Media supplement inside

The Ubyssey takes a look at media diversity, corporate control, public funding, culture jamming, the ethnic press, propaganda and women in the media. A student perspective on mass communications.

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The beauty and the myth

Body dysphoria describes a woman's badly distorted view of her body; it's a warning sign for eating disorders, but more significantly, it indicates a harmful self-destructive and disempowering attitude.

by Simona Rabinovitch
The Link

MONTREAL (CUP)—TWENTY-YEAR-OLD CYNTHIA IS on her diet again. Her consciousness of the subtle changes in her body enables her to guess her weight to the precise ounce without even stepping on the scale.

A university student who works part-time at a health club, Cynthia has been obsessed with her weight since she was 17. "I've gone through a hard time in my life lately," she says over a supper of roasted potatoes and egg white soufflé.

"If I don't exercise, I feel fat and guilty."

At 5"3 and 120 pounds, Cynthia's fit physique is the envy of many sweaty bodies at the gym. Her brown eyes expose her defeat as she describes the daily battle she wages against her own body. In a voice that is almost a whisper, she admits her body obsession rules her life.

BODY DYSPHORIA IS AN ATTITUDE DISORDER THAT affects millions of women and girls in Western society. The term describes a woman's badly distorted view of her body. It is a warning sign for eating disorders, but more significantly, it indicates a harmful self-destructive and disempowering attitude.

Beauty obsession eats away at a woman's sense of self-esteem, and experts agree that poor self-esteem lies at the heart of most eating disorders.

Director Katherine Gilday's film *The Famine Within* shows how women's obsession with beauty erodes their inner sense of power.

"Woman's so-called normal identity, which includes the obsessive concern with appearance, is pathological," explains Gilday in a recent issue of *Images* magazine.

This explains why more women than men develop anorexia and bulimia.

Montreal dietitian Terry Dimitratos claims the binge and purge-cycle begins with dieting. Even women who are not overweight diet, for fear of becoming fat. All this obsessive weight loss effort leads women to associate self-esteem with deprivation. Because we are expected to be paranoid about the way we look, many women who have crossed the line from obsession into dysphoria don't even realise they have a problem. "I feel fat" has become a litany of womanhood—the smaller the jeans, the greater the soul.

Not only is the longing for razor-sharp curves disempowering, for most women it is simply mission impossible. Less than five per cent of women are capable of achieving the glorified bodies of super models without exercising for hours and eating little more than a few celery sticks each day, according to Dimitratos.

"Since most of us compare ourselves to an unattainable ideal, we feel we're not good enough," says Dimitratos. "We need to start accepting ourselves for who we are."

BECAUSE SHE HASN'T STARVED HERSELF IN "ALMOST TWO YEARS," CYNTHIA FEELS THAT SHE HAS FINALly overcome the eating disorder that has twice caused her to try to vomit.

"It didn't work," she says flatly.

Seeing herself in the bathroom mirror with her polished fingernail rammed down her throat shocked Cynthia into reality. For women who are obsessed with their physical imperfections, the seed of self-loathing is planted early in life. A study by the Dairy Bureau of Canada revealed that 30 percent of nine-year-old girls and an overwhelming 80 percent of 12-year-old girls think they should be thinner.

Nine percent of those pre-teens are anorexic.

Nutritionist Lisa Duperneau of the Montreal Children's Hospital works closely with children who are suffering from eating disorders. She says she often treats children showing symptoms of anorexia or bulimia.

By identifying the unhealthy mental attitude at the root of an eating disorder, Duperneau is able to stop the cycle of self-hatred before it manifests itself in physical symptoms.

Lack of self-esteem also leads to the numbing of women's passion and aggression, which is identified by Gilday as a major cause of depression. "When I did the film, I kept seeing this tremendous waste of talent and intelligence," she says.

Author Naomi Wolf argues that the closer women come to power, the more society plays on their vulnerabilities of physical self-consciousness to keep them down.

In her bestseller *The Beauty Myth*, Wolf explains how the beauty backlash prevents us from moving on to the next phase of the feminist movement.

But don't despair: Wolf reminds us that more and more, women are finding power and freedom in sources other than the bathroom scale.

According to 1991 statistics, more than half of Canadians are women. Wolf says this statistic makes women potentially unstoppable. So why do so many women feel like a minority?

Throughout history, men have traditionally been recognised for their skills and achievements, while women have been recognised for their physical beauty, says Dimitratos, who acknowledges that the female standard of beauty has been somewhat self-imposed.

Beautiful, brilliant young women are plagued by self-hatred because they cannot remodel themselves according to a new set of blueprints. Ironically, this insecurity becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Self-esteem is reduced to nothing. Feelings of powerlessness and worthlessness prevail.

Women themselves are collectively to blame for succumbing to media messages. It's easy to point a finger at everyone else for their own dysfunctions: the media, men, mothers, fathers.

By refusing to accept responsibility for their own detriments and, consequently, for their own self-improvement, women are perceiving themselves as passive participants in their own lives. This kind of thinking kicks women in the face as hard as the beauty obsession.

The female quest for physical perfection is the bread and low-fat, non-dairy spread of countless industries. "Be younger, slimmer; therefore a better, more worthwhile, desirable person," cry the flawless buttocks of a thirteen-year-old nymph in a Christian Dior advertisement for a cellulite-reducing elixir.

Seeing herself in the bathroom mirror with her polished fingernail rammed down her throat shocked Cynthia into reality

Women must learn to be conscious of these subliminal messages; to look at these unrealistic images critically, with an awareness of their inherent purpose. And resist.

Self-image is still impossible to ignore. How can women unlearn decades of priorities?

From Betty Boop to Kate Moss, unrealistic body images have been around for a long time. How can women suddenly decide to ignore the media and convince themselves that their self-worth need not be connected to the way they look?

The answer is in accepting that physical appearance is just a small part of female identity. All healthy bodies are uniquely beautiful. Instead of showing off their pouty red mouths, women should flaunt their sharp, witty tongues. Taking responsibility for body obsession and eating disorders is the only way to prevent them.

The key to overcoming this obsession is for women to make love to their self-esteem. Not the shallow, inconsistent self-esteem that comes from beauty, but a deeper self-love that sticks around the morning after.

