

Brand's work unsettles. Her subjects, lesbian, black, migrants, activists and workers are the sort usually denied foreground in much literature. Her position, writing from a place close to that of her characters, from a position of marginality, does not afford the privilege of an apolitical world view. *In Another Place, Not Here* is a worthy exploration of the lives of these women as personal and political entities, as folks doing the work of "imagining other ways of navigating [their] collective future."<sup>3</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

1. The slave name given to the great-great-grandmother of the woman Elizete was given to.

2. "And when she [Adela] done calculated the heart of this place, that it could not yield to her grief, she decide that this place was not nowhere and is so she call it. Nowhere. She say nothing have no name" (Brand 18).

3. From Adrienne Rich's preface to her *What Is Found Here: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics*. She situates this idea in terms of a general failure of the American public to do this work.

#### REFERENCES

Brand, Dionne. *In Another Place, Not Here*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Working Paper on Black Women In Toronto: Gender, Race and Class," *Returning the Gaze: Essays on Racism, Feminism and Politics*. Ed. Himani Bannerji. Toronto: Sister Vision, 1993.

Rich, Adrienne. *What Is Found Here: Notebooks On Poetry And Politics*. New York: Norton, 1993.

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**Clara Gutsche: La Serie des Couvents / The Convent Series.** France Gascon, ed. Montréal: Musée d'art de Joliette, 1998. (Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Musée d'art de Joliette, Musée de la Civilisation and Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery).

The photograph featured on the cover of this issue of *Atlantis*, selected from Clara Gutsche's *La Série des Couvents / The Convent Series*, shows us nuns at play. The image bemuses: four middle-aged women, cloistered within a walled garden, move awkwardly from within the heavy folds of their habits. Each is poised to serve, to smash her ball against the stone wall. This representation of nuns, their living space, the dailyness of their lives, characterizes all the photographs included in the catalogue for Gutsche's series insofar as it reflects back defamiliarizing questions concerning privacy, pleasure, desire, and identity in the secular world: we recognize the game, but are moved to consider the rules.

Gutsche explores in these magnificent and arresting photographs, as she has throughout her thirty-year career in a variety of remarkable photographic projects, "what time has left behind ..." (France Gascon, "Foreword," *La Série des Couvents/The Convent Series*, 15). She explains that her fascination with convents and their inhabitants arose from her experience upon moving, in 1970, from America to Québec, when that latter culture had recently and definitively "dismissed," with remarkable "vehemence," its "Catholic past" (quoted in Gascon, 17). On one view, then, *The Convent Series* stands as the return of the repressed. Gutsche addresses Québec's denial of its history by dramatizing cloisters and the women who remain, anonymous and invisible, within them, as the silent heart of Québec's memory. One aspect of Gutsche's achievement lies in the implication that subject formation within the rituals of Catholic obedience has mutated into compliance with contemporary consumerist practices. For in Gutsche's rendering of convents, the material conditions and affective relations of tradition and secularity are not disparate; rather, they converge.

When the artist began this work in the 1980s, she was interested chiefly in exploring the meaning of monastic architectural space. (Fully one-third of the forty-eight photographs in the catalogue do not include people.) As Ingrid Jenkner observes of the series as a whole, an "aura of authority is reinforced by spatial perspectives that evoke the orderly universe of a Renaissance

painting" (Jenkner, *La Série des Couvents/The Convent Series*, 13). The orderliness of Gutsche's convent space is eerie, communicating a seemingly eternal and inevitable authority. By means of depth-photography, inanimate artifacts associated with contemporary feminine domesticity - sofas, chairs, televisions, hair dryers, potted plants, irons - assume a hyper-real, even ominous character. In "Une salle de travail/Utility Room" (37), a lurid reproduction of the sacred heart mounted on the wall invests the familiar, banal clutter of a laundry room with resonances of timeless suffering, sacrifice, and service. The accoutrements of domesticity are thereby imbued with the presence of disciplinary power.

In the 1990s, after negotiating permission from convent authorities to photograph sisters, Gutsche embarked on a theatricalized arrangement of the women within those spaces. By achieving "a consensual intimacy" with her subjects, whom she represents by means of "a staging approach" (15), she extends her interpretation of the spatial meaning of cloisters. In the process, she evokes profoundly disturbing questions concerning the cultural scriptedness of feminine desire, identity, discipline. The weirdness of cloistered nuns in their alien setting perhaps serves as an analogue of women's contemporary social construction.

Gutsche's photographic compositions emphasize the uniformity of nuns' costumes, postures, gestures, while the vividness of mass-produced artifacts, occupying equal importance within the frame, at once mirrors and reifies the women's presence. A traditional, monolithic feminine subjectivity appears to be infinitely reproduced. "Le musée/Museum" (64) exemplifies Gutsche's representation of women's preservation of sacral femininity. Fixed high onto the wall is a large children's doll, round-eyed, expressionless, costumed in sequined robe and wings: a commercially-produced angel. The doll presides over a table set with several framed reproductions; the foregrounded one, at least, is of Madonna and child. Beside the table stands an aged, bespectacled, rather vigorous-looking nun cradling a yard-high porcelain statue of the Christ child. The parodic image conjures a bizarre, but not cruel, revelation: "time has left behind" this woman and her enduring

identification with a divinely mysterious, young virgin mother. The old woman's willing performance as embodied mediator of a paradoxical role might provoke audiences to consider the dissonances inherent in their own situatedness in historical and popular cultural materiality.

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***Cracking the Gender Code: Who Rules the Wired World?*** Melanie Stewart Millar. Second Story Press, Toronto, 1998; 230 pages; ISBN 1-89674-14-2.

***Women Encounter Technology: Changing Patterns of Employment in the Third World.*** Swasti Mitter and Sheila Rowbotham, eds. Routledge, London and New York (published in association with the UNU Press); 1995 (paperback 1997); xvii + 356 pages; ISBN 0-415-14118-4.

There are, of course, more and more books on "the new technology" as more and more of us become aware of the profound changes "purely technological" changes can cause in so many aspects of our political, economic and social lives. These two books tackle very different aspects of the issues, and by doing so, illustrate how confusingly varied are both the problems and the feminist approaches to them. While the term "new technology" is usually broadly applied to technologies that incorporate the microchip, this invention has now permeated so much else that any discussion of it tends to encompass virtually anything that we might call "machinery" or "industrial production." We are not simply dealing with the ubiquitous PC or even the Internet, but with the way the microchip has transformed global production and trade and consequently the majority of work carried out by women in capitalist settings.

Millar and Mitter and Rowbotham not