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# ***CURRENTS***

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***READINGS IN RACE RELATIONS***

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ADVOCACY AND  
THE MEDIA

*Published by* **THE URBAN ALLIANCE ON RACE RELATIONS**

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The Urban Alliance on Race Relations is an educational agency and an advocate and intermediary for the visible minorities. It works toward encouraging better race relations, increased understanding and awareness among our multicultural, multiracial population through programmes of education directed at both the private and public sectors of the community. It is also focusing its efforts on the institutions of our society including educational systems, employment, government, media, legislation, police, social service agencies and human services, in order to reduce patterns of discrimination and inequality of opportunity which may exist within these institutions.

The work of the organization is carried out through working committees such as: Education Institutions; Legislation; Media; Law Enforcement.

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# *Advocacy and Race Relations*

For many people there is an uneasiness in linking the term "advocacy" to race relations. Such apprehension appears to be based upon the analysis that the only way to improve race relations in this country is by pursuing a consensus strategy in which all conflict and controversy must be kept to an absolute minimum.

The recently published Government response to "Equality Now", the report of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities, appeared to adopt this position by having as its central theme, "a persuasive approach".

This approach seems to make the assumption that racism and inequality are just a haunting remnant of our flawed past and that continuing progress and movement to a new future will result in the fading away of past injustices.

There is also in this approach a tendency to equate improved race relations with racial peace and harmony. Unfortunately the pursuit of racial harmony means no more than the absence of racial conflict and certainly does not address itself to the eradication of racial inequality.

If racial discrimination is not to be tolerated in society, we are surely obligated to pursue vigorous and unequivocal *coercive* action. The analogy of crime has been used as an activity that we will not tolerate and as such we certainly do not limit ourselves to merely pleading with criminals for more understanding so that they will not be so active!

Rather than dismiss, marginalize and delegitimize advocacy activities in race relations as merely an exercise in negative protest by a few self-selected propagandist pressure groups, this issue of *Currents* is an attempt to begin to assess the most effective strategies and avenues to effect meaningful change in the decision-making processes of our major institutions. Meaningful change requires having an impact on the nature and extent of discriminatory practices. Such change can either provide the legislative framework which effectively reduces discriminatory practices. Or they may more diffusely contribute to the popularisation of a non-racist culture; or more particularly, they may successfully defend and protect the rights of individuals against discrimination. Advocacy activities in race relations require the implementation of concerted action to confront racism as it occurs in its various forms within the workplace, social groups and in communities and society at large.

## **Advocacy Activities**

Advocacy activities then, have as their purpose the meeting of visible minority group needs, defending visible minorities against discrimination, and combatting institutional racism and equalizing the opportunity levels of all visible minorities.

The types of activities can vary according to an individual's or group's ability to influence decisions. The types of advocacy strategies that can be and have been pursued in race relations in Canada can

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perhaps be grouped under the following:

- Protest and defend activities that are intended to expose and oppose racism. This includes such activities as marches, rallies, demonstrations and public meetings.
- Identifying and promoting the special needs of visible minority groups. This includes research and the collection and dissemination of information in the form of studies, reports, briefs and submissions.
- Programme and policy development. Such positive action entails developing specific responses to meeting special needs.
- Liaison with formal institutions on issues relating to the provision of services, resource allocation, etc.

This issue of *Currents*, in looking particularly at the media and advertising industries, describes a number of advocacy strategies that have been pursued that incorporate in varying ways all of these strategies.

Much of community activity has of course been directed at seeking government intervention. The importance of government is that it alone possesses and can pursue unique and distinctive advocacy strategies. These include the capacity for changing legislation, for making structural changes in its operation, for allocating greater resources through policy and programme changes, as well as playing a leadership role in promoting racial equality.

### **Elections**

Clearly then government is a major focus of attention, and perhaps one of the most important individual advocacy strategies is participation in the electoral process.

Participation in elections is beneficial to race relations because it provides an opportunity for visible minorities to articulate their needs and express their views on various policies put forward by the political parties.

Having said that however, what is the causal relationship between votes cast and public policy? The little research that has been done on this question seems to suggest that the influence of electoral politics on government policies may not be as great as perhaps we would like to believe.

The experience of the Special Parliamentary Committee process gives one the uncomfortable feeling that the attempt to involve minorities occurs at a stage too far removed from the positions where power is actually held and that, once more, the appeal to the community only results in the avoidance of real issues, of conflict and change.

### **Subjects or Participants?**

There was an unprecedented interest in the 'ethnic vote' during the recent federal election. The ethnic minority vote is in a particularly influential position because these communities are not randomly distributed throughout the country. Their relative concentration in some centres means they are in a position to influence voting strength and the outcome of elections.

However minority participation without education is in itself insufficient. This was evidenced in a number of examples leading up to the recent federal election where the 'ethnic vote' was being subject to being coopted and misused. The example in some Toronto constituencies of stacking nomination meetings with roving ethnic voting blocs is a travesty of the meaning of political participation.

Such activities encourage the critics of multiculturalism policies who feel that such policies have encouraged the notion of Canadian society on the one hand and the existence of ethnic groups as something independent of their society on the other. Outsiders in their own home, they have been given a "subject" rather than a "participant" orientation. Minority involvement in the federal election seemed to be less a process of encouraging active participation in Canadian society and more the use of minorities as mere objects to be manipulated and subjects for debate.

### **Politics of Empowerment**

Negative experiences of the political process can only engender feelings of political powerlessness and distrust. It is therefore vitally important that the victims of racial prejudice and discrimination are prevented from becoming so disenchanted, so scarred that they will not have the long-range optimism necessary for an enduring commitment to our political institutions.

To conclude on a positive interpretation however, it might be said that the federal election was the starting point — the tremors have started in the coming of political age of minorities. No matter how clumsily the 'ethnic vote' was used, it was a way of bringing people into the political process who had previously been disengaged and powerless.

Growing political involvement is a step toward empowerment. Minorities must not be diverted from the protracted and at times limited results of the political process. But rather than trying to herd the ethnic vote, more consideration should be given to motivation and education. Political power will only increase with an expansion of political consciousness.

TIM REES



## Immigrant Women

Congratulations for your issue on visible minority women. It was a telling and shocking account of the socio-economic disadvantages suffered by minority women.

One theme that could and should have been addressed by your journal is one dealing with "immigrant women". This is an issue which requires further consciousness-raising to explore the political and ideological motivation behind the popular use of such term.

Indeed, the label "immigrant women" is too liberally applied to minority or ethnic women who are Canadian even by birth. It served primarily to stigmatize and to institutionally marginalize many women who are made to suffer a double jeopardy based on racism and sexism. It helps make them feel subordinate and excluded from mainstream society as "eternal immigrants" who do not deserve full Canadian citizenship rights and privileges. Consequently, it subjects minority women to exploitation and discrimination, racial, sexual or otherwise, because by its nature, it forces upon these women a kind of deviant and marginal mentality of I-don't-belong which over time becomes self-stigmatization and self-oppression.

Minority women have long struggled for due recognition and respect. Since the women's movement became a political force that changes our national agenda, and since the multiculturalism policy was declared back in 1971, minority women have been forgotten by a predominantly white-middle class feminist faction and by a mostly male-dominated minority faction. They do not seem to be part of the "minorities" or the "women" category targeted for affirmative action programs. None of the federal Multiculturalism Ministers has been a woman. The federal (and many provincial) advisory councils on the status of women is lily-white, and research on minority women non-existent. The Parliamentary Committee on Visible Minorities did not have one single woman M.P. on it, even though there are 15 women in the House of Commons (excluding the Hon. Jeanne Sauvé, who was Speaker at the time).

In Quebec, the situation is worse. Because of a

widespread mentality that all non-French Canadian and non-whites are "immigrants" (or Néo-Québécois), minority women here are further marginalized. Like its federal counterparts, the provincial government here organized in 1982 a conference on and for "immigrant women", which had among its participants many women who are Canadian-born and who have lived here for many decades. Minority organizations obediently organize "immigrant women's" committees in order to receive provincial funds, even if the programs in question have more to do with racial discrimination and sex discrimination than with immigration or adaptation.

It is my fundamental belief that once an immigrant receives his or her Canadian citizenship after three years of permanent residence in Canada, he or she officially becomes a Canadian. As such, she or he has all the rights and responsibilities associated with a Canadian citizenship. Society has a duty to treat its citizens with such respect and fairness, for collectively, we all have much to gain if our common welfare and richness are fully developed.

There lies our challenge as minority and women's rights activists. We must assume the duty to ensure that minority women are equipped with adequate skills and knowledge to fully participate in society (are you listening, minority and women's organizations?). As long as minority women are labelled and treated as "immigrant women", the process of marginalization is only perpetuated, and they will continue to be assigned to the fringes of existence.

I am a man, and a minority man on top of that. All this debate was not made out of any intellectual exercise in feminism or in male chauvinism. Being a minority rights activist, I have experienced and fought against racial discrimination. Having an aging mother, two sisters in the labor force and a niece growing up non-white in this white society, I have also known what sexual discrimination means. I will fight to the end to ensure that this will be a world where they are judged not by their sex or by their skin color but by the content of their character.

I hope these ideas would help readers of *Currents* more aware of the situation of minority women in our society.

FO NIEMI, MONTREAL

# *Minorities Have Power*

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut

*on Accepting the Urban Alliance – Race Relations Award*

The Race Relations Award has been established by the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to honour people in the community who have contributed in a significant way to the betterment of human rights and race relations in Canada.

The inaugural award honoured Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut who has been variously described as a scholar, sportsman, artist, sculptor ... leader, columnist, teacher, writer, preacher ... public servant, statesman and community spokesman. He has devoted most of his life to the promotion of human rights and race relations.

The following is Gunther Plaut's acceptance speech given at the Award Dinner held on March 31, 1984 in Toronto.

It is in the nature of an occasion such as this, that I should be, at least in part, personal in my remarks. I would like to tell you where I came from, and then go on to share with you my vision of where we are and where we might be going.

Fifty years ago, I lived in Germany. I was finishing my law career and ready to submit my doctoral thesis, a final act, for the Nazis had written an effective end to my career. I was not only a person without a country, I was also a person without a profession or job.

I lived in a country that had an essentially homogenous population. There was only one miniscule ethnic minority, which comprised a bare 1% of the population. I belong to that single minority, the Jews who, try as they might, could not merge into the populace at large. They were held up to constant ignominy and eventually suffered persecution, expulsion and extinction. I grew up as a member of that ethnic persecuted minority. I was part of the invisible minority; but

the Nazis put a star on us to make us visible and ready for discrimination. I lived – as a Barbadian phrased it – in the castle of my skin. I suppose that my whole belief structure and my social imperatives have derived from that experience.

