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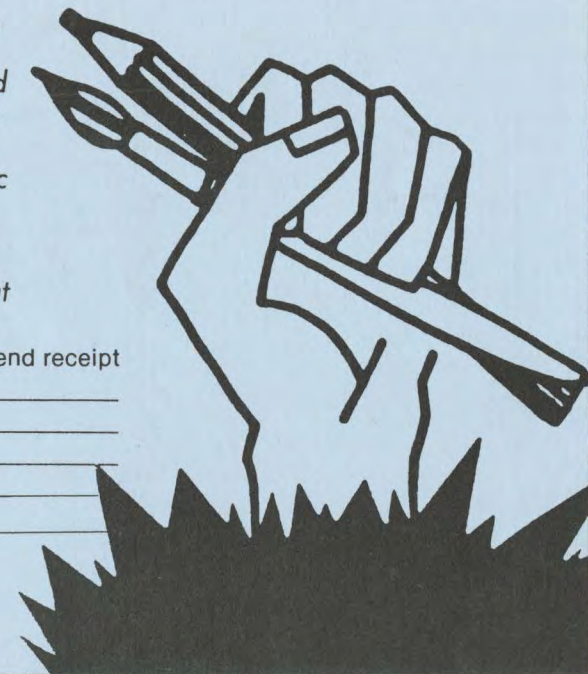
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s Against Reaction
Black and White

Joyce Nelson, Marlene Nourbese Philip,
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SARA DIAMOND

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Cover Design and Artwork: Mike Constable
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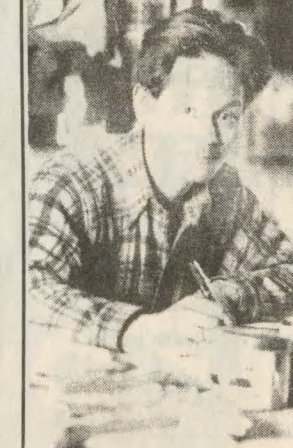
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Work Available

In this issue of FUSE, we are returning again to our mixed formula of cultural reportage and analysis. The loose supplement on Broadcasting covers the CRTC, a local international symposium on 'Artists and Television' and a report on the erosion of Black music programming in Toronto.

The other change which you may have noticed in the last few issues is our commitment to publish profiles on Canadian artists, who are making substantial contributions to our culture. We need assistance to do this outside of the Toronto region, particularly from Quebec, the Prairies and the East

Coast. We ask writers living in those regions to send us outlines for possible features.

We are also planning ongoing investigative articles under special funding which unfortunately is limited to writers from Ontario. We also encourage performance/video artists, musicians, playwrights and filmmakers to write critical reviews of their peers' work. (We continue to give high priority to features and reviews on the cultural work of women, gays and artists of colour.) And lastly, we would appreciate more feedback. What articles are of personal use? What would you like to see more or less of?

Wishing you an employed new year.

The staff and editors of FUSE

SUPPORT INDEPENDENT CANADIAN MUSIC

"Thanks to the Black artists on Eglinton at Robert's rehearsal place and Bobby's studio who play this music day in and day out for little or no money. I would like to thank Anta, my daughter, Billy Bryans, who produced the record, and all my friends and supporters in the Black, feminist and left communities."

—Lillian Allen,
Juno acceptance speech



Heather Graham

FUSE interviewed Lillian Allen in 1979 and 1983. FUSE's vinyl cousin, VOICESPONDENCE released the first *Dub Poets* disc. Both FUSE and VOICESPONDENCE would like to thank and congratulate Lillian for her achievements. Victories may be rare and brief, but they are nonetheless sweet!

To order Lillian's new record *Revolutionary Tea Party*, write and send cheques payable to: VERSE TO VINYL, P.O. Box 311, Stn. E, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6H 4E3. Albums or cassettes are \$11.50 (\$10 & shipping).

R. Gledhill

Tim Jocelyn 1952-86



Thanks Mr. Nice Guy for being totally hip and fun in the 80s.

Thanks for the love and the wit and the smarts.

Thanks for the Talent with a capital T, the fabulous art, a postive buzz.

Thanks for being so cool and dancing and laughing.

Thanks for putting on the Ritz and pulling all the seams together.

Thanks for the mega-spectacles only you could pull it off.

Thanks for giving yourself to total collaboration and letting us wear those incredible threads.

Thanks for the showcases you gave to your city.

Thanks for Dressing Up, Chroma Living and Ooga Booga.

Thanks for the hottest party in town when you were like totally wasted.

We don't understand why that damn plague came knocking like a thug in the night.

It just isn't fair, your ride wasn't over, fate fucked up.

LEFT CURVE No. 11

FILM, CULTURE, POLITICS: *A View from Hungary, Interview with Gyorgy Szomjas, Introduction by C. Polony. "Magic of Disorder" by Akos Szilágyi.* HAITI 1986: *DANCING ON A VOLCANO* (poetry & images from Haiti) by The Jacques Roumain Cultural Brigade. RECENT WRITING BY SARAH MENEFFEE. LIFE OF THE AUTOMOBILE, *An Imagistic Theatre Presentation*, Adaptors Notes by R. G. Davis with Maria Gilardin. ART & POLITICS OF ELIZAM ESCOBAR: *An Introductory Note* by C. Polony; "Notes on the Discourse of Art and its Politics" by Elizam Escobar; *Art as an Act of Liberation*; "The Case of Elizam Escobar, Prisoner of War, and the Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence;" THEATRE—MONTAGE by Bob Feldman; THE EYE GALLERY & PHOTOGRAPHY by Tom Ferenz; MISC. WORKS, NOTICES, ETC. (POETRY by Jack Hirschman, Mila D. Aguilar, P.J. Laska, Fritz Hamilton; ARTWORK by Susan Schwartz-enberg, Doug Minkler, Nancy Buchanan, Frank Garvey, *Xchange TV* by Martha Wallner, etc.).

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call for proposals

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Artists are asked to consider the specificity of both medium & site before they make submissions and are encouraged to contact Public Access for further information. All proposals should be post-dated by the 15th of March, 1987.

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MEDIA Telling: Like It Isn't

TORONTO — As part of its twentieth anniversary, *This Magazine* held a Toronto public forum, "The Mainstream & the Margins: Who's Telling the Truth?" The guest panel consisted of a moderator, Margaret Atwood, and panelists: Bill Cameron, *The Journal*, CBC; Ian Adams, *This Magazine*; Susan Cole, *NOW/Broadside*; Susan Riley, *Ottawa Citizen*; Rick Salutin, *This Magazine*; and Geoffrey Stevens, *Globe & Mail*. (The forum preceded an evening cabaret with guests Lillian Allen, Joe Hall, Erica Ritter, and others).

why does the liberal-dressed mainstream press carry so little socialist economic analysis? As if we didn't know.

To be fair, what *This Magazine* had in spirit organized was an anniversary afternoon of entertainment — perverse fun in public — symbolized by the extremely short microphone cord coming out from under the panelists' table, so that audience members who wanted to ask questions were physically forced to strike a pose familiar to any singer, shouting hurt/love songs with a face three feet above the stage floor.

things which do not happen to them." Cole pointed to the ability of papers like *Broadside* being in a position to break stories (as in the example of Nestles and its Third World campaign to encourage the switch from mother's milk to Nestles' products). Cole informally aired the forum's theme song: "I yearn for a mainstream voice."

Rick Salutin made the clearest index of the hidden assumptions behind mainstream media power:

- people are in positions of power because of merit;
- we live more or less in a basically democratic society;
- economic order exists more or less as a natural state;
- population of Canada consists of 85 people.

These assumptions, or lies, are some of the givens upon which the mainstream media is both constructed and arrogant-



L to R: Bill Cameron, the *Journal*; Rick Salutin, *This Magazine*; Margaret Atwood; Geoffrey Stevens, *The Globe & Mail*

The first thing to be said is that print journalists/critics don't appear in public forums often enough and that the marginal 'press corps' has less to lose by doing so. Hindsight observation also says that the topic for this particular panel was somewhat of a rhetorical dog.

Comparative "truth"? Forget the ethics, the audience of some two hundred were largely there to see and hear what, if any, intellectual concessions Cameron and Stevens were officially able to make. As the afternoon progressed and the warm and friendly discussion quickly began to percolate a stronger ideological flavour, we circuitously arrived at questions like,

Susan Riley was the least defensive and spoke mainly about the Ottawa Press Gallery and its 400 members, "33 of whom are women, no non-whites, no gays." Riley stated that the prime function of the Press Gallery was to validate the House of Commons, giving "massive coverage to non-events like Throne speeches."

Ian Adams, appropriately blunt, revealed stories from his recent cross-country research on Canadian poverty. "The corporate media is the mouthpiece for the corporate state and as such lies because they do not report what is really going on."

Susan Cole defined journalists' objectivity as the "luxury of writing about

ly self-satisfied. As Salutin said: "the voicelessness would be astounding if we could hear it."

So what did Cameron and Stevens say? Not a hell of a lot. They hid behind libel law, were unwilling to class Reagan as a war criminal, etc. Cameron is afflicted by the deadly CBC disease (see elsewhere in this issue), saying, in his own words: "the *Journal* is better than its audience." (More scientific Trudeauisms.) The best minds have studied the problems inside out, and we damn well know we're right, and too few people can agree that we're wrong, so c%\$@ you! Stevens, if he was saved, was only saved by the bell. The forum could've gone on for a month

and even then I doubt whether the audience would have run out of questions to ask of the *Globe & Mail*.

Question: "When are you going to get rid of your misogynous theatre critic?" Answer: "I can't comment on that."

And marginal truth? Audrey Rose, a local Black dancer, said she attended because she thought Lillian Allen was on the panel, only to find out that Allen

was performing at the cabaret. "If we're always good enough to provide the entertainment, how come we're not also represented on the panels?" Atwood and Salutin at first stumbled over the obvious response, before Salutin offered: "It was an oversight."

Clive Robertson

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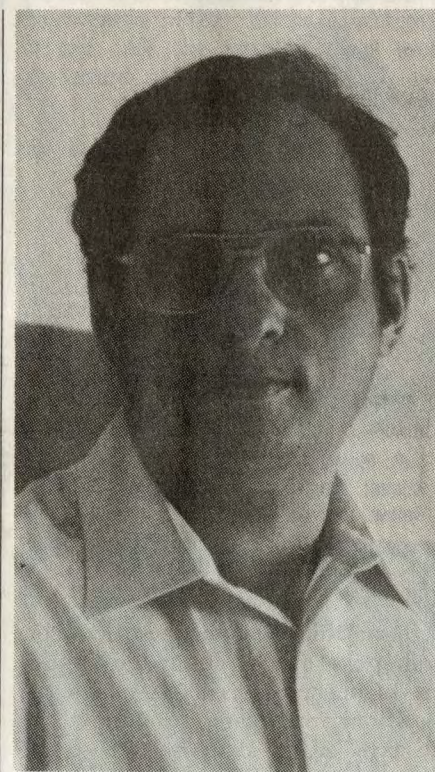
Glue Scandal

TORONTO — Canadian nationalists gather conviction from the numerous examples of the demonstrated superiority of this country's traditions to those of the Great Satan to the south. From our treatment of Negro slaves to our treatment of Salvadorean refugees, there is much to be proud of. Less remarked upon, however, are those instances when U.S. practices put ours to shame.

The most recent example of this latter reality is the way in which American courts handled cases arising out of the police disruption of political parties in the sixties and seventies. In the U.S., the F.B.I. ferociously worked to destroy the Black Panthers, the Socialist Workers' Party, and other groups. In Canada, the R.C.M.P. Security Service attacked the Parti Québécois, the Waffle, and local Trotskyites.

In the U.S., a court has recently awarded the Trotskyist group there the sum of \$300,000 Canadian for the damage it suffered for police crimes. To be sure, this is a fairly tepid response, one which fails, among other things, to repay the damage done to the public in general through this unilateral destruction of the democratic fabric. To my knowledge, for example, no U.S. secret policeman has been convicted of crimes committed.

In Canada, however, the police have fared far better, and democratic values far worse, in the long drawn out court battles. Of course, no Security Service



Harry Kopyto

personnel have criminal records, despite their crimes. Worse, the courts have refused to award damages at all, contrary to the U.S. practice.

One person does bear a criminal record as a result of police misbehaviour, to be sure. He is Harry Kopyto, the lawyer who tried to force the courts to make the police pay damages for their disruption and crimes. When an umpteenth court bent over back-

wards to maintain the secret police as a sacrosanct entity, lawyer Kopyto said as much, telling a reporter that the courts and the police "are stuck together with Krazy Glue." Compared to police break and entries, thefts, and the like, this was nothing. But these words brought down the wrath of the judiciary, which successfully pressured ex-civil libertarian Ian Scott to bring criminal charges of "scandalizing the court" against Kopyto.

The Supreme Court Judge, Montgomery, chosen (by whom?) to hear the case, had a well-established reputation as a Conservative prior to ascending the bench, and had excoriated those on the left who interfered with Commerce. This same judge had also made rulings which tended to protect the R.C.M.P. from legal attacks led by Kopyto.

To the inevitable motion that he disqualify himself for bias, Montgomery ruled that he was free of any hint of bias. When Kopyto then offered to prove, in court, that the courts in Canada do tend to protect the secret police, the judge ruled, amazingly, that the truth or falsity of what Kopyto said was irrelevant, since the courts were being "vilified." In short order, he found Kopyto very guilty.

Lawyer Kopyto read a prepared statement at his sentencing, making clear in somewhat grandiloquent terms that history would absolve him, and that he had nothing to apologize for, as he had only spoken the truth.

The judge then banished him from all courts in Ontario, until he apologized to all the judges in Ontario for his statements. Since Kopyto cannot do so sincerely, the sentence requires him to hypocritically mouth words which he does not believe, as if this were a condition of practicing law in Ontario. It is as if the judge, in unconscious communion with the feudal origins of the particular offense of "scandalizing the court," imposed penalty right out of the history of serfdom and the Inquisition, where recantation, and the symbolic bending of the neck to the yoke were the conditions required to work for His Lordship.

Jeff House

PERFORMANCE

"L'angle d'attaque est furtif" (LE LIEU)

QUEBEC CITY — Furtive or not, performance festivals are alive and well, particularly in Québec City. Le Lieu, an artists centre and publishing home of *Inter* magazine recently (21st-26th October) completed their *Third Festival d'In(ter)ventions*: "Espèces Nomades" with artists from Québec, Montréal, Toronto, Denmark, Germany, Italy, France and the U.S. The thirty works presented are being compiled into a 30 minute TV program to

rare screening of a German documentary of early (1960-62) Fluxus events and actions, and an American retrospective video concert of Fluxus work (1983).

"Espèces Nomades" brought together three generations of vastly different genres of live art, from the classic bean rituals of Alison Knowles and the language games of Dick Higgins, to the chemical transformation paintings of Alain-Martin Richard,

the workaday humour of Wolfgang Hainke and J.O. Olbrich, the choreographed songs of neoist Monty Cantsin, and the feminist-humanist walkabout of Diane-Jocelyne Côté. There was classically orchestrated feedback from Italian architect Giovanni Fontana, a brilliant tape loop manifesto from Pierre-André Arcand, body drumming from Philip Corner and soundslapstick from bp nicol and Steve MacCaffery.

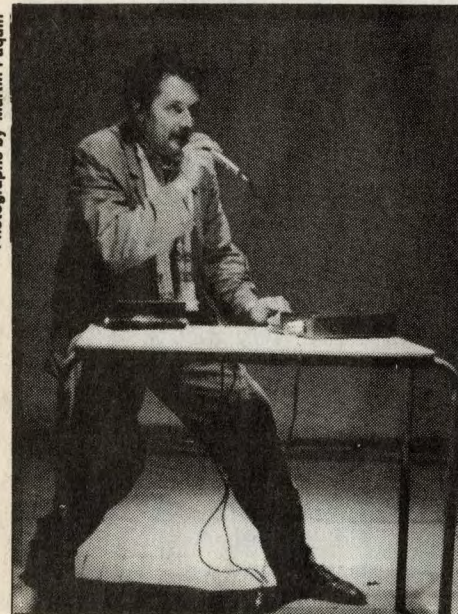
With one fleeting exception, all of the pieces worked according to their own systematic aesthetic. Without encouraging any cloying and uncritical international be-in, there was a remarkable temporary fraternity among the visiting performers and sound poets. Part of this *amour* is the ultra-marginalism of this varied form of almost contemporary folk art; part was due to the responsive attitude of the festival's audience and technicians, and the remaining credit goes to Le Lieu as seasoned organizers and catalysts for such nomadic gatherings. The Le Lieu artists are also not Québec stay-at-homes. The last six months have seen them presenting their work in Italy, Northern Europe, New York City and Mexico.

Participants in the *3rd Festival d'In(ter)ventions*:

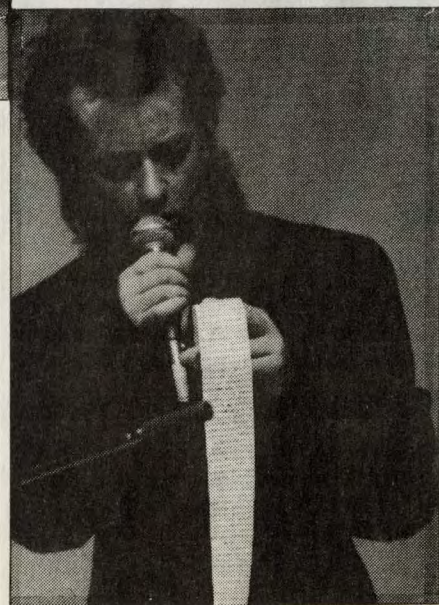
Gilles Arteau, Jean-Yves Fréchette, Alain-Martin Richard, Pierre Arcand, Richard Martel (Québec City); Genevieve Letarte, Sylvie Laliberté, Marie Chouinard, Diane-Jocelyne Côté, Atelier Insertion (Montréal); Eric Andersen (Denmark); Sarenco and Eugenio Miccini, Enzo Minarelli, Giovanni Fontana, (Italy); Wolfgang Hainke, J.O. Olbrich (W. Germany); Alain Gibertie (France); Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Philip Corner, Monty Cantsin (USA); and Frances Leeming, bp nicol, Steve MacCaffery, Karl Jirgens, Clive Robertson (Toronto).

Clive Robertson

"George Maciunas: In Memoriam" double album available from Le Lieu, Centre en art actuel, 629 rue St-Jean, Québec, Canada G1R 1P7.



Left: Pierre-André Arcand
Above: Sylvie Laliberté
Below: Richard Martel



be broadcast by Radio Canada. Last year saw the release of a double album documenting the *2nd Festival d'In(ter)ventions* (1984): "In Memoriam, George Maciunas."

Le Lieu is fuelled by the energies of a group of Québec artists including Richard Martel, Alain-Martin Richard, Sylvie Côté, Pierre-André Arcand, Marcel McNicoll and Mona Degagné.

The week of performance evenings which took place at Oeil de Poisson were supplemented by presentations of a performance film and video program at the artist-space, *Obscure*. This documentary series included a

PERFORMANCE

Winnipeg Performance Festival

WINNIPEG — The prairie cities are geographically distanced and thus isolated from the larger centres in Canada — Toronto, Montreal and, to some extent, Vancouver. The political histories, geography, economics, internal/external migration, and population, come into play when determining our differences, problems, and approach to almost everything, including cultural production and presentation. This is true of any region(s) and never more evident to me than recently, while critiquing a static visual art exhibition, *Points of View*, for the Yukon Arts Council in Whitehorse.

The question for me and other artists/cultural producers, curators and critics living and working on the prairies is, to what extent does our history, environment, governments and in particular geographic isolation, influence our work, attitudes and priorities? The discussion is current among prairie media artists and began more formally during the Plains Film and Video Conference, hosted by EM Media, a Calgary artist-run video/audio/performance space, in August 1985. Although these questions do not directly relate to the *International Intermedia Performance Festival* held this fall in Winnipeg, they do have some bearing on the orchestration of the Festival which had a "local" intent. While the relevance of performance by artists is being pondered by some critics/artists in the larger centres (partially because of "leaks" into the mass media) there is renewed interest in cities like Winnipeg. Performance is being used as a method of expression by more and more prairie artists and supported by a growing number of enthusiastic curators. The *International Intermedia Performance Festival* was indicative of a strong interest on the part of the curators and organizers to produce and showcase an event that would expose their community to the various "strains" of performance art by Canadian and international artists,

and to bring attention to local performance artists.

