

A GUIDE TO THE NFB  
MEDIA LITERACY VIDEO RESOURCE

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# MEDIA & SOCIETY

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FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA



# **MEDIA & SOCIETY**



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**A**ll media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, strategic, psychological, moral, ethical and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched or unaffected or unaltered. The medium is the message. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments.

Marshall McLuhan,  
*The Medium is the Message*

.....

**T**o the fish, the water is invisible.

Ghanaian proverb



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# INTRODUCTION

## About this Resource

*Media and Society* is a video resource package for students and teachers involved in media study. It was developed by the National Film Board in response to educators' requests for stimulating and accessible video material *about* the media. It also reflects the NFB's belief that any examination of media in this country should include an awareness of Canadian images, exposure to alternative visions and discussion about the impact of imported media images on Canadian culture.

The package itself consists of a resource guide and three videocassettes containing a selection of films and film excerpts. The film material was chosen from the NFB's collection, so certain aspects of the media are not represented, for example, newspapers, rock videos and feature films.

## About the Videocassettes

The 19 titles on the videocassettes have been grouped into four main sections: **Advertising and Consumerism**; **Images of Women**; **Cultural Sovereignty**; and **Shaping Information**. Short introductions present some of the main issues explored in each section.

The selections themselves consist either of complete short films or excerpts from longer films. The decision to excerpt was made whenever a film, in its entirety, seemed too long or too dated or not particularly relevant to teenagers.

Location codes, to help you find a particular selection, appear on the lower right of the video screen. (See page xiv for a complete listing of these codes.) As well, there are three film excerpts in which individual shots have been numbered to give viewers a sense of how the sequences are constructed. These numbers appear on the lower left of the video screen.



These videocassettes should be used as a film anthology rather than a lock-step unit of study. The selections have been organized to provide you with maximum flexibility in your choice, sequencing and combination of material. Certainly, they contain more material than any one teacher will be able to use with any one class. Consider the films and accompanying notes as a bank of material to be drawn from and expanded upon during your years of teaching media.

## About the Resource Guide

This resource guide contains notes and background information on each of the film selections. These background notes include a description of the film, ideas for discussion, suggested student activities, provocative quotes, and annotated listings of further resources. In certain instances, there are interviews with film-makers or producers, as well as reprints of relevant articles.

A quick perusal will reveal both a wide range of subjects and varying degrees of complexity in the ideas and exercises; we believe that you, as an educator, will know best how to select and adapt the material in this package according to your teaching needs and the interests and abilities of your particular students. The questions and exercises have been numbered to make them easier to use, rather than to suggest that the material is presented in sequential order.

A thematic index (see page 114) will help you find what you need and suggest linkages between films. A glossary of basic film terms (see page 116) is also included.

## “Teaching” the Media

When dealing with the media in a classroom setting, it can be helpful to keep the following points in mind:

- If, as McLuhan suggests, the media are our environments – the water in which we swim – then all of us, students and teachers alike, are co-learners when it comes to examining that which surrounds and affects us. There are few experts teaching media; an exploratory, non-hierarchical approach can lead to the most productive and exhilarating learning experiences.
- Study of the media, particularly by adolescents, seems fraught with potential pitfalls – of infringing on young people’s culture or taking away from them something which they enjoy by criticizing it. However, an approach which looks at the mass media critically need not necessarily look at them negatively. The aim of such study is, rather, to empower young people so they can make informed choices about the way they interact with the media.
- Study of the media will likely lead you into areas of controversy. Don’t be afraid to enter.
- To initiate discussion after a screening, it is often effective to begin with the viewers’ personal responses. If these are slow in coming, you might want to consider questions such as the following: Are there any images or incidents in the film/video which stand out in your mind? Is there anyone with whom you strongly identify? Is there anyone with whom you particularly agree or disagree?
- Meaning resides not in the “text” of the film/video image but in the complex interaction between films/videos and the people who view them. And what viewers bring to the film or video depends not only on their individual past experiences but also on the values, ideas and beliefs current in the society in which they live.



- All films and TV shows embody “points of view” about the world. Whether these viewpoints are consciously intended or not, they manifest themselves through a variety of ideological and aesthetic choices, made on many levels by the film-makers or producers:
  - What story will be told (or reported)?
  - From whose perspective will it be presented?
  - How will it be filmed (camera placement, movement, framing)?
  - How will it be edited?
  - What sort of music will be used (if any)?
  - Whose voice(s) will we hear?
  - What will the intended message be?

Questions surrounding the media’s “point of view” lead us to ask: Who has created the images? Who is doing the speaking? From whose perspective does the camera frame the events? Who owns the medium? What is our role as spectator in identifying with – or rejecting – what we see and hear?

## Film or Videotape?

All the titles in *Media and Society*, originally produced as films, have been transferred to videotape for this compilation. The transfer was done because of the increasing preference for videotape in educational settings and because detailed analysis of material is easier in video. For example, video is useful for replaying key scenes and for examining particular images with the freeze-frame button.

However, the power and pleasure of film should not be ignored. There is, for instance, a world of difference between seeing a theatrical film like *2001* on television and seeing it on the large screen for which it was intended. Video presentations usually work best with small groups in intimate settings. For larger classes, however, film projection in a darkened room tends to be a more engaging viewing experience. In using *Media and Society*, try to substitute film for video occasionally, where you feel it would be more effective.

# The National Film Board

## A CANADIAN ALTERNATIVE

The National Film Board of Canada is the oldest active government film production agency in the world. Now past its fiftieth anniversary, it remains committed to the principles established in the early years under its first Film Commissioner, John Grierson: to make films that reflect the Canadian identity, to reinforce a sense of social purpose, and to foster artistic and technical innovations in filmmaking. In the process of doing so, it has completed over 17,000 productions, has won almost 3000 awards in international competition and has, at present, 4600 titles in active distribution through film and video.

Over the years, the NFB has been known especially for its production of documentaries, which Grierson defined as "the creative treatment of actuality", and its pioneering work in animation, which began with the arrival of Norman McLaren in the early 1940s. McLaren's 1952 Oscar-winning film *Neighbours*, described as the most eloquent argument for peace ever made, has been borrowed over 106,000 times from NFB libraries and more than 2500 prints have been sold around the world.

Well before the advent of television, a unique distribution system, which included travelling projectionists on rural circuits, film councils, regional film libraries and film clubs, made it possible for NFB productions to be screened in all parts of Canada. In addition, many of the NFB's theatrical shorts were shown regularly in cinemas across the country.



*Neighbours*



*Sonia*



Right: John Grierson

*The Big Snit*



*Daughters of the Country: Ikwe*





Cry of the Wild

The French production unit, created in the late 1950s, played a leading role in the flowering of québécois cinema during the next three decades in both documentary and feature film production.

During the 1960s, the NFB started making feature films, began its innovative program of social awareness *Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle* and produced *Labyrinth*, a revolutionary new style of film projection which would lead in later years to the creation of Imax. The 1970s saw the creation of many films focused on Quebec, as well as the establishment of Studio D, the first publicly funded women's production unit in the world.

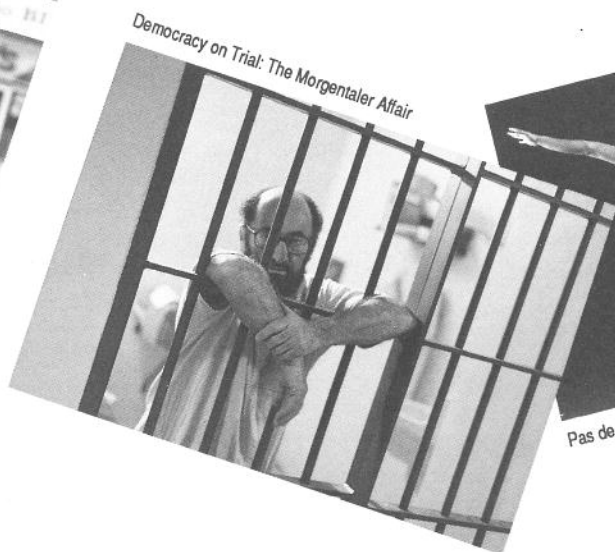
In the 1980s, there have been major changes. NFB productions are now created in six regional centres that make extensive use of freelance filmmaking talent. Classroom VCRs and home videos have become, along with television and 16mm film rental, important distribution channels. And in addition to the documentaries and animated films for which the Board is world-famous, innovative film styles and approaches are being seen in low-budget alternative dramas, in docudramas with their melding of elements from drama and documentary, in computer animation, and in films by and for women which have nourished the Canadian women's movement for over a decade.

From an international perspective, the NFB is unique. A government institution accountable to the Treasury Board, it nonetheless has considerable freedom to challenge the status quo. It is also in a fortunate position, being able to consider factors of creativity, Canadian content and social values over profit.

Some see the NFB as one alternative to the mass-image mills that are rapidly becoming the chief industry in the global village. It is in the spirit of providing such an alternative for those who wish to examine how the mass media function that this particular selection of NFB material has been made.



Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community



Democracy on Trial: The Morgentaler Affair



Pas de deux



# Acknowledgments

This project was developed and refined with the generous participation of educators and members of the film community. Their contributions helped shape *Media and Society* and, for their voluntary time, energy, expertise and enthusiasm, we are very grateful.

For their input into the early stages of this project, we would like to thank Barry Duncan, Jamie Fowlie and Neil Anderson of the Association for Media Literacy. For attending screening sessions with us and sharing their insights and suggestions, then and at the manuscript stage: Denise Deben, West End Alternative School; Barry Duncan, SEE School; Sharon Foster, Central High School of Commerce; Michael Vegh, Claude Watson School of the Arts; dian marino, York University; Marian McMahon, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; John Pendergrast, Malvern Collegiate; John Pungente, Jesuit Communication Project; Barry Simpson, NFB, Toronto.

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# Location Codes

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## ADVERTISING & CONSUMERISM

The selections grouped together in this section explore the ways in which the mass media are used to spread the message of consumerism.

*TV Sale* and *The Bronswik Affair* both deal, in a humorous and satirical way, with television – its offerings and its possible effects. *Mirror Mirror: An Advertiser's Scrapbook* is a tongue-in-cheek history of Canadian advertising which scans eight decades of ads for information about each era's most notable preoccupations. The excerpts from *Have I Ever Lied to You Before?* and *An Unremarkable Birth* present two "recordings" of a birth: one filmed for a life insurance commercial, the other for a documentary about birth. Finally, *This is a Recorded Message*, constructed out of thousands of cut-up ads, is a personal statement by a filmmaker about what it means to live in a society saturated by mass-produced images.



# 1 TV SALE

106C 0175 067

10:23 col. 1975

Dir: Ernie Schmidt

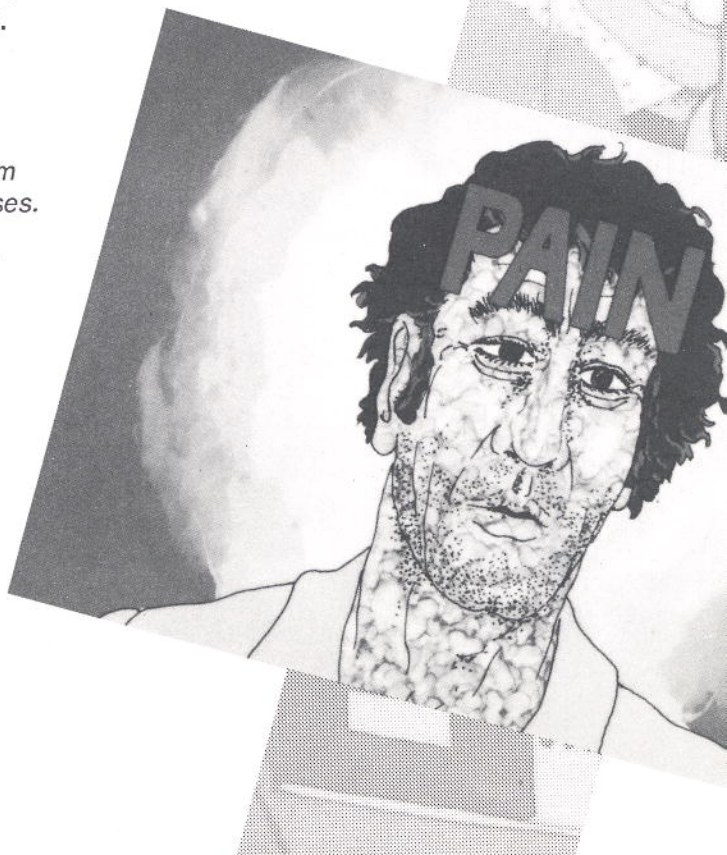
Prod: Peter Jones, Don Worobey, John Taylor

Int./Sr. high

**T**his satirical examination of the fare served up to television viewers opens with a salesman extolling the virtues of "the tube" to an interested couple. State-of-the-art hardware, he assures them, guarantees quality entertainment. To prove his point, he rapidly clicks through the offerings available: thin slices of programming sandwiched between generous slabs of commercials. The range of material speaks volumes about the values inherent in what we see on television: anxiety-inducing commercials about life insurance and body odour; game shows; an excerpt from a violent drama; evangelical exhortations – all presented through the use of animation.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

- Begin discussion of the film with the students' responses.
- This short film lends itself to more than one viewing.







## IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

### About the Animation Technique

**E**rnst Schmidt, the creator of *TV Sale*, was especially interested in the satiric possibilities of animation. He wanted to devote more time to the development of character than to the time-consuming process of creating movement from still drawings. As a student at the Vancouver School of Art in the early 1970s, Schmidt had been forced to work with limited amounts of cels (clear acetate sheets onto which drawings are transferred) and paints. The technique he devised at that time was one he continued to use in *TV Sale*.

On the underside of the cel, characters and settings were outlined with ink and painted in. On the upper surface, Schmidt created a textured or pointillist effect by drawing hundreds of dots with felt pens. He made simple cycles of six to eight drawings and photographed them from beginning to end and from end to beginning so as to cut down on the number of drawings that would have to be done. The result of this technique was a flickering effect which is very noticeable in *TV Sale*.

A quick trip through the arithmetic of standard cel animation: 720 cels (i.e., different drawings) are required for one minute of animation, provided that there is only one level of cels and each individual drawing is photographed twice. In multi-cel animation, it is not uncommon to work with three or four different levels of cels. To make a ten-minute multi-cel animated film can take six people working full time one-and-a-half years.

**1** Describe a part of the film that particularly struck you. Where did you first laugh? Are the programs and commercials you watch on television really like those satirized in the film? Make some comparisons (for example, how does a game show like *The Price is Right* compare with the one depicted in *TV Sale*?). What kinds of programs do you like to watch?

**2** Is the choice of programming today different from that depicted in this film made in 1975? What sorts of alternatives are available today?

**3** The title of *TV Sale* is significant. What exactly is being sold here, apart from the TV set and the products in the commercials? To whom and by whom? (See also *This Is a Recorded Message*, selection #5.)

**4** What does the term “voice of authority” suggest to you? Who speaks with the “voice of authority” in this film? The news anchor, the game show host, the doctor, the evangelist – all of them white males – have the power to present and define the

situation for their viewers. Watch some “regular” television programming to see if that also holds true.

5 What images of women are presented? What are their physical characteristics? What kinds of activities are they involved in? What sorts of things do they say (if they speak at all)? What functions do they serve in relation to the men? Are the current images of men and women on television similar to those in the film or have they changed?

6 What kinds of people tend to be invisible in mainstream television programming and commercials? (The only non-white shown in *TV Sale* is a “lazy” Mexican, wrapped in slumber and his serape. His assailant, in this take-off on a spaghetti Western, is an unknown “bandito”, also Mexican.) On today’s television, can you give examples of working-class people, women, and members of ethnic or racial groups who are presented in a complex and non-trivializing way?

7 What elements contribute to effective satire? In *TV Sale*, did the satire work better for certain types of programming than for others? Why is animation an effective vehicle for satire? What if, instead of animation, there had been live actors as in *SCTV* or *Saturday Night Live*? How might that have changed the feeling or emphasis of the satire?

8 Has video changed the way in which you, your family and friends use television? What differences do you notice?





## ACTIVITIES

**1** Have students keep track of the different kinds of programming and products which are spoofed. After discussion, students, working in groups, may want to produce their own television “take-offs”. One person in the class might play the role of a TV viewer who decides, by clicking an imaginary remote control, how much of each spoof gets to be seen and in what order. Each group of students should be prepared to interrupt its skit at any time. Consider the effects of such fragmentation on TV viewers. What are the implications of “channel hopping” for programming and advertising? (See *This Is a Recorded Message*, selection #5, to experience bombardment by “bits” of images which lack any immediate context.)

**2** Have students look up the original meaning of “stereotype”. Did they make use of stereotypes or conventions in their spoofs? Discuss the pros and cons of working with stereotypes. Are some stereotypes more flattering than others? Have students brainstorm a list of conventions used in certain genres, for example, the police detective show, the horror film, the Western, the gangster movie.

**3** Students might want to debate the issue of sexual stereotyping by forming a panel with a moderator. All members of the panel choose a role – for example, nurse, journalist, supermarket cashier, priest – and then present viewpoints consistent with that role. Questions to the panel could be invited from the “audience”.



**4** Monitor programming and advertising on CBC, CTV, PBS and ABC from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on a given weekday. The following table suggests the type of data that could be collected. Compare findings. What kinds of alternatives does public broadcasting offer Canadian audiences? (For further material on this topic, see the notes for *Has Anybody Here Seen Canada?*, page 70.)

Channel \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Program title \_\_\_\_\_

Program type \_\_\_\_\_

Targeted audiences \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total time allowed to  
advertisers per half-hour \_\_\_\_\_

Products advertised \_\_\_\_\_

Channel \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Program title \_\_\_\_\_

Program type \_\_\_\_\_

Targeted audiences \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total time allowed to  
advertisers per half-hour \_\_\_\_\_

Products advertised \_\_\_\_\_

Channel \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Program title \_\_\_\_\_

Program type \_\_\_\_\_

Targeted audiences \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total time allowed to  
advertisers per half-hour \_\_\_\_\_

Products advertised \_\_\_\_\_

Channel \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Program title \_\_\_\_\_

Program type \_\_\_\_\_

Targeted audiences \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total time allowed to  
advertisers per half-hour \_\_\_\_\_

Products advertised \_\_\_\_\_



5 Have students group themselves into programming units and come up with suggestions for a new season's lineup of shows. After having discussed some of the issues raised above (for example, images of gender, ethnic stereotyping), they may be ready to decide what kind of dramas, documentaries, "entertainment", music, children's programs and programs for and about teenagers they would like to see made.

6 Have interested students research the following questions: Who makes television programs? What are networks? Who owns them? What are their goals and objectives? How do they achieve them selling advertising?



Advertisers pay one million dollars U.S. to influence buying habits by placing a 60-second commercial on some top-rated broadcasts. It would seem a bit disingenuous to argue that the other 48 minutes of programming time has [sic] no power to influence or change behaviour.

Terry L. Fisher, writer/producer, *L.A. Law*

.....

Viewing audiences as passive, as a collectivity that can be manipulated, has been shown by research in the 1970s to be a wholly mistaken model. The introduction of cable and pay TV and of the video recorder and the zap button have increased our ability to be selective as audience members.

*Adjusting the Image: Women and Canadian Broadcasting*  
Report of a national conference on Canadian  
Broadcasting policy held March 20-22, 1987, p. 53

.....

The BBC television productions of all 37 of Shakespeare's plays were seen by more people in the world than have been in all the audiences of those plays since they were first staged.

John Pungente, *Getting Started in Media Education*  
(Centre for the Study of Communication and  
Culture, 1985), p. 12

.....



The following provocative article by Joyce Nelson (Cinema Canada, #119, June 1985) examines the emblematic differences between U.S. and Canadian TV game shows.

## SCANLINES

by Joyce Nelson

### Games people play

National identities have a way of exposing themselves in the most surprising places. Like TV game-shows. I recently took a look at CBC's *Front Page Challenge* and CTV's *Definition*, two Canadian offerings in this genre, and for comparative purposes, tuned in on a couple of U.S. game-show reruns. In a way, you wouldn't ask for nicer analogies of the two nations. The game-shows say it all.

The first obvious difference is in the studio-sets. Standard iconography in American game-shows includes a set full of flashing lights, gigantic game boards, intricately turning doors and panels, and an array of astounding gadgets and gizmos. The technological environment tends to dwarf the few humans inside it. By contrast, the sets for *Front Page Challenge* and *Definition* seem tastefully sedate. On *Definition*, nothing more elaborate than the letters and word-blanks board, always shown as a cut-away and thereby never in the same shot as the contestants. In other words, in the Canadian game-shows the studio-set does not diminish the human participants.

In keeping with the iconography, the sound of the shows is remarkably different. On *Front Page Challenge* and *Definition*, there is nothing louder than a polite bell to indicate that a contestant's time is up. Even the audiences are remarkably quiet

and respectful, emitting proper applause according to cue. The voices of hosts, panelists, and participants remain calm — even somewhat flat — with never a whoop or groan, unless it be a sympathetic sound uttered by host Jim Perry on *Definition*. On the American game-shows, bells, buzzers and everything but whoopie-cushions accompany the goings-on, while the hosts whip up the suspense and the contestants and audience alike shriek and wail in the agony or ecstasy of the moment.

Of course, this emotional tone has something to do with the nature of the prizes at stake. Big bucks and big-ticket items characterize the American game-shows, while on *Definition* a prize-winner is going for something like an electric back-massager, a watch, or a water filter. And on *Front Page Challenge* there simply are no prizes: panelists Pierre Berton, Fred Davis, Betty Kennedy, and Allan Fotheringham are clearly beyond such indignities.

All these aspects relate to the nature of the games being played, which are also decidedly different in

the two cultures. *Front Page Challenge*, Canada's oldest TV show still-running, is really an educational program thinly disguised as a game. Its focus is clearly informative, with its panelists revealing their historical/current affairs acumen by guessing the front-page issue connected to a "hidden challenger." Actually, it's all a ruse for educating the viewer, who is not only let in on the identity of the challenger, but also given a little mini-documentary on the subject once the panelists have guessed the item. If that weren't enough, the panelists then add to the lesson by interviewing the challenger, thereby raising the finer points about the particular event. Fortunately, there is no quiz to test whether or not we have retained the material.

Similarly, CTV's *Definition* has a slightly serious and purposeful tone, depending on word-skill and familiarity with puns in its variation on the old game of Hangman. In both Canadian shows there is an underlying belief in the value of words, logic, and mental skills. On *Definition*, viewers themselves are invited

to submit the items of word-play, and are given no more clues than the contestants. In both shows, a certain amount of skill is assumed.

American game-shows, however, long ago abandoned any pretense of intelligence. No doubt as a result of the quiz-show scandal of the '50s, American game-shows instead focus on luck. Participants generally match their luck against the random play of a machine — the "Tic Tac Dough" board, the "Bulls-Eye", the "Wheel of Fortune", the "Family Feud" board, etc. If Canadian game-shows suggest a belief in human mental prowess, U.S. shows convey the sense of technology reigning supreme, and even that human effort and skill are largely irrelevant. All a contestant need do is push a button, make a decision to activate or not activate the technology, and the American Dream may or may not come true. Luck is, for all purposes, the decisive factor.

If game-shows differ so distinctly in the two cultures, perhaps one could relate them to the very different values promised the two peoples in their ruling constitutions. This may sound too far-fetched, but only consider for a moment that the repatriated BNA Act promises "peace, order, and good government," while the U.S. Constitution endorses "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." That difference is enough to send me back to the tube for another round.



## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

To further examine the way in which advertising and the "image industry" in general may prey upon and distort human needs and aspirations, see *This Is a Recorded Message* (selection #5) and *No Way! Not Me* (selection #9).

### PRINT

*The Man Who Stole Dreams* (The Women's Press, 1983) by Barbara Taylor is a fable about someone who filches people's dreams in order to sell them back at "reasonable rates" from his newly opened discount supermarket. It is also available as an animated film from the National Film Board.

There is always *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Scribner's, 1925) for senior students who want to explore the connections between inchoate longings and their material embodiments.

For a behind-the-scenes look at the "business" of television, see Todd Gitlin's book *Inside Prime Time* (Pantheon, 1985).

John Meyer's work *The Image Makers: Powers and Persuasion on Madison Avenue* (Macmillan, 1984) is a very readable account of the tactics of Madison Avenue, with special emphasis on VALS (values and lifestyles) research and the kinds of ads produced as a result.

Also see *Advertising, The Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society* (Basic Books, 1986) by Michael Schudson. The author looks at advertising as a business and social institution. He persuasively concludes that it is not nearly as important, effective or scientifically founded as either its advocates or its critics imagine.

*Loving With a Vengeance* (Methuen, 1984) by Tania Modleski is a feminist analysis of melodrama: gothic horror, romance novels and TV soaps.

*Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (Comedia, 1986) by David Morley is a detailed British study of TV viewing among families from different cultural backgrounds. This viewing is situated within the politics of the living room and the structure of the power relations within the family. Viewers are seen as active participants and choosers of material.





# 2 THE BRONSWIK AFFAIR

106C 0178 017

22:58 col. 1978


Dir: Robert Awad, André Leduc

Prod: René Jodoin

Int./Sr. high

This engaging spoof, lighthearted in execution but serious in intent, zooms in on the avid consumerism fostered by advertising. Appropriating the techniques of documentary investigative journalism, this slightly edited version of the original film purports to uncover a sinister conspiracy aimed at hapless television viewers. All the techniques of persuasion, from subliminal messages to expert testimony to government-sponsored television commercials are trotted out with tongue-in-cheek gravity. The filmmaking style, too, is a *mélange*: there is faked archival footage shot in black-and-white and scratched by the filmmakers to give it an authentic look; extensive use of photo-collage; and explanatory graphics that look as though they had recently escaped from an antacid commercial.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

 This production contains so many film and advertising techniques that second and third viewings always provide fresh insights.







Filmmakers: Robert Awad and André Leduc

## Spot the Techniques

**The Bronswik Affair** gleefully spoofs many of the techniques normally used in serious documentaries and news reports to assure viewers that what they are watching is, indeed, the truth. Some of the most obvious techniques parodied here include:

- *constant references to dates and times*
- *simulations/recreations*
- *interviews with those actually involved in the situation*
- *use of evidence: still photos, letters, chart of corporate interconnections*
- *silhouetted mystery informant*
- *archival footage*
- *hidden camera footage*
- *concealing identity of well-known figures by placing black bar across the eyes*
- *animated graphics to explain complex scientific information*
- *use of "experts"*
- *authoritative male narrator - note pace of presentation.*
- *music and sound effects - notice how and where they are used.*

## ACTIVITIES

**1** Have students list the items they bought in the last two weeks. Were there any they didn't need? What made them decide to buy what they did? Can they find examples of advertising, in print or on television, aimed at the "teenage market"? Are there any common elements or themes in these ads?

Screen and discuss the anti-smoking, anti-drug ads produced by the Department of Health and Welfare for a teenage audience. These are particularly interesting since they use the conventions of consumption for the purposes of anti-consumption.

Have students brainstorm ideas for a commercial aimed at adolescents which is designed to "sell" something other than a product. Those who are interested may want to act out the idea or produce a storyboard.\*

**2** Screen the film again and try to spot some of the standard investigative documentary techniques outlined above. Can students use some of them to create their own spoof?

**3** Look at the new marketing channels on TV and the "infomercials" commonly shown late at night. How is shopping being merged with information and learning?

\* A storyboard is similar in format to a comic strip. It consists of illustrated frames or panels showing what visuals will be used to tell the story. Accompanying text is also indicated.



Audio-Visual Reinforcement Techniques Inc. is an American company that produces audiotapes and videotapes containing subliminal messages. Videotapes used at staff training sessions subliminally "instill loyalty, encourage diligence, and reduce absenteeism." Audiotapes heard in supermarkets and department stores tell us, "You are honest. You won't steal. You will be caught if you do, and you will go to jail." The possibility exists that these techniques can and will be used on television.

