

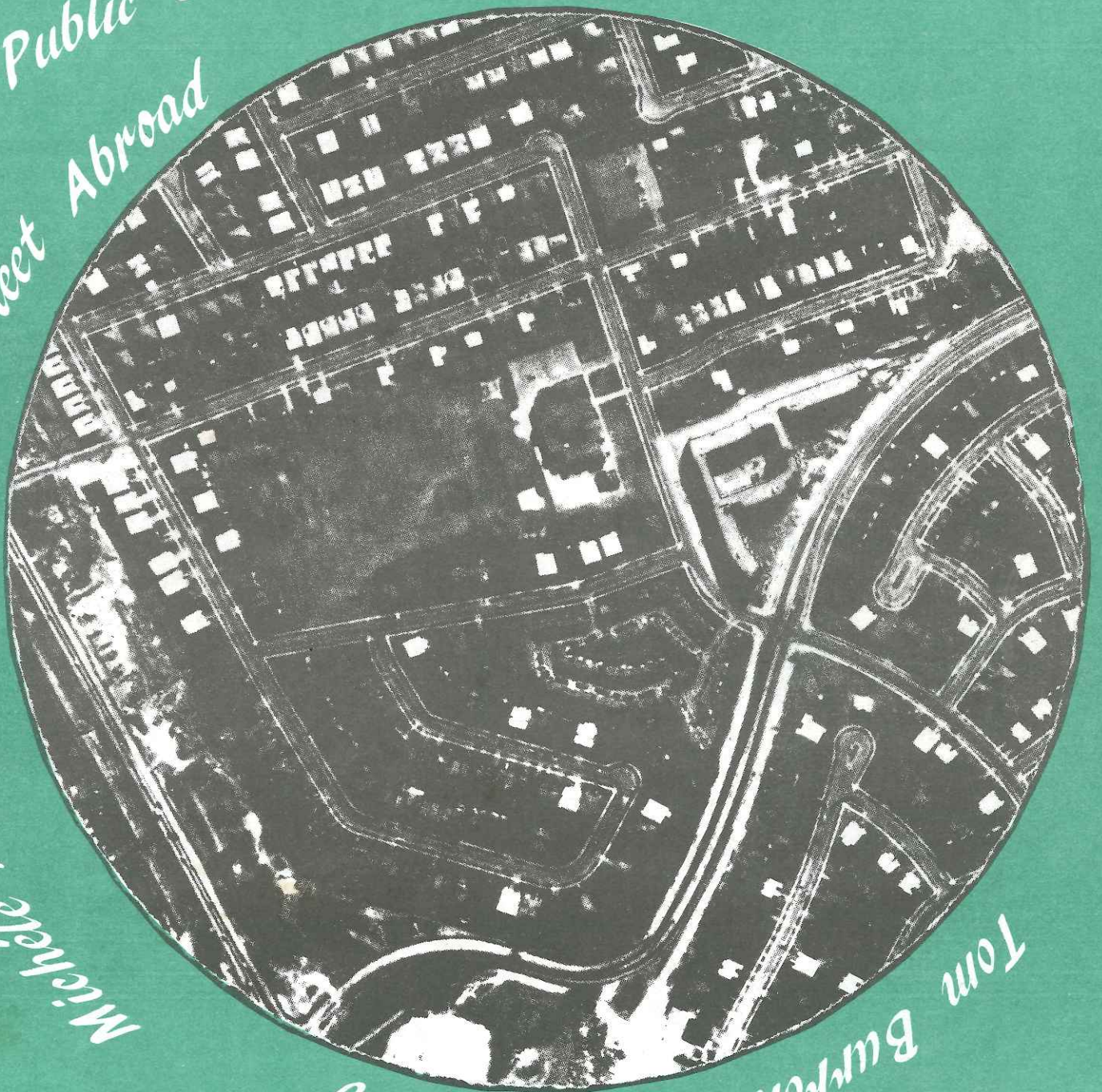
CULTURES CONTEXTS CANADAS

# border/ines

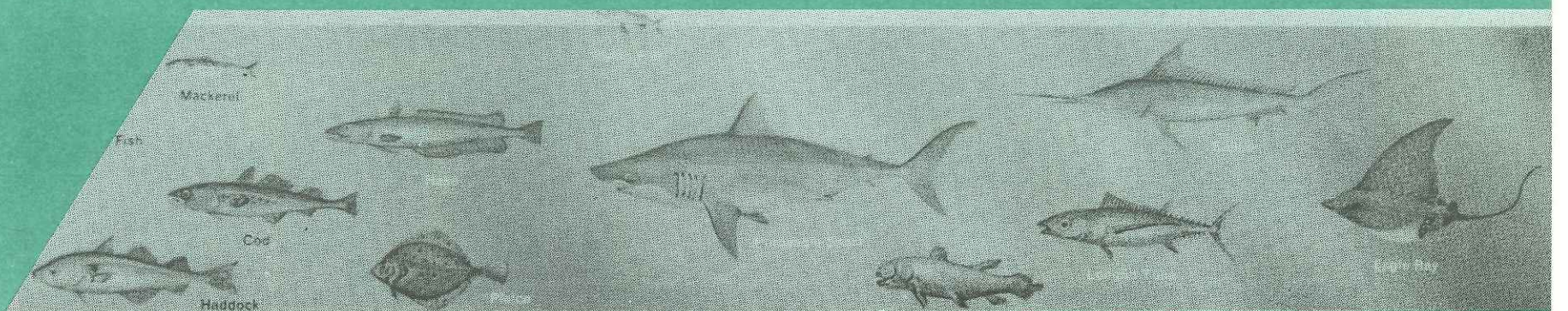
Reviews: John Sewell, Philip Corrigan

Marc Raboy: The Crisis in Public Broadcasting

Michèle Mattelart: Sesame Street Abroad



Tom Burrows: On Squatting





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**border/lines**

Cultures • Contexts • Canadas

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**ERRATA**

We apologize for the following omissions and errors in Issue 2:

Tom Taylor was uncredited for his photograph which accompanied Michael Boyce's article 'Stereo Mourning'.

Mark Lewis' photographs on the front and back covers were intended to work as a single piece, by their placement they may not have appeared as such.



## When I first tried

to write something on the music industry's various African records/videos, I immediately encountered what seemed to be a moral dilemma: despite the myriad reservations I had about the packaging of the products, I had to accept the fact that they had at least managed to raise a large amount of money for what was indisputably a good cause—to be critical in any way almost seemed like an act of bad faith. I was silenced, then, by the *care* that the records and their contributors exuded.

Perhaps another example of this feeling of stasis can be found in our uneasy relationship with the disarmament movement: the apocalyptic consequences of nuclear war are used to silence all opposition to the terms upon which that debate is held. We are told to forget, or at least to hold in abeyance, reservations we might have concerning this dissolution of difference(s), because we are all agreed that the safety of the world comes first. We are, before anything else, the world.

However, to meet these extraordinary manifestations of corporate concern within the music industry with no critical work because we *too care* for the plight of those third world peoples suffering from the results of economic and political repression would be to acquiesce in a rather scandalous atmosphere of self-satisfaction. Crucially, to say nothing would be, I believe, to bear silent witness to the depoliticization of both starvation and the whole notion of 'care' itself.

I was confirmed in my 'bad faith' while watching The American Academy Video Awards on tv last week. Unbelievably—though only just, this was after all the music industry in Hollywood, on tv!—the academy announced the introduction of 'a very new and special award'. I groaned, as thousands of others must have, in cynical expectation. The very first recipient of 'The Humanitarian Award' was, of course, the USA For Africa team with their song and video *We are the World*. For, in the words of the record's producer, managing the awesome task of bringing together in one room 45 of America's greatest living artists.

Their's was not the first nor the last awesome gathering. Since Christmas we have also had Bob Geldof's Bandid with 'Do They Know It's Christmas?', and more recently Bryan Adams and friends with 'Tears Are Not Enough'. All three records have gone to the top of their respective charts and the British and American have managed reciprocal transatlantic success. They have all been aided by massive exposure on both the radio and tv with the American record being the most stunningly marketed: 'We are the World' was simultaneously released and played on over 2,000 radio stations world-wide—a feat only equalled perhaps when the Americans first stepped on the moon! First and foremost, though, these have been tv events.

Who has not been moved in some way by the spectacle of so many of our favourite stars of different epochs assembled together to sing for the plight of others? There is something quite touching about the likes of Ray Charles, Tina Turner, Stevie Wonder and Bob Dylan singing together simply because they care for a better world. But we should pause to think a little about this notion of caring that is so central to the success of both this record/video and the British and Canadian ones. A preliminary question that we might pose then could be: what would constitute a politics of caring; how do we



untangle and make sense of the meanings and preconceptions imbricated with these ideas of care and charity? To pose such a question means ultimately to consider questions of Western and, crucially, US imperialism.

Interestingly, many members of this latter-day American salvation army played at President Reagan's inaugural bene-

fit. Even more interesting is that a number of the black stars did that when 90 percent of black Americans, recognizing where their best interests definitely did not lie, voted against Reagan. Another awkward fact that we might consider is that some of the singers have performed in South Africa (Tina Turner, Ray Charles, Kenny Rogers) despite the international embargo. It would appear then that it is easier to care when your object of interest is thought to escape any political concerns, is one that seems not to be predicated on any notion of struggle and is therefore found to be worthy of your humanitarian gaze.

## We Are The World — You Are The Third World

by  
Mark Lewis

fit. Even more interesting is that a number of the black stars did that when 90 percent of black Americans, recognizing where their best interests definitely did not lie, voted against Reagan. Another awkward fact that we might consider is that some of the singers have performed in South Africa (Tina Turner, Ray Charles, Kenny Rogers) despite the international embargo. It would appear then that it is easier to care when your object of interest is thought to escape any political concerns, is one that seems not to be predicated on any notion of struggle and is therefore found to be worthy of your humanitarian gaze.

Certainly the sense of being 'touched' by the singers' performances soon shifted into one of wariness when I considered the lyrics of the USA For Africa song; they began to reveal for me precisely the unwritten texts that inform the sentiment of the project. What is necessarily disavowed but also revealed in the very words 'we are the world' is the role of colonial history and present day western imperialism in precipitating the current African crisis. For the 'world' that is elided is the world of the world bank, the International Monetary Fund, western defence programs and the world markets that dictate the price and availability of crops and commodities, now and in the future. This is the world that is massively culpable for the terrorism of starvation and it is a world *we wish we were not*. For, and uncomfortable though it is for us to

acknowledge, starvation is the logical consequence of a western terrorism that lends money to countries at rates of interest the latter will only be able to meet by instituting horrific 'austerity' programs; that floods third world countries with Western food and encourages the purchase and raising of cattle thus precipitating the abandonment of traditional

crop programs; that backs despotic regimes which divert most of their GNP onto defence and the purchase of western manufactured arms. To be blunt and ignoring charitable niceties, to speak of American generosity in raising some \$40,000,000 when third world countries are going bankrupt trying to repay the tens of billions of dollars that they owe to the US, is really to engage in a beggars' economy.

The first time I saw the 'Canadian' video 'Tears Are Not Enough' was on a CITY-TV music program where it was played back to back with 'We Are the World'. The two videos were broken (tied together) by Lionel Ritchie's other big hit these days, the reworking of one of his songs to the words of 'The Pepsi Generation'. What are we to make of these juxtapositions? On the one hand, efforts to convey to us the tragedy of starvation, and on the other, Lionel Ritchie informing us that we've made our choice and it's Pepsi—conspicuous consumption, as the marxists used to remind us, revealed to us without any sense of irony!

There are many things that could be said about the exercise of bringing together widely disparate groups of musicians under the aegis of a 'national' contribution, particularly as it pertains to the 'Canadian' product, which has the appearance of seeming to strain after the effect. However, this is not the place to adequately explore this rather compli-

cated issue. Suffice it to add that this would be a problem with particular relevance for a (official) culture that continually attempts to create national difference and so often ends up looking rather opportunist.

It is interesting to recall that all three records/videos have been aimed, naturally enough, at the teen-age market, and it is therefore to this constituency—presumably without substantial income or savings—that an appeal for donations is made. The pop stars give up an afternoon or morning of their time while these young people hand over money and at the same time must give up their sense of what they normally consider to be interesting and accomplished. Another question then: why is it that in order to demonstrate that they too care, people must first purchase records which are musically some of the most uninteresting songs ever to be released? Or more pointedly, why is it necessary to use this area of overt conspicuous consumption—how much were Ritchie and Jackson paid for their Pepsi songs?—which will only further fuel careers already well buoyed with heroic status, in order to assuage the pain (and perhaps we should say 'the guilt') of starvation?

In England, Bob Geldof and Midge Ure assembled some thirty-odd British singers and musicians and put together the very first 'aid' record—'Do They Know It's Christmas?'. Bob Geldof went on to acquire national fame and exposure as he became the official spokesperson for the Bandid project. This was to reach rather absurd proportions when in a single month he was to be found co-hosting a photo session in Africa with Mother Theresa and also was a guest on London's 'This is Your Life'. In the latter show, dozens of people were brought onto the set to testify to the importance of Geldof's earlier formative years in generating his more recent philanthropic persona.

In an interview with the music press Geldof and Ure were asked why they did not use their undeniably skilled marketing techniques to raise money for Britain's beleaguered striking miners, who towards the end of the strike were suffering greatly. Ure replied that the miners had chosen to strike and that if they were hungry they could always go back to work, therefore he did not feel them worthy of support. It seemed almost unbelievable that a so-called spokesperson for a charitable concern could engage in what for all intents and purposes is the rhetoric of the feudal landlord; or is it? Just before I left England to return to Canada, Geldof was again featured on television, this time in a program all about how to be seen at the trendiest places and parties in London. Geldof was to be overheard saying that sipping all this champagne and eating smoked salmon made him feel guilty when he thought about the starving Africans in Ethiopia.

But why is this rather quotidian juxtaposition experienced by Geldof with such anxiety-ridden guilt? Precisely because Geldof as philanthropist cannot possibly have any understanding of contradiction per se. Philanthropy and care are predicated on a refusal of both politics and ideology and are only activated by this sense of guilt: a 19th century posture that we are now witnessing with a renewed vigour today. But we should not be at all surprised by this, for, to recall the portentous words of Lionel Ritchie, they have made their choice and they are now members of a new generation.

**Mark Lewis**

is an artist who works, lives and teaches in London, England and Toronto.



*Open fully  
smooth on wherever  
the heart beats  
near the skin.  
Anticipation soars  
the sublime realization  
...*

## IN POSITION.

The silver-tongued voice is well digested, gathering into luminous gesture; Use me and/or I'll use you. But buy, sell, save—Want! So it goes, obtuse symmetry of the desirous and desirable.

Now. In another space (bus stop: Toronto) the spectacular voice alters in plea, modulates its utterances and opens onto another persuasion. *Posters Mean Business* the source declares—splashing across a tube of Crest. The medium (media) calls attention to its very power. Promises of commerce displace the promise of passion. A self-reflexive nightmare: advertising space solicits itself. Media striptease; the g-string finally falls in Ontario and exquisite positions are spoken. In suggesting its availability we may now consider having something to sell—Out. To intervene perhaps; ex/Pose and offer a discordial brand of passion.

*Some women lead  
extraordinary lives.  
For them, Sonia Rykiel has created  
7ième Sens.*

So. In transgressing, a direction/voice quavers. Intricately bound questions of cultural geography arise: the form of address, audience positioning, public access, space/history and finally images of power vs. powerful images. Media territory. Into this crowded spectacle enters 'The European Iceberg', *The largest, most ambitious exhibition ever shown at the Art Gallery of Ontario*. Running somewhat concurrently is 'Public Address' (A Space), a series of artworks exhibited within a backlit, glass enclosed sign-space, erected on the exterior brick wall of the building housing the gallery. Both exhibitions set in motion the media/public in radically distinct ways. Becoming apparent, are the differences between a media phenomenon and a deliberately mediated address.

Focused. As an institution the AGO administers mainstream definitions of what constitutes Art. These 'museum fictions' perpetuate the notion of art (practice) as an autonomous object (static), commodiously detached, untainted by stuck-in-the-mud reality in order that it ascend... unto sublime Realization. Through an octopus-like autonomy, the AGO weilds invisible power—a making visible rooted in elitism that (em)-braces the monolithic status quo, successively operating around a principle of exclusion supported by the specialized audience to which it appeals. The appropriation of marginal art into a mainstreamed 'avant garde' (such as the General Idea Pavillion) demonstrates with audacity this power. Through advertising the AGO refashions and legitimizes its knowledge of the rules of the aesthe-

tic field. Thus, the language of Art is spoken from a position of authority; the tentacled efforts of its extremities allowing the inner lizard to bask in an aura of certainty. Media presence confounds the autoecious cycle: host and parasite of the public.

*A Work of Art  
within a work of Art.*

In penetrating. Though well-oiled and glib, the unweildy representational apparatus is vulnerable; what of squeaking wheels, displaced gears and zones of friction? In an instant, art defines itself as capable of intervention—a working through/against conditioned ways of looking at art within culturally sanctified 'art space' or, by disrupting the images we encounter in public. Both instances, a shift in the place of reception or undermining from within the institution, subvert the traditional value judgements hung upon art.

Impertinent (outside). We may consider two specific strategies of 'public art'. One, where an artspace simulates an advertising space, such as A Space's 'Public Address' or

## EXCURSIONS

London's 'Docklands Project'. An immediately deviant situation arises when artists appropriate an advertising space, such as New York artists' collaboration with the owners of the electronic billboard in Times Square, Toronto's Public Access Project or Optica Gallery's bus project in Montréal. Acutely disruptive, the work must contend with the history of a specific advertising space. Positioned between the before and after of commodification, the work finds meaning/affect therein. The audience is thus expectant, and suspecting. Crucial, when considering these seemingly similar strategies, is that the work is shifted from a contained (predictable) space into the public sphere where an audience arrives by chance; chaotic and in motion.

*Dangerous, but worth the risk.*

Here. At stake are the circumstances of exhibiting: Who speaks? Who's looking? Powerful images,

images given the name of Art tumble—contextualized. A Space's 'Public Address', representing 'marginal art' by virtue of its parallel position (within the gallery system), consciously crosses fields by mounting this exhibit. The works speak a double-tongue on a troubled edge, both here and there; perverting the 'innocence' (straight-forwardness) of the media while massaging the political conscience of marginal art by repositioning and redistributing (opening up?) its audience. And yet intervention is precisely that which cannot be assumed; in a fatal way, the circumstances of 'Public Address', that which makes the exhibition possible, do not appear to seep into the exhibiting itself.

Generally. The works deal with issues/processes of socialization, but in a manner curiously unspecific to this place/space (i.e. Spadina Avenue, Toronto). Lacking the self-reflexivity that would ground each work as somehow street-wise (site specific?), they rest appendaged to the gallery itself: uninquisitive and already-named. The lack of local immediacy and history is similar to the way in which advertising targets its audience—moves in, dominates and networks (denying local autonomy and difference). The Address is thus from above, not an unearthing and blowup from within and around. Who's looking? Who's speaking? The questions collapse into a single unified address—from the art community to its members. In this manner the circumstances become only that of an art exhibit; non-interference and specialization.

In closing. Simulation of intervention obscures the critical edge disturbing powerful images from images as extensions or affirmations of power (images of power). It is a claim to consistency: cordial speech. The public is both singular, many bodied and only accidentally an 'audience'—responsive to the positioning/ context of an image...if well-placed.

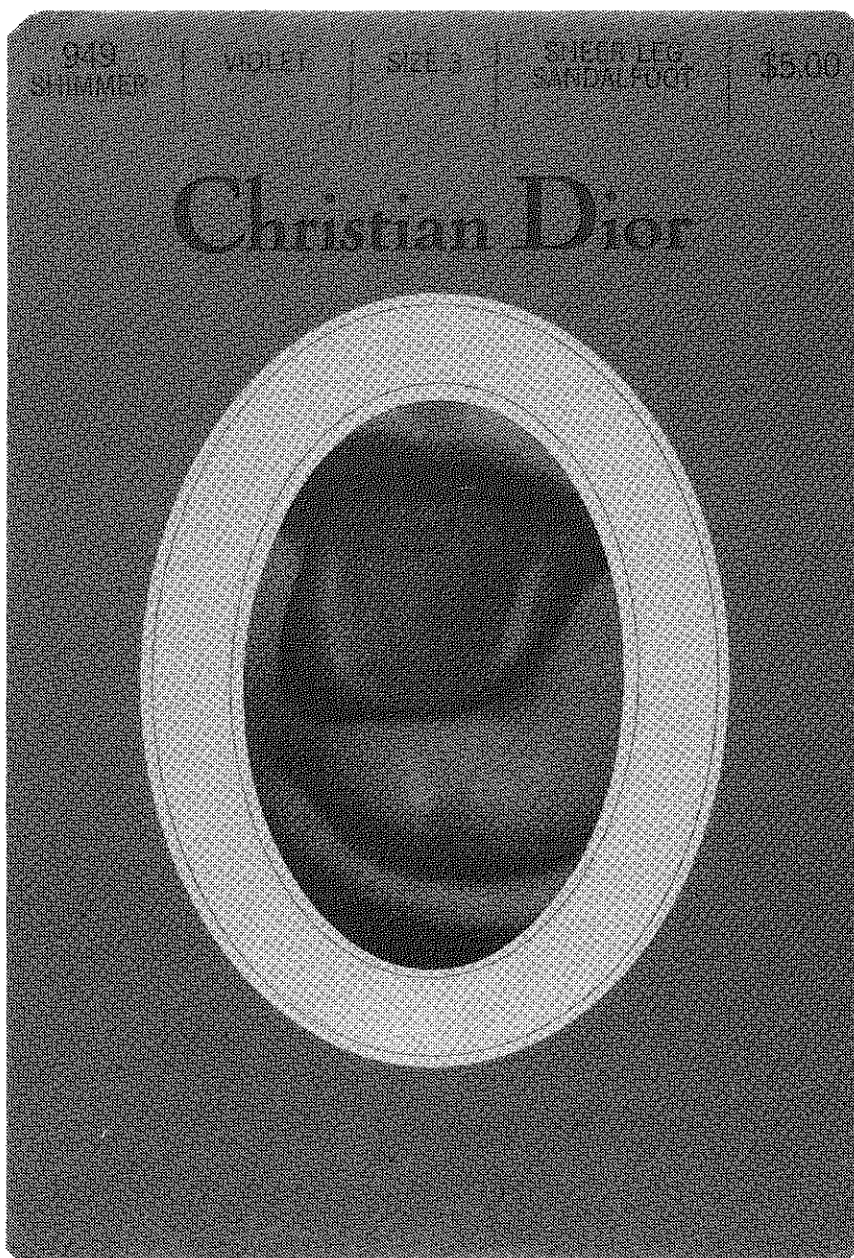
*La femme est une ile,  
Fidgi est son parfum.*

re: (im)Positioning. Opened fully...between borrowed images and desire the perfumed 'I' loses sense of fantasies smoothed on in a private stroke, as the scent goes public. Unsatiated, the original desire is reconstituted. Impossibly impassioned images. Imaging risks: dances the embrace of institutional amnesia, barely eliding indifference of its positioning/body/effect.

**Christine Davis**  
is a Toronto artist.  
**Monika Gagnon**  
is a Toronto writer.  
Both are members of the  
**border/lines** collective.

## Speaking The Media — Tongue in Cheek

by  
Christine Davis  
and  
Monika Gagnon





# Telling (a story?)

We were having lunch one day in a nice cafe beside the Toronto Morgantaler Clinic. We were meeting someone there who hadn't yet arrived, so we spent some time watching the "Pro-lifers". And while we were watching, a group of 10 (or so) darkly-garbed figures advanced in single file into the fray holding signs reading something like the following: DOWN WITH SEX, REAGAN LOVES YOU WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, ONLY TO PROCREATE, GAY IS EVIL, etc. We thought it quite funny. They joined the circle of "Pro-lifers" who, hence, dispersed; presumably not wanting to be associated.

While a waiter told us he knew one of them, and understood that this was a bit of "Guerrilla Theater," the organisation of which he had heard rumours about, others exclaimed: "Oh, my God, that's going too far!" "Look at those fanatics!" "Is this for real?!" We continued to laugh.

Madeleine went outside as people began to gather to watch. The police looked jittery. The "Pro-lifers" stood on the periphery, one of them took pictures. A Star reporter appeared and spoke briefly with Madeleine. "He thought they were for real!", she told me, "I tried to convince him otherwise and he just said that everyone was entitled to their opinion, I think he thought I was one of them." I was amazed; it seemed quite clear that this was a joke, "Some people are so literal-minded," I muttered.

Madeleine went back outside and she and another woman spoke with a man who told them: "If it's alright for you to get an abortion, then it's alright for me to rape you." This really was getting pretty bizarre.

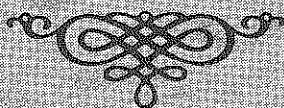
Madeleine tried to speak with the enigmatic "protestors". The brooding, cowed-ones remained silent and glum. Another man said to her: "They're trying to discredit us." "Us?!", she said. Then, seemingly in recognition of this scene, one of the mysterios handed her a square, orange piece of paper with a printed message reading: JOIN THE ANTI-SEX CRUSADE. We laughed more.

Then the TV-news-teams showed-up, and the subjects of controversy immediately left, being replaced quickly by the "Pro-lifers", who the news-teams seemed to show little interest in. The question remained: "Was that for real, or what?"

Everyone in the cafe was talking to one another. An interesting feeling of comradeship pervaded the atmosphere; we all had shared in an interesting "ambiguous" "event".

It is precisely that ambiguity which I find so "beautiful" about it all: it's efficacy was assured either way. On the one hand, if read as fanatics, they would discredit a certain species of criticism against Morgantaler, the clinic, abortions, etc.-- precisely because the ground of such a criticism would be localized as primarily reactionary, repressive, fascistic, etc. On the other hand, if read as a joke, amusement would be dependent upon, in some sense, having already discredited such a species of critique.

Whether or not this critique needs to be discredited, and/or done so in this way, does not interest me here. What does interest me--what I find interesting about this story-- is an idea, a topic, perhaps a title to be pursued further: The Efficacy of Ambiguity, or, The Strength of Ambiguity, maybe even, The Preference for Ambiguity. How might this be pursued? What kind of history would it be situated within/in-relation-to? What difference does it make? What would be the relation between such a pursuit and its own (possible?) ambiguity? Questions I suspend for now; wanting mostly to tell a story, and thus also suspending, for now, the ambiguity of such a telling...



Michael Boyce

Michael Boyce may or may not be any of the following: a writer, a musician, a student, a teacher's assistant, a member of the Border/lines collective, a story.



## Among the stars

generated by Hollywood over the past 50 years are a few whose names and faces have become universal signifiers: rather than simply referring to a particular film genre or style of acting, they have come to connote a way of being in the world, or a 'world' itself. James Dean can be thought of in this way: I would argue that the same is true of Bogart; in a more complex fashion. As an image, Bogart represents not only a way of being in a world now gone, but also a profound sense of loss in our own era. It is in this light that I would like to examine him: not the gangster Bogey, or the adventurer of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, but that more general image which encompasses and transcends these particular figures.

This image is, perhaps, best represented by the ubiquitous wall posters which signpost, in the restaurants, offices and apartments of the land, a cult of remembrance which is, or was, more than an appreciation of talent or technique; more than a cataloguing of 'great films' and certainly more than the collection of movie trivia. Rather, this is a remembrance focused on images which are a mixture of movie and life. The parting on the airfield; the piano lounge sequence; Lauren, her baby, and Bogey the devoted husband and father; the valiant final fight against cancer—all these devolve into one image in a variety of incarnations: that craggy, unlovely and immensely melancholy face at once familiar and enigmatic, reassuring and saddening.

In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'<sup>1</sup>, Walter Benjamin discussed a broad historical transformation both in the definition of and the relation to works of art as a result of technological developments that have made possible the mass reproduction of images. As John Berger has noted, this transformation made the 'original' both utterly meaningless and simultaneously the object of veneration (because of the economic role it plays in the constitution of an art market).

Benjamin refers to this shift from cult value to exhibition value as a transformation of parameters for judging and responding to works of art. Before the age of mechanical reproduction, the cult value of a work of art lay in its uniqueness and in the way in which it set up a relation to itself which absorbed those who came into contact with it. On the other hand, exhibition value is predicated on the removal of the reproduced (or reproducible) work of art from its context, its interpellation into a world of symbolic exchange as one image among others (a consequence of its reproducibility) and its consumption by a distracted audience which literally passes it by as it takes it in.

The photograph, as such, is infinitely reproducible. Yet, says Benjamin, in the earliest portrait photographs, the consequences of this reproducibility are both anticipated and not yet fully worked out: such photographs still bespeak the cult of loved ones lost, and this constitutes the air of melancholy and 'incomparable beauty' still to be discovered in them.

If, in the image of Bogart, we have something akin to a cult of remembrance (all the more poignant given the infinite reproducibility of its object)—a melancholic evocation of things forever past—then the question arises as to what has been lost. What has left its trace in this face, and how is it in any way still important to us?

Part of the answer might be found in the character of Philip Marlowe. Like Bogart's face, Chandler's detective is evocative of some quality larger than himself which he yet personifies: a personality, a time, a culture, a sense of the world. It has been argued (as in a recent CBC *Ideas* program on Chandler) that Marlowe symbolizes for the middle decades of this century a new kind of 'urban man' of a sort later developed (albeit more crudely) by Spillane and dozens of others. This is the cynical bachelor with many contacts and no ties, living in a dingy apartment (an important signifier of a certain lack to be filled or not filled in later life), the half-empty bottle of passably good scotch on the greasy table besides the week's worth of unopened mail his only companion: the man who is saved from despair by sporadic adventure, world weary at the age of 35, flitting from job to job, liaison to liaison, driven by an eternal restlessness best symbolized by his predatory way with women who both fascinate but must always faintly bore him. This is a man who would be in search of salvation if he believed in it, or even knew what it meant. In a sense, Bogey is this man, translated onto the screen: it is no accident that so many of us think Marlowe and see Bogart.

This kind of character would scoff at the possibility of salvation, but he is bedeviled nonetheless by a sense of loss translated into cynicism. Its polar opposite is the continual chance that a situation larger than himself—the love of a good woman, a call to protect someone in danger—will raise him out of himself and redeem him to live in the twilight of the American frontier myth as the good man, the provider and protector who was there all along but never thought to be worth invoking.

As we know, Bogey in real life was so redeemed, to fade away in his own golden twilight leaving an ever loyal wife and child to grieve him. In the modern age, the good man has no basis for existence: made more noble by his death, he is pure memory.

