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Spectacular sexualities on la Sainte-Catherine and Josée Yvon's *Danseuses-mamelouk*

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Although there are some examples that predate the 1970s, it was this decade that really saw the emergence of francophone gay, lesbian, feminist and counter-cultural fiction in Québec, with canonical publications including Réjean Ducharme's *L'Hiver de force* (1973), Nicole Brossard's *French Kiss* (1974), and Marie-Claire Blais's *Les Nuits de l'Underground* (1978). In some of this writing, according to Guy Poirier, 'the city—often Montréal—[is] depicted positively, as a place of potential happiness and self-realization'.[1] Parts of Montreal's downtown have been associated with gay and lesbian entertainment venues since the 1920s.[2] The city is now famous for its non-straight culture, with Divers/Cité, the annual lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered festival initiated in 1992, attracting over one million visitors every year. Whilst the 1970s saw political activism on the part of gays and lesbians in francophone and anglophone Canada, homophobia was still very much in evidence in this decade with, for example, regular police raids on Montreal's saunas and gay and lesbian bars.[3] This article looks at a text that celebrates the radical potentials of the city at the same time as it continues, albeit from a different perspective to its predecessors, a tradition of ambivalence towards Montreal in francophone Québécois fiction.[4] Although published in 1982, Josée Yvon's *Danseuses-mamelouk/Mameluke-Dancers* comes out of the context of Québec's counter-cultural and gay and lesbian literature, although it, and its writer, really occupies a place apart. In analysing the social underclasses celebrated in this poetic work, I shall consider how Yvon produces a particular kind of urban uncanny.

Danseuses-mamelouk is a triptych, composed of 'La chienne de l'Hôtel Tropicana' (The bitch from the Hotel Tropicana), 'Androgynes noires' (Dark androgynes), and 'Filles-commandos bandées'(Hard/aroused commando-girls). The first two parts take the form of prose-poems, whereas the third is made up of a number of relatively short poems. Several of the characters appear in more than one of the parts, so that the work reads as a whole. This sense of unity is also enabled by Yvon's use of photographs that the reader interprets as some of the people and places within the novel. By and large, these are interspersed throughout the text, seemingly at random, rather than being po-

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sitioned as illustrations of particular instances in the narrative. However, they appear to have a relationship with its content, echoing, at times, descriptions of the characters or else certain moments in the novel. Yvon's use of form, notably her combination of poetry and prose, has similarities with *l'écriture au féminin* (writing in the feminine)—the radical writing practice of lesbian-feminists like Nicole Brossard with which Québec's feminist oeuvre is most usually associated. However, Yvon has been marginalised in relation to the feminist canon, and is a vastly underrated writer. This is doubtless due to the challenging nature of her work, which features strippers, transsexuals, drug addicts and other so-called underground characters, and which celebrates sex acts such as sadomasochism and sex between adults and adolescents. I find the latter profoundly difficult: for Yvon, however, coming out of and also expanding the boundaries of a radical lesbian-feminist and counter-cultural tradition, this was part of a refusal of bourgeois normative heterosexuality, as can be seen in remarks that seem to have been intended for the introduction of *Danseuses-mamelouk* that also provide a defence of S & M: 'le S & M n'est pas un "power trip" ni un "mind game", et tout ce qui peut apparaître à côté n'est que du sexe de vênille [sic]' (S & M is not a "power trip" nor a "mind game" and everything alongside it is only vanilla sex).[5]

Another reason for Yvon's relative marginalisation in relation to the literary mainstream is her use of a populist language that has been described as bordering on vulgarity.[6] Yvon's use of the working-class vernacular, *joual*, functions as a signifier of the writer's class origins, whilst also locating her work in Montreal. This positioning in relation to the city occurs from the outset of *Danseuses-mamelouk*, since the written text is prefaced by two pages of photographs of strip bars and dance clubs on east Sainte-Catherine that serve as establishing images for the narrative. Probably best known as Montreal's main shopping street, la rue Sainte-Catherine/Saint Catherine Street, like others in the city, varies widely in character along its length. Dominated by department stores, shopping malls and tourist shops in the area around University and a few blocks further north, until recently, the street has had a more mixed, and often less affluent, feel east of the intersection with boulevard Saint Laurent, which bisects the city and which occupies a place within the Québécois imaginary as historical boundary between a francophone east and anglophone west. Alongside the nightclubs and cheap restaurants targeting the students at l'Université du Québec à Montréal, tourists, and others, traces of the sex shops, strip clubs and porn cinemas belonging to what a web ad for Théâtre Sainte-Catherine describes as 'formerly the historic Red Light District' still remain.[7] This is despite efforts, over the last three or four years, by the municipal authorities and other members of the Partenariat du Quartier des spectacles/the

