

Jaded

FINAL ISSUE, SPRING 2007
PROGRESSIVE CULTURE FOR ALL



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MISSION STATEMENT

Jaded is an alternative media magazine that was founded and supported by an Asian American community at UCI. Though our identity is rooted in the community, we aim to make issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation relevant to our socio-political environment. We are committed to social justice and at the same time to arts, entertainment, and creative expression. Our progressive identity shapes the way we process information and the development of our articles. Jaded hopes to create a community of young, creative, and critical thinkers that can make positive change in our collective future.

OUTRO

We are proud to say that in the three years of making Jaded, we continuously made an effort to make each issue better than the last. In this final issue of Jaded, we present to our readers a double issue packed with investigative articles, interviews with amazing people, and thoroughly researched pieces that expose the hypocrisy of our culture. We are sad to announce that this will be the last issue of Jaded, but hopefully not the end of magazines like ours. In this last issue, we have compiled a brief guide to DIY journalism, which we hope will be both entertaining and informative for readers interested in started their own publication—or for readers who want to laugh at our working process. It has been a great three years. Thank you all for reading.

ON THE COVER

Front and back covers by Sean Sullivan

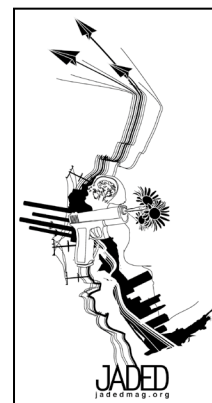
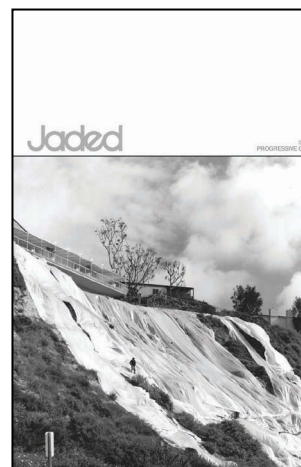
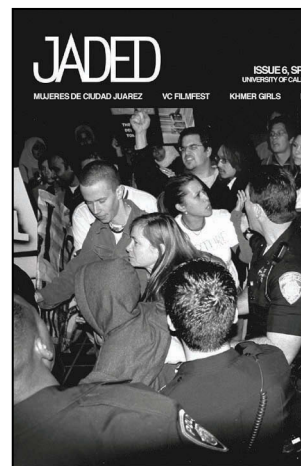
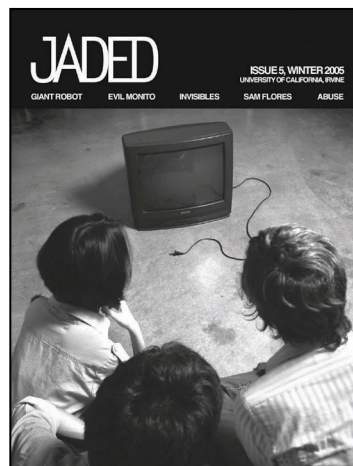
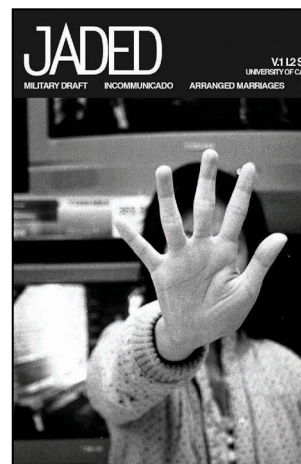
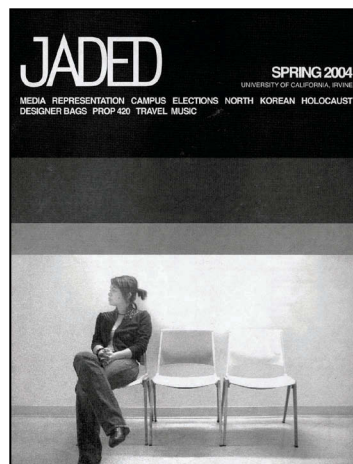
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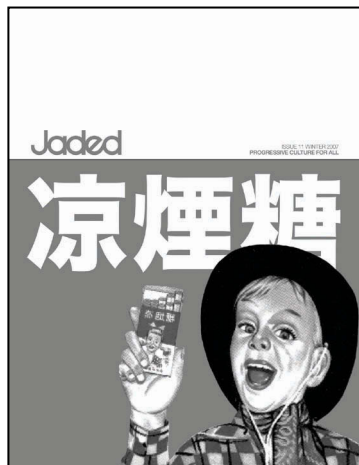
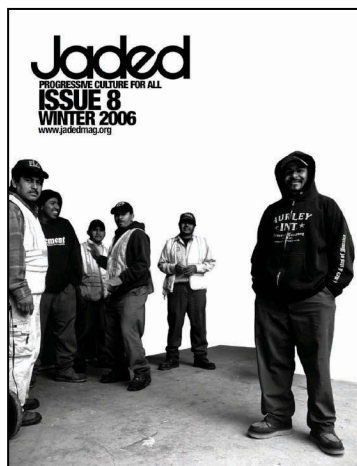
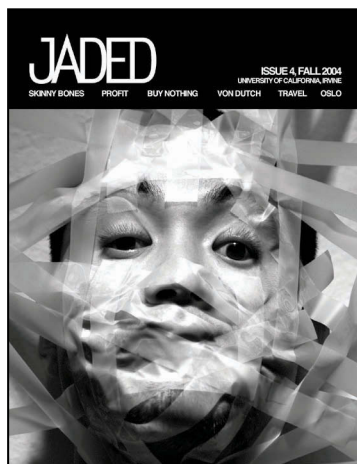
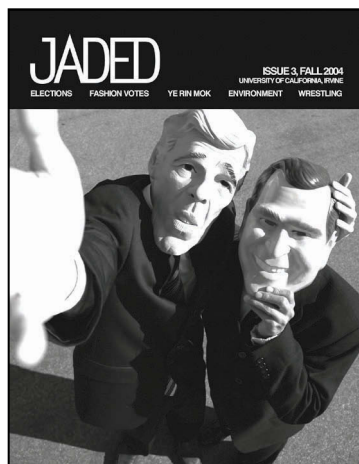
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DISCLAIMER

The ideas and opinions of the articles do not necessarily reflect those of the entire Jaded staff or UCI.





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EDITORS' NOTES

My perfect day usually starts in the car with NPR playing in the background driving to some mundane place. The day becomes one of those extraordinary moments when familiar places and everyday routines suddenly become strange. The ten lanes that make up the widest part of Irvine's MacArthur Boulevard mimics the state funded lanes of the 405 freeway. The absence of benches at bus stops start to feel like a cruel act to people that rely on OC's inefficient and infrequent bus schedules. I start to see the mile long sidewalks as obligatory designs and nonfunctional pathways that lead to no where specific. I feel ashamed that we have the luxury and money to have a sensor-triggered automatic flushing toilet, but we can not afford to pay our service workers adequate living wages. At these times, the contradictions of life become more apparent and the structural injustices become less defensible. It is these long moments that I get glimpse of the world around me. It is in these rare moments that I feel smaller but more connected to the injustices and inspired by every day people. I can never accurately describe a perfect moment, for me it is actually many moments during a process of talking and working with talented and inspiring people that help me imagine a more beautiful world.

-Diana Jou

I was driving along PCH with Diana the other week when we spotted a new development, a monstrosity built in a garish, faux-Mediterranean style. "The chunky columns! The colors! Nothing in Italy looks like this!" we yelled, our wind-whipped hair as riled up as we were. And suddenly, we rounded a bend on PCH that gave way to a serene view of the Pacific Ocean sparkling shades of teal that day. We were silenced by that sight, and remarked in softer tones that the world really could take your breath away sometimes. That is Jaded to me: a product of and critical response to Orange County, and an effort to acknowledge competing, contradictory realities. Working with Jaded has been a gift, and the friendship of the editors and staffers a rich reward for the sleepless nights and work marathons.

Thanks for joining us in our dialogue.
-Julianne Ong Hing

From writing about a prisoner convicted to life in prison for stealing cookies to trips down to Mexico looking at property I couldn't afford to buy, writing for Jaded these last few years has put me in situations that I never could have imagined. Having a reason to talk to experts, engage with little known topics, and having a job that required me to think critically about the world and politics, have been some of my favorite parts about working for the magazine. It is in neglected communities and in response to formulaic news that epiphanies about politics and society can happen. I can't begin to describe how lucky I have been to work with a group of people I absolutely respect and trust, people who are willing to put in long nights, very long nights sometimes, without pay or compensation beyond the feeling of purpose that comes with writing something that feels just. Working for something bigger than yourself, bigger than anyone one person, is both humbling and inspiring. I trust that a new wave of progressive-minded publications are beginning at UCI, to fill Jaded's shoes, even if those publications only exist at the moment as a meandering thought in the mind of a first-year. I hope you have enjoyed reading our magazine. We have loved making it.

-Patrick Appel

Most people believe that nothing constructive can be accomplished through negative thinking. I beg to differ. I joined Jaded because I was annoyed, bored, and needed a challenge. There were, and still are, many aspects of campus and Orange County life that I abhor. UCI is such a complacent institution, and I was looking for some like-minded individuals who were doing more than sitting around on couches on Ring Road. The most illuminating part about being involved in an alternative media publication is simply the satisfaction in knowing that although you're in the minority, you're definitely not alone in your views. It's so easy to lose yourself and your identity within the insular, patriarchal world of academia. Let's not forget that there's a real world beyond the orange curtain, and that it's understandable to hate shopping malls yet still find yourself employed at one. Don't ignore your negativity; embrace it, express it, and change it.

-Kayeleigh Shaw

I still get caught up watching the polarizing ideologies of the day shout each other down from across rooms, across public plazas, across the blogosphere, and across satellite feeds. I like it. It's easy thinking and sometimes none at all. Two ideas, two arguments, two sides, two parties, two religions, two countries extolling the virtues of their undeniably indisputable positions in an endless dramatic conflict that creates more drama and more conflict as it seeps into other areas of life. On it goes, even as it gets progressively and monotonously more unimaginative.

In the middle of all of this, though, I've found an interest in maybes, gray areas, the "other" column, and plans C, D, E, and F. These things expand thinking, possibilities and discourse. I believe Jaded has served those ideas and in the process prevented itself from becoming a reiteration of much louder, powerful and pervasive forces that already wield plenty of influence and control the public debate. I'm optimistic that, in some small way, the articles, profiles and ideas we put forth encouraged someone to imagine something beyond what had been prescribed by the dominant culture. If not, I hope someone at least recycled the magazine.

-Chris Dea

THE FACTS OF LIFE

COMPILED BY PATRICK APPEL

Number of the 27,000 nuclear weapons in the world controlled by the U.S. and Russia: 26,000
Number controlled North Korea: Less than 10

Percentage of legislators in Iraqi parliament who recently voted for the U.S. to set benchmarks for withdrawal: 52.4%
Percentage of U.S. congressmen in the House who voted for benchmarks: 51.2%

What a person needs to earn an hour to afford a two bedroom apartment in Orange County (according to fair market rent): \$28.56
Number of hours someone working a minimum-wage job would have to work to earn the same amount: 169.2

Percent CIA estimates wiretapping will increase between 2000 and 2010: 300%
Number of pets surgically implanted with microchip identification tags: 2,500,000

Acres of land U.S. would need to switch over to corn-based ethanol fuel: 630 million acres
Acres of useable agricultural land the United States has (total): 412 million acres

Number of people who died on 9/11: 2973
Days after 9/11 that the U.S. began bombing Afghanistan: 26

Percent of greenhouse gas emissions believed to be from deforestation: 25%
Gallons of water it takes to create one pound of beef: 855

Number of Federal Prosecutors fired by the Attorney General: 9
Number of times Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said he didn't recall during a Senate hearing on the matter: 70+

Number of Prisoners at Guantanamo Bay prison (according to Pentagon numbers): 558
Estimate of how many American men, women, and children of Japanese descent were interned during WWII: 110,000

Amount of money raised by Hillary Clinton for Democratic party primary (in the first quarter): \$26 million
Amount raised by Barack Obama for Democratic party primary (in the first quarter): \$25 million
Former record for fundraising for first quarter: \$8.9 million

Number of people who have died trying to cross the U.S. Mexico border since 1994: 4000+
A "good" wage to be making for working in a Maquilladora (per day): \$8

Number of soldiers killed in Iraq War for whom Irvine was their home town: 4
Number of 21 year-olds killed in Afghan and Iraqi Wars: 473



Life in Iowa, Presaged by the WB

TEXT BY CAROLINE GREY
IMAGE BY KARINA RABARA

When I first started thinking about college there was a show on the WB called 'Felicity' about a baffled California girl headed east to follow her crush. Every episode opened with a letter to her mentor, "Dear Sally..." A few years later, I followed a boyfriend east to college, and later followed a boyfriend even further east, and then moved to Iowa to write Barack Obama a letter. Last night, Rory Gilmore left Stars Hollow to move to Iowa and follow Barack Obama's bid for the presidency. The WB is nothing if not prescient.

I moved to Iowa in February to take a job on the campaign. I broke up with my boyfriend on Valentine's Day, threw my clothes from a stint in the Caribbean in a suitcase, filled another suitcase with books, and then stepped off the plane into a blizzard. It was as terrifying as leaving California for the East Coast the first time around.

So life in Iowa is a repetition — its motions are familiar; a reenactment that has less to do with rehearsal and more with ritual. Personally, it's my chance to relive those earnest, early moments in college when you're still desperate to embrace everything new. Politically, it's the chance to make good on the promises activists and idealists and even, secretly, cyn-

ics, have been making for 35 years. It's the chance to make good.

And Iowa is good. Idle conversation is the rule, doors are held open, my girlfriends go on dates and families answer their phones at 6:00pm, expecting a friend but happy to talk politics instead. The cities are walkable, and the art museums are sharp, and the hipster artist quotient is high enough even to satisfy my inclinations, but Iowa's caucus is first because it's meant to represent the whole of the United States. Is this heaven? No, it's Iowa. It's not meant to be perfect, but it's meant to be a prescient indicator, and I'd do anything for that to be the case. This place, I'd live in forever. I spend my days talking to Iowans who are given the chance to pick a President, they were empowered and then pressed to act on their responsibility.

A month after I arrived, the entire office spent a morning writing letters to themselves about their reasons for being here, in Iowa.

To: Senator Obama
From: Caroline Grey

"During training, one of our directors asked us to name our purpose in life and after some stuttering, someone finally told the truth: she just wanted to be happy. This campaign is the outline of that happiness for a lot of us. We tip our hand every day. I'm giddy at night and anxious in the morning, wear everything on my sleeve and share it all with my ragtag band of caucus-goers. Plainspoken is the rule and I don't know if I'm learning that from Iowa or the cam-

paign. I'm grateful either way. We left fiancés in Chicago, wake up early to write stories, live in rooms without ceilings, gave our possessions away until everything we owned could survive the trek from California to Iowa.

I can't write a poem so I'll quote one instead:

I

We asked the captain what course of action he proposed to take toward a beast so large, terrifying and unpredictable. He hesitated to answer and then said judiciously: "I think I shall praise it."

-Robert Hass

I don't have enough political experience for what I'm trying to accomplish but every intent of this campaign is familiar to me. We hesitate and listen and default to the best answer as opposed to the quick one. Judiciousness and praise might as well be written on our office walls but we settled on "empower, include, respect." Your bid gives relevance to ideals; it gives me something to say on the phone as I call through a group united by no more than a shared zipcode. It brings them into the office after that conversation and then into the campaign a week later. I love paying the compliment of discussion, of clear signals, of calculated happiness."

Epistolary romance will always be my favorite. ■

Solar-Powered Superpower

TEXT BY NADA NGAOTHEPPITAK
IMAGE BY JEFF TANG

More energy is delivered to the earth from the sun in one day than mankind uses in a year.

With fossil fuels burning up the earth's atmosphere and melting the polar ice caps, harnessing the sun's energy has become of central importance to environmentalists around the globe, but it isn't just the green movement that is getting behind solar power. With all its benefits, the United States military has solar powered visions of its own.

Recently, the government awarded a \$1.6 million contract to Konarka Technologies, Inc., to begin testing a foldable solar panel for soldiers to use in the field. In conjunction with Konarka, the military has also commissioned Iowa Thin Film Technologies to develop similar panels for the roofs of military tents. With power being generated from a portable solar panel, the seventy to a hundred pounds worth of batteries and generators soldiers normally carry could be greatly reduced. Soldiers often leave behind packs and extra batteries which can compromise their positions. Having solar powered tents would diminish the thermal signature that troops give off and reduce their chances of being detected.

However, the government isn't just using solar power to hide and protect the troops. A \$149.2 million contract with Lockheed Martin and Iowa Thin Film Technologies is creating and testing a solar powered missile defense system. The solar powered "Missile Defense Blimp" is an unmanned, radar-equipped, surveillance blimp designed to detect and neutralize incoming missiles. While the blimp would require less energy than an aircraft, it would need to be massive in order to support fundamental functions. In tests, engineers have created a prototype that is twenty-five times larger than the Goodyear blimp; hardly inconspicuous.

Military testing of solar powered crafts has been in effect since the early 1990s. A former employee of Northrop Grumman's classified

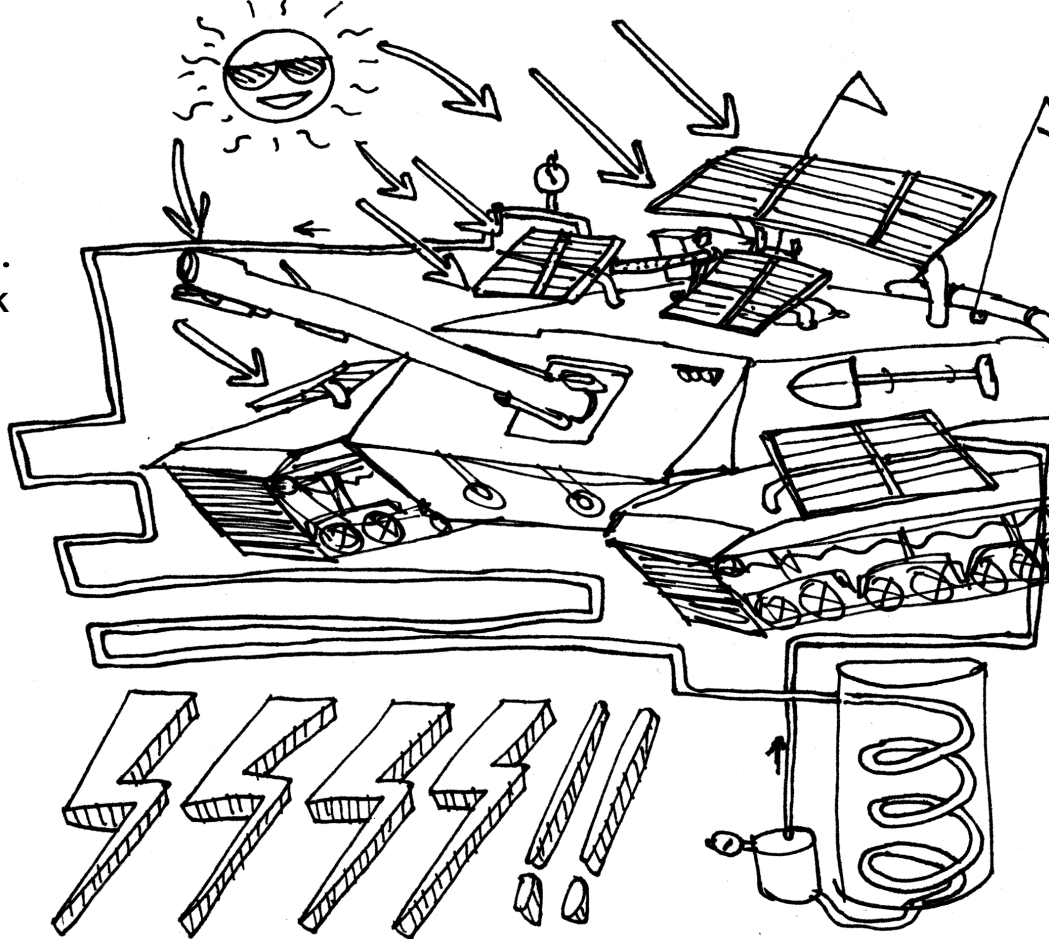
"Military testing of solar powered crafts has been in effect since the early 1990s. A former employee of Northrop Grumman's classified military aircraft team speculated that actual solar power efficiency is much better than public knowledge."

military aircraft team speculated that actual solar power efficiency is much better than public knowledge. If this is true, if the military's solar power technology is more sophisticated and effective than that available to general consumers, it seems it would be beneficial to share that knowledge with citizens to ease the energy crisis and develop better energy sources.