Thus, in the image of Bogart, we find entwined both his life and the roles he played. Together, they invoke more than a persona. They are, rather, a remembrance of times, and of a way of being in the world, forever past. But both the times and the nostalgia are complex. Bogart stood for something new—the rootless urban American male—and also for something lost—the male as anchor of a community, as provider, protector, as the 'good and steady man' rooted foursquare in the land, as the hero with no need to look a hero, as the man who was what he was, the man-in-himself. Further, insofar as Bogart symbolizes both as one he is at once the *last man* and the *first image*. This is the key to the melancholy of his gaze. He evokes for us the man who is no more, but *he does so as an image*. He is at one and the same time the cynical and immensely sad last man in a new world of images, and the melancholy image (for 'us') of an irretrievable past. Symbolically, he marks a turning point in American

male culture: the death (marked by his own) of the 'good man' of the frontier rural community, but more importantly, the transformation of that figure into an image—a signifier to be bought and sold in the marketplace of symbols.

If Bogart's significance is as a sense of loss, what is the significance of his cult? It is, to begin with, a celebration of loss. But one might ask, insofar as the cult has itself become an industry (part of the larger industry of 'camp') in competition or collaboration with the Presley industry, the James Dean industry and others, whether the celebration has not doubled and thereby canceled itself. In a world where any image is exchangeable with any other (all exchanges are possible; only some are 'bad deals'), have we lost our sense of loss?

One might explore this possibility by examining the present equivalent of the urban male played by Bogart at mid-century: that phenomenon Barbara Ehrenreich tagged in an article for the *New York Times Magazine* as the 'New Man'.<sup>2</sup> This man, too, is an apartment-dweller; he too is single, if not singular. But he no longer, apparently, hangs his hat in a dive marked by the absence of any good woman to turn it into his home and castle. The New Man feels none of this sense of loss. Instead, he decorates. He can grow plants. He knows art, and its investment value; good music, and what kind of system will make it fit the acoustical requirements of his residence. He has learned to cook and regards with disdain the man who still relies on—or worse boasts about—his one spaghetti recipe. He can colour-coordinate.

More importantly, this man feels no need to be saved, to protect or to provide. He has learned the discourse of equality as well as that of fashion: he is enlightened, sensitive and wears good clothes. He is the perfect companion for a night out to the right places. He works out, swims or plays tennis, pursues interests rather than hobbies and is implusive. He also works hard, not at a good job, but at a promising career. He has shed both the myth of the frontier male and the cynicism and despair which characterized the myth of Marlowe. The former he regards as tacky and the latter as camp. He perceives his loss as good: he wants no part of images of male dominance that are looked upon askance in the right circles, except perhaps insofar as they form a recurring theme in the wall decorations of the places in which the circles meet.

But all is not well with the New Man. Ehrenreich articulates a growing dissatisfaction with him and illustrates it with quotations:

**Brian Clarke, 33, puts in 14-hour days as a network tv production assistant in New York, reads *Interior Design* magazine and *Playboy* ('for the fashions') and tells first-time dates: 'No commitments!'<sup>3</sup>**

**Stephen G. Dent, 29, spends 10 hours a day at a New York investment firm, half an hour exercising and five minutes arranging dates. 'Sensitivity is very important to being a man,' he says.<sup>4</sup>**

As one might have expected, women resent being seen as entries in a schedule. But there is a more important issue. Ehrenreich raises the question whether the New Man has not

leapfrogged the gains of the women's movement: having freed himself from family responsibilities and having invested that freedom with consumer goods, his thanks to women, whose critique of the family aided his escape, are summed up in the slogan, 'No commitments, please.'

The resentment evinced by the New Male takes a number of forms. One can see it, for example, in Deborah Laake's description of 'worm boys': males so afraid of commitment they hesitate to ask women out to dinner.<sup>5</sup> One can see it in popular literature on how to spot the wrong man: a recent article on 'creeps' in *Mademoiselle*<sup>6</sup> represents them as warm and open at first (contrary to a more traditional definition of the term), but unable to respond to the emotional demands of women. The flaws of the New Man have even been made the subject of a pop psychology industry, and have been given a term: the 'Peter Pan' syndrome.

In an interview for CBC *Ideas*, Ehrenreich made passing reference to this lack of commitment as involving an abhorrence of the possibility of being clung to and restricted by women: an abhorrence which involves a judgement about women which it is hard not to call misogynous. One might, in light of this, see a darker significance in the comments often made by such males about 'being burned'. This is not necessarily new. But what is notable here is the way in which the popular imagery of the New Male has apparently translated the love of a woman (or at least some of its corollaries) as perdition, rather than assalvation.

But while misogyny may be a characteristic of the 'New Male' ideology, it is not possible to make it out to be the latter's most important causal factor nor its only effect. There is more going on. Apparently, New Men, like single career women, do on occasion get lonely. This, in turn, has given rise to a new genre: round table interviews in the mass media with representative single men and women of the right age and class, voicing their frustrations at being unable, in the face of approaching age, to find a good man/good woman for something more than an opening night. One finds a new nostalgia for the settled relationship. If men have a horror of commitment, it appears that it is not universal. If they fear the emotional demands of women, it is apparently not all women that they are judging, but rather the ones they have met to date.

The amazing thing about these developments is the way in which both men and women, in looking for the 'right' opposite number, look right past each other. The focal point of their gaze may be characterized in terms of a longing for commitment, but it is aimed at a set of characteristics, and it operates by way of comparison.

These themes—singlehood, upward mobility, the problems of commitment—are obviously of significance to our culture. But the basis and nature of that significance needs to be examined more thoroughly. How many New Men (or New Women, for that matter) are there?



What proportion of the total population do they form? What is the worm-boy population of New York City? Of Toronto? Ehrenreich herself has pointed out that the 'New Man' phenomenon is characteristic of only a tiny proportion of the North American population. Yet, numerically unrepresentative as he may be, the New Man is the darling of the advertising industry, especially that aspect of it devoted to fashion and status consumer durables. Even his dark side has been industrialized insofar as he has become personal characteristics (somewhat like yellow teeth a generation ago) to be bought off by the right book, the right therapy or, barring that, the right disguises. The New Man is representative precisely insofar as *he is no population*. He is any of us any time we are addressed by and respond to any of his signifiers.

The New Man, then, is at least in part an image-commodity. Insofar as he is any one of us, we are bought out by the goods we purchase to furnish his lifestyle. The New Man shuns commitments because commodities do not form commitments; they are only exchanged in terms of relations external to themselves. Commodities feel neither melancholy nor a sense of loss. It is in such a world that Bogey becomes a poster, part of the decor.

Discontent with the New Man, then, will be subverted as long as it is allowed to be drawn into the commodity trap, thereby becoming little more than a critique of a bad product. What deserves attention instead is the way in which the commodification of men structures in a flight from commitment and an abhorrence of community. And the task is to address the possibility of forms of commitment and of community as imaginative and compelling as those aspects of commodity culture that momentarily but continually escape the dull repetition of fetishism. In this, Bogart is no longer of any help, if he ever was. The persona for which he was remembered was already insupportable: that is why, after his salvation, he would have had to die anyway. Remembrance indicates a loss: only imagination can address our lack.

**William Ramp**  
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#### Notes

1. W. Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations* (ed. H. Arendt), Schocken, 1969, pp.217-251.
2. B. Ehrenreich, 'A Feminist View of the New Man', *New York Times Magazine*, May 20, 1984, p.36.
3. *Ibid.*, p.38.
4. *Ibid.*, p.41.
5. *Ibid.*, p.48
6. *Mademoiselle*, November 1984, p.148.

## The Economics of Toronto's Culture by Ioan Davies

### Tom Hendry's

report on Toronto Culture (*Cultural Capital: The Care and Feeding of Toronto's Artistic Assets*, Toronto Arts Council, January 1985) is an important document, written at white-hot speed (ten months from being commissioned) and full of the correct position-statements against the present mania for stacking the arts down to Reaganite or Thatcherite size. It is also correct about the locus that we should adopt in confronting the cutbacks, the philistinism, the narrow ideological definitions of what is good for the people. Tom Hendry's locus is here; the city we inhabit.

We start, not with the terrorism of ideas, that the way to Nirvana is by bowing to the almighty American buck or the International Monetary Fund's definition of what we should do to keep their books straight, but with what we have been doing and what we need to do it better. And it is important that Tom Hendry is both an accountant and a playwright. He can both write plays and add (a rare combination in these puking times of the two new cultures where people write but can't calculate or calculate and wonder why they can't write). The report is therefore written with an honest anger against those who would be so stupid to think that writing or dancing or acting or making photography comes easily and that the 'industry' (in the jargon of Paul Audley) cannot just go on making big bucks, that the artists are there (some-where? anywhere? nowhere?) because they have always been there.

It is sad that Hendry had to spend his time writing this report. He *should* be writing plays. But this is a time to do accounting because the cretins who have taken over our culture need an accountant to do the homework they never did. *Cultural Capital* is Tom's best play to date, much as Bert Brecht's appearance before the House Unamerican Activities committee was his best play. There is a moment when you stop the play and say 'there is a more important play'. Tom Hendry has done that with this report.

In a hushed theatre, there are arrayed the lost, forlorn roués from Adam Smith's faded script (alias Brian Mulroney, Marcel Masse, Barbara Amiel, Peter Worthington, with Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher just off-stage). On centre stage is Tom Hendry. 'You are here,' says the Crown Attorney, 'accused of saying that the artists of the city constitute the cultural capital of the city. Why aren't they making real money? They should be working on Bay Street, or helping to get Chrysler or AMC off the ground. Why should they be sitting around Queen Street West, eating do-

TABLE VII  
Municipal Benefits Conferred on Toronto Arts and Cultural Organizations  
Other Than By Way of Cash Grants

	1981		1982	
	City \$	Metro \$	City \$	Metro \$
<b>Tax Exemptions</b>				
Roy Thomson Hall	22,336	26,221	315,523	370,397
Massey Hall	12,799	15,025	14,066	16,512
O'Keefe Centre	170,534	200,192	187,421	220,016
St. Lawrence Centre	114,493	134,405	125,831	147,715
Art Gallery of Ontario	156,151	183,308	171,613	201,459
Ontario College of Art	413	484	453	532
Royal Ontario Museum	182,592	214,347	200,673	235,573
Ontario Heritage Foundation	1,936	2,273	2,128	2,498
Eaton Auditorium	6,095	7,155	6,699	7,864
National Ballet School	26,459	31,060	34,442	40,432
Alumnae Theatre	3,526	4,139	3,875	4,548
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>697,334</b>	<b>818,609</b>	<b>1,062,724</b>	<b>1,247,546</b>
<b>Real Grants:</b>				
Alumnae Theatre	18,000		19,260	
National Ballet of Canada				
St. Lawrence Hall	128,000		136,960	
Young People's Theatre			14,625	
	<b>146,000</b>		<b>170,845</b>	
<b>St. Lawrence Centre</b>				
Debt Charges - Building and Renovations	187,403		176,264	
Operating Grants to Centre	489,240		656,440	
	<b>676,643</b>		<b>832,704</b>	

nuts or renting gritty apartments (alias studios) on Sorauren Street? in old industrial backyards?' 'Because they are trying to make ends meet while the tourists come in to watch their exhibitions at A Space or see them act at Toronto Workshop Productions.' 'I must say that that is a reprehensible point of view,' says the CA. 'Have you never heard of Anne Murray, or William Shatner or Gordon Lightfoot?' The rest of the play you can imagine.

But the play that Tom Hendry puts together is an accountant's play, a play which is put together on the basis of where the money comes from, what is done with it and how we might change the accounting system. The important feature of the play is that we—all of us—are short-changed and that there is an alternative version. We might look beyond this one to investigate how the elsewhere are managed. Hendry helps us to begin this exercise in allowing us to think about cities like Vancouver, Montréal, London (England), Paris, New York, Minneapolis, Vienna. Some of the experiences of these cities are worth exploring. The appendices on London, Paris, New York and Minneapolis are particularly instructive, though London is a watershed on whether the cultural life will be there anymore, and Paris (well-funded) tells us nothing about the elite version of the play. (This isn't Hendry's fault, but probably a fault of the way that the French provided their data for him, a problem which is present with collecting data from any city and depending on their version of what happens.)

But Hendry is very sensitive to the nuances of the internal cultures (from whatever city) and this helps us to make sense of Toronto. Why is it that we spend less on the arts than hierarchical Paris, and why is London (going bust) more important as a model than, say, Berlin, which is not quoted, or Budapest (which might be relevant because of great power marginality)?

The statistics are very impressive, simply because no one in Canada has tried to extrapolate a city before out of the maze of figures that come from Statistics Canada, the Canada Council, local government, etc. But before the statistics grab us in their sense of finitude, I have one complaint against this report. Are magazines not part of the art scene? If art is about being *there*, then part of that be-

ing is talking about *it*. Apart from asking for a municipal listing service, Hendry does not address possibilities. He might be right, of course, in implying that critics don't matter—they are, after all, the wrong accountants. What matters is that people go to the museums, the galleries, the theatres, the films, etc. and that these should be well-funded. But should people not think about what they are going to? New magazines get no support from any of the agencies. Hendry's report might have addressed that issue. Accounting for what goes on is one problem, but accounting for the accounting is another, and a serious one. As Shakespeare, that other accountant, wrote in *Timon of Athens*:

**Gold, yellow, glittering precious  
gold. No, gods,  
I am no idle votarist...**

A culture is not built up by saying simply that the show must go on; it is the constant questioning of what show, what script.

With that caveat, Tom Hendry has produced a brilliant script which can be used for social and political action. Like any good morality play it proposes alternatives to the bat-eyed fiats of laissez-faire ideologies. By adopting the language of the ideologies it demonstrates the fallacy of their rhetoric.

**The hand that signed the paper  
felled a city,  
Five sovereign fingers taxed the  
breath,  
Doubled the globe of dead and  
halved a country;  
These five kings did a king  
to death.**

Via his accounting, Hendry invites us to listen and think, feel, move.

Within the limitations of an accounting metaphor, Hendry invites us to do just that by compelling us to start from where we are and use that as a base for thinking of what we might do.

**Ioan Davies**  
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# TOM BURROWS ON SQUATTING

EDITED BY ROSEMARY DONEGAN

I have been using squatting as a subject for photographic and sculpture presentations since 1971. My interest began in December 1971, when my self-built squatter home on the mudflats of Vancouver was burnt by civic authorities, which I consider to have been an act of arson. This systematic destruction of squatter self-built homes has eliminated housing for an estimated 20,000 people in the Vancouver area since 1940.

Since the trauma of watching my studio-home and its contents erased, I have been exploring squatting as an element of the housing system. Squatters most often occupy an area when social and economic mobility is more important than security of tenure. This is reflected in the age-grouping and the social-economic status of squatters. To squat is to act within the theatre of politics.

The issues are large and my research has taken me as far as squatting communities in Africa, India and Southeast Asia. I had difficulty in doing individual research in third world countries, due to having to relate to the filtering policies of bureaucratic housing agencies because of my lack of knowledge of regional customs and languages. I have found that my most relevant research has been within Western European communities, specifically London, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin and Rome, because of the relative ease of networking on a grass roots level in Western Europe. This work — which focuses on Vancouver, Western Europe and the third world — was presented in a photo-text exhibition called *Skwat Doc* in 1982.

## SQUATTING AND THE PRESS

In western culture the centralized press manipulate and censor issues surrounding squatting. England is a good example. In London throughout the 1970s the press dramatized the middle class plight that 'they couldn't go salmon-fishing in Scotland for fear they would come home to find themselves replaced by squatters.' In reality this rarely occurred and was very easily remedied by the police and the courts, even before the Criminal Trespass Law was passed in 1977, which eroded squatter's rights that had existed for over 300 years.

There was *no* mention in the press of the fact that there was a severe housing crisis in Greater London, while simultaneously there were 100,000 empty flats, due to an archaic and rigid centralized housing system, coupled with a tax incentive system geared to major property developers.

## ▼ VANCOUVER 1958

**"Now me, little b-----, I ain't ever been good' for anything. Never work. Drink canned heat. Steal. You want me leave floathouse, go live next door you? Ha! Maybe you save your old beer bottles for me, eh? so I can sell 'em to junk-man, get canned heat."**

**He laughed and laughed. Then he kicked the door open for me**

Interview with a Vancouver squatter from the *Vancouver Sun*.



THE SQUATTER **GP**

Inside: ★ confessions! OF A LAY-ABOUT HIPPI SQUATTER building barricades Big Transport Big City City Medicine Maintenance Guide



To squat is to challenge authority!  
To squat is to challenge property!  
Don't apologize.  
It is your right to house yourself.  
We must create our own culture. It is OUR city, OUR world, OUR lives.  
These are our houses.

**BEWARE OF AUTHORITY.**  
it robs you of your own power.

**BEWARE OF DOUBLESPEAK.**  
authority tells you it is doing what it is in fact PREVENTING. just like the council says it is providing housing when in fact it is trying to prevent us from housing ourselves. so SCHOOLING prevents us from EDUCATING ourselves, the NHS prevents us from HEALING ourselves, and JOBS prevent us from WORKING productively and co-operatively. GOVERNMENT creates confusion, chaos and LAWS. the law prevents justice. government prevents us from creating harmony in our lives.

**BEWARE OF POLITICIANS.**  
politicians tell lies. use you. don't be fooled by them. licensed squatting is a means for controlling you, for absorbing you into the system and robbing you of your own power. that is, your independence, your conviction that you have a right to be here.

**IT IS YOUR HOUSE - KEEP IT.**

▼ LONDON 1977

Eviction at Branchly Road, London.



▲ LONDON 1976

Squatters' paper published in Islington, London.



Squatter shanties by a sewage canal on the edge of Bombay.

▲ BOMBAY

SQUATTING:  
10<sup>TH</sup>

At the UN Habitat Conference in 1976 it was conservatively estimated that squatting supplies about one-tenth of the world's urban dwellings. In some third world countries at least one-half of the urban population is housed through squatting. In many Western European communities urban squatting has flourished since the late 1960s. The squatting population of Greater London in the mid-70s has been estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000 people.



# ▼ WEST BERLIN 1980

Squatted Kreuzberg tenement, which had become a showcase cooperative self-help building in 1984.



## INSTANDBESETZER MOVEMENT

In the first quarter of 1980, an estimated 4,000 squatters moved into over 250 derelict tenement buildings in the Kreuzberg area of West Berlin. They organized to occupy and repair these buildings rather than see them torn down and the neighbourhoods dispersed, resulting in a physical and social vacuum. For this reason, they called their movement 'Instandbesetzer', which translates as 'squatters who repair'. In September 1984, when I returned to Berlin to attend a conference on aspects of self-help housing and to hang the exhibition *Skwat Doc*, less than one-half of the squatters had managed to retain their dwellings. There had been a lot of open and often brutal confrontations with the police and the state. A number of households had been forcibly evicted.

The houses that remained, except for one or two exceptions, had entered into agreements with the state to become legalized self-help collectives. The recent brutality of the police had made continued squatting impossible — they either signed a contract or hit the streets. The terms of their contracts were very rigorous as to the amount of work that the inhabitants had to do on their buildings in a defined period of time. Many people complained that the legalized squatters who had accepted these contracts were virtual slaves to the reconstruction of their buildings with no time for political activity beyond the confines of their walls.

However, the original movement of 4,000 had secured self-determined housing for a group of nearly 2,000 people — something no other western urban centre has achieved.



## ▲ AMSTERDAM 1970s

Squatter riots have occurred almost like civic festivals since the early 1970s.

## INSTANDBESETZER GRAFITTI

One of the most consistent and public statements about the Kreuzberg area and the Instandbesetzer movement is the local graffiti which permeates the entire district and speaks the politics and emotions of the neighbourhood.

the symbol of the squatters who repair  
both the architecture and  
the community fabric

Occupied — that is enough

Too bad cement doesn't burn

Unrest in the deep freezer

You have the power  
but we have the night

Power is always without Love  
Love is never without Power

Taking a house is better than waiting to  
be given one

It is better that our youth squat houses  
than foreign countries

Be realistic — demand the impossible

It is better to squat and repair a house  
than to own a house and let it  
fall into ruin

Under the paving stone — the beach



## WEST BERLIN-SOUTH BRONX TRANSFER

On my return from Berlin in October 1984, I undertook to transfer the graffiti images of the Kreuzberg area to an abandoned South Bronx tenement. As part of the 'Sculpture of Dreams, Sculpture of Concrete' series coordinated by Fashion Moda, a South Bronx storefront gallery.

The reason I chose the South Bronx was the similarity of architecture and class structure to that of the Kreuzberg area of Berlin. Initially the South Bronx presented itself to me like a war zone. The past two decades had seen a process of severe urban rot. Well-constructed buildings were left to fall into ruin because they couldn't generate enough capital from predominantly black and Puerto Rican low income inhabitants. The landlord claimed to be unable to pay the minimal taxes levied on their property, so they abandoned it. The inhabitants, unable to comprehend custodianship of property that they didn't privately own, allowed the communal infrastructure of their buildings to fill with garbage and fall into ruin. The more recent high-rise welfare housing that surrounds the greater urban crater of the South Bronx is quickly following this process of urban dweller alienation.

There was a lot of already existing graffiti on the walls of the South Bronx. I was occasionally asked to lend one of my spray cans to a local teenager so they could paint their signature on the wall where it wouldn't interfere with my work. Part of the Bronx graffiti ethic was that one didn't pay for a spray can. For this reason they were kept locked under the counter at the paint stores. I personally didn't adhere to the ethic, for a variety of reasons, and bought my tools. But the fact that I'd lend my spray cans made for an easy way for the teenagers to get their signatures up on the wall. Apparently you had to get it up about one thousand times before you were really there. Possibly it was secretly motivated by a desire to be recognized as an artist and escape the ghetto. A select few of these graffiti artists had been promoted to transfer their imagery onto canvas and enter the art gallery market. Coincidentally, West Germany has become the most active market for contemporary gallery art and that's where a

lot of the graffiti-ghetto work is sold.

The existing South Bronx graffiti was of a different nature than the Kreuzberg-Instandbesetzer messages. It was very advanced in calligraphic style but more related to defining the machismo and turf of the graffiti gang than to the political nature of housing or the local neighbourhood.

Half-way through my project of painting the Berlin imagery on the walls of the Bronx tenement, I was busted by the local police. A typical vulgar police confrontation which turned comic for me when one of the police jumped on a spray can, which burst, covering his pants with lemon yellow.

The men that ran a small welding shop next to the tenement witnessed the police bust; they said the police were just having a bad day when they confronted me or else they wouldn't have bothered, there was so much graffiti anyway. They thought what I was doing was amusing, even more so when the police got involved. They wanted more of it. I was told that I could store my equipment in their shop and borrow their ladders, as well as hide in their shop if a police car appeared. Soon other people from the neighbourhood set up a watch network to let me know if any police cars were approaching. Another man knew enough German to correct a spelling error that I made.

At one stage, I was confronted by a Latino woman in her thirties who demanded to know what I was doing. When I explained it to her she left. She later returned to tell me to keep up the work, as she and a group of people were actually thinking of taking over the building as urban homesteaders. They thought the graffiti project might help their cause.

The text-images were reconstructed as close as possible to the original German graffiti and translations were posted beside the work in both English and Spanish. The work was entitled the *West Berlin-South Bronx Transfer*.

I attempted to transfer the political content of the West Berlin graffiti to the South Bronx using an established local medium. It was content that didn't exist in any other media in the Bronx. I used graffiti itself as a vessel to transfer the content. West Berlin-South Bronx.



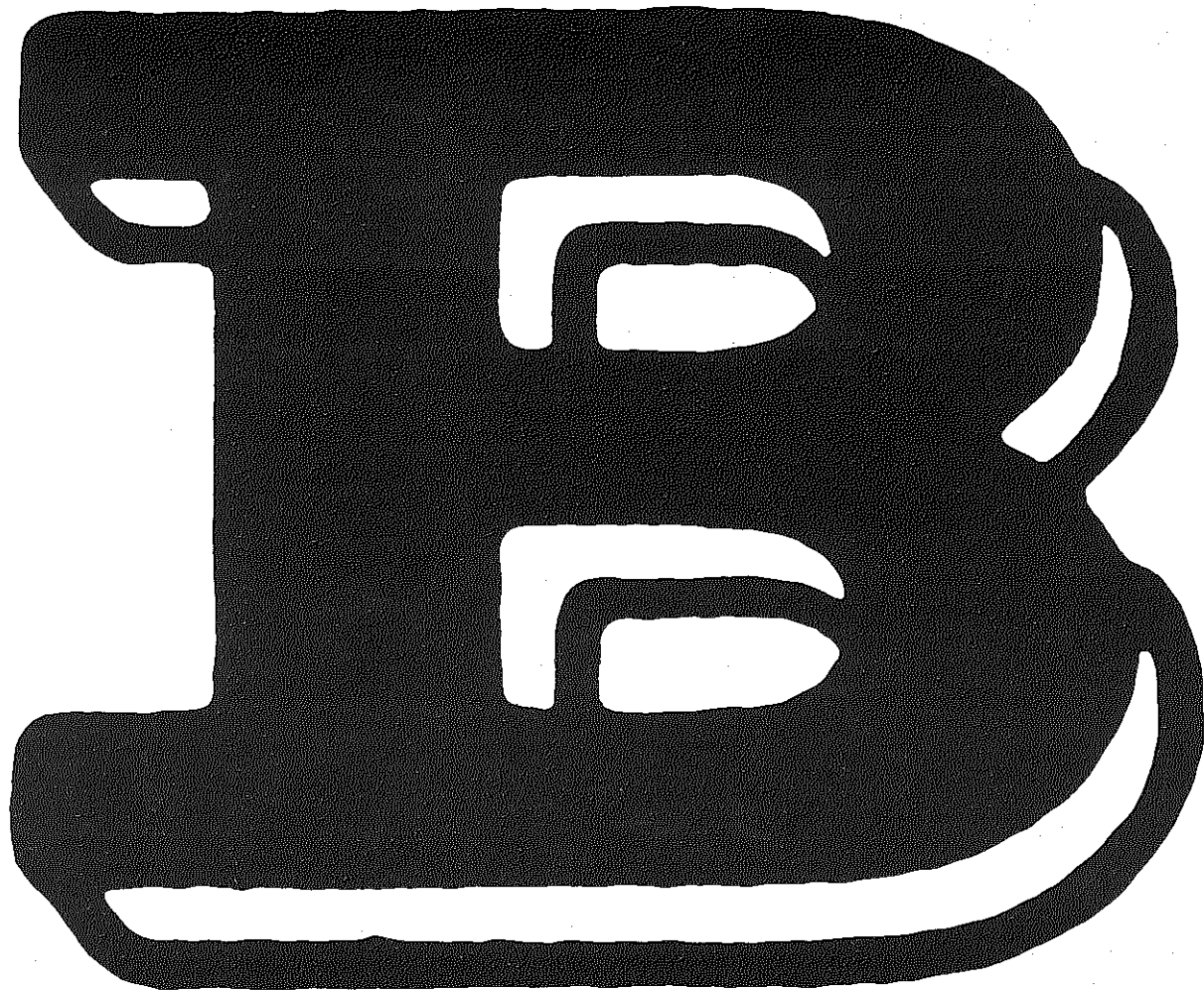
▲ SOUTH BRONX 1984

## SQUATTER PROFILE

Caroline and Nick were two of the most active organizers of the Tolmers Square squat in central London. At the time they were both students of architecture and planning at the University of London. After almost a decade of struggle with one of the most capitalistic property developers who had held the lease, the squat was redeveloped by the Local Council with some planning input by the squatters.

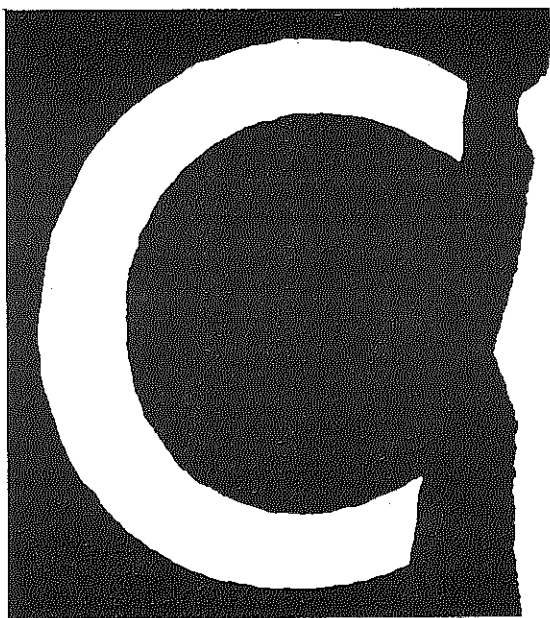
By this time, Nick and Caroline had graduated to the professional world. With their accumulated income, plus the practical knowledge they had gained of the material structure of older multi-dwelling buildings in Tolmers Square, they were able to realize the potential of an East End London Institute for Seamen that was put on the market by the Local Council. For a minimum of capital and with a maximum of well-planned labour and materials they developed a five apartment co-op building. Incidentally, the co-op is next to the Museum of Labour History in the East End. The building now includes a functioning swimming pool in the basement that was once used to teach merchant seamen how to swim.





# ROADCASTING POLICY AND THE PUBLIC

By Marc Raboy



ommunications Minister Marcel Masse's creation last April of a task force to review all aspects of Canadian broadcasting may have put a temporary hold on the sense of turmoil in the field which followed the federal government changeover of September 1984. But the nature of the enterprise—a task force, which will consult interested parties privately but hold no public hearings and receive no unsolicited submissions—points to the new direction in which communications, especially broadcasting, policy is heading: never, since the subject was placed on the public agenda in the late 1920s, has the Canadian public been so absent from the policy-making process.

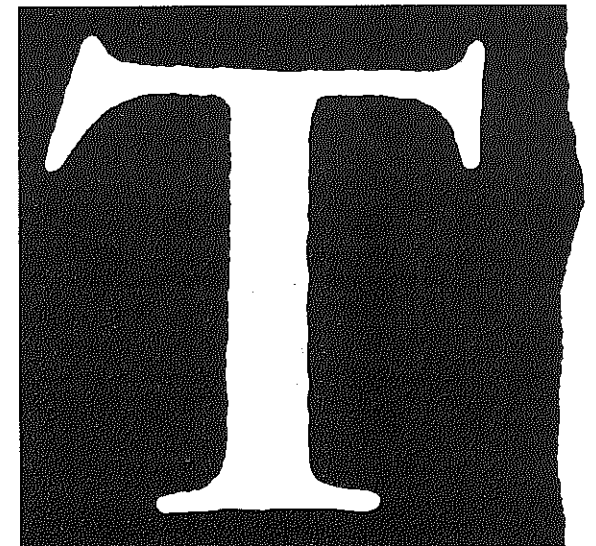
This direction has been evident since the Conservative government came to power, in the dramatic increase of ministerial involvement in nominally autonomous areas like the CBC budget; in the rapid move to reintroduce a discredited piece of abandoned Liberal legislation (Bill C-20) which would give the cabinet political control over the independent regulatory agency, the CRTC; in the closing down of the main institutional channel of public expression, the CRTC licence renewal hearing, in the case of the CBC this year; in the minister's clear preference for interlocutors from the private sector rather than public interest groups when he 'consults' on a particular question.