Morris Wolfe, *Jolts: The TV Wasteland and the Canadian Oasis* (James Lorimer, 1985), p. 128

In 1983, national advertisers in Canada spent nearly 860 million dollars to promote their goods and services on television screens across the country, with the Government of Canada coming in as the second-highest spender.

*Television and Your Children* (TVO, 1985), p. 41

## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

*This Is a Recorded Message* (selection #5) also examines the effects of subliminal messages in advertising.

"E" (selection #14) presents much more direct techniques of "persuasion" than those parodied here.

### PRINT

See Wilson B. Key's book *The Clam Plate Orgy and Other Subliminal Techniques for Manipulating Your Behaviour* (Signet, 1980).





# 3 MIRROR MIRROR:

## An Advertiser's Scrapbook

106C 0183 004

25:05 col. 1983

Dir: Kit Hood, Linda Schuyler

Prod: Kit Hood, Linda Schuyler, David Springbett, Don Hopkins  
Int./Sr. high



With tongue in cheek, *Mirror Mirror: An Advertiser's Scrapbook* traces the social history of Canada from grandmother's day to the present, as reflected in print and television advertising. Taking us from the age of durability to the age of disposability, the film shows how advertising plays on our basic fears and desires for status; traces the changing images of women and men; illustrates the ingenuity with which advertisers co-opt social trends to pitch their products; and deals with the effects of print and television on both advertisers and consumers.

The film's montage of print and electronic ads from 1889 to 1982 shows that as times changed, so did advertisements. Black-and-white newspaper illustrations were followed by full-colour visuals in magazines. Long, serious copy reflecting strong family ties and rigid morals gave way to short, humorous copy focusing on individuality and personal freedom. Television became the new medium, more blatant use of sex became the sales pitch and optical effects became the rage.

Structured around the notion of the ideal Canadian family, *Mirror Mirror* raises questions about the extent to which advertising influences social trends and is driven by market forces.





MACLEAN'S MAGAZINE

**PERFECTION**  
SMOKELESS OIL HEATERS

Comfort and Happiness! With weather raw and chill outside, there is pleasant warmth within, through the Perfection Oil Heater. Not till the winds howl, and snow blows in drifts will the furnace be needed, and even with that burning there is always need for the Perfection in rooms and corners where the furnace does not warm properly. On sale in every town.

THE IMPERIAL OIL COMPANY, Limited  
BRANCHES IN ALL CITIES

USE  
ROYALITE OIL

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

- Students will get more out of *Mirror Mirror* if they do pre-screening work with images from magazines (see ACTIVITIES, page 17).
- Mirror Mirror* is a film densely packed with images and information and should be screened more than once. Particularly with younger students, teachers may want to use just ten minutes of the film, and that ten minutes may be chosen quite randomly.
- Mirror Mirror* lends itself to small group work and independent study as well as class viewing and discussion.

BUSY MAN'S ADVERTISING SECTION. 173

"Tired at Three O'clock?"  
No Sir! I use the Monarch"

IF typewriters were machines run by mechanical means instead of human hands, you would find that, with a given amount of power, a Monarch could be run at a higher maintained speed than other typewriters.

Run by "girl power," you find that the Monarch is run at a higher all-day average speed than other typewriters, and without a "tapering off," from fatigue, toward the day's end. Both these truths are due to the fact that

**Monarch** *Light Touch*

lightens the draft, uses power more economically, eliminates the waste of energy that typifies the heavy-tough machines. This in turn means increased production per machine and a decreased cost of typewriter work per folio.

While Monarch Light Touch and the Monarch Rigid Carriage machine are exclusive Monarch features, every other important feature of the modern typewriting machine, such as Buck Space Key, Two Color Ribbon Shift, Combined Tabulator, etc. etc., will also be found in the Monarch.

Let us give you a demonstration of Monarch Light Touch and other Monarch advantages.

Write for Illustrated Descriptive Literature  
The Monarch Typewriter Company, Limited  
45 King St. West, Toronto, 122 Commercial Building, Montreal,  
and all other leading cities.

Don't fail to mention Busy Man's when writing inquiries.

# About the Making of the Film

INTERVIEW WITH LINDA SCHUYLER, CO-DIRECTOR

**M**irror Mirror actually started out to be a film about racial discrimination in advertising. We wanted to look at the invisibility of minority groups, the way they never show up in the ads. But we ran into a whole slew of problems. For one thing, advertisers refused to give us clearance to use their material if we were going to take that slant.

Still, we knew that we wanted to concentrate on Canadian advertising. We started off by taping hours of commercials off television, flipping from station to station — sometimes in the middle of a commercial — to see if we could discern any trends. The closer we got to the present, the harder the trends were to spot. Most of our research, though, was done in the Rare Book Room [the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library] at the University of Toronto. They had books and books of ads from Canadian magazines and we fell in love with them. They were fascinating.

So we decided to make the film a history of Canadian advertising. It was focused on the ideal white Canadian family which is all that you ever saw when you looked at the ads. And we hoped that people would pick up on what wasn't there; on what was missing and who was missing.

To get hold of old TV commercials, we contacted the Canadian Advertising Advisory Board. Their archives, if you can call them that, were pretty incomplete. In fact, they mostly



Photo: Playing with Time Inc. / ©Bill Dunn

consisted of reels and reels of uncatalogued commercials stacked up in somebody's garage. We cleaned all the film and organized it in exchange for the right to use the material.

We decided to use a first-person narration for a couple of reasons. As we pored over hundreds of ads, we saw the same woman appearing decade after decade. She was in her late 20s or early 30s, usually a mother, always middle class; in recent years, often a professional as well. That woman, that "ideal consumer", was the most dominant image in the ads. So we decided to write the narration from her point of view.

The other reason was tied into our interest in who wasn't being represented in advertising. It's very easy for a narration written in the third person to seem authoritative and generalized, as if this were the "final word" on the subject. By telling the story from this one white middle class woman's point of view, we hoped to emphasize that this was a pretty limited perspective. We wanted our audiences to think about all those people who weren't getting a chance to tell *their* stories.

# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

charm of youth

1 *Mirror Mirror* focuses particularly on the changing images of women in Canadian advertisements over the past century. Are there any constants in this representation? How do current ads treat women? (See the excerpt from *No Way! Not Me*, selection #9, for up-to-date examples of women in advertising.)

2 In the film, what products are being sold to men? What products are being sold to women? What do these differences reveal about the advertisers' assumptions? Look at some current ads. Are there changes in the kinds of products being pitched to the sexes?

3 What representations of Canadian families can you find in today's ads? Do they come from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds? How consistent are they with the way families are portrayed in television shows and movies? Look for media examples of different kinds of families. Does variety exist? In what way do these fictionalized families mirror or contradict the actual experiences of students?

4 There is a difference between the sophisticated commercial with glossy production values\* designed for national consumption and the locally produced ad for used cars, bargain furniture or the like. What kinds of conventions do local ads use? Do they use them in the same way?

\* "Production value" refers to the amount of money spent on sets, costumes, casting, cinematography, music — the elements of a film's packaging which will help make it attractive to distributors and audiences.

PURE **JAEGER** WOOL

The Business Shirt for City Men

A SHIRT, smart and stylish in appearance, in neat and dignified designs and carefully selected color combinations, with no stiff parts to annoy and irritate—in fact an ideal shirt for city men.

JAEGER PURE WOOL UNDERWEAR keeps the skin active and healthy—allows the perspiration to escape quickly—drains the system of superfluous fat and moisture and keeps you agreeably cool and fresh, even on close oppressive days.

For the "man at the desk" such wear means **improved health and assured comfort**. The garments are made in all sizes, styles and weights, and are obtainable from leading dealers in all principal cities.

Write for Catalogue No. 42.

**DR. JAEGER'S SANITARY WOOLLEN SYSTEM CO., Limited**  
 2206 St. Catherine St., Montreal.  
 280 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg.



# ACTIVITIES

## PRE-SCREENING

**1** Have students create an image bank by tearing out advertisements from magazines. This image bank can be used in many ways. Students may, for example, classify the ads according to categories such as gender, race, class, age, family structure and products. The images can then be collaged on a large bulletin board.

Can any conclusions be drawn from these collections? Who is dominant? Who is subordinate? How do we know? For clues, note characters' appearance, body language, poses, relationships to other characters, and setting or context.

(See *This Is a Recorded Message*, selection #5, a film which had its beginnings in this sort of image collection. The notes for that film also contain further activities related to advertising.)

**2** Before seeing the film, senior students, working in small groups, can choose a decade or era in the 20th century to research in terms of the major social or political events and preoccupations of the time. After a viewing, discuss the ways in which those concerns and events were treated in the advertising of the day.

**3** In the light of Linda Schuyler's comments about what is missing in the film (see interview, page 15), it might be an interesting pre-screening exercise for students, working in groups, to choose a category like race, class, age, gender or family structure and come up with a hypothesis of what they might find (or might not find) in this film about the history of advertising. Later discuss: Who's there? Who isn't there? Why?

## POST-SCREENING

**1** Since the film was completed in the early 1980s, some of the more "modern" ads now look dated. Have students prepare a print and/or video collage of contemporary ads. What new trends, themes and techniques are apparent? How have advertisers capitalized on current social trends? (Among other things, students may want to consider rock videos, advertising's appropriation of rock and roll, "feel good" ads, "image" ads and entertainment ads.)

**2** At their best, commercials – highly compressed and allusive – can be 30-and 60-second works of art. Discuss some samples of television commercials that seem especially inventive and appealing. What elements make the commercial successful? (See **FURTHER RESOURCES**, page 19, for information on where to rent award-winning commercials.)

*"It was not the thing to do when I was a girl!!"*

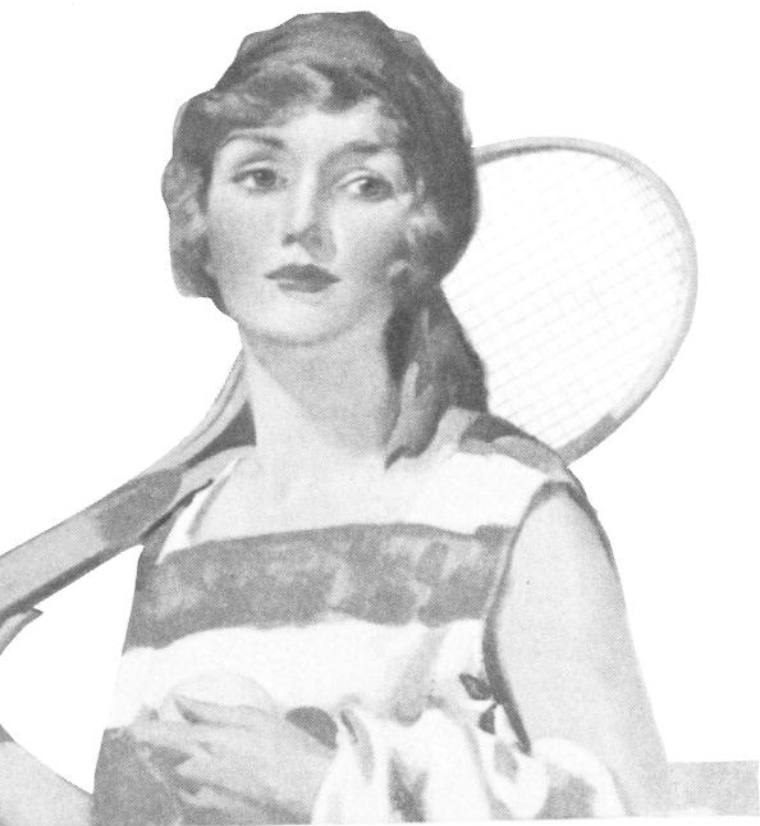
- 3 Brainstorm a list of familiar jingles from radio or television. Are there some which everyone remembers? What makes certain jingles more effective than others? Have students choose a product and write a jingle for it.
- 4 The narration in *Mirror Mirror* was written from the point-of-view of a white, middle class female consumer. Have students create a narration for a teenage "voice" talking about current products.
- 5 In his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman mentions that the emphasis in advertising has shifted from the word to the image. Have students find an ad or commercial that uses almost no text or narration but which relies mainly on the image — and the emotive effects of sound. What is the message of the ad? How is it being created?



The television commercial is not at all about the character of products to be consumed. It is about the character of consumers of products. Images of movie stars and famous athletes, of serene lakes and macho fishing trips, of elegant dinners and romantic interludes, of happy families packing their station wagons for a picnic in the country — these tell nothing about the product being sold. But they tell everything about the fears, fancies and dreams of those who might buy them. What the advertiser needs to know is not what is right about the product but what is wrong with the buyer. And so, the balance of business expenditures shifts from *product* research to *market* research. The television commercial has oriented business away from making products of value and towards making consumers feel valuable, which means that the business of business has now become pseudo-therapy. The consumer is a patient assured by psycho-dramas.

Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (Penguin, 1986), p. 128

.....



# f youth that schoolgirl complexion"

in daily skin care to follow if you seek it

THE woman of today knows one goal above all others in beauty care. And that is to *keep* her Youth. For she knows how tragically difficult, *once lost*, it is to regain.

Soap and water has become the Youth preservation rule of the world. Used properly, it is surprising what it does. The thousands of youthful women, long past their first youth, seen on every side today, prove the point beyond question.

Urged by leading skin specialists, that rule is based on keeping the skin and pores clean of age-inviting accumulations. Its whole secret is the *KIND* of soap one uses. *A true complexion soap is meant, a soap like Palmolive, made for one purpose only; to safeguard the complexion.* Others may prove too harsh.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

*The Cannes International Advertising Film Festival Award-Winning Commercials* are available for rental from Adfilms Ltd., 250 Merton St., 4th Floor, Toronto, Ont., M4S 1B1. Tel: (416) 483-3551.

### PRINT

For a balanced and comprehensive look at advertising from a Canadian perspective, see *Advertising and Society* (Addison Wesley, 1986) by Benjamin Singer.

For material on images of men in advertising, see *FOOD FOR THOUGHT*, page 33.



4

# HAVE I EVER LIED TO YOU BEFORE?

a

106C 0176 046  
56:30 col. 1976  
Excerpt length: 3:17  
Dir: John Spotton  
Prod: Colin Low  
Int./Sr. high

# AN UNREMARKABLE BIRTH

b

106C 0178 226  
52:22 col. 1978  
Excerpt length: 4:37  
Dir: Diane Beaudry  
Prod: Kathleen Shannon, Diane Beaudry  
Sr. high

**T**his selection consists of two related but contrasting items: a film excerpt which includes a life insurance commercial featuring a birth, and a birth scene from a documentary. When juxtaposed, the differences – in style, tone, underlying assumptions and emotional resonance – are revealing.

## Have I Ever Lied To You Before?

**T**he first selection is an excerpt from a 1976 documentary about Jerry Goodis, a Canadian adman with a flair for self-promotion. The excerpt begins at an advertising awards banquet where Goodis' firm has been singled out for producing the best commercial of the year.

This commercial for life insurance is shot in a soft, hazy style reminiscent of the Bell Telephone ad campaign "Reach out and touch someone". In 90 seconds, a birth happens. The woman in question, dwarfed by the best that technology has to offer, lies quietly as she is delivered of a child – all this presented with diffused lighting, soft dissolves, soothing music and a narration delivered in quasi-reverential tones. There is no blood, there is no pain, there is no passionate exultation.

This commercial for London Life was honoured again by the advertising community in 1988 as one of the outstanding productions of the last 25 years.



# About the Making of the Commercial

All Canadian commercials destined for network television must first be approved at the script and storyboard stage. Ads for beer or alcoholic beverages must be vetted by the CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission) while those dealing with drugs or food products require clearance from the Department of Health and Welfare. The rest are evaluated by the CBC and the Telecaster Committee, which represents the private networks like CTV and Global. (See FURTHER RESOURCES, page 27, for information about where to get copies of the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards and CBC's advertising guidelines.)

This particular commercial was considered to be a breakthrough in the advertising industry because it was shot in a delivery room during an actual birth, with doctors and nurses rather than actors. Also, it was one of the first times that a real birth had been shown on Canadian television, certainly for advertising purposes.

Cameraperson-director Zale Magder remembers the production as follows: "We had decided that we didn't want this birth to look medical or scientific so we settled on very soft lighting. I shot it myself, with two other people to help me.

I had the camera positioned in such a way that the woman's knees and legs were discreetly draped at all times. I knew the client and the advertising agency wouldn't allow me to show the baby actually coming out, so I asked the doctor to hold him up against the window. That's the only time I interfered with the process. And I can't remember... I might have asked her to reach up and touch the baby.

We shot a lot of footage — thousands of feet. Most of it was in the delivery room with a little bit before and some after. But the delivery room material was basically one shot which was later cut up and reassembled in the editing room."





# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

## Text of the Narration

*If you could pick a country to be born in, Canada would be a good one. You could take advantage of its opportunities, help it to grow.*

*At London Life, we've been believing in Canada for about a century now by finding better ways to protect our policy owners, by trying to do a little more for Canadians. That's why a baby born here stands a good chance of living in a home made possible by London Life financing. The roads he'll travel, the university he attends, this hospital, all represent a London Life attitude which is deeply concerned with the welfare of Canada. We always try to apply the utmost integrity to the ways we invest money.*

*At London Life, we're concerned with living.*

*When you protect yourself with London Life, you do a little more for yourself than buy life insurance.*

*London Life: To us, life is more than insurance.*

**1** For a first viewing, try screening the commercial without the sound and without the last shot which contains the London Life logo. What do you think is being advertised? On what do you base your assumptions?

**2** Screen the commercial a second time, with the sound. What feelings do you have, watching this commercial? What is the connection between these feelings and life insurance? Why do you think London Life's advertising agency would have chosen to use a birth scene to sell their product?

After looking at and listening to the commercial, recount the substance of the narration. If you can't remember details, why not? Does this mean that the commercial has failed to deliver its message effectively? (See the text of the narration, on this page).

**3** The third time round, time the commercial and note the number of separate shots. (The shot number appears in the lower left of the screen.) Each time a shot changes, an *edit* has been made. How many shots focus on the woman, how many on the medical personnel?

This commercial was filmed in three different locations —hospital room, corridor, delivery room — and is made up of 20 different shots. The final

“story line” or narrative is constructed during the editing process. (See “Film Editing and Structure” in the GLOSSARY OF BASIC FILM TERMS, page 116, for further explanation of this process.)

4 What are some of the assumptions embodied in this commercial about medical technology, birth, the relations between patient and doctor, the sex of this child, the class of this child? To which segment of the Canadian population is this commercial speaking?

5 Selling life insurance is a tricky business, one’s own death being a subject most people would prefer to ignore. Discuss the techniques used by the ad copywriter and the director to make the subject positive, palatable and even attractive.

## ACTIVITIES

1 This ad, shot in the mid-1970s, bears certain similarities to the final commercial used in *Mirror Mirror* (selection #3). Is this style and approach still being used today? Find a current example of a “corporate” ad — for the banks, life insurance or Bell Telephone — and discuss what sorts of lifestyle expectations, dreams or fears these ads are playing on.





## An Unremarkable Birth

**T**his excerpt of a scene shot in a hospital labour room begins as the baby's head is starting to crown, and ends about a minute after the birth. Present in the room with the prospective parents are a labour coach, a doctor and a nurse. Also there (but unseen) are a director and a cameraperson, with a sound recordist outside in the corridor.

The excerpt is taken from a documentary which examines routine procedures and attitudes to childbirth and explores possible alternatives to them. The title is a standard medical term used to describe a childbirth which has required no special medical intervention.

Since most adolescents in our culture have never attended a birth, and since this footage is respectfully explicit, teachers should exercise their judgment as to which classes could appreciate this material.

Though the London Life commercial can be analyzed on its own, it's in the differences between the two presentations that the most fruitful possibilities for insight lie. Unlike the commercial, this documentary recording of the birth is shot from one camera angle. Though the camera does move, resting at points on all the different people in the room, there are only two *edits* in this four-minute sequence. With those two exceptions, the scene is one long continuous *take* of the event as it actually occurred.



# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

## PRE-SCREENING

1 Have you ever been present at a birth? What do you imagine a birth to be like? Have you ever seen a birth in a film or on television? Perhaps mothers or aunts might also be asked about their experiences.

## POST-SCREENING

1 How do you feel about this birth, compared to the one you saw in the London Life commercial? What makes it different for you? Do you have a preference?

2 Does this birth seem more “real”? If so, why? What are the differences between the private/public or personal/corporate presentations of an event?

3 What differences are there between the two women giving birth? What about the relationship between the doctor’s role and the birth process?

4 What is the difference between emotion and sentimentality? Cite some examples from literature, film or television that illustrate this difference.

5 What differences are there in the soundtracks of each of these excerpts? How does the sound — voices, music, sound effects, silence — contribute to the feeling or tone of each birth?



*Neil Postman, in discussing the Bell Telephone Romances (“Reach Out and Touch Someone”) created by Steve Horn, quotes Jay Rosen’s comments on Horn’s work:*

Horn isn’t interested in saying anything. He has no message to get across. His goal is not to provide information about Bell, but to somehow bring out from the broken ties of millions of American lives a feeling which might focus on the telephone... Horn does not express himself. You do not express yourselves. Horn expresses you.

*Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Entertainment (Viking, 1985), pp. 134-135*



## FURTHER RESOURCES

### PRINT

Free single copies or classroom sets of *The Canadian Code of Advertising Standards* may be obtained by writing to the Advertising Standards Council, 350 Bloor St. E., Suite 402, Toronto, Ont. M4W 1H5.

For a copy of CBC's *Advertising Standards Policy* booklet for the English networks, write CBC Advertising Standards, P.O. Box 500, Station A, Toronto, Ont. M5W 1E6.

*Decoding Advertisements — Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* by Judith Williamson (Marion Boyars, 1976) is a somewhat dense but provocative book which provides detailed analyses of individual advertisements.



# 5 THIS IS A RECORDED MESSAGE

106C 0373 028  
10:10 col. 1973  
Dir: Jean-Thomas Bédard  
Prod: Pierre Moretti  
Sr. high

What does it feel like to live in a society where we are continually bombarded by glossy manufactured images? What is the net result of this onslaught? How does it influence our values, direct our choices and mould our sense of possibility, both individual and collective? *This Is a Recorded Message*, constructed out of hundreds of cut-out colour ads projected in rapid and apparently fragmented succession, raises all these questions and more.

In its provocative and open-ended way, this film touches on all the topics of interest in *Media and Society* — what it means to live in a media-saturated society; how images reflect and are shaped by the dominant ideology or belief system; the far-reaching effects of consumerism and its handmaiden, advertising; the images of gender promoted by the media; the fragmentation of information encouraged by television; and politics, fame and personality in an image-dominated society.

*This Is a Recorded Message* is, above all, a film experience. In fact, its assault of images and sounds can be, at times, uncomfortable, even overwhelming. This is quite deliberate. The viewer responds not with detached analysis but with a strong visceral and emotional reaction.







## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

- ☛ *Note the pre-screening activities on page 33. Students who have prior experience looking at, playing with and talking about advertising images will find This Is a Recorded Message much more accessible and rewarding.*
- ☛ *Because of its richness and complexity, This is a Recorded Message warrants more than one viewing. If you can arrange to screen it the first time on film rather than video, do so. Later, it may be worth viewing specific segments again on video (for example, the childhood sequences or those which demonstrate the contrast between representations of women and men in advertising).*
- ☛ *If you wish to give students copies of the interview with Jean-Thomas Bédard, it is advisable to do so after they have talked about the film themselves.*

# About the Making of the Film

## INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-THOMAS BÉDARD, DIRECTOR

### **Genesis**

I am from the countryside. I grew up on a farm in Quebec. So I was safe from the visual aggression of the city. I spent a lot of time in the forest, with nature, doing paintings. I came to Montreal to work at the National Film Board in a three-month training program in animation. I wasn't very old — in my early 20s. The city was a visual shock for me. Advertising images were everywhere. They were very seductive and yet they seemed like falsehoods to me. I wanted to denounce that kind of image.

The best way to do it, I felt, was not through words but by giving people an overdose of what they saw around them all the time. Images of the "good", images of the "beautiful". And often sandwiched in newspapers and television between material about real suffering and violence. That kind of juxtaposition in itself was very violent, it seemed to me.

So I made the film partly as a way of talking to myself, of liberating myself from the fascination I felt for these images and the way I felt manipulated by them.

### **Themes**

I structured my film around the four great crises of human life: birth, childhood, romantic love/eroticism, and death. All by using images from advertising.

You know, there are very different values at work in the way women and men are presented. The women, for example, float along the beach. There is such artifice in the photography. And the men are always connected with machines and speed.

When I made *This Is a Recorded Message* [in 1973], the use of subliminal messages in advertising was very fashionable. And so was the outcry raised against them. I decided to use these techniques for certain images, to scratch at the surface of the subconscious, to give the viewer some possible openings.

This film is, as we say in French, an "oeuvre ouverte", an open-ended work. It offers up images, possibilities; it's a slice of life to which people can attach their own meanings and understandings.

For me, it's about modern life, the city, solitude and death. It's about the cycle of violence transmitted by advertising which plays with our drives and our dissatisfactions, using images suggestive of happiness and of insecurity too.

I wanted to show another reality that we usually forget. In our consumer world, we don't want to know about what's going wrong. We live in a comfortable haze. We don't want to know about what's happening in the rest of the world. That's one of the reasons I used the images from the Holocaust. They are close to us. We remember that still. And I wanted to say "Take care because these things could emerge again".

### ***Technique***

I began by collecting images from everywhere. I made my friends bring me whatever they had. I ended up with hundreds of magazines. I classified these images according to subject and the kind of movement shown. In that way I was able to build up an image bank to deal with the subjects I chose, to have a visual continuity. There were 10,000 to 20,000 photos.

Including research, the film took two and a half years to make. For one thing, I used optical effects which were quite time-consuming — for example, the parachutist who lands on earth at the beginning of the film or the women walking on clouds.

Also, many of the photos were vertical and since the shape of the film screen is horizontal, I had to superimpose images on different backgrounds to get a picture with the proper dimensions. The other thing was that the photos were all different sizes. I worked out a method of changing the calibration on the camera so as to modify the details so that the images appeared to blend into one another.

Through movement, I was able to create a unity even while working with images of many different people. I guess these were the technical experiments.

Each picture lasts about one-eighth of a second. Throughout the film there are six to eight pictures per second. At the end I speeded it up even more by alternating two frames of image, one frame of black. That created the stroboscopic effect.

### ***Sound***

I am not entirely happy with the soundtrack on this film. I wanted to tape messages off the shortwave radio, use lots of actuality sound in lots of different languages. The musician wouldn't do that because he said the sound quality wasn't good enough. Instead, he took sound "images" from Montreal radio stations and manipulated them electronically. I thought that would be too familiar. I wanted something that would reach out farther into the world, have more universal meaning.

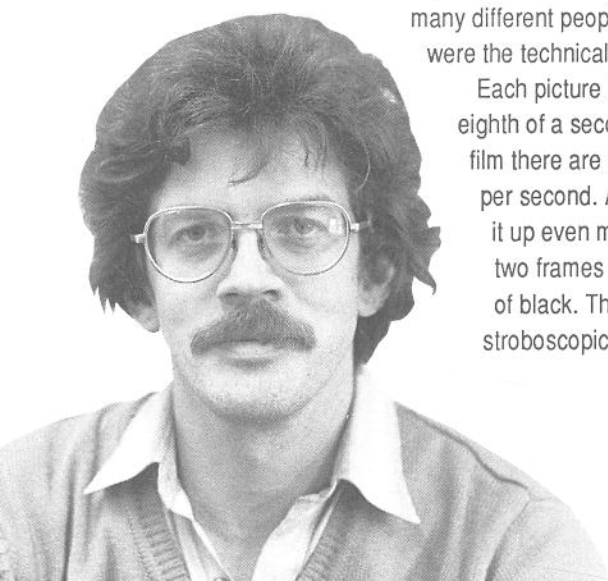
I didn't get exactly what I wanted. I was too young to know how to insist on carrying through my vision. Now I know.

