Dancing with Absences: The Impossible Presence of Third World Women in Film

By
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> Instead of interrogating a category we will interrogate a woman, it will at least be more agreeable.
>
> E.P. Thompson, "The Poverty of Theory."

INTRODUCTION

"It may be good to announce the end of movies/film/cinema--at least as we have known them...after 85 years, a long and tempestuous and rewarding life, cinema has passed away."[1] This declaration, seen especially in the context of films produced within the Western sphere, comes at a crucial moment in the destabilizing of dominant film practice and theory. In the age of the collapse of the post-modern "Other," we are witnessing more and more a redefinition and restructuring of the film media.

Emerging from a series of concurrent debates within post-colonial discourse, cultural politics and feminist scholarship, the dilemma of "difference" and the spirals of discourse interrogating its representation have reached a crossroads. In reaction to the 1960's crisis clash between the Black consciousness movement, socialism, and feminism in the West, fueled by a series of successful nationalist liberation movements in the Third World (I use the term symbolically, not hierarchically), a dynamic opening up of theory and social practice occurred, reflected in the European avant-garde cinema, Cinema Novo (Brazil) and the clandestine Cinema Liberacion (Argentina), with similar cineasts emerging in Cuba, Latin America, and Africa. Sometimes called "resistant" or "Third" cinema,[2] it is characterized by the destruction of time and space, plot and narrative, and dominant, imperialistic film language. Third Cinema films such as "Yelen or Brightness" (Suleyman Cisse, Mali), "Emitai" and "Xala" (Sembene Ousmane, Senegal), "Harvest: 3,000 Years" (Haile Gerima, Ethiopia), "Lucia" (Humberto Solas, Cuba), "A Idade da Terra" (Glauber Rocha, Brazil), and "Memories of Underdevelopment" (Thomas Gutierrez Alea, Cuba), exemplify alternative systems of thought which reject traditional

Hollywood aesthetics and ideology in their push towards decolonizing the image, and also exemplify or reflect their desire for a re-presentation of the of non-Western Other(s).

Yet it is this binary notion of self/other that is at once polemical and restrictive. For the filmmaker, a political cinema **must** be a fetishist's cinema;[3] that is, it must rely on identification with an image which it also has to reject as an arbitrary closure or carrier of an hegemonic ideology in its original structure. The dominant tradition's seemingly recent discovery and limited appropriation of "otherness" with regard to film practice and theory reveals the ideological monopoly of this tradition, "and ultimately, in relation to black cinemas, its racism."[4] It is important to recognize that we are all part of an unpure, unfixed Other, in this hybridized, migrant world. We are all made up in some way of multiple ethnicities and identities, existing in and of each other, in a complex web of differing differences. What is "marginal" should be seen as multiple **and** reciprocal. As long as decentering discourse continues to unravel from a Western historical and cultural perspective, its contribution to change will only be of degree, rather than kind. (emphasis added)

"Difference" as represented in Third Cinema is better understood as a new realm of discourse, rather than a direct negation or opposition to the norm, what Vietnamese-American female filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha rejects as the "apartheid-type of difference."[5] Difference should be used as a tool of creativity, not of segregation; neither should it be defined in terms of the dominant sex or culture. Third cinema shows us we can no longer afford to reduce images to positive or negative representations; rather, the entire complex process of representation and identification must be called into question. The crucial question is not one of nationalism or ethnicity, but that of how identity itself is constructed and reconstructed, not only making representation an unstable, slippery business, but also unhinging the subject and its identity.[6] Intersecting issues of race, class and gender are more and more being informed by the idea of presence/absence and and by a critical, subversive ambivalence. Whereas racial politics are defined by a presence, that which is seen, the female discourse is built on the idea of absence, the unseen. The grey area where sexual and racial discourses meet and challenge each other is precisely where gender difference collapses on its own premise.

But this is all theoretical construct, ironically both a caveat and critique to the act of a Western woman writing on the image of non-Western women in film. The following pages seek to understand this problem and its potential duplicity. My discussion then begins in the in-between "naked space,"[7] between the cracks, and in the slippage between man/woman, self/other and identity/alterity.

DESTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT: THE RE-PRESENTATION OF AFRICA ON FILM

> They can't really afford this, they said
> But bought it anyway
> Flew to Africa
> And waited with an anguished excitement
> For the paid shock of exoticism
>
> T. Minh-ha, "Naked Spaces, Living Is Round"

Inasmuch as Third Cinema is concerned with the collective struggles of Third World peoples, its nascent consciousness reflects disturbing counter-trends within the established filmic order. Fanon's question, "What does the Black man want?"[8] is inverted by the contemporary, displaced subject, seeking the valorized Other to plead: t "Tell me why I am here."[9] In today's cultural plurality, the question can be further extended, what does the Western world want from the Diaspora? How much of the Western world is in fact defined by the Diaspora? To challenge white culture is also to implicitly be within it. To be "of color" these days is to be "black" (as used in its political/cultural sense by some progressive social groups in Britian).[10] Instead of a colonial, imperialistic movement into Africa, we are now witnessing a metonymic reversal, where more and more images are coming "out of Africa."

Even Hollywood, that myopic perpetrator of difference, has been actively engaged in appropriating images of African culture, however sensationalized and distorted, with such films as "Coming to America," "Gorillas in the Mist," "Out of Africa," "Cry Freedom," and "A World Apart," the latter two films challenging South Africa's apartheid regime, the very vanguard of difference as legislated separation.

Perhaps it is a telling symptom that images of Third World conflict have entered mainstream cinema. The white man's tale of the black man's struggle, especially in its Hollywood extravagance, is dangerous. Films such as "Mississippi Burning" and "Cry Freedom" are extensions of Baudrillard's cinematic war machine, whose "nostalgic megalomania" carries on the colonial thrust, privileging Western technocinema and media monopoly above the power of black resistance.[11]

With colonization carefully disguised, the Third World has become an aesthetic battleground, where the dominant culture plays out its postcolonial fantasy as the prime representors, and the privileged

translators, of meaning. The filmmaker has taken over from where the missionary and colonial administrator left off. Steve Biko's story is told through Donald Woods (by no coincidence a journalist), just as the civil rights movement in the American South is reduced to a tale of the conscientization of two white FBI agents. For this reason, the essential, manichean Black subject capitulated on film is no different than its colonial predecessor, fixed irrevocably in the Western camera's scopic drive to stereotype and stigma. Further, films such as "Gorillas in the Mist" and "Out of Africa" show us that it is no longer just the male gaze that can be faulted.

THE FEMALE GAZE ON THE OTHER WOMAN

This is where the entire problem of the representation of "Woman" as site of sexuality and resistance enters. Fundamental to this question is the idea of the female spectator and the nature of the confrontation between the Western woman and her "sister outsider."[12] In view of the limiting parameters of Western feminism, which is under fire from Third World women resisting membership in something based on the oppressive concept of a universal sisterhood, it seems feminism falls apart at the foot of racism, as forms of otherness between women are not solely answerable to sexual difference. Indian feminist Gayatri Spivak argues "**against** sexism, where women unite as a biologically oppressed caste, and **for** feminism, where human beings train and prepare for a transformation of consciousness"[13] (emphasis in the original). The dilemma of difference, then, is how one can use it without being used **by** it.(emphasis added)

> Our white sisters
> radical friends
> love to own pictures of us
> sitting at a factory machine
> wielding a machete
> in our bright bandanas
> holding brown yellow black red children
> reading books from literacy campaigns
> holding machine guns bayonets bombs knives
> Our white sisters
> radical friends
> should think
> again[14]

The turning of contemporary feminist attention overseas to focus on women in development is not unlike the recent scramble to Africa for

film locations and subjects. The image of the Third World woman farmer, guerilla fighter, or pass-book pyrotechnic is more often than not grossly generalized and constructed from an overly romanticized, if ethnocentric point of view. Images of Third World women are developed largely from political/economic paradigms, where pseudo-Marxist feminists have reduced Third World women to statistics. They are either units of labour, acted on by capitalism, or biological tropes, framed in terms of their reproductive capacities.[15]

A kind of global desire, or what Spivak calls "worlding," permeates postmodern and postcolonial discourse, and is the stuff that alternative filmmakers of today are constantly embracing.[16] Reinscribing "herstories," or interrogating racial and cultural identity is perhaps just another way of approaching age-old conundrums defined by the proliferation of power inherent in the human condition. How new are these "new ethnicities,"[17] and how much of what the West is just beginning to discover has always been imbedded in non-Western thought and cultures?