The focusing of public attention, especially in English Canada, on the CBC's budget cutbacks, has highlighted only one—albeit crucial—aspect of the problem, the role of the national public broadcaster. But the minister of communications himself has been the first to admit that the CBC's fiscal crisis was only the tip of the iceberg: the entire *system* is being rethought, and will be reorganized, on the basis of a new consensus (to emerge from where, it is not yet clear). It is immediately evident to even the most casual observer that the government is determined to reduce the role of the federal state in the broadcasting business, and will strive to create a broadcasting environment in which private enterprise can flourish.

But every development of the last year indicates that the victim will be not only the Canadian broadcasting system as we have known it since 1932, but also the democratic tradition whereby the Canadian public, or more properly, publics, have regular access to the decision-making process, particularly in moments of change.

The Conservative policy thrust in communications is, of course, part of a process that is neither specific to that party, nor indeed, to Canada.<sup>1</sup> The government is riding the global wave of general conservatism whose hallmark is the redefinition of the role of the state in all aspects of public life. 'Deregulation', 'privatization' and reduced budgets for public services are all manifestations of this general shift. Whether these manifestations coincide with the general ideological orientation of the Conservative Party, or are the reason the Tories are in power, the important thing is to understand the fundamental change in the system over which the government is presiding.

## Public Interest And National Broadcasting



he historic importance of government as patron, organizer and enabler of the cultural and technological aspects of communication systems in Canada is self-evident. Government intervention has been the means by which the Canadian state has guaranteed Canada's national sovereignty, a secure capital base for its entrepreneurs and financiers, and free expression and access to communications for its social interest groups.<sup>2</sup>

This multiple role has been made possible by an identification of the political function of the state with the 'public interest'. As the state—if not the government of the day—is perceived as the embodiment of the public interest, its interventions can be made in the name of public interest. Conversely, critics of government/state interventions put themselves forward as alternative representations of the public interest. This process tends to obscure the actual role of the state, as the promoter of particular *private* interests, and also the fact that as a pivotal social institution, the modern state has its own particular interests.<sup>3</sup>

In the advanced, industrial west, the state's interests include: (1) the need to maintain and promote a sound national economy, based on the expansion of capital and the furnishing of a minimal social welfare net; (2) the need to maintain social peace by minimizing class conflict and maximizing cross-cultural, inter-regional harmony; (3) the need to negotiate a favourable position for the national entity it represents on the global, geopolitical scale; and (4) the need to maintain its own legitimacy above and beyond question.

In the specific case of Canada, the state has had two principal tasks: (1) to protect the integrity of the national entity from the centripetal pull of the imperial neighbour to the south; and (2) to protect the internal cohesion of the national entity from the threat of fragmentation posed by Canada's particular 'national unity' crisis.



Until recently, a strong, central communications and broadcasting system was perceived as fundamental to both of these tasks, and federal policy flowed from that perception. This basic assumption has now changed.

Throughout the 20th century, it has been necessary, in all the western countries, to 'defend' the very idea of public life against the advancing ideology of the marketplace.<sup>4</sup> The emergence of public broadcasting systems in the 1920s and 1930s was, along with the introduction of social welfare measures, a manifestation of an expanding state as well as a question of principle.

In Canada, the initial legislative framework for broadcasting—brought in by a Conservative government, as we are continually reminded these days—was in fact the result of a conjuncture of nationalist sentiment, economic circumstance and one of the broadest, most determined movements of public opinion in Canadian history. While nationalism provided the main impetus for the Canadian Radio League, the demand for public broadcasting also contained an emancipatory notion of public life and the possible role of broadcasting therein.<sup>5</sup>

The pattern we are now in dates from the end of the Second World War, since which time the Conservatives, mostly in opposition, have acted as the political voice of the private sector in broadcasting, while the Liberals, mostly in government, have advocated a politically-motivated predominant public sector. In the economic 'boom' climate of the 1950s, public service advocates had to defend the public sector against the increasingly credible and successful efforts of private enterprise to roll back the ideological and material gains conceded by the state in the earlier period. The Royal Commission on Broadcasting of 1957 still insisted on considering the public sector predominant, but the practice of the new Board of Broadcast Governors created by the Broadcasting Act of 1958 (under the last strong Conservative government) quickly elevated the private sector to equal status.<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note the parallels and the differences between the last full-scale broadcasting policy review under the Liberals in the mid-1960s and the new one announced last April 9.

The report of Marcel Masse's task force is to be the basis of a white paper to be produced next year and aired before a parliamentary committee before becoming legislation. The Broadcasting Act of 1968 was also preceded by a White Paper on Broadcasting (1966) that grew out of the private deliberations of a special advisory committee set up by Secretary of State Maurice Lamontagne in 1964 (The Fowler Committee).

Lamontagne publicly announced his review in a speech to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters in Québec City; Masse made his announcement to the Canadian Cable Television Association in Toronto.

There the parallels stop. Under the Pearson and Trudeau governments, successive secretaries of state—Lamontagne, Judy La Marsh and Gérard Pelletier—forged a national cultural policy, with broadcasting and the CBC in particular as its cornerstone, designed to meet the political challenge of Québec nationalism and the new social movements of the 1960s. In the Liberal strategy for Canada, the Broadcasting Act of 1968 had two overriding purposes: to preserve as best it could the CBC's diminished position in the broadcasting system and to write into law an explicit obligation for the CBC to promote the cause of national unity.<sup>7</sup>

In this process public broadcasting was equated to broadcasting in the national interest and the identification of the 'public' interest with the particular interest of the Canadian state reached its height. This was recognized by one Member of Parliament, who said during debate on the Broadcasting Act:

**I wonder whether the government has given sufficient thought to the insertion of this phrase in the bill because it seems to me that we have treasured in this country over the past thirty years the establishment of something that was very unique and important—a public broadcasting system, not a state broadcasting system. When we begin to move into areas such as...national unity, we are in effect moving away from the concept of public broadcasting toward the idea of state broadcasting whereby the broadcasting system of the country becomes an extension of the state.<sup>8</sup>**

The MP who took this strong position was David Macdonald, who later served briefly as communications minister in Joe Clark's government of 1979-80.

MacDonald's position notwithstanding, there has been a consistent tactical difference between the way Liberals and Conservatives have used the broadcasting system. Put simply, Liberals have seen it primarily as a political instrument in time of crisis and a cultural tool for nation-building in time of social peace; while for the Conservatives it is an important sector of the national economy. Thus, the Liberals have tended to resist the encroachment on the dominant position of the public sector which began to set in after the War, while the Conservatives used their one significant period in office to make great strides for the private sector, taking regulatory authority away from the CBC and overseeing the establishment of effective equality between public and private television—something which had never occurred during the earlier radio era.

What the Clark government might have done had it survived is an enigma in this regard. David MacDonald, perhaps the most progressive individual ever to hold the communications portfolio<sup>9</sup>, initiated the Federal Cultural Policy Review that produced the 'Applebaum-Hébert' report, but was not around long enough to receive it.

The Applebaum-Hébert review demonstrated a lack of sensitivity to any real notion of public involvement in either the formulation or the object of broadcasting policy. The essence of the Canadian broadcasting system, the committee's report stated, is its 'national' character, in which two sub-systems distinguished by ownership—the private and the state—coexist. The committee thus continued the myth that Canadian broadcasting constitutes a 'single national system', just as it offered concrete proposals whose effect would be to begin dismantling the 'public' component of the system to the benefit of the 'private'.

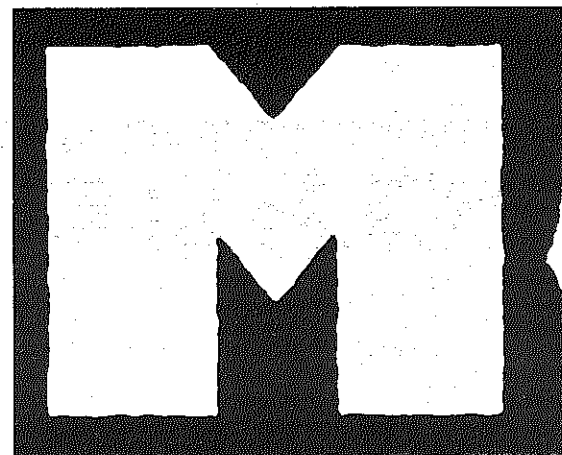
By the time the Applebaum-Hébert report was tabled, with its radical proposals for reducing the role of the CBC, the political and technological context had changed: the Liberal Party's political sigh of relief following the Québec referendum of 1980, and a dramatically increased technical capacity for television reception destroyed both the political need and the practical meaningfulness of a strong (and costly) voice promoting national unity. As audiences fragmented and the national unity crisis began to settle in the early 1980s, Canada's last nationalist minister of communications, Francis Fox, began floating policy proposals departing from traditional Liberal commitment to public—that is, 'national'—broadcasting.<sup>10</sup>

John Turner's short-lived administration was a tribute to political schizophrenia,

demonstrating the malaise of traditional Liberal policy. Turner split the hard and soft dimensions of the 'communications' portfolio, which had been unified at last in 1980, so that the economic aspects were handled by a business-oriented minister, Ed Lumley, and virtually appended to the ministry of industry and commerce, while the cultural aspects reverted to a secretary of state with solid credentials as a scrapper for national unity, Serge Joyal.

So the policy changes we are now living through are partly conjunctual, partly historically-rooted, and partly a continuation of a process begun by the previous government. Indeed, as Marcel Masse told a group of Québec journalists last December, 'We're not the ones who threatened to put the key in the door of the CBC because we didn't like its news coverage'.<sup>11</sup>

## 'Denationalization': National Interest Without The State?



Marcel Masse's appointment to the reunified portfolio of communications-cum-culture was a fascinating move which brings credit to the new prime minister's reputation for political astuteness. Marcel Masse is not only a dyed-in-the-wool Tory, but a Québec nationalist who earned his stripes with the Union Nationale government of the late 1960s in its battles against federal centralism in communications and for more provincial cultural power via agencies like the provincial broadcasting network. Considered an 'ultranationalist' member of Daniel Johnson's government, Masse served as minister of state for education and later, under Jean-Jacques Bertrand, as minister of intergovernmental affairs. He was thus close to one of the stormiest dossiers in federal-provincial relations of that era, educational broadcasting, and was part of the government that created Radio-Québec. His appointment last fall was no naive one, as he would have come to the direct attention of Brian Mulroney as far back as 1968, when the present Canadian prime minister worked closely with the Union Nationale in planning Conservative electoral strategy for Québec in that year's federal election.<sup>12</sup>

Masse was just the man to apply the axe to the CBC when his finance minister ordered him to find savings last November. Only vaguely committed to a public broadcasting system, both in principle and as a vehicle for promoting national unity, the Tories have little to gain from preserving the CBC. On the other hand, in tendering the olive branch to the provinces, particularly Québec, the government has significant political capital to gain, while the increased space opened up for private sector expansion by a diminished CBC meets the expectations of the Tories'



traditional clientele, particularly the private capitalist entrepreneurs of Canadian culture.

Masse was just the man to 'denationalize' the public dimension of Canadian broadcasting—that is, to separate, in a way no Liberal or Canadian nationalist could ever do, its 'national' purpose from the direct responsibility of the state.

Masse's approach was laid out in an interview with *Le Devoir* published December 20, 1984. To journalist Bernard Descoteaux, it was clear that the era of mass state involvement in defining Canadian culture was a thing of the past.

Descoteaux quotes Masse:<sup>13</sup>

**The Conservative Party applies its theories in every sector, in communications as elsewhere...the state is an important tool in economic affairs as in cultural affairs, but we are not about to have a culture of the state...we are going to have a culture of Canadians.**

**We have insisted, to the exclusion of everything else, that the defence of Canadian culture was the CBC's responsibility. We have insisted on this until everyone else wound up believing they had no responsibility. Perhaps it's time to redress the balance. Canadian culture belongs to the Canadian people, and it is up to them, through all their institutions, to see that it flourishes...**

Masse went on to reiterate the importance of viewing the private sector as *equal* in importance to the public sector—a point that had been fundamental to the Tory reform of 1958, and that had marked its departure from previous policy:

**The independent broadcasters are part of the Canadian experience. They should not be perceived by the CBC, nor by the Canadian government, as secondary vehicles.**

I refer to the Tory policy as one of 'denationalization' in the sense that it sees a major role for what the Liberals, ever insistent on a centralized vision of national unity, only accepted begrudgingly: an important role for the 'other' public broadcasters, the provincial agencies. In effect, this is a farming-out by Ottawa of public service responsibilities. Masse told *Le Devoir's* Descoteaux he sees the provincial broadcasters as positive instruments for regional cultural development, which should no longer be viewed as invaders of federal territory.

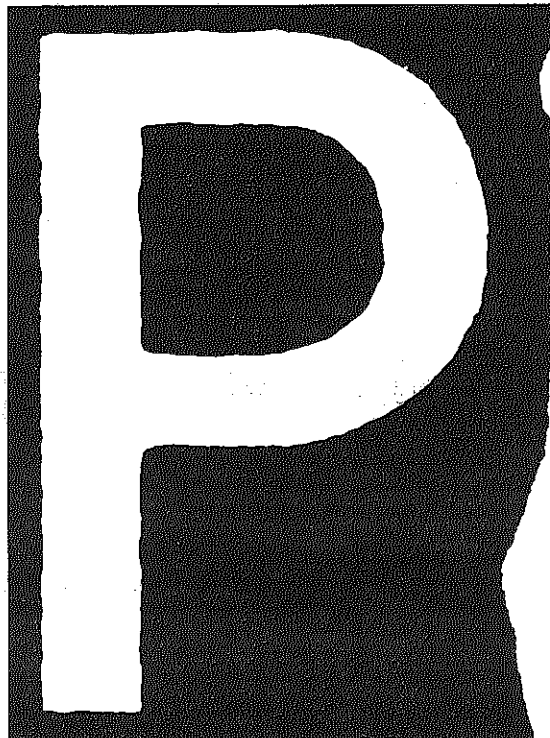
The inclusion of the provinces in the strategy for extricating the federal government from state responsibility augurs a tripartite approach to national policy (Ottawa-provinces-private sector) which the Québec government finds particularly attractive. In February, Masse and Québec communications minister Jean-François Bertrand announced a \$40 million seed-money agreement for Québec-based firms—the first federal-provincial accord since Ottawa and Québec created their respective communications ministries in 1969. They also set up a federal-provincial committee to study and report on possible areas of collaboration.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the government, a segment of Québec nationalist opinion sees the new distribution of resources in communications as outweighing the negative effects of federal policy on traditional public services. In an editorial March 23, *Le Devoir's* Lise Bissonnette called the pro-CBC campaign of the artistic and cultural community of English-Canada 'unacceptable and dangerous' for Québec because of its centralizing tendencies. She asked: 'Are we prepared, in Québec, to accept being enclosed in the obscure concept of "Canadian culture"?' From Québec's point of view, she said, there was cause to applaud the move away from the massive federal involvement in cultural af-

fairs that characterized the Trudeau regime.<sup>15</sup>

This critical view is consistent with a long line of Québec dissidence that has blocked a truly pan-Canadian consensus on broadcasting since the Taschereau government and the Dominion argued the question of jurisdiction before the Privy Council in London in 1931. It provides a glimpse of the extent of the problem of determining the public interest in Canadian communications.

## Or Without The Public?



art of the problem in the present crisis must clearly lie with the public itself. Referring to the ease with which the government put the axe to the CBC budget, Peter Desbarats commented in the *Financial Post* last December 29:<sup>16</sup>

**Not since the controversy over the political independence of 'This Hour Has Seven Days' in the 1960s had Ottawa dared to establish such a direct link between the cabinet and CBC management.**

**In contrast with the events of two decades ago, the CBC appeared to accept this emasculation without any public signs of outrage. Its apathy was matched only by the public's apparent lack of concern, a sad commentary on the corporation's loss of contact and identification with its audience, particularly its television audience.**

Since that article appeared, there has, of course, been a significant public response to the CBC cutbacks.<sup>17</sup> But in several other areas where the government has anticipated its own new policy there has been no public intervention. While public debate and media attention focus on the attempt to rationalize public spending on broadcasting by cutting CBC budgets, and the legitimate critique that this will have a disastrous effect on the cultural production community, a much more insidious and far-reaching set of problems remains obscured.

However we care to criticize it, the CRTC has the merit of being, in theory at least, an independent agency through which the public interest can and should be represented. By the early 1980s, the CRTC and the department of communication—an arm of government, not an independent public agency—were locked in a competitive situation bordering on impasse. In a piece of legislation introduced in February 1984 the government tried to bring the CRTC under ministerial control.

The Liberal's Bill C-20 gave the cabinet power to issue directives to the CRTC on any matter under its jurisdiction, except particular broadcasting licenses. Where 'matters of public interest' were concerned, however, the cabinet could issue a directive affecting specific licensees. Bill C-20 also proposed to amend the Broadcasting Act giving the entire broadcasting system a mandate to be 'balanced' and give the CBC the objective of becoming 'distinctive'.

Bill C-20 never made it into law and fell with the Liberal government. The Conservatives reintroduced it December 20, 1984, but with attention massively focused on the CBC cutbacks it has gone virtually unnoticed—except in Québec, where public interest groups tend to be sensitive towards government attempts to assert political control. Indeed, only the most persevering followers of policy development seem to have noticed it, yet Bill C-20 has long-range implications which make the CBC cutbacks pale in comparison.

The new version of the bill seemed to anticipate the charge of political interference. It no longer refers to special measures which might be necessary in the 'public interest'. Speaking in the House on second reading January 31, Masse emphasized the 'guarantees' that protect the public against abuse by the bill: (1) the Canadian Charter of Rights, which protects freedom of expression; (2) the exclusion on directives involving particular licensees; (3) a new provision requiring the minister to consult with the CRTC before issuing a directive; and (4) a 30-day delay during which the directive would be referred to a parliamentary committee (also in the Liberal version).<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, Masse presented the bill as a major element of the new edge the government was putting on communications policy. He presented the new Tory gospel of Canadian communications history, lauding our telecommunications and broadcasting systems as concrete realizations of the prophetic dreams of men like John A. Macdonald and R.B. Bennett—and as the result of dynamic cooperation between the private and public sectors.

Bill C-20, the minister said, aims essentially to clarify and establish a new equilibrium in the distribution of powers between the government and the regulatory agency. It aims to close the gap between communications legislation and the cultural possibilities of the new technologies which existing legislation did not anticipate. Quoting Montesquieu and Cardinal Richelieu on the role of the state, Masse said it may be in the public interest to deregulate certain telecommunications services. The telecommunications industry would flourish in the marketplace provided public regulatory intervention were kept to a minimum, and Bill C-20 aims to facilitate this.

It was time to review telecommunications and broadcasting policy, Masse said, and this bill was somehow related to that review, but in just what way he did not make clear.

Last March, the Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (ICEA) and 30 Québec labour and community groups called for the postponement of such interim legislative action until a new overall communications policy, based on a wide public consultation, was developed.<sup>19</sup>

Bill C-20, according to the Québec coalition, gives the minister a 'blank cheque' to make new policy as he pleases, and on an ad hoc basis, without obliging him to state his general intentions and debate them with the public. So far, the cornerstone of his policy appears to be deregulation (Bill C-20 also



proposes to extend from five to seven years the duration of a broadcasting license, thus diluting public control).

Most important, the coalition said, the bill contradicts the 1968 Broadcasting Act, which states that an independent agency is the best guarantee that policy objectives will be met. Such a fundamental change in the basic framework of the system should not be made without public debate, the ICEA-led coalition argued. Yet, while Masse habitually mentions 'consultation' in his speeches, and has in fact privately consulted specific groups and organizations, no public consultation mechanism has been indicated in connection with the policy review.

The task force announcement of April 9 continued this pattern of policy-making without public debate.

Indeed, under the Tory government, even the CRTC, the main public consultation mechanism of the past 15 years, has reduced its role as a place where the public can appear. On March 13, in anticipation of the ministerial review, the CRTC renewed the CBC's television licenses without holding the obligatory public hearings. As the ICEA pointed out, this was in effect implementing Bill C-20 before it even became law: already, in the case of the CBC, public control has been replaced with ministerial control.<sup>20</sup>

CRTC hearings on the CBC at this time would have been a forum for public expression on the present and future role of the public broadcaster in the overall communication system. In their absence, the CRTC did maintain plans to go ahead with a slew of public hearings on other broadcast licenses. In Montréal alone, hearings last May dealt with the renewal of licenses for several private radio stations, Radio-Québec, the private television network Télé-Métropole and the awarding of a license for Québec's controversial 'second private French network'. Ironically, the tabling of such a massive agenda by the CRTC coincided with the absence of the traditional forum on the 'national' public broadcaster, a step which underscored both the scope of the regulatory agency's authority and the diminishing of the possibility for effective, independent public representation before it.

Traditionally, communications policy in Canada has been made, at least in principle, only following long and thorough public debate. While a case can be made for the government to make policy in lieu of an agency whose mandate is once-removed, where is the justification for circumventing public debate?

Which raises the question: if 'public' broadcasting is to be deflected from a national to a regional, or provincial level, is public debate to follow the same trajectory? Again, recent events in Québec provide a glimpse of an answer.

The oldest provincial broadcaster, Radio-Québec, has always appeared as a somewhat incomplete mutant form of public broadcasting. Last fall, the provincial minister of communications spoke publicly of transforming Radio-Québec into the 'second private French network' promised for Québec by former federal minister Francis Fox. Following several weeks of controversy over this plan, and an accompanying proposal to introduce advertising to the educational network, Québec undertook to produce a document clarifying the orientation of Radio-Québec.

The document *Radio-Québec maintenant* was published March 11. It proposes that Radio-Québec remain unequivocally a public body, with a mandate wherein 'educational' is interpreted in the broad 'cultural'—as opposed to the narrow

'pedagogical'—sense, and with financing based partially on a limited amount of indirect advertising.

In a statement accompanying release of the document, communications minister Bertrand said the report ought to be the object of a broad public debate; after all, Radio-Québec's shareholders, he said, were 'tous les québécois'. Bertrand said the report would be submitted to the Québec cabinet committee on cultural development, to the provincial parliamentary commission on education and culture, to the CRTC and to Québec's regulatory equivalent, the Régie des services publics, as well as to the Forum permanent des communications, a consultative body created after the October 1983 provincial 'summit' on communications.

The Québec government has a political interest in allying 'the public' with its policy on educational broadcasting. As the only broadcasting agency completely under its control (and even then, subject to CRTC approval), Radio-Québec is the province's point of entry into the field of mass communication. In terms of potential constitutional dispute (for example, over the definition of 'educational' broadcasting) it is important that a Québec position be legitimated by a demonstration of popular support.

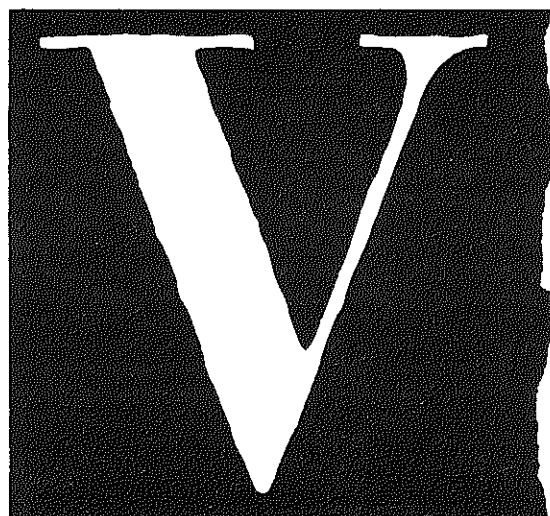
But the origins of Québec's policy are apparently as dubious as its federal counterpart. According to a report in *Le Devoir*, the whole fuss originated with a top-level government committee named to develop a strategy for Radio-Québec ('Comité directeur sur la participation de Radio-Québec aux mutations de la télévision au Québec'). This committee was composed of the secretary of the provincial cabinet, the deputy ministers of communications and cultural affairs and the chairperson of Radio-Québec...hardly what one could call accountable public representatives!<sup>21</sup>

This news prompted the ICEA to comment last December:<sup>22</sup>

**It is high time, in our opinion, to return to a more democratic practice in this area. We need to know who is making the decisions about Radio-Québec, on what basis and according to what policy.**

**We therefore demand that the minister of communications make public his department's policy on communication and cultural development, and submit that policy to public consultation.**

What course the public consultation on Radio-Québec will take remains to be seen. In Québec, too, there is a strong tradition of public input to broadcasting policy, but here as well, the climate does not favour tradition.



viewed comprehensively, the fundamental policy question remains unchanged after 50 years: which is to prevail, the logic of public service or that of the marketplace? This is more than a question of who is to own the media, or how much public funds are to be committed to them. It is more than a question of Canadian content or constitutional

jurisdiction. It is fundamentally a question of how we view our democracy.

It seems clear at this point that not only the government but the different publics making up the community affected by federal policy need to review their desires and expectations with respect to broadcasting and communications. These need to be developed and articulated as policy proposals expressing an ideal, not restrained in the first instance by practical considerations. In the government's scenario, debate will be invited only in reaction to the accomplished fact of the white paper, thus depriving the entire community of exposure to the utopian side of the public imagination.

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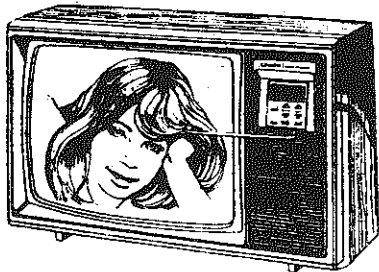
*This paper was presented at the Sixth Annual Conference of the Canadian Communication Association in Montréal, May-June 1985.*

#### Notes and References

1. A round-up of the situation in western Europe is provided in 'Public Service Broadcasting: The End?', a special issue of the British journal *Media, Culture & Society* (vol.5, no.3/4, July-October 1983). More recently, the French journal *Politique Aujourd'hui* published a dossier entitled 'MEDIAS: La FIN du service public?' (new series, no.7, November-December 1984).
2. See e.g., Herschel Hardin, *A Nation Unaware: The Canadian Economic Culture*, North Vancouver (B.C.), J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1974.
3. The classic theoretical work on this question is Jürgen Habermas' *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* ('Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'), published in French as *L'espace public*, Paris, Payot, 1978.
4. See e.g., John Keane, 'Elements of a Radical Theory of Public Life: From Tönnies to Habermas and Beyond', *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* (vol.6, no.3, Fall 1982, pp.11-49; and vol.8, nos.1-2, Winter-Spring 1984, pp.139-162).
5. This important aspect of the early struggle for public broadcasting in Canada has tended to be obscured by the emphasis on its nationalist and economic aspects. See e.g., Ron Faris, *The Passionate Educators (Voluntary associations and the struggle for control of adult educational broadcasting in Canada 1919-1952)*, Toronto, Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1975.
6. See e.g., Alan Thomas, 'Audience, Market and Public—An Evaluation of Canadian Broadcasting', *Canadian Communication* (vol.1, no.1, Summer 1960, pp.16-47).
7. 'the national broadcasting service should...contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity.' (*Broadcasting Act*, S.C. 1968, c.25, section 2.g.iv).
8. *Debates*, House of Commons, January 26, 1968, p.6025.
9. See e.g., his article 'Prime Time Democracy', *Policy Options* (vol.2, no.4, September-October 1981, pp.25-28).
10. E.g., 'Towards a New National Broadcasting Policy' and 'Building for the Future: Towards a Distinctive CBC', both Ottawa, Department of Communication, 1983.
11. Oral response to a question following a speech to the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, Montréal, December 10, 1984.
12. Pierre Godin, *Daniel Johnson* (vol.2), Montréal, Les Éditions de l'Homme, 1980.
13. Bernard Descoteaux, 'Marcel Masse: Radio-Canada prend trop de place dans le budget culturel', *Le Devoir*, December 20, 1984, my translation.
14. André Bouthillier, 'Masse et Bertrand signent une entente de \$40 millions pour développer l'industrie des communications au Québec', *Le Devoir*, February 2, 1985.
15. Lise Bissonnette, 'L'envers du décor', *Le Devoir*, March 23, 1985.
16. Peter Desbarats, 'Tories put the squeeze on the message and the media', *Financial Post*, December 29, 1984.
17. E.g., the two-page ad in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* signed by 1,200 'Friends of Public Broadcasting', February 13, 1985.
18. *Debates*, House of Commons, January 31, 1985, pp.1845-8.
19. 'Le projet de loi C-20 sur le CRTC et la radiodiffusion—un véritable chèque en blanc', public statement, March 6, 1985.
20. ICEA, 'Qui a peur des audiences publiques du CRTC?', press release, March 13, 1985.
21. Gilles Lesage, 'Après Jasmin, les Nordiques?', *Le Devoir*, November 17, 1984.
22. ICEA, 'Radio-Québec: Être éducatif ou disparaître?', public statement, December 5, 1984, p.10, my translation.



## CAN



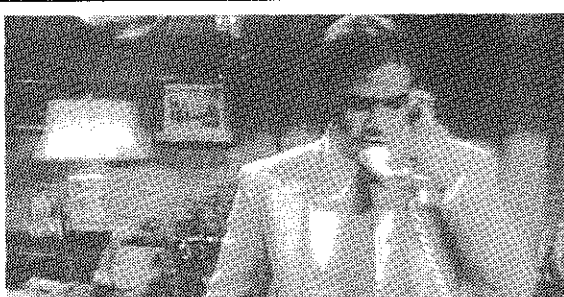
## INDUSTRIAL



## CULTURE



## BE A



## CULTURE



## OF



## DIFFERENCE?

Reflections On The  
Current Confrontation of  
France With The Model Of  
Serialized Cultural Production  
Of The U.S.

