When I first tried to write something on the music indus-
try's various African records/adopts, I immedi-
ately encountered a real problem: there seems to be an un
avoidable discrepancy between the manner in which the
records are promoted and the manner in which they are
consumed. Perhaps part of the reason for this is the nat
ural reluctance of the music industry to promote its prod
ucts in a manner that is more than a mere advertisement.
Perhaps another example of this feeling of
centrality to the world of music is the recent advent of
the internet, which has made it possible for artists to
reach a much wider audience than ever before. This has
led to a kind of democratization of music, where the
ability to produce and distribute music is no longer limi
ted to the few who can afford the expensive equipment
and technology required to do so. However, this also
leads to some concerns about the quality and diversity of
the music that is available to consumers. It is importan
to consider the potential benefits and drawbacks of this
development before making any conclusions.

We Are The World —
You Are The Third World
by Mark Lewis
IN POSITION.
The silver-tongued voice is well di-
gested, gathered into luminous ges-
ture; use me and I'll use you. But buy, sell, save—Want! So it goes, ob-
taining symmetry of the doses and de-
sirable.

Now, in another space (bus stop; Toronto) the spectacular voice alters in plea, nods its understandances and opens onto another persuasion. Pos-
ters Mean Business the source de-
clare—sweeping across a tube of Crow. The medium (media) calls at-
tention to its very power. Promises of commerce displace the promise of passion. A self-reflexive nightmare: advertising space solicits itself. Media strip tease; the getting finally fails in Ontario and exquisite pos-
tions are spoken. In suggesting its availability we may now consider having something to sell—Get. To intervene perhaps; ex/Pose and offer a discoidal brand of passion.

Some women lead extraordinary lives. For them, Xonia Rykel has created 7hme Sins.

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

Focussed as an institution the AGO administers mainstream defini-
tions of what constitutes Art. These 'museum fictions' perpetrate the no-
tion of art (practice) as an autono-
mous object (static), commodified, detached, united by stick-thru-
ness reality in order that it ascend... unto sublime Realization. Through an octopus-like autonomy, the AGO wields invisible power—a making visible rooted in elitism that (em)braces the monolithic status quo, successively operating around a principle of exclusion supported by the specialized audience to which it appeals. The appropriation of mar-
ginal art into a mainstreamed 'avant garde' (such as the General Idea Pa-

dilion) demonstrates with audacity this power. Through advertising the AGO refashions and legitimizes its knowledge of the rules of the aesthetic

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

A Work of Art within a work of Art.
In penetrating though well-sited and glib, the unwieldy representa-
tional apparatus is vulnerable; what of squeaking wheels, displaced gears and zones of friction? In an instant, art defines itself as capable of inter-
vention—a working through against conditioned ways of looking at art within culturally sanctified art space or, by disrupting the images we encounter in public. Both in-
stances, a shift in the place of recep-
tion or undermining from within the

the institution, subvert the traditional value judgements hung upon art.

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

London's 'Docklands Project'. An immediately deviant situation arises when artists appropriate an advertis-


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

Generally the works deal with issues/processes of socialization, but in a manner curiously unspecific to this place/space (i.e. Spadina Avenue, Toronto) lacking the self-
reflexivity that would ground each work as somehow street-wise (site specific). They are appended to the gallery itself, unequivocal and already named. The lack of focal fra-

moving in, dominating and (often) (over) the audience and difference. The Address is thus from above, not an unraveling and bitroup from within and around. What's looking? Who's speaking? The questions collapse into a simple valued address from the community to its members. In this res-


Speaking The Media

by Christine Davis and

by Monika Gagnon

Tongue in Cheek

Christine Dior

La femme est une belle, l'homme est son parfum.

Christine Davis

is a Toronto artist.

Monika Gagnon

is a Toronto writer.

Both are members of the border lines collective.
We were having lunch one day in a nice cafe beside the Toronto Morgentaler Clinic. The waiting room was crowded, and people were talking about the "Pro-lifers". One while we were talking, a group of 10 or so dark-skinned women advanced in single file into the foyer, holding signs reading something like the following: "DO NOT MARRY, HABER HAS YOUR LIFE WITH ALL HIS MIGHT. USE GO PROTEST, CRY IF YOU WILL, etc." We thought it quite funny. They joined the circle of "Pro-lifers" who, however, dispersed, presumably not wanting to be associated.

While a waiter told us how the one time, and understood that this was a bit of the "Guerrilla Theater," the organization of which we had heard rumors about, we heard one of them say, "Oh, my God, what's going on here?" "Look at those fucking!" "Is this for real?" My comment was:

Modeline went back outside and she met another woman who was talking to her. "If it's alright for you to get an abortion, then it's alright for me to have one." This really was getting pretty heated.

Modeline tried to speak with the anti-choice "protesters." The woman, needlessly, turned around and glared. Another woman said to her: "They're trying to obfuscate." "No," she said. Then, seemingly in realization of this moment, one of the protesters handed her a white, orange piece of paper with a printed message reading: "DO NOT GIVE UP YOUR RIGHT TO ABORTION." We thought this was a contradiction.

Then the protesters showed up, and the subject of controversy immediately left, being replaced quickly by the "Pro-lifers," who the waiters seemed to show little kindness to. The question remained: "Was that for real, or what?"

Everyone in the cafe was talking to one another. An interesting feeling of anonymity pervaded the atmosphere as all we shared in an interesting "confusion" event.

It is interesting that anxiety which's a feeling of "confusion" about it, idea's a feeling we avoided either way. On one hand, if read as fearsome, they would disprove a certain species of criticism against Morgentaler, the clinic, abortions, etc., precisely because the grounds of such a criticism would be located as utterly banal, common, practical, etc. On the other hand, if read as a joke, anxiety would be dependent upon, in some sense, having already discredited such a species of criticism.

Another or yet this critique needs to be discredited, and/or done so in this way, does not interest me here. What does interest me—what I find interesting about this story—is an idea, a topic, a little tag to be pursued further: the efficacy of anxiety, etc., the strength of ambiguities, etc, the preference for ambiguity. What might this be pursued? What kind of history would it be situated within/related to? What difference does it make? What would be the relation between such a pursuit and the one (possibly) ambiguity? Questions I suspect for now, waiting precisely to tell a story, and thus also suppressing, for now, the ambiguity of such a telling.

Michael Boyce may or may not be any of the following: a writer, a musician, a student, a teacher's assistant, a member of the Borderlines collective, a story.
Among the stars generated by Hollywood over the past century, few names and faces have become universal signifiers: rather than simply referring to the character Bogart plays, when Bogart is acting, they have come to connote a way of being in the world, or a 'weather pattern' that the audience has thought of in this way: I would argue that the same is true of Bogart; in a more complex fashion, the name and image of Bogart represents not only a way of being in a world now gone, but also a profound sense of loss in our own era. It is in this light that I would like to examine him: not the gangster Bogey, or the adventurer of the Treasure of the Sierra Madre, but that more general image which encompasses and transcends those particular figures.

This image, perhaps best represented by the ubiquitous wall posters which signpost, in the restaurants, offices and apartments of the land, a cult of remembrance which is, or was, more than an appreciation of talent or technique; more than a catalogue of the 'classic films' and certainly more than the collection of movie trivia. Rather, this is the 'Bogey image', a collection of images which are a mixture of movie and life. The putting on the airfield; the woman with a baby, baby's bottle and Bogey the devoted hus-

band and father; the valiant final fall; the final council; the woman with both hands outstretched (the image of the Great Seal of the United States); the image of the dead man; the image of the woman holding the body of the dead man; the image of the woman holding the body of the dead man; and so on. And it is a world of images in a variety of incarnations: that craggy, unloved and melancholy face is, as ever, as familiar and enigmatic, reassuring and sadening.

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

Benjamin refers to this shift from work to commodity, from work to reproduction, as 'a transformation of parameters for judging and responding to works of art', adding: 'Art now is the air in which we live, the way in which we set up a relation to itself which absorbed those who could not set it at with it. On the other hand, exhibition value is predi-
cated on the reproduction of the original or reproducible work of art from its context, its interpellation in to a world of symbolic exchange as one image among others (a conse-
quency of its reproducibility) and its consumption by a distracted audi-
cience, the latter naturally by it as it takes it.

Thus, the photograph, as such, is infin-
itely reproducible, and yet not yet fully worked out: such photographs still bespeak the cult of luminous objects for their own sake, and the air of melancholy and 'incom-

parable beauty' still to be discovered in them.

If, in the image of Bogart, we have something akin to a cult of remembrance (all the more poignant given the infinite repetition implicit in the char-

acter)—a melancholic evocation of things forever past—then the ques-
tion is whether in the image of the culture, a sense of the world. It has been argued that the fact that Bogart is the type of the 'great man', the image of the image, in the media culture only, in fact, through the transformation of that image into a signifier, that image is bought and sold in the market-
place of symbols.

If Bogart is the type of the 'great man', the image of the image, then it is not the presence of the man himself that is important, but the 'expression' of him, and his signification in culture. Not because the image of Bogart is a sign of the man, but because the image of the man is a sign in the media culture. We can take this as a study in the media culture of the new culture, of the new world of images, and the melancholy image of the Great Seal of the United States; the image of the woman holding the body of the dead man; and so on. And it is a world of images in a variety of incarnations: that craggy, unloved and melancholy face is, as ever, as familiar and enigmatic, reassuring and sadening.

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male culture; the death (marked by his own) of the 'good man' of the western rural community. Less importantly, the transformation of that figure into an image—a signifier—is bought and sold in the market-
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What proportion of the total population do they form? What is the wormboy population of New York City? Or Philadelphia? Elbein herself has pointed out that the 'New Man' phenomenon is characteristic of only a tiny proportion of the North American population. Yet, numerically unrepresentative as he may be, the New Man is the darling of the advertising industry, especially that aspect of it devoted to fashion and status conscious durables. Even his dark side has been industrialized insofar as jerkiness, wimpdom or wortiness have become personal characteristics (somewhat like yellow teeth a generation ago) to be bought off by the right book, the right therapy or, barring that, the right disguise. The New Man is representative precisely insofar as he is no population. He is any of us any time we are addressed by and respond to any of his signifiers.

The New Man, then, is at least in part an image-commodity, insofar as he is a sign of us, we are bought out by the goods we purchase to furnish his lifestyle. The New Man shuns commitments because commodities don't form commitments; they are only exchanged in terms of relations external to those relations. Creations feel neither melancholy nor a sense of loss. It is in such a world that Borge became the clown.