Quartier des spectacles (show or entertainment quarter) Partnership to sanitise the area; turning it into a district devoted to music, theatre, comedy and the other cultural industries for which Montreal, with its numerous festivals, has become internationally renowned.

The establishing images that preface the written text of *Danseuses-mamelouk* ensure that we read the other photographs as representing the characters within Yvon's novel. These include the erotic dancer, Ginette, the title character of 'La chienne de l'Hôtel Tropicana'; Lulu, a male-to-female transsexual who goes into hospital for gender realignment surgery partly to escape a gang who are seeking their revenge for her having sold what turned out to be a lethal cocktail of drugs to la Tétrault, a pre-op male-to-female transsexual prostitute working the avenue du Parc area; Julie, Ginette's daughter, who blew out the window of her flat after setting fire to her husband's curtains; and Marie, who moonlights as an escort on rue Rachel and who one day, after some time spent in a psychiatric hospital, rents a room on rue Lagauchetière and kills herself with 'la plus merveilleuse overdose' (the most marvellous overdose) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 103). Photographs of erotic dancers, such as the photograph of a highly made-up blonde woman on the cover of the novel, a photograph just inside of the hips, thighs and hand of a fringed bikini-wearing woman holding a cigarette, and a photograph of a topless dancer in feathers and fishnets (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 90) connect with elements within the narrative. For example, on the title page of 'La chienne de l'Hôtel Tropicana', there is a photograph of a stripper on stage on whom oral sex is being performed by a male spectator whilst another looks on. This echoes the description, in 'Androgynes noires', of Julie's husband as 'le seul gaspésien à se décrocher la mâchoire/en suçant une danseuse en action' (the only Gaspesian to put out his jaw by licking out a dancer in action) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 84). The other illustrations—there are also a number of cartoon line drawings, of, amongst other things, a young 'girl' with a bruised or missing eye holding a doll or baby (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 64)[8]—also seem, to the reader, to represent Yvon's characters, since here, too, there is a contiguity between image and narrative content, with Julie being described as having lost half her brain and half her face in the fire she started (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 94).

The few critics who have written on Yvon tend to highlight the parallels between the writer's subject matter and her own life. For example, an obituary by Gaëtan Dostie, written after Yvon died prematurely of AIDS-related illnesses in 1994, begins: 'tel un papillon qui se brûle les ailes à la lampe allumée, Josée Yvon dans sa quête de l'incandescence des milieux interdits, sa fraternité avec la fange d'une société, son ivresse jusque dans les extremes du plaisir, a brisé

son miroir et elle est redevenue l'étoile de la fée… (like a moth that burns its wings on the flame, José Yvon, in her quest for the headiness of forbidden milieux, her fraternity with the dregs of society, her intoxication that pushed at the limits of pleasure, has broken her looking-glass and has become, once more, a star or a fairy…).[9] It seems that *Danseuses-mamelouk* is informed by elements from Yvon's experience: as a young woman, the writer performed a number of jobs in order to support her studies, including erotic dancing. A letter to Raymond Cloutier dated July 18, 1973, states, 'à Montréal, j'ai signé un contrat pour danser dans un hotel [sic] en face, contrat qui commence aujourd'hui. Je viens de le brûler, je viens de tordre le cou au compromis. Retour en arrière défendu. Trembler une semaine à la pensée de cet esclavage, c'est assez' (in Montreal, I signed a contract to dance in a hotel opposite, a contract that begins today. I've just burned it, I've just wrung the compromise's neck. A forbidden step backwards. Shaking for a week at the thought of that slavery is enough).[10] It would be an oversimplification to interpret the novel solely in terms of fictionalised autobiography, however. *Danseuses-mamelouk* knowingly makes a play around testimony: although most of the narration is in the third person, at times, a first person narrator addresses the reader. For example, after the description of Ginette in the club in the opening of 'La chienne de l'Hôtel Tropicana', we have 'je l'ai rencontrée sur un banc de la clinique Saint-Jacques,/elle racontait sa blennorragie, un shiner à l'œil et elle/riait' (I met her on a bench in Saint-Jacques clinic/she was talking about her gonorrhea, with a shiner of a black eye/she had an eye poché, and she/was laughing) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 24).[11] In 'Androgynes noires', this first person narrator figures herself as being in a psychology class with Marie and going on to have a relationship with her. Their daily routine is represented as being organised around sex—including with the teenage Julie, since the narrative moves backwards and forwards in time—drugs, alcohol and welfare cheques: avalé une dizaine de "black beauties" pour le fun et/commencé à se faire des Collins, astheure on boit à même/le 40 onces comme une élégiaque noce' (swallowed ten "black beauties" for a laugh/pour s'amuser/and began to make ourselves Collins, these days/de nos jours we drink up to/40 ounces like an elegiac wedding party) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 86–7).