MICHELE MATTELART

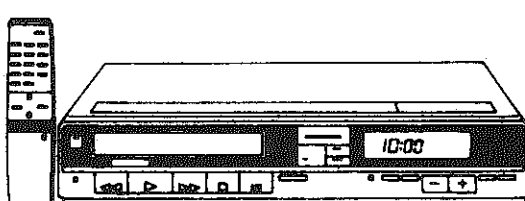
## Introduction

Michèle Mattelart is a French sociologist who does research in communications and mass culture and teaches at the University of Paris VIII. She is co-author of the recently published *International Image Markets: In Search of an Alternative Perspective*, written with Armand Mattelart and Xavier Delcourt, and published by the Comedia Publishing Group, London, 1984. Mattelart lived and worked for many years in Latin America, particularly in Chile, where she was a programmer at the national television network during the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende. It was during those years that her associates Armand Mattelart and Ariel Dorfman published the well-known *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*. Michèle Mattelart's publications include books and articles on women's magazines, television, photo-novellas and feminism and culture in Latin America. In July 1982 she was part of the French government's delegation to UNESCO's international conference on culture held in Mexico City. Mattelart has also worked on many governmental agency projects, including one Gabriel García Márquez initiated in France called Interlatina, whose mandate it is to raise questions about the internationalization of culture.

The following article is extracted from a paper of the same title read at the conference 'Marxism and Culture' in Urbana, Illinois in June 1983. Excerpts are printed here with the author's permission. A longer version of this article will appear in the forthcoming *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Lawrence Grossman and Cary Nelson, University of Illinois Press (Urbana). We wish to thank the editors for their permission to excerpt from this article in *borderlines*.

## Culture Or Economy

## In Question?



The implementation of a cultural policy linked to a reindustrialization strategy gives a new acuteness to the question of the 'American program' and of the 'serialized American production'.

The present audiovisual system is going through a serious production crisis: the development of a video products market, the launching of a fourth television channel, the inauguration of satellite direct broadcasting and the beginning of an active policy in favour of cable—all of these are creating an urgent need to foresee new contents and to encourage innovation not only in technical uses, but on the part of viewers themselves. The implementation of this conscious communications policy raises the problem of programs and services. What can be put into these new containers?

The few debates—too few we think—which this question raises are haunted inevitably by the fear that the creation of new channels will open fantastic possibilities for invasion by North American programs. The precedents offered by countries which have deregulated their television systems would be sufficient to legitimize this fear. France's situation today is no doubt extraordinary in this respect. What is less so is the possibility, since the arrival to power of a socialist government in May 1981, for the debate to get somewhere. The jubilation demonstrated by US industrialists would suffice to justify the fear mentioned above. In a recent issue of *Computer World* the satisfaction over the multiplication of networks and channels in Europe—a multiplication which implies many possible sources for the diffusion of cultural American products—was clearly expressed. 'It's good for us.' Our worry is no less than the reverse side of this interest.

This forced reference to the threat of a tidal wave of North American production clarifies what is at stake inasmuch as it evokes the influence of technical, financial and cultural determinisms which weigh heavily on a policy of communication. The North American program thus becomes the symbol of the mass-media model which the logic of the development of capital tends to implant and generalize.

These stakes can be summarized by the following questions: Will it open the way to the con-

*The shadow of Dallas hovers over any meeting where the future of culture is being discussed*

struction of a national industry of programs which, when responding to new needs, will not be satisfied with merely copying the transnational model of production represented today by the US? Will it stimulate the search for new alternatives, original means of production and diffusion? What will the ratio be between the budget for equipment and the budget for creation? How can one combine industrial logic and the social logic of group expression, of a wide base of audio-visual production, of the participation of civil society in the choice of technologies of communication and in the definitions of their use? Is there an incompatibility between a 'local' product which gathers the expression of a collectivity, thus allowing it to reappropriate its own sounds and images, and the international market? Does an international 'alternative' product as compared to a transnationalized mass culture product exist?

Fascinated, France is witnessing the tidal wave of new technologies. Such tv programs as 'La Planète Bleue' ('The Blue Planet')—in which the complete panoply of new technologies was shown to a flabbergasted audience of shepherds in a small village of the Pyrénées—gave proof of this seduction, as does the extraordinarily increasing number of articles dealing with this new 'advent' which are published by a euphoric press. We are entering into modernity. Modernity was refused us for many years for reasons which cultural and political anthropology should want to clarify. One only needs to think about the difference between France and other European countries in the matter of audio-visual equipment—tv sets yesterday, video today—which has always placed France at the end of the list of beneficiaries of these products.

If the signs of the technological prospective say 'Tilt' in our collective imaginary, and if they exert such a fascination, isn't it mostly because they reflect what modernity is—*par excellence*, American modernity? Besides, few media can resist admitting their joy at rejoining the founding myth. The first country to have written its his-





tory on celluloid, it is as if the US, under the conjugated effects of economic liberalism and media development, had always had the power to anticipate dreams of growth in this realm of the image, and the faculty made rhythmical by the self-renewal of industrial and technological mechanisms to repeat endlessly: 'I am your imaginary.'

This echo chamber could not easily resonate to the words of the French representation to the International Conference on Culture organized by UNESCO in Mexico in July 1982. Those words put into question the monopoly of the US over the means of production and diffusion of cultural goods, and once more launched the fight for the affirmation of identities and pluralities.

The unanimous polemic evoked by this speech in the French press is well known. Some spoke of chauvinistic confinement, jingoistic nationalism; others mentioned the suicidal madness of this rebellion against natural hegemony, thus fatal as well as justified. Some took advantage of this—in the television page of *Le Monde*—to mention the pusillanimity of 'French' production, and the

same struggle.' The debate has been activated lately by the fast arrival of new technologies. These key words speak the real place of the challenge. This challenge is endowed with a particular meaning in a country such as France which, up to now, has always been repelled by the thought of associating so bluntly these two terms and realities. Malraux's words, 'Cinema is an art, but it is also an industry' anticipated this realism, but in any case—was it because of the times, because of the personality or was it because it was about cinema?—his words did not seem to be understood as disrupting the way culture was thought of in France.

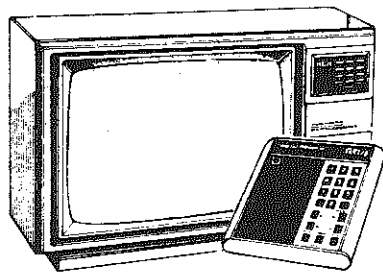
The ministerial changes which took place in March 1983 shortly after the colloquium of intellectuals—'the international of the imaginary' as it has been called—established the return to a more orthodox notion of effectiveness. Economists were called back to the seats of power and culture was pushed back.

One could foresee that things were not going to be simple. It is not in vain that the shadow of *Dallas* hovers over any meeting where the future of culture is being discussed. *Dallas*: ready-made emblem of a cultural production which must be anathematized: This is *it*. This is the indigence which we do not want. (It goes without saying that cultural indigence is meant, since in *Dallas* no one is broke!)

But while in the Sorbonne some were excommunicating *Dallas*, others were signing contracts which would renew the programming of this series in France. (TF 1 had just purchased 23 episodes.) Just when the American writer Susan Sontag was asserting that 'American culture does not have the importance they say it has', the great majority of television audiences the world over were getting ready to enjoy on that Saturday evening, as well as on other Saturdays, J.R.'s new Machiavelian plots and Sue Ellen's new torments, all of which keep on priming the prime time success of the series. Such is one of the incoherences to be mentioned, one of the contradictions to be analyzed, because it simply points to the reality of the constraints presently implied by the binomial economy/culture.

### Could The Universal Be Confused

#### With The Commercial?



In order to explain the success of tv films of North American serialized production, one would be tempted to stick to analysis of their narrative structure, their content—that is to say, to isolate oneself in these tv products in order to find the answer to the questions one has about them.

Doesn't this tendency hide the very important fact that this television product is the emanation of a particular television system which, in its turn, comes from a historical heritage? It is a system which crystallizes in its mode of organization the characteristics of its genealogy, as well as the role which it has been given in the production and reproduction of the social whole—specifically in comparison to the other apparatuses for socialization and the creation of a 'general will'.

Economy and culture. It is known that the US, where the mass media system developed from the beginning under the auspices of business, was the first to resolve this equation economy/culture and to turn it into the spearhead for the conquest of markets, thus instituting it as the trademark of universalism. Hence today in the French

*Dovjenko relates that at a certain time the leaders of Soviet cinematography produced, shall we say, 100 films and noticed that out of such a quantity, they had only found five which could be called excellent, 20 which deserved the term good, whereas 50 were mediocre and 20 quite bad. Thus, they decided with apparently the best common sense, to only produce good and excellent films in the year to come, so they reduced to 25 the total number of productions; 25 films in which all the resources and the efforts which the production of 100 would have cost were to be invested. They then noticed with surprise that out of the 25 films produced during the year, only two were excellent and good, ten were mediocre and eight bad. They thought that it was necessary to reduce the quantity even more in order to concentrate the effort on very few films and only produce the number of films which had received the qualifications of good and excellent the year before. They judged that if they limited the number of productions they would achieve masterpieces. Result: Excellent—0; Good—2; etc.*

*We shall note with interest that it is the same relation of quantity/quality, but seen from another angle, which was produced in France at the beginning of 1983 by the Union of Professional Artists and Performers, who objected to the increase of advertising on television channels. 'The interference of announcers in the programs is felt in the reduction of "free production" Advertising which gives us work on a short term basis reduces work on a long term basis. The law of public polling is the choice of a movie over a play. 'Twelve Angry Men'—people will look at that and that's as far as it goes. The specificity of a tv creation where the actors could have a determining role does not interest announcers. Of course, criteria of quality are dangerous to use, but it is well-known that it is through a certain quantity of fresh production that the proper quality of audio-visual creation underlined in the text manifests itself. And the financial risk of quantity is impossible for a leadership tied to the listener ratings.*

MM

boredom it exudes. The masses were called upon to be jurors; the same masses and the daily plebiscite they constitute mobilized to defend the only culture supposed to fit the advanced industrial age. While focusing so much on the attack made against americanophilia and ambient atlantism, one thing was forgotten: a sentence, or rather a kind of programmatic order of the day, which was at the turning point of the Mexico speech before it came to be at the heart of the debate on cultural politics: 'Economy and Culture, the

## An Interview With

### Michèle Mattelart

The following conversation with Michèle Mattelart took place in July 1983, with Jody Berland, Rosemary Donegan, Peter Fitting and Alexander Wilson. Translation is by Peter Fitting.

**border/lines:** The questions you've raised in your work are central to current discussions of culture in Canada. Since a principal cultural concern in Canada has to do with our 'national identity', the question of cultural industries—media, film, publishing and recording—has become of interest to the state itself. The Canadian government has been pushed to raise questions of social concern that one does not ordinarily expect from the state. Looking at the French government's current interest in cultural policy and in American hegemony within mass culture, we wonder how this concern came about.

**Michèle Mattelart:** The question arose because Jack Lang, the French Minister of Culture, raised the issue of identities and cultural pluralities as these are confronted by US hegemony in cultural production and distribution. That was at the UNESCO conference in Mexico City in 1982. This is also a position that has been taken by the French Prime Minister. Mitterand himself used the example of film: of approximately 260 foreign films on French tv, 200 are from the United States. But film is not a very good example, for I'm afraid I prefer a good American movie to a bad French film.

Jack Lang, anyway, was almost universally condemned in the French and American press for his statements. At the same time, the political crisis in France is accompanied by the rise of 'American-ness'. The introduction of new technologies in France is legitimized by the myth that these technologies bring France closer to American modernity. I need only cite newspapers like *Libération* or *Le Monde*, whose Sunday sections argue the importance of new communications technology in terms of American modernity.

**b/I:** Like Régis Debray's comment about May '68: that the French left had started out for China and landed in California.

**MM:** Yes. This is the myth of the new California lifestyle. For a whole generation of French intellectuals, the focus has shifted from China (the Cultural Revolution, Maoism and so on) to 'American-ness'. Look at the trajectory of the journal *Tel Quel*.

But to return to the original question, the concern with American cultural hegemony did not happen because of intellectual debate or even because of discussions within political parties, but largely because of Jack Lang's rallying cry.

**b/I:** The situation in Canada is perhaps singular. We share an immense border with the US, within 100 kilometres of which most of our population lives. Most Canadians also speak the same language as Americans. The government has been reduced to establishing quotas for radio and tv—yet even this is difficult in face of the public's preference for American tv in particular.

As Canadians, we are interested and concerned not only about US cultural hegemony, but also about the way bourgeois nationalists in Canada have pre-empted the question of US cultural penetration. The Canadian left tends sometimes to adopt a nationalist position—both economic and cultural—which resembles that of bourgeois nationalism and which obscures any possibility of a critical or socialist alternative.

**MM:** I wonder if the struggle against US domination in Canada hasn't led to cultural openings toward Québec. But in any case, this isn't an issue in France. The current debate for us around American cultural hegemony is a response to the rapid penetration of new technologies. We are overwhelmed by these developments—the imminent setting up, for instance, of new tv channels. (TV is state-run in France and there were, at the time of the interview, only three channels with a total of 30 to 40 hours a day of programming—eds.)

In France our system of audio-visual production is in crisis. It is certainly possible that the new channels to be opened in



France will be filled with US programs. Look at the situation in Italy since tv (and radio) were deregulated, and the rapid emergence of private networks and stations. There are apparently more than 600 private tv stations in Italy, which in most cases fill their broadcast time, often 24 hours a day, with cheap American series. This has forced the RAI (Italian national tv) to examine and reflect on what Italy itself is producing in the way of national programming—so as to avoid the flight of capital from Italy, and to look at the ways of meeting these new demands from within. Obviously the RAI is being forced to respond to a dynamic touched off by the private stations, who have undercut the older supply and demand relationship of tv programming by switching to a programming system based entirely on **distraction**, and thus on foreign programs and series.

**bl:** Is there a positive aspect to the present (US) internationalization of culture, particularly television programming?

**MM:** Let us be very careful when we speak of internationalization. Only some programs are internationalized. We do not have in France a complete picture of American tv production. Even the largest commercial tv networks and production companies may produce programs for specific minority groups and cultures in the US. These are not the programs which are internationalized. We must be very clear about this so as not to oversimplify a very complex problem.

The phenomenon of internationalization implies a **selection** of US tv productions; but Americans themselves can watch on their tv screens programs which correspond probably much more than we realize to their own ethnic and/or cultural minority. Nor should we overlook PBS, and it is certainly not those programs which are exported. Nor should we forget US cable tv either.

Given these qualifications, let me give an example of a positive dimension to the phenomenon of internationalization. In the so-called totalitarian countries, for instance, we must recognize that the importation of mass culture can play a progressive and democratizing, indeed even liberating, role. In his book *The Alternative*, the East German Rudolph Bahro states that it was only thanks to international news reports (broadcast from the West) that the East German intellectuals learned of the debates going on within European communist parties around Eurocommunism, for instance, and that they were able to link up with groups in West Germany.

It must be recognized that mass culture has developed within a specific class society—that of liberal democracy. Democratization is an important component of mass culture: democratization in the shaping of and in access to cultural products, and even to some extent in the content of those products.

**bl:** How can we begin to think of an alternative to American production?

**MM:** What is communications anyway? My principal criticism of our reaction to this technological explosion lies in our failure to question the underlying assumptions about communications. TV is always judged, for instance, in terms of **consumption**, as something produced by others. The relationship between production and consumption itself is never questioned. What I would propose is that we begin to look at this relationship, for it seems to me that this avalanche of new technologies into France, which has for the French an enormous fascination—a fascination which stems from an idea of modernity—this new technology will come to naught unless we examine why we continue to develop the means of image consumption without even looking at communications media as a **means** of communication, as the possibility for communication.

What would this mean in practice? Some cities in France, for instance, are making plans for the introduction of cable tv based on an **interactive** model: a cable system which would be an extension of the community services provided now by the city and which would, in this case, allow communication. Ethnic and other minority groups, for instance, would have access to the interactive network.

**bl:** But won't this just become what we have in Toronto and other Canadian cities, for example, with community-access cable? There is access to a studio, but little beyond that—with the result being panel discussions and the like that are poorly produced and poorly advertised.

perspective the challenge of combining within the same discourse a will of independence from the American model and the necessity to satisfy the unavoidable imperatives of this equation.

At the time of the conquest of culture markets, a commercial system has tremendous advantage when compared to a public service system. "Merchants have no homeland." These words are not mine. They are Jefferson's, said Salvador Allende more than ten years ago while presenting the UN with the complaints of his government against the actions of multinational firms in his country, Chile.

'Merchants have no homeland,' Jefferson's words make clear the advantages of a commercial system over a public system where the penetration of the communication and culture markets is concerned. Business knows no borders. Markets have no limits. States recognize the limits of nations and the public services which function within their logic subscribe to the same recognition. The commercial norm is therefore more internationalizable than the norm of the public service system.

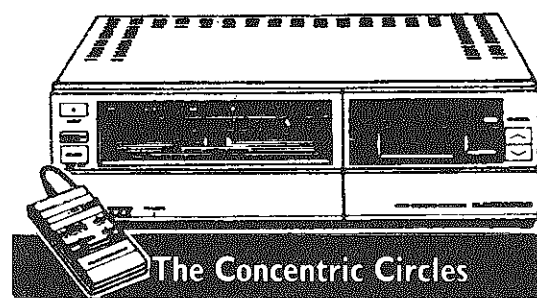
In April 1983 during the MIP TV in Cannes, the assessment of French televised products by the President of MCA Universal TV was quite revealing. It evoked the handicap faced by a culture marked with the seal of a cultural heritage which has taken the shape of a public service and has solidified a cultural connection between creation and technical reproducibility, when this culture has to cross the border of internationalization: 'In the French products that we see there is no "network appeal". The topics are generally too national, not commercial enough, also too cultural for the average US television viewer. Furthermore, we are presented with mini-series when our interest lies in standard-length series, with actors known to the general US public! At the moment we are not interested in co-productions. In two years we might talk about it again, who knows? We also need to add that we have an enormous stock of products and that we do not really need to find new ones.' To the remark made by *Le Film Français*, 'But some US channels, HBO and PBS for example, buy French series,' the President of MCA Universal TV answered: 'PBS has very little money, and HBO aims at another public. This is fine but it is not for the average US viewer.'

Here in any case is the profile of the product which stands a few chances within the strategy of internationalization as drawn by the President of MCA: an **average** product to be consumed by the **average** US tv viewer, the network tv viewer. The MCA leader was thus clearly making reference to the production of programming criteria by the commercial oligopoly, setting aside the US public channels and the type of programming through which they respond to the cultural needs of a public which is not this mass public or these massive audiences which seduce advertisers.

The problem becomes more complex today with the presence of cable networks, which should imply segmented markets. Will the production which these new networks call for be fundamentally different? One may doubt it when hearing this from the producer of *Dallas*, Lorimar, during the same Cannes festival: 'The products which we are thinking of making for cable tv must absolutely be high quality movies with real budgets and big names...Quality will have to be maintained with an eye kept on international sales.' Will these 'domestic' networks not constitute a new way of conquering the international market?

The increasing number of American series is nothing but the immediate sign of adherence to a model of television diffusion and production in which the standardized series, and especially the American series, naturally find their place; a model which in the three established functions—namely, information, education, entertain-

ment—grants an enormous predominance to the last one: **entertainment**.



The Concentric Circles

### Of Concentration

Let us get back to the aspect of **quantity**. It suggests other points. The first one, already made several times, presents the trump card of quantity in the form of stocks of available programs, already made profitable on the internal American market and thus available to national television networks at a cost much lower than that of a local production: a 55-minute series costs an average of 1,000,000 francs if it is French; 52,000 FF if it is foreign.

A second development takes us back to a trend which fits within a new and promising line of research concerning the reception of audiovisual messages, and tries to change the conception of the signifying processes of the image. This trend implies a criticism of the weight which the founding codes of analogy have exerted upon the treatment of the reception of the image. According to this new trend in research, the image does not draw its signification from reality only,

## Juneau says CBC can't afford to drop U.S. shows

OTTAWA (CP) — The CBC cannot afford to replace its popular U.S. television programs with more expensive Canadian productions, CBC president Pierre Juneau says.

"You can buy an American program, one hour, for \$35,000-\$50,000, like *Dallas* for instance, whereas these programs cost at least a million dollars now to produce per hour," Juneau said yesterday in an interview on NewsRadio.

"If we produce them in Canada we can manage to produce them at a lesser cost, but it's still much more than the cost of buying an American program off the shelf."

The CBC, for those purely economic reasons, "cannot afford to replace them," he said.

But the network will continue to try to satisfy Canadian demand for quality domestic productions like *Seeing Things*, *Charlie Grant's War* and *Gentle Sinners*, Juneau said.

"We've had for all those programs better ratings than for most of the American programs we put on," he said.

"There's so many things that separate one part of the country from the other — languages, ethnic origin, religion, distances.

"I think we must bridge those distances, and stories can do that."



It has been evident for a long time that there is a developing crisis in Canadian television, and the reasons for this crisis have been equally evident. Because of the proliferation of cable systems (now available to 75 percent of the Canadian population and in use by more than 50 percent) the Canadian audience is the most fragmented in the world. In the larger cities, viewers may have a dozen or more channels to choose from, including all the American commercial networks and the public broadcasting service, PBS. Ironically, the new Canadian stations which have been licenced over the years have added to the influx of American material.

Thus, by sheer weight of numbers, American programs dominate Canadian screens and Canadian viewing. In the fall season last year nearly two-thirds of all the television programs available in English Canada were of foreign—mainly American—origin. And English-speaking viewers as a whole spend nearly 75 percent of their viewing time watching these foreign programs. In the case of children, the proportion is even higher—83 percent.

Even French-speaking Canadians, in spite of the apparent protection of language, spend 48 percent of their overall viewing time watching foreign programs, some in translation on French channels, others on English Canadian stations or direct from the United States by cable. For French-speaking children, the figure is 56 percent.

... We are being caught up in a rapidly expanding communications technology, with attractive new opportunities for the hardware side of broadcasting: cable converters, satellite-to-cable distribution, pay television, fibre optics, cheaper earth stations, videotape and videodisc systems in the home, the evolution of the family television set into a kind of computer terminal with access to a whole range of information and entertainment choices. But the natural course of events—if it is not controlled—will be for these new distribution systems to bring Canadians an even wider selection of foreign material: American movies, American television, American sports events.

Unfortunately the events of 1978-79 did not bode well for the resolution of the crisis: the budget forecast of the CBC for 1979-80 was cut by \$71 million; the cable companies, while still pressing for pay tv, showed little sign of being willing to contribute to the production of more and better Canadian programming by and for Canadian broadcasters; and private television stations and networks did little to contribute to an increase in the range and quality of Canadian production.

CBC Annual Report 1978-79

or rather from the impression of reality; it also and mostly draws it from its relationships with other images, within a corpus which transcends them. This immense dialogue among images creates effects of exchange, and of intertextuality, whereby images maintain a system of intertextuality through reference to each other.

When Z. Brzezinski says, 'the US is the society which communicates the best,' he is no doubt unaware of the potential meaning of his own sentence. The flow of images of American series constantly rekindles the memory of the North American image industry, and thus constantly nourishes the imaginary which this industry of the image shapes.

There is in fact in the US image-industry today a development which is little different from a conscious management of the imaginary, particularly since it stimulates the memory of genres, of the genre-effect. A film like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is made as a real digest of the adventure genre. *Dallas* situates itself at the confluence of the western, the soap opera and the family saga. In its time, *Sesame Street* understood perfectly the

benefit to be derived from this reprise of all the daily propositions made to children's imaginary by television. It organized stimuli which would ensure the dramatic effect of its educational objectives. It incorporated all the genres and forms which mass culture has popularized among children: cartoons, puppets, sketches, comedies, series, commercials. The novelty, in this first industrial model of an educational series, lay precisely in the way it organized around a pedagogical model the synergy of all these genres, and the resources of this immense bank of images.

It is as if the process of concentration within the industry itself had as a counterpart a process of concentration on the symbolic level. The use of derived products and the multi-media techniques are based upon the same movement: the popular tv film refers back to the successful film; the toy or the record constantly reawakens a chain of meaning, definitively blurring the division between infrastructure/superstructure in an immense syndrome of repetition.

Need I mention that, aside from the new Japanese cartoon industry, the only industrial-cultural complex to possess the base for re-energizing the symbolic universe in the distribution network of goods is the American one? The new industry of microcomputers and video games happily dips into this huge stockpile. The French television channels have not been slow to reproduce this mechanism. A suggestive remark was made in Cannes by a New York television director about the opening of the American market to foreign products, including the French: 'The French must be willing to exploit every advantage and must remember a few essential points: they should study the American market which they want to conquer, propose a time and a finished product; avoid dubbing and sub-titles, and prefer a version done directly in English; respect the length of the American program (22 1/2 and 48 1/2 minutes) while taking into account the time for commercials which have to be inserted.'

As noted by a critic in *Cahiers du Cinema* who was recapitulating a ten-year retrospective of tv in the US (an exhibit held at Beaubourg, December 1981): 'Obviously, competition is tough and the finger of the tv viewer is fast on the knob. Every 45 seconds, the documentary changes its point of view. There is a fascinating quantitative study to be done concerning the number of changes in axis or place in American programs. I am sure that with all products taken together, one would get to a UTTB (base unit of television time) which I estimate to be approximately 45 seconds.' Could it not be said that North American television production crystallizes in its generality the law of competition?

The era of the spectacular is no doubt the main cultural instance of technological society. In our recent study of the *Sesame Street* series, we noticed how much the rhythm of commercial time was felt. This series—it has not been underlined enough—remains one of the few instances where the institutionality of mass culture was taught in order to attempt to remedy what its founders deemed to be the commercial mediocrity of this culture, the levelling effect it has. It seems, however, that they had to make use of the laws of this culture and to utilize advertising appeal as the support for new pedagogical messages—aimed in priority, let's not forget, at the children of ethnic minorities placed in disadvantageous position in the school system. Speaking of this era of spectacularity, we wrote: 'It is not only the recourse to the technical event which characterizes *Sesame Street*; it is also the propensity to re-inject into the pedagogical field all the stimuli of the universe of consumption, all its normative injunctions to the imaginary and sensory registers of childhood. Exploiting the seduction of rhythm, of diversity, *Sesame Street* mostly works by calling upon the huge stock of signs of the universe of the consumer culture, stimulating the in-

**MM:** In a free-enterprise system there is, of course, the problem that such programs must compete against well-funded network programming. How can we compete with their production values, and so on?

Let me take a concrete example. Even though we do not yet have cable in France, we will very soon; and we are aware of the Canadian experience. How could these new community networks be used in an interactive way? Women, for instance, might seek to communicate with each other by means of cable and even, within the new interactive potential of fibre-optics technology, to have someone 'watch', as it were, their children. This system would in fact be an expanded telephone, if you will.

In addition to the possible uses of this new technology, there is also the question of the expansion of the bases of production. A community could certainly decide to take upon themselves, for instance, the aesthetics of their own socialization—to dramatize and broadcast, for instance, how they feel about and understand the problems facing them as a community; and to make their own programs, aided, of course, by technicians and professionals, and with more help and funding than you mention in the Canadian experience. In France there have already been attempts within the existing system to regionalize and localize production.

**b/l:** On that score, I think we remain skeptical. Community access has been cut back and increasingly centralized. But are there in France community or political groups who are striving for more control of or access to existing media?

**MM:** We are in a period of retreat. The election of a socialist government has been followed by a serious political crisis, particularly for the left. The various groups which had organized as tv consumers' committees have even less influence and impact today than they did under the preceding government, and there is an overall decline in organizing around these issues.

**b/l:** What about the cultural producers themselves: actors, musicians, etc., and efforts to develop more access to the means of cultural production?

**MM:** Yes, to some extent. Actors, for instance, want more say—but only in terms of access to existing state-run tv. As for record production, there is a good system of small record companies who discover musicians, and then the artists go to the big companies who have a better distribution system.

**b/l:** Is there work being done in France on the question of symbolic imperialism?

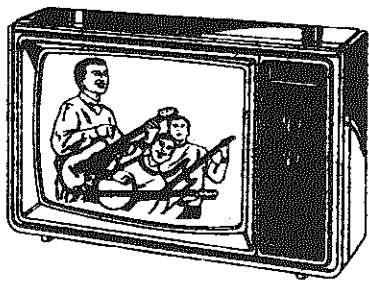
**MM:** Although we are very isolated in France, this is a part of my own work and a problem which has interested me for some time—along with the question of reception, that is, what happens in the moment of reception. The meaning which is uncovered through the analysis of a work's content may be contradicted by the response or reaction that the subject-spectator gives to that work. The whole question of reception needs looking into, particularly the reception of the image, in terms of the unexpected results which take place at or in the moment of reception. Unfortunately, very little research has been done along these lines, although there is now an area we call the socio-pragmatic of the image. Our work has already benefitted from this work, and it is doubly important insofar as it completely tears to pieces the more traditional theory of manipulation, a theory which in turn is the basis for the simplistic theory of cultural imperialism.





tegration of the child to this world. In fact, what triumphs is a modality of time determined by industrial culture: a modality based upon the artificial, a time which no longer has anything to do with the temporality of daily life, a time of record times, of the exceptional, of the spectacular. What disappears is on the one hand the temporality of daily life, the real, the duration of lived experience; and on the other hand, the rhythms specific to other cultures. This no doubt acquires its full meaning within the framework of the series, which proposes to reach ethnic minorities, children who belong to cultures other than this highly industrialized one. Fighting against segregation it gathers around them the era of technological progress, inevitably assimilated to the irreversible progress of modernity. It assimilates them, homogenizes them, agglomerates them through the effect of instantaneity, the immediacy which characterizes its learning techniques, and the culture of anticipation to which it refers. One may legitimately wonder whether the real educational message of *Sesame Street* does not reside in this initiation to the world of consumption with its modalities of mass space-time.'

The notion of *time* is central to the process of internationalization of television products. The criticism of French series, very often by the French themselves, of being too 'slow' bears witness to this fact. One realizes the weight of this obstacle when one studies the different protocols of agreement or the critical material concerning exchanges and co-productions: 'French series drag in length and langour.' But here again, it is hard to say where the defect starts and where quality begins.



### Culture As a Planetary Regulator?

There may be a tendency to stick too closely to the consideration of the importance of the American mass-media as an industrial vector. It has in fact been a fantastic nation builder. The United States was very early faced with the emergency to create universal rallying signs in order to answer to the composite nature of its population, made up of immigrants from various races and ethnic groups. This urgency has haunted them since the Civil War and the mass-media culture offers an answer. First the comic, then the western and today series like *Kojak* or *Dallas* have strongly contributed to amalgamating this national society. It is too often forgotten that the first effort toward amalgamation has the national society itself as a target. The first test, in fact, of the universal values of American programs (as well as that of their profitability) takes place within the limits of the national territory. They await the verdict of the national public, sufficiently mixed and representative. Said verdict will become the guarantee of universality.