THIRD CINEMA AND THE EPIC IMAGE OF WOMAN

Because Third Cinema's central concern is collective empowerment and social change, in its search for liberating and multiplying the images of the Third World, it introduces an alternative film language which speaks directly to the schism in the women's movement and the breakdown of culturally and sexually biased representations of women in all societies. Indeed, the female in Third Cinema represents, among other things, the primordial social activist, but not only limited to deflecting the colonial gaze. Her image is the engendering symbol for the new aesthetic; she is the "Ceddo" or "outsider," in Sembene Ousmane's film, who liberates her people, the warrior of all just causes, representing a revolution reborn through the efforts of womanhood. Women's liberation becomes a liberation not only for the colonized, but for cultural expression as well, and thus it is a powerful metaphor for politicizing cinema.

This idea is elaborated in Sankofa's production of "Passion of Remembrance," when a Black woman, dressed in black and standing apart, while sharing the same landscape, addresses her male counterpart in race but oppressor in gender. Her language echoes the alienating rhetoric of the liberation struggle she questions, while the camera circles her listener like a satellite. Yet there is no sense of the male as center. In fact, he comes to her "lost," looking for the way "home." The two are never shot simultaneously, so the land appears to be shifting. The woman paces up and down. Her movement, complemented by the

camera's movement becomes a metaphoric must, showing the need for a violent epistemic break from the fixed axes of race, class and gender. The entire scene is about movement; they do not reach any convenient compromise. Thus she remains anterior but in motion, unbridging but articluating her position, which is in a state of constant flux. It is the man whose image eventually disappears into the hazy horizon.

A similar morphology of film language is developed in Trinh T. Minh-ha's latest film, "Surname Viet, Given Name Nam." An exiled Vietnamese-American woman, reenacting an interview of a Vietnamese woman doctor, claims, "There is the image of the woman, and there is the image of her reality. Sometimes the two of them do not go well together." Minh-ha is well aware of the problematics of female representation, as she exposes the hypocrisy of documentary and ethnographic film tradition, calling attention to the objectifying process of film-making through the intercutting and collusion of written text, audio, and visual elements. There are times when the film is speaking, the woman is speaking, and the image is speaking, simultaneously, and they are all displacing each other.

Minh-ha questions every camera move, as we should our relationship to the images it produces. The film's readings are random and myriad, informed by what is not there, arrived at through an evocation of naked space, dead soundtrack, and the presence of absence. Minh-ha as the female objectifier/filmmaker/voyeur splits her subject and her film into multiple parts, and uses the site of woman to represent the entire polemic of representation. Another female film critic and producer, Jacqueline Rose, reflects, "The problem is the image of the cinema as the image of the woman in particular. The undoing of cinema and the undoing of the image of the woman come together at the same time."[18] As in her earlier film, "Reassamblage," Trinh Minh-ha's work introduces a participatory cinema, one which explores the Other as Us, and representation as collaboration.

African films such as Ousmane's "Emitai" ("God of Thunder," Senegal), "Naitou" ("Orphan," Republic of Guinea) and Desire Ecare's "Visages de Femmes" ("Faces of Women," Cote d'Ivoire) are complimentary in their use of the image of woman to challenge the hegemony of Western cinematic style and discourse. Seen from outside their cultural framework, these films are interesting in their similar investigation of women as the means through which history is accessed and collective identity created. Without resorting to a Western feminist reading of the non-Western female image, an alienating dialectic in its judgement of sexual inequality from outside indigenous constructions of gender and sexuality, I am chiefly interested in looking at how the portrayal of African women in these films delimits the

feminist perspective, and reopens the concepts of sexual difference and female identity.