With true self-esteem comes the strength to act and speak aggressively, the confidence to resist seductive media images, and the power to initiate change. sf

news

Classifieds 822-1654

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Near UBC Gate 1 Rm. $385. 1 Rm $360 (laundry/utils. included) plus kitchenette. Large sitting room, gas fireplace, cablevision, private entrance. Available Feb.1, tel 224-3762.

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Please contact the UBC Housing Office in Brock Hall for information on rates and availablility. The Housing Office is open from 8:30 am - 4:00 pm weekdays, or call 822-2811 during office hours.
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PARKING AND SECURITY

Staff turnover unexplained

by Stanley L. Tromp

There's strange stuff going on at UBC's Parking and Security office.

Four top officials in UBC's Parking and Security branch have left UBC in the past six months, and an internal audit into the department's finances might not reach the public eye.

Last fall, Parking Manager David Miller left UBC, then in early January Security Access Manager John Naylor departed. The university refuses to give a reason for either departure, or say if they were voluntary. Miller and Naylor could not be reached for comment.

Their chief, UBC Director of Parking and Security Services John Smithman, told *The Ubyssey* he resigned last August after nine years on the job to start a management training business. Smithman, who was also chair of the UBC Transportation Committee, was rehired in the fall as a transportation consultant on a term which ended in December.

Smithman was replaced in September by Frank Eastham, former associate vice-president of human resources. Smithman held the job until the end of the year. Tom McNeice, who had worked under Eastham, took over as director on January 2.

McNeice said that former Assistant Parking Manager Danny Ho replaced Miller as Parking Manager, and there is currently a posting for Naylor's job.

An audit of the department's financial situation is ongoing and should be finished by the end of this month. McNeice said that, contrary to campus rumours, the audit is completely routine and "not a forensic or special audit."

Asked if the audit would be released, UBC Internal Audit Director Michael Hartwick said "these reports are normally not public because they are done for the senior management at UBC." McNeice and UBC acting Finance Director Steve Ryan agreed the audit is done for UBC's internal use and probably will not be distributed further.

"They've had some financial systems problems," said Hartwick. "They've got to make some improvements. But there's no concern about fraud or anything like that."

"You must appreciate that I can't start talking in detail about UBC financial issues that are supposed to be resolved by the managers," he added. "It's not being run by the public."

Vice-President of Finance and Administration Terry Sumner, who oversees the results, did not return *The Ubyssey's* calls.

The RCMP said it is not investigating the Parking and Security department. McNeice added that he knows of no harassment complaints against the branch in the past year; Smithman said there were no such complaints in his nine year term, nor any financial accountability problems.

Residence advisor selection questioned

by Faith Armitage

Competition for residence advisor positions, worth between $5000 and $7500, is unfair, according to some UBC residents.

About 80 students turned out at Totem Park Tuesday night for an information session about residence advisory positions for 1997/98.

"Melanie," an advisor at a junior residence for the second year in a row, agreed to talk to *The Ubyssey* on condition of anonymity about the hiring process.

"Other advisors can either make or break the interview and I think it's really unfair," she said. "I'd say I got the job because someone recommended me."

Assistant Director of student housing Janice Robinson admits criticism has been leveled against the interview and hiring process.

"Residence can be a small place to be and so I think that there are times when it appears that you get hired on who you know," she said. "But it's about the kinds of activities you've been involved in. The reality is perhaps you've been involved in activities that have been programs or whatnot that advisors have also been involved in."

Measures have been taken to prevent nepotism, Robinson said, pointing to the introduction of a two-year limit on holding the same position in the same residence. Hiring teams are also composed of three advisors from at least two different residences, and applicants undergo a two-stage interview process, with the residence life managers having the final word.

The Housing Office has also been criticized for the indiscriminant re-hiring of advisors. Kristen (not her real name) lives in Place Vanier and applied unsuccessfully to become an advisor. "You can do the bare minimum [as an advisor] and be rehired."

Added Melanie, "People extend their degrees because it's free [to live in residence]."

Robinson said all advisors are subject to review and evaluation and they must re-apply for a position. "Some staff are invited to return if they've done a good job or a reasonable job and the residence life manager believes that next year they'll continue to do a good job or will show improvement."

Totem Park residence life manager Janet Cox says the appearance of friends hiring friends comes from friendships formed among advisors after they get the job.

"Advisors certainly get to be better friends once they get hired," Cox said Tuesday at Totem Park.

"How they get to be such good friends, I guess, is because they have to work together so much. There isn't another student in residence that would equally understand the time demands, equally understand the pressures of advising, equally understand what it means to be a peer on the floor... That's a very stressful thing to start out the year with so they begin to rely on each other.

"The bottom line is the decision lands in the residence life manager's lap and I don't think there's a residence life manager who's friends with the students here," Cox said.

In 1996, Robinson said there were 369 applicants for 98 positions. Advisors receive free room or room/board, plus a stipend, depending on the position. The total value of the compensation package varies from a minimum of $5050 for an advisor at Totem Park, Place Vanier, Walter Gage, Ritsmeikan, and Thunderbird residences to a maximum of $7534 for house advisors at Walter Gage, Ritsumeikan and Totem Park.

"If you're in it for the money there are probably easier ways to make the same amount of money and not have to invest the same amount of time that advisors invest," said Robinson.

JANICE ROBINSON Assi. Dir of Housing talks to students in Totem Park on Tuesday. FAITH ARMITAGE PHOTO

Arts rep sounds smoke alarm

by Janet Winters

The nation-wide battle between the rights of smokers and non-smokers is about to hit UBC--again.

At the AMS's January 8 council meeting, Arts Undergraduate Society representative Chris Matisz announced a plan to start a petition to ban smoking from the SUB's Gallery Lounge.

His opponents are already fuming. A smoking ban, they said, would drive away loyal customers, resulting in decreased revenues and possible closure.

AMS Food and Beverage Manager Nancy Toogood said it would be "absolutely devastating," reflecting on the negative economic experience the Gallery had in 1993 when revenues dropped nearly 35 percent and staff were laid off after the lounge went non-smoking.

Toogood attributes the losses to a link between drinking and smoking. "Drinking and smoking just seem to go together," she said.

AMS General Manager Bernie Peets suggested the AMS had no choice but to return the Gallery to a smoking environment in 1994. "It got to the point where the decision had to be made either to close the venue or to turn it back to a smoking venue because that's what the customers wanted," he said.