Under the executive directorship of inter-media artist/arts administrator, Grant Guy, the Festival presented performance work by Connie Beckley, New York (USA), David Brown and Betina, Minneapolis (USA), Elizabeth Chitty, Toronto (Canada), John Gurdebeke, Winnipeg (Canada), Tina Keane, London (England), Alethea Lahofer, Winnipeg (Canada), Doug Melnyk, Winnipeg (Canada), Carolee Schneeman, New York (USA) and myself. All the performances were presented at the MTC Warehouse



Carolee Schneeman performing *A Dream Morphology: First Blood*

Theatre, except for *Moral/Passion* (Elizabeth Chitty), which took place at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and *The Police Interrogate an Artist* by Winnipeg artist Alethea Lahofer which was performed at Plug-In. Workshops were given by six visiting artists under the co-ordination of Liz Jarvis. Although Grant Guy had an overall curatorial vision, the final selection of artists was decided upon by Winnipeg inter-media artist, Gilles Herbert who co-ordinated the festival, and Jon Tupper, the former director of Plug-In, and currently the exhibitions manager at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. The perfor-

mance work presented was diverse, one similarity being the use of copious amounts of technology — when New York artist Carolee Schneeman, an important figure historically in performance art, inquired about the availability of extra video monitors—I believe it was the production manager, Al Poruchnyk, who responded with something to the effect of, yes, how many? out here we're hunters and gatherers. Hunted and gathered they did — the energy that went into this part of the festival must be commended. That's not to say that the festival was without problems; the set-up and rehearsal time for the artists was tight due to budget restraints. Nevertheless, the organizers and other personnel worked to accommodate the artists. Acknowledgements are in order, particularly to co-ordinator Gilles Herbert; technical director, Calgary video artist, Vern Hume and Production Manager, Al Poruchnyk.*

Further complementary programming included a piece by Shared Stage members, Lloyd Brandson, Grant Guy and Al Poruchnyk entitled, *Soft Salade*; Winnipeg musician/audio artist, Jeff Gillman performed *Love Funk* with poetry written and read by Steve Toth; a selection of mid-west video art was presented by Video Pool, and a provocative interactive video installation — *Light Rail Surveillance Ar-*

*Other people, key to the organization and realization of the Festival were Roland Bouchard, the Assistant Co-ordinator, Liz Jarvis, Workshop Co-ordinator and Frank Reimer, Designer. Gerry Kasil, Andrea Phillips, Wayne Baerwaldt, Nancy McKinnon, Jeff Gillman and Julie Krause also donated their time and energy.

ART COUNCILS

Re-wiring Needed

maments by Calgary artist Grant Poirer was installed at Plug-In. The Winnipeg Art Gallery hosted a symposium featuring the work of sculptor Tony Brown, and a selection of films by Derek May was screened at the National Film Board.

I especially appreciated the implementation of the Internship Program, designed to allow local artists interested and involved in inter-media to work with a visiting artist. Plug-In, MAWA, Video Pool, Midcontinental, Ace Art, Shared Stage, and the Winnipeg Film Group nominated individual applications to an independent selection committee, who then chose local artists for the program. The interns acted as assistants/apprentices to the artists, carrying out a wide range of responsibilities from picking them up at the airport to seeing to some of the details of the performances, workshops and in some cases, providing technical assistance. About sixty volunteers were involved in various aspects of the festival — promotion, the securing of equipment, props, and like the Interns, supplying technical assistance. The Internship Program, the volunteer help, the workshops by the visiting artists and the co-operation of the Winnipeg artist-run centres and organizations, rendered the festival educational and participatory. Audiences for performance art are generally small in number by comparison to other mainstream performance events, but the attendance at this festival was remarkably high and consistent throughout the seven days. Also, the audiences were not made up exclusively of artists, but included a cross section of the community.

Large events/festivals of this kind bring with them an immediacy and vigour often lacking in solo presentations and/or continuous programming of artists' work. As an invited artist, the festival provided me with an opportunity not only to present my work, but to interact with the other invited artists as well as the artists working in the local community. Finally, the *International Intermedia Performance Festival* allowed me a shared sense of regional accomplishment, in that it took place out here, on the prairies.

Marcella Bienvenue

OTTAWA — The Media Arts Section of The Canada Council has formally announced that Tom Sherman, Integrated Media Officer, will be leaving the Council, after four years, to return to his work as an artist and video producer.

The job will be posted before December 20, 1986, at all artist-run centres across Canada. This is a politically sensitive position. Thus, it is important that all artist-run centres notify competent senior filmmakers and video artists regarding this job opening.

The revised Canada Council budget for 1986-1987 includes an extra \$10 million added into the base. After much debate at the Council, 80% of this money went into "bail-out" funds for the performing arts, and 20% went to all other sections of the Council. This decision was forced on Council by the Federal government; but the Council's will to struggle against this denial of the arms-length relationship has yet to manifest itself.

Even though Media Arts has received a 10% increase over the original projected 1986-1987 budget, for the first time this section has lost ground, and will be receiving 4.1% rather than 4.7% of the total Canada Council budget. The budget has gone up exponentially but Media Arts is shrinking. Media art forms are being jeopardized by the politics of a conservative and weak-willed Council.

Preferred treatment for the performing arts will continue to be an omnipresent political fact within the yearly struggle with Council for fair allocations to the Media Arts section.

Are Council's motives concerning policies and allocations to Media Arts shaped by self-interests on the Council? Does the Council see less reason for expanding their support to Media Arts because of Telefilm's mandate?

Can the Council's motives be ferreted out? Can we then, as a very large community of independent filmmakers

and video artists, reshape the motives of this Council?

The Media Arts Advisory Panel, a group of independent filmmakers and video artists who sit four to five times a year, and who are selected by staff in Media Arts, is presently one of the structures whereby the producing community can theoretically bring policy and funding problems to the staff for discussion. In my experience, the panel spends too much time discussing policies and decisions already made and not enough time formulating policy directions concerning real community needs and ideas for survival within the funding struggles at Council. The panel deals with the general rather than the specific. There is much time wasted sorting out "confidential" matters; too much time spend 'rubber-stamping.'

The Media Arts Advisory Panel should be elected by the artists in the areas or regions of representation rather than being selected by staff. The mechanical structure of this could be worked out through various artist representative associations/unions across the country. Panel representatives elected by the constituency will bring a clearer understanding of what the producing communities needs are. There is political sense in proper representation that would strengthen the Canada Council negotiations with the federal government.

Staff at The Canada Council has limited power. Knowledge of needs and expertise in survival actually lies within the producers' community. The community must take its grievances with policy and funding allocations to a properly elected Media Arts Panel and simultaneously, through briefs and presentations, directly to members of Council or all previous gains will be eroded.

Pat Wilson

EXTREMITIES opened on Broadway in 1982, shocking audiences with its hard-hitting message. William Mastrosimone's **EXTREMITIES** lets loose a relentless emotional barrage forcing the audience to become a participant in the conscience of our society. Many women are justifiably terrified of a sexual attack and often their fears make them even more passive therefore more vulnerable. Mastrosimone focuses on a woman who's outrage is the weapon she needs to overcome her fear and her attacker. The root of the story is not the attack but the question of justice.

EXTREMITIES

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VIDEO ART PRIZE!

Congratulations to Popular Projects of Nova Scotia, producers of the videotape *Commercial Culture* for winning 1,000,000 Lira (approx. \$1,000) in this year's Festival International Cinema Giovani. The most pleasing aspect of this prize is the fact that the tape breaks all the rules when it comes to the "International Video Art Look" — special effects for no good reason — in fact, the tape deals directly with specific concerns of Canadian artists such as centralization and cutbacks to the arts councils. Applause to both the producers and the festival.

NATIONAL GALLERY UPDATE

More good news! The National Gallery of Canada has changed its considerable mind on the issue of video art and its place within one of Canada's important showcases. As a result of the formidable pressure exerted by the video art community with help from independent filmmakers and other ar-

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VIDEO NEWS

tists, the National Gallery has decided to hire a temporary curatorial assistant in charge of both film and video art. While we welcome this news, we are left to speculate and wonder what took them so long?

BAD NEWS FROM A VIDEO JURY

Money is tight but we're UPTIGHT. At the most recent Canada Council 'A' level jury for senior video artists no grants were awarded. The mandate of The Canada Council is to award grants to artists based on an assessment process by a jury of the artists' peers. What then are we to interpret from this no grant stance? That there are no 'A' level video artists in Canada? Thank you very much!! While the arts community is often quick to criticize The Canada Council for many of its policies, it is clear that the jury members decided to take this initiative on their own. The Canada Council's officers tend to like to give away money to artists, so we can rule out interference on their part.

In order to understand this fuck-up we have to look a little deeper into the structure by which grants are administered. While there is a peer jury process, these juries are selected subjectively by the officers of the C.C. (surely it would be better if artists were involved with the selection of jurors, but that's another issue). Furthermore, artists who have not been awarded grants have no appeal process. You can see the frustration and anger this kind of news creates within the arts community.

The decision not to award any 'A' grants needs to be questioned at all levels. There is very little money reaching the video arts community. Not awarding this money is false economy. This money will not be somehow 'recycled' into video artists' hands. The most disappointing aspect

of this debacle is who caused it. Not the Conservatives in Ottawa, not the bureaucrats that run the Council, but the artists on that jury. None of the video artists that applied for 'A' level grants have any recourse. This extreme situation makes it clear that an appeal process is long overdue.

MONTREAL/TORONTO VIDEO EXCHANGE

Finally. After two years of planning, the Montréal / Toronto video exchange took place. It's impossible to think that this isn't a regular occurrence but it isn't. Thanks to the diligence of Jean Gagnon and Claude Marchand of Vidéographe and Nancy Patterson and Mary Raudsuss of A Space the exchange helped to break down the cultural barrier that unfortunately exists between Quebec and Ontario.

Tapes from Montréal were: *Madame Salome* by Ewa Turksa, *Lee a Two Rivers* by Nicole Benoit, *Comptimes* by Diane Poitras, *Tony de Peltrie* by Pierre Lachapelle and Phillipe Bergeron, *A Propos Peinture* by Su Schnee and Daniel Dion, *Fiction* by Bernard Hébert, *Touei* by Luc Bourdon, *Distance* by Luc Bourdon and François Girard, *Pas Obligé d'être en Amour* by Louise Gendron, *Puzzle* by Jean Gagnon and Paul Gauvin, *Fog Area* and *Monsieur Léon* by François Girard, *Rock and Roll Romance* by Marie-Carole de Beaumont and Johane Frechette, *Scheme Video* by Luc Bourdon and Marc Paradis, *Machine/Machines* by Pierre Zoville.

Tapes from Toronto were: *Janus* and *No Voice Over* by Colin Campbell, *Birthday Suit* by Lisa Steele, *Censored: the Making of a Pornographer* by Vera Frenkel, *See Evil* by Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak, *Money Talks*, *Bullshit Walks* by Rodney Werden, *You Taste American* by John Greyson, *Hygiene* by Andrew Paterson and Jorge Lozano, *A Place to Call My Own* by Dennis Day, *Absence* by Susan Rynard.

Let's hope video exchanges between Quebec and Ontario become a regular event.

Kim Tomczak

B-R-R-R-O-A-D-C-A-S-T-I-N-G

THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

To be well-read on the current analysis of Canadian TV broadcasting requires some magazine-hopping. We highly recommend that you also read another Joyce Nelson article: "Losing It In The Lobby — Entertainment and Free Trade" (*This Magazine*, October/November 1986) — a story that reveals how the Motion Picture Export Association of America employed Canadian "contras" to do their dirty political work for them. Also of note is Ian Taylor's analysis of the CBC's *Journal* (*Borderlines*, Summer 1986) which suggests how the *Journal* shapes conflicts to give both pleasure and re-assurance to its viewers. Sandra Gathercole (*Cinema Canada*, November, 1986) provides a useful commentary on the recent Federal Report of the Task Force on Broadcasting Policy and Herschel Hardin's book: *Closed Circuits: The Sellout of Canadian TV* (Douglas and MacIntyre, 1985) includes a wealth of detail on the idea-less bagmen that own and regulate Canadian broadcasting. Profits and private broadcasting may make your blood simmer, but it is the failure of public broadcasting access that freezes us out.

CTV Asleep at the Wheel

Canadian Broadcasting in the Age of Television Sprawl

THE figures are actually astounding. Pre-tax profits of private Canadian television broadcasters rose from \$98.5 million in 1980 to \$163.3 million in 1984. In that year, English-language private TV broadcasters had revenues of \$748 million, compared to the \$430 million operating budget allocated to the English-language CBC-TV. Yet, during the peak viewing hours of 7 to 11 p.m., CBC managed to achieve a level of 80 per cent Canadian programming on its TV schedule, while private broadcasters turned in an overall average of 37.5 per cent Canadian content during those viewing hours. "In the year ended August 31, 1985," states the Task Force, "only 3.4 per cent of revenues of CTV and its affiliated stations went into investments and licence fees for Canadian feature-length films and television series." Obviously, with almost twice the money to work with by comparison to CBC, the private broadcasting sector achieves less than half the level of Canadian programming achieved by the CBC.



Illustrations by Mike Constable

by Joyce Nelson

WHAT, then, does the private broadcasting sector do with all its revenues? — you might well ask. Well, for one thing, it ploughs much of it into financially supporting the American independent television production sector, while Canadian independent production companies go begging: shut out from their own airwaves.

That needs some explaining, since many readers will not be aware of the strange business structure that determines why television is the way it is throughout much of the world. So, we have to take a momentary detour into the sleaze of broadcasting history — the first of several, you are forewarned.

A Blast From The Past

IN THE FIRST DECADE OF COMMERCIAL television in the United States, from 1946 to around 1955, most broadcasting was done live. Though some of the shows were stored (for archival purposes) on kinescopes — made by pointing a movie-camera at a television screen during the live broadcast — the bulk of TV programming simply disappeared into the ether, so to speak. We might say that a given show, broadcast live, had a half-hour or hour-long existence, and then it was gone: unrepeatable, beyond playback. This fact coincided with another one. In those early days of live broadcast, the U.S. networks produced most of the shows themselves, in-house (as they say), and sold sponsorship of an entire show to a single advertiser. It was a kind of enclosed, self-contained system: the networks produced their own shows with their own paid staff, financed production by selling ads, the shows were broadcast and disappeared, then the networks produced another batch of shows the next day. Simple.

But then the U.S. movie industry — which at first had been very threatened by television because it was keeping people at home instead of going out to cinemas — began to realize that they just might be able to get a nice piece of the action. If, they reasoned, instead of being produced live, TV programs could be produced on film and then broadcast, all those shows wouldn't just disappear into the ether; they could be re-run and resold and syndicated, and Hollywood could get a chance at the new brass ring, too!

The big American corporate sponsors and advertisers really liked the idea of eliminating live broadcasting and doing programs on film — especially because the programs could be made more glamorous, mistakes could be eliminated by re-takes, and there would be greater control over what was going

out over the airwaves, especially in terms of controversy, which they wanted to avoid having associated with their products. The big sponsors could see the immediate success of filmed, formula series like *I Love Lucy* and *Dragnet* — which had been made on film precisely for the purpose of syndicated reruns. As backers of a medium meant for selling products, advertisers and sponsors quickly recognized that filmed, formula series were exactly what they wanted American television to consist of. Hollywood was quite willing to oblige.

By the mid-1950s, the U.S. television networks (bowing to the wishes of their sponsors) had largely phased themselves out of in-house production of programming (aside from their news shows) and were instead filling their broadcast schedules with filmed programs made by the big Hollywood studios, as well as by independent production companies which sprang up to take advantage of this significant shift in broadcasting practice: from live production to filmed production, and from in-house network programming to reliance on formula series made by production companies independent of the networks.

At the same time, the networks turned away from the practice of selling single sponsorship of a show, and began the now-standard practice of selling small spots of time on a program to lots of advertisers. With the increasing desirability of TV as an advertising medium, the networks have escalated their rates until now one 30-second prime-time spot sells for about \$150,000.00 on the average.

This increased ad-revenue for the U.S. commercial networks is accompanied by a brilliant financing system which the networks arranged in the mid-1950s with the TV studios and production companies. A programmer like MTM, Disney, Lorimar or MCA-Universal does not literally sell a

show to a U.S. network. Instead, the show or series is rented by the network for a 'licence fee' that covers (usually) two showings of the series by the network, first in prime-time, then as a rerun. Typically this fee amounts to between 50 and 70 per cent of the total costs of making the program. This arrangement between a network and a program-producing company is called "deficit financing." It is the structural key to the American television industry, and it is also the key to television practice world-wide, as we shall see. The shift to deficit financing in the mid-1950s completely altered the economic structure of television and accounts for virtually all programming and business practices that have continued since that time.

Let's say it costs a producing company \$1 million to make each episode of an hour-long action-adventure series like *Miami Vice* — a production cost figure that is now typical for American shows. If the series is intended to run for 22 episodes in a season, this would mean a cost of \$22 million to the producing company. The network, however, would license the series for, at most, 75 per cent of the costs, or about \$16.5 million — meanwhile selling ad-time on each episode at a rate which could easily bring in double the amount paid out for series in licensing fees.

If a show becomes a hit according to the ratings, it is the network which profits from the success, at least immediately, because it can then increase its ad-rates for each episode throughout the season, without having to pay out any more money to the company that produced the series. In fact, that company would seem to be losing several million dollars on the deal because of the deficit financing arrangement. The idea, however, is that the producing company will keep churning out episodes until it has, say, five seasons' worth of product in-the-can. The company is playing a waiting-game until its hit series (which has been making big bucks for the network in ad revenues) has had its two licensed network plays (a first run and a rerun). Then the series can become a syndicated re-rerun outside prime-time: bought up by hundreds of local U.S. stations and "stripped in" to their daily time schedules. For the producing com-

pany, the syndication of a 100-episode package to local broadcasters across the U.S. can easily bring in cumulative profits of \$20 million at a crack: the prize for hanging-in through the period of deficit financing in the first years.

But sales outside the domestic U.S. market do not have to wait until the series has finished its two network runs. Such foreign sales can be made immediately and are pure profit — profits which literally support that American producing company as it is going through the period of apparent "loss" according to its arrangement with the U.S. network. Foreign sales thus actually carry the U.S. company financially until it can begin to reap the extraordinary bonanza of domestic syndication, and the profits from such sales to foreign networks and stations continue to pour in long afterwards.

We can see that the deficit financing structure of American television accounts for virtually every aspect of broadcasting in that country: certainly for the assembly-line approach to series production. But most important for broadcasters outside the United States is the fact that the foreign sale of American TV shows is a necessity built into the economic structure of U.S. commercial TV. Had the U.S. networks simply continued to produce their own shows themselves, financing in-house production through ads and paying their production staffs a fair salary to work, things might have turned out differently. But as soon as production of programming was no longer in-house, and was financed through this deficit arrangement, the production companies independent of the networks were then forced to cover their costs and make a profit through foreign sales, as well as by domestic



syndication. For that reason, the American television industry aggressively peddles its programs throughout the world (with the help of its lobby, the Motion Picture Export Association of America): vastly undercutting the price of comparable indigenous production. In other industries, this tactic is called "dumping," and on the world-wide television scene, the term is no less applicable.

In retrospect, we can thus see another reason why the Hollywood film

industry wanted television production to switch from live broadcasting to filmed formulas. A tangible product in-the-can was fully exportable. Just as with the feature-film industry, all you'd have to do is get other countries to set up broadcasting systems that depend not on in-house production, but on product from outside. Once the world-wide TV scene is organized along those lines, then buying "dumped" U.S. product is the only economically feasible way to go.