Within African tradition, the concept of "female" is viewed as a primary principle or force, and is in fact the central medium for communication with the divine. She is Nomkhubulwane, the daughter of the Creator, and the source of all life.[19] African epic tales of Mwindo and Sundiata posit the female principle as the seminal symbol of creation and creativity.[20] She is Mother Africa, the earth, as well as the Goddess of Water, the rivers and sea.

African film invests heavily in this epic woman. She is portrayed as apocryphal, larger than life, or life itself. As the rice farmer in "Emitai," she feeds the villagers and the gods, sustaining balance between them. As the jealous wife in "Naitou," her rage perpetuates death. As the collective chorus in "Visages," she generates her own story which is simultaneously the story of humankind. Men are reduced to vestiges, mere accessories. They are ill-organized, indecisive, and at the mercy of the gods. Where the gods are women, man is subhuman, dwarfed by the spirit world. The soldiers in "Emitai" are like the young warriors preparing to rescue the orphan girl in "Naitou," or the cuckolded husband in "Visages;" their prayers and flexing of muscles are rendered impotent under the spell of women's creative powers, either spiritual ("Naitou"), fantastical ("Visages") or real ("Emitai").

In another Sembene film, "Xala" ("spell of impotence"), man's sexual failure becomes the trope for a political satire which exposes the hypocrisy of neocolonial heads of state, cowering to the dominance of core capitalist countries. This film includes women as the carriers of traditional wisdom (the first wife) and revolutionary impetus (the daughter). In one scene, the self-aggrandizing Minister of Finance is reduced to a groveling dog, crawling on his knees and barking in a desperate bid to regain his virility.

In "Emitai," Sembene establishes a stark, reactionary style with his "cinema of silence," dramatized by the seated, voiceless resistance of the village women. For Sembene, silence means natural sounds or the total absence of sound (deadtrack).[21] Certain sounds are juxtaposed with images in such a way that the visual is deconstructed. A cock crows while the camera captures a poster of General de Gaulle. While the women are forced to sit in the hot sun, the only sounds heard are the isolated cries of a child, and the footfalls of the soldier's boots on soft earth. This profound silence speaks loudly as a precursor to action. The sound of trees swaying, bare feet running through dead leaves, or an empty gourd falling enhances the drama and suspense of the oppressive situation. The rifle shots at the end of the film are heard in an image vacuum, or black screen. The spectator is then left with the haunting

imprint of the last image before the shots, that of the vigilant women, circling in a ritualistic war dance.

In "Emitai," the women do not speak, but emerge having spoken. Their silence is a kind of willful masking, like putting on the Muslim veil as a revolutionary act, the signifier of their struggle.[22] In choosing not to speak, they have exercised their will to don the veil, or "unsay," thereby creating a language of their own, which enhances Sembene's progressive film language. Their silence is the impossible presence rather than an absence in any preconceived text. Their collective femininity becomes a ritualized force greater than death. At the end of the film they dance, clutching the spears abandoned by the men who have succumbed to French demands and who are killed anyway. The woman's dance is a dance of absences, articulating through movement the space for continuity and rebirth.

All of this has a startling effect on the spectator, who is at once acknowledged and dismissed. Spectator identification in terms of an individual character finds little relevance in Sembene's film; it is more about collective engagement. The final silence is penetrating, one which prompts audience response. As Sembene himself stressed, films don't **make** revolution, but **prepare** society for revolution[23] (emphasis in the original). A film is only revolutionary insofar as it moves the masses to action. Sembene's films have in fact had such an impact. At one point in Senegal, maids and housewives refused to work in order to attend repeated screenings of "Black Girl," a film about a domestic servant who commits suicide.[24] (emphasis added)