Gallery waitress Michele Hope said she feared history would repeat itself if the Gallery reverted to a no-smoking policy. "If they cannot come here and smoke, they will go to a bar downtown," she said.

Matisz maintained he is simply trying to protect the rights of non-smokers to breathe clean air in the SUB concourse, and insisted he is not an "anti-smoking crusader."

"Smoke is not contained in [the Gallery]," he said. "It comes right out into the SUB concourse, the heart of all student activities."

Toogood, however, said the air quality in the concourse has already improved following the installation an ionizer in the Gallery last October. Peets said the AMS is looking at other technologies to improve the air.

Matisz, however, argued effective advertising could compensate for any financial shortfalls by attracting the large number of non-smoking students. "If we rearrange our marketing strategy and target that market, it's only going to make better economic sense," he said.

Second-year Law student and Gallery customer Joe Irvine said it might be a good idea to make the lounge non-smoking. "Even though I'm a smoker, people shouldn't have to inhale cigarette smoke," he said, adding students' opinions should take priority to the bar's regular patrons in determining its fate: "Everyone pays their AMS fees so it should be [up to] the student body as a whole."

If Matisz successfully gathers 1000 signatures, the question will go to a student referendum.

FREEBYSSEY
FREEBYSSEY

The Ubyssey **presents The Vancouver Grizzlies vs The Denver Nuggets, Saturday, January 25 at 7:00pm at GM Place. The first two people from different faculties, who didn't opt out of *The Ubyssey*, to come by SUB 241K today will win a pair of tickets. Staff of the paper are not eligible.**

Three lines free! UBC students can place a free classified, three lines long, in *The Ubyssey*. Up to one page will be allotted each Friday. Stop by SUB 245 to sell, buy, advertise or find a special friend.

Disc Attacks!

The UBC Ultimate mothership is set to take off. Let the invasion begin.

by Wolf Depner

Away Force. Flick. Huck. Pull. Inside-Out. Trap. Zone-O.

These are some of the terms that swirled with the white plastic discs through the unusually cold January air as the UBC women's ultimate frisbee team held its first ever practice eight days ago.

The men's team was just a few feet away, going through a vigorous workout. Anybody not familiar with ultimate and its terms could have easily confused the gathering at Osborne Fields with a scene from *Plan Nine from Outer Space,* the air filled with miniature white saucers and quirky lingo.

While ultimate is still alien to the average sports fan, it's no longer considered a sport from outer space played by former hippies.

Around since the late '60s, ultimate has grown up quickly over the last five years, and club teams from over 30 countries will converge on UBC this summer to participate in the world club championship.

In Canada, Vancouver is considered the sport's hotbed and the best players from across the country have come west to enjoy the lifestyle and level of competition here. And while UBC students and alumni are well-represented in the local ultimate community, it has only been around on campus since the fall of 1995, when a men's team was organised for the inaugural Canadian university national championship in Ottawa.

There, UBC finished third, losing 15-3 to Victoria in the semifinal.

A women's team didn't get off the ground at the time, but the idea was revived when Vicki Chow and first-year medicine student Tally Vertinski played with the men's team in the spring of 1996. Traveling to a major college tournament in the United States, they came across a thriving collegiate women's ultimate scene and thought something similar could be established at UBC.

"We took a look around and said that there are enough good players here to put a team together," explained Chow, who got together with like-minded women. "Getting a women's college team established is also important for the west coast ultimate scene."

The US-based Ultimate Players Association (UPA) helped the women's team along when they voted by a 12 percent margin to allow Canadian teams to compete for the collegiate national championship. In the past, Canadian teams could participate in tournaments, but they weren't allowed to win anything more than a bag of stale bagels.

Team organisers expected about 25 players to show up, but were pleasantly surprised with a turnout of more than 40. "We should have bought stick-on name tags for everybody," quipped Chow.

The large number of players made practice difficult, but amidst the confusion Chow was very pleased with the interest shown in the team. "It was just so amazing to see so many players come out," Chow says, adding the large turnout bodes well for the future.

A total of 16 players made the team while another eight were placed on the practice roster.

And Chow thinks if there's one year to win it all, this is it, considering all the talent around.

Four players come from three-time defending Canadian national champions *Guests of Oprah* while four more play with *Jezebel,* another Vancouver club team. A total of nine have been to Canadian national championships while two represented Canada at the world championship in Sweden last year.

"I think that they are poised to do better than we'll do," says Mike Firth, co-coach of the men's team. But considering the talent on the men's team, they shouldn't do too badly either—16 out of 19 team members played at last year's nationals and four were on the Canadian national team that placed fifth at the world championships.

The men's team finished last season with a 12-3 record against American schools and caused a major stir when they beat several top US colleges team.

"Last year, there were no expectations," says Firth, one of Canada's best. "We're just so relaxed. It was a great position to be in."

While Firth is no longer eligible to play for UBC, the men's team has high expectations for the season, which starts with the Washington Huskies invitational tournament in late March. They then host the Northwest sectional tournament and travel to Stanford University in the last week of April for the western regional qualifying tournament.

And if everything goes the way both teams expect, they'll be off to the national championship tournament. The final tournament's site has not been determined yet, but the teams are budgeting for extensive travel. Both, however, are strapped for cash.

The women's team has applied to the Walter H. Gage Memorial fund and hopes to cover the remaining costs through fund-raising. The men's team, however, can't apply for that fund and will have to cover virtually all costs through their own pocket books and fund-raising.

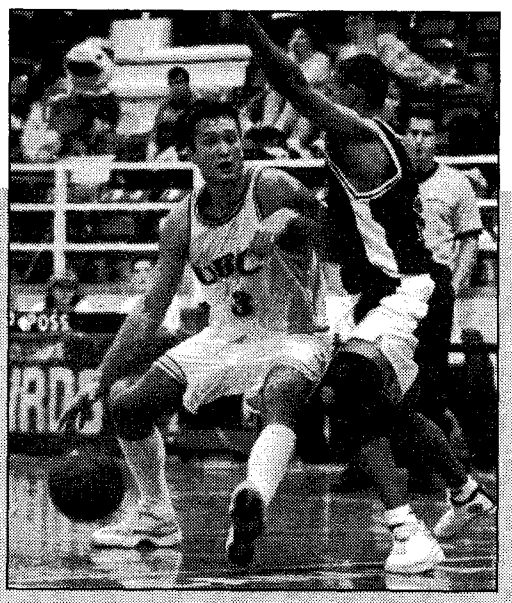
The teams are also looking to the corporate community for support, and the men's team has landed a couple of minor deals. But on the whole, the response hasn't been great.