AS WE RECOGNIZE how the economic structure of domestic American television works, we begin to perceive that private Canadian television broadcasters are fully plugged into the American broadcasting system, rather than being a part of the Canadian one. The \$100 million-or-so they spend annually to pack their schedules with American shows quite literally goes directly to (1) financially support the private American production companies which make TV programs, and (2) maintain and fully uphold the deficit financing structure of the U.S. TV industry.

B - R - R - R O A D C A S T I N G

Tears Are Not Enough

AS WE RECOGNIZE HOW THE economic structure of domestic American television works, we begin to perceive that private Canadian television broadcasters are fully plugged into the American broadcasting system, rather than being a part of the Canadian one. The \$100 million-or-so they spend annually to pack their schedules with American shows quite literally goes directly to (1) financially support the private American production companies which make TV programs, and (2) maintain and fully uphold the deficit financing structure of the U.S. TV industry. For example, according to its current licence renewal application, the CTV network paid out \$30.4 million for "popular foreign programming" (mainly American shows) aired during the 1985-86 season. (Its private affiliated stations are also able to buy their own American shows, but the figure for that expenditure is not available.) This network expenditure of \$30.4 million for primarily American shows generated, according to a *Variety* reporter, "better than \$85 million" in ad-revenues — money that, as we know all too well, is not then ploughed into supporting Canadian production efforts but is instead essentially re-invested in the American production sector through the purchase of more (and increasingly more expensive) American shows. At the same time, as the Task Force figures reveal, CTV (and its affiliates) spends only 3.4 per cent of its revenues on buying programs and series made by Canadian independent production

companies. This same behaviour applies throughout the Canadian private broadcasting sector.

With most of that sector's energies and program-spending directed south of the border, it is no wonder that virtually every aspect of independent Canadian film and television production has long lurched from one crisis to the next. But we must face the situation clearly: one segment of the Canadian private sector (the private broadcasters) refuses to support another segment of the private sector (private Canadian independent producing companies). The irony in this has long escaped many minds attempting to grapple with the broadcasting situation in Canada. Indeed, it is usually the CBC that is blamed for not doing more for the independent Canadian production companies. But the CBC, **organized around in-house production**, can finance and show only a limited amount of independent Canadian programming (at least with its present budget). Even so, CBC manages to purchase close to 35 per cent of its overall entertainment schedule from Canadian production companies independent of the network. Thus, the high amount of Canadian TV programming on the CBC schedule is achieved by a combination of (1) its own in-house production, and (2) purchase of programming from private Canadian independent production companies.

However, Canadian private television networks and stations are not organized around in-house production. They are like the U.S. networks and stations in that they produce very

few shows themselves, but instead 'licence' TV programs made by others. This situation should have meant that Canadian makers of TV programs would have many windows of opportunity for selling their shows to private Canadian networks and stations. After all, these private broadcasters were not set up like the CBC — filling their schedules with programs made in-house by a paid staff — but were set up precisely for the purpose of buying TV shows made outside their own walls. And here, one would have thought that one segment of the private sector (the private broadcasters) would support another segment of the private sector (the private production companies). And, no doubt, that was originally the rationale behind licensing private networks and stations in the first place. But, as is obvious, things didn't work out quite that way. When the profit-motive is operating, solidarity even among private businessmen goes right down the tubes.

Let's take a hypothetical example. Let's say Primedea Productions, or Atlantis, or Insight Productions, or M+M Films, or Playing With Time Productions, or any other Canadian independent film/TV production company gets a fine idea for a Canadian television series. They figure out that it would cost, say, \$300,000 to make each episode (1/3 of the cost in the U.S.) of a 13-week series, or \$3.9 million overall. They go to a private Canadian network with the idea, hoping that the network will (according to the "promises of performance" by which it got its broadcasting licence) back the idea by providing money up

front to get the production rolling. In exchange for the deficit financing, the network will be guaranteed two runs of the series, on which it can earn money by marketing it well and selling commercial spots on each episode. The private Canadian independent production company is excited about its series idea, has a credible track record of some excellent productions in the past, and it hopes that the private network will commit to, say 50 per cent of production costs: \$1.9 million for the 13-week series.

Financially, the decision-making executives of this private Canadian network or station are no dummies. They know that they can go down to Hollywood and, with a bit of strategy and some crafty bidding, they can get an already popular, proven success of a series (with guaranteed American production values and big American stars) for far less money than these Canadian private producers are asking. And besides that, the American series will run for 22 weeks, will bring in some big advertising bucks, and will be a great scheduling coup because this private network or station will have snapped it away from all of the other Canadian program-buyers bidding for it. The executive for the private Canadian network eyes the proposal handed him by the private Canadian independent production company. "Sorry," he says, "it's just not sexy enough, y'know what I mean?" (But, he suddenly thinks, we've got those damned Canadian Content regulations to meet. He looks up.) "Have you got something one-hour long that we can run on Dominion Day of 1988 at 7 p.m. That would

interest us."

So, one segment of the Canadian private sector just keeps shafting the other — as a result of the way the American private broadcasting industry is structured.

The profit motive fully fuels the American broadcasting structure: there is much to be gained all around for advertisers, networks, the independent production studios and companies, multinational corporations. But for countries outside the United States, the adoption of the profit-motive for broadcasting simply feeds their broadcasting systems into the belly of the U.S. As we have seen, if what you're into is simply the making of big bucks through broadcasting, then there is every financial reason in the world to just buy the much less expensive, "dumped" American series — thereby plugging directly into the deficit financial structure imperatives of the American TV industry. Accordingly, American programs will always be less expensive than indigenous ones, and that fact inevitably marginalizes the indigenous production sector of any other nation.

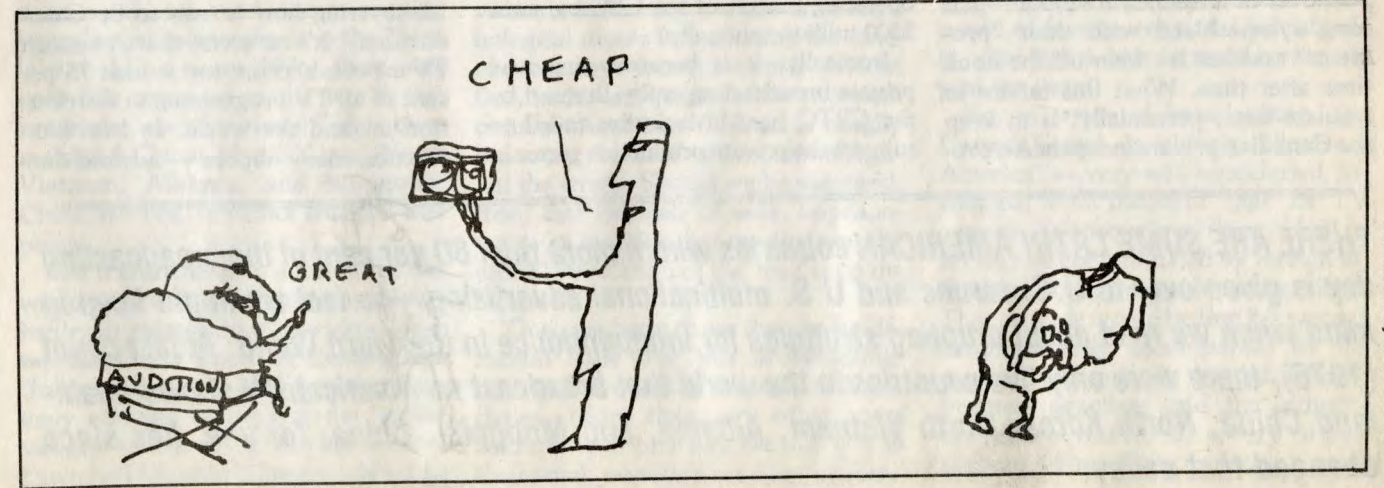
Historically, it is not apparent that Canadian decision-makers fully perceived the realities of the broadcasting situation when they made the decision, in 1960, to license the private network CTV. They might have, however, looked at the feature-filmmaking scene and recognized that U.S. domination over Canada in that field (through ownership of theatre chains here and through distribution practices) could very well have an effect on the course taken by a private Canadian network,

especially one dependent on product bought from outside sources.

By 1968, however, it was already apparent that if there was going to be anything Canadian on Canadian private TV stations, then that would have to be legislated by setting up Canadian content quotas. The CRTC (Canadian Radio and Television Telecommunications Commission), regulatory agency for the system, was set up to enforce the quotas: which were themselves a sign that the Canadian broadcasting structure simply tied right in to the American one, and so, to counteract that, there would have to be regulations which go against the current of the financial incentives.

But, as Herschel Hardin ably demonstrates in his book *Closed Circuits: The Sellout Of Canadian Television*, the CRTC has itself all along seemingly been captive to the private sector. It has never revoked the license of any broadcaster for failing to live up to the "promises of performance" that got it a license in the first place — promises which inevitably have had to do with supporting the efforts of independent Canadian film/TV production companies. Nor has the CRTC enforced its own Canadian content requirements in terms of the private sector broadcasters — unless you call "moral suasion" and rhetorical slaps on the wrist enforcement.

According to those "requirements," the broadcast day of any Canadian station is supposed to have at the very least 60 per cent Canadian content throughout the daytime hours, and 50 per cent Canadian programming in prime-time — which is very liberally



defined as being between the hours of 6 p.m. and midnight. Obviously, private broadcasters look for loopholes in these content regulations, and the CRTC nicely obliges them.

It does this first by allowing TV broadcasters to report their CanCon scheduling over a twelve-month period: a practice by which private broadcasters simply pack most of their (few) Canadian programs into the summer months when viewership is down, ad revenues are down, and the American TV season is in temporary hiatus. If the reporting period were quarterly, or even more frequently, broadcasters would (at least in principle) have to meet their Canadian programming requirements throughout the year.

The second fat loophole is the very flabby definition for prime-time. By making it a six-hour long period (6 p.m. to midnight), the CRTC allows private broadcasters to meet their Canadian programming requirements of 50 per cent by slotting in news shows at supertime and after 11:00 p.m. Thus, the peak viewing hours — 8:00 to 11:00 — can simply be given over (especially throughout the winter months) to American imports.

What's obvious in all this is the sense that Canadian programming is a duty, a forced responsibility, a loathsome requirement that private broadcasters — like naughty schoolboys facing homework assignments — do everything they can to get out of fulfilling. Their standard reason for not living up to the regulations is that it's too costly to do so and they lose money at it. The CRTC — like everybody's memorable pushover of a teacher in school — has long sympathized with their "problems" and has let them off the hook time after time. What this failure to regulate does, perennially, is to keep the Canadian private independent pro-

duction sector impoverished and struggling, while American producers grow rich on CRTC lassitude and Canadian private broadcasters' irresponsibility.

Most recently, the CRTC has proposed to cut the daytime requirement for private broadcasters to 50 per cent — explaining that if the same amount of money were devoted to fewer Canadian shows, then the quality of them would increase. Of course, one could also argue that if more money were devoted to more Canadian shows, both quality and quantity could be increased — but that appears to be asking too much of the private broadcasters. Behind this, though, is the unmistakable sense that the CRTC regards private Canadian broadcasters as "impoverished." The trick here, as Hardin has reminded us in his book, is that the financial returns of private broadcast licensees are kept confidential — only the CRTC and the broadcasters themselves really know how rich they are.

Nevertheless, Hardin estimates that by the end of the 1970s, the rate of return on net assets of all private television was in the range of 55 per cent before tax — an incredible level of profit "for a regulated, licensed activity under public protection and, at least theoretically, under licence not to produce profits but to provide a public service." (By contrast, Bell Canada's rate of return in the mid-1970s was about 14 per cent.) And as figures given in the Caplan-Savageau Task Force Report reveal, the profits accruing to private broadcasters as of 1984 had doubled in four years and far outstripped the operating budget of the CBC by some \$300 millions annually.

Ironically, it is because each new private broadcasting entity licensed by the CRTC has, historically, failed to support the private production sector in

Canada, that the CRTC has tried to create subsequent niches, other windows of opportunity, for Canadian programming. Rather than simply insist — through the revoking of licenses — that private networks and stations fulfill their national role as broadcasters, the country has kept on adding more private stations, and then tiers of new hardware — stacked cable, satellite transmission, pay-TV, "super-stations" — all in the belief that maybe one of these decisions would provide the niche for what was intended in the first place: a Canadian broadcasting system that actually supports the production efforts of the Canadian independent film/TV industry.

But again ironically, each of these CRTC decisions has only served to further Americanize broadcasting in this country: because each "sophisticated" hardware decision was, at bottom, based on the same old primitive notion: making the biggest bucks possible. As always in this industry, when that's your bottom-line — lo and behold! — you're right back where you started: plugged into the American deficit financing structure with its glut of programming product going cheap to all takers world-wide.

We Are The World

OBVIOUSLY, THERE ARE MANY other countries which are now facing a somewhat similar situation to the one which has prevailed in Canada. As Michael Dorland recently wrote in *Cinema Canada*, the rest of the world is "discovering how it feels to be Canadianized." It's no secret that American TV exports account for at least 75 per cent of all TV programming in distribution around the world. In television practice, many nations — advised dur-

THERE ARE SOME LATIN AMERICAN countries where more than 80 per cent of the broadcasting day is given over to U.S. reruns and U.S. multinational advertising — a fact we might keep in mind when we read about erupting struggles for independence in the Third World. At last count (1976), there were only five countries in the world that broadcast no American TV shows: mainland China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Albania, and Mongolia. China, for one, has since changed that policy.



ing the 1950s and early 1960s by American television experts who recommend they adopt the U.S. model of advertising-based broadcasting — remain program-importing countries rather than program-producing countries: dependent on "dumped" American product as the least expensive way to fill a broadcasting schedule.

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The rhetoric used to account for this world-wide state of affairs is mystifying bafflegab ranging from the view (once expressed by a writer for *Esquire*) that "folks just love our junk," to the seemingly edifying concept of the "global village," to that favourite phrase of the powerful U.S. entertainment lobby (the

MPAA) and the U.S. State Department: "the free flow of information." What this bafflegab hides are the particular historical strategies, business practices, lobby efforts, and the industry structure of deficit financing that ensure American domination over the world's airwaves.

In her book *Survival*, Margaret Atwood writes: "A person who is 'here' but would rather by somewhere else is an exile or a prisoner; a person who is 'here' but thinks he is somewhere else is insane." If we take the view that television broadcasting is a powerful technological means for reflecting the 'here' of a country, then it becomes obvious that, in this last quarter of the twentieth century, American TV-land is rapidly becoming the 'here' of peoples throughout the world. Should we be surprised, then, that the state of exile, imprisonment, or insanity that results from the radical dislocation of the 'here' is on the increase?

Thus, we begin to see that the fundamental issue that this broadcasting-century has raised is the issue of boundaries. More than any other mass medium (and precisely because it is in the home), television confuses or elimi-

nates boundaries: conscious/unconscious, reality/representation, self/screen, past/present. As a mode of selling it is therefore extraordinarily powerful. But it also eliminates or confuses the boundaries between nation-states. To be more precise, television eliminates the boundaries between any given country and the overwhelming American Other.

To see the truth of this, we need only look at the state of television broadcasting in the United States itself. What we find there is a country so insulated from foreign influence, certainly in terms of its TV screens, that there is virtually nothing to suggest that other countries have any sort of program-producing industry whatsoever. PBS (itself in jeopardy under Reagan) runs some British series, a few foreign documentaries, and there's Jacques Cousteau, and on the commercial networks there might very rarely be (outside of prime-time, of course) a foreign-made program acceptable because it looks American. But, by and large, American television screens are fully steeped in an American 'here.' Regardless of whether or not that TV 'here' in any way coincides with a real American 'here,' it is nevertheless that country's own spectacle about itself; or, if you prefer, a handful of powerful U.S. entertainment/advertising conglomerates' spectacle designed to suit their own interests. The point, though, is that while the United States inundates the rest of the world with its own "dumped" TV exports, it imports virtually nothing. In the mid-1970s, less than 2 per cent of the overall American TV broadcasting schedule was comprised of foreign content. Undoubtedly, that figure has decreased over the past ten years.

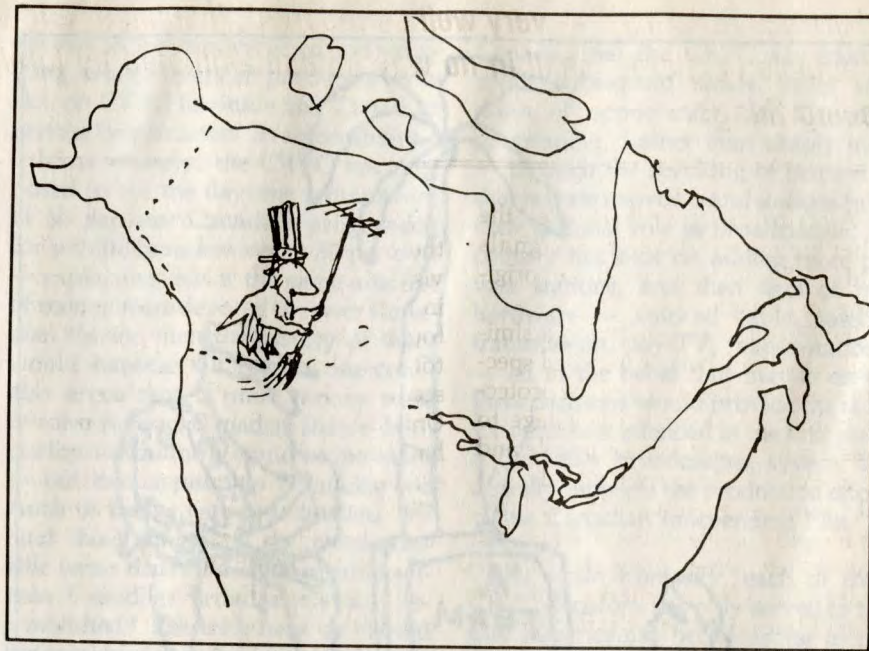
So, in terms of broadcasting, the United States is clearly "Fortress America" — very well bounded, insulated, and insistent that its TV screens, its spectacle of 'here,' shall in no way be contaminated by foreign influences, foreign ways of seeing things. That attitude would be fine if it weren't simultaneously accompanied by the aggressive dismissal, through specific business practices and the industry structure itself, of every other country's boundaries.

B-R-R-ROADCAS TING

Where Is Here?

UNDER THE ONSLAUGHT OF "dumped" American TV export, certain program-producing countries (Britain, France, Italy, Australia, Germany, Sweden, etc.) set quotas on the amount of foreign programming their TV stations will broadcast. Canada, however, sets a quota for the amount of domestic programming to be aired. The distinction seems more than a mere semantic nuance. As we have seen, it obviously indicates the extent to which the Canadian broadcasting structure is tied to the American one. But the distinction also suggests two strikingly different positions with regard to the Imaginary space, the 'here,' a country inhabits. The first position — setting quotas on the amount of foreign shows — implies that a given country has a clear sense of its own cultural-political space and can therefore set the boundaries on the amount of foreign material that will be allowed into its borders. The second position — setting quotas for indigenous programming — suggests a country whose cultural-political space is so overwhelmed from outside that it must try to create a little island for itself within the deluge.

In Canada, that deluge is extremely obvious on our television screens, as 1984 statistics reveal. Of 5,500 hours of news specials broadcast on English-Canadian TV that year, 54 per cent were of foreign (primarily American) origin; of 10,400 hours of variety, music and game shows broadcast, 75 per cent were American-made; of 17,500 hours of dramatic programming broadcast on English-Canadian stations and networks in that year, a whopping 98-1/2 per cent were of non-Canadian origin, mostly made in the United States.



Through the fate of geography, Canada has throughout this broadcasting-century struggled for its own separate existence in the face of overwhelming odds. With 90 per cent of its people living within 100 miles of the Canada-U.S. border, the bulk of the Canadian population has been in easy reach of American radio signals right from the start of U.S. broadcasting in the 1920s — especially because the American stations quickly organized themselves into networks and were transmitting at 50 kilowatts of power, while isolated Canadian stations were broadcasting at 500 watts or less. So, geographical proximity coincided with the greater radius of American transmission to effectively eliminate the geo-political border.