### ***Reactions to the film***

For many people, this is a hard film to watch. It's not a film to seduce people. It's meant to provoke them.

Normally, as a filmmaker, you do want to seduce your public. But I was about 24 or 25 when I made the film. I was very idealistic and angry too about having to make the compromises necessary to live in this society.

And yet I think any work of art, any creation brings hope. Because you build something, because you know that you have the capacity to respond.





# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

1 It is particularly important to begin discussion of this film by talking about your reactions as a viewer. How did you feel watching the film? (You might want to ask a few students to note people's body language during the screening. Do they cross their arms to shield themselves from the image barrage? Do they give themselves up to it?)

2 If you react to the experience with anger and resentment, it may be worth exploring what caused the anger. Why do people resist certain kinds of visual experiences? What are people's expectations when they watch a film or television program?

3 Which images/parts of the film stand out in your mind? (This process of trying to recall images or sequences from a film is known as an "image scan" and is a very helpful way of opening up discussion after a screening.)

4 What did you think the film was about? (There will doubtless be a range of reactions and interpretations to this material. Especially in a film of this type, people will tend to "fix" on certain parts and sort them out in different ways).

5 What associations do you have with this title? What if it were simply called *This Is a Message*? Who made the message? Who is it for? What is the content of the message?

6 Is the filmmaker's "message" the same as the message of the people who originally created the images he is using? If not, how does he get his point-of-view across?

7 Try to recall (or go back and look at) the images of men in the film. Consider such elements as: appearance, activities, preoccupations, contexts or objects with which men are associated. What do these signify? How are men and women depicted in today's ads? Are there noticeable changes from these 1970s ads?

8 Follow a discussion of advertising images of women in this film with a screening of the excerpt from *No Way! Not Me* (selection #9). What changes do you see in the 15 years between them? Also see *Thin Dreams* (selection #8), in which teenage girls discuss how media images of women affect the ways in which they view their bodies and hence themselves.

9 The soundtrack in this film is an integral part of the message and effect. What is the effect? What elements are used? Try running the images without the sound. How is it different? What would it be like with a voice-over narration explaining what you see on the screen? Try listening to the track with your eyes closed. What feelings does it evoke? What images do you see?

# ACTIVITIES

## PRE-SCREENING

1 Have students bring in a copy of their favourite magazine. They can create an image bank by going through it and removing all the advertisements. These can then be categorized in a number of ways — according to subject, colour, body posture, movement, who is dominant in the photo and who is subordinate. What is left of the magazine once all the ads are removed? (Students may enjoy working in pairs; it is sometimes easier to decode someone else's magazine with a measure of freshness and detachment.)

2 Students can create flip books or photo collages, using images from their photo collections.

## POST-SCREENING

1 The film begins with a baby/astronaut falling towards earth into a maelstrom of sounds and images. Have students report on our society from the standpoint of a recently-arrived alien. What features would strike the visitor most? The report could be done as a collage of images from recent advertisements with appropriate commentary — outraged, satirically approving, naïvely enthused.



Media are really environments, with all the effects geographers & biologists associate with environments. We live inside our media. We are their content. TV images come at us so fast, in such profusion, they engulf us, tattoo us. We're immersed. We're surrounded & whatever surrounds, involves. TV doesn't just wash over us and then "go out of mind". It goes into mind, deep into mind. The subconscious is a world in which we store everything, not something, and TV extends the subconscious.

Such experiences are difficult to describe in words. Like dreams or sports, they evade verbal classification.

Edmund Carpenter, *Oh, What a Blow That Phantom Gave Me!* (Bantam, 1974), p. 64

.....

There has been an extension in the range of commodities aimed especially at [men]. In the fifties, a list of such goods would have included cars, beer and booze, certain brands of cigarettes, hobby gear and life insurance. Since then we have seen an ever-expanding array of male-oriented leisure goods (including pornography), a steady drive to incorporate male clothing into fashion, and mounting efforts to sell men all

manner of personal-care products... Men as private persons, in short, have been targeted for economic development and are beginning to undergo, seventy years after women went through something similar, a process of intensive consumerization. For men to become more critically aware of how ads are beginning to encode their sex is for men to become more aware of what their enhanced role as consumers implies culturally.

Andrew Wernick, "From Voyeur to Narcissist: Imaging Men in Contemporary Advertising", included in *Beyond Patriarchy* (Oxford University Press, 1987), ed. Michael Kaufman, p. 279

.....

Publicity turns consumption into a substitute for democracy. The choice of what one eats (or wears or drives) takes the place of significant political choice. Publicity helps to mask and compensate for all that is undemocratic within society. And it also masks what is happening in the rest of the world.

John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin, 1977), p. 149

.....

## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

See the material on Publicity in John Berger's film series *Ways of Seeing* and his book with the same title. Berger is particularly interested in the political implications of the push towards relentless consumerism. The film series is available for rental or purchase from BBC Enterprises, 39 Baywood Rd., Rexdale, Ont. M9V 3Y8. Tel. (416) 745-6533.



### PRINT

Erving Goffman's book *Gender Advertisements* (Harper Colophon, 1979) has fascinating information on the visual codes commonly used in advertising. It is now out of print, so libraries are the most likely source.

For material on images of men, see Andrew Wernick's article "From Voyeur to Narcissist: Imaging Men in Contemporary Advertising", included in *Beyond Patriarchy* (Oxford University Press, 1987) ed. Michael Kaufman.



# IMAGES OF WOMEN

The six excerpts and one complete film included in this section raise questions about the visual representation of women in the mass media. Though our original intention was to collect material on images of gender, we found little available that examined images of men. We decided, instead, to focus on the material we had on women and to use it as a model for suggesting ways of looking at the representation of other groups in the media, be they men, blacks, Asians, native people, gays and lesbians, or members of the upper, middle and lower classes.

The first four excerpts - *Careers and Cradles*, *Women at War*, *Service in the Sky* and *Attention: Women at Work!* - all deal with the theme of women's role in society. The latter three, especially, have been chosen to suggest the connections between social demands and expectations and the ways in which women are portrayed, particularly in film and on television.

Society's obsession with slimness and the perfect body is the focus of *Thin Dreams*, a film made specifically for an adolescent audience. The excerpt from *No Way! Not Me* considers the effect that current advertising and rock video images of women may have on teenage girls' perceptions of their future possibilities. Finally, the excerpts from *Not a Love Story: A Film About Pornography* raise questions about the complex issue of pornography.

# 6 CAREERS AND CRADLES

a 106B 0177 179  
11:07 b&w 1947  
Excerpt length: 1:57  
Sr. high

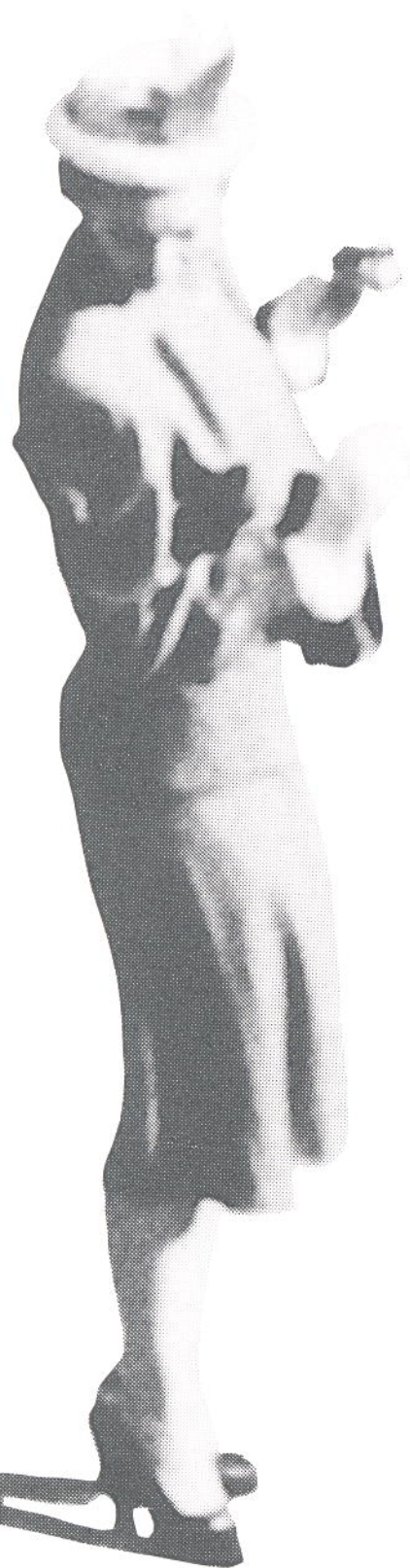
This short clip, taken from the opening of a 1947 film\*, has been chosen for two reasons. First, the excerpt provides a clear example of some of the key conventions — including point of view, cinematographic style and narrative voice — which have typified the treatment of women in the media over the years. Second, it is a striking instance of how hidden messages, whether intentional or not, can operate in film.

*Careers and Cradles* was one response to the vexing problem of what to do with women in the post-war world. During the war, women had worked capably and efficiently in areas, such as munitions production, previously considered to be the sole preserve of men. The film, in apparent recognition of this contribution, begins by paying lip service to the notion of equality, but quickly becomes a paean to the glories of domesticity and the joys of consumption. Now that the war is over, it turns out that woman's proper sphere is not the public realm but the home, and that her main contribution to the nation lies in shopping. Such a shift in the representation of women's roles will guarantee two things: that the men returning from war can be reabsorbed back into the labour force and that a ready-made market will exist for the products of a recently dismantled war-time economy.

\**Careers and Cradles, Women at War and Service in the Sky* are part of an archival series now available on video. See FURTHER RESOURCES pg. 50.







## About Point of View

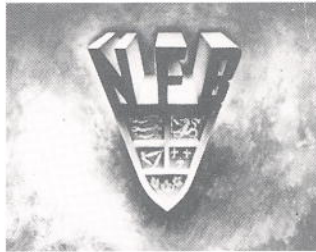
**T**his opening excerpt from *Careers and Cradles* offers a useful example for drawing attention to the concept of point of view. For instance, why did the filmmakers choose to include shots of men looking at the woman, both on the street corner and on the bus? Do these shots add anything to the stated argument of the film, presented in the narration? What do they suggest about the filmmakers' assumptions (intentional or unintentional) about their audience?

In fact, the sequence is constructed (shot, framed, edited, narrated) in a way which assumes or encourages a male perspective or identification on the part of the viewer. This assumption that the viewer is male is true of much of the history of representation of women in film, television and the visual arts. Despite the ostensible message of the narration, the staging and direction of the sequence seem to be telling us that women are not really instrumental in society — that their preoccupations in life have less to do with careers, social equality, or political responsibility than with grooming themselves to be “objects of the male gaze”.

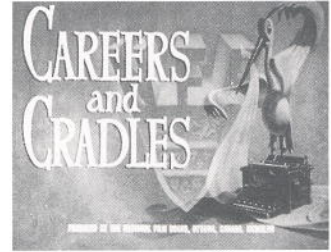


# Shot Analysis

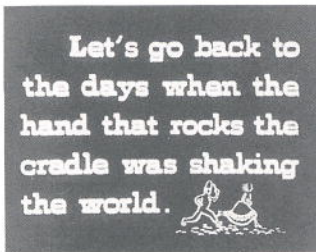
**T**his brief sequence offers a classic example of a “double message”. In this case, there is a marked discrepancy between what the sound track (narration) is saying and what the picture is saying. The following is a shot-by-shot breakdown of the sequence, including narration and music:



- 1** **MUSIC:** fanfare  
NFB logo



- 2** **MUSIC:** strings  
Opening title: *Careers and Cradles*, against artist's drawing of stork standing on stenographer's machine. *Wipe to:*



- 3** **MUSIC:** strings  
Intertitle: Let's go back to a time when the hand that rocks the cradle was shaking the world. *Wipe to:*



- 4** **NARRATION:** In Great Britain and the United States,  
**MUSIC:** march  
Archival footage: Women marching with British flag.



- 5** **NARRATION:** loud shouts of “votes for women” greeted the arrival of the twentieth century.  
Women marching.



- 6** **NARRATION:** The suffragettes chalked their slogans on walls, organized parades and even risked imprisonment.  
Person with bicycle, horse and carriage passing by.



- 7** **NARRATION:** Women were fed up being the inferior sex.  
Woman, surrounded by men, being led away by two bobbies.



- 8** **NARRATION:** Today the campaigns of the suffragettes belong to history.  
*Dissolve to:* staged footage of “modern” woman walking to “meet” suffragette.



- 9** **NARRATION:** In the last 50 years, there has been a revolutionary change in the status of women.  
She reaches for her compact.



- 10** **NARRATION:** In most parts of the western world, women can vote,  
She checks seams of her stockings.



- 11** **NARRATION:** own property and  
Two men nudge each other.



- 12** **NARRATION:** practise any profession within their capabilities. Most important again was the self-respect and  
She checks her hair in compact mirror.



- 13** **NARRATION:** assurance that came with political equality.  
She enters bus. Shot from point of view of someone sitting down. Camera pans up her body.



- 14** **NARRATION:** They now feel they're on an equal footing  
Seated man looks up at her.



- 15** **NARRATION:** with the opposite sex.  
Woman's face, close up.



- 16** **NARRATION:** Man, for his part, is still adjusting himself to the idea.  
Close up, her foot in spike heels, close to his sensible shoes. Takes her foot out of the shoe, rubs her foot against it.



- 17** **MUSIC**  
Seated man on bus rubs nose, shifts uneasily in his seat.

# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 What is this sequence about?
- 2 Who is speaking? From whose point of view is the story being told?
- 3 Which makes the strongest impression — the commentary or the visuals?
- 4 What are the attitudes implicit in this sequence?
- 5 While the footage of the suffragettes is archival material of actual events, that of the primping young woman has been staged by the filmmaker. In shot 12, how would you describe the look on the woman's face as she checks her hairdo in the mirror? Is she aware of being watched? Is the invisible viewer male or female?
- 6 In the narration, members of the female sex are referred to as "women". Members of the male sex, however, are referred to by the generic term "man". What is the effect of this different use of language on women? On men? Does this happen today?

- 7 This sequence often evokes an amused, incredulous response because such blatant sexism is no longer acceptable. Using a specific example from film or television today, discuss the presentation of female roles and behaviour. In cases where the female lead is shown doing work outside the home — for example, as a lawyer, doctor, nurse, bartender — are more subtle sexist values still implicit in the way the character is presented through the scripting, acting or direction? Try to give some examples.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/PRINT

For further discussion of the notion of woman as object and the presence of the invisible viewer, see John Berger's film on women in the BBC series *Ways of Seeing* and Essay #3 in the book of the same name. Berger's book and film series are most suitable for advanced senior students and as a teacher reference. The film series is available for rental or purchase from BBC Enterprises, 39 Baywood Rd., Rexdale, Ont. M9V 3Y8. Tel. (416) 745-6533.





# 6 WOMEN AT WAR

106B 0177 177  
10:23 b&w 1942  
Excerpt length: 4:00  
Sr. high

**P**roduced in Britain in 1942, this film is an anomaly for the time it was made. Created by women, about women, primarily for women, it differs significantly in tone from most wartime films made in Canada.

Whereas most Canadian propaganda films portrayed women's wartime activities as something extraordinary, *Women at War* matter-of-factly presents women's direct participation in the war effort as a natural outgrowth of their peacetime occupations. Women are assumed to be competent and the world of women at work—including feeding, nurturing, supporting and succouring—is seen as part of the “real” world, and not simply as a natural extension of their biological reality.

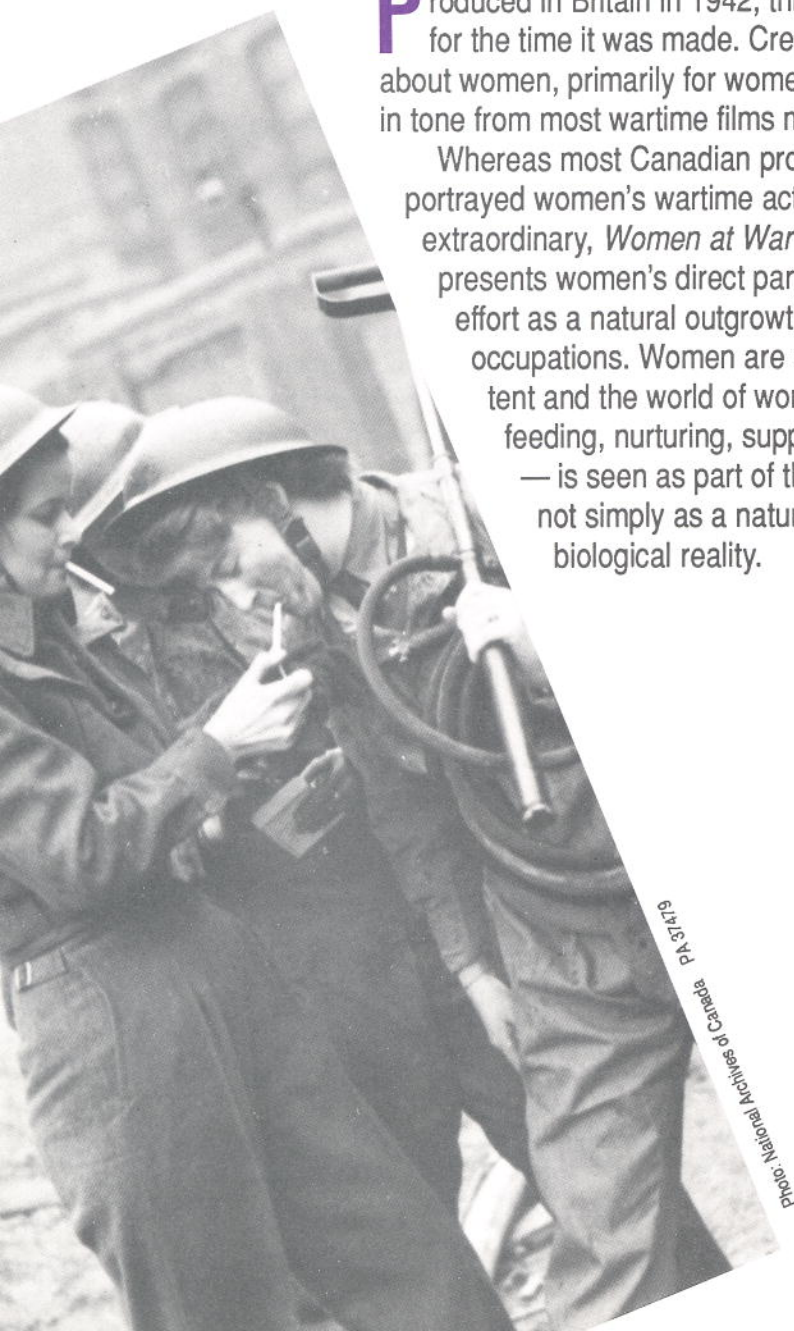
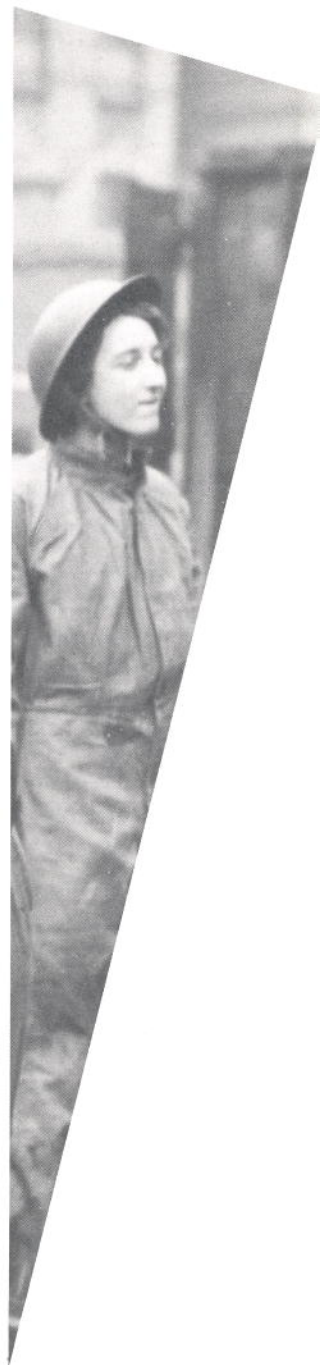


Photo: National Archives of Canada  
PA 37479



## About the Film

### Narration

Not only was the commentary for this film written by a woman, it was read by one as well. In the 1940s, this was almost unheard of. Even today, it is still not the norm for women to do voice-overs or narrations in film, television and radio. According to ACTRA, the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists, the percentage of voice work done by women at the present time is approximately 5 per cent. For television commercials, it is about 17 per cent. The media "voice of authority" is still unquestionably male.

It is interesting to notice the differences in tone between this narration and that of most wartime films. There is no background music and the narrator's delivery is calm and understated. In contrast, most Canadian documentaries of that era featured the authoritative masculine "voice of doom", heavily underscored by foreboding music to drive the point home.

The style of narration prevalent at the time was determined, in great part, by the technology. The cumbersome nature of film equipment in those days made it impossible to record sound on location. Instead, documentary films were shot like silent pictures, with narration, music and sound effects added later in the sound studio.

### Visuals

The documentary footage in *Women at War* is striking because we do not often see images of women planting fields and harvesting crops, women piloting planes, women fighting fires caused by bombings, women welding and riveting, as well as women decorating shop windows, nursing the sick and feeding the hungry. In fact, the images in most war films show women performing tasks previously believed to be beyond their capabilities and contrary to their "nature". The social need was there and so, suddenly, were the images.

## IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Is there a different relationship between filmmaker and subject in this film compared to *Careers* and *Cradles*?
- 2 Describe the difference in tone between this film and *Careers* and *Cradles*.
- 3 How are women represented in this film? What other examples have you seen in film or on television of women doing "non-traditional" work?
- 4 Choose a television program or film you particularly like. What kind of work do the women in it do? What kind of work do the men do?



Photo: National Archives of Canada PA 112891



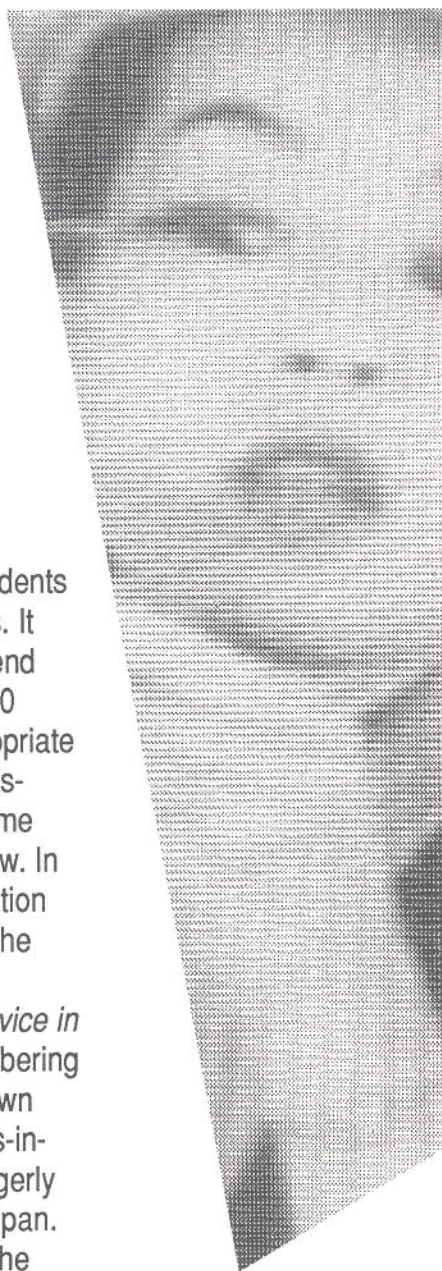
# 6 SERVICE IN THE SKY

**C** 106B 0177 182  
9:48 b&w 1957  
Excerpt length: 3:54  
Sr. high

**M**ade in 1957, this film about air stewardesses glamorizes a service job in which minor incidents are portrayed as serious and absorbing challenges. It also assumes that marriage is the fitting and final end to a woman's formal work life. With the benefit of 30 years' hindsight, this attitude may seem so inappropriate as to be laughable, but our current unquestioned assumptions about gender may well occasion the same kind of hilarity and disbelief three decades from now. In fact, it's worth discussing whether the current situation has changed as much as a first cursory glance at the archival clips in this section might suggest.

Only 15 years separate *Women at War* and *Service in the Sky*; the differences between them are both sobering and instructive. In *Women at War*, women are shown fighting blazes; in *Service in the Sky*, a stewardess-in-training, decked out in fur coat and high heels, gingerly attempts to extinguish a fire set in a large roasting pan. An instructor hovers protectively over her and as she fades into the background, he steps forward to explain to "the girls" how it's really done.

In *Women at War*, women are shown working with the lathe and the riveter, producing the materials necessary for Britain's offence and defence. In *Service in the Sky*, a group of stewardesses-in-training are taken to a factory. They listen politely, like tourists in a foreign country, while a male mechanic carefully explains to them the component parts of a plane.





## Text of the Narration from Women at War

*All this vast organization of women in uniform might as well be playing with paper dolls if it were not for the women of the factories. They are the armies of the lathe and the riveter. They forge the striking power into Britain's defence and offence. Not as glamorous as being an actress or as comfortable as being a stenographer but more useful. They even mount the fittings and install the engines for the little powerboats of the navy. They work night and day in the places most coveted by the Nazis. They leave their acetylene welders to find that the bombs which missed their factories shattered their homes but they get back to work on time and train for firefighting. They never know when this experience will stand them in good stead in protecting their own homes.*



## Text of the Narration from Service in the Sky

*[These girls] will never be asked to repair a flap or fix a fuselage but they will know enough to tell a piston from a turbo prop and to satisfy an inquisitive passenger.*

# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

**1** Re-screen the sequences described on page 43 and discuss the differences in images and commentary between the two films. Why are these differences significant? (See the text of the narrations from the films.)

**2** As in poetry, film can create meaning through the significant *juxtaposition* of images. Such juxtapositions are fashioned by the process of editing. What might be some of the implicit messages/ meanings of the following juxtapositions?

- *The group of stewardesses-to-be is being ushered through a factory. As the mechanic explains the structure of the plane, the camera focuses on his hand moving over the various components. The visuals cut or change to a close-up of a woman's hand also touching a piece of equipment—in this case, the door to the compartments that hold the food trays for the passengers.*

- *The women are standing by respectfully as an air controller competently operates the array of switches at his command. The visual changes from a close-up of his hand on the control panel to a close-up of a woman's face in a mirror. The camera pulls back to show her hand applying make-up as a "professional teacher" shows these women how to always put "their best face forward".*

**3** In the film, males are referred to as men and females are called girls. In what other ways are women trivialized in the film? What is the cumulative effect of such trivialization on men's perceptions of women? On women's perceptions of themselves?

**4** Judging from these films, what was the role of women supposed to be in 1942? In 1957? What would viewers in the year 2020 surmise about women's role and status in today's society from looking at current television programming, films and advertising?