The immediacy of Sembene's films to his audience stems from the African oral heritage his aesthetics are drawn from, in terms of time, space, rhythm and music. Sembene has been called the "modern griot"[25] as he extends the role of traditional storyteller to that of filmmaker. As the griot is the cultural mediator for his society, so are Sembene's films articulations of his people's history and identity, through collective memory. His use of visual metaphors common to artist and audience reflects shared attitudes and ideas which are specific to African thought systems. His symbolism transcends the context of the film, which is just one text among many. The dead Baobab tree recurrent in "Emitai" is the sacred tree of life common in Senegalese folklore, which symbolizes the passage between the heavens and earth. Roads, rivers and forest are given sacred significance and also serve as thematic linkages to African mythic structures. Sembene's camera tells the story of a shared history, one which is ultimately rendered by his audience's own experiences under foreign occupation and domination. In "Emitai," gods talk and walk; death is a journey, rice farming a ritual. Similarly, in the pedagogy of Senegalese storytelling, myths feed and reflect reality. It is interesting that Sembene's films have crossed

cultures so successfully. Perhaps his image of woman is readily analogous to all women's struggles, indeed any denigrated group in society can relate to the political message in his films. The style is also jarring, almost alienating, to the Western viewer, well-versed in a film language built around repetitive montage, hero-centric narrative and linear structure. Yet the overall effect of seeing a Sembene film is unforgettable, an implosion of the unexpected, a gnawing infinity.

This loosely structured, highly symbolic, participatory cinema is even more evident in "Naitou" and "Visages de Femmes," as the entire story is told through song and dance. As the griot speaks through music, rhythm, and gesture, these films perhaps move further into the traditional African oratory and myth than "Emitai." In both films, water is depicted as the eternal women's emblem, symbolizing renewal and purification. The water the "Emitai" women drink sustains their energy to resist. In "Naitou," the goddess of the river, "Le Conscience," glides in and out of the frame, frequently shot by a waterfall, in a canoe, or at the banks of the river. Omnipresent woman, she serves as the mediator between both man and spirit and film and spectator. In "Visages de Femmes," a riveting lovemaking scene takes place with man and woman submerged in water, their bodies undulating as waves, the erotica of nature coalescing with human sexuality.

The concept of woman is dramatized here as water-oriented and cyclical, as in the "Naitou" circumcision scene, shot under the cascading spell of a giant waterfall. Women's purity and fecundity are ritualized in the elaborate ceremonial dances performed before and after the circumcision. The entire film flows like water, washing over its spectator in a visual array of passing, dancing images. This non-linear structure reinforces African cosmology, which follows a cyclical pattern of death, followed by rebirth, imbedded in the female principle. This is shown in "Naitou," when the death scene is shot low-angle into the skies, immediately followed by an unnamed woman giving birth. One woman's death is followed by another's labor toward childbirth as the fertility cycle reinstates order, and optimism is embodied in the new child.

The free-form flow of "Naitou" defies canonization. The story has no structured beginning or end, as in "Emitai," where the film title does not even appear until halfway through the first reel. This relates to the idea that no story can be told in isolation, it must always refer to what has come before and what will follow. The idea of a finite, closed narrative is alien to African understanding.

In many ways African cinema transcends itself as narrative as it crosses over into the territory of myth-making. The undeniable power of the double moving image, literally "dancing frames," is mesmerizing. As W.B. Yeats ponders in his famous line, "Who can tell the dancer from the dance," who can tell the film from the reality it seeks to

transform? In fact, "Naitou" disorients so completely with its lack of story and plot anchorage that any investigation of theme is peripheral. The journey into the film's mythic core, like the orphan's journey into the sacred forest, becomes a nomadic expression that transcends fixed meaning. It is not for the viewer to interpret, but experience, as in a ritual. The spectator is given verbal entry only once, and this directly, at the end of the film, in French subtitles (by no coincidence a colonial language). Language itself is already foreign to the rest of the film, so when it appears, "Voulez-vous resemblez cette femme?" (would you like to **look** like this woman?), the question comes as an assault (emphasis added).