The play around testimony that we get in Yvon's novel is also found in the use of photographs, which are popularly assumed to have a documentary function. Roland Barthes, asserting in *Camera Lucida*, that 'in Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*',[12] has been critiqued by critics such as John Tagg for relying on a reactionary realism.[13] However, it is the case that photographs are culturally perceived as testimonies to the past, even if this necessitates a voluntary suspension of disbelief on the part of the

viewer. Consequently, as Corey K. Creekmur asks, 'might the realist belief in photographic truth be at times a conscious, even if desperate, fantasy of the sort acknowledged by disavowal […]?'[14] What makes *Danseuses-mamelouk* very interesting and attests to Yvon's skill as a writer is that whilst the novel self-consciously positions its narrative in Montreal through the use of the establishing photographs that preface the written text, and through references to landmarks such as rue Drolet (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 44), and La Ronde (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 83), the theme park built for Expo 67, many of the photographs of people are actually from the seminal work by American documentary photographer, Susan Meiselas, entitled 'Carnival Strippers' (1976).[15] From 1972–5, Meiselas spent her summers photographing and interviewing women who worked the striptease shows in carnivals in small towns in New England, Pennsylvania and South Carolina.

Yvon's use of these photographs–Meiselas is credited on the flyleaf of the novel, but none of the individual illustrations are attributed–is part of what seems to be a collage technique adopted by the writer. Archival material relating to *Danseuses-mamelouk* includes cartoons of masturbating women, a photograph of a woman's face with a plug in her mouth, a photograph of a large, fairly butch older woman, and a photograph of a blonde male-to-female transsexual standing on the street, all of which appear to have been cut out of magazines, and which feature in the novel.[16] There is also a newspaper or magazine clipping of an article entitled 'Le "tops and bottoms"—Une nouvelle drogue aux États-Unis' ("Tops and bottoms"—a new drug in the U.S.), which is found in Yvon's novel in the drugs that Lulu sells (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 69) and another article about smoking hash and hiding a gun under the bed in which the protagonist's name has been crossed out by hand and altered from Pierre to Gina.[17] At least one of these photographs—of a blonde stripper named Lulu who is holding a rose that is used on the cover of *Danseuses-mamelouk*—is by Meiselas. Other photographs by this artist used in Yvon's novel include the one of the stripper who is having oral sex performed on her, the bikini bottom image used on the flyleaf, and an image of two 'female' figures who appear at first glance to be kissing but who are actually sharing a toke used on the title page of 'Androgynes noires'.[18] There is a further reference to 'Carnival Strippers' in the narration of Yvon's novel. In addition to the choice of the name Lulu for one of the characters, we have a description of Ginette that figures her as having a scar on her abdomen. This appears to allude to a photograph amongst Meiselas's collection that does not appear in *Danseuses-mamelouk*, but which shows a woman with what seems to be a C-section scar running from umbilicus to pubis that predates the introduction of more recent surgical

techniques, which cut along the line of the pubic hair so as to minimise scarring.