But perhaps more important than this initial inequality of power in transmitting-signals was a particular political strategy adopted by the United States. Soon after the invention

of radio and the recognition of its great lucrative potential as a mass medium, the United States allocated to itself most of the available broadcasting frequencies of the spectrum — leaving Canada and Mexico with a paltry few. This arrogant usurping of a shared natural resource meant that both other countries would enter the field of broadcasting at a very significant disadvantage. Not only were they hampered by the imposed scarcity of the spectrum resource, but they were facing a well-organized and well-financed system whose signal reach could easily penetrate their national borders.

Until this international issue — the unequal allocation of the spectrum — was sorted out, radio broadcasting in Canada was fully chaotic. Three or four stations in any one city shared time — all using the same frequency, and there was bitter in-fighting over the few available frequencies left from

THUS, WE BEGIN TO SEE THAT the fundamental issue that this broadcasting-century has raised is the issue of boundaries. More than any other medium (and precisely because it is in the home), television confuses or eliminates boundaries: conscious/unconscious, reality/representation, self/screen, past/present. As a mode of selling it is therefore extraordinarily powerful. But it also eliminates or confuses the boundaries between nation-states. To be more precise, television eliminates the boundaries between any given country and the overwhelming American Other.

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the American grab. Meanwhile, the higher-powered American signals could easily drown out those originating in Canada.

While Mexico was placed in a similar situation in terms of imposed spectrum scarcity, at least it had the protective buffer of a different language to act as a border between its people and the radius of American signals. As well, through its own fate of geography and climate, most of its people were not clustered along the smaller border that Mexico shares with the United States. Whatever influence the spill-over of radio signals might have on those living along that border, the facts of a widely diffused population, a separate language, and a unique culture would act as buffers curtailing the effects of the American medium.

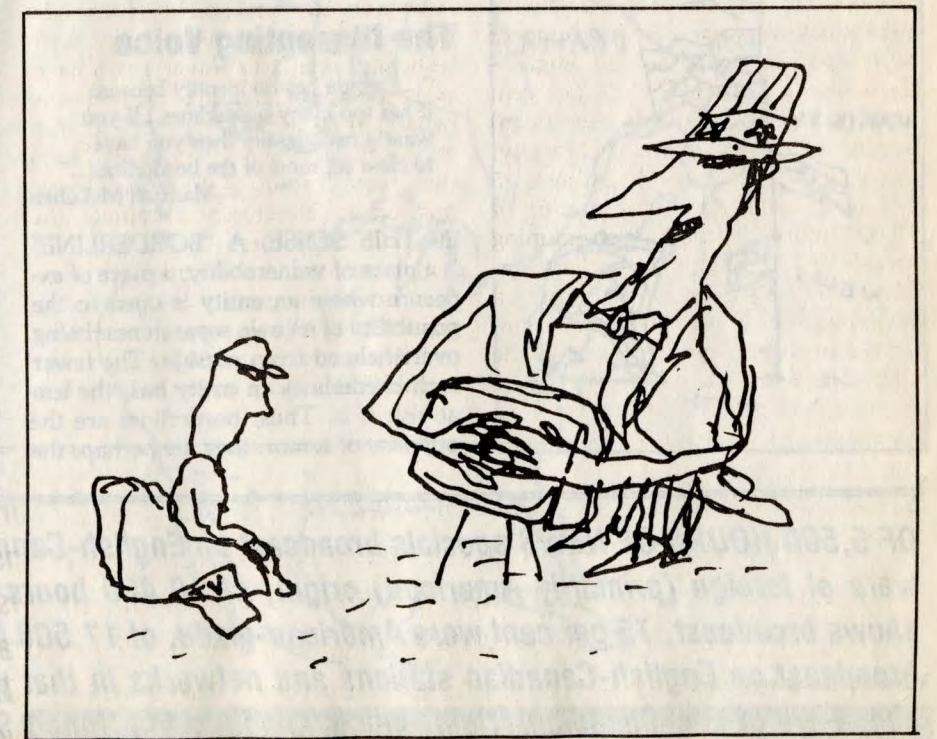
In Canada, however, only the Québécois and the people of the far North could be said to have had, in the early days of radio, any sort of buffering containment — through language, unique culture, and/or distance — that would act as some kind of border separating them as a people from the United States. Otherwise, for most English-speaking Canadians, the 49th parallel was rapidly becoming a quaint remnant of an earlier age.

It is obvious, then, that right from its inception, Canadian broadcasting faced three central conditions that fully undermine the healthy existence of any entity: (1) imposed scarcity — of spectrum allocation, station time, transmitting power, and potential audience (because most were already tuned elsewhere); (2) self-division — through Canadian stations in-fighting as a result of the imposed scarcity, and through the crucial fragmenting of the indigenous audience into those already captured by American signals and those not; and (3) the loss of boundaries — since neither the 49th parallel, language, culture, nor transmission power were providing an effective barrier to the overwhelming American signal-reach.

These three conditions working at the outset against the possibility of a viable Canadian broadcasting industry in the early days of radio were confounded by yet another important factor. As the first on the broadcasting scene, at least on this continent, the United States was in the position (as it had been with feature filmmaking) of establishing the dominant codes by which listeners would judge whether or not the medium was being used "correctly." Without alternative broadcasting voices within the U.S. borders, and without any foreign contenders vying for the ears of its populace, the newly emerging American radio networks could posit their own, fully arbitrary ways of using the new medium as the seemingly "natural" and "only way" to do things. Although there were (and are) any number of models that the medium might have followed, or uses to which it might have been put as a mass form of communications, the powers emerging in the American broadcasting industry selected (not

surprisingly) an advertiser-based model for financing and for broadcasting. This meant that everything else about the medium would conform to certain dictates.

Because of this advertiser-base for so-called "free" delivery of signals, it followed that there would be specific kinds of programming formats and ways of doing things that would be considered more "appropriate" than others for the new medium: essentially those which highlight commercial sponsorship and are amenable to the selling purposes of the industry. Narrative forms quickly evolved that were structured according to frequent ad interruptions and which would, in their light and inoffensive content, not alienate any segment of the consumer audience. Pacing and formats, narrative structure, content and lengths, speaking voice and accent, style and types of entertainment genres, patterns of scheduling, types of music, formats and extent of news coverage, length of the broadcast day — all of these



B-R-R-ROADCASTING

elements and others were fully determined by the fact of advertiser-financing for the American medium. A different model would have determined them differently. The fully arbitrary radio-broadcasting conventions that grew out of this advertising-base became the dominant codes by which listeners would judge whether or not a program was "good" and whether or not the medium was being used in the "right" way. Since the advertiser-base dictated that U.S. radio center around light entertainment, rather than around documentary and information, the U.S. medium especially set the codes for what "good" entertainment programming should be.

If we keep in mind that such codes are completely arbitrary — that there really is no "correct" or "natural" or only way to use a medium or even to provide entertainment — then we can see that this establishing of the dominant code for radio by the American commercial networks had crucial repercussions for Canada. With Canadian listeners fully attuned to this particular way of using the medium (and the programming conventions which result), any attempt to construct in Canada a different model for broad-



casting, which would necessarily engender different programming conventions, codes and practices, would be met with resistance (often unconscious) from many Canadian listeners as being somewhat "inferior" or even "foreign." While this resistance might not appear in those areas excluded by the American advertiser-based medium (documentary and information), it would certainly surface with regard to entertainment (the area of expertise in the American model).

These four conditions besetting Canada at the dawn of radio — imposed scarcity, self-division, loss of boundaries, and the seeming "correctness" of American codes for the medium (especially in entertainment programming) — have remained essentially unchanged throughout the past fifty years of broadcasting in this country. Indeed, they have been exacerbated by television — especially, as we have seen, by the American industry structure based on deficit financing and the financial imperatives to export.

But perhaps behind these four central conditions that have long hampered broadcasting in this country, there is another condition that must also be addressed, especially in light of the techno-imperialist agenda operating in this, the American Century.

The Dissenting Voice

"...Canada has no identity because it has too many borderlines...If you want a real identity then you have to close off most of the borderlines..."

—Marshall McLuhan

IN THIS SENSE, A "BORDERLINE" is a place of vulnerability, a place of exposure where an entity is open to the possibility of its own separateness being overwhelmed from outside. The fewer such borderlines an entity has, the less at risk it is. Thus, borderlines are the opposite of armor: they are perhaps the

gaps in the armor where the "skin" is exposed, where the line separating self/other is fragile indeed.

We have already seen that in relation to the U.S., Canada has several such "borderlines" in not having a distinctly different language (aside from the Québécoise), in not having a strongly unique culture, and in sharing a geo-political border that stretches some 3,000 miles. In terms of just these three elements alone, we can see that Canada, unlike Mexico, has borderlines rather than buffering armor.

But we must also see that, in certain political decisions, and especially in the broadcasting field, Canada has chosen to create more such vulnerable borderlines, rather than attempt to create some necessary armor for itself as a uniquely separate country. For instance, at the onset of television, the nation might have opted for a completely different scanning system than the one in operation in the United States. Canada might have adopted the European TV technology which uses more scanning lines to create a better TV image — a decision which also would have meant that technologically the system (including receiver sets) would have been incompatible with American transmission. Though subsequent technological invention and U.S. business practices have eroded the effectiveness of different scanning systems as barriers, in the early 1950s such a decision in Canada might have protected a fledgling TV system emerging several years after that of its powerful neighbour. The choice of compatible technology created another vulnerable borderline, rather than armor.

Similarly, the country might have adopted a completely different structure for its broadcasting industry, rather than simply falling in line with the advertiser-based model adopted by the United States. Regardless of the noble goals articulated in the Broadcasting

IN THIS COUNTRY, one gets the unmistakable sense that all along the CBC was perceived to be — and expected to be — fully Canadian, fully different, but the private sector was not. It is as though private industry of any sort is automatically excused from nationhood: an attitude that turns the very concept of the Canadian nation into something sentimental, abstract, "uncontaminated" by realities like business or finance. This separating-off of nationhood from every-day business realities is precisely the gap, the borderline, through which any country actually loses itself.

Act, the choice of the advertiser-based model (in whole or in part) neatly tied the Canadian TV industry into the American one. A different model and structure for Canadian TV would have, again, created some national armoring, rather than another borderline.

So, too, with the microwaving of cable, the introduction of pay-TV, etc. Each new "window" of programming — intended to compensate for the obvious failure of private broadcasters to support Canadian program production — has turned out to be nothing more than another borderline through which the nation further merges with the American industry and the American 'here.'

We begin to see, then, that in broadcasting, the only sense of armor that exists for Canada are the Canadian content regulations. Certainly in terms of the private sector broadcasters, it is only these regulations which keep them from completely Americanizing their schedule beyond the overwhelming extent to which they already have. The importance of enforcing these regulations, and actually increasing rather than eroding them, becomes apparent.

If one assumes that, in this last quarter of the twentieth century, it remains important, even crucial, that there be separate nation-states, dissenting voices vis-a-vis the overwhelming American Voice and its agenda for the world, if one believes that a separate and different Canadian 'here' actually exists and is worth protecting, then one can see the difficult challenge that has long confronted the CRTC. To be fair to that august body, however, it has rarely recognized the full enormity of the challenge facing it.

To keep alive difference itself, in an age when all boundaries are being swept away, all borders eliminated, is nothing less than a Herculean task. But as one surveys the history of broadcasting (and broadcasting decision-making) in this country, one gets the

unmistakable sense that all along the CBC was perceived to be — and expected to be — fully Canadian, fully different, but the private sector was not. It is as though private industry of any sort is automatically excused from nationhood: an attitude that turns the very concept of the Canadian nation into something sentimental, abstract, "uncontaminated" by realities like business or finance. This separating-off of nationhood from every-day business realities is precisely the gap, the borderline, through which any country actually loses itself. When the dictates of multinational capitalism supersede the nation's business — as is so obvious

in the private broadcasting situation — then one can no longer realistically speak of separate nation-states.

If Canada is simply to merge with the United States in everything but name, then no changes are necessary — in broadcasting or any other arena. If, however, Canada has a separate role in the world, a different view of how life might be lived, different values by which its people find meaning in existence, then clearly its broadcasting situation and structure must be radically altered. The Canadian government, the CRTC, and Canadian audiences themselves have some difficult, but crucial, choices to make. ■



Joyce Nelson is a Toronto freelance writer who analyzes the mediascape. Her book, *The Perfect Machine: Essays on Television and The Patriarchy In The Nuclear Age*, is forthcoming from Between The Lines Press, Toronto.

Illustrations by Mike Constable

OF 5,500 HOURS OF NEWS specials broadcast on English-Canadian TV in 1984, 54 per cent were of foreign (primarily American) origin; of 10,400 hours of variety, music and game shows broadcast, 75 per cent were American-made; of 17,500 hours of dramatic programming broadcast on English-Canadian stations and networks in that year, a whopping 98 1/2 per cent were of non-Canadian origin, mostly made in the United States.

The following report was originally aired on CKLN-FM 88 on Thursday, October 12, 1986 on the program "Commentary on the Black Experience."

by Milton Blake

If you've been finding that the places on your radio dial where you found the special programs of reggae music, soca, R&B, soul and jazz are now silent, it's not that the radio stations have disappeared...it's the DJ who has disappeared.

It is simply a case of declining Black music and Black DJs on radio. The question which races to mind is: Are Black DJs under attack or is it Black music or both? I'll lay out some of the facts for you, and then you draw your own conclusions. In order to do this it is necessary for me to mention some of the radio stations in question, and the names of some of the Black music programers who have fallen to the axe.

CKFM carried "Reggae in the City".... produced and hosted by Black DJ P.V. Smith on Mondays and Wednesdays between 11pm and midnight. At the end of August the program was cancelled.

Q107 had Black DJ Ray Williams producing and hosting the reggae program "Cool Runnings" Sunday mornings 9-10. On September 21st the program was yanked off the air.

Black DJ Michael Cuffe was a staple Monday to Friday on Brampton's CKMW-AM 9pm to 1am. Michael Cuffe was sent packing recently. The Black music that Michael presented went with him.

Jai Maharaj has been moved from the well established nightly Caribbean Music slot on CHIN-FM to the sister AM station, where he is hidden by weaker signals. The sounds of the Caribbean that made CHIN radio popular in not only the Caribbean community, but in the English speaking community at large, has been effectively silenced. People are still asking where is Jai? What has happened to the Caribbean program at CHIN?

Are Black DJs under attack or is it Black music, or both? Using the cases I've just mentioned, I, too, will draw my own conclusions.

- At CKFM the DJ was silenced — so was the music — REGGAE MUSIC.
- At Q107 the DJ was silenced — so was the music — REGGAE MUSIC.
- At CKMW the DJ was silenced — so was the music — A VARIETY OF BLACK MUSIC.
- At CHIN the DJ is hidden — so is the music — A VARIETY OF BLACK MUSIC.

Where CKFM, Q107 and CKMW are concerned, we are talking about middle and top market radio, where the impact of such a loss will register itself negatively not only in the local music industry, but as a blow to Black music and Black music creators in general, and to all those who make a living from Black music at every level.



Chris Reed

RADIO BLACK OUT

Milton Blake is the producer/announcer of CKLN's program *The Musical Triangle*, Sundays 4-6pm. He is a former announcer with the Jamaican Broadcasting Corporation. He is formerly of Chin Radio and CKQT-FM, Oshawa. He also works as a free-lance writer.

Where CHIN is concerned, we are talking about multicultural radio. And the action of the station is yet another reminder that the whole concept of multiculturalism when translated into reality doesn't work for the poorest and most despised in the society, Black people.

In mainstream radio, in the middle and top market radio stations in question, Black music has not been retained. It is not a case of a change of personality — it amounts to an attack upon the music. BLACK MUSIC IS UNDER ATTACK ON THE BANKS OF LAKE ONTARIO. Further, you cannot isolate the attack on the music from the creators of the music — the people who create the music and are struggling to make a living from their creative work — Black people, too, are under attack. The creators of the music, the people whose experience is documented in the music, the DJ who plays it, and in some cases makes a living from playing it, are all under attack.

The usual reasons given for such callous disregard to the welfare and the presence of Black people are well known. Oh, they will tell you, "The program is not attracting enough advertising dollars," or "we are undergoing format changes," for example. Of course we nod our heads when we are reminded that "this is just another business — it has to run profitably like any other business." This is partially true. It is also true that Black music is extremely profitable. But profitable for whom? It is the music that built the empire that is the music business. It is the music that rescued CBS, for example, not too long ago when Michael Jackson's multi-million seller album *Thriller* put new life in the industry.

The British popular music industry was on its death bed when it was rescued by the irrepressible influence of the late reggae superstar Bob Marley, transforming a bankrupt creative atmosphere into a laboratory of experimentation with the reggae beat. This was followed by the birth

of a new sound, focussing the eyes of the world on Britain as a new dynamic centre of musical innovations — to say nothing of the many international stars reggae's influence created, and the hundreds of fired jacket and tie executives that reggae music put back to work; the multi-millions the record companies put in their coffers, and the sudden end to the speculation that radio was losing its audience to television. AND HERE ON THE BANKS OF LAKE ONTARIO Bob Marley is chased off the air.

Why are Black people treated with so much disrespect? *Always building, rescuing, creating, enduring.* Building houses but not able to sit at the table of sharing. Rescuing these houses and getting no respect. Creating with brilliance and having others take credit for their creativity. Enduring all the indignities to be told "you complain too much" when the pain is too much to bear in silence.

It is true that the media — radio — is not just another business. It happens to be a sensitive piece of property that is more than property. It is an instrument of power that carries with it the weight of social, cultural, political and class considerations. And you do not simply take your millions of dollars, build a radio station and say, "We're open for business."

It is used as an instrument of control in the hands of those who are in control; it is an instrument of coercion for those to whom coercion is a lucrative weapon in the attainment of certain social, political, cultural and financial ends. In its use for honourable and just ends, radio (the media at large) can be a source of enlightenment, a wave of civility and a melodious tune of harmony.

It therefore follows that if on other people's property we are treated so shabbily, are so dispensable, then why not move towards the ownership of a piece of this sensitive and powerful property? I rest my case. ■

B - R - R - R O A D C A S T I N G

THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

Broadcasting & Bureaucracy NEW TELEVISION

by
PAT WILSON

In Toronto, the **Artists and Television Symposium** took place Nov. 14-23, '86, sponsored by United Media Art Studies and Trinity Square Video. The symposium was held in conjunction with a week of screenings of video tapes from Channel 4 (Britain), the IBC (Northwest Territories), the Kitchen (NY) and two PBS stations (NY and Boston).

The purpose of the symposium was to increase dialogue between public broadcasters and independent producers. From my observations, the dialogue was exceedingly one-sided. The following is a summary of the most important issues discussed during the three evenings.

The first panel was entitled **Broadcast Programming: Artists and Television**. The panelists were: Barbara Osborn, a NY-based TV producer who is presently programming consultant with WNYC-TV (PBS). She has worked at the Kitchen, and as consultant to Channel 4 for the series *Ghosts In The Machine*. She presently sits on the Board of Media Alliance.¹

Jean Gagnon is a Montreal-based independent video producer, writer and critic, and was video curator for the 14e Festival International du nouveau cinéma et de la vidéo de Montréal. He works with *Le Vidéographe*.

Michel Ouelette is a co-founder of Agent Orange, Inc., a video and film production company. Their production

Le Chien de Luis et Salvador was broadcast on Channel 4 (Britain), RAI III (Italy), ZDF (Germany) and Radio Canada (Montreal). He is now working on two more video art/television projects; a co-production with RTBF (Belgium) television entitled *2 Nouvelles* and *Time Code* which is a co-production of a one hour television program of international works, involving ZDF, NOS (Netherlands), RTBF, and the CAT Fund (US), Channel 4, and Radio Canada.

Stan Fox is the director of Adult Programming, TVO, where he is in charge of all production and co-production.