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

William Remp teaches in Cultural Studies and Sociology at Trent University.

Notes
3. Ibid., p. 41.
4. Ibid., p. 48.

The Economics of Toronto's Culture by Ian Davies

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

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

It is sad that Hendry had to spend his time writing this report. He should be writing a lost, faro-form rondo from Adam Smith’s faded script (alas Brian Mulroney, Marcel Masse, Barbara Amiel, Peter Worthington, and Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher just offstage). On centre stage is Tom Hendry: “You are here. You are here.” Armando Antontshick, accused of saying that the artists of the city constitute the cultural capital of the city. Why aren’t they making real money? They should be working on Bay Street, or helping to get Chrysler or AMC off the ground. Why are they working around Queen Street West, eating donuts or renting gritty apartments (alias studies) on Spadina Street in old industrial backyards? Because they are trying to make ends meet while the touring theatre comes to watch their exhibitions at A Space or see them at Toronto Workshop Productions. “I must say that that is a reprehensible point of view, says the CA.” Have you never heard of Anne Murray, or William Shatner or Gordon Lightfoot? “The rest of the play you can imagine.”

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

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

The statistics are very impressive, simply because no one in Canada has been able to extrapolate a city out of the maze of figures that come from Statistics Canada, the Canada Council, local government, etc. But before the statistics grab us in their sense of fatality, I have one complaint against this report. Art magazines not part of the art scene? If art is about being there, then part of that being is talking about it. Apart from asking for a municipal listing service, Hendry does not address publications. He might be right, of course, in implying that critics don’t matter—they are, after all, the wrong accounts. What matters is that people go to the museums, the galleries, the theatres, the films, etc. and that those will be well-funded. But should people not think about what they are going to? New magazines get no support from any of the agencies. Hendry’s report might have addressed that issue. Accounting for what goes on is one problem, but accounting for the accounting is another, and a serious one. As Shakespeare, that other accountant, wrote in Timon of Athens:

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

A culture is not built up by saying simply that the show must go on; it is the constant questioning of what show, what script. With that caveat, Tom Hendry has produced a brilliant script which can be used as a basis and political tool. By playing with the ideas of the ideologies it demonstrates the falsity of their rhetoric.

The hand that signed the paper felled a city.

Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,

Doubled the globe of death and halved a country:

These five kings did a king to death.

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

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

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It is sad that Hendry had to spend his writing time reporting. He should be writing and directing or acting or whatever it is to account for the credentials who have taken over our culture need an accountant. The Cultural Capital's Tom's best play to date, much as Bert Brecht's appearance before the House Un-American Activities committee was his best play. There is a moment when you stop the play and say 'there is a more important play'... Tom Hendry had done that with this report.

In a truthful theatre, there are the lost, faroof romps from Adam Smith's famed script (alas Brian Mulroney, Marcel Moue, Barbara Amiel, Peter Worwinez with Ronald Rougsh and Margaret Thatcher just offstage). On centre stage is Tom Hendry: 'You here, you there, now and then, in Aristotelean (ed of saying that the artists of the city constitute the cultural capital of the city. Why aren't they making real money? They should be working on Bay Street, or helping to get Chrysler or AMC off the ground. They should be trying around Queen Street West, eating donuts or renting gritty apartments (altas studies on Scarfors Street, in old indus trial backyards)?' Because they are trying to make ends meet while the tourists come in to watch their exhibitions at A Space or see them act. Toronto Workshop Productions, 'I must say that that is a reprehensible point of view, says the CA. 'Have you never heard of Anne Murray, or William Shaner or Gordon Lightfoot? The rest of the play you can imagine.

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

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

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

VANCOUVER 1958

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

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

Interview with a Vancouver squatter from the Vancouver Sun.
**LONDON 1976**

Squatters' paper published in Islington, London.

**SQUATTING: 10TH**

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

Squatter shanties by a sewage canal on the edge of Bombay.
**WEST BERLIN 1980**

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

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**INSTANDBESETZER MOVEMENT**

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

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

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

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**INSTANDBESETZER GRAFFITI**

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

...the symbol of the squatters who repair both the architecture and the community fabric... Occupied — that is enough. Too bad cement doesn’t burn. Unrest in the deep freezer. You have the power but we have the night. Power is always without Love. Love is never without Power. Taking a house is better than waiting to be given one. It is better that our youth squat houses than foreign countries. Be realistic — demand the impossible. It is better to squat and repair a house than to own a house and let it fall into ruin. Under the paving stone — the beach.

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**AMSTERDAM 1970s**

Squatter riots have occurred almost like civic festivals since the early 1970s.
WEST BERLIN—SOUTH BRONX TRANSFER

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

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

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

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

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

The men that ran a small welding shop next to the tenement witnessed the police bust; they said the police were just having a bad day when they confronted me or else they wouldn’t have bothered, there was so much graffiti anyway. They thought what I was doing was amusing, even more so when the police got involved. They wanted more of it. I was told that I could store my equipment in their shop and borrow their ladders, as well as hide in their shop if a police car appeared. Soon other people from the neighbourhood set up a watch network to let me know if any police cars were approaching. Another man knew enough German to correct a spelling error that I made. At one stage, I was confronted by a Latino woman in her thirties who demanded to know what I was doing. When I explained it to her she left. She later returned to tell me to keep up the work, as she and a group of people were actually thinking of taking over the building as urban homesteaders. They thought the graffiti project might help their cause.

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

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

SQUATTER PROFILE

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

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

▲SOUTH BRONX 1984
The Conservative policy thrust in communications is, of course, part of a process that is neither specific to that party, nor indeed, to Canada. The government is riding the global wave of general conservatism whose hallmark is the redefinition of the role of the state in all aspects of public life. 'Deregulation', 'privatization' and reduced budgets for public services are all manifestations of this general shift. Whether these manifestations coincide with the general ideological orientation of the Conservative Party, or are the reason the Tories are in power, the important thing is to understand the fundamental change in the system over which the government is presiding.

Public Interest And National Broadcasting

A historic importance of government as patron, organizer and enabler of the cultural and technological aspects of communication systems in Canada is self-evident. Government intervention has been the means by which the Canadian state has guaranteed Canada's national sovereignty, a secure capital base for its entrepreneurs and financiers, and free expression and access to communications for its social interest groups. This multiple role has been made possible by an identification of the public function of the state with the 'defence of the public interest'. As the state—if not the government of the day—is perceived as the embodiment of the public interest, its interventions can be made in the name of public interest. Conversely, critics of government/state interventions put themselves forward as alternative representations of the public interest. This process tends to obscure the actual role of the state, as the promoter of particular private interests, and also the fact that as a pivotal social institution, the modern state has its own particular interests.

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

In the specific case of Canada, the state has had two principal tasks: (1) to protect the integrity of the national entity from the centrifugal pull of the imperial neighbour to the south; and (2) to protect the internal cohesion of the national entity from the threat of fragmentation posed by Canada's particular 'national unity' crisis.
Until recently, a strong, central communications and broadcasting system was perceived as fundamental to both of these tasks, and the Conservative policy reflected this perception. This basic assumption has now changed.

Throughout the 20th century, it has been necessary for the government, in all the western countries, to defend the idea of public life against the advances of the marketplace. The concept of free, public broadcasting systems in the 1920s and 1930s was, along with the introduction of social welfare measures, a manifestation of an expanding state as well as a question of principle.

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

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

It is interesting to note the parallels and the differences between the last full-scale broadcasting policy review under the Liberals in the mid-1940s and the new one announced last April 9.

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

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

There the parallels stop. Under the Pearson and Trudeau governments, successive secretaries of state—La Marche and Gérard Pelletier—for a national cultural policy, with broadcasting and the CBC in particular as its cornerstone, designed to meet the political challenge of Quebec nationalism and the new social movements of the 1960s. In the Liberal strategy for Canada, the Broadcasting Act of 1965 embodied two overriding purposes: to preserve as best it could the CBC’s diminished position in the broadcasting system and to provide the political obligation for the CBC to promote the cause of national unity.

In this process public broadcasting was equated to broadcasting in the national interest, and the identification of the “public interest” was left to the good faith of the Canadian state reached its height. This was recognized by one Member of Parliament, who said during debate on the Broadcasting Act.

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

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

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

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

The Applebaum-Hébert review demonstrated a lack of sensitivity to any real notion of public involvement in either the formulation or the object of broadcasting policy. The essence of the Canadian broadcasting system, the Hébert committee’s report stated, is its “national” character, in which two sub-systems distinguished by ownership—public and private—coexist. The committee thus continued the myth that Canadian broadcasting constitutes a “single national system”, just as it offered concrete proposals whose effect would be to begin dismantling the “public” component of the system to the benefit of the “private”. By the time the Applebaum-Hébert report was tabled, with its radical proposals for reducing the role of the CBC, the political and technological context had changed: the Liberal Party’s political signal of relief following the Quebec referendum of 1980, and a dramatically increased technical capacity for television reception destroyed both the political need and the practical meaningfulness of a strong (and costly) voice promoting national unity. As audiences fragmented and the political unity of the country began to settle in the early 1980s, Canada’s last nationalist minister of communications, Francis Fox, began floating policy proposals departing from traditional Liberal commitment to public—that is, “national”—broadcasting.

John Turner’s short-lived administration was a tribute to political schizophrenia, demonstrating the malaise of traditional Liberal policy. Turner split the hard and soft dimensions of the “communications” portfolio, which had been unified at last in 1980, so that the economic aspects were handled by a business-oriented minister, Ed Lumley, and virtually ignored by the CBC. Industry and commerce, while the cultural aspects reverted to a secretary of state with solid credentials as a scraper for national unity, Serge Joyal.

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

"Denationalization": National Interest Without The State?

The government’s appointment to the reunited portfolio of communications—cum-culture minister, Marcel Masse, to the Quebec National government of the late 1960s in its battles against federal centralism in communications and for more provincial cultural power via agencies like the provincial broadcasting network. Considered an "ultranationalist" member of Daniel Johnson’s government, Masse served as minister of state for education and later, under Jean-Jacques Bertrand, as minister of intergovernmental affairs. He was thus close to one of the stormiest dossiers in federal-provincial relations of that era, educational broadcasting, and was part of the government that created Radio-Québec. His appointment last fall was no naive one, as he would have come to the direct attention of Brian Mulroney as far back as 1985, when the present Canadian prime minister worked closely with the Union Nationale in planning Conservative electoral strategy for Quebec in that year’s federal election.

