practice.

### **Case studies in Orientalism as photographic representation and practice.**

I have selected two photographers whose books I believe represent Orientalism in photographic practice. The photographers are Irving Penn, *African and New Guinea Portraits* and Philip Blenkinsop, *The Cars That Ate Bangkok*. As an alternative I offer the work of Shirin Neshat, who offers a different interpretation on some of the commonly held Western stereotypical views of Muslim women.

In the 1970’s Irvin Penn traveled to New Guinea to make photographs of the local tribes people. What transpired were beautifully light controlled, formally constructed and expensively printed photographs. When referring to Orientalism and the representation of the ‘Other’, there are problems.

Penn’s style is to control all aspects of the photograph. This total control of light, pose and background is a strong metaphor for Orientalism. Here the control is with the wealthy, white European male and the resultant representation is a photographic construction of the other that exists only through his imagination. The local people are photographed in a mobile tent studio. They are alienated from their local environment and appear to be constructed as a museum display for a Western viewer. Their names are

not provided only the local regions where they live are noted. The plates are in black and white the further highlighting their otherness. Penn constructs his photographs through his discursive practices and the result is that these people are photographically represented as exotic/erotic, potentially dangerous, backward primitive, other.



Figure 11. Irving Penn, *Three Asaro Mud Men*, New Guinea, 1970. From Szarkowski (1984). *Irving Penn*

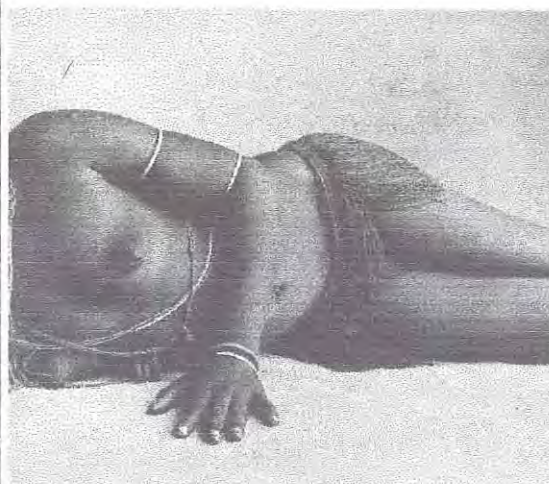


Figure 12. Irving Penn, *Chieftain's Wife*. Cameroon, 1969. From Szarkowski (1984). *Irving Penn*

Ramamuthy (1997) states,

The images tell us very little about the people, but say a lot about Penn's construction of these people as primitive and exotic. As with the fashion shoot, these images are contrived and stylized, and Penn is at pains to find what is extraordinary and to create the dramatic. The isolated space of the studio removes the subjects from their time and space...and gives the photographer free rein to create every aspect of the image. (p.177)

The photographs of Islamic Moroccan women are similar to the New Guinea series. The women have been objectified because of their religious and traditional dress codes.



Equally Penn's photographs of African tribes people suffer from the same problems. The plates also can be seen to exude a sexual fetish. One plate in particular (page 97, *Chieftain's wife*) where Penn crops the woman's head from the frame leaving only the bare-breasted scantily clad torso. Here the Western viewer can possess or linger over the nubile young woman's black African body. In another (page 96, *three girls, one reclining*), the ritual scarification of the young bodies is objectified as well as the breasts, again offering the primitive yet sexually charged African woman.

The people involved have been photographed as specimens and displayed as curios in the world of advertising and 'high art'. Their photographic representations have become commodities. The photographs were not made for the people of New Guinea and Africa but for the comparatively wealthy in Northern America and Europe.

Irvin Penn may be considered a product of his generation and his discursive practices may have possibly been a product of that time and space but twenty years on some of these discursive practices are still in place.

Philip Blenkinsop is a photojournalist based in Thailand. He produced a book documenting the death and destruction caused by automotive accidents on Bangkok streets and the religious orders that retrieve and bury the bodies. Blenkinsop photographs broken, burnt, squashed, lifeless bodies on the streets of Bangkok and all of these bodies are Asian. According to Taylor (1990), the West and Western photojournalists have

preoccupation with images of death and destruction in the under developed world, he states,

You want to see mountains of corpses? Certainly, we have them. Do you prefer old or new mountains? From which continent? We have them all, have you a preference in the manner of death? For instance do you prefer burnt to drowned, or butchered to starved? Yes, we have small numbers of dead, and can provide individual agonies of a cerebral nature, delineations of madness or extremes of fear and subjugation. We also have the remnants of slaughter, such as ashes or viscera. We are happy to be of service, and should you want more then call again soon. By then, there will be a whole bank of new dead, the wonderful teeming dead of the world, awaiting your choice. (p. 13)

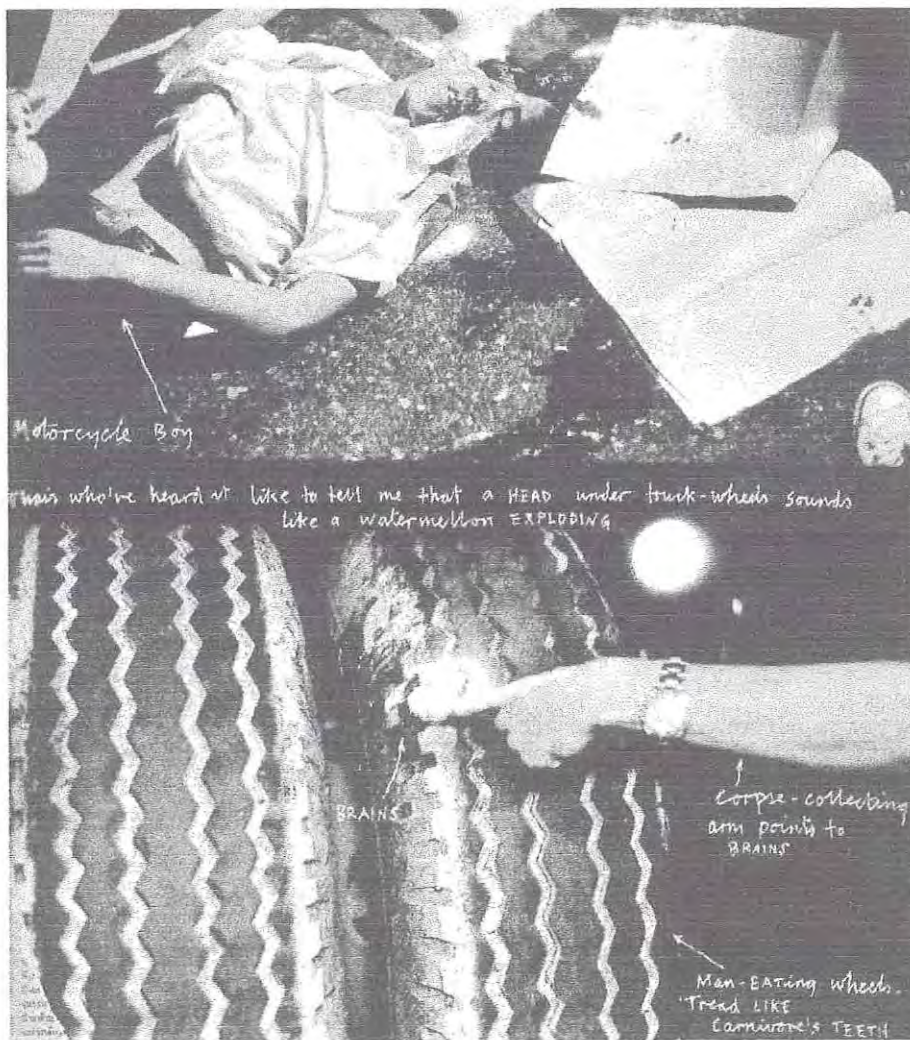


Figure 13. Philip Blenkinsop, Untitled page. From Blenkinsop (1996), *The Cars That ate Bangkok*.

Blenkinsop's book begins as a story about Bangkok's traffic problems and the high mortality rate of the road users. It is centered around the religious agencies Poh Tech Teung which retrieve the bodies, but as the book progresses it is more about death and the mechanics of death, until finally cerebral matter embedded in a truck tyre is pointed out by the nearest hand.

Blenkinsop points out that the people of Thailand have a different view on death compared to the Westerner. The book was produced for a Western audience, the text is in English but the bodies represented are Asian. A small version was published in the popular culture magazine *Rolling Stone*. Western news agencies, papers or books do not display the corpses of local people killed in road accidents. It is considered unacceptable firstly because of the grief that will be caused to the family (and the possible litigation problems), and it is not socially accepted as it is taboo subject material. The West does not show graphic details of death unless the bodies are non-Western and those bodies are in the underdeveloped world. Blenkinsop has appropriated the dead Asian bodies as a goulish reminder of an unruly and under developed region. He has stereotyped Thailand or Asia by using dead Thais, or to evoke Bhabha "the stereotype....is a form of knowledge and identification that is always 'in place', already known and something that must be anxiously repeated" (my emphasis)

If Irvin Penn and Philip Blenkinsop represent some of the Western male's discursive practices, then Shirin Neshat offers a different view, an insiders view, an Asian woman's

view. Neshat draws on her cultural heritage and reworks the stereotype. The West's view of the Islamic woman is of total submission to her culture and faith. The most obvious signifier to the Westerner is the Chador or the cloaked garment that some Islamic women wear. Neshat uses this signifier to challenge Western viewers and their preconceived perceptions, helping to bring some understanding to the Islamic woman's perspective and position within her culture.