The text that accompanies Meiselas's photograph is by a stripper named Blue, who describes herself as a 'fluff butch', namely a lesbian who wears men's clothes but who doesn't 'try to overact the male role'.[19] Meiselas's photographs include pictures taken of the shows, the audience, of the strippers relaxing or preparing backstage, and of posed portraits of these women. The portraits are accompanied by texts from interviews, since Meiselas wished her audience 'to engage with the words of the subjects'.[20] In an essay to accompany the revised edition of the book publication of the work, Deirdre English argues that 'Carnival Strippers is, as much as anything, a social documentary about a workplace, an unsung career chosen by women as a way to earn more money than by any other means open to them'.[21] The use of so many photographs by Meiselas disrupts the apparently straightforward identification of Yvon's narrative with Montreal. However, it is part of a technique that might be termed appropriating-in-solidarity adopted by the writers for *MainMise*, the countercultural journal for which Yvon worked for two years as a critic of U.S. literature. The editorial to the first edition of the journal states: 'le dôme géodésique de Fuller est québécois quand il est traduit par notre ciel montréalais' (Fuller's geodesic dome [the U.S. pavilion for Expo 67, now the Biosphère] is Québécois when it is translated by our Montreal sky).[22] It is certainly the case that a number of parallels can be drawn between Meiselas's approach that, according to English, was informed by John Berger's conception of photography as being carried out for its subjects rather than for its viewers (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 154), and the way in which Yvon represents her protagonists. Both figure their subjects with sympathy and solidarity—presumably, it was the latter that prompted Meiselas to perform on one occasion during the course of her project.[23]

Like 'Carnival Strippers', *Danseuses-mamelouk* positions the sex industry within a wider economic context: a dialogue between the strippers reveals them to be doing the job in order to earn money to pay for a lawyer so as to regain custody of their child, or to pay for childcare, or else to buy some land in New Brunswick (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 38–9). Similarly, an ageing male celebrity's attempts to pick Ginette up off the street and to get her to have sex with him for money are described in terms of financial, as well as sexual, exploitation: 'la Lincoln maléfique traversait le quartier démoli, d'une/tristesse qui faisait mal. Ginette entendait comme dans/un cauchemar les pissenlits gémir sous le masque du/béton' (the baleful Lincoln crossed the demolished quarter,/with a sadness that hurt. Ginette heard as if in/ a nightmare the dande-

lions moaning under the mask of/concrete) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 118). This is not exactly a piece of social realism, however. Yvon's novel domesticates erotic dancing to the degree that it describes the economic motivations of the dancers, the boredom that frequently informs their work (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 21), the poverty and violence that characterises their everyday lives, and the drugs they take to escape these. At the same time, it makes the women and the other characters it describes fantasy renegades by refusing to domesticate, that is, to tame, to relegate to the domestic, or so-called private sphere, their sexual desire.[24]

At a visual level, this transformation is carried out by the implicit connection the reader makes between the photographs of excessively made-up performers that we get throughout the first two parts of the triptych and the line illustrations of masturbating young women, the photographs of the sadomasochist woman and of two large—one butch, one naked—women who do not conform to conventions of feminine beauty, and what looks like a reproduction of a poster of an outlaw saloon-girl figure wielding a gun that we get in the final part. At a narrative level, as the title of the section suggests, the poems in 'Filles commandos-bandées' bring together revenge, violence and lesbian desire. These themes are encountered elsewhere in the novel, but are given central stage here. In this way, for instance, 'ginette en chaleur' (ginette on heat) recounts how ginette shoots the man as he is preparing to have sex with her in the motel room: 'elle se rappela les 65 ans de Bertha, la messagère de la/gang qui lui avait promis un silencieux' (she remembered 65 year-old Bertha, the messenger of the/gang who had promised her a silencer) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 119). These 'women' are figured as having been abused for not conforming to social norms to the extent that it is not possible to abuse them further. As a result, they are fearless: 'l'abus est notre seul espoir de prospérité et de/jouissance' (abuse is our only hope of prosperity and/fulfilment) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 117).[25] This fearlessness is aided by the extent and intensity of their desire, which they bring to the public sphere in a move that is represented as profoundly unsettling: 'les petites filles bandées dangereuses/sèment la mort sur l'autoroute' (dangerous little turned-on girls/spread death on the motorway) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 127). The contestatory element to *Danseuses-mamelouk* is contained within the title of the novel, with a definition of 'mamelouk' on the flyleaf describing this as 'milice turco-égyptienne, formée de guerrières esclaves, qui prit possession de l'Égypte et d'où sortirent plusieurs sultanes' (a Turko-Egyptian militia, made up of female warrior slaves, who took possession of Egypt, and from which emerged several sultans).