I saw a world divided into good and evil. It was a simple philosophy. Amongst the good people were those who voted for peace and democracy. Needless to say, we were on the side of the good. On the other side were the Nazis who tried to destroy us and everything that belonged to German culture; who spent huge amounts of money in order to prepare for the next war; and there were those who accepted war itself as the culmination of their personal dreams. No, there was no problem for the young growing man to distinguish between who was good, and who was evil. It was with this simple philosophy that I came to the new world – to America first, to the land of opportunity, and I knew that in this land, the good far outweighed the evil.



## A Continent of Opportunity

It *was* a land of opportunity, even for the young immigrant who came with 40¢ in his pocket, and a high school acquaintance with the English language. This would be my continent of opportunity. It took a while for me to find out that this opportunity might exist for me and many others, but not for everyone, that there were millions of people to whom the door was literally closed, that racism was built into the very fabric of this society. Blacks, Orientals and Native people were the prime targets. All of them were weighted down with stereotypes: Blacks were lazy, Natives were alcoholics, and Orientals were devious. Jews were also on the list of racial stereotyping; we were clannish, we were clever, and we were Christ killers.

I was very new in America, and I accepted almost everything, even that undercurrent of anti-semitism that I found, for in comparison to what I had left, it was like nothing. Opportunities did exist. So I plunged from the beginning into the political mainstream of the land, bringing to it my liberal background and convictions nurtured on the social and ideological battlefields of the old country. I demonstrated against fascists' involvement in the Spanish Civil War and picketed Dow Chemical because it provided the wherewithal to the fascists. I was slated to address a student rally even with my poor English, and participated in planning for the meeting—only to find out that all our meetings and all our plans were worthless, for there were other people who ran the show. They got their word from far away in Moscow, and even in the heart of America, in Cincinnati, Ohio, I found myself a potential target of their policies. That was my first brush with realities that could not be seen but were real. Nonetheless, I opened my eyes and looked about.

My wife and I discovered that there were two Chicagos where we lived in our first pulpit assignment, that of the Whites and that of the Blacks. The two met rarely; the ghetto on the south side was real and to break out of it was in those days a rarity, and for most an impossibility.

I joined the army to fight the Nazis—and found the army to be lily-white, except for a few Black regiments. Throughout my service of three years, I never served in the same group with Black soldiers, who were *allowed to die* for their country, but were denied a fair and equal share in molding its policies.

I found that even in my infantry unit, there was considerable sympathy for the Germans, for their orderliness, for their bureaucratic efficiency, for the fact that Germans had cold and hot running water in their houses, which, compared to what we had found in France, was clearly a sign of cultural superiority. That sentiment prevailed until we opened the first concentration camp. Then we saw another reality, hidden away from the world, disbelieved at first, and now revealed in its utter depravity. We saw the ultimate inhumanity of human beings. We found thousands of corpses unburied, the remainder starved and at the edge of death. I, the starry-eyed optimist, was once again confronted with the realities of life and swore an oath to myself that the rest of my efforts would be dedicated to securing not only for my own people, but for human beings everywhere, a decent and fair break in life.

I was fortunate, for my next post in the United States brought me to Minnesota, a state of free-wheeling and open idealism, with men like Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy and Fritz Mondale, who charted a new course for us and opened up the doors of opportunity for everyone.

## Canada

And then I came to Canada. The civil rights and anti-Vietnam battles were raging in the United States, but human problems do not know of national borders; they have a habit of spilling over. Thus, in a natural way, I brought the prophets of American Black liberation to my congregation in Toronto: Martin Luther King and Coretta, Ralph Abernathy, the leaders of the Urban League, and Harry Belafonte. At the time of Selma, Alabama, we marched with 400 clergy from First Metropolitan Church to the American Consulate. At Maple Leaf Gardens, we picketed against the appearance of Governor George Wallace. (May I say in retrospect that one of the greatest victories of my rabbinate was to move the members of my congregation to picket the Gardens, and to stand at Yonge and Carlton Streets and collect money for the Martin Luther King Fund).

It was at that time that we began to think about Canada as a land that was not exempt from racial prejudice, that had all too long been held in the fetters of old privilege. It was this same land in which Jewish refugees could rarely gain admittance, when even one Jew was considered too many. For it was only a few decades before that



Jews and Greeks could not get insurance in this city; and that Jews could not obtain residency in any hospital, however excellent their medical record. There were many areas of the city in which they could not rent or buy, until the late and beloved Keiller McKay came along with his famous decision, opening up the city to all its inhabitants. Here, as in so many other parts of the world, Jews were bellwethers of progress. Where they could cut a swath into the thorny bushes of prejudice, others could follow. Bora Laskin was the prime example. But let me say with as much emphasis as I can: now that Jews have largely made it, many of them have forgotten how it was once for them, and are no longer ready to battle for the rights and privileges of all. This remains our task as it is the task of every citizen, a social challenge, and a religious obligation for Jews as for everyone else.

Sad to say, that while we *seem* to have made it, there are still segments of the Canadian population that view us with the eyes of yesterday, who mouth such epithets as Zionism is racism, and mean thereby to put the tag of prejudice on Jews instead of on themselves. There are those, like a certain teacher in Alberta, who deny that what I saw with my own eyes ever took place. Here in the city of Toronto, at High Holy Day Services, from the latter years of my rabbinate until today, police are present to protect the worshippers. To be sure, we have learned to handle it, we have long experience, and it is my faith and my belief that Canada can handle it, too, if only it wants to.

### Racism

So I have come full circle to a few remarks on where we are today. I make these remarks in a personal capacity and not as a member of the Human Rights Commission. It has been my privilege to have served it for six years — rich and fruitful years, no so much as in what I have accomplished, but rather in what I have learned.

Above all, I have learned racism exists and is well in Canada, and is real. No, it is not of the Nazi type, nor of the U.S. variety. But it is real for all too many — from Natives to Blacks, to people of Asian background. We are fortunate that here in the city we have no permanent ghettos of any significant kind nor large tenement districts that have deteriorated. We are fortunate because the temper of the whole community is good. There is widespread decency. The majority of Ontarians do believe that good citizenship requires one to

be tolerant and fair. But while racism is not usually in the open, old stereotypes still abound. A few years ago we tried to persuade executives of advertising agencies to give a fair break to people of visible minorities, even though Americans have already shown that it is good business, not bad business to do so. Slowly, all too slowly, breakthroughs are at last occurring in Canada as well, but there are still many who are unconvinced, and who do not think that discrimination is a real threat to our society.

### Whose Responsibility?

It is my unshakeable conviction that Canada will never reach its full potential until we draw all of our citizens into the vortex of its opportunities — for their sake, and even more so for ours. I believe education for good citizenship is just as important as, if not more important than, the knowledge of algebra. I see a great deal of goodwill, but I do not see visible minorities in highly visible positions of government, to say nothing of industry and commerce. Everyone is hesitant to use the term affirmative action, but the time to bite the bullet is now, before discontent becomes a cancer in our society. I believe the control of hate literature and systemic discrimination is more important than the rigorous control of parking regulations. I applaud the Commons' Special Committee on Visible Minorities for its forthright support of this principle, for its many important recommendations and especially its call for compensating our Japanese citizens for the wrong done to them in World War II. And, I applaud Mr. Lawlor's report on group defamation made to Mr. McMurtry.

It is the responsibility of government and its agencies to procure opportunities for all, *but it is also the minorities themselves that must resolve to use their will and at the same time, their political, economic and social power to achieve their aims.* For one insidious effect of racism is that those who are discriminated against have a tendency to internalize it: if others treat me as inferior, I must be; if others deprive me of power, I must be powerless. That is true in politics above all. Minorities have power if they would only use it. It is the very essence of democracy that every group fights for what it believes is best for itself and the country. If that is true for farmers or for labour, if that is true for Westerners or for Maritimers, it must be true for people of any minority who want to push for true equality of opportunity. It is good

for them, it is important for them that they do so with all the strength of which they are capable. For when we do this, we are fighting for Canada. The strength of Canada is its people, not the wealth of its resources; it is human beings above all.

This is a good country. Law is held in high esteem; we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms; we have a Human Rights Code in our

province; and we have people who believe that these rights are the foundation of our society. So let us devote our energy to making these rights real for all people. Prejudice against a single person diminishes us all. We are in truth one family, and as one family we must care for each other and work for each other.

RABBI W. GUNTHER PLAUT

## Urban Alliance Race Relations Award Medal

*Designed by: Irene Chu*

The ultimate goal in race relations – to achieve racial equality and harmony – is depicted in the medal by the symbols of 16 men and women encircling the Maple Leaf. The number represents the 16 points on the compass thus reflecting the cosmopolitan make-up of the people of Canada. The choice of 8 men and 8 women of equal status emphasizes our effort towards equality between men and women as well as equality among all races.

Race relations work has never been smooth, nor easy; it takes courage, patience and unwavering determination to overcome the many hurdles and obstacles that lie in the path towards racial harmony. The many difficulties and hardships are represented here by the angles and edges on the outside of the medal.

At the centre is our National Emblem – the Maple Leaf – around which all Canadians gather and rally expressing our aspirations that Canada be a leader in Race Relations.





## *"Here's The News" \**

Hamlin Grange

That one statement has become an integral part of our vocabulary and our psyche. It holds a note of finality and, for some people, self-evident truth. For better or for worse, we have come to believe in and depend upon the people who deliver the news. A growing number of us, however, are having doubts about accuracy and fairness of news gathering and delivery. This is particularly true in the area of race relations and news concerning non-whites in Canada.

It was no surprise then that the working session was an opportunity for participants to vent their frustrations at the resource people — Ray Gardner of the Toronto Star and John McFadyen of radio station CKFM. The exercise, however, was useful because it provided a necessary forum that eventually "both sides" agreed is needed and should be fostered.

Specific strategies were identified that media and the non-white community can do to alleviate the problem. Interestingly enough both sides are not that far apart. The media want to treat people fairly; after all, it's poor business to deliberately offend an audience. The community also wants the same thing. Where they part company, at times, is how to accomplish the task.

Advisory groups can be helpful to media outlets. Not only do they provide the media an accessible pulse to the community but they also bring the community into the newsrooms. As sophisticated as we may be as users of the media, most of us don't know how it works. In fact, people within the media are sometimes just as baffled. Unfortunately advisory groups are often established to deal with a crisis. Media should be approached during "good times" to set up such groups.

Regulatory bodies like the Ontario Press Council are good access points that the community can use. There was a suggestion that a meeting be held with the Press Council to discuss appoint-

ments to the board and other issues. Again, the time to do this is before a crisis develops.

As with any process there are certain buzz words that crop up; one of them is "sensitization." Sensitivity training has been called for on numerous occasions for media employees. The problem is, an agreement can't be reached on exactly what they should be sensitized about and how it should be done. Generally, the media think they are pretty sensitive to issues. That may be so, but they visually tend to be overly sensitive whenever they are out under the microscope. They simply don't like that. After all, they say, we don't make the news, we reporters are notorious for being "observers" rather than active participants. Things don't happen to us, they say, they happen to the people we report about.