Even though solar power seems like the ideal energy source, it is still highly inefficient. Solar energy is abundant and free but the ability to use it in a lightweight, compact, and affordable manner is still in development. While the technology is better than it used to be, solar cells still generate only about one kilowatt of power per meter, whereas a car engine puts out about 25 kilowatts. Energy is also lost in the conversion of the DC energy into usable AC energy currents, and it is difficult and expensive to store this captured energy in large quantities.

While use of solar power has gained momentum in recent years, with production rising twenty to thirty

percent yearly, the military's use of solar power, using millions of dollars to fund unrealistic and illogical projects, like Missile Defense Blimps, is an abuse of solar technology. The money needed to create solar powered defenses could be better used in more practical devices meant to benefit the populous or the money could further subsidize the formidable cost that installing solar panels poses to citizens. The department of defense's budget (439.3 billion dollars in 2007) means that they are one of the biggest sponsors of new technologies; because the military has so much of the budget, technology firms are often forced to create military weaponry when the technology they are developing could be used to create infrastructure rather than destroy it. Instead of spending hundreds of millions in tax payer's dollars on a device that relies on solar technology, perhaps government should first look to improve solar power efficiency to create better and more ecological energy supply for the people. ■



WORKING THROUGH THE MAIZE

by Julianne Ong Hing & Chris Dea

INTRO

As a plant, corn is an unassuming stalk of greenery. But as a commodity, corn is a mega crop that's backed by a phalanx of American multinational corporations that have gone to great lengths to secure and maintain corn's dominance in the global food and energy market.

THE BIG THREE

The corn industry is led by three companies: Monsanto, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), and Cargill-Continental. Monsanto is the world's largest developer of genetically modified seeds and pesticides. ADM is the world's largest processor of corn and grains products and the top producer of ethanol in the US. Cargill, the second largest private company in the world, works in grains and financial trading, grains processing, and animal feed production. Together, ADM and Cargill are two of the four agribusinesses that control 81% of the global corn trade.

MONSANTO
imagine®



Based In St. Louis, MO

Revenue FY2006: \$7.3 billion

Profit FY2006: \$3.5 billion

Interesting fact: Produced the chemical Agent Orange

Products: GMOs, agrochemicals, bovine growth hormone, seeds

MONEY



LOBBYING GROUPS

Corporations increase their political leverage by creating lobbying groups to advance their interests. Some corporate-backed lobbying groups are the American Sugar Alliance and the American Farm Bureau Federation, a farm bloc made up of landowners, rural banks, insurance companies, and farm equipment dealers.

Cargill

Based In Minneapolis, MN

Revenue FY2006: \$75.2 billion

Profit FY2006: \$1.54 billion

Interesting fact: Convicted of price fixing, defrauding customers, and exploiting suppliers

Products: Corn and grains processing, feed and fertilizer protection, commodities tradings

INFLUENCE

PRODUCT

CORN, CORN, THE MIRACLE CROP

Corn is the basis of chemicals like sorbitol, corn syrup, citric acid, and corn starch which are all found in everyday household products. Corn is also processed into cattle and pig feed. The two most profitable corn products though are high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and corn-based ethanol. HFCS are used in nearly all processed foods from cereals to lunchmeats to sodas.

ADM

Based In Decatur, IL

Revenue FY2006: \$36 billion

Profit FY2006: \$2.9 billion

Interesting fact: It was revealed in a Congressional hearing that ADM patriarch, Dwayne Andreas, wrote a \$25,000 check to finance Nixon's Watergate break-in.

Products: Corn and grains processing, futures trading, largest producer of corn ethanol in the U.S., high fructose corn syrup



"Monsanto should not have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech food. Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible. Assuring its safety is the F.D.A.'s job" - Phil Angell, Monsanto's director of corporate communications.

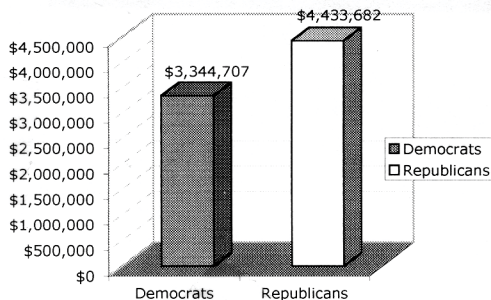
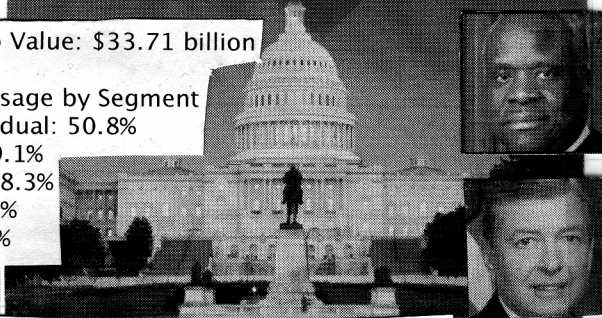
BIOTECHNOLOGY

Biotech firms like Monsanto select desirable traits and design genetically engineered (GE) seeds that guarantee the expression of those traits. Monsanto has created maize seeds that are high-yielding, insect and herbicide resistant, and even drought-resistant. They sound too good to be true because they are. Firms patent the science of their findings to privatize traditional localized agricultural practices. Biotech firms also insure their profit in other ways. Some GM seeds are designed to "terminate" after one season so that farmers are locked into buying GE seeds every year. More than 70% of all processed food eaten in the US comes from GM crops.

Sources: National Corn Growers Association; Grist Magazine; Environmental Working Group; USDA; Corporation Watch; Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, Iowa State University

2006
Corn Crop Value: \$33.71 billion

US Corn Usage by Segment
Food/Residual: 50.8%
Export: 19.1%
Ethanol: 18.3%
Other: 7.4%
HFCS: 4.4%



ADM Total Political Contributions 1990-2006

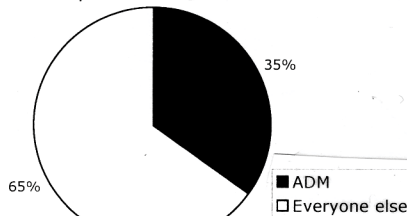
They also donate strategically to politicians when major agriculture legislation like the Farm Bill, which is renewed every five years. ADM donates primarily to political action committees (PACs), and the rest of their contributions go to individual candidates on Capitol Hill in discrete \$1,000 amounts. ADM gives to both conservative and liberal politicians like Dennis Hastert (D-IL), the Chairman of the Senate Agricultural Committee and Tom Harkin (D-IA), Max Baucus (D-MT) and Pat Roberts (R-KS).

GOVERNMENT AID = CORPORATE WELFARE

In return, politicians support bills that benefit corporations. "Aid" is an umbrella term for government farm support, which can take the form of subsidies that give direct payments to companies. Aid also includes implementing price floors so corporations that harvest a surplus crop can get paid even if they dump their excess. The US government also passes tariffs and quotas on foreign imports to bolster American corn crop prices against competition from foreign imports. American taxpayers paid \$15 billion in farm aid in 2005 and \$9.413 billion in subsidies alone. Aid is not distributed equally either; eighty-three percent of subsidies go to just 20% of aid recipients.

HOW SWEET IT IS

In the 1970s major corn corporations needed new markets for surplus corn harvests that subsidies created. ADM developed methods for converting corn into concentrated sweetener - HFCS - for the soda industry. But HFCS couldn't be made cheaply enough to compete with sugar.



High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) Market

So ADM financed the American sugar lobby's demands that Congress implement quotas on cheap foreign sugar imports. ADM pushed a protectionist policy via American sugar companies. When these policies led to sugar price increases, the corn industry stepped in to steal their sweet business away. With HFCS the less expensive sweetener, both Pepsi and Coca-Cola switched over from using 100% sucrose (sugar) to 100% HFCS as their drinks' sweeteners.

Coca-Cola

PEPSI

Neither corn-based ethanol nor high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) would exist in the US market if it weren't for consistent government support and corporate manipulation.

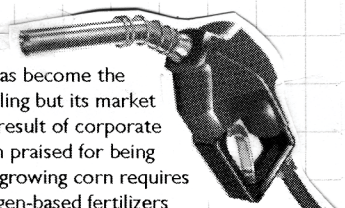
Faces

Political Title	Corporate Role
Clarence Thomas Supreme Court Justice appointed by Bush, Sr.	Monsanto attorney
Chuck Conner Deputy Secretary of Agriculture appointed by Bush, Jr.; former aide to Senator Richard Lugar	Former President of the Corn Refiners Association; former USDA official
Linda Fisher EPA Deputy Administrator appointed by Bush, Jr.	Monsanto lobbyist
John Ashcroft Attorney General appointed by Bush Jr.	Received \$60k in campaign contributions from Monsanto
Richard Lugar U.S. Senator	Longtime proponent of agribusiness, he co-wrote a paper extolling the virtues of corn-based ethanol with James Woolsey of BCI International, an ethanol start-up company.
Donald Rumsfeld Former Secretary of Defense for Bush, Jr.	President of Searle Pharmaceuticals, which was bought by Monsanto -- estimated Rumsfeld pocketed \$12 million in the sale
James Woolsey Former CIA Director	Board member of BCI International, an ethanol start-up company.
Stansfield Turner Former CIA Director	Monsanto board member
Bob Dole Former U.S. Senator	ADM was Dole's largest campaign contributor; Dole helped arrange and protect a \$3.5 billion tax credit for ethanol (54 cents per gallon.) Archer Daniels makes 60% of this ethanol and receives \$2 billion directly from this tax credit.
Ann Veneman Secretary of Agriculture appointed by Bush, Jr.	Board of directors for Calgene Pharmaceuticals (now owned by Monsanto)

\$9.413 billion in 2005

CORNAHOL

Corn-based ethanol has become the alternative energy darling but its market popularity is another result of corporate manipulation. It's often praised for being "carbon neutral," but growing corn requires vast amounts of nitrogen-based fertilizers that pollute the groundwater and increase soil erosion. The demanding conversion process of ethanol is not energy efficient either. But the corn industry has seized on rising oil prices to push ethanol to the forefront of the energy debate.



WHAT'S NOT BEING TALKED ABOUT

- For the majority of the world that survives on less than \$2 a day, the recent price jumps of corn threaten the survival of millions. In Mexico when tortilla prices quadrupled in the fall of 2006, angry protests from Mexico's poor (who get 40% of their protein intake from tortillas) demanded government market intervention.
- Algae is a better source of ethanol and biodiesel. Algae is capable of producing 30 times more ethanol per acre than corn, is non-toxic, biodegradable, and does not draw from the world food supply.
- The ethanol-focused debate drowns out any talk about changing and reducing our consumption habits.

The Color of Patriotism

TEXT BY PATRICK APPEL
IMAGE BY CHRIS DEA

During the Civil War, a woman pinned a yellow ribbon to her chest as a symbol that she was betrothed to a member of the cavalry. During the 1979 Iran hostage crisis yellow ribbons were tied to trees as an act of solidarity with the hostages. When the first Gulf War started, the ribbons were used by some to symbolize support for our troops while others considered them a sign of peace. Yellow ribbons represented hawkish values and at the same time popped up at a peace memorial for a man who had committed suicide in response to the Gulf War.

The yellow ribbons appeared again in the months after 9/11, this time as yellow magnets stuck to the backs of trucks and VW bugs alike. When the yellow ribbons reappeared at the start of the Iraq War in 2003, they were meant to bring American opinion behind the troops and stifle the dissent of the anti-war movement. They were designed to avoid the type of public malaise that the troops encountered coming home from Vietnam, with the addition of SUPPORT OUR TROOPS across the yellow band. Riding on the backwash of patriotism from 9/11, the ribbons sold well.

As the war has progressed and digressed, yellow ribbons have donned fewer and fewer cars. Those who still proudly display them don't necessarily still support the war (as opposed to the troops), with even conservative pundits turning their backs on the Bush administration. According to Gallop polls in February of 2007, seventy-one percent of Americans think the war in Iraq is going badly. Over half favor setting dates for the soldiers to come home.

While public sentiment has changed, anti-war advocates still often voice hate for the yellow ribbons, without being able to articulate why they feel this way. This has led to attacks on yellow ribbon people, rather than a deconstruction of the symbol. It's not that the ribbons themselves are dangerous; it is their use as a socializing tool by a conforming nation that has frustrated pacifists. It isn't what the ribbons said, but what the ribbons prevented from being said. The one-sided debate on Iraq that led up to the war was related to the overzealous patriotism that yellow ribbons embodied. While the yellow ribbon has meant different things to different people at different times, it currently is an attempt to narrow the public's point of view and to silence dissent. Put another way, yellow ribbons are a second muffler on the back of cars. ■



One Laptop Per Child

TEXT BY DAVID SALVADOR
IMAGE BY ARA JO

A nonprofit organization called One Laptop per Child [OLPC] is developing a \$100 laptop that could revolutionize education as we know it. The Children's Machine, the laptop's official title, will provide an interactive electronic environment where libraries, televisions and other educational entities are scarce or unavailable. Developers for OLPC hail the Children's Machine as "a window into the world and a tool with which to think." The computer is a platform through which children can autonomously gain knowledge and interact with fellow students. Full color flatscreens, which can be made viewable in direct sunlight, Wi-Fi mesh networking, flash memory, optional handcranks or ripcords for power, and built-in cameras and microphones are just some of the computer's features that will allow children to read e-books, chat via instant messaging clients, and—most importantly—report to their host school in order to monitor progress.

OLPC first received funding for the project from Google, News Corp, AMD, Red Hat, Brightstar and Nortel at two million dollars each. Since then, eBay, SES Global and Marvell have joined the ranks. Nicholas Negroponte, chairman of OLPC and co-founder of the MIT Media Lab, spearheads the operation and serves as the organization's public figure, taking the time to personally answer most queries and respond to criticism.

Negroponte is quick to stress that \$100 is strictly a target price, possible by 2008. Prices today range from \$127 to \$208 per unit. This said, a lot of public interest (especially in the United States) has focused on how to obtain a \$100 laptop for consumers. OLPC's stance has remained firm, stating simply that "You can't." The Children's Machine is made available only to national government agencies, namely Ministries of Education. The way a government chooses to allocate its resources, and whether or not the governments decide to invest in the laptops, is out of OLPC's hands.

Whether starving children need

laptops as opposed to food, water and shelter is the main criticism by the project's skeptics. Negroponte side-steps these claims by redefining the laptop's intended market to include those who can account for their own basic needs, but don't have a shot at a decent education. Critics have also raised questions about people selling the laptops for profit after they arrive in their destination country. Negroponte smoothly quelled any concern by alluding to the optional GPS feature and to a security mechanism by which the laptop would fail to function if it doesn't touch base with the host school. One analyst has reported that it would cost roughly \$200 per laptop a year when taking into account the laptop itself, setup, training, maintenance, and internet access.

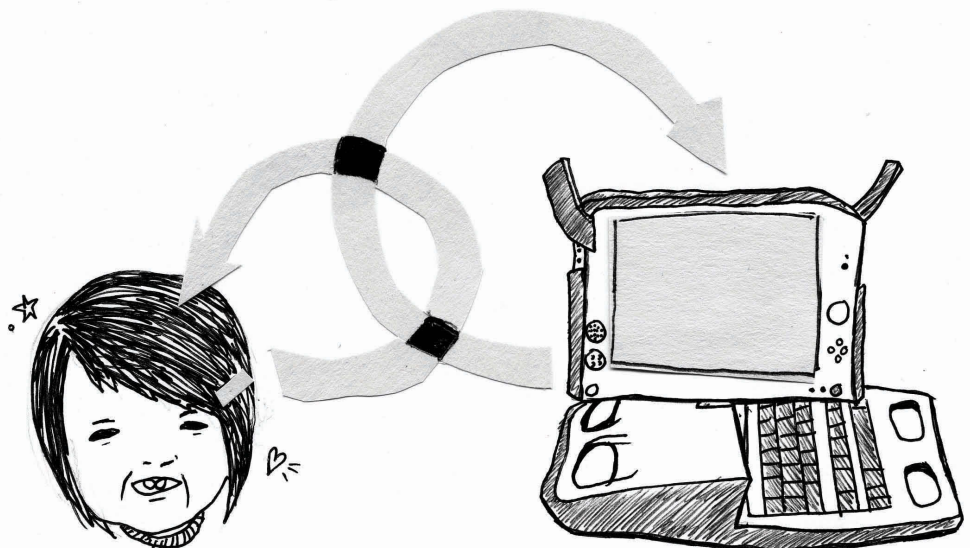
Undaunted by associated risks and price tags, Argentina, Brazil, Libya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Thailand and Uruguay have all signed contracts with OLPC, and full-scale production is scheduled to start mid 2007. Libya signed a \$250 million contract on October 11, 2006, providing laptops for all of its 1.2 million school children (that's \$208.33 per laptop for those of us that are counting). The Children's Machine could easily become the world's most widely distributed piece of technology; Negroponte predicts upwards of 5 million units being shipped by year's end.

With so much generally posi-

tive feedback and recognized potential, a number of imitators have surfaced to produce their own sub-notebooks and capitalize on OLPC's idea. Intel, AMD's chief rival in the realm of computer processors, has announced the Classmate PC on the grounds that the Children's Machine is more of a gadget, and those countries aiming to narrow the digital divide should look into a more generic PC. Intel has estimated its cost to be \$350. Argentina has ordered one million Classmate PCs and Mexico has already begun discussions to receive 300,000.

So why isn't the United States getting affordable laptops for its school children? With so many American children in economically disadvantaged schools, shouldn't we have been amongst the first in line to sign up? True, the Children's Machine caters to the needs of developing countries, but that shouldn't mean that our students take a back seat. Massachusetts and Maine have already begun to lobby for their schools.

OLPC will rate its success based on the education levels of students before and after the Children's Machine is distributed. OLPC's mission "is an education project, not a laptop project." It's not just about consumerism or keeping up with technology, instead it is about using the available technology in first world countries as a way of broadening access to education in third world nations. With Negroponte stepping down in 2006 from his position as MIT Media Lab's chairman to focus on OLPC, and with an array of companies donating their checkbooks and many talents, education for the masses is on the horizon...all for \$100. ■



Some Assembly Required: **Mexican Women Workers and the Struggle for Justice**

TEXT BY JULIANNE ONG HING
IMAGES BY DIANA JOU



“Within globalization, a woman factory worker is like a commodity,” a woman in Maquilapolis says. “As a maquila woman... we are just objects, objects of labor.”

Early in the film *Maquilapolis*, Carmen Durán, a single mother of three kids, tells her story to a camera she is operating. “I have worked in nine assembly plants. I was thirteen years old when I arrived in Tijuana,” she narrates quietly. Carmen explains the work she did for Japanese electronics company Sanyo making flybacks, a television component. “When I started working [at Sanyo] my nose started to bleed because of the chemicals. The adhesive smelled horrible, like burning plastic... I started having kidney trouble because they wouldn’t let us drink water or go to the bathroom.” She seems unfazed by the workplace horrors she is recounting.

And even as she goes on to tell how she eventually lost her job when Sanyo said they were moving their production to Indonesia to chase the cheaper labor costs, she maintains a calm equanimity. Mexican labor law required Sanyo to pay their workers a severance check before they left. But Sanyo began making work unbearable for their employees in sinister, yet perfectly legal, ways so Carmen and her fellow workers would quit, thus surrendering their right to their severance money. Carmen was forced from the night shift to the afternoon shift and eventually to the day shift, which made it impossible for her to take care of her kids, yet she refused to quit her job. When Sanyo abandoned their Tijuana

plant without providing any severance pay to their workers, Carmen did not accept the multinational company’s escape quietly.

