

Dry Lips

oughta move to Kapuskasing

by **TOMSON HIGHWAY**

Produced by Theatre Passe Muraille and Native Earth Performing Arts

Opens April 21st at Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Avenue
For tickets phone 363-2416

The flip side to the REZ SISTERS, DRY LIPS is an adventure into the heart and soul of life on the reservation with the same wit and political clarity that brought us REZ SISTERS.

FUSE

M A G A Z I N E

APRIL • MAY 1989 Vol. XII No. 5

\$3.00

Gut Issues In BABYLON

The Cultural Faces of Racism

by *Marlene Nourbese Philip*

RECOGNIZING RACISM

Interviews by *Ayanna Black*

Tapping Environmental
Concerns For Profit
by *Joyce Nelson*

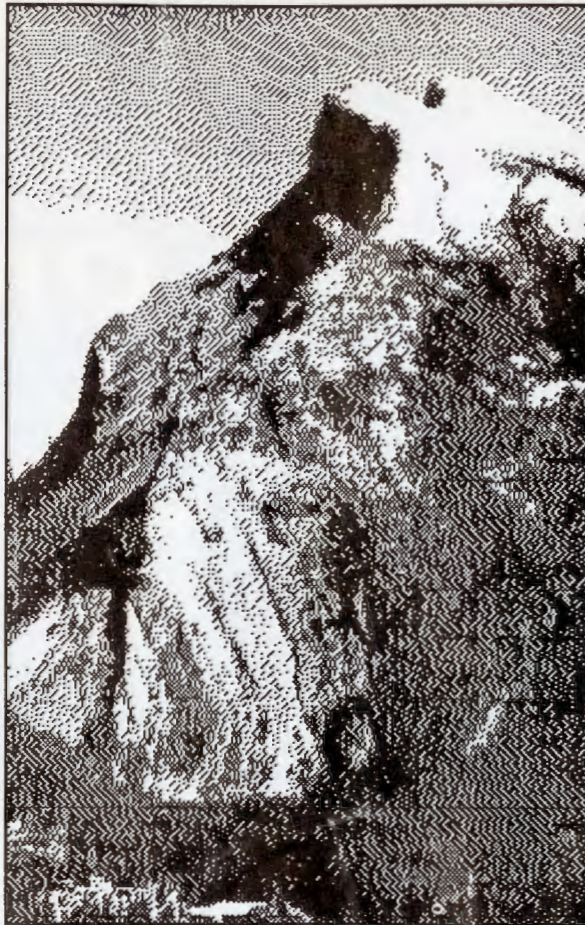
Manufactured Life:
Industrial Art in Windsor
by *Jim Miller*

Police Harass
Hiphop Peace Posse
by *Myke Dyer*

Striptease:
Reclaiming the Body Erotic
by *Sue Golding*

arbie





Critical Fictions

July 17 - 28

The Summer 1989 "Writing Criticism" Workshop
sponsored by the Art Studio program

Chair: Russell Keziere
Lecturers: Reesa Greenberg
Jeanne Randolph
Audrey Thomas

Critical Fictions will debate and present possible alternatives to the scientific models which have dominated the theory and practice of contemporary criticism. The life of fictional, dramatic and poetic texts as criticism will be presented, discussed, workshopped. The censorship of feeling and expression for the sake of a self-conscious rigor will be examined in light of the politics of art publishing, in both critical magazines and popular media.

For more information call (403) 762-6180



The Banff Centre

Office of the Registrar
Box 1020, Station 420
Banff, Alberta
T0L 0C0

Deadline: April 15, 1989

Northern Visions presents:

FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO
May 3rd to May 7th

images



LOCATIONS:

Harbourfront's Studio Theatre
235 Queens Quay West
&
The Euclid Theatre
394 Euclid Ave. (at College)

4 programs nightly of the best new and exciting independent video and film from across Canada. With retrospectives, workshops, panel discussions, parties and much, much more!

FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO



From the video *Born Near the U.S.A.* by John Scott.

FUSE

MAGAZINE

APRIL • MAY 1989
VOL. XII No. 5

Contents

REVIEWS

NEWS & REPORTS

5 **Gettin' on the Good Foot**
Interference
And the Rent Is Low
The Crest of a Wave
Video News

COLUMNS

33 **In Nature's Image**
by JOYCE NELSON
Tapping Environmental Concerns For Profit

FEATURES

12 **Gut Issues in Babylon**
by MARLENE NOURBESE PHILIP
Racism and Anti-racism in the Arts

27 **Recognizing Racism**
by AYANNA BLACK
Interviews with Arts Organizations

37 **Manufactured Life**
by JIM MILLER
Industrial Impact Exhibition in Windsor

40 **Tongue-tied and Loving It**
by MARUSIA BOCIURKIW
Dykes Have Bad Times Too

41 **Bootless Pacing**
by NIGEL HUNT
DNA Theatre's Hamlet

42 **Lesbian Lovebite**
by SHONAGH ADELMAN
Lesbian Vampires on Home Video

44 **The Façade of Obsession**
by COLIN CAMPBELL
Tess Payne's Video By Way Of Fiction

46 **Reclaiming the Body Erotic**
by SUE GOLDING
Revelations, a Book on Striptease

47 **Whose View?**
by DEREK HEDLEY TAYLOR
Peter Raymont's Film The World is Watching

Cover Image: Grace Chanter

FUSE MAGAZINE

APRIL • MAY 1989
VOL. XII No. 5

EDITORIAL BOARD

Jane Farrow, Marva Jackson, Elizabeth Schroder

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bruce Barber, Sara Diamond (Vancouver),
Clive Robertson (Ottawa)

STAFF

Glenn Cooly (Promotion/Distribution), Bryan Gee
(Design/Layout), Jocelyn Grills (Administration),
Mark Rogers (Assistant Editor),
David Walberg (Production Assistant)

CONTRIBUTORS

Shonagh Adelman, Ayanna Black, Marusia
Bociurkiw, Colin Campbell, Myke Dyer, Sue
Golding, Nigel Hunt, Pat Jeffries, Jim Miller, Mary
Ann Moser, Joyce Nelson, Marlene Nourbese
Philip, Mark Rogers, Derek Taylor, Andrew Terris,
Kim Tomczak, Dot Tuer

PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Grace Channer, Robbert Fortin, Bryan Gee, Simon
Glass, Celest Natale, Joyce Nelson, A. Prior, Cathy
Schick, Kim Tomczak, David Walberg

PRINTING

Delta Web Graphics, Scarborough

PUBLISHER

Arton's Publishing

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff House, Sandra Janz,
Gary Kibbins, Clive Robertson,
Lisa Steele, Kim Tomczak

FUSE is published five times a year (includes one double issue) by Arton's Cultural Affairs Society and Publishing Inc., a non-profit artist organization. Our offices are located at 183 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T 2R7, tel: (416) 367-0159. All newsstand inquiries should be sent to this address. Second Class mail registration No. 4455. Copyright © 1989 Arton's Publishing Inc. All rights reserved under International Copyright Union. Copyright is shared equally between the authors and the publishers. Any reproduction without permission is prohibited. Arton's Publishing assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. Manuscripts not accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. Publication of an advertisement in FUSE does not include endorsement of the advertiser by magazine. Opinions expressed outside of specifically marked editorials are not necessarily held by each and every individual member of the editorial group.

Subscription rates: \$12 per year, Institutions \$18 per year (in Canada only). For U.S. and elsewhere add \$3.00. Decisions regarding who qualifies as 'individual' subscriber remain the right of the publisher. Printed in Canada. ISSN 0838-603X.

FUSE acknowledges partial assistance from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, Ontario and the many hours of volunteer and partially paid labour which are provided by everyone listed on our masthead.

Letters

re: "A Hairstyle is not a Lifestyle" (FUSE, Jan/Feb '89).

I greatly enjoyed reading your well-written and interesting piece, but as a survivor of the fiasco that the late 60's and early 70's turned out to be, I can honestly say that it's an old song to new music. From zoot suits to Kerouac, from Jerry Rubin to John Lennon, from James Dean to Hunter Thompson, and on and on, it's been one long line of idealistic bullshit that fades awfully fast once some fat man with a cigar appears on the scene waving a fist full of dollars and mouthing platitudes. Sad to say, I put my money on the fat man once again when it comes to punk.

Try these lyrics by Bickle[sic] and the New Bohemians. Apparently Ms. B isn't too fond of thinking, at least that's what she's telling the world: "Drop me in the shallow water before I get too deep. Well, I'm not aware of too many things." (Sung with apparent pride).

You get the idea. It's the Blue Zone at its finest. Don't think too much, it ain't worth it.

I watched in horror as friends went from hippie, to yippie, to yuppie, to jello. I saw disco decimate a generation's ideals with cheap smoke and a light show. I found that you can only write off so many of these people before you begin to think that maybe it's you that got it wrong, that maybe the meaning of life is secretly hidden in the real estate section of the *Toronto Star*.

I sincerely hope that your ideals can remain intact and that you succeed in making a real difference where other generations have failed. Yours would be the first. You see Ms Farrow, to the vast majority, a hairstyle is most definitely a lifestyle.

J. Paul Panza, Willowdale, Ontario.

FUSE welcomes letters to the Editors. All letters are subject to editing.

Mea Culpa:

Re: "Northern Light" (FUSE, Jan/Feb '89).

We regret the confusion due to an error in production and apologize to the writer and our readers for the mistakes in the layout of the article.



Recycle FUSE !

For those of you who prefer not to preserve your back issues in red morocco leather binding we suggest recycling your favorite magazine. Simply discard the cover and recycle with your newspapers.

EXHIBITIONS:

Artware: Artists' Bookworks
April 8-May 6

The Working Image
May 9-27

EVENTS :

The Writer As Performer

The Hybrid
April 21
Work Writing/Writing Work
May 12
Feminist Works
May 25

A Presentation by
The Art & Working Life
programme from Australia
May 10

A space

A Space, Suite 301
The Orient Building
183 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ontario
Canada. M5T 2R7
Tel. (416) 364-3227

172 JOHN STREET, TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5T 1X5

tel. (416) 593-1332

VIDEO

VIDEO PRODUCTION
AUDIO PRODUCTION
POST-PRODUCTION
& WORKSHOPS

TRINITY SQUARE VIDEO

VIDEO OFFER \$29.95

From the National Film Board of Canada

BEYOND THE SUN: A Portrait of Margaret Peterson

"Art is a search in rhythm for communion with the gods"

Margaret Peterson



A short melodic video profiling a woman artist and her insight into the process of making art.

A complimentary addition for a variety of art programs.

To order/preview contact your nearest National Film Board

Office:

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|----------|----------------|
| Vancouver | (604) 666-0716 | Toronto | (416) 973-9093 |
| Edmonton | (403) 495-3010 | Montreal | (514) 283-4823 |
| Winnipeg | (204) 983-4131 | Halifax | (902) 426-6001 |



National
Film Board
of Canada

Office
national du film
du Canada

The Women's Press



A GATHERING OF SPIRIT edited by Beth Brant

A collection of poignant short stories, autobiographies, poetry, letters and illustrations by Native women. \$12.95 pb



IMAGINING WOMEN SHORT FICTION edited by Second, Second Story Collective

Seventeen women including Marlene Nourbese Philip, Claire Harris, Ann Decter and Marylou DeBassige write on a variety of themes. \$9.95 pb

229 COLLEGE STREET #204 TORONTO ONTARIO M5T 1R4

ATLANTIC INDEPENDENT MEDIA

formerly
Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Atlantic
presents the
Fall Releases of 1988

I WILL NOT MAKE ANY MORE BORING ART

(William D. MacGillivray)

NOTHING PERSONAL

(Melodie Calvert)

JACKASS JOHNNY

(Alex Busby & David Coole)

BOLAND TWIRLERS

(Angela Baker)

OBEY YOUR HEART

(Dean Brousseau)

SIRENSONG

(Jan Peacock)

A.I. Media is a non-profit national distributor of films and videos produced in Atlantic Canada, specializing in the distribution of works by the independent artists.

Mailing: PO Box 1647, Station M, Halifax, NS. B3J 2Z1

Shipping: 1574 Argyle St. Halifax, NS. B3J 2B3
(902)422-5929

NEWS & REPORTS

Gettin' on the Good Foot

Hiphop's Peace Posse vs Police Harassment



by Myke Dyer

TORONTO — In the past 10 years four studies have looked at the relationship between visible minorities and the police forces in Ontario. A fifth was recently prompted by the outcry from Toronto's black community after the shooting death of Wade Lawson. Many in the black community are doubtful that this hearing will accomplish anything in the way of reforms. They view the task force with pessimism, seeing it as a cynical attempt to reduce tensions after Lawson's death and the charge of manslaughter laid against one of the officers.

In Toronto, with a police force of over 2,000 officers, only 200 are from visible minorities. Optimists point to the majority of visible minority members on the task force. Only two members are white, while the others belong to the groups most affected by racial tensions within the police force. Some believe that this group will

therefore suggest positive solutions to the problems.

But it is easy to understand that even the optimism surrounding the task force is guarded when Toronto police union president Art Lymer says: "If they (blacks) provoke violence, violence will be provoked against them."

The mainstream press hasn't helped much. Working closely with the police, they have turned Lawson's death into a question of integrity and trust. It's not a matter of guilt, but rather a question of the public's faith in its police force. When one officer takes a fall they all go down like a close knit family. Right now they are suffering from a collective scraped knee. With a look of pity, the police warn us that if they cannot shoot whom they please, "we'll have a city built on violence, like in Detroit." The gap is widening between police and people of colour, especially the black community.

Ron Nelson feels he is a victim of both mistrust and harassment. Nelson is the radio-programmer-cum-community activist heard on *The Fantastic Voyage*. The CKLN-FM radio show features the latest in hiphop, rap and dub music. *The Fantastic Voyage*, once fraught with controversy (too sexist, too homophobic) has become the flagship programme for the black community, especially the young.

The show has evolved over its five-year history from a simple music show to an active community/political forum. Weekly topics recently included the Lawson case, inter-racial violence, and the promotion of an AIDS awareness rap contest. Nelson lays his feelings out in the open, almost pleading for understanding, faith, and most of all, peace within the black community. He feels ashamed of the violence within the community, and he tells his listeners: "In order for us to get love and re-

spect, we have to learn to love one another." And Nelson's listeners respond.

Ron Nelson has also been responsible for bringing some of the biggest names in hiphop to the city and promoting a healthy local rap scene. Some concerts have drawn thousands of people and Ron Nelson Productions has created a market for this vital, energetic music. The largest and most frequently used venue for these shows has been the Masonic Temple, known in recent years as the Concert Hall. Nelson had been gearing up for a busy holiday season, with four shows booked into the hall in December, 1988, including a New Year's Eve bash. Then, suddenly, Nelson's contract was canceled. Permanently.

The last few months of 1988 saw sporadic outbreaks of violence after shows at the Concert Hall. One event in particular, a dance promoted by Nelson on November 19, in which fighting and looting took place after the show, led to a *Toronto Sun* story with the headline: "Kids Riot After Dance." This in turn led to a letter from the people representing the hall, the Masonic Temple Corporation. The group, essentially shareholders, expressed concern that their reputation would be tarnished by the press reports and that their Public Hall Licence would not be renewed. The promoter sees it much differently.

"It was a fear by the police (52 Division) about New Year's Eve," says Nelson. "They were doing everything they could to prevent all events that had the potential to go out of control in any way, shape, or form from happening. That was their solution."

The New Year's festivities at Toronto City Hall last year turned into a violent free-for-all as 75,000 revellers poured into the streets. Some looting occurred. This had nothing to do with the Concert Hall nor did the evening feature rap or any other "black" music. But the police took 'preventive measures' by singling out Nel-

DAVID MERRIT

15 avril au 14 mai

DEBORAH MARGO ET LORÈNE BOURGEOIS

20 mai au 18 juin

DIASPORA DES FEMMES ARTISTES AFRICAINES

(D.A.W.A.)

25 juin au 23 juillet

ARTICULE

4060, St-Laurent, suite 106
Montréal, Québec H2W 1Y9
(514) 842-9686

subventions: Conseil des Arts du Canada, Ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec, Conseil des Arts de la C.U.M.



INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL FILM CONGRESS MAY 28-JUNE 4, 1989 TORONTO, CANADA

Toronto invites the world to participate in a major event celebrating cinema's avant-garde. Sponsored by the Art Gallery of Ontario, the University of Toronto, York University, and the Goethe Institute, the International Experimental Film Congress is an exciting celebration of cinema's avant-garde.

Some of the confirmed participants include: Wilhelm and Birgit Hein, Bruce Elder, Rose Lowder, Steve Anker, Simon Field, William Moritz, Stan Brakhage, Robert Breer, David Rimmer, Pat O'Neill, Michael Snow, Carolee Schneemann, Marjorie Keller, and others.

For information regarding registration, open screenings, and accommodation, contact

Jim Shedden, Coordinator
International Experimental Film Congress
2 Sussex Avenue
Toronto ON M5S 1J5
CANADA
(416) 978 7790/588 8940

son's concerts which the community at large associates with violence. The promoter says that the police pressured the Masonic Temple Corporation to cancel his New Year's Eve show. But they went further.

"I knew," Nelson says, "from my discussions with the Masonic Temple people that when they knew that the police were going after the cancellation of my event there would be legal difficulties and they hid behind the excuse by canceling all my contracts."

The failure of both the Concert Hall and the police to discuss their plans for 'preventive measures' and more drastic solutions with Nelson is reprehensible. The cancellations came with little or no warning at all. Deposits for the canceled shows had been made and some of the contracts were signed months in advance. The last minute cancellations, days before the first event, meant lost investments in advertising and a direct loss in potential revenue of as much as \$30,000. An alternative club in Don Mills was found but it had a capacity of only 800, compared to the Concert Hall's 2,000.

Nelson has provided the Masonic Temple with two and a half times more business than any other client. He imposed tight security at the door, using metal detectors for weapons searches and providing for hand searches of bags and parcels.

"Our functions have been according to contract stipulations. We control the crowds inside. When they leave it becomes the responsibility of the police; I am not able to provide security on the street."

Rather than work on options (moving the dates around, working with the police), Nelson says the Masonic Temple Corporation was "insensitive to the fact that I had run my business successfully in the past and that I would suffer major damages as a result of the canceled contracts."

Apart from pressuring the Masonic Temple to close the hall

off to black dances, Nelson says that the police had been in the habit of towing away all the cars that had been parked both legally and illegally in the vicinity of the Concert Hall during his shows. When asked, the police claimed they were towing the vehicles as a safety caution, "should anything happen."

Police harassment continues to follow Nelson. While pursuing legal action against the Masonic Temple (a law suit is pending) the young promoter must find a suitable venue to replace the hall. He is having difficulty finding any alternatives.

"There's no place like the Concert Hall; it's irreplaceable. It's



the place for young entrepreneurs like myself to gamble with a fair-sized concert and not lose my shirt. The place has a great sound and a good location. They've taken away the Concert Hall and they've stagnated the hip-hop scene."

The police, apparently monitoring Nelson's activities, have also warned other venues against renting to Ron Nelson Productions. The Party Centre, a location that has opened up to Nelson in the past, is now refusing to do so. When Nelson asked the landlord why, he was told to call 52 Division for an answer. Another location which Nelson has used in the past and that he has secured for shows in the spring is also receiving calls from the police.

The Hungarian Hall admitted to Nelson that officers from 52 Division called their office and told them "lots of stories."

And although the Concert Hall did get their license renewed for a year they can't sign contracts with promoters unless they have the support of 52 Division. This support comes through the division supplying pay duties—officers hired at \$30 an hour by the promoter. If the division won't agree to supply the pay duties, the event will not take place.

Nelson acknowledges the crowds that come to his shows have their problems; a few bad apples spoil every large gathering. But Nelson makes an effort

to confront the violent element at his shows, the "bad man" as he refers to it, on his radio programme.

"The kids themselves are radically smartening up their acts," Nelson says. "They're realizing peace is the only route to go; the peace posse is the only posse worth belonging to. They're seeing more and more the bad man is getting pushed underground because we're ruining his morale, taking away the image that he used to have."

Violence and hip-hop have always had a bad record together and the association is made even stronger by the mainstream press's failure to understand the role of rap in the black community. Rap and hip-hop do not pro-

mote violence and drug use, they condemn it. There are shallow rappers who are sexist and promote it openly. This isn't something new in contemporary music and it's certainly not limited to hip-hop culture. But these artists aren't playing the role models either. *The Fantastic Voyage* becomes an education for the young with Nelson's own words and through the black consciousness rappers he regularly plays, like Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions, and Rumble and Strong. They are putting out records that deal with topics directly, trying to prevent young blacks from succumbing to bad influences. The rap artist has become a positive role model.

"Drugs, crack, and walking with knives and guns; I know it exists," says Nelson. "But they're rapping against it, that's the way it goes, not the way your friends or the other guys who live in your neighbourhood go. If you follow them you follow a very destructive path."