Some media prefer the "big stick" approach with internal enforcement of policies and guidelines. The community on the other hand prefers a more formal and structured approach with specific staff training development at all levels of a corporation. This is an impasse that must be bridged if constructive dialogue is to begin.

That dialogue, however, must be with as broad a cross-section of the media as possible. Too often we use our "friends" in the media as resource people. They may be helpful but they are often times the converted and we don't get the strident views from the detractors. I believe that is crucial in any real attempt to advocate against the media. We must approach those in the media we see as diametrically opposed to our views and get them into the process. Again I suggest this should happen before a crisis develops and both sides feel threatened by the process.

*Hamlin Grange is a reporter with Global T.V. and Vice-President of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.*

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\* The following two articles review workshops looking at strategies by which minorities can effect the decision-making process in the mass media and advertising industries. These workshops were part of a special conference, "Minorities in the Media: Advocacy Strategies" sponsored by the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, and the Ad Hoc Media Committee, December 3, 1983.



# *Visible Minorities in Advertising*

Susan Eng

"One of the most powerful instruments in communicating attitudes and influencing behavior is the media. Advertising, in particular, has been described as one of the most pervasive forms of communication in our society." So began yet another multiculturalism conference. It does not matter which conference. Unfortunately, pious rhetoric is endemic in such quarters. What we hoped to achieve with the "Advocacy in the Media" conference was to leave the rhetoric behind and concentrate on examining particular concerns and developing the skills necessary to remedy the problems.

The approach was to identify the problems by examining current advertising in the print and broadcast media, to suggest remedies in terms of specific changes, to identify the change agents and more important, to identify their interests and finally, to develop strategies to stimulate needed change.

Identifying the problems is not as easy a task as it might seem. In fact, if recognition is half the solution, it is the larger half. The examples and case studies can be divided into three main categories — those which show no representation of visible minorities, those which misrepresent or represent visible minorities in stereotypical roles and those which provide appropriate representation.

## **Ads with Inadequate Representation**

Ads showing no visible minorities illicit the usual response. Many people, both whites and non-whites, would see nothing wrong with them. However, if a white person were shown an ad from *Ebony* magazine that uses only Black actors, the immediate comment would be that the viewer did not feel included. This was the exact point made to the advertising industry in our meetings with them, namely, that what has been the norm has blithely excluded an increasingly larger segment of their potential market. To the extent that

advertising purports to represent "real life" or to encourage certain lifestyles, the message to visible minorities can be interpreted as, "You don't belong!"

The inability of advertisers to understand the issue was evident in the saga of the Ontario government's Energy ads. In response to the criticism that there was a lack of visible minorities in the "Conserve it, Preserve it" commercials, the Ministry of Energy prepared a new commercial using non-white actors but in the final print, only their hands were visible or they were seated in the back of the bus (ahem) where they could not be distinguished. After another round of talks, the same film was used. However, a few minor editing changes revealed the Asian woman attached to the hands and the Black person in the bus was seen getting aboard. When congratulations were offered to the actors who appeared in the final print, they advised that they had been involved in the original filming. Clearly, deliberate editing decisions had been made to exclude the visible minorities.

## **Stereotypical or Negative Representation**

Negative stereotyping is more obvious. The proverb-slashing Charlie Chan in the Wintario radio commercials was an easy target. The commercial was part of a "Great Detectives" series and featured the Hollywood Chinese accent and dialogue that is unmistakably identified with Charlie Chan. No one would seriously deny that the Charlie Chan caricature ridiculed and belittled Chinese North Americans. Nor, on the other hand, is it an excuse to say that the advertiser was merely using an historical image. A progressive society learns from its mistakes.

The commercial was first brought to our attention by the Toronto radio station, CKFM, which had decided not to air the commercial because it was offensive and, after some publicity surround-



ing the issue, the Ontario government withdrew the commercial. To this day, there are those who would criticize Asians for their inability to laugh at themselves although this caricature crosses the fine line between laughter and ridicule. The simple response is that the thickness of one's skin is directly proportional to one's economic and social stability. Further, the impact of such negative stereotyping is exacerbated by the lack of positive representation to provide a balanced representation.

### Appropriate Representation

The appearance of non-whites in ads in non-stereotypical roles is sparse and when discovered, is liable to set off much celebration and mutual congratulation. Ironically, representation of reality illicitly more animation than the stilted picture that many have come to accept as the norm. Seeing non-whites in everyday situations, eating (!), driving cars (!! ) and working (!!!), can be quite a "high" for people who have been disenfranchised by advertisers. Unfortunately, most of such ads appear in U.S. publications and those which are aimed at a non-white market such as Ebony magazine.

### Some Industry Attempts

The key is to determine whether these are temporary aberrations or evidence of a concerted effort by advertisers to reflect their market more realistically. A partial answer may be found in the less-than-successful attempts made by two advertisers. One advertiser, a wine company, produced a "lifestyle" commercial which showed a large group of young, (presumably swinging) singles enjoying a backyard barbeque. In the first 0.5 second frame of the film, an Asian woman was seen coming out of a doorway. The image was so fleeting that the participants had to rerun the tape and play "Find-the-Ethnic" several times before she was discovered. Such antics by the advertisers give new meaning to the word, "token".

In another commercial, several young children were sitting on a doorstep discussing world events and the relative merits of the particular brand of breakfast cereal. The Black child was notable, not only because he was the only non-white in the group but also because he was the only one wearing earphones and not participating in this erstwhile activity. When the others wanted his opinion, it was only to lift his earphone to ask,

"Right, Jeffy?" to which he responded with a terribly erudite, "Yeah!" and resumed grooving.

In both cases, the exclusion was not obvious and probably without great premeditation. It was, nevertheless, real. There is a lack of effective visibility in one case and a lack of interaction between whites and non-whites in both cases. The coup de grace is that these advertisers provided the tapes as examples of their positive efforts to include visible minorities in their advertising.

### Closer Examination

Not all situations are obvious. In some cases, there is a real need to examine the context in which the advertisement is presented in order to discover the subtleties of the negative stereotyping. Take, for example, the Nivea ads which show a "before and after" picture of a woman who presumably uses Nivea cream. The "before" picture is a woman in stage makeup, made up to look like Madame Butterfly, complete with chopsticks in her hair. The "after" picture is a "wholesome", white, Barbie-doll type. (no chopsticks!) If one squints at the ad, one discovers, ahah!, it's the same woman.

What does an ad like this mean? To some, it merely suggests that a ton of makeup can be removed with one quick swipe of Nivea cream. To others, the message is that using Nivea cream allows women to remove the unacceptable "before" picture and replace it with the preferred "after" picture. After all, isn't that what "before and after" advertising is all about? Remember the magic 10-day diet ads? Who wants to be a sweaty 200 pounds in a flower print tent dress? Who wants to look Japanese? It does not take a great deal of mental gymnastics to see the connection.

These cases underscore the need to analyze the ads carefully. Untold millions of advertising dollars are spent annually to ensure that commercial messages get through, as frequently to the subconscious as it does to the conscious mind. It is crucial to ensure that unintended images, those that debase, ridicule and exclude, are not dragged along in their wake.

### Understanding the Industry

Needless to say, community based voluntary organizations cannot be expected to match even a fraction of the resources available to the advertising industry. It is, therefore, necessary to be selective about where to direct our efforts.



The first order of business is to try to understand how the industry works and how decisions are made in the industry. The advertising industry consists of advertisers, both in government and in the private sector, advertising agencies and the media organizations which accept advertising for circulation or broadcast. Each of the various elements of the industry is likely to try passing the responsibility to others. However, it is the advertisers who are in the position to dictate the actual content of the advertising. "He who pays the piper calls the tune". The difficulty is to make the advertiser realize that the buck stops there.

In fact, it is crucial to recognize that a major motivating factor in decision-making by advertisers is whether a particular decision would lead to more bucks stopping with them. Their interests, apart from the usual platitudes about social consciousness, lie in maintaining their market share, increasing that market share and creating new markets. In the vernacular, it is the "bottom line" that matters, not much more, not much less.

For them, it was necessary to understand that they could indeed reach a portion of the market that they had hitherto ignored by addressing themselves to the needs and interests of the visible minority communities. If that were realized, their bottom line and bottom line of the visible minority communities could be reached together.

There are, however, many smaller advertisers which must rely on established advertising agencies to do their creative work. In such cases, it is the advertising agencies which must be sensitized. Creative people are probably the least receptive to the suggestion that they have been missing part of the picture. They are certain that they have just the right answer to our concerns. Rather than listen to what we, the unwashed, complain of, the constant question is, "What about this?" as yet another abomination is presented for review.

The advocacy role is not to become a censor. Rather, it is to point out the distortions and ask that more thought be given to avoiding such distortions. All that is asked is that a genuine effort be made to understand the issue. There must be the confidence that their creative juices will flow in the right channels once they stop consuming their own mental shortcuts and take a good look at the real world.

## Role of Media Organizations — Commercial Acceptance

Media organizations can also have an important impact through their commercial acceptance policies. All private and most public media organizations, namely, television and radio stations and newspapers, have a separate department or person solely responsible for deciding whether or not to accept commercials for airing or printing. Often, the only criteria are the amount of potential revenue and good taste. And, just as good taste is subjective, the degree of sensitivity to the representation of visible minorities varies tremendously. And unfortunately, potential revenue is often inversely proportional to good taste. Nevertheless, this is one area in which media organizations can exercise real influence, if they so choose.

The controversy involving Wintario's "Charlie Chan" radio commercial is a case in point. CKFM, alone among the Toronto radio stations, refused to carry the commercial, thus potentially depriving itself of an important source of revenue. It seemed, at first, to be an unnecessarily aggressive position, especially as the commercial was still aired on the other stations. However, the commercial was ultimately taken off the air as a result of the combined efforts of CKFM, community groups and government leaders. Nevertheless, without the initiative taken by the radio station, making an informed business decision, the issue may never have arisen nor have been resolved satisfactorily.

## Community Advisory Boards

Various government agencies have regarded the advisory board of CKFM with some envy. (Remarkable in a general atmosphere of derision!) It is an experiment that worked and has continued to work. The advisory board was established in the aftermath of a potentially explosive situation involving Phil McKellar, a CKFM radio announcer who made a racist remark on the air, purportedly inadvertently. Whatever the real reason for the remark, the reaction was immediate and heated. The crisis was the catalyst for the formation of the advisory board.

The board included community members, representatives of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Metropolitan Toronto's Multicultural Relations department and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. One important key was the participation of senior management of the radio

station without whom the advisory board may easily have been a paper tiger.