"Ultimate, on the whole, is just not well known in Canada," says Chow, adding that ultimate is more recognised south of the border where corporate sponsorship and university funding are better established.

UBC Athletics has given the men's team club varsity status and has provided some, if minimal, support. "Ultimate could get some money if we could get some money," says Athletic Director Bob Philip. He hopes that more money for varsity clubs will be available down the road.

But despite the financial concerns, both teams are heading into the season with brimming confidence. And that's something you can't put a value on. *jf*

THE PEOPLE BEHIND UBC'S TWO ULTIMATE TEAMS: (L to R) Mike Firth, Lauren Ross, Ashley Howard, Vicki Chow, Jon Wooldridge. RICHARD LAM PHOTO



JOHN DYKSTRA plays against Winnipeg last October. UBYSSEY FILE PHOTO

John Dykstra's back on track

by Wolf Depner

Basketball Bird John Dykstra is the BC sports comeback athlete of the year after he received the Harry Jerome Award.

The award recognises the athlete who has made a courageous comeback after suffering a major setback.

The 6'5" 205 lb Chilliwack native was selected for his return to varsity basketball after a diving accident in the summer of 1995 near Vernon nearly left him crippled for life.

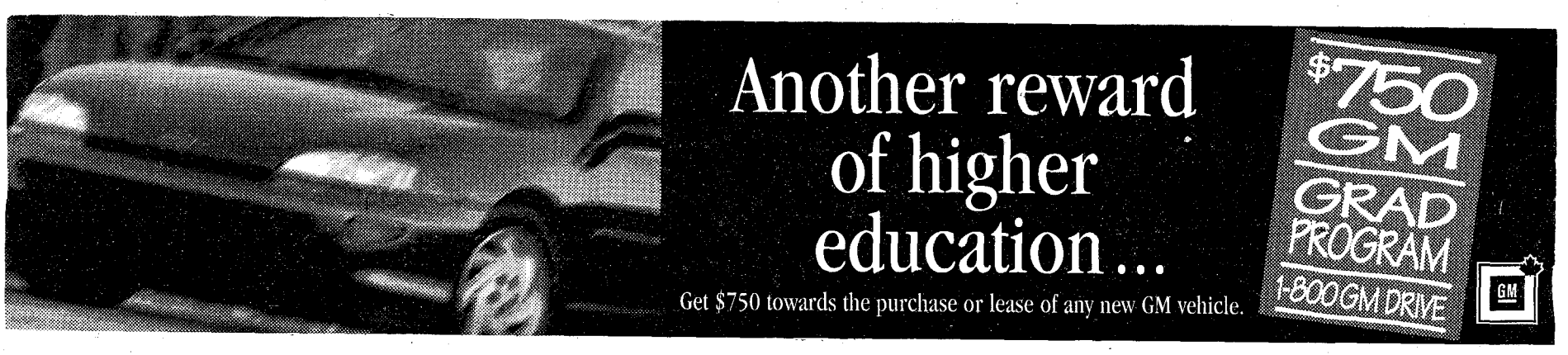
Dykstra dove off an unmarked pier into three feet of water, broke three vertebrae, and was quadriplegic for almost a week. Following surgery and extensive rehab, Dykstra, who played NCAA II division baskeball at Alaska-Anchorage before transfering to UBC, was back on his feet by the fall and redshirted last season.

The power forward returned to the court this season, averaging 8.5 points, 2.8 rebounds in 17 minutes.

Dykstra was humbled by the honor bestowed upon him.

"I couldn't be more thankful and I'm elated to get the recognition for the hard work," said Dykstra.

"It's more of an award for my family, my coaches and for those who stuck around me and gave me guidance until I got better." *jf*



Panych attack!

7 STORIES: Bryn Williams, Jonathon Sutton, Jacqueline Prince and Raugi Yu tease us with hollow wisdom.

by James Rowley

7 STORIES
at the Freddy Wood until Jan 25

Frightened by the lines of your shoes?
Disturbed by what your hat says about your head?
Terrified of losing your place in the world?
Don't panic.

Unlike The Man in Morris Panych's *7 Stories*, you can have your perspective refreshingly turned on its head *without* the need of a tall building to jump from. Guest director Roy Surette sets the energy meter on "zany" right from the first curtain and keeps it there, making good use of Camille Tseng's mind-bending scenery.

If you remember *Vigil*, recently at the Arts Club Revue, you'll know that Panych's plays are often fundamentally silly with a core of profundity injected deep within, seemingly at the last moment. A 1977 UBC grad, he started writing *7 Stories* (which opened in 1989) while trying to come up with a musical about Jack the Ripper. What resulted is bizarre and brilliant, with a frenetic pace and mad-cap zing the mostly student cast has varied success in sustaining.

It's tempting to rave about this show because the script is so vibrant and surprising, but the line between *big* and *bad* acting is crossed a little too often, leaving loud but dull bits between the big jokes and eye-popping visual effects.

The Man, played with a little physical discomfort by Bryn Williams, has some magical conversations on his way to the edge. The stand-outs: Joe Procyk as Leonard, the paranoid psychiatrist; Michael Schultz as Marshall, the actor anticipating his last and largest role as husband; and Catriona Leger as Rachel, the Christian granny who *knows* God exists because she *acts* for him. (All three are BFA students.)

This production brings up the decades-old question of casting in the UBC Theatre Department. Should the Freddy Wood stage be a learning ground and showcase for actors in the BFA program, leaving BA students to use other venues? Or should guest directors be allowed to cast non-students like Drew Mcreadie, Khristine Aberin and Diane Fairey if it will encourage talents like Roy Surette to direct here? At the moment, it seems the official policy is wishy-washiness.

Departmental politics aside, the show at hand teases us with its brand of hollow wisdom, brushing up against a New Philosophy but then shrugging, with an "I forget." *7 Stories* is rounded out by Fairey, a former teacher who spent 7 years teaching grade 7 in room 7 somewhere, in a warm, generous performance as Lillian, who threatens to sum up the show and give The Man a reason to live but then, thankfully, doesn't.