But with the loss of the Concert Hall and other venues, Nelson feels the live hip-hop scene is dying and morale is very low.

"People feel like they've been ripped off. Ninety-nine percent of the kids who came to the shows were the good ones. It's just the bad man who did what he did that gave us the reputation that led to being closed out of the hall."

Ron Nelson may recoup his losses if the lawsuit goes in his favour, but his name and the hip-hop scene in general have been tarnished by the cancellations. The Concert Hall, a place of entertainment and culture for so many, has now been closed off to the black community. Nelson hopes that the hip-hop scene will be nourished and thrive again.

But he also points to New York, where clubs for live hip-hop shows are virtually non-existent due in part to the hostile nature of the crowds. This may happen in Toronto and the loss of a venue like the Concert Hall may be the beginning. ■

Interference!

CRTC Muzzles Campus & Community Radio

by Mark Rogers

TORONTO — In addition to lining up programming and coordinating volunteers, campus and community radio broadcasters must now second guess ad hoc rulings by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) on what is a "matter of public concern." However, this is not a matter for idle speculation. As CFRO-FM, Co-op Radio in Vancouver discovered, a "wrong" judgement in this test on modern metaphysics can have serious implications come license renewal time.

As guardians of the publicly-owned airwaves, the Cabinet-appointed CRTC commissioners have decided to enforce a narrow interpretation of the Broadcasting Act as it pertains to "balance." The Act states: "The programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should be varied and comprehensive and should provide reasonable, balanced opportunity for the expression of differing views on matters of public concern . . ."

At Co-op Radio's license renewal hearing in March of 1988, the gulf between the CRTC and Co-op Radio interpretations of the Act became clear. In an unusual move, the CRTC allowed an intervenor to appear at the hearing and voice his complaint that "Co-op Radio had failed to provide balance in its programming on mat-

ters of public concern." Specifically, he charged that in its regular broadcasts of *The Voice of Palestine* (produced by Co-op Radio), the station had "taken upon itself to use the publicly-owned airwaves to broadcast very strongly-worded Arab views while completely barring the Jewish side on the present crisis in the Middle East."

Co-op Radio took the position, shared by many campus and community broadcasters, that it is the broadcasting system as a whole that should provide balance, and that it is the role of campus and community broadcasters to balance the mainstream media. At the hearing, Co-op Radio expressed disbelief that the balance requirement "would require us to establish programs that give voices to sectors of society that already have voices in the media."

The CRTC disagreed. Citing its Public Notice (1983-112) on Religious Broadcasting it stated that with regard to controversial programming "the appropriate way to achieve the objectives of the Broadcasting Act is to require that balance be attained by each individual station in the programming it broadcasts." Furthermore, in its decision, the CRTC stated that it was "not satisfied with Co-op Radio's response to the matters of balance and access as raised" and renewed Co-op Ra-



dio's license for only three years rather than the usual five years. The CRTC ordered the station to submit a report within six months outlining "in detail" how it plans to meet the balance requirement.

To clarify its position, the CRTC released (on the same day as its decision on Co-op Radio) a Public Notice (1988-161) on Balance in Programming on Community Access Media. For their part, Co-

op Radio filed with the Federal Court of Appeal for leave to appeal the CRTC's decision. In January they were informed that this would not be granted. Since then, representatives from campus and community radio have criticized the CRTC position on CBC radio's *Media File* (04/02/89) and on CBC television (*The Journal*, 10/02/89).

Criticism has been leveled

against the CRTC's Public Notice 161 on a number of fronts. National Campus/Community Radio Association President John Stephenson said that the normal process of consultation between the CRTC and broadcasters that occurs before the release of this kind of policy statement had not been adhered to in this case. "This is of particular concern to us because we are ready and willing to assist the Commission in the formulation of policy."

The problem for campus/community broadcasters in interpreting and implementing the "balance" requirement came to the fore in a panel discussion on *Media File*. Punam Khosla, station manager for CKLN in Toronto, Peter Royce, board member for Co-op Radio, and Peter Fleming, Director General of Radio for the CRTC, could not agree on what constitutes a balanced debate. Khosla repudiated the notion that campus/community broadcasters should take their cue from the print media on how to frame debates on issues of importance to the communities they serve. "The media, overall, holds the position that there are two sides to every story—the way we operate is that there are at least two stories to every side and we want to bring that out."

Exposing further weaknesses in Public Notice 161, and in the Broadcasting Act that it seeks to clarify, is the ambiguity surrounding the notion of a matter of "public concern." This is significant because the Public Notice states that "not all programming need be balanced, only that relating to matters of public concern." Questioned on *Media File*, Peter Fleming was unable to offer a definition though he suggested as examples such "hot topics" as abortion, capital punishment, foreign policy and free trade.

Questioned on the same point, Allan Rosenzweig, the CRTC lawyer who handled the Co-op Radio hearing, told *Fuse*: "We don't have a list of topics. We don't tell stations in advance you

must consider these to be matters of public concern." He reaffirmed the CRTC's position that it is the licensee's responsibility to determine what is a matter of public concern. However, the Public Notice goes on to state that "the Commission may subsequently review a licensee's handling of controversial matters, whether in response to a complaint or otherwise." Rosenzweig described the review process as being similar to

a court case, relying on precedent and taking into account the positions of the complainant and the station: "A judge at the end of the day is going to make a decision." Co-op Radio, he said, "was judged to be off-side by the Commission after considering what was complained about and the station's response."

In his assessment of the implications of the CRTC's ruling, NCRA president John Stephen-

son said that "the biggest worry is that some stations will no longer present things that might be controversial but at the same time of interest to the public and of value to the community." The NCRA is drafting a letter to the CRTC stating that there should have been more consultation before it released the Public Notice and that Co-op Radio's license should be renewed for the full five-year term. ■



THE STRONG MAN: A CARTOON FOR LABOUR DAY MAY. "Yes, there can be no doubt about your strength if you can support all those; but don't you think it's time to take a holiday?"

Still timely:
Walter Crane's
May Day Cartoon
Published in
Justice, May 1897.

And the Rent is Low

Calgary Artists Reach Critical Mass

by Mary Anne Moser

CALGARY—The reputation of Calgary in the Canadian art scene has waffled between nonexistent and negative in the past. Most artists here have had to learn to live with the suspicion that if they were any good, they would be living somewhere else. But this fear of being in the art dark has begun to erode. Replacing it is the attitude that Calgary is a worthy place to work. Of course, along with this attitude has come all the problems facing a developing community.

The depth and scope of Calgary's difficulties have been growing alongside the rapid development of a cohesive, dedicated and expanding group of artists. These hopes and fears were vented recently at a forum sponsored by EM/Media, a video production centre and exhibition space. This forum, *Margins, Meanings and Methods*, was the crest of a four-month wave of film, video and performance art that involved the cooperation of not only the artist-run centres in Calgary, but also the more reserved University of Calgary Nickel Arts Museum and the Alberta College of Art Gallery.

The recent swell in interest in the time-based (film, video, performance) inter-media arts has been in response to a barrage of shows: *Media Blitz*, *A Festival of Film and Performance Art*, a collaborated effort by The New Gallery, EM/Media, the Calgary society of Independent Filmmakers and 2nd Story Gallery; *Camera Obscura*, a 12-part ca-



Colleen Kerr and Nelson Hendricks in *God, a Media Blitz* performance.

blecast series on Rogers Cable 10; *Elemental Instincts* at the Nickel Arts Museum (University of Calgary) and *Performance Anthology* at the Alberta College of Art.

Critics, writers, curators, art funding agencies and artists gathered at the end of this four-month crush to ask why the inter-media time-based arts are not readily accepted within the confines of broader contemporary art practice in Calgary. Not surprisingly, the issue came down to support, in terms of both a wider audience and money.

In the first place, there is pressure on Calgary artists to go to bigger cities like New York, or even Toronto (for the truly troubled), in order to make it big. This pressure, however, is waning. With the growth of a more stable and cohesive art community, the working environment has become stimulating. The one thing yet missing is stable funding. But as

affinities to other people around the country, around the globe, just by the nature that it is produced by human beings... the audience can be that broad," Hendricks explained.

The recurring theme is that although the community involved in time-based and performance art is undeniably much larger in bigger centres like Toronto and New York, there is no difference in quality and dedication. When outsiders visit "that's what they notice—the quality," according to New Gallery coordinator Sandra Tivy.

Tivy says the reasons for this concerted effort to examine the role of the inter-media time-based arts in Calgary was necessary because the profile of these art forms was low, they were suffering from a lack of support, limited exposure and a harmful reputation linking them with theatre and film. And yet there existed a significant body of artists and works ready for a media blitz.

The sudden flourish in inter-media time-based arts could be attributed to a number of things. Perhaps it is simply that a critical mass has been reached in Calgary so that the community is large enough to perceive itself as legitimate. Perhaps one factor is that the technology allows an artist to reach beyond his or her own geographical location. Or, on a more practical level, it may be influenced by the cost of living in larger centres.

According to Tivy, who can be credited for much of the organization and inception of *Media Blitz*, Calgary artists are redefining their centre. It is not the mainstream determined by the Canada Council. Events like *Media Blitz* can be a way of redefining the centre. "It can be here," she said. "That's just started to happen. It's a real change in thinking. I don't know what brought it about exactly."

The interesting thing about this situation in Calgary is how, single-handedly, the artist-run centres have supported inter-media art.

Photo by Cathy Schick.

Inter-media art differs from the traditional art media because it has been informed by a history that originates outside the city and has arisen spontaneously in Calgary, "almost travelling by spore" according to one participant. Since its inception here, inter-media time-based artists have been writing their own history. The concern now is to develop a critical discourse among artists, and develop a broader audience by doing so.

This point raises another major area of concern for Calgary artists: being both figuratively and geographically away from the centre of support for the arts in Canada, there is a tendency to want to conform in order to share that support pie. The warning issued at the forum was to be careful of using the criterion of the mainstream as justification for activity. "We don't have to say, 'Look, we're getting closer to that, so recognize us.' Video has been happening for 20 years in Toronto. We're doing the same thing here, so support us."

This whole issue of who is doing inter-media time-based art, for whom, and with what effect, was the focus last fall in Calgary. The forum over, artists are back in their studios, curators are planning new shows and writers are looking for new stories, all with a heightened awareness of the struggles of a dedicated, developing art community.

Shows like *Media Blitz* reflect the concern shared by ANNPAC (Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres) galleries across the country to deal with work that cannot be easily categorized.

The margins aspect of the forum dealt with the problems of being on the fringe. By making art in Calgary, one will definitely be on the fringe. The changing attitude now is that a centre can be found in that fringe, that a "critical mass" has been reached creating a certain energy, coherence and continuity within the Calgary art community. ■

The Crest of A Wave

Nova Scotia Coalition Lobbies for an Arts Council

by Andrew Terris

HALIFAX — In 1983, the Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness and the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia jointly sponsored a provincial cultural policy conference. One of the major recommendations of the conference was the establishment of a provincial arts council, and since then calls for such a council have been numerous and frequent.

A group of concerned citizens formed the Nova Scotia Coalition on Arts and Culture in 1984 to address cultural policy issues at the federal level. In September 1985, the Coalition organized a national conference, the Halifax Conference, with funding from all levels of government, public interest groups, corporations, and several foundations. The Declaration of the Halifax Conference included a succinct statement of fundamental principles which were widely circulated during the conference proceedings. These principles, which have been the basis for the subsequent work of the Coalition, contain these basic tenets: "public support as the cornerstone of arts and culture policy in Canada; the arm's length principle; the central role of artists in the development and implementation of policy; commitment to the cultural integrity of the regions."

The Nova Scotia Coalition on Arts and Culture publicly called for an arm's length provincial council in 1986. In 1987, with

funding from the Atlantic Project Fund of the Canada Council, the Coalition held a series of 11 open meetings across the province. The question asked at these public consultations, and the title of the report which resulted, was "Does Nova Scotia Need a Provincial Arts Council?" The report recognized widespread interest in provincial cultural development and support for further investigation of arts council models. It also indicated the necessity to look at an arts council in relation to arts activities in smaller communities and in the educational system.

The Coalition currently finds itself with some important alliances and significant opportunities. Organizational changes in the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia have resulted in improved communications. Moreover, the credibility and contacts of the Coalition have increased substantially as a result of its province-wide meetings; its work stands as a model for responsible, independent, long-term cultural activism, based on open consultation and substantial volunteer effort.

Local government recognition of this fact came in a pre-election policy paper issued on August 26, 1988, by the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia. Titled "Arts and Culture: The Nova Scotia Mosaic," it made the commitment that: "A Progressive Conservative government will

consult with the province's cultural organizations, including the provincial Cultural Federations and the Nova Scotia Coalition on Arts and Culture, to ensure direct input on cultural policies and programs."

The Coalition has proposed taking the next logical step—the preparation of a comprehensive cultural development strategy for the province of Nova Scotia. This plan will be based on the findings in the aforementioned report, on the report of the findings of the Cultural Policy Conference of 1983, on existing structures and organizations in the province, on further broad consultations with the entire cultural community and on exhaustive research into existing arts councils and methods of community cultural development. The first draft of this strategy will be submitted to an advisory group of 30 representatives from the provincial cultural community, who will meet for two days to review the strategy and comment upon it. A revised draft will then be widely distributed prior to a provincial conference in the fall of 1989. It is expected that this successor to the Nova Scotia Cultural Policy Conference of 1983 will be co-sponsored by the "Coalition," the Cultural Federations and the Department of Tourism and Culture. The discussion and adoption of a new cultural development plan for Nova Scotia should top the agenda. ■



by Kim Tomczak

FILM / VIDEO CANADIANA. The Moving Image and Sound Archives, the National Library of Canada, the National Film Board of Canada and the Cinémathèque québécois invite video makers to participate in their national film/videography. Entry forms for this computer based listing service are available in most media centres across the country or from: Moving Image and Sound Archive, National Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3 or call Anne Marie Walling at (613) 996-3414.

REBEL GIRLS: A Survey of Canadian Feminist Videotapes 1974 - 1988 curated by Susan Ditta is now on and runs until the 21st of May 1989 at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. *Rebel Girls* features 30 videotapes divided into a series of seven programmes: "THE BODY POLITIC," "REQUIEM FOR ROMANCE," "THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL," "MEMORY, MYTHOLOGY, DESIRE" and "SHE WORKS HARD FOR HER MONEY." The exhibition focuses on artists who have a critical understanding of the political aesthetics of feminism. The videotapes

analyze, critique and examine a wide variety of feminist issues. The styles of works featured vary from simple sustained close-ups, used as a medium for relating personal experiences, to the fast-paced, colourful dynamics of computerized animation and rock-video editing techniques that create a sense of excitement and changing times.

DELUING DOCUMENTARY is the name of an international symposium that examines the influence of video art on the documentary form. Organized by Karen Knights and Louise Rudnicki of the Video In, events will take place on March 28, 31, April 1 and 2, 1989. Video and film artists included are: David Tuff, Stuart Marshall, Lorraine Dufour & Robert Morin, Tom Kalin, Mona Hatoum, Peg Campbell, Robert Milthorp, Gary Kibbins, Martha Rosler, Meera Dewan, Marion Blackwood & Issac Julien and John Greyson. If you don't live near Vancouver, borrow the money and go as this is a must see event. Contact Knights or Rudnicki at the Video In, 1102 Homer Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6B 2X6, tel. (604) 688-4336.

IF YOU have produced or plan to produce a video tape on the subject of AIDS please let V Tape know. This Toronto distributor is in the planning stages of producing compilation programmes for distribution across Canada and perhaps (in association with an American distributor) the U.S. Send VHS preview copies with descriptive materials to: V Tape, attn. John Greyson, 183 Bathurst St., Toronto, M5T 2R7. Make sure you enclose your return address.

(both national and international) by women of colour. Contact: Zainub Verjee, *Women in Focus*, #204, 456 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V5Y 1R3 or call (604) 872-2250.

MEDIA ARTS at the Banff Centre. I mentioned this in the last issue but apparently some of you need to be bugged. Vern Hume of the Banff Centre is still looking for applications for two programmes: The Creative Residency programme and the Video Intern programme. Please contact Vern Hume, The Banff Centre, Box 1020, Stn. 405, Banff, Alberta, T0L 0C0.

WOMEN IN FOCUS and the NFB will host the *Women of Colour Festival* which celebrates film and video work



Still from *Born To Be Sold: Martha Rosler Reads the Strange Case of Baby \$ M.*



Still from *A Few Questions* by Eva Manly.



Gut Issues In BABYLON

RACISM & ANTI-RACISM IN THE ARTS

by Marlene Nourbese Philip

The Gut! IS WHERE I EXPERIENCE RACISM. When a newspaper vendor throws my change at me, simply because I'm black, I feel it in my gut; when I hear of the shooting of a young boy in the back of the head, and know in my bones before I hear it on the radio that he is black, it is my gut that twists and turns; when an agent who has been trying to market my book tells me that publishers are not even interested in reading the manuscript because it features black children, my gut tightens and wrenches. And when I read of the appallingly unscientific and racist theories of Phillippe Rushton of the University of Western Ontario, my immediate gut response is that he should be eliminated—by any means necessary. My heart then aches for my people and the centuries of unrelenting attacks upon our persons and our humanity, my head buzzes with the effort of trying to think my way out of the morass of racism.

Illustration by Grace Channer

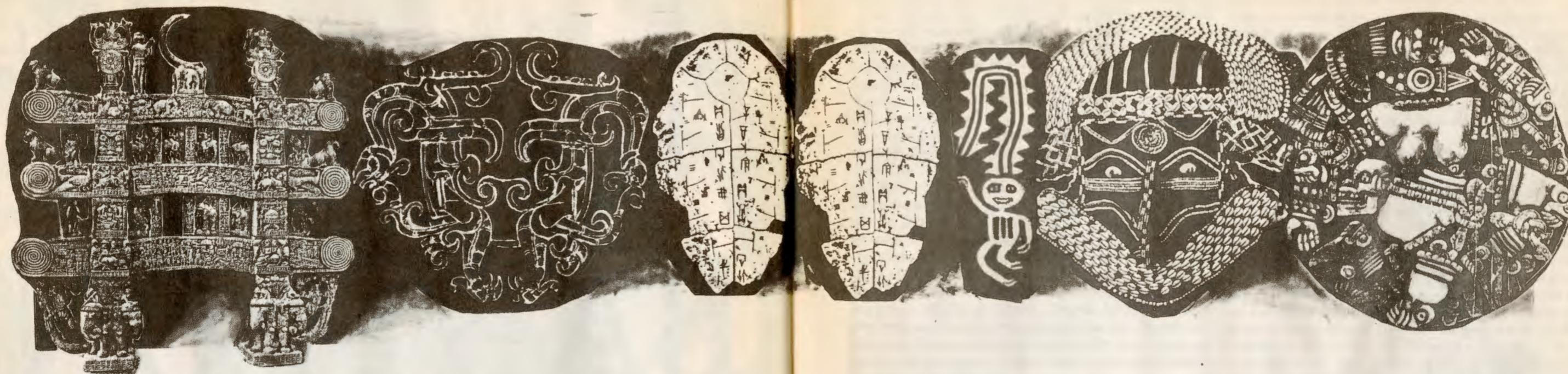


Illustration by Grace Chamber.

And somehow I must contain my gut revulsion for these theories and for this man and his kind: I must bring to bear on what is, in my opinion, a carefully orchestrated plan against African peoples¹ as carefully thought-out and as rigorously articulated reasons why individuals such as he, and ideologies such as he espouses, should be excoriated, from any society of humans we wish to take pride in. My body and its body intelligence, and I include the mind in this concept, are deeply involved and implicated in the practice of racism — against me and others — even though I may never be physically attacked. Remembering — although I have never forgotten — that it was for our bodies that we were first brought to this brave New World, the irony of this observation does not escape me.

“Would you let your daughter marry a black man?” While this question has entered the realm of the cliché it is hard to get more gut than that. The image—it is perhaps more appropriate to say nightmare—conjured up of the white man’s daughter in “the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor” (Shakespeare, *Othello*) making the “great two-backed beast” strikes at the heart of white patriarchy—white women being mounted by black men who are, as we all know and as has recently been ‘corroborated’ by Mr. Rushton, proverbially better endowed. When we lay aside the veneer of scholarship and specious research, how clearly the gut issue presents itself, how efficiently it has hidden itself.

As it ripples out from the centre—from the gut issue—racism multiplies exponentially and indefinitely until it thoroughly permeates the bureaucracies, the institutions, the arts, culture, education, until it becomes exceedingly difficult to find the gut issue.

Racism is a gut issue. Because it is a gut issue, it is an

explosive issue; it becomes at times a murderous issue. Because racism is a gut issue it is a difficult issue to solve, particularly so when it metastasizes quickly and efficiently into the facelessness of systemic racism apparently evacuated of any guts.