All participants stepped gingerly into their positions, well aware of the criticism that "fanatics in the race relations industry drove McKellar to his untimely death". There was a need for all participants to understand the limitations as well as the skills and experience of the others. Common to all was the commitment to exploring the causes of the environment that made the incident as explosive as it was. It was necessary to understand why the protesters reacted as strongly as they did and why the station's initial apologies did not mollify them. It was also necessary to understand how a radio station operates and what limitations it faced in implementing changes that were determined to be needed. Ultimately, it was a combination of commitment, open-mindedness and chemistry among the participants which allowed both community representatives and the station to hail the experiment as a success story. The acid test is that the advisory board is now almost obsolete, something that should be the ultimate goal of any advocacy group.

### Common Goals

Communication is a much overworked Psycho-babble expression. However, as we nosedive into the technological explosion that surrounds us, there is a crucial need to link the world manufactured by the media and the world in which we actually live. In the absence of the ability, and indeed, the inclination, to regulate what the media produces, the approach of advocates should be to present a realistic picture of the Canadian market to the decision makers in the advertising industry and to make them aware of the benefits to all if that picture were accurately reflected in their advertising. Those who make a profession out of communicating should be asked to communicate to all of us.

### Strategies

A number of strategies were discussed in the workshop as to how to communicate our understanding of the issues. Letter writing to advertisers and to regulatory bodies is a must. The "powers-that-be" do not believe that we are serious unless we commit pen to paper and, that old bugaboo, follow up with a telephone call. Form letters are frequently, and justifiably, ignored. There must

be evidence of a personal commitment to the issue.

Another strategy is returning advertising material, flyers, catalogues, advertising supplements etc. to the advertisers with a terse note explaining the reason for rejecting their entreaty. The bolder among us may consider returning the material without prepaid postage.

Monitoring ads for positive and negative representation is a thankless task and unless it is organized and clear guidelines are established, volunteers would soon tire of such self-flagellation. Thus, it is necessary to establish monitoring forms, preferably with the co-operation of the advertising industry in an attempt to conduct the research in the same language that the industry uses.

Another common excuse given by the advertising industry is that there are insufficient visible minority actors available for their ads, ignoring the fact that there seems to be no dearth of actors for stereotypical roles. Talent inventories have been established by various groups but there is a need to combine and co-ordinate these efforts.

In an attempt to conclude on a positive note, it was agreed that recognition should be given to those who make an effort to remedy some of the distortions that we discussed. At the time, we were not particularly concerned about being inundated with shining examples but we were prepared, in the event that there was a deluge, to give sincere commendation to those who provide some balance to the stilted picture that the visible minority communities face daily.

*Susan Eng is a lawyer and Board member of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.*



# *Mail-Back Campaign*

Carol Tator

On January 16, 1984 the Urban Alliance on Race Relations launched a mail-back campaign on all catalogues and flyers from major retail stores which fail to reflect the multiracial, multicultural diversity of Metro Toronto.

Seven companies were targeted, all of which were frequented by large numbers of non-white shoppers. The adoption of this rather dramatic action happened only after many other approaches had resulted in no measurable changes. Several years of meetings and consultations with both senior executives in major retail and ad agencies had failed to alter the slick and glossy brochures which continue to be distributed on a weekly basis to almost every home in Toronto.

The impact of this almost total exclusion of visible minorities is to make outcasts of whole groups of people. The subliminal message contained in these ads is of a society comprised only of those whose skin is white, and are the only ones who wear fashionable clothes and cosmetics, buy furniture and appliances. The invisibility of racial minorities in catalogues and flyers make it appear as if only those of anglo descent should expect to participate in the mainstream of Canadian life. Blacks, East Indians and Asians are simply not considered part of the good life portrayed in these ads.

## **Understanding the Advertising Industry**

Previous discussions with key players within the industry made it abundantly clear that there was no shortage of talented non-white models. They simply did not get recommended for auditions or try-outs. Another barrier was the ad agencies themselves, which with all their creative resources could only see Canadians as coming in one colour. Perhaps the most serious obstacle was presented by the client's own preferences and concerns. Repeatedly we heard the argument made by cautious Canadian business executives that they feared their product image would suffer by association with non-whites. They seemed unaware of the studies by their own industry in

cooperation with government, that revealed that the use of non-whites in ads made no difference to the consumer. It is the quality that sells the product, not the colour of skin of the model.

Thus, we found ourselves struggling against deeply ingrained myths and biases. However, the importance of challenging these false assumptions became increasingly important to those of us working in race relations. We could no longer afford to ignore the distorted image reflected by advertising. As we began to take a closer look at the dynamics underlying the problem, we discovered a chain reaction of exclusion and discrimination. The cycle begins with the client who assumes that the consumer prefers to see only white faces in promotional situations; the advertiser then provides a creative strategy consistent with the client's assumptions, and the casting agent selects talent consistent with the advertiser's request. Talent agents add another link to the chain by promoting performers with proven track records.

Once we understood this cycle, the question became how to interrupt or alter these entrenched patterns. Where should we focus our efforts? The answer came from an unexpected source.

## **Oscar Peterson**

Oscar Peterson, the great Canadian jazz musician called a meeting with some of us working in the area of race relations and media. He expressed his own deep concern about the exclusion of minorities from advertising. Although Mr. Peterson said that his frustration with Canadian advertising had been growing for some time, the catalyst for his decision to initiate action was a comment made by his young son; asked his father while watching a T.V. ad, why black people never appeared in commercials.

In our initial discussion with Mr. Peterson, he singled out the lifestyle commercials of Canadian breweries as "setting the worst example of human relationship of anyone". He suggested the possibility of a boycott. Further discussions and meetings led to a day-long workshop for the com-



munity organized by the Urban Alliance and the Ad-Hoc Media Committee in which various advocacy strategies were explored. In small groups, community people identified different advocacy skills; and examined case studies of various strategies. The guest speaker of the conference was Oscar Peterson. In his remarks he advised participants to buy only the products whose advertising truly reflects the multiracial community of Canada. "It's pure economics, said Peterson..." let your absence be felt on the financial statements of the companies that try to gain your attention and your money". He went on to suggest that "we should change the familiar Canadian slogan. Instead of buying Canadian, we should buy Canadian products that record Canadians of all creeds, colours and ethnic history".

### The Campaign

At the end of this conference, participants were asked to indicate if they were interested in follow-up activities. Out of the 100 participants 25 indicated a specific interest in pursuing the issue of advertising.

A mail-back campaign was chosen at a follow-up meeting as the first step in reducing the exclusionary barriers. Letters were sent to each of the target companies informing them of the campaign and the reason for it. The companies selected were major retail stores which spend large sums of money on print advertising. This process of selection simplified the task of monitoring to match the limited time and resources of the volunteer group.

Secondly, details about this campaign were disseminated to race relations organizations and their cooperation and support were solicited. In particular, they were asked to mail-back every catalogue and flyer which did not reflect the multi-racial composition of Metro, with a note to the President and Advertising Manager explaining why.

Thirdly, a press release was distributed announcing the campaign. In the first critical weeks the support of the electronic and print media which picked up on our press release was very helpful in creating public awareness of the campaign. Some of the target companies were approached by the media to give their response.

A simple monitoring device was developed (see Table I).

The monitoring focussed solely on the catalogues and flyers distributed with the major newspapers.

The onus for collecting the catalogues and flyers fell on the volunteers and a separate file was maintained for each target company.

For those companies who were found to have had the occasional visible minority represented in their advertising, a letter was sent complimenting them on their efforts, but suggesting that they could perhaps do better.

For those whose record was found to be very poor, a strong letter was written. Our findings were presented and compared with the total non-white population. The impact of the distorted image portrayed by advertising was explained, and that the non-white population represented a huge market for consumer products. In addition, we identified the obstacles presented by talent and casting agencies and photographic studios for not using non-white models. We also emphasised that we were not talking about quotas — only adequate representation. Finally, we asked for a specific response.

### Conclusions

The campaign began last January. Has it been an effective strategy? A recent content-analysis of the ads produced since the campaign have begun to show some gradual signs of change, particularly in the last month.

How many ads were actually sent back to the stores, and how many letters were written? We have no way of knowing, but we doubt whether it was in the hundreds. The point however is that the target companies were put on notice that the people of Toronto were watching and monitoring their progress.

In the media coverage of the campaign — the importance of which cannot be stressed enough — stress was placed on the importance of gaining the involvement of not just the minority communities: this is an issue of concern to the whole community.

That is not to suggest that the battle has been won. The mirror which the media holds up to society is still distorted. We rarely see South Asian male or female models. Children of all colours are rarely used. Asian men are virtually non-existent. There is still a very obvious tendency to use non-white models whose features and colour of skin most closely resembles the anglo norm.

However we are encouraged by the general use of a growing number of visible minorities. In one company which had the poorest record, the

TABLE I

Feature Type

	WHITE	ASIAN	S-ASIAN	BLACK	NATIVE	OTHER NATIVES	TOTAL
MALE							
FEMALE							
INFANT							
CHILD							
YOUTH							
YOUNG ADULT							
ADULT							
MATURE ADULT							
(SENIORS)							
SUB TOTAL							
TOTAL NO. OF PHOTOGRAPHS PRESENTED =							

last catalogue revealed a very noticeable change.

The struggle to achieve a more accurate reflection of Canadian society is not over. If we fail to sustain our monitoring efforts, if we grow impatient or tired of mailing back those ads which are not good enough we may very well lose the ground we have gained. We are dealing with deeply entrenched patterns of thinking and behaviour. We will not easily overcome the prevailing biases and misconceptions that have created the

problems of the invisibility of visible minorities in advertising. However, the changes we have seen give us some degree of optimism that we have the potential and the power to mobilize our resources and that united together, communities can influence systems such as the advertising industry.

In the final analysis, our effectiveness in this area could make a significant contribution for improving the state of race relations in Canada.



# *How To Complain:*

## *The Ontario Press Council*

The Ontario Press Council considers complaints from the public about the conduct of the press in gathering and publishing news, opinion and advertising.

Anyone with a grievance can complain, even if it involves a newspaper that does not participate in the Council. The Council, as a voluntary body, considers complaints against non-member newspapers only with their consent, but is ready to seek such consent promptly.

All a complaint costs is postage — and time. The Council meets other expenses involved.

To qualify for consideration, a complaint must be specific and be about some specific conduct of the newspaper. The Council refuses to deal with complaints that are general in nature.

The complaint starts with the letter from the complainant who should define the complaint precisely, and provide pertinent evidence such as newspaper clippings or tearsheets, and evidence of an approach to the newspaper if one has been made.

The Council replies as promptly as possible. Each letter varies with the circumstances, but each leads to the same conclusion — if the newspaper does not redress the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction, the Council will deal with it.

The Council assigns detailed examination of complaints to its Inquiry Committee, made up of five members. The chairman and two others are from among the public members of the Council. Two are employees of member newspapers.