Even so, by the end of the show I felt strangely...uplifted.

A feast for pathological retinae

by Sarah Barr

MINA TOTINO
at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery until Mar 1
PHOTOSOC
at the SUB Gallery until Jan 31

Lush, flesh coloured paint, purple feather boas, body-piercing rings and chains, stripper's paraphrenalia and tattoos are some of the ingredients in Mina Totino's sensuous new exhibition at UBC's Belkin Art Gallery.

Totino's work reconnects our minds to our bodies, encouraging us to taste again. In 'Slow Learner' she paints a massive fleshy tongue and writes "sweet" and "bitter" to indicate the areas of sensory taste, reminding us of the many bodily experiences we take for granted.

The sublime has always been a concern in modernist painting, from the 'Sublime' of Barnett Newman's minimalist colour bars to the ejaculate style of Jackson Pollock's action paintings. However, as curator Scott Watson puts it, Totino is "challenging the masculine subtext of modernist painting." Totino readdresses the allegiance to the male quality of repression which dominates much modernist painting, and her sublime is full of decoration and excess.

In Totino's abstract painting the gender issue is explicit; we can sense the female body under the red beads in 'A Class Act' and the nipple tassles in 'Dress to Kill.'

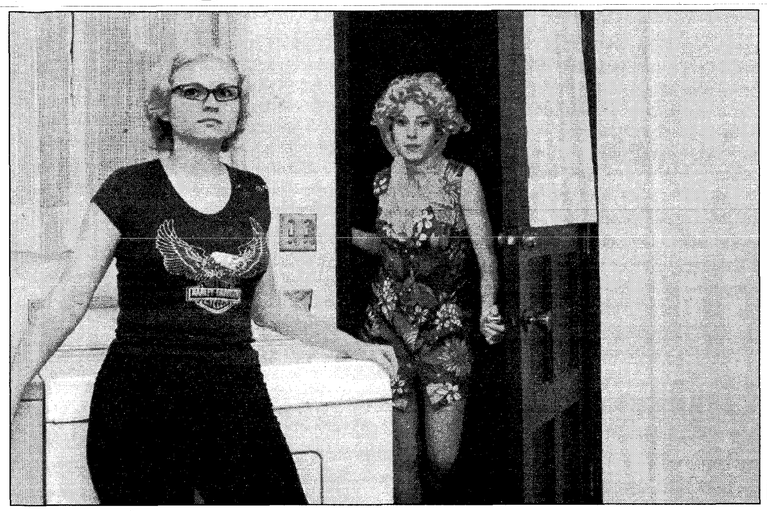
This is a female artist reclaiming the sensuous female body from the censorship and seediness imposed on it by so much art.

❖ ❖ ❖

ANOTHER EXHIBITION CURRENTLY ON AT UBC IS THE PHOTOGRAPHY Society's annual show. Take a stroll through the SUB some lunch hour and and pop into the gallery, but don't expect an abundance of imagination. Like the bagel with cream cheese you may be munching at the time, much of the subject matter seems rather predictable and cliched.

The works, choosen by the members themselves, at times seem banal and rather meaningless, like the black and white photograph of a stack of oranges.

There's a sprinkling of soft focus stunners like 'A rose on the pavement' which, frankly, I hope was an ironic statement (though I doubt it).



'UNTITLED' BY SARAH MCALISTER is one of the more humorous, ambiguous photos on display at the AMS Art Gallery.

Often photos which were meant to be profound and simplistic just seem boring. That said, however, there are some interesting works. The precision in the technical printing of Peter Kao's photos is impressive. His two larger black and white photos have a sharp sculptural quality in their stillness.

Likewise Heather Larsen's black and white photo 'United Grain Growers, Vancouver' posseses a beautiful balance of tones and light, stark shapes and clear details.

Sarah McAlister's humorous photo of two girls dressing up to go out has an ambiguous feel to it. The viewer is unsure if this is a snap shot moment or a posed composition. Were these two girls actually about to go out for a night on the town in their retro disco gear, or is this a wholly artificial set-up? This kind of photo seems to probe deeper into the uses of photography as a medium of representation. The viewer must question the "truth" of what he sees before his eyes.

As one visitor wrote in the comments book: "PhotoSoc PhotoRoc or PhotoCoc?" Decide for yourself. *jf*

$3 a film
FilmSoc Movie Line, 24 hrs, 822-3697
UBC FilmSoc
Fri-Sun, Jan. 24-26, Norm Theatre, SUB
7:00 PM
Long Kiss Goodnight
9:30 PM
First Wives Club

WEST 10TH OPTOMETRY CLINIC
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Learn...
Is this the Classroom of the Future?
Tuesday, January 28th
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Hey, writers have sex lives too!

by Peter T. Chattaway

IN LOVE AND WAR
at the Capitol 6 theatre
THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD
at the Fifth Avenue theatre
MOTHER
at the Fifth Avenue and Vancouver Centre theatres

Writing is a lonely task, and usually quite boring to watch. Which is just as well, since writers typically don't like it when people look over their shoulder while they're working. It's understandable, therefore, but also more than a little ironic that so many films ignore the act of writing itself to pry into the frustrated love lives of these typical loners.

Few directors may be as adept at ignoring the creative impulse for the sake of cheap sentiment as Richard Attenborough. His adaptation of *Shadowlands* couldn't hold a candle to the teleplay that came before it, but at least it had Anthony Hopkins' unusually vulnerable performance as C.S. Lewis. *In Love and War*, on the other hand, has Chris O'Donnell as a cloyingly juvenile Ernest "Skippy" Hemingway.

That would be enough to sink the film's prospects right there, but Clancy Sigal's script would be unsalvageable no matter *who* had to recite the lines. When Hemingway, an 18-year-old Red Cross volunteer in World War I, gets his first war wound in the trenches, he points the medical staff to the Italian on the stretcher next to him and gasps, "Don't let him die! He's never been with a woman!" None of the nurses take the hint.