# ACTIVITIES

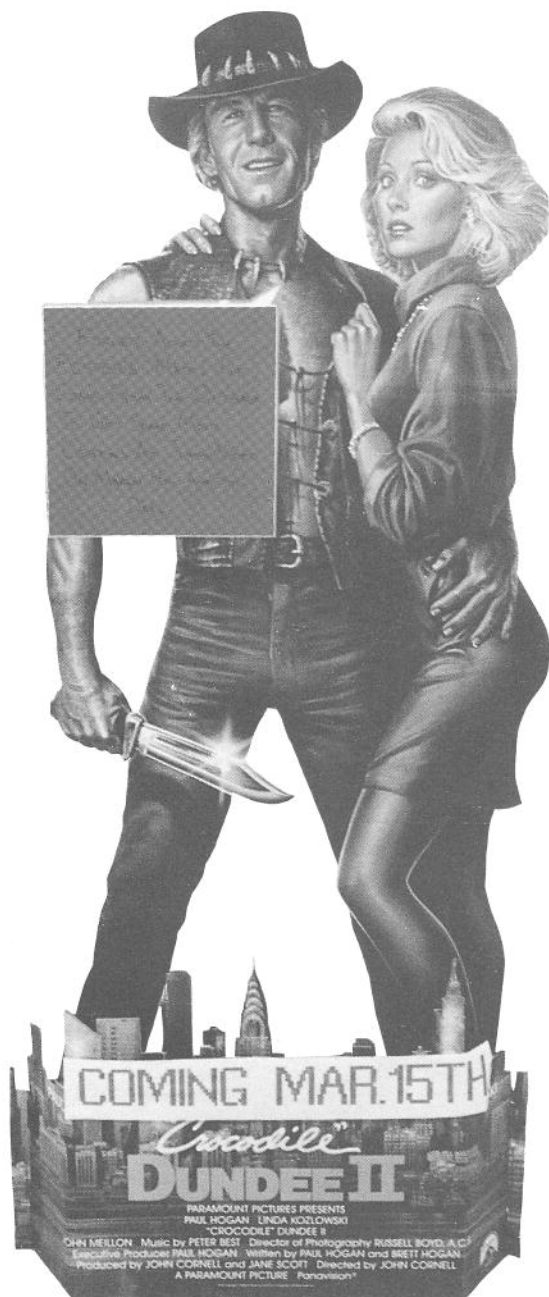
1 Have a group of students choose another archival film from the video compilation, *Women in the '40s and '50s*. (See **FURTHER RESOURCES**, page 50, for a listing of titles). After they view the film and analyze it among themselves, have them screen it for the class and lead a discussion.

2 Students may want to focus on the images of girls and women in music videos or television sitcoms. Have them find two current examples which seem to echo traditional representations of women and two examples of alternative representations.

3 Try the same exercise, concentrating on images of men.

4 Pick another group — perhaps native people, blacks, members of the working class — and examine how they are presented (or not presented) in films or TV programs. What would help change this situation?

5 In small groups, have students brainstorm ideas for a contemporary film about flight attendants. What kinds of visuals would they use? What would they say in the narration? In 1956, service was stressed. What could be stressed today?





# 7 ATTENTION: WOMEN AT WORK!

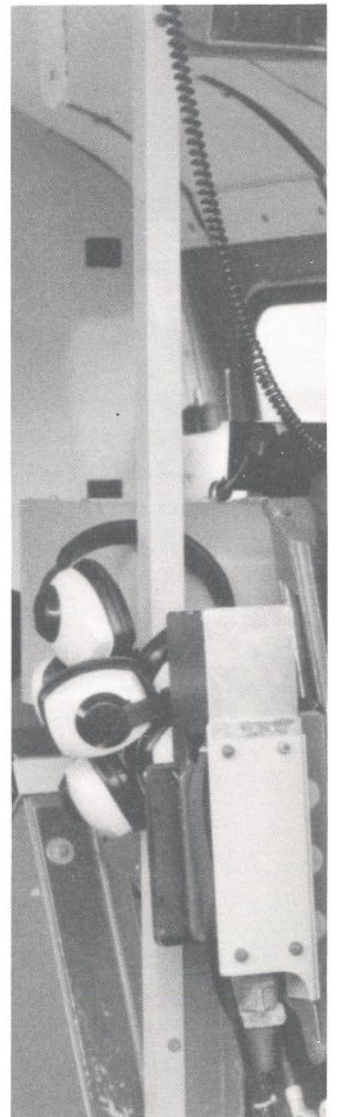
106C 0183 594  
28:20 col. 1983  
Excerpt length: 7:13  
Dir: Anne Henderson  
Prod: Margaret Pettigrew, Kathleen Shannon  
Int./Sr. high



If media images of women reflect society's needs and expectations, and if they also influence beliefs about women's capabilities and options, then clearly images of competent, independent women are desperately needed again. Forty years after *Women at War* was produced, *Attention: Women at Work!* attempts to answer that need in a film for teenagers sponsored by the Federal Women's Film Program.

A hovercraft pilot, an architect and two carpenters speak of their success in a male-dominated workplace. Their career portraits are intercut with a discussion among adolescent girls about factors influencing their choice of a career, including sex-role stereotyping, self-image, marriage and family expectations. The excerpt chosen here focuses on the hovercraft pilot.

In *Attention: Women at Work!*, the young woman profiled speaks for herself, in her own voice, which creates a sense of immediacy and intimacy missing in earlier productions like *Women at War*, *Careers and Cradles* and *Service in the Sky*. This change in narrative style was partly due to the development of lightweight portable equipment in the 1950s which revolutionized documentary filmmaking. It now became possible to record sound on location simultaneously with the images. (For further information on sound in film, see the GLOSSARY OF BASIC FILM TERMS, page 116.)



## IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION



**1** Where have you seen women — either in film or on television — doing non-traditional work? What is the impact of seeing these kinds of images?

**2** What differences do you notice in “voice” between this film and *Careers and Cradles* or *Service in the Sky*? Who does the talking? What is the difference in tone when direct address is used rather than voice-over narration?

**3** Contrast the use of music and sound effects here with those in *Careers and Cradles* and *Service in the Sky*. How do these elements contribute to the tone and mood of each of the films in this section?

[Womanpower] is stamping an imprint on both sides of the camera, reshaping the male and female images on the screen as well as the sexual make up of the industry that manufactures those images. The feminization of television has surprisingly little to do with feminism. At its roots lies an intriguing demographic shift: female viewers have seized control of the prime-time dial as the network's male audience increasingly drifts to the cable channels. At the same time market research reveals that women have become the principal purchasers of the products most advertised by prime-time sponsors (e.g., cosmetics and household goods.) Such findings have spawned a theory: the network that most endears itself to the lady of the house has the best chance of survival. The theory also comes with a corollary: shows that capture the viewers sponsors prize most — women between the ages of 18 and 49 — can charge “Cosby”-close ad rates even though they rest a tier below in the ratings.

A second explanation for TV's sexual role reversal can be found behind the cameras. As the networks ardently woo women, the men who have traditionally controlled what the tube disgorges at night — mostly male characters playing out male fantasies — are being joined by an ambitious and talented cadre of females.

Harry F. Waters and Janet Huck, “Networking Women”, *Newsweek*, March 13, 1989.







What might be the effect of having significantly more prominent males than prominent females on TV? First, it provides fewer models for female than for male viewers. This may be especially important for children. Secondly, it makes it more difficult to provide variety in the portrayal of prominent females, making it more likely that these portrayals will be stereotyping. Thirdly, the consistent portrayal of more prominent males than females conveys the implicit message that females are less important than males.

T. MacBeth, Williams et al. *The Portrayal of Sex Roles on Canadian and U.S. Television*, UBC: Dept. of Psychology, 1986, p. 3

If you look around, you can see there are no women managers of our networks. There are no women owning and running broadcasting stations. And in the media generally, there are very few, if any, women holding positions of influence and power ... Who decides what subjects are to be covered, and from what angle?

Flora MacDonald, former Minister of Communications and Culture at "Adjusting the Image: Women and Canadian Broadcasting" conference, March 1987.



## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

If you are interested in doing more work with historical images of the role of women, look at the NFB video compilation of eight archival films, *WOMEN IN THE '40s AND '50s*. Titles in the series include *Women at War* (1942), *Wings on her Shoulders* (1943), *Proudly She Marches* (1943), *Careers and Cradles* (1947), *Women at Work* (1958), *Service in the Sky* (1957), *Needles and Pins* (1955), *Is It a Woman's World?* (1957). The films are also available separately in 16mm format.

*The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* is a splendid examination of the work experiences of women during World War II— and much else besides. Available for rental or purchase from DEC Films, 394 Euclid Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6G 2S9. Tel. (416) 925-9338.

One of the few films available on media representations of minority groups is *Black History: Lost, Stolen or Strayed*. Produced in 1973 and narrated by Bill Cosby, the film examines the image of blacks in Hollywood cinema, from *Birth Of a Nation* through Steppin' Fetchit and Amos 'n' Andy, and ends with *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*

### PRINT

*Boxed In: Women and Television* (Pandora, 1987), ed. Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer, is the first in-depth look at women's relation to television — as on-screen performers, as writers and programme makers and as television viewers.

*Television and Sex Role Stereotyping* (John Libbey, 1986), by Barrie Gunter deals with the portrayal and perception of the sexes on television as well as the social effects of television and sex stereotyping.

For a general introduction to the subject of women in Hollywood films, see Molly Haskell's book *From Reverence to Rape* (Penguin, 1974).

*Toms, Coons, Mulattos, Mammies and Bucks* (Viking, 1973) by Donald Bogle is about the history and evolution of black stereotypes in film and on television.

Also see: Patricia Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema* (Indiana University Press, 1984) and Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (Harper & Row, 1981).

*Jump Cut: Hollywood, Politics and Counter-Cinema* (Between the Lines, 1985), ed. Peter Steven, contains articles about working-class heroes in film, and media representations of gays and lesbians.

# 8 THIN DREAMS

106C 0186 054

20:38 col. 1986

Dir: Susie Mah

Prod: Micheline Le Guillou, Gerry Rogers, Kathleen Shannon

Int./Sr. high



In this film, young women in high school explore the way they feel about their bodies and comment on society's obsession with thinness. They know that their preoccupation with self-image and particularly body-image is fueled by what they see in the media — women with flawless complexions, slender bodies and no discernible insecurities or imperfections. The growing rates of anorexia and bulimia testify to the grim consequences of trying to live up to such "perfection".

In addition to the discussion sequences, the film contains three dramatic improvisations. The first focuses on a group of friends on a shopping expedition in which one overweight young woman is unable to find anything attractive that will fit her. Besides emphasizing her apparent discomfort, the sequence makes clear the way in which the fashion industry makes trendy clothes available only for certain body types.

The second dramatic scene deals with dieting and the participants' constant battle to curtail their food intake in order to achieve the "perfect body". It is here that eating disorders are mentioned.

The third sequence deals with dating, boyfriends and being convinced that a slimmer body would be an instant ticket to popularity.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

Because of the sensitive nature of the subject for mixed groups, some teachers may decide to divide the class along gender lines in order to encourage freer discussion. Another option, after previewing, is to screen a selected sequence from the film to initiate discussion.

## About the Making of the Film

### INTERVIEW WITH SUSIE MAH, DIRECTOR

*Thin Dreams seems to have avoided the stereotyped ways of presenting adolescents so prevalent in film and television. This may be attributed, at least in part, to the way the film was made. Its director, Susie Mah, was part of a Women Filmmakers in Training Program sponsored by Studio D, the Women's Unit at the NFB, during International Youth Year, 1986.*

#### **Susie Mah:**

Once I decided to make the film, I contacted four high schools in Montreal and went to talk to girls in the drama classes there. Eventually, after interviewing a lot of girls, I chose eight drama students from two different schools. We met once a week for six weeks.

I chose three situations — shopping, dieting and dating — and the girls improvised what they would say and do. I videotaped the improvisations and then wrote the scenes using a lot of their dialogue. I wouldn't have been

able to capture the way they spoke and what they spoke about if I had done it by myself, without their participation.

I made some other choices. I wanted the girls in the film to be mixed, racially and ethnically. And I never pointed out to them how they had been indoctrinated by the media. They had their own very firm ideas about where they had got their ideas on thinness. And I wanted them to draw their own conclusions. Which they did.

Susie Mah





## IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 What characteristics make up North American society's definition of beauty? (You may want to consider such factors as age, race and class in the definitions of male and female beauty.) Where and how did we learn our concepts of attractiveness?
- 2 In North America, what implications do our notions of the perfect female body have for women's health? Is the current emphasis on weightlifting having similar consequences for young men?
- 3 "You never see a fat lady advertising a Pepsi. You never see a fat lady advertising a car." (*Thin Dreams*). When do you see fat people in commercials, films or television programs? What sorts of roles are they cast in? Discuss other kinds of physical stereotypes in the media, for example, the 90-pound weakling, the bosomy blonde, the dumb jock.
- 4 How do you feel about the teenagers in this film? Did they seem realistic to you? Which did you like? Which did you not like? What kinds of images of adolescents do you see on television or film?

# ACTIVITIES

1 Have students come up with ideas for a film that would be the male equivalent of *Thin Dreams*. What would it deal with? Are men objectified in the media? If so, what are the prevalent images?

2 Bring in an ad (either print or video) that has been aimed deliberately at the teenage market. What kinds of images and language does it use? (For an extension of this exercise, see ACTIVITIES, page 11.)

3 In small groups, brainstorm ideas for films about teenagers. Students may want to consider the kinds of characters, their dilemmas or situations, their backgrounds and the settings for these films.

4 Have students do an improvisation on a subject of their choice, using Susie Mah's film as a model. Those with access to equipment can make their own videos.

5 Have students research how notions of beauty have changed in western culture over the centuries or how such notions differ from culture to culture.

6 According to a 1989 *Vogue* magazine article (see FOOD FOR THOUGHT, page 55), "Most of our clients... want minorities because they look more interesting, often more exotic, certainly more noticeable." Have students examine print ads and/or commercials to see if they notice any such trend in the types of models being used currently.





There is little question that the emotional, often primitive assessment of what counts as beauty — what shapes a cultural ideal — is undergoing a profound change. And a major reason for that change is television, our most powerful purveyor of images. TV made Bill Cosby a star — and Bill Cosby brought news of middle-class black America into millions of homes. And TV made athletes like Olympic runner Florence Griffith Joyner and skater Debi Thomas not only symbols of racial (and national) pride but exemplars of a new female sensibility. Clearly, who we admire has changed, and no business is more aware of this than the advertising business. But the shifts in advertisers' thinking has less to do with politics than with a keen sense of what people are responding to.

"Tokenism is dead," says Ron Anderson, vice-chairman, chief creative officer of Bozell, Jacobs, Kenyon and Eckhardt, an agency with an annual \$1.3 billion in billings. "Most of our clients (Chrysler, Merrill Lynch, Fabergé) want minorities because they look more interesting, often more exotic, certainly more noticeable. It's happening across the lot. It's healthy and it's good for business."

Shirley Lord, "American Style: Everybody's all-American",  
*Vogue*, February, 1989, p. 317.





## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

*This Is a Recorded Message* (selection #5) deals, among other things, with images of gender in advertising.

For examples of the sort of mainstream media images which influence the girls in *Thin Dreams*, see the excerpt from *No Way! Not Me* (selection #9).

In the NFB production *Being Male*, adolescent boys talk candidly about how traditional images of maleness fit their own experience.

*Still Killing Us Softly* and the excerpts from *Not a Love Story* (selection #10) make it clear that the use of woman's body as object and product in "regular" advertising culminates finally in pornographic images which are both violent and degrading. Teachers are advised to preview this material before screening it for students. *Still Killing Us Softly* is available for rental on video from the NFB and for sale in 16mm film and video from Kinetic Film/Video, 408 Dundas St. E., Toronto, Ont. M5A 2A5. Tel. (416) 963-5979.

*Hair Piece*, a short animated film, explores in a humorous fashion, the impact that white models of beauty and hair have had on black people and black women in particular. Available from DEC Films, 394 Euclid Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6G 2S9. Tel. (416) 925-9338.

### PRINT

See *Face Value: The Politics of Beauty* (Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1984) by Robin Lakoff and Raquel Scherr and *Fat is a Feminist Issue* (Berkeley, 1978) by Susie Orbach.

Jungian analyst Marion Woodman's books *The Owl was a Baker's Daughter* (Inner City Books, 1980) and *Addiction to Perfection* (Inner City Books, 1982) contain fascinating material linking eating disorders to the repressed feminine principle in our culture.

Myrna Kostash's book *No Kidding* (McClelland and Stewart, 1987) offers insights into the world of adolescent girls.

For material on images of men, see Andrew Wernick's article "From Voyeur to Narcissist: Imaging Men in Contemporary Advertising" included in *Beyond Patriarchy* (Oxford University Press, 1987), ed. Michael Kaufman.



# 9 NO WAY! NOT ME

106C 0187 104

29:00 col. 1988

Excerpt length: 1:51

Dir: Ariadne Ochrymovych

Prod: Silva Basmajian

Int./Sr. high

**N**o Way! Not Me, aimed specifically at an adolescent audience, examines the increasing feminization of poverty in Canada. Rosemary Brown, feminist, social activist and former NDP MP in British Columbia, speaks on the issue of poverty to a mixed group of teenagers in Toronto. For her, the socialization of young women, as exemplified in media images, is one of the root causes of their failure to live up to their potential.

The short excerpt used here consists of the sort of current images — found in magazines, commercials and rock videos — which so influence the young women in *Thin Dreams* (selection #8). Rosemary Brown is concerned with the social and economic effects such images have on girls' futures.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

☞ *It is advisable to do some preliminary work with images from magazines before looking at this excerpt.*



## Text of the Narration

*Here in North America we know that one of the contributing factors to our poverty as women has been the socialization which has led us to believe that because we're women we're going to be taken care of, first by our fathers, then by our loving husbands and partners. And each new generation of young women settle for incomplete education, short-term jobs, ignorance about money matters, and dream of marriage ensuring happiness ever after.*

*So we have romance novels. And rock videos. And the movies. Advertising. And the media. Even some religious and educational institutions teaching us as women how to wait for the right man with the right-sized wallet to come along. And how to lie in wait, preparing our bodies and our wiles. Just marking time. Never taking our rights nor our responsibilities seriously. These institutions construct a mask and hide the reality of our poverty, exploitation, but most of all, of our wasted potential.*

## ACTIVITIES

**1** See **ACTIVITIES**, page 17 and page 33, for ideas about image collections and related exercises.

**2** Once students have a bank of images related to gender, they may want to see if the following questions help them uncover any recurring patterns or visual codes:

- What are the facial expressions that recur on women's faces? On men's? What do those differences mean?
- What body postures do women assume in the ads? How do they differ from the men's?
- What are the power relations in these ads? Who is in control? How do you know?
- What is the lifestyle "norm" in these ads?
- Who is missing in the ads?
- What concept of beauty is being pushed in the ads?

**3** Have students bring in ads or sample clips of depictions of romance, sex, relations between men and women, and marriage. In small groups, students can discuss these images and how they are affected by them. Make collages from the images.







# Unmasking the Media

*The following material on rock videos is excerpted from an article Unmasking the Media by Susan G. Cole which appeared in Forum: The Magazine for Secondary School Educators, Dec. 1987/Jan. 1988. The excerpt has been included here because it offers concrete examples of how to work with products of mass culture in a classroom setting.*

**U**nlike ads for cosmetics and clothing, rock videos are directed primarily to a young audience that has always had a special affinity for popular music. They believe this music belongs to them and their loyalty to favourite rock groups is fierce. This affinity may be harnessed in deconstructing rock video with fascinating results. When the subject is rock video, its content and meaning, students are ready to talk.

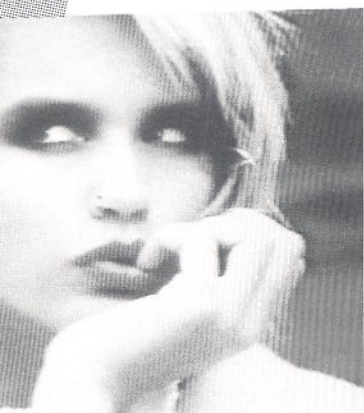
They are also prepared to listen to descriptions of the process of making a rock video. They understand the idea is to market pop performers, using images to complement the power of the music itself. What they may not know is how much the videos cost, who makes the artistic decisions about how the video will look (they are often surprised to hear that the musicians frequently have no input whatsoever), and how rock videos are marketed (unlike other forms of advertising, record companies do not have to pay for air time). In sessions with students about rock videos, we begin with these basics pertaining to the recording music industry.

But it is the deconstruction process that is always the most dynamic. My own method of deconstruction is inspired by feminist and feminist-influenced critiques of art, image, and their social construction. John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* is particularly useful for elucidating the point that

women are surveyed by the male gaze and E. Ann Kaplan's book *Women and Film* contains the ground-breaking essay, "Is the Gaze Male?" that elaborates on this concept. A third book about art and its institutions, *Old Mistress* by Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollack, analyzes how art is valued and by whom. Together these books provide the groundwork for understanding both the basic elements of feminist film theory: analysis of the content of an image, its narrative, and its characters and analysis of the values embedded in the form of the image itself.

To get a sense of these basic elements, I'd like to take you through a process I facilitated with grade 12 students in a downtown Toronto high school. After covering some of the economics of rock video, I established that my purpose was to talk about violence and sexuality in rock videos. I told them I was going to show a rock video and wanted them to help me analyze its contents. The video I chose was by Motley Cruë, a band firmly ensconced in the genre of rock music known as heavy metal. For those unfamiliar with the sensibility of this music, imagine men clad in leather playing guitars as if they were weapons.

I asked the students to consider what was going on in the video, to count the number of violent acts, to notice who were the perpetrators and who were the victims, to watch for what women were doing in



the scenario — were they active or were they just standing there? — and finally, to discuss why leather clothes were so important to the scene. The students went at it with a great deal of enthusiasm. It helped that there were no heavy metal fans in the room. In fact, I detected scorn for the boys and their guitars and this helped. Nobody felt threatened or personally criticized while the exercise was taking place. In the end the class agreed that the video depicted a large number of violent acts, that women were often, though not always, the victim, that men were invariably the perpetrators, and that the women tended to just stand there — the word object came from the students. About the virtues of leather, the class was unclear. In a class of university students I might have pressed for a discussion of the iconography of sadomasochism, but without cues from the high school students themselves I was not prepared to push it. In all, the content analysis was very effective. The students began to see how media images often harp on sex roles and stereotypes and allowed that they didn't like the tendency much.

For the next step I showed another video, this time from rhythm and blues singer Gregory Abbot. The song *Shake You Down* describes what the singer anticipates will be a torrid sexual encounter with his date. This example was appropriate first because, contrary to the

impression given by the images which were apparently non-violent, the video did treat women as objects; and second, because the song was at one point number one on the charts, I knew the students would recognize it.

The video features Abbot languishing against a wall during his reverie while the camera surveys his date preparing for the evening. The class was slightly baffled. Based on the first step of the exercise, there was nothing to criticize in the video. There were no overt acts of violence, no leather, no ugly vibrations. We embarked on a deeper analysis. What role was the camera playing? One student used the term Peeping Tom to describe the camera's invasion of a woman's bedroom. This was a breakthrough: realizing the camera acts as a voyeur and that sometimes film situations are set up as an excuse to watch women. Soon we were comparing the portrayals of the man and the woman. Though the singer was extremely handsome, and thus to some extent himself an object, the video still depicted his point of view, him imagining her. The class also noticed that although this sexual encounter contained some elements of equality, we never saw the man with his clothes off, only the woman. Through this deconstruction process, the students discovered a deeper analysis of form and the camera's point of view.







## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

*"...and They Lived Happily Ever After"* was produced by Studio D, the NFB's "Women's Studio", during the mid-1970s. It examines some of the myths surrounding marriage and motherhood, particularly as promoted in advertising, and contrasts them with the testimony of women who've learned by experience that reality and dreams don't always coincide. Visually, the film seems somewhat dated but the issues and the attitudes of the teenagers remain surprisingly unchanged.

*International Sweethearts of Rhythm* is an award-winning documentary about a multi-racial, all-women jazz band of the late 1930s and early 1940s. It can be used as an exhilarating counterpoint to the images of women in rock videos. Available from DEC Films, 394 Euclid Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6G 2S9. Tel. (416) 925-9338.

### PRINT

See Erving Goffman's book *Gender Advertisements* (Harper Colophon, 1979) which analyzes visual codes and discusses, among other things, the "feminine touch", the family and the ritualization of subordination as portrayed in advertising. The most likely source is the library since the book is now out of print.

*Sex Stereotyping in Advertising* (D.C. Heath Company, 1983) by Alice Courtney and Thomas W. Whipple examines the results of sexual stereotyping and questions its effectiveness as an advertising tool.

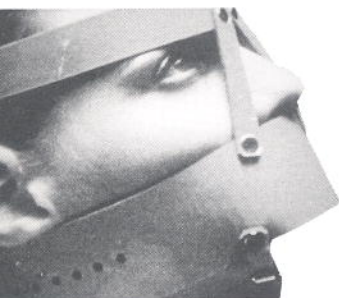
Rosalind Coward's book *Female Desires — How They Are Sought, Bought, Packaged and Sold* (Grove, 1985) is a provocative study of female pleasure — of what things women enjoy or are meant to enjoy, as presented by television and other media.

For added suggestions, see the FURTHER RESOURCES section of *Thin Dreams*, page 56, and FOOD FOR THOUGHT material in *Not A Love Story: A Film about Pornography*, page 67.



# 10 NOT A LOVE STORY:

A Film About Pornography



106C 0181 041

68:40 col. 1981

Excerpt length: 10:45

Dir: Bonnie Sherr Klein

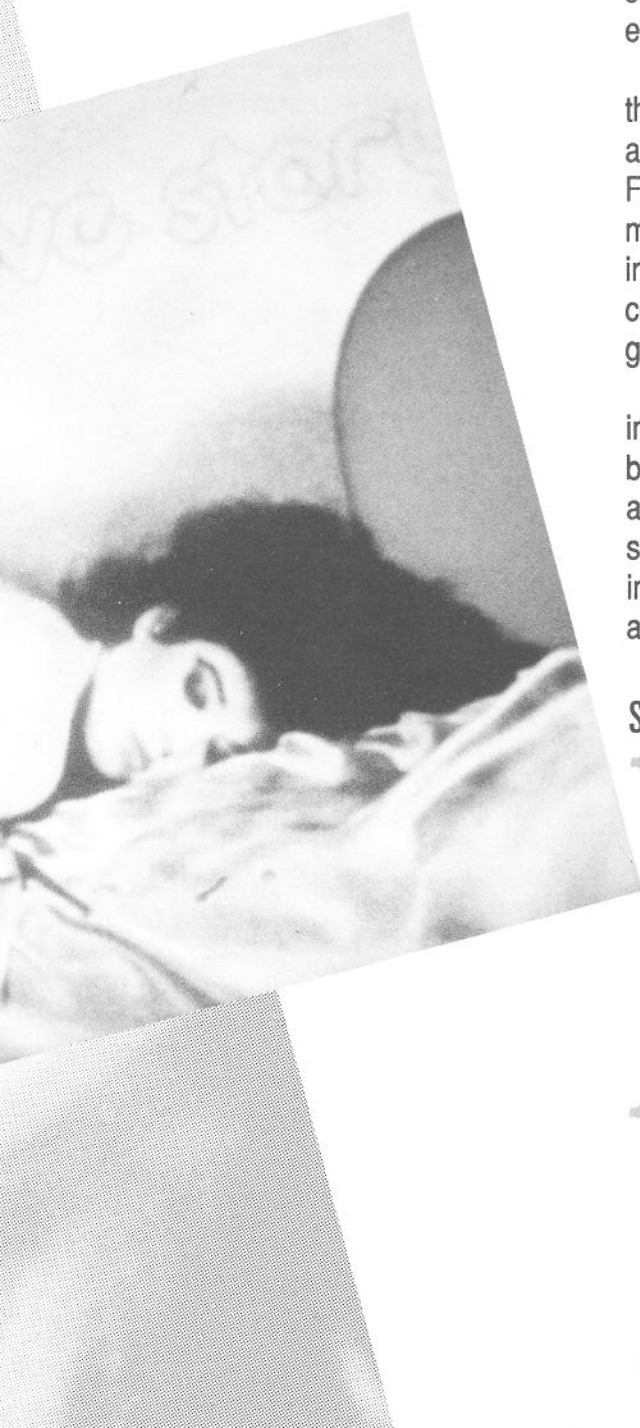
Prod: Dorothy Todd Hénaut, Kathleen Shannon  
Sr. High

**N**ot a Love Story: A Film About Pornography is one of the best-known productions to come out of Studio D, the "Women's Studio" at the National Film Board. Although the studio has at times included male filmmakers, its main objective is to make films which look at social issues from women's perspectives and to act as a catalyst for social change through the medium of film.