Masse was just the man to apply the axe to the CBC when his finance minister ordered him to find savings last November. Only vaguely committed to a public broadcasting system, both in principle and as a vehicle for promoting national unity, the Tories have little to gain from preserving the CBC. On the other hand, in tendering the olive branch to the provinces, particularly Quebec, the government has significant political capital to gain, while the increased space opened up for private sector expansion by a diminished CBC meets the expectations of the Tories’
traditional clientele, particularly the private capitalist entrepreneurs of Canadian culture. Masse’s approach was to ‘renationalize’ the public dimension of Canadian broadcasting—that is, to separate, in a way no Liberal or Conservative government could ever do, its ‘national’ purpose from the direct responsibility of the state.

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

Descoteaux quotes Masse: “The Conservative Party applies its theories in every sector, in communication... the state is an important tool in economic affairs as in cultural affairs, but we are not about to turn the state... we are going to have a culture of Canadians.

We have insisted, to the exclusion of everything else, that the defence of Canadian culture was the CBC’s responsibility. We have insisted on this until everyone else wound up believing they had to create something in its place to restore the Canadian culture to the Canadian people, and it is up to them, through all the institutions, to see that it becomes... Masse went on to reiterate the importance of viewing the public sector as equal in importance to the public sector—a point that had been fundamental to the Tory reform of 1958, and that had marked its departure from previous policy:

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

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

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

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

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

Or Without The Public?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Last March, the Institut canadien d’éducation des adultes (ICFA) and 30 Quebec labour and community groups called for the postponement of such interim legislative action until a new overall communications policy, based on a wide public consultation, was developed.

Bill C-20, according to the Quebec coalition, gives the minister a “blank cheque” to make new policy as he pleases, and on an ad hoc basis, without giving his critics any general intentions and debate them with the public. So far, the cornerstone of his policy appears to be deregulation (Bill C-20 also
proposes to extend from five to seven years the duration of a broadcasting license, thus diluting public control.

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

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

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

CRTC hearings on the CBC at this time would be a dialogue for the future discussion on the present and future role of the public broadcaster in the overall communications system. In their absence, the CRTC did not even plan to go abroad for an analysis of public hearings on other broadcast licenses. In Montreal alone, hearings last May dealt with the renewal of licenses for several private radio stations, Radio-Quebec, the private television network Tele-Metropole and the awarding of a license for Quebec's controversial 'second private French net-work.' Ironically, the tabling of such a massive agenda by the CRTC coincided with the absence of the traditional forum on the 'national' public broadcaster, a step which underscored both the scope of the regulatory agency's authority and the diminishing of the possibility for effective, independent public representation before it.

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

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

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

The document Radio-Quebec maintenat was published March 11. It proposes that Radio-Quebec remain unequivocally a public body with a mandate where "education" is interpreted in the broad "cultural"—as opposed to the narrow "pedagogical"—sense, and with financing based partially on a limited amount of indirect advertising.

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

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

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

This news prompted the ICEA to comment last December:22

'It is high time, in our opinion, to return to a more democratic practice in this area. We need to know who is making the decisions about Radio-Quebec, on what basis and according to what policy. We therefore demand that the minister of communications make public his department's policy on communication and cultural development, and submit that policy to public consultation. What course the public consultation on Radio-Quebec will take remains to be seen. In Quebec, too, there is a strong tradition of public input to broadcasting policy, but here as well, the climate does not favour tradition.

"Because it was a case of increasing the role of the CBC without public debate, it is clear that the fundamental policy question remains unchallenged after 50 years: which is to prevail, the logic of public service or that of the marketplace? This is more than a question of who is to own the media, or how much public funds are to be committed to them. It is more than a question of Canadian content or constitutional jurisdiction. It is fundamentally a question of how we view our democracy. It seems clear at this point that not only the government but the different publics making up the communications sector, have a federal policy need to review their desires and expectations with respect to broadcasting and communications to be developed and articulated as policy proposals expressing an ideal, not restrained in the first instance by practical considerations. The government's silence in that regard is invited only in reaction to the accomplished fact of the white paper, thus depriving the entire community of exposure to the utopian side of the public imagination.'

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Note and References


2. See, for example, 'The Regionalization of the Quebec Economic Culture,' North Vancouver (B.C.), J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1974.


4. See e.g., John Kume, 'Understanding the State: Theory of Public Life: From Thomas to Habermas and Beyond', Canadian Journal of Public and Social Theory (vol.6, no.3, Fall 1982, pp.11-49 and vol.8, nos.1-2, Winter-Spring 1984, pp.139-362).

5. This important aspect of the early struggle for public broadcasting in Canada has tended to be obscured by the emphasis on its nationalist and economic aspects. See e.g., Irvin Firth, The Passionate Educators: Voluntary associations and the struggle for control of adult educational broadcasting in Canada 1920-1932, Toronto, Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1973.


7. The national broadcasting service should... contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity. (Broadcasting Act, S.C. 1968, c.25, sect.3).


9. See e.g., his article 'Prime Time Democracy', Policy Opinions (vol.2, no.4, September 1984, pp.5-6).


17. E.g., the two-page ad in the Toronto Globe and Mail signed by 1,200 'Friends of Public Broadcasting', February 1, 1985.


20. ICEA, 'Quei a peur des audits publics du CRTC?', Lien, net revue, March 15, 1985


Introduction

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

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

Cultural Or Economy

In Question!

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

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

This forced reference to the threat of a tidal wave of North American production clarifies what is at stake in this crisis as it evokes the influence of technical, financial and cultural determinants which weigh heavily on a policy of communication. The North American program thus becomes the symbol of the mass-media model which the logic of the development of capital tends to implant and generalize. These stakes can be summarized by the following questions: Will it open the way to the construction of a national industry of programs which, when responding to new needs, will not be satisfied with merely copying the transnational model of production represented today by the US? Will it stimulate the search for new alternatives, original means of production and diffusion? What will be the ratio between the budget for equipment and the budget for creation? How can one combine industrial logic and the social logic of group expression, of a wide base of audio-visual production, of the participation of civil society in the choice of technologies of communication and in the definitions of their use? Is there an incompatibility between a “local” product which gathers the expression of a collectivity, thus allowing it to reappropriate its own sounds and images, and the international market? Does an international “alternative” product as compared to a transnationalized mass culture product exist?

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

If the signs of the technological prospective say “Tile” in our collective imaginary, and if they exert such a fascination, it’s not mostly because they reflect what modernity is—par excellence, American modernity! Besides, few media can resist admitting their joy at rekindling the founding myth. The first country to have written its his-
In order to explain the success of tv films of American serialized production, we would be tempted to stick to analysis of their narrative structure, their content— that is to say, to isolate oneself in these tv products in order to find the answer to the questions one has about them.

 Doesn't this tendency hide the very important fact that this television product is the emanation of a particular television system which, in its turn, comes from a historical heritage? It is a system which crystallizes in its mode of organization the characteristics of its genealogy, as well as the role which it has been given in the production and reproduction of the social whole— specifically in comparison to other agencies for socialization and the creation of a 'general will'.
France will be filled with US programs. Look at the situation in Italy since TV (and radio) were deregulated, and the rapid emergence of private networks and stations. There are apparently more than 600 private stations in Italy which in many cases are as competitive and even more so than the American networks with their cheaper American series. This has forced the RAI (Italian national) to streamline and redefine what it itself is producing. The result is a mix of national programming so as to avoid the flight of capital from Italy, and to look at the ways of meeting these new demands from within. Obviously the RAI is being forced to respond to a dynamic caught off by the private stations and the older public and defined relationship of its programming by switching to a programming system based entirely on attraction, and that is foreign programs and series.

It's there is a positive aspect to the present (US) internationalization of culture, particularly television programming.

PM: Let us be very careful when we speak of internationalization. Only some programs are internationalized. We do not have in France a complete picture of American TV production. Even the largest commercial or networks and production companies may produce programs for specific minor- groups and cultures in the US. There are new programs which are internationalized. We must be very clear that this is not a single story of very complex problems. The phenomenon of internationalization means a selection of US TV productions; but Americans themselves can watch on their own screens programs which correspond broadly to regional problems. In this respect the reality of the European Union is that we enjoy only a partial internationalization. We are a long way from a real internationalization of our television, and that is the case in Europe as well.

It must be recognized that mass culture has developed within a specific class society—that of liberal democracy. Democratization is an important component of mass culture: democratization is the shaping of and access to cultural products; and even some examples of the existence of these products.

PM: How can we begin to think of an alternative to American internationalization?

PM: What is the situation in France? My personal opinion of our situation today is that technological explosions lie in our future so that the underlying assumptions about communication are always changing. TV is always changing, for instance, in terms of image. TV is being produced by others. The relationship between production and consumption itself is never questioned. What I would propose is that we begin to think of such relations in terms of new technologies into France, which has for the French an enormous fascination. The situation which stems from an idea of modernity—this new technology will come into its own. It is clear that we need to continue to develop the means of language, communication media, and as means of communication, as the possibility for communication.

France: What is the case here? Some cases in France, for instance, are making plans for the introduction of cable. A network of a new channel in the future, a combination of different programs which are also seen on other channels. There is also a network, SFP, which is interested in access to television. In France, however, it is harder to make plans for the introduction of cable because of the amount of work that is needed. France is a country that is very resistant to change.

France: But won't this just become another way of having to compete against the new networks and channels? It is already a complex situation.

PM: It is a complex situation. In France, for example, it is very difficult to make plans for the introduction of cable. It is a complex situation which involves a large amount of work.
It has been evident for a long time that there is a developing crisis in Canadian television, and the reasons for this crisis have been amply evident. Because of the proliferation of cable systems (now available to 75 percent of the Canadian population), and even more so, because of the Canadian broadcasting system (the CA's), the Canadian media is the most fragmented in the world. In the larger cities, viewers may have a dozen or more channels to choose from, and how these commercial networks and the public broadcasting service, MTS, are chosen in the same way. The new cable channels which have been licensed over the years have added to the flux of American material.

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

Even French-speaking Canadians, in spite of the apparent protection of language, spend 48 percent of their free time watching foreign programs, some in translation on French channels; others on English Canadian stations or direct via cable. For French-speaking children, the figure is 98 percent.