And then there's his fling with his nurse, Agnes von Kurowsky (with a name like that, it must be Sandra Bullock), a tepid affair that offers not one insight into either of their characters beyond the fact that she's easily confused by her one and only patient (at least, we don't *see* her treating anyone else) and he's real smug. "Just imagine," he says, visualising their future together. "You'll be making the old place spic and span while I'll be writing great works." O'Donnell's tendency to just rattle off his lines is fatal here: we don't know if he's being ironic or if he really is a selfish pig, waiting for the five o'clock shadow that will prove the boy has become a *man*.

One thing's for damn sure: *In Love and War*, which seems to end on several occasions, only to start up again, is anything *but* a great work. Sigal should go back to his day job as a journalist, where choppy and easy-to-hack storytelling is a virtue and not a liability, or perhaps *he* should make the house spic and span while letting someone else try their hand at "great works."

Perhaps something less lofty is required. A contemporary of Hemingway's in time only, Robert E. Howard is best known as the inventor of Conan the Barbarian, She-Ra and other pulp fiction heroes destined never to win him a Nobel Prize, and Dan Ireland's *The Whole Wide World* is an admirably low-key study of the adolescent world in which Howard lived—both in his writing, which Ireland captures with imaginative sound effects and battle-clad music, and in his personal relationships, where an unhealthy bond with his mother threatened his friendship with Novalyne price and ultimately cost him his life.

Michael Scott Myers' script wisely keeps Howard's writing in the fore, with Vincent D'Onofrio shouting his stories aloud as his fingers hit the typewriter. Howard is not an easy man to like, yet D'Onofrio plays him with an enthusiasm that is downright infectious, despite his nihilism—the world is a scummy place infested by "the maggots of corruption." Howard keeps telling us—and his tendency to flaunt his sexual, if virginal, precociousness.

Perhaps the most fascinating, yet underexplored, aspect to the film is Price's insistence that Howard should write about "handsome and kind" people, not "misfits." Renee Zellweger (*Jerry Maguire*) gets our sympathy, if for no other reason than this is the second film in a row in which she has had to put up with morally confused men, but she has her fantasies too. There's just enough of the immature in Zellweger's performance to suggest that Howard, overbearing as he was, may have served as Price's reality check.

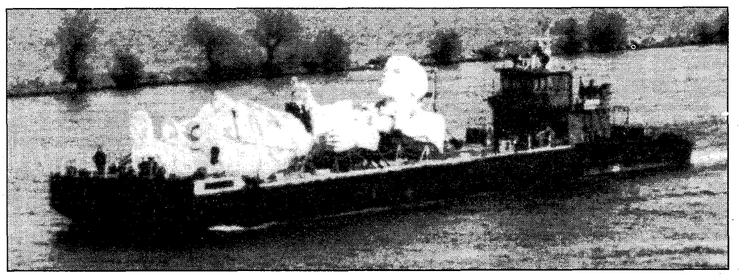
Speaking of reality checks, I wish someone would have given Albert Brooks one. Most of *Mother*, the film in which the weary neurotic plays a science fiction writer who moves back into his mother's house as a way to cure his ailing lovelife, is funny enough, true enough, even perverse enough to be genuinely insightful. But by film's end, it's clear Brooks is casting about in his own make-believe world.

In some ways, this isn't so bad: when John Henderson (Brooks) drives home, the soundtrack cues a nifty parody of Simon & Garfunkel's 'Mrs. Robinson,' with new lyrics based on the film. Debbie Reynolds is blithe enough, yet canny enough, to answer Brooks' dietary concerns with absurd lines like "*Everything* comes from a cow" one moment, and to discuss her sex life with an elderly suitor the next. *Mother* derives much of its edge from Brooks' willingness to draw out the sexual humour of his scenario (call it *Oedipus Lite*); their scene together in a lingerie store is a scream.

Unfortunately, Brooks peppers his film with sunny-side-up psychobabble, and neither he nor Reynolds knows how to pull off the somewhat hokey moment when their relationship finds a cure. "Why can't you write about *real* things?" Reynolds asks Brooks at one point. It's a question Brooks would have done well to consider; his conclusion is a flimsy fairy tale, all smiles and no warmth, while the best laughs come from those moments that feel like they could have happened to anyone. *jf*

THE AMERICAN PATIENT: Chris O'Donnell puts the "earnest" back in Hemingway during a tepid fling with Sandra Bullock in Richard Attenborough's IN LOVE AND WAR.

A *gaze* to daze audiences



LENIN LYIN' DOWN: Harvey Keitel's in hiding somewhere, looking for the life in **ULYSSES' GAZE.**

by Robin Yeatman

ULYSSES' GAZE
at the Pacific Cinematheque until Jan 27

Watching vacation videos is never interesting, except for those who actually take part in the home movie themselves. Thus one wonders why Greek filmmaker Theo Angelopoulos supposed his story of the voyage of A., the main character in *Ulysses' Gaze*, would be intriguing to a movie-going audience.

A. (Harvey Keitel) is a Greek filmmaker himself, returning to Greece from the United States in order to satisfy his strange and rather obscure obsession with the three reels of film first shot by the pioneering Manakia brothers. It is said the brothers ignored the political tensions of their time to travel across the Balkans, filming historic events and customs. However, it is not certain that this story is true, or that these reels actually exist.

In a voyage which is supposedly comparable to Ulysses' adventures in Homer's *Odyssey*, A. travels through Greece, to Albania, to Skoplje, to Bucharest, to Costanza, to Belgrade and finally to Sarajevo in search of the lost reels. The slowness and extreme length of A.'s journey is made painfully clear to the audience through countless gaps of silence, of looking out onto barren landscapes, and lengthy silent walks up and down the streets of several cities.

If you aren't nodding off by now, you may find yourself drowsily posing the question of why, *why* A. is travelling all this way through dark, wet, war-torn countries to find these possibly imaginary canisters of film? The answer, if any, proves obscure. It is possible that A. believes these glimpses of the past could revive a dying culture. In one scene, A. compares the reels to Ulysses' gaze, which he sees as a kind of birth, trying to emerge from the darkness. He sees this gaze as something pure and life-giving, as opposed to the death, destruction, fear and oppression present in the countries through which he travels. Whether or not this is a noble quest, A.'s tiresome, relentless adventure is neither compelling nor inspiring.

