

## UPRISING

Three central means of participation in the uprising, both symbolic, one at level of materiality, experience, the other mediation:

The first through direct participation in looting, burning, leaving; the second by "witnessing, reporting, documenting, the third through panic: fleeing, locking oneself in, various anxiety related activities and fantasies."

1) "theft": return to relations of market economy, importance of private property: economics of protest, in culture where acquisition poses membership; ownership about position outside of marginalized communities. Theft of commodities and theft of real estate (if you can't own it, burn it...) Although I see ARSON as different order, closer to the symbolic and to t.v.)

Looting is symbolic: naming, incorporating, toxicity of pleasure. Different orders of acts.

- To take leisure items. (The eight hour day)
- To take food and diapers. (Love and nurturance)
- To take whatever is available. (Luck)
- To take home improvement items. (Home)
- To take the means of representation. (Simulacra)

The idea of crapping in your own crib (one's neighbourhood) conflated with destroying corporate owned buildings.

Tendency to explain looting in economic terms alone because of obvious gaps in economic hierarchies. No question that women looted food, diapers, furniture, clothing for their children. Some representation of "bad mothers" telling their children what to take. Liberal desire to explain as survival tactic and unquestionably that is part of what happened, especially once resources in communities were disappearing (stock up, the earthquake's coming!). But looting is more than that, tied to structures of race (even if not only Black people looted) and economics and the organization of districts according to race (as an acquaintance who grew up in Watts reminded me, Black people could not buy anywhere other than S. Central, Watts, Inglewood as early as twenty years ago).

Instrumentality of memory and history to sense of investment, Argue for identification and i.d. in the face of erasure. Uprising: conflicting interstices of i.d. along race and class lines. Expression within the language of property relations, economic disenfranchisement, different layers of rebellion confused: attacks on international corporations housed in L.A. Issues articulated connected to need for local and community control. Important to remember many different levels of people participate in any such event: racially mixed in fact (Latino, White, Black). System breakdown, breakdown of authority structures.

## LOOTING

As both an economic/pol. strategy and as a direct response to marginalization, consumer riots are hardly new; historical tactic of those with access to the market and domestic production, but not to means of production. Often the other side of price gauging, hoarding. Looting simply returns the investment in exploitation back to capital.

As one unnamed African-American stated in L.A. Times,

"What we did was American, you ever heard of the Boston tea Party? They looted the ships and threw it overboard."..If this was Cuba, the L.A. time would call it a rebellion."

Bread rioting in France and London from the 16th to the 20th century, with bread operating as a symbolic of basic food. Women would riot during shortages, during price hikes. Apparently spontaneous, but also ordered.

Looting was not only practical but about profound anger. People with money whose insertion in "the system" is economically recognized, but whose sense of identity is as marginal both because of the history of race and class and because of the omnipresence of seduction and insecurity looted because it was available as a means of expression, whether of rage or of displaced desire. Uprising's insistence on "looting", that is delayed payment shopping on demand, makes sense.

Problem of rebellion when unemployment high, when relation to employment marginal, i.e. general strike as traditional weapon. Crisis of leadership led to action on the most immediate level: no other response in place.

Violence placed onto specific sub-groupings, misadjusted individuals and groups blamed, police violence erased.

Television and advertising present within community structure and homes. Constant presentation of what values and objects of value constitute success in America. Once you have the object what does it matter how you got it? Capitalism has never stressed an ethics of production methods, rather an ethics of ownership.

History of bread riots, other forms of consumer dissent which articulate in class terms.

Issue of external control: communities demanding control over economic development.

## ARSON

### SLOW AND FAST BURNS

Man arguing on television that looting makes sense, but destroying outlets in the community is a problem because it destroys jobs which need to remain inside the community, ANGER suggests that burning as or more important than looting. Looting can be seen as

job creation, burning as a symbol of heat, anger, destruction, erasure and replacement. Sculptural motif in a community. (The WATTS TOWER). Burning destroys what is present, replacing it with a symbolic of potential, with marks of identity, with a map of movements and other forms of language. I.D. with feminine behavior of self-marking, burning, cutting the body, the body as a space one inhabits and is constructed into, alienated from.

