

# STRUGGLE: LOCAL AND GLOBAL

*We feel strongly within ourselves a hidden momentum that can't be located but comes from our interest in the world that we live in and the way we see the world.*

*Struggle: the collective process, (the collected writings) the ability to change, to shift the existing state. It is the multi-potent forces that meet at the point of intersection where the moment of inertia is transformed.*

This special issue of *The Capilano Review*, whose reins were generously handed over by Bob Sherrin, had its difficulties. To begin with we were four women, from diverse artistic experiences, racial and cultural backgrounds and all very active members in our own communities. In these seven months we were all in the same city for only four weeks — when the actual decisions about the work were finalized. Between the four of us we struggled to keep the ball rolling from Kenya, England, Nova Scotia, Haida Gwaii, Saskatchewan, Alberta and our answering machines — because they seem to be a country unto themselves at times.

As women we have so many struggles. As Women of Colour, as lesbians, as part of the working class, as a woman with disabilities, we each have particular concerns. Nicole Brossard once wrote, “to write *I am a woman* is filled with consequences.” The work in this issue reflects some of what B.C. women artists are thinking and experiencing.

As editors we struggled. The process of selection — what a difficult and implicitly powerful privilege — be given, assigned, allocated — to accept the position to select or reject. To recognize the challenge of these actions. One would prefer not to be positioned as ‘judge’. How can one speak for many? To be democratic whilst acknowledging the pinched budgets inherent to a small

periodical. To never shelve the too often unacknowledged interest 'informing' any editorial process. How do we name these?

We discussed and considered the advantages for younger writers, though considerably less polished or sometimes less precise in their presentation, of having a valuable opportunity to be neighbours with the more experienced.

Our decisions which had the appearance of organic revelation perhaps were not as organic as we would have liked. Somehow we knew implicitly what we sought. Direct address rather than ambivalent evasion. Simplicity yes. Attentiveness of detail yes. Generalized reductions no. The local. The specific. Humour. Passion.

At one point in the proofing stage the question arose about the capitalization of the words Black, Asian, Women of Colour, and the non-capitalization of white. One of us said that the *Globe and Mail* doesn't capitalize Native or Black. Does that make it right? We could have looked in the *Chicago Manual of Style* and found that Native, Black and Asian are considered adjectives and must not be capitalized. The question is: says who? White is considered an ideology, a given, whereas Native is an adjective, and not a race or a proper noun. Who made the rules? White must be in lowercase to pull readers out of their complacent and safe look at the world as "White is Right." Why can't white be capitalized as well? Perhaps there will be a time when White and black are equal, but not now; they aren't. We need to redress the imbalance, and it begins here. And now. We must make the familiar, oppressed position of seeing black, in lowercase (lower case) strange, by standing it in uppercase, Black. Likewise we must make the familiar White, strange by putting it in lowercase. White looks unusual in any type because white people have never looked at themselves as a colour. When we say woman or man, we assume white automatically; our racist roots are deeply embedded under this patriarchal ground. Both white/black or White/Black are constructed meanings. We need to subvert these creations. We must deconstruct the patriarchal, racist language, the syntax, the form which

we have so uninvitingly inherited. In this issue it might have been Black and white, in some other magazine it may be women fighting to be called women and not girls. What does it matter, you can hear the voices saying, they're just *words*.

*Caught between loving and hating the language of imperialism, and the possibility of subverting its power, oppression is met creatively with many forms of resistance as is evident in the works in this edition: humour, parody, anger, subversion. Colonial imperialism: not just words, but violent acts that we [have] experience[d].*

We want to thank Bob Sherrin for being patient and “hands off” with this issue. *The Capilano Review* is seen, at least in the literary world, as a publication place/space to aspire to. Over the years it has published many writers and until recently most were white and male. How could an Asian or Native woman who hoped to be published by this magazine ever be included? Not to belabor the obvious, her work wouldn't have reflected the white, middle-class editors' reality. The publishing world is changing and *The Capilano Review* knows that. Our hats are off to them.

Jane Hamilton, you have the patience of a ... buddha? saint? Thanks so much for all your invisible and heartfelt work. It doesn't go unnoticed.

This special issue of *The Capilano Review* is not meant to be comprehensive. We would have needed years, not months to compile such an issue. This is just a slice of time. Here it is. As it is. Take it. Enjoy.

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