We are being caught up in a rapidly expanding communications technology, with attractive new opportunities for the hardware side of broadcasting—cables, satellite dishes, distribution, pay television, fibre optics, cheaper earth stations, videocassette and video systems in the home, the evolution of the family television set into a kind of computer terminal with access to a whole range of information and entertainment. All this may be of great benefit to many of the great commercial events—if it is not censored—will be for these new distribution systems to bring Canadians in an even wider variety of foreign material.

American movies, American television, American sports events.

Unfortunately, the events of 1978-79 did not bode well for the resolution of the crisis: the budget forecast of the CBC for 1979-80 was cut by 17.7 million; the cable companies, while still pressing for pay TV, showed little sign of being willing to contribute to the production of more and better Canadian programming by and for Canadian broadcasters; and private television stations and networks did little to contribute an increase in the size and quality of production.

CBC Annual Report 1978-79

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

When Z. Brezinski says, "the US is the society which has never been a nation," he is no doubt un- aware of the potential meaning of his own sen-
tence. The flow of images of American series constantly rekindles the memory of the North American continent and thus constantly nourishes the imaginary which this industry of the image shapes.

There is in fact in the US image industry today a device which is little different from a con-
scious management of the imaginary, particularly since it stimulates the memory of genres of the great American corporations, which constantly nourishes the imaginary which this industry of the image shapes.

The era of the spectacular is no doubt the main cultural instance of technological society. In our recent study of the Sesame Street series, we noticed how much the rhythm of commercial time was felt. This series—it has not been under-
lined enough—remains one of the few instances where the institutionality of mass culture was taught in order to attempt to remedy what its founders deemed to be the commercial mediocrity of this culture, the levelling effect it has. It is indeed in this sense, that they had to make use of the laws of this culture and to utilize advertising appeal as the support for new pedagogical mes-
ges—aimed in priority, let's not forget, at the preservation of an ethnic minority placed in disadvantageous position in the school system. Speaking of this era of spectacularity, we wrote: "It is not only the revolution seen to the technological genre which characterizes Sesame Street; it is the propaganda to re-inject into the pedagogical field all the stimuli of the universe of consumption, all its normative shape. It is the transformation of the primary registers of childhood. Exploiting the seduction of rhythm, of diversity, Sesame Street mostly works by calling upon the huge stock of signs of the uni-
verse of the consumer culture, stimulating the in-
tigation of the child to the world. In fact, what triumphs is a modality of time determined by industrial culture: a modality based upon the artificial, a time which no longer has anything to do with the rhythms of daily life, a time of model, times, of the exceptional, of the spectacular.

What disappears is on the one hand the temporality of daily life, the real, the duration of lived experience and on the other hand, the time specific to other cultures. This no doubt acquires its full meaning within the framework of the series, which proposes to reach ethnic minorities, children who belong to cultures other than this highly industrialized one. Fighting against segregation it gathers around them the era of technological progress, inevitably assimilated to the irreversible progress of modernity. It assimilates them, homogenizes them, agglomerates them through the effect of instantaneousness, the immediacy which characterizes its learning techniques, and the culture of anticipation to which it refers. One may legitimately wonder whether the real educational message of Sesame Street does not reside in this initiation to the world of consumption with its modalities of mass space-time.

The notion of time is central to the process of internationalization of television products. The criticism of French series, very often, is of the French themselves, of being too "slow" bear witness to this fact. One of the most frequent obstacles when one studies the different protocols of agreement or the critical material concerns exchanges and co-productions: "French series drag in length and language." But here again, it is hard to say where the defect starts and where quality begins.

Culture As A Planetary Regulator?

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

The Italian filmmaker Pasolini evokes a mechanism which is complementary to the series when he judges that the "success of a telefilm is to be attributed in the first place to the specificity of the product which contains in itself its own pro-motional campaign: each "episode" creates in the viewer the desire to find again and to recognize oneself, even if the search for novelty, but the confirmation of a habit, from the programming schedule to a narrative scheme, to the repetition of characters and actors. One can then not speak of "specificity" but rather the artificial, the paradigmatic, automatic each week. (From the same commer-

clinal perspective, the former director of TV Globo confirmed this idea when he explained that the telenovelas had such success on Brazilian channels, especially on TV Globo where they are programmed every evening from 7:00 to 9:00 and 10:00: "TV is a habit. The battle for the audience is won by anyone succeeds in keeping and attracting again a viewer to the particular channel.

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

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

One can no longer appreciate the value of the presence of American series on the screens of the world in the terms in which we appreciated them in the early seventies. The facts and the stakes are of another importance. The arrival of the commercial series is also the arrival of the commercial mode of organization of social relations which goes beyond that of the organization of cultural production. It is nothing more or less than the penetration of commercial logic into the relations of the State and civil society.

The State must resort to commercialization citizens, abandoning to tv marketing tactics campaigns of general interest concerning the teaching of reading, contraception, solidarity.

A national consensus. A world consensus. This logic of privatization of all spheres of collective and individual life is the answer to the pressure inherent in the transnational mode of expansion, which desires this type of organizational power and tends to reduce public space, to eliminate anything having a connection with public function. Whatever remains an obstacle to the increasing integration of national economies in a world increasingly and the new international division of work may become the new favored targets of this remodeling. (These are the forms of social control recommended by the Tripartite Commission.) The main target is to doubt the structures of the nation-state and the totality of its institutional apparatus. These structures and apparatuses—the results of a historical heritage, in spite of the numerous contradictions which cross them—obtain in societies which live under the civic sign of a "really existing democracy", and are moved by a collection of norms and values in contradiction with the movement toward transnationalization of economies. The production of cultural goods and transnational information carries in itself not only a cultural project, but also a new system of power. It is probably into this space made by the commercial exchange of cultural goods that the traditional nation-state tries to instate itself in order to weaken any kind of national resistance.

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

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

This is not the least of the damaging effects which this fascination for technology produces: this fascination leads to literally transposing onto an American modernity now illustrated by the explosion of communication, the idea of an America as symbol of freedom and democracy. This in turn has pervented notions of decentralized interactive communication, while attributing these virtues to technology itself, and while taking for a revolution in social relations what in many cases is nothing but a new technological interface. The fact that one often forgets to mention that before being a support or a means of communication, communication is a social practice, is without any doubt one of the characteristics of the situation today.
Is This The Voice Of God Speaking?!

New Directions In Documentary/Docu-Drama

Glen Richards

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

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

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

"Canada's worldwide filmmaking reputation rests largely on our tradition of excellence in the production of documentary films. Public opinion surveys clearly indicate great audience demand for documentary programming on Canadian TV."

From Canadian Independent Film Caucus press release

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

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

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

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

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

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

Toni

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

Toni and Osvaldo

"Our object was not to cheat anyone." 

Osvaldo

"...It is all true...but we are not afraid to re-create a documentary" 

Toni

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

Toni and Osvaldo

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

"Santiago Alvarez, the Cuban filmmaker, has very well defined the line we wanted to pursue in this film: to make a fiction film with no fiction in it; to be extremely realistic about the testimony that people give—nobody would say that doesn’t happen, (that) the
I've tried to re-constitute myself as a dramatic director. That's what I hope will come from it, that suddenly I will be seen as a dramatic director. It really depends on what the public reaction is. If that happens I want to do more drama, because I think we're losing the documentary audience... we're losing the ability to read and I think the documentary is a very literary film form. There's language and an art and poetic, propagandistic, it's not literary, it's not narrative, it's discursive. Documentaries are part of writing and I'll always want to make documentaries. If you make a film like Brenda Longfellow's "Farewell," about one man and you make a documentary you get a certain audience. But if you take the same story and put a dramatic form on it, a feature or a television drama, you get ten times the audience, and ten times the attention—and ten times the work. I want to take all my interests in documentaries and put them in a fiction story..."

Tom Sharul

"I don't know what a docu-drama is. We had no literary basis to rely on, so we relied on the newspaper basis of a story. In that respect Walls qualifies. Except that Walls is based on a play, based on a real event. We took tremendous liberty with the story of Walls. We didn't reduce it to all that was realistically-valid; it became what we needed to make the story and do justice to the real events."

Tom Sharul

"The only difference between Walls and Dog Day Afternoon is money. It took 19 days to shoot Walls, which meant I couldn't shoot detail. I could only shoot siphore. I had to stay completely on the foreground of the story. I couldn't dwell on the other characters, I couldn't dwell on the other people in the prison or the background of how a prison really operates. It's a function of money. You have a character standing there thinking and then you cut away to something completely irrelevant that he's looking at. Well, in Walls there's very little of that, and it's a function of the dough. The difference between the two is that Dog Day Afternoon was probably a six million dollar film. And here, it was $500,000. Harlan County is shot more like a feature film, like a drama... and that's where the American documentary tradition differs from our own, because they don't have the institutional support we have, they have to be more inventive."

Tom Sharul

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

Tom Sharul

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I was not able to get permission [from the film Board] to go there right away when I wanted to go. Being an Indian person I wanted to be there right away to see what I could do... I got there the day after the second raid and I went there by myself and took a Nagra and did a lot of interviews. I didn't sleep for two days and two nights, we stayed at the border, there was a 24-hour guard of all the brassaxes a lot of Indian people who had come from all over. It was just like wartime there, it was unbelievable. They had scanners and I took notes and we listened to the OPP and they were being played live. I don't know how they knew we were listening. You could touch the feeling of something really weird in the air... the children were terrified. If a helicopter went over they would hide underneath the porches."

Alanis Obomsawin

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

Alanis Obomsawin

"...A lot of people were taking pictures. For instance, while the police were urinating in front of the women and the kids there were Indians who took pictures, but their cameras were confiscated. They took a lot of pictures, so we didn't have so many pictures to use."

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

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

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

Low Visibility

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

Alain Abomsawin

...’I go there like a bull (to the NFB) and all I think about is what I have to do and I'm going to do it at the end and I'll fight every battle every day. But a lot of people, their mind doesn’t function like that, they’d like to be in peace and make a film in peace and quiet. I would like that too, but I’m not going to wait till I have peace before I make a film.”