John Dimon is the program advisor for Independent Production, CBC. In this position he is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating development contracts for independent productions. He negotiates projects having the participation of independents and Telefilm.

Jim Burt is the Supervisor of Script Development for Independent Production/TV Drama at CBC.

The moderator was Susan Crean, Toronto writer and broadcast critic. She has written extensively on such issues as the economic status of artists, Pay-TV in Canada, nationalism, and women's issues.

Susan Crean opened the discussion by posing some of the questions before the panelists and audience. How does the broadcast network work? How

were "windows" opened in Quebec and NY for independent producers? What is the structure and format of public television today? She continued with the commentary that public TV deals with only a very narrow slice of what the medium's capabilities really are and that the most salient factor of public TV is that it is driven by commercial advertising.

Barbara Osborn gave two examples of artists using television to showcase video art. Channel 4 presents an interesting model. Early in its production history, Channel 4 developed a video art program for British audiences.

In the US, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) programs to 20 affiliates. The independent producers have organized to form community broadcasting stations all across the US. Through Media Alliance they have also established Stand-By and On-Line. These are organizations that make it possible for independent video producers to access commercial video and audio facilities for \$100 per evening.

In Boston, the Contemporary Art Television Fund (CAT) was established in 1983 as a special project of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) and the WGBH New Television Workshop. This fund assists artists in producing work and getting it on public television.

Barbara followed the brief historical survey with the comment that "There is

Pat Wilson is a video producer, formerly general manager of Trinity Square Video who currently sits on the Media Arts Advisory Panel at the Canada Council.

no consensus as to where or how the intersection of artists and public television happens." Public television is concerned with sustaining the institution not the artists. The escalation of production budgets and the crisis in arts funding exacerbates the competitiveness of the broadcast scene. The centrifugal force of this struggle can suck the artist in. Cable television and/or independent broadcast stations are options for the independent producer in the light of the public broadcast industries' narrow mandate, lack of flexibility and power politics.

Jean Gagnon spoke of his work with *Vidéographe* in video distribution projects. He stated that it is tremendously important for artists to get their work on television. "How can we finance our on-going production as artists unless we educate the public?" he queried. Jean is now working on an eight part series on video art for television. Each program is devoted to a particular style. The aim of the series is to introduce the public to video art in a comprehensive manner. The new TVO French-language network will be on air in January. This will be one of their targets. The video producers of Montreal are organizing, negotiating to get their works on air.

Stan Fox of TV Ontario spoke briefly of TVO's mandate, audience and intentions. He said TVO is dedicated to selling ideas to their audience. That's because TVO's budget is 1/20th of the budget of the CBC and they are unable to produce drama except through co-production. Because the audience they serve is conservative, the inclusion of video art or independent film must be incremental. TVO has already aired two two-hour shows of independent Canadian filmmakers' works. It is involved in a second collaboration with Margaret Dragu, an independent filmmaker. TVO's involvement with independents is not as much as they would like, but it is their "intention to move in that direction," stated Fox.

Michel Ouelette reviewed the successes of Agent Orange and *Vidéographe* in Montreal and abroad — especially in terms of organizing for co-production through and with the public broadcasting system.

Michel's argument was as follows: In Germany, the broadcast system has set aside one hour per week for new works for the last nine years. Broadcast surveys indicate only 40% of the

available viewing market watches television. It is the public broadcasters' responsibility to get involved with video artists to co-produce programs, and to gamble on this as-yet-untapped audience. It is their responsibility to develop the new markets and to find the audiences. They have the funds necessary to create funding program structures, acquisition and production structures that are accessible to creative video producers and filmmakers.

John Dimon, program advisor for Independent Production, CBC, read from a prepared text and regaled the audience with the CBC's record of achievements. **In summary, he said nothing new.** It is the CBC's mandate to Canadianize TV scheduling. CBC has set aside \$45 million to invest in Canadian film and television production, with an emphasis on drama. CBC looks for material that will reflect Canadians' interests and appeal to a broad and conservative market. CBC does not have the money or the time to deal with any productions but those within its own mandate. The creative opportunity is there for artists. The independents have to offer what the CBC is buying or the CBC will not buy.

Jim Burt of the CBC equivocated. He postured. He pontificated. He said that autocrats must be moved. (He is one.) The independent producer must know his/her enemy. (We do.) Video art is weird. Autocrats work within the system. The system has suffered enormous cuts. You must understand the political problems. We are all in this together. You must format your material for our market. Maybe anthologize. Or package your work for the home video market. It is the artists' job to create their own market through political activity.

Debate ensued.

Clive Robertson spoke to the CBC reps, saying that we understand the problems at CBC: You talk of all you've done for artists but even in comedy you did not take on SCTV or the Hummer Sisters or the Clichettes. If Radio Canada in Quebec can broadcast a documentary on performance art, so can the CBC. The management of CBC is completely out of touch with the country.

Burt from the CBC replied by hemming and hawing.

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Glossary

The symposium proved that the television industry does not even comprehend distinctions of terminology let alone language. In television, the term 'independent' only means that a production is not undertaken by in-house personnel, though in-house facilities may at some stage be used. Artists and cultural producers are in fact the only video producers who maintain total control of copyright. For readers and producers alike, here are some suggested clarifying definitions:

Experimental Video:

A term that was used by broadcasters and others as in, "less experimental, more interesting." There is experimental film, there is a tradition of avant-garde film. There is no experimental video, though video can and has been seen as avant-garde or new television.

Video Art (Artist):

A video production scripted, directed, edited and produced by an artist(s). The production, or package of productions is completed prior to interaction with broadcaster or exhibitor.

Independent Video Producer:

In industrial terms, can mean a producer who has an idea or script which is then shaped by co-producers to find the end market. This producer may in fact shoot and/or direct the project, once the script has been approved.

Video Cultural Producer:

An artist or group of artists who often work to disseminate social or political voices from specific communities of interest. The producer, by contrast, has control over the final edit, but attempts to get consensus agreements to the earlier stages of the production.

Industrial Video Producer

A free-lance producer who works for a client and produces a product which meets the clients commercial or educational objectives.

Producer (Video)

A person(s) or company which takes the administrative responsibility for the financing of the video production, and often its marketing and distribution.

Clive Robertson

B-R-R-BROADCASTING

Michel Ouelette said a policy of "intention" from the public broadcasters is not good enough. There is a need for a formal and consistent policy at TV Ontario and CBC, that allows artists access.

The audience queried the low prices being paid in Ontario particularly for airplay of independent artists' works. Stan Fox pointed out that artists must find more than one customer for his/her work as one sale cannot recoup costs.

Michel spoke to this. The economics of TV production forces the producer to forge a show that can be sold all over. But the new work of the independent producer, by its nature, does not appeal to a mass market. From the artists come the ideas that will be the future of television, and yet broadcasters are not willing to invest in their own future by seeing that. Artists pay for broadcasters' education, but they don't learn. Their representatives are never present at international video festivals and conferences. Why not?

Geoffrey Shea, video producer, spoke to the broadcast reps, saying: we asked you here in order to set up a dialogue. We need a collaborative effort, a coming together. It is your perception that has to be changed. Our national cultural TV should look to the cultural production of independents, look to packaging it and developing the market.

Stan Fox noted that one of the producers' hopes should be through private broadcasters such as CTV and MuchMusic. He wanted to know why the private broadcasters were not at the panel discussion, and felt that they should be confronted with their responsibility too. Clive Robertson pointed out that there were up-to-date critiques of private broadcasters available and that the material contained in those critiques revealed the futility of inviting them.

Michel Ouelette wrapped up the essence of the debate. The solution lies partly in working within a larger collective to force solutions to the problems of structure so that windows are opened and approaches to these windows made very clear.

The second evening of the artist-television conference concerned **Funding Perspectives**. The panelists were: Judy Gouin, Film, Video and Photo-

graphy Officer from the Ontario Arts Council; Bill House, Executive Coordinator of Production and Development with the Ontario Film Development Corporation; and André Picard, Senior Executive of Operations with Telefilm Canada. The moderator was Lawrence Adams, the Director and founder of the Arts Television Centre in Toronto.

Judy Gouin reviewed the extension of OAC's relationship to the OFDC and Telefilm through OAC's Film Assistance Program which was funded by an infusion of money from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. The Film Assistance Program handles high budget feature films. The filmmaker can now access money simultaneously through the OAC and the OFDC. The question then arises: should OAC adopt the structure from the feature film project assistance program to shape a video project assistance program? (This is a privatized model that is concerned with audience size and profit margin.)

Bill House spoke briefly of the history of the OFDC. The fund is seen as a film development and production fund to address the paucity of Canadian films both in our theatres and on public Canadian television. Over three years, 1985-88, \$20 million was to be focused on the development of scripts and the production of feature films. (Productions that cost over \$300,000 and under \$3 million.) These funds are available only to those filmmakers developing projects that satisfy the OFDC of their production and distribution potential. All projects must have a firm commitment from a Canadian theatrical distributor, broadcaster or pay TV, with certain minimum guarantees of licenses.

Bill House elucidated the Special Projects Fund within the OFDC which handles low budget productions of Canadian feature films (\$300,000 or less). Producers cannot expect funding without a firm commitment from a Canadian controlled, Ontario based theatrical distributor for the release and exhibition in Ontario of such a feature film.

The Special Projects Fund was designed for those artist-driven productions that had the support of the

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I understand that broadcasters have problems, rules and certain fixed forms of behaviour. I do not want to discuss their problems. They have to solve such problems through their own administration.

—Michel Ouelette, Agent Orange Inc.,
Montréal

We ask you to make the effort to take the blinkers off your eyes and begin to look at this material, not as 'weird' or 'strange' or 100% unacceptable.

—Geoffrey Shea, video artist

When I use the word 'weird,' I did this stuff too. I don't mean it in a negative sense...You can argue with us all you want, but ultimately you have to argue with Flora MacDonald or your MP.

—Jim Burt, CBC



Paul Wong

Three's Company: CBC-Telefilm-CFDC

Clive Robertson is a media artist, former organizer of The Canadian Video Open and currently Chairperson at Trinity Square Video.

Photographs by Max Caldwell



Michel Ouelette



Geoffrey Shea

Where's the development money coming from?

—Paul Wong, Video Inn, Vancouver

Until there are certain breakthrough movies in Canada...all sorts of activity such as mainstream television and video will remain ghettoized. We're hoping that our program support for feature films will have the kind of trickle-down effect that we're after.

—Bill House, CFDC

One of the side-effects of the ongoing 'free' trade debate coupled with the recent Federal Report on Broadcasting is that various cultural production communities in the country have, once again, begun to review the publicly-owned cultural investment services and broadcast agencies that we assume, in part, are there to assist our needs. The recent 'Artists and Television' symposium was just one of many recent forums (I also participated in a symposium at Carleton University, 'Music and Free Trade' where the privatized Canadian music industry again came under scrutiny) to discuss issues of accessibility.

The stories ultimately all overlap, whether in publishing, music, video or whatever. Those who are consistently, in great numbers, producing grass-roots contemporary Canadian culture (ConCanCult) are not getting access to commercial distribution, broadcasting, or high level existing public investment. And the people who have the keys to all of these doors import "pre-established popularity" items from outside the country to a) make a safe profit or b) to keep within their misdirected budgets. In addition, the CBC and Telefilm are programmed to believe that the ConCanCult phenomenon doesn't exist, that it will not make a return on investment, or that a mass audience would be displeased if it were exposed to such indigenous materials. That the private sector displays such ignorance comes as no surprise. (If you ever find a copy of FUSE at an airport newsstand you can safely assume that Ed Broadbent has won a federal election). What is aggravating is that publicly-owned film cultural agencies are now proud to talk in this privatized doublespeak, all in the name of Canadian cultural sovereignty.

We learned from the 'Artists & Television' forum that political thinking has been bent to believe that feature films are now considered the "driver for Canadian cultural expression." Well, at \$3 million a pop, our expression will at most consist of a phrase building up, I suppose, to a sentence. The film/TV industry has obviously been lobbying up a storm, and good luck to them, except that we as lowly artists, filmmakers, musicians, writers and independent cultural producers are being seriously denigrated within their vainglorious master plan. And are therefore being denied serious employment opportunities.

This voice is coming to you from the video community, a network of artist video producers which has been in existence since the Matrix conference, Vancouver, 1973. It is a network of co-operative production facilities and a self-initiated **distribution market** as well as a network of regional and specialized distributors. This community (not an industry) has perhaps 2,000 active producer members. The work, as the jargon goes, has placed Canada on the map with repeat awards from Europe, Asia, South America, etc. The tapes have been broadcast on every known public broadcast network, except (with rare occasions) in Ontario. Costs range from \$500 to \$50,000, and productions are brought to you at the expense of artists/producers and state subsidies. You will not see this Canadian stuff on MuchMusic and you definitely will not see it on the CBC (Radio Canada's Quebec viewers are more fortunate). The work takes the form of documentary, docudrama, drama and non-narrative fiction. It has been broadcast to audiences of 2,000,000 and they loved every non-traditional minute of it. Most of it (form and content) is Canadian-originated, that is, you will not see domestic imitations of foreign impulses. End of Message.

So we had to sit through two evenings of deadly dull stuff: parental, patronizing, aggressive, apologetic, misinformed; there was so much eye-rolling in the audience that we could have been sitting in a laundromat watching the dryers.

Some of the guest panelists shone above and beyond duty. Michel Ouelette from Agent Orange Inc., and Susan Crean, once she got into the spirit, were a welcome relief. John Reilly and Barbara Osborn from the States behaved admirably once they quickly understood that they were caught in Canadian crossfire. Stan Fox from TVO was gracious, though he sees Ontario as being much more conservative than we can ever allow. But between the CBC, Telefilm, and the Ontario Film Development Corp., we had real problems.

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B-R-R-ROADCASTING

Canada Council or Ontario Arts Council. The OFDC considers this project funding important for purposes of assisting in the development of new ideas, and new producers — that out of this work would come the new crop of Canadian filmmakers.

André Picard delineated the policies and mandate of Telefilm. Telefilm, which is driven by broadcast imperatives, is a fund dedicated to presenting Canadian prime time entertainment programs. Telefilm has a mass-media orientation. Its major challenge is to replace American drama with Canadian drama on our networks. The Feature Film Fund within Telefilm was created shortly after the Ontario Film Development Corporation came into being. \$33 million was set aside to assist in production of feature films. Telefilm will help in the development, production and some part of media placement costs of a film that is commercially viable and has a pre-commitment from a Canadian broadcaster to air. The program is interested in building an industrial base. Telefilm has no interest in video artists' productions for television as they have no desire to dilute their film production mandate. Picard further noted that video artists work in formats and language that the investors, politicians and audiences do not understand. Because the material is not suitable for a conservative audience, it is therefore not suitable for funding from Telefilm.

Debate ensued.

Paul Wong, Vancouver video artist spoke. The film world has it wrapped up. Video is in a ghetto. We hear you and hear nothing. We want to know where the development funds are coming from for video and video producers.

At this point Bill House reiterated what he had said, and what Picard had said. Politicians cannot relate to video art. They like to see success. The independent producers must fashion their work to make the videos more...well...watchable. The video artist cannot get access to production funds and broadcast "windows" without reshaping their work.

Judith Doyle, the filmmaker of *Eye of the Mask* which is distributed through DEC, noted that the OFDC and Telefilm might consider DEC, Cinephile, Creative Exposure and other such

venues to be an acceptable network; that the notion of an alternative theatrical distribution network be accepted and adopted in the policies of these two funding bodies.

Bill House answered by repeating that the OFDC expects some return on their investments. That there is much more potential for 35mm film than 16mm production. If the independent producers in film and video would try to understand the economic theory of OFDC investments — then they might be able to tap the funds and be able to continue making films and videos.

Judith Doyle continued her discussion by noting that the non-theatrical life of an independent film or video is often longer than the life of a commercial film through theatrical or broadcast release. And further, that the cost effectiveness, i.e., the ratio of production cost to returns over a long period of time is most probably as good as the returns that Telefilm has on its productions.

At this point it was queried as to what percentage of returns Telefilm was actually able to claim on its film production commitments in the last year. André Picard said it was about 3% annual return on investments. He further relented to Ms. Doyle's continued enquiries and said that, in fact, if the alternative theatrical network could present a package outlining powerful commitments, then Telefilm might consider funding the production of that film. In the case of full length feature films, Telefilm would always demand a prior commitment from a broadcaster in Canada before committing funds to the production.

André Picard stated that in fact anyone can have an idea for a film. But decisions at Telefilm are made on the basis of whether it is a good idea and whether the costs are recoverable. Later in the discussion, Picard mentioned that of Telefilm's current \$110 million budget, only \$3.5 million was recovered so far this year. He also admitted that studies in Quebec show that low-budget documentaries have a higher return than feature films.

Michel responded to Picard's statements concerning recoverable costs.

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André Picard

Photographs by Max Caldwell

An exchange between Rolly Mossop, video artist and John Dimon, CBC:

Mossop: *Why aren't you looking at the different issues that ordinary Canadians are concerned with. For example, there is an existing pool of gay productions with a national audience of 2,000,000.*

Dimon: *CBC Journal explores those issues nightly and there's Fifth Estate...*

Mossop: *Forgive me but I do work on the National on weekends...*

Dimon: *You should watch the Journal...*

Mossop: *I do.*

Dimon: *Then you're not comprehending what you see.*

I seriously don't think that the CBC knows how to save itself.

—Susan Crean, author, broadcast advisor

Three's Company: CBC-Telefilm-CFDC

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We don't touch documentaries that relate to information, news, public or current affairs...we pick up 50% of the creative costs of posters, refrigerator stickers, teddy bears and lighters for Canadian film export companies.

—André Picard, Telefilm



John Dimon



L to R: Deborah Brisebois, Susan Crean

The organizers, Su Rynard and Geoffrey Shea, were somewhat inexperienced, if not naive, in their conception of the symposium which inevitably, given the structure and exclusions, broke down into moments of justifiable anger. The symposium also allowed for misrepresentation of the video community in that it did not make use of the experiences and mistakes of similar past events (e.g. Fifth Network conference, Toronto, 1978). An audience member commented outside the forum: "If we want to negotiate with broadcast people, we should do it as professional organizations in a more conducive setting."

As a large part of the symposium was (for the producer-audience) directed towards conditions in Ontario, it was misguided not to have any video producers from Ontario on the panels. As the issue of content was hardly mentioned, it would have been useful for special interest producers to have been formally represented. Because of these and other omissions, local senior video artists and cultural video producers were noticeable in their absence. The broadcast management's rejection of our work has been heard many, many times before over the last fifteen years. If we want to listen to the CBC's answering machine, we can, at any time, make a call in the privacy of our own homes.

Now to cheer you up — please learn from Mike and Andy Jones, producers of Newfoundland's first feature, *Faustus Bigood*. Andy Jones: "Wayne Clarkson (currently C.E.O., Telefilm) told me point blank that I don't know how to edit...the CBC and distributors said come back when you finish it... Telefilm has such a reputation for re-writing scripts into mass-digested formulas that creative filmmakers steer clear of this crown corporation." (*Cinema Canada*, November 1986)

Bill House's (OFDC) comments on prioritizing feature film were puzzling. Shortly after he made the statement about ghettos (see quotes) he said: "politicians are interested in the most number of people doing the most number of things." He was attempting to imply the attraction of a mass audience for feature film, even though film does not have the audience of television. And, as Susan Crean pointed out, somewhere like 30% of the Canadian population watches 80% of viewed television, in turn suggesting that television itself has a minority and not a majority audience. It seems like in the scramble for a feature film dream (and employment for the industrial TV/film workforce) that narrowcasting and specialized audiences have been conceptually and politically shipped off to the surplus stores. Is in fact the government, through its Crown cultural investment corporations, now rewarding those Pay-TV and privately-owned broadcast corporations who have already failed to meet the Canadian content promises of their broadcast licenses?