There is a stereotype about the women- they are all victims and submissive- they're not. Slowly I subvert that image by showing in the most subtle and candid way how strong these women are. Neshat (cited in Horsburgh, 2000, p.1)

According to Spalding (2001), Shirin Neshat is an Iranian born artist now living in the United States. Having left Iran to study, she was left stranded by the Islamic revolution of 1979. When returning to Iran for a visit, she was shocked to see the freedoms that women had once taken for granted had disappeared. The public space was entirely devoted to the men and the women were confined to domestic or private spaces. Spalding (2001) states,

Men were visible while the women disappeared behind the billowing fabric of the chadors. Neshat knew better. Perhaps because of her own history of displacement, she could see that this way of viewing contemporary Iranian life was shortsighted and monocular. It would be impossible to capture its complexity with one gaze. (p. 1)

The Western view of the Iranian woman is that of one clothed in the chador, the black head to toe garment that only allows the face and hands to be seen. This as a Western signifier implies oppression or a binding to religious or tradition life. Neshat photographed herself and others clothed in the chador. Working with images and text she places Farsi calligraphy on the print using only the exposed part of the skin (hands and

eyes). Iranian feminists penned some of the writing, while others were penned by Islamic fundamentalists.



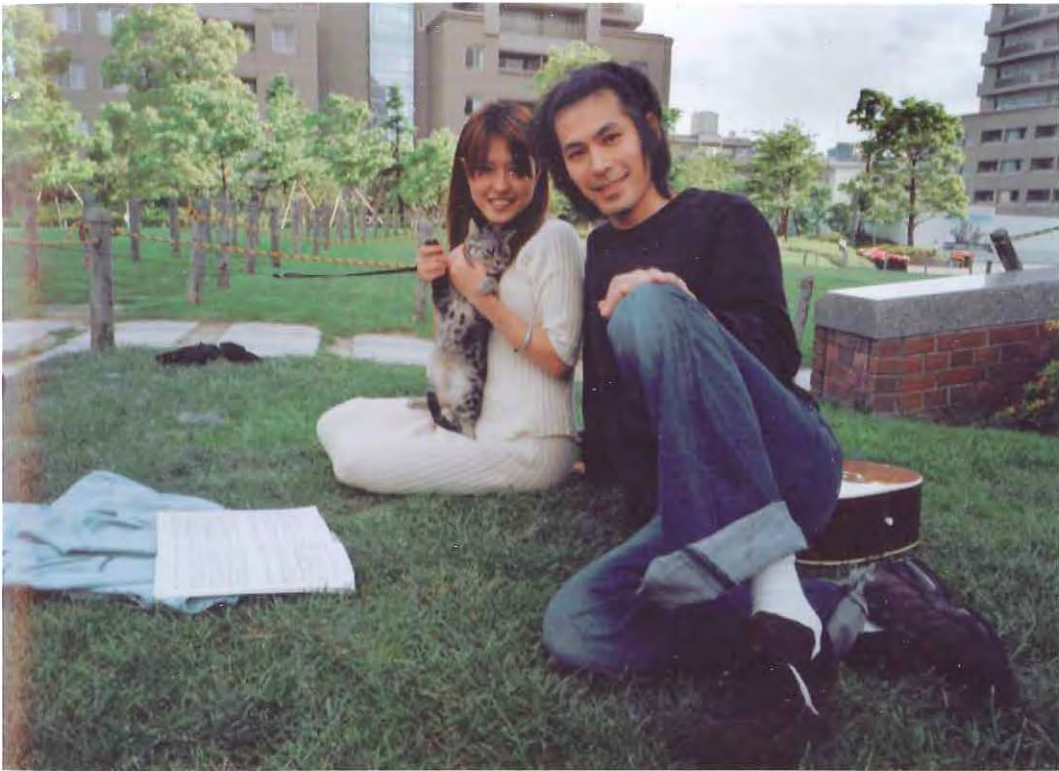
Figure 14. Shirin Neshat, *Untitled, Women of Allah Series*.  
From: [http:// www.Iranian.com/Arts/Dec97/Neshat/](http://www.Iranian.com/Arts/Dec97/Neshat/)

Spalding (2001) states,

Calligraphy written directly on the skin challenged the viewer's conception of the chador as a form of solitary confinement. In *Unveiling* the garments censoring action is both magnified and subverted. The bodies social and political encoding is amplified visually. The women in the pictures have literally been over written and remapped by ideology. Yet the visible parts of the models refuse to be silent.... The photos suggest that in contemporary Iran a woman's body itself can become a vital form of resistance. (p.1)

According to Horsburgh, Neshat's art neither condemns nor glorifies Islam but challenges the viewers to rethink their images of it. Neshat's work is important in helping to understand non-Western religious, cultural and political beliefs, equally important is her life as she represents a type of cultural hybrid. The life of an immigrant or émigré, where the amalgamation of the old culture with the new produces new ideas, motifs and promotes cultural awareness. Her work centers on aspects of Islam but is formed and produced in the predominantly Christian U.S.A.

The current geo-political climate has again polarized the East/West divide. The West verses elements of Islam and sadly Orientalism is being re-established as discourse and practice. The West's discursive practices are again prevalent in rhetoric and action, where attacks on the West are considered attacks on civilization, attacks in Middle East and the under developed world are accepted, implying, if you are not Western then you are not civilized. The construction of the stereotype, is based on 'the already known', precisely as both Said and Bhabha have previously described. Orientalism in practice works firstly to locate/dislocate, to invent, to stereotype, to disparage, and finally to conquer.



*Untitled, Osaka*

AR 2000.

### **3. Hybridity, Globalization and Tourism.**

### 3. Hybridity, Globalization and Tourism.

The transformation that comes of the new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs; '*Melange, hotchpotch*' .... 'A bit of this and a bit of that is *how newness enters the world.*'

Rushdie, (cited Robbins, 1997, p.40)

Globalization is a complex and contentious issue. Robbins (1997) feels postmodernism and globalization allows for the crossing of old cultural boundaries. This mixing and intermingling of cultures allows a cultural hybrid to emerge. Conversely, Morley (1996, p.328), sees globalization as the final stage of cultural imperialism, where the West is imposing its value systems on the non-Western and developing worlds, an economic and political system based on Euro/American ideals. This has overtones of Modernity. The modernist era was one of Western science, Western history and Western discursive discourses and practices. Morley (1996, p.328), states, "Modernity is usually equated, somewhat unproblematically, with the history and the societies of the industrial West." Little was thought of the people, or about countries outside of the West. Morley's and Robbin's comments underpin the contentious issues involved in the globalization debate, because, we are living in the postmodern age, in which, according to Barrett (1990), postmodernism rejected the past and its singular Western narrative.

Postmodernism is not a single ideology or discourse. It is an umbrella of ideologies that best describe a fast changing world that is dominated by images, consumption and mass media. Poster (cited Rowe, 1998, p.12) states, "the postmodern world will be one of



multiply realities". Postmodernism does acknowledge cultural diversity and that the world is interrelating as never before, mixing and forming hybrid cultures.