Alain Abomsawin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glen Richards is a freelance filmmaker who lives in Toronto.
A HOSTEL WHERE THERE IS SUPPORT

SHIRLEY SAMAROO DECIDED TO GO TO

Speak out, bearen wive told after murder

JUDI JOHNSON

Women's Habitat of Etobicoke, Woodlawn Residence, Ernestine's, Internment Place, North York Women's Shelter, Emily Slowe Shelter, Women in Transition, Education Wife Assault, Yellow Brick House.
New Internationalist has just published in its 32nd year, over twelve years it has provided a remarkably consistent and partisan commitment to issues of what it calls 'the untold relationship between rich and poor worlds'. It maintains three editorial offices in London, Britain and Canada—and is operated as a cooperative 'whose purpose is to communicate development ideals through print and film to the widest possible audience'. As such it represents a brave attempt at bucking the dominant wisdoms of print journalism while taking into account the existence of television, radio and film. Of 45,000 international subscriptions, 26,000 are in Britain, 6,500 in each of Canada and Australia, 2,500 in the USA and the rest around the world. New Internationalist is a Commonwealth magazine, printing the conscience of whites but not yet making much of an inroad into the African white market, which presumably believes that Time or Newsweek or US News & World Report even South gives them all the facts and figures that are worth digesting.

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

New Internationalist has grown a lot in twelve years. At its inception it looked little more than a mouthpiece for British do-gooders, a secular missionary tract supported by Quakers, Methodists and the like. They found their true home in the British Liberal and Labour parties; a kind of journalistic Oxbridge. What we have now is a magazine that has a much better sense of theory and practice, recognizing that the third world is not, 'out there' but here in our own back yard, that the issues that affect the third world are here in our own schools, on our tv screens, on our streets. The interplay between their publications and the feature of the new New Internationalist. Each issue is devoted to a theme, but also has letters (often the most abrasive part of the magazine), an update on past themes, a page or two on brief news items, a page on "Ideas for Action", book reviews, a review of a "classic" book and a profile of one of its readers. This is done with the finest blend of reportage, autobiography, photojournalism, interviews, articles and analysis. The one reason economic, intellectual, cultural, political, religious, geographical... slimmer resources, New Internationalist is an imaginative magazine to look to. It iss exactly in its scope and direct. It can be read right through at one sitting, at the end of which you go to the next one.

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

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

The sense of there being three worlds and that we are all here in our own back yard, that the issues that affect the third world are here in our own schools, on our tv screens, on our streets. The interplay between their publications and the feature of the new New Internationalist. Each issue is devoted to a theme, but also has letters (often the most abrasive part of the magazine), an update on past themes, a page or two on brief news items, a page on...
Horizon Canada: The New Way to Discover Canada

Weekly, March 19, 1985, $1.95 per issue or all 52 issues for $175, Centre for the Study of Teaching, Canada, Inc. Address for subscriptions: Horizon Canada, 394 Orleans Drive, Office 333, Brampton, Ontario, L6T 1O9.

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

The two stories I have seen both in the Toronto Star: Don Braic, 'Publishers Clashing at Their Post,' March 16, 1985, p.85 and Beverly Slopen, ""Ecclesiastical Wars"" on the same date, p.87; bring out information about Horizon Canada that relates to the claim made in the previous issues cumulatively make up an encyclopaedia of 5,350 pages on art, photography, maps and illustrations. One critic (quoted by Braic) states that Horizon Canada is ""a neat 350 writers"". In the publicity's claim there is a clash with already numerous Canadian Encyclopaedias (three volumes, 8,000 articles, 5,000 contributors) from Hurtig Publishers Ltd., the English edition of which is to be published in the fall of 1985. In 1980 the latter project received $4 million from the Alberta government; Hurtig raised a further $7.5 million (Brazil) or $7.5 million (Slopen) himself, with no federal funding (except for the French translation to appear from Stanke Publishing, Montréal, in 1987). In contrast, Horizon Canada received $4.2 million (Brazil) or $4.6 million (Slopen) from Serge Joyal, Secretary of State in the Trudeau government, early in 1984. The total budget is about $11 million including $1 million spent on advertising (Slopen). I'll write that again: the 120 issues of Horizon Canada have received over four million dollars in federal funding (and raised some further $7 million) for a magazine which is selling (according to Michael MacDonald, co-chairman of its Board of Trustees) over 200,000 copies of the English language edition alone (about 300,000 in the centre of less than) (the projections of the test.). The magazine is produced by Transo Publishers and distributed by Maclean Hunter (efficiently); I found my own copies in a small (GTA) supermarket on College Street in Toronto. But before I briefly review the contents thus far issues 1 through 4 I just want to look at the origin of one version of this Horizon Canada. According to the inside front cover Horizon Canada "was launched by the Centre for the Study of Teaching Canada Inc., a non-profit educational organization promoting and publishing research on Canada". Its chairman is Benoît Robichaud, former President of the now-defunct Horizon. The co-chairman, Michael Macdonald, is at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. On September 1, 1972 the federal Secretary of State has been funding the Canada Studies Foundation ('incorporated in 1970 as an independent, non-profit organization scheming for a fund-raising party in the fall of 1982'). This Foundation has two locational addresses and two names; for it is Omnibus Institute for Studies in Education Toronto address is it known as the Canada Studies Foundation ['the first publication is that of Omnibus in Canada, but for its Universal Laval, Quebec, address it is known as Le Centre de l'Enseignement en Canada/The Centre for Studies of Teaching of Canada. But that squabble is rather minor if we return to the cash-nexus more generally and think, briefly, just what over four million dollars from federal funds might have done across Canada in, say, $10 to $15,000 amounts? Might have done; for example, for HERIcon: women's news magazine (Winnipeg) or THE INCITE (Toronto). Two final acerbic queries: most funding for periodical publications requires 'demonstration of effect'—i.e. successful demonstration of survival for three issues (which of course means that the contents can be reviewed and the appropriateness of the content assessed). Press reports indicate funding for Horizon Canada in 1984. Secondly, it looks to me if the contents are published up and distribution intended for a much earlier date than finally proved possible—issues 1 through 4 were copyrighted and have in their legal deposit date 'CAN OCT 84'. So, for me, all of this does defend offer new ways to 'discover Canada'?

Alas, I wish I could say as much about the contents. They remind me of a vulgar comment by a militant Chartist on the flood of state funded historical, geographical and cultural materials intended to 'force civilization' through their recurrence in English Canada—of it, to 'F##k you and leave'. Telling us 'You'll never see Canada the same way again,' (it is generally rather heavily Althusserian in its interpellation practices!) one enclosure with issue 1 asks.

**DO YOU KNOW...**

- That a murderer's son who established the first white settlement in Newfoundland... and adds a further nine examples of such meretricious rhetoric. The fold out poster (itself a little gem, opening with the words 'This is a collective' ') of how much does your family really know about Canada and give the Disney land iconography to keep poor Roland at work for a week) says

**Did you know that...**

...among the tens of thousands of people who set out prospecting for gold in the Klondike at the end of the 19th century, only a hundred became millionaires? and adds a further eleven question marks

But this is, of course, only publicity, only marketing, only signalling the insignificance of the commons. Each issue has four articles, plus (inside the back cover) a 'Discoveries and Inventions' (outside the back cover) a 'Masterpiece' of Canadian painting; the former has digressed Canadiana via insulin, standard time zones, snowmobiles (Skidoos) and kerosene. The others have been supplemented by articles on The Group of Seven (issue 2) and the painters of the Rockies (issue 4). The latter hopefully gleans an alliance of trade unionism and 'Art' in the CP Railway's provision of free travel passes and commissions to painters, graphic designers and photographers to 'promote' the Rockies:

It is this mixture of quixotism and innocence which in the end produces more than anodic discourses (given the funding levels and the existing ex- tent of sales); it produces an angel about the marginalization (at best and pervasive silence established by this 'voice' of history (this story almost completely to rest and image for the first four issues, aside from an article on Emma Afifi, opera singer, in issue 4). There is a tone here which in its pleasures and drooleries, quirks and 'annual' aisles, is incessantly didactic but conveys its own teaching (and authority) in those persisting tautologies of the petty bourgeois: adorably identified as myth by Barthès (Mythologies, Paris, 1957). Here, in all their 'appealing' humaneness are the facts', whether about 'The Genius of Baddeck' (Alexander Graham Bell, issue 1), 'Canada at Bat' (baseball, issue 3) or 'Furs and Rivalries' (issue 4). It would be less than I am arguing—all though important to indicate—if I were simply to illustrate how the national's quaintness and innocence erases any discussion of social differences, either by 'simple' silence (class, gender, ethnicity) or by blandness: the native peoples are either ar- chologically or anthropologically ("Time Before Time" in issue 1) or absobed into a curious "partnership" (Issues 2, 3 and 4). Child labour is depicted as a 'ghostly side effect' of something called the 'Industrial Revolution in Canada' (issue 3); this article concludes, describing 1918 or so: "With most children now in school instead of the factory, one of the worst excesses of Canada's Industrial Revolution was over.") Or, again, a charming little vignette—under the classification 'Social Life'—"Red Coat Woes", about how the RCMP made the Canada West a peaceable kingdom for the English-Canadians in the years following Confederation (issue 2), blithely re- membering the temporary nature of the role of the Mounted Police between Batoche (1885) and "the tragic conflict of 1919", during the General Strike of 1919. (But then the author of this fable naivety is the RCMP at its most laconic and charming). It produces, and is designed for, a tautological close-up. Today, children, 'things' are better; this, that, was 'The Past' —full of Heroes and Icons (some of them a little fearful, just to remind readers about Progress); today we're different. More or less. (If this is lacking anyway) it is not a kind of complexity—simply beyond the reach of tautology. Horizon Canada produces historical experience, a heritage of historical experience, not only contradictory, but antagonistic understandings of who we are and how we have become as we do as we do. This magazine is 'at one' with the Canadian Studies Foundation in the same way tautological closures around a pre-concerted agenda, a known 'Canada' that produces certain effects—its size, the pattern of its 'settlement'. A history which is not simply powerless (lacking in any tracing of power relations, and worthless in helping us to understand the past...Quaintly, the issues are kept, in the end, people-less. It is, like all myth, frozen (and what, to be sure, could more securely echo back that standard Great White North icon that stands in, again and again, for the Canadians), and, essentailly, there... once upon a time.