It is hard to find any justification for current government incentives to the private cultural sector. It is equally hard to put up with the program planning mismanagement of a publicly-owned corporation like CBC television. Stagnation at the CBC is something which is hard to be proud of, and yet the CBC is clearly proud that its overextended mandate places it in the position of power to dismiss all suggested innovative access changes. If the CBC is unwilling to adequately cover areas outside of its information and news services, then it should allow others to take on that responsibility. Rather than the CRTC continuing with its policy trend to give everyone a license until the Canadianization objective is met, it would be better to break up the CBC monolith, while at the same time keeping it in public hands. Contrary to accepted opinion, the solution is definitely not to give CBC-TV more subsidy with the hope that it will in some distant future finally produce an appropriate contemporary programming schedule. This position is going to have to be overstated many times before the CBC acknowledges a possible compromise by opening up late night slots for other forms of currently non-visible Canadian programming.

As for future symposiums on 'Artists and Television,' they should be taken out of the bear pit and be working sessions, in private. Gains that were made this time around were with TVO, who are looking at broadcast commitments so that film and video artists can become eligible for support from the Ontario Film Development Corporation and maybe even Telefilm. ●

Clive Robertson

B-R-R-ROADCASING

"At Telefilm you are organized internally in such a way that all our questions are bounced back to us. There is a history of TVO and of OAC being involved in the production of artists' works for television. There must be some way we can initiate a dialogue with you people at Telefilm. Encouragement of private investment in video is as important as in film."

Picard noted, "Feature films are high risk with high return but video and TV are low risk with low return. Out of 20 films Telefilm needs 10 to 15 successes to begin to realize its mandate of increasing Canadian drama on TV and in the theatres."

Bill House mentioned that OFDC is interested in investment in Canadian culture and that Special Projects is a possible way in for the independent filmmaker. A member of the video producing community asked whether or not any video artists had applied. House noted that there had been only one application and that one was turned down.

Clive Robertson spoke from the audience footnoting that artists have worked with community access cable TV and aired that work for some nine to ten years. Now ten years later, we hear you talking about how conservative the audience is.

Panel three dealt with **Alternatives — Artist Run Television**. The panel consisted of the following: Deborah Brisebois, Executive Director of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation which is an organization dedicated to providing public television service to 20,000 Inuit living in small communities in the North.

John Reilly, co-founder with Rudi Stern of Global Village in 1969, has been a pioneer in the field of video, especially in the fight with the Federal Communications Commission (F.C.C.) to allow communities of people access to low-power television stations. He initiated a five year series of national workshops which helped facilitate the first opportunities for independent producers in public broadcasting in the US.

Susan Crean, a Toronto writer and broadcast critic who has worked with the CBC on its CBC II proposal to the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC).

Adam Vaughan, station manager of CKLN Radio, an alternative low-power radio station, located at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, which covers local socio/political events in Toronto as well as federal, provincial and municipal politics.

Nick Ketchum, Senior Policy Analyst in the Television Broadcasting Group of the CRTC, is involved in assessing public concerns about broadcast policy, developing policy documents and guidelines.

The moderator for the evening was Clive Robertson, who began the evening with a summary of the two previous evenings.

One of the major problems is one of literacy. It is apparent that the representatives from the broadcast industry and from the major film funding agencies do not consume contemporary Canadian culture as they are unaware of the alternate press, radio, music, film and video producers. They do not read our magazines or see and hear our work. They are essentially illiterate — and have no notion of an already changed culture. The essential difference between the industrial producer and the independent producer is that the independent retains control of his/her content. The attempt to market this audacious material and retain control is the problem. Arts funding agencies are public institutions. Somehow they have forgotten who they work for and the roles have been switched. We have suggested changes to national film and video funding/distribution policies. We have seen little response.

We need input into those structures. **Closed-circuit TV and its distribution is the market that we developed.** We want access to a larger market. In Quebec an association of producers is working together collectively to change these structures. This regional development should be nationally adopted as a strategy. As for marketing strategies — TVO is our most likely candidate. We only need to find a few of these sympathetic stations across the country. We must solidify our own resources and develop an association to deal with these people outside. It is imperative that we gain access to the broadcast funds.

Debbie Brisebois spoke at length

outlining the history and the mandate of the IBC. The IBC produces 5 1/2 hours of native material in Inuktitut per week for the Inuit people of the Northwest Territories. Established by the Secretary of State and licensed by the CRTC in 1975, the IBC went on air through CBC's Anik B Satellite. IBC provides production centers and technical training for native producers. The programming is interactive in nature, linking communities from Frobisher Bay to Baker's Lake.

"In 1981 the CRTC and the government heaped praise on IBC," said Brisebois. "We are praised for being a model of a community public broadcast system — but the money does not increase. Our broadcast distribution is controlled and limited by the CBC. All prime time of the up-link is for the CBC. We are allowed the leftover broadcast hours."

"IBC has long term goals. We want to participate in changing CRTC policies. We want Native people to have access to distribution of their programming without CBC interference. We want to be consulted on an ongoing basis about our needs."

Susan Crean spoke next about her work on CBC II (Télé-Deux) in 1980-1981. She was brought into CBC to fantasize about CBC II. The idea went through several stages of development. It was to be a two network system delivered by satellite and cable, using vertical programming, in touch with communities across the country to develop schedules with these communities. Arguments against CBC II were: 1) the cost of \$30 million, 2) lack of universality, and 3) the CBC's track record. The CRTC handed CBC an interim turn-down which meant they could re-apply. It is telling that the CBC never re-applied.

"In the original fantasy were such ideas as low-budget and local productions, re-using of archival materials, regional exchanges of programming, use of satellite for broadcasting regional arts and cultural festivals, and finally full access to this network for Canadian independent video artists." The proposal failed and so there is no second channel available to meet the

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It's a Long Time to Hold Your Breath.

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

'Artist-Run Television'

or

Low Power Equals No Power

Somehow, we all knew it would come to this. Start your own television station. It's fun. It's subversive. Not to mention it will cost you all your time, your income and your art to make it happen. Mostly, it's boring. But, it's a 'window,' one of the charming buzz-words used by The Boy from Telefilm. Personally, I prefer to walk through doors. What were all the panels about? Money. The video artists were anxious to find out how they could get some money. The people on the panels who had the money were really anxious to keep it. Oh, you might get some of it if you played by all their improbable rules (like climbing through windows). But mostly, it's the old game. We have it. You try to figure out how to get it.

Broadcast television is hardly the only game in town. Sure, there's lots of money there. And money is bought and sold. Just like art. For television and video art to mesh, there's got to be a lot of compromise on both the artist's and broadcast television's positions. It's a buyer's market right now. TV has the money, and artists have the art. On the evening of the second panel, someone from CBC interviewed me on the topic of 'is television stifling video art production?' Well, hardly. I mean, before they can stifle us, they have to be aware we exist. Once they are aware we exist they have to be concerned. Once they are concerned, they have to get motivated. It's a long time to hold your breath.

I promised the editors of FUSE some fashion notes in this article. The audience reaction to the first two panels focussed on the hair. A great deal of hair was seen standing on end. Hair loss was common. People pulled their hair out. Some wanted to pull other people's hair out. There were several documented cases of people's hair simply falling out (mine included).

The Artists and Television Symposium panels concluded on a decidedly inconclusive note. The order of the panels in retrospect, seems to have been rather prophetic.

'Broadcast Programming'

or

Don't Hold Your Breath

Everyone did hold their breath, but the arrogance displayed by the CBC front men resulted in a verbal battle that left everyone, well, breathless. Part of the problem appeared to be that the CBC didn't know who they were talking to, therefore didn't know who to send. This implies of course that there is someone at the CBC who could talk on the subject. An overly optimistic notion. They haven't even thought of it.

Part of the outrage expressed by the art audience was no doubt fostered by the history of cutbacks by the Conservative government. The cutbacks imposed upon the arts community and the CBC occurred simultaneously; therefore they seemed linked. Artists protested against the cutbacks to the CBC at the same time as they reacted against the cutbacks to art funding agencies. The arts community was puzzled by the absence of the CBC at the myriad of protests organized across the country. Obviously, the link between the CBC and arts community cutbacks was a mirage. Video artists and the CBC are about as closely related as thistles and venus fly traps. This was dramatically demonstrated during the night of the first panel. Everyone went home with their dis-membered expectations, consoled only by the faint glimmer of hope offered by the second panel.

'Funding Perspectives'

or

No News is Bad News

It took a remarkably long time to discover that there are, in fact, no funding perspectives by Telefilm and the OFDC. We already knew about the funding perspectives of the Ontario Arts Council. Who said no news is good news? The boys from the CFDC and Telefilm kept their chill. Secure in their knowledge that their positions (and funding) were unassailable, they alternated back and forth between undisguised glee: "Yes, I'm a bureaucrat," and mock concern, "Oh do keep hammering away at us, we may eventually notice you." A sterling example of white male privilege. Well, what next? You got it. ●

Colin Campbell

B-R-R-ROADCASTING

needs of different regions and the communities of artists. The problems remain. There is no understanding by the decision-makers of the new language. This raises questions of power, of who gets to program and schedule, and of the politically suicidal relationship between the NFB and the CBC. Who decides what? Public television proposals awaken these political imperatives.

John Reilly spoke next. He summarized the way the Video Freaks started up as gate-keepers to the idea of distribution of video art. The Global Village was established as a video theatre in 1970. There was later access to cable TV, but no continuing support from this area. Public television became the independent's target. "In 1971 we organized a video panel to discuss the needs for better distribution of our work. In 1979, we began to push for access to our own low-power TV stations. We wanted the FCC to re-define what a TV station is and give the low-power stations to the people. Finally there was deregulation and it became possible for community groups, unions and artists to establish their own low-power TV stations. What was a

good idea has been twisted in its development under the Reagan administration."

In 1980 only one license was given for a low-power station although dozens of applications had been received by the FCC. After extremely heavy lobbying by various community groups, the FCC approved 7 more. In total there are 150 low-power TV stations in the continental US and 200 in Alaska.

Under the Reagan administration government subsidies were withdrawn from these community stations. Essentially, these community stations are now completely at the mercy of the free marketplace.

Adam Vaughan spoke briefly of the political and social role that CKLN had played in the last few years. The station was able to reflect and respond to its immediate student community when the radio station was at 13 watts. Now that CKLN has moved to 150 watts it is able to deal with a broader community and its interaction with the student community. Adam moved from this brief overview to state that radio is, in his opinion, more powerful than television and that trying to get on public tele-

vision was too difficult. He felt that, in order to affect society efficiently, the producers should use radio.

Nick Ketchum spoke from his vantage point of spending eight months at the CRTC. The CRTC does not know, at this time, what the independent producers may be after. The CRTC does have a low-power TV policy which is likely to be applicable only to remote or underserved areas. But this policy does not remove the possibility of a license being granted for a low-power station in an urban setting. This could be an option for independent producers. It could be the answer to all the problems of access to broadcast.

The debate ensued, with Susan Crean noting that the CRTC's betrayal of its basic mandate and its broken promises are apparent on every hand. The CRTC allows licensed stations who have decided to leave the industry to sell out their station and license. This is "trafficking in public property" and is a betrayal of the Canadian public. It is a public problem and should be dealt with. The CRTC's mandate continues to broaden but serves the public less and less. The power for all these manoeuvres is in back rooms on Parliament Hill.

Paul Wong noted that the CRTC is reluctant to withdraw licenses from a station once they are established because the station itself becomes a political beast intent upon its own survival. And in fact, it does not seem to matter how far away from servicing the community the stations might go — they still have their license renewed. They use the air time to strengthen their own image.

Susan Crean noted that this is a time of low ebb, that there is a lack of challenge, and the private sector is fast running out of ideas. The television industry needs to be turned upside down. It could do something quite different — get rid of commercials, change the industry's economic base and figure out a different way to fund television...

Someone in the audience suggested that we might form a pirate TV station as a solution to broadcast access... ●

Pat Wilson

¹Media Alliance is a non-profit membership organization whose purposes are to assist artists and independent producers in accessing state-of-the-art production equipment, funds for production and the support system necessary for getting works on broadcast.

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WINTER 86/87

ARLENE MANTLE:

The Singer & The Song

Photograph by Carole Conde and Karl Beveridge



by
PAT WILSON

IN JULY, 1986 I WAS APPROACHED BY ON THE LINE Music Collective. Arlene Mantle and Jayne Walker wanted me to work with the collective on a series of songwriting sessions and assist in the production of a major album of Arlene's political and solidarity music. I decided to work with them because I knew Arlene's work as a popular educator, having seen her in 1985 at an Adidas workers songwriting session. I also knew of her history and her work with a very large community of sole-support mothers and labour union activists. As I am part of the community Arlene works with, it felt very natural coming on line to work with the music collective. I have never regretted my decision.

Through working with Arlene and Jayne I have not only been reminded of my own grassroots but also have been privy to meetings of important women from across the nation, women who form the roots of the Canadian working class and women who are invisible by fact of their community being poor, immigrant, or disenfranchised. Having seen Arlene working with her friends for change, I am reminded of the power of alliances, and that important change begins here at the grassroots.

WINTER 86/87

FUSE

The Singer & The Song

Early Years

AS A YOUNG GIRL, ARLENE, REARED IN HAMILTON, played football, hockey, wrote poetry, swam with the Aquatic club (winning many medals), and played clarinet and baritone sax in the high school band. She was taught "never to question" the teachers, but her natural curiosity drove her to relentlessly question authority. She left school early due to her general restlessness and disillusionment.

Shortly after Arlene left school her mother died and her father and brother moved in with relatives. Arlene joined the Air Force in hopes of training as a medical aide. Instead she was put in charge of troops as a "disciplinarian." In this role she called drill routines. "...And I thought, who needs it?" said Arlene. She was on the road again.

House on Haunted Hill

IT WAS ABOUT 1953 WHEN ARLENE LEFT ORANGEVILLE and stayed at the Elmwood Hotel in Toronto, a residence for women. She proceeded to find work at Superior Electric Supply in the daytime, and at the Rio Theatre, as cashier, in the evening. Early in 1959, she was introduced to a man who had just finished a 'hitch' in the Air Force. They married one month later. On their wedding day, they went to the movies and saw *House on Haunted Hill*. As she says now, half-jokingly, "It was an omen of what was to come."

First Guitar

AFTER THE BIRTHS OF HER FIRST TWO SONS, Arlene left her husband for a while and shared a place with a woman friend who bought her a guitar. She began playing and practicing country and western favourites, hanging out at various bars and hotels like the Drake, the Edgewater and the Claremont. She was constantly practicing the guitar and studying songs by country and western singers, and beginning to write poetry and work it into lyrical arrangements. She then began performing at the Edgewater and the Drake.

Arlene continued to work the country and western bars, dressed in western clothes: hot pants, white go-go boots and fringed satin western shirts. She was playing the out-of-town circuit by now — places like Kapuskasing and Kirkland Lake. She was the sole support of the children, her husband and sometimes his brother.

In 1965, the entire family moved from downtown Toronto to an apartment in Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) at Jane and Sheppard. Arlene spotted an ad in the paper and contacted Bill Legere, and together they worked the upstairs lounge of the Spadina Hotel. He did the jokes and Arlene sang and played. They worked the Cloverleaf Hotel for four weeks and then went on to Wawa, in Northern Ontario. They worked together for about a year before Bill decided to become Arlene's agent. Arlene continued to play small bars across Ontario, singing country and western songs, backing up go-go dancers, and doing whatever was available.

Lyricist/Composer

ARLENE BEGAN WRITING A LOT OF COUNTRY tunes and became registered with BMI (now PROCAN), a copyright association. Many country and western singers began to request permission to make recordings of Arlene's songs. Bev Barker recorded "Just a Good Time Girl." Diane Lee recorded "Christmas in the City," Honey West and Lynn Jones did "Moods of My Man," Donna Ramsay "Not So Far Away," and Honey West "Country Soul." "Country Soul" was also released as an instrumental, honky-tonk piano piece by Bobby Munro. "Moods of My Man" was released as a full orchestral arrangement. These royalties helped pay the rent.

In 1967-68 Arlene was approached by Art Snider and together they produced a country and western album called *Games People Play*. This album included five original tunes by Arlene.

In 1969 Arlene was invited to the BMI Song Writers Awards dinner at the Royal York roof garden in order to receive an award for "Just A Good Time Girl." The irony of the situation was bitterly apparent as she was supporting a family of seven (by this time the twins had been born) on her earnings as a performer/musician. She was, of course, broke, and said she "...spent more money on the clothes for the dinner than I ever made on royalties from the song."

By 1971, the marriage was finished and her husband gone. Arlene continued the bar circuit until 1972, when she hung up her guitar and quit entertainment. Arlene Mantle was to return to singing and songwriting three years later, as a powerful advocate of the poor, of labour unions and the lesbian feminist community.

Political and Musical Development

WHEN ARLENE LIVED IN OHC SHE WOULD GO TO bingo, hang out, play her guitar on the patio and talk to other women about the problems of being poor. She lived around the Jane-Finch area, dealt with a gamut of social workers, some bad, some good. One suggested she return to school. Arlene registered at Atkinson College, York University in 1975 and completed 4 courses. One was Poverty and Social Change, and it was through this course that Arlene began to understand international connections in terms of the poor classes of the world, reasons for poverty, and possible strategies for change.

In the early 70's Arlene met Katie Hayhurst, Alderman for Ward 3, North York, and became deeply involved in the Reform Metro Campaign. Katie Hayhurst explained city politics to Arlene; Arlene taught Katie guitar. Out of their collaborations came a slide/sound show intended to defeat developers who were attempting to put up five more high-rise towers in the Jane-Finch area, an area already desperately over-crowded. Katie put together the visuals, Arlene the narration and music. The song was "Mister, Don't Build Me No Highrise":

Hey Mister, don't build me no highrise,
I want a big swimming pool.
And classrooms that aren't overcrowded
When I'm old enough to go to school.

Arlene was later to work with Katie on a commission by the Women's Institute of Wellington County to narrate a slide show and write a song for the *History of Rural Women*. Out of this came the song "Patches of the Past." Shortly after that came "Women Without Choice," written for a video show about welfare women in public housing developments.

Arlene was commissioned to work with the Faces of Etobicoke, a multi-cultural festival held in 1974. She was involved in therapy at the time and met women who later brought her to edit the newsletter at the women's centre at Humber College. It was International Women's Year and the Group on the Grass, an ad hoc group raising funds for women's events was formed and Arlene was a founding member. This group ran Sunday evening performances at St. Paul's Church on Avenue Road, and called themselves the Bread and Roses Coffee House. This group later became the Women's Fund Raising Coalition.

In 1980, Deb Barndt of the Art and Popular Media Coop — a group formed by downtown community groups including English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers from the Participatory Research Group (PRG), musicians, community workers, artists and photographers — was planning a two-day event to raise money for Nicaragua. This included a festival called Songs of Struggle and Celebration and an all-day Songs for People Workshop. Deb Barndt asked Arlene to perform at the festival and to facilitate a songwriting session at Scadding Community Centre. The song created at the Songs for People Workshop was "Rosie's Song:"

Whiter than white, cleaner than clean,
What does all this advertising mean?

In April and again in November of 1982 Arlene worked with the United Steel Workers of America Union, District 6, at Chaffey's Locks, Ontario. Out of these two songwriting sessions came: "The Robots are Coming," and "Women of Steel." Arlene received a standing ovation at the banquet held for the workers after the sessions. The powerful sharing by the men, in their sessions, of their real fears of new technology produced "The Robots Are Coming." Says Arlene, "they were no longer able to visualize themselves in the workplace..." This song clearly states that the adversary is the company, not the technology:

We won't take lip thru' a micro-chip
Our union is the only way
The power of the union is here to stay.

"Women of Steel" was written mostly with women, in an equal partners course, and is dedicated to the women of Irwin Toy who fought so hard and long for their first contract.

In 1983, the Participatory Research Group, a Toronto-based group of adult educators, requested that Arlene do



TOP: Arlene's first songwriting session at Scadding Court Community Centre, 1981



BOTTOM: On the picket line at Algonquin College with NUPGE workers, 1983.