When I first conceived the idea for this piece, my intention was to do a piece on anti-racism and the arts. The kernel of the idea arose from a situation that had arisen at a feminist publishing house, The Women’s Press, in 1988 and that focused around the issue of racism and anti-racist publishing. The crisis at this press touched—directly or indirectly—most women writers in Toronto, if not Canada. I was one of the writers whose work had been accepted for publication in the anthology that catalyzed the crisis, and was, over several months, the recipient—at times it felt like the target—of a great deal of correspondence by the two groups that developed at the Press. The issue came to the fore at the Third International Feminist Book Fair in

Montreal in 1988, which itself had to confront issues of racism in its organizing of the fair.

My desire to look at the arts in general was, on my part, an attempt to broaden the issue. I wished to move the debate away from The Women’s Press and the ‘writer-and-voice’/ censorship debate that had swirled, seemingly interminably, around this very particular set of circumstances affecting this particular publishing house when it attempted to grapple with racism and to establish some sort of corrective to it. I wanted to look at how other arts disciplines and organizations were, if at all, dealing with racism. Once I had, however, identified the gut nature of racism, I had to ask myself whether I too, in taking this approach, was not attempting to move away too quickly from what the gut issue was for me—the very issue that had propelled me in the first place to look at other arts groups and disciplines. I had to return to the gut.

The gut issue for me, an African-Caribbean woman holding a Canadian passport (the Ben Johnson lesson is a chastening one) who attempts to make a living as a writer in Toronto, was that The Women’s Press had never published a work by a black woman—or any other woman of colour, for that matter—in its sixteen year history. It was a gut issue when they appeared singularly uninterested in the manuscript of a novel I submitted to them some years ago.² And it certainly was a gut issue when in 1985, or thereabouts, a proposed anthology of writings by black women, to be published by The Women’s Press, gave rise to criticisms by members of the Press that much of the writing was anthropological, or, in one case, not black enough!

When, in 1987, The Women’s Press approached me to submit a piece for their anthology on feminist theory, *Works*

in Progress, I challenged them as to why I was to be the only black woman in the collection: was this not, in fact, tokenism, I argued to the editor, and further, how much of the other work in the collection would address the differing realities of black women or women of colour? This was a gut issue for me, and so was the identical situation raised by their subsequent approach to me in 1987 for a piece of fiction to be included in their anthology *Imagining Women*. Once again I raised the issue of lack of representation of all women and provided them with a list of names of African and Asian writers from whom they should attempt to solicit submissions. *Imagining Women* would be the catalyst that precipitated the split in The Women’s Press—the irony does not escape me.

To sum up, African-Canadian women writers—the only group I may presume, albeit tentatively, to speak on behalf of—did not view The Women’s Press as a particularly friendly place for their work. It was, in my opinion, no different from the other mainstream presses. Correction—there was one difference: they held themselves out as being feminist and therefore representative of all women, when in fact they represented a very specific group—white, middle-class women. And to be brutally frank, when the issue of racism exploded at the Press and became public, my first gut response was: “It’s about time—they’ve had it coming for a long time!” I was to think the same thing as I watched the city convulse over racism over the last few months. It’s about time. Except that we get killed and *that* is a gut issue.

No one was killed at The Women’s Press but there were casualties: some of these had to do with individuals losing their jobs and some to do with the loss of a certain reputation previously held by The Women’s Press among the various

literary and publishing networks around the country. Certain bookstores and distributors have, for instance, since refused to carry the Press's books. The response of various organizations as well as the media appears to have focused on two issues: the behaviour of those members of the Press who perceived themselves as taking an anti-racist stand, and the issue of censorship. In the ensuing debate which the media, print and electronic, have covered, racism has remained a non-issue.

Without wanting to dwell unduly on a situation that has already been debated excessively both in and out of the media, my limited understanding of the facts that precipitated the crisis at The Women's Press in the summer of 1988 is as follows: three short stories for the proposed anthology *Imagining Women* were rejected by the Publishing and Policy Group (PPG) after they had been accepted by the fiction manuscript committee. The reason given by the PPG was that the stories were either explicitly or implicitly racist. The two issues that arose from this action on the part of the PPG were: (a) whether the PPG had the right to reject material already accepted by the manuscript committee, and (b) whether the stories were, in fact, racist. Opinions diverged radically on both issues and eventually led to the splitting up of the Press.

The Women's Press dispute saw the coming together of two gut issues—power and racism—making the situation doubly explosive. What happened at The Women's Press was, in my opinion, essentially a power struggle among white women that manifested itself in the issue of racism—it could have arisen over any other issue. That was what my gut told me after attending one public meeting. The fact that racism, as an issue, has remained subsidiary to that of censorship or 'the writer-and-voice,' confirms for me the general reluctance in Canadian society to tackle this issue. This may appear a harsh opinion; I cannot, however, conclude otherwise in view of the fact that when the issue of racism in writing and publishing finally surfaced, the debate would not be about how to ensure that African, native, or Indian women have access to the publishing resources of a feminist press, but about whether white middle-class women ought or ought not to be allowed, or should be able to use the voice of traditionally oppressed groups! It is tempting to dismiss the whole matter as ludicrous. It remains, however, a gut issue for me. The unarticulated assumption behind the Press's Anti-Racist Guidelines put out in the summer of 1988, and designed to tell white women how to write in a non-racist way, was that their writers would also be white. At no time were the Anti-Racist Guidelines allied to an affirmative action publishing policy, such as a commitment that the Press would, if necessary, help develop manuscripts by African, Asian, or native women writers, as well as publish a certain number of books by such authors annually, or by a certain date. Both sides are implicated in this charade. The Press's more recent Anti-Racist Guidelines for Submissions stating that the Press "will publish fiction and non-

fiction work by women of colour on issues determined by their concerns" represents a small movement in the direction of an affirmative action publishing policy.

I do not for one moment suggest that individuals at The Women's Press were not, or are not, serious about the eradication of racism; quite the contrary; but I do feel that there was insufficient consulting with a wide enough range of black writers to ensure that the views of the very groups on behalf of whom some members were advocating were adequately represented. There is a dangerous and pernicious practice in this society, particularly now that anti-racism has become a growth industry, for white individuals or groups to choose one or two individuals from other ethnic groups and to treat them as spokespersons for an entire group. This practice assigns a monolithic nature to African, native, or Asian Canadians that is non-existent. These groups are, in fact, no more monolithic than are white groups: to see them as otherwise is an expression of racism. I am, for instance, deeply disturbed when I read that Judith Merrill has been quoted in *Kinesis* (December/January 1989) as saying that white women writers in Canada had been "asked by women of colour not to write from the point of view of a woman of colour" (my emphasis). Who are these women of colour? When and in which forum did they make this request? I have certainly not expressed this view. More importantly, no one has ever asked my opinion and yet responsibility for this proscription has now been laid at our door. And here again the gut issue—no one has asked us; no one has consulted with us, and everyone blithely decides what is best for us. I do find it patronizing and offensive that white women would decide what is in my best interests as a writer. This is a significant issue, for in anti-racist struggles when, as often happens, problems arise, the tendency is to hold the victim responsible which in turn leads to the blame-the-victim backlash. If I am going to be held responsible then I ought to be a part of the decision making process.

Very simply put, my opinion is that if every white writer were, voluntarily or otherwise, to decide not to write from the point of view of African, Asian or native women, this would in no way ensure access to publication by these latter women. Such action would do nothing to ensure that our work was reviewed or taken by distributors or even taken seriously. Such simple proscriptions are hollow victories.

There is, however, a grievous crime—I use those words advisedly—that certain members of The Women's Press and their Anti-Racist Guidelines attempted to address. The crime is that for centuries and for far too long white European cultures have penetrated other cultures. Where Europeans have not murdered they have pillaged; where they have not pillaged they have looted; and while doing all these things they have, wantonly or otherwise, destroyed centuries of learning and knowledge. They have barbarized civilizations and cultures; where, because they needed the labour, they declined to wipe out entire peoples, they have appropriated their labour, or the product of that labour

along with whatever they considered valuable.

The examples of this exploitation are legion, but a couple of outrageous examples will suffice. To begin at the beginning—at least for Westerners—there is increasing white mainstream scholarship which reveals that the so-called "cradle of civilization," Greece, "significantly borrowed culturally (and) linguistically from Egypt and Phoenicia."³ And whether—as some scholars do—Ali Masuri for instance,⁴ we accept that Africans along with other races contributed to Egyptian civilization, or whether like Cheik Anta Diop,⁵ the late Senegalese intellectual, we are convinced that Egypt was primarily an African civilization, the fact remains that Egyptians were the cultural ancestors of Greece. The obliteration of this fact, as Martin Bernal argues in *Black Athena*, is directly attributable to the rise of racism in the nineteenth century. The second example has to do with art and modernism. That the modernist movement in art is heir to African aesthetics is indisputable, yet beginning with Picasso, the most famous of pioneers in this movement, most of these artists eventually denied any African influence on their work. Some, like Brancusi, even went to the extreme of destroying their earlier work because it appeared "too African."

What really twists the gut, however, is that when the cultural practitioners from these very cultures attempt to gain an audience for their work in the metropolitan areas, the doors swiftly close. If and when the work is shown, as in the case of Wilfredo Lam, the Afro-Cuban artist whose work *The Jungle* is on display at the MOMA, it is shown as an appendage to the work of the European, in this case Picasso. Lam's work, in fact, hangs in the hallway leading to the museum's coat room, and the commentary by the museum's curator suggests it is an homage to Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*.⁶

For the white artist/writer/painter/musician—particularly the male of the species—the world is his oyster, and if he or she wants to use Indian, African, or native culture, then why the hell not? What does white mean if it does not mean being able to lay waste and lay claim to anything you may happen to set your mind to? That is the moral turpitude at the heart of white 'civilization.' The mea culpas are long overdue. That was the gut issue—the apparent freedom of whites to appropriate as their own whatsoever they wished—to which The Women's Press Guidelines attempted to offer a corrective; the guidelines could be seen as both a mea culpa and an attempt to right a wrong. And while I do not advocate, for reasons too many to enter into here, proscriptions against writers writing from voices other than their own, The Women's Press must be given credit for the courage to tackle this issue, albeit not in the most effective way. In a society such as ours where there has been an "ostrich-like denial that a significant problem of racial hostility exists at all," such actions are significant; the opportunities they present for sound anti-racist work ought not to be minimized.⁷



Illustration by Grace Chaner.



Illustration by Grace Chamber.

Anti-Racism

Sexism is to racism as feminism is to civil rights? multiculturalism? Black Power? anti-racism? None of those suggestions is satisfactory, and the difficulty in finding the word that corresponds with feminism is linked to some of the difficulty around the concept of anti-racism. Were we being entirely accurate when talking about discrimination practised by one racial group against the other, the word we ought to use is "racialism" and not "racism." Usage has, however, determined that racism is the word that has come to encapsulate that particular practice; it includes and embraces both the individual type of discrimination as typified by the landlord who refuses to rent his apartment to an Indian, as well as the more elaborate philosophies, such as those espoused by Rushton, of white supremacist movements.

The absence of a word that parallels feminism is significant. Sexism refers to the practice of patriarchy; feminism, or womanism as some black women have chosen to re-define themselves, refers to the movement that seeks to empower women through any number of ways. To be feminist, or womanist, would, I assume, at least imply that one was anti-sexist, and I would argue that within the concept of feminism is the practice of anti-sexism. However, while books and policies and work-places may be anti-sexist, the term feminism means something more than being anti-sexist. There is an element of the positive and proactive implied in the use of the word; feminism is not only against sexism, but in favour of, in support of, in celebration of something.

There was a time when the concept of Black Power would have paralleled feminism, in both its proactive and reactive aspects; a time when those words encapsulated an entire philosophy built on black pride and initiative while also being against the practice of racism. It also, if we are to be honest, struck fear into the hearts of those who ruled. Eventually, the word would become to be too closely associ-

ated with black armed struggle, with the Black Panthers and with the threat they presented to the government of the United States; eventually the word would be evacuated of its more celebratory aspects such as the insistence on the creation of our own images, or the recognition of the beauty of those who had been defined as Other for too long. A very simple and yet not so simple thing like an Afro—Angela Davis's Afro—came to symbolize a revolution long overdue. But that was long before the flight from black as I call it.

There was a time when black was a political colour. The late Walter Rodney, the Guyanese intellectual, argues its meaning brilliantly in *The Grounding With My Brothers*. His argument is that much of the treatment meted out by the European nations, particularly during their expansionist and imperialist periods, to the world's peoples of colour was similar. Despite differences in culture, colour, language and location, what these countries and peoples shared was the fact that they were not white-skinned which in turn guaranteed their exploitation:

If a Jamaican black man tried to get a room from a landlady in London who said 'No Coloured,' it would not impress her if he said he was West Indian, quite apart from the fact that she would already have closed the door in his black face. When a Pakistani goes to the Midlands, he is as coloured as a Nigerian. The Indonesian is the same as a Surinamer in Holland.⁸

The position of the peoples of African descent was, however, he argued: "clearly more acute than that of most non-white groups."⁹ It was these black-skinned ones who would lend their colour to name a movement that would attempt to re-assert a balance in the inequitable distribution of the world's resources and power—Black Power.

Black is now empty of its political meaning. A. Sivanandan, Director of the Institute for Race Relations in London and Editor of *Race and Class*, writes that "black from being a 'political colour' was broken down into its cultural parts of West Indian, Asian, African—and these in turn reduced

to their ethnic constituents."¹⁰ I discern no little racism in this flight, albeit the reasons given usually stress the need to emphasize one's ethnicity. I believe the more insidious reason is the fundamental unwillingness to be associated with blackness or Africans. While I understand and support the need to emphasize one's ethnicity, I also observe that "white" as a political term and concept is able to encompass both the blond, blue-eyed Northerner and the dark-haired, darker skinned Southerner. And I hadn't noticed that there was any possibility of mistaking German culture for Italian culture.

Neither multiculturalism nor civil rights meets the need for a word that contains the creative tension of opposition against, as well as celebration of. While multiculturalism is somewhat descriptive of the ethnic composition of Canadian society, it is a bureaucratic construct and fails to address the power differential that exists among the many cultures. Civil rights remains what it is, a legalistic description of one's rights within a society allegedly governed by the rule of law.

Those who are interested in struggling for a more just society, for essentially that is what the fight against racism is all about—a struggle "against injustice, inequality, against freedom for some and un-freedom for others"¹¹ must therefore resort to that catch-all phrase, anti-racism. The danger is that people come to believe that there exists an ideology called anti-racism. The reverse is actually more true—there is an ideology of racism which anti-racism attempts to combat in as many different ways as there are spectres of racism. As Sivanandan writes:

There is no body of thought called anti-racism, no orthodoxy, or dogma, no manual of strategy and tactics, no demonology. What there was in our society was racism, in every walk of life, and it had to be opposed—in every conceivable way. And because racism was hydra-headed, and reared its different heads in different ways in different times (prosperity and depression) and differing relations (employment,

housing, schools) and different places (inner city, suburbia), the ways of fighting racism were also different and legion. Nor were there any short-cuts to its demise. Racism had been a long time in the making and would take a long time to die. 'Anti-racism,' therefore, was a portmanteau word meant to carry all these differing ideas and ways of combating racism. The important thing, however, was to keep racism from corrupting society to decay.¹²

Anti-racism then comes to include both reactive and proactive actions—actions like the Anti-Racist Guidelines put out by The Women's Press which were essentially reactive, as well as more proactive measures such as affirmative action publishing strategies. To develop these strategies we move from the gut to the head, but I would argue the need always to remember that racism is, and will always be, a gut issue. Anyone who felt that Toronto, or Canada for that matter, did not have a racial problem would have had that belief laid to rest over the last few months. Racism is alive and well and kicking shit in Toronto, in Ontario and all over Canada. All of which brings me to the arts.

The Cultural Faces of Racism

As mentioned earlier, my intention was to look at the arts in general to see whether there had been any attempts made to identify the practice of racism and to deal with it as The Women's Press had attempted to do. To recognize the anti-racist practices or solutions instituted within a particular discipline it was first necessary to identify the nature of racism in each discipline. What follows is an overview of the cultural faces of racism in dance, theatre, music, literature, film and video. This overview is by no means intended to be an exhaustive analysis of all that is happening in those disciplines with respect to racism; nor does it deal with institutions like A Space or other artist-run centres or

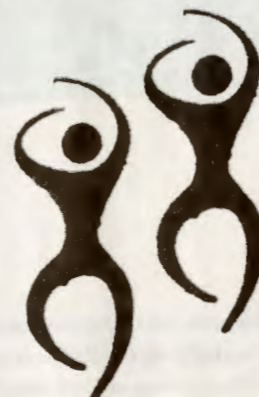
organizations which deserve an entire article devoted to their practices. I was and am primarily interested in how black¹³ artists perceive their particular discipline; how racism impinges on them and how they continue to practise their art under such limitations.

I have also looked at the primary funding agencies since their funding policies and in particular their understanding of racism and approach to anti-racism directly affect the survival of the black and non-European artist. With a view to taking the pulse of professional organizations I also looked briefly at two related to writing. As a writer I confess to being particularly interested in these two groups.

I intend the results of my inquiries to be essentially a spring board for further inquiry by artists themselves, by funding organizations and other interested art groups. By presenting the information as I have done, in tabular form, the reader will, I hope, be able to grasp quickly the overwhelming and appalling similarity of the systemic racism that permeates the disciplines I looked at. The reader can, as well, for comparison purposes follow a particular area such as training or funding through all the disciplines.

Racism will, depending on the discipline, manifest itself differently in each area. While the black writer, for instance, may have to deal with funding agencies, she also has to deal with the marketplace and the censorship of the marketplace that comes through racism. The black documentary filmmaker, on the other hand, deals primarily with institutions such as the National Film Board; her existence as a documentary filmmaker is much more dependent on such sources of institutional funding than is the writer's. The former can, after all, always publish her work herself and, as some writers have done, market it herself. Fundamentally, however, the core of racism in the arts remains constant: the refusal to treat as valid the cultural experience, knowledge or expertise of the artist coming from a non-European culture, wedded to the belief that Eurocentric values are in and of themselves better.

Because racism can be a debilitating experience, it is important that while identifying it, we also record the ingenuity of individuals and groups in getting around or over the hurdles created by racism, so that they can continue to practise their art. The solutions which I have identified are, therefore, as important as the problems I have uncovered. Many of these solutions may be seen as reactive to the wider practice of racism in the arts, but in a black theatre group mounting its own show, for instance, or a black publisher publishing a work by a black writer, the proactive nature of such anti-racist practices is visible.



DANCE

COMMENT:

There are amazing black dancers out there, but they don't get the exposure, and are put in the ethnic bracket.
PATRICIA WYNTER, DANCER

TRAINING:

Dancers only trained in modern and balletic techniques; no training in or validity assigned to African techniques or African aesthetics of movement.

FUNDING

Inadequate; African-based dance dismissed as ethnic, marginal—non-mainstream; funding based on evaluation in ballet or modern dance; no one on juries to assess the aesthetics of African dance.

PERFORMANCE:

In modern dance black female dancers often passed over on the grounds that they do not have the appropriate body build—too much muscle is the complaint. "The black female dancer needs to be very, very thin, slim-hipped, flat-chested and/or very, very exceptional." Black male dancers in some instances more easily hired because they satisfy the need for exotic elements. Very seldom paid for rehearsal time; rehearsal space scarce and expensive—particularly for groups operating on very limited resources.

SOLUTIONS:

The creation of black/African dance companies like Usafiri, Ebony Voices, Siyaka, Chissamba Chiyuka and Sethlabi Taunyane's group. All these groups are operating on a shoestring.

STILL TO BE DONE:

- More adequate funding for groups and individual dancers;
- More representation by individuals knowledgeable in non-European dance forms on arts councils.



FILM & VIDEO DOCUMENTARY

COMMENT:

There is pressure to make film and video that focuses on a little bit of initiative, a little bit of organization, a little bit of dance and music and lots of progressive nostalgia, rather than serious film that will deal with the stark realities of racism, immigration and human rights from a legal and human perspective.
PREMIKE RATNAM, FILMMAKER

TRAINING:

Very low expectations of the student on the part of the teachers and fellow students; undervaluing and underestimation of student's work until another audience acknowledges it; no respect for professional competence.



Illustration by Grace Chanter.

FUNDING:

Traditionally inadequate; African, Asian, or native content not seen as valid but as minority culture; work viewed as educational and non-mainstream; "Come back when you've made it" or "We made a black film last year" are typical comments; filmmakers not allowed to move out of their ethnic or racial slot to make film on mainstream issues like rape; funders often want to shape ethnic or racially based material according to their interests, not the interests of the filmmaker.

SALES:

Often told that there is no market for work.

PRACTICE:

Appropriation of experiences by white filmmakers making films about Asians, natives or Africans and often having more access to funds.