So I do not believe with this (and so much else: the provincial and federal documents, maps, imagery are all from the same tapestry) that it is a question of 'demonstrations'. Here, indeed, evidence lacking there or, in any usual sense, bias; it is the quality of the evidence that is lacking, a possible, encouraged. Stanley Rorper on the need to make powerful...empowered and silenced simultaneously. It is about confirming a certain order of things which, as is true of all petty bourgeois myths, allows a simultaneous unamig acceptance at not being those things, one of (those) being what ones is. In that sense (not least for the $54 million federal investment, which I suspect has more than a little to do with a certain 'opening' to a "punctuation of the horizon..." (France-Québec) is impressive, but I am doubtful of the relevance of the, what I am calling: an emerging "network of power groups that identified "volunteers' for the Navy by forcing a shifting into the military industrial complex...schooners became sailors. Most identifications work like that. These, here, need to be understood in the way of the outside look and how the narrow result- ing history is accomplished. There's too much below and beyond this horizon.

Philip Corrigan
DISTINCTION: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste
by Pierre Bourdieu (translated by Richard Nice)
(Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1984)

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

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

Distinction begins by taking issue with a philosophical approach to the 'judgement of taste' developed by the eighteenth century philosopher Immanuel Kant. For many years, Kant's universal claims about the categories of human thought, Bourdieu challenges Kant's characterization of aesthetic judgement as a mysterious act removed from everyday considerations of usefulness, ethics and intelligibility. According to Bourdieu, aesthetic judgement, like other social practices, cannot be understood apart from the social conditions that shape both the product being judged and the individual engaged in the activity of judgement.

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

But Bourdieu's ambition is not merely to provide an account of the diversity of lifestyles in modern French society, thereby opening up the debate on aesthetic judgement. He is concerned rather with providing a rigorous account of the system of lifestyles. This concern, which owes something to the insights of French structuralism, starts from the premise that the meaning of a cultural product, or a lifestyle, does not reside in that product, but in the relation between that product and every other product in the system. Hence the need to construct a grammar or map of the cultural system in order to understand the meaning of any particular product or lifestyle within that system.

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

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

If it was only this political dimension of culture that was charted by Bourdieu, his work, as suggested, would represent a considerable advance over some forms of structuralism. But what is perhaps most unique in Bourdieu's work is his attempt to connect a political sociology of culture with a theory of the subject that is as rich in the sensitivity to human experience that characterized the phenomenological tradition. Thus Bourdieu does no more than map out the hierarchy of cultural products. He also explores the individual's (or group's) relation to the dominant culture.

It is in this context that Bourdieu's concept of the habitus, defined as a 'system of dispositions', has a role to play. As means of the habitus concept, which is explained more fully in his earlier works, Bourdieu attempts to connect the idea of culture to the embodied human subject. Bourdieu suggests that this relation has been severed by intellectuals whose idea of culture is coloured by their intellectual relation to culture, by the fact that for them culture is primarily something to think about. Far from being an object of intellectual reflection, culture, for Bourdieu, is bound up with the very practical urgencies of everyday life. And against intellectual tendencies Bourdieu stresses that culture is a bodily phenomenon. Even speech may be viewed as a technique of the body, a way of holding the mouth and a sense of knowing when and how to speak, the result both of past 'conditioning' and of unspoken, but deeply felt, censorship experienced by the individual in a given situation.

These theoretical insights, developed and employed in Distinction, merit close attention. What of the more substantive concern? Bourdieu's model of French society includes three main classes, three objective classes (as he might say: bourgeois, petty bourgeois and the working class). Associated with each objective class (and necessary to its definition) is a characteristic lifestyle or relation to the dominant culture. It is worth noting that in his discussion of objective class and lifestyle Bourdieu is close to Max Weber and he goes as far as to suggest that Distinction is 'based on an endeavour to reestablish Max Weber's opposition between class and status'.

In three successive chapters Bourdieu analyses the lifestyles of each of the major classes, devoting some attention to his class fractions within them. At one extreme is the 'sense of distinction' that characterizes the bourgeoisie. The new bourgeoisie, especially, is fluidable, and is able to assume several different looks or styles, from the conservative to the sporty, and even, in some contexts, to the rough and macho style of the manual worker. In this way the style of the 'modern manager' or new bourgeois may be distinguished from that of the 'old-style authoritarian inquisitorial', 'post-bellum', 'pompous', and showing more restraint in language and morals. At the middle of the spectrum is the petit bourgeoisie. While some mem-
Of the many personal issues that the women have brought up for political debate in recent years, one powerful issue has been long evaded. As the two authors of Fashion, Mass Production and the Modern World mark, we have discussed almost all of the issues that before made us feel alone and insecure—all except personal beauty. Happily for us in Face Value they have taken the challenge of answering the power that beauty holds over us.

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

Face Value is a disconcerting reminder of how significant physical appearance is, how we feel valued, primarily on the basis of our looks. Beauty is fundamental to our sense of selves as women and as beautiful, as beautiful or not. Women are 'disdained' by the tyranny of looks. By the threat of loss and the possibility of rejection and with it power, withheld.' The authors argue that 'discrimination based on beauty is more pernicious to our society's progress and development based on race.' The book explores how and why beauty holds such much power.

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

In Beauty in Our Times the authors examine the role of the camera in the media and society. The media then we say, give us a great description of capitalism's commodification of beauty. Mass production and mass communications haven't come from somewhere randomly befallen to something constantly being influenced. With the privileged of the leisure class, became available to all.

The ingredients of beauty could be bought everywhere inexpensively and the media's message that we must be beautiful reached into the lives of people of all classes.

Visual images of beauties—professional beauties—bombard us daily and we respond by buying, we buy constantly at mass media's command, image magazines, ads, this ad is in the media's and its standards for beauty, mass media's models and actors by and large are so秾pass to possess under their skins the Caucasian features of the white ideal of beauty.

Beauty's power is used to divide men from women, women from women, race from race. To be beautiful is compensatory for lack of power, but a beautiful woman is not a powerful woman. It is beauty, not woman, who has the power, and in pursuit of power we seek beauty.' Perhaps until recently men had so little else to make their lives comfortable, psychologically as well as physically, that they needed the promise of beauty, and the thrill of competition with other men for the same. These men would have been jealous of each other, would have been more interested in the development of the art form of and function that would be more stimulating and fulfilling, and would have been less interested in the more trivial, in the more superficial, in the more ephemeral. The development of the art form would have been more stimulating and interesting, and the thrill of competition would have been less.
Of the many personal issues that the woman faces, her political activity has drawn the most attention. Her call for peaceful coexistence with her neighbors has received widespread support. The government has acknowledged her efforts and awarded her the Nobel Peace Prize.

However, her political activities have not been without challenges. She has faced harassment and threats from those who oppose her views. Despite these challenges, she remains committed to her cause.

In conclusion, the woman's political career has been marked by dedication and resilience. Her commitment to peace and justice has inspired many, and her legacy continues to be felt today.
other women in this arena, to make living worthwhile.

What are the psychological roots of our responses to beauty? Unfortunately the authors do not attempt to answer this question. Their research turned up only contradictory positions. Academic psychologists link beauty with happiness, while others emphasize competence and goodness. Psychologists link it to misery, passivity and immorality. Both claim 'empirical evidence... The two together form a whole—the whole of our myths, literature and popular stereotypes about beauty.

In their own surveys the authors found that, without exception, all the women they interviewed claimed that beauty was important to them, though none could elucidate why. Many felt guilty at admitting its importance, believing that their concern for personal beauty was antithetical to feminism. In the fight to be valued equally and on the same basis as men—for our activities—parts of the feminist movement have often polarized on the issue of beauty. Some believe that we no longer should shave our legs, paint our eyes or participate in the exchange of expensive goods. Others prefer to remain beautiful femenists, especially among younger women.

What is private about our looks and we go to extraordinary lengths to enhance or reduce them once ageing and barrier between them and society is no more apparent. But despite the fact that we no longer need to shave our legs, paint our eyes or participate in the exchange of expensive goods, many women are eager to enhance their beauty. 

The city and the grassroots

The most common form of political action any of us are likely to take these days is urban actions. It might be joining a tenants' group to protest against the disinflation of the housing, or fighting off an attempt to raise rents. It could be rallying around a shopkeeper or a charity, or pilfering an old building scheduled for demolition or about the desecration of a shrine. It could involve the environment, such as saving a stand of trees, worrying about industrial waste or deteriorating water quality.

What's amazing is the extent of these actions. People take them everyday in every city—political people, folks who would never put themselves out to shake the hand of a walking, breathing member of Parliament. Often these kinds of struggles aren't seen by the traditional political analysts as being of much importance—they are on the fringes, people amassing themselves on the periphery of life. But when one of these minor irritations erupts into a battle, grand and impressive, then there's such a surging to report the size and shape of the action. One thinks of the fight around the Spade Fairway housing and the attempt to change the direction of transportation policy and urban form in Toronto. Think of the bitter fights to save important downtown landmarks in Halifax, Montréal, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver. And to prove the worst of the developers' excess. Most other Canadian cities were involved in these kinds of struggles, with a noticeable effect on urban politics.

And there are other, perhaps more significant political actions. Every large Canadian city has its urban renewal fights, as working people did battle with governments to preserve their neighbourhoods. Many communities have spent much of the last two decades fighting off developers, and their high-rise towers, in the process demanding that more opportunities be given for citizen participation in decision-making and that elected politicians be more accountable to those they supposedly represent.

Does any of this activity mean anything in the long term? Critics have often argued negatively—even for the Spadina Expressway project. But classical marxists and libertarians both see this as a battle, that will change the social structure, namely class struggle. The individuals involved are of course aware that the critics say what they will, and continue right on bashing their heads against the wall. They think the battle is worth engaging in, whatever the outcome of today.

Now along comes Manuel Castells, eminent Marxist political analyst, in an attempt to make sense of urban action. What emerges out of 336 pages large of text is shown up by the quality of the useful appendices, followed by notes and no less than 17 closely spaced pages of bibliography, is a revisitation view. He concludes that the urban action makes sense but the marxist analysis doesn't. At one pole he cries out... but the Marxist theory might not have room for social movements other than the historically privileged class struggle, social movements persist. So experience was right and marxist theory was wrong on the point. Hence the practical traditional marxist study of social change should be recast.