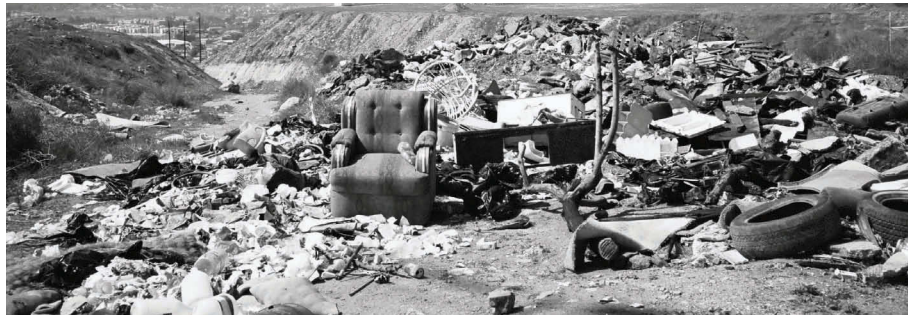
Instead, she sued Sanyo with the help of the Tijuana-based Workers’ Information Center, CITTAC (Centro de Información para Trabajadoras y Trabajadores, A.C.). The film *Maquilapolis* follows Carmen to her meetings with CITTAC attorney Jaime Cota, a tall man with a neat ponytail of thinning gray hair whose everyday uniform is a striped short-sleeved shirt and jeans. Jaime runs the 20-year-old cooperative with other activists who fight for workers’ rights. As he discusses the legal proceedings of Carmen’s case, Carmen reaches for the right Biblical allusion to give hope to the other plaintiffs. “We are like Samson ... no, David, who are fighting against Goliath, the big corporation.”

In many ways Carmen’s story is very typical of people in her line of work. She is one of roughly 50,000 Tijuana residents who work in maquiladoras, assembly plants owned by multinational companies that line the Mexico-US border. The major maquila centers are located in Tijuana, Mexicali, Reynosa and Juarez and other northern towns that share borders and connections with sister cities in the US: San Diego, Calexico, McAllen, and El Paso. Maquilas are often regarded as a post-NAFTA free market phenomena, but they actually date back to 1965 when Mexico

instituted the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) to attract foreign investment to Mexico after the United States terminated another contract labor initiative, the Bracero Program. The supposed intention of the maquiladoras was to provide jobs for workers in Mexico. Indeed, 1.17 million workers were employed in maquiladoras in 2006 according to the National Institute of Geographical Statistics and Information (INEGI). Carmen is just one of many.

Carmen’s story is unique in one significant way though. She is a promotora, a community organizer, who became an activist after her experience with Sanyo. She took part in *Maquilapolis*, a recent project fusing art and activism, to address the effects of the maquila industry and the destabilizing forces of corporate globalization. Vicky Funari and Sergio De La Torre directed the documentary that gave cameras to twelve promotoras, like Carmen, to document their everyday lives. The premise of the film was simple: allow women to tell their own stories. Armed with a camera, these women show extraordinary courage in the face of corporate intimidation and threats of unemployment.

Most of the maquila workforce is female. And while there is no official explanation for this, Sergio De La Torre argues that corporations see women as an attractive workforce because “women are seen as much more



submissive. They won't organize, they won't complain about the chemicals and the bad treatment. But the complete opposite happens. The women organize and fight back." And so the film begins to encompass a larger narrative of women demanding to be heard, of women drawing on the strength of their communities to demand change. *Maquilapolis* is an experiment in the development and documentation of a counter-narrative to the dominant rhetoric around labor struggles in Mexico. Carmen's experiences and those of her fellow maquila workers are not uncommon, but they are so often untold. And yet the film is just one expression of a multi-pronged resistance fighting for environmental justice, workers' rights, and international solidarity.

Maquiladoras operate in a free market zone where companies, usually US-owned, are allowed to import raw materials, machinery, and other parts duty free. Companies can set up factories that bring unfinished pieces of a product together so that the last stages of the most labor-intensive work can be completed by a group of inexpensive workers. Once finished goods are assembled, they get re-exported, usually to the United States. Most are exempt from paying taxes to the local governments they operate in. Through the maquila program every imaginable type of manufactured good has passed through Mexican assembly plants: panty hose, medi-

cine, irons, weapons, elevators, and toys are all manufactured in maquiladoras. And maquila industries import nearly \$22 billion yearly in raw materials and components. Tijuana alone has strong electronics, automobile, and medical instruments divisions making goods for companies like Toyota, Sony, Samsung, Canon, and Philips.

Maquilas make very smart business sense for foreign investors. A typical maquila wage is about \$8 USD for eight hours of work. As Made in Mexico, Inc., a San Diego-based subcontracting firm, boasts on their website to potential clients, "The entry-level wage for low-level jobs in Mexico is approximately 25% of the hourly wage paid to workers in the U.S., which nets you enormous cost savings." The company website continues to extol the cost effectiveness of maquiladoras, saying US businesses can take advantage of "low-cost Mexican labor, advantageous tariff regulations, and a close proximity to US markets." It's an ideal set up for foreign-based companies. But business people, better than anyone, should know that nothing comes for free. And the true costs and human impacts of maquiladora operations in Mexico are borne out in the day-to-day struggles of life as a maquila worker.

The camera in *Maquilapolis* later follows Jaime, Carmen, and other women workers to the arbitration hearing for their Sanyo case

run by the Labor Board. On that day Carmen holds her youngest child at her hip. After their small group staggers into the office – they have to carry in their own chairs to the proceedings – the defendant's lawyer mocks the women and the proceedings quickly reach a deadlock. Carmen looks down into the camera and whispers incredulously, "The Labor Board, instead of helping us, they are – should I say it? – screwing us," letting out a quick expletive in Spanish.

The film shows Carmen in the early morning corralling her kids into their home in Lagunitas, a neighborhood in Tijuana, after coming home from a night shift at a nearby maquila. She heats water for her kids' baths and puts some leftover soup on the stove for a quick morning meal. It's an endearing domestic scene, except Carmen's home has no floors, and her walls are made out of refuse, discarded garage doors from American homes. Not far away, Lourdes Luján, another maquila worker, looks out over a stream that divides the two sides of her neighborhood. She lives in Colonia Chilpancingo, a residential neighborhood that sits at the base of one of the wealthiest industrial parks in Tijuana, a section of town called Otay Mesa. Chilpancingo is home to many maquiladora workers who set up their homes close to the factories. Lourdes gestures towards the filthy water gurgling unnatural shades of



Previous Page: The view from Otay Mesa.

Above Top: Workers and organizers at CITTAC, Carmen Duran second to right.

Above Bottom: Polluted river near Chilpancingo
Opposite Top Right, Clockwise: Industrial waste from an abandoned maquila; Colonia Chilpancingo; The view of the border wall from Tijuana

gray and says, "The factories pollute the river. Some days it's black, green, red, foamy."

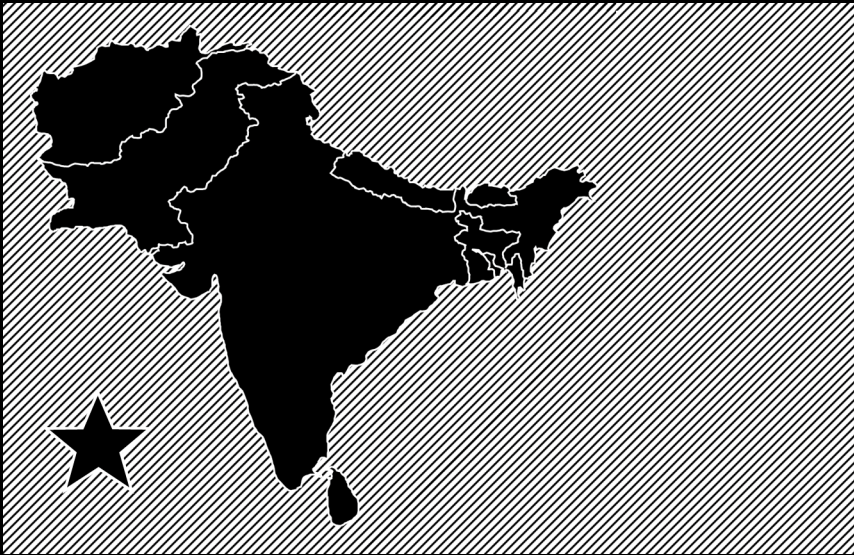
Chilpancingo is essentially a shantytown. Its residents are squatters in a neighborhood of improvised homes. The unpaved, stamped dirt streets are lined with sandbags, and address numbers are marked with spray paint. There is evidence everywhere of the engineering creativity that the desperation of poverty demands. A retaining wall of stacked tires holds back the earth at the river's shore. Homes are just shacks; their walls of wood pallets and branches stand under tarpaulin roofs advertising Marlboro cigarettes and Tecate beer. It is an unfortunate picture on film, and a devastating sight in real life.

Maquila workers average a weekly income of \$48 USD. While this salary beats the Mexican minimum wage of \$5 a day, a maquila salary is not enough for a family's basic needs. An hour of work barely buys a jug of water, and two hours just a gallon of milk. As Maquilapolis director Sergio De La Torre explained in an interview, "Many women work for the maquila and in the informal economy. They sell Avon, Tupperware, cosmetics. They take in other families' laundry or do clothes mending and cooking for more income."

The maquiladora industry has often been touted as the solution to the hemorrhaging of Mexican workers leaving their home country for better paying jobs in the

U.S., but it has failed because of the fundamental contradictions of neoliberal policies that allow foreign companies to descend on Mexican towns to extract labor without paying taxes or investing in the infrastructure of the Mexican economy. Economic policies that are designed to benefit only US businesses are more like contracts for indentured servitude than trade agreements. It's in neighborhoods like Chilpancingo where the lofty goals of free market fundamentalism meet the reality of structural inequality. In the vast production chain of consumer goods, maquiladoras are just one stop in a long line of exploitative business arrangements that keep costs down so corporations can maximize their profits. "Within globalization, a woman factory worker is like a commodity," a woman in Maquilapolis says. "As a maquila woman... we are just objects, objects of labor."

In real life Carmen is more petite than her spirit on film. She speaks frankly about the everyday struggles of her job and organizing other workers, but her kind voice belies the fearlessness that drives her activism. "Workers must know their rights, they have the right to sue the maquilas. They ruin my life when they move my hours, but my mission is not to be suing companies all the time. My goal is to stay and educate workers about our rights to justice." ■



SOUTH ASIAN ALL-STARS THINKERS & MOVERS

IMAGES BY SAEIDEH OMIDGHAEMI

We are proud to present four outstanding South Asian/American thinkers and movers that show us the innovative possibilities of integrating social justice values with any profession. From journalism to economics, they transform the traditional practices of their field to fight the growing disparity between the rich and the poor and between the powerful and the powerless. At the same time, they redefine “activism” to include people that are serving their community through science and banking models. They refuse to accept structural injustices as a normative way of living and they introduce new and improved ways of operating and living in this globalized world. Through their passion and commitment to their field and social justice, we hope they will inspire a new class of creative movers and innovative thinkers.



Arundhati Roy

Writer, Public Speaker, and Activist

Arundhati Roy, a brilliant thinker and humble public speaker, crafts poetically poignant essays on the US' war on terrorism, nuclear policies, globalization, the misuses of nationalism, public power, and the growing class divide. In her public speeches she never shouts but consistently delivers powerful ideas line after line that linger in your mind well after the speech is over. With a strong command of literary language and a deep understanding of humanity, she captivates her audience and engages them in a journey of critical reflection of the world around us. Roy connects ideas of war and terrorism calling it a “privatization of war.” Roy wittily compares John Kerry and George Bush with detergents, underneath the shrill exchange of insults, there is almost absolute consensus. “It’s not a real choice. It’s an apparent choice. Like choosing a brand of detergent. Whether you buy Ivory Snow or Tide, they’re both owned by Proctor & Gamble.” She is able to expose the absurdity and hypocrisy of American foreign policies labeling the government as “preaching peace but waging war.”

Her first novel, *God of Small Things* won England’s most prestigious literary award, the Booker Prize in 1997. Her non-fiction works include, *The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile*, *The Cost of Living*, *Power Politics* and *An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire*. In 2004 Roy was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize and in January 2006 she was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award for her essay ‘The Algebra of Infinite Justice’, but declined to accept it to affirm her protest with the Indian government. Roy currently resides in New Delhi and is working on her second novel.

-Diana Jou

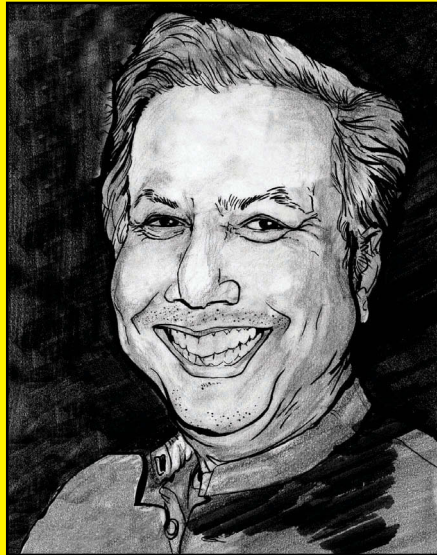


Vandana Shiva

Physicist and Eco-feminist

Vandana Shiva envisions global reforms in agriculture that help create "living democracies...based on the intrinsic worth of all species, all peoples, and all cultures." Shiva combines her advocating for global justice with her background in environmentalism, writing and speaking against globalization in farming, a problem she sees as "suicidal" to global health. Arguing that globalization and privatization result in a "culture of exclusion, dispossession and scarcity," Shiva recommends a return to community farming. She also critiques corporate bioengineering as unsustainable and as one cause of lower quality harvests. Shiva's many books, *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit*; *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*; *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*; *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*; and *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace* all focus on components of the struggle for a more equitable and just relationship to economies of food production. Raised by a forest conservator father and an animal loving mother, Shiva believes in a global democracy that counts members of all species as global citizens. Among many other accomplishments, Shiva has won the Alternative Nobel Prize (The Right Livelihood Award). She is also a leader of the International Forum on Globalization, along with Jeremy Rifkin and Ralph Nader.

-Patrick Appel



Muhammad Yunus

Economist

Since when have poor people been approved for credit? Nobel prize winner Dr. Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh founded Grameen Bank in the 1980s (translating to "Bank of the Villages"). He has amassed a total of 6.61 million borrowers as of May 2006. Motivated by the Bangladesh famine in 1974, Yunus started with \$27 loans to forty-two families for them to jumpstart getting out of poverty. After much success in Jobra village and other nearby villages, the bank was dubbed an independent bank in Bangladesh by 1983.

Working together with small groups of borrowers (about five), Grameen Bank loans them a set amount of money. If one person does not meet his or her legal obligation, the rest of the group is denied any more credit. This establishes incentives for all parties to "act responsibly" in line with one another. There has been a 98% payback rate and many have been able to escape acute poverty. An astonishing amount of borrowers (97%) have been women.

As a Vanderbilt University doctorate graduate, Yunus innovatively incorporated a set of values into the not-so-ethical banking system. By means of the Sixteen Decisions, a sort of published commandments the bank abides by, the bank operates on microcredit and self-help. As an economist, Yunus knows there's no such thing as a free meal. Instead, he opts for a "fundamental rethink on the economic relationship between the rich and the poor." Recognizing credit as a fundamental human right is essential, according to Yunus, to promote hope and the total eradication of poverty.

-Janelle Flores



Rinku Sen

Writer, Organizer, Publisher, and Activist

When asked, at the 2007 Facing Race conference at Columbia University, what she would do if she were able to make governmental decisions about racial justice Rinku Sen replied in part that, "I would put a team to work to find out how racism could be redefined to take the intention requirement out of the definition of racism. That is, I would think about Supreme Court appointments, and I would think about creating civil rights legislation that does not require someone to prove that there was the intention to discriminate in order to prove that discrimination had happened."

Rinku Sen, publisher of Colorlines Magazine and the President and Executive Director at the Applied Research Center, is a leading voice in discussions about race. A strong advocate for universal healthcare, freer immigration, a better education system, among a myriad of other causes, Sen was voted one of twenty-one feminists to watch in the 21st century by Ms. Magazine. For twelve years, Sen served as a director at the Center for Third World Organizing, where she trained new organizers and created public policy campaigns. Emigrating from India to the U.S. in 1972 with her parents, Sen grew up in suburbia, a world apart from those of a shared racial and cultural background. Graduating with a B.A. in Women's Studies from Brown University in 1988 and an M.S. in Journalism from Columbia University in 2005, Sen recognizes the work of prominent African-Americans and feminists as initially radicalizing her understanding of race and politics. She is the author of *Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing* and the editor of *We Are the Ones We Are Looking For*.

-Patrick Appel



I See There, Fore I Am

TEXT BY PAUL OSHIMA

If you ever go into the basement of a research library and walk through the solemn rows of bounded periodicals, you'll be sure to find old copies of magazines like *Life* and *Time* published during the Japanese American internment in concentration camps. Looking through these magazines, you will also be sure to find ads and photographs full of hope and optimism for the future enthusiastically espousing racism, sexism, and consumerism. Such racist photographic representations took on another level of meaning when covering the subject of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The official rationale for the Japanese American concentration camps was the "threat" of sabotage, to "protect" Japanese Americans, and "military necessity." An analysis of photographic representations covering the War in the Pacific and Japanese internment offers another rationale: revenge, revenge, revenge. Japanese Americans were held responsible for the actions of Japanese citizens because Japanese Americans were considered to be not merely more Japanese than American but rather, Japanese and not American.

In February of 1942, FDR — avowed advocate of civil rights — denied the rights of Japanese Americans when he issued Executive Order 9066. The order effectively imprisoned Japanese Americans on the West Coast in concentration camps for the duration of World War II. It took 40 years — after many of these internees had died — for these victims



to receive \$20,000 and an apology from the federal government. Unfortunately, the federal government was unable to return the three or so years of the Japanese Americans' lives or the property that could, post-World War II, be found in the hands of the government and neighbors who had the good fortune to not be "relocated" for the duration of the war. Nor could the government redress the potent anti-Japanese American discrimination on the West Coast that persisted even after the war.

During World War II, Japanese Americans (people of color, in general) were not considered fully American. America had made it clear that it didn't want any immigrants from Asia by passing a federal law, which had effectively stopped all Asian immigration by 1924. First-generation Asian Americans were not allowed to become citizens, a federal law in place since 1790. Here in sunny California, it was illegal for Asian immigrants to own



Opposite Top: The caption for this image from *Life* (October 14, 1940) reads: "The color line is drawn by real-estate owners who say that white tenants move as soon as Japanese enter neighborhood. Housing is the worst problem of the Nisei."

Opposite Bottom: Nisei Week Queen being crowned in Los Angeles.

Left: The caption for this image from *Life* (October 14, 1940) reads: "Graduate of U.C. Agricultural School tends his flowers in a Los Angeles County field. Californians dislike proximity of Japanese farms to oil wells."

land or property. For the second-generation Asian American, citizenship was mostly nominal. Occupational discrimination was legal, billboards pronounced the boundaries of residential segregation, and interracial sexual relations were criminal. America had defined itself as a white nation and made many of its laws based on that premise. Photographic representations are doubtless informed by these exclusionary definitions about who is eligible to be an American.

The cover image from a September 7, 1942 *Life* article shows J.B. Powell, an American newsman released from Japanese-occupied Shanghai. The caption reads, "Americans Return from Jap Prison Camp" and above it is a photograph of an emaciated white American man, helplessly lying in bed, a horrifically amputated foot held up on display. In the article, Powell blames medical incompetence for the amputation, yet the *Life* article's gruesome photo and description tell another story. According to the article, Powell was "put in a filthy concentration camp" and a "Jap [sic] doctor looked at his [gangrenous] feet and laughed," suggesting brutish and inhuman Japanese cruelty. This cruelty was then ascribed to Japanese Americans.