Examples of hybridity can be seen in many aspects of popular culture. The crossing of old colonial boundaries and the amalgamation of different cultures can be recognized in street clothes, music, film, art and fashion where ideas and motifs cross the ethnic and cultural divide becoming a celebration of impurities and the new. What were once the fringes and margins are absorbed and reformed again as the mainstream. As modernism, in its cultural rigidity and tones of racial superiority, represented the colonial Western European, postmodernism and hybridity represents multiculturalism in its celebration of mix, amalgamation and impurity. This anti-modernist sentiment and the fracturing of colonialism is explained by Beya (2000), commenting on Bhabha and hybridity,

Hybridity, Bhabha argues, subverts the narratives of the colonial power and dominant cultures. The series of inclusions and exclusions on which dominant culture is premised are deconstructed by the very entry of the formerly-excluded subjects into mainstream discourse. The dominant culture is contaminated by the linguistic and racial differences of the native self. Hybridity can thus be seen, in Bhabha's interpretation, as a counter-narrative, a critique of the canon and its exclusion of other narratives....the migration of yesterday's 'savages' from their peripheral spaces to the homes of their 'masters' underlies a blessing invasion that, by 'Third Worlding' the center, creates 'fissures' within the very structures that sustain it. (p.2)

Robbins (1997) also comments that the highly mobile global work force, migration and international commerce have contributed to the process of multiculturalism and hybridity. This has allowed people to cross the old cultural and linguistic boundaries, which in turn allows them to mingle and hybridize into the new. This is echoed by Ahmed (cited in

Robbins, p.40) when he states: “the swirling and eddying of humanity mingles ideas, cultures and values as never before in history.” Turner (1994) states that multiculturalism and cultural diversity are altering the power balance in the Western nation-states. The other now resides within the former colonial power and the old traditional power structures have to accommodate their growing political power. Those who were previously marginalized now have educational, political and economic status. They are forming their power structures within the systems that had once ostracized them. He goes on to state,

With globalization and the emergence of multicultural politics as a prominent dimension of all political systems, the sense of strangeness of the outside world is difficult to sustain since the other has been, as it were, imported into all societies as a consequence of human mobility, migration and tourism. Otherness has been domesticated. (p. 183)

World commerce, tourism, the satellite, cable and television and the World Wide Web have all contributed to making a smaller world. The fragmenting of old colonial powers, world commerce, migration and the general acceptance of the new along side the old have all contributed to globalization. According to Robbins (1997) globalization represents the old along side the new, or a hybridization, a cultural cross over on a world stage. Robbins goes on to state,

globalization does not supercede everything that has preceded it... Globalization may be seen in the terms of an accumulation of cultural phenomena, where the new global elements coexist alongside existing and established local or national cultural forms... a juxtaposition and combination of the old and new elements. (p.19)

There are differing views on the benefits of some aspects of globalization. Ferguson (cited Robbins 1997, p.19) asks “who is being globalized (or deglobalized), to what

extent and by whom?" Not all cultural critics and local populations are in agreement with globalization. Although most welcome the acceptance of world diversity and the growing acceptance of other cultures, they feel there is also a political, economic, social and cultural imperialism at work. One of the main concerns is the 'Euro/American' hegemony of the world's communication and media networks. Critics of the postmodern and globalization claim that the world's media is in the hands of the former colonial powers, which promote Western value systems. Latin American cultural critic Eduardo Galleano (cited Morley, 1996, p.330) states, "In Latin America we are still subject to the invisible dictatorship of American media." Also in question is the promotion of Western style mass consumerism into the non-Western and developing worlds. Turner (1994) claims globalization brings mass consumerism and this reshapes the conditions and lifestyles of the developing world. It erodes traditionally held cultural values and threatens non-Western systems of power. El Guindi (cited Turner 1994), explains,

As the peasant sits in the evening with his family to watch the TV that his son has purchased from the fruits of his labour in Saudi Arabia the intrigues of J.R. Ewing and Sue Ellen in Dallas strip him of what is left of his legitimacy as a culture bearer in his own culture. Between programmes, he is told in English that he should be drinking Schwepes or dubbed in Arabic that he should wear a deodorant, and that all his problems are caused by having too many children – a total package of imported ideas. (p.91)

Morley (1996, p.330), makes an important point when he claims that opponents of cultural imperialism make the assumption that the local culture is pure and uncorrupted, when in reality all cultures adopt and ingest foreign elements from external and internal sources, then naturalize them. Morley does acknowledge that communication and media technologies, combined with the instantaneous electronic nature of the postmodern world is forming cultural hybridity based on Euro/American ideals. This has sometimes been

termed 'the new world order'. For this reason, Hall (cited in Morley, 1996, p. 332) cautions against romanticizing hybridity within the confines of globalization discourses. Morley also states, that although American culture is termed postmodern it accepts less 'foreign' material into its own media than any other country.

Turner (1994) writes, it is important to note many of the world's problems cannot now be addressed on the local level of the nation-state. Issues of organized crime, environmental degradation, climate change, world health especially the AIDS epidemic, refugees, unemployment and poverty can not be treated effectively at the local level. These issues require global responses and governments to act in unison.

There is resistance to some aspects of globalization at localized levels. Nationalists and fundamentalist religious groups - Hindu, Christian and Islamic fear losing their identities and importantly their power bases. They are anxious that globalization is not just another strangle hold placed on them by the West. There is precedence for these views, for example the lending practices of the World Bank. Money lent to a developing country by the World Bank has numerous conditions. Some of these conditions include forming a Western style democracy, access for large multinational companies and the formation of a Western style consumerist economy. The developing nation is forced to Westernize if it wishes to receive the loan. According to Turner (1994, p.188), Marxist theorists and main stream Feminists argue that postmodernism and globalization offer very little real social change as both ideologies have capitalism as their core. They feel there has been no real change in the division of sexual labour and inequality and that the systems of power are

still dependant on the discursive practices of Western patriarchal males. Western ecological groups and anarchists feel globalization is just capitalism running rampant on a world scale, searching for more resources, new markets and cheaper labour while still representing the West and its capitalistic cultural values. Similarly Dirlik (cited in Boon 1998) states,

I think it is arguable that the end of Eurocentrism [proclaimed by post-modernists] is an illusion because capitalist culture as it has taken shape has Eurocentrism built into the very structure of its narrative, which may explain why, even as Europe and the United States lose their domination of the capitalist world economy, European and American cultural values retain their domination. (p.156)

Tourism is inherently part of the mechanics that drives globalization and can be seen to promote some aspects of hybridity. Firstly, at its best, it acts as an interactive agent between cultures, promoting cultural awareness and exchange of ideas. On the flip-side there are different types of tourists and tourist activity so that not all the exchanges are beneficial to the cultures involved. Secondly, as a form of consumption driving the world economy, it is difficult to imagine a world without some form of tourism. The world's airlines, hotels and service industries are tourist dependant. It is one of the largest industries in the world and growing. Countries world-wide cater for the internal and external tourist, especially the international tourist as they add money to the local economy. The economics of tourism can not be understated. The decline in world tourism post September 11<sup>th</sup>, has damaged the economies of both the developed and underdeveloped worlds. The tourists comes with their baggage and part of this baggage is the 'tourist gaze'. Urry (1990) explains,

There is no single tourist gaze as such. It varies by society, by social group and by historical period. Such gazes are constructed through difference. By this I mean that there is no universal experience which is true for tourists at all times. Rather the gaze in any historical period is constructed in relation to its opposite... The gaze therefore pre-supposes a system of social activities and signs which locate the particular tourist practices, not in terms of intrinsic characteristics, but through contrasts implied with non tourist social practices, particularly those based at home or paid work.  
(p.1)

According to Urry (1990), the sites chosen to be gazed upon are eagerly anticipated. Often this site is a day-dream or fantasy, constructed, enhanced and sustained by literature and represented in television and photographs. The gaze is directed to places or objects, divorced from the everyday life of the tourist and it lingers. The tourist looks to validate the experience. Tourists look for what they have imagined, they look for the signs that indicate the experience- thatched roofs of 'old England', the 'typical' Korean temple or at worst, South-East Asian brothels that cater for the white European male 'gaze'. The site is circulated in postcards and photographs, endlessly reproduced and relived. Urry (1990, p.3) states, "the gaze is constructed through signs and tourism involves collecting those signs."

Urry writes that mass forms of tourism can feature the 'pseudo-event' or staged authenticity, where the local culture displays an illusionary or contrived event for the tourist. MacCannell (1992, p.168), calls this 'reconstructed ethnicity', where the staged event maintains ethnic form to provide entertainment for the tourist. The tourist's gaze uses the signs and signifiers to reconstruct the ethnic group. This is reliant on the discursive practices or hegemonic representations that are inherent within the tourist's culture. Some tourists can re-invoke the Western stereotype, so that the costumes worn or

dances performed create the stereotypical other the tourist was seeking, validating the experience. After the event, the tourist is ushered back to the hotel or 'environmental bubble'. The 'environmental bubble' is hotel accommodation with all the features of the West. This allows the tourist sanctity, insulation, from the 'strangeness' of the local culture. According to Turner (cited Urry, 1990, p.8) "the 'environmental bubble' produces a small monotonous world that shows us our own image."