Courtesy of On The Line Music Collective

The Singer & The Song

a collective songwriting session with its members. From two evenings of discussions about the rising of the Right, the Right-to-Lifers, and the infamous 'bathhouse raids' came the song "Smash the Right:"

All around the Right is risin',
People we need organizin'.
Smash the Right is our song,
Because we know that the Right is Wrong.

In 1983 Arlene facilitated several other song writing sessions which produced "We've Always Had the Sense," "Forget-Me-Not (A Layoff Lament)," and "We Hold Up Half the Sky." "We've Always Had the Sense" was written by women from the Women's History Course, Humber College Labour Studies Program. "Forget-Me-Not" was written with trade union organizers who were concerned by the fact that union members, once laid-off, are often forgotten by their unions. "We Hold Up Half the Sky" was written in Paris.

As songwriting sessions increased between 1980 and 1983, so did the commissions from community groups, labour and solidarity groups. Much of Arlene's work for the poor is as a volunteer. But some work is commissioned, for example, a song for a videotape, *Making Changes*, for the Cross Cultural Communications Centre, a song for a cable show on violence against women for the Rape Crisis Centre, a song for the premiere of Laura Sky's film *Moving Mountains* (1981) for the United Steelworkers Union, and the theme song for Laura's film *Good Monday Morning* (1983) for the National Union of Provincial Government Workers.

Labour Union and Solidarity Work

AS MENTIONED, ARLENE'S FIRST SOLIDARITY work was at a benefit concert for Nicaragua in 1980. She appeared that evening on the program with Los Compañeros and the Gayap Rhythm Drummers. She continued to do benefit concerts that year for Regent Park Teen Association, the Regent Park Recreation Fund and the Vancouver El Salvador Support Group. Her work with community, solidarity and union groups all across Canada was to burgeon that year and grow at such a pace that Arlene would travel over 150,000 miles between 1981 and 1986.

Arlene also worked with *Sistren*, a performance group from Kingston, Jamaica, which was a poor women's theatre collective. This group of women had studied with Honor Ford-Smith at the Jamaica School of Drama. When they came to tour Canada in 1981, Arlene became friends with them and drove the truck that moved them and their equipment on their Canadian tour.

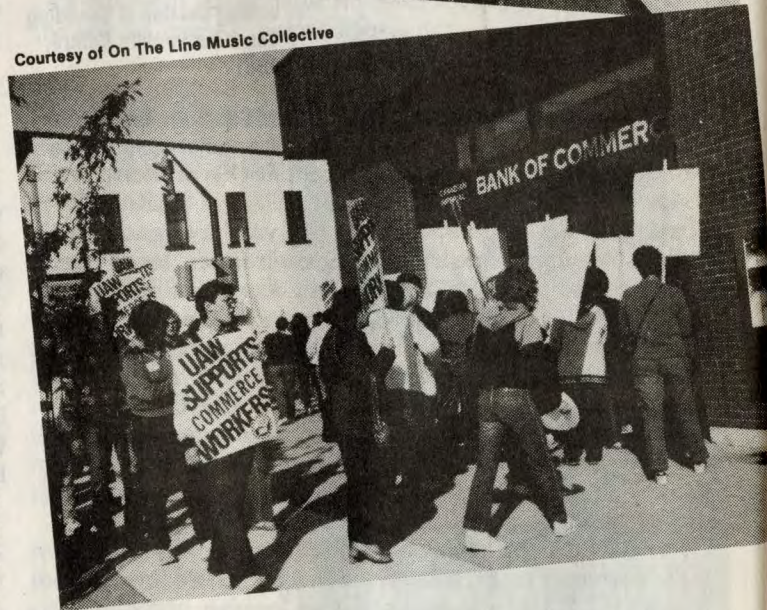
Simultaneously with her benefit concert work and her songwriting sessions with community groups, she began to network with artists, Native and Canadian, and labour representatives. It was through Deb Barndt that she



Still from video *To Pick Is Not to Choose*



Courtesy of On The Line Music Collective



Courtesy of On The Line Music Collective

TOP: Image from video tape *To Pick Is Not to Choose* by John Greyson for Tolpuddle Labour Information Centre, 1985.
MIDDLE: With *Sistren*, a poor women's theatre collective from Kingston, Jamaica, 1981.
BOTTOM: Visa Strikers, Imperial Bank of Commerce, Port Elgin, Ontario, 1985. Information picket.

would meet D'Arcy Martin, then Canadian Educational Director for the United Steel Workers. He asked her if she would like to do the music for a slide show concerning Bill 70 to facilitate education of workers to their right to refuse unsafe work.

In 1981, Arlene worked for the Participatory Research Group. She worked there for a year and during that time met Naomi Wall. Naomi is an activist in the women's movement, the solidarity movement and is a member of the *Red Berets*, a Toronto-based Socialist feminist singing group. Naomi and Arlene became good friends. Arlene joined the *Red Berets*, and sang and worked with them briefly.

Sole-Support Mothers/Regent Park

IN 1981, FRANK DREA, THEN MINISTER OF SOCIAL Services, suggested that Family Benefit Allowances (FBA) be transferred from the provincial to the metropolitan jurisdiction. Immediately Neighbourhood Legal Services set up a public information forum. Arlene was invited to sing. Union representatives from the Ontario Public Service Employees Union and the sole-support mothers were present. The union presented its argument against the "transfer." Jim Clancy, a worker at the time with Social Services and a unionist, presented the union's point of view. In the process he suggested that sole-support mothers should not lean too heavily on their social workers during the turmoil made by the transfer proposal. Arlene spoke up, noting that if "the workers are the caring fingers of what is essentially a corrupt body that serves us so poorly, then the worker is the first point where the recipient can lean. You cannot deny us this...."

As a sole-support mother with little money, Arlene felt compelled to continue speaking up. After this meeting, two women from Regent Park asked Arlene if she would come and explain the dangers involved in the suggested FBA transfers. Arlene agreed. After doing research, she met with 30 women at Regent Park. From that meeting the core of the Regent Park and Area Sole Support Mothers Group (RPSSMG) was forged. This group became a powerful and noisy lobby group that helps sole-support mothers in Regent Park and area. They have helped organize a Regent Park gardening group, distribution of food, and are presently lobbying for reduced-rate TTC passes for welfare recipients.

Arlene continued (after the defeat of the "transfers") to work with the RPSSMG. She still takes personal responsibility, contributes by singing, organizing, gathering information and networking with Central Neighborhood House, St. Christopher's House, Contact School, and other community groups.

In 1984, Arlene, Naomi Wall and Maria Theresa Larrain proposed that the International Women's Day Committee (IWDC) try reaching out to communities of poor Hispanic and immigrant women in a different way. They decided to spend time in those communities, learning from the women what their issues were and then working together to plan an event within the community around those issues. The RPSSMG put on an evening of skits, panel discussions and entertainment, which was

documented in a videotape by Phyllis Waugh entitled *Growing Together*. The event was well-attended by the immigrant and poor communities though the broader feminist community did not participate.

Union Work/Women's Work

WHILE ARLENE WAS WORKING WITH REGENT Park Sole Support Mothers, she was also working with unions and was acutely aware of how many trade unionists were losing jobs and were on welfare. She knew it was important that poor women work with unions because of the strength inherent in that coalition. It was a natural extension of her personal struggle and the struggle of the poor to connect with the unions. The enemy was the same.

This was most apparent in B.C. where Arlene worked with the British Columbia Government Employees Union (BCGEU). She visited for two weeks in 1983 and saw welfare recipients on picket lines with welfare workers. While there she talked to people, went to strike lines, rallies, concerts and meetings and wrote a song in New Westminster with the Solidarity Coalition. The song was "The People Say No":

The People say no, the People say no.
The Socreds gotta go
Cause the people say no.

Arlene has worked with most of the unions, either at women's conferences, in songwriting sessions or in concert, on picket lines and at rallies. Some examples are: the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), Ontario Public Services Employees Union (OPSEU), the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the United Steel Workers (USW), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL).¹

Arlene also works with or for unions by producing special music. She produced a song for the retirement of Grace Hartman (CUPE) called "Union Women Be Strong" (1984), did a workshop with the United Steel Workers Women producing "VDT Blues" (1982), attended workshops at Port Elgin with women of the CAW producing "Equal Partners for Change" (1983), produced the theme song "To Pick Is Not to Choose" (1985), for John Greyson's videotape on the farm workers of southern Ontario for the Tolpuddle Labour Information Centre.

Arlene Mantle and the On The Line Music Collective also worked with the Eaton's department store strikers during the bitter strike of the winter of '85. Jayne Walker, a dedicated member of the collective, sat on the Eaton's Strike Support Committee. Emma Productions made a videotape about the Eaton's strike entitled *No Small Change*. The title song by Arlene is "Mean Ole Eaton Blues."

¹Union list continued: Organized Working Women (OWW) for Equal Pay and Affirmative Action Conference, Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers Federation (OSSTF) for Status of Women's Conference, Canada Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU) for a Women's Conference, NDP's Women's Equality conference, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, the Paperworkers Union, Irwin Toy Workers Union (USWA), the Library Workers (CUPE), the Postal Workers Union, the British Columbia Government Employees Union (BCGEU), and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Alberta and Toronto.

The Singer & The Song

In the coming year Arlene and On The Line Music Collective were to show up at many picket lines including those of the UFCW in Edmonton and Calgary and those in front of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce during the Visa workers' strike (Port Elgin and Toronto). In the summer of '86, Arlene made a swing to Edmonton and Calgary to support the strike by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) against the Gainers meat plant owned by Peter Pocklington. She met with a group of strikers there, arranged for a songwriting session in a church near the Gainers plant and together she and the strikers produced "The Battle of 66 St." The following day they made copies of the song and held an impromptu concert with Arlene singing from the back of a pick-up truck in front of the Gainers plant. There were 100 strikers present. A provincial injunction had been issued that "no more than groups of three are allowed in front of the Gainers plant." When the police arrived they allowed the demonstrators, magnanimously, fifteen minutes to wrap it up. On this occasion, the use of a PA system and the number of people present became part of a contempt citation against the union.

Arlene, recognizing what a bitter and expensive strike the UFCW was involved in, came back to Toronto and with the On The Line Music Collective produced a single of "The Battle of 66 St." Arlene and Jayne Walker volunteered their time and Arlene her music. The record is now being sold by the UFCW to support the Gainers strike.²

Paris

IN 1982, BUD HALL INVITED ARLENE TO PERFORM at the opening ceremonies, and direct a songwriting session at the International Council for Adult Education which was being held in Paris. The International Council could not pay her flight, only housing and a per diem. With the Council's assistance and with help from the community, Arlene managed to raise her airfare.

The incongruities of her trip became more apparent on reaching Paris. There were no grassroots people at the conference, only educators. Arlene was singing to the middle class for no pay. And, as she says now, "I would sing for the poor in any country, anytime, but I would not sing again for free for the middle class, anywhere. I lose sense of myself as a worker."

Arlene did pull a golden moment of victory (as always) out of a less-than-ideal situation. She facilitated a songwriting session for the women's caucus and the song "We Hold Up Half The Sky," dealing with women's invisibility in all classes, was presented at the plenary session:

You said man and he
But where were we?
Women who hold up half the sky.
You said man and he
But where were we?
We were invisible, we were unheard.
And, we know why.

On her way to Paris, Arlene had stopped off in Brixton, England, hung out, visited community centres and met with poor women there to compare notes on problems of survival and solutions developed within the communities. After Paris, Arlene went on to Sweden with a representative from the Conference who had invited her to visit the Folk high school system in Göteborg, Sweden. There, she visited the Women's House, sang songs, and travelled to the University of Linköping to do a collective songwriting session with teachers of the Folk School (adult education).

Chile

IN 1983, THE CONGRESS OF ARTISTS AND CULTURAL Workers, Chile, contacted solidarity representatives in Toronto at the Trojan Horse requesting a Canadian performer who sang political music about Canada. From the list suggested by the Trojan Horse, Arlene Mantle and Bruce Cockburn were able to go. They flew down together.

While Arlene was there she met with artists, musicians, teachers, students and the people of Santiago. She interviewed people from the Commission Against Torture, the Mothers of the Disappeared, the Committee for the Return of Exiles and also Chilean feminists. She came back with 30 hours of interviews and over 900 slides of the 'tomas' (squatters' villages), 'pobliciones' (the shantytowns — once government housing until the government gave up that responsibility in 1981), the people in the resistance, the evenings of entertainment dedicated to the people's struggle and of 'pacos' (police) in downtown Santiago. Arlene, Jayne Walker, Joe and Terry Jackman put together a Chilean slide/sound show that has been shown to the solidarity and women's communities five times in Toronto. Arlene's song "Maná es Ahorá" and the slide show reflect the suffering of the people of Chile as well as their grim determination and solidarity in the face of a horrifying military regime and desperate poverty.

Facilitator/Educator

ARLENE'S WORK IN THE SONGWRITING SESSIONS, her hours of talking to grassroots people and being intimately involved with their issues, led her to develop a particular notion of popular education. Arlene's method of creating a collaborative song is firmly based in her belief that, "The community has within it all the expertise and ability to identify, analyze, strategize, and to take action around their own issues. When I do songwriting sessions I come in as a facilitator and help with identification. Once a group is aware of their situation through discussion, and is aware of the collective nature of its oppression, the people can go from there themselves. Sometimes they may need specific information from outside, but not education about their own reality. Popular education is confrontational. The process leads to making changes. The rich and

Photograph by Pablo Veldiviva



TOP: Toma de terrenos, November, 1983.
BOTTOM: L to R — Gilles Cholette, Jane Ellenton, Tony Quarrington, Jayne Walker, Arlene Mantle, Lynn Mantle, Kevin Cooke, Marilyn Lerner.



Photograph by Carole Conde and Karl Beveridge

powerful don't need popular education. They have board meetings."

Because people at rallies, picket lines and union conferences were requesting access to the songs being produced across the country by unions and women's communities, Arlene and Jayne started the On The Line Music Collective, and began production of the people's songs in book and cassette format. The On The Line music book and cassette were published in late 1983 with assistance (music and graphics) from Rick Fielding. *Voices of Struggle* was produced in cassette in 1984.

Class Act

IT BECAME APPARENT TO ARLENE IN 1984-85, AFTER eight years of travelling to picket lines, rallies and songwriting sessions, that she had wide support in the working membership of the unions. But the support evidenced in the grassroots was not reflected in any ongoing way in leadership decisions of most of the major unions, particularly in Ontario.

Arlene was praised for her volunteer work but when convention time rolled around, the larger unions would hire bands or performers with a high media profile. Often these bands or performers had no political commitment to the issues pertinent to the working class.

Arlene recognized this as a serious problem. She realized she needed to command a larger forum in which to showcase the people's songs of struggle. She realized she must find ways to support her work so she could continue producing music with and for the working and poor people of the country. Somehow she would have to figure methods by which she could increase her work with the unions.

Subsequent to this analysis, Arlene and On The Line began (January '86) production of a major album of songs of struggle, many of which are women's songs. The album was completed and released on November 23, 1986.

Coverage by the press and the media has begun. In time, Arlene and On The Line will see if the initial response to the album will become a factor in their relationship with the union leadership and future jobs within the union movement. If being a "bona fide" performer is a prerequisite for being able to work in the union and if producing a professional album is considered a serious statement of artistic commitment, then possibly the unions will recognize Arlene as the rich resource person that she is.

On the other hand, Arlene is not a 'reformist.' She does not believe — and it is obvious in her songs — that one can reform the system within which the poor attempt to exist. Consequently, her work and her analysis takes her into dangerous territory. Not all unions want to hear criticism of policies adopted that are detrimental to the workers — or about the policies not adopted that are even more detrimental to workers. Arlene is noted for her blunt and outspoken manner whenever the worker is betrayed in negotiations — whenever the unions forget their workers after lay-off. It is this honesty that assures her a place in the memory of the worker. It is this same honesty that makes the union leadership coy.

Pat Wilson

²"The Battle of 66th St" is available through the UFCW and On The Line Music Collective. All proceeds to the UFCW.

Journal Entries Against Reaction

MARLENE NOURBESE PHILIP

Day one

We bleed therefore we are. That, in opposition to Cartesian philosophy which would have us believe that something as simple and reflexive as thinking proves our existence. Surely only a man — a white male at that — could have suggested that. Images that confront me daily in the media suggest that for 'the others' — Blacks, people of colour, Native people, women, gays — my philosophical aphorism is a more accurate one: we bleed therefore we are. We have, after all, been thinking (and plotting revolutions) ever since we were; much of the time it appears that we still are not. I know I take liberties with Descartes' philosophical maxim, but for me it is not only rooted in the certainty of doubt but also in a patriarchal matrix. I think therefore I am. Only a man.

Day two

"The first impulse of the Black man (sic) is to say no to those who attempt to build a definition of him. It is understandable that the first action of the Black man is a reaction..." (Frantz Fanon) Much the same may be said of women — their first action a reaction to those who "build definitions" of them. It is difficult not to react — as female, as Black, when much around conspires against these very realities. And why shouldn't one react?

Day three

There is nothing wrong with reacting. We must. But there are dangers for the

writer who has roots in these twin realities — Blackness and femaleness. The danger is that one's writing could easily become persistently reactive. Can writing which is always reactive ever succeed beyond the immediate

NOTES FROM THE MARGIN

and particular — can it ever be more than a rallying cry to action? Should it be more? or less? or different? Rallying cries are absolutely imperative. But if we write constantly from a reactive position, are we not still responding to someone else's agenda?

Day four

The white male thinks therefore is. He seldom, if ever, says or needs to say I am; I am white: I am male: I am human. Everything around him conspires to transform mere attributes into qualities synonymous with privilege. So, we might say, all this is hackneyed and old hat — we are, after all, in the age of post-feminism. But it — the issue — crashes in against writing which is rooted in the word — "the 'paternal Word' sustained by a fight to the death between the two races (men/women)." (Kristeva) Not to mention the father tongues imposed on us — the colonized peoples of colour.

Day five

The Black female writer faces a conundrum. Implicit in the qualities of white maleness is a denial — at times more explicit than at others — of all that she is and represents. She must respond and react. The conundrum: how to transform what is essentially a response and a reaction to a statement of denial, into its own first statement.

Day six

To transform writing from reaction to statement. To oppose Woman to Man, according to Kristeva, is to impose a "fixed sexual identity which is counter-productive to understanding and action." Woman is not a reaction to Man; she is not a response. She is her own first statement. Black is not a reaction or response to White; it is its own first statement. Am I only Black and female, if you are white and male: I think therefore I am — Black and female.

Day seven

The challenge for me as I write is how to make the response or reaction into a statement, given an environment that continually forces one into a reactive position. How to convert the mere attributes of Blackness and femaleness into first statements or principles. Or are feminism and Black consciousness but moments, spasms in the history of mankind.

Day eight

I am. Not in defiance and response to your pretending otherwise. But because I am. Not because I bleed, unless you bleed with me. But because I think. I demand the utter luxury and privilege of claiming existence merely by virtue of my thoughts. They have not been sufficient to date. Not even my blood. Impossible. Is this possible? Probably not in our time. But as I write, I am constantly establishing myself, my being, my reality. As centre, not other. What will I write that is new. (This echoes a question of Kristeva about women: what will they write that is new?)

Day nine

A Caucasianist (as in Africanist): a specialist (not by choice) in Caucasian affairs. I once introduced myself at a poetry reading this way — "a Caucasianist." A stab at the constant imposition of the white Western expert on the rest of the world's peoples. We who have lived in the belly of the whale — shark is maybe more accurate a symbol — for so long, surely we best know

its internal workings; surely we are the true experts. One ridiculous attempt at positioning myself at centre, not periphery. There are more serious attempts: developing a language more attuned to expressing my reality; creating written forms of the demotic languages of the Caribbean — in which I am most at home — as in Heidegger's sense of language being the house of being; 'playing with' language to arrive at that place where life and death meet within the language. Language — symbol of death and life for me. To arrive at the centre. To write from the centre.

Day ten

There is no law against dreaming. So writes Winnie Mandela. Dreaming; the imagination — the one faculty of the human that can resist colonization. To construct imaginative and poetic worlds as if we were at the centre. To design imaginative and poetic scapes with us at the centre. We speak from the centre and are whole.