The Italian filmmaker Ettore Scola evokes a mechanism which is complementary to the series when he judges that 'the success of a telefilm is to be attributed in the first place to the specificity of the product which contains in itself its own promotional campaign: each "episode" creates in the viewer the desire to find again and to recognize emotions already felt: not the search for novelty, but the confirmation of a habit, from the programming schedule to a narrative scheme, to the repeating of characters and actors. And autopromotion multiplies itself automatically each week.' (From the same commier-

*The need for such funding arises from the continuing metamorphosis of the environment in which programs are produced. The new technology is bringing about a proliferation of programming services, not just in Canada but around the world. This transformation of the global broadcasting environment will result in a continually growing and voracious demand for new programming to fill the multiplicity of channels soon to be available. This hunger for new content represents an enormous opportunity for Canadian program producers. But, in order to compete effectively in these new markets and in our own domestic market, Canadian program producers must have the resources to produce attractive, high-quality Canadian programming in both official languages and of international calibre—Canadian programming that people will choose to watch.*

*Towards a New National Broadcasting Policy  
Department of Communications  
Government of Canada, 1983 (emphasis added)*

cial perspective, the former director of TV Globo confirmed this idea when he explained why the *telenovelas* had such success on Brazilian channels, especially on TV Globo where they are programmed every evening at 7:00, 8:00 and 10:00: 'TV is a habit. The battle for the audience is won by anyone who succeeds in keeping and attracting again a viewer to the particular channel.'

This constant work of amalgamation is found at another level in terms of the ideological function assumed by the media: the American series are in a constant dialogue and in a vast (unequal) exchange with the preoccupations and tensions which animate civil society, reducing the contradictions, turning latent conflicts into already solved conflicts. One need only think about the 'presence' of the black problem, the problem of women, of ethnic minorities. All these are biases through which these series speak to us, call to us, find an echo in us.

A national consensus. A world consensus. Constantly watching to fill in any possible gap in the preservation of consensus, and stepping up their vigilance in periods of crisis, these series offer us symbolic answers to problems, the return to the family being the most widely insinuated remedy. These fables have a world-wide value today.

One can no longer appreciate the value of the presence of American series on the screens of the world in the terms in which we appreciated them in the early seventies. The facts and the stakes are of another importance. The arrival of the commercial series is also the arrival of the commercial mode of organization of social relations, which goes far beyond that of the organization of cultural production. It is nothing more nor less than the penetration of commercial logic into the relations of the State and civil society. The State must resort to commercials to mobilize citizens, abandoning to tv marketing techniques campaigns of general interest concerning the teaching of reading, contraception, solidarity.

A national consensus. A world consensus. This logic of privatization of all spheres of collective and individual life is the answer to the pressure inherent in the transnational mode of expansion, which desires this type of organizational power and tends to reduce public space, to eliminate anything having a connection with public function. Whatever remains an obstacle to the increasing integration of national economies in a world scheme and to the new international division of work may become the favoured target of this remodeling. (These are the forms of social control recommended by the Trilateral Commission.) The main target is without doubt the structures of the nation-state and the totality of its

institutional apparatus. These structures and apparatuses—the results of a historical heritage, in spite of the numerous contradictions which cross them—obtain in societies which live under the civic sign of a 'really existing democracy', and are moved by a collection of norms and values in contradiction with the movement toward transnationalization of economies. The production of cultural goods and transnational information carries in itself not only a cultural project, but also a new system of power. It is probably into this space made by the commercial exchange of cultural goods that the transnational logic attempts to insinuate itself in order to weaken any kind of national resistance.

And what about the forces of resistance faced with this technological and social change? The crisis of politics is evident on the right and on the left. But on the left it hurts even more, especially when (divine surprise) it has the opportunities of power. The National Secretary for Cultural Action of the French Socialist Party drew up a severe review of the situation during the Cannes Festival: 'One should not be surprised that the Left cannot, or will not, withdraw the development of the cultural industries from the influence of the market. But one may be alarmed by the enthusiasm with which it sometimes abandons them there.'

It is now official. The French Antenne 2 produced in 1984 a great *saga* in the spirit of *Dallas*. 'Conceived by two teams of scenarists, this series of 26 episodes will tell the story of a family, owner of a big daily newspaper of the regional press...' As for the fourth tv channel, promised for the near future, the decision for pay tv seems to mortgage heavily the possibility it could have offered to diversify the French industry of programming, on the one hand, and, on the other, to serve as a support of social communication—interactive communication between groups—within a wider conception of a public service. It will be difficult to program anything but programs for a wide public.

This is not the least of the damaging effects which this fascination for technology produces: this fascination leads to literally transposing onto



an American modernity now illustrated by the explosion of communication, the idea of an America as symbol of freedom and democracy. This in turn has perverted notions of decentralized interactive communication, while attributing these virtues to technology itself, and while taking for a revolution in social relations what in many cases is nothing but a new technological interface. The fact that one often forgets to mention that before being a support or a means of communication, communication is a social practice, is without any doubt one of the characteristics of the situation today.

Editor's note: Readers wishing to find sources for quotations indicated in the text are advised to consult the full version forthcoming in Grossman and Nelson, as they were not provided in the first (here reformed) translation issued in Urbana. We have taken the liberty of our own location to replace Mattelart's term 'North American' with 'American' where it seemed appropriate; we suspect she would understand.

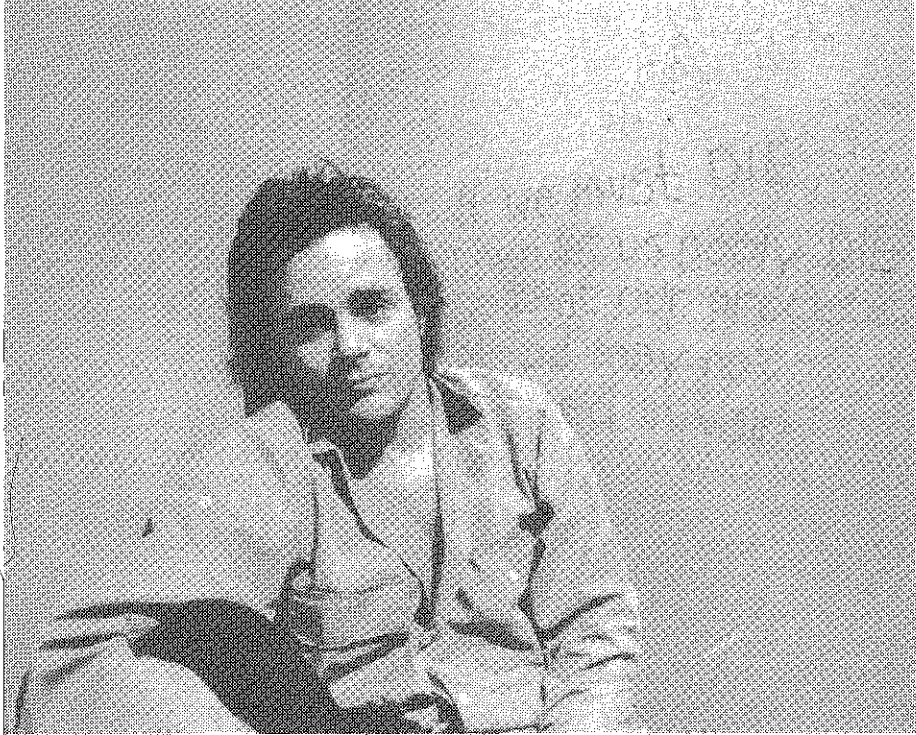


# Is This The Voice Of God Speaking/?!

## New Directions In Documentary/Docu-Drama

Glen Richards

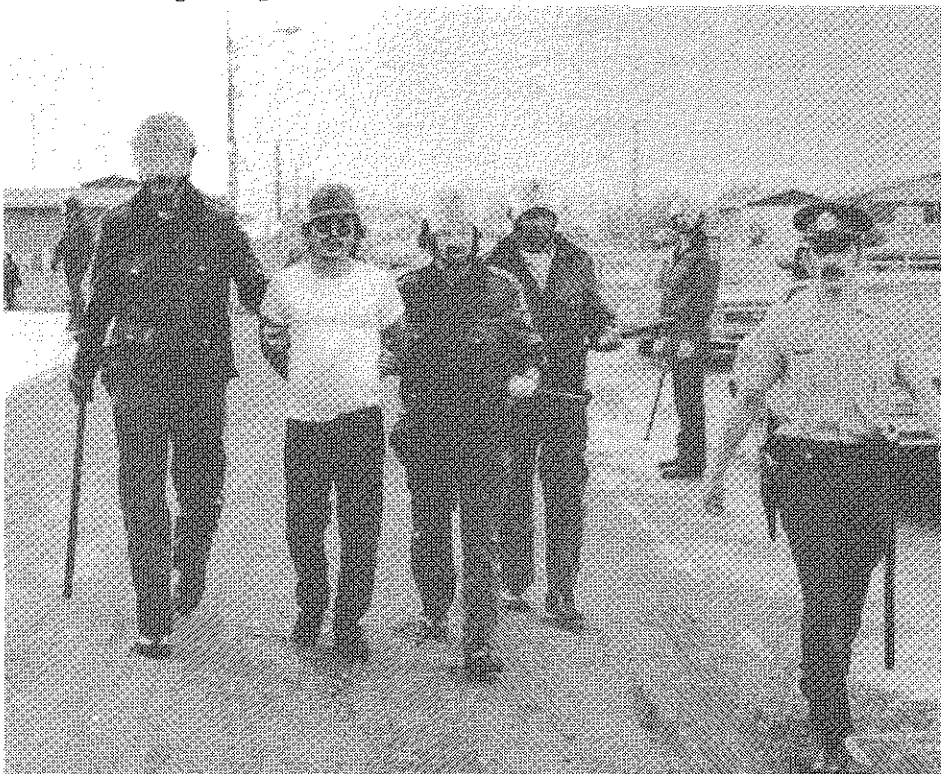
Walls



'Canada's worldwide filmmaking reputation rests largely on our tradition of excellence in the production of documentary films. Public opinion surveys clearly indicate great audience demand for documentary programming on Canadian T.V.'

from Canadian Independent Film Caucus  
press release

Incident at Restigouche (photo: Journal L'Aviron)



## Canada's

film traditions

have been largely defined and developed by the documentary and its fictional hybrid—the docu-drama. This tradition originated with the National Film Board, which was founded in 1939 under John Grierson. Grierson, a social democrat, minister's son and prime mover in the British Post Office Film Unit, was influenced by both the rhetoric of the pulpit and the moralism of social democracy. For Grierson documentary film was a 'pulpit from which to preach politics'. Brought to Canada by Mackenzie King to make war propaganda for the State, films under his regime at the NFB were full of patriotic anti-fascist polemic intended to arouse a slumbering nation. The distinctive form of these films had an influence that extended well beyond the war years.

Although the stated purpose was to 'interpret Canada to Canadians and the world', this form was limited and authoritarian. Much of the 'authority' of these films was derived from a specific inscription of a narrator. The function of the narrator was to give cohesion to the images, to interpret, to analyse and to develop the film's thesis. The anonymous voice, hidden and separated from the image, is given the power to interpret and by this distancing becomes omnipotent, becomes the 'voice of god'. Together with the artfully constructed images of 'reality' the audience is presented with a seamless view of the world, a world falling into the thesis of the filmmaker (or the sponsors). Therein lies the problem. Instead of a world full of contradictions, a world in process—changing, moving—we have the filmmaker's constructions which usually have only one possible conclusion. Instead of films that build on the viewers' conscious participation in the continued development of a social process, we have the 'blank-page-theory' which allows no cultural, social, economic or political ideas, only an open mind ready to be convinced by the 'logical argument'.

This style may have been relevant to the war years and even subsequently when film was used as propaganda for 'reconstruction'. It is a style which always sees the State as the institution of change. This belief in the liberal democratic State as the mediator in the conflict of classes has been somewhat eroded over the years. Likewise, there are new documentary initiatives that rely less on the old didactic approaches. The narrator-as-voice-of-god style is fast disappearing and in its place are a variety of new forms. These forms change the narrator's role to one of participant in the process. The films are also self-reflexive—they hold up their own images as 'constructs', not as 'idealized reality', and invite challenge as well as identification with their versions of the world.



**Under the Table** is the first film of Toni Venturi and Luis Osvaldo García, both immigrants from Latin America and both film students at the time of the film's production. The film is an exploration of life as an 'illegal' immigrant and draws on both Canadian and Latin American culture. Incorporating both documentary and fictional or docu-drama sequences, the film resists any attempt to fit it into a neat category—what is real? what is fiction? The film confounds the possibility of making these distinctions, refuses to allow itself either to be the bearer of 'truth' or 'reality'.

A slow pan opens the film. Across an old man's rented room the camera picks up the details of his life—a salt and pepper shaker, a kettle and, in the centre of the wall, an iron bed on which the old man sits. He begins his story as an illegal. He tells of finding a hearing aid in a pawn shop which then becomes his 'aid' to escape detection by the immigration authorities—he pretends to be deaf. The details of his life begin to build: when his workmates talk, he points to his hearing aid and shakes his head in response, so the foreman gives him the noisiest machine to work on because he won't be bothered by the noise. Always alone, unable to speak to anyone in his own language for fear of being caught, his pretense at deafness becomes his own prison. But while we are caught up in the details of the story and his documentary style of monologue, it becomes apparent that the details we are relating to are stylized. A soft blue light bathes the room, the shadows are surreal, the camera for the most part is static, the image is framed like the studied *mis en scene* of a studio set. All of this contributes to our growing awareness of the status of the image as fictional. Resituating the sequence as fiction transforms the man's particular story into a universal one. The injustice of illegality, the ingenuity and perseverance of the old man speak of and to the experience of all illegal immigrants.

The universal experience of the illegal is also joined to the story of the film itself. José L. Goyes, the film's writer, is himself an 'illegal' from Latin America. After several years of escaping detection, Goyes, who came to Canada to become a filmmaker, was eventually discovered and ordered to leave the country. Thwarted by his status as 'alien', Goyes had been unsuccessful in pursuing his dream of becoming a filmmaker. He decided to contact his student filmmaker friends, Osvaldo and Toni, who were unaware that he was an illegal. (Although immigrants are very often aware that some of their friends may not have landed status, most are careful not to ask questions.) They agreed to work with him to make a film about illegals based on his own experience. Along with the old man's story, Goyes' story is real—but it's transformed into fiction by its particular inscription within the film. Goyes the writer first appears in **Under the Table** as a kind of mystical apparition posed against a background of an urban night-scape, his face hidden behind a hockey goalie's mask. The image can be read in a number of ways: as an evocation of a ritual mask from another culture and as the 'warrior hockey player'. It is also the mask that the illegal, caught in a battle with the authorities, must hide behind, disguising his identity in order to escape detection. Here the immigrants' cultural heritage meets and joins with the icons of Canadian popular mythology. Later, when he is discovered by the authorities, the mask is removed, but ironically with his identity restored, he is forced to return to his native country.

This theme of alien identity is carried through in the 'documentary' sequences as well. The images of work—the restaurant dish washer, the office cleaners, the worm pickers—exist in a surreal twilight world where reality takes on the characteristics of a nightmare. A low-angle shot of a man mopping an endless corridor features the mop sweeping across the frame, stopping at each edge as if contained in the body of the camera. The worm pickers are ghost-like apparitions, appearing and disappearing in the darkness, cans in hand. In the hands of Toni and Osvaldo these 'documentary' images are transformed into cinematic echoes of Latin America's magic-realist literary tradition.

**Under the Table** represents a new development in the films produced by Latin American immigrants. Highly articulate and politically conscious, these young filmmakers have learned their film craft in Canada and have been here long enough to absorb Canadian culture and make it their own. While working within the framework of Canada's filmic traditions, they have approached the documentary/docu-drama without the ideological baggage of so-called 'objectivity' and 'realism'. Instead they have constructed a documentary that forces the viewer to appreciate not only the dilemma of the 'illegal' but also the contribution immigrants make to the cultural life of Canada.

Four films shown at the Festival of Festivals in Toronto last fall are good examples of these new trends. Two documentaries, **Under the Table** and **Incident at Restigouche**, a feature-length docu-drama, **Walls**, and a new-narrative feature, **Low Visibility**, are part of a body of work (produced both independently and within the NFB) which is giving the documentary form new life. And in an age of 'lowered expectations, mass culture and cultural cutbacks', these films inspire hope for an oppositional cultural renaissance.

'Santiago Alvarez, the Cuban filmmaker, has very well defined the line we wanted to pursue in this film: to make a fiction film with no fiction in it; to be extremely realistic about the testimony that people give—nobody would say that doesn't happen, (that) the

political level expressed by the people does not correspond to their cultural level. But at the same time the surroundings were created by the filmmakers—it helps highlight the reality they live in.'

Toni and Osvaldo

'...it was not just a story of using a hearing aid to hide your identity, it was a first step of an immigrant person to react to their situation. Even though he was not completely politically aware of the reasons why he was here, he was at the same time capable enough to think of a solution to his own problem by using this apparatus as a means of defense.'

Toni and Osvaldo

'Our object was not to cheat anyone.'

Osvaldo

'...It is all true...but we are not afraid to recreate a documentary'

Toni

'...The hockey mask that the illegal wears is very folkloric—the illegal is a warrior in some ways, but at the same time the mask is very close to death or something very horrible.'

Osvaldo

'I don't think the state will make good films unless they take all the filmmakers. It cannot be a system where you are either "in" or "out" because if you are out (as we are) you have to struggle and struggle.'

Toni



'I've tried to re-constitute myself as a dramatic director. That's what I hope will come from it, that suddenly I will be seen as a dramatic director. It really depends on what the public reaction is. If that happens I want to do more drama, because I think we're losing the documentary audience...we're losing the ability to read and I think the documentary is a very literary film form. There's language and art in it and polemic, propaganda...it's not literary, it's not literature, it's discursive. Documentary is part of writing

and I'll always want to make documentaries. If you make a film like Brenda Longfellow's **Breaking Out** about single mothers and you make a documentary you get a certain audience. But if you take the same story and put a dramatic form on it, a feature or a television drama, you get ten times the audience, and ten times the attention—and ten times the work. I want to take all my interest in documentaries and put them in a fiction story...'

Tom Shandel

'I don't know what a docu-drama is. We had no literary base to rely on, so we relied on the newspaper basis of a story. In that respect **Walls** qualifies. Except that **Walls** is based on a play, based on a real event. We

took tremendous liberty with the story of **Walls**, we didn't relate to it at all realistically; it became what we needed to make the story and do justice to the real events.'

Tom Shandel

'The only difference between **Walls** and **Dog Day Afternoon** is money. It took 19 days to shoot **Walls**, which meant I couldn't shoot detail. I could only shoot upfront. I had to stay completely on the foreground of the story. I couldn't dwell on the other characters, I couldn't dwell on the other people in the prison or the background of how a prison really operates. It's a function of money. You have a character standing there thinking and then you cut away to something completely irrelevant that he's

looking at. Well, in **Walls** there's very little of that and it's a function of the dough. The difference between the two is that **Dog Day Afternoon** was probably a six million dollar film and **Walls** was \$500,000. **Harlan County** is shot more like a feature film, like a drama...and that's where the American documentary tradition differs from our own, because they don't have the institutional support we have, they have to be more inventive.'

Tom Shandel

'The only way that I can see **Walls** as a docu-drama is in its intent. It intends to tell you something about something that is really happening. I'm not saying that the story is really happening. The story stands for something that is really happening. So that the crawl at the end brings the audience back to "this is what happened after the story ended". This is the implication. Guys are getting out, prisoners are released and if you don't do something soon, they are going to come out worse than they went in.'

Tom Shandel

**Incident at Restigouche**, by singer, storyteller, filmmaker and native culture activist Alanis Abomsawin is an effective documentary that combines native story traditions and traditional documentary techniques. Constructed very much after the fact (although Alanis was on the scene shortly after the second raid), from photographs, news footage and re-enactments, **Incident** is an investigation of the Québec Provincial Police raids on the Micmac Indian Reserve at Restigouche, Québec in June 1981, ordered by the Québec government to force the Micmac to comply with provincial restrictions on their traditional native fishing rights. While the Atlantic fishery harvests over 3,000 tons of salmon during their return to the spawning grounds, the Micmac take six tons. The Québec government determined that the Micmac would have to reduce that amount to protect the ecological and commercial balance, the 'natural order'. When the Micmac refused, the Québec Minister of Fisheries ordered the QPP into the fray to assert provincial authority over the reserve. The first raid, complete with helicopters appearing on the horizon à la **Apocalypse Now**, resulted in the destruction of fishing nets, men being beaten with police nightsticks and arrested, and women and children generally subjected to fierce intimidation. By the second raid, the community had organized resistance and set up barricades to protect their territory. Native people across the country rallied in their defense. The National Indian Brotherhood and All Chiefs' Conference decided to move its meeting to the Restigouche Reserve. There were demonstrations in Montréal and people came to help from as far away as Alaska. This time the QPP did not get into the reserve. Most people arrested in the raids were given small fines. Two people refused to plead guilty to the charges and in a blatant display of racism, a Québec judge fined them and put them on probation for a year, despite a number of photographs taken by one of the accused that contradicted

**Walls**, directed by Tom Shandel and written by Christian Buyere, is described in a press release as a prison drama based on the 1975 B.C. hostage-taking incident which resulted in the death of a prison social worker (supposedly killed in the crossfire). A dramatic feature film, both gripping and socially conscious, **Walls** fits more neatly into the proscribed definition of Canadian docu-drama. Featuring Québec actress Andrée Pelletier as Joan Tremblay, the social worker, and Winston Rekert as Danny Baker, the inmate protagonist, it is both well directed and well acted.

Danny is a natural leader and has spent the last five years in the 'hole', solitary confinement. A lawyer and Joan, the socially-conscious social worker who has not yet been 'institutionalized' by her job, are working hard to reform the prison system and challenge the 'hole' as a cruel and unusual punishment. The authoritarian warden, under pressure to agree to certain reforms, allows Baker out of the hole. He predicts trouble—and that's what happens. Baker is provoked into a violent outburst; about to be sent back to solitary, he rebels and with two other inmates takes a guard and several administrators hostage, including Joan. In a series of crude attempts to get the prisoners to surrender, the prison authorities lie and connive and eventually authorize an assault which results in the death of Joan.

The monotony, boredom and soul-stifling routines of prison life are highlighted in the rarified tenseness of the 'hole'. A prisoner pricks his finger to draw blood which he imprints on torn toilet paper to make playing cards—and is rewarded for his patience and persistence by having them confiscated by a malicious guard. A demented prisoner is deliberately set loose in the corridor with Danny so that there can be an excuse for a beating.

Paralleling the story of the inmates who are dehumanized by the prison system is the story of the social worker who recognizes that this brutalization serves neither the inmates nor the society they will return to. Challenging the system from within, the would-be reformers are thwarted at every turn by an intransigent bureaucracy, by scared guards and an antiquated system that bears a close resemblance to **Dungeons and Dragons**.

While director Tom Shandel would claim dramatic feature film status for **Walls** there are many similarities of style and construction that place it in the docu-drama category. It is difficult for the 16mm independently-produced feature film to have the seamless, glossy and super-realist look of a 35mm Hollywood production. Shandel works within the conventional forms of realism because it is an accessible form for audiences whose formative film experience comes from watching Hollywood films. He also admires independent American features like **Can She Bake a Cherry Pie?** and **Heart Like a Wheel**. **Walls** is no **Dog Day Afternoon**, which is also based on a hostage-taking incident. It is, however, an earnest and respectable attempt to turn an infamous prison event into a gripping drama and plug for prison reform. What **Walls** highlights is that docu-drama characters, even if they are full of contradictions like Danny, are principally intended to illustrate the social parable being presented. For Danny the wheels of reality are turning and he has no possibility of affecting the outcome. Admittedly, given the basis of this story, **Walls** can only make changes in the details of its telling and not in the outcome itself. Perhaps that sense of pre-determination limits the ability of the film to represent the possibility of change, the possibility of struggling against social and economic determinism.

'I was not able to get permission (from the Film Board) to go there right away when I wanted to go. Being an Indian person I wanted to be there right away to see what I could do...but I got there on the day after the second raid and I went there by myself and took a Nagra and did a lot of interviews. I didn't sleep for two days and two nights, we stayed at the band office, there was a 24 hour guard of all the entrances by a lot of In-

dian people who had come from all over. It was just like wartime there, it was unbelievable. They had scanners and I took notes and we listened to the QPP and they were obviously talking in codes because they knew we were listening. You could touch the feeling of something really weird in the air...the children were terrified. If a helicopter went over they would hide underneath the porches.'

Alanis Abomsawin

'When the boy was on the bridge he saw the RCMP on the New Brunswick side waving a stick at him as if they were going to hit him and he ran back and he saw the QPP on the other side and then he thought "there's a war on and those guys are on our side". He went toward them for help, but then he saw them running after his own people, he got really scared and went to hide.'

Alanis Abomsawin

'...A lot of people were taking pictures. For instance, when the police were urinating in front of the women and children there were Indians who took pictures, but their cameras

were confiscated. They took a lot of cameras, so we didn't have so many pictures to use.'

Alanis Abomsawin



police evidence. The judge declared these photos fakes. The convictions were overturned two years later by the Québec Superior court.

The film benefits greatly from two invaluable resources. One is the colourful descriptions of the events 'played out' by the participants as they recollect the events and the other is Abomsawin herself. Her forceful presence comes across in the film during an interview with former Québec Minister of Fisheries, Lucien Lessard, who betrays the hypocrisy of the white politician who is also a Québec nationalist. Possessing a quiet and serene appearance, Alanis Abomsawin is nevertheless a passionate and committed activist who forcefully argues with Lessard. By contrast, Lessard appears shallow and callous, a very accurate representation of the continued disregard with which the Québec and other provincial and federal governments deal with native rights.

**Incident at Restigouche** has many of the characteristics of the formal documentary. One of its editors is veteran Film Board producer Wolf Koenig and the film is an NFB production. What gives it freshness, however, is both its 'non-objectivity', its unqualified support of the rights of the Micmac and its careful integration of songs, story-telling recollections and some very tense re-enactments.

Low Visibility



**Under the Table**, 20 min., 16mm.  
Available from DEC Films  
Toronto.

**Walls**, 90 min., 16mm. Not  
available in general distribution  
as of the date of writing—watch  
your tv guide and keep your  
fingers crossed.

**Incident at Restigouche**, 45 min.,  
16mm. Available from the NFB.

**Low Visibility**, 78 min., 16mm.  
Not yet in general distribution;  
available for special screenings  
from the filmmaker, c/o  
Communications Department,  
Simon Fraser University,  
Burnaby, British Columbia.

'There are lots of films I still have to make. I have to go on singing too and that's my life...sometimes some of the news (coverage of the incident) was not very accurate, other times it was. Sometimes some news people were looking for news that wasn't there. Because some reporters were there for months they had to feed the newspaper every day.'

Alanis Abomsawin

'...I go there like a bull (to the NFB) and all I think about is what I have to do and I'm going to do it to the end and I'll fight every battle every day. But a lot of people, their mind

doesn't function like that, they'd like to be in peace and make a film in peace and quiet. I would like that too, but I'm not going to wait till I have peace before I make a film.'

Alanis Abomsawin

Patricia Gruben's film, **Low Visibility**, is not a documentary or a docu-drama, but in many ways her avant-garde new-narrative drama is a critique of the 'realistic', 'objective' vision of the world offered by the documentary. The film is based on the 'true' account of a man found wandering on the highway and apparently suffering from aphasia (loss of the use or understanding of language). The opening of the film is constructed like a home movie. Two women are driving along the highway when they encounter 'Mr. Bones' (a name given him by one of the nurses from the hospital). The second sequence has a documentary form and shows a news crew that begins to 'construct' the story. The third sequence features the actual newscast. Later on, through a video camera at the hospital, we 'observe' Mr. Bones. Each perspective adds a detail, each detail another level of truth. Lorne Greene narrates a nature documentary on a hospital tv, ascribing all sorts of human social values to African ants—an anthropological ethnocentrism which relates to the kinds of social norms that inform a therapist's endeavour to 'cure' Bones—the cure being a conformist adaptation to an oppressive social 'real'.

The narrative is organized as an investigation paralleling police and journalists' endeavours to identify the man and the circumstances of his appearance on the highway. The police, informed by a woman psychic (who, by contrast to the rational empirical logic the film is critiquing, represents the 'feminine intuitive mode of thought'), make connections between the man and a plane crash where bodies are found that may have been cannibalized. As the story unfolds, the mystery deepens. Is Mr. Bones hiding his identity?

Paralleling the police and journalist investigation, the film provides an account of Bones' 'rehabilitation' in the hospital where we observe the day-to-day rewards and punishments that are used by his therapist to brainwash him into a replica of a 'normal person'.

Using television reports, video camera 'observations' and omnipresent tv sets, the film explores the authoritarian nature of the 'socialization process' and the equally authoritarian nature of the documentary image. As the point of view shifts from one mode to another—from television report of 'real' event, from observational documentary to the framing narrative—the frames of the 'real' become increasingly impossible to locate. The result of these shifting points of view and discursive modes is a constant sense of ambiguity that refuses to assign the status of 'truth' to any one image.

**Low Visibility** is as much a mystery story about images as it is of the events portrayed. At the same time as the film's narrative truth is illusive, contradictory and ambiguous, so too are the images that we construct from our own imprinted social perceptions, our own icons of truth. Thus, the documentary, the news reports, the 'objective observer' all turn out to be false prophets, conjurers and magicians. **Low Visibility** refuses to resolve the question 'What is truth?'

The key to the renaissance of the documentary and its new formations is diversity. Diversity in form, diversity of content and diverse groups of filmmakers. Out of the four films described only one is by a white Canadian male. Those who have 'traditionally' been outside of the mainstream of film possibilities are now (having struggled for decades) able to contribute new and exciting ideas. A new conjuncture of theory and practice has opened up new possibilities not only for filmmakers, but also for their audiences. In the days to come, if these films are an indication, audiences will embrace these new forms and engage in the continued social processes both they and the filmmakers have initiated.

Glen Richards is a freelance filmmaker who lives in Toronto.