So the journey is over, and the viewer must extricate him- or herself from the film in order to understand its final question. This is where the female image becomes reductive. The film's entire radicalized orientation towards pluralism and liberating forms breaks down when reexamined in the polygamist context. In the end, the jealous wife is bewitched and condemned. The women in the audience are chastised by her horrific, neanderthal image, and warned not to end up like her. Why this dichotomy between the progressive style of the film and its individualizing, objectifying final image?

Ultimately, the African woman occupies a pivotal place in African history and cinema, as well as within Western historical and feminist discourse: "The non-western woman as a trope of feminist discourse is either non-modern or modern; she is seldom perceived as living in a situation where there is deeply felt tension between tradition and modernity."[26] In "Naitou," polygamy can be condemned by the chaos it implicates. Just the same, its problematics can be displaced, by condemning a jealous wife. The syncretic nature of today's Africa produces representations of women as between the celestial and subaltern, or Goddess and slave. Her multiple nature may be a proliferation of colonialism and male dominance, but in "Naitou," her mythic prowess diffuses her subordinate role. To be usurped is to be naked, speechless, blinded. But it is also to be unrevealed, prolific, visionary. It is in this ambivalence, embodied by the female principle, that the stereotype turns around to confront its maker, and illustrates that moment of pleasure and power that so unnerves the Western consciousness.[27]

Void is always capable of being filled by solid
And I look at the myriad of reflections
the entire lake within me
Unable to quench it
Quench an endless thirst
The charm of its nudity lights up our desire for both

retreat and expansion.[28]

The interesting notion here is that woman cannot be fixed by the male or female colonizer's gaze, instead, **she** unfixes **them.** This idea of space and visibility is central to the construction and deconstruction of woman, both in the Western and non-Western sense. The scopic drive of the colonial gaze precedes the cinematic, in its ploy to anchor woman within a frame and manipulate her within. Western filmmaker Chris Marker articulates this anxiety of unfixity when confronted with what he calls the "built-in grain of indestructability of African women": (emphasis added)

> I see her--she saw me--she knows that I see her--
> she drops me her glance, but just at an angle as though
> it was not addressed to me--and at the end of the
> real glance, straight forward, that lasted a
> twenty-fourth of a second, the length of
> a film frame. [29]

In contrast, Sembene has unequivocally addressed the issue of women's (mis)re-presentation in African society in almost all his films. This has cost him censorship, especially in the case of "Ceddo," which has been banned in Senegal because the female protagonist kills the Imam, or Muslim leader. Sembene explains: "Women have no value in our Muslim-dominated society and this representation of women is something Islam cannot accept.".[30]

In "Emitai," women are not individual wives, daughters or mothers. Rather, they are continually shot en masse, in rigid, perfected lines as they till the land or march off to hide their rice. This is to reflect the militancy of their oppressors, which throws back a precise image of resistance."Emitai" in Dialo means "god of thunder," who brings rain, and propagates life. Yet Emitai is also the god of anger and rage. Emitai is the driving spirit of womanhood, the life force and the voice of reparation when repressed. Like the women's festival in "Visages de Femmes," the women's song in "Emitai" is an incessant protest refrain that cannot be silenced. Its shrill perseverance breaks down any effort to contextualize, conceptualize, or close her image.

This representation of the "woman as spectacle," embodies the revolutionary aesthetic in Third Cinema. It is this concept of the indestructable, collectivized female that imparts a political message by liberating cinematic form. The mythic woman belongs to the past, she symbolizes collective memory. She is referential, yet carries within her the potential for eternity and the promise for the future. In the process

of rejuvenating and decolonizing film practice, the female image serves as progenitor of an alternative discourse, or perhaps a doing away with discourse altogether. Her movement in "Naitou" between illusion and reality defies the imprisoning precepts of sign and signified, her song in "Emitai" frees the subject from its object by disorienting time and space.