Despite all of this, there are a few redeeming points in the film. One particular scene in Sarajevo that takes place in the fog is especially gripping. Keitel's final soliloquy is also memorable, composed of emotionally charged prose. However, with such a relatively unsubstantiated plot, slow pace and unsatisfying ending, it is doubtful that *Ulysses' Gaze* will achieve even a portion of the fame from its legendary namesake. *jf*

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Editorial Office
Room 241K, Student Union Building,
6138 Student Union Boulevard,
Vancouver, BC. V6T 1Z1
tel: (604) 822-2301 fax:822-9279

Business Office
Room 245, Student Union Building
advertising: (604) 822-1654
business office: (604) 822-6681

Business Manager
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James Rowan

Conrad Black was in the mood for a little shopping. Nothing drastic, you understand, but he felt a few lesser-known, small circulation publications could use a little of his direction and a lot of his money.
So he made some calls. The *Sarah Galashan Times* were looking for some capital, so he purchased them. Same with the *Joe Clark Enquirer*. The *Sarah O'Donnell Examiner*, the *Scott Hayward Globe* and *Richard Lam Post* were on board before morning coffee break. Then he went after some smaller niche-market publications. He made an offer on *Film Critics Anonymous*, but editor Peter Chattaway would have none of it. Nor would the kind folks at the Media Foundation. Ian Gunn had no such reservation about selling *The Radio Times*. Nor did Wolf Depner of his *Telephone Etiquette Quarterly*. Having worked up an appetite, Mr. Black went to lunch with Federico Barahona, Afshin Mehin and Richelle Rae and before they were onto the fourth course the *Wesley Chung Mail*, the *Faith Armitage Listener* and the *Neil Razzell Echo* were all part of the ever-growing conglomerate. As was the entire Stanley Tromp chain. After a short nap, it was back to work. The *Janet Winters Observer* was looking for new owners, as was *Theresa Chaboyer Today*. Paul Champ's award-winning *Insomnia Review* didn't know it was for sale, but soon learned differently. The staff at *John Zaozirny World* guessed something was up when editors Sarah Barr, Doug Quan, and James Rowley started handing out Hollinger coffee cups. The *Robin Yeatman Tribune* and *Ron Kertesz Times* flirted with Black's buyout offer, but declined on the grounds that they'd had a more generous one from somewhere else. Which Black found hard to believe until just before dinner when his whole empire was bought out by Andy Barham.

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op/ed

We scrutinise ourselves for once

This issue's supplement discusses, explores and analyses the Canadian media, an arena some now argue has become monopolised by media mogul Conrad Black.

But despite growing concerns over corporate control, one can still find a diverse group of publications springing up around the country. Just look around Vancouver and you will see publications starting up in virtually every neighbourhood, counteracting Black's influence.

The Ubyssey is part of that media diversity, and we too are subject to analysis. So for once, the finger of criticism is not pointed at some newsmaker, but at ourselves.

As UBC's official student paper, we are the best equipped campus organisation to cover UBC news and issues. It is our responsibility to put out the best and most appealing twice-weekly newspaper that we can.

And we do our best to do exactly that.

But simply reporting the news in a fair manner is not enough.

We're not content to just report, we would also like to raise awareness about issues that affect students and help effect significant social change. We also hope we are thought-provoking, and provide the reader with alternative coverage to what they read in the dailies. We'd really like to meet our deadlines with the best cutting edge copy possible.

However, whether we accomplish this 50 times a year is not for us, but the reader, to decide.

And we appreciate whatever input you might have. In fact, we encourage you to participate in *The Ubyssey* through letters, perspectives or even becoming a staffer because, heck, the paper belongs to you.

Neither staff, or publications board is entirely representative of the campus community; we realise that at times our coverage reflects this.

The most obvious manifestation of this problem is the lack of female images and sources found in our pages. We also need to improve *The Ubyssey's* coverage of racial issues and other marginalised communities.

We want to reflect the community we work in, and we're aware of these issues every time we put out a paper. So we welcome criticism and questions, and happily accept the help of any who want to make a difference in the world of print.

We are your campus media; take advantage of us. *jf*

letters

Democracy week?

AMS and democracy? An interesting oxymoron. Sci Week is traditionally in the last week of January—but this year the AMS gave that week to Arts. Our External VP, Phil Ledwith, expressed concern many times that Sci Week advertising would interfere with AMS Elections, but the appeal fell on deaf ears. Meetings with the AMS D of A produced no change. This is the "administrative matter" Blair McDonald discussed with Michael Hughes [letters, Jan. 21].

Thus, we postered before the campaign week, advertising Sci Week and our 54-40 concert. Very few of those posters remain; the "democratic" process came by and plastered over everything.

SUS has to advertise Sci Week—and there is no space left after independants and slates promote their campaigns. The slate which Michael represents is a notorious offender—setting up enormous blocks of posters that occupy as much space as possible. This action is representative of the arrogance of student politicians—do they really think they have exclusive rights to every square inch of poster space on campus?

SUS has plastered over AMS election posters. But no slate or candidate was singled out, despite Michael's claim. Ironically enough, this schoolyard bickering continues, with Sci Week posters disappearing across campus. Of course, this problem would have never happened in the first place if the AMS had listened to its constituency.

Tracy MacKinnon
President of SUS

Referenda defender

In two recent *Ubyssey* issues, Antonia Zuniga has expressed his disapproval with the move by the AMS to put forth a referendum on providing extra funding for AMS clubs ("AMS fee hike is hypocritical" Letters , Jan.10, "Referendum stirs up election debate", Jan.21). Mr. Zuniga claims that it is hypocritical of those who supported the motion in Council to ask for more funding at a time when the official AMS psition is to oppose ancillary fees by the University.

In fact, the AMS policy is that Council would only support an ancillary fee that has been through an adequate consultation process and has been put to the students in the form of a referendum. If Mr. Zuniga chooses not to support the AMS clubs, whose membership totals are currently over 15,000, then he is free to vote accordingly, as is every other student on campus. This process will hopefully set an example for the University on the proper way to deal with a proposed fee increase.