SOLUTIONS:

- Resolution passed at last AGM (1988) of the Independent Film and Video Alliance that:
- the group support in principle the right of native groups to make film and video on native issues;
 - that the Alliance would support film and video production by native groups wherever necessary.

STILL TO BE DONE:

- Develop among young people the awareness of careers in film and the importance of being able to control the making of images of oneself.
- Lobby for greater control by visible minorities over the making of images about themselves.

* It is my understanding that the reason for the recent disbanding of the NFB's Studio D unit is to increase accessibility to those who have not traditionally had adequate access to the studio such as native, African, Asian women or the handicapped. Whether such increased accessibility will result is too soon to tell at this time.



LITERATURE

COMMENT:

The fundamental problem is that in Canada the term black Canadian is not a legitimate term, and therefore, the aspirations of black Canadians are viewed as intrusive rather than a natural part of the body politic. In contradistinction, despite the racism in the U.S.A., black American aspirations are seen as legitimate and not aberrant.

CLAIRE HARRIS, POET

TRAINING:

Works of literature from non-European traditions seldom part of the curriculum; lack of interest in creative writing programmes on issues of language revolving around dialect and straight English.

FUNDING:

Extreme difficulty in obtaining funding by those authors choosing to work in a demotic variant of English; insensitivity of arts councils to such linguistic traditions; lack of interest in black experiences, the subject matter of work by black authors.

PUBLISHING:

Refusal of publishers to publish works by black authors; reluctance or refusal on the part of media to review published works by black authors unless work panders to racism or fulfils stereotypes; problems with distribution of books by black authors; lack of interest on the part of bookstores.

PROFESSIONAL GROUPS:

Lack of interest in black writers or minority writers and their concerns; rejection of work on grounds that it is not literature.

SOLUTIONS:

Creation of presses like Sister Vision, Williams Wallace and Carib Can, with mandates to publish work by black and other minority writers.

STILL TO BE DONE:

- Establish affirmative action programmes for publishing houses;
- Make it mandatory that publishing houses receiving federal funds begin reporting along with other businesses on their employment equity programmes;
- Require that publishers report annually on how many manuscripts by black and other minority writers they have seriously considered, as well as providing the government with some sort of target figures for publication.





MUSIC JAZZ AND BLUES

COMMENT:

After so many years black musicians seem to be still in the position of making music without reaping the awards.

DIANA BRAITHWAITE
SINGER/MUSICIAN

TRAINING:

Black music today taught primarily by whites in universities.

WORK:

Black musicians still doing performances—seldom get studio work which is better paid; reasons given are that black musicians can't read music; whites imitate black sound and get jobs; whites still making money on black music; unlike Eurocentric music no credit ever given to black initiators of forms like 12-bar blues; blues sung by whites with no respect for tradition or feeling; blues crossed over to the point that white musicians can imitate sound from traditional country blues to Chicago blues resulting in white musicians getting more and higher paying gigs than blacks; blacks not sufficiently employed in production; absence of record deals with big companies; refusal of Juno awards to recognize the variety of black music.

AIRPLAY:

Radio stations playing black music seldom employ blacks either in programming or production.

SOLUTIONS:

The establishment of the reggae music award; setting up of organizations like the Black Music Association and the Black Music Association of Canada which lobby on the part of black musicians.

STILL TO BE DONE:

- Establish an institution where traditional black music can be taught;

- Pressure radio stations playing black music to hire more blacks;
- Take initiative in collecting and protecting black music;
- Establish separate categories at the Juno awards for calypso and reggae.



THEATRE

COMMENT:

Content affects everything—training, funding and casting and it's obvious that black content is being rejected, and that is our essence; if that is being rejected we need to examine that and change it.

AHDRI ZHINA MANDIELA,
ACTOR/DIRECTOR

TRAINING:

Black actors trained in standard methods, what they have naturally is trained out of them.

FUNDING:

Marginalized and insufficient; work dismissed by arts councils as amateur and lacking in professionalism; work categorized as folk or ethnic.

PERFORMANCE:

Black content not considered worthy of presentation at any level; insufficient colour-blind casting in mainstream theatre; insufficient performance of scripts by black playwrights; very little respect for quality, validity and relevance of work even by distinguished playwrights like Walcott.

SOLUTIONS:

Formation of black theatre groups like Imani Theatre Ensemble, Theatre in the Rough, Theatre Fountainhead—all operating on a shoe-string; production companies like Jones and Jones; colour-blind casting companies like Emerald City.

STILL TO BE DONE:

- Increase the awareness of arts councils to the aesthetic validity of the content of black theatre;
- More adequate funding for black theatre groups;
- More relevant training for young actors.



VISUAL ART

COMMENT:

We don't believe in total assimilation. We find we are not accepted in the gallery scene, even at the alternative galleries except for A Space. It is still a struggle to stay within A Space. As artists we suffer from a lack of knowledge of the system and how it works. The upholders of the system refuse to recognize the value of other cultural artifacts. Our art is not an inferior substitute.

BUSEJEE BAILEY, ARTIST

TRAINING:

Emphasis on Eurocentric values and aesthetics; conservative view of cultural production, e.g. traditional bead-work by native women and the traditional textiles of African women dismissed as craft, except when validated through use by white artists; refusal to recognize other cultural languages.

FUNDING:

Failure of arts councils to accept responsibility for cultural representation; marginalized funding to individual artists, as well as to galleries showing work in a new context (A Space is the only gallery attempting to grapple with some of these issues); arts councils have a very narrow view of what constitutes visual art; preponderance of Eurocentric values in both arts councils and in arts community as a whole.

PRACTICE:

Appropriation of images by white artists.

CURATING:

Decontextualization of work as in *The Spirit Rises* at the Glenbow Museum and the MOMA exhibition on Primitivism; inability to get a certain kind of work into mainstream galleries (some galleries are showing works by blacks and other artists of colour).

CRITICAL ACCEPTANCE:

Failure on part of critics to recognize both non-Eurocentric work as well as work in the modernist tradition done by non-European artists, e.g. the critical neglect of black Abstract Expressionist artists in the U.S.A.

SOLUTIONS:

Formation of networking/support groups like Diasporic African Women's Art (DAWA); A Space providing space and support for shows like *Weapons of Culture* and *Black Wommin: When and Where We Enter*.

STILL TO BE DONE:

- Increased funding.
- Better understanding on the part of arts councils, of other cultural languages.



Where They're At:

Reports on Arts Councils & Arts Organizations

Funding by arts councils is often the life blood for many artists: without it many visual artists, for instance, could not practise their art. Accepting that we live in a racist society, we can expect that councils, funding bodies, and professional groups such as the League of Canadian Poets and the Writer's Union will reflect the racism present in the society at large. It may not be the aggressive type of racism by commission; it often is the more gentle and therefore more pernicious type of racism by omission: failure to appoint to juries individuals and artists representative of non-European cultures.

The issues facing us when we attempt to analyze critically the workings of arts councils are complex ones and ones which are beyond the scope of this particular exploration, but suffice it to describe them briefly. As demonstrated by the tables above, there is the issue of the representative nature of the juries and boards. There is also the issue of multiculturalism, how it intersects with anti-racist work, and how it works to muddy the issue of racism and at times to obscure it.¹⁴ I have always believed that multiculturalism was concocted in part to diffuse the explosive potential of racism, and look where that got us. Finally but equally important is the composition of the staff of these bodies—how representative they are of the society in which we live, which gets us into the area of affirmative action, or for those who blanch at that expression, employment equity.

In order to assess where arts councils and professional organizations are regarding anti-racism and/or affirmative action policies, I sent out the following brief questionnaire:

1. Does your organization have a clearly articulated policy on anti-racism and/or affirmative action?
2. In the case of funding organizations does your organization have a clearly articulated policy on anti-racism and/or affirmative action applicable to your funding practices?
3. If you have such a policy please send materials documenting that policy and please furnish examples of how the policy is implemented.
4. If your organization does not have such a policy, do you see a need for such a policy and have you made any attempts to implement such a policy?

What follows is a synopsis of the replies.



THE CANADA COUNCIL

The Council is included in the federal government's Employment Equity Act and reports annually on their staffing record. I didn't ask about percentages, so no percentages were provided.

There is no affirmative action or anti-racist policy on funding.

Within the context of the Multiculturalism Act, the Council is beginning to examine policies, programmes and practices to make sure they conform to the Act. Native arts have been targeted in the Council's long-range planning exercise.

Specific programmes and/or practices addressing native arts currently in operation are as follows:

- The Northern Canada Jury for Explorations. The jury includes members drawn from native and Inuit communities from the North;
- The Writing and Publication Section accepts applications from eligible publishers publishing in native languages;
- Candidates for Arts Awards writing grants may submit material in their language of origin. External assessments are sought in that language, then submitted to the English or French-language jury;
- There is a Native Curatorial Residency in Visual Arts; the jury is composed of native people.

*The Council needs another \$47 million for the arts. If this money is not forthcoming then there will be continued cuts to programmes and the needed expansion and development of programmes to make them more sensitive to minority groups will certainly not take place. It will be those arts viewed as minority, not truly Canadian, that will be the first to go, or remain unfunded or underfunded.

** There are no other comparable programmes for any other non-European cultural groups. For instance, there is no provision made for black artists working in a demotic (dialect) English to have their work assessed externally.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ARTS PROMOTION DIVISION

There was no response to my questionnaire despite a follow up phone call. The Arts Promotion Division under their Literature and Publishing programme "supports Canadian participation in major international conferences on literature of importance to Canada." I myself personally tried to get support to attend the First International Conference of Caribbean Women Writers, held in Boston in 1988. I was unsuccessful and I certainly got the impression that such a conference was not considered to be dealing with "literature of importance to Canada." I protested this in a long letter to the department outlining the importance of Caribbean women writers in Canada and their importance to the Caribbean-Canadian population here in Canada.

METRO CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Metro Cultural Affairs appears to be looking both at the composition of its staff as well as the composition of its resource lists from which their panels and juries are drawn, with a view to making them more racially and ethnically representative of the community of Metropolitan Toronto. In September 1988, Council passed the following recommendations:

"It is further recommended that the Chief Administrative Officer be requested to report to Council early in 1989 with a proposal for the redevelopment of a multicultural policy for service programmes directly operated by the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and services purchased, and of the strategy for the implementation of such policy."

Metro Cultural Affairs would come under these proposals, but changes come slowly in bureaucracies so I do not anticipate any major changes in the near future.

I recommended to Irene Turrin that one of the easiest ways to begin to make changes was to ensure their resource list begins to reflect the diversity of the city in the cultural field.

* The issue of the concern to maintain professional standards was raised at my meeting with Ms Turrin. My position then and now is that it is a false dichotomy to suggest that professionalism and cultural representation of non-European aesthetics are mutually exclusive. Groups often appear to and do lack professionalism because they cannot obtain adequate funding which in turn makes them appear amateurish. Catch 22!

THE ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

The OAC has a clearly articulated personnel policy on non-discrimination.

The Council also complies with the Human Rights Code, 1981, and tries to provide "a work environment which is free from racial or sexual harassment."

Two new positions have recently been set up at the Council: Multicultural Coordinator and Native and Folk Arts Associate. Among the duties of the former will be that of developing "a number of additional programme initiatives in the next year specifically addressed to multicultural objectives."

In 1988 the OAC received an additional \$30,000 "to assist in funding additional activity or initiatives of a multicultural or folk art nature." Among groups receiving funding from this fund were Emerald City Theatre Company, Theatre in the Rough, *Tiger Lily*, Imani Theatre Ensemble, Theatre of Change, and the Association of Gospel Music Ministries.

* The OAC appears to be broadening its resource list from which it draws jury members so that it draws on all artists from the community.

** The video *Art Is!*, the OAC's 25th anniversary video which premiered on September 7, 1988, was an inaccurate picture of the arts in Ontario. There was one brief image of a black artist and brief clips of Orientals in the symphony. After sitting through this video I felt that the video ought to be renamed *Art Is White!* The video gave no indication of the many, many African, Asian, and native artists working seriously at their art.

While I welcome the increased funding for black groups under the multicultural man-

date, what concerns me is the real possibility of ghettoizing multiculturalism as Other while 'real art' or 'true art'—read Eurocentric art—remains at the centre of cultural representation in Ontario.

*** The OAC has had funds from their 'new' multicultural budget (from Citizenship and Culture) for the last year. As far as I have been able to ascertain, disbursement of this fund functions as follows. At the officer's discretion, applications are removed from the jury process and reviewed by advisors picked by the officer under the terms of a multicultural art defined as providing the initiatives of:

- linkages, access, and information;
 - bridging mechanisms to overcome language and cultural barriers;
 - new audiences, ensuring that pluralistic art forms are exposed to a wider public.
- Final decisions, however, are made at an officer level.

**** The absolute lack of community consultation in defining these initiatives and the "bureauspeak" of the language seriously jeopardize any commitment the OAC may claim towards instituting a representative multicultural policy. This is appalling.

TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL

The Council adheres to the City of Toronto's Non-Discrimination Policy and grant applicants and recipients must sign a "declaration of the formal adoption of a non-discrimination policy as a condition of receipt of the grant."

The Council's staff is participating in the city's Equal Opportunity Programme.

"Arts discipline committees, which make recommendations to the board, and the Toronto Arts Council Nominations Committee are working to ensure that board and committee membership reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the City of Toronto."—Rita Davies, Executive Director

THE WRITER'S UNION

The union replied that their eligibility criteria was based entirely on a person being a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant with a trade book in print. Although their letter to me stated they had enclosed an application form which set out eligibility criteria, none was enclosed.

The union also stated that the matter of racism in writing and publishing was going to be the subject of discussion at their next meeting.

* In 1986, when I was still a member of the union, I wrote to them expressing interest in setting up a committee or working on a committee such as the Rights and Freedoms Committee which would look at racism in publishing. The union neither acknowledged

my letter nor responded to my request.

** It is my understanding that in or about 1986 the union adopted a measure to increase union membership among blacks, native people and other minorities. To date nothing has been done about that.

*** In preparation for this piece I approached the union with a request to read a debate that had taken place in the union's newsletter, *Writer's Confidential*, on the issue of racism and the writer and voice which had come out of The Women's Press situation. The union told me it had to get the permission of the National Council. I heard nothing further from the union until its reply to my questionnaire in which I was told it wasn't possible to give me access. I do not know if this was, in fact, a decision of the National Council. I do respect the union's decision in this matter and its reliance on its protocol. What I am interested in, however, is whether a decision was sought from the National Council before the union became involved in The Women's Press dispute. In that particular instance, on behalf of writers of whom none are members of the union, they issued a warning to all union members not to do business with The Women's Press until further notice.

If suspension of protocol and rules is possible in a situation that the union obviously perceived as having larger significance, surely it is justified when a writer is seriously interested in looking at the issue of racism in the

Commentary

Arts councils are not the only institutions to practise the highly developed art of racism by neglect; the councils are, however, important since their funding of particular projects serve as virtual stamps of approval and sends a message throughout the arts community. While the composition of juries, for instance, remain in their present scandalous state with little or no expertise or resources to assess African-based dance, for example, or work coming out of the linguistic traditions of the Caribbean, racism will continue to flourish in the councils. I maintain that provided the will is there, the composition of juries and panels remains one area where changes can be made most easily.

Within the general marketplace, I would like to see those institutions and businesses like dance companies and publishing houses which receive federal monies having to report both on their employment equity programmes as well as on their inclusion of all artists, black and white, in their shows and publications. I have no illusion as to the resistance such a proposal will engender in the art world, but if, however, such companies will not change voluntarily, then changes will have to be made legally.

The inequity, energy and talent of black artists in the face of overwhelming odds is demonstrable; this must now be matched by the funding bodies, by the arts organizations and by the marketplace.

arts—particularly writing and publishing—with a view to moving the debate one step along the road to a solution. Is the union genuinely interested in ridding the writing and publishing world of racism or merely interested in protecting the turf of its white middle-class membership?

**** I was able to read the debate—through other sources—and it confirmed my concerns that for the most part union opinion reveals a profound lack of concern for the practice of racism in the writing world.

THE LEAGUE OF CANADIAN POETS

The league has not replied to the questionnaire. Angela Rebeiro, the Executive Director, told me that the questionnaire had been received and that the president wished to answer it himself.

What follows are relevant statistics on readings sponsored by the league:

Composition of League
Men 54% (approx.)
Women 36%
Poets of colour 10%

Readings:

Men 61.5% (approx.)
Women 37%
Poets of colour 1.5%

Wha' fe do*

When I consider the responses of the funding bodies to my inquiries, all of which are for the most part serious and well-meaning, and consider in turn the depth and apparent intransigence of the racism as revealed in the tables above, it is difficult not to grow weary. When I hear that in 1988 the reason given for not hiring musicians is that they cannot read music, it is difficult, if not impossible not to feel that one is living in a time warp. The divide between the lived reality of the black or non-European artist, and the funding policies of arts councils, between the black artist and the art world in general is so great as to be almost unbridgeable. Automatic and almost instinctive, the response to the black artist and her work by the art world is one that reveals a profound lack of respect for the individual artist and his or her cultural traditions, particularly when she is the practitioner of her art. The flip side of this response is the cultural appropriation by the white artist of those traditions for his or her personal aggrandizement. And therein lies the gut issue. It is clear that the arts councils have not even begun to address the issue of racism, relying instead on the practices surrounding the concept of multiculturalism. While I am not suggesting that multiculturalism be abandoned, I see no reason why multiculturalism and anti-racism need be mutually exclusive.

*What to do.



I started out this essay by talking about the gut issue of racism—for me at least. I suspect that for the individual white person the gut issue is going to be the giving up of some of the power and privilege they have held for so long, and to begin to view as equals those whom they have long considered inferiors. And herein lies the significance of Rushton's theories for white supremacists of all shades.

What I am talking about is not an easy thing to do or accomplish, I am not even sure that it's possible. Many well-meaning individuals, eager to do the right thing, believe that by including the odd multicultural writer into a curriculum, for instance, or tinkering here and there with superficialities, what is needed will be accomplished. What is necessary goes much deeper than these cosmetic changes and will be profoundly disturbing for many.

On a personal level the eradication of racism will require at least a complete rethinking of one's values so that one does not automatically equate white with better and/or more desirable; it must mean an understanding of one's privilege as the purveyor of certain cultural representations and the cost of that to others; it should mean an understanding of the political and social underpinning of what we have come to know as knowledge; it ought to mean an understanding of how, in a racist society, traditions such as scientific objectivity and academic freedom become tainted and are used as shields for racists. It means, above all, not just a shift in one's perspectives, but a shift in the position from which one's perspective is formed. What it means is at times gut-wrenching, gut-twisting change. And who wants to do that? It's far easier to yield to the forces of inertia; turn on the TV and leave things as they are.

On a systemic level such change must mean the institution and enactment of affirmative action policies on all levels in the art world, from the marketplace to the arts councils; from the performance spaces to the classrooms.

We live in a society in which our mode of thinking is one of binary opposition: the either/or conundrum. My life or your death. My well-being or your lack of well-being; my wealth or your poverty. Closely tied to this is the concept of scarcity, real or contrived, which is essential to the proper functioning of capitalist societies. We are continually encouraged, by various means, to believe that the satisfaction of one person's needs automatically means the non-fulfillment of another's. White middle-class female writers, therefore, come to believe that the publication of works by black and non-European writers automatically means the non-publication of their works. Scarcity wedded to binary oppositional thought becomes a deadly combination so that policy makers and arts councils come to believe that the funding of works by black and non-European artists must be at the expense of mainstream cultural representation and the flip side of that, that the only way to ensure that European culture continues to flourish is to deprive non-European artists of adequate funding.

This specious—I am tempted to say magical—belief in scarcity is as powerful as it is unwarranted: there is no doubt in my mind that European cultural representation can exist alongside cultural representation by black and other non-European artists. We would all be the culturally richer for it as well. But the fear that scarcity engenders that the metaphorical pie is not big enough for us all to share is what drives many to hold on to privilege.

In view of all the forces massed against profound and meaningful change, not the least of which are the powerful media, any change which does take place will, I believe, happen piecemeal, in eruptions here and there as in The Women's Press ordeal, or in small epiphanic moments as it did for some in the aftermath of that event. But happen it must.

James Baldwin writes that, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." Racism might never be eradicated, but it certainly will *not* be eradicated until it is faced, not once, but over and over again until, I hope, we get so fed up with it we chuck the whole damn stinking mess out.

Racism is on the rise in Toronto and Canada. The racism that exists and flourishes in the arts is all of a piece of the racism in education, the racism in policing, and the racism in the work place. Each of these areas have a particular significance to our society and the significance of cultural representation or the arts cannot, I believe, be emphasized too much. It is through cultural representation that the artist re-presents the guts and soul of a people; the urge to such representation is, I believe, basic to the human species. The impulse to creativity and cultural re-presentation will, if stymied, continue, but in more negative ways.