Elevate the derisive of one's own body as death, exteriorizing the symbology of dead matter, of life turned to death.

Arson creates historical memory, material and concrete. There is historical memory, wounds...wounding the landscape..and memory like the body, process of making identity known, how stay in boundaries, how slips outside of containment...) Arson specifically about marking.

This is true in pre-televisual terms, although the Watts Riots were broadcast, television news had not yet centred on fires and murders as their specific modality. One can see the burnings in L.A. as giving news their spectacle and the spectacle in turn producing the news.

Fire: calming, fixating, threatening, reduced, warm. The ultimate news experience: the collapse of fires and murders into one site, the possibility of risk for the constructing reporters, the difference in space between anchorpeople and the events on the street, the banality of description, the insistence on traditional authority at a time when its erosion was most evident: all these aspects contributed to the reduction and control over the uprising, but also the role of the media in constructing itself as the speaking subject.

Rebuilding (water) posed against the destruction of fire (baptism vs the fires of hell)...whose master narrative?

Directed, ordered mapping. While press constructed event as orgiastic, arson was well organized, systematic, requiring a minimum of tools, but tools nonetheless: transportation, molotov cocktails, gas. Mapping: ownership: corporate; of Korean community's activities in building certain economies, in their placement or pressuring into these jobs (like Jews). Leaving behind visible markers to be cleaned up (I refused to clean up). The aftermath effaced.

- 1) construction hoardings
- 2) very fast tear downs
- 3) references to peace (symbols and signs), suggests a history which has been eradicated.

Back to normal.

Gendering of looters: always images of men, women with children (bad mothers), but WANTON men (wanton violence), with ESCATRIC looks (stealing). Equation of raping property.

Degendering of "looting", or gender transference: carnivale tradition, reversal of roles accompanied by symbolic actions. Women as consumers, women were in footage, but men are described and named (young, Black men) as perpetrators. Images of male hysteria, out of control, escatic. property conflated with the body, with personal danger: most acts were not against the body of the other, but vs property.

Sexualization of event: Jouissance like  
"feeding frenzy"  
"vortex of violence"  
"swelling, surging"  
"looking ecstatic"  
"glazed eyes"

Escatic construction ties to other emerging construction of the King beating, its rationale and the racist ordering of the Other as threat, calling upon white womanhood to defend violence against African-American men. Amplified by sense of organization on part of Black youth (the gangs...)

King referred to by Koons as "Mandingo, denigrating reference, "gallows humour". He suggested that King "shook his buttocks at Cal. Highway Patrol Officer Melanie Singer who worried for her safety approached King with a gun. As king sexually girated, a mixture of fear and offence overcame Melanie. The fear was of a Mandingo sexual encounter." "...there's this sexual prowess of the South and intercourse between blacks and whites on the plantation." Classic use of sexualized images of Black men to condone violence. "Group beat" or "monkeyslapping time" discussion: about pleasure of violence, like a circle jerk. As Koon suggests: 'literally it means an officer is going to masturbate', in this instance it means an officer is going to kick back and relax." Homoerotic construction of violence, panic disorder, the homosexual panic defence used to rationalize violence against gay men. Fear of identification gives rise to violence (fear that one might actually be like or be gay or want something to happens to you like...)

GENDER, HYSTERIA, LOOTING, PUNISHMENT and PLEASURE

Carnival aspect of expression and media construction. The palpable resentment of reporters who perceived that people were having "fun" and not acting out of desperation hovered above the smoke. Reporters engaged in own elegization on one hand on the other, in moralizing about the activities surrounding them. "Opportunists" versus genuine protestors. Separation of system into different structures, as though the economy were somehow not part of the problem. As though the media, 'showing' selective events were not part of constructing the uprising.