Neither feminism, racial politics nor alternative film-making can escape the difficulty of claiming difference while being held bondage to what is needed to define that difference. When images cease being sought, produced, and read as closed entities, as dialectical deferrents making **present** what is **absent,** then multiple margins and readings are afforded. Cinema becomes a spectacle, a process, an event. In Africa, where there is no particular reverence or cult of the cinematic image, movies are built out of collective memories, stories, and ritualistic traditions. The image is not accused for its cultural or racial limitation, but liberated for its universal possibility. Western feminist and critical discourse has much to learn from the ladies in "Visages de Femmes," who return to the site of dance, which is motion, which is life. Their polyphony of voices and bodies defy closure, their story multiplies itself. The film opens and opens again, (dis)closing with these sounds of words: (emphasis added)

> ... In the beginning was the festival
> In the end, the festival became a refuge...

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[1]James Monaco, ***How To Read Film*** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.13.

[2]Teshome Gabriel, ***Third Cinema in the Third World*** (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Press, 1982)

[3]Felicity Collins, "(Sad) Song of the Body," ***Screen,*** 28: 1 (Winter, 1987), p.36

[4]Robert Crusz, "Black Cinemas, Film Theory and Dependent Knowledge," ***Screen***, 26: 3-4 (May/August, 1985), p.152.

[5]Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Not You/Like You: Post-Colonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference," ***Inscriptions***, nos. 3/4, 1988, pp.71-77. See also her introduction to ***Discourse***, guest editor of issue entitled "The Inappropriated Other," (Fall/Winter, 1986-87).

[6]See Gayatri Spivak's discussion in ***Undercut***, special issue on "Sexual Identities, Questions of Difference," no. 17, Spring, 1988, pp.23-25.

[7]Minh-ha, from the text of her film, "Naked Spaces, Living Is Round."

[8]Franz Fanon, ***Black Skin, White Masks*** (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p.8.

[9]Homi Bhabha, "Remembering Fanon, Self, Psyche, and the Colonial Condition," Foreword to ***Black Skin, White Masks***, p.xvii; see also "Sly Civility," in ***North Dakota Quarterly*** (Summer, 1987), p.36.

[10]For further discussion of this "reversal" and its racist indications, see Paul Gilroy, ***There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*** (London: Hutchinson, 1987), and James Snead, "Images of Blacks in Black Independent Films," ***Blackframes*** (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1988), pp.16-25. This article draws inspiration from Gilroy.

[11]Jean Baudrillard, "The Evil Demon of Images," ***At the End of the Social and Other Essays,*** translated by Foss, Patton, and Johnston (New York: Semiotext, Inc., 1983).

[12]Audre Lorde, ***Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*** (The Crossing Press: CA), 1984.

[13]Gayatri Spivak, ***In Other Worlds***

[14]Jo Carillo, "And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You," in ***This Bridge Called My Back,*** eds., Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldua (Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1985).p.63.

[15]Aihwa Ong, "Colonialism and Modernity: Feminist Representations of Women in Non-Western Societies," ***Inscriptions***, Op.Cit., pp.79-90.

[16]Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts," ***Race, Writing, and Difference,*** edited by Henry Louis Gates,Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). See entire article

[17]Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," ICA Document, #7, 1988, pp.27-29.

[18]Jacqueline Rose, "Sexual Identities, Questions of Difference," ***Undercut,*** Op. Cit., p.24.

[19]Mazisi Kunene, ***Anthem of the Decades***, (London: Heinemann, 1981), p.289.

[20]See the translations of these ancient epics: Daniel Biebuyck and C. Mateene, ***The Mwindo Epic.*** (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971) and D.T. Niane, ***Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*** (London: Longmann Press).

[21]Francoise Pfaff, ***The Cinema of Sembene Ousmane*** (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press), p.63.

[22]Trinh Minh-ha, "Not/You Like You," Op. Cit.,p.73.

[23]Sembene Ousmane, "Filmmakers and African Culture," ***Africa***, No. 71, 1977, p.80

[24]Pfaff, Op.Cit., pp.174-177.

[25]Pfaff, Op. Cit., p.63.

[26]Ong, Op. Cit., p.86.

[27]Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question," ***Screen,*** Nov./Dec., 1983.

[28]Minh-ha, "Naked Spaces," Op. Cit.

[29]Chris Marker, "Sunless," from ***Sans Soleil***, courtesy of New Yorker Films.

[30]Gabriel, interview with Sembene, Op. Cit.