Drawing on Mary Russo's work on the female grotesque,[26] Claudine Potvin argues that *Danseuses-mamelouk* figures its bodies in terms of spectacular excess so as to disturb the symmetry of straight society: 'en effet, l'écrivaine construit ses corps féminins comme des *freak bodies* engagés dans un spectacle permanent (le film, la danse, le *peep-show*, le travestissement, le texte)' (the writer constructs her feminine bodies as freaks engaged in a permanent spectacle (be this film, dance, peep-show, cross-dressing, or text)) .[27] Yvon's novel renders the characters it describes objects of speculation, in the sense that Luce Irigaray uses in *Speculum de l'autre femme*;[28] objects of exchange that are looked at in fascination: 'nous sommes absolues, vulgaires, obscènes, mal habillées/nous vivons sous des néons intransigeants/dans une ville de malades' (we are absolute, vulgar, obscene, badly dressed/we live under the intransigent neon lights/of a city of sick people) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 111). However, they refuse to be the passive objects described by Laura Mulvey in her seminal essay on the cinematic gaze: 'in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly'.[29] The exaggerated adoption of some of the codes of (hetero)sexualised feminine beauty as figured in the wigs, heavy make up, sequined outfits and false eyelashes worn by biological and non-biological women in some of the photographs stresses the performative nature of gender identity at the same time as it connects with the excess of the pictures of the 'ugly' women, the S & M woman, and the line drawings of the masturbating women. *Danseuses-mamelouk*'s aesthetic of excess—rendered particularly arrestingly in the images, but also contained in the written text—effects a repositioning of the gaze that is bound up in a wider challenge to Montreal's majority culture.

As Potvin points out, the representation of the city in *Danseuses-mamelouk* is hyper-realist, cinematic, and pornographic. Montreal as rendered here is composed of strip bars, psychiatric hospitals and poor apartments to the east of boulevard Saint-Laurent. We have references to l'Hôtel Tropicana, in which 'Ginette de la rue Frontenac' (Ginette from Frontenac Street) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 23) strips, shoots heroin, and takes cocaine, [l'hôpital] St-Jean-de-Dieu (Louis-Hyppolite-Hochelaga Hospital since January 1976) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 99), and 'un 3½ surmeublé rue Hochelaga' (an over-furnished 3½, i.e. an apartment with 3 rooms plus a bathroom, on Hochelaga Street), where the plants are dying amidst 'le vertige de pisse de chat' (the giddiness of cat piss) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 35). Montreal is both backdrop and central to Yvon's novel: it is the characters who are foregrounded, and yet these are very much located in particular parts of the city, not only through the establishing

photographs that preface the written text, but also through references to specific places, as well as through Yvon's use of *joual*. In common with a good deal of francophone Québécois culture, the narrative addresses itself primarily to a domestic audience, who would be familiar both with the Montreal vernacular and with landmarks such as the streets and hospitals named in the narrative. In celebrating the 'devil's disciples/chapitre sainte-catherine' (devil's disciples/ saint catherine chapter) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 116), Yvon is alluding to a history of non-straight sexualities and performance culture on Saint Catherine Street.[30] Placing her characters centre-stage, her novel points up the artificial and hypocritical separation of so-called respectable and non-respectable society in a way that parallels what Homi K. Bhabha describes as the disruption of the distinction between the public and private spheres within second-wave feminism.[31] In highlighting what Bhabha refers to as the 'unhomeliness' (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 9) of the city, Yvon's novel renders its economically oppressed and, at times, sexually exploited, protagonists more liberated than their conventional counterparts. In a nice inversion of the feminisation of the urban carried out by male nationalist writers of the 1960s and early 1970s, the narrator and the 'women' she celebrates are figured as capable of blowing the city apart with their subversive sexuality: 'on va faire bander le trottoir jusqu'à ce qu'il s'émiette en/jardins' (we'll give the pavement such a hard-on it'll explode into/gardens) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 48). Their embodiment of a radical sexual desire (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 127) is in contrast with what is represented as a desexualised mainstream population that channels its energies into paying the bills. The latter, with its culture of slush (a reference to winter streets), of nine-to-five jobs, and of the Ed Sullivan show (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 116), is described as 'un peuple débandé' (a limp-dicked people) (*Danseuses-mamelouk*, 124). Structured around the coming together of patriarchy, heterosexism and, crucially, capitalism, it is mainstream Montreal society that is figured as the true whore.