While it is sometimes extremely difficult to do so, I do believe—have faith in the essential improbability of the human species. I suppose I must. If I don't I may as well give up. Nadine Gordimer writes that "the writer is eternally in search of entelechy in his (sic) relation to his society." I go further; not only the writer, but the artist, the human being, the human species, is in search of perfection in its relation to society. However, while blights such as racism, sexism and classism exist, such perfection will continue to escape us. Here in Canada there has traditionally been a reluctance to face the ugly facts of racism—the gut issues; The Women's Press faced them and suffered many casualties as a consequence. I do believe, however, that the community of writers, and the arts community in general, has benefited tremendously from this painful but necessary bringing to the fore of what we all knew was there all along. The opportunity for enlightening debate, the potential for change and, yes, love or agape, as in the old sense of charity for one's neighbour—the West Africans call it ashè or supreme coolness—are all there. We must, I believe, seize this opportunity; it might not present itself in quite this way again. Blacks and whites facing each other across flaming barricades in Toronto—this is no longer an unlikely image. I would not have said so two years ago and I hope two years hence I can read this and conclude I was crying wolf. But things must get better. Or worse. They will not remain the same.■

END NOTES

¹ It is, I believe, no coincidence that Rushton's theories have come to the fore at this point in time in Canada when racism against African Canadians is on the increase, and when the stand-off between the police and the latter remains at crisis proportions.

² This manuscript was to be later accepted for publication in England and, irony of ironies, the new Women's Press would buy its Canadian rights.

³ African scholars have for years now argued that this was the case; their scholarship has by and large been ignored by white mainstream institutions.

⁴ Ali Mazuri is a distinguished African scholar, author of several books, including *The Africans*, based on the T.V. mini-series by the same name.

⁵ Author of the seminal works *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa* and *The African Origin of Civilization*.

⁶ John Yau, "Please Wait by the Coatroom," *Arts Magazine*, December 1988.

⁷ Moodley in Stanley R. Barrett, *Is God A Racist*, University of Toronto Press, 1988, p.326.

⁸ Walter Rodney, *The Grounding with My Brothers*, Bogle, L'Overture Publication, 1969, p.16.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *New Statesmen*, May 27, 1988.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Readers will have noted that when referring to non-European artists I have, for the most part, particularized them as African, Asian and native. With the falling into disrepute of the use of the word "black" as a political concept, the writer can no longer rely on its use in describing non-Europeans, although the treatment meted out to these groups may essentially be similar. I have, however, in this section used black synonymously with African; if what I describe applies to other non-European groups, they will have to extrapolate from the information provided.

¹⁴ For a more detailed analysis of multiculturalism and arts councils I refer readers to "The Multicultural Whitewash," *FUSE*, Fall, 1987.

Marlene Nourbese Philip is a Toronto-based writer and poet. Her latest novel is *Harriet's Daughter*, published by The Women's Press, Toronto.

Recognizing Racism

INTERVIEWS BY AYANNA BLACK

"Free at last, free at last, great God Almighty, I'm free at last!" The voice of Martin Luther King trembled with power and passion. A Baptist preacher on national TV, King challenged the conscience of white America. I recall watching the news on TV and seeing black men and women being clubbed over the head by huge Southern cops. My blood ran cold. I was angry.

The time had come for Martin Luther King to chant proudly and uncompromisingly his message for equality and justice, not only to the American people but to the people of the world! It was a special and splendid chant that evolved from the skin of the drum. Blacks in America and in Canada gained visibility and political power.

During the 60's, many groups and organizations developed out of social, political or cultural need. One of the most prominent and progressive in the U.S.A. was S.N.C.C. (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), which developed to decentralize the focus of the traditionally ensconced power base and became known for its dramatic style in grassroots organizing.

Canada, like the U.S.A., was on trial because of inequality and oppressive conditions, racism against native people and immigrants from the Caribbean, and our role in the Vietnam war. Yet, to some extent, it was a time of enlightenment, a time for social, political and cultural changes.

The middle-class and upper-class white kids were turning their backs on their parents' values and rejecting their heritage. The discovery of the cancerous cells of racism running through Canadian life caused a traumatic reaction, as the discovery of sexism would years later. Multiculturalism was being promoted by the government and racism often made headlines in the newspaper. The educational boards were creating multicultural units. Racism in schools was beginning to be explored. The vault of Canadian history was unlocked, now there was light. Their parents had lied! Their textbooks—their bible had lied! Their films had lied! Their teachers had become accomplices. Disillusioned middle-class and upper-class white kids and the newly transplanted Caribbean Canadian kids would have to develop their own unique groups and organizations to meet their needs.

Although people of colour and whites developed autonomous organizations, there were some alliances. For example, they shared the music of Motown and free, spirited events like Caribana.

And it was inevitable that the inter-cultural empathy would develop organizations to meet the individual group's interest and to take care of its needs. In other words, each group had its own priorities, and it remains so today.

Since 1979 dark clouds have surrounded a number of progressive arts organizations and caused eruptions of criticism about their structures, and their accessibility to minorities. I interviewed representatives from five progressive organizations. Some of the organizations have been in operation for 20 years, others began within the last five years. These organizations have accomplished a great deal, but the problems of structural racism and lack of access are coming under increasing criticism from people of colour. Predictably, these alternative organizations now face structural crisis. Since 1975, I have worked in several progressive women's organizations—the *Fireweed* Collective, the de-

funct Metro Women's Credit Union and The Women's Writing Collective. Each organization had a different structure and offered a different experience. There have been some small structural changes in women's organizations; for example, one woman of colour sitting on a committee or board. But it is still based on the premise and the pattern of the patriarchy's missionary mode, where decisions are made for women of colour. Just as white male organizations marginalize women, so too do most white women's organizations tend to marginalize women of colour. They do not see us as natural allies. They will invite women of colour to sing and dance, but rarely are they invited to sit on panels to discuss issues other than race. The inclusion of women of colour in activities only, without their involvement in the decision making process, is tokenism. During the Feminism & Art Conference in September 1987, sponsored by the Women's Art Resource Centre (WARC), tokenism and racism emerged as the key issues. Beatrice Bailly used the panel to ask: "Are you open? Are you sure you're not racist when put to the test?" (*Broadside* Nov. '88). What is disturbing about this is that it is a recurring process. New women's organizations, and others, are taking the same wrong path.

On August 9, 1988, The Women's Press made headlines in the *Globe & Mail*—"Stories of white writers rejected" and "Race issues split Women's Press." Lisa Rochon of the *Globe & Mail* wrote: "The Press's Policy and Publishing Group, which is responsible for final editorial decisions, rejected three stories, saying they were 'structurally' racist because in all three, white authors reflect on Latin American or African cultures, sometimes adopting the voices of people of colour." During the crisis, 10 women at The Women's Press formed a caucus known as The Popular Front of the Bus Caucus.



"REAL CHANGE IS PAINFUL AND IT'S A STRUGGLE. AND IT'S WHEN WE WEAKEN, WHEN WE SORT OF WIMP OUT AND SAY, 'OH, IT'S TOO HARD, I CAN'T DO IT,' THAT YOU KNOW THAT WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH IS REALLY IMPORTANT AND IN THE END IT'S VERY ENERGIZING BECAUSE CHANGE IS ENERGIZING."

The Women's Press

The Women's Press is Canada's largest feminist publishing house.

Maureen Fitzgerald and Michelle Paulse from The Women's Press are members of the Popular Front of the Bus Caucus. They talked to me about the restructuring and the ideology of The Women's Press.

MF: To be progressive is to transfer the world in which we live into a more equitable world. For me, as a socialist, that involves a transformation of the economic structure, of capitalism. And the struggles of various peoples around that. So it's always a starting point for me to see how The Women's Press is actively involved in struggles. And that means that we see ourselves as more than a publishing house. It's not what we publish, but also the way in which we publish it. It's important for us to be in the process of transforming ourselves and that means that those of us who have power, however little of it we may think we have, those of us who are white and privileged by virtue of our class, who have tended to be predominant here at Women's Press, have got to look at that power. We must confront the areas in which we become part of an oppressive system. And I think that's been very difficult for us to do. I think it's much easier for us to say that the issues are out there. We disagree with someone who says, 'yes, there is racism and it's to be struggled with, but it's out there.' To be progressive you have to engage yourself on a personal level, and not just analyze the oppressive structures that are out there, but also the way in which some of us have internalized the roles of being oppressive to other peoples.

MP: The Women's Press is the first progressive group that I've been directly involved with for such a long period of time and in such a major way. In the last year and a half I've learned about The Women's Press and also about the contradictions around its label as a progressive or as a socialist-feminist organization. The people at The Women's Press did not see themselves as being very much a product of their privilege, whether white or middle class. And also the product of a liberal politic, because Canada is very much a liberal country. There were a lot of people who were feminist but how far does your feminism or your radical politics extend when it comes to a hard political issue like we've had here at the Press. People had to take a stand. One of the things that made it difficult was that the women were very liberal in their approach. Liberalism can be unfocused and detract from the issue at hand. And, my sense is that groups were much more progressive in the 60's and 70's. That was certainly when society also saw itself as being more progressive. And I think a lot of that has changed. We hear about the move to the right, but I don't think there's enough thought being put into how the right is affecting our organizations and how we are seeing the world and how we are acting accordingly.

AB: How do you think that groups can deal with the aspect of race, sexism and sexual preference?

MP: Well I think sexism and sexual orientation have been the two acceptable oppressions that progressive groups have taken up. Sexism more than sexual orientation. Homophobia is still a bit of a struggle in some groups. During the summer a woman said to me, 'you know it's different being called a sexist than it is to be called a racist, because racism is akin to a social taboo.' It's a history North Americans want to forget about. I never really dealt with racism. The truth is that I've never really dealt with the way it is manifested. And I think that inability to deal with it is still very apparent in a lot of places. It's apparent in the women's movement in a major way. It was apparent in the 70's but nobody was talking about it. The tendency has been for groups to back off from racism, to back off from having more black women or other women of colour working in their groups because they are afraid. Black women and white women participated in the change at the Press, but the information that went out and the understanding was that black women took the place over. I think that white people fear that we are gonna come and take it over. I think we see that all the time, we hear that the Chinese people are coming to take over. If they start a new business, if they move into the neighbourhood, they're coming to take over. White people are so into oppressing and abusing us that they're afraid we're gonna turn tables on them.

AB: Do you see racism being used in some of the progressive organizations when, in fact, it is a white power struggle?

MP: Well I know that the events at The Women's Press have been distorted as a power struggle and in a PPG (Publishing and Policy Group—the Board of Women's Press) meeting one of the white

women said that we should recognize this as a power struggle. And one of the black women said this is a power struggle. And it is clearly a power struggle when you look at it, but it wasn't a power struggle in the way that white women will say. But what the black woman meant is that white women are in the position of power by virtue of being in positions in organizations or simply by being white. I mean it is a position of power. We black women were trying to make those women take note of the consequences of the structure of the Press. The consequences of the ways that we were working, the consequences of the way that they saw us or didn't see us. From the position of power you can choose what to do and how to do it and when to do it. And we were saying that they had to give some of that up. Because we wanted to be involved in that also. They had to give up the power to always be the ones sitting up on top directing everything when they wanted to do it. We wanted to be sitting up top there with them. And that was something that they didn't want to do. They didn't want to share that position, or share that ability to direct and do things. And that's how I see racism being an issue of power.

AB: What advice would you give to other progressive groups?

MF: My advice is that this isn't an easy process. And don't think that you can cut corners. Be prepared. Real change is painful and it's a struggle. And it's when we weaken, when we sort of wimp out and say, 'oh, it's too hard, I can't do it,' that you know that what you're going through is really important and in the end it's very energizing because change is energizing. In terms of racism, it was always painful for women of colour to work. But certainly as a white woman speaking to other white people who see themselves as progressive I would say it's a struggle and it's worth it and you've got to be prepared to put your energy into it. Because it's important.



"I THINK THAT SELF-DETERMINATION IS THE BEST WAY OF GETTING ANYTHING . . . THE BEST THING FOR ANNPAC WOULD BE IF NATIVE GROUPS OR BLACK GROUPS, OR ANY GROUP, JOINED TO EFFECT CHANGE."

ANNPAC/RACA

ANNPAC/RACA (Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres/Regroupement d'artistes des centres alternatifs) is a bilingual national arts service organization. Its membership includes over 80 artist-run centres.

Ric Amis is a video artist, and managing director of ANNPAC. He explains the lack of involvement of people of colour and what's ahead for ANNPAC.

RA: We've tried to include people of colour, but I think part of it is dealing with criteria, which is bilingualism, and that sort of excludes a number of people right off the top. I'm the only unilingual person here. And I think that will change when I leave.

AB: Are you saying there are no people of colour who speak French?

RA: No. We put out a call for a new assistant at the beginning of September. We tried to focus on communities other than the white community. We sent our information to the Chinese community because we realize that there are people from Vietnam and places like that who speak French. We also sent information out to the black community, to a couple of the small weekly newspapers, and we

circulated it in French bookstores, libraries and among community groups. We got one response back from a person who was Asian. We had a long conversation after we had finished the interviews about how we were going to deal with the whole issue of race. And how we would qualify somebody for employment. Are we going to take somebody who has less qualifications or has no qualifications into the position? That particular candidate had no qualifications at all. No administrative experience and didn't know how to type. So in that regard, the issue of colour didn't come into it in a way. If this person had been qualified, or had at least some qualifications, then they would have definitely been considered. We understand that we've got to start somewhere. And that's the big issue. Where do you start? It's a catch 22. How do you get the education to get the job?

AB: Do you plan to include people of colour on the Board?

RA: ANNPAC did an employment survey about working conditions in artist-run centres. Sometimes we like to think we're progressive, but we're not as progressive as we imagine ourselves to be. One of the questions that we asked was what race the individual was. We were criticized for having that question in there. We didn't think there was a problem asking the person what race they were. We discussed the issue of race at our annual meeting, and one important area that was brought up was the situation facing natives. That was a big issue this year at our annual meeting. We have to start dealing with the issue of native culture more directly because these groups do have organizations that are similar to ours, but because of prejudice they're not eligible for Canada Council grants. They might be eligible for multi-cultural or native special funding—they are looked at completely separately; folks, that kind of social attitude. What the native community asked us was to not represent them in any way, artistically included.

AB: How do you see being progressive in terms of ANNPAC?

RA: Well, one of the things that I would like to see happen with ANNPAC is to see native communities or black groups join ANNPAC because I think that self-determination is the best way of getting anything. I think that when you get somebody else to do it for you, sometimes they don't hear you right or they think they know what's best for you and they don't. I really believe in people moving forward themselves. I think the best thing for ANNPAC would be if native groups or black groups, or any group, joined to effect change. Then they've got a direct voice in the process. We've been communicating and working with NIIPA (Native Indian/Inuit Photographers' Association) on one project, as a group. So that's a step in the right direction. I think the next step is to interest them in joining. And then we'll have actual direct representation. So that when we sit around the table at an annual meeting and we talk about native communities, there will be somebody there directly that can respond to that. Not somebody who's talked to somebody about it. I think we're the same with the black community too. Because ANNPAC is a multi-disciplinary organization, it could be anything. It could be writers, poets, theatre, paintings, etc.

AB: People of colour have voiced complaints about the lack of support from government funding bodies like the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council. Some of these people may not be members of ANNPAC, but they are members of other organizations that are members of ANNPAC. How does ANNPAC plan to deal with this?

RA: I think that you bring up a good point. For ANNPAC I think it would mean that an organization like A Space should bring forward that concern to the organization. I think that is a more progressive way of working anyway. I would prefer to see ANNPAC reacting to the community, rather than initiating. I'd rather see ANNPAC responding to its community and then initiating from that initiative. And I think it would be good for A Space to make those kinds of proposals. Whether it's at the Ontario Arts Council or not. ANNPAC is broken down into a decentralized system, so, while I'm here in Toronto, I don't deal with any Toronto issues, not as the managing director of ANNPAC. I just deal with national issues, censorship, copyright, with the federal government and the Canada Council. In the case of the Ontario Arts Council, ANNPAC would leave that responsibility up to the regions.

Tanya Mars is a performance artist, editor of *Parallogramme* and long-standing staff member at ANNPAC.

TM: I think one thing that Ric overlooked in terms of the politics of ANNPAC is that we have been dealing with racism at the level of French and English. The Quebecois consider themselves the white niggers of America, they feel that they are oppressed, under represented and misunderstood. We have devoted the last five or six years to becoming an officially bilingual organization, to getting translation, to reaching out actively to French communities. Now this may not be black, native, or Asian, but it is a minority and it is a form of racism. The problems are tremendous. It costs a lot of money to be a bilingual organization. The possibility exists for miscommunication when you are dealing with mostly unilingual anglophones and often unilingual francophones. Communicating through a translator is something of a trial. I don't think that most artist-run centres are dealing with the issue of French as a racist issue, though I don't see much difference. I don't agree with Ric that ANNPAC should only respond. I think that ANNPAC tries to set precedents: i.e. paying fees to artists, instituting bilingualism and dealing with sexism. I might add that minorities will only get more grants when there are more minorities on juries. They will only have more minorities on juries when the OAC and the Canada Council are aware of minorities as practising artists. And places like ANNPAC—who are often asked for names of people to be on juries—could initiate, or could make it a priority to push for stranger representation for minorities at all levels. I do however agree with Ric that this kind of action would have to be brought forward to the membership from a member centre. We are an organization of organizations. But when you look at how we are run and our goals, I would say we are undoubtedly progressive. But progressive is not and should not be synonymous with perfect!



"WE'RE TRYING TO DO COMMUNITY OUTREACH TO DIFFERENT MARGINALIZED GROUPS OF WOMEN. SO THAT'S GOING TO HAVE AN EFFECT ON OUR STRUCTURE."

WARC

WARC (Women's Art Resource Centre) was set up to nurture women artists by creating a support structure to educate women about past and present art made by women.

Carla Murray is one of the founders of the five-year-old organization.

CM: We are a predominantly white group and we are trying to change our structure. We're not sure how to go about it. One way of trying to deal with it is to do some workshops around racism. We're also trying to reach out to women outside of Toronto, because we've had no participation or input from women outside Toronto. We're trying to go beyond that with projects we have planned for this year. Basically, we're trying to do community outreach to different marginalized groups of women. So that's going to have an effect on our structure. We also plan to have structural workshops, as well as racism workshops. We are going through a lot of growing pains right now.

FUSE Magazine

Clive Robertson is an artist, contributing editor and founding member of FUSE Magazine. He is currently artistic director of Gall rie SAW in Ottawa.

CR: FUSE started in 1976 in Calgary as an artist-magazine that dealt with time-based arts including video, performance and artists' books. We moved FUSE to Toronto in 1978. The *Body Politic* trial was on and a number of artists, including myself, thought we should use the magazine to do a media analysis of the way the trial was being reported in the newspapers and on TV. We attended the trial and we attempted a legal analysis of what was going on with the issues. An issue we did after that was called "Women and Infanticide" and was based on research that Lisa Steele, who was working at a women's shelter at the time, had done. And we then did an immigration issue. It was our first contact with the black community. That was in 1980. Karl Beveridge edited that issue and that was the first time we connected up with Truth and Rites and Regent Park. It was very close to that issue when Otis Richmond started writing for FUSE. At the time John Greyson was also working on FUSE too, so we had a gay presence in the magazine, we had a feminist/activist stand from Lisa and all the people that Lisa knew who were working in the cultural and the social service community. And through people like Norma Zlotkin, who was a native rights lawyer, the whole thing started coming together. And within a couple of issues we decided that as artists with this weird magazine, we would produce what we called a cultural news magazine. And we would still have art content, but we would also be dealing with as many of these issues as we could, that we could gain access to. Our primary interest was in having people who were directly involved writing for the magazine.

AB: When you began you hadn't thought of involving people of colour?

CR: In Calgary? No. Because race wasn't an issue like it isn't an issue in Ottawa. It isn't an issue in Quebec City in 1988. It's not entirely true that it's not an issue in Ottawa, but I'm amazed at how much these things are not an issue right now. It's become an issue in Toronto for obvious reasons. Because of the particular point in time. It didn't happen just with A Space, but when Otis Richmond was asked to be on the board of A Space when it was taken over five years ago, and when people like yourself and Lillian Allen and Clifton Joseph and others began to be involved in the visual arts community, it opened the door, it was obvious what was going to happen. I've been away from Toronto a year now. The situation has changed dramatically. There's another generation of people of colour—it has changed in terms of what the racial make up was of people who would go to clubs on the Queen St. strip. People that you would see down there either as audience members or now as artists. And I think that once access starts, and once you have a number of people that are both confronting and confronted by the issues, then something has to happen. And that's what it takes. I mean when we were involved with the *Body Politic* trial, much of the artist community was incredibly homophobic. And these things take place and once they begin to take place, there are changes.



"OUR PRIMARY INTEREST WAS IN HAVING PEOPLE WHO WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED WRITING FOR THE MAGAZINE."