The committee carries out its work in two

stages, inviting complainant and newspaper to: (a) submit a final written summary of evidence and argument by a fixed deadline; and (b) attend an informal oral hearing to argue the issue in person.

The final written submission is not essential if either of the parties, or both, feel that the evidence and argument have been covered fully in previous correspondence. But it is urgent if either has something new to say because the Council aims at full pre-hearing disclosure by sending each party the other's submission.

At the hearing, neither party may be represented by counsel. There are no pleadings, no cross-examination. No one is sworn and there is no verbatim record of proceedings. The committee asks the complainant to speak first, followed by the newspaper. Each has a chance for rebuttal. Committee members ask questions. Either party may call witnesses.

After the hearing, the committee agrees on a draft adjudication which goes to the Council for adoption or amendment.

Subsequently, the Council announces the adjudication in a press release which names complainant and newspaper. The newspaper involved is under an obligation to publish the adjudication.

Mail all letters of complaint to:

Fraser MacDougall  
Executive Secretary  
Ontario Press Council  
151 Slater St., Suite 708  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5H3



# Immigrant Women's Radio Project

*Theory, Operation, Analysis*

N. Claire Rettie

Women have been defined rather than self-defining. So have non-English speaking peoples.

"Ethnic" is something they call us, not something we call ourselves.

(Suniti Namjoshi, Women in Words Conference, Vancouver, 1983)

Between September 1983 and March 1984, Vancouver Co-operative Radio and the Secretary of State, Multiculturalism, co-sponsored the Immigrant Women's Radio Project (IWRP). Through training and documentary production the project was designed to address, in a media context, concerns and issues of immigrant women.

Ideas and concepts for the project were developed from the theory, and the reality, that immigrant women represent one of Canadian society's most isolated groups. At the same time, they tend to suffer misrepresentation at the hands of a mainstream media which is largely white, male and middle class; and media structure which, in many instances, has foregone quality and accuracy for sensationalism and exploitation.

The project, which operated out of Vancouver Co-Operative Radio, was an attempt to address this perceived imbalance. It was hoped that the acquisition of skills and the exposure to a media environment would empower women to deal, in their own terms, with this situation. It was also presumed that the production of documentary materials, based on immigrant women's perceptions, would prove a valuable resource.

The project's financial needs were offset by a grant from the Secretary of State and donations, in-kind, from Co-Op Radio. The Secretary of State

provided salaries for Project Trainer; Production/Administrative Assistant; Technician and Project Co-ordinator. In addition, this grant covered equipment rental; tape purchase; radio supply purchase; postage; office supplies; telephone; publicity; travel and day care. Co-Op Radio provided, free of charge, memberships for the participants; studio space and control room access; equipment and office and meeting rooms. Project costs totalled, roughly, \$40,000. Of that, Secretary of State provided \$24,000 in the form of a cash grant, and Vancouver Co-operative Radio provided \$15,000 worth of services and space. \*

In order to attain our objectives, in a four month time frame, the project operated with two concurrent undertakings. The first of these involved the design and implementation of a radio skills training program. Taught by one of the program designers, we attempted to be flexible and responsive to individual and group needs. This meant restructuring content and delivery formats and being available for special assistance and tutoring. It also required time for cultural and information exchange and program modifications needed to accommodate diverse approaches to learning and teaching.

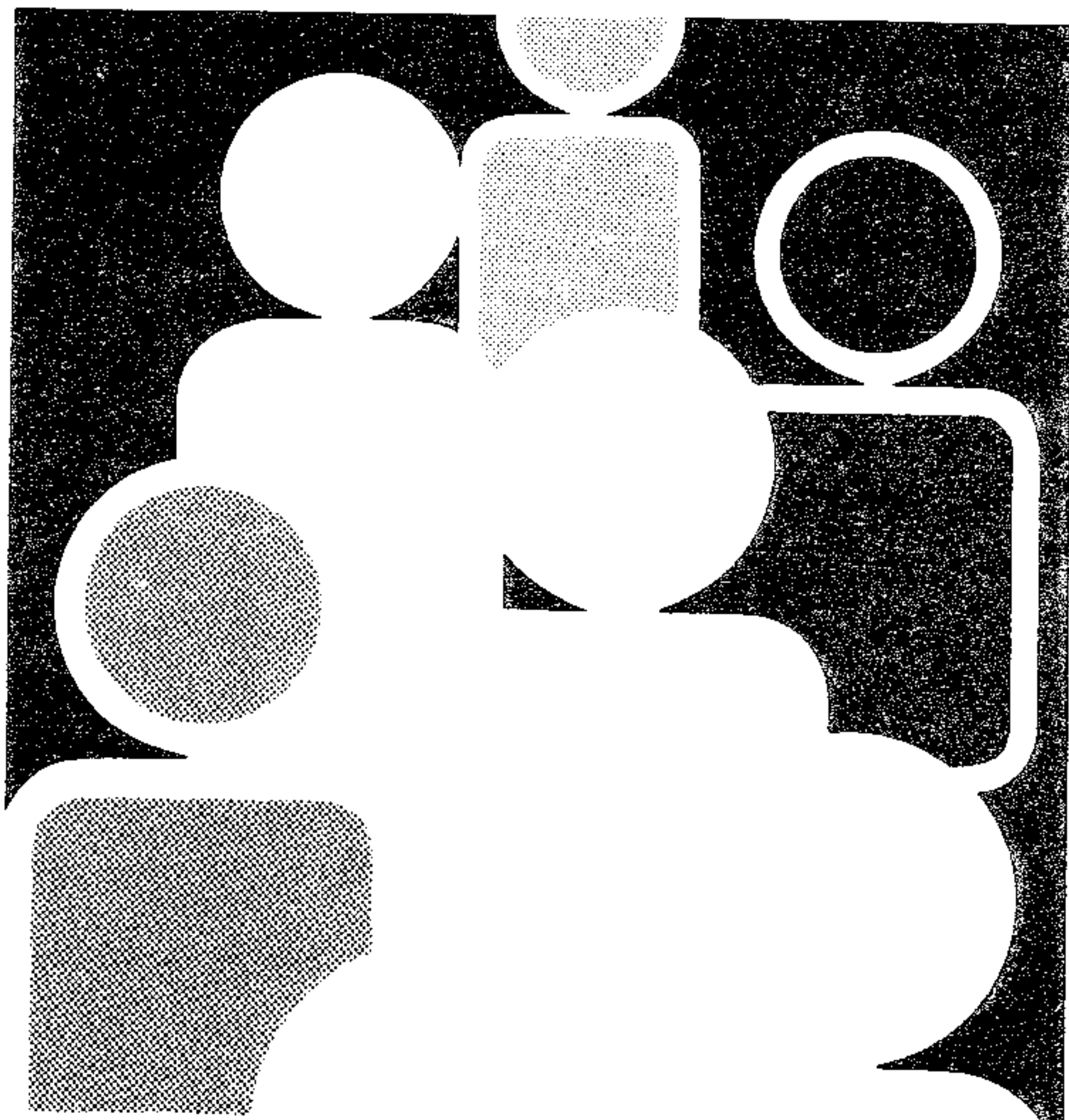
In creating and delivering this program it is important to realize that the presence of a community radio station was critical. Operating at no cost to the participants, the project used both the facilities and knowledge available through Vancouver Co-Operative Radio. Had such a structure not been in place it is not unlikely that this format would have evolved. Throughout its nine years of operation, the station has had an opportunity to demystify and de-bug many of the systems necessary for a volunteer media outlet. Fortunately, IWRP was able to draw on the sum of this experience.

\* Figures have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 for simplicity



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Given the accessible program models and facilities, we were able to devote much of our time to community liaison and information sharing. A major undertaking was reaching those women interested in radio training. Women ultimately involved in the project arrived through individual contacts and the circulation of information sheets outlining training areas; project goals and application formats.

### Participants

The application process resulted from consultations with community and immigrant women's groups. Our format requested women to apply in cassette or letter form. These applications were welcomed in either the woman's first language or one of the two official languages. \* The presentations were to inform us of individual interests and to outline plans for using radio production and interviewing skills.

Initially, we hoped to involve ten women, expecting to lose a few through attrition, unfulfilled expectations and time conflicts. The project began, instead, with thirteen women and ended with nine regular attendants. In interviewing and talking with the women we were careful to inform them of the employment realities in radio and media areas. If anything our bias was toward the negative — reinforcing the fact that there are no guarantees whether you spend three months or three years learning the skills.

### The Programme

Ours was a three month program, with classes running for three hours, twice a week. Contents of the program included: Basic Skills; Production and Advanced Techniques (see Table I). Teaching procedures were concerned with 'doing radio'. Each new skill was introduced by a printed hand-out combined with in-class sessions. Hand-outs outlined background, exercises, technical jargon and often included pictures and graphs. The format was such that this written material formed the basis for a reference manual. Once the written and oral delivery was completed, the class was asked to follow through with practical exercises. These exercises included taping personal comments; interviewing; editing interviews and sample tape; writing radio copy from newspaper articles; developing focal areas for interviews; working in the studio and a multiplicity of other



TABLE I

*Three Month Training Program***Basic Radio Skills**

1. Use of microphone and portable tape recorders
2. Interviewing for radio
3. Writing for radio — script and news writing
4. Research for radio
5. Basic remote (on location) recording
6. Dubbing, editing and mixing
7. Hosting and Voicing

**II Production Skills**

1. Studio technical operation
2. Studio recording and production
3. Producing a radio show

**III Advanced Techniques**

1. Documentary production — methods and style
2. Advanced remote recording

activities which meant functioning in a radio environment.

In tandem with this training program, we researched, interviewed and focused the documentary portion of our project. Initially, we planned six half-hour productions. Early in the project-life, however, this was altered to three one-hour segments. Even with this change, these documentaries remain in production and should be completed before the end of the summer.

Immigrant women agreed to share their experiences and opinions — provided they remained anonymous.

The first thing my husband did when I came to Canada was to take me to buy a pant suit.

I wanted to wear my Punjabi pants but he said I had to wear a pant suit.

(Punjabi woman)

Canadians don't like their kids. In my country we have a 'special' kind of love for our kids. In Canada they don't have that.

(Guatemalan exile)

I am fighting for my country. It's my country and my peoples and we don't want war, we don't want to be poor ... I am fighting with what I can for *my* country.

(Salvadoran exile)

These statements, and those of other immigrant women, comprise the foundation of our documentaries.

Because of our short time frame we were forced to set many of the production goals and criteria *before* we began the training. Our intent was not to recreate existent stereotypes, but to

allow immigrant women to express their views, values and perceptions. We identified, as our audience, other immigrant women: those designing services for immigrant women and that great mass of the Canadian population which has forgotten its immigrant roots.