*Not a Love Story* has as its "frame story" the journey of two women — Bonnie Klein, filmmaker and Linda Lee Tracy, a Montreal stripper. Together they set out to explore the world of peep shows, strip joints and sex supermarkets. Their motivation is to understand more about pornography — why it exists, what forms it takes and how it affects relations between men and women.

The film offers insights and perspectives from women and men, both inside and outside the "business". There are interviews with people who earn their living in the porn trade, as well as discussions with well known American feminists. These latter provide thoughtful analyses of pornography as an expression and a cause of sexual inequality as well as an arena for violence practised against women. The emotional and psychological effects of pornography on men are explored by a





discussion group organized by "Men Against Male Violence". A number of these discussions and interviews have been edited together for this particular selection.

The issue of pornography is extremely complex and far-reaching; hence, this film material and its accompanying notes should be seen merely as a way of introducing certain questions which individual teachers may want to explore with their students in greater depth.

We made certain decisions about how to deal with the topic within the framework of a media studies package designed primarily for secondary school students. First, we found ourselves unable to show some of the most explicit pornographic images in the film. It is an interesting comment on our society that we felt more constrained to omit graphically sexual imagery than graphically violent imagery.

Second, we decided to sequence the material on images of women in such a way that pornography could be understood as part of a larger continuum, rather than a phenomenon in itself. It is, therefore, best to use this selection after having decoded some of the "soft porn" images that have increasingly seeped into mainstream advertisements and glossy high-fashion spreads.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

- ☛ *To help clarify the connections between pornography and the more subtle and pervasive objectification of women found almost everywhere in the media, a study of advertising should precede the screening of this excerpt. For pertinent activities, see suggestions on pages 33 and 54. Also, try to screen Still Killing Us Softly. (See page 56.)*
- ☛ *We recommend that teachers who want to work with this selection also look at the original one-hour film.*

# About Pornography

## **THE BUSINESS OF "PORN"**

When it comes to pornography, Canada is a market colony of the United States. Distribution of American-made pornographic materials is widespread and highly profitable.

- In the United States, pornography is estimated to be a five-billion-dollar business. It is larger than the American film and record industries combined.
- Project "P", the police unit which deals with pornography in Toronto, estimates that the pornography business in Canada is worth about 500 million dollars annually.
- In Canada, the number of monthly pornographic magazines available has risen from 30 different titles in 1965 to more than 200 in 1983.
- A survey conducted in the summer of 1983 of 252 stores in London, Ontario (including variety stores, smoke shops, grocery stores, department stores and bookstores) found that 80 per cent carried "men's entertainment" magazines.

## **THE CONSUMERS OF "PORN"**

In a 1985 survey of Canadian attitudes regarding sexual content in the media,<sup>1</sup> York University assistant psychology professor James Check found that:

- Adolescents from 12 to 17 years of age are the primary consumers of pornography in Canada today.

- Thirty-five per cent of 12-to-17-year-old Canadians expressed an interest in watching sexually violent scenes (rape, torture, bondage, etc.)
- Twelve-to-17-year-olds were the most undecided about whether an erotic film is different from a pornographic film.
- Twelve-to-17-year-olds were the least willing, of all age groups, to support banning sexually violent materials.
- Thirty-seven per cent of 12-to-17-year-olds watched a pornographic videotape at least once a month.

In a 1986 study<sup>2</sup>, Check also found that the students displayed a surprisingly high acceptance of rape myths and the use of violence against women, including tolerance of forced sexual intercourse.

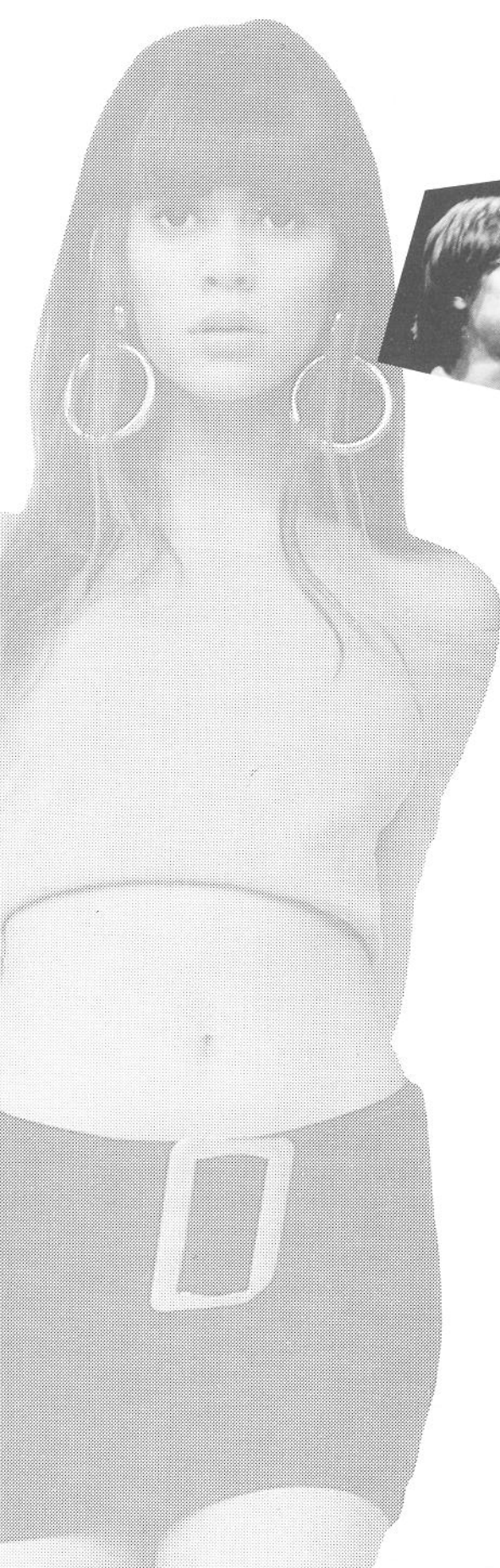
Additional studies show that it is young women in their teens and early 20s who are most likely to experience coercive sexuality, especially "date rape". The most common age category for female victims is 15 to 19 years.

<sup>1</sup> Check, J.V.P. et al., "A Survey of Canadians' Attitude Regarding Sexual Content in the Media", Report No. 11, La Marsh Research Programme on Violence and Conflict Resolution, York University, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> Check, J.V.P., "Attitudes and Behaviour Regarding Pornography and Sexual Coercion in Metropolitan Toronto High School Students", Report No. 30, La Marsh Research Programme on Violence and Conflict Resolution, York University, 1986.







## Quotes from the Film

***Porn Actor:***

"It's a man's world, filmed by men, for men."

***Kate Millett, Writer/Artist:***

"What is disturbing about pornography for me is that it's so unsexy. It's all mixed up with old dreadful patriarchal ideas that sex is essentially evil and that the evil in it is female."

***Susan Griffin, Author:***

"Pornography is like a film that's projected on a blank screen and that blank screen is women's silence. Pornography is filled with images of silencing women. Our silence is the way in which our status as objects is made real."

***Participant, Men Against Male Violence:***

"The world's not telling me how to be intimate. It's telling me how to hate myself, how to hate women, how to hate children, how to be cynical. And love gets lost in all that."

***Member, Women against Pornography:***

"Women have been taught that it's liberal and cool and hip and sexually liberated to like porn. The women don't have any support at all to say 'That offends me. That's my body that's being abused.'"

# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

**1** The distinction between erotica and pornography, though often cited, is much debated. In a 1984 study, York University assistant psychology professor James Check divided sexually explicit material into: sexually violent pornography; non-violent dehumanizing pornography; and non-violent erotica. Can you think of examples from literature, film or television of explicit portrayals of sexuality that you would consider to be “non-pornographic”? On what basis do you distinguish between these depictions and those shown in pornographic magazines, films or videos?

**2** “One of the media’s worst aspects is its frequent linking of sex and violence. There are ads and rock videos which feature women who are tied down, physically threatened and hit. There are TV shows in which characters fall in love with those who rape them. These media know two things that sell: sex and violence.” Caren Adams, *No is Not Enough: Helping Teenagers to Avoid Sexual Assault* (Impact Publishers, 1984), p. 64.

Can you think of examples which either support or disprove this statement? Discuss.

**3** What messages does pornographic material give about the power relationships between men and women? Who is dominant? Who is subordinate? What are the visual codes — poses, body language, physical placement in a shot or scene — which convey this message? What connection do these power relationships have to violence?

**4** The porn video screened for a faceless client in *Not a Love Story* is called “Little Girl, Big Tease”. Find examples of the sexualization of children, even in mainstream advertising, films, etc. How do you feel about this?

**5** How aware are you of the extent of pornography’s influence in your life? How much subtle pornographic imagery have you noticed in commercial advertising, movies and television shows?

**6** The most frequently discussed strategy for combatting pornography is censorship. However, there is no consensus on this issue. Many who have grappled with the problem are torn between their commitment to civil liberties and desire for social reform, on the one hand, and concern for the social consequences of pornography, on the other. Is censorship an effective method of dealing with pornography? What are alternative strategies?

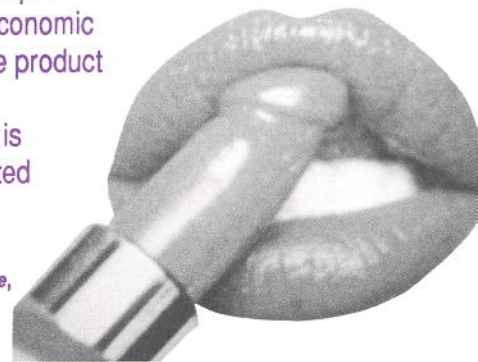


Children are not presented with models of positive, affectionate, realistic sexual behaviour as part of their sex education in the schools. In fact, it may very well be that with the rapid expansion and use of videotapes, these students learn about the social and behavioural aspects of human sexuality from pornography. In the absence of educational information to counteract the frequently misleading and false messages in pornography, is it any wonder that our young people believe that force, sexual coercion, and adversarial approaches to sexual behaviour are acceptable and perhaps even the norm?

J.V.P. Check, "Attitudes and Behaviour Regarding Pornography and Sexual Coercion in Metropolitan Toronto High School Students", Report No. 30, La Marsh Research Program on Violence and Conflict Resolution, York University, 1986.

In order to use women to sell products, in order to use pornography to sell genital arousal, there has to be an economic system that makes the use profitable. Porn is just one product in the big social supermarket. Without an analysis of consumer culture, our understanding of pornography is pathetically limited, bogged down in the undifferentiated swamp of morality and womanly purity.

B. Ruby Rich, "Anti-Porn: Soft Issue, Hard World", *The Village Voice*, Vol. XXVII, No. 29





## FURTHER RESOURCES

### PRINT

For adolescents, newspaper and magazine articles are among the most accessible sources of current material on the subject.

*The Secret Museum — Pornography in Modern Culture* (Penguin, 1987), by Walter Kendrick, explores how conceptions of pornography reflect attitudes and social mores. He discusses the jurists, artists, guardians of public morality, sleaze merchants and civil libertarians who have played roles in the changing definitions of pornography.

*Women against Censorship* (Douglas and McIntyre, 1985), ed. Varda Burstyn, is a collection of essays, with a theoretical introduction, which grapple with issues of pornography and censorship. Contributors include a lawyer, a feminist artist, a writer and a journalist-social activist. The book is now out-of-print, so libraries are probably the best source.

*Pornography and the Sex Crisis* (Amanita, 1989), by Susan G. Cole, talks about what pornography is and does, discusses its influence on sexuality and offers suggested strategies for combatting its influence.

In the film series *Ways of Seeing* and the accompanying book, John Berger discusses, among other things, the traditional representation of the nude in European oil painting. Also see the photographs of Edward Weston, referred to by Kate Millet.



## CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

The three excerpts in this section deal with the connections between moving images and cultural identity and sovereignty.

*Has Anybody Here Seen Canada? A History of Canadian Movies 1939-1953*, emphasizes the importance of creating our own images of ourselves and raises questions about why doing so has been so difficult. *Magic in the Sky* investigates the impact of television on the Inuit people of the Canadian Arctic and documents the setting up of an indigenous television network. *The Question of Television Violence*, a filmed record of hearings held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Communications, has been included in this section because much of the violent programming available in Canadian homes is actually transmitted from the United States and is therefore not subject to Canadian broadcast regulations.

We are quite aware that the issue of cultural sovereignty is not usually of pressing interest to adolescents. However, this material is included here in the hope that some students may at least become sensitized to concerns which will occupy them more in later years.



# 11 HAS ANYBODY HERE SEEN CANADA?

A History of Canadian Movies 1939-1953

106C 0178 301

84:37 b&w 1978

Excerpt length: 1:40

Dir: John Kramer

Prod: Mike McKennirey, Arthur Hammond, Kirwan Cox

Int./Sr. High

This documentary follows the adventures and mishaps of Canadian filmmaking from the end of the Second World War until the introduction of television in 1953. Like its precursor — *Dreamland: A History of Early Canadian Movies, 1895-1939* — *Has Anybody Here Seen Canada?* concentrates on our image-making history — or lack of it. The establishment of the National Film Board, the struggles of private film producers, the development of the film industry in Quebec and the emergence of the documentary are all dealt with in this production. Above all, the film asks whether the alternating fortunes of the Canadian film industry, in the face of an overwhelming U.S. presence, reflect the attitudes of the Canadian people towards themselves and their culture.

The particular excerpt chosen for this tape features the stereotyped image of the “Hollywood Canadian” — a troupe of horseback-riding, red-coated Mounties who make the wilderness ring with their musical ditties. If one is to believe these snippets from 1940s Hollywood productions, Canada is a land of towering trees and no urban spaces, bereft of culture, peopled by hearty out-



door types who feast with gusto on animals cooked to a turn. As the narrator in the film points out, that's what happens when we let other nations do our myth-making for us.

This excerpt is most effective when screened in conjunction with *Magic in the Sky* (selection #12) which includes the stereotyped image of the "Hollywood Eskimo" — as played by Anthony Quinn and assorted Hawaiians.

The Inuit realized that in order to keep their culture strong, the power of the camera had to be in Inuit hands. Only in that way could they be sure that their people would hear their own myths and see images of their own reality. If they didn't do it for themselves, other people, they knew, would do it for them. As they already had.

This problem — of how to create and maintain cultural identity through the media — is one with which the rest of Canada is still struggling.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

- ☛ *Since this excerpt is so short, it is advisable to do some pre-screening activities to provide a context for the material.*



# ACTIVITIES

## PRE-SCREENING

**1** Have students create media autobiographies. These might include: television programs that stand out in their memories from childhood on; magazines or comics that they now read or used to read regularly; record albums or songs that have meant the most to them; films that made a strong impression. They may want to swap autobiographies with someone else in the class. Do they know in what country the material they particularly like was produced? Was any of it Canadian? Does this matter?

**2** Do the students see images of themselves, their families, their communities and their landscapes in films, on television and in newspapers? If they were going to make a film or television program, whose story would they like to tell: someone in their immediate surroundings, someone from the past, a contemporary figure? Is there anything that would distinguish their story or production from one set in another country?

**3** Debate: Should there be Canadian content regulations for rock radio stations? Why or why not? Does the same argument hold true for Canadian television and film?

## POST-SCREENING

**1** In his article *Slow Dissolve: The Death of Public Broadcasting*, page 73, Mark Starowicz suggests that there are significant differences between public and private broadcasting in Canada. Assign groups of students to monitor programming and advertising on CBC, CTV, PBS and ABC from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. on a given weekday. (See page 6 for a sample worksheet.) Compare findings. What kinds of alternatives does public broadcasting offer Canadian audiences? (The notes to *The Question of Television Violence*, pages 86 to 94, also raise the issue of cultural sovereignty and the media.)

**2** Senior students with a particular interest in cultural matters may want to do independent study in some of the following areas: the influence of the NFB (See the Introduction, page x, for some background information); cinema in Quebec; the Caplan-Sauvageau Report on broadcasting policy in Canada; expatriate Canadian filmmakers working in the U.S.; U.S. films made in Canada today; the current state of feature filmmaking in Canada.



# Slow Dissolve

## THE DEATH OF PUBLIC BROADCASTING

*The following article about the crucial importance of public broadcasting in Canada is an edited version of a longer piece by Mark Starowicz written in April 1985. Mr. Starowicz is executive producer of CBC current affairs programs The Journal and Midday.*

National broadcasting and national sovereignty were ideals forged in large part out of the history of western Canada. Over fifty years ago, during the Depression, political movements in the Prairies fought for these ideals and understood their urgent necessity. Powerful American signals were becoming the only contact with the metropolitan culture, so the idea of forming a transcontinental broadcasting link was appropriately understood to be a matter of national survival. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, radio had a more central role than in the East. It was the instrument of politics and of religion, a force for spreading ideas and forging reform. From the Lakehead to the foothills, it was clearly understood that there were two pillars of national sovereignty — the transcontinental railroad and the airwaves.

...The Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act of 1932 was a declaration that the population north of the 49th parallel had decided it would have its own culture and evolve its own agenda, cover its own news, produce its own radio plays and comedies, that its children would be raised hearing programs which reflected our sensibilities, our values. That one act of Parliament had a more profound effect on playwriting than all the theatres of the dominion would, more on orchestral and

popular music than all the conservatories and entertainment halls in the country. The economic ripple of declaring a sovereign cultural market reached generations of writers, singers and musicians.

There is little doubt as to the objective which we, as a nation, set for ourselves then. Prime Minister R.B. Bennett introduced the Broadcasting Act in the Commons with these words:

*This country must be assured of complete Canadian control of broadcasting from Canadian sources, free from foreign interference or influence.*

He was unequivocal about the method as well:

*No other scheme than that of public ownership can ensure to the people of this country, without regard to class or place, equal enjoyment of the benefits and pleasure of broadcasting...I cannot think that any government would be warranted in leaving the air to private exploitation and not reserving it for the use of the people.*

The bill was passed with only one dissenting vote.

The objectives it set were simple: it was to be a system which was substantially Canadian in its content; a broadcasting system in which the public broadcaster would play the predominant role and one in which the commercial exploitation of the airwaves, while acknowledged in a mixed



public and private system, could not take precedence over the public interest and the objective of having a predominantly Canadian system.

These principles were reaffirmed in 1952 when Lionel Chevrier, Minister of Transport, addressed the House of Commons about the advent of television.

*The essential reason for public development of television in this country is that we want...both popular programs and cultural programs to be produced in Canada by Canadians, about Canada... We want programs from the United States...but we do not want, above all, that these programs will come over and be in a position to monopolize the field...It is perfect nonsense for anyone to suggest that private enterprise in Canada, left to itself, will provide Canadian programs. People who invest their money...will certainly invest it where they will make the profit —by importing American programs.*

In radio, the reality has been remarkably consistent with the ideal. Despite fragmentation and the multiplicity of stations on the band, despite the massive impact of American music, we have maintained a national character in both private and public radio.

In television, the reality is not only different, it bears little relation to the will of the founders of the system and the will of Parliament which called it into being. We have not developed a system which is substantially Canadian, but a system which is substantially American.

Only 28 per cent of all English-language television available in Canada is Canadian. In peak viewing hours, between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m., only

23 per cent of all programs available are Canadian. In some areas of the country, the ratios are even more skewed. In our largest city (Toronto) and our third largest (Vancouver), only one-fifth of all English language television is Canadian.

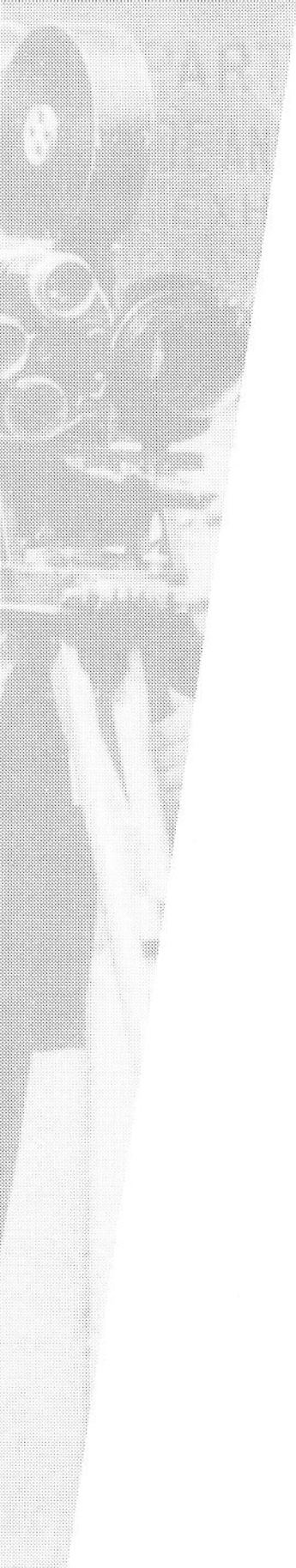
There are more discouraging figures than this. For example, Canadians spend 50 per cent of their time viewing popular drama, which is not unreasonable for a medium which is our prime source of entertainment. Less than five per cent of the programs available in this category are Canadian.

We have the most sophisticated distribution system for programming in the world — cable, satellites, repeater stations. Our geography dictated that we would be a cabled and wired nation. And yet three out of every four programs piped through this expensive and sophisticated system are American.

English-speaking children between the ages of two and eleven spend more than 80 per cent of their viewing time watching American programs, American cartoons and *The A Team*. And even francophone children spend more than 50 per cent of their time watching U.S. programs.

We have become so confused on the matter that we have a *Canadian content quota* instead of a foreign content quota. The irony is that we are watching these American programs on Canadian stations, Canadian cable, Canadian pay-TV and Canadian specialty channels. All that American programming is coming from Canadian transmitters. This is the saddest comment on what has befallen the ideals of sovereignty of the airwaves. *Every time we licence a new Canadian television*





*station, the viewing of American programming increases in that market.* With the exception of educational stations, every time the CRTC gives a licence to a Canadian applicant, it is used to import hours of American programming.

Do not comfort yourself that you may not watch the 23 to 24 hours of television Canadians average a week, or assume that only the lumpenproletariat does, because the overwhelming majority of our people are reflected in those statistics, and no political leader, no broadcaster, and no cultured person can afford to dismiss the people as an aberration. We cannot afford to find solace in contempt for the television medium, any more than a writer — or a reader — can afford contempt for the paperback. The finest, and the most contemptible, artifacts of our world appear on the television screen. The language of the culture, its mode of transmitting values has shifted from print, to radio, to television. We either occupy that stage as a nation, and cause our values to be transmitted, or we succumb to citizenship in another culture.

The stark reality is that anyone who owes allegiance to science, to art, to wit, to music, to history, to discourse instead of conflict, to analysis of our condition, will have to demand that those values appear on the medium that has become *the* forum of the nation — television.

We need to define cultural sovereignty of the airwaves, and attempt to quantify the programming we require. The first and absolutely essential ingredient is news and public affairs. If you cannot set your own political and social agenda, you are not a nation. If you do not have the

national stage on which issues can be debated before the electorate, you do not have sovereignty.

The core of this is the national television news services. Weaken them and you are watching NBC reports from Nicaragua, just as you watched NBC reports from Vietnam. Permit dependence on American news sources and you have accepted someone else's agenda of issues, of emphasis, of interests.

Next time you watch a so-called Canadian independent station, a local private station which is not affiliated to CBC or CTV, watch the sources of all foreign reports. You will discover that almost 100 per cent of the foreign news reports come from ABC, NBC or CBS. In most cases, such newscasts are little more than a Canadian announcer reading continuity between American news stories.

Even on the two national networks, there is an excessive proportion of American news reports. The reasons are simple — we have no correspondents between Washington and Tierra del Fuego, no bureau in eastern Europe, no bureau in the Middle East, two people for all of Asia, India and the Pacific. One radio correspondent in Moscow and nothing in all of the other communist nations. No bureau in Africa. And that's taking CBC and CTV combined.

Our total English television presence in the United States: one CBC correspondent and one CTV correspondent. For a republic of almost 300 million people.

We must also resist the erosion of local and regional news and current affairs coverage, since many private local stations are pressing to have the national

broadcaster get out of the local coverage business. (Their motives are obvious; it would give them almost an advertising monopoly, and convert many of our cities into the electronic equivalent of one-newspaper towns.)

Under the general umbrella of information programming, I'd add coverage of the arts and entertainment in Canada, which is woefully inadequate. *The Journal* devotes up to one-fifth of its air time to the arts and entertainment, and that is virtually the only topical weekly coverage of the arts in Canadian television, aside from our new rock video programs. This is not adequate for a nation of 25 million people who consume films, videos, theatre and who are reading Canadian literature in record numbers. We are starving the artists and entertainers of this country of attention — and importing *Entertainment Tonight* every evening. In news and public affairs we have at least engaged the battle. In our failure to produce drama, we mortgage not only our culture, but assure that a generation of writers and performers is culturally stillborn.

CBC television, which produces 90 per cent of Canadian television drama, has an output of 60 to 70 hours of in-house production a year. Sixty to 70 hours of English drama for a population base of 25 million of which 19 million are anglophone. That's just over an hour a week.

I am a news-and-current-affairs producer, and have never produced a drama

in my life. But I don't believe that news and current affairs alone can attain that level of reality, that level of examination of our human condition that a culture requires.

We must realize that in the late twentieth century, television is our national theatre — not the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, not Stratford.

This is the theatre from which people derive their relaxation, their laughter and their world view. We must nurture this theatre if it is to nurture us.



Mon oncle Antoine (NFB)





The bottom line for the cultural industries in Canada is the economics of production in a small market penetrated to a high degree by U.S. products. For example, take the case of the production of television programs by independent companies. Such production can only be profitable if the broadcaster, in purchasing the rights to broadcast the program, is willing to pay a licence fee that covers the costs of production. In Britain and France, costs of production can be covered in the home market. In the U.S., producers can earn a profit in the home market. But in Canada, independent producers rarely recover more than 20 percent of their costs from sales in the home market.

John Hutheson, *The Canadian Forum*, November 1986, pp. 4-5

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## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

See *Dreamland: A History of Early Canadian Movies, 1895-1939*, for a look at the beginnings of Canadian cinema. The film is available from the NFB.

*The Image Makers* is a montage film about the National Film Board and what it does, made in 1979 to commemorate the Board's fortieth anniversary.