# Cultural Critique

A New Journal from the University of Minnesota

*Cultural Critique* will examine and critique received values, institutions, practices, and discourses in terms of their economic, political, social, cultural, and aesthetic genealogies, constitutions and effects. Since none of these formations can be adequately understood from the perspective of any single analytic discipline, the journal will encourage and solicit analyses utilizing various methodologies and combining different fields.

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## Letters

There are lights on inside the church tonight. It's a surprise to see, but it means the place is being prepared for a funeral, Friday. The harbour's other store owner died early this morning. She'd gone out of business several years ago, much to her relief: she'd been carrying the community's food bills on her own credit for years and years. The relief of that financial release was pretty quickly overpowered by the terminal shuffle she began back and forth to the hospital.

If I look in the other direction, there is light also, but this comes from a bonfire on the hillside cemetery. The fire is barely visible: what does show up is the thick greasy smoke that comes from it. The fire is in the grave. All day the chink and scrape of four men digging at the grave bounced around the village. There's a couple of feet of frost to get through before the task is eased and the work finished tomorrow. Burning tires in the grave is a traditional means of speeding the process.

You might imagine that in the midst of all this, it was a surprise and a delightful kind of incongruity to receive an issue of *borderlines*. I liked the sense of picking up the voices of ongoing conversations. The sheer visual presence of the magazine is very striking and, to my eyes, pleasing. You should all be very proud of the achievement.

**Brian Rusted**

English Harbour, Newfoundland

The fire is barely visible: what does show up is the thick greasy smoke that comes from it. The fire is in the grave.

**B**orderlines appears a most timely and interesting concept. In your promotional letter you indicate that 'Intellectual life in Canada is fragmented...' Perhaps so, but while attending the University of Waterloo during the late 60s and early 70s, I noticed that such fragmentation somehow allowed one a greater access to scholars, writers, artists, and seemed to present options for creative endeavour not readily available in the United States. Here, one is isolated; the 'community' is simply too large to allow spontaneous interaction with those working in diverse fields. Each summer I return to Canada and rediscover the joy of 'fragmentation' as opposed to isolation within the confines of one's specialty.

**Lee F. Werth**  
Cleveland, Ohio

**H**ello *borderlines* collective. Here's one west coast sense of what you need: (1) less incestuous commentary...is this because of intention or newness?; (2) at least a Vancouver contributing editor if you're serious about the 'CULTURES, CONTEXTS, CANADAS' stuff...shall we explore the possibilities of mutual exploitation?; (3) the praise that I first was going to offer for a first edition, but then withdrew because flattery encourages decay, but now decide you do deserve it...why don't I take the chance that you know what to do with compliments?

Print the accompanying text if you wish as a kind of pseudo-meta-critique.

### Five Hazards of Post-Semiotic Deconstructionism

1. confusion → insanity
2. pompous jargon (what Anne Mandelsohn calls 'the labour value of surplus theory') which no one has the time to deconstruct
3. assuming you know something because you think everything but actually you have nothing which can be used
4. mystification → fetishism → theology
5. deconstruction of your own arrogant position as critic (this is, of course, the point but nevertheless a hazard...see 1. above).

**Chris Creighton-Kelly**  
Vancouver, BC

## PUBLIC ACCESS

### call for proposals

Public Access is a project being set up to extend the public display and dissemination of artists' and writers' works. Public Access is inviting artists and writers to submit proposals for original image and/or text works that will be displayed on the Electromedia electronic sign on Yonge street in Toronto. Each selected work will be displayed for a period of a week to ten days and Public Access will pay each artist or writer an artist's fee. Public Access will also take responsibility for the documentation of each work.

Artists and writers are asked to consider the specificity of both medium and site before they prepare any submission, and are therefore encouraged to contact Public Access in the first instance. All proposals should be post-dated by the 15th of October.

Public Access, 462 Wellesley Street East, Toronto, Ontario M4X 1H9. (416) 928-1918.

Public Access acknowledges the generous support of The Canada Council and Electromedia Ltd.





## DISTINCTION: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste

by Pierre Bourdieu  
(translated by Richard Nice)

(Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard  
University Press, 1984)

**Pierre** Bourdieu holds the Chair in Sociology at the prestigious Collège de France, a position that places him in the company of a number of other luminaries of French intellectual life. Not restricted to one type of sociology, or even to sociology *per se*, his interests are remarkably varied. He is probably best known outside of France as the sociologist of education who coined the phrase 'cultural capital', though he is read by anthropologists, social theorists and philosophers as well. The publication of *Distinction*, the most recent of his books to be translated into English, promises to extend that audience to include those engaged in an exploration of the political meaning of culture.

Readers wishing to get the most from *Distinction* will have to come to terms with a style that is irritating at times and a sociological perspective that challenges sociologists and non-sociologists alike. Because Bourdieu's arguments are shaped by a seemingly endless succession of positions defended and attacked, they can be hard to follow. There is, however, a principle behind this polemic. Running through Bourdieu's work is a sustained critique of various oppositions: 'objectivism and subjectivism', 'structuralism and phenomenology', 'theoreticism and empiricism' and so on. If Bourdieu has one overriding conceptual aim, it is moving debate in the social sciences and humanities through and beyond these kinds of oppositions.

*Distinction* begins by taking issue with a philosophical approach to the 'judgement of taste'. Like Durkheim, who challenged Kant's universal claims about the categories of human thought, Bourdieu challenges Kant's characterization of aesthetic judgement as a mysterious act removed from everyday considerations of usefulness, ethicality and intelligibility. According to Bourdieu, aesthetic judgement, like other social practices, cannot be understood apart from the social conditions that shape both the product being judged and the individual engaged in the activity of judgement.

To move beyond the philosophical position it is necessary to widen the frame of reference to include all cultural products, not just 'obviously' aesthetic products that belong to the domain of high culture or art. Having done this, Bourdieu can begin to draw on an anthropological tradition, to which he himself is a contributor, which construes culture as a 'way of life'. The idea of a 'lifestyle' is also used to capture this more inclusive sense of culture.

But Bourdieu's ambition is not merely to provide an account of the diversity of lifestyles in modern French society, thereby opening up the debate on aesthetic judgement. He is concerned rather

with providing a rigorous account of the system of lifestyles. This concern, which owes something to the insights of French structuralism, starts from the premise that the meaning of a cultural product, or a lifestyle, does not reside in that product, but in the relation between that product and every other product in the system. Hence the need to construct a grammar or map of the cultural system in order to understand the meaning of any particular product or lifestyle within that system.

If Bourdieu had stopped there, he would have stopped at that type of structural analysis that sets out to demonstrate that all culture is communication by identifying the patterns that underlie an aggregate of cultural products. But Bourdieu's approach to culture represents an advance over this type of analysis in at least two ways: the first concerns the link between culture, power and class; the second concerns the nature of cultural activity and the subject who is engaged in that activity.

In order to explore the relations between culture, power and class, Bourdieu makes use of the resources of classical sociology, including Marx (though his debt to the latter is hard to pinpoint). Axiomatic is the proposition that cultural products are arranged hierarchically and that this hierarchical arrangement is a source of power. Also important is the claim that the means of appropriating the most esteemed cultural products, and hence of maintaining certain relations of domination, are monopolized by privileged groups. Some groups are correspondingly excluded from the control of property, whether this is symbolic property ('cultural capital') or more straightforwardly economic property (other forms of capital). It is with this in mind that the struggles of the social world, including the struggles to define the social world, must be interpreted.

If it was only this political dimension of culture that was charted by Bourdieu, his work, as suggested, would represent a considerable advance over some forms of structuralism. But what is perhaps most unique in Bourdieu's work is his attempt to connect a political sociology of culture with a theory of the subject that is rich in the sensitivity to human experience that characterized the phenomenological tradition. Thus Bourdieu does more than map out the hierarchy of cultural products. He also explores the individual's (or group's) relation to the dominant culture.

It is in this context that Bourdieu's concept of the habitus, defined as a 'system of dispositions', has a role to play. By means of the habitus concept, which is explained more fully in his earlier works, Bourdieu attempts to connect the idea of culture to the embodied human subject. Bourdieu suggests that this relation has been severed by intellectuals whose idea

of culture is coloured by their intellectual relation to culture, by the fact that for them culture is primarily something to think about. Far from being an object of intellectual reflection, culture, for Bourdieu, is bound up with the very practical urgencies of everyday life. And against intellectualist tendencies Bourdieu stresses that culture is a bodily phenomenon. Even speech may be viewed as a technique of the body, a way of holding the mouth and a sense of knowing when and how to speak, the result both of past 'conditionings' and of unspoken, but deeply felt, censorships experienced by the individual in a given situation.

These theoretical insights, developed and employed in *Distinction*, merit close attention. What of the more substantive concerns? Bourdieu's model of French society includes three main classes, three objective classes as he might say: bourgeoisie, petite bourgeoisie and the working class. Associated with each objective class (and necessary to its definition) is a characteristic lifestyle or relation to the

grande bourgeoisie not only possesses discriminating tastes with respect to the most rare and sacred of aesthetic products; it also has the option of owning these products. When executed properly, the act of appreciating and owning is the consummate act of distinction as it directly enhances the person of the owner while symbolizing the time and money spent collecting beautiful and 'useless' objects.

Different from the grande bourgeoisie, but sharing its sense of distinction, are the more established intellectuals. Yet while the grande bourgeoisie seeks out an art that will reinforce its world views, intellectuals are more willing to take a chance with the avant-garde and generally with art forms that challenge bourgeois existence (though artists themselves are apt to view intellectual taste, with its 'sterile didacticism', as a variant of bourgeois taste). The bourgeoisie as a whole displays a certain social ease, knowing what to say and how to say it, regardless of the formality of the occa-



dominant culture. It is worth noting that in his discussion of objective class and lifestyle Bourdieu is close to Max Weber and he goes as far as to suggest that *Distinction* is 'based on an endeavour to rethink Max Weber's opposition between class and *Stand* (status).'

In three successive chapters Bourdieu analyses the lifestyles of each of the major classes, devoting some attention to the class fractions within them. At one extreme is the 'sense of distinction' that characterizes the bourgeoisie. The

The new bourgeoisie, especially, is flexible, and is able to assume several different looks or styles, from the conservative to the sporty, and even, in some contexts, to the rough and macho style of the manual worker. In this way the style of the 'modern manager' or new bourgeois may be distinguished from that of the 'old-style authoritarian industrialist', 'pot-bellied', 'pompous', and showing 'more restraint in language and morals'.

At the middle of the spectrum is the petite bourgeoisie. While some mem-



bers of this class may be content merely to recognize the codes of the dominant culture (and Bourdieu suggests such recognition occurs despite the conscious intentions of individuals), others attempt to acquire the distinguished relation to culture. Yet if the style of the bourgeoisie in relation to high culture is one of relaxed familiarity, that of the petite bourgeoisie is one of tension or pretension. The constant self-monitoring of the petite bourgeoisie originates in the context in which they acquire culture. Unlike the bourgeoisie which is likely to have acquired a sense of culture as 'second nature' through early experiences in the family, the petite bourgeoisie picks up a sense of culture through formal education, or worse, through its efforts to teach itself.

Bourdieu maintains that the marks of this mode of acquiring culture are unmistakable: '(The petite bourgeoisie) takes culture...too seriously to escape permanent fear of ignorance of blunders, or to side-step tests by responding with the indifference of those who are not competing or the serene detachment of those who feel entitled to confess or even flaunt their lacunae.' But the new petite bourgeoisie is not entirely excluded from the game. This class fraction, 'having abandoned the somewhat morose asceticism of the rising petite bourgeoisie', forms a 'natural ally' for the new bourgeoisie mentioned above. Both are engaged in establishing and responding to the need for new lifestyles. Bourdieu's brief but highly suggestive description of these new lifestyles recalls arguments made by Foucault and others about sexuality and therapy: 'The fear of not getting enough pleasure, the logical outcome of the effort to overcome the fear of pleasure, is combined with the search for self-expression and "bodily expression" and for communicating with others ("relating"—*échange*), even immersion in others (considered not as a group but as subjectivities in search of their identity); and the old personal ethic is thus rejected for a cult of personal health and psychological therapy.'

At the bottom of the cultural hierarchy in Bourdieu's framework are the working classes for whom the very choice of a lifestyle is heavily influenced by restrictions imposed by necessity. Bourdieu suggests that the working class aesthetic is the very antithesis of aesthetics, at least in the Kantian sense. Thus the members of the working class apply the standards of everyday life to aesthetic objects, disdaining "'frills" and "fancy nonsense"' in a range of cultural products including household decor. Working class women reject the 'typically bourgeois idea of making each object in the home the occasion for aesthetic choice, of extending the intention of harmony or beauty even into the bathroom or kitchen...' And they also reject the efforts devoted by bourgeois women to personal appearance. Working class men, Bourdieu goes on, are even less likely to waste time in the 'pretension' of personal style. Such pretensions are viewed as both bourgeois and feminine. In this regard, Bourdieu suggests that the culture of virility is a kind of psychological refuge for the working class male.

Bourdieu, as might be imagined, is very critical of romantic views of working class culture or any other form of counter culture. In his view, the values and codes of the dominant culture are pervasive and produce effects on conduct despite the activities of those who would reject them. These effects are even found in the area of explicitly political discourse. Because of their relation to language, the working classes are apt to distrust the generalizations and verbal strategies of politicians and other special-

ists in the production of political discourse. While this perspective on working class culture may suggest a certain pessimistic undertone in Bourdieu's work, it does not by any means preclude an understanding of roots of progressive social change.

That *Distinction* constitutes a major contribution to our understanding of the significance of culture in French society, and with some modifications in other national contexts, is indisputable. But the precise nature of that contribution is hard to specify. The theoretical insights noted earlier are of a high order. The methodological and rhetorical achievements are unique and imaginative. Bourdieu has developed a compelling albeit difficult narrative using as an empirical foundation the results of interviews combined with the results of a questionnaire that surveyed tastes as well as demographic data. But how far does *Distinction* take us towards an understanding of the role of culture in social reproduction, the question Nicholas Garnham and Raymond Williams suggested was fundamental for Bourdieu?<sup>1</sup>

To those who object that Bourdieu has neglected the historical and conflictual aspects of social reproduction, I would suggest that his approach conforms to a logically defensible division of intellectual labour. There is no reason why Bourdieu's concepts cannot be applied to advantage in ethnographic studies of culture as well as in analyses of determinant factors in class formation, cultural resistance and political struggle. Though space prohibits an adequate consideration of this problem here, I would argue that Bourdieu's theoretical perspective is suited to a discussion of both social stability and social change.<sup>2</sup>

The charge that Bourdieu's analysis of the universe of lifestyles has a problematic connection to a theory of the major institutional influences on culture is more valid. There exists a danger, to which *Distinction* is by no means immune, that a discussion of lifestyles may become too far removed from an appraisal of the role of the state and private corporations in cultural and social reproduction.<sup>3</sup> The result is an ambiguity with respect to the relative importance of various forms of power and capital in society.

This latter reservation aside, I feel that *Distinction* and many of Bourdieu's other publications will prove to be invaluable resources for the study of culture in Canada and elsewhere. Bourdieu is well aware that those doing sociology are themselves part of the struggles of the social world insofar as they contribute to definitions of the nature of those struggles. Perhaps more than anything else, his work provides a refreshing example of what intellectuals can accomplish when they set out to explore the politics of culture fully aware that they are starting from the intellectual's relation to culture.

**David MacLennan**

is a graduate student in sociology at York University.

#### Notes

1. Nicholas Garnham and Raymond Williams, 'Pierre Bourdieu and the sociology of culture: an introduction.' *Media, Culture & Society* 3 (1980), p.211.
2. For a detailed analysis of this issue see Bourdieu, 'On Reproduction, Habitus and Education'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 2 (1984), pp.117-127.
3. For a relevant analysis of changing influences on cultural production in the United States, see Paul DiMaggio and Michael Useem, 'The arts in class reproduction', in *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education: Essays on Class, Ideology and the State*, ed. Michael Apple (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), pp. 247-274.



**Of the** many personal issues that the women's movement has thrown up for political debate in recent years, one powerful issue has been long evaded. As the two authors of *Face Value* ruefully remark, we have discussed almost all of the issues that have made us feel alone and insecure—all except personal beauty. Happily for us in *Face Value* they have taken the challenge of analyzing the power that beauty holds over us.

Beauty? A political issue? Certainly, argue the authors, for 'it figures in the exchange of power and influence.' Beauty is not, they explain, power in itself. It is a passive attribute existing only through the judgement of others. But for women, systematically excluded from power, beauty is hugely significant. It is the one value that enables us to attract those who do have power. The ideal traditional marriage is just that exchange of her beauty for his wealth, influence and power.

*Face Value* is a disconcerting reminder of how much women are still valued, and feel valued, primarily on the basis of our looks. Beauty is fundamental to our sense of selves as women whether we beautify ourselves or not. Many women are indeed 'controlled by the tyranny of looks, by the threat of having approval, and with it power, withheld.' The authors argue that 'discrimination based on beauty is more prevalent than discrimination based on race.' The book explores how and why beauty holds so much power.

The authors examine the myths and stereotypes of beautiful women, their visual representation in painting and sculpture, the language of beauty, men and beauty and the effect of white standards of beauty on other races. The book's eclectic focus shifts constantly, segregating rather than integrating these component issues. Unfortunately, through the cracks of their approaches the question of why beauty is conferred with such power finally slips away unanswered. In the meantime the authors give us fascinating and insightful descriptions of the power of beauty in our lives.

In 'Beauty in Our Times' the authors examine the role of the camera and the media on beauty. In the process they give us a great description of capital's commodification of beauty. Mass production and mass communication turned beauty from something rarely beheld to something constantly beheld. Beauty, once the privilege of the leisured class, became available to all. The ingredients of beauty could be bought everywhere inexpensively and the media's message that we must be beautiful reached into the lives of people of all classes.

Visual images of beauties—professional beauties—bombard us daily and we respond by buying, we buy constantly at magazine racks, cosmetic counters and movie houses. Stars such as Greta Garbo or Farrah Fawcett Major set standards of beauty that affected millions simultaneously. Literally thousands of women made themselves over in those particular styles. Already narrowly focused on one race, the range of prescribed beauty shrank to one style, one fashion at a time, elusively out of the reach of most women.

'The message we are given daily by the myriad images of beauty is that women must look a certain way to be loved and admired—to be worth anything.' Yes, but it's all too easy to confuse the message with the response. There's no denying that most women at some point in

## FACE VALUE: The Politics of Beauty

by Robin Tolmach Lakoff and Raquel L. Scherr

(Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984)

*Mass production and mass communications turned beauty from something rarely beheld to something constantly beheld*

their lives measure themselves against the current norm of beauty and find themselves woefully lacking. But what we do about it will differ according to our age, our class background, our race and our personal circumstances. *Face Value* tends to assume both that white western standards of beauty are powerful universal standards and that all women respond docilely to the imperative to be beautiful.

Women of all races have fought back against normative messages of beauty. Blacks in western society have rebelled against the equation of white with beauty and against social ranking in the black community based on lightness of skin. White notions of beauty lie at the heart of racism and, as the authors state, 'Beauty is never more political than when it is used to prop up the power of one race while it renders others powerless, immured in self hatred.' But the black is beautiful rebellion has only minimally penetrated the visual media and its standards of beauty. Black models and actors by and large are still obliged to possess under their skins the Caucasian features of the white ideal of beauty.

Beauty's power is used to divide men from women, women from women, race from race. To be beautiful is compensation for lack of power, but a beautiful woman is not a powerful woman. It is beauty, not woman, who has the power, and in pursuit of power we seek beauty. 'Perhaps until recently women had so little else to make their lives comfortable, psychologically as well as physically, that they needed the promise of beauty, and the thrill of competition with





other women in this arena, to make living worthwhile.'

What are the psychological roots of our responses to beauty? Unfortunately the authors didn't get very far with that question. Their research turned up only contradictory positions. 'Academic psychologists link beauty with happiness, competence and goodness. Psychoanalysts link it to misery, passivity and immorality. Both claim "empirical" evidence... The two together form a whole—the whole of our myths, literature and popular stereotypes about beauty.'

In their own surveys the authors found that, without exception, all the women they interviewed claimed that beauty was important to them, though none could elucidate why. Many felt guilty at admitting its importance, believing that their concern for personal beauty was antithetical to feminism. In the fight to be valued equally and on the same basis as men—for our activities—parts of the feminist movement have often poised on the edge of puritanical views. The call that we no longer should shave our legs, paint our eyes or participate in the exchange of beauty for power and influence served two ends. It liberated some from tedious cosmetic routines but put many others off feminism. The image of the ugly feminist endures, especially among younger women.

We worry in private about our looks and we go to extraordinary lengths to enhance or reclaim them once ageing and birthing threaten to permanently mark our bodies. *Face Value* describes in wincing detail the self-mutilations, from ear-piercing to face lifts and implant surgery we elect to undergo. In our efforts to maintain ourselves in the current image of slender beauty we put our health at risk. The current adolescent look in which sexual innocence and knowingness are simultaneously suggested by sexually experienced women in the slim firm bodies of the immature, has led many women to dangerous lengths to obtain a slender body. Women let their body weight fluctuate dramatically and unhealthily and consume dangerous dietary 'aids' by the millions. Ten thousand women a year in the United States alone are poisoned each year by diet pills, and thousands more are left exposed to hypertension and strokes.

In the quest for beauty, ageing women shell out thousands of dollars for cosmetic surgery. While the signs of ageing are popularly considered to enhance the attractiveness of men because they are evidence of his experience in the world, the prime virtue of manliness, the same bags and wrinkles and greying hair are, for the same reasons, considered ugly in a woman. The signs of ageing not only deny our innocence, they also blur the male/female distinction at the root of the ideal of female beauty.

Beauty is the power of the weak, but while women are relatively powerless in other ways in western society, can we renounce the one power we command? Would we ever want to give up the pleasure of seeing or being a beautiful woman, of at least trying? *Face Value* suggests that only when women are valued primarily for our activities and gain real power will beauty relinquish its powerful grip. Perhaps then we can enjoy beauty without compulsion or guilt. We need to use this book and the other writings that ought to follow as a starting place to shake this 'final great divider, the ultimate thing we worry about as individuals'.

Dinah Forbes

**The** most common form of political action any of us are likely to take these days involves urban issues. It might be joining a tenants' group to protest the disrepair of the building, or fighting off an attempt to raise rents. It could be rallying around a particularly impressive old building scheduled for demolition or about the desecration of a ravine. It could involve the environment, such as saving a stand of trees, worrying about industrial wastes or deteriorating water quality.

What's amazing is the extent of these actions. People take them everyday in every city—apolitical people, folks who would never put themselves out to shake the hand of a walking, breathing member of Parliament. Often these kinds of struggles aren't seen by the traditional political analysts as being of much importance—they are on the fringes, people amusing themselves on the periphery of life. But when one of these minor irritations erupts into a battle, grand and impressive, then there's much scurrying to report the size and shape of the action.

One learns for the first time about the remarkable rent strike in Glasgow in 1915, the tenant action provoked by the prostitutes in Veracruz in 1922 and the bitter struggles of the early 1970s in the Grand Ensembles—the post World War II new towns in the commutershed of Paris. There are intricate discussions of the Mission District in San Francisco as well as the urban impact of the gay community in the same city; explanations of squatter communities in Lima, Mexico and Santiago de Chile, and the profile of the citizens' movement in Madrid in the mid-1970s.

Unfortunately, none of the stories turn out to be terrifically interesting, at least not they way they are told. Castells recounts them not for their own sake, but to draw out his thesis and that means he hasn't the time or inclination to outline the characters firmly and to inject all the details of the battles that make them so fascinating. (Take a look at John Cheevers' marvellous book *Oh What a Paradise It Seems* to experience how well fragments of these urban stories can be told.) When something can't be drawn out to fit in any way with the thesis—as indeed happens in regard to the Madrid struggle—Castells is reduced to saying, 'These stories offer no lesson.' Well, thank goodness he let me know, but it hardly provides enlightenment.

Castells generally concludes that 'urban movements do address the real issues of our time, although neither on the scale nor terms that are adequate to the task... they are more than a last, symbolic stand and desperate cry: they are symptoms of our contradictions, and therefore potentially capable of superseding these contradictions.' What does this actually mean? I'm not quite sure. It is but one of many examples of a paragraph starting out with panache and direction, then ending in a puddle of words that have lost their sense. There is a romanticism about Castells' conclusions that is irritating. One wishes he'd be a bit tougher about exactly what he is saying.

The thesis he proposes is certainly simple enough. He proposes that an urban movement will achieve its maximum impact if it meets the following four criteria:

## THE CITY AND THE GRASSROOTS

by Manuel Castells

(Los Angeles, California, University of California Press, 1983)

What Castells attempts to do in this book is develop a theory that will make sense of urban grassroot political movements. His approach is to discuss some of the more spectacular urban fights in cities across the world, going as far back as Castilian Spain in 1520 and the Commune of Paris in 1871, to a dozen other examples this century in Europe, South America and the United States. The stories are ones that are not well-known—after all, urban struggles have not been treated with much respect by scholars.

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Many communities have spent the last two decades fighting off developers and their high-rise towers

1. It must have goals related to collective consumption demands (such as lower rents), community culture (that feeling of being part of a neighbourhood, for example) and political self-management (such as participation in decision-making). Indeed, he shows that the important struggles always include these three elements, and if you think of significant battles in any Canadian city, chances are they will be there. Take the case of the fight of the Toronto Island residents. They want reasonable rents, the right for their community to continue its existence and a say in how their community is run. Those kinds of criteria are handy to keep in mind as one assesses the seriousness of a community struggle.

2. It must be conscious of its role as an urban social movement. In other words, it must have a sense of history, rather than being an instantaneous backlash worried only about its own status.

3. It must be related to society through the media, professionals and traditional political parties.

4. It must be autonomous of any political party. We all know the damage that a political party—a group with its own agenda—can cause to a community group.

Castells has a great deal of sympathy for struggles involving these elements, in spite of their limitations. 'Urban social movements are aimed at transforming the meaning of the city without being able to transform society. They are a reaction, not an alternative; they are calling for a depth of existence without being able to create that new breadth.'



And why do people engage in this kind of limited activity? Because 'People appear to have no other choice. The historical actors (social movements, political parties, institutions) that were supposed to provide the answers to the new challenges at the global level, were unable to stand up to them... Thus urban movements do address the real issues of our time, although neither on the scale nor the terms that are adequate to the task.'

And that's the pity. Urban movements are just concerned with — and it's not a word that Castells uses — reform. That's always been the great bugaboo of the marxists — reform never goes far enough, it's not based on a deep enough analysis. What this book does is make reform legitimate even though it is incapable of making the changes required. I think that Castells would agree that reform politics produces useful results — he's much too quiet on this point for my own liking — and that's going some for a theoretician of his stature.

But for the many of us who have at times become immersed in urban politics, there's some comfort to believing that reform and urban politics may soon become respectable among the intellectual leaders of our times.

#### John Sewell

is a former mayor and alderman of Toronto. He writes a daily column on urban affairs for *The Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper.

**Let** me begin with 'the object itself': this book is divided into a nine-page introduction by the editors; Part 1 of 215 pages (nine essays, plus 'A Very Partial Chronology' of five pages); Part 2, 'Reading for What', of 143 pages, introduced by Sohnya Sayres, with subsections 'Memories', 'Acknowledgements' and '(Re)Takes'; the book concludes with a 'Lexicon of Folk-Etymology' by Ralph Larkin and Daniel Foss.

The editors' 'Introduction' ends with the moment of the book's own context — the 'trashing of the sixties', the various Rights with their particular moralisms and the multiple Lefts' weak and defensive responses. The editors conclude that they see this book as 'an attempt to combine the affirmative with the critical, an attempt to salvage certain positions now under severe attack...' But they also stress how 'reflecting the radical displacement in those years of homogeneity itself, we make no claim that ours is a complete account. We put this work before the reader in the form of an intervention, and we do so without apology.'

Part 1 frames (or, polemically, is a kind of frame-up for) Part 2, which consists of shorter, often extracted, writings. I shall resist the strong desire to respond, conversationally, to much that is vibrant, sentimental, signifying differently in Part 2... I shall concentrate on the frame. But in this response I do so with the resources drawn from the one Great (Re)Discovery of the 60s: as ether or glue, words (later signs) fix and faze us. Turning that onto the frame of Part 1, there is a murmur as I am reading — who is speaking, to and for whom? Was there love made and unmade, did people walk midnight streets or sit in sunlit rooms rocking alone, talk for hours about their visions and their gastronomy... did people have bodies in the 60s? These thoughts are raised because Part 1's frame-up tends to cop-in with a gentle (affirming?) but firm (critical?) policing, heard (more than read) by problems with tenses, adjectives, verbal flows, textual flushes.

Part 1 has nine essays, eight of them by men (including one of these 'A 60s Movement in the 80s' which is an interview between the two-man *Social Text* 'collective' and David Apter) — and the exception, by Ellen Willis, is 'Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism'. In that regard, this is a pre-60s ensemble. Despite some attempts — notably the Apter interview concerning the Narita Airport movement in Japan; Belden Fields' 'French Maoism'; Herman Rapaport's 'Vietnam: The Thousand Plateaus', strong themes within Simon Frith's 'Rock and the Politics of Memory' and some features of Frederic Jameson's 'Periodizing the 60s' — to internationalize the accounting, the US-centric view is very strong. It predominates in Stanley Aronowitz' 'When the New Left Was New', Ellen Willis' essay, Colin Greer's 'The Ethnic Question' and, differently but significantly, in Jameson.

Let me focus further — a zooming-in on the opening Aronowitz and the closing Jameson texts as they are the bolts and bars of the frame. I find many of the other texts share their finalization, their boxing-in (much talk of legacies and consequences, little of resources and filiations) and a persisting tone (or drone) of the academy: a tidying-up, a final-wording. The two partial exceptions are the Apter interview and Rapaport's 'Vietnam' (catching up threads from both *Coming Home* and *Apocalypse Now*). To all of these essays I want to affirm and abjure by saying, 'It's not that simple.'