Danseuses-mamelouk, and, indeed, Yvon's writing as a whole, deserves more critical attention than it has received to date. Yvon's skilful, and, often beautiful, use of language and imagery, as well as the inventive way in which her knowledge of debates on feminism and counter-culture beyond the Québec context inform her work, ensure that she is a fascinating, if sometimes difficult, read. Her systematic use of photography in her fiction—other novels, such as *Maîtresses-Cherokees* also contain photographs throughout[32]—might well prompt renewed interest in her, since there is currently a good deal of critical engagement with this practice.[33] Whilst the photographs from 'Carnival Strippers' align Yvon, to a degree at least, with a broader feminist tradition, her 'women' end by being very much situated in Montreal. *Danseuses-mame-*

louk retains a sense of locatedness that is found in its language, references to place names, and the establishing photographs at the start. In figuring this city as both a site of oppression and a place of potential liberation, the novel echoes themes found in other examples of the period, including Blais's *Les Nuits de l'Underground*, in which the name of the lesbian bar frequented by the protagonist (the Underground) is also, rather obviously, a metaphor for the character's sexuality. Yvon's radical politics and language ensure, however, that her vision of the city—as a whore house in which the only people capable of posing a challenge to society are the 'women' who occupy the most marginalised positions within it—stands in a place of its own.

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Footnotes

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[2] Ross Higgins, 'Des lieux d'appartenance: les bars gais des années 1950', in Irène Demczuk and Frank W. Remiggi (eds.), *Sortir de l'ombre: histoire des communautés lesbienne et gai de Montréal* (Montreal: Vlb éditeur, 1998), 103–28.

[3] http://www.uwo.ca/pridelib/bodypolitic/gaylib/70stimeline.htm, 26/01/07.

[4] According to Jean-François Chassay, early examples of the Montreal novel in French contain a narrative of urban alienation experienced by protagonists leaving their rural parish for the first time. Jean-François Chassay, *Bibliographie descriptive du roman montréalais* (Montreal: Groupe de recherche Montréal imaginaire, Université de Montréal, 1991). Later examples, notably the neo-nationalist fiction of the 1960s and early 1970s, mobilise a bi-ethnic model of Montreal as split between a poor francophone east and wealthy anglophone west in what was seen as a consciousness-raising move.

[5] Fonds Josée Yvon. Cote 4. Documents Professionnels et personnels (1950–1994) (suite). MSS-407. 407/006/006. Archives nationales du Québec.

[6] See Paul-André Proulx's review of Yvon's novel *Maîtresses-Cherokees* (1986) at http://www.litterature-quebecoise.com/oeuvres/maitresseschero kees.html, 23/02/06.

[7] http://www.theatrestecatherine.com 23/02/06.

[8] I use inverted commas here to indicate the ambiguity both around this image—it is not clear whether this is a biological female or a male-to-female transsexual—and in Yvon's use of language. I apply the same convention to 'woman' and 'women' elsewhere in this essay. I recognize there is considerable debate as to the use of terminology in relation to transsexuals, but Yvon seems to make a distinction between these and biological women while at the same time referring to both as 'she'.

[9] Gaëtan Dostie, 'Josée Yvon 1950–1994', *Lettres québécoises* 75 (automne 1994), 15–16 . The reference to 'the star' and 'the fairy' is a play around Yvon's nickname, which was 'la fée des étoiles' (literally, the fairy of the stars). In a broader context, this is a character that traditionally helps Santa Claus distribute presents in Québec.

[10] Fonds Josée Yvon. MSS-407/017/001. Correspondance (1973–1992) Josée Yvon, signataire. Archives nationales du Québec.