"WHAT THEY WANT TO DO IS CREATE PROGRAMMES THAT WILL GET MINORITY ARTISTS INTEGRATED INTO THE SYSTEM, MAKE THEM GOOD, MAINSTREAM, WHITE, EUROCENTRIC ARTISTS."

Independent Artists' Union

The Independent Artists' Union is a union for visual and media artists. Its aim is to achieve a living wage and equality of access to cultural resources and distribution for all artists.

Karl Beveridge is an artist, photographer and founding member of the Independent Artists' Union.

KB: The Artists' Union was organized during the major cutbacks in 1983-84, when the Conservative government first came in. As usual, the Canada Council asked artists to come out and defend its existence. A number of us were talking and saying it's pretty silly that we go out defending the budget of the Council when essentially our benefit from it is minimal. Rather than putting our energy into defending the status quo as such, we should begin articulating what our own needs are. Even though CAR/FAC existed, CAR/FAC's vision was essentially to patch the existing system. And we felt that there had to be a radical re-evaluation and change in terms of what benefits artists were receiving from society for the work they do. There was a growing recognition through a certain politicization of the arts, that art isn't just an elite patronage producing type of activity, but that art has social value and has social meaning and that artists do work and should be rewarded for the social value that they produce.

AB: Was the Artists' Union part of the body that brought up the issue of the exclusion of people of colour in the jury system?

KB: We've always said that juries should be representative and they should be selected not by the officers, but representative on the basis of community, not only in terms of artists of colour and women, but also of region.

AB: How was that received by the Ontario Arts Council?

KB: Well they paid lip service to it. 'Oh yes, but we have to consider quality.' But they're not going to move on it very much. They'll move as much as they have to move to keep a liberal face, but I think at root, that's not their interest. The Board of the Ontario Arts Council is our governing board. They are selected by the Premier's office, and that's a political appointment. There's no way in which the community at large or the arts community have much say in terms of who is selected. They tend to be your typical board type people. They'd be people who are on the board of the Art Gallery of Ontario, they're monied people, they're lawyers. I mean the whole problem with the Council is that it is not democratically accountable. Even though the OAC claims that they consult the artist community, it's selective consultation, and even though they have juries, the OAC selects the members so there's no real input. I'd never heard this before but the OAC not only claims arms-length from government, they claim arms-length from the art community. Who are they accountable to if they are arms-

length from everybody? In other words they are an entity unto themselves. Their response to the pressure that's been exerted by various organizations has been to hire what they call a kind of multi-cultural coordinator watch-dog. It is very curious that someone has been hired to monitor the various sections to make sure that at least they give token recognition. And the other major point is what the perception of the arts council is. If you look at their professional development programming, they are really interested in the model that's from New York state where they have a training programme for artists and visible minorities. Basically the emphasis is, how do you make artists of colour into good, white artists? In other words, how do you integrate them into the existing system. Rather than recognizing any concept of autonomy or self-determination. And that's the real thrust that's going to have to be fought. Because essentially what they want to do is create programmes that will get minority artists integrated into the system, make them good, mainstream, white, Eurocentric artists. Now I think if an individual chooses to work in a particular mode, that's their decision, but I don't think there should be a policy to do that. If a minority artist wants to be supported and recognized for work that they may do within their own community context, they have a right to do that. I don't say that all black artists should make, should produce an autonomous culture, necessarily. I'm just saying that they should have the right to choose. I think that's the issue. It's really up to the community to have the ability to make that decision. It's not up to us to say to an individual artist of colour you should or shouldn't. I mean if an artist of colour wants to take up ballet and become a ballet star, fine, but if an artist of colour wants to develop an autonomous indigenous art, they should have the right to do that.



"(A SPACE) HAS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE, ON A REAL LEVEL, THE INVOLVEMENT OF VISIBLE MINORITY GROUPS AND THEIR CULTURAL WORKS."

A Space

A Space is the oldest and one of the largest artist-run centres in Canada. Its long standing policy of open membership has made it receptive to change. This was demonstrated in 1986 when a new board of directors implemented a committee structure which radically opened up programming to membership participation.

Ahdri Zhina Mandiela is a performance poet and theatre director who for four years has been involved in A Space as a board member and member of both the Written Word and Performance Committees.

AM: I think A Space is one of the most important progressive art organizations around today because its membership allows diversity and reflects the make-up of the Toronto arts community. What I have seen over the years is that the organization has expanded to include, on a real level, the involvement of visible minority groups and their cultural works. I think we need more membership organizations like A Space. Because the membership determines the organization, the policies that are enforced stay in place over the years. A Space's membership not only reflects the make-up of the art community, but is actually attracting more ethnic and other practising artists through programming. A Space is the only arts organization, that I am aware of, that is actively working on its pro-active policies, pro-active in personnel and programmes.

AB: What do you mean by pro-active?

AM: Pro-active is a policy where constant search is actively made to bring in materials or people that are not white or considered mainstream.

A Space is a revolutionary organization in the sense that it is not afraid to start new trends.

AB: What are your feelings about other progressive arts organizations?

AM: I can't really name any off hand. Because I don't have experience in any other organization that does the kind of work that A Space is doing. And mainly because their membership is on a different level. Most of the arts organizations are not run by memberships. The membership is what attracted me to A Space. I believe in artists' autonomy and self determination. And that's what A Space is all about.



"THERE IS NO SENSE THINKING YOU CAN CHANGE IT HERE OR THERE, BECAUSE IT IS NOT GOING TO FOOL ANYONE. YOU MIGHT DRESS UP YOUR PRODUCT AND MAYBE A FEW WILL THINK IT'S DIFFERENT. BUT YOU ARE NOT GOING TO FOOL ANYONE FOR LONG."

Demands for Change

Anne-Marie Stewart acts as a consultant to groups involved in organizational and structural change. In conversation with Ayanna Black, she outlines the issues facing progressive organizations.

AS: I think that the three most significant issues affecting organizations today, and which determine how they will operate most effectively, are usually (1) the structure, (2) how work is done within the organizations and (3) the people who the organization hires, which organizational theory calls "causal determinants." And if you look at the output of the organization you will find as well that output is directly related to those major areas. If you are going to make changes in an organization, they have to be systemic. You can't change your product if you don't make change inside. You could say 'I want to make decisions differently,' but you can't make decisions differently, unless you make changes inside. You could say, 'I want my meetings to be different,' but in terms of making the meetings different you are dealing with symptoms. You're just putting band-aids on. You have to go back and look at who you hire, who you train, how you hire, how you train and go even further back than that. Where do you get your people from, and where do you advertise. But as well, how work is done, what are the assumptions inherent in the rules of the organization, the rules for how work is done. I'm sure if you check this, you'll find that a lot of those assumptions are based on white, middle-class assumptions and behaviour. So you have to examine all your rules around how work is done, and match them with that. Then you look at structure. What are the assumptions inherent in collective structure? Where do those assumptions come from—the white middle-class world? You have to make some adjustments inside. If you're putting out a magazine, your product goes out. The people that you want to buy that product aren't any longer just plain white, middle-class people. The organization now wants to get their product to all the diversity out there. But unless you've done the change inside, changed your product, the diversity will reject it because it doesn't meet their needs. And they keep making demands on your organization to change. But there is no sense thinking you can change it here or there, because it is not going to fool anyone. You might dress up your product and maybe a few will think it's different. But you are not going to fool anyone for long.

Ayanna Black is a Toronto-based writer and poet.

UPCOMING IN THE
NEXT ISSUE OF

FUSE

MAGAZINE

The Art of Polling
by Joyce Nelson

Images 89

A Review of the Festival

MICHEE MEE
FANZINES
& MORE!

Hamilton Artists Inc.

143 James Street North, Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2K8 tel: (416)529-3355

Arts
Awareness
Weeks
May 19 to June 17, 1989

Opening Ceremonies:

Friday May 26, 8 p.m. *Laugh/Cry Come Apart for Art*

a night of performance, music, raffles and surprises. Free Admission

Saturday May 27, 11 a.m. to 4p.m. *The Art of Coming Together*
a conference on The Search For Space. Free Admission.

May 19 through June 17, Hamilton Artists Inc. will house information tables for Hamilton's Arts Organizations and reference stations featuring resource material on the issue of housing for arts organizations and artists.

COLUMN

IN Nature's Image

TAPPING ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS FOR PROFIT

by Joyce Nelson

In the midst of an unprecedented onslaught on the environment by corporate polluters, public awareness of environmental issues in Canada has never been as high as it is now. A nation-wide attitudinal survey conducted by Angus Reid in the summer of 1988 revealed that 83 per cent of Canadians rank the environment as "very important," with 80 per cent of the respondents willing to spend more for consumer items that are environmentally safe. A whopping 89 per cent believe that private industry does not contribute enough to solving environmental problems. Confronted with an environmentally aware public, consumer product advertisers have taken some unusual twists in recent months in a heightened effort to cover their assets.

Co-opting nature icons for inanimate (and polluting) products is a time-tested strategy of advertising ever since the industry discovered "Marlboro Country," but lately that tactic has assumed new proportions. A sign of the times can be

found in the new ad campaign for Craven A cigarettes. Where once upon a time smokers were depicted enjoying the killer weed in natural great outdoors settings, now the company has taken a more aggressive stance by actually carving the corporate logo into the landscape. The ads show smokers on a golf course where the putting green has been mowed into a huge circle containing the words "Craven A," or on a beach where a similar transformation has been made on the sandy expanse. The message is like a staking of a land claim, asserting the corporate place in the landscape, but also proclaiming the human "necessity" to rework and transform natural surroundings. In terms of attitudes toward nature, the ads subtly say that corporations have a right to alter the earth.

Where once car manufacturers were content to utilize animal totems merely in naming their vehicles, now the advertising goal is to completely anthropomorphize the product, making it seem like a

new "species" and therefore worthy of human and animal rights. For instance, an ad for Saab in a recent issue of *Harrowsmith* states that it's "An Heir To The Air"—suggesting subtly that automobiles too deserve their share of available oxygen.

A current Nissan Pathfinder ad claims the vehicle is "Half Man, Half Beast," thereby denying all technological reality. Similarly, the current Audi ad, with its slogan "The Hills Are Alive," transfers that ecological awareness to the car, making it seem like just another species roaming the planet. Ironically, in the January 2 (1989) edition of *Time*, whose cover-story was devoted to the woes of "Endangered Earth," a Mercury Cougar ad makes the claim that it is "The Next Breed Of Cat," apparently meant to replace the actual animal species. The ad adopts a pseudo-evolutionary tone: "The breed begins. Again. Sleeker. Faster. More intelligent."

Attributing species-status to polluting



Excel in Great Expectations

The 1989 Hyundai Excels have arrived. And each one's a bundle of joy.

Now you can baby yourself with over 50 standard features. That's more than any car in its class.

Front-wheel drive, rack-and-pinion steering, and a peppy 1.5 litre overhead cam engine make the Excel playful and fun to drive.

You can take comfort knowing your new addition is well taken care of with

a 2-year blanket warranty and a 5-year major components warranty.

So if you're planning a new addition, visit your Hyundai dealer. You'll discover the

Excel delivers a lot more car than you're

expecting for a lot less than you think.



HYUNDAI
Cars that make sense.



B&H/CIG. Health and Western Canada advises that danger to health increases with amount smoked—avoid inhaling. As per cigarette: C&W King (tar, 1.1mg; nicotine 0.11mg); Soft (tar, 1.1mg; nicotine 0.11mg); 100's (tar, 0.9mg; nicotine 0.09mg).

Gilding the lily with a corporate logo.

products like cars apparently allows them to frolic at will in nature. But sometimes advertisers proclaim human status for their products. The Hyundai ad in the November 21 (1988) edition of *Maclean's* depicts a car apparently being delivered by a stork. This "bundle of joy" will hold claim to its "parents'" loving care and attention, no matter how naughty it is to the actual environment. Likewise, a Mercedes Benz ad claims that its product is "The Automobile Every Sports Sedan Wants To Be When It Grows Up."

But sometimes even human status isn't enough for consumer products. Electronics and computer corporations often claim super-species status for their technologies. A recent *Maclean's* ad for Gold Star Electronics is typical. "To Err Is Human," states the ad, "So Gold Star Tests With Robots." Move over, humans. Your planet is being usurped.

Another group of ads adopts a somewhat more bizarre twist in terms of environmental awareness. The ads effect a

kind of clever reversal of expectations and perceptions, perhaps based on our propensity to merely skim ads. A good example is a recent IBM ad in *Maclean's*. The two-page ad shows a photographed scene overlooking Vancouver's ocean front, with four floating corporate oil rigs dominating the foreground. The ad's bold copy states: "If You Can See Beyond This, Then IBM Shares Your Point Of View." The implication is that we need ecological awareness and visionary thinking to move beyond the situation depicted in the photograph; that corporate exploitation of environmental resources is not the answer for the future, and that IBM shares this point of view. But when you actually read the smaller ad copy, you find that it is about the "spectacular view" of the Pan Pacific Hotel recently purchased by IBM, from whose 23rd floor the accompanying window-framed photograph was shot. There isn't a word about those four oil rigs, which thereby become "natural" features of the view.

A similar transformation happens in a November 7th (1988) *Maclean's* ad placed by the Canadian Nuclear Association. The ad shows a family relaxing on the grassy slopes of a park, while in the background a nuclear power plant (the Pickering Generating Station) is clearly visible. At first one assumes that the ad copy accompanying such a photograph will be decidedly anti-nuclear, since the juxtaposition of this happy nuclear family outing and the nuclear power plant is so ironic and bizarre. But the accompanying ad copy is all about the "safety" of nuclear power. Again, as in the IBM ad, something that does not inherently belong in the landscape and is in fact a major polluter is made to seem like a "natural" feature of the scenic view.

Corporate attempts to naturalize pollution and polluters extends into language-use as well. For example, a January Toyota ad boasts about "Performance Verging On Meltdown," twisting the meaning of the word into favourable connotations. A


Ford Aerostar ad in *Harrowsmith* asserts that it is "a sporty Eddie Bauer model . . . with new Eddie Bauer style," as though associations with this outdoor clothing manufacturer might compensate for an otherwise polluting product.

But the two weirdest "environmental" campaigns are the ads currently being placed by Benson & Hedges and Chrysler Canada. Benson & Hedges, the tobacco giant, has adopted two new strategies to provide product appeal. One technique is based on perception reversals. The ad shows a woman with long, dark hair, running a comb through it. Superimposed on her tresses are gold streaks and the Benson & Hedges logo, with the caption "Black and Gold." Despite the fact that one of the things which people dislike about smoking is its lingering odours on the body, clothing, and in the hair, here the company reverses that perception with a seemingly "beautiful" image. In other words; if the nose is offended, appeal to the eyes.


Another Benson & Hedges ad takes an even more aggressive approach by seemingly tattooing natural species with its logo. One recent two-page ad shows a beautiful flower being approached by a Monarch butterfly: one flower petal and both butterfly wings are inscribed with the corporate name. While on one level, this might seem to be a co-opting of nature iconography and associations, on another level it is a bizarre but bold assertion of nature as corporate enemy: tattooed in advance of extermination.

Chrysler Canada's current ad campaign takes a similar approach. Its two-page magazine ad shows a close-up of the red exterior of a car body with rain drops falling on it. The bold ad-copy reads: "Over Time, The Penetrating Force Of A Single Drop Of Rain Will Pierce Metal Like A Bullet." At first glance, the reader expects that the remaining print of the ad will be devoted to the issue of acid rain, with maybe something about corporate responsibility in helping to diminish the sulphur dioxide emissions from car exhaust that contribute heavily to the problem. But no, Chrysler takes a different tack, portraying nature as the hostile enemy: "Rain is only the accomplice. The real killer is ferric oxide; the deadly

**Nuclear Energy in Canada
SAFETY BY DESIGN**



SEEKING TO GENERATE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING



Canadian Nuclear Association
Association Nucléaire Canadienne

AN INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF MORE THAN 100 COMPANIES.

Nuclear family picnicking at Pickering.

combination of water, air, and metal we call rust." The ad goes on to talk about the protective coating applied to Chryslers to combat the seeming terrorist aggression of nature, and its penetrating "bullets."

But perhaps the biggest irony of the new Chrysler Canada ad campaign is its slogan: "Changing The Landscape." No other technology in this century has done more to alter and threaten the planet: with the depletion of fossil fuels, the paving of the landscape, the creation of toxic and acid rain devastating our forests and lakes, and contributions to the "greenhouse effect" looming on the horizon. In a hide-

ous and bizarre twist, Chrysler Canada's new corporate slogan simultaneously boasts about such effects, incorporates an environmental buzzword, and promises to wreak further havoc. As their ad makes clear, the "landscape" they care about is the smooth, un-pitted and non-corroded surface of the beloved new car, the only "body" that really counts.

Joyce Nelson's latest book is *The Colonized Eye: Rethinking the Grierson Legend*, published by Toronto's *Between The Lines Press*.

S
W
E
I
V
E
E
R



Photo by David Walberg.

From the video *Born Near the U.S.A.* by John Scott.

EXHIBITION

Manufactured Life

**INDUSTRIAL IMPACT:
VARIOUS POINTS OF VIEW**
Artcite and Common Ground,
Windsor, Ont.
Nov. 1988

by Jim Miller

INDUSTRY IS a pervasive fact of contemporary life. It affects who we are in a myriad of ways: what we eat, where we work, our sexual preferences, where we live and how we die. It comes as no surprise that it is difficult to get an overview of the industrial phenomenon without running the risk of representing its complexities in crude, reductive ways. But it is precisely because of industry's powerful impact on our lives, positive and negative, that it is important to try and understand its fullest implications.

Last November, *Industrial Impact: Various Points of View* opened in Windsor's two artist-run centres: Artcite and Common Ground. An ambitious project, with 12 artworks and five catalogue essays, *Industrial Impact* had a promising process of development. In February of '88, the organizing gallery, Artcite, held a preliminary symposium on the subject. The gallery brought together selected artists, art historians, critics and curators who had in some way dealt with industrial themes and issues in their work, and put them

with industry: labour activists, environmentalists and the chairman of a robotics company. This linking-up of quite diverse participants made the event different from the predictable, adversarial spectacle of art panel discussions. This was not "art star wars"; it was more of a get-acquainted workshop. Each participant made a presentation and fielded questions from the floor. In addition to the modest aim of the symposium to share information and bridge information gaps, there was also the hope that it would stimulate new work, possibly collaborated efforts. Most important, however, was the intent to use the workshop atmosphere to help establish a direction for the planned November exhibition/publication.

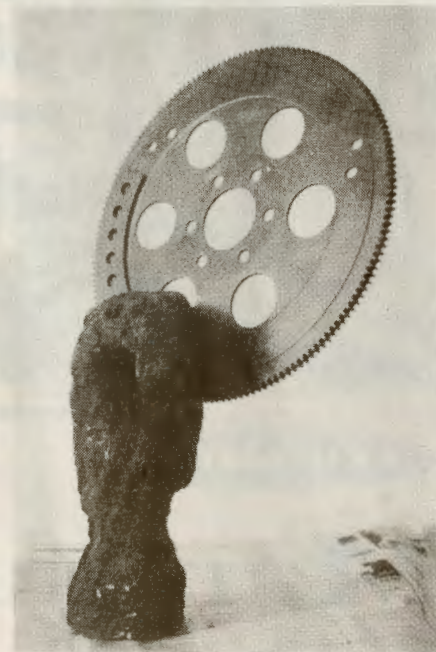
As the weekend drew to a close, there was a sense that very good presentations had been made, but that time was running out on the effort to fit the specific areas of interest dealt with into the larger theme. Before the symposium wrapped up, a closed evaluation session was added on specifically to discuss the challenges and options involved in shaping the project. There were essentially three directions that emerged in that discussion: one was to tighten the focus and create a more manageable scope of inquiry for the project; the second was to simply provide a forum for the audience to approach related artworks and essays—without trying to impose a rigid curatorial grid of interpretation; the third option, and most ambitious, was to make the critical effort to articulate the connective threads in the broad industrial theme.

Mary Ellen Scully Mosna, the curator and coordinator of *Industrial Impact*, chose to take the middle option. She created a pluralistic project that presented works in many media; works that explored a variety of "Industrial Impact" subjects using a range of approaches from documentary to fiction. The resulting collection of art and essays; the "Various Points of View," were left to speak for themselves—to create their own context for interpretation.

Unfortunately, by taking the middle curatorial path *Industrial Impact* missed some of its potential. The project covered such sprawling thematic territory that a strong curatorial hand was absolutely necessary to help the viewer make sense of it all. Some useful contextualizing was accomplished with Rosemary Donegan's catalogue essay—an informative art/historical glimpse at the way Canadian artists of the 30's and 40's responded to industry. But her essay only began to set the stage for the consideration of a larger array of contemporary issues. Given the awkward size of that remaining task, it might have been

easier and ultimately more effective to scale the thematic scope of the project down and focus on one or two specific areas. Several of the artists and writers dealt with subjects that could have easily been expanded further.