Aronowitz and Jameson involve their writing with their more general agenda — I use the singular term deliberately, partly because of their association with,



## THE 60s WITHOUT APOLOGY

edited by Sohnya Sayres, Anders Stephanson, Stanley Aronowitz, Frederic Jameson

(University of Minnesota Press in cooperation with Social Text, Minneapolis, 1984)

for example, *Social Text*, and/or their individual publications and/or specifically Frederic Jameson's essay in *The Anti-Aesthetic* (ed. Hal Foster, Bay Press, 1983) and Aronowitz' review of that book (*Village Voice Literary Supplement* October 1983, p. 14). On the first page of Aronowitz' essay in the reviewed text we have a sentence which condenses all the closures/policing I have indicated:

**In fact (N.B.), only Kerouac, Ginsberg and San Francisco poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti survived the Beat movement. Most of their comrades literally sat out the 60s; by the late 50s their rebellion had generated into the cynical affectation characteristic (N.B.) of all failed romantic politics and art. (p. 11)**

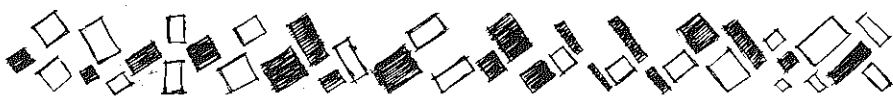
*All failed romantic politics and art. Nothing sturdy enough about them in the first place, not realistic, etc. But the claim is enormous: 'characteristic of all...' The rest of his slight, singular, sub-superhero account pales beside that kind of claim, now, in the face of a history that includes,*

at least as a beginning sense, the 1940s and 1950s, plus the 1970s and half of the 1980s. Might not this be part of the prison we are all in: fixated on success (what it is, how it is accomplished) in the wrong image-repertoire?

With Jameson there is also something different — a problem of tenses: like the replay commentators on sports programs, he tends to write now (1983/84) that someone 'will' do something in the 60s! But the same Papal infallibility is involved: '...postmodernism...is no longer at all (N.B.) "oppositional"...indeed it constitutes the very dominant or hegemonic aesthetic of consumer society itself and significantly serves the latter's commodity production as a virtual laboratory of new forms and fashions' (p. 196). Really? Just-like-that? I have been arguing for some time that the real symptomatic issue here is the loss of the Authority of the Critic, or, better, making visible the claim to that Authority. Multiplicity, difference and varied







making-meaningful can no longer (or, not so easily) be captured and contained, policed and paroled by Mr. Language himself.

Taking the two thematic universal claims together we have some famous instrumentalisms: a 'romantic politics and art' that *succeeds* can be redefined as 'not really' romantic in the first place; a post-modernism that is *oppositional* turns out to be not 'truly' a post-modernism. What is it about 'romanticism' and/or 'post-modernism' that produces this snort of disgust, this cackle of derision? Do we detect written under each work, Utopianism? In other words, I am arguing that under the guise of a certain, measured affirmation there is, in fact, more trashing at work here. Like forgotten customs officers in some anachronistic border post such policemen wait, tidying their rubber stamps, affirming their hearty unitary selves, being suspicious of fun, pleasure, desire, sentimentality, the body — singing dull threnodies called 'That's a sixties thing...' over their intercommunicating throat mikes. There's a real danger — that a one-sided optimism/adventurism/voluntarism will be replaced by a one-sided pessimism/opportunism/objectivism. This is clear in Régis Debray's tenth anniversary 'Remarks' trashing 'les evenements de mai 1968' firmed-up by the Secretary General of the Socialist Party of France in May 1983. Such currents can work both to vivify anti-marxism *and* (as in Jameson's last pages) argue for making 'traditional' marxism 'true again'. A curious idealism this, since I thought marxism was a

**The 60s were both... and... but differently. The 60s undid a certain knot (which was also a Not of fatherly negation)**

theory generalized from historical experiences, a theory capable of learning!

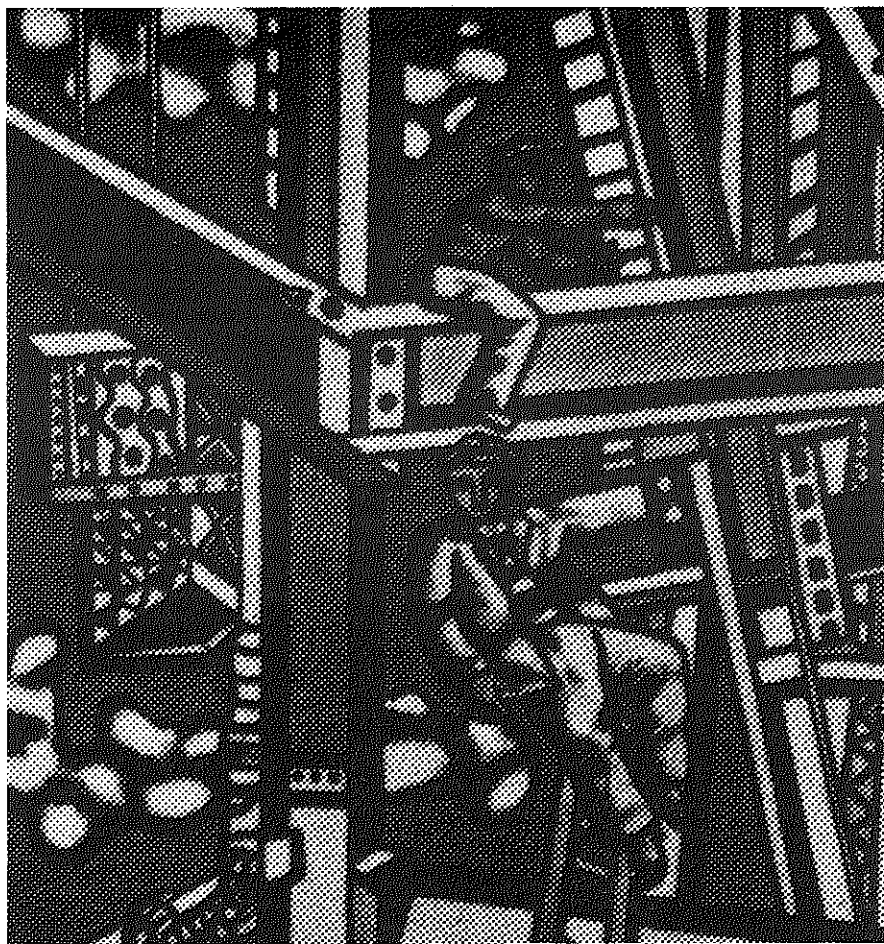
Of course, as Ronald Sukenick ('Up from the Garret', *New York Times Book Review*, 27 January 1985) argues, the 60s did redefine 'much in American culture, including middle class aesthetic standards, but at the same time eroded the mystique by which artists had resisted the pressures of the market place' (p. 1 — an excellent article throughout). *But that is not all*. Transforming his sexist 'men' we can recall Morris here:

**Human beings fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes, turns out not to be what they meant, and other human beings have to fight for what they meant under another name.**

(W. Morris' *Dream of John Ball*, quoted in the very relevant article by Peter Linebaugh, 'All the Atlantic Mountains Shook', *Labour/Le Travail*, Autumn 1982, p. 92.)

Contradictions within and between, for example, culture as a set of regulated expressive forms *and* culture as different ways of life; or politics as official institutional rituals and routines *and* the politics of the so-called private, personal and profane...create spaces, establish frissons, make ideologies hearable. Capitalism (does it still have to be said?) is no way of life at all for the majority, it is a differential series of ways of death, founded and foundering upon contradiction which are both universal and multiple and, in its own drives, unsolvable. The 60s re-arranged different possible ways of saying, seeing, showing and sharing, its romanticism was re-arranged by realities (not erased, not dismissable). If post-modernism is firmly at the heart of hegemony, it is causative of heartburn and heartache there also! The 60s were both... and... but differently. The 60s undid a certain knot (which was also a Not of fatherly negation). There are no more purely economic, political or cultural revolutions because there will be no more singular-totalizing (in the old sense) revolutions. So what's new? A period of hope, emancipation, easiness and caring gets in part trashed and in part encashed into commodified forms. We have to learn that living historically means we both, as Pasolini puts it, affirm in the making of our selves and we abjure what powers *and* knowledges do with what we have become. But mainly now, sentimentally, I affirm.

**Philip Corrigan's** book with Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*, will be published by Blackwell in July 1985.



## CAPITAL TALES

by Brian Fawcett

(Vancouver, Talonbooks, 1984)

**While** occasionally evocative of the free-floating sense of dread which accompanies Raymond Carver's banal worlds, Brian Fawcett's latest book, *Capital Tales*, is also reminiscent of early Springsteen lyrics: tableaux governed by random violence, chance and a vague displacement of absence at the heart of working class experience.

However, the BC logging towns, 4x4 trucks and the edgy desperation or curiosity of Fawcett's characters are really only the *realist* tip of the much larger question his prose introduces: what is the relation between the world of the imagination and our lived experience; in what ways are the conventions of fiction inadequate as expressions of the realities of our everyday lives?

Though these are by no means new questions, Fawcett's treatment of them in this collection of short stories manages to do a number of things well. A process of subversion, an undermining of our responses as readers, is begun midway through the stories and actually challenges the relation between text and reader as it occurs, as we attempt to 'consume' literature and distance ourselves from the very real contradictions of the world around us. Fawcett, without the usual didacticism, examines the role of literature and of any fictive convention under capitalism, its assumptions about our lives and the expectations we ourselves bring to a fictional treatment of our world.

At the same time that our attention is slowly being drawn towards the process of interpretation we are involved in, Fawcett conveys concise, accurate portrayals of characters bound by class structures, structures whose hidden character only gains articulation in the seemingly unconnected actions, gestures and frustrations of those characters' lives. In this sense Fawcett manages to deal with work experience, a world defined by labour and social relations of production, without slipping into a neo-'socialist-realism' which would ensure that all the ideological 't's and 'i's are crossed and dotted (usually painfully so)

for a supposedly hapless and unintelligent collective reader. Here Fawcett gives his readers the benefit of their, and his, experience as the basis for interpretation.

Interestingly, throughout the stories, especially 'Balance of Nature', 'The Ghost' and 'The Brotherhood of Men', the world of men and manhood, the narrow limits of male identity within a system in which even personal life is bound to consumerism and commodity fetishism, continues to assert itself. Rather than serving up trite lessons on male chauvinism, Fawcett gives us a complex social and psychological view of the role of ideology in orchestrating social practice and in shaping male identity which leads to obsessive, violent and defensive behaviour. For Fawcett the boundaries of this male world are seldom free from the larger economic and social realities which define this world in the first place.

In this we come to one of the most entertaining and unifying elements in Fawcett's collection: the deliberate friction between the worlds his text brings into play. This perhaps is illustrated most clearly in one of the final stories, 'The Life of Robert Oomer'. Here the world of Fawcett's imagination, the real world of his experience and the world of dreams and the unconscious collide and interact in a way which ultimately reinforces each as the legitimate source of the story. In the transition from history to fiction, from the worlds of literature and the imagination to that of daily survival, Fawcett moves effortlessly, only foregrounding the tension between these different worlds (often with wry authorial cheek) to raise us above the narrative for an observation of the act of reading itself. This reflexivity reaches its height in 'A Personal Memoir of Thomas Carlyle' where the 'slippage' between worlds reveals not only the tensions in our expectations of literature, but wonderfully exposes the creativity and eclectic freedom of Fawcett's prose; the multiple voices, influences and codes serving as the framework of a text as busy confronting itself as it is the collective reader. Or perhaps, as Fawcett would no doubt suggest, to confront the one is always in fact to confront the other. For a critical, conscious, capricious and absorbing read, Fawcett's collection of stories is a discovery work making.

**Dennis Corcoran**

## STILL BARRED FROM PRISON: Social Injustice in Canada

by Claire Culhane

(Montréal, Black Rose Books, 1985)

**Claire** Culhane is a social activist, a foe of social injustice who, since the mid-1970s, has focused her attention and tenacious energies on our penitentiary system. This book is a broad extension of her first work, *Barred From Prison: A Personal Account* (1979), which described the situation that led to a series of riots and hostage-takings at British Columbia Penitentiary in the late 1970s. Her new book, *Still Barred From Prison* should be required reading for every Canadian who demands longer prison sentences and a harsher penitentiary regime. It is a litany of the lawlessness of our prisons, of the constant brutalization of prisoners and their physical and psychological destruction. It is a record of prisoners' desperate pleas for our intervention, communicated in the only ways possible, through suicide, hostage-takings and riots. It is also a testament to public misconception, indifference and refusal to intercede. Culhane states her position clearly.

It therefore becomes all the more incumbent upon those of us in the outside world to insure that the rule of law is respected *inside* prisons...since the polemics of this book invite bias in favour of those who fight against the glaring injustices of the Canadian prison system, and by extension, against injustice the world over.

Our first penitentiary, opened in Kingston in 1835 (and still in use), was modelled after the American Auburn system which had been created in New York State in the 1820s. The architect of that system was Gresham Powers who noted that if reformation of prisoners was a consideration, then 'Reformation by horror, constant hard labour, and by the breaking of the spirit was the Auburn method'. It is clear from Culhane's work that little has changed in 150 years.

The text may be divided into two main sections. The first examines the pattern of prison violence, the second presents a more general discussion of prisons and prison reform and abolitionist arguments. More than half the book (Chapter 2) focuses on the violence, brutality and bad faith which characterizes our penitentiary system. Culhane takes us from penitentiary to penitentiary, mapping the main events which illustrate the nature of this culture of violence. This is a first rate exposé of the fraudulent state ideology of rehabilitation and reform which masks the day-to-day repression and out-right torture of prisoners. It is witness to the degree of pathology of these institutions. If the Canadian public is to realize the horror of these archaic failures, then a necessary first step is to provide them with an insight into what actually transpires. We need to see beyond the distortions and smokescreens of the Solicitor General's publicists, as in the recent Carson Committee Report (1984). Culhane examines the central issues. The overbearing and disruptive control of the prisons by the guards' union, evident in the torture of prisoners and the guards' refusal to allow constructive prison reform programs, is clearly described. She relates how Kent Maximum Security was opened in British Columbia in 1979,



and was hailed as '...an exemplary model in providing progressive programs for offenders in a humane and secure environment...', in a modern 'university campus' setting. And how the guards *indefinitely* postponed the 'rehabilitation part' on the grounds it was too dangerous to allow prisoners to mingle. Overcrowding and double-bunking; the manipulative use of involuntary transfers; the unjustified expansion of Special Handling Units; the constant torture of prisoners through beatings and gassings during longterm isolation in solitary confinement; are all addressed. Culhane indicates how control of prisons by the guards' culture of violence produces rising rates of prisoner suicide and violence, often translated into hostage-takings and riots. She discusses the contained construction of large, geographically isolated, maximum-security prisons, which is inexplicable in terms of the accumulated wisdom of the developments in penology of the past 30 years.

In the last section of the book, Culhane suggests links to the social context (Chapter 3) and attempts to expand on this connection through arguments for the abolition of prisons (Chapter 4). This last chapter provides a succinct argument for greater public access and community control of the institutions. 'The first essential remains to create a prison system scrupulously accountable to the community.' The demand is for Community Prison Boards which are representative of the society, particularly of the minority groups (e.g., natives) which are overrepresented in the prisoner population. These boards are to have ready access to the penitentiaries and prisoners, and are to be allowed *real* input into the day-to-day operations, as well as in areas such as parole and post-release. The author concludes with this statement:

**The intent of this book is clear—to link the prison abolition movement with other political struggles for fundamental change. A formidable task, but one which must be tackled—with creativity, with enthusiasm, and with a passion.**

Enthusiasm and passion characterize *Still Barred From Prison*. The author is known as Saint Claire among federal prisoners.

*The first essential remains to create a prison system scrupulously accountable to the community*

The strength of the book lies in the author's tenacious grip on the reality of prison life, the product of her constant contact with prisoners and their struggles. But the larger purpose—to locate prison struggles within the context of the containing society is not achieved, and that's the weakness of this book.

Claire Culhane is a prisoner, a defier of the faith, not a theoretician analyzing the larger questions which surround the issue. Why have the guards and their union achieved such power, and how have they gained control of our penitentiaries? What is the current state ideology which justifies the curtailment of the few resocialization and reformative programs that exist in favour of a purely punitive regime? This level of analysis is absent. Though there are indications of important connections to the political economic context in which prisons are embedded, these are never analyzed. No, this is not a theoretically informed analysis which *specifies* the role of the penitentiary within the Canadian state and Canadian society. Instead, the author opts for broad, unsatisfactory generalizations, arguing that the prison is a microcosm of our culture, the ultimate repression in an oppressive capitalist society. This tells us little. Culhane argues:

**Usually, exposés of the 'shocking reality of life behind bars' manage only to astound, agitate and infuriate. They appeal mainly to the emotions. Seldom do they draw political conclusions as by examining the prison system as a function of the state—an instrument for class, racial and national oppression. Publications of prisoners' autobiographies and other harrowing descriptions of prison life by reformists are not a threat to the establishment insofar as they merely describe what exists;...what is a threat is any truly political analysis which proves that prison conditions are not unique, positioned as they are in the increasingly controlled society in which we live.**

Unfortunately, *Still Barred From Prison* does not provide the kind of political analysis that the author herself requires in a book about prison.

The problem is located in the absence of a theoretical framework to organize the overall argument. For example, psychological positivism—biochemical therapy for prisoners—is applauded—and critical political analysis are connected by no ascertainable logic. This confusion is compounded by reliance on polemic instead of analysis. The division of the main chapter into sections on different penitentiaries is useful, but the constant digressions to major issues results in a sense of disorganization which at times made me uneasy. What is this *all about*? What's being argued? Unfortunately, I sometimes came away without answering that question.

But this is an important book, one which opens eyes and turns heads. Its principal strength comes from the author's rapport with the penitentiary population. The hard, clear view of reality expressed in the many excerpts from prisoners' letters gives the book a veracity not common to criminological writing. Claire Culhane is a medium for the protest of Canadian prisoners. This book is a vehicle for the articulation of their plight.

**Robert Gaucher** teaches in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa.

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## New Internationalist

Subscriptions: \$22, 1 year; \$39, 2 years, \$54 institutional, from 70 Bond Street, Ground Floor, Toronto, M5B 2J3

*New Internationalist* has just published its 146th monthly issue. In over twelve years it has provided a remarkably consistent and partisan coverage of what it calls 'the unjust relationship between rich and poor worlds'. It maintains three editorial offices—in Australia, Britain and Canada—and is operated as a cooperative 'whose purpose is to communicate development ideals through print and film to the widest possible audience'. As such it represents a brave attempt at bucking the dominant wisdoms of print journalism while taking into account the existence of television, radio and film. Of 45,000 international subscriptions, 26,000 are in Britain, 6,500 in each of Canada and Australia, 2,500 in the USA and the rest around the world. *New Internationalist* is a Commonwealth magazine, pricking the conscience of whites but not yet making much of an inroad into the American white market, which presumably believes that *Time* or *Newsweek* or *US News & World Report* or even *South* give them all the factoids that are worth digesting.

Only 45,000 copies? Let us begin with that staggeringly low figure for a magazine which is competing with millions. What would you do to prick the conscience of the capitalist world? We could start, I suppose, with blankets for Ethiopia, which are certainly more practical than tears. The Wicks' are right: The naked should be clothed, the cold warmed, the hungry fed. And this is certainly better than the tired old clichés of left and right, that would like us to believe that we are always right, and they wrong because they did not/do not have the right ideology or organization. But, of course, it is not enough, because it is generally too late, too slow. The blankets keep the vultures from pecking away at the cadavers. And our ignorance of what prehistory existed before the locusts swarmed and the desert encroached on fertile plains is part of our willful misreading of all that passes for the third world. (The Falashas, for instance, hijacked from Sudan only after the Israeli rabbinate had, in their tortured wisdom, decided that after 2,500 years they were kosher after all.) So how do you prick the conscience of the rich?

*New Internationalist* has grown a lot in twelve years. At its inception it looked little more than a mouthpiece for British do-gooders, a secular missionary tract supported by Quakers, Methodists and Baptists who had found their true home in the British Liberal and Labour parties; a kind of journalistic Oxfam. What we have now is a magazine that has a much better sense of theory and practice, recognizing that the third world is not 'out there' but here in our own backyard, that the issues that affect the third world are here in our own schools, on our tv screens, on our streets. The interplay between their problems and ours is the most striking feature of the new *New Internationalist*. Each issue is devoted to a theme, but also includes letters (often the most abrasive part of the magazine), an update on past themes, a page or two on brief news items, a page on

An open letter addressing the issues and state of affairs within cultural journals; we solicit opinions, critiques and submissions.

'Ideas for Action', book reviews, a review of a 'classic' book and a profile of one third world country. All of this is done with a fine blend of reportage, autobiography, photojournalism, statistics and graphics. Given its slender resources, *New Internationalist* is an impressive magazine to look at, and the prose style is generally succinct and direct. It can be read right through at one sitting, at the end of which you have to dash to your typewriter to write to someone, even if it is only *NI*, to get some agro sorted out.

Take the theme issues, for example. At random—Looking Beyond Violence; Tourism in the Third World; The Class System: Education and the lessons of learning; Goodbye to Innocence; The Making of an Adult; Everything Under Control: Life in a managed society; A Second Look—Global reporting in a critical light; Living Images: Popular culture in the third world; The Treatment of Mental Illness. Some of the letters have accused *NI* of being tendentious (linking Rape Crisis Centres with the Greenham Common movement, for example) and there is obviously a problem in trying to make connections in order to establish 'movement' when what may be truer to the facts is that people do what they do for quite different reasons. *New Internationalist* not only tries to give us facts, but also to establish connections between the facts, and they are different facts and different connections than those provided by the rest of the media. Most readers of *borderlines* will probably accept those connections, but not all those who give blankets to Ethiopians will, and thereby lies the problem of media coverage and our involvement in the third world. People relate to the third world for different reasons and a liberal-marxist point of view is not necessarily the obvious point of connection. On Latin America, for example, is Gabriel García Márquez' the 'correct' view as opposed to, say, Mario Vargas Llosa's, who is prepared to take money from the Moonies in order to display his sense of what Peru is all about? *New Internationalist* risks its neck by coming down on one side rather than another—but there are so many magazines piled up on the other side!

The major difference between *New Internationalist* and other magazines dealing with the third world (*South* is an obvious comparison, which tries to appear as a third world London *Economist*) is the economy of words as well as the graphic visual appearance which, together with the emphasis on theme issues, gives the magazine a distinctive campaigning sense. The material is there not for pure information, but to be used (one suspects to be used mainly in educational institutions). Some of the articles are based on individual case studies, which gives a sense of immediacy; others are summaries of trends or research which sometimes leads to superficiality (the special issue on mental illness is a particular case of this). But the overwhelming impression is of reflective urgency.

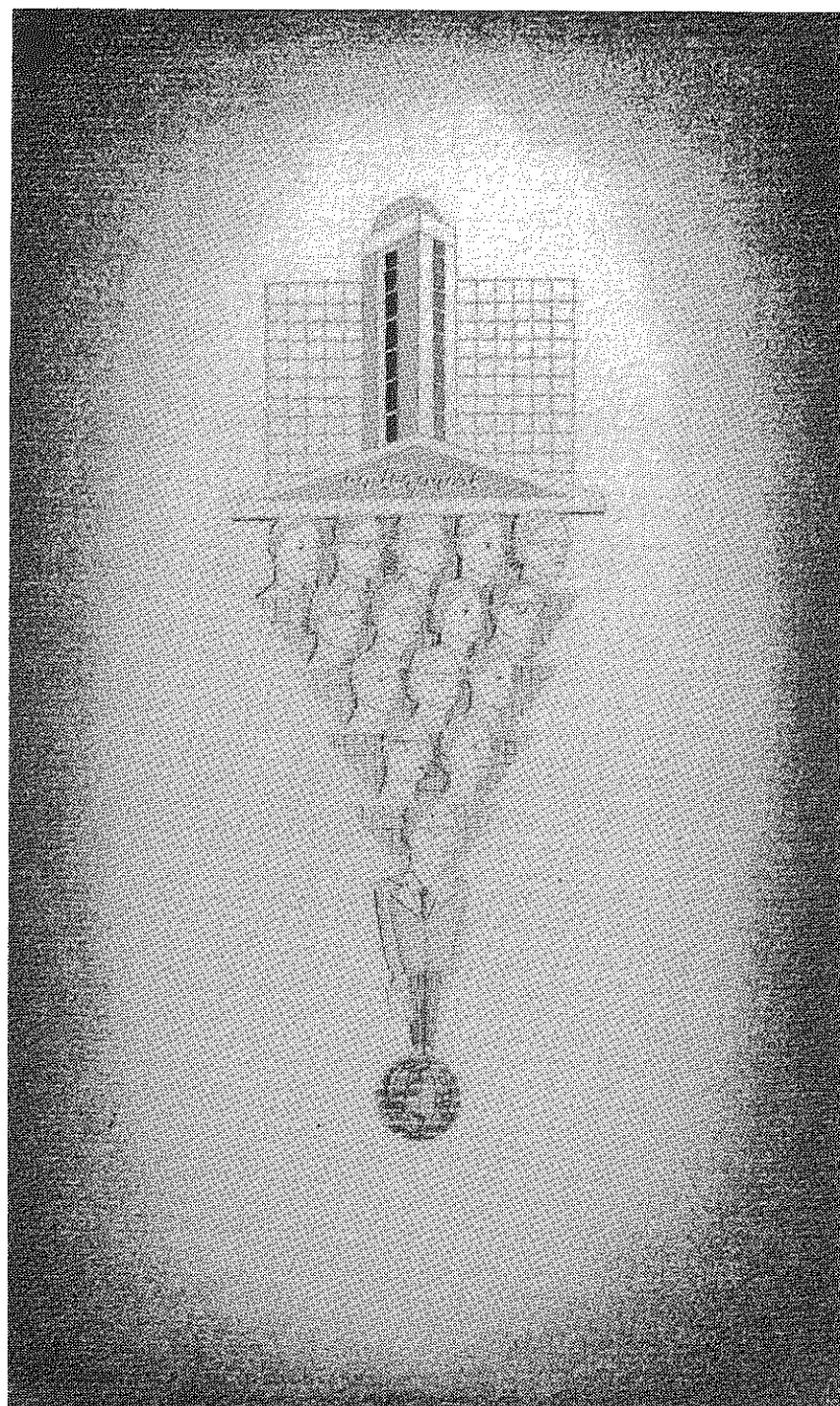
The sense of there being three worlds of development—first thought for us, I think, by Franz Fanon—is an intricate net that has to be reweaved. *New Internationalist* is a beginning in unscrambling those forced definitions, important because they come from countries which have

been instrumental in forging them.

Sometimes, however, in reading the magazine one wishes that there was a wider sense of history. Important as it is to invite readers to confront Robert Tresselt or Karen Blixen, perhaps it would be more important to read them in 'context'. Peter Worsley's *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984,

into our everyday lives (which it certainly is in intent) then the following points have to be taken into account in wishing for its effectiveness. There is still a tendency in the magazine to depend on slogans and short-cut history. To make a connection between *us* and *them* requires a more specific confrontation on issues (birth control, abortion, violence, migration, exchange rates, etc.) in which the pat-

# JUNCTURES



\$8.95 paper) tries to do in one book what I think *New Internationalist* tries to do twelve months each year. But there is a difference. *New Internationalist* plunders history in order to demonstrate that we have been here before: Worsley tries to show the importance of understanding how different we were *then* before we can begin to make connections. He does this, in part, by examining the theories that have been advanced to account for the state of the third world's so-called development, but also by a patient sifting of evidence on migration, poverty, ethnicity, nationalism and agriculture, comparing today's third world with early stages of development in Europe and North America. Where the *New Internationalist* lives in the eternal present, Worsley tries to project us into the past as present.

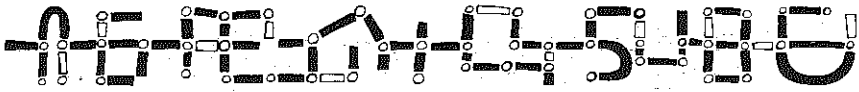
If, therefore, *New Internationalist* is to be taken as a serious intervention

terms that connect (in Gregory Bateson's sense) are spelled out, debate encouraged (and not just in the 'Letters' section). The selling of the magazine must be more aggressive in the USA. The critique of the Soviet Union and its acolytes must be more astringent. Somehow the tendency of the British editors to refer to Indians as 'blacks' must be curbed (do all 'wogs' still begin at Calais?). And thus the particularity of the different countries must be respected, as well as the life histories of their people.

But all of this is like selling coal to Newcastle. *New Internationalist* is the only popular magazine on the third world and *our* worlds in English. It knows its problems and its advantages. Read it and write agro and supportive letters to Richard Swift, 175 Carlton Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 2K3. Above all, write for it.

Ioan Davies





## Horizon Canada: The New Way to Discover Canada

Weekly, March 1985, \$1.95 per issue or all 120 issues for \$175, Centre for the Study of Teaching Canada, Inc. Address for subscriptions: *Horizon Canada*, 394 Orenda Drive, Office 333, Brampton, Ontario, L6T 1G9.

On seeing some of the advance and post-publication publicity for *Horizon Canada* and—more so—when I acquired the first issue (with which issue 2 came 'free'), I had wanted to write about this part-work. But even had I not been so motivated, I would have been when some of the information about its funding became clear.

The two stories I have seen (both in the *Toronto Star*: Don Braid, 'Publishers Clashing at Their Peril', March 16, 1985, p.B5 and Beverly Slopen, "'Encyclopedia Wars'" on the *Horizon*', March 24, 1985, p.B7) bring out information about *Horizon Canada* that relates to the claim made in its publicity that its 120 issues cumulatively make up an *encyclopedia* of 3,360 pages (with over 4,000 photographs, maps and illustrations). One critic (quoted by Braid) says that it will have 'only 472 articles by 350 writers'. In the publicity's claim there is a clash with already announced *Canadian Encyclopedia* (three volumes, 8,000 articles, 5,000 contributors) from Hurtig Publishers Ltd., the English edition of which is to be published in the fall of 1985. In 1980 the *latter* project received \$4 million from the Alberta government; Hurtig raised a further \$7.5 million (Braid) or \$7.8 million (Slopen) himself, with no federal funding (except for the French translation to appear from Stanke Publishing, Montréal, in 1987). In contrast, *Horizon Canada* received \$4.2 million (Braid) or \$4.6 million (Slopen) from Serge Joyal, Secretary of State in the Trudeau government, early in 1984. The total budget is 'about \$11 million including \$1 million spent on advertising' (Slopen). I'll write that again: the 120 issues of *Horizon Canada* have received *over four million dollars* in federal funding (and raised some further \$7 million) for a magazine which is selling (according to Michael MacDonald, co-chairman of its Board of Trustees) over 200,000 copies of the English language edition alone ('...in French, the sales are double the projections of the test.'). The magazine is produced by Transmo Publishers and distributed by Maclean Hunter (efficiently; I found my own copies in a *small* IGA supermarket on College Street in Toronto.)