What Castells attempts to do in this book is develop a theory that will make sense of urban grassroots political movements. His approach is to discuss some of the more spectacular urban fights in cities across the world, going as far back as Castiliano Spad in 1920 and the commune of Paris in 1871, to a dozen other examples this century in Europe, South America and the United States. The stories are ones that are not well-known—after all, urban struggles have not been treated as serious by most social scientists. One learns for the first time about the remarkable rent strike in Glasgow in 1915, the tenant movement in the streets of Dublin in 1916, or the protest in Paris in 1968. They are stories of struggles that are well-known, but are less known.

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For example, in the case of the rent strike in Glasgow in 1915, the tenant movement in the streets of Dublin in 1916, or the protest in Paris in 1968. They are stories of struggles that are well-known, but are less known. Many communities have spent the last two decades fighting off developers and their high-rise towers.

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

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

3. It must be related to society through the media, professionals and traditional political parties. It must be autonomous of any political party. We all know the damage that a political party—group with its own agenda—can cause to a community group.

Castells has a great deal of sympathy for struggles involving these elements, in other words, the limits. Urban social movements are aimed at transforming the meaning of the city without being able to transform society. They are a reaction, not an alternative; they are calling for a slash of existence without being able to create a new breed.

Dinah Forbes

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other women in this arena, to make living workable.

What are the psychological roots of our responses to beauty? Unfortunately the authors give no general answer to this question. Their research turned up only contradictory positions. Academic psychologists link beauty with happiness, competence and goodness. Psychoanalysts link it to misery, passivity and immorality. Both claim "empirical" evidence... The two together form a whole— the whole of our myths, literature and popular stereotypes about beauty.

In their own surveys the authors found that, without exception, all the women they interviewed claimed that beauty was important to them, though none could elucidate why. Many felt guilty at admitting its importance, believing that their concern for personal beauty was antithetical to feminism. In the first to be valued equally and on the same basis as men—for our activities—parts of the feminist movement have often polemicized on the side of puritanism. They have realized that we no longer should share our legs, paint our eyes or participate in the exchange between men and women so subtly served two ends. It liberated some from tedious cosmetic routines but put many others before the mirror and led the ugliest feminists endure, especially among younger women.

We are private about our looks and we try to go for extraordinary lengths to enhance or restrain them once again and barrier: to permanently mark our bodies. Face Value describes in wincing detail the self-mutilations, from warping to face lifts and nose and breast surgery we elect to undergo. In our efforts to maintain ourselves in the current image of slender beauty we put our health at risk. The current adolescent look in which sexual innocence and knowhow are simultaneously suggested by socially experienced women in the slim firm bodies of the immature, has led many women to dangerous lengths to obtain a slender body. Women let their body weight fluctuate dramatically and unhealthily and consume dangerous dietary "aids" by millions. Ten thousand women a year in the United States alone are projected to die of weight-related illnesses and thousands more are left exposed to hypertension and strokes. In the quest for the perfect aging women shell out thousands of dollars for cosmetic surgery. While the signs of age and the signs of aging are multi-faceted and the attractiveness of men because they are evidence of his experience in the world, the prime virtue of mankind, the same bags and wrinkles and greying hair are, for the same reasons, considered ugly and unworthy marks of age not only deny our innocence, they also blur the male-female distinction at the root of all sexual behavior.

Beauty is the power of the weak, but while women are relatively powerless in other ways in western society, we can pronounce the one power we command. Would we ever want to give up the idea of beauty? This is not, of course, a question for an individual woman, at least trying. Face Value suggests that only when women are valued fairly will the beauty power be beauty rebound its powerful grip. Perhaps then we can enjoy beauty without depression or guilt. We need to use this book and the other writings that ought to follow as a starting point to shake off this "final great deal: the ultimate thing we worry about as individuals".

Dinah Forbes

THE CITY AND THE GRASSROOTS

by Manuel Castells

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

What Castells attempts to do in this book is develop a theory that will make sense of urban grassroots political movements. His approach is to discuss some of the more spectacular urban uprisings in cities across the world, going, as far back as Casztiillan Spain in 1520 and the Commune of Paris in 1781, to a dozen other examples this century in Europe, South America and the United States. The stories are ones that are not well-known—after all, urban struggles have not been treated with the same analytic care by scholars.

One learns for the first time about the remarkable rent strike in Glasgow in 1916, the tenements occupied by the prostitutes in Veracruz in 1922 and the bitter struggles of the early 1970s in the Grand Escaliers— the past World War II towns in the commune of Paris. There are intricate discussions of the Mission District in San Francisco as well as the urban impact of the gay community in the same city; explanations of squatter communities in Lima, Mexico and Santiago de Chile, and the profile of the citizens' movement in Madrid in the mid 1970s.

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

Castells generally concludes that "urban movements do not have a level of analysis of our time, although neither on the scale nor terms that are adequate to the task... they are more than a last, symbolic stand and desperate cry: they are symp- toms of our contradictions, and therefore potentially capable of superseding these contradictions." What does this actually mean? I'm not quite sure. It is but one of many expressions of a paragraph starting out with panache and direction, then ending in a puddle of words that leave their source unknown. There is a roman- ticism about Castells' conclusions that is irritating. One wishes he'd be a bit tougher about everything: Castells is a political theorist and he feels as if he is striving for the truth. The thesis he proposes is certainly simple enough. He proposes that an urban movement will arise in a new social struggle, struggle against capitalism if it meets the following four criteria:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Many communities have spent the last two decades fighting off developers and their high-rise towers
And why do people engage in this kind of limited activity? Because ‘People appear to have no other choice. The historical actors (social movements, political parties, institutions) that were supposed to provide the answers to the new challenges at the global level, were unable to stand up to them… Thus urban movements do address the real issues of our time, although neither on the scale nor the terms that are adequate to the task.’ And that’s the pity. Urban movements are just concerned with — and it’s not a word that Castells uses — reform. That’s always been the great bugaboo of the Marxists — reform never goes far enough, it’s not based on a deep enough analysis. What this book does is make reforms legitimate even though it is incapable of making the changes required. I think that Castells would agree that reform politics produces useful results — he’s much too quiet on this point for my own liking — and that’s going some for a theorist of his stature.

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

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

**Let me begin with ‘the object itself’; this book is divided into three-page introductions by the editors; Part 1 of 215 pages (nine essays, plus ‘A Very Partial Chronology’ of five pages); Part 2: ‘Reading for What’, of 143 pages, introduced by Sobeya Sayres, with subsections ‘Moments’, ‘Audience Appointments’, and ‘Revisitation’; the book concludes with a Lexicon of Folk-Etymology by Ralph Larkin and Daniel Penn tray. The editors’ Introduction ends with the moment of the book’s own context — the ‘trafficking of the stakes’, the various Rights with their particular moralisms and the multiple Lefts’ weak and the diverse responses. The editors conclude that we see this book as an attempt to combine the affirmative with the critical, an attempt to salvage certain positions now under serious attack…’ But they also stress how ‘reflecting the radical displacement in these years of homogeneity itself, we make no claim that ours is a complete account. We put this work before the reader in the form of an intervention, and we do so without apology.’

Part 1 frames (or, polemically, is a kind of frame-up) for Part 2, which consists of shorter, often extracted, writings. I shall resist the temptation to respond, contrariwise, to much that is vibrant, sentimental, differing significantly in Part 2… I shall concentrate on the frame. But in this response I do so with the resources drawn from the one Great (Re)Discovery of the 60s, or rather: no glue, words (later signs) fix and face us. Turning that onto the frame of Part 1, there is a murmur as I am reading — who is speaking and for whom? Was there love made and unmade, did people walk midnight streets or sit in suits rooms rocking alone, talk for hours about their visions and their gastronomy… did people have bodies in the 60s? These questions are raised because Part 1’s frame-up tends to cop-in with a gentle (affirming?) but firm (critically) policing, heard (more than read) by planners with themes, adjectives, verbal flows, textual flashes.

Part 1 has nine essays, eight of them by men (including one of these) ‘A 60s Movement in the 60s’ which is an interview between the two-man Social Text ‘collective’ and David Apker — and the exception, by Ellen Willis, ‘A Radical Feminist and Feminist Radicalism’. In that regard, this is a pre-60s ensemble. Despite some attempts — notably the Apker interview concerning the Niagara Airport movement in Japan; Golden Fields’ ‘French Masochism’; Harman Rappaport’s ‘Viet nam: The Thousand Plateau’, strong themes within Simon Frith’s ‘Rock and the Politics of Memory’ and some features of Federico Jameson’s ‘Periodizing the 60s’ — to internationalize the accounting, the US-centric view is very strong, it predominates in Stanley Aronowitz, ‘When the New Left Was New’, Ellen Willis’ essay, Colin Greer’s ‘The Ethic Question’ and, differently but significantly, in Jameson.

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

Aronowitz and Jameson involve their writing with their more general agenda — I use the singular term deliberately, partly because of their association with, for example, Social Text, and/or their individual publications and/or specifically Frederic Jameson’s essay in The Anti-esthetic (ed. Hal Foster, Bay Press, 1983) and Aronowitz’s review of that book (Village Voice Literary Supplement October 1983, p. 14). On the first page of Aronowitz’s essay in the reviewed text we have a sentence which condenses all the closures/Polking I have indicated:

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

All failed, romantic politics and art. Nothing sturdy enough about them in the first place, not realistic, etc. But the claim is enormous: ‘characteristic of all’. The rest of his slight, singular, sub-superhero account pales beside that kind of claim, now, in the face of a history that includes, at least as a beginning sense, the 1940s and 1950s, plus the 1970s and half of the 1980s. Might not this be part of the prism we are after: fixed on success (what is it, how is it accomplished?) in the wrong image-expoiterie?

With Jameson there is also something different — a problem of tones: like the replay commentators on sports programs, he tends to write now (1983/84) that someone ‘will do’ something in the 60s? But the same Papal infallibility is involved… postmodernism… no longer at all (N.B.) ‘oppositional’… indeed it constitutes the very dominant or hegemonic aesthetic of consumer society itself and significantly serves the latter’s commodity production as a virtual laboratory of new forms and fashions (p. 196). Really! Just-like-that! I have been arguing for some time that the real symptomatical issue here is the loss of the Authority of the Critic, or, better, making visible the claim to that Authority. Multiplicity, difference and varied
Let me begin with 'the object itself.' This book is divided into one-page introductions by the editors; Part I of 215 pages consists of nine essays, plus 'A Very Partial Chronology' of five pages. Part 2: 'Reading for What,' of 143 pages, introduced by Solnya Sayres, with sections 'Moments', 'Audience/Listeners and Readers,' and 'Re-Takes.' The book concludes with a Lecture of Folk-Symphology by Ralph Larkin and Daniel Penn. The editors' introduction ends with the moment of the book's own context - the 'shaping of the article,' the various rights with their particular moralities and the multiple Left's 'weak and deficient responses.' The editors conclude that we see this book as 'an attempt to combine the affirmative with the critical, an attempt to salvage certain positions now under severe attack... But other than our own lifting and that's going some for a theorization of his stature. But for the many of us who have at times become immersed in urban politics, there's some comfort to believing that reforms and urban politics may soon become respectable among the intellectual leaders of our time. 