Our productions focus on women as political exiles; women of Indian origin and women from the Phillipines. Perhaps one of the most difficult project tasks was determining how to manage, in a media framework, the wide-sweeping experiences of 'immigrant women'; how to tackle an issue which is comprised of subtle nuances in meaning and action; how to avoid reinforcing existant stereotypes and how to come-to-grips with this need for control, without imposing a false and artificial set of perimeters.

We began by drawing our production boundaries based on region, nation and situation. This choice of framework was based both on a perceived level of understanding in the general public and desire to address 'cultures' and 'herstories' within comprehended boundaries. Which cultures and situations posed further problems. In making this decision, we chose to focus on those women whose numbers had increased (in British Columbia) but, whose voice had not been heard publicly. At the same time, we wanted to ensure individual perceptions as opposed to mass testimonials.

### Evaluation

These solutions were, by no means, ideal; nor was the project training model. At the root of the problem lay an attempt to accomplish too much in too short a time period. As a result, there is room for improvement in the areas of program enrichment, integration of trainees into documentary production, and research into learning and teaching methods. Were a similar program to again receive funding, analysis indicates that it would be more effective — for both the women and the community — were it to follow a two tiered structure.

Under this model Phase I would be devoted to skills training and Phase II to documentary production. The first of these phases would be designed as a three month program; the second as a program of four months. Using the original Training Program as a guideline, Sections I & II would coordinate with Phase I and Section III would provide the foundation for Phase II. While

criteria for participation in Phase I could follow the original format, it is imperative that those women participating in Phase II be chosen on the basis of the skills they exhibit at the earlier stage. In restructuring the program in this manner not only would the objectives be more manageable, those involved would receive a more enriched program and be directly involved in production.

While this process addresses our problem of goal management, it does not deal with our second frustration — lack of follow-through and completion of assignments. Partly, this was due to our inexperience with advanced teaching methods; our desire not to exert too much pressure, and to other prevailing concerns amongst the group. Regardless of rationale, this situation became an aggravation for both staff and participants. Two strategies have evolved to short-circuit similar situations. First, in working with the original program, there is a need to build in more 'milestones' and visible (audible) measures of progress. Second, based on the new structure, there is a need to search for funds for those women who participate in Phase II. While it is theoretically positive to empower women to access the media, the 'power' is somewhat hollow without economic security. To avoid this I would suggest, in the early stages of program design, attention be directed to: application for training salaries; support funds for producers (trainees); honoraria for completed productions, and possible sale of completed productions.

Hindsight being what it is, I do not want to leave the impression that this project fell far of its goals. Although we are still completing the documentary productions, the training portion has borne its successes. Of the nine women who completed, seven are actively using their radio skills — five in various media outlets and two in community settings. These women are presenting and sharing their visions and perceptions — enlightening and enriching all who listen. Their task is a monumental one. Misconceptions, misrepresentations, lack of understanding or interest are biases which are well established in the media. They are not going to disappear overnight. Only through joint efforts from within, training, public education and lobbying will we see changes in the existant system.

*N. Claire Rettie is a consultant and directed the Immigrant Women's Radio Project.*

\* Such a process necessitates access to language translators willing to 'donate' their time to your endeavour.



# *The Portrayal of Visible Minorities by Canadian Television During the 1982 Prime-Time Season*

by Gary Granzberg

A study of the portrayal of visible minorities by CBC, CTV & CBS in 1982 prime-time television (as broadcast in Winnipeg, Manitoba) reveals the presense of misrepresentations, discrimination and stereotyping.

This finding is based upon data developed by two judges who analyzed 360 hours of videotaped programming and compiled statistics on 511 characters in 101 programs. These data were supplemented by the inclusion of statistics on an additional 282 Native & Asian characters.

The original sample included 23 Native characters (70% appearing on the CBC), 36 Asian characters (50% of them on CTV), 136 Black characters (52% on CBS) and 316 Caucasian characters. When the supplementary material was incorporated, the number of Natives in the sample increased to 91 and the number of Asians in the sample increased to 250. The judges analyzed the nature of TV portrayals by following a standardized coding system which was adopted from the format developed by the Univ. of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

### **Misrepresentations**

Misrepresentation of visible minorities by TV consists of erroneous portrayals of the socioeconomic circumstances of visible minority life. We took eleven measures of misrepresentation. In all eleven areas there was decided misrepresentation (see Table 1).

In summary, the misrepresentation data indicate that femaleness, youth, marital and economic stability, urbanization and ethnicity are underrepresented by TV and that population and stereotyped fields of employment are overrepresented.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination of visible minorities by TV consists of the failure to provide equal opportunity for visible minority characters to experience the "good life". Discrimination is revealed by comparing the percentage of visible minority characters who participate in valued facets of TV life with the percentage of Caucasian characters who so participate. We measured discrimination in twelve areas. These were population, maleness, settled adult status, major character status, hero status, achievement of employment, work, good income, marital stability, parenthood, sexuality, and freedom from violence. We discovered that discrimination existed in ten of these areas (see Table 2).

We found that, on average, 12% fewer (10% fewer when supplementary sample is included) minorities participate in the "good life" on TV than is the case with caucasians. When broken down by network, CBC has a 7% level of discrimination, CTV a 10% level and CBS a 14% level. When broken down by minority group, Blacks are most discriminated against (15% level), then Asians (7% level), and then Natives (3% level).

The most discrimination is found in CBS's portrayals of Blacks and the least is found in the CBC's portrayals of Natives. The areas of greatest discrimination overall are sexuality, marriage, major character status and hero status.

The summary picture of discrimination which emerges finds the average visible minority character on 1982 prime-time Canadian television younger than other characters, less gainfully employed, less maritally stable, less virile, less heroic and less important than other characters.

TABLE 1

*TV Misrepresentations of Visible Minority Life\*\*\*\**

Aspect of Life	TV	Real Life
1. Percent of Population who are visible minorities	18%	2.5%*
2. Percent of Visible Minorities who are male	67%	50%*
3. Percent of Visible Minorities between 0-34 yrs. of age	45%	67%*
4. Percent of Natives (of all ages) who are employed either part or full time	69%	26%**
5. Percent of Natives who work in primary industry (e.g., agriculture, hunting, fishing, trapping)	38%*	18%*
6. Percent of Natives who live in urban areas	2%	25%**
7. Percent of visible minorities who are married	7%	37%*
8. Percent of visible minorities who are victims of violence	17%	1%***
9. Percent of Asians who speak a traditional Asian language	40%	57%*
10. Percent of Natives who speak a traditional Native language	21%	44%*
11. Percent of Visible Minorities who display ethnicity in their behaviour (e.g., clothing, gestures, hair style, language, arts, religion)	33%	50%+%* (based on language statistics)

\* = Statistics Canada 1971

\*\* = Indian Affairs statistics 1980

\*\*\* = Annenberg School of Communications statistics

\*\*\*\* = This table is compiled from a sample of 136 Black, 250 Asian &amp; 91 Native characters (477 in all).

**Stereotyping**

Stereotyping of visible minorities on TV consists of portrayals which reveal non-individualized, overgeneralized preconceptions. We took 17 measures of stereotyping for each Native & Asian character and 12 for each Black character.

The list of stereotypes that were investigated included seven general ones (applicable to all visible minorities) and 25 specific ones, 10 of which applied to the Native, another 10 to the Asian & 5 others to the Black. The 7 general

stereotypes included portrayals of minorities as ignorant, lazy, tricky, having romantically ideal and uncomplicated lives, lacking a rational ethnic perspective, playing humiliating or demeaning roles, and having undifferentiated personalities. Among the more specific stereotypes investigated were Native chiefs, medicine men, braves, maidens and scouts; Black preachers, servants, athletes and entertainers; and Asian martial arts experts, geishas, waiters, laundry workers, and philosophers.

Taking the 7 general stereotypes first, we find



TABLE 2  
*TV Discrimination of Visible Minorities*

Aspect of Life	Visible Minorities (N=195)	Caucasians (N=316)
1. Population on TV as compared to true life Canadian population	+15.5%	-14.5%
2. % who are male	62%	65%
3. % who are settled adults (35-65 yrs. of age)	35% (51%)*	59%
4. % who are married	18% (7%)*	31%
5. % who have children	8% (10%)*	14%
6. % who participate in sexual behaviour	9% (10%)*	26%
7. % who are employed either full or part time	54% (69%)*	73%
8. % who engage in constructive work	67% (77%)*	85%
9. % who are upper-middle class or higher in income	41% (24%)*	56%
10. % who are major characters	23% (26%)*	59%
11. % who are heros	11% (13%)*	30%
12. % who are free of violence	93% (83%)*	82%

\* parenthesized figures are those obtained when the supplementary sample is included in the calculations. This raises the minority sample from 195 to 477.

that if a score of 3 is assigned to indicate that a stereotype is present to an extensive degree, a score of 2 to indicate its presence to a moderate degree and a score of 1 to indicate its absence, then, in a total of 1365 observations, the average observation yields a score of 1.8. This indicates that general stereotyping of visible minorities in 1982 prime-time television was present to a relatively moderate degree.

When broken down by network, we find that

the average observation on the CBC is 1.65, and that it is 1.84 on CTV and 1.80 on CBS.

When broken down by minority groups, the average observation for a Black character yields a score of 1.83, the average for an Asian character is 1.76, and the average for a Native character is 1.59.

In addition, we found that when a minority character is portrayed on TV, 91% of the time an undifferentiated group of minorities, acting in

unison without individual character, appears as either a supplementary portrayal or as the sole portrayal. We also found that only 7% of minority depictions demonstrate discrimination and that only 22% depict a rational system of ethnic values and viewpoints. Thus, for all three groups, the areas of heaviest general stereotyping were with respect to romantic imagery, lack of appreciation of the inner rationality of ethnic customs, and undifferentiated portrayals.

Turning to the more specific stereotypes, we made 1270 observations upon 195 characters and found 66 specific stereotypes (e.g., Indian chiefs, Asians karate experts, Black athletes, etc.). By this measure, the 1982 prime-time television specific stereotyping level is 5.2%.

When broken down by network, the level of role specific stereotyping on the CBC is 3.8% (10 stereotypes in 260 observations), and on the CTV it is 5.2% (23 stereotypes in 440 observations), and on CBS it is 5.8% (33 stereotypes in 570 observations).

When broken down by minority group, the Native level of role specific stereotyping is 9.1% (21 stereotypes in 230 observations), the Black level is 5.0% (34 stereotypes in 680 observations), and the Asian level is 3.1% (11 stereotypes in 360 observations).

These figures are very conservative, though quite precise. A clearer picture of stereotyping emerges when we consider how many minority characters exhibit at least one role stereotype. We then find that, overall, stereotyping exists in 31% of the cases. The figure for CBC is 34%, for CTV is 30% and for CBS is 30%.