[11] It is hard not to erase *joual* when translating into standard English. Other translators of *joual* have rendered a sense of the language by translating into a regional, working-class dialect. See, for example, Michel Tremblay, *The Guid Sisters*, trans. Bill Findlay and Martin Bowman (Toronto: Exile Editions, 1988), and Jacques Renaud, *Broke City*, trans. David Homel (Montreal: Guernica, 1984). Whilst I sometimes do a similar thing, using my South Wales Valleys dialect, it is not always easy to do so. Here, I have included some French in the translation to point to the presence of the Montreal vernacular in the original.

[12] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 1993), 76.

[13] John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988), 2.

[14] Corey K. Creekmur, 'Lost Objects: Photography, Fiction, and Mourning', in Marsha Bryant (ed.) *Photo-Textualities: Reading Photographs and Literature*, (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 73–82 (75).

[15] Susan Meiselas, *Carnival Strippers*, rev. ed. (Göttingen: Steidl Publishing, 2003).

[16] Fonds Josée Yvon. MSS-407/006/008. Maquette de couverture avec illustration, photos, dessins et texts différents. Archives nationales du Québec.

[17] Fonds Josée Yvon. MSS-407. Boîte 3. Chemise 25. Divers. Archives nationales du Québec.

[18] See http://www.magnumphotos.com.

[19] Susan Meiselas, *Carnival Strippers*, rev ed. (Göttingen: Steidl Publishing, 2003), 72.

[20] Joanna Heatwole and Mariola Mourelo, 'Extending the Frame: An Interview with Susan Meiselas', *Afterimage*, 33.5 (March–April 2006), 17–20.

[21] Deirdre English, 'Stripped Bare: Nude Girls and Naked Truths', in *Carnival Strippers*, rev. ed., 153–9 (153).

[22] 'Pénélope nous parle maintenant de Mainmise', *Mainmise* 1, oct 1970, 64.

[23] Deirdre English, 'Stripped Bare: Nude Girls and Naked Truths', 153.

[24] For a discussion on this term in relation to a critique of the legacy of second wave feminism's representation of the domestic space as a prison, see Rachel Bowlby, 'Domestication', in Diane Elam and Robyn Wiegman (eds.) *Feminism Beside Itself*, (London: Routledge, 1995) 71–91.

[25] 'Jouissance' literally means 'orgasm' but is used by feminist writers, notably those informed by theories on writing the body, to refer to fulfilment in the sense of a plenitudinal feminine identity that embodies and expresses pleasure in language. In this context, pleasure is figured as both sexual and more than this, in that it goes beyond patriarchal definitions of desire.

[26] Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[27] Claudine Potvin, 'L'Hyper-réalisme de Josée Yvon: la scène pornographique', in Lucie Joubert (ed.) *Trajectoires au féminin dans la littérature québécoise (1960-1990)*, ([Montréal]: Nota bene, 2000), 197–121 (202).

[28] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l'autre femme* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1974).

[29] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1989), 14–26 (19).

[30] See, for example, John Yorston, 'Club charges discrimination', *The Montreal Star*, Saturday, April 22, 1967, on a court case involving the club Arlequin aux deux masques at 75 Saint Catherine Street E, in which the clientele are described as mainly composed of male homosexuals. Other famous nightspots receiving media coverage for infringement of licensing legislation include Casa Loma and Vic's Café. See, for example, 'Le Casa Loma obtient son permis municipal après un délai de 4 ans', *Dimanche-matin*, mai 3, 1959, and Irwin Shulman, 'Vic's Cafe Case Nears Conclusion', *Montreal Star*, June 10, 1958. Archives municipales, Montréal. 1-A. Dossier R3153. Bobine no 3-30-1.1. 44. 15.8. Rue Sainte-Catherine. Divers. More recent years have seen the growth of Montreal's gay village on parts of this street and a little further east of boulevard Saint-Laurent.

[31] Homi K. Bhabha, 'Introduction', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1–18 (9).

[32] Josée Yvon, *Maîtresses-Cherokees* (Montréal: VLB, 1986).

[33] See, for example, the research group led by Martine Delvaux at l'Université du Québec à Montréal, 'Spectre de soi (Le). La mise en récit du sujet, entre la première et la dernière image'.