Problem with carnivale is that it is structured into the system, allowed as part of reversal, acting out, dispersal of threat. Erasure of rebellion intensifying daily. Considered non-news.

Carnivale: sense of empowerment and rejoicing; now the white judicial system looks for signs of remorse or victimization. Otherwise culpable. Radical fear is of reassertion of control. Orgy of intervention: National Guards, Marines, all suggest that evaporation of systems of order = terror. Rebuilding (reordering) immediate solution (gender: "middle class women and girls" recounted: here women finally have a presence).

2) The second means of participation: documentation. Not a surprise that some of the first stores looted and burned were camera and video stores:

Resale value.

The means to participate in the economy of image production and exchange, to make images which could be sold (a la Rodney King) on in the market place (prices offered by media and police, home video shows on T.V.); not exactly self-representation.

As a means of participation which appears less implicated (because the media feigns objectivity).

To establish communication in situation where events at some instances unfolded for the camera.

To maintain a lasted record of participation, in situation where document manifest and experience latent, no oral tradition, only proof is image and even that proof negotiable (false).

Take ex-Captain Timothy Goldman who heard of the outbreak of violence on his friend's police scanner and headed to Normandie Florence with his new videocamera. He became the subject of L.A. times interest, constructed as a character in the drama, quoted as 'first sympathetic and then dismayed, trying to dissuade people from looting, although, "we're a bit sick of the lapd."

The commercial media provided the model: they constructed themselves as the subjects of the event--reporters, The Press constructing itself:

"Jurnalists jobs make them nobody's comrade and nobody's enemy. That nobody loves the press is a given, on Wed. and Thurs, "nobody" had guns and knives.' They had rocks the size of cantalopes. In places where the police and firefighters were not in evidence, the press was , white or black, they took the crest of the rage and disapointment."

Or Channel 2, "That's my right arm, we're behind the police car, seeking safety." or "lotta guns drawn", or ...

Anger at the media, television specific:

John Mitchell: "Its the hype television gives, the running commentary by the t.v. folks who dont know the area and are trying to give this instant analysis." Surface commentary which infuriated people even more, limits of life without a script.

Instructive in gendered, race and class terms to see who speaks (L.A. Times worth reading):

Very few speaking subjects allowed, virtually no African-American

or Latino speakers.

Gates

Victims of violence and property damage (conflated)

Fearful white families

Survivors of the Watts Riot

Profiles of Denny Beaters including nicknames, wrap sheets  
and family disfuncion

Gender:

Women either as victims or bad mothers or rebuilders (good mothers).

Rodney King verdict proof that truth is completely subjective, level of mediation astounding, as L.A. Times, if want conviction in Denny trial, keep the videotape at home. Or truth simply confirms what "know" already. Media sticks to notion of news as objective reporting. In L.A. all of the channels had non-stop burning. Same fire shown from six perspectives, fires placed over interviews. The ultimate form of censorship: for the demands of the immediacy of news coverage, its sense of control for the viewer over events which threaten him/her meant a certain containment to areas where viewers assumed not to be. After Gulf War where people watched nothing but a horizon for twenty minutes, the L.A. Rebellion coverage was equally absent while a totalizing presence. Never left the fires for commentary because it would have meant that channels would lose viewers.

Now, the press busy with erasure. Erases specificity of actors except within very contained constructions: disfunciton young black men, gang members, INDIVIDUALS.

Personally, interested in impossibility of representation of the uprising. Like the impossibility of representing certain kinds of pain, victimization etc. While dangers in reducing to rational, need for analysis and fearfulness of conclusions is evident.

RACE PANIC

Race panic: terror of the Other. Quote from the L.A. Times about how "They" are crawling like ants towards Beverly Hills. Race panic of people fleeing across town, just in case they or their area became the focus of rage: panic disorder. Construction of response: call in paternal authority, force; shoot to kill; aflight from L.A. in panic, 75% rise in visits to Ventura area realtors after the riot, "I cant take this any longer, get me out...:" "Hours after the riots began, Kathleen was packing her possessions..."