During WWII, the Japanese were also described as unimaginative, traditional, and obedient (sound familiar?) in everything from *Fortune* to *Time* magazine. These characteristics were just as rapidly applied to Japanese Americans. In the April, 1944 issue of *Fortune*, which is fully dedicated to Japan and its people, some of the captions underneath the photos are "Etiquette is ground into them," "They imitate Western opera and make baseball a national sport," and "Their minds are full of ghosts." A caption goes on to describe chopsticks as primitive. A *Life* article from August 16, 1943 includes antipathetic headers such as "Japanese are Imitative and Traditional But United by Emperor Worship and Hate." Captions describe how Japanese don't say what they mean, are suspicious of one another, and sit in imbecilic positions. Japanese

soldiers were furthermore described as rapists, cannibals, and deviants in *Life*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*.

Visual strategies of Othering (Othering meaning to exclude a group of people from one's own group and define the excluded group as utterly different), were used against Japanese Americans to further exacerbate the improbability of public (a.k.a. white) sympathy. The October 14, 1940 *Life* article, "The Nisei: California Casts an Anxious Eye Upon the Japanese-Americans in its Midst" is evidence of both the mighty hyphen that can bridge these "distinct" identities, and visual strategies of Othering pre-existing the December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor. Although the article's main image of a Japanese American man in a field might initially seem empathetic, the man's face is somewhat obscured. His eyes cannot be seen and his body is in an awkward, unflattering position. Just as important as the Japanese American man are the oil fields carefully kept in the frame of the image. As the article goes on to discuss, the proximity of Japanese farms to oil fields, airfields, and harbors justifies white American fears of sabotage. The other photographs in the article, though generally upbeat, are often shot from a distance, showing the Japanese Americans in undifferentiated masses. There are no portraits, there are few names and, conspicuously, the only white person shown amongst the Japanese Americans is a government agent, the mayor of Los Angeles.

Small but notable gains in public perception were achieved through Japanese American service in the armed forces. Both *Time* and *Newsweek* wrote favorably of Japanese American soldiers, yet descriptions and photographs were still tinged with Othering. The *Newsweek* article writes that German POWs are especially concerned about capture by the segregated Japanese American units, inferring that the reputation of cruelty the Japanese soldiers had applied to Japanese American soldiers. A *Time* article writes approvingly that "a group of sinewy oriental [sic]

soldiers, only one generation removed from a nation that was fighting fanatically against the U.S., was fighting just as fanatically for it." However, what is implied is that the Japanese race is essentially fanatical. The photographs, though generally positive, include few names, are shot un-individualized, and in the absence of whites.

Photographs of the Japanese American concentration camps, with the exception of the sensationalized disloyal Tule Lake camp ("Tule Lake: At This Segregation Center are 18,000 Japanese Considered Disloyal to U.S." [note no mention of Americans]), do not veer away from the visual strategies of Othering: photographing from a distance, portraying Japanese Americans in mass groups segregated from whites, abstaining from portraiture, and including few names.

It would be interesting to compare these visual strategies of Othering Japanese Americans to contemporary visual representations of marginalized and demonized "Others." The themes and techniques of racism through photography continue in society, even as the Other and the enemy changes. Some marginalized Others, such as the contemporary Asian American, have almost completely disappeared from public consciousness, save for Trisha Takanawa in *Family Guy* and Harold from that movie about the Castle of Whites. The "threat" of the Japanese "saboteur" is now the "threat" of the Mexican "immigrant" and the Arabic "terrorist" (beyond nationality, assumed to be Muslim, and with Persians lumped in). Without even looking, the visual history of Othering would suggest that people in these groups are hardly ever represented in photographs and only occasionally named. On the rare occasion when these groups are represented in photographs, they would characteristically be depicted in un-individualized masses or groups, never shown cooperating or cohabiting with whites, and rarely seen in the form of a portrait, with the exception of criminals. I have yet to see a wide-range of images to suggest otherwise. ■



TALKING HER

JUDY YUNG PUTS CHINESE AMERICAN WOMEN



R WAY IN:

MEN'S HISTORY ON THE MAP

TEXT BY DIANA JOU
IMAGES BY CHRIS DEA



In Judy Yung's home, natural light comes in through two glass sliding doors and illuminates a wall full of colorful books.

The most exciting part about visiting this scholar's home is looking at her personal library. A careful look at her wall reveals an elaborate collection of history books, novels, documentary photography books, and magazine journals. More books line her hallway, which eventually leads to a smaller library in her office. Having rooms full of books is nothing unusual for the former librarian, now a Professor Emerita of American Studies at UC Santa Cruz. Asian American studies being a relatively new field, formed in the late 1960s, means that it only has a couple generations of scholars specializing in Asian Americans' relationships to immigration, discrimination, colonization, and diaspora. Yung is one of the first to assert the voices and experiences of Asian American women into the male dominated narratives of American history. Her writing about Chinese American women's multi-layered identities and contributions was revolutionary simply because it has never been done before.

Yung's interest in historical research started when she was growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown during the 1950s. Her parents were apprehensive about describing their family history because of their illegal

“For the first time, Chinese American women were not depicted only as prostitutes and brides; they were world travelers, cabaret dancers, writers, community organizers, US Air Corps Corporals, and shipyard workers.”

methods of coming to America, during the enforcement of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, when the only way to get into the U.S. was to be the son or daughter of a current Chinese immigrant. Members of Yung's family, like many other Chinese, bought illegal papers claiming falsely to be the son or daughter of an Asian American, thus becoming “paper sons” and “paper daughters.” After many files were burned in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, many other Chinese were able to claim American citizenship through the buying and selling of these false papers. In school Yung was taught a very Euro-centric male version of American history, and in Chinese language school she learned about Chinese classics heroes. She noticed that not only her family's history was kept clandestine because of racist policies but a whole mass of voices were hidden for the same reason. Early Chinese Americans were not written about in history books and even silenced themselves, often not talking to their own children about their experiences. Even more rare in American history were the voices of Asian American women.

Between the discovery of gold in California in 1848 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 about 335,000 Chinese migrants came to America, but, even with such a large population, there were hardly any documentation of their social and political activities. Judy Yung's book *Unbound Feet*, first published in 1995, was one of the first to tell a detailed and empowering history of Chinese American women. It was hard enough to find primary documents about of Chinese Americans, but trying to retrieve women's voices was difficult because women did not hold positions of power and therefore didn't have their stories heard or recorded. While men had community publications, legal papers, and autobiographies documenting their lives, women had little in the way of rights and freedom in the public and legal sphere. The only way to write about women's history was to talk to them about their lives and family histories.

Judy Yung did exactly that. With a small team of researchers, she spoke with more than 250 Chinese American women across the nation and wrote a book that gave Chinese American women a place in the history of social change. She showed that there was a diverse and colorful community of Chinese American women in San Francisco from the turn of the 20th century to the end of World

War II. For the first time, Chinese American women were not depicted as prostitutes and brides; they were world travelers, cabaret dancers, writers, community organizers, US Air Corps Corporals, and shipyard workers.

Yung, keen on issues of narrative, explained people's stories in relation to social events and political environments. *Unbound Voices: A documentary History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* is a book of original and captivating documents that are contextualized with informed introductions and extensive footnotes. Yung's footnotes can take up more than half the page. In one section of the book, Yung reprinted original coaching manuals that helped “paper sons and daughters” pass lengthy immigration interrogations that could last from a few weeks to a few months. In the footnote, she talks about the process and business of making a coaching book. The writer of the book had to interview relatives, draw detailed floor plans and compile them into question and answer format. Some books came out to be thirty-two pages with over 400 questions.

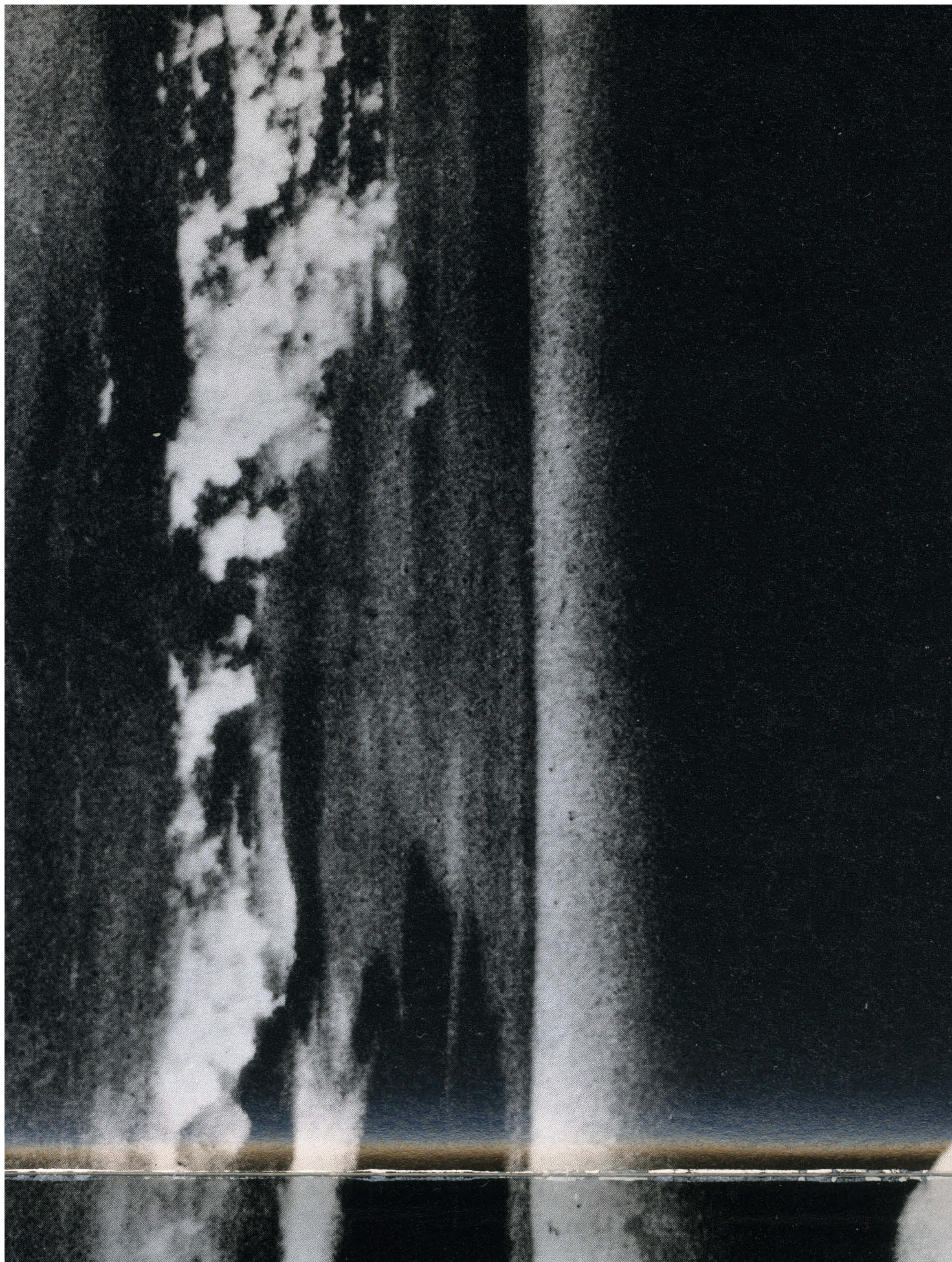
After accumulating over sixteen filing cabinets of primary documents for her previous book project, *Unbound Feet*, she felt that the “full range of women's voices needed to be heard.” In *Unbound Voices*, she reprinted Chinese proverbs that depicted women, confessions of a Chinese-Slave dealer, a Chinese prostitute's contract, speeches from feminist activists, and outspoken articles and newspaper columns, all from Chinese American women. Yung provided additional information to connect the separate stories into one larger story of Asian American experience, to understand them in a global and local context and to correct for confused memory and misinformation.

Yung, aware of the power dynamics between the historian and the subject, sets up a tedious system of fact checking to write her books. “Part of it is maintaining a really strong code of ethics in the oral history process,” says Yung. Often she will a full profile of the women from their childhood to their adulthood, including their experiences with immigration, work, family and community. When researching, she has to first carefully do background research reading censuses, immigration documents, and microfilmed newspapers for any information on Chinese American women, before she goes into an interview. Then Yung will do the interview in Canton-

ese or English depending on what a person is comfortable with. The tape then needs to be translated and transcribed. Then she will show the subject the transcriptions to give them a chance to correct anything and see how it will be used in the book. “This way there is an equal relationship,” says Yung.

“One of the greatest thing about being retired is you have all the time in the world to do whatever you want to do,” says Yung. Going back to her first book project, which she translated all the Chinese poems etched on the barracks of Angel Island, she is doing a narrative history of pacific immigration to Angel Island. This time the project is harder; all the people have passed away and she only has interrogation files and family members for stories. “What was the experience of other immigrants that came through Angel Island from 1910-1940?” Yung asks. “The Japanese was the second largest group and we don't know anything about what happened to them. We know Koreans, Filipinos, South Asians, all came through Angel Island, but also immigrants from Australia, New Zealand, parts of Europe, Russia, Mexico and Central Americans end up in Angel Island.” While this book project will include an expanse of diverse immigrant voices and experiences, she will still try to bring in women's stories. If there are any oral interviews they are usually done in that person's native language, so she is challenged with language and cultural barriers. But her ambition doesn't stop there. She is writing a memoir for her husband Eddie, who was a cowboy in Texas during the 1940s and fought in Pacific right before World War II. Eddie is unique because he lived in the South, fought abroad and was captured by the Japanese in World War II. The book is due out this fall and is titled, *The Adventures of Eddie Fung; Chinatown Kid, Texas Cowboy, Prisoner of War*.

Yung's fantasies of idle days have been replaced with a sense of urgency to the finish the Angel Island book projects by 2010, just in time for the centennial opening of Angel Island Museum. When she is not busy trying to give the voiceless a place in American history, you can find her playing Scrabble. Yung jokes that one of the terms of her marriage with Eddie was that they would play one game of scrabble everyday. “Now that I'm retired,” gushes Yung, “after I play Scrabble with Eddie, I can play Scrabble on my laptop to my heart's content.” ■



“The mushroom cloud pictures seemed too important to have been knowingly composed, yet those pictures are a product of the military institutions and censorship boards which commissioned them.”

NUCLEAR HERITAGE

TEXT BY **PATRICK APPEL**

You know the photograph—a stiff column of smoke and radioactive ash rises seven and a half miles into the air, the column’s top ballooned out into a noxious cloud. A grainy wash of silver particles embedded in black and white photo paper renders few details beyond the “mushroom” shape. If it weren’t for knowledge of the destruction below, the photograph would almost be beautiful, like a picture of a volcanic eruption, Old Faithful, or The Northern Lights.

As the atom bomb picture gets passed around in a UC Irvine photography class, a student remarks that he sees “death and pain.” A few minutes later, a girl claims instead that “looking at this picture is like looking at a picture of an apple.” The image is “worn out,” someone else proposes. The class nods.

It seems to be another case of desensitization everyone agrees, no doubt the consequence of too many scary movies and violence on TV. Just then the photograph gets back to the girl who brought the picture, UC Irvine student Erin Minto, granddaughter to Air Corps Private Roland Steinmetz. “My grandfather took this picture,” she says. He was one of the military photographers given the mission of photographing the atom bombs dropped on Japan at the end of World War II.

This knowledge changes the photo-

graph. Certain pictures are of such historic importance that the hand of the photographer is nearly forgotten. Those photographs are thought of as windows to the past and the images become symbols of truth. The mushroom cloud pictures seemed too important to have been knowingly composed, yet those pictures are a product of the military institutions and censorship boards which commissioned them. It is how the atomic bombs were photographed that makes them comparable to a “mushroom” or an “apple” or, as one veteran remarked, a “pumpkin.” These images of the atomic bombings are substitutes for pictures of radiation burns and collapsed houses.

The intentionality of this substitution is obvious when looking at the actions of the United States Office of War Information, basically the U.S. propaganda and censorship bureau during World War II. In the days following the bombing, reporters managed to get past the military blockades to see the ruined cities; military filmmakers taped the landscapes and the blistered bodies of the people. The government censored the reporter’s articles, and classified the film. Neither historic record emerged for almost four decades.

Lt. Col. Daniel McGovern, who directed the classified military filming at Hiroshima, declared in a 1984 interview that he “was told by people in the Pentagon that

they didn't want those [film] images out...because they didn't want the general public to know what their weapons had done." McGovern asserted "that the people in the Atomic Energy Commission were sorry we had dropped the bomb." These government employees recognized that if the American people knew about

They went as far as flying test runs for nuclear bombing over North Korea, dropping dummy nuclear warheads. General Douglas MacArthur pushed for the real thing, but using nuclear weapons could easily have brought North Korea's ideological allies, China and Russia, into the war. Eisenhower relieved MacArthur

potential." There were atom bomb earrings, which were reportedly, "as daring to wear as the first atom bomb," and there was a myriad of atom bomb movies and songs. These pop culture spin-offs of nuclear imagery were not new creations, but echoes of the spectacle apparent in the mushroom cloud pictures.

Journalist William Lawrence, who saw the glow of the first atom bomb test over the New Mexico sky in July of 1945, described the explosion as "...a sunrise such as the world had never seen...lighting up the earth and sky...with a dazzling luminosity." He claimed that the mushroom cloud "took the form of the Statue of Liberty" and he compared the blast to "the moment of creation when God said: 'Let there be light.'" Lawrence understood the haunting beauty of the nuclear bomb, a quality embedded in the mushroom cloud pictures and amplified by popular culture.

Even the images which came to light with the end of official government censorship and the passage of time, depicting burned bodies and flattened landscapes, were eventually pushed back into the recesses of American memory. They have never been able to command the same type of historic importance in America as the impersonal, almost beautiful, mushroom cloud pictures. Unlike the dropping of napalm on the people of Vietnam, which was immortalized by the image of a nine-year old girl walking down a road with her clothes melted off, and unlike the images of bullet-riddled and artillery-blasted soldiers from any number of wars, representations of the atom bomb are generally devoid of people.

Photographs are history's bookmarks; they are landmarks in our collective memory. But pictures only become iconic when they are propelled forward by political and societal necessity. Delaying and preventing the release of pictures from Hiroshima and Nagasaki created a blind spot in American memory, and this has allowed for nuclear weapons to become so normal that they are almost invisible.

With the passing of the Cold War, the threat posed by American nuclear stockpiles does not weigh as heavily upon the American psyche as it once did, and America's use of nuclear weapons no longer seems like a real possibility, but all that may be about to change.

As the United States and Britain consider war with Iran, many impor-

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Below: A publicity still from the 1946 movie *The Beginning of the End* starring Robert Walker, Audrey Trotter, Tom Drake, and Beverly Tyler.

Opposite Top: Miss Atomic Bomb, 1957, selected at the Sands Hotel, Las Vegas.

Opposite Bottom: A building at the Doooms Town test is obliterated.

the harm that the bomb inflicted, using the weapon again would not be viable politically.

Keeping the images from Hiroshima and Nagasaki buried was important for officials in both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, who sought to keep the idea of nuclear war alive. In order to use nuclear bombs as a tool in the "containment" of communist countries, the U.S. needed the world to believe that American officials would push the button again. During the next major U.S. conflict, the Korean War, American commanders debated using the atomic bomb once again.

of his command. North Korea was spared a nuclear bombing campaign, but nuclear diplomacy remained central to fighting communism.

The American people's ignorance about the effects of radiation helped make this strategy acceptable to the masses. At the time of the 1945 bombings, radium was touted as a panacea, a cure for everything from skin lesions to cancer. Besides, the radioactive component of the atom bomb wasn't highly publicized by the newspaper headlines, which compared the bomb to 20,000 tons of TNT. When Americans did come to understand that radiation was the most deadly part of the atom bomb, they were told that a basement or a cinderblock bunker would block out the gamma rays. During the 1950s and 1960s, Americans were encouraged to hide away in their basements and duck under their desks to avoid an atomic blast, actions which offered a false sense of security and turned atomic warfare into just another potential danger, like an earthquake or fire, to be dealt with on a routine basis.