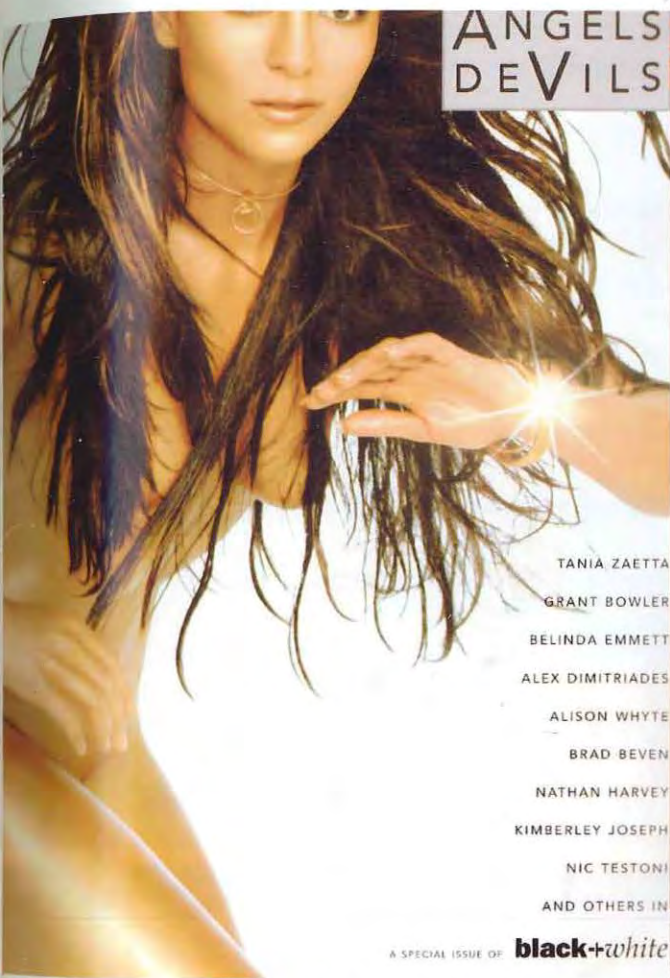
Some of these 'pseudo-events' are staged for the local populace rather than international tourist, as the rapid rate of industrialization and urbanization has divorced urban populations from their folk or rural roots in a very short time. I write here of the reconstructed folk villages and museum dioramas in Korea and Japan. Urry (1990, p.8) states, "the tourist is a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in 'other' times and other places away from their everyday life."

Tourists are products of their culture and all previously discussed aspects of documentary and cultural discursive practices can be reprised, here especially as photography plays a large part of the tourist experience. MacCannell (1992) writes that commodification of the touristic encounter extends past the buying and collecting of handicrafts, to the body of the local person. He states,

Southwestern Indians complain that tourists have attempted to pat up their hair and arrange their clothing before photographing them, and that they receive unwanted offers from tourists to buy the jewelry or the clothing that they are actually wearing. (p.28)

Photographs provide the tourist with a momento of the gaze that can be continually relived. Areas are provided for taking of photographs, film is always available and the gaze can be directed to the 'real' version of the imagined scene or cultural vista. The tourist moves from one spot to another producing an endless repetition of the imagined and the realized; the other and the self and the photographic comparison of the foreign to the home culture. The tourist inadvertently promotes globalization and hybridity, while attempting to reproduce the travel brochure or the commodified image that initially enticed them to the exotic locale.





Magazine Cover, *A Special Issue Of Black + White*



Magazine Cover, *Photographers International #54.*

#### 4. The Image, the Other and the Commodity.

#### **4. The Image, the Other and the Commodity.**

The spectacle uses the photographic frame not to provide a window on the world, but to present the game of looking out the window on the world.  
Slater (1983, p.115)

We live in a capitalistic society in the age of mass consumerism where the global economy is dependent upon trade, of export and import; buying and selling formed in the tradition of Western free market economies. Internal product sales form the base of any economic system within capitalist culture and the image nature of our media vehicles - newspapers, magazines, television and the World Wide Web provide a continual spectacle of advertising to aid in product sales. We are assailed by images for our every waken moments and some of these images invade our dreams. Photography and image production assumes a major role in advertising by turning the lifeless object into a desirable commodity. The nature of some of this advertising, when portraying the people of the non-Western world or the other is important, as there is a tendency to evoke the cultural and colonial stereotype as an aid to the sale. This chapter discusses the use of the constructed other in the image-laden world, and the way that image is transformed into a commodity.

Historically the photographic studio was setup as a business to offer a product to the community and initially that studio based their custom on affordable portraiture. According to Tagg (cited Ramamurthy, 1997, p.153), in the nineteenth century the middle classes looking for affordable symbolic objects that reflected their status flocked to photographic studios for their portraits to be taken. This was far more affordable than

the traditional painted portrait that was done for the upper classes and the aristocracy. Tagg commenting on the growth of the photographic industry, calls it 'a model of capitalist growth in the nineteenth century'. With changing print technologies the photograph soon replaced the drawn or etched representation of the commodity that appeared in newspaper and magazines advertisements. The later half of the twentieth century and the start of consumerism saw an explosion in the use of images, so that today image consumption is taken for granted. Consequently the image-makers and advertising groups of the late twentieth century have in turn become the 'models of capitalist growth' servicing the image saturated publics.

The point of advertising is to sell commodities. Ramamurthy (1997, p.154) states, "photojournalism for instance, like journalism, is primarily concerned with selling of newspapers rather than the conveyance of news." Photojournalism uses 'the spectacle of the other' as a lure for viewing publics in the hope of gaining more sales. Ramamurthy (1997, p.154) also comments that, "commercial photography mimics the cultural views of Western society", and further states,

One of the key characteristics of photography within advertising and marketing is its parasitism. It borrows and mimics from every genre of photographic and cultural practice to enhance and alter the meaning of lifeless objects - commodities. (p.154)

Ramamurthy goes on to comment that commercial photography perpetuates the ideas and ideologies that are prevalent in Western society, reinforcing the construction and perpetuation of stereotypes, calling this 'hegemony in photographic representation'. Bailey (1990) gives the example of the endless perpetuation of the Asian body as the

exotic in travel advertisements and that Asian body as always seemly feminine and available, again defining the white, dominant male nature of our culture.

Allouka (cited Ramamurthy, p.171) claims that in photography, the portrayal of the other as the sexual exotic can be traced to the postcard industry of the ninetieth century where the women of the colonial lands were photographed as purely sexual objects.

Photographers catering for colonial fantasy posed local models in a studio constructed harem, thus defining and re-defining the binary of white European colonial male verses the constructed fantasy of the colonial woman. This according to Ramamurthy has a correlation to the modern day tourist advertisements and brochures. The destination in the developing world is photographically described as exotic, sexual and a playground for the European traveler. Photo-brochures depict these destinations with mysterious veiled women, playful children in traditional clothing and the monuments of the past coupled with photographs of the European enjoying the splendor of the experience. The destination constructed is similar to the harem postcard: feminine, sexual, inviting and waiting to be possessed. Ramamurthy (1997, p.177) goes on to state that, "tourism creates its own culture." People in the tourist brochure are dressed in elaborate garb so that they can be recognized as traditional and importantly exotic. The construction of the other is a perpetual exotic/erotic fantasy. The brochure offers no guide to the life and conditions of the people in the under developed world but only serves to enhance the position of the dominant European by virtue of economic wealth.

Fashion photography can also escalate this problem by objectifying the veiled and traditionally clothed women of the developing world and at times treating the women solely as photographic objects that are verging on museum displays. Situating the photo-shoot in the far off exotic land where the Western models can be juxtaposed against local women in a 'primitive' environment. The end product is a stereotypical spectacle constructed for publics in the developed world again defining the binary of 'those who have' against 'those who have not'.

According to Ramamurthy the Benetton clothing group uses advertising based on images of the exotic other while purporting to promote international multiculturalism. One image features a black woman's torso breast feeding a white baby. This image only reinforces the 'notion of types' and the dominant position of white culture. The woman, whose face can't be seen, is only deemed fit to be represented as a fragmented body and food source for the white baby. She is the exotic other who cannot speak but can be spoken for. The product is associated with her objectified and fragmented body, producing a commodity with the represented body of the other. Benetton also uses photographs from unrelated areas: from an aids photographic report, from a series on murder and Mafia activity in Sicily and from commissioned photojournalists. These images are used as the basis of advertisements creating ambiguity and controversy, and this in turn brings more and more publicity to Benetton and its stable of image/commodities. In this case the spectacles depicted are the others on the fringes of Western society who are similarly objectified and then commodified.

According to Mitter (cited Ramamurthy 1997, p.192) Benetton has some dubious globalized labour practices. Part of their manufacturing process encourages subcontracting in small workshops and piece-work (home labour) that is non-unionized and cannot be monitored for safety or exploitation. Benetton also benefits from the disparate import/export regimes between Europe and the under developed world, which limits the amount of imported goods from the third world. The process of subcontracting can involve manufacture in the third world, so Benetton can exploit cheaper third world labour while promoting world harmony. Ramamurthy (1997), states,

As far as the relationship of this Western company to Third World workers is concerned, this too is not a picture of world harmony. Much of Benetton's success in world markets is linked to the establishment of the multifibre agreement, which limits clothing imports from the Third World for the benefit of European manufacturers. Secondly, the system of subcontracting has been used by many companies in the West to franchise out unskilled 'shell making' to factories in the Third world, where the labour is cheap. (p.192)

My example in this case is a painter, writer and photographer George Gittoes, who is the current war artist for the Australian Armed Forces. Part of his work was to paint his impressions of the Australian Peacekeeping Forces in Rwanda, Palestine, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He also has visited Northern Ireland and China. Gittoes was the subject of a television documentary called *I Witness*, which in turn was part of the ABC documentary series entitled *Australian Story*. I use George Gittoes as an illustration, because of the processes described in this chapter and throughout the thesis, are apparent from the start of his work to the final exhibited product. Gittoes' painted works seem to be Western stereotypical representations. As Said (1990) and Bhabha (1983) state, the stereotype is a discursive strategy, constructed to demonize, reinforcing the Western idea that the other

is 'backward, duplicitous and barbaric'. Gittoes tries to project the image of a concerned world citizen, but he seems intent on cataloging the symptoms of the world's problems, without making any references to the possible causes. His paintings of the Rwanda genocide, the conflict in the middle East and his portrayal of Chinese women can be best described by reprising Jolly (1991, p.17). "The spectacle of the third world struggle is stripped from the strugglers within the same power structure as their raw materials were stripped before (and still are being stripped)."