The most frequent role specific stereotypes on the CBC were portrayals of Blacks as entertainers and portrayals of Natives as artists and shamen. The most frequent role specific stereotypes on CTV were portrayals of Blacks and Asians in personal service roles (such as servants, maids or stewards), portrayals of Blacks as entertainers, and portrayals of Natives as warriors.

When the general and role specific stereotype scores are combined, and when we utilize the system whereby a score of 3 = extensive stereotyping, 2 = moderate stereotyping, and 1 = no stereotyping, we find that the overall stereotyping score is 1.45 (a low-medium range of stereotyping). We find, too, that it is 1.36 for CBC, 1.47 for CTV, and 1.48 for CBS. As well, it is 1.33 for Natives, 1.35 for Asians and 1.52 for Blacks. Hence, overall, Natives are stereotyped the least and

Blacks the most, and the CBC does the least stereotyping and CBS the most.

### Overall Summary

There is measurable misrepresentation, discrimination, and stereotyping of visible minorities in 1982 prime-time TV. Though these problems in the portrayal of visible minorities occur on all three networks and with all three minority groups, Canadian TV does better than American TV, CBC does better than CTV, and Natives fare better than Asians who fare better than Blacks. An analysis of the data while controlling for major, minor and background status of characters shows that the problems persist even when the amount of time allocated to characters is controlled. For example, when major characters only are compared, there are still 9% fewer minority heroes, 8% fewer minorities of settled adults status, 14% fewer minorities exhibiting sexuality and 11% fewer minorities who are married. It is only as working adults & parents that minority major characters achieve equal participation with Caucasians.

### Recommendations

Canadian networks must work to improve their portrayals of visible minorities. They must try to incorporate more accurate portrayals of real life conditions, especially in the areas of employment, marriage, linguistics & ethnic usage. They must try to achieve more even distribution of roles portraying the "good life", especially major roles, hero roles, and stable family roles. And they must attempt to reduce stereotyping, especially romantic imagery, lack of sensitivity to ethnic meanings and customs, and lack of sensitivity to the variety of positive roles that visible minorities play in Canadian life.

These goals can be facilitated by a greater level of co-operation between advertisers, programmers, technicians, actors and visible minority peoples; by further efforts in training minorities to participate in all facets of media activity; by intensifying positive hiring procedures; by continued monitoring of media and the development of year by year measurements of progress; and by the development of guidelines for licensing and funding which include provisions relating to progress in the portrayal of visible minorities and progress in including them in media activities.

*Gary Granzberg is Professor of Anthropology, University of Winnipeg.*



# *Focus on Visible Minorities and Advertising ... It's Good Business*

Randy Scotland

*Held in Winnipeg, April 13 & 14, this regional conference explored the subject of minority representation and opportunity in the media.*

"There is no question that advertising in Canada fails to reflect the racial diversity of our population.

"It is small wonder that people of a variety of ethnic origins are angry and impatient with our industry."

That comment by Keith McKerracher, president of the Institute of Canadian Advertising, summarized the key issue tackled at a recent two-day conference held here on visible minorities and advertising.

McKerracher told conference delegates – reportedly none of whom were from the local agency community – that it is not prejudice that results in under-representation of ethnics in advertising.

"I honestly believe," he said, "that the real reasons are more likely to be concerned with mental laziness, lack of a feeling of personal responsibility, or with just fears of leaving the warm feeling of status quo.

"If I am right, then this is good news because we can deal much more easily with these reasons than we could with deeply-imbedded prejudice.

"It is for this reason that I believe the problem of under-representation of visible ethnics in advertising will be solved."

McKerracher said that the process of rectifying the situation has already begun, as shown by the growing numbers of advertisers who are now incorporating ethnic minorities in their ad messages. Their example, he suggested, should lead

other advertisers to do the same.

"Those advertisers will get no hate mail for using visibly ethnic people, their sales won't be hurt and, in fact, they may begin to get some compliments for having been good corporate citizens.

"That story will get around to other advertisers, and they'll be reassured about their previously-held fears," he said.

McKerracher said that the advertising industry "is moving toward a complete solution at a reasonable speed," and that the industry "will not relax its ongoing efforts to rectify the problems."

McKerracher's optimism was shared by Bob Olive, interim president of the Advertising Advisory Board, who told the conference:

"Attitudinal change...involves restructuring of our mental and perhaps our emotional processes. Such change, even when longer overdue, is unlikely to be swift or dramatic.

"But this combination of a sense of social responsibility and sound marketing practice will, in my view, provide an irresistible forward thrust to trends already under way.

"There is a long road ahead, but we are walking in the right direction, and I personally view the future with hope."

Olive said that progress to date has been encouraging, and that now there are some major advertisers who have made a corporate decision to include visible minorities in their commercials.

\* This review was first published in the April 23, 1984 issue of *Marketing*.

He cited a recent meeting of advertisers and agencies as "particularly significant because of its focus."

"Both advertisers and agencies brought along actual commercials which reflect the many-colored cloak that now represents the word 'Canadian'. And in an off-the-record atmosphere we discussed the creative, casting and marketing problems and opportunities involved.

"The turnout was about 50% higher for that working luncheon than we anticipated – which was encouraging. And, of course, the fact is that even two years ago such a meeting would have been a waste of time, for the commercial content would have been woefully inadequate," said Oliver.

Oliver said the meeting ended with a consensus on two conclusions: "First, collectively, we

While 48% of the visible minority characters were major characters who were represented using the advertised product, 75% of the white characters were major characters.

Also, while 36% of visual minorities used in ads were background props, only 12% of whites played this role.

There was a prevalence of visible minorities in charity and government advertising, where about 50% of the ads contained visible minorities. Only 6.7% of all other categories of ads included visible minorities, with none appearing in ads for personal care, home products, business opportunity, liquor, tobacco, sports and cameras.

Overall, the study found: "There is measurable misrepresentation, discrimination and stereotyping in print and TV advertising, and the extent

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## *Under-representation of ethnics 'due to laziness—not prejudice'*

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have made more progress in minority portrayals than we realized. And second, the winds of change are blowing and it was important to keep our sails set high and not to lose momentum."

Also presented at the conference was a series of research studies documenting portrayals of visible minorities in various media. The studies were co-ordinated by Dr. Gary Granzberg of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Winnipeg.

The first part of the research, dealing with television advertising is reported elsewhere. The study suggested that Canadian TV networks work to improve their portrayals of visible minorities.

Similar conclusions were drawn concerning magazine advertising, based on a survey of 30 magazines containing 480 ads, where 10% portrayed visible minorities.

Of the 30 magazines sampled, five were published in Manitoba. The percentage of ads in three local magazines which contained visible minorities was 6%.

of the problem appears to increase at the local Manitoba level.'

Bill Armstrong, executive vice-president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, told the conference that the media has a responsibility to portray accurately the racial diversity of Canada "like a mirror."

"I am told by physicists and others who know about such things that there is no such thing as a perfect mirror. There are, I am told, always imperfections.

"But that can be no excuse for the media mirror we build to be like one of those old-fashioned carnival mirrors, which deliberately distorted the image ... In building the media mirror we can, we must, we will do better.

"That is a goal which should apply to all the players in the media game – print as well as electronic, private sector and public sector alike."

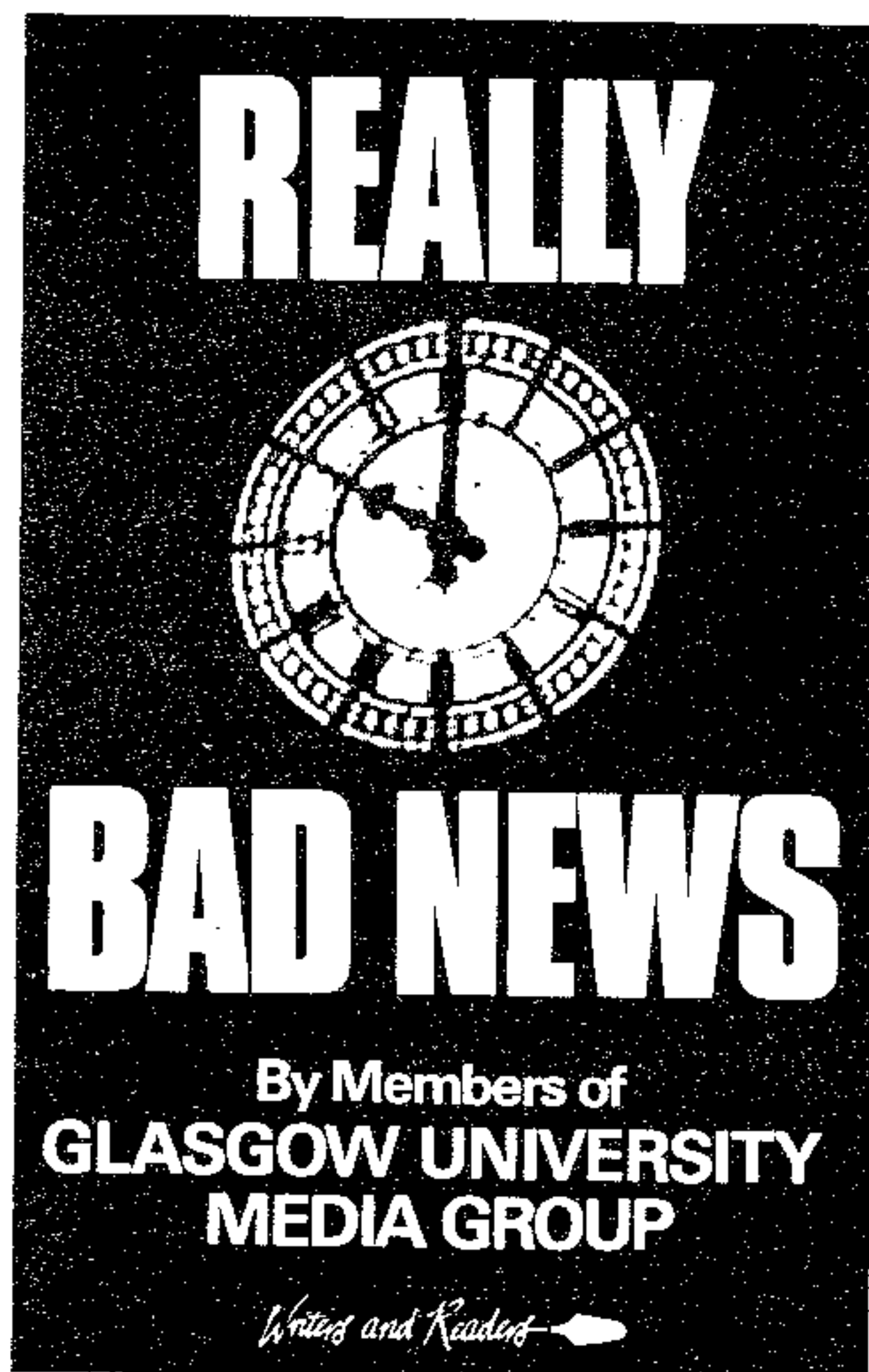


## Not The News?

Pamela Blais

### REALLY BAD NEWS

Glasgow University Media Group  
Writers and Readers



What you see is what you get but what you get isn't what really happened.