Marketing firms and advertising agencies capitalized on the other side of the atom bomb, focusing on the spectacle of the blast. In the years following the U.S. bombing of the Japanese, the legacy of the atom bomb photographs could be seen in everything from atom bomb decoder rings in cereal boxes to a Miss Atomic Bomb Pageant held in Las Vegas, where the winner wore a mushroom cloud placard over her bosom. The bomb was sexualized after the tests at Bikini Island, when a French designer named his two-piece swimsuit after the nuclear bomb site, in order to emphasize the bikini's "explosive



tant strategists, including the founder of the Iran Policy Committee, believe that the only way to destroy all of Iran's nuclear facilities is to use "bunker-buster bombs." Some of these bombs, which are meant to destroy underground facilities, are nuclear-tipped, carrying a one to three-hundred kiloton charge, making some of the bombs twenty times more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima.

The potential use of this type of nuclear weapon has been met mostly with silence, with few media outlets in the U.S. carrying the story. While the United States itself is unlikely to drop the first nuclear bomb in sixty years, because of the foreign relations consequences, the U.S. is also said to have sold these types of weapons to Israel, which is much more likely to use the bombs because of the threat a nuclear Iran poses to Israeli security.

Just as the bombs dropped on Japan were personified by naming them "Fat Man" and "Little Boy,"

The manipulation of the public's understanding of nuclear weapons has been one of the government's great public relations challenges over the last sixty years. The government is constantly trying to figure out how to use nuclear weapons without creating a public uproar. Already we use depleted uranium, a common nuclear component, as ammo in everything from tanks to gatling guns. This ammo turns to dust as it enters an object; the radioactive particles linger in the air and the landscape, doing harm to both the surrounding populations and U.S. soldiers.

For forty years, the Soviet Union's nuclear program balanced the threat of U.S. nuclear capabilities. Public sentiment also helped control the use of nuclear bombs. Just after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the American public, along with the rest of the world, recoiled from the new weapon, immediately sensing the danger that atomic bombs posed to humanity. In its first issue after the bombing, *Time*



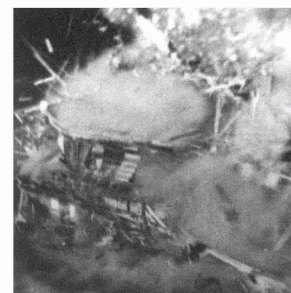
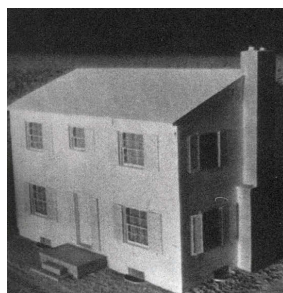
"Photographs are history's bookmarks; they are landmarks in our collective memory. But pictures only become iconic when they are propelled forward by political and societal necessity."

these new weapons come with their own rhetoric. The term "bunker-buster bomb," with its ear-pleasing use of alliteration, is meant to distance these bombs from traditional nuclear warheads, a necessary tactic in an era when nuclear warfare is internationally condemned. "Bunker-busting" sounds more like the name of a child's toy than a WMD. As one commentator wrote, it is a "cutesy-pie" name for ground-penetrating nuclear weapons capable of causing radioactive fallout.

England's leading leftist newspaper, *The Guardian*, reports that "US preparations for an air strike against Iran are at an advanced stage, in spite of repeated public denials by the Bush administration." According to *The Guardian*, a strike against Iran could take place as early as the Spring of 2007, but is more likely to occur just before Bush leaves office. If this does come to pass and nuclear-tipped bombs are used, we are likely to see an attempt by the Bush administration to control the media's understanding of what constitutes a nuclear weapon.

magazine stated that the war—the biggest, most deadly, most expensive war in human history—had become of "minor significance." Winning the war had been overshadowed by the fear that the future use of nuclear weapons would destroy the world: a fear which was carefully manipulated and eventually purged from the American consciousness.

140,000 people died from the bombing at Hiroshima; 70,000 died at Nagasaki. Most of these people were civilians. The number of people killed by a single blast of a hydrogen bomb could range in the millions. Yet, the public today doesn't seem to be shocked by the idea that nuclear weapons may be used in the near future. One of the reasons for this is that there is no iconic photograph of atomic destruction for today's youth to latch onto, no visual heritage by which to remember the human costs of atomic warfare. Fifty years of images of nuclear weapons have veiled, not illuminated, such horror. There are no well-known photographs to forewarn this kind of danger. ■





MAY D



AY

IMAGE BY AVEL CULPA

35,000 march, holding American and Mexican flags, while little kids and old men sit on the curbs of Los Angeles. Around 600 officers are on hand. In MacArthur Park, fifty to a hundred officers in riot gear get in formation. They fire 240 rubber bullet rounds, throw tear gas, and swing their billy clubs at the heads and backs of both protestors and journalists. They beat and bruise at least two dozen people. Many go to the hospital. Investigations are launched and the LAPD says it will "retrain" sixty officers. ■





DJ O-DUB, PH.D.

“Even if you can get people on an individual level to be nicer and not say stupid things, that is not going to eliminate racism in the criminal justice system, racism in the education system, housing market, and health care.”

TEXT BY JULIANNE ONG HING, IMAGES BY CHRIS DEA

Oliver Wang is a busy man. His list of job titles includes Assistant Professor of Sociology at CSU Long Beach, journalist, and music critic for outlets like NPR, the LA Times, and Wax Poetics. Wang has trained an eye on pop culture and society, applying the rigors of critical academic intellectual inquiry to his popular writing. A social critic by trade and a DJ and blogger on the side, he has also released two compilations through his music blog, Soul Sides. Wang sat down with Jaded and explained the world through the lens of race and pop culture in just forty-five minutes.

Jaded: Why popular culture as your periscope for examining race and race relations?

Oliver Wang: Well, I think pop culture is a really fascinating medium in terms of looking at issues of social values and social identities. Pop culture is the product of people's individual and collective imaginations. So popular culture is a rich and valuable place in which you can see the culture change and examine what the attitudes are about kids, about society, about relations between people. And it doesn't simply absorb these things, but it also very much influences how people think about themselves, how they think of other people in terms of gender, race, class, nationality—all these other kinds of identities.

J: What are the main areas of pop culture that you study?

OW: First and foremost, it has been popular music. Beyond that, I also have a lot of inter-

est in cinema, specifically Asian American cinema. But in general, I'm just really fascinated by a lot of different aspects of pop culture. Things like video games, television, import car racing. What I'm interested in is how people, especially young people, make meaning out of their lives through participation in cultural forms. So whatever those forms are, I'm curious in how these phenomena are created, what makes things popular, and what draws people's interest.

J: On your blog you talk about white and Jewish artists like Matisyahu and Amy Winehouse performing traditionally black genres of music. And while you're really clear about saying there's nothing inherently problematic about that, what do you think their popularity reveals about the complicated racial dynamics of society?

OW: I wish there was a short answer for that. I think when I say it's not inherently problematic, what I mean by that is that I think it would be hasty to point at any one individual's act and generalize that within the larger history of racial appropriations or racial dynamics. But I think when you consider what it could reveal when someone like Matisyahu, or Amy Winehouse, or any number of non-black artists are working within traditionally African American aesthetics and cultural forms, it becomes much more complicated. On the one hand, you do have a very long history, a very clear history, of appropriation and exploitation where African Americans create culture, but it is other groups, historically whites, who have benefited and profited from it this materially and socially. There's an inequality in that



relationship that is not unique to this present era, but has happened throughout American history. So any time these artists pop up, we have to think about people like Pat Boone, who during the rock and roll era became a very successful artist by covering people like Little Richard and Chuck Berry, and effectively became the white face of songs that he didn't write. He was the one who got to profit off of it, not the artists who actually created it. So when you see someone like a white reggae artist, the question you have to ask is— why is Matisyahu one of the best, most successful reggae artists in American music industry history? Is it because his music is really that much better than every other reggae artist who has come before him? Or is it because perhaps he's white, and audiences who are also white feel more at ease with him? In comparison to someone like Vanilla Ice or the Beastie Boys, I think part, but not necessarily all, but part of what made them popular, especially in the late 80's and early 90's, was the white face on something that previously was explicitly black. And I think for white fans, there is perhaps more of a comfort level that developed with a white artist, even if the aesthetics are African American. But literally the space in which they're doing it matters, because Eminem, to use a more recent example, has been very astute about this. He has a song called "White America," where he says, "Look, I sell twice as much just because I'm white." And he recognizes that there is that dynamic, that white audiences constitute a very large majority of the consuming audience.

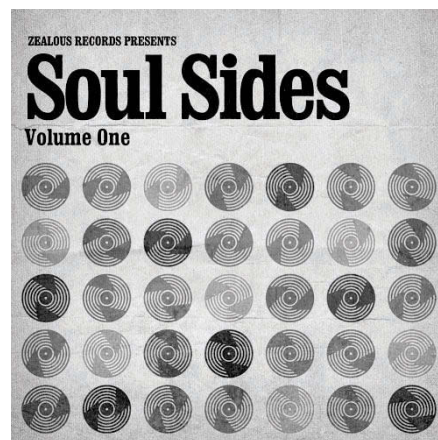
J: It seems like the only way people are comfortable talking about race these days is when somebody like Michael Richards, Rosie O'Donnell, or Don Imus makes a flippant or caustic remark about a racial minority. They get written off as deviants who just momen-

tarily lost it. And to me the reaction seems to be out of proportion to what they've done; why do people think these verbal slurs are the worst racial offenses we're facing today?

OW: Well, one of the big concerns I have is the ways in which racism is seen as largely the product of individual prejudice. I teach a class on race, class, and gender, and popular culture, and we just watched the movie *Crash*. One of the messages that film puts across and I think is reflected in the debates around Don Imus and Michael Richards is the presumption that the main problem with racism is how these individuals act out, in individual prejudice. And yes, obviously, racism is perpetuated and harms people on a person-to-person level, but when I think of racism I don't think of individual behavior so much as I think about structure and inequality in society as a whole. And even if you can get people on an individual level to be nicer and not say stupid things, that is not going to eliminate racism in the criminal justice system, racism in the education system, housing market, health care, or in all these immensely powerful structures that everyone in America depends on, and benefits from, or doesn't benefit from. But we don't talk about racism on that level, we talk about racism perpetuated by individuals, those who are crazy, or expressing offensive or controversial views, and that's not to say it's not important to talk about that, but it focuses so much on the micro that we really miss the big picture. Racism is a problem of big picture proportions.

J: Why are we so afraid to discuss race and the persistence of social injustice in other areas?

OW: Because the main thing it would require, and this applies not just to racism, but also sexism and classism, is it means not just im-



Top: Oliver's compilations *Soul Sides*, Vol. I (Zealous Records, 2006)

Middle: *Soul Sides*, Vol. II (Zealous Records, 2007)

Bottom: *Classic Material: The Hip-Hop Album Guide*, Edited by Oliver Wang (ECW Press, 2003)



proving the way we speak, but about letting go of privilege. Whether or not that privilege was earned properly or not – in most cases it wasn't – no one willingly gives up their privilege unless they're forced to or in the very, very rare cases they feel the moral compunction to do so. The reason why people don't want to talk about racism on a structural level is, number one, they don't want to have to admit that they're privileged, and number two, they don't want to have to relinquish it. And these things are so immense for people to conceive of dealing with. It's so much easier to talk about small, easier to resolve things. And I don't mean to say this to be cynical. I just think that social change requires a great deal of struggle. It doesn't come automatically. In any situation, something extraordinary needs to happen to compel people to invest their time into the struggle, to affect that kind of social change. And maybe our country hasn't gotten to that point where we're ready for that kind of change.

J: As the news about the Virginia Tech shooting was breaking, communities of color were on edge about the shooter's then-unidentified race. When Cho Seung-Hui was identified, I think I felt a sigh of relief for other besieged groups of color and a simultaneous feeling of dread about the backlash the Asian American community would face. What was your immediate reaction to finding out he was Korean American?

OW: For me, not to contradict what you said,

but I would expect most people expected he'd turn out to be white. Because the vast, vast majority of the perpetrators of these kinds of rampages and school shootings are white, so I think the fact that he wasn't white was a surprise to people.

As for what I thought of it... I underwent a series of different moments. My first impulse was to say, I hope this is an isolated thing. It never occurred to me that anybody would seek to pathologize this as being an Asian or Asian American problem, even though I could see that already happening in the media calling him a resident alien, but my immediate reaction was just, "That's just racism and the need to put the blame on another." But it never occurred to me to think whether his Asianness played a role. It's something I rejected out of hand, because I was reacting to this very quick set of assumptions the media was making, casting him as a foreigner, and not claiming him as a American, because I actually think his actions are best understood not by looking through a lens of anything that goes on in Korea, but what happens in America. But after a few days had passed, I let myself accept that actually race should be a part of how we're thinking about this. I don't want it to be the dominating mode of analysis, but if you're talking about isolation and feeling marginalized, speaking as an Asian American man myself, those are not feelings I am unaware of or are alien to me. And just growing up, Asian American men, and people of color in general, but especially Asian American men in this

society have a unique set of challenges. And could that help explain some of his psychology? I think it's worth asking that question.

So I went from feeling race should play no part in this to realizing that was probably my defensiveness in motion, and gradually, accepting that race is probably a perfectly valid, and probably important question to be asking. But I'm wary of desires to create a pathology of shooters. I mean, it's important in terms of prevention's sake, but I also think there's an intense personal curiosity about what "made him crack," and what's useful about that? What can you address in terms of policy, and how much is just a morbid fascination? Unfortunately, when we create that pathology, and when what we can learn is not going to be that productive, a lot of it is just to satisfy our morbid curiosity about these atrocious acts of humanity.

J: A personal question: Did your family ever give you any grief for pursuing a writing life?

OW: In a word, yes. Without turning this into a personal therapy session, yes, my mom to this day still says, "You know, it's not too late to go to law school."

<http://www.soul-sides.com/>
<http://www.poplicks.com/> n

OVER A YEAR AND A HALF LATER, A GHOST TOWN IS NEARLY ALL THAT'S LEFT

A Few Volunteers Try to Pick Up Where Big Government Failed in Post-Katrina Louisiana

TEXT BY **KAYLEIGH SHAW**
IMAGES BY **RUBY JOU**

Spring break 2007: They took the red eye flight from LAX to New Orleans and arrived on Monday morning. From the airport, the twenty UCI students piled into a fifteen seater van and a Buick to make the fifty-two mile drive to the small town of Buras. On the drive, they pass countless dilapidated houses, many of which have the words "DO NOT BULLDOZE" hand-painted on their walls, or what's left of them.

The gas tanks in the cars are less than half full, but the students haven't seen a gas station since leaving the city. Some people start to panic a bit, but finally, they pull up to a station called Happyland to refuel. Across the street from Happyland, an abandoned house on a vacant lot would lead anyone to believe that Katrina had touched down just days, not months, ago. A few of the students walk up closer to someone else's former home to get a closer look. Peering in through a window, one of them points out that the only article left behind in the entire house is a lone pot sitting on a shelf. Happyland, indeed.

Located in Plaquemines Parish, Buras sits on the peninsula that juts out southeast of New Orleans into the Gulf of Mexico. It is arguably the most vulnerable location in all of Louisiana, and on August 29, 2005, Buras

became the place where Hurricane Katrina made its strongest and most destructive landfall.

Before Katrina changed everything, Buras was home to roughly 5,000 people, most of whom worked in the shrimping and fishing industry. To even call it a town anymore is to use the term loosely. There is nothing here, not even a grocery store. Barely 400 residents live in Buras today. Where have they all gone? Where do they live, what do they do for a living anymore? More importantly, does anyone even care?

The volunteers do. These twenty UCI students have foregone the typical drunken-week-on-a-Mexican-beach spring break to spend their time sleeping in humidity-soaked tents, getting up at 5:00 and 6:00 in the morning to cook meals from scratch to serve to Buras residents and to the other volunteers that have made a partially-destroyed YMCA center their new home.

The former YMCA structure is missing an entire back wall. There are some doorways, but no doors. The roof is virtually the only aspect of the original building serving any real function. In June of 2006, the non-profit organization Emergency Communities, in a partnership with United Way, opened the structure as a volunteer site and community meeting place. They renamed it the Y Café, and converted it into a space that provides free laundromats, internet access, and three hot meals daily to an average of 200 people. Emergency Communities has opened four other Katrina relief sites in the region, most recently in the ninth ward in the city of New Orleans.

At the Y Café there is a rotating cast of characters who come here to volunteer, in addition to the permanent volunteers, most of whom are AmeriCorps members. Groups come for a week or a month at a time, cook



and serve food, help on reconstruction projects, and eventually go back home. There are college kids and older volunteers; some are 60-70 years old.

The young man who runs the kitchen goes by "Turtle." After Katrina happened, he dropped out of college, told his friends that they could have whatever possessions he left behind at his apartment, and he came down to live here permanently. Eighteen months sleeping in a tent can really wear you down, which is why Turtle has converted an old van into his own living quarters. A few of the other permanent volunteers live in trailers.

The trailers appear to be the only evidence of any FEMA "relief" in the area around Buras. There are trailer parks where the only things on the rise are violence, prostitution, and drug use. Most residents who were accustomed to living in their own houses, surrounded by acres of land, are cramped into tiny 8' x 28' camper trailers. The majority of the houses, the ones that haven't been demolished, are completely uninhabitable.

Eighteen months later, everything and nothing have changed. One of the UCI students explained that "the houses are still



“Before Katrina changed everything, Buras was home to roughly 5,000 people, most of whom worked in the shrimping and fishing industry. To even call it a town anymore is to use the term loosely. There is nothing here, not even a grocery store. Barely 400 residents live in Buras today.”

Opposite Top: Debris blown into a tree by Hurricane Katrina. Still not cleaned up a year and a half later.
Opposite Bottom: A temporary volunteer domicile.
Above: The only remaining sign that indicates a YMCA building once existed among the rubble/debris

boarded up, with the number of people found dead inside painted on the front.” But the entire sequence of events has become a mere blip on the media radar. The administration has more important things to worry about than the displaced people from these rural, low-income areas.

What sort of progress has been made since late 2005, if any at all? The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s website makes it sound pretty impressive. According to their figures, \$110.6 billion in federal aid alone has been provided for relief, rebuilding and recovery efforts. But for the volunteers and remaining residents living in Buras, it’s hard to imagine where all this money has been spent. It certainly hasn’t made much of an impact here.

On the Department of Homeland Security’s website, there’s a page titled “Hurricane

Katrina: What the Government Is Doing.” Under categories like “Preventing, Waste, Fraud, and Abuse” and “Rebuilding Communities”, statistics ramble on and on with little explanation behind the numbers and dates. Sure, state and local governments have been “awarded” millions upon millions in relief money, but the truth of the situation is that virtually none of it has reached the common citizen. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) boasts that it has “approved the States’ rebuilding plans in record time and will continue to carefully manage the use of the Federal grant dollars.” If there’s one thing to be learned from the Katrina disaster, it’s that the government has severely mismanaged the entire relief effort, from its slow and inefficient FEMA response, to its misappropriation of funds, to the lack of accountability at the federal and local level. Awarding the state of Louisiana \$16.7 billion means nothing if that money isn’t directed towards rebuilding citizens’ homes, schools, and hospitals. FEMA’s emergency housing plan, which is mostly comprised of dumping a bunch of \$30,000 trailers in cities that were completely leveled by the storm, is hardly a solution for long term housing.

In light of all the fraud and corruption on behalf of both the government and aid organizations (the Red Cross has been investigated for misusing millions of dollars donated after Katrina), it’s not surprising that the small town of Buras is still picking up debris from the 2005 storm over a year and a half later. Without the round-the-clock Emergency Communities’ volunteer centers, Buras residents would be suffering even more. Unfortunately, in June the Y Café will run out of its \$20,000 a month funding, forcing residents to have to cook for themselves. The nearest library is fifty miles away, the nearest laundromat is twenty miles, and without the crucial

internet access that the Y has provided for the last ten months, it’s difficult to imagine how Buras residents will live their day to day lives. It’s because of the help of a rotating cast of volunteers from all over the country that the Y Café and other centers have even been possible. The government didn’t organize it, the Red Cross has barely made any contributions, but these small groups of individuals have done what they can to help reconstruct a way of life that has been completely destroyed, both physically and psychologically by the burdens of Katrina.

With their funding scheduled to run out in a matter of weeks, the volunteers at the Y Café are trying to raise money to keep a scaled down version of the center running for about \$3,000 to \$4,000 a month. But even that is against the odds. Many of the volunteers have been sleeping in tents and trailers for as long as the residents have.