The opening sequence of him stalking through the bush in battle fatigues and all cameras at the ready is over the top but does allude to the respective positions of power, reinforcing the binary of the empowered over the powerless. The camera crew and Gittoes enter a camp in Rwanda where there has been a horrific massacre, here he photographs and catalogues the scenes of brutal maiming, death and destruction. The programme charts his thoughts and working processes until finally he ends in China where the people on the street don't do as they are told and generally seem to be annoying him.

Gittoes returns to Australia to paint where he uses the photographs as an aid to painting and memory. We learn he is a good Christian and devoted family man. What transpires is a set of paintings that in all the senses of the word are horrific impressions of his experiences. The survivors of the Rwanda camp are painted as very dark, grossly disfigured, machete scarred characters straight from Dante's *Inferno*. The rock throwing youth in Palestine has developed more than one set of arms.



Figure 15. George Gittoes, *Gaza*, part of *I Witness* series.  
From [http://www.members.ozemail.com.au/~gittoes/I\\_spy/Sheds/sheds.html](http://www.members.ozemail.com.au/~gittoes/I_spy/Sheds/sheds.html)

Chinese women are represented as painted objects, swirling around him, trying to take his money. Conversely the Europeans represented by children in Northern Ireland and Bosnia Herzegovina are always painted as very white and anatomically correct.

Gittoes, through his paintings and photographs, speaks for the people caught in the world's trouble spots, they do not speak for themselves. When asked why he made these paintings he replied 'someone has to bear witness', but the irony of his statement is lost. Gittoes as the white Western male presents the people of the non-Western world as constructed others, further reinforcing the binary of us/them and again redefining the stereotypical hegemony inherent in parts of Western society. All his painted works are offered as commodities firstly as documents to the Australian Armed Forces and as



painted objects hanging on the white walls of the exhibition space where his paintings were shown. What makes this even more surreal are the people at the exhibition- white middle class, walking around drinking and eating, taking in the spectacle, while the bestial African, the duplicitous Asian and the hapless fringe dwelling European caught in yet another catastrophe, look on waiting to be sold.

My second example involves postmodern consumer practices and again a reworking of a stereotypical representation. This example is a group of young Japanese women photographers that were called the 'Onna no ko shashinka' or 'the girlie photographers'. The young women reworked a stereotypical image, the 'panty photograph', and ultimately re-commodified it.

Walking around Osaka (or probably any other Japanese city) you become aware of the 'panty shot', no matter up town, down town or outside the local museum the 'panty shot' reigns supreme. Whether cartoons, gatcha gatcha (small toys dispensed through vending machines), graffiti, television programmes, and commercials, or simulated schoolgirls on cards for strip clubs and prostitution, the image seems to have ingrained itself into Japanese popular culture. Japan, probably more than any other culture could be called postmodern and has been used as a metaphor for the 'post modern condition'. Urban areas are constantly in the state of renewal. The populace is continually bombarded by images. The younger generation take on fad and fashion from all parts of the world and then quickly discard them for the next in an endless cycle of consumerism. Japan which is still in economic recession has relied on the spending power of young women to keep the local economy afloat, and that they have.

According to Di Pietro (1999) the photographic practices of ‘the girlie photographers’ appeared in the middle 1990’s. One of the original instigators was a young woman called Hiromix who used a disposable camera and processed at the local kiosk. She photographed herself and other teenage girls in their underwear and the images were lazily copied and fixed to magazine styled pages and enlarged. Similarly Maki Miyashita did the same photographing forty young teenage girls in bras and panties. Di Pietro (1999, p.1) asks, “was this a statement of reclaiming female sexuality or a mirror image of a male created stereotype staring back?” It may well be, or it could be a practical application of Bhabha’s ‘mimicry’. My point in including this small example is that the consumer orientated nature of post modern culture allows for male created stereotypes to exist in advertising simultaneously along side the critique. The politics of the images may be different but they both become commodities which represent women’s bodies.



Figure 16. Maki Miyashita, *Untitled*, from *Rooms and Underwear*, 1998. From <http://www.assemblylanguage.com/reviews/Miyashita.html>



Figure 17. Hiromix, *Untitled*. From <http://www.assemblylanguage.com/images/Hiromix.html>

## Conclusion.

While documentary photographic practices reflect the discourses described by Hamilton, subjective representation is the discourse that is prevalent. Photographs are constructed by the decision making processes of the individual and these processes are influenced by the cultural determinates of that individual. Foucault's Power/Knowledge nexus dominates this decision making process. The photographer's individual discursive practices are related to their cultural experience and any stereotypical hegemonic representations that are embedded in that culture. Some of these discursive practices arise from cultural and power differential binaries: East/West, male/female, colonial/colonized, developed world/underdeveloped world, or more simply, those who have power/those who are subjected to that power. Stereotypical photographic practice is the projection of these binaries and represents discursive discourse in practice. Orientalism is a valuable discourse in revealing these power differentials and any consequent stereotypical representations of 'others'.

Although we may exist in an era characterized as the post modern, these practices still exist. The dawn of post modernism ushered in changes in photographic practice that reflected changing social and cultural discourses. Post modernism embraced diversity, and importantly, multiculturalism. Previously ignored voices from the margins were now incorporated into the mainstream. Western cultures have slowly changed from what was previously rigid and homogenous, to a mixed hybridization, difference is slowly being adapted and (perhaps) accepted. Popular media outlets are reflecting some of these changes. Virgin Telecommunications made a series of advertisements that included

people that suffer from Down's Syndrome, not as objects of derision but as part of mainstream society celebrating the joyous diversity of life. A young hearing-impaired girl has been used to advertise lamb. Deborah Mailman, an indigenous actor charms the viewing public, playing a major part in the television series *The Life of Us*. Although these changes are small, they do represent a change in attitudes to those who have been marginalized. But on a more pessimistic note, the current war climate is re-establishing Orientalism as a major discursive practice.

All photographic practices, ideologies and discourses find common ground as commodities. The work of Penn, Blenkinsop, Neshat, Salgado, Richards, Mann, Araki, Gittoes and the 'girlie photographers' are all linked within consumerist Western post modern cultures. That is all the images have commercial value. This commercial value accommodates any moral issues or discursive practices. In Western free market economic terms, a buyer is linked to a seller and the commercial value is determined by the whims and desires of 'the market'. A photographer may sell to a magazine or a gallery owner may sell to the public. As a commercial transaction, the commodity value is reflected in the name of the artist, quality of the image, rarity and artistic merit, but is usually a combination of all.

The realized Orientalist practices of Penn are extremely valuable and coveted by photographic collectors and fine art galleries. Blenkinsop's work is made for a smaller audience. His work is generally published in popular culture magazines, although not as valuable in monetary terms as Penn's, the work still has commercial value, commodity

value. This is equally true for both Salgado and Richards, who are represented in both popular culture magazines and newspapers as well as on gallery walls as fine art commodities. Both Salgado and Richards have a political agenda steeped in Magnum's liberal humanism, the motives of Penn and Blenkinsop are less clear.

The works of Mann and Neshat have social and cultural ramifications. They view small worlds and make comments that are related to their experiences. Opposed to Penn and Blenkinsop, they rework modernist perspectives, allowing the formation of new discourse and discussion, but their works also become commodities for sale.

George Gittoes offers his paintings as spectacle and entertainment value to the white middle class Australian audience and as gallery based commodities. The 'girlie photographers' like Neshat re-work a male created stereotype and the result is another commodified image of represented bodies.

The study of photographs does offer another value in the sense we can see the discursive practices of Western society. This is a resource commodity. Each generation of photographers reflect practices which express discourses prevalent in their societies. What we see are the layers of change in Western society. Viewing photographs in a historical sequence allows a type of archaeology of practices and discourses to evolve. This is an extremely valuable resource for study and allows for the formulation of new knowledges and discourses. In the end, the cultural resource is far more valuable than the commercial value of the photographs.

I consider my work to be a practical application of subjective representation discourses. I acknowledge that I am part of the photographic component, firstly in my represented body, and secondly, the mixture of photographic techniques, the text, the editing, the juxtapositioning of the elements are all part of my decision making process.

