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## A Blue City (Disconsolate, Even) Bewildered by a Red America

By JOSEPH BERGER

**S**triking a characteristic New York pose near Lincoln Center yesterday, Beverly Camhe clutched three morning newspapers to her chest while balancing a large latte and talked about how disconsolate she was to realize that not only had her candidate, John Kerry, lost but that she and her city were so out of step with the rest of the country.

"Do you know how I described New York to my European friends?" she said. "New York is an island off the coast of Europe."

Like Ms. Camhe, a film producer, three of every four voters in New York City gave Mr. Kerry their vote, a starkly different choice from the rest of the nation. So they awoke yesterday with something of a woozy existential hangover and had to confront once again how much of a 51st State they are, different in their sensibilities, lifestyles and polyglot texture from most of America. The election seemed to reverse the perspective of the famous Saul Steinberg cartoon, with much of the land mass of America now in the foreground and New York a tiny, distant and irrelevant dot.

Some New Yorkers, like Meredith Hackett, a 25-year-old barmaid in Brooklyn, said they didn't even know any people who had voted for President Bush. (In both Manhattan and the Bronx, Mr. Bush received 16.7 percent of the vote.) Others spoke of a feeling of isolation from their fellow Americans, a sense that perhaps Middle America doesn't care as much about New York and its animating concerns as it seemed to in the weeks immediately after the attack on the World Trade Center.

"Everybody seems to hate us these days," said Zito Joseph, a 63-year-old retired psychiatrist. "None of the people who are likely to be hit by a terrorist attack voted for Bush. But the heartland people seemed to be saying, 'We're not affected by it if there would be another terrorist attack.' "

City residents talked about this chasm between outlooks with characteristic New York bluntness.

Dr. Joseph, a bearded, broad-shouldered man with silken gray hair, was sharing coffee and cigarettes with his fellow dog walker, Roberta Kimmel Cohn, at an outdoor table outside the hole-in-the-wall Breadsoul Cafe near Lincoln Center. The site was almost a cliché corner of cosmopolitan Manhattan, with a newsstand next door selling French and Italian newspapers and, a bit farther down, the Lincoln Plaza theater showing foreign movies.

"I'm saddened by what I feel is the obtuseness and shortsightedness of a good part of the country - the heartland," Dr. Joseph said. "This kind of redneck, shoot-from-the-hip mentality and a very concrete interpretation of religion is prevalent in Bush country - in the heartland."

"New Yorkers are more sophisticated and at a level of consciousness where we realize we have to think of globalization, of one mankind, that what's going to injure masses of people is not good for us," he said.

His friend, Ms. Cohn, a native of Wisconsin who deals in art, contended that New Yorkers were not as fooled by Mr. Bush's statements as other Americans might be. "New Yorkers are savvy," she said. "We have street smarts. Whereas people in the Midwest are more influenced by what their friends say."

"They're very 1950's," she said of Midwesterners. "When I go back there, I feel I'm in a time warp."

Dr. Joseph acknowledged that such attitudes could feed into the perception that New Yorkers are cultural elitists, but he didn't apologize for it.

"People who are more competitive and proficient at what they do tend to gravitate toward cities," he said.

Like those in the rest of the country, New Yorkers stayed up late watching the results, and some went to bed with a glimmer of hope that Mr. Kerry might yet find victory in some fortuitous combination of battleground states. But they awoke to reality. Some politically conscious children were disheartened - or sleepy - enough to ask parents if they could stay home. But even grownups were unnerved.

"To paraphrase our current president, I'm in shock and awe," said Keith Sales, a 58-year-old former publishing administrator walking a dog near Central Park. He said he and friends shared a feeling of "disempowerment" as a result of the country's choice of President Bush. "There is a feeling of 'What do I have to do to get this man out of office?'"

In downtown Brooklyn, J. J. Murphy, 34, a teacher, said that Mr. Kerry's loss underscored the geographic divide between the Northeast and the rest of the country. He harked back to Reconstruction to help explain his point.

"One thing Clinton and Gore had going for them was they were from the South," he said. "There's a lot of resentment toward the Northeast carpetbagger stereotype, and Kerry fit right in to that."

Mr. Murphy said he understood why Mr. Bush appealed to Southerners in a way that he did not appeal to New Yorkers.

"Even though Bush isn't one of them - he's a son of privilege - he comes off as just a good old boy," Mr. Murphy said.

Pondering the disparity, Bret Adams, a 33-year-old computer network administrator in Rego Park, Queens, said, "I think a lot of the country sees New York as a wild and crazy place, where these things like the war protests happen."

Ms. Camhe, the film producer, frequents Elaine's restaurant with friends and spends many mornings on a bench in Central Park talking politics with homeless people with whom she's become acquainted. She spent part of Tuesday knocking on doors in Pennsylvania to rustle up Kerry votes then returned to Manhattan to attend an election-night party thrown by Miramax's chairman, Harvey Weinstein, at The Palm. Ms. Camhe was also up much of the night talking to a son in California who was depressed at the election results.

When it became clear yesterday morning that the outlook for a Kerry squeaker was a mirage, she was unable to eat breakfast. Her doorman on Central Park West gave her a consoling hug. Then a friend buying coffee along with her said she had just heard a report on television that Mr. Kerry had conceded and tears welled in Ms. Camhe's eyes.

Ms. Camhe explained the habits and beliefs of those dwelling in the heartland like an anthropologist.

"What's different about New York City is it tends to bring people together and so we can't ignore each others' dreams and values and it creates a much more inclusive consciousness," she said. "When you're in a more isolated environment, you're more susceptible to some ideology that's imposed on you."

As an example, Ms. Camhe offered the different attitudes New Yorkers may have about social issues like gay marriage.

"We live in this marvelous diversity where we actually have gay neighbors," she said. "They're not some vilified unknown. They're our neighbors."

But she said that a dichotomy of outlooks was bad for the country.

"If the heartland feels so alienated from us, then it behooves us to wrap our arms around the heartland," she said. "We need to bring our way of life, which is honoring diversity and having compassion for people with different lifestyles, on a trip around the country."

*Michael Brick and Brian McDonald contributed reporting for this article.*