And so this is what has come down to. Some dedicated volunteers will struggle to raise funds to keep providing internet access and laundromats to the few hundred Buras residents who returned. But how much longer can they live in temporary trailers? The entire fishing and shrimping industry that Buras thrived on is but a past memory. The government has pledged millions to revive commerce in the area, but none of it will reach individual fishers and their families. Most residents have simply gone elsewhere in search of new lives and new professions.

As for now, Buras, Louisiana is on the verge of becoming a ghost town, forever haunted by the skeletons of abandoned homes and the lives they used to contain.

For more information on Emergency Communities, visit www.emergencycommunities.org ■

Golden Child Yellow Belly

TEXT BY LYNNE NGUYEN, IMAGE BY JEFF TANG

Golden Child Yellow Belly

TEXT BY LYNNE NGUYEN, IMAGE BY JEFF TANG

I was out running errands with my mother one day when pleasant conversation disintegrated into an ugly argument. I don't know what made me do it, but my plans of moving to New Orleans and working in the community skidded out of my mouth. I hadn't meant to tell her so soon, and definitely had not meant to do so as we were standing in line at the cashier with oversized bedding in hand. But then there it was, thrown up all over the bedding in my arms.

"Oh no, you're going down that road," she said, with a shake of the head.

I can't remember if that's what she actually said, particularly after translating from Vietnamese. But that's the general idea. And it's how we launched into an hour of elevated, frustrated voices.

I suppose this is a typical response from parents who haven't been heavily involved in social justice and community work. But in my

WAKE UP, THE REAL WORLD'S CALLING

With her request, my mother sent me reeling into unrelenting guilt, which had always seemed to be the favorite, or at least, most deadly, emotional weapon of my parents.

When I first started living back home, they would talk about nursing homes at dinner. My seventy-year-old father who still works a six-day week voluntarily hasn't been as healthy and vibrant as a few years ago. My sixty-year-old mother was bedridden for a week with a cold for the first time in my memory. After all they've done for me and are still doing for me, shouldn't I be a 'grateful' daughter with proper Asian/Vietnamese values and give something back? Leaving the state for a low-paying job that would leave my parents fretting endlessly about my well being didn't seem like the most helpful thing

some pretty expensive hobbies and interests, like traveling, photography, and so on. And our generation is all about doing what we have a passion for, right? What if dedicating myself to social justice means giving up other parts of me? It's now time for me to enter the real world and 16 years of quality education have done nothing to assuage my growling, rumbling yellowbelly.

WASTED POTENTIAL

My mother said something else that furrowed my brow in confusion. She said that I might be into these dreams now, but when I'm older and stuck in a hard place, I'll look back and regret it. Don't people usually say that the opposite way around? And looking back, my answer to her was the answer to my dilemma all along.

I told her that I didn't want to look

"IT'S FUNNY HOW MY MOTHER HAD TWISTED A CAREER IN SOCIAL JUSTICE, SOMETHING THAT I HAD ALWAYS CONSIDERED TO BE RATHER SELFLESS, INTO SOMETHING INCREDIBLY SELFISH, AND SHE HAD ME TOTALLY BUYING INTO IT."

case, I have three older sisters who have decided to focus their efforts of social justice issues. I thought my parents would be cool with this by now. I thought that they'd understand the importance of what we do by now. Good grief was I wrong. Apparently, my parents see social justice as a complete waste of time. In their eyes, I wouldn't be contributing to a career path or a secure future (the two phrases being interchangeable).

A GOLDEN CHILD

It's partly my fault in a way; I think I had shown such potential of being the reasonable, sensible daughter and had given them hope. During my sisters' tumultuous adolescent years, I was still an innocent kid, in the single-digit ages. My sisters would go through their door-slamming fits and I, the golden child, would console my parents: "I'll always listen to you," I promised. "I'll always be good." And now they're cashing in on those statements. But what did I know? Like when I thought I was actually going to be a nurse after my sister had an extended stay in a hospital. Was it cruel of me to tease my parents with visions of me in the medical field?

My parents actually have been very accommodating when it comes to their children's life choices. My sisters pretty much always studied and worked where they wanted, in whatever field they wanted. I expected the same treatment, so I was shocked when, a day after the argument, my mother approached me with teary eyes and did something she'd never done before.

"Don't go to New Orleans. Go to grad school. The one thing I want to see you do is finish grad school."

to their graceful aging. That's what my three older sisters did, and now I was my parents' last hope.

It's funny how my mother had twisted a career in social justice, something that I had always considered to be rather selfless, into something incredibly selfish, and she had me totally buying into it. I was going off and doing what I wanted to do and putting an impersonal "society" before the people who birthed and raised me.

This got me thinking: my parents have provided for me almost completely in my life. What if my mother was right? What if I couldn't provide for myself and cut it in the real world without my proverbial umbilical cord? I am a suburban middle-class kid, through and through. And somehow, I can't help but feeling that being taken care in life all adds up to being book smart and street stupid.

According to the US Census Bureau in March 2007, there is nearly a \$30,000 dollar difference between the average salary of an adult with a master's, professional or doctoral degree and an adult with a bachelor's degree. I had never really been motivated by monetary reasons, but that's a whole annual salary that lies between now and three more years of school. It might be useful, maybe for raising a kid or, I'll admit it, my love of tech gadgets. Maybe even for situations like caring for elderly parents.

And then I realized something: Besides my general desire to please, maybe I'm so willing to accommodate my parents' wishes because I'm scared. What if something does happen to my parents? What if I spend the rest of my life bouncing around from rented room to rented room? I also have cultivated

back on my life and see a linear progression, a straight road. I didn't want to know that I had taken the sensible exits and rest stops, but that I had dared to weave down a winding road with a breathtaking view once in a while. I wanted to pursue what's important to me. Yeah, I've lived a cushy life, and yeah, I'm in a privileged position to be able to choose a social justice career instead of a "provider" job. But isn't the whole point to make use of what you've got?

My parents see social justice as a waste of time and potential. It's mostly because they don't really understand it. I think it's hard work that deserves more credit. I see it as a grand opportunity to make a difference while I'm still young, carefree and am able to make that commitment with my life.

My mother's got some good points that I've definitely considered, but ultimately, her opinions grew out of her projected fears and emotions, not from any concrete situation, just as my hesitations stemmed from my own fears of the future and of my abilities. And maybe being a "grateful" daughter doesn't have to be so narrowly defined. What's that one saying? "The best revenge is a life well lived." Only, in this case, I mean a loving, different kind of "pay back." I've decided to stick with my passion for social justice and not waste the potential that I see in it.

Someone I know worked at a worker's rights organization, and when her organization had a big victory recently, her father sent her a note that said, "I am proud of you, daughter."

That sentence is all we really want from each other, my parents and me. And I think we're on our way to getting it, if we haven't already. ■

OUTSOURCING THE AMERICAN DREAM

TEXT AND IMAGES BY **PATRICK APPEL**

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“It’s the American Dream, it just happens to be in Baja, Mexico,” read the slogan on the promotional packet that came in my mail a few months ago. Catchy phrases and postcard-like pictures advertised for “El Dorado Ranch,” a development touted as “Baja’s premier seaside residential recreational golf resort community.” As I watched El Dorado’s informational DVD, blue oceans and picturesque mountains streamed across my TV screen; geriatric couples did water calisthenics; a security guard drove down one of the gated community’s dirt paths on an ATV. I saw land and sea and desert and golf. What I didn’t see was Mexicans.

A few weeks later, I attended one of El Dorado Ranch’s free informational dinners at El Adobe Restaurant in San Juan Capistrano. El Adobe Restaurant was an oddly appropriate setting for a meeting of Americans thinking about buying property in Mexico. The town’s squatty Spanish mission fell within eyeshot. El Adobe Restaurant itself had been declared a

historical landmark of the Spanish and Mexican eras of California history. But, the most genuinely Mexican part of the restaurant was the way *ta-co* and *en-chi-la-da* rolled off the tongue of the man who served them to me. I wondered what he thought, where he was from, what Americans buying up their homeland would mean for Mexicans across California and North America.

I set out to answer that question in the middle of April, 2007 when I pulled my dusty Ford into a corporate park in Orange, the Orange County meeting place for El Dorado Ranch’s “Discovery Tour” weekend, a two day/one night trip down to Mexico to see the ranch and visit the town of San Felipe. I unloaded my bags and walked towards a fifty passenger bus painted red, white and blue, the words “Coach America” stenciled across the side. A young African American woman named Tanya took down my name as I climbed on board.

The people inside Coach America were mostly baby boomers from the outskirts of

suburbia; not a surprising demographic considering El Dorado Ranch is marketed in cities like Riverside, Bakersfield, and Pomona, places where middle income households salivate for a chance at seaside living and a cheap retirement. Realtors had originally tried marketing El Dorado Ranch in cities like Huntington and Newport Beach, but those people could already afford luxury living by the sea, even with California’s inflated housing prices. It was the American middle-class that would buy elite status at a discounted price in Mexico.

The engine of Coach America started up, vibrating the bus’s plastic paneling and linoleum flooring. “Hola,” the bus driver, Tino, said. “Buenos dias!” He asked everyone to make sure they had their ID to get back into the United States, and that, if they didn’t, to be sure that they had a credit card. “Mexico is not so easy if you don’t have the cash,” he half-joked before he drove Coach America out of the parking lot and onto the freeway.

I looked out the window at the traffic



Previous Page: An unfinished house at El Dorado Ranch.

Below Right: Boxes of tiles and stoneware in the driveway of an El Dorado Ranch house under construction.

Below Left: A map of Baja California, where new developments like El Dorado Ranch are popping up.

Opposite Top: The interior of an unfinished house.

Opposite Bottom: On the rooftop patio of a house.

on the 22 Freeway as the wheels churned and Tanya went around handing out breakfast burritos to the two dozen or so people on the bus. A packet of hot sauce with a Mexican in a sombrero was saran-wrapped to my burrito's front. Just before eating, I peered out the window. We passed what looked like strawberry fields, where migrant workers were bunched together like flocks of birds, hunched over in groups of around fifty, their faces obscured by grey and red hooded sweatshirts.

As we drove, "Coach America" was reflected back at us in the windows of passing minivans, while its colors were mimicked by American flags plastered on construction sites and housing developments. Tracts of houses painted homeowners' association beige, brown, blue and pale yellow lined the tops of hills. I reflected upon the *Los Angeles Times* article I had read the day before about the average cost of a house in Southern California rising above \$500,000 for the first time, despite the slowing housing market and the crash of sub-prime loans.

Inside Coach America, passengers gazed listlessly at the eight inch TV screens above their seats or listened to music. As we neared San Diego, I got out my copy of *A Concise History of Mexico* written by El Colegio de México professor Jan Bazant. I read the first page, where Bazant outlines what he considers "the dominant...themes of Mexican history: the struggle for land on the part of those who do not possess it... and the striving for

land-owning families to preserve their position on the social pyramid."

Land, it turned out, was central to almost every major event in Mexican history. From overthrowing the Spanish rulers, who stoked revolution with a compulsory land tax, to attempt after attempt to redistribute the land monopolized by elites, to the Mexican-American War of 1847— everything connected to land.

The land out of Coach America's windows turned from a pale green to a tarnished brown. We passed rock quarries, tumbleweeds in the making, and scrawny bushes I would have thought were dead if there weren't so many of them. This was the real face of California, the California of chaparral, desert and sand.

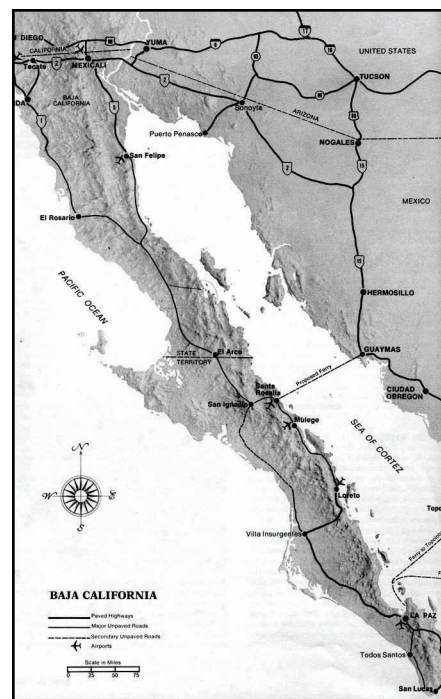
Fifteen minutes from the border, Coach America stopped to pick up more people at Desert Trails RV park in El Centro. Olden lanterns and ancient pioneer wagons rusted on the fairway of the nearby Desert Trails golf course and along its aptly named "Wagon Trail Road." These relics from the Gold Rush were reminders of the past American migrations to California that helped solidify the United States' claim to the territory.

Mexico never forgave the U.S. annexation of nearly half its land. The 1917 Mexican constitution, still in effect today, states that "foreign citizens cannot own land within 100 km of the border and 50 km of the sea." It's a law meant to prevent the type of gradual

American invasions that occurred during the early 1800s in Texas, New Mexico, and California. In the mid 1990s, around the time of NAFTA, when Mexico was opening herself up to maquiladoras and foreign investment under the banner of neoliberalism, this part of the constitution became irrelevant. New laws allowed foreigners to purchase land through "fideicomisos," trusts that afforded them the same rights as Mexican landowners. With this new power, Coach America was on its way, armed with checkbooks, for us to stake our claims in Baja California.

We crossed the border at the Calexico checkpoint, watching the cars backed up going the other way. The neatly arranged housing developments we had cruised past in the U.S. gave way to Mexican houses that had been built up one section at a time with little regard to material. A house might have started as cinderblock and then with the second room moved on to wood and with the third room to brick. It gave the homes a collaged look, like someone had come along in the middle of the night and played a practical joke by switching around the rooms of different houses.

Some Mexican cities, especially cities like Tijuana, are composed almost entirely of these patched-together houses. Communities of squatters fashion rooms out of found pallets, scrap wood, and bits of wire. These shantytowns are the primary way neighborhoods in Tijuana start, according to Enrique



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“Coach America was on it’s way, armed with checkbooks, for us to stake our claims in Baja California.”

Davalos, an assistant professor of Chicano Studies in San Diego and a labor organizer in Tijuana. With so many Mexicans unable to afford housing, the land-hungry take polluted or undeveloped property, and create cobbled together homes.

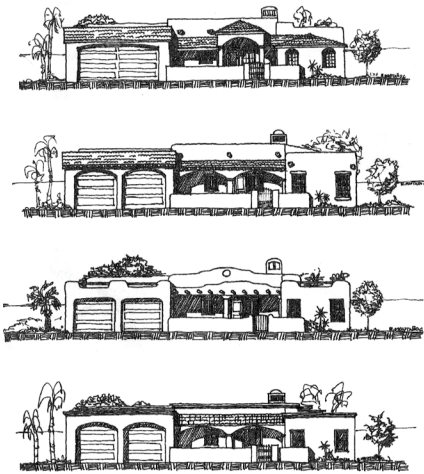
But the houses I looked out of Coach America’s windows at –houses which would have ranked among the worst in the United States– weren’t home to squatters. These belonged to the Mexican middle-class, a group I had been taught to distinguish by their satellite dishes and paved roads.

Coach America drove through Mexicali, where a Mexican version of Silicon Valley is being made, and out into the desert where the land gets drier and drier, until the vegetation can’t survive anymore, and the landscape becomes sand for as far as the eye can see, besides the odd blown-out tire buried in the sand. As we approached our destination, the road snaked back towards the sea and towards the town of San Felipe, 120 miles from the border. Before the expatriates came, San Felipe had been a sleepy fishing village with most of its people working as shrimpers. Now, tourism is its biggest industry, and Pat Butler, the owner of El Dorado Ranch, is the largest employer in town.

Americans and Canadians make up around a third of the town’s 15,000 people. It is a case of counter migration, and San Felipe isn’t alone. There are a reported 700,000 Americans living in Mexico, a big number considering Mexico’s population is only around a hundred million people. Americans coming to Mexico are seduced by the low cost of living, which is so low primarily because the people of Mexico are so poor. Not just the land and labor are cheap, but everything from medical prescriptions to electricity costs a third to a quarter of what it costs in the United States. The Americans are attracted to the very poverty that Mexicans are leaving Mexico to escape.

When Coach America finally pulled past El Dorado Ranch’s front gate and down to the golf course’s club house, I could see the real estate agents waiting, wearing Hawaiian shirts and slip-on shoes. As I got off the bus, I shook hands with R-MAC real estate agent





Dan Williams, a fifty-nine year old Southern Californian with sharp brown eyes and a businesslike gait. We joined an Asian American couple, Jannie and Alex, both accountants from the San Gabriel Valley, and we prepared to tour the property.

El Dorado Ranch is around the size of San Francisco. The houses are arranged on quarter acre minimum plots, in a "feathered" pattern, to create "view corridors," meaning every property, even if it is six miles off the beach, has a view of the ocean. The houses are each custom built, within certain limitations, to satisfy American notions of individuality. Owners choose from any number of styles, such as Mexican-Colonial, Santa Fe, and Territorial-Mediterranean. The houses are designed in conjunction with the Costa Mesa based home building company Classic Pacific. The homes are American interpretations of Mexican and Spanish styles exported back to Mexico.

As Dan, Jannie, Alex, and I toured some half-finished houses on the property, bundles of tar paper rested on top of condos and wiring poked out from holes in the drywall. Pieces of tile and bags of cement were strewn around the living rooms and bedrooms of the houses. A sawed-off Sprite bottle was filled with drywall screws and pages of newspaper were taped over windows. Everywhere there were the indications of Mexican labor, but nowhere the Mexicans.

I asked Dan about how autonomous El Dorado Ranch is from San Felipe. "Very," he replied. "This is a city within a city." When I asked how necessary it is for residents to learn Spanish, he answered "not at all." Later, he explained with enthusiasm that El Dorado Ranch is "bringing California to Mexico."

The four of us drove out to the western tip of the property, where the new plots of land are located, priced between \$40,000 and \$60,000. The houses themselves can be built for between \$75 to \$150 a square foot, making many houses cost somewhere between \$200,000 and \$300,000 total. I calculated that



using all my savings, without considering the cost of the land itself, I could only build a four and a half square foot house. If I maxed out my credit card that figure went up to eighteen square feet. The houses were cheap, but not that cheap.

I looked out at the desert landscape, the Sierra San Pedro Martir Mountains at my back and the Sea of Cortez in front of me. A light wind was blowing across the arid plain. The sun hung low in the sky. I could see the allure of El Dorado Ranch for Americans looking for a vacation home or place for retirement, but I was unsure of the costs to the Mexican people. El Dorado Ranch, and the hoard of Americans coming to San Felipe, has provided more jobs and better wages, but it also means that Mexicans are fast becoming second-class citizens in their own country. Security guards stationed at each entrance to the ranch keep the townspeople away, as do El Dorado Ranch's concession rights to the beach. Likewise, "The Gringo Gazette," a newspaper directed at Americans living in Baja, shelters its readers from the greater part of Mexican society and culture.

When Coach America drove us the six miles into San Felipe later that night, the sun had already set and only the neon lit quarters of downtown San Felipe were navigable by foot. Vendors stared ruefully at the passing tourists, selling trinkets, cheap jewelry, knockoff sunglasses, and novelty t-shirts, the same kind of souvenirs one can find throughout Mexico. Young boys played soccer on the sidewalk. A man in a tux was getting his shoes shined outside of a wedding reception. A carnival had brought some tourists into town, but the scene was nothing compared to the 60,000 people said to have been packed into San Felipe over Spring Break a few weeks earlier.

Spring Break in San Felipe had been "ill" according to Frank, a Spanish-speaking American who had come down from El Centro. While hundreds of people drank and partied, Frank leaned against the cement partition of

"The Americans are attracted to the very poverty that Mexicans are leaving Mexico to escape."

the San Felipe boardwalk and sipped his Budweiser. Every few minutes, when a group of women wandered by, Frank belched a string of catcalls, the Spanish so thick and quick I had a hard time untangling the vowels. After every encounter, Frank laughed with the trill of a heavy pot smoker. He complained that the bouncers wouldn't let him into the club across the street. "Over in the club," he boasted, "are some bitches who want to fuck me." As for the Mexican girls he shouted at, they pretended he didn't exist.