One of the most successful works, and one that was explicitly rooted in place, was John Scott's video *Born Near the USA*. In this work Scott tells his story of growing up in Windsor: of the firey foundry that he could see from his bedroom window as a kid; of his fathers slow death from industrially induced lung disease; of working in car plants as a teenager and of girls and sex and drugs and confusion and Detroit radio. It's an urgent and effective mix



Detail from *Jardins d'lcare et d'aujourd'hui* by Robbert Fortin.

of 'speedy' voice-over that trips and stumbles, with a crude animation of his characteristic quick and evocative ink drawings against a choppy, repetitive sound background of Springsteen's raspy hit. Far from being a straight narrative, the video cut roughly in and out from reminiscence to observation. It asked questions about the urban industrial environment that distorts people and wears them down—and finally posed a challenging vision of collective change.

The Windsor/Detroit urban industrial theme was prominent in several other artists' works. Wayne Tousignant's multi-media wall piece, *abDDTfg*, was an old refrigerator door. The familiar and reassuring shiny white surface was done away with and covered over by a year's accumulated litany of local Windsor

press reports on environmental concerns, or cut away to reveal whirring motors and compartments housing assortments of pop can tabs and other bits of man-made debris. Michelle Goulette's *Detroit Demolition Dream* was a seven-foot-long series of collotype prints with repeating, overlapping images of immense mountains of garbage. These images were overlaid with an inscrutable written text and punctuated five times by the image of a sleeping, dreaming figure. In *Neighbourhood*, Suzanne Konyha created an evocative three dimensional painting on a free standing screen made from pieces of plywood and wall paneling. The images shifted from panel to panel in a dream-like narrative manner: from a dark industrial scene, to a sooty residential street, to a working man in a T-shirt taking a break for a smoke. In its quiet way, Konyha's piece shed a different light on the disagreeable problem of taking your work home. Joan Borsa's catalogue essay went a step further to address the state of 'home' and homeless people—and related it to the way profit imperatives can push the juggernaut of industry, with little regard for the community or domestic consequences.

Carole Conde and Karl Beveridge's *Class Work* stood out in *Industrial Impact* by demonstrating an art practice that goes beyond the usual art world confines. Their latest in a long line of collaborated projects, this twenty panel photo/text series presented a fictional narrative developed from interviews and workshops with members of the Communication and Electrical Workers of Canada. The central character in their story about divided loyalties in the work place was a woman working in a TV parts branch plant. It opens with her blaming herself for being laid-off when the plant is shut down by its U.S. parent. By the end she has acquired a healthy scepticism towards the company's manipulative bottom-line paternalism and has recognised that her first loyalty is to herself and her union co-workers. Conde and Beveridge dramatize the story by using a cast of actors and imaginative sets that mirror the woman's interior state, and at the same time, contextualize her work place in a larger political and social frame. With its compellingly constructed message, *Class Work* functions very well as gallery art, and as an educational photo play in the union hall.

The bridges between art and activism saw traffic moving in both directions in the *Industrial Impact* project. While Conde and Beveridge took art practice into the work-place, the symposium and catalogue contributions by Rick Coronado, Joyce McLean, Jim Brophy and Margaret Keith brought information

about industry into the gallery setting and the art system. Joyce McLean, the International Coordinator for the Greenpeace Great Lakes Campaign, sketched the situation of the pulp and paper industry's pollution of the Great Lakes. Rick Coronado, Chairperson for the Windsor Labour Council's Environment Committee, looked at the social and political circumstances that allow pollution to occur. In our consumer democracy, the paying customer has the deciding vote in determining which technological innovations get elected to the kitchen cabinet. But we have less clout in determining the environmental price that is paid for the conveniences we enjoy. In recent years there have been strategic political efforts to modify old institutions so they can deal with new problems. Jim Brophy and Margaret Keith, founding executive members of the Windsor Occupational Health and Safety Council (W.O.S.H.), saw the need to go even further and create new independent organizations that can monitor industrial practice in the work-place and the environment. Like Coronado, they feel that from this position they can press hard for responsible action by government and industry.

A trait that has characterized industry is the narrow instrumental thinking that divides the world into its constituent quantifiable parts; thinking that separates 'us' from 'them' and gives 'us' a licence for their exploitation. The most disturbing feature about this instrumental way of viewing the world is that we internalize it and perpetuate it—it is the ideology of industry. This subtle issue was central in several works in the show. Christine Burchnell's large high contrast black and white photo work called *Fail Safe* shows a smudgy, grainy scene of railway tracks going under an enormous loading hopper. In this ominous image of debased rationality, the expected vanishing point at the end of the tracks just isn't there—it has been lost in the technical process of making the image. What remains is the graphic bulk of the loading hopper, poised above the tracks like an industrial guillotine. Joe De Angelis's sculpture, *Three Quarks for Galileo*, lampoons science with a mock astrolabe constructed from the 'found' discards of Windsor's industrial foundries. In Stan Deniston's photo work about framing views, *The Natural World*, the viewer first encounters a text on glass in which the artist relates his remembering of a newspaper article reporting the opening of an airforce base in Colorado. The notable thing about the installation was that it was camouflaged to match the surrounding landscape. Underneath the glass was a large detailed cibachrome image of an expansive and apparently pristine Colorado



Detail from *Between the devil and the deep blue sea* by Anne-Marie Beneteau.

scene—this view of 'nature' had been poisoned. In Stephen Andrew's series of five drawings entitled *How to plant a tree*, images of industry and its effects were completely absent, which at first made the selection of his work seem quite puzzling. But in the end, it became clear that he excluded industry's instrumental world view in order to counter it with another. By exploring the animistic connection between humans and other living things, he turned the critique away from the rationalized separation of industry and us (the people 'it' effects), and re-posed the question to consider our body and our spirit in the flux of things.

There were many worthwhile elements within *Industrial Impact: Various Points of View*. The idea of holding a public symposium in advance to help develop the project was one that deserves emulation. The effort to bridge gaps between members of the cultural community and activists in other areas—the environment, labour, health and safety—was informative and hopefully has strengthened the lines of communication. The many issues

raised in the exhibition and catalogue bore witness to the fact that industry insinuates itself into every corner of our lives and underscores the importance of trying to comprehend the price we pay for the benefits we gain. Several of the art works stood out: John Scott's autobiographical video, Conde and Beveridge's *Class Work* photo series and Suzanne Konyha's evocative painted screen. The wide ranging, hands-off curatorial approach was the least satisfactory aspect of the project. More substantial overall results could have been gained if a thesis had been developed to link the various issues, or alternatively, if the thematic scope of *Industrial Impact* had been scaled down. But if its ambitious reach exceeded its grasp, *Artcrite* still deserves praise for the public forum that was created by the symposium, exhibition and publication. Issues were raised, from a variety of perspectives, on a manufactured fact of life that we can't afford to ignore. ■

Jim Miller is a writer living in Toronto.

Tongue-tied and Loving it

DYKES HAVE BAD TIMES TOO
STRANGE SISTERS
The Party Centre, Toronto
Dec. 9, 1988

by Marusia Bociurkiw

Having an affair used to sound so exciting. But now we say: 'Oh the risk! Oh the pain! And who's got time, anyway?'

Flare magazine, January, 1989

... the waiting becomes too much. I ask you to touch me and you do—slowly and gently. But my body is hot, and your soft caresses only intensify my wanting you.

Mary Louise Adams, *Reveries*

WOMEN'S magazines and lesbian erotic writing both talk about sex, it seems. One is context, the other subtext. It's only an accident that *Flare* magazine appeared in my neighbour's mailbox the same week that I saw *Dykes Have Bad Times Too*. Yet the magazine's implicit text of sexual fear—of pain, of disease, of loss—provided a timely reference point.

Dykes Have Bad Times Too was organized by Strange Sisters, the lesbian caucus of Buddies in Bad Times, a Toronto-based gay theatre company. Funds raised through this event will go towards lesbian plays in the upcoming *Queer Culture* festival of lesbian and gay theatre (March/April, 1989). The evening featured a range of readings and performances by a selection of local lesbian poets, performance artists, and musicians. Strange Sisters describes itself as "pro-sex, pro-fun, and pro-bad,"—a fitting description of the evening's lesbian sex writing.

Several years of anti-censorship organizing in this city has fostered a context for numerous "pro-sex" screenings and performances, although few of them have been devoted entirely to lesbian work. Now that Bill C-54 is history and the Censor Board is in retreat, there is less urgency about producing events like *Wet and Hard*, an evening of lesbian and gay sex talk at the Sex and the State Conference, or *Political Tongues*, a 1986 workshop on lesbian erotic writing at A Space.

Oh the risk. Oh the pain. And who has time anymore? Since the raid on A Space four years ago by the Ontario Censor Board and the flurry of actions, court cases and benefits that followed, the ranks of anti-censorship activists have thinned. The risks and controversies involved in constantly talking sex can be taxing for those who remain. Still less visible are 'out' lesbian and gay artists who also do explicit work. The showing of such work involves 'coming out' again and again. One does the work anyway, but one longs to talk about other things too.

So *Dykes Have Bad Times Too* felt a bit nostalgic somehow, as though there has been less conversation lately, and more worrying about relationships, AIDS, and human rights protection; concrete issues, to which sex is just a sub-text (or is it?). In fact, many of the pieces were simply readings of already published works: Sarah Sheard reading from her short story, "Will You Hold These For Me" (*Impulse*, 1986); Ingrid MacDonald and Mary Louise Adams reading their short stories from "The Erotic Spread" (a sex fiction insert from a 1986 issue of *Rites*); and *Lesbians Who Wear Lipstick*, a cabaret-style revue from San Francisco that has already played numerous times in this city.

Newer works included *Never Again, Again*, a performance about a lesbian breakup by Janice Fuller, and a composite coming-out story by Becki Ross. Ross's reading was the only one to hint at any kind of social or historical background to lesbian representation. Initiated by the Canadian Women's Movement Archives, and based on research and interviews with women involved in the Lesbian Organization Of Toronto (LOOT) from 1975 to 1980, the reading was part documentation and part affectionate send-up. Says Ross of her work: "I wanted to see if I could fuse my activism and my academic work in front of a much larger audience than I'd find in academia, while still retaining the

integrity of these women's experience." From *The House That Jill Built* Ross read:

I had sex on the LOOT couch, inspired by Beverly Glenn-Copeland . . . and later felt guilty and alienated by the whispered accusations: "slut," "sleaze"—very "bad girl" marks that I would give my eye-teeth and a highly coveted LOOT t-shirt for now. The much trumpeted slogan: "The personal is political" was not extended to embrace the nitty gritty particulars of sexual freedom. Instead, lesbianism at LOOT meant work and struggle and politics and oppression and, as I remember, it had little to do with sex—a platform which, in retrospect, clearly limited both the range and depth of our analysis and action.

The pendulum can swing both ways. Most of the pieces at the *Dykes Have Bad Times Too* evening had almost everything to do with sex: sexual fantasies and relationship stories abounded. Some were beautifully written, and represented lesbianism as an enviable and privileged existence, as in Sarah Sheard's story:

... and the other women around us thrust tongues into our mouths and stroked themselves sharing our heat and suddenly it was



Photo by Celest Natalie.

Becki Ross reading at *Dykes Have Bad Times Too*.

like being swallowed by a garden hose I felt hoops of pleasure squeezing me rolling down my scalp and neck a passage of pleasure in tight rings that lasted for maybe minutes it was the longest orgasm of my life and as the grains of pleasure began to sift away the others groaned around me urging one another to come again . . .

About halfway through the evening, dripping wet cunts and trembling thighs began to sound mundane, making me wonder if it is enough just to talk sex anymore. The more complex make-up of lesbianism and feminism—in particular, the acknowledgement of difference among women—demands more complex representations, and more context. The white-only composition of the performers that night seemed to indicate an urgent need for the inclusion of cultural difference as well.

'Do a little dance, make a little love, get down tonight.' (K.C. and the Sunshine Band) . . . Would that we could. But for medical reasons, we can't completely re-embrace that disco mantra . . .

Flare magazine

... though I'm electric with hunger, I'm afraid I won't be able to fill the emptiness inside me. But I do begin . . .

Ingrid MacDonald
Upstairs There Is A Room With A Bed

In *A Restricted Country* (Firebrand Books, NY, 1987), lesbian historian Joan Nestle writes:

Erotic writing is as much documentary as any biographical display. Fantasies, the markings of the erotic imagination, fill in the earth beneath the movement of great social forces; they tell deep tales of endurance and reclamation. They are a people's most private historic territory . . . Being a sexual people is our gift to the world.

An event like *Dykes Have Bad Times Too* is indeed part of the historical struggle for a visible lesbian culture. The prioritization of sexual pleasure and the creation of safe spaces for transgressive fantasies is made more difficult than ever by the moral agenda of capitalism in the late 80's. The women's mags tell all.

Strange Sisters will be holding more events in the future. Their stated goal—to raise funds to produce more lesbian plays and cultural events—can only help to create a larger and more diverse body of lesbian writing to listen to and rebuild from. ■

Marusia Bociurkiw is a video artist and writer, active in lesbian and feminist publishing.



Photo by A. Prior.

Kirsten Johnson as Ophelia is mad about papayas in DNA's *Hamlet*.

THEATRE

Bootless Pacing

HAMLET
DNA THEATRE
The Theatre Centre, Toronto
Jan. 21- Feb. 4, 1989

by Nigel Hunt

SHAKESPEARE'S *Hamlet*, while much loved and admired, has also been much abused by theatre artists in recent years. Charles Marowitz adapted *Hamlet* into a sort of Hamlet-comes-unstuck-in-time. East German Heiner Muller rewrote the text as *Hamlet-Machine*, his own fragmented version of the modern nightmare that forms the history of postwar society. Vancouver's Tamahnous Theatre did a production called *The Haunted House Hamlet*, setting the play in an old house in which Horatio is mistaken for an east-end street kid trying to break into the place.

And, neither last nor least, in Toronto this January, another version—the *DNA Hamlet*—joined the long list of contemporary re-

sponses to Shakespeare's most famous 4,000 lines.

In past productions, director Hillar Liitaja has concentrated on creating his oddly-compelling collages of carefully coordinated but seemingly fragmented action and inaction using the poetry of Ezra Pound as both spoken text and jumping-off point for his theatrical imagination. The *DNA Hamlet* (spelled with a backwards 'E') is Liitaja's directorial debut with a classic from the theatrical canon.

The DNA Theatre has cultivated a transgressive relationship between the audience and the players—patrons are encouraged to roam about during the performance while the actors treat them (us) as some sort of nuisance.

We are urged to instigate our own experience and then are punished for doing so. Pursuant to these contrary trends, the DNA *Hamlet* immediately alienated its audience with the price of admission and by its length: tickets were \$50, and the piece went on for nine hours. The logic of value for money doesn't carry through when a show's potential audience is not likely to have as much disposable income as the audience attending *Cats*. The length also fails to look attractive in a city averse to experimental theatre in general and to DNA Theatre in particular. Still, in the end, many discounts and invitations sprung up to reduce the cost of Hamlet-ing. The actual length turned out to be a more modest seven-and-a-half hours. And, of course, in all DNA shows but in this one especially, you're always free to come and go as you like.

Arriving at the entrance of the Theatre Centre at 2 p.m. for a weekend performance, the pattern of alienation continues. The doors are shut: audience members are not allowed to enter the theatre; instead you are separated from any friends and companions, gathered in groups of two to four and taken around the back of the building and up a fire escape.

Still outside, you are met by two women, cloaked in black, who stare you in the face and demand: "Who's there?" and "Answer me. Stand and unfold yourself," and finally, "Long live the king," the first lines of *Hamlet* spoken by two sentinels.

The back door to the building is then flung open and, as you enter into the darkness, bright white lights are shined in your eyes. Afraid to walk for fear of falling, you are forced to grope your way around until you gradually accustom yourself to the strange new environment.

Chairs are scattered throughout the space. Strings of naked lightbulbs hang from the ceiling, at times brightening and dimming. Loud classical music resonates from speakers all around. A loud voice bellows: "Sit where you like! Feel free to move around the space! Do as you are told, or leave!" The voice belongs to one of several men and women uniformly dressed in white shirts and black pants. Another of these repeats: "Never reveal what you have seen tonight." As my eyes adjust, several levels of platforms can be made out. On one, a large wooden bed comes into focus. Higher up is an area with a couch and chairs. People standing on this level are yelled at for leaning on the railing. Beyond that, there is some sort of lounge in which a black-corseted woman sits and chats with a bearded man. (She turns out to be the Mistress of the Underworld, and he is the ghost of Hamlet's father). Just along from them a

woman practising samurai moves with a sword starts to slide down a long ramp towards you. Time to move.

On the opposite side of the space is a woman sitting on a stool in front of a table-saw. Throughout the performance, she tweets whistles, blows horns and points at characters whenever they utter a line from the text of *Hamlet* that she approves of, noting it down in a small ledger. (She later fingerprints characters who die during the play, giving them a pill to swallow and sending them off to heaven). Beyond her, on the wall, there are several uncased speakers through which one can make out the voice of the director, evidently taped during rehearsals, telling his actors how to play their roles. Further on, at the far corner, sits Hamlet (Andrew Scorer), head shaved, talking quietly to a young woman who seems to be Ophelia (Kirsten Johnson). I find a chair close to them and try and make out what Hamlet is saying as I continue to survey the scene.

Frequently, audience members are moved out of the way of an impending piece of action. Claudius (Sky Gilbert), having spent a good twenty minutes devouring an entire chicken, parades around with Gertrude (Shirley Josephs) in circles, accompanied by more loud music, before addressing the masses gathered below. Polonius (Ed Fielding) pushes his familiar pedantry to new extremes by speaking so slowly that it seems certain he will forget his thought before he gets to the end of it. Ophelia goes mad and smears herself with papayas. A funeral march slowly brings her body on, taking twenty minutes to go a distance of twenty feet. Portraits of the dead are mounted on the walls.

Despite its consistently unusual vision, both of Shakespeare's classic world and of ours—something hard to come by in our local theatres—the downfall of the piece was ultimately its confused sense of freedom. The overall slowness of the piece soon made going from place to place within the theatre an act of aimless and unrewarded wandering rather than anxious exploration. Possible contrasts of pace, rhythm and image were dulled by the invariable lugubriousness of the event as a whole. The mechanized playing style of the performers, combined with the pushiness of the "watchmen" further served to confine the very imagination which a good part of the staging seemed to want to free. Finally, I chose the most meaningful sense of freedom that this piece—and any other performance—permits: the freedom to leave. ■

Nigel Hunt is a playwright and editor of *Theatrum*.



Photo from *Daughters of Darkness* by David Walberg.

HER VICTIMS are men lured by sexual seduction into a web of desire which transforms lust into blood hunger. Two lesbian lovers, entwined, are suddenly attacked by a man who bludgeons them to death in a fit of jealous rage. Women rise from the dead to take revenge on all men.

What is the lesbian vampire stereotype? Is it a warning of the potential excesses of female narcissism or independence, the imaginary femme fatale gone berserk, "death with the face of love?" What mythical role does the lesbian vampire play?

In both *The Hunger*, a recent American extravaganza, and *Daughters of Darkness*, a 60's Belgian cult film, the motive for blood thirst is not vengeance but immortality, in keeping with the traditional vampire mythos. The desire for immortality in these two films, however, is culturally inscribed as a specifically female desire for eternal youth and beauty.

As if delivering lines from an Oil of Olay commercial, the Countess in *Daughters of Darkness* asks: "How old do you think I am?" and the casting of Catherine (Chanel No.5) Deneuve in *The Hunger* foregrounds a cosmetic personae of foreign aristocratic glamour.

The Hunger crosses scientific empiricism and science fiction, transforming the mythic resonances of the vampire theme into moralistic sci-fi in which the lesbian content simply provides an erotic "special effect." Where *The Hunger* merely plays out the lesbian vampire seduction, using the plot as a thin armature for over-produced mise en scène, this theme is a platform from which *Daughters of Darkness* launches its parody of romance, family, marriage, desire and linguistic clichés. The two films diverge significantly in characterization and moral tenor. In *The Hunger* the simplified characters are destined to fulfil a familiar

HOME VIDEO

Lesbian Lovebite

DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS

Tony Scott
Harry Kümel
Distributed by Gemini Releasing Corp.

THE HUNGER

Tony Scott
Distributed by MGM/U.A.
1982

by Shonagh Adelman

Hollywood moralism, ending in a horror-flick revenge of the living dead. "Daughters," however, touches on aspects of sadism and duplicity in all the characters, exploring extremes of perversion/abnormality (primarily in dialogue), characteristic of De Sade and Bataille. The psychological and/or maniacal underpinnings of the characters are never completely differentiated or explained. A semblance of normality, initially represented by the newlywed couple, is continually challenged so that the mythic/fictional abnormality of the Countess doubles for and is mirrored by the psychological abnormality of Stephen, whose identification with the Countess's sadism, revealed by his rapturous re-telling of her infamous three thousand years of libertine conquests, blurs the difference between the 'real' and the mythic. Obliqueness, irony, and unexpected twists in the plot obscure information with which we might make sense of the characters, drawing attention to and si-

multaneously thwarting our expectations. The alliance of love and death, figured by the lesbian vampire theme, stages an enigma which, in *Daughters*, through its reflexivity, draws into question the fiction itself: both the vampire myth of love as death, and the social myth of romantic love.