I don't consider myself as a modernist. I embrace multiculturalism, diversity and hybridity but I don't feel the need to align myself with the post modern. I agree with Lessing (2001) when she stated, "‘Ism's' are categories and ideologies – be suspicious." Of the two major ideologies or discourses I feel I fall in between, a hybrid perhaps. I photographed my friends and myself, but I worked in a culture that was not my own. I have incorporated black and white style reportage, cross-processed cityscapes, colour montages and a rambling autobiographical text, all of which could be linked either ideologies, but more likely it is a mix of both. The photographic narrative is progressive, but doesn't seek closure. In photo-journal tradition, the 'third way' has been employed to impart ambiguity, and in the tradition of infotainment magazines, the text is a mixture of fact and fiction. Viewed at a whole, the accompanying text offers a chance for closure, as it becomes a gentle de-facto critique of documentary and the viewing publics' image laden world. This forms the link to the commodity and the written thesis component. If I had to describe my work in the one line I would happily chose Susan Sontag's (1978) quote,

“they [photographs] are pellets of information and clouds of fantasy.”

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roses



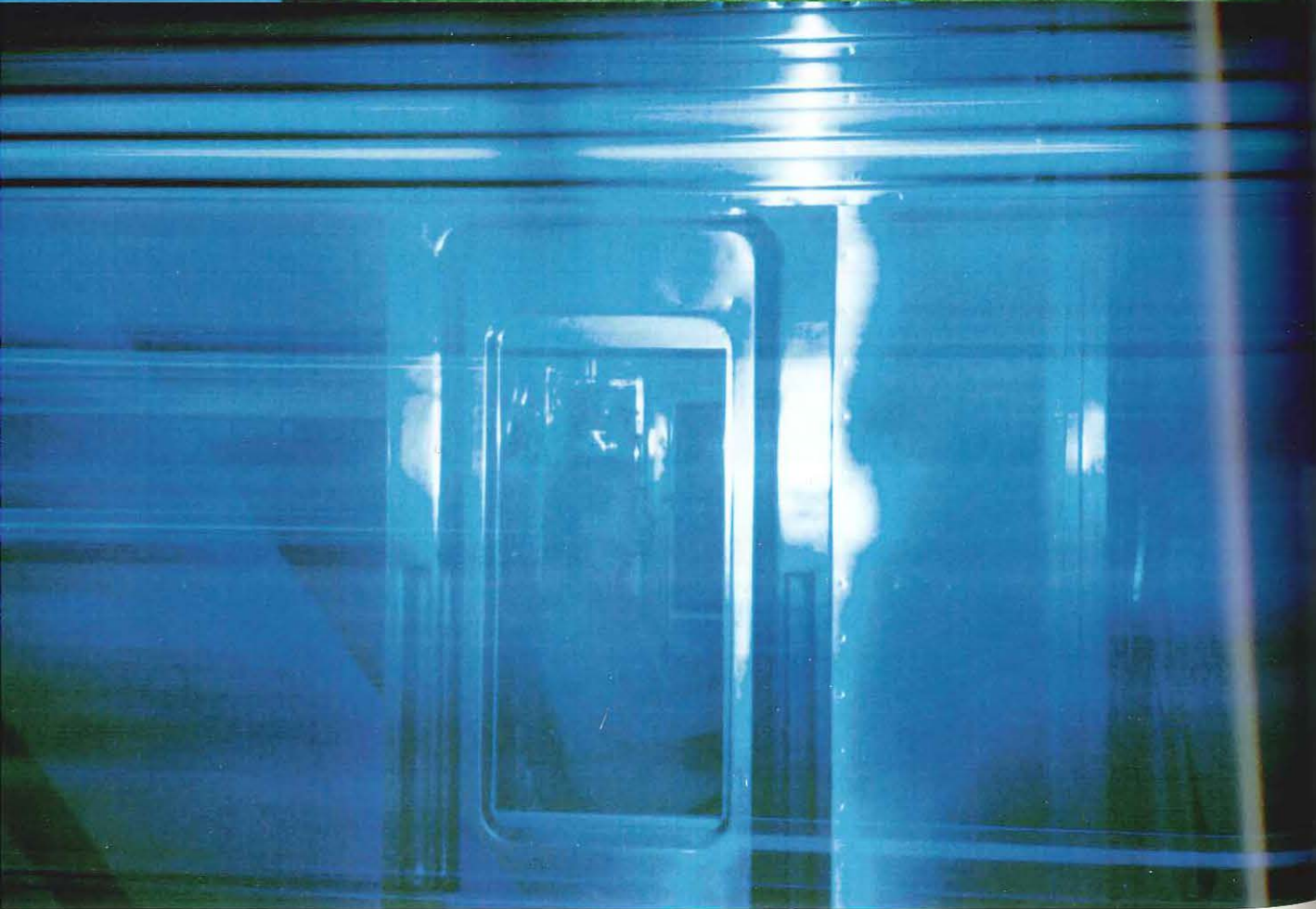
I spent a number of afternoons sitting  
peacefully in an Osaka rose garden.

Familiar things are important. New places  
seem a little strange at first. This  
particular rose garden featured the best  
bred roses post 1949....I like roses....  
I also like architecture....I digress....





























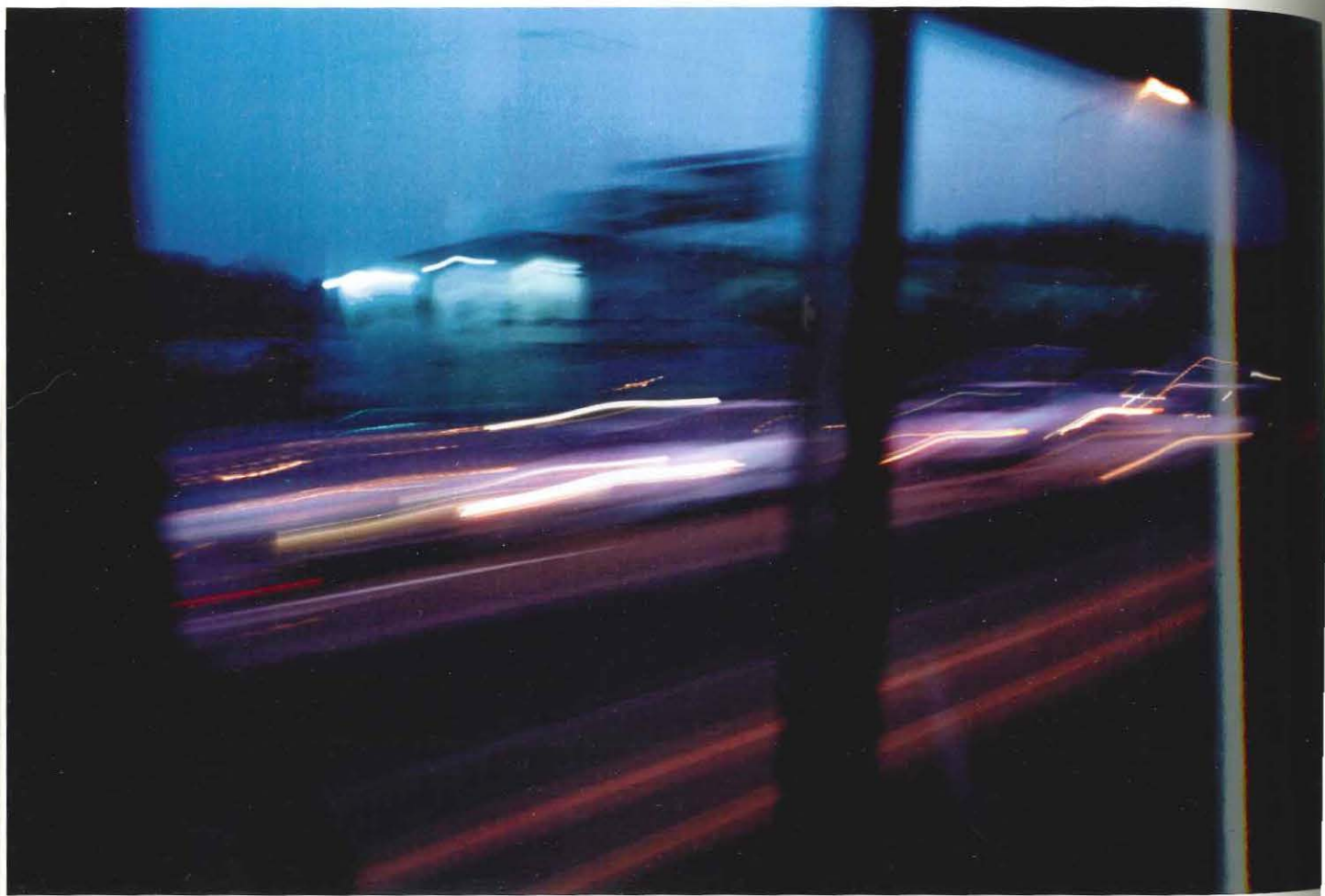
One day in Seoul my leg cramped up....