Really Bad News compares British television news reporting in three areas — industry, economics and politics — with what 'actually happened' based on information derived from alternate sources. This is accomplished by analysing television news in considerable detail in order to unveil the precise ways in which biases and distortions occur.

The authors note for example, that in the language of strike coverage, management made 'pleas' which workers summarily 'rejected'. Alternative views of problems or events were de-emphasized or simply not presented. Access to television interviews was granted overwhelmingly to a select group of people in positions of authority. Data or statistics were often only presented in part and/or were left unqualified when qualification was crucial to their interpretation.

This book presents endless examples of these types of practices. It then proceeds to illustrate how a single view or opinion of an issue evolves, through constant repetition as an unquestionable truth. For example, in coverage of the British

Leyland strike of 1975, the words 'stoppage' and 'strike' were so closely and consistently associated with each other that they became interchangeable in news broadcasts. This despite the fact that stoppages were often caused by machine breakdowns or management mistakes. Similarly, workers' 'wage increases' came to be synonymous with 'inflation'.

The analysis concludes that television news presents a single, narrow view of issues and events. This situation is attributed to the close ties between television executives, upper levels of government and private business. Public broadcasting is also faced with the contradiction that "It is committed to an ideological perspective which is founded on the view of consensus, 'one nation', and 'the community', while having to report phenomena which cannot easily be fitted into this framework of understanding".

Three main criticisms are levelled against television broadcasters. First, existing views are not presented in a balanced fashion. Second, all groups of society do not have equal access to representation in television. Third, by seeking to process information within a mistaken consensual view, the stations violate their stated canons of accuracy and impartiality.

These are serious charges which seem to be borne out by the ample evidence and persuasive arguments presented. These arguments are placed in a broader explanatory framework which makes them still more compelling.

Though this analysis does not refer specifically to racial or ethnic minorities or the North American situation, it indicates the omnipotence of the media in shaping society's attitudes, beliefs and expectations. Media is an immensely powerful element of modern society. The fact that information is manipulated in this manner (deliberately or not) should be given greater attention so that at the very least, viewers are informed of the vices and virtues of television news coverage.

*Really Bad News* has pinpointed the methods and tools employed by television broadcasting and shown us how they are used systematically to promote a single perspective. It is up to us to follow this lead and scrutinize Canadian media more thoroughly and acutely.

# First Steps

## SMALL VOICES AND GREAT TRUMPETS:

minorities and the media

Bernard Rubin, editor

Praeger Press



*Small Voices and Great Trumpets* is an ambitious attempt to address the complex relationship between minority groups and the media. The book touches upon the many intersections of racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly, women and native people on the one hand, with the press, radio, television and film on the other.

Many of the problematic aspects presented by the media are shared by all of these minority groups. They are enumerated and examples cited in the introductory article by Bernard Rubin, and are re-iterated throughout the book.

Fundamental problem areas are inter-related and include a lack of minority-group members in positions of responsibility in the media employment structure and insufficient minority ownership of print and electronic media operations. As well, biased reporting of events concerns minorities, specifically the presentation of negative, in-

accurate stereotypes, the biased selection of events which often depict minorities in a negative light, and the lack of comprehensive, ongoing coverage of all facets of community life.

Rubin advances a partial explanation for this situation. He suggests that in the quest for profits the mass-circulation newspapers, for example, cater to the affluent, white male market and avoid placing stories about or of interest to minority groups for fear of losing their white readership and the corresponding advertising.

In 'Blackface in Prime Time' Melvin M. Moore explores in greater detail the stereotyped presentation of blacks in film and television roles. This article begins with a brief but intriguing history of American minstrelsy, then continues to argue forcefully that the 'Amos 'n' Andy' type portrayal of blacks in the electronic media persists to this day. He notes that as recently as 1979, this image survives in contemporary films such as 'California Suite'. While whites are consistently presented in serious, real-life situations, the black pair in the film (Cosby and Pryor) are shown solely in farcical, slapstick situations.

Moore concludes "From minstrelsy to the motion pictures of the 1970's white America has seemed unable (or unwilling) to significantly alter its representations of Afro-American identity, unable to extricate itself from the self-serving complex of myths it has woven around the Afro-American. By maintaining control of mass entertainment, white America has also maintained control over its black images".

The author found a similar state of affairs in television despite the increased presence of black faces on the set. He attributes this situation to the view of blacks held by the decision-making white media executives who control the nature and content of television programming.

The problem is therefore two-fold, revolving



around the historical and likely future dominance of affluent white males in critical posts in the television industry, and secondly, their view of blacks and other minorities. This skewed view is a result of their distance (social and otherwise) from the realities of black culture and a one-dimensional orientation towards the goals of the industry.

While the emphasis of *Small Voices* is decidedly toward chronicling and rudimentary analysis of minorities and the media, some suggestions for positive, ameliorative action are presented. In 'Advocating the Minority Interest', Emil Ward documents some initiatives that have achieved a degree of success. Though in keeping with the rest of this book, examples refer entirely to the U.S. situation, Ward emphasized three important changes brought to television news. These changes resulted from the actions of an organized interest group, the United Church of Christ, who sought legal action against a southern television station. Its biased programming and employment practices virtually ignored the 45% black viewing population of Jackson, Mississippi.

Through a series of legal challenges the UCC garnered the right for the public to file petitions to deny renewal of station licences; a first broadcast license was revoked on grounds of discrimination in programming, the fairness doctrine and employment practice; and a direct settlement between the public and the television station under question was allowed. This latter settlement touched on matters such as hiring practices, the need for ongoing coverage of community news, and the station's obligation to discuss programming regularly with all segments of the public. While the Canadian administrative and legal structure differs somewhat, that significant strides were made by an organized community group is the important point here.

The Ward article deals very specifically with a documentation of progress made in the U.S. Caryl Rivers extrapolates a bit to provide some more universal and far-reaching guidelines for reform. The courses of action she advocates in-

clude: that media managers seek out and initiate contact with the disenfranchised and establish regular contact, that media managers actively reward reporters for coverage of minority events, that reporters be assigned to cover specific minority 'beats', and hiring and promotional practices be improved to include minorities.

One point Rivers makes seems of utmost importance with respect to reporting for minorities, namely that "the old definition of news as something that happens is too narrow. They are going to have to unlearn their knee-jerk reaction that when something doesn't happen, it's not news". This approach would vastly improve the quality of news reporting not just for minorities, but for society as a whole.

*Small Voices and Great Trumpets* is readable and interesting despite its total dedication to specifics of the American experience. It offers up opportunities for comparison of problems and progress with the Canadian case, and a means for evaluating the 'melting pot' versus 'multiculturalism' approaches and the role of the media in achieving these goals.

Due to its broad scope, *Small Voices* is relegated primarily to chronicling past events, and therefore the actual analysis emerges as rather basic and at times superficial. Many of the proposed courses of action do not address the causes of problems cited in the articles, such as the role of attitudes pointed to by Moore, Rubin and Rivers.

The relationship between minorities and the media is complex and multi-faceted. *Small Voices* is an inaugural step in the march to address the problematic aspects of this relationship. But it must be acknowledged that the sources of these problems are often more widespread and reach beyond the media industry itself into the structure of the economy and society. Perhaps the rudimentary approach taken in this book is simply an indication of the emergence of a relatively new field in its initial stages of development. This suggests the degree to which such work is overdue and the magnitude of future work required.  
P.B.

# *The Ethnic Media and Immigrant Integration*

Pamela Blais

## **THE ETHNIC MEDIA AND THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO IMMIGRANTS:**

### **An Exploratory Discussion**

Ann Svendsen and Andy Watchel  
Social Planning and Research, United Way  
of the Lower Mainland

## **THE ROLE OF ETHNIC MEDIA FOR IMMIGRANTS: A Case Study of Chinese Immigrants and Their Media in Toronto.**

Lawrence Lam  
Canadian Ethnic Studies, Vol XII, No. 1.

In an exploratory study, using Chinese immigrants and their ethnic media in Toronto, Lam found the assumption that the ethnic media serves as a "bridge" between the new and the old environment as somewhat misleading.

Lam's findings seriously question the myth that the ethnic media have a vital role in orienting immigrants to their new society. The study indicates that acculturation as measured by the immigrants' knowledge about the systems, institutions, symbols, and personalities of Canadian society, and exposure to and consumption of ethnic media have no direct association. In terms of providing help and information for immigrants, the data suggests that greater emphasis should be directed at the "personal communication methods" instituted and employed by the immigrants themselves.

"The existence and silence of the ethnic media", Lam concludes "can be better explained in terms of the role they play in easing and enabling their readers to attain, achieve and subsequently develop a more satisfying relationship between themselves and their immediate social milieu. Hence, the ethnic media can be viewed as the *raison d'être* for the immigrants to search for means of accepting the conditions, of achieving a satisfying equilibrium and of escaping from the limits and boundaries of their new environment

through "reassurance" either directly or by "symbolic detours".

### **Mildstyle**

Svendsen and Watchel attempt to analyse the role of the ethnic media in the provision of social services to immigrant families. It is concerned primarily with enumerating and cataloguing the various sources of ethnic press, radio and television programming and providing an inventory of their content.

Not until the last chapters are we presented with any meaningful analysis of how the media functions in relation to the provision of social services for immigrants. Some obvious points are made here, such as the need to consider the cultural heritage of the target group when designing and promoting outreach programmes. The example is cited of a programme which failed that aimed at promoting family life education for Chinese parents experiencing the usual difficulties of child-rearing. Participation in the programme was considered by the Chinese as admission of parental failure in a community where "Family shame should not be made public".

The study also points to the need to employ a combination of strategies for reaching target groups, such as networking, word of mouth, or endorsement by community leaders.

The precise role of the media in the process of cultural and social integration is left ambiguous, but the original point of view — that ethnic media would operate either to help or hinder integration but not both — was rejected in favour of a view that the media could achieve both results simultaneously.

The report concludes with a few suggestions for improving the presentation of social services in the ethnic media. The tone of the report is extremely cautious and tentative. This is acknowledged within the study itself and explains in part, why its conclusions are also mild, tentative and unsurprising.

P.B.



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**In the next issue:**

**MENTORSHIP**

The Urban Alliance is a non-profit organization that provides mentorship programs for young people. This issue will explore the importance of mentorship in the lives of young people and how the Urban Alliance is working to provide this support. We will also hear from some of the mentors and mentees who have been part of the program.