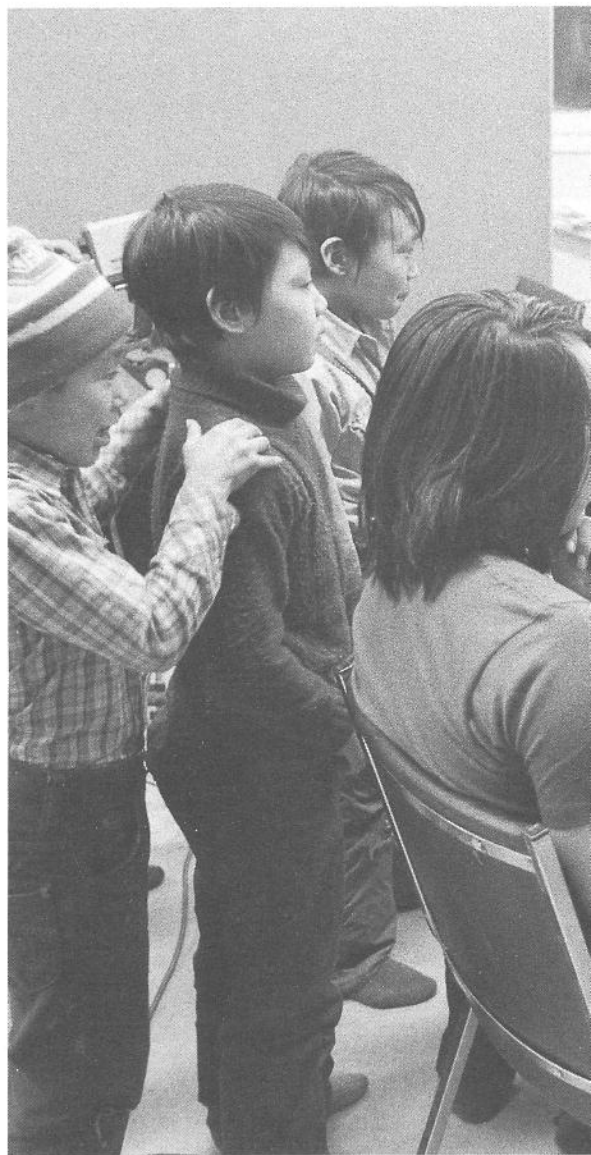
### PRINT

In *Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image* (McClelland and Stewart, 1975), Pierre Berton examines the stereotyped images of Canada and Canadians in the 575 American-made movies set in this country.

Gerald Pratley's book *Torn Sprockets — The Uncertain Projection of the Canadian Film* (Associated Presses, 1987) traces the history of Canadian film from its beginnings, through the founding of the National Film Board, and into a discussion of contemporary Quebec filmmakers.

In *Mass Communication in Canada* (McClelland and Stewart 1987), Rowland Lorimer and Jean McNulty examine the effects of mass communications on all aspects of our society — social, cultural, political, economic, technological and educational.

For current material on Canadian films and Canadian filmmaking, see the monthly magazine, *Cinema Canada*. For subscription information, write *Cinema Canada*, P.O. Box 398, Outremont Station, Montreal, Quebec H2V 4N3.



# 12 MAGIC IN THE SKY

106C 0181 058

56:51 col. 1981

Version length: 20:58

Dir: Peter Raymont

Prod: Peter Raymont, Arthur Hammond

Co-produced by Investigative Productions,

NFB and the Inuit Tapiriit of Canada

Sr. high

The excerpt included here is an edited version of an hour-long documentary about the coming of television to Inuit communities in the North. It is an investigation of many things: cultural imperialism through the mass media; stereotyped images (or the lack of images) of marginalized peoples; and the attempt to use new media to tell culturally relevant stories in culturally appropriate ways. Besides detailing the effect of a new and extremely powerful technology on a hitherto isolated culture, it also raises questions about cultural identity and sovereignty relevant to all Canadians.

Photo: ©Peter Raymont





# About the Film

## INTERVIEW WITH PETER RAYMONT, DIRECTOR

*The following is an excerpt from an article "Peter Raymont, Voyeur of the Power Structure" which first appeared in Cinema Canada, #96, May 1983.*

**Peter Pearson:**

What do you think *Magic in the Sky* is about?

**Peter Raymont:**

Well, to use a '60s term, it's about cultural imperialism, and how powerful ideas are when transmitted like that. We are all Inuit or something. But a lot of people don't seem to get that point.

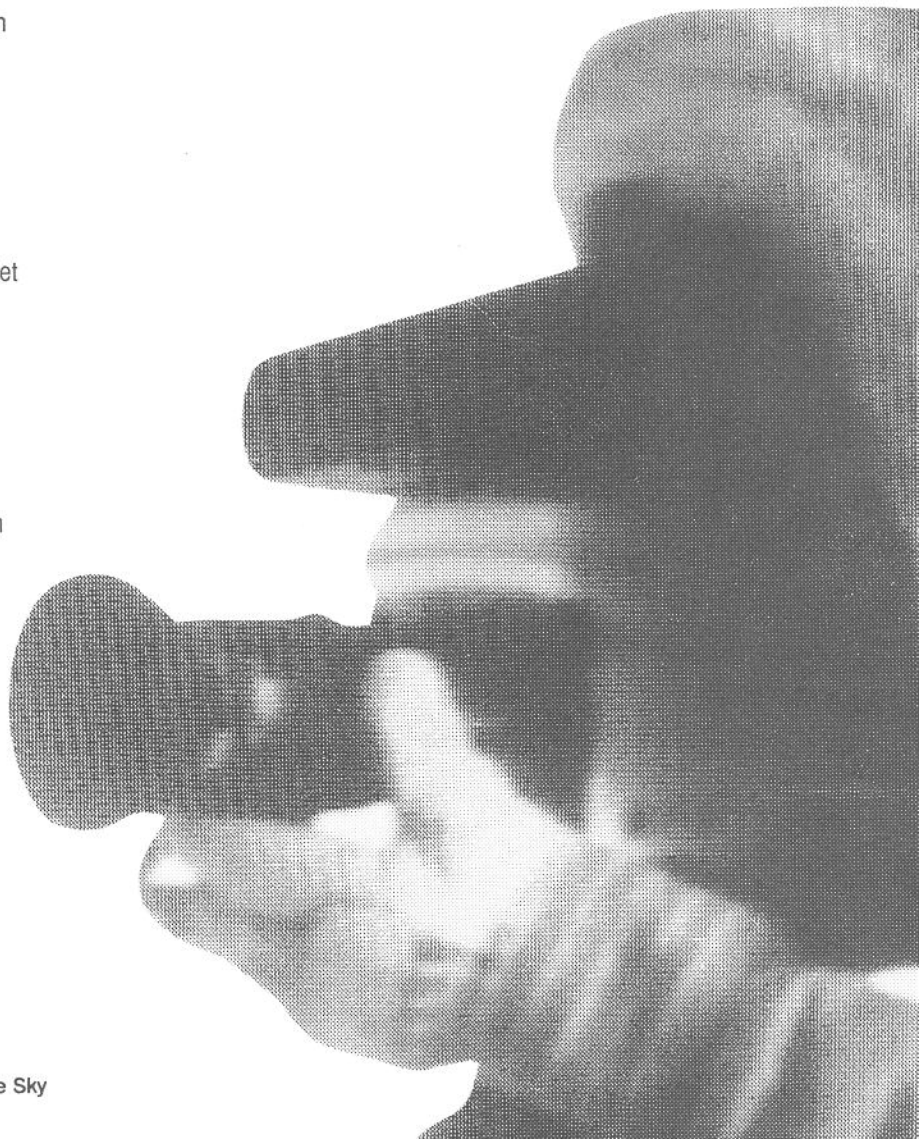
**Peter Pearson:**

Do you have any sense of television's impact on the formation of Canada as a society? Or let me change the question: [What is your sense of] the impact of television on the Inuit?

**Peter Raymont:**

That was the point of that film, really. It's a metaphor ... the extraordinary introduction of television into the Canadian North, the launch of the Anik satellite, and all that before the Inuit people or anyone up North is ready for television, or understands television, or is capable of producing their own television. It's just a one-way street. It's a metaphor for what's happened to Canada, with America sitting next door, and what's happened to countries all over the

world. To suddenly get fed this machine, *Dallas*, *The Edge of Night*. I hoped that by making a film in the North, not only would the film be useful to the Inuit people in their own self-examination, in their own struggle to hang on to that culture and that language, but that it would also help Canadian people to understand how dangerous and enormous the American television machine is, and how much it has affected Canada.



# Update on Native Broadcasting in Canada

- The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) was licenced as a television network by the CRTC in 1981, as was Taqramiut Napingat Inc. (TNI). IBC and TNI programs are broadcast to 44 Arctic communities in the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador. Native broadcasting policy emphasizes cultural enhancement, language retention and community development.
- IBC and TNI produce about six hours of original programming weekly in their language, Inuktitut; mainly current affairs, drama and a children's series. The dramas which feature northern actors in northern settings have included spots on AIDS and programs on drug and alcohol abuse as well as spousal assault. Current affairs shows deal with important regional issues such as land claims, Arctic sovereignty and northern defence. The children's series *Takuginai* uses a combination of live action, animation and puppets to teach in the time-honoured Inuit way — by story and moral precept.
- Ratings are high for this programming: 85 per cent of Inuit viewers over the age of nine watch one to three hours of the weekly programming.

In many ways, native broadcasting in northern Canada is a success story: the productions are popular (and award-winning), new jobs have been created and 200,000 people regularly see or listen to programs which grow out of and respond to their own experience. But the outside southern influence is, of course, ever-present and growing:

- CBC northern television service, now available in all Arctic communities regardless of size, carries two hours a week of its own programming in Inuktitut and an additional six hours of IBC and TNI programming. The rest is mainly southern fare, including U.S. entertainment shows.
- Many Arctic communities have installed second satellite dishes to pick up U.S. programming. Iqaluit (Frobisher Bay) for instance, where 80 per cent of the population is Inuit, now has eight channels.
- Video rentals are booming. In some predominantly native communities, over 75 per cent of the homes have VCRs.
- It is estimated that by the age of 18, most Inuit will have watched 30,000 hours of television, which is twice the time spent by the average Canadian teenager.



## Quotes from the Film

***John Amagoalik, President, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada:***

"When television first came, the effect of the television on the community was very drastic. People no longer visited their neighbours. Children did not play outside and the interactive activities of the community in general were broken down. The home, the family was the last refuge of the Inuktitut language, and television, by coming into the home, was invading this last refuge."

"The foundation of our culture has always been the concept of sharing things... [Yet] commercials suggest that people have to watch out for Number One and that people should go after these things for their own benefits."

"One of the purposes of our television project was to use television to understand ourselves, to remember our past, but also to broaden our horizons... We want to use television not only to protect our language and culture but as a means of artistic expression."

"The Inuit are probably the most photographed race of people on earth. The first time I saw a white man, he had a camera and it seems that whenever government officials or tourists came North, they always had cameras and they projected what we considered to be the wrong images of the Inuit — the Hollywood image or the stereotype image."

John Amagoalik





# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

**1** Describe images you see of native people on TV. How do you think this affects native people watching these programs? In what ways can aboriginal peoples use radio and television to strengthen their languages and cultures?

**2** Several people in the film talk about the impact of southern television programming on Inuit culture. What impact do you think U.S. programming has had on Canadian culture? Do you believe there are any Canadian attitudes and values which are substantially different from American ones? (Peter Raymont, in the interview excerpted on page 80 makes an explicit connection between the Inuit situation and the Canadian situation in terms of the influx of "foreign" images and myths. See the notes to *Has Anybody Here Seen Canada?*, page 70, for further discussion of this topic.)



# ACTIVITIES

**1** Contact native groups in or near your community which are involved in TV or radio production. Are they working on any productions which would provide an alternative to mainstream programming? What effects do *they* see mainstream media having on their culture?

**2** In *Magic in the Sky*, John Amagoalik discusses the effects of television on Inuit family and community life. Have students chart the TV patterns in their families. Is there more than one TV set in each household? How many hours do they watch a day? Do family members watch together? How are decisions made about who is going to watch what?

What are the differences, if any, between watching a television program and watching a videotape that has been rented, bought or borrowed?

What influence do students think television and video have had on the social life of people in their community? They may want to compare findings with other members of the class.

**3** Have students watch a television program or see a film in a language they do not understand. Discuss what the film was about. What clues were used to make sense of the program? How would students feel if most of the television programming available in their community was in this foreign language?

**4** John Amagoalik mentions that the importance of sharing in Inuit culture is weakened by the stress on individual acquisition in commercials and game shows. Have students look at one ad or one television program from the perspective of someone from another culture, trying to learn about what makes this society function. They may want to try “listening” with the sound turned down. What values or messages do they see in the ad or program? What conclusions could they draw about what is important in the society?

Photo: Investigative Productions

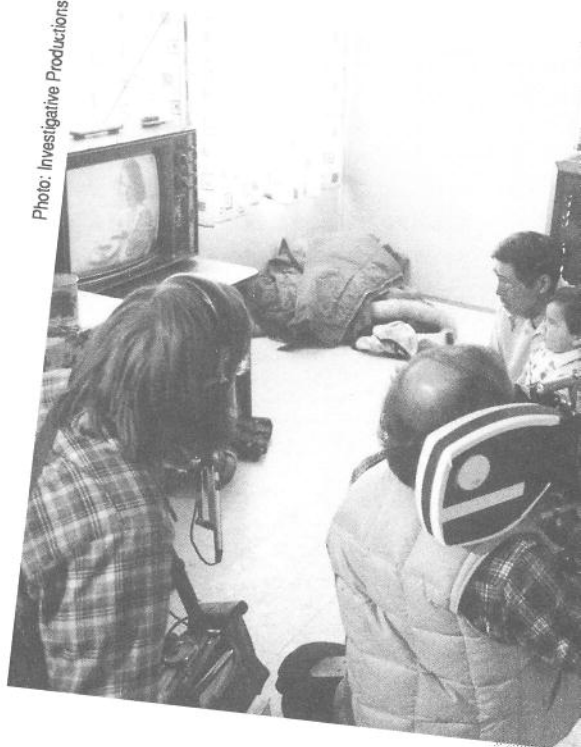




Photo: Inuit Broadcasting Corporation



Photo: Inuit Broadcasting Corporation

## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

*First Contact* contains rare footage of native/white contacts in New Guinea during the 1930s. Thirty years later, these same villagers are filmed looking at this footage and reminiscing about their first impressions of the startling strangers. The film is available for rental or purchase from DEC films, 394 Euclid Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6G 2S9, Tel. (416) 925-9338.

### PRINT

For a sometimes problematic, but always provocative, consideration of the effect of mass media on cultures unfamiliar with them, read *Oh, What a Blow That Phantom Gave Me!* (Bantam, 1974) by Edmund Carpenter.

See the description of *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (Comedia, 1986) by David Morley in FURTHER RESOURCES, page 9. This book is a detailed examination of TV viewing among families from different cultural backgrounds.

*The Caplan-Sauvageau Report* was produced in 1986 by the Federal Task Force on Broadcasting Policy after more than a year of research and public hearings across Canada on all major issues related to Canadian radio and television broadcasting. Chapter 20, page 513, deals with native broadcasting.



# 13 THE QUESTION OF TELEVISION VIOLENCE

106C 0172 061

56:00 col. 1972

Excerpt length: 5:26

Dir: Graeme Ferguson

Prod: Len Chatwin, Colin Low

Sr. high

Is television harming children? In order to answer this question, the U.S. Surgeon General in 1972 produced a report, *Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence*. The document raised a number of concerns, including the possibility of a causal link between televised violence and anti-social behaviour, particularly in children. To explore the report's findings, U.S. senator John Pastore of Rhode Island convened the Senate Committee on Communications for four days of intensive hearings. Witnesses included the Surgeon General, consumer and parent groups, social scientists and representatives of the television industry.

This short excerpt from the film record of the hearings has been chosen mainly as a way of beginning discussion on a very large and complex topic. Clearly not a comprehensive treatment, the clip is of historical interest because it gives viewers a sense of what was being said about television violence during the early 1970s.

The issue of violence — in film and on television — is not as simple as one's first instinctive reaction of concern might suggest. There is still no clear consensus



on the connection between violence on television and anti-social behaviour. The fact that many adolescents enjoy seeing representations of violence does not necessarily mean that they believe such representations accurately reflect their society. Many young people, moreover, are connoisseurs of the conventions belonging to specific genres — the gangster film, the cop show, the horror flick — and enjoy seeing how various directors handle them.

As Patrick Watson points out in the conclusion to this excerpt, Canada produces little violent programming of its own but is swamped with it from the U.S. Though Canadian broadcasters can regulate what appears on Canadian television, what floods across the border on transmitters from the United States can be controlled only in our own living rooms. It is for these reasons that this excerpt has been included in the section on cultural sovereignty.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

- ☛ *The issues raised in this film, many of which are still being debated today, should be considered in conjunction with analysis of a current television program or film in which the violence portrayed seems almost an end in itself.*
- ☛ *Some adolescents, who may be reluctant to talk about television violence or who may, in fact, enjoy it, might be willing to discuss violence in terms of children's programming and its possible effects on a child's development.*
- ☛ *It is advisable for students to watch some Saturday morning television programs and talk about their own perceptions and ideas before they see this clip.*

# About Television Violence Today

- According to Dr. John E. Strawbridge, Head of the Psychology Department at Memorial University in Newfoundland, the average Canadian child will have seen 18,000 murders — and 300,000 commercials — by the end of high school.
- The typical television police officer kills one to four dozen people a year. (Real-life police officers in the United States fire their guns an average of once every 27 years.)
- A recent report on children's television commissioned by the National Film Board states that most children have begun watching adult programs by the age of four.
- Today over 80 per cent of children's film, television and home video programming produced in the United States is toy industry-related. Toy-linked war cartoons are appearing on television sets around the world. Each program is designed to help promote the sales of a different line of war toys. Sales of such toys have soared 700 per cent since 1982 when the Reagan administration repealed the law prohibiting programs that were merely disguised commercials.



Toronto Star

**Mastroianni has seen *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* 12 times.**



# When Degrassi kids get together, it's a real horror show

There's a video rental place near where I live called Movie Stop, at 177 Ravel Rd. in Leslie Finch-Square, and they have about 2,000 movies in stock, a very wide range from kids to comedy to horror and drama.

And what I usually like to do on Friday and Saturday nights when I'm not working on the set is call four or five friends over, mainly friends with whom I work on Degrassi Junior High. I always watch with friends; it's kind of boring to stay at home by yourself and watch a movie.

We'll stay up until about 4 a.m. watching movies we've rented. We all decide what we want to rent. Because it's my movie rental store, I usually pay.

## Pizza and pop

I have a special card from Movie Stop that allows me to get one free movie each time I rent one. To rent one costs about \$3 for one night. The card cost me \$20 but the store stopped selling them because everyone was buying them and they were losing money. I was one of the lucky ones.

If we go to someone else's house, they pay. We all take turns.

But everyone chips in for pizza and pop. It's usually pizza because that's the easiest thing to be delivered to the house.

Most of the time we rent horror flicks because we like laughing at them. A lot of them are really funny, not scary.

One of my friends, Stefan Brogren who plays Snake on the show, suggested that we rent *Evil Dead I and II*. The special effects are really amazing and instead of the movie being frightening it is a real spoof.

Several times the main character smashes his head against the wall for no reason and at one point his hand becomes possessed by the

## What I watch

Pat Mastroianni



evil dead and he starts beating himself up with his own hand. The end of the movie is a real cliffhanger. The main character is sucked into a time warp and brought to the Dark Ages where he has to fight all the evil dead creatures. It ends with him screaming "No," which leads to the possibility of there being an *Evil Dead III*, hopefully.

During the movie, we all played tricks on each other such as trying to scare someone. We all screamed and broke out in laughter. Real silly stuff, but we all had a good time.

*Creepers* was something else. It's about a girl who has special powers to communicate with insects. They come up and swarm around without hurting her, but at her command they will attack an enemy. The movie was supposed to be scary but it was just dumb.

It didn't have a good budget and was cheaply made and not even the blood looked real. At different times, heads were chopped off bodies but none of it made sense. There wasn't a plot, just people dying one after another.

We didn't even finish watching it and we never want to hear about it again.

On the set, but more usually at school, we usually talk about movies we like to rent. Those of us who watched *Creepers* put out the word, "Don't watch it. It sucks."

But we sure told everyone that *Evil Dead I and II* was "boom" (a word we use for "great").

Sometimes we like to watch violent dramas, not because we're violent but we just like them. Movies like *Lethal Weapon*, *Robocop* and *Action Jackson*. We get a kick out of people shooting themselves and screaming. It gives us a chance to relax and watch other people being kicked around.

Kids are always being told what to do and bossed around and we like to watch adults being shot at and killed. Well, it's just a movie anyway, nothing that we really take seriously.

## Enjoys Eddie Murphy

And sometimes we watch comedies. I enjoy watching Eddie Murphy in most of his concert shows such as *Delirious* and *Raw*. He does a lot of improv in his other movies too, and he plays all of his parts differently but at the same time he makes those characters funny, such as *Beverly Hills Cop* and *Coming To America*. Rent a movie by Eddie Murphy and you know it's going to be good.

We watch a lot of videos but I still go to the movies, at least three times a week. No matter what the movie, if it's good we'll rent it two or three times. Mainly because if you see a movie once you forget a lot of it. The second time you can watch it a lot more closely and that makes it so much better.

I've seen *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* 12 times. I just love it. It's my all-time favorite.

□ Pat Mastroianni won a TV Gemini Award 1988 as best actor for his role as Joey on *Degrassi Junior High*, which airs on CBC-TV Monday at 8.30 p.m. Mastroianni is 17 years old and is in Grade 12 at Mary Ward Secondary High School in Scarborough.



FAV

# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

1 How would you define violence? Is all violence physical? What instances of violence are you aware of in our society? (Besides physical and psychological violence, students may want to consider institutional and structural violence such as poverty.) Do you see any differences between violence as it is portrayed on television and violence as it exists in society?

2 Why do you think there is so much violence in films and on television? (See **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**, p. 92.) Why do some people enjoy it? Some researchers argue that constant exposure to images of violence tends to desensitize people to actual violence. Do you agree or disagree?

3 Are there different ways of presenting violence in a film or television program? One witness in the Pastore hearings differentiates between *depicting* violence and *glorifying* it. Think of some examples from recent films or television that show this difference.

4 Violence in drama is a time-honoured convention, as a quick glance at the Greek tragedies or plays of Shakespeare will show. Discuss the differences between the violent scenes in a play like *Macbeth* or *King Lear* and those in recent action films known for their violence. What dramatic purposes does violence serve in each case? How essential are the acts of violence themselves to the mood, development of character, theme or meaning of the story? If the violent acts were removed from each play or film, would there still be a story left to tell?



# ACTIVITIES

**1** In this film excerpt, Nicholas Johnson remarks: "When you're in a moment when you can either respond with a violent act or you can respond with compromise and co-operation and compassion, what do you do reflexively? Because that's what you're going to end up doing. And what we're teaching our kids is to take the violent path."

Monitor a cartoon, sitcom or violent TV program. In what ways do the various characters resolve difficult situations? Who are the villains? Who are the "good guys"? Who are the victims? One study found that the victims tend to be women, young boys, foreigners and members of the upper and lower classes.

**2** Have students interview police officers about different aspects of day-to-day police work. What do *they* think about television portrayals of police officers?

**3** Divide the class into programming groups. Have each group pick one type of film or program they would like to produce—for example, a cop show, a horror movie, a gangster film, a war movie. Brainstorm elements such as setting, characters and incidents that should be included in each production. Does violence occur? How is it used? What purpose does it serve? Is the production serious or a spoof on what is usually presented?

If all groups are "producing" the same kind of film, for example, a horror movie, do certain elements recur? Students may want to discuss

how aware they are of these elements or conventions in some of the violent material they watch.

**4** Divide the class into groups and monitor Saturday morning programming for children on CTV, CBC and a U.S. channel. Report on the following: the schedule of programs; what they are and who produced them; the incidence and extent of violent action; the pacing; toy industry connections; the amount of advertising, products advertised and techniques used.

Findings can be used as a basis for discussing, among other things, the messages and values which children are getting; the effects of structure and pacing; children's programming as advertising; the differences between public and commercial broadcasting and the differences between Canadian and U.S.-produced fare for children.

**5** Have students look at a typical local evening newscast. What percentage of stories that make it to the air involves violent or destructive occurrences? What kinds of events are considered to be violent? Why do newscasters focus on these types of events? (See *Only the News that Fits*, selection #16, for Bill Gentile's comments about the preferences/biases of news editors.)

**6** Compare U.S. and Canadian newscasts, or newscasts on CBC with those on a privately owned Canadian station. What differences can you see in style of presentation, pacing ("jolts per minute"), commercial content and types of stories?





*Morris Wolfe points out that violence is embedded not only in the content of television programs, but also in the way in which these programs are structured:*

American programmers discovered some time ago that most of us have short attention spans and that those attention spans are easily manipulated. They realized that if a long time goes by without a jolt of verbal or physical or emotional violence on the screen, or if the picture doesn't change quickly enough as a result of a jolt of rapid editing or camera movement, or movement by people or objects within the frame, or if the soundtrack doesn't have enough decibels, viewers will switch to a channel and a programme that gives them more of those things. That's how almost all the top American shows get their audiences. They obey the first law of Commercial Television: *Thou shalt give them enough jolts per minute (jpm's) or thou shalt lose them.*

*Jolts: The TV Wasteland and the Canadian Oasis (James Lorimer, 1985), pp. 13-14*



Whether it's *The A-Team* or *Sesame Street*, it's only the structure, the number of jpm's, that counts. The result is that most programmes look more and more alike. As Ken Sobol put it in a submission to the Ontario Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry, "The problem with this technique is that with it, violence becomes a structural rather than a story element. It's there automatically, before the story, not as a result of it."

*Jolts: The TV Wasteland and the Canadian Oasis* (James Lorimer, 1985), p. 20

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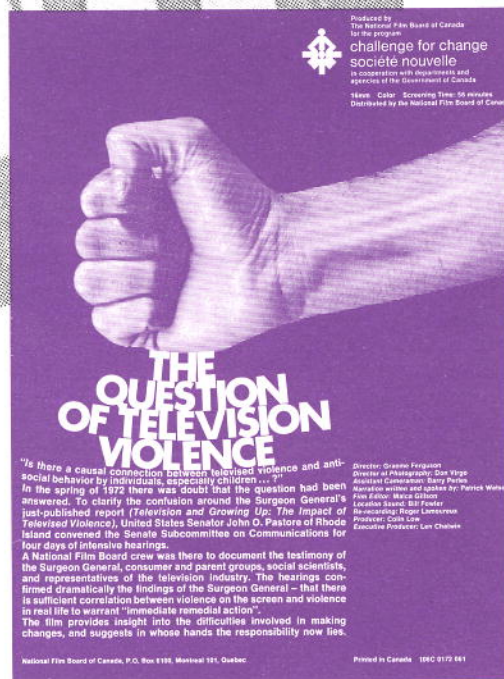
*George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications undertook a long-range study of the effect of televised violence. Contrary to popular belief, he found that heavy TV viewing actually cultivates a **fear** of violence:*

Conventional wisdom and fearful people, themselves victimized by images of violence around them, might stress the one or two in a thousand who imitate violence and threaten society. But it is just as important to look at the large majority of people who become more fearful, insecure and dependent on authority, and who may grow up demanding protection and even welcoming repression in the name of security. The most significant and recurring conclusion of our long-range study is that one correlate of television viewing is a heightened and unequal sense of danger and risk in a mean and selfish world.

George Gerbner et al. "The Demonstration of Power: Violence Profile No. 10", *Journal of Communication*; Summer 1979, p. 196

.....





## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

Most of the data and references cited in this section have been American. In fact, Canadian programming, particularly for children, is significantly less violent than that produced in the United States. However, the issue of television violence must still be dealt with, since we are swamped with U.S. programming through cable. For further discussion of Canadian cultural sovereignty and Canadian public broadcasting, see the notes to *Magic in the Sky*, page 79 and *Has Anybody Here Seen Canada?*, page 70.

In contrast to Gerbner's findings, it is often argued that constant exposure to violent images and situations leads to a numbing effect. For the connection between advertising and sexual violence, screen *Still Killing Us*

*Softly*. (See FURTHER RESOURCES, page 56, for rental information.) For an explicit link made between pornography and sexual violence, see the excerpts from *Not a Love Story* (selection #10).