A big man ran over and massaged it

for me. He had a big gun....

This was very disconcerting....

A few days previously I had learnt I  
was considered a lesbian....it's a  
long story....sorry I digress again....  
back to the 'real' story....











♥デートにも最適♥おとなの映画♥

**妻服妻魚妻**

腰は3の字で



栗田るか

**密会の女たじ**

人妻から女子大生まで



**緊縛肉拷問**

発禁本



入場券は2階売場で発売

5月17日→23日

上映時間

上映時間	1部	2部	3部	4部
妻服妻魚妻	11:20	2:30	5:40	
密会の女たじ	12:20	3:30	6:40	
緊縛肉拷問	10:15	1:25	4:35	7:45

毎 土 曜 日

ナイター時

上映時間	1部	2部	3部
妻服妻魚妻	8:50	12:00	3:10
密会の女たじ	9:50	1:00	4:10
緊縛肉拷問	5:00	8:10	11:20





hip hop's COO

가르쳐  
수고하셨습니다!!

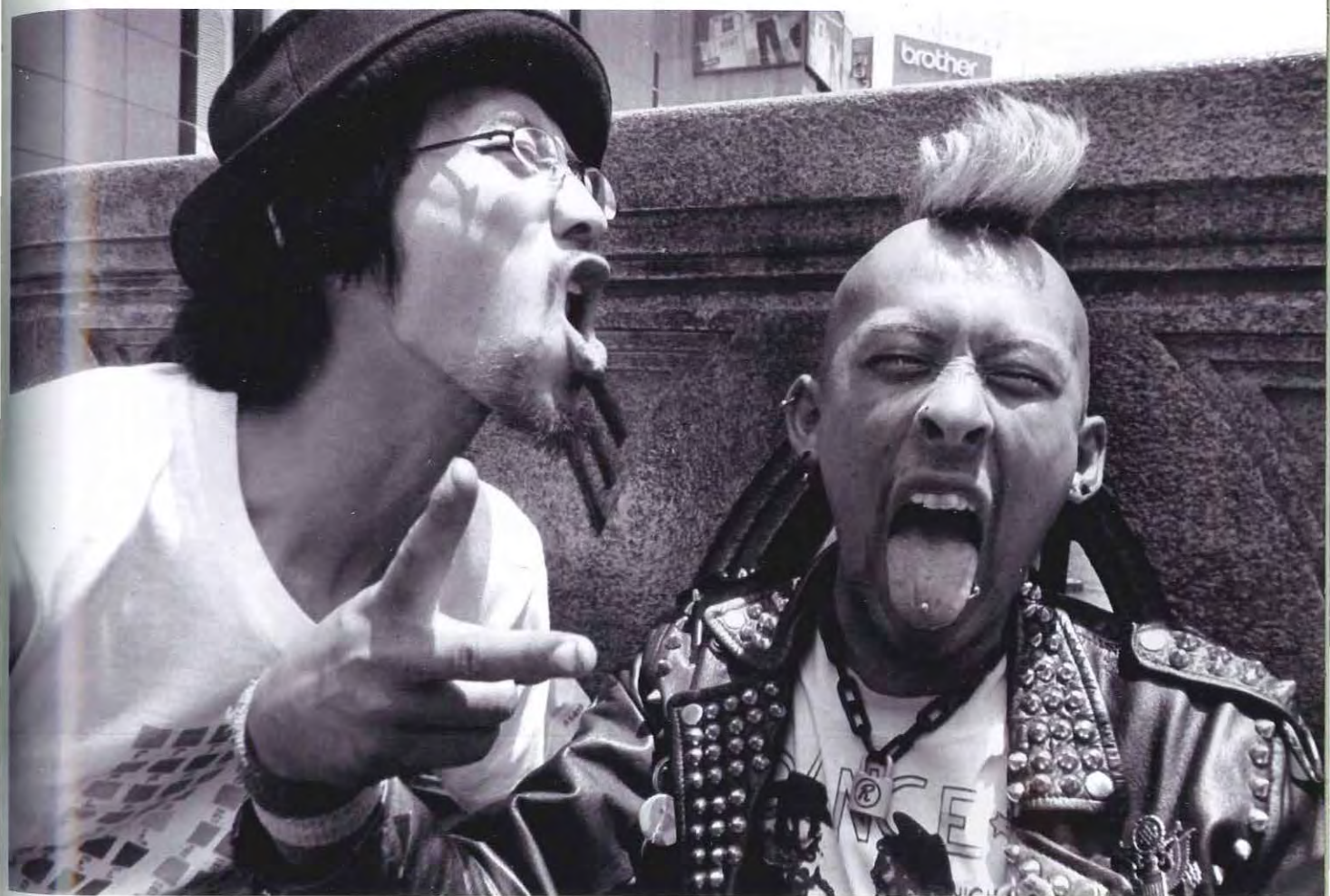






















**진찰영장소**  
**(Photo Point)**





The City of Osaka runs an annual  
contest for the best rose photo. Late  
in the afternoon the garden was awash  
with my fellow photographers....they  
were severely tooled up....

I've met a number of photographers  
over the past few years....there is  
something very much in common.

That is....

PENTAX

光って  
おまかせ。



**MZ-7**

世界初!  
1/10000秒シャッター

*Shot of my Life.*

NEW! JAPAN ONLY











BLAST CITY



有名AVギャルが



ザックザク!!!







photographers take their work very....