Before I briefly review the contents thus far (issues 1 through 4) I just want to add a further hinge or two to this *Horizontate*. According to the inside front cover *Horizon Canada* is 'published by the Centre for the Study of Teaching Canada Inc., a non-profit organization devoted to promoting and publishing research on Canada'. Its chairman is Benoît Robert, Université Laval, Québec (the co-chairman, Michael MacDonald, is at Mount Allison University, New Brunswick). Since 1970 the federal Secretary of State has been funding the Canada Studies Foundation ('incorporated in 1970 as an in-

dependent, non-profit organization...' according to its Fall 1982 report). This Foundation has two locations and two names; for its Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Toronto address it is known as the Canada Studies Foundation/La fondation d'études du Canada, but for its Université Laval, Québec, address it is known as Le Centre d'études en enseignement du Canada/The Centre for Studies of Teaching of Canada. But that squeak is rather minor if we return to the cash-nexus more generally and think, briefly, just what *over four million dollars* from federal funds might have done across Canada in, say, \$10 to \$15,000 amounts? Might have done, for example, for *HERizons: women's news magazine* (Winnipeg) or for *INCITE* (Toronto). Two final acerbic queries: most funding for periodical publications requires 'demonstration-effects'—i.e. successful demonstration of survival for three issues (which of course means that the contents can be reviewed and the appropriateness of the content assessed). Press reports indicate funding for *Horizon Canada* in 'early' 1984. Secondly, it looks to me as if the copies were printed up and distribution intended for a much earlier date than finally proved possible—issues 1 through 4 are copyrighted 1984 and have as their legal deposit date 'CAN OCT 84'. So, for me, all of this does indeed offer new ways 'to discover Canada'.

Alas, I wish I could say as much about the contents. They remind me of a vulgar comment by a militant Chartist on the flood of state funded historical, geographical and cultural materials intended to 'force civilization downwards' in 1830s England: 'Quaint facts to f\*\*k up your mind'. Telling us 'You'll never see Canada the same way again.' (it is generally rather heavily Althusserian in its interpellation practices!) one enclosure with issue 1 asks:

### DID YOU KNOW...

- That it was a murderer's son who established the first white settlement in Newfoundland?

and adds a further nine examples of such meretricious rhetoric. The fold out poster (itself a little gem, opening with the possessive-collective 'How much does your family really know about Canada?' and giving enough Disneyland iconography to keep poor old Roland at work for a week) asks:

### Did you know that...

...among the tens of thousands of people who set out prospecting for gold in the Klondike at the end of the 19th century, only a handful became millionaires?

and adds a further eleven quaint questions.

But this is, of course, 'only' publicity, only marketing, only signalling the significance of the commodity. Each issue has four articles, plus (inside the back cover) a 'Discoveries and Inventions' item and (outside the back cover) a 'Masterpiece' of Canadian painting: the former has celebrated Canadianicity via insulin, standard time zones, snowmobiles (Skidoos) and kerosene. The back covers have been supplemented by articles on The Group of Seven (issue 2) and the painters of the Rockies (issue 4). The latter hap-

pily glosses an alliance of 'commerce' and 'Art' in the CP Railway's provision of free travel passes and commissions to painters, graphic designers and photographers to 'promote' the Rockies.

It is this mixture of quaintness and innocence which in the end produces more than sardonic disquiet (given the funding levels and the existing extent of sales); it produces an anger about the marginalization (at best) and pervasive silencing *established* by this 'voice' of history (his-story almost completely in text and image for the first four issues, aside from an article on Emma Albini, opera singer, in issue 4). There is a tone here which in its pleasantries and drooleries, quirks and 'amusing' asides, is incessantly didactic but conceals its own teaching (and authority) in those persisting tautologies of the petty-bourgeoisie admirably identified as *myth* by Barthes (*Mythologies*, Paris, 1957). Here, in all their 'appealing' human-ness are 'the facts', whether about 'The Genius of Baddeck' (Alexander Graham Bell, issue 1), 'Canada at Bat' (baseball, issue 3) or 'Furs and Rivalries' (issue 4). It would be less than I am arguing—although important to indicate—if I were simply to illustrate how the magazine's quaintness and innocence erases any discussion of social differences, either by 'simple' silences (class, gender, ethnicity) or by blandness: the native peoples are either archeologized or anthropologized ('Time Before Time' in issue 1) or absorbed into a curious 'partnership' (issues 2, 3 and 4). Child labour is depicted as a 'ghastly side effect' of something called the 'Industrial Revolution in Canada' (issue 3; this article concludes, describing 1918 or so: 'With most children now in school instead of the factory, one of the worst excesses of Canada's Industrial

Revolution was over.'). Or, again, a charming little vignette—under the classification 'Social Life'—'Red Coats in the West', about how 'The RCMP made the Canadian West a peaceable frontier for settlers and Indians in the years following Confederation' (issue 2), blithely recounts the 'social service support' role of the Mounted Police between Batoche (1885) and 'the tragic confrontation in the streets of Winnipeg during the General Strike of 1919'. (But then the author of this *fabula rasa* is the RCMP staff historian.)

So that could and, in my view, *should* be argued (the product is, after all, heavily sold as 'educational' and oriented to school projects), but I want to finish differently. What is mythic about this history is central to its petty-bourgeois *voice*: it is the discourse of facticity (garlanded, as I wish to repeat again, with quaintness and charm). It produces, and is designed to produce, a tautological closure. Today, children, 'things' are better; this, that, *then* was 'The Past'—full of Heroes and Icons (some of them a little fearful, just to remind readers about Progress); today 'we' are different. Difference (mostly lacking anyway) is not a kind of complexity—simply beyond the reach of innocence and light-artery—it is what produces historical experience, a sense of not simply divergent, nor yet only contradictory, but antagonistic understandings of who we are and how we came to be, to live, to speak, as we do. This magazine is 'at one with' the Canadian Studies Foundation in arguing (but implicitly) its tautological closures around a pre-concerted agenda, a known 'Canada' that produces certain effects—its size, the pattern of its 'settlement'. A history which is not simply powerless (lacking in any tracing of power relations, and worthless in helping us to understand today and tomorrow) but, in the end, people-less. It is, like all myth, frozen (and what, to be sure, could more securely echo back that standard Great White North icon that stands in, again and again, for the Canadas), and, essentially, there... once upon a time.

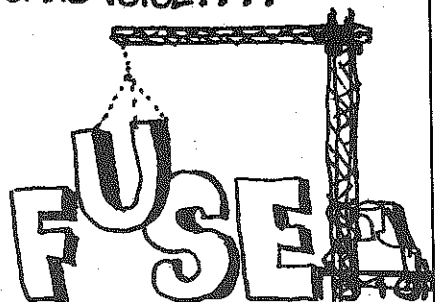
So I do not believe with this (and so much else: the provincial and federal documents, maps, imagery are all from the same tapestry) that it is a question of balance (facts missed here, evidence lacking there) or even, in any usual sense, bias: it is the quality of understanding produced, made possible, encouraged. Stanley Ryerson, through this format, would be empowered and silenced simultaneously. It is about confirming a certain repertoire of identifications which, as is true of all petty bourgeois myths, allows a simultaneous smug satisfaction at *not* being there (then, one of those) *and* being what one is. In that sense (not least for the \$4 million federal investment, which I suspect has more than a little to do with a certain 'opening to' a popularization of the history of one version of New France-Québec) it is *impressive*, but I am thinking as I write of the press-gang that identified 'volunteers' for the Navy by forcing a shilling into their hands; 'taking' the shilling they became sailors. Most identifications work like that. These, here, need to be understood both in terms of who they leave out and how the narrow resulting history is accomplished. There's too much below and beyond this horizon.

Philip Corrigan

*Think,  
briefly, just  
what over  
four million  
dollars from  
federal funds  
might have  
done across  
Canada in,  
say, \$10 to  
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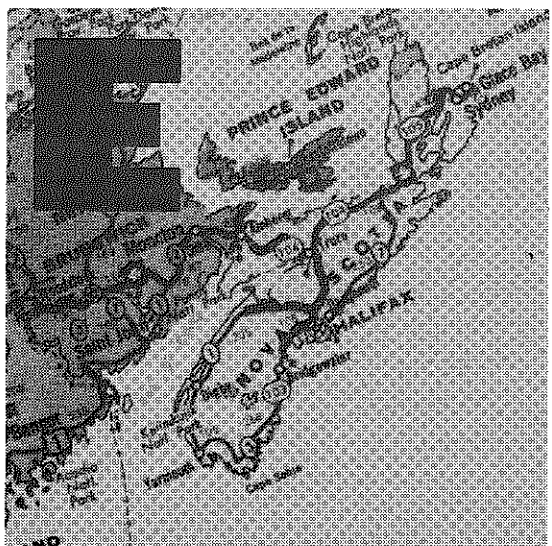
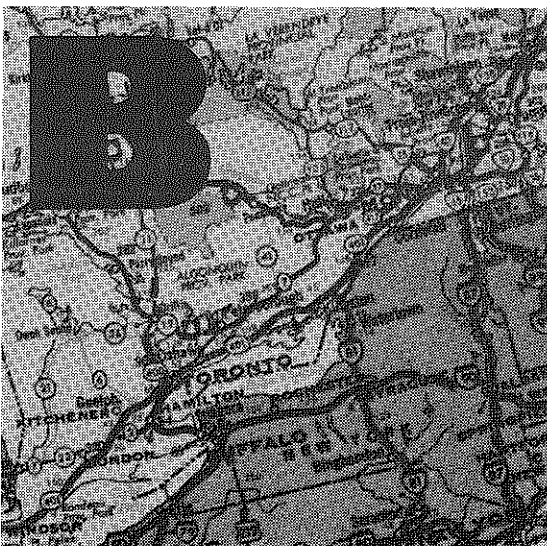
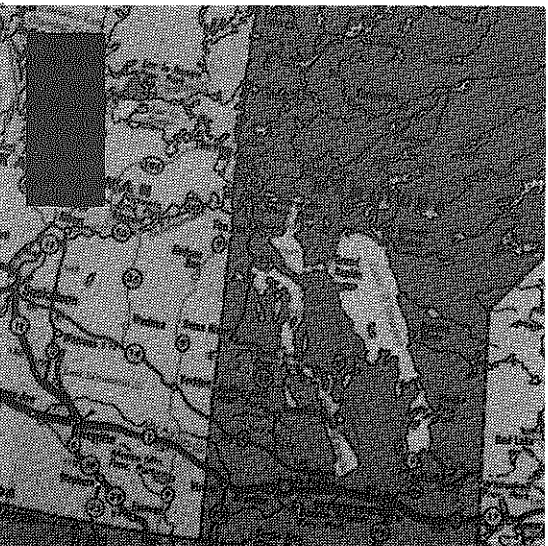
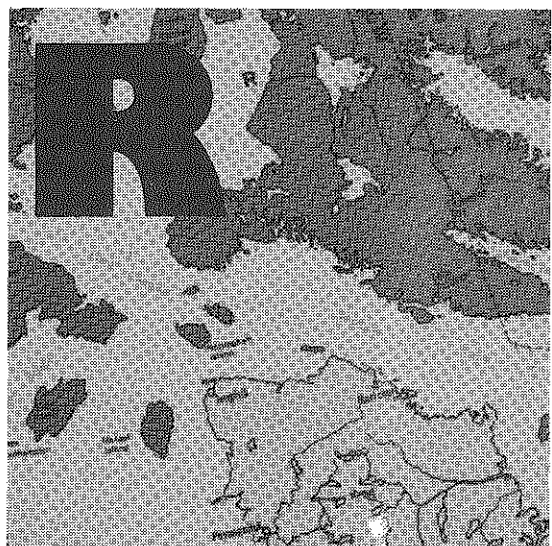
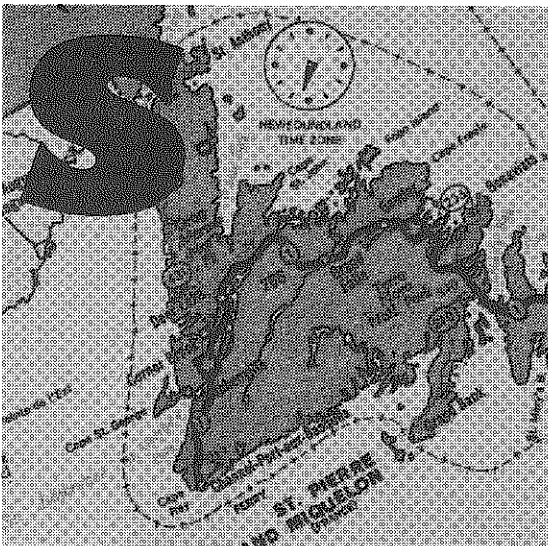
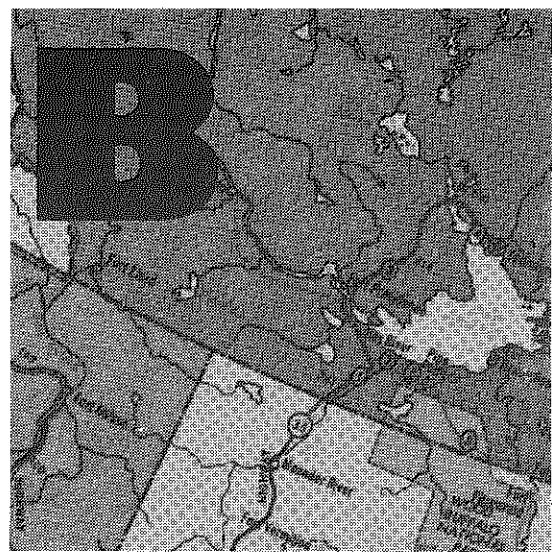
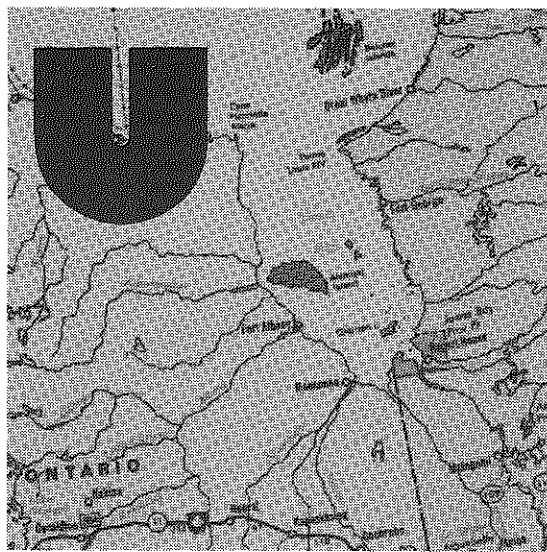
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# Scanner

A listing of academic, political and cultural events, compiled by Kieran Bonner and Peter Fitting.

This section aims to bring together the various events, particularly in Canada, which are not generally publicized.

## POLITICAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS

For political and cultural events we want to provide a publicizing opportunity for those events which, for financial or ideological reasons, do not have access to the major media outlets.

● **FORUM ON ANARCHO-FEMINISM**—12 September, 519 Church Community Centre, Toronto, 7:30 PM. Women only.

● **INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER**—Forty-third Congress of the International Federation for Documentation Sept. 14-18, Montreal. For information: E.V. Smith, Director CISTI, National Research Council of Canada, Ottawa K1A 0S2.

● **THE SECOND GENERATION: CURRENT SASKATCHEWAN PAINTING**—MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan. Sept. 13 - Oct. 27

● **DISCOVERIES: NEW WORK: 1985: EDMONTON**—Two major group shows of new work by emerging Edmonton artists. Aug. 28-Sept. 29 and Oct. 2-27. Latitude 53 Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta.

● **WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT: BEYOND THE DECADE**—An International Conference to review major lessons learned about women's contributions to development in the last decade, to identify gaps and to stimulate action for future activities. 26-29 Sept., Guelph, Ontario. For further information: Development Education Program, 15 University Ave., Guelph, Ont. N1G 1M8. (519) 824-4120.

● **KEEPERS OF OUR CULTURE: A CELEBRATION OF NATIVE WOMEN IN THE LIVING ARTS**—Sept. 26-28, Brantford, Ontario. For information: Woodlawn Indian Cultural Education Centre, 184 Mohawk St., Brantford, Ont. N3T 5V6. (519) 759-2650.

● **WOMEN AND PEACE**—Oct. 18-Nov. 11, The Art Gallery, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax. An exhibition of visual art by women from across Canada to survey their resistance to militarism in the nuclear age. The show is designed to mark not only the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki but the continuing and growing role of women in resisting war through visual expression. 1985 is the end of a United Nations decade for women. During this time, women's voices and actions have emerged as key expressions of the outrage towards a war mentality. The work selected may include: drawing, photography, textiles, posters, video, collage, documentation of performance, paint, etc. The key factor is the focus on women's struggle for peace. This could include work that envisions a nuclear-free future and range to work that focuses on issues of race, class or sexuality. Info: Wilma Needham, Women and Peace, The Art Gallery, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, N.S., B3M 2J6.

● **FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU NOUVEAU CINEMA ET DE LA VIDEO DE MONTREAL**—Oct. 17-27, Montreal. For information: 3742 Bd. St-Laurent, Montréal, H2X 2V8. (514) 843-4725.

● **NONCON 8**—Science Fiction Convention with writer John Varley, Oct. 12-24, North Hill Inn, Red Deer, Alberta. For information: Norcon 8, 20 Huget Cr., Red Deer, Alberta T4N 5R4.

● **INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SCIENCE FICTION AUTHORS**—Readings by twenty major SF writers, Oct. 21-25, Harbourfront, Toronto. For information: Coordinator of Public Readings, Harbourfront, 417 Queens Quay, Toronto M5V 1A2. (416) 534-3350 or 364-7127.

● **NATIVE AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**—November 1985, Museum of the American Indian, Broadway at 155th St., New York City 10032. (212) 283-2420.

● **FOOD FOR ACTION: A CONFERENCE ON THE POLITICS OF FOOD**—November 2, University of Toronto. Daycare; wheelchair accessible. Info: Dee Kramer, 25 Sandbar Willowway, Willowdale, Ont. M2J 2B1. (416) 499-8418. This is a community conference on the alternatives to centralized food economies. The agenda ranges across health and diet, agronomy, urban gardening, and first/third world relations.

Speakers include Maggie Burstyn, Ken McMullen, Alejandro Rojas, Stuart Hill, Joyce McLean and Jim Kirkwood. Workshops will address among other things: recycling, organic agriculture, decentralization and alternative economies, food advertising, soils, the People's Food Commission, food co-ops, food and sexism. The conference is aimed at supporting ongoing educational and political work around food issues; its proceedings will be published.

Alexander Wilson

● **FREE UNIVERSITY: ALTERNATIVE LEARNING NETWORK**—Last spring, a number of people in Toronto put together an alternative learning network called the Free University. The organization is non-partisan and non-hierarchical and is committed to innovative skill-sharing projects that move our communities toward self reliance. "Learning should be grounded in the real world and in the commitment to change it, and that dialogue should result in action", says the catalogue. Courses are free or at cost, and to date have included such things as organic gardening and household repairs.

The Free University also sponsors community forums, and this is the fall schedule:

● **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL CHANGE**—26 September, 519 Church Community Centre, Toronto, 7:30 PM. Talk by Don Alexander, followed by discussion of human nature, the mind as ecosystem, and the psychology of conformity and rebellion.

● **FORUM ON GREEN POLITICS**—24 October, 519 Church Community Centre, Toronto, 7:30 PM. Speakers Michael Bodeman, Susan Berlin and Alejandro Rojas will assess and debate the possibilities of a green politics (ie, does the green movement represent a break with traditional politics, a paradigm shift from the left/right polarities of the past 100 years? Does the movement have the potential to unleash large-scale political participation? What have been the shortcomings of contemporary green politics in Europe and North America?)

● **FORUM ON RADICAL PAGANISM**—30 October, 519 Church Community Centre, Toronto, 7:30 PM.

● **A CRITIQUE OF MARXISM**—21 November, 519 Church Community Centre, Toronto, 7:30 PM. Talk by Don Alexander, followed by discussion.

Upcoming Free University events include a forum on the **EAST EUROPEAN PEACE MOVEMENT**, and a conference on **CREATING AN ALTERNATIVE ECONOMY**. More information can be had by writing to Box 423, Station D, Toronto, Ont. M6P 3K1, or try calling Richard Shapcott at (416) 964-6869 or 364-1076.

● **WOMEN IN THE ARTS CELEBRATION**—Women and the Arts/Les Femmes et les Arts, a Manitoba co-operative of artists of all disciplines is working on an international celebration of women in the arts. This is slated for 1986 in Winnipeg. Ideas and recommendations are welcomed. Contact: Women and the Arts/Les Femmes et les Arts, c/o Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 693 Taylor Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3M 3T9, or phone Lanie Patrick, (204) 943-4737.

## CONFERENCES

In terms of conferences, *SCANNER* wants to gain a wider and more general audience for activities which are listed only in specialized journals.

● **THE ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES**—will hold its eighth biennial conference in Philadelphia, September 19-21, 1985. Program organizer is Professor Richard Beach of SUNY, Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901.

● **ROADS TO REVOLUTION**—Oct. 17-20, University of Guelph. 'Roads to Revolution' is a special focus for papers at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for 18th Century Studies. Papers will concentrate on the forces leading towards revolution in such fields as science, aesthetics, religion and politics. Distinguished academics from Europe and North America have been invited to speak on this theme. Prof. Kenneth Graham, c/o Dept. of English Language and Literature, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1.

● **CANADIAN CONFERENCE ON CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP**—Oct. 16-19, Saskatoon, Sask. Information: Ministry of Education, 2220 College Ave., Regina, Sask. S4P 3V7.

● **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE STATUS OF GIRLS**—Oct. 29-31, Montreal. Information: 6161 St. Denis, Suite 406, Montréal H2S 2R5.

● **WHO'S AFRAID OF THE NEW RIGHT? SOCIOLOGY, POLITICS AND THE NEW RIGHT**—Oct. 17-19, Waterloo, Ont. For information: Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont. N2L 3C5.

● **AMERICAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY**—Nov. 7-10, Vancouver, B.C. For information: Robert Cohen, Dept. of Music, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1W5.

● **THE EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTH**—Oct. 30-Nov. 1, Vancouver. First International Child Care Conference. For information: University Extension Conferences Office, University of Victoria, Box 1400, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2.

● **SEXUALITY 85: SENSITIVE ISSUES IN SEXUALITY**—Nov. 13-14, Toronto. For information: Professional and Management Development, Humber College, 205 Humber College Blvd., Rexdale, Ont. M9Z 5L7.

● **STATE, LAW AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**—Nov. 20-22, Calgary. The Calgary Sociology Colloquium. For information: Prof. C. Reasons, Sociology, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alta. T2N 1N4.

● **MASS MEDIA AND THE OLYMPICS MOVEMENT**—Feb. 1986, Calgary. For information or to submit proposals, write: Tom McPhail, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alta. T2N 1N4.

● **LITERATURE AND THE OTHER ARTS**—Feb. 20-26, Louisville, Kentucky. Fourteenth Twentieth-Century Literature Conference. For more information or to make submissions, write: Prof. E.B. Clay, Dept. of Modern Languages, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. 40292.

● **RELIGION IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF LATIN-AMERICA**—Feb. 6-8, 1986. An International Conference on Liberation Theology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. For information: Conference Services, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6.

● **CONFRONTING THE CRISIS: STRUGGLES IN WORK, COMMUNITIES AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR**—Call for papers for the Sixth Conference on Workers and their Communities, May 1986, University of Ottawa. For information: Fred Caloren, Sociology, U. of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland, Ottawa K1N 6N5.

● **"PERSONS, MINDS AND BODIES: A TRANSCULTURAL DIALOGUE AMONGST PHYSICAL EDUCATION, PHILOSOPHY, AND THE SOCIAL STUDIES"**—May 7-10, 1986, University of Ottawa. Sub-themes of the conference include: "The Nature of Education and Learning in Physical Knowledge," "Alternative Views of Human Nature and their Implications for Physical Education," "Physical Education and Knowledge," "Physical Education/Sport and Values," and "Physical Education and the Social Sciences."

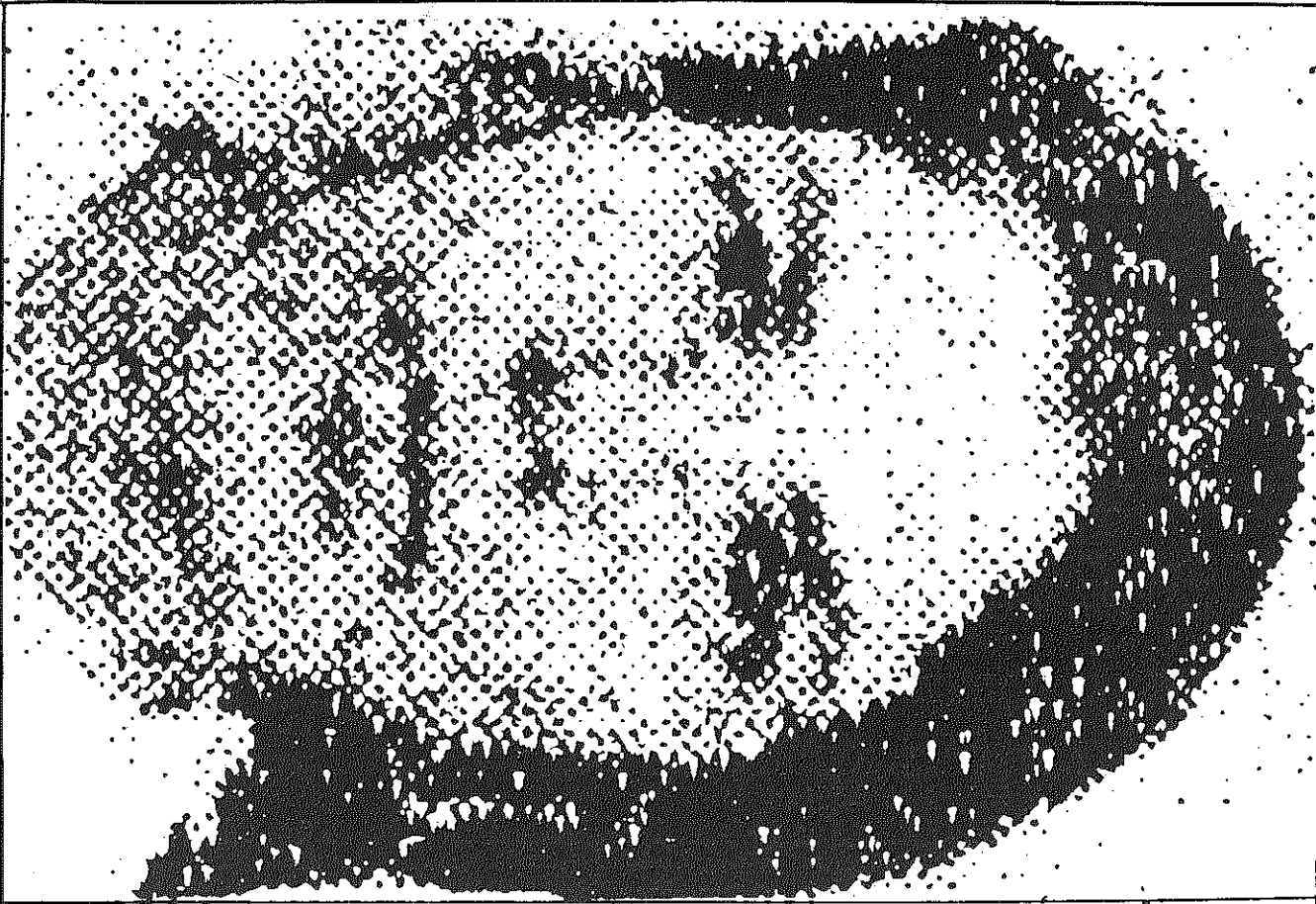
Those interested in the conference should contact Professor Saul Ross, Department of Physical Education, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6N5.

● **INTERNATIONAL HUMOUR CONFERENCE**—April 1, 1987 weekend. The Sixth International Humour Conference, Phoenix, Arizona. Anyone interested in this, or in the annual Western Humour and Irony Membership Conferences, should write to Don L. Nilsen, WHIM, English Department, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287, U.S.A.



Interval House, Emily Stowe Shelter, North York Women's Shelter, Interim Place,

Women in Transition, Education Wife Assault, Yellow Brick House,



**Metro Weather**  
 Cloudy tomorrow,  
 High -5C,  
 Details, A2

COMMUNITY SERVICES  
 See page H1

LIBRARY

# THE TORONTO STAR

Established 1892

See page C1

## Speak out, beaten wives told after murder

By Laurie Messerzoller  
 Toronto Star

Shirley Samaroo lived with bruises and terror for 16 years until her husband murdered her, soaked a bed with gasoline and died in flames beside her.

It is a hideous story. But women's aid groups want it brought home to thousands of other Metro wives who live in silent fear of beatings, too frightened even to phone for help.

Shirley Samaroo could become a cause celebre after a memorial service at 7:30 tonight at the Warden Woods Community Centre, 74 Firvalee Court, Scarborough.

Organizers hope her horrible life and death will train a public



**Family tragedy:** Errol Samaroo killed his wife, Shirley, last Thursday, then died in a fire he set.

Spotlight on the growing problem of wife abuse and force action to combat it.

Social workers say at least one man in 10 beats his wife. About 60

per cent of women who die violently are battered wives.

In the last year, more than 1,000 women have fled from brutal husbands to Metro's seven shelters, and hundreds more are on waiting lists, hiding with friends.

Samaroo was 34. She had been beaten every week of her 16-year marriage. Six weeks ago, she finally escaped with her teenage son and daughter to the Emily Stowe Shelter.

"Mom was so happy there," said 15-year-old Yvina. She smiled a lot more. She was going to stay away from my father for good."

But last Thursday she went back home, as she always did. This time the mistake was fatal.

Police still don't know why she ignored warnings from her family and social workers. She may have returned to the Danforth Ave. flat to pick up clothes or to change the registration of the family car from her name to her husband's.

"We told her, 'Don't go back to the apartment, you'll never have a chance to get out again,'" her daughter said.

"But they (wife-beaters) fill your head with a whole lot of nice garbage and you go back."

Errol Samaroo, a 36-year-old machine operator, was waiting in the second-floor flat.

Police said he locked her in the  
 See DONT/page A4

# SHIRLEY SAMAROO DECIDED TO GO TO A HOSTEL WHERE THERE IS SUPPORT.

Peggy Ann Walpole House, Nellie's, Stop 86 (YWCA), Anduhyaun Residence,

Women's Habitat of Etobicoke, Woodlawn Residence, Ernestine's,