### PRINT

For a discussion of some differences between Canadian and U.S. television programming, see *Jolts: The TV Wasteland and the Canadian Oasis* (James Lorimer, 1985) by Morris Wolfe.

John Fraser's book *Violence in the Arts* (Cambridge University Press, 1976) includes an historical examination of violence in the arts, as well as an analysis of the outstanding features of such violence and our reactions to it.



## SHAPING INFORMATION

The three selections in this section deal with the connections between media, politics and ideology. By ideology, we mean those assumptions in a society which usually pass for common sense and truth — for example, our beliefs about consumerism and the “good life” or gender roles and relations. Here, the emphasis is on the role the media play in the arena of politics and their influence in shaping the world as we think we know it.

“E” is a blackly humorous animated film about how the state manages to ensure consensus on the part of its citizens. *History on the Run* examines the role the media play in election campaigns, while *Only the News That Fits* investigates the “news business” by looking at how the media from different countries report on the situation in Central America, particularly in Nicaragua.

The  
Globe  
and  
Mail  
Canada's National Newspaper  
REPORT ON BUSINESS

QUALITY MAGAZINES  
EXCLUSIVELY WITH YOUR GLOBE

Fri. Feb. 17

Fri. Feb. 24

Fri. Mar. 3

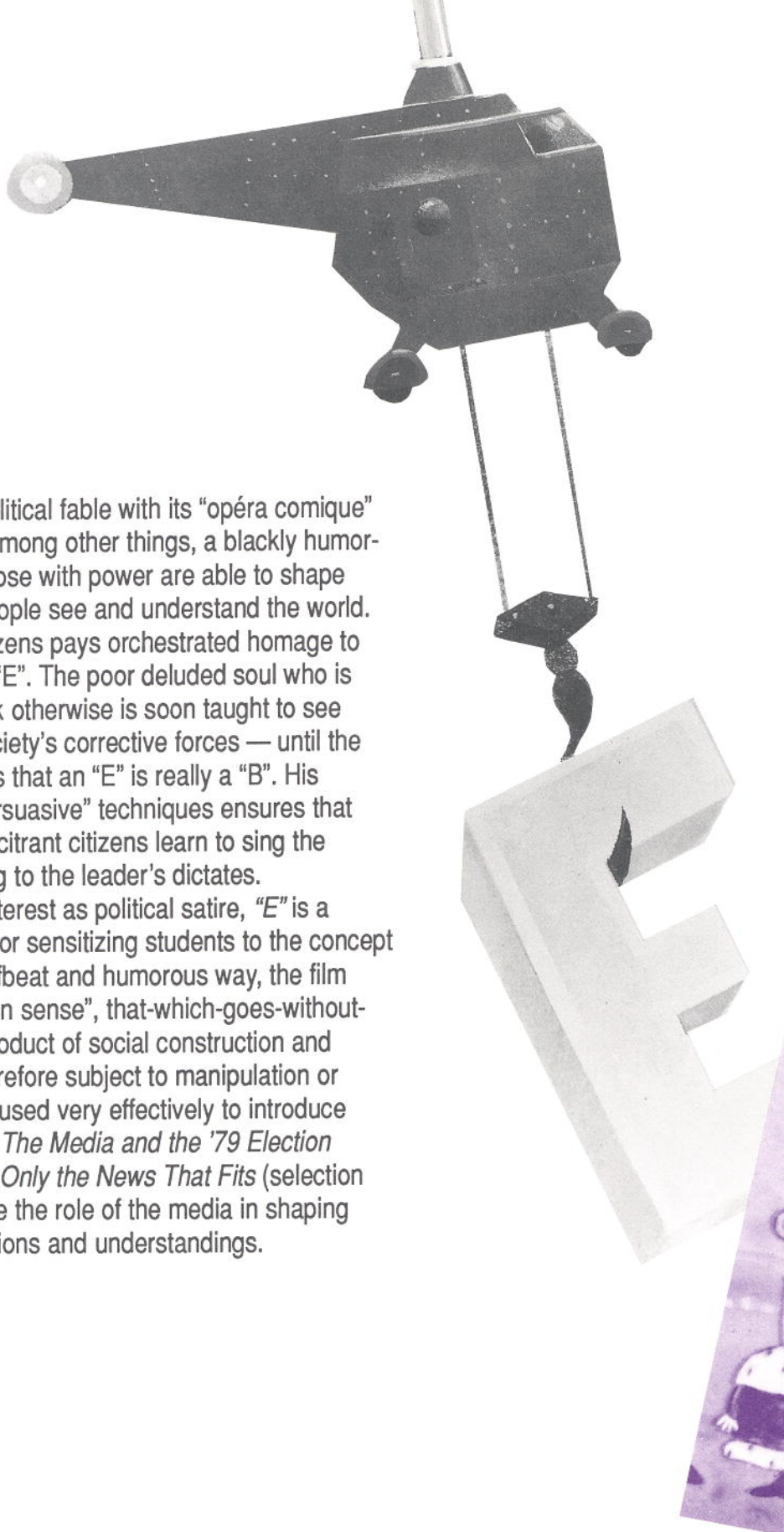


# 14 “E”

106C 0081 020  
6:32 col. 1981  
Dir: Bretislav Pojar  
Prod: Robert Forget  
Int./Sr. high

This animated political fable with its “opéra comique” soundtrack is, among other things, a blackly humorous study of how those with power are able to shape the way in which people see and understand the world. A crowd of solid citizens pays orchestrated homage to what is “clearly” an “E”. The poor deluded soul who is so foolish as to think otherwise is soon taught to see “properly” by his society’s corrective forces — until the day the king decides that an “E” is really a “B”. His judicious use of “persuasive” techniques ensures that even the most recalcitrant citizens learn to sing the new song, according to the leader’s dictates.

Apart from its interest as political satire, “E” is a good starting point for sensitizing students to the concept of ideology. In an offbeat and humorous way, the film shows how “common sense”, that-which-goes-without-saying, is often a product of social construction and consensus, and therefore subject to manipulation or change. “E” can be used very effectively to introduce *History on the Run: The Media and the '79 Election* (selection #15) and *Only the News That Fits* (selection #16), which examine the role of the media in shaping our political perceptions and understandings.



# IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

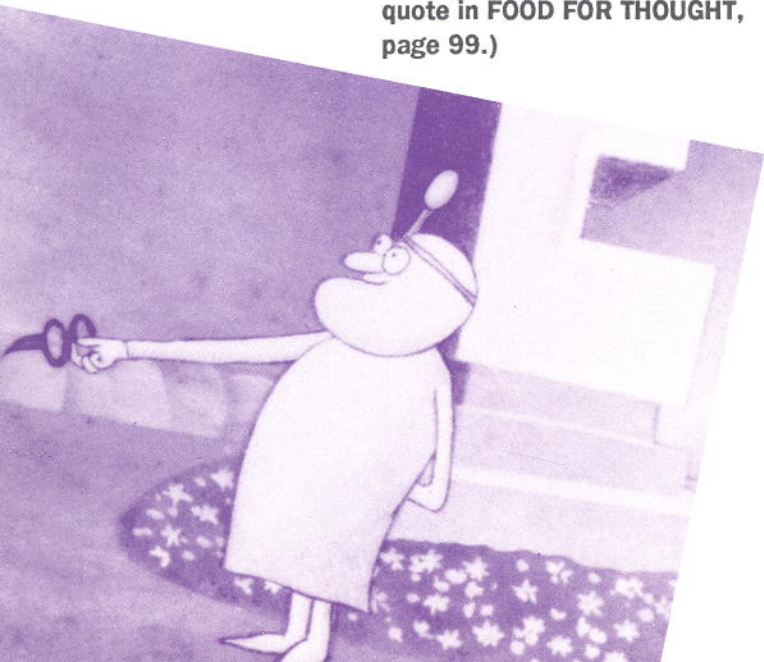
**1** Is the majority opinion always right? What if the filmmaker had chosen not to show us the statue of “E”? As the two men are quarreling at the beginning of the film, who would you be tempted to side with and why?

What satirical comment, if any, is being made about the doctor and the majority of citizens who “know” that the “truth” is simply a product of science and common sense? Are they as sure about the rightness of “B” as they once were about “E”? What caused the change?

You may also wish to discuss examples from history in which widely-held “common sense” beliefs, officially sanctioned by the state or the church, were later proved to be wrong, for example, the notion that the earth was flat. If television reporters had been around during the Middle Ages, which view of the earth do you think they would have been most likely to propagate? (See Gerbner quote in *FOOD FOR THOUGHT*, page 99.)

**2** Why do you think the filmmaker chose to do a spoof of the conventions of the operetta? In what way do these satirized conventions connect with the theme of the film? (The sound track is produced by a québécois duo, “Les Mimes Électriques”, two men who use their voices as instruments to create wonderfully fresh and funny “non-sense” sound. For another hilarious example of their work, see the NFB’s Academy-Award-winning animated film *Every Child*.)

**3** In “E”, which was created by an Eastern European animator, Bretislav Pojar, the king achieves consensus by using force. This is, undoubtedly, an accurate reflection of Pojar’s experiences in Czechoslovakia. In western democracies, force is not usually the technique of persuasion used. If the powers-that-be in a western democracy wanted to ensure that all its citizens now realized that an “E” was really a “B”, what strategies might they use? What role might the media play in helping to achieve such consensus? (It is interesting that the Government of Canada is consistently one of the largest advertisers in the country, particularly on television. See *The Bronswik Affair*, selection #2, for a wealth of propaganda techniques deployed to convince restive citizens that the “national crisis” was over.)



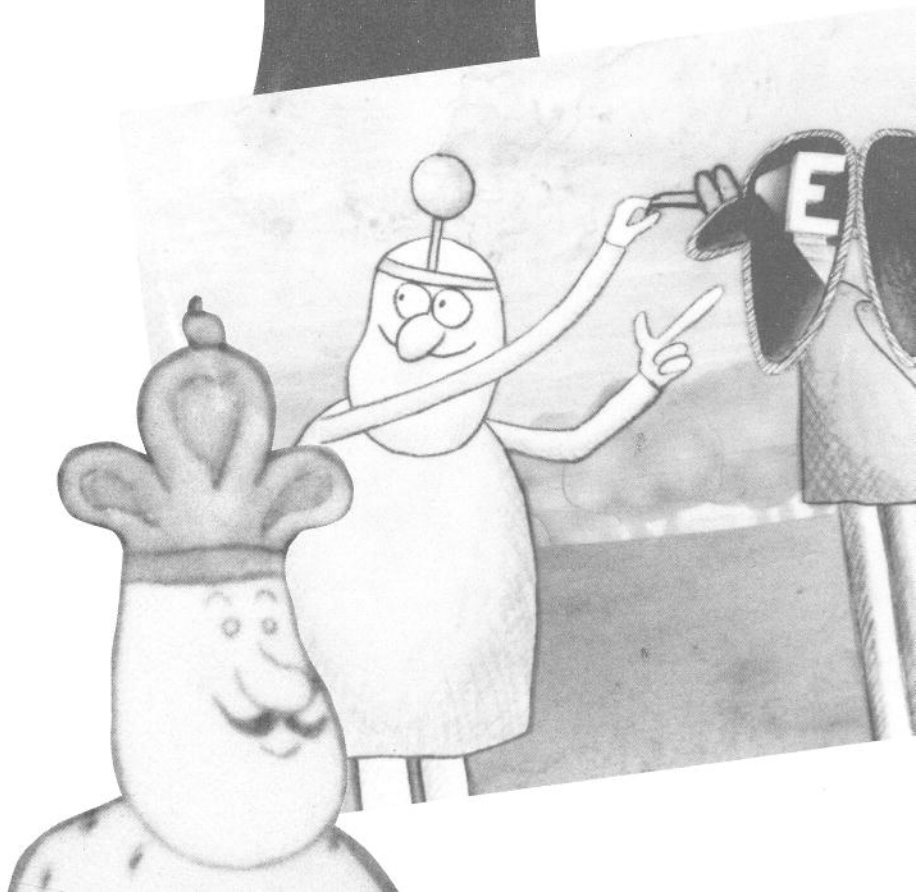
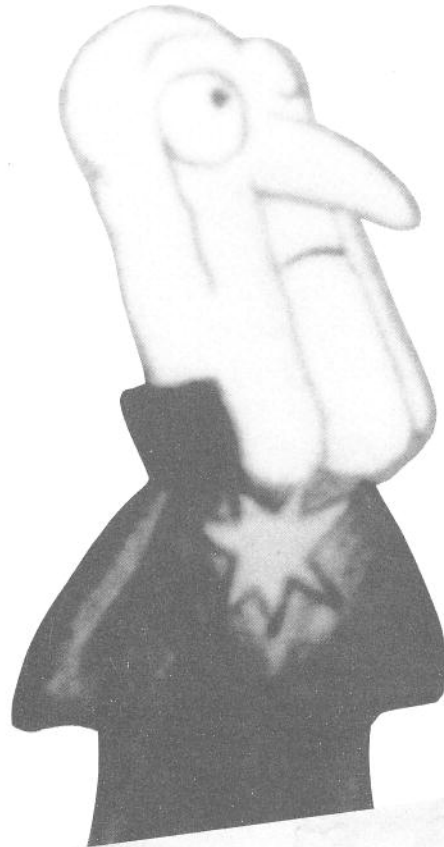


# ACTIVITIES

**1** How do the media portray persons or groups in our society who are somehow “different” or “other” because of who they are, what they look like, what they believe or what they do? You may want to consider factors such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation or political convictions.

Choose a film or TV program (police shows often work well) and analyze what happens to characters who, in some way, diverge from the mainstream. (a) What position do they occupy in the narrative? Are they central, peripheral or expendable? Are they heroes or villains? (b) What kinds of personality traits and physical characteristics are assigned to them? (c) What happens to them in the end? (d) What moral conclusions (hidden or overt) can one detect in all this?

See *History on the Run: The Media and the '79 Election*, ACTIVITIES, page 103, for exercises involving political campaign strategies.





All societies have ways of explaining the world to themselves and to their children. Socially constructed “reality” gives a coherent picture of what exists, what is important, how things are related, and what is right. The constant cultivation of such “realities” is the task of rituals and mythologies. They legitimize actions along lines which are conventionally acceptable and functional.

Television is the mainstream of that cultural process. It is an agency of the established order and as such serves primarily to maintain, stabilize, and reinforce — not subvert — conventional values, beliefs and behaviors. The goal of the greatest audience appeal at the least cost demands that these messages follow conventional social morality.

George Gerbner, “Growing Up with Television, Violence Profile #10”,  
*Journal of Communication* (Summer, 1979), pp. 179-80



## FURTHER RESOURCES

### PRINT

British educator Len Masterman has a substantial chapter on ideology in his thoughtful and comprehensive book *Teaching the Media* (Comedia, 1985).

To further explore the limitations of our socially constructed notions of “reality”, see the paintings of René Magritte, which provide a healthy antidote to our firmly based notions of what “is”.

See RESOURCES section in *History on the Run*, page 105, and *Only the News That Fits*, page 113.

# 15 HISTORY ON THE RUN:

## The Media and the '79 Election

106C 0179 265

56:45 col. 1979

Dir: Peter Rayment

Prod: Peter Rayment, Simon Riley

Version length: 23:05

Int./Sr. High

**H**istory on the Run: The Media and the '79 Election examines the connections between media and politics by focusing on several journalists who, for eight gruelling weeks, followed the campaign trail of the May 1979 federal election. Mark Phillips, reporter for CBC National News, Richard Gwyn, columnist for the *Toronto Star* and Jim Munson, radio reporter for Standard Broadcast News must keep a daily flow of information coming in, no matter how thin the material, no matter how dull the events. In frank commentary, each discusses the constraints of his particular medium. This short version of the original one-hour film offers an inside look at the phenomenon of political coverage as seen by those who produce it.

Although the politicians have aged and the political scene is different now from what it was in 1979, the issue of the connections between politics and the media remains the same.

Photo: Investigative Productions



# About the Film

## INTERVIEW WITH PETER RAYMONT, DIRECTOR AND CO-PRODUCER

I first got the idea for making this film while I was reading Timothy Crouse's book *The Boys On The Bus* about American reporters covering the 1972 Presidential campaign. I felt the subject was really important because to have a really healthy democracy, you need an informed electorate, and to have an informed electorate, you need a vigilant press. I see the media as a building block of power and democracy. And yet, it hasn't been investigated as much as it should be.

Once I decided to make the film, I knew there were several areas I wanted to examine. They're the same ones we also deal with in *The World is Watching*. [See selection #16 for the shorter version of that film, renamed *Only the News That Fits*.]

First, I wanted to talk about the relationship between the journalists and their media organizations. It's very hard for journalists to remain true to their own ideas because of the pressure from their bosses to have the same material as the leaders like *The Globe and Mail* and the CBC. This leads to pack journalism and the pseudo-notion of competition. In reality, there are very few scoops.

Also, I was very interested in the manipulation of media organizations by political parties and journalists' responses to it. Journalists often feel compelled to resist patently manufactured media events and their cynicism about politicians can extend, in some cases, to the political process itself.

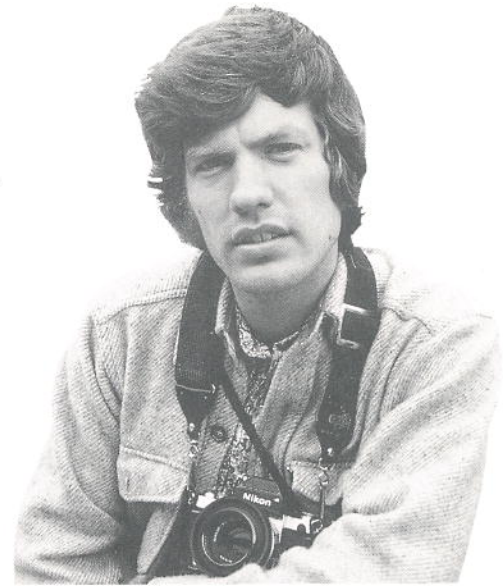


Photo: Investigative Productions

Finally, I wanted to deal with the symbiotic relationship between politicians and the media, and also show how the pressures of time, exhaustion and the formal demands of the medium affect what gets reported by journalists.

The hardest thing is to get money from the TV networks to do investigative work on how the media function. It's possible as a filmmaker to get access to the world of banking or the stock market or even political parties. But not the media. They have a hard time looking at themselves as a power centre. And, of course, they're so media-smart.

Anyhow, I knew I wanted to make a film about the relationship between media and politics. And nobody would give me money — not the CBC or the private networks or the NFB. All I had was a \$10,000 grant from the Canada Council.

So I borrowed a trick from Norman McLaren who always said that each film should be a technical experiment as well as an experiment in content. I decided to try and shoot the film in a *cinéma vérité* documentary style, using portable hand-held one-inch video equipment.

## Quotes from the Film

And then, if the results were good, we could transfer the video material to 16mm film. It was the first time anyone had tried to do that.

Sony gave us free use of fancy one-inch recording equipment for three weeks. I think they hoped they would sell a lot of one-inch tape machines to the Film Board. And the NFB donated the services of a cameraperson and camera assistant. We used the \$10,000 dollars to pay costs. For instance, every time we got on a Liberal or Tory plane we had to pay. And there were the motel rooms and food on the road. So we worked without salaries.

The Department of Communications let us use their editing equipment because my partner on the project worked there. And the Film Board agreed to buy *History on the Run* from us and distribute it. That's how we finally paid ourselves something.

We made a 16mm [film] copy from the master tape. It did turn out to be slightly cheaper to first shoot a film on tape, but the Film Board wasn't totally happy with the quality. Mind you, that was 1979. Now people work with Betacams which produce very high-quality images.

### **Mark Phillips, CBC TV:**

"TV news' greatest limitation is its format. It's something that people have come to expect. They expect news reports to last a minute and a half, or two minutes, almost never over three. It's a commercial world. Commercials run 30 seconds and a minute."

### **Tim Ralfe, PC Director of Communications:**

"Most Canadians now get their news from what they see on TV, not from what they read in the newspapers ... That's why in all the parties where there have been major policy announcements, they have come at noon events. They haven't come at the big night rallies and that is because of the influence of television. What I want to do is get the major story, the policy announcements in the early evening newscasts because that's where the biggest audience is, far bigger than the 11:00 newscast audience."

### **Courtney Tower, former Trudeau adviser:**

"We have been getting the politics of imagery and froth and lack of substance ... It's all media events which put such a premium on the glib and articulate politician to the detriment of the thoughtful one. The man who can speak in 40-second bursts has a heck of a lead over the man like Mr. Stanfield who speaks in 40-second pauses. ... And I think we lose an awful lot of very good people in the process."

### **Political Party Lighting Technician:**

"What we try to do is to turn a non-event into an event by adding a lot of light and some music ... that's show business!"

### **Richard Gwyn, Toronto Star:**

"If there were no politicians, we'd be out of a job because we'd have nothing to write about. And if we didn't exist, they'd be out of a job because no one would know *they* exist. So that the notion of the press as an opposition to the politicians in power is, in part, phoney ... because we are dependent upon one another. Power is the psychic income that you get out of both professions ... We are both in the marketplace of public opinion. We both have to be entertainers."



# ACTIVITIES

**1** Have students write a 60-second radio spot to describe and analyze an event that has happened locally. These can be read aloud or, if possible, taped. Students may want to discuss with one another what has been left out. Which reports seemed to work best? Why?

**2** In groups, have students report on the same event, with each group using a different medium. One group can prepare a video "item", another a radio spot, a third a newspaper report. Which medium seemed most appropriate for this particular story? What was in the newspaper report that didn't get on the video "news item"? How does video's (television's) need for material that is visually interesting affect the way the event gets reported?

**3** Have students follow the different candidates in their ridings during a local, provincial or national election. What sorts of events are held for the media? When are they held? Where are they held? Do some candidates appear to be getting more coverage from the media than others? Why? Do some issues appear to be getting more coverage than others? Why?

Collect and analyze the candidates' campaign material. This should include print materials like brochures and posters, as well as radio spots and television commercials. What kind of image is each candidate cultivating? How much information is being presented? Does each candidate's message remain the same, regardless of the medium used, or is the message tailored to the particular medium? If the message changes, how does it change?

**4** In groups, have students brainstorm how they, as politicians, would plan their campaigns if there were no radio or television. They may want to research the ways in which the political campaigns of someone like John A. Macdonald or Wilfred Laurier were conducted. How did politicians use radio, before the advent of television? What effects has television had on political campaigns? What changes, both positive and negative, has television made in political analysis and commentary by journalists?

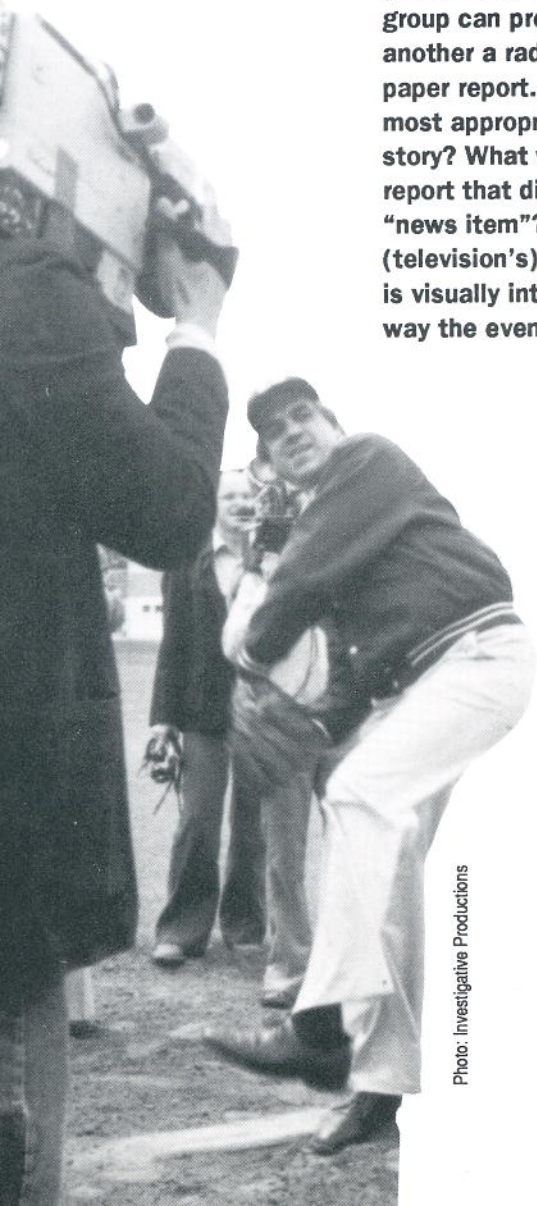


Photo: Investigative Productions





Politics has always been to a large degree a matter of orchestrating performances in order to project images to audiences of various sorts. Machiavelli's *The Prince* is, in part, a manual on image-making. If television didn't invent image politics, however, it is the primary stage on which it takes place in the modern world.

Daniel C. Hallin, "We Keep America on Top of the World",  
*Watching Television* (Pantheon, 1987), ed. Todd Gitlin, p. 13

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Serious journalism tends to treat politics as a contest rather than a discussion of social values: it asks "Who is winning?" not "Who is right?" or "What should we do?"

*Ibid.*, p. 20

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Whatever bothers the press about a president will eventually bother the country.

David Halberstam, U.S. Journalist

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## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

See the NFB productions *Reflections on a Leadership Convention*, which discusses the orchestration of leadership campaigns and conventions for television, and *The Hecklers*, an entertaining look at political cartooning in Canada from the days of Wolfe and Montcalm to the present.

*The Edit* is a Genie-Award-winning comedy-drama about news editing and the ethics of television journalism. Available from Kinetic Film/Video, 408 Dundas St. E., Toronto, Ont. M5A 2A5. Tel. (416) 963-5979.

Reflections on a Leadership  
Convention (NFB)

### PRINT

Some of the most useful material for the purposes of media study is to be found in current newspaper, magazine, radio and television coverage.

Books about politics and the media include:

Clive Cocking, *Following the Leaders: A Media Watcher's Diary of Campaign '79* (Doubleday, 1980).

Lindsay Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus* (Random House, 1973).

Peter Desbarat's *Guide to Canadian News Media* (Harcourt & Brace, 1989), which includes chapters on the history of Canadian print and electronic media, media and politics, the structure of the Canadian mass media and how the media operate.

Edwin Diamond and Stephen Bates, *The Spot: The Rise of Political Advertising and Television* (MIT Press, 1984). This book examines the major persuasive techniques and visual styles of political advertising in U.S. presidential campaigns from Eisenhower to Reagan.

Gladys E. Lang and Kurt Lang, *Politics and Television Reviewed* (Sage, 1984). A consideration of some of the ways in which television has shaped public images of politics and political personalities and, in so doing, has influenced the nature and course of political life.



# 16 ONLY THE NEWS THAT FITS

111C 0189 015

29:50 col. 1989

Investigative Productions/NFB

Dir: Peter Raymont

Prod: Harold Crooks, Jim Monroe, Peter Raymont

Sr. high

**W**ho decides what's news? And how are those decisions made? How much of what we see and read about world events is fact? Are foreign correspondents free to describe what they see or must they defer to an editorial line?

*Only the News that Fits* examines how the news business operates — revealing the inevitable distortions that become part of the process. To do so, the film focuses on the way in which events in Nicaragua are reported on and shaped by those who work for foreign “news factories”.

Among other things, this half-hour version of the original hour-long documentary *The World is Watching* examines the way in which ABC News covered Nicaragua's implementation of the 1987 Arias Peace Plan. The “gatekeeper” role of powerful editors in New York who monitor every word spoken, the tensions and format restrictions experienced by journalists in the field, the processing of world events into easily digestible “packages for consciousness” are vividly presented. The constructed nature of news “stories” is glaringly evident.