Further along the boardwalk, two white girls in red bikinis drove by on an ATV. Tecate beer girls, Mexico's answer to Budweiser girls, stood in front of clubs in white short shorts and halter tops, while a tourist took pictures of them with his cell-phone camera. An American standing on the flatbed of a passing truck dropped his pants and danced back and forth half-naked. Sitting there I realized that it was not just the Mexicans that the people of El Dorado Ranch were escaping from: it was the other tourists.

Looking out from my doorway at the Langosta Roja hotel, I could see the spinning head of the town's lighthouse, warning what fishermen remained in San Felipe of the approaching rocks. I went into my room, flicked on the TV, saw that the E! channel was showing drunk Americans partying in some other part of the world, flicked off the TV, and went to sleep, the sound of fireworks and car horns echoing in the distance.

When I awoke at 5:30 am these sounds had been replaced by the crow of roosters and the rumbling engine of a truck hauling a boat up the main drag. I got dressed and

Below: El Dorado Ranch's La Ventana Del Mar Golf Course.

Opposite Top Left: California, Mexican-Colonial, Santa Fe, and Territorial California housing styles; some of the approved fascades for El Dorado Ranch houses.

Opposite Top Right: El Dorado Ranch's Las Villas Condos, under construction.

"The homes are American interpretations of Mexican and Spanish styles exported back to Mexico."

walked down to the beach to catch the sun coming up over the water.

In early morning, San Felipe was a different city. The streets which had trailed off into darkness the night before were reconnected to downtown by the halo of yellow and white ebbing over the horizon. I went down to the water's edge, not the easiest task in San Felipe, which is home to the third biggest tide change in the world. The tide was out. I was free to walk along the exposed ocean floor, across bubbling sand and sluiced inlets made by the water pulling away. I avoided the remains of fish and the little piles of fish waste that looked like sandy yarn.

When Coach America drove us back to El Dorado Ranch later that morning, Dan, Jannie, Alex, and I circled around to the undeveloped property miles off the beach. Jannie and Alex looked at squares of sand and desert brush, and tried to envision the view off their patio. I looked down at the ground, where flakes of mica, fool's gold, shone brightly in the morning sun.

The gold flakes reminded me of how California supposedly got its name from a book popular around the time of Spanish conquest. The book spoke of "an island called California...peopled by black women, among whom there was not a single man...They had beautiful and robust bodies...Their weapons were all of gold...because in all the island there was no metal except gold." This tale of discovery and riches still exists in travel books about Baja California, books with titles like *The Forgotten Peninsula* and *Mexico's Diamond in the Rough*.

At the first hole of El Dorado Ranch's

golf course stands a bronze statue of Moctezuma Xocoyotzin, the last Aztec ruler. Beneath him a plaque reads, "Aztec emperor at arrival of the Spaniards which signaled the end of the empire and the beginning of a new world." Each time you tee off Moctezuma watches this "new world" of golf, condos, and titanium drivers. It is a "new world" that was his old home.

While Jannie and Alex decided on a property and, having decided, started signing papers, I sat down at the clubhouse to quesadillas with another couple, Thomas and Carol Gale. Carol wore a leopard print shirt with a little gold golf club hanging off the zipper. Thomas, for his part, puffed on his pipe, his cropping of silver hair quivering in the wind. They were interested in buying a condo around San Felipe.

All weekend El Dorado Ranch employees had described Mexicans as being "real sharp," "fast learners," and "hardworking." Carol and Thomas had other ideas. They tried to explain to me how Mexicans just "don't value education" and how their work habits are "lackadaisical." They argued that "blacks and the Mexicans do not like each other" and Thomas noted, somewhat distastefully, how cities like Santa Ana "encourage" taking Mexican culture to California. Carol complained about how Mexicans who come to the U.S. don't learn English, while I wondered how many how many Americans had bothered to learn Spanish when they moved into Mexican-owned Texas and California. According to historian G.L. Rives, writing about Americans living in Mexican-owned Texas, Texans "would never submit to the domination of a race they

regarded as inferior. They despised Mexicans as they despised negros [sic] and Indians, and they calmly ignored Mexican laws."

As I crossed back into the United States later that day, I looked up at a crooked picture of George W. Bush hanging above the X-ray machines of the Calexico checkpoint. Less than a week before, President Bush had been down at the border himself talking about "illegal immigration" and how "we're making progress." He came, he said, to "remind the American people that we're spending...their money, taxpayers' money, on securing the border." Bush explained that "about eighty-five percent of the illegal immigrants caught...crossing this border are Mexicans," before launching into a discussion of a "temporary worker" program, one part of the immigration reform package he is trying to push through the House and Senate. "The American people have no earthly idea what's going on down here," he declared, after describing the need for more officers, more cameras, more fencing, and fewer immigrants.

The Coach American crowd crossed over the border without incident, several of the passengers carrying the paperwork for their new properties in Mexico. One couple carried two folders of paperwork for two plots of Mexican land. Many of the goods these Americans buy, everything from prescription drugs, to cars, to television sets are made in Mexico by cheap Mexican labor. Now, standing under the pillars of free trade and open markets, Mexico is selling away even her soil, one parcel of at a time, to the highest bidder. ■



"New Rave is a scene on the verge of expiration and, regardless of whatever genius they may have, Klaxons will most likely expire with it."



The Kids Want Techno

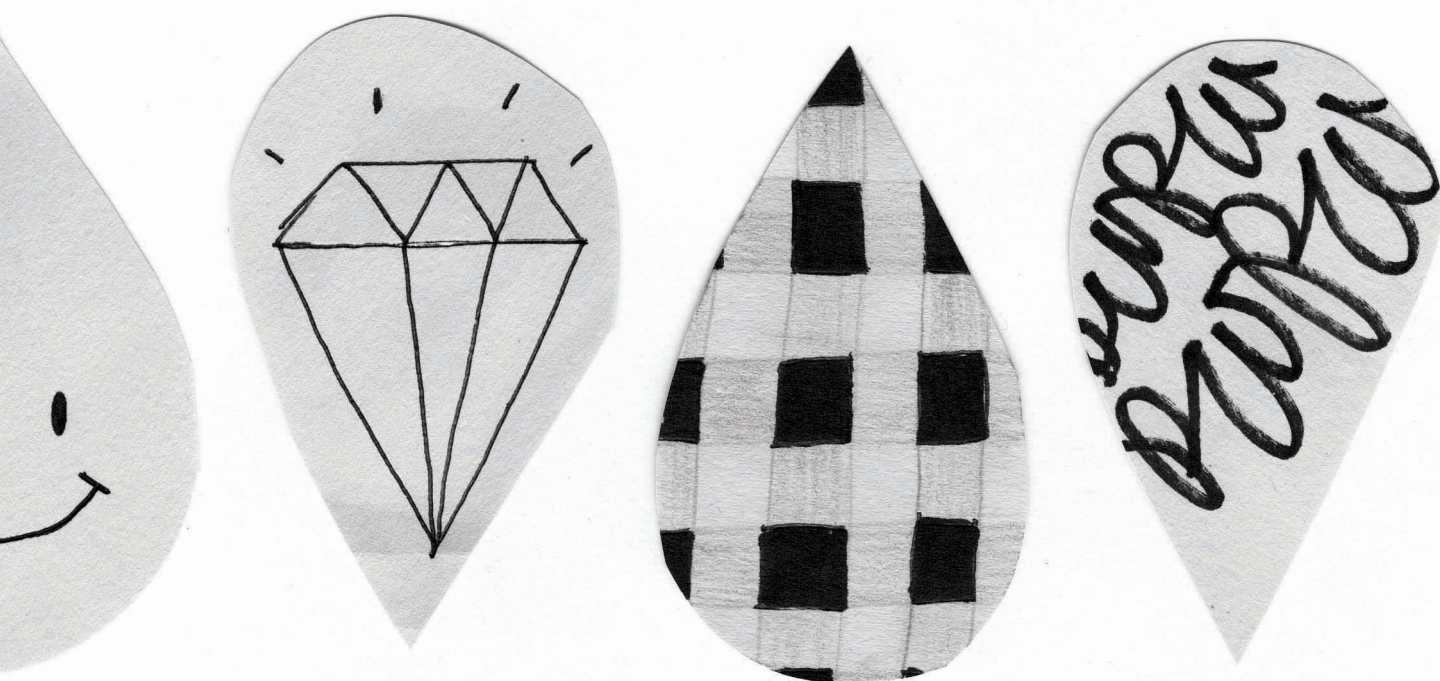
TEXT BY JEGGI ELINZANO
IMAGE BY ARA JO



Reading, England, August 27, 2006: British television station BBC3 is broadcasting a performance by the forebears of music tabloid NME's latest trend. The crowd sits patiently as the young performers prepare themselves for the next song. Without warning, a high pitched siren call awakens the dormant audience. Suddenly, a thumping bass line drops and the crowd lets out a satisfied roar. The television camera pans to the audience and captures a turbulent sea of neon green glowsticks. As keyboards and bass weave around each other, a powerful drum beat accompanies them. With the song's driving rhythm intact, the crowd explodes into an uncontrollable juggernaut of jumps, screams, flailing arms, and day-glo.

The band is called Klaxons. The song is "Atlantis to Interzone." And the 'latest trend' is called 'New Rave'. Behind yellow smiley face masks, a tribute to rave culture's early days, the band heralded the arrival of this new scene on the cover of an October issue of England's NME magazine. Inside, the rave theme continued with the headline "MDMA-zing," a reference to the drug Ecstasy. According to the magazine, these shaggy haired punks, along with a small community of similar minded bands, are bringing back the hedonistically carefree days of rave culture.

In reality, however, New Rave is less in debt to the original rave culture than the name implies. With its simple combination



of guitar, drums, and bass (plus the inevitable synthesizer), New Rave harks back more to the days of punk and New Wave rather than rave. Aesthetically, Klaxons; with their skinny 'Cheap Mondays' denim and tiger print jackets, look more rocker than anything else. Even the infamous levels of debauchery have yielded to a mature sense of responsibility. Conscious of the growing legions of impressionable teenagers behind them, Klaxons Jamie Reynolds proclaimed, "Now that we've got a younger fanbase we've got a responsibility. Those kids are coming to our gigs and doing drugs, which I find really unnerving."

New Rave, therefore, appears to be the latest fabrication of the music industry's trend merchants. It's just another attempt to cash in on nostalgic revivalism. It's questionable whether Klaxons would be as significant as they are without grand visions of a great rave revival attached to them. Rather than being scene pioneers, the band could easily be grouped into an endless sea of guitar driven dance music.

The acceptance and subsequent popularity of New Rave, however, is inevitable. Therefore, scene pioneers like Klaxons must come to terms with their position at the top. Although the band hasn't and (probably) will never fully embrace the burdens of the title 'New Rave', they cannot deny the power given to them by magazines like NME. "As far as I'm concerned it's an in-joke between me and my friends," says Klaxons' Jamie Reyn-

olds, "Just the fact that it's become a sort of international media phenomenon I find really strange."

Unfortunately, the reality is that the commerce for music scenes in England seems to be based on transient heroes. Although your band may be on the cover of the NME one week, you may easily find yourself back playing your local pub the next. Like stated, magazines like the NME thrive on capitalizing on trends rather than substance. Thus, New Rave is a scene on the verge of expiration and, regardless of whatever genius they may have, Klaxons will most likely expire with it.

Currently, however, New Rave's growing popularity seems unstoppable. Outside of England, in their 'Global Trend Report' for 2007, Vice Magazine reports the presence of New Rave fashion in Stockholm, Amsterdam, and Berlin. When compared to England, however, there is a clear division in the kind of presence that New Rave holds in each of these locations. Where, in England, the term New Rave seems to lack any real substance; the other locations view it as a legitimate culture. These locations look beyond the fabricated trends and the band idolatry and see actual possibilities in the New Rave scene.

German New Ravers', for example, show their dedication to the culture through t-shirts that announce "Rave is King" or "The Kids Want Techno". There is also a collective of designers, musicians, and DJs called Rave Strikes Back that strives to commemorate

the golden era of raving and add some legitimacy to New Rave. One of their most interesting projects is an invitation for prominent DJs to submit lists of their top ten rave anthems of all time. Instead of attempting to revive anything from early rave culture, Rave Strikes Back is trying to promote the simple idea that rave culture never died.

With scene heroes Klaxons trying to detach themselves from the title, one would be hard pressed to find much of a future in New Rave. Ironically, amidst all the media hoopla and screaming teenagers, it is Klaxons themselves that seem to find the ultimate purpose of New Rave. "I think the reason that the term's gone around..." said Jamie Reynolds, "Is that it sums up...this scene now where bands are bringing the parties, and gigs are no longer gigs in the traditional sense—they're more of a party atmosphere." Indeed, beyond the re-emergence of glowsticks and day-glo is an understanding of what made rave culture so popular in the first place. If the sound and style of New Rave aren't especially reminiscent of the original rave culture, then surely the importance these kids put into enjoying the party is. Raving, in its heyday, was all about the party. It was all about the kids bringing the music, the drugs, and the color. Although New Rave might be a misnomer and the scene's days may be numbered, New Rave is an example that 'yesterday's party' never truly died. In the end, that's all that matters. ■



MORE THAN WOWOWEE

TEXT BY NICK REFUERZO



“Don’t bother learning Tagalog. It’s a dying language.” These grim words are from my mother who told me to learn a more “useful language for today’s jobs.” Her concern was strictly economic, but her advice also demonstrates the linguistic and racial hierarchies that my mother grew up with in the Philippines. All I’ve ever been exposed to of Philippine media are sappy soap operas and generic action flicks that imitate Hollywood – a clear indication of America’s cultural dominance. As a suburbanite in America, how in tune can I be with “my culture” if all I’ve ever seen of it is a film industry in Hollywood’s ominous shadow?

Tagalog was never a language I intended to learn in order to help my supposed future career in film, but Philippine cinema, in English, hides “my culture” in the shadow of Hollywood. The weight of American culture on Philippine cinema can be related back to my mother’s statement. The country’s hybrid language is a symbol of its

“If Tagalog— a language of Spanish and English hybridity — is at all representative of the Philippines, then the country and its cinema must also be founded on ideas of racial and cultural amalgamation. Its cinema is consequently one of hybridity, varied influences, and indigenization.”

.....

hundreds of years of colonization. The Philippines was colonized by Spain, sold to America, colonized by America, and then granted independence in 1946. The details of suffering and heroism during the hundred or so years of American occupation were never discussed by my school or by parents, who were both born into an independent Philippines. Yet, the effects remain: Tagalog and English are both the official languages of the nation, despite Tagalog having six sister languages. The idea that English shares the title of national language in the Philippines reflects the lasting effects of racial, economic, and cultural colonization.

What this translates into is a culture and a society built on foreign influence. If Tagalog— a language of Spanish and English hybridity — is at all representative of the Philippines, then the country and its cinema must also be founded on ideas of racial and cultural amalgamation. Its cinema is consequently one of hybridity, varied influences, and indigenization. The Philippines has produced many genre films to combat Hollywood's strangle on foreign markets, by indigenizing ideas of drama, action, and comedy into something more accessible to a local audience.

The result? At a quick glance, the industries of imitation and indigenization seem like copycats, capitalizing on mainstream formulas. This is apparent in generic Americanized TV shows like “Wowowee” with its ridiculous amounts of singing, flashy colors, sex appeal and dizzyingly quick cuts. But under the surface of this genre is a deeper meaning.

It's easy to conclude that America/Hollywood is evil, and that the Philippines needs enough pity to make up

for 300+ years of oppressive colonialism and globalism. However, pessimism isn't necessary in order to approach Philippine cinema and its indigenization. Rather, it's important to understand the amount of cultural influence throughout the Philippine's history. It's also important to note the positives of indigenization. Indigenization of the cinema can be seen as reclaiming the medium, taking advantage of western trends and then capitalizing on its popular appeal. Philippine cinema is an adaptation to the media environment; it both capitalizes on foreign influence and makes a point to subvert it.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the “Second Golden Age” of Philippine cinema, the film industry was under much political strife and oppression, but amazing films and film institutions emerged in the country. Several contemporary Filipino films have built off this legacy by winning coveted awards in international film festivals. Films *Magnifico* (Maryo J. De los Reyes, 2003) and *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros; Aureus Solito, 2005) won awards at the Berlin International Film Festival, and *Maximo* was nominated at the Sundance Film Festival.

These films present creative, poignant and imaginative stories that are easy for Filipinos to identify with, yet universal enough to be accepted by international audiences. With such critical acclaim on an international level, the Philippines should be able to develop a stronger identity on the global market, achieving more cultural clout and significance, a difficult task for any post-colonial nation. Because Philippine cinema is founded on a hybrid of cultures, languages, and ideas, it is already marketable on an international

level. There is only room for growth as Philippine cinema continues to pick and choose which elements to borrow, expand, and reinterpret.

Although Philippine cinema is still not as established as other Asian cinemas, it is clear that American cinema is retaliating against it and other foreign competitors. With Hollywood's constant acquisition of Asian film rights (remake after remake of Asian horror films and the recent award-winning debacle *The Departed*), Hollywood is attempting to tap into the market the only way it knows how: by buying originality, slapping a sexy edgy bumper sticker on it, and selling it back for more than it's worth.

My recent education here at UCI has exposed me to far more international cinema than America would like its consumers to know about. And, although it doesn't necessarily help me “reclaim” any of my “lost culture”, it definitely gives me a better understanding of film. I will always see the generic Filipino melodramas and action flicks as ridiculous, but now it's comforting to understand why they're so bad that they're good. I know Americanized formulaic films are not all the Philippines (or any other post-colonized nation's cinema) has to offer. Its cinema is always changing and adapting to whatever the influence may be, taking whatever works and applying it to a local setting. It's satisfying to know how open minded the Philippine film industry is, and incredibly exciting to know it's gaining international recognition.

So I'll reply to my mother (4 years after her comment) with “Tagalog is just changing, not dying. If anything's dying, it's Hollywood's Sarah Michelle Gellar.” ■

Opposite Page:

Himala (Ishmael Bernal, 1982) features Nora Aunor as Elsa, a supposed miracle worker that is murdered after a speech denouncing God and miracles. Her corpse is carried through the masses as they completely ignore her final message of self-reliance and humanity.



REPORTS FROM A DARK ROOM

TEXT BY JACK TUNG

Bei YaZi De NanHai (Taking Father Home)

Director: Ying Liang (2005)

Literally translated as “the duck-carrying boy,” the English title for Ying Liang’s first feature was advertised as *Taking Father Home*. The entire film was shot on a Mini-DV camcorder, resulting in a lack of facial close-ups, cinematographic techniques, and uninteresting camera pans. I made the mistake of assuming the film would be in the vein of old Zhang Yimou classics. But the outcome was a far cry from my expectations. From a remote village in Sichuan province of mainland China, a bitter teenager aimlessly hunts for his long-gone father in the city (which I assume to be the capital of Sichuan, “Chengdu”) while carrying a basket of ducks on his back. The word “hunt” was mentioned in the last sentence for a reason. B+

Mah Nakorn (Citizen Dog)

Director: Wisit Sasanatieng (2004)

One of the most creative films I’ve watched all year, Wisit Sasanatieng’s *Citizen Dog* was an adaptation of his wife’s novel (Koynuch, Siriphan Techajindawong), and it lived up to every bit of its hype. Using the same visual aesthetics as *Fah Talai Jone* (*Tears of the Black Tiger*), Wisit Sasanatieng combined the ultra-saturated element of Technicolor (often used in classic Thai films of the mid-1900s) with a contemporary love story set in the beautiful city of Bangkok. Constantly jumping from one job to the next, Pod (the male leading character) develops a crush for Jin (a young cleaning lady who is fascinated by a white book she’s unable to read). Throughout the course of the film, we’re introduced to a number of eccentric characters that that would make any viewer cry from laughter (or

just from absolute enjoyment). For instance, one of the characters was a lonely depressed teddy bear who tried coping with the loss of his previous owner’s love by drinking and smoking. WOW.A+

Fah Talai Jone (Tears of the Black Tiger)

Director: Wisit Sasanatieng (2000)

Upon my second theatrical viewing of this “homage to 1950s Thai Westerns,” I’ve realized three main reasons why I love this film so much; ultra-saturated Technicolor visuals, traditional western soundtrack completely in Thai, and a major cheesy-yet-charming story of a forbidden love. What I found to be quite coincidental (in addition to the many Wong-Kar-Wai-like influences) was that every male character in this film exuded a bit of the “Tony Leung cinema charm,” which really benefited the tone of the film in my opinion: 1) Dum - the hopeless romantic side of Leung from *Happy Together*. 2) Police Captain Kumjorn - the law enforcer side of Leung from *ChungKing Express*. 3) Mahesuan - the cold, heartless side of Leung with a classic thin Clark Gable ‘stache to top it off from 2046. 4) Fai - a 50+ year old version of Leung with a classic thin Clark Gable ‘stache from 2046, played by Sombat Metanee who holds the Guinness World Records for most film/TV

Opposite Page: Fah Talai Jone (*Tears of the Black Tiger*)

Top: Bei YaZi De NanHai (*Taking Father Home*)

Middle: Fah Talai Jone (*Tears of the Black Tiger*)

Bottom Right: Mah Nakorn (*Citizen Dog*)

Bottom Left: Tanin No Kao (*The Face of Another*)



appearances (over 2,600).