Although a relatively straightforward narrative, the naturalism in the film is disrupted by ambiguous irony in the dialogue and in deliberately exaggerated dramatic devices such as the fade-to-red between scenes, cut-away shots of stormy weather (lightning and thrashing waves), and stylized two dimensional shots that have a deliberately kitsch effect.

At the outset of the narrative, the amorous three hour newlyweds affirm/deny their feelings for one another:

Valerie: Tell me, do you love me?
Stephen: Don't you know?



Photo from *Daughters of Darkness* by David Walberg.



Photo from *Daughters of Darkness* by David Walberg.

Valerie: I want you to say it.
Stephen: No. And you, do you love me?
Valerie: Me? Of course I don't!
Stephen: Good. Apparently we were made for each other.

Beginning on a note of playful and cynical transgression of romance, the narrative swings back and forth between reinstating the authenticity of love/romance and unveiling it as a posture which disguises a utilitarian relationship of dominance/submission. All the characters are guilty of antisocial desires in some respect; from the Countess's pillaging to the interloping detective's voyeurism. Even Valerie, who appears to be the real innocent, is accused of taking pleasure in describing the disturbing sight of Stephen's necrophilia. The knowing are also innocent; the Countess in her 'naturalness': "I can't behave like other people. When I think something, I have to say it," and Stephen in his suspension of disbelief. These extremes, played out between and within the characters, have a parodic effect which ultimately contests socially sanctified conventions of 'normality' in familial relations (Stephen's mother), in the S/M resonances of marriage, romance and desire, and in the coded meanings of language/dialogue. However, the social roles of the characters are finally dislodged: the powerful die (appropriate deaths) and the submissive is promoted to the status of dominatrix. As in every fairytale, after the fatal daylight-induced car crash in which the Countess is impaled and burned on a stake, the "beautiful, young" Valerie subsumes the role of the "old hag," the Countess, only to continue the circularity of the love/death diad. In a final ironic flourish Valerie, professing her unmediated relation to language in the Countess's sing-song intonation, alleges her uniqueness, her innocence: "I can't behave like other people. When I think something, I have to say it." ■

VIDEO

The Façade of Obsession

BY WAY OF FICTION

TESS PAYNE
Distributed by V Tape
Toronto, 1988

by Colin Campbell

TESS PAYNE'S NEW TAPE, *By Way Of Fiction*, is the culmination of what could be read as a series of three tapes investigating characters who act out obsessions as a substitute for passion. *The Flow Of Appearances*, *Life On Our Planet*, and finally *By Way Of Fiction* all use a similar structure of disjunctive and simultaneous narratives that present characters caught up in "lifestyles" that mimic media representations of fulfilment via form. In Payne's tapes, the people in the media (in most cases, television and magazines) all have names, but the central characters don't. In the previous two tapes, we watch people who have mastered "lifestyle" seemingly at the expense of content. They look perfect, cook perfect meals, and chit-chat while doing ex-

cruciatingly painful looking exercises to mould perfect bodies.

However, there are cracks in the seamless perfection of their lives. The farmer being interviewed on television proudly asserts that his 10,000 chickens all have their own cages (no such thing as a "homeless" chicken), but has to admit that this doesn't allow them to do anything but eat the constant supply of genetic and hormone altering food provided them. A woman having dinner with her roommates confides to her friends how each night someone comes into her room and places cups over her breasts and she can feel the milk flowing, induced just like the automatic milking machines used on cows. One of the women dismisses it as a dream. The woman recount-

ing the story isn't convinced, but does not seem unduly disturbed by either the event or the dream of the event. The occurrence just seems endless. These disquieting instances barely ruffle the glowing patina they have achieved and so joylessly polish. *By Way Of Fiction* probes that patina of consumerism, revealing a decay of the spirit that is both touching and chilling.

The woman (unnamed) who is the central character is presented in a number of situations that may or may not be fictional. Read literally, she is a woman who is raising her teenage son by herself. She is having an ultimately unsatisfying relationship with a television producer in search of a "concept." She supports herself and her son as an actress and, as back-up, by what must be supply teaching.

She's keeping her life together, but all is not well. Milton, her lover, longingly eyes prostitutes, while she develops an infatuation with an attractive male student in her class. Milton gives her cash for her trip (they take separate vacations) and dismisses her affectionate gestures by declaring he has no time for romance. But she obviously wants romance. At this point, very early on in the tape, we suspect that she is submerging herself into a state of mind that is more fictive than real. She auditions for the part of a prostitute and manages to look and act as hard-bitten as the prostitutes Milton has been ogling. The audition scene is ambiguous, full of descriptive images, but no context. One gets the feeling

she could play the part on the street as easily as she can "act" it.

But it is the role of Madame Bovary that begins to consume her. This is where fact and fiction begin to blur. Her gay hairdresser gives her a Madame Bovary hairdo for the role she has got, but next we see her in the classroom, reading *Madame Bovary* to her class. What is real? Is the class by coincidence studying *Madame Bovary* at the same time she is rehearsing the role? The class seems real until she walks up to a student making a paper hat during her lecture on metonymy and metaphor and hikes up her skirt to reveal her leg to him and get his attention.

We realize that he is the same boy who has bumped into her at the beginning of the tape while she is in Madame Bovary costume, carrying a basket of apricots. In the novel, Madame Bovary is awaiting word from her lover, with whom she intends to run away to escape from her dull marriage. Her lover sends her a basket of apricots in which is concealed a note saying the plan is off. At dinner, Madame Bovary's husband eats the apricots, his every bite compounding her despair. Similarly, Milton, who picks her up after the encounter with the boy, rejects her advances, and munches on an apricot, talking about "concepts."

The scene has complex implications. We realize we may be watching fictional situations which are all constructed in the woman's mind. Like Madame Bovary, she hates her dull "marriage." The male student becomes a potential lover. She hoists her skirt, plainly risking a charge of sexual harassment in the classroom. The pose of the exposed leg is the quintessential "male gaze" of film history. An off camera male voice calls "cut." The scene ends.

Later, we see her, her son and his girlfriend Lisa (who is obsessed with California) sitting watching an image of paper being folded into a hat, with a poetic text transposed over it on a computer. Unknown to the son and Lisa, it is a romantic poem to her male student. The woman is obviously proud of her computer composition which, like the novels *Madame Bovary* reads and finally believes to be true, is romantic and overblown.

The tape ends with the woman, her hairdresser, the son and Lisa making plans over dinner for their trip to New York. As instructed by Milton, the woman turns on the TV to see Milton's ad from California. Milton says: "Think hip. Think 80's. Think California." He then toasts the camera. The audience at the table raise their glasses in a toast to New York. "California Dreaming" then fades in with the final credits.



The plan is off. 'The woman' as Madame Bovary in Tess Payne's *By Way Of Fiction*.

The only time we feel sure that we are in a 'real' environment is in the woman's domestic situation. Although she performs the role of the good mother flawlessly, she is obviously dissatisfied with her life. Rather than taking action, she falls into fantasy. One does not sense that she is going to stop seeing Milton, a cold two-timing cad. Her choices of alternative potential lovers are either unattainable (the gay hairdresser) or dangerous (the student). Milton remains the unsavoury reliable partner.

The tape talks about the roles assigned to women, and the difficulty women, especially older women, have in escaping those roles reinforced by the media. While Milton has no trouble finding a beautiful young woman as his companion in Los Angeles, the heroine of the tape realistically feels her options are limited.

By Way Of Fiction is an intriguing work. The tape contains the same impeccable visuals and structuring as Payne's previous two tapes. But where the characters in the other works determinedly fix on their obsessions to see them through, in *By Way Of Fiction* we see a woman crumbling internally through her need for passion instead of mere surface.

Whether she will attain it or not remains unclear. She is surrounded by people who seem successful, but discontented. Her hairdresser tells her that he has no sex-life. Milton's girlfriend listens to the neighbouring conversations in the restaurant, bored by his childhood stories. Lisa is fixated on California to the exclusion of everything else. She had a bit part in a movie in L.A. and represents a younger version of the heroine. The cycle is starting again before the woman's eyes, in her own home. Her son would much rather be in New York with Lisa than with his mother. She invites the hairdresser to correct the situation. She remains very much alone.

By Way Of Fiction cracks the surface of the opulent and self-indulgent 80's to reveal people caught in and unable to cope with the spectacle the media has constructed.

Payne's narrative structure continually subverts the master narrative as represented on television. Clearly, Payne has no interest in mimicking television or Hollywood movies. There is no melodrama being acted out, no nifty and improbable endings and in many cases, no plot. In the stunning scene where Milton and his girlfriend are eating in the restaurant, we have Payne at her best. The bored girlfriend is listening to the two men talking beside her and Milton. She is not listening to Milton. The two men are aware that she is listening to their conversation and listen to her and Milton when Milton accuses her of not listening to him. We get fragments from all the stories, but the dynamic is about how information is or is not received. The impression each couple makes upon the other becomes the focus, as opposed to the stories themselves.

The woman in *By Way Of Fiction* is Payne's most well-defined character to date. By layering the narratives, Payne allows us to see several facets of the woman's persona. But the woman's intentions remain as opaque to us as they are to herself. This is intentional. Payne has presented a woman who is not passive, but at the same time refuses to act. This is due in part to her limited choices, but also because she does not buy the media construction offered her. She knows the shimmering facade of obsessive media consumerism is merely a mask of decay. ■

Colin Campbell is a senior video artist who teaches video production and theory.



"Think hip. Think 80's. Think California," from Tess Payne's *By Way Of Fiction*.

BOOKS

Reclaiming the Body Erotic

REVELATIONS: ESSAYS ON STRIPTEASE AND SEXUALITY
MARGARET DRAGU & A.S.A. HARRISON
 Nightwood Editions, London, Ont. 1988

REVELATIONS IS ONE of the most provocative and playful feminist texts to have emerged in recent years. It is also one of the most radical. Its playfulness and radicality is due in part to the fact that both Dragu and Harrison refuse to accept the standard anti-porn view that woman is either a victim—or an accessory—to the crime of sexual life. By putting the tease back into strip, they begin to explore the very soul of stripping, drawing out its erotic communication and control with and against the audience. In here, woman is no longer object of someone else's fantasy, nor for that matter, simply master of her own; she is intricately the intersection and expression of both. Given their unabashed, and at times deliciously cynical, exposé on this complex and yet ecstatic soul of strip, their writings emerge quite simply, as a welcome relief.

In one of the best chapters of the book ("Consumer's Guide to Strippers"), we find a dead-pan Dragu waxing eloquent on the "ten distinct types of stripper." Her comments are as insightful as they are brazen, dripping with heat, passion, friendship, and yes, a logic and forthrightness that ought to make even the most ardent moralist rethink her rigidities when defining the sexual proclivities of woman. Here, the reader is treated to a taste of everything from Burlesque Queen ("a star, preserving showbiz traditions with the resolve of ban-the-bomb protesters") to the sophisticated Vamp, the woman who's always "very much in control . . . a tasteful sax jazz—all hot and cool." One meets as well the eclectic Dingbat Artist as opposed to the anti-traditionalist New Wave Stripper, distinct yet again, from both the Hippie Strippers, those who "don't equate nudity with sexuality, so they don't project sexuality when they strip," or the Greaser Mama ("usually good looking with large breasts and small waists"). Sex Kittens are the ones who play "helpless little

girl" but clean up on the tips, all the while rejecting the delicate balance between audience control, sexual communication and fantasy.

This rejection of the stripping soul also comes packaged in two other forms, on the one side, as 'Jockette,' the middle class dullard but "perfect version of whatever body men are buying this year;" while on the other side, as the Pathetic Waif, the saddest case of all. These women are "the junkies, the lost souls and the hopeless wrecks of the strip scene . . . the stripper with the three kids and a husband with a bad back." Finally, we are introduced to the Intellectual Stripper, that kind of woman whose ingenuity, political satire, and sometimes feminist critique fuses with the erotic savvy of her body movements. Instead of fighting against the strip traditions or trying to break out of them, the Intellectual Stripper is the woman who "uses stripping as a forum for her philosophies and politics . . . who puts her view of life into her act."

But the book is not simply a series of descriptive categories or antidotal truths which are to be held out to the reader for his or her

ritual self consumption. Revelations does something else, something far more radical than—and just as important as—breaking the code of fundamentalist/feminist puritanism or even the old school sexism long ago rejected. Margaret Dragu and A.S.A. Harrison break the code of who (or what) is precisely to be 'author' or 'reader;' or even, stripper. Interspersed within the narrative—indeed interrupting it—are not just the stories of Fonda Peters, Eve, Dragu, Gwendolyn and others, which drop off in certain chapters only to reappear several times later, as if old friends picking up where they last finished without the finality of a 'good-bye.' We find as well that the voices of the writers are themselves cordoned off from each other. By way of using different type faces the attempt to maintain a private boundary line to authorship creates a narrative which begins at once by interrupting itself, correcting itself, dissecting itself.

A profoundly radical concept of 'truth' thus emerges, one which is never quite 'finished' or homogeneous. For in *Revelations* who (or what) becomes the messenger or the message, the artist or the art, the voyeur or the stripper is both author and reader, character and narrative. The disrupted moment, the instability of the 'fact' which at one and the same times maintains its identity and fuses with the other creates—and, yes, reveals—the 'truth.' Its fusion is as political as it is erotic; its pleasurable sexuality as historical as it is contemporary. In the case of stripping, this is a truth constituted and exposed through the complexly designed give and take of a tease. ■

Sue Golding is a long-time feminist and gay activist and a regular contributor to the alternative press.



FILM

Whose View?

THE WORLD IS WATCHING
PETER RAYMONT
 Investigative Productions 1988



Cinematographer Dan Holmberg and Director Peter Raymont.

by Derek Hedley Taylor

A TOPEXECUTIVE for NBC, Reuven Frank, is quoted as instructing his staff that "every news story should, without sacrifice of probity or responsibility, display the attributes of fiction, or drama" (*The Media are American*, J. Tunstall, 1977, p.36). Here, then, are the three main directives of television news re- portage clearly spelled out for us: honesty, responsibility and entertainment. Of course, the question is: can these three decrees live together harmoniously? Can Truth and Fiction really survive simultaneously? And just where does this responsibility lie?

It is predominantly the last of these questions that Peter Raymont focuses on in his excellent, award-winning film, *The World Is Watching*, which premiered last fall at the 1988 Festival of Festivals. Ostensibly about the American news coverage of Nicaragua during the signing of the Central American Peace Accord, this documentary-style film also broaches the much broader ethical issue of news-media responsibility. But one must ask if this film is about Nicaragua and its struggle for peace, or if it is specifically about the American news-gathering process and news production in general. It is the tension between these two "narratives," these two projects, that produces the film's inner dynamic (and, ultimately, accounts for its success).

But which "narrative" are we responding to? Is it the political force of a pro-Nicaraguan (anti-American) stance, or is it the attraction of a more deep-seated scepticism of the integrity of television news-gathering practices? After the second Toronto screening of this film (Feb. '89), at the Saint Lawrence Centre, a panel discussion was held between prominent television journalists Ann Medina and John Irwin (both of the CBC) and Peter Raymont, the director. Framed in this way the discussion could not help but become polarized around the antagonism between a cri-

tique of the news media—represented by Peter Raymont and largely supported by the audience—and a spirited defense of the news media—represented by the two prominent journalists. In this discussion, Peter Raymont insisted that the subject of this film was incidental to the overall project; that neither the incident (in this case, Nicaraguan politics) nor the targeted American news teams should be regarded as the "subject" of the film. Rather, the film was "about" television news and perhaps more specifically about American network coverage.

Among the many questions directed at this panel by the audience, by far the most interesting was asked by a young (about 10 years old) girl. This young girl very politely asked why it was that the panel was so uniform in character; why wasn't another point of view represented in this forum? This question, perhaps unwittingly, points directly at the contradiction that exists between these two "narratives." Perhaps she simply wanted to know why, for example, a Nicaraguan perspective was not represented in this discussion (which would justify a political reading of this film). But more importantly this query exposes the fact that there was essentially no difference between the opposing sides of this debate; that Peter Raymont is as much a "journalist" as the other two. After all, there is very little substantial difference between *The World Is Watching* and, for example, the three part series on Central America produced for the CBC by one of these two prominent panelists.

So, clearly, if this film is a critique of news production in general, then it must also be an auto-critique. Obviously the coordination and mechanisms of media production will be different for an independent documentary film than they are for a corporate sponsored news programme. And obviously there will be different advantages and limitations for each. However, the three-fold directive of effective

news coverage is the same in both cases. The great value of a film such as *The World Is Watching* is its ability to expose the inner workings of television news production, but we must also be aware of the fact that its success depends on the very same directives that it is trying to undermine. Each of the two intertwining narratives of this film displays "the attributes of fiction" with its cast of characters, its heroes and villains, its hopeful beginnings, its tragic twists of plot, its dramatic dénouement, and its final closure. As Jean-François Lyotard says: "Scientific knowledge cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative kind of knowledge." (*The Postmodern Condition*, 1985, p.29).

This is not meant so much as dismissal of Peter Raymont's film nor is it by any means a call for the elimination of entertainment in this or in any context. Only that the top network executives are not the only "gatekeepers" of knowledge and that the directive to "entertain" carries with it its own particular ideological baggage. Honesty, the first of the three directives, is, perhaps, the easiest to understand and verify—this is largely a matter of individual integrity. Responsibility is quite a bit more complicated since it is not always clear who is the actual "agent" of that responsibility, to which "cause," and why—this is largely a political issue (with a capital "P"). Entertainment, however, is without a doubt the most difficult of these three directives to analyze since its logic cannot be bound directly to any single source of power, political or otherwise. Truth is truly stranger than fiction. ■

Derek Hedley Taylor is a Ph.D. student at York University, studying phenomenology and contemporary social theory.

LIFE AFTER TELEVISION



183 BATHURST ST, 1st FLOOR
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5T 2R7
TELEPHONE: (416) 863-9897

VIDEO FROM V TAPE

CKLN Balance the Budget Bash

Thursday, April 27th
The Diamond Club • 410 Sherbourne • 8 pm

Michie Mee & L.A. Luv
Lillian Allen & Band
Shuffle Demons
Razorbacks

Plus: D.J. Gary Topp of "The Gary's"

Tickets \$12 (\$8 for Students & Unemployed)
Available at CKLN, DEC, Pages, Women's Bookstore
Vortex, Record Peddler, This Ain't The Rosedale Library

All proceeds from this benefit go to CKLN Community Radio.

No PLACE LIKE HOME

a critical look at women
and the domestic sphere

Buseje BAILEY
Sandra BLEUE
Grace CHANNER
Corrine CORRY
Nancy EDELL
Natalka HUSAR
Josie KANE
Susan McEACHERN
Leslie SAMPSON

CURATED BY CHRISTINE CONLEY
May 3rd to May 24th 1989

SAW, 67 Nicholas
Ottawa, K1N 7B9
(613) 236-6181



Women In Focus

204 - 456 W. Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1R3
(604) 872-2250

GARY KIBBINS

The Long Take
MARCH 29-APRIL 22

SCRUTINY

a group exhibition
curated by Bruce Grenville
APRIL 5-22

GEOFFREY SHEA

The Truth About the U.S.S.R.
MAY 3-JUNE 3

HOLLY KING

MAY 10-JUNE 3

Y Y Z

1087 QUEEN STREET WEST
TORONTO, CANADA M6J 1H3 (416) 531-7869

YYZ is sponsored by The Canada Council, The Ontario Arts Council, The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, The City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council and The Municipality of Metro Toronto, Cultural Affairs Division.

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

The Ontario Arts Council offers grants to professional artists who are residents of Ontario, working in the following media:

PHOTOGRAPHY & HOLOGRAPHY

- assistance for new projects or work-in-progress.

Deadlines: February 1, August 15

PHOTOGRAPHY

- exhibition assistance towards the cost of an upcoming exhibition.

Deadlines: February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, December 15

VIDEO

- to assist with the production of original video art.

Deadlines: February 1, August 15

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

- to facilitate creation of works of art using electronic media; to facilitate research of potential significant benefit to the arts community into the creative possibilities of electronic media.

Deadlines: May 1, December 1

FILM

- to assist with the production of documentary, dramatic, animated or experimental films.

Deadlines: April 1, November 1

For information and application forms, contact:

Film, Photography and Video Office
ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
151 Bloor Street West, Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario
M5S1T6

(416) 961-1660

Toll-free 1-800-387-0058

(Ontario only)