Most disturbing of all is the reduction of a reasonably lengthy interview with two shell-shocked peasants who have just survived a Contra attack into a 10-second clip which airs on the evening news.





# About the Film

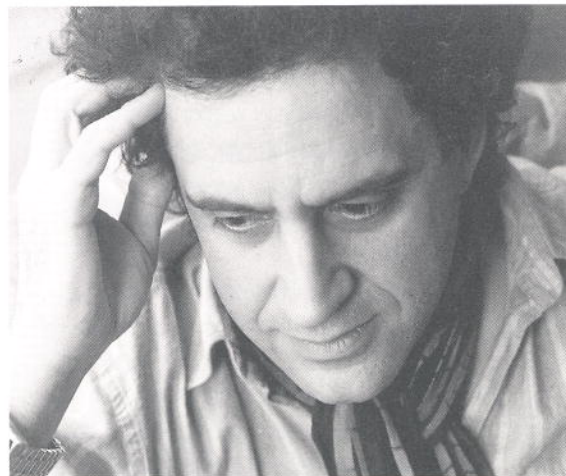
## INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD CROOKS, WRITER AND CO-PRODUCER

In 1984, Peter Raimont and I were both in Nicaragua, picking cotton for three weeks with a brigade of young Canadians. We stayed on a while longer as journalists, Peter for CBC Radio and myself for *Canadian Forum*. We had thought, before going, that we were fairly well-informed about the situation there, so it was a powerful experience for us to realize how badly the media had prepared us for what we actually found when we got there.

We decided that a film had to be made that would demystify the role of the mass media in its coverage of international news stories. We planned to do this by revealing how the highly packaged and processed commodity we call news can often impose a quite fictional form on local reality.

In early 1985, I received a grant from the Washington-based Fund for Investigative Journalism to go to Central America and make contact with working foreign correspondents there. I met with about three dozen journalists during my trip and that research became the basis of our film proposal.

We used that proposal to raise the \$400,000 that we needed to make the film. It took over three years to do that. The money came from Channel 4 in England (which now is one of the most important funding sources for independent film production in the English-speaking world), the Ontario Film Development Corporation, Telefilm, the National Film Board, TV Ontario, various non-governmental organizations and the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security. There were also presales to Swedish and Dutch television. I still can't believe, as I reel off this list, that we actually did it.



Meanwhile, we started talking with different networks, trying to negotiate access to their operations. CBC gave us their co-operation as did ABC. In conversation with Peter Raimont, ABC news anchor Peter Jennings expressed his personal misgivings about the way in which major news networks deal with foreign news stories and this may well have been a factor in our being given permission to film inside ABC News.

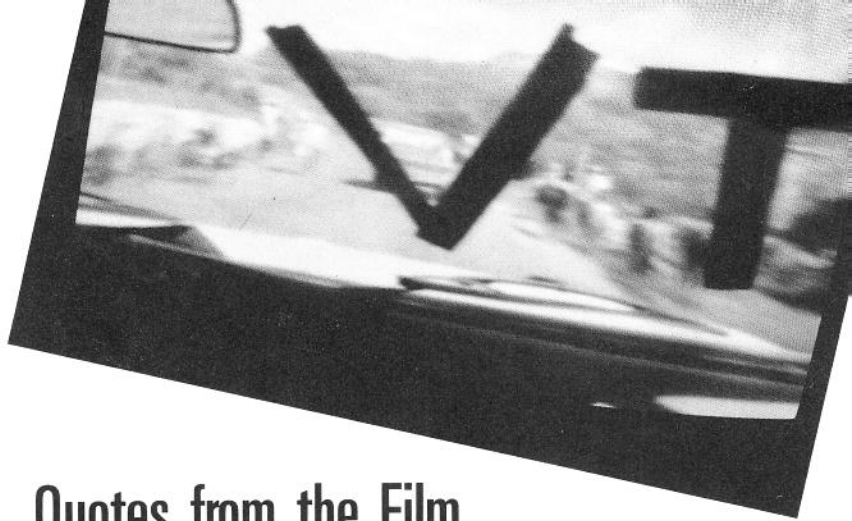
We began shooting in Managua in late September, 1987 and continued all through October. We had another crew at ABC in New York and a third crew in Europe.

We returned to Toronto with 30 hours of material. What we found when we started looking at the rushes [unedited material] was that the ABC shoot yielded the most dramatic footage to illustrate the points we wanted to make. Unlike feature filmmaking where you control everything — the script, the location, how people will say the words you write — in documentary filmmaking, you're at the mercy of circumstance. You don't have total control over what you're going to get.

For example, it was just by chance that the ABC journalists and our crew found that burned-out farming co-operative. And yet, the old lady's testimony there became the core sequence of the film. I was in Managua organizing things that day. When the crew came back, everybody's eyes were haunted. It was obvious they had had a profound experience.

To look at national differences in news coverage of events in Nicaragua, we followed news teams from different parts of the world. And yet we found, when it came to TV news, that the commonalities tended to be greater than the differences. It's as though there is something inherent in the way that medium works that imposes on local reality an overly simplified dramatic structure with conflict, climax and resolution. So, basically, it is a fictional form. But the illusion is that the news "story" is an objective non-fiction narrative. And these stories, unlike most other ones, are told to vast audiences.

With the spread of global mass communications, TV discourse is replacing all other forms of discourse in the modern world. This is a new fact of life with tremendous implications of which we are barely aware. Societies are being transformed by the nature of mass media, and conventional wisdom says that this is a liberating force. We, however, assumed that it might very well be a constraining force on social liberation movements in the Third World.



## Quotes from the Film

**Richard S. Salant, former President, CBS News:**

"Our reporters do not cover stories from *their* point of view. They are presenting them from *nobody's* point of view."

**Ronald Reagan, former U.S. President:**

"I'd like to take a moment now to address myself to the ladies and gentlemen of the press... You must keep watch on the progress of democracy in Nicaragua. Train all your investigatory abilities, all your skepticism on the Sandinista government. Demand full disclosure. See that they live up to their promises. This could be one of journalism's finest hours, when with the truth, you help set a people free."

**Randolph Ryan, editorial writer and columnist for the Boston Globe:**

"I think the basic issue for a journalist is to apply the same standards and ask the same questions of governments on both sides of the fence. You've got to be as tough in looking at the friendly governments, the ones that are called, quote, 'democratic', as the unfriendly governments, the ones that are called 'communist, totalitarian, Marxist-Leninist.'"

"To me, the great moral issue in newsworld is where are you going to put your resources, where are you going to deploy your people, where are you going to spend your time ... and what stories are you going to cover?"

Think of it as a dark room. You're there with a flashlight. The room is full of dark corners. Which dark corner are you going to point your flashlight at? That's the agenda-setting aspect of the news and it's absolutely crucial."

**Bill Lord, Executive Producer, ABC News:**

"[The Sandinistas] should understand that today the spotlight is there and if they do something after seven o'clock at night, it'll be a much smaller light bulb that will be put on it tomorrow."



## ACTIVITIES

**1** As a class or group exercise, have students view a taped TV news program. How many specific stories can they recall at the end? (As a rule, the items are so “packed” that retention of specific facts or visuals is difficult.)

Re-screen it with a few of the following questions in mind: Can you recall three news stories? What is the content of each item? What is the approximate length of each item? Can you recall specific visuals? How were graphics used? What about music? What have you learned from each news item? What further questions do you have about each item? Do the stories have any connection with each other? Is there any follow-up of stories from one evening to the next?

**2** Many Canadian journalists feel strongly that there is a substantial difference between the way news is reported on Canadian and U.S. television networks. Have students compare a newscast on CBC with that on a major U.S. television network, and a newscast on CBC with that on a privately owned Canadian station. Are there any noticeable differences in style of presentation, pacing (“jolts per minute”), commercial content and types of stories?

**3** Have students examine a newspaper or television report and try to determine what is fact and what is opinion or judgment.

**4** In class, compare the ways in which different newspapers in the same city report the same story. Take note of the headlines, the content and where the item gets placed. What gets on the front page? Which items get juxtaposed next to one another and what do such juxtapositions suggest? How are photographs used?

Based on this discussion, have students create a newspaper front page which tries to put across a particular point of view.

**5** Have everyone in the group report on the same school or community news item, using the same medium. (The report can be written, taped or videotaped.) After the items have been presented, have students discuss the differences in these presentations. If they are similar, what kinds of conventions are being used?

**6** Have students prepare a report on a school or community news item from a personal point of view. Ask them to report on the same item again, adopting a more objective point of view. Discuss the differences.



# A Structure of Reassurance

*The following is an edited version of an article by Joyce Nelson which first appeared in Cinema Canada, #89, October 1982.*

**T**he *National*, like all other network news shows, is a complex interweaving of disparate elements — filmed reportage, live studio coverage, rear-screen graphics, minicam transmission, satellite feeds — all combined into an apparently seamless whole. Add to this complex collage the sophisticated computer animation which *The National* uses to open and close the show and the result is a sense of television technology taken to its limits.

No other TV genre brings together such a range of technological competence. Arguably, the network news show is a showcase for the latest in electronics hardware and a celebration of television itself. Seen in this light, the recurring structure of the nightly newscast reveals an interesting ideology at work behind the overt content.

...Because the news is a program like any other, it must fit within the broadcast schedule in its allotted time period. Therefore, each item on its agenda must be timed and slotted into the overall rhythm of the show. Reality, of course, is not so neat. As the only part of the show transmitted live in real-time, the studio anchorman, therefore, has certain vital functions. Primarily, he or she is the signifier of live coverage.

...A nightly news show is a complex blending of myriad time-space parameters. Of the 20 or so individual news items on the agenda, there may be a filmed item shot six hours earlier in the Middle East,

another filmed in Europe, an item using hour-old ENG coverage from downtown Toronto, a satellite feed from another network earlier in the evening, etc. As the signifier of live coverage in real-time, the anchorman must confer the aura of "presentness" on everything else in the show. He or she must introduce each news item and thereby (as the word implies) "anchor" it within the space-time frame that the anchorman represents. Only then can the screen be relinquished to a previously filmed or taped segment. The image of the anchorman brackets every item, conferring upon it the resonance of live transmission in real-time that he/she embodies.

This illusion of presentness, built into the structure of the program through the bracketing function of the anchorman, works to convey an ideology in which the present frames and brackets the past. Individual news items are treated as discrete and separate entities, with little or no relation to other items or to a larger historical context. The illusion of presentness conveys the sense that events take place in a vacuum and are entirely self-contained. An ideology in which the present is seen as presiding over the past is somewhat of a reversal of reality, wherein the past gives birth to the present and explains it. But as an ideology, this illusion of presentness is useful to television's purposes.

Without historical context, information becomes bits of trivia. Viewers may find





these bits "interesting", but be unable to connect them to each other or to anything else. Without context, viewers may accumulate information and data, but have no real understanding of why something is happening or what is behind an event.

...In place of wider historical context, TV news substitutes an illusion of presentness populated by officials, all "making official statements about official things". In other words, history is replaced by institutions as context. As viewers, in our efforts to understand why something is happening, we may rest assured that, although a particular event might seem inexplicable to us, presumably someone else knows the necessary background and context for the information: undoubtedly one of the many officials we see arriving and departing, shaking hands and making official statements. Thus TV network news continually reassures us of the viability of our society's official institutions. Since television itself is one of our most eminent official institutions, it has quite a stake in this reassurance function.

...The studio news anchorman is the official *par excellence* in the structure of the news program, his role is a mirror image of officialdom in the wider society. That is, his statements carry more authority than anyone else's, at least given the structure of the program. And, as the signifier of live coverage, his presence is vital to the show, whereas individual reporters (and events) may come and go. Interestingly, almost a full year in advance,

viewers were being prepared for the retirement of Walter Cronkite as CBS anchorman. Over the ensuing months, we could, in effect, watch Dan Rather take on the anchorman's "aura". Presumably, through such advance notice, no undue rupture would occur in our perception of the signifier of live coverage.

Moreover, only the anchorman is invested with the special status that television technology claims for itself: live transmission in real-time. As Arthur Asa Berger has written of Walter Cronkite, "His presence has come to be regarded, by many people, as an indicator of the significance of any event". Before his retirement, Cronkite's presence on a TV special meant not only that the coverage was important, but also that the transmission was live in real-time. On CBC, anchorman Knowlton Nash has come to signify this same combination of important coverage transmitted live. He, too, appears on special event programming, conferring the status he represents onto the show. In a sense, then, the network news anchorman signifies the institution of television itself. As the only medium which can bring us live on-location transmission in real-time, television as an institution seems larger than any and all other institutions. It can show and comment on them all, overseeing and bracketing them within the illusion of presentness which the technology claims as its own.





One of the things that is most distinctive about TV news is the extent to which it is an ideological medium, providing not just information or entertainment, but “packages for consciousness” — frameworks for interpreting and cues for reacting to social and political reality.

Daniel C. Hallin, “We Keep America On Top of the World”,  
*Watching Television* (Pantheon Books, 1987), ed. Todd Gitlin, p. 13.

.....

...with media whose structure is biased toward furnishing images and fragments, we are deprived of access to an historical perspective. In the absence of continuity and context, bits of information cannot be integrated into an intelligent and consistent whole.

Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (Penguin, 1986), p. 137

.....

91 % of the experts, 70 % of the people in the street and  
84 % of the eyewitnesses in television news were men.

Media Watch: National Watch on Images of Women in the Media Inc.  
monitoring study, 1984

.....





## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FILM/VIDEO

*Consuming Hunger* is a series of three 30-minute video productions which examine television coverage of the Ethiopian famine. Available for rental or purchase from DEC Films, 394 Euclid Ave, Toronto, Ont. M6G 2S9, Tel. (416) 925-9338.

*The Journey: A Film for Peace* is an epic documentary by Peter Watkins about the nuclear arms race and the way in which society distorts and fragments political information. Also available from DEC Films.

*Deadlines*, a short drama from the NFB's *Perspectives in Science Series — Water* (111C 0188 048; 11:37), focuses on the reporting of an ecologically important story. In the process, it raises questions about what news items get reported and from whose point of view.

### PRINT

*Reading the News* (Pantheon, 1986) by Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson is an investigation of the who, what, where, when, why and how of news reporting.

Daniel C. Hallin's article on television news, "We Keep America On Top of the World", is available in *Watching Television*, edited by Todd Gitlin (Pantheon Books, 1987).

*Newswatch — How TV Decides the News* (Simon and Schuster, 1982) by Al Westin was written by a former producer of the CBS evening news. This book looks at the history of television journalism and explains what the viewer can and should expect of the news.

*In Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Pantheon, 1988), Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky contend that an underlying elite consensus structures almost all facets of the news.

Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B.L. Chan have produced a somewhat academic but fascinating study, *Visualizing Deviance — A Study of News Organization* (University of Toronto Press, 1987). The authors show how journalists' decisions about what is newsworthy play a significant role in determining social values. They also suggest that in Western societies, the essence of news is its emphasis on social deviance and control.



Photo: Investigative Productions

# THEMATIC INDEX

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TV Sale  
The Bronswik Affair  
Mirror Mirror: An Advertiser's Scrapbook  
Have I Ever Lied to You Before?  
An Unremarkable Birth  
This Is a Recorded Message  
No Way! Not Me

## CULTURAL IDENTITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

Has Anybody Here Seen Canada?  
Magic in the Sky  
The Question of Television Violence

## IDEOLOGY

Everything on these tapes, but specifically :  
"E"  
Only the News That Fits  
This Is a Recorded Message

## IMAGES OF GENDER

TV Sale  
Mirror Mirror: An Advertiser's Scrapbook  
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## **POWER, POLITICS AND THE MEDIA**

"E"

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## **PROPAGANDA**

The Bronswik Affair

Careers and Cradles

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Mirror Mirror: An Advertiser's Scrapbook

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This Is a Recorded Message

Magic in the Sky

Only the News That Fits



# GLOSSARY OF BASIC FILM TERMS

One source of apprehension for teachers who are preparing to teach the media for the first time is the prospect of learning and understanding the technical jargon of film and video language. What is a "shot"? How many "frames" are there per second? What's the difference between a "dolly shot" and a "zoom"?

Our philosophy in preparing the notes for this project is that knowing the ins and outs of film jargon is much less important to teaching the media than one might suppose. Just as it is possible to learn to appreciate literature without first studying books of grammar, so one can talk about the mass media and their impact without memorizing pages of technical terms. With this in mind, we have used few of them in discussing the issues raised by the films in this compilation.

Nevertheless, some basic terms of film/video language are useful, insofar as they provide a common vocabulary with which to discuss filmic phenomena and experiences. For this reason, we have included an explanation of some basic terms below.

## Framing, camera angle and movement

Framing, camera angle and movement are all important ways in which a filmmaker can determine how a scene, event or character will be presented on the screen. How the camera photographs the subject can strongly influence the way that we, the audience, relate to the subject on an emotional or psychological level.

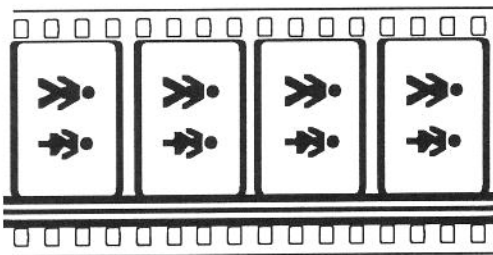


One "frame". The edges of the frame form the boundary between what the camera sees and records and what it doesn't.

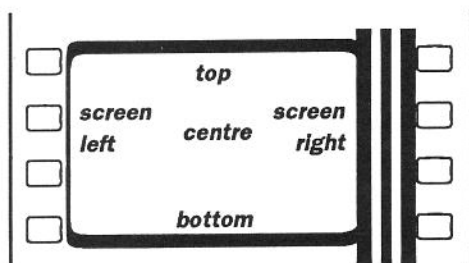
### **Frame**

A single still image from a film or video.

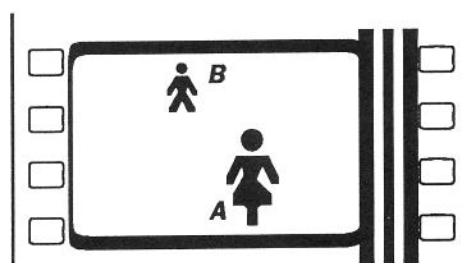
The illusion of movement in film is created by projecting a series of still pictures or frames in rapid succession. If the rate of projection is fast enough, the human eye cannot make out the separateness of the images, and the picture appears to represent a smooth continuous motion. You can see a series of frames by looking at a strip of 16mm film, or you can freeze a single frame of a video picture by using the "pause" button on a VCR.



A series of frames. The illusion of motion in film is created by projecting a series of still pictures in rapid succession.



Some basic screen geography. Left and right are determined from the point of view of the viewer facing the screen.



Foreground and background. Character "A" is in the foreground. Character "B" is in the background.

### ***Frames per second***

The edges of the frame (usually defined for us by the black masking around the screen in a movie theatre or the edges of our TV screen) form the boundary between what the camera sees and records, and what it doesn't see and record. People and objects within the picture are said to be "ON SCREEN" or "ON CAMERA" whereas objects which are not in the picture are said to be "OFF SCREEN" or "OFF CAMERA". Characters can also move "in frame" or "out of frame", depending on the action within the scene.

The speed at which a camera or projection device runs.

Most film today is shot and projected at the rate of 24 frames per second (meaning one second of action is broken down into 24 separate photographic images). Video images are recorded and run at 30 frames per second.

### ***Camera angle***

The angle from which the camera is pointed at the subject: HIGH, LOW, EYE-LEVEL, etc. Normally, the camera is placed at eye-level to the subjects being filmed. In a high-angle shot, the camera is placed so that it looks down on the scene, while a low-angle shot looks up at the characters or action.

### ***Extreme close up (ECU)***

An exaggerated CLOSE UP shot in which a small detail (for example, a hand, eye or mouth) fills the entire screen.

### ***Close up (CU)***

A shot which includes a person's face only, or any shot where the camera is moved in very close to an object.

### ***Medium shot (MS)***

A shot where the framing is between a CLOSE UP and a LONG SHOT. With actors, this usually includes from the chest up.

<b>Long shot (LS) (or full shot)</b>	A shot where at least the full figures of the subjects are included in the frame, usually more.
<b>Extreme long shot (ELS)</b>	Generally a panoramic view of an exterior location, photographed from a considerable distance.
<b>Establishing shot</b>	Almost always a LONG SHOT or EXTREME LONG SHOT, an ESTABLISHING SHOT is any shot which shows the audience the general location where a scene is about to take place, or is already taking place. It is often used to provide essential information or simply to orient the viewer.
<b>Point-of-view shot (POV)</b>	A shot which shows the scene from the point of view of a particular character. A POV is almost always preceded by a shot of the character "looking". The POV shot then shows what the character is "looking at".
<b>Aerial shot</b>	A shot taken from a crane, plane, helicopter or other vantage point high in the air. Not necessarily a moving shot. (See opening shot of clip from <i>Have I Ever Lied to You Before?</i> , selection #4a, filmed from the CN Tower in Toronto.)
<b>Static shot</b>	Any shot in which the camera does not move, regardless of whether the subject is moving.
<b>Pan</b>	Short for "panoramic" shot. A horizontal movement, in which the camera swivels from left to right or right to left, to follow a moving subject or to give a panoramic sweep across a scene. The camera remains fixed to a stationary tripod or axis. (See first shot of excerpt from <i>Service in the Sky</i> , selection #6c.)



<b><i>Tilt</i></b>	A vertical movement in which the camera is tilted up or down to follow the action or record a scene. As in a panning shot, the camera remains fixed to a stationary tripod or axis. The expressions "pan up" or "pan down" are also used.
<b><i>Tracking or Dolly Shot</i></b>	A shot in which the camera actually moves through a scene, being mounted on a dolly or similar wheeled device. Also called a TRAVELING SHOT, particularly when the camera is hand-held by the cameraperson or mounted on a moving vehicle such as a car or truck.
<b><i>Zoom</i></b>	Often confused with a tracking shot, a zoom is simply an optical effect created by turning the zoom ring on the camera lens. The camera itself does not physically move in relation to the objects being filmed. A "ZOOM IN" magnifies objects to make them appear closer, while a "ZOOM OUT" widens our angle of view within a particular scene.

## Film Editing and Structure

EDITING is the process by which some film or video footage is selected to be included in the final film or program, and other footage is not. It is also the process by which this footage is ordered. Editing determines the final length of a film or program, its pacing, its emphasis and its overall structure.

<b><i>Camera take</i></b>	An unedited segment of picture, as it is originally exposed or recorded in the camera.
<b><i>Shot</i></b>	A segment of film or video image, without internal edits or cuts, which appears in the final film or program. It is possible to derive several different shots from the same original camera take. Varying anywhere in length from one frame (1/24th of a second) to several minutes, a shot is the basic building block of film or video editing.

**Sequence**

A series of shots edited together to form a larger grammatical unit in a film. Sequences are often the equivalent of "scenes" in a play or novel, depicting actions or events that take place in the same setting or time period, but they can also be groupings of shots whose logical connections are of a didactic or thematic nature.

**Cut**

The most common form of edited transition between two shots, in which the last frame of one shot is simply butted together with the first frame of the next.

**Cutaway**

A relatively brief shot inserted into a scene to show something that is happening elsewhere, presumably at the same moment. Cutaways are commonly used to disguise an edit which has been made in a longer take, particularly in television and documentary interviews.

**Cross-cutting**

Intercutting of shots from two or more different scenes or actions, used to suggest that the events are happening simultaneously. Often used to suggest parallels or to create suspense.

**Dissolve**

A transition between two shots in which the first image gradually fades away as the second image gradually grows to full brightness over top of it. (See excerpt from *Careers and Cradles*, selection #6a.)

**Wipe**

An optical effect used for scene transitions in which one image appears to be wiped over top of another. Commonly used in films of the '30s and '40s, but rarely used today. (See excerpt from *Careers and Cradles*, selection #6a.)

<b><i>Fade in</i></b>	A punctuation device typically used to denote the beginning of a scene or sequence, in which the image gradually appears from total blackness, growing to full brightness.
<b><i>Fade out</i></b>	The opposite to a FADE IN, often used to denote the end of a sequence.
<b><i>Continuity</i></b>	The appearance, created through editing, of a seamless, uninterrupted flow of action within a scene — even though the action itself may have been shot as a series of separate takes, recorded in different locations at different times.
<b><i>Jump cut</i></b>	An edit within a single shot which disrupts the continuity of a scene. Often a case where one or more frames of picture have been removed from the middle of the shot, creating an unexpected discontinuity or “jump” in action.

## Special Effects

<b><i>Freeze frame</i></b>	An optical effect in which a single frame of picture is frozen on the screen for an indefinite period of time.
<b><i>Slow motion</i></b>	An effect achieved by filming a scene at greater than 24 frames per second, so that when the film is later projected at normal speed the subject appears to be slowed down.
<b><i>Fast motion (or accelerated motion)</i></b>	The opposite to slow motion. The subject is filmed at less than 24 frames per second, so that normal projection causes it to look speeded up.



**Animation**

Techniques by which inanimate objects are made to appear to move on the screen, lending the appearance of life. Techniques include drawing directly on film, photographing CELS or individual drawings one at a time, or photographing real objects one frame at a time while adjusting their positions slightly between frames (PIXILLATION).

**Sound****MOS**

Pronounced "M-O-S". From a Hollywood slang phrase: "mit out sound" referring to picture footage which has been shot without any synchronized sound to accompany it. A sound track is usually added later in the recording or editing studio.

**Sync sound  
(or actual sound)**

Sound whose source is an actual object or person within the picture. Sync sound can include dialogue or noise which can be seen to emanate from the action on the screen.

**Music/FX  
(music and sound  
effects)**

Types of sound which can be added to a sound track to enhance mood, realism or non-realism, or to convey information to an audience.

**Voice-over (V.O.)**

Narration or commentary which is added to the sound track in addition to any synchronous sound, music or effects.

**Synchronization**

The timing of sound to match what is happening in the picture on the screen. Since sound and picture are separate media which are wedded in the finished film or video tape, it is possible to create situations where sound and picture are "out of sync".

# HOW TO OBTAIN NFB FILMS AND VIDEOS

## BUY YOUR OWN NFB VIDEOS

All recent NFB films are available on video, and department heads and school librarians are being encouraged to build up their own video collections. With the NFB's new video prices this is now possible. As of this book's printing, these prices are:

30 minutes and under	\$39.95
30:01 to 59:59	\$69.95
One hour and over	\$89.95

## RENT NFB FILMS AND VIDEOS

You can reserve NFB videos and films by telephone, by mail or in person at NFB offices up to 90 days prior to play date. Videos are \$2.00 per day, films \$4.00 to \$8.00 (depending on the length of the film) for a five-day period. Films and videos can be picked up in person or delivered by mail. Discount subscription plans (15 to 25 percent off) are available for frequent users.

## OBTAIN NFB FILMS AND VIDEOS FROM YOUR MEDIA CENTRE

Media resource centres often own the NFB films which are frequently used by teachers. Increasingly, media centres are also buying electronic reproduction rights for specific titles, allowing them to make as many video copies as they wish for interested teachers in their district. Consult your media centre staff to see which NFB film and video titles they own and for which they have electronic reproduction rights.

## HOW TO OBTAIN NFB MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTS

The NFB has produced hundreds of slide sets and sound filmstrips (many of which are now available on video) especially for the classroom. These are distributed for sale only, by McIntyre Educational Media, 30 Kelfield Street, Rexdale, Ontario, M9W 5A2. Write for an NFB multimedia catalogue or call 1-800-268-1429 (Ontario), 1-800-268-1470 (outside Ontario) or 245-7800 (in Toronto).





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