I'm glad this film has finally reached its official US theatrical release through Magnolia Pictures. It deserves a lot more press than just being labeled as a "pad Thai western." Ugh, god I hate film critics. A+

The Cats of Mirikitani

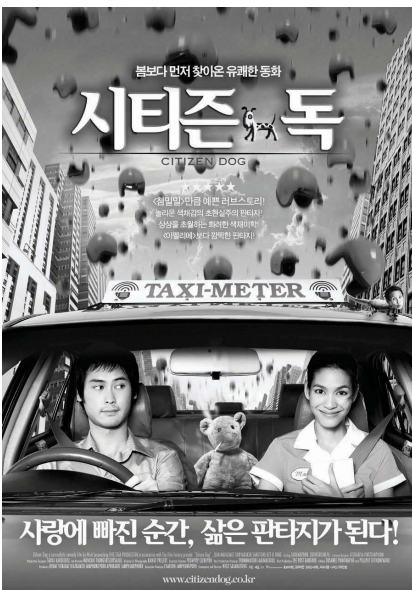
Director: Linda Hattendorf (2006)

Linda Hattendorf lived only a few feet away from the street corner where an elderly homeless Japanese-American artist Jimmy Tsutomu Mirikitani lives, keeps warm, and draws sentimental pictures of cats. Putting to rest painful memories of his past (in a WW2 Japanese internment camp located in Tule Lake), Linda ultimately became the driving force behind healing Jimmy's wounds, and ultimately reconnecting him with his sister whom he hasn't seen in 60 years. Shot entirely with amateur camcorders, Hattendorf's first documentary film was as heartfelt and warm as sipping on a cup of hot chrysanthemum tea while listening to your grandparents tell stories of their young lives. Highly recommended. A-

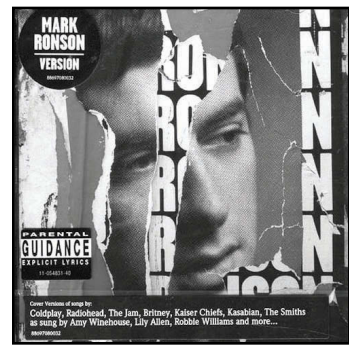
Tanin No Kao (The Face of Another)

Director: Hiroshi Teshigahara (1966)

I befriended a Japanese American film historian who digitized old Japanese cinema from the early-to-late 1900s, including the additive of subtitles. *The Face of Another* was my immediate selection out of the hundreds he digitized, since it's nearly impossible to find a copy of this film anywhere in this day and age. Originally adapted from a book about surgical face transplants by Kobo Abe 10 years prior to the official release of this film, Hiroshi Teshigahara's new wave masterpiece questioned the worth of beauty and physical norm in modern-day Japanese culture of the 1960s. This is a rather dark tale of a faceless man with a newly transplanted face of another from a scientific experiment, and soon after, decides to execute the ultimate experiment of his own: seducing his own wife with his new face. A+ ■



reviews

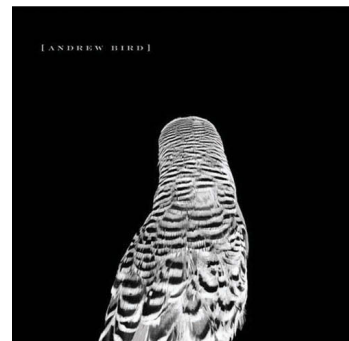


Mark Ronson

Version

The revisionist proverbial purpose to bridge gaps is in full effect on producer, remixer and songwriter extraordinaire Mark Ronson's second full-length album. The title refers to the term printed on mostly older record labels to distinguish cover versions of original songs. Alongside a supporting cast including an all-star band The Dap Kings, burgeoning songstresses Lily Allen, Amy Winehouse, and notable lead vocalists like Robbie Williams, Alex Greenwald, Daniel Merriweather, et al, Ronson serves as head chef to cook up some Memphis soul stew, in which popular English rock chunes is a key ingredient. Drawing heavily from his diverse musical background and influences, Ronson tastefully combines rock ballads with a live strings and horns section, atop a hip-hop breakbeat ethos. The lead single, 'Stop Me If You Think You've Heard This One Before', may surprise Morrissey/Smith's diehards, while 'Just', just might actually top the Radiohead original. Of course, no album would be complete without the legendary Ol' Dirty Bastard (RIP) dropping an exclusive verse and yelling "Oooh! n*gga I'm burnin' up!" over the one-off Britney Spears cover on 'Toxic'. Personal fave goes to Amy Winehouse doing 'Valerie' by The Zutons, and it ain't because I got crush on her either.

-Humanchu



Andrew Bird

Armchair Apocrypha

Some call Andrew Bird a boy wonder, which is not quite fair considering that he is a fully-grown man of 33 years. So this man wonder, this multi-instrumentalist from Illinois, has been delighting a small crowd of indie/folk fans for several years. With this release,

Bird's latest modern-day opus, the crowds that gather for his live shows are bound to expand at exponential rates. Bird is clearly a literate lyricist, but his words are never heavy-handed or purposely pretentious a la Colin Meloy. Much of the album sounds truly symphonic: you can hear the violin and glockenspiel, perhaps a harp and a banjo, then comes the soft, low whistling behind Bird's calming voice. He manages to make a very large, expansive record while simultaneously sounding delicate and intimate. Put on this record, close your eyes, and it feels like Andrew Bird and his band are playing in your living room. The production quality is excellent and really plays up every instrument's contribution. "Heretics" made the mp3 blog rounds in February and March to huge fanfare. On that track, the somber melody of the violin accompanies Bird as he opines, "Thank God it's fatal," and then seconds later laments, "Wait just a second now, it's not all that bad. Are we not having fun?" I think we are.

-Kayleigh Shaw



YACHT

I Believe In You. Your Magic Is Real.

At the 2002 MTV Music Video Awards, Michael Jackson accepted a non-existent award for "Artist of the Millennium" and thanked David Blaine. He said, "I believe in you. Your magic is real." It was a truly magical moment in pop culture history. YACHT understands that moment. He is trying to create true pop magic. He is Jona Bechtolt, and in between producing some damn good remixes for the likes of Architecture in Helsinki and making crazy fun electro-pop with Khela Maricich as The Blow, he made this record. YACHT brings along some friends to join in on his third solo album and although his music is entirely computer-generated, the songs have far more depth and texture than most fully electronic outfits. The track "See a Penny (Pick it Up)" recalls the wonderfully catchy Rolling Stones lick from "Miss You", and "It's Coming to Get You" is just immensely danceable. My personal favorite is the album's grrrl power closer in which he chants, "Women of the world, take over! Cause if you don't the world will come to an end!" until the music of the apocalypse drowns out his desperate yelling. I am so with you, Jona. Your magic is real. It doesn't hurt that your curly brown

locks just fall perfectly over your dreamy eyes, either.

-Kayleigh Shaw

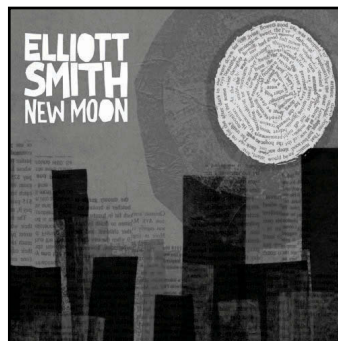


The Horrors

Strange House

When you first experience the gothic spectacle that is The Horrors, please look beyond the giant hair and extremely tight fitting jeans (errr...denim tights!). Instead, pay attention to the band's dedication to the psychotic sounds of 1960's garage punk. Pay attention to the driving organ and raw punk yell of track 'Count in Fives'. Pay attention to the sonic seizure that is 'Sheena is a Parasite'. It is through these tracks that you will understand that The Horrors are equal parts substance and show. Songs like 'Death at the Chapel' attack like a sea of Transylvanian bats hidden from the world since 1965. One of the more interesting tracks on the album is 'Excellent Choice'. The track plays like a mash-up between White Light/White Heat era Velvet Underground and the surf minded licks of Dick Dale. The Horrors may look like a bunch of over-dressed hipsters, however, their dedication to garage rock'n'roll's freakiest traditions is undeniable. I mean, what other band is cheesy enough to call themselves 'The Horrors' and cover a song called Jack the Ripper?

-Jeggi Elinzano



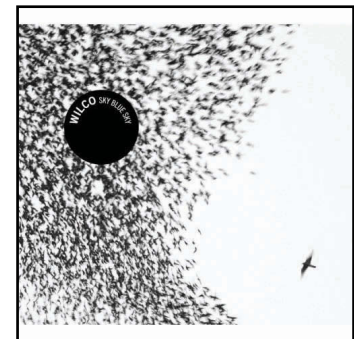
Elliott Smith

New Moon

New Moon, a double album collection of rarities, and unreleased tracks from 1995-1997, a refreshing and welcome glimpse into the depths of the late singer/songwriter's catalogue. The producers who compiled the album took pains to establish itself as purely

work of Elliott, not a profit-hungry, jumbled collection of rough takes. Many of the tracks were album contenders and taken together, they form two discs worth of material that rival, if not surpass, much of Elliott's released material. Because these songs are culled from his pre-major label days, they are often sparse, populated by his trademark fingerpicking, double tracked vocals, and the occasional strategically added instrument. One highlight among many is a studio version of his cover of Big Star's "Thirteen", a long time live staple. There are two Heatmiser songs and perhaps most fascinating, a very early version of "Miss Misery" complete with different lyrics and none of the lush instrumentation of the Grammy-nominated version. It's a must have for anyone already obsessed with him and those with a passing interest will undoubtedly find something to love here, as its an amazing, coherent album in its own right.

-Spencer Seward



Wilco

Sky Blue Sky

I love all of Wilco's catalog, from their early beginnings as alt-country roadpavers to their forays into experimental pop. Gone, however is the tension between experimental sound and traditional rock heard on *A Ghost is Born*. Here, Wilco sounds polished, relaxed, confident: it's an album that would fit in perfectly with the softer side of country rock (a la Neil Young) from the 1970s, which for some may be a bad thing. New guitarist Nels Cline's loose and confident guitar work adds to the jam band feel Wilco has cultivated (there are some blistering solos here).

Many of the songs don't sound far off from a *A Ghost is Born*, but where that album often felt strained and purposefully inaccessible, the songs here have no hidden agendas. Most of the album keeps that ramshackle, jam band feel, highlighting Tweedy's always wonderful melodies and ruminations on the darker (and sometimes lighter) sides of ourselves. Where Wilco's early work was concerned with writing twangy alt-country pop songs, the songs here are concerned with solid musicianship. Melody is present, as always, simply because Tweedy is a great songwriter, but this time around, he's not afraid to give the band more room to show off a bit.

-Spencer Seward

I Hate Everything

TEXT BY KAYLEIGH SHAW
IMAGE BY ARA JO

Everything is unoriginal and nothing is cool anymore. This pretty much sums up the sorry state of affairs in music, fashion, film, literature, et cetera. Whatever seems fresh and different is really just boring and derivative of some past trend or artistic innovation. Even food. Try as you might, you cannot reinvent the burrito. It is perfect. But the worst offenses of feigned originality are definitely those taking place in fashion and music. Apparently humanity has progressed far enough in the cultural sphere, and we now appear to be moving backwards. What better place to observe this peculiar sociocultural phenomena than at a popular music festival? It's a prime opportunity for every seventeen-year-old with internet access to demonstrate that they have been paying close attention to Cory Kennedy's "fashion" sense and voraciously digesting all the mp3 blogger criticism that so easily molds their capricious young minds.

Coachella is basically a microcosm of the greater macrocosm of American hipsterdom (though it's a mostly West Coast flavor — New York be damned). Various trends in music, fashion, drugs, and general unruly behavior are shared between foreign and domestic kids. This has been a huge year for scenester headwear: the fedora is the undisputed king. It jumped the shark even before JT made it acceptable for middle class white guys. Cowboy hats (worn ironically, or, more rarely, with sincerity) will always be in style because they harken back to the good old days of Manifest Destiny and stealing half of Mexico's land and whatnot. It's historically been a great masculine choice. Tying a bandana around a cowboy hat maximizes its potential douchebag factor. Of course, there are always those few brave souls who forego traditional headgear and go for something they probably think is amazing. They just don't realize that it's actually hideous, non-functional, and completely passé. A purple sequined visor? In Palm Springs this is standard old lady uniform. A group of skinny dudes wearing Native American headdresses were the most unique, but that's such a blatant rip-off, not to mention culturally insensitive. Thumbs down all around.



Which is not to say that the music made up for the festival-goers' uninspired fashion choices. Interpol has been playing the same record for 6 years now, but they distract everyone by singing about the West Coast on their new album instead of NYC. Carlos D grew a mustache and decided to become Orlando Bloom's gay pirate sidekick. Change is hard to come by. The Jesus and Mary Chain somehow decided that putting Scarlett Johansson on stage to sing three words over and over was a great idea. But from the back, she looked like a middle aged pasty woman with short legs. Putting a Hollywood starlet in a short dress and letting her sing the chorus to the one song that most people sort of like does not make you edgy or exciting. And what's up with Air showing up 45 minutes late, playing 5 songs, and then saying "au revoir"? Even by French standards, that's shitty. Last year Madonna only made us wait 40 minutes. And she was wearing a purple leotard and dancing.

James Murphy, self-proclaimed God that he is, wore an all white suit and sweated profusely throughout his set. The rest of us sweated on each other and wondered why he ended the set with his boring, sad, Lou Reed-New-York-homage song. We don't like New York! We're from California! At least he didn't let Paris Hilton dance onstage (shame on you, Girl Talk!). The Decemberists, bless their overly-literate hearts, are just simply living in

the wrong century. They were clearly made for the 19th century stage. Or a weekday slot at the local library. Their Mariner's Revenge interactive giant whale puppet spectacle reminds me of being 5, because only toddlers really find that entertaining. I'm convinced that Colin Meloy is a large toddler with an expansive vocabulary but little understanding of adulthood. He would make such a fine pre-school teacher. The New Pornographers didn't have Neko Case with them but Carl Newman made fun of his cousin/keyboardist because she didn't know that you can google and wiki from your phone. Truer words were not spoken the rest of the weekend.

So that's it. You are probably thinking, "What's so hip about mustaches and bands with keyboards?" Exactly. That's what kids are getting all riled up about these days. Wearing fedoras and bandanas and obscenely hideous jewelry while listening to bands that are ripping off other bands that are probably sampling Beethoven or Bach. It's not a cycle: it's a digression. Unless we do something soon, bloggers will be raving about "New Classical" or maybe "Post-Baroque" and Sufjan Stevens will arrange an entire orchestra of people playing Grecian lyres. You can do your part. Encourage people to stop wearing fedoras and getting their new favorite bands from Danny Masterson's DJ show. We can only prevent shitty hipster trends if we work together. ■

Write a relationship column.
 Give up on the first draft.
 Write journalism like a paper school
 Don't:
 Find primary sources.
 Write to your audience.
 Read your sentences out loud.
 Do:
 Writing Tips

Fund it!
 After making \$10 dollars from selling boob cookies, we came up with two tips.

Don't have a bake sale to raise \$700.



Do apply for grants. Articulate your begging and grant writing are good skills to have.

Applying to grants is like that movie *Pretty Woman*, if you say the right things to the right rich guy, you're set.

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Do-It-Yourself Media

Guide



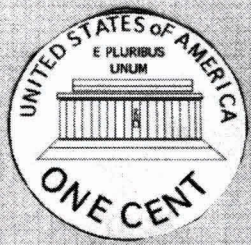
By professional unprofessionals! Now with profound comments!

Based on the unpublished Jaded Manifesto manuscripts

SCALE:	Pocket Edition	DRAWN BY
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Instructions:
 Fold downward, then fold in half again. trim top.

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DATE:		REVISED
DRAWING NUMBER		

Love it!

Do what you love, love what you do.

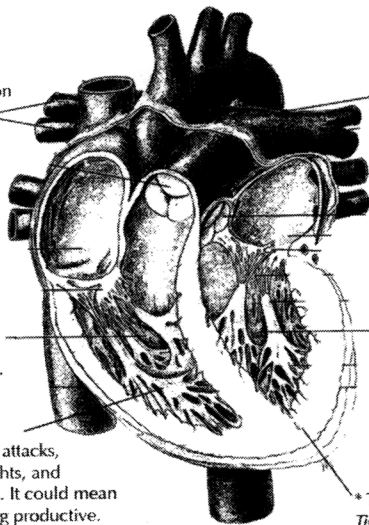
*You don't need a background in Journalism to love magazines.
Use the publication as an excuse to pursue your real interests.*

Do

* Find inspiration in everything. From course readers to industry magazines, planograms to real estate brochures.

* Pretend you get paid to do a good job.

* Be familiar with anxiety attacks, sleepless nights, and blurry vision. It could mean you are being productive.



Don't

* Write about controversial topics when you have nothing new to add to the discourse.

* Pursue time sensitive hot topics that have a shelf life. Your article will be out of date by the time you publish.

* Try to be the next Tiger Beat.

* No real connection to the heart image.

GOOD VALUES CERTIFICATE

for

[your name here]

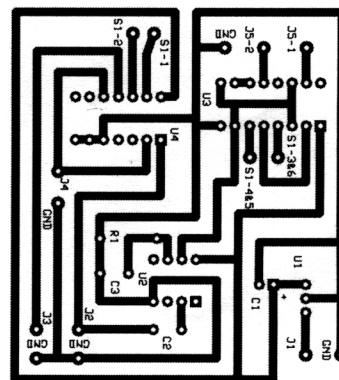
- * See news not as isolated events but part of a larger structural apparatus.
- * Analyze and investigate normative culture.
- * Understand the existence of social, racial, sexual, religious and economic inequality..
- * Know your audience and write about your surroundings.

This is to certify that you value aforementioned points and will try to make them part of your life.

Someone Official

Information!

Few sources for news and inspiration



Radio: 89.9 KCRW
Poplcks.com
Blogs
danlethermanandez.typedad.com
racewire.org

Online:
Alternet.org
Salon.com
Seedmagazine.com

Culture and/or Politics Magazines:

Good- goodmagazine.com
Mother Jones- motherjones.com
Ms. Magazine- msnmagazine.com
The Nation- thenation.com
Theme- thememagazine.com

Adbusters- adbusters.org
The Believer- believermag.com
Bidoun- bidoun.com
Colors- colorsmagazine.com
Giant Robot- giantrobot.com

Build it!

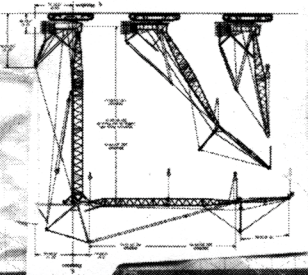
Imbue smart, committed and fun people with a sense of obligation, so they won't leave right away.

Establish roles and responsibilities with grandiose titles like "Supreme Marshall of Grammar Adjudication".

Have regular work "parties".

Don't ever stop recruiting. Or else you'll fold, like Jaded.

Don't have too many procrastinating perfectionists.





"You already have zero privacy. Get over it."
-Scott McNealy, CEO of Sun Microsystems, 1999