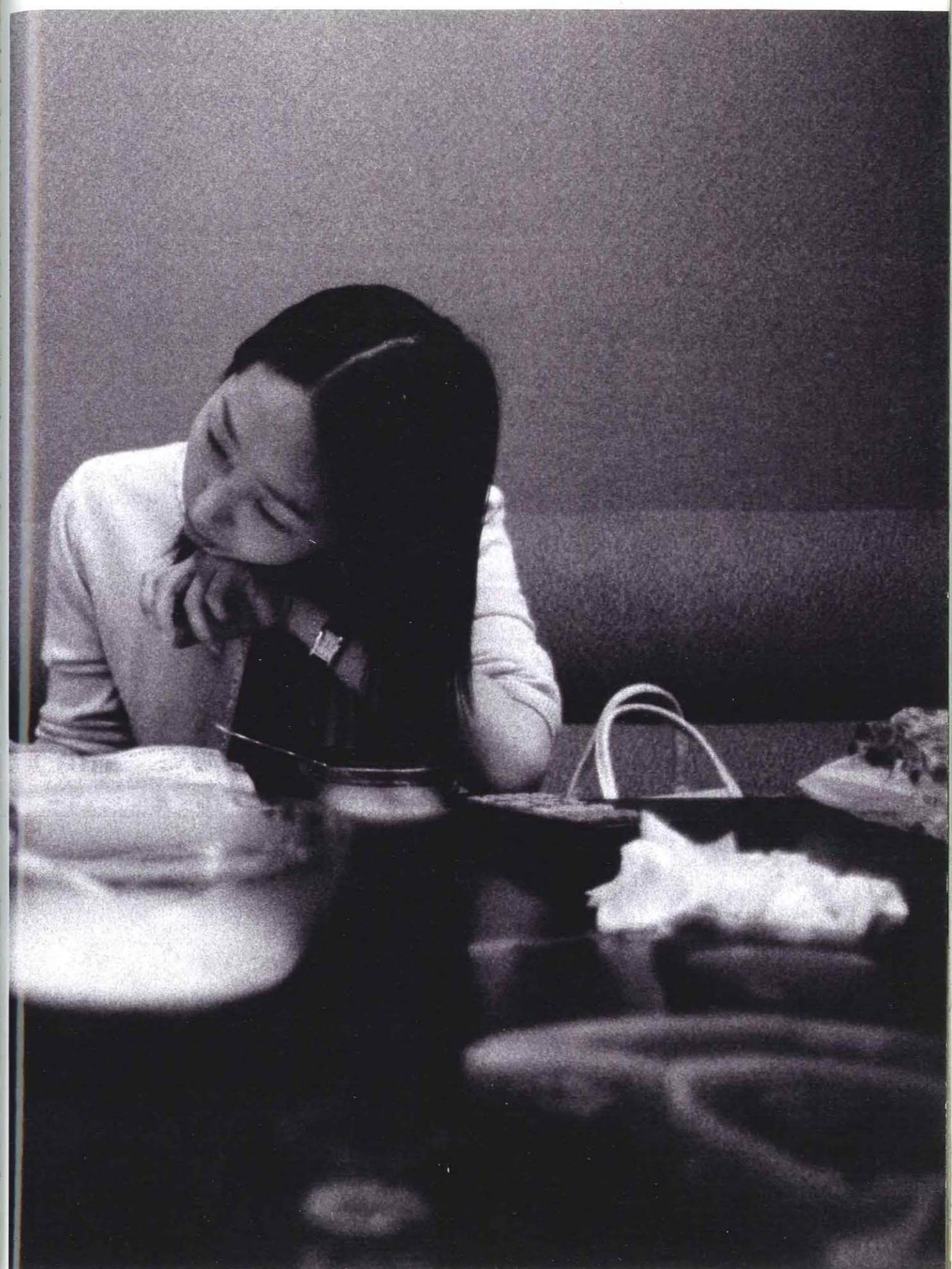
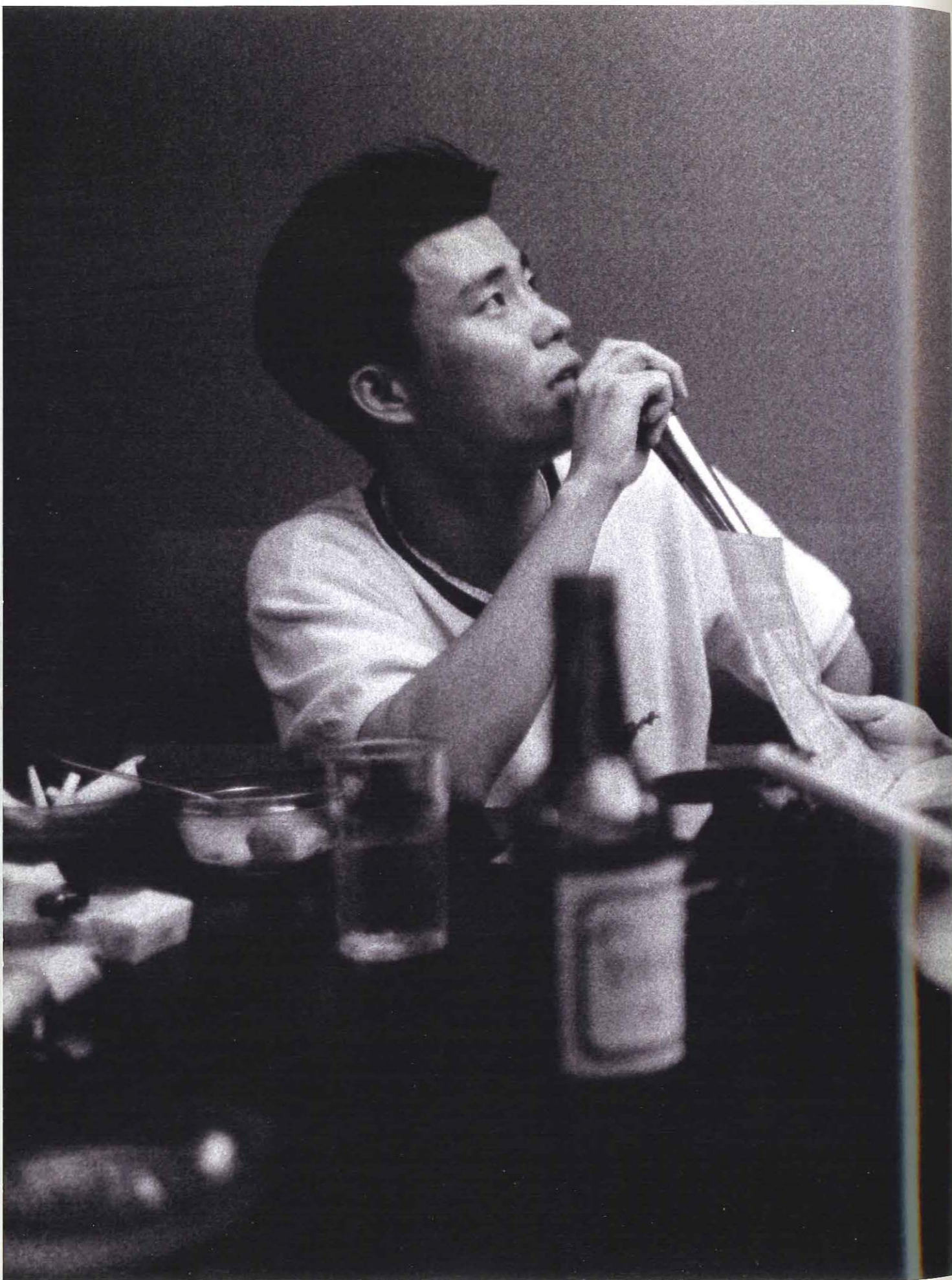
very seriously....

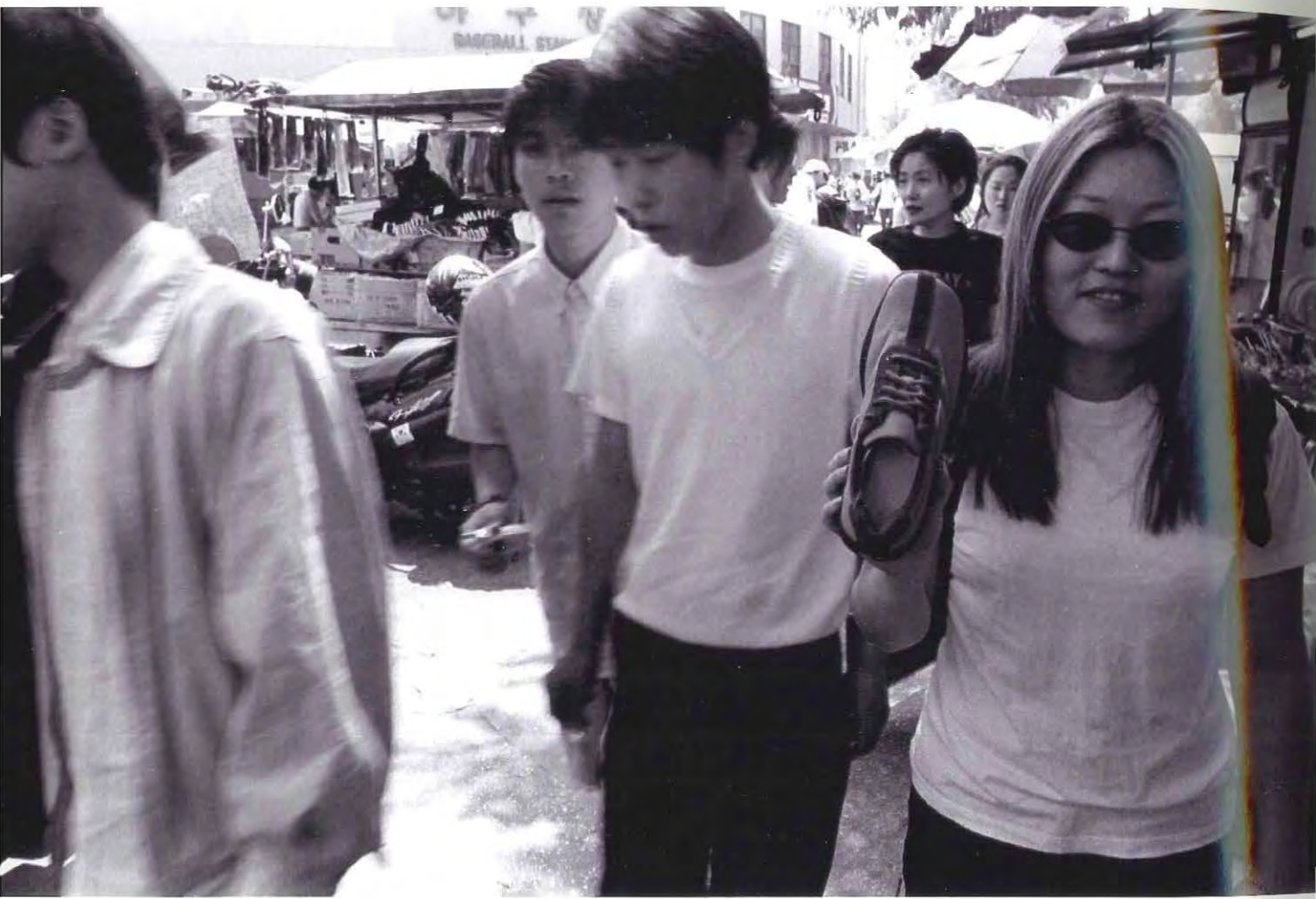


So I feel the need to ask you a  
question....Have....











**사 진 촬 영 장 소**  
**(Photo Point)**

you been entertained?

Photos and Text, Allan Radich

Photo Edit, Max Pam

Layout, Allan Radich + Max Pam

Project Supervisor, Norm Leslie

Roses has been produced as the  
photographic component of a Honours  
Thesis/Project in the Department of  
Photomedia, Edith Cowan University,  
Mount Lawley Campus, Perth, Western  
Australia.

Copyright AR 2001.

I would like to thank my good friends Pris,  
Larry, Suk Hee and Tomo, for without their  
help there would be no roses....



AR 2001