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

Capital Tales
by Brian Favcett
(Vancouver, Talonbooks, 1984)

While occasionally evocative of the free-floating sense of dread which accompanies Raymond Carver's novel, the world Brian Favcett's latest book, Capital Tales, is also reminiscent of early Stephenie King's sense of random, chance and a vague displacement of absence at the heart of working class experience.

However, the BC logging towns, 4x4 trucks and the edgy desperation or cruelty of Favcett's characters are really only the realistic tip of the much larger question his prose introduces: what is the relation between the world of the imagination and our real lives? What are the conventions of fiction in adequate expression of the realities of our everyday lives?

Though these are by no means new questions, Favcett's strength is in his collection of short stories manages to do a number of things well. A process of discovering over time, Favcett's characters grow from the first story to the last, allowing us to see the development of his experience and the world of dreams and the unconscious collide and interact in a way which ultimately reinforces the role that is the ultimate source of the story. In the transition from history to fiction, from the worlds of literature and the imagination to that of daily survival, Favcett moves effortlessly, only foregrounding the tension between these different worlds (often with a wry authorial cheek) to raise us above the narrow for an observation of the act of reading itself. This reflectiveness reaches its height in A Personal Memoir of Thomas Carlyle' where the 'skipping' between worlds reveals not only the tensions in our expectations of literature, but wonderfully exposes the creativity and aesthetic freedom of Favcett's prose; the multiple voices, influences, and codes, an as the framework of a text is being reinterpreted by the reader, the author, and the reader becomes aware of the process of the construction of meaning.

For a supposedly hapless and unintelligent collective reader. Here Favcett gives his readers the benefit of their, his, and our experience as the basis for interpretation. Interestingly, throughout the stories, especially 'Balance of Nature', 'The Ghost' and 'The Brotherhood of Man', the world of men and manhood, the narrow limits of male identity which pervade and constrain us, and even in which personal life is bound to consumerism and commodity fetishism, continues to assert itself. Rather than serving up trite lessons on male chauvinism, Favcett gives us a complex system of roles and social and psychological view of the role of ideology in orchestrating social practice and in shaping male identity which leads to obsessive, violent and defensive behaviour.

For Favcett the boundaries of this male world are seldom free from the larger economic and social realities which define this world in the first place. This is how we came to one of the most unsettling and unsettling elements in Favcett's collection: the deliberate friction between the worlds, the texts bring into play. This perhaps is illustrated most clearly in one of the final stories, 'The Life of Robert Colmer'. Here the world of Favcett's characters is an experience of his experience and the world of dreams and the unconscious collide and interact in a way which ultimately reinforces the role that is the ultimate source of the story. In the transition from history to fiction, from the worlds of literature and the imagination to that of daily survival, Favcett moves effortlessly, only foregrounding the tension between these different worlds (often with a wry authorial cheek) to raise us above the narrow for an observation of the act of reading itself. This reflectiveness reaches its height in A Personal Memoir of Thomas Carlyle' where the 'skipping' between worlds reveals not only the tensions in our expectations of literature, but wonderfully exposes the creativity and aesthetic freedom of Favcett's prose; the multiple voices, influences, and codes, an as the framework of a text is being reinterpreted by the reader, the author, and the reader becomes aware of the process of the construction of meaning.

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

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Though these are by no means new questions, Fawcett, in the collection of short stories (many of whose responses, Fawcett manages to do a number of things well. A process of sublimation where the relation between text and reader as it occurs, as we attempt to 'consume' literature and distance ourselves from the very real contradictions of the world around us. Fawcett, without the usual didacticism, examines the role of literature and of any fictive convention under capitalism, its assumptions about our lives and the expectations we ourselves bring to a fictional treatment of our world.

As the same time that our attention is slowly being drawn towards the process of interpretation we are involved in, Fawcett conveys concise, accurate portrayals of characters bound by class structures, structures whose hidden character only gains articulation in the seemingly unconnected actions, gestures and frustrations of those characters' lives. In these Fawcett manages to deal with work experience, a world defined by labour and social relations of production, without slipping into a naive 'socialist realism' which would ensure that all the ideological 'is's and 'is' are crossed and dotted (usually painfully so) for a supposedly hapless and unintelligent collective reader. Here Fawcett gives his readers the benefit of their, and his, experience as the basis for interpretation.

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

In this we come to one of the most unsettling and unified elements in Fawcett's collection: the deliberate friction between the worlds he casts into play. This perhaps is illustrated most clearly in one of the final stories, 'The Life of Robert Comer'. Here the world of Fawcett, a world of his experience and the world of dreams and the unconscious collide and intersect in a way which ultimately reinforces each as the legitimate source of the story. In the transition from history to fiction, from the worlds of literature and the imagination to that of daily survival, Fawcett moves effortlessly, only foregrounding the tension between these different worlds (often with wry authorial cheek) to raise above the narrative for an observation of the act of reading itself. This reflexivity reaches its height in 'A Personal Memoir of Thomas Carlyle' where the 'slippage' between worlds reveals not only the tensions in our expectations of literature, but wondrously exposes the creativity and aesthetic freedom of Fawcett's prose: the multi-valent, inflected, Fawcett, and coding, serving as the framework of a text by thus confronting itself as it is the collective for an interpretation, perhaps with no doubt suggest, to confound the one is always in fact to confront the other. For a critical analysis, condescending and absorbing read, Fawcett's collection of stories is a discovery work making.

STILL BARRED FROM PRISON:
Social Injustice in Canada

by Claire Culhane

(Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1985)

Claire Culhane is a social activist, a foe of social injustice who, since the mid-1970s, has focussed her attention and tenacious energies on our penitentiary system. This book is a broad culmination of her first work, Barred From Prison. A Personal Account (1979), which described the situation that led to a series of riots and hostage-taking at Black British Columbia Penitentiary in the late 1970s. Her new book, Barred From Prison, requires reading for every Canadian who demands longer prison sentences and a harsher, penitentiary regime. It is a study of the lawlessness of our prisons, of the constant brutalization of prisoners and their physical and psychological destruc-

tion. It is a record of prisoners’ despair and pain for our intervention, communi-
cation, and correction. This book is a study of the social, structural causes of the constant riots, suicide, hostage-taking and riots. It is also a testament to public misconceptions, indifference and refusal to intercede. Culhane states her position clearly.

It therefore becomes all the more im-
cumbent upon those of us in the outside world to insist that the rule of law is respected inside prisons—since the penal system is one of the last bastions of reward for those who fight against the glaring injustices of the Canadian prison system. In pursuit, by extension, against the injustices the world over.

Our first penitentiary, opened in King-
ston in 1835 (and still in use), was model-
lled after the American institutional system which had been created in New York State in the 1820s. The architect of that system was George Pownall who noted two years later the importance of a strict regimen and the need to instill a sense of loyalty among the convicts. American penologists, in their turn, were particularly interested in the role of the prison in the social order. The penitentiary is a society in miniature and a place of retribution, of hardship and correction. This is what Culhane meant when she said that in every penitentiary there is a microcosm of our society, a nucleus of modern society in the prison.

The second essential remains to create a prison system scrupulously accountable to the community. The strength of the book lies in the author’s tenacious grip on the reality of prison life, the product of her constant contact with prisoners and their allies. But the larger purpose—to locate prison structures within the context of the community—is not achieved, and that’s the weakness of this book.

Clare Culhane is a prison activist, a defender of the faith, not a sociologist analysing the larger questions which sur-
round the issue. Why have the guards and their union achieved such power, and how have they gained control of our penitentiaries? What is the current state ideology which justifies the curtailment of the few reclassification and reformative programs that exist in favour of a purely punitive regime? This level of analy-
sis is absent. Though there are indica-
tions of important connections to the political economic context in which prisons are embedded, these are never analysed. No, this is not a theoretically informed analysis which speci
cates the role of the penitentiary within the Canadian state and Canadian society. Instead, the author opts for broad, uncritical theoretical generalizations, arguing that the prison is a microcosm of our society; the ultimate repression in an oppressive capitalist society. This tells us little. Culhane argues:

inmates. There are no excuses, only the reality of the inmate’s situation. Better to be in prison than out, the inmate knows. And better still to be in a prison where one has the power to control the conditions of life behind bars.

The book ends with a powerful epilogue, a call to action, which is a welcome addition to the book. Culhane ends with a powerful epilogue, a call to action, which is a welcome addition to the book.

The book is a must-read for anyone interested in the issues of prison life and social justice. It is a call to action, a call to rethink our society, and to challenge the status quo. Culhane’s work is a testament to the power of the written word, and a call to action for all those who believe in justice, equality, and human rights.

The First Essential Remains to Create a Prison System Scrupulously Accountable to the Community

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

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

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

Letters

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

Brian Rustad
English Harbour, Newfoundland

Hello borderlines collective. Here's one west coast sense of what you need: (1) less intransigent commentary...is this because of intention or nervousness? (2) at least a Vancouver contributing editor if you're serious about the 'CULTURES, CONTEXTS, CANADAS' stuff...shall we explore the possibilities of mural exploration? (3) the praise that I first was going to offer for a first edition, but then withdrew because Blatny encourages decay but, now decide you decide it...why don’t I take the chance that you know what to do with compliments! Print the accompanying text if you wish as a kind of pseudo-meta-critique.

Five Hazards of Post-Semiotic Deconstruction

1. confusion → insanity
2. pompous jarron (what Anne Mandle-son calls "the labour value of surplus theory") which no one has the time to deconstruct
3. assuming you know something because you think everyone does but actually you have nothing which can be used for interpretation → formalism → theology
4. construction of your own arrogant position as critic (this is, of course, the point but nevertheless a hazard...see 1., above).

Chris Creggton-Kelly
Vancouver, BC