Day eleven

How to transform response into statement? Transformation: metamorphosis. Metamorphosis: the action or process of changing in form or substance esp., by magic or witchcraft. Transubstantiation: the changing of one substance into another.

Day twelve

Call and response. An African art form. Together the call and the response make up the whole expression or the expression of the whole. Denial and response. They can never be together; they are mutually exclusive.

Day thirteen

We are, however, more than the sum of all our parts. To believe that our reality is circumscribed by the word, Black or female, is to connive and collude in our own prisons. But. But. But.

Marlene Nourbese Philip



Pat Jefferies

MINORITY VOICES

by Andrew Lee

Andrew Lee is the owner of Second Wave Books on Asia, 968 Queen St. W., Toronto M6J 1G8. (416) 532-3727. The bookstore holds a monthly reading series with minority writers.

ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY OF our reading material comes from transnational publishing corporations based in the United States and the U.K., it does not explain the underrepresentation of written books by minority Canadian writers in the mainstream media. Book reviewers and editors have argued that they operate on merit systems, and not on quota systems, implying that these works just do not meet the calibre of their publications and attentions. This is compounded by the fact that most publishers deem minority works not to be of general interest, which leads to limited efforts in promotion and distribution.

On the one hand, publishers are reluctant to bankroll minority projects due to a limited market. On the other hand, book reviewers tend to overlook them due to their lack of interest. Against such odds, one wonders how minority stories ever get told at all.

But they do, quite a few of them. They are generally published with the assistance of government subsidies. Aside from the regular channels, publishers are also eligible for grants made available through various minority

funding agencies. It is the lack of attention and distribution that prevents these titles from reaching a wider readership. In other words, in a way quite synonymous with the physical presence of minorities, the existence of these works is ignored by the status quo.

Writers of Japanese and Chinese descent in Canada fall squarely into this spectrum of minority works. For the reason of availability, I have limited my discussion to titles that are still in print. Within this context, I will be looking at 23 titles, published mainly in the past ten years.

They can be roughly divided into four categories, namely: documentation, personal accounts, children's writing and creative writing.

Documentation

THE DOCUMENTATION IS OFTEN a factual and statistical account of historical events. Ken Adachi's *The Enemy that Never Was — A History of the Japanese Canadians* (1976, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto) heads the list. Adachi wrote, "...the resultant work is an attempt to indicate, with as

much documentation as possible, what it was like to have immigrated to Canada, or to have been born in this country as a member of an unpopular minority group." It is in this vein that Adachi started his painstaking journey into the seemingly endless realms of archival material, in order to set the record straight.

To a lesser extent, *From China to Canada — A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (1982, McClelland & Stewart) follows the same route. Its editor, Edgar Wickberg wrote, "We have attempted to present a view of Chinese Canadian history from what is at least in part a Chinese perspective...using view points derived from Chinese sources."

In *Gold Mountain—the Chinese in the New World* (1983, New Star, Vancouver), Anthony B. Chan takes a different perspective. He examines the minority situation in the light of race and class analysis. Chan wrote, "While white prostitution in Victoria outnumbered Chinese prostitutes 150 to 4 in 1902, the presence of Chinese prostitutes once again symbolized a separation of the races." It is to date the

Courtesy of Public Archives of Canada



LEFT: Image from *The Enemy That Never Was* by Ken Adachi. Damage to grocery store on Powell St. during 1907 anti-oriental riot in Vancouver.

OVERLEAF: Image from *The Politics of Racism* by Ann Gomer Sunahara. A worker in the Burmis Lumber Camp bunkhouse.

most pointed discussion on the Chinese as a minority group.

Nikkei¹ Legacy (1983, NC Press, Toronto) by Toyo Takata gives an overview of the development of Japanese communities across the country. Its documentation of personalities and events makes it a valuable source book on social history.

A fifth title, *A Dream of Riches — the Japanese Canadian 1877-1977* (1978, Japanese-Canadian Centennial Project, Vancouver) is a tri-lingual (English, French, Japanese) pictorial history that chronicles the first centennial of the community. In a similar fashion, *Gumsan² — Images of Gold Mountain 1886-1947* (1985, Vancouver Art Gallery) tells the story of the Chinese in British Columbia through photographs.

If the purpose of documentation is to set the record straight, with the publication of these books, the stage is set for more detailed accounts. Ann Gomer

Sunahara's *The Politics of Racism — The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War* (1981, Lorimer, Toronto) tells the distinct story of forced relocation and internment. But she also offered an explanation, "...government documents demonstrate that each order-in-council under the War Measures Act that affected Japanese Canadians — uprooting, confinement, dispossession, deportation and dispersal — was motivated by political considerations rooted in racist traditions accepted, and indeed encouraged, by persons within the government of the day."

Personal Accounts

TO COMPLEMENT SUNAHARA'S pointed revelations, the following personal accounts reiterate this collective torment on an individual level. Muriel Kitagawa's *This is My Own — Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians 1941-1948* (1986, Talon, Vancouver) describes life in the Hastings Park Livestock Building in Vancouver and her subsequent relocation to southern Ontario. Through her elo-

quent writing, we get a glimpse of the racist tactics employed. She writes, "The Chinese are forced to wear huge buttons and plates and even placards to tell the hakuji³ the difference between one yellow peril from another. Or else they would be beaten up."

Based on his diaries, tanka⁴ poet Takeo Ujo Nakano traces his own experience in *Within the Barbed Wire Fence — A Japanese Man's Account of His Internment in Canada* (1980, University of Toronto Press). His vivid descriptions of imprisonment, punctuated with thoughtful reflections, can be best summed up in tanka verses like, "Faintly plashing, / Waves hit the shore / Beneath the floorboards. / Windowless walls, / Yet that penetrating sound."

In *We Went to War* (1984, Canada's Wing, Stittsville, Ont.), Roy Ito tells the story of the Japanese Canadians who volunteered during the first and second world wars. He gives an impassioned account of the men and women who

¹Nikkei: Japanese word meaning "Japanese Canadians"

²Gumsan: Term used by Chinese immigrants to describe North America, means "gold mountain"

³Hakuji: Japanese word meaning people who are "non-Japanese"

⁴Tanka: Japanese poetry form containing 31 syllables arranged in five lines of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7 syllables.



Yuichi Kogawa

strived to obtain franchise, and thus full equal citizen's rights, by fighting for their country. Ironically, it was the political climate at home that impeded them from obtaining their franchise until September 1948, five months after the Japanese Canadians were allowed to move back to reclaim their properties in the coastal regions of British Columbia.

Fighting inequality in another arena is the life story of a Japanese fisherman, Ryuichi Yoshida. In the book *A Man of Our Times* (1976, New Star), authors Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi tell the heroic story of Yoshida, who fought racism and exploitation against segregated unions and magnates in the fishing industry.

*Issei*⁵ (1984, NC Press) by Gordon G. Nakayama is a unique collection of biographies of first generation Japanese Canadians. Written in the form of an oral history, it captures the spirit of the once vibrant, cohesive community.

Books for Children

IN THE AREA OF CHILDREN'S writing, both Joy Kogawa's *Naomi's Road* (1986, Oxford University Press) and Shizuye Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp* (1971, Tundra, Montreal) give vivid accounts of the internment/relocation experience from a child's viewpoint. While Takashima confronts all aspects of internment, *Naomi's Road* leads to personal growth through calm perseverance.

⁵Issei: Japanese word for "first generation Japanese Canadians"

Vancouver seems to be the focal point of children's writing among Chinese Canadians. Sing Lim's *West Coast Chinese Boy* (1978, Tundra) traces the author's memories of Chinatown in the 1920's. It is a story of cultural interaction among all minority groups in the downtown area. Along the same line comes Paul Yee's first book, *Teach Me to Fly, Skyfighter!* (1984, Lorimer). Set among five schoolmates of various backgrounds who live in the downtown Strathcona neighbourhood, this collection of short stories tells the tale of racial harmony among inner city kids. Yee's second book *The Curses of Third Uncle* (1986, Lorimer) tells the story of a courageous teenage girl asserting her rights in the Chinatown setting at the turn of the century.

Creative Writing

VANCOUVER IS THE SITE OF another unusual piece of minority writing, in this case, a stage play. R.A. Shiomi's *Yellow Fever* (1984, Playwrights Canada) stares right into the eyes of the neo-fascist climate of the early seventies. It also brings out the harsh reality of a skeletal community that was once vibrant.

There is no lack of vitality and creativity among poets of Asian descent. The poetry of Joy Kogawa needs no introduction since she is now in the Order of Canada, but it was her novel *Obasan* (1981, Lester Orpen Dennys; now in Penguin Books) that gained her accessibility to mainstream

readers. In her latest collection, *Woman in the Woods* (1985, Mosaic, Oakville, Ont.) along with her serene imagery, she has given us a hard-edge perception of being a minority. In a poem titled "May 3, 1981" she wrote:

I'm watching the flapping
green ferry flag on the
way to Victoria—
the white dogwood flower
centred by a yellow dot.

A small yellow dot
in a B.C. ferry boat—

In the Vancouver Daily Province
a headline today reads
"Western Canada Hatred
Due to Racism."

Ah my British
British Columbia, my
first brief home.

Along with twelve other poets, Kogawa's work was also collected in *paper door — an anthology of Japanese-canadian poetry* (1982, Coach House, Toronto), edited by Gerry Shikatani and David Aylward. It is a project that unites Japanese poets from all disciplines, thereby providing the self-perception of continuity and cultural integrity that is vital to minority groups.

Shikatani's works, in the fine tradition of prairie/west coast poet Roy Kiyooka, is about active involvement. He wrote, "Writing is only one type of action, that, like others, must be in service to compassion." *A Sparrow's Food* (1984, Coach House) paints an articulate picture of life the way it is actually lived.

Prairie writer Fred Wah is the only published poet of Chinese descent, and he won the Governor General's medal for poetry in 1985. In his latest collection, *Waiting for Saskatchewan* (1986, Turnstone, Winnipeg), Wah examines his minority roots.

In addition to these titles, a number of articles have appeared in the now-defunct journal, *Asianadian*. From 1978 until 1985, it provided a much-needed venue and training ground for emerging minority writers of Asian descent.

Other incubating projects include: a collection of creative writings, a book on Chinese Canadian women, an anthology of Chinese Canadian poetry and various other individual projects. ■

My Trip to New York

SARA DIAMOND

RECENTLY I WENT TO NEW YORK for the *Viewpoints* conference on women, culture and public media. It offered those in attendance a valuable overview of the independent media voices of American feminism. The panelists included American women from all over the United States, a sprinkling of Europeans and Third World women and a handful of Canadians. The event spoke both to the history of women's efforts and forms in the independent media, to the ways that women are effectively redefining their images now and to the everpresent and manipulative efforts of the consciousness industry. That the conference was a free event guaranteed a large turnout of female media consumers, young women, students and producers. As well as workshops there were screenings of clips from panelists' works. Events ran simultaneously — the following description is impressionistic, based on the panels that I attended.

While *Viewpoints* emphasized women's efforts in constructing subjecthood within alternative venues, public and private broadcast were posed primarily as locations where women are constructed as 'other.' The first framework allowed a broad array of production to be described and explored within the limited two-day time frame. Alternative production panels ranged from lesbian fictions, to low budget production, to redefining family experience and structures, to labour and technology, and to an historical view of female language in media.

Panels that analysed women's position in the mass media included those about the economics of sexism, the impact of women as cultural consumers,

the politics of "cracking the media mystique" and women as subjects and audience for right-wing media. The absence of women who have chosen to work within mass media, including PBS, was unfortunate. It made it difficult to assess the impact of feminism within the central structures of ideological control, on both workers and concepts, retaining instead the perspec-

NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE WEST

tive of the outside looking in. Mass and alternative media appeared as two opposing poles, their mutual impact on one another, both subversive and enlightening was not part of the discourse.

Despite this criticism, the conference presented a strong showing of production and thinking by the assembled women. More than any Canadian art conference that I've ever attended, women of colour were well represented on panels and as moderators. It was not a context where one or two women were made to carry the discourse about racism in an overwhelmingly white context. Nor were women of colour pressed to always address racism as an issue. They could talk about issues in their work and the work of other women that assumed their presence and vision as media producers. This may have meant, as suggested by some voices at the closing plenary, that although women of colour were present on all of the panels, there was no structured framework to deal with the specific impacts of racism and to evolve solutions to discriminatory access and related issues.

Cheryl Chisholm of the Black Women's Health Project opened the first plenary with an analysis of Black people and then Black women as cultural consumers, noting the disproportionate numbers of Blacks in the viewing audience relative to whites and the notable dearth of Black programming reflective of their lifestyles and issues. She described different readings of mass media Black images by Black viewers, for example *Amos and Andy*, described alternatively as satire about Blacks, satire about whites, overt racism, etc. She cautioned social activists against self-righteousness as a stance. Chisholm emphasized the assertive power of self-production versus the defensive position of organizing against "this word or that person."

Parminder Vir, who has worked extensively with the Greater London Council (recently abolished by the Thatcher government) spoke to the need for Black women to own and control the means of media production. She noted that Third World women have begun to produce works that give them access to a broader women's community and at times are tantamount to survival. Thus, women in India are using video to organize against dowry deaths, for example. On the same panel, Judith Williamson, also from England, argued that the left and feminism should not explore consumerism as a place of radical intervention. While it is true that women make up some 80% of consumers and that advertising is geared to them, publicity itself is unreformable. Its job is to sell within a capitalist market and it would shift to reflect changing images, but would not drop its fundamental nature. Michelle Mattelart spoke to the power of soap opera as a

form — it coincides with the domestic work cycle, encloses the unresolved narrative structure of daily life and presents emotional conflict and resolution, the feminine domain.

The "Making History" panel included speakers whose work spans very different styles, yet the panelists judiciously validated work that was experimental, narrative or documentary. The central theme was the importance of constituting women as subject. Yvonne Rainer has done this through removing her female character's image from the screen but retaining her voice and influence, thus defeating the colonizing gaze. She spoke to the debates on narrative as a male construct — while the theorizations are extreme these provide tools in producing media works, allowing the artist to disrupt narrative and move between documentary and constructed texts. Michelle Parkinson has produced film and video documentaries such as *Gotta Make This Journey*, with *Sweet Honey and the Rock* that "fill the void" and "validate." Parkinson stressed that "politics is not just ideology but our everyday life," a truism in the women's movement, but relevant to what discourses are ultimately validated within film.

Also on this panel were Margaret Randall and Lynne Tillman. Randall spoke of her persecution by the American government. She has spent many years of her life living in Mexico, Cuba and Nicaragua and has documented the experiences of Latin American women. Now, the American government has refused her application to return to her birthplace, the United States. In his findings, the judge, a Vietnam veteran, stated, "Her writing advocates the doctrines of world communism," using as a rationale Randall's sympathetic portraits of Cuban and Nicaraguan women and her opposition to American policy in Vietnam. Tillman discussed her film *Committed*, an independent production that centred on the life of Frances Farmer, a work that places the actress within the social structures of law, psychology, Hollywood, family, as neither role model nor victim.

I participated in the "Subject of Politics: Women and Right-Wing Media" workshop, presenting a paper on the reactionary implications of state censorship and the right-wing/feminist/governmental alliance that



Women,
Culture &
Public Media

NOV 7, 8, 9, 1986

has brought it into being. Faye Ginsberg discussed her anthropological work with anti-choice American women's groups. She argued that at least some of these women identify with feminism on other issues and are attracted to the "pro-life" movement because of its ideology of nurturance and rejection of "me generation" ideas. Ginsberg and Julia Lesage, the third panelist, posed the right as heterogeneous, as opposed to monolithic. Lesage provided her insights into Christian television, which she has monitored for many years and entertained us all with her renditions of various preachers. She noted that it is one of the few places where working class Americans can see themselves in the mass media.

The final panel I attended was "Cracking the Media Mystique: Images and Politics." Serafina Bathrick of Hunter College, where the conference was located, presented a slide series of American turn of the century graphic and sculptural images. In these, women, representing culture, preside over telegraphy as it is strung across

the Prairies; stand regally over the Columbia World Fair; two female figures kiss over the newly planned Panama Canal. In these images women are objects of desire and motherhood, not subjects of desire. Bathrick called for the integration of the protective mother with the assertive father. She ended with a description of *Aliens: Two* and asked the difficult question: is the heroine a truly integrated, un-objectified woman or is she simply a 20th century version of the early use of the feminine as rationale for technology and imperialism?

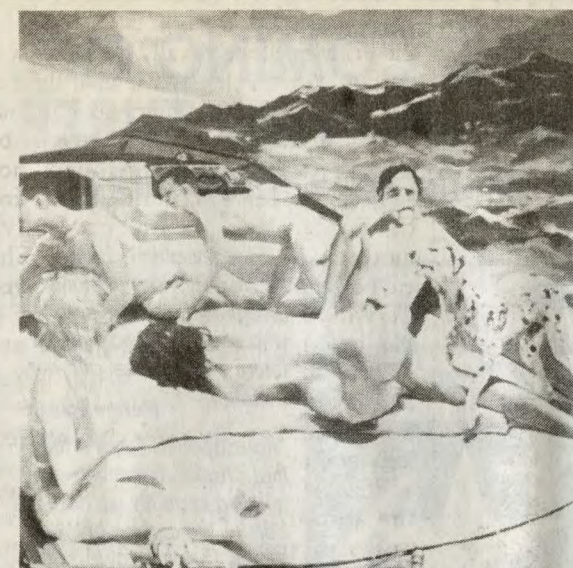
Panelist Trinh T. Minh-ha argued the importance of non-narrative strategies and Mary Helen Washington, a critic, argued that feminist media artists must be wary lest they reproduce the cliches that surround the representation of women in cinema. Ayoka Chinzira, whose films include *Hair Piece: A Film for Nappyheaded People*, which was screened at the conference, addressed the continuing racism experienced daily by women of colour who produce media works. She questioned why there were only fifteen to eighteen Black women making films in the USA and called on the feminist community as a whole to share resources with women of colour.

The conference had opened inauspiciously Friday night, when Lizzie Borden's new film, *Working Girls* could not be premiered due to technical difficulties. It ended with a sense of excitement and ongoing debate. On one hand there was a list of issues that were not adequately covered in some women's view. Some wanted more photography, others a stronger representation of older women who had been producing over the years; yet others felt that they should have been a clearer forum to tackle racism.

One criticism voiced by many participants was the overlapping of workshops. With three to four occurring simultaneously, it made it impossible for people to attend more than one-third of the presentations.

Nonetheless, the conference was well attended and balanced between the practical and the theoretical. Participation was generally lively and the calibre of work and presentation was of the best. Lets hope the organizers publish the papers!

Sara Diamond



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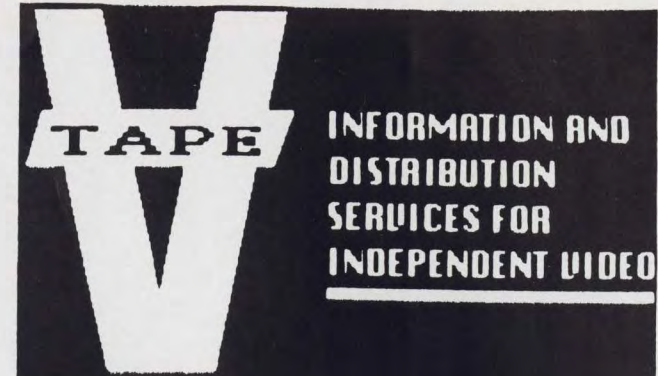
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FILE 88

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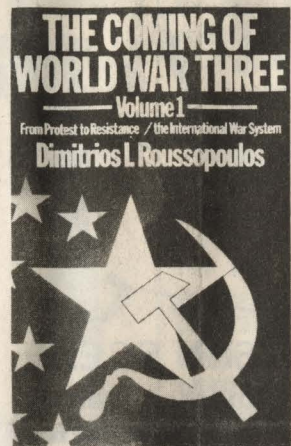
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