Andrew Henry
Arts AMS Representative

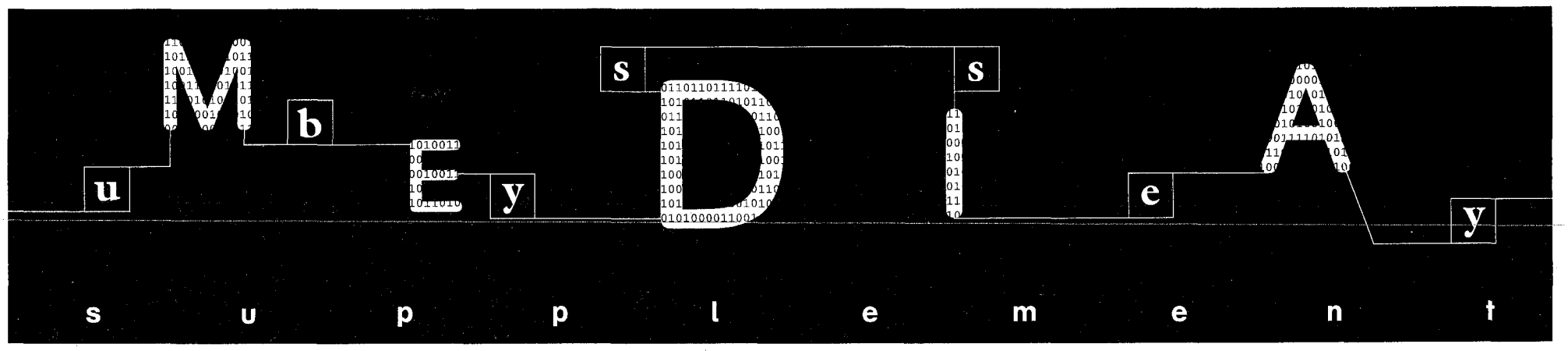
GSS responds

In his letter to the editor entitled "GSS Council Manipulated," published in the Tuesday, January 14, 1997, edition of *The Ubyssey*, David Murphy again raises concerns about the current operation of the GSS. Throughout the latter half of 1996, David has aired what he perceives to be serious mismanagement at the GSS. Fully aware of David's skepticism, council attempted to meet his concerns by voting to reseat him at our August Council meeting. With his reseating, David's status as a member of the finance committee was firmly established. However, involving David more closely in the operation of the Society does not seem to have addressed his concerns, nor does the Society's policy of full but confidential disclosure to all members of the Society (of which he has made full use) regarding Society issues seem to have had any effect. Having included David within the governing bodies of the GSS, I am deeply concerned that he continues to publicly misrepresent events occurring in the GSS:

David claims that the GSS council makes "precipitous decisions," imposed on them "during closed and secret sessions," and during which "the executive provides councillors with limited information heavily laced with innuendo [which the] attendees are then obliged to keep confidential under threat of unseating or libel suit." No decisions have been "precipitous" and nothing has been "imposed" upon any councillor. I have no further to look than to David's participation to illustrate my point most clearly. If our meetings have been "closed and secret" regarding staff matters, it has only been so to protect the status and reputation of our employees, not to isolate the issues from the general membership. We, as executives and councillors, have a legal responsiblity to do this. It is unfortunate that some members of the Society do not understand this concept; had they understood it, much misinformation would not have occurred.

David's portrayal of the conditions of our council meetings is equally unfortunate. I dare say that if they had been as David portrays them, he would never have been reseated, let alone granted access to financial documents. If anything, the GSS may be faulted for

cont on p. 7



Fifteen years after a royal commission expressed concerns over high levels of media concentration, Conrad Black has gone shopping. The result? Black now owns 58 percent of all dailies in Canada.

by Paul Champ

Conrad Black is a Canadian millionaire, an opinionated writer and probably the biggest press baron the world has ever known. Aside from his newspaper holdings in England, the United States and Israel, Black's Hollinger Corporation went on a $660-million buying binge in Canada last year. When the dust settled, he had bought up the Southam chain, the Armadale chain, and a chunk of the Thomson chain—his empire here now stands at 60 daily newspapers, 58 percent of all dailies in Canada.

Fifteen years ago, a Royal Commission on Newspapers reported on the dangers of ownership concentration: "The process of corporate growth, by concentration into larger groups within the industry, has been accompanied by a reduction in the diversity of news and comment that is the vital element of a free society." When the Kent Commission—named after chair Tom Kent—began in 1980, the three largest newspaper chains owned 57 percent of dailies. That figure was 45 percent in 1970 and 25 percent in 1958.

Today, the three largest chains control 72 percent of dailies.

Black uses a subtle form of control called "the trickle down theory" of management influence, according to James Winter, communications professor at the University of Windsor and the author of a new book called *Democracy's Oxygen: How Corporations Control the News.*

When Black buys a newspaper, Winter explains, the editorial content changes in two ways. First, he influences the content by hiring editors who share his views, who then shape the newspaper to those views by story selection, story editing, story emphasis or placement, and decisions about headlines. Even if a reporter has different views, he or she usually conforms to get important assignments, good beats and promotions.

The second way Conrad Black changes editorial content is by laying off reporters. Fewer journalists, says Winter, means lower quality journalism with fewer local stories, no investigative journalism, and a heavy reliance on press conferences and news releases from institutional sources. The Kent Commission also complained about this problem, and cited Thomson Newspapers as the chief villains.

But Winter says Black is worse still. "He goes into those Thomson Newspapers, and they've already been pared to the bone, and he cuts them back by 30 percent or more." And the lay-offs, he adds, are generally ruthless. Last March, the employees of the *Regina Leader-Post* and the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, two recently purchased papers, showed up as ordered to convention centres in their respective cities. Staff were sent to two different rooms: one for those who were staying, the other for those who were fired. The 20 percent in the firing room were told they could not return to the office; their belongings would be delivered.

In the United States, media watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) believes the situation is even more dire. A wave of mergers began in 1986 when General Electric bought NBC for $6.6-billion US. In 1995, all the other networks were also gobbled up: Westinghouse Electric bought CBS for $5.4-billion, Time Warner bought CNN/Turner Broadcasting for $8.5-billion, and Walt Disney bought Capital Cities/ABC for a $19-billion mega-merger.

These new parent companies have some invested interests in nuclear weapons production, fighter planes, medical services, banks, insurance companies, telecommunications, or hazardous waste disposal, among other things. It is not surprising that FAIR raises concerns about the potential bias of news organisations at these major networks.

Canada does not have such direct dubious connections in its media ownership structure, but Winter says there is a conflict of interest with people who sit on the boards of directors of our media corporations. Hollinger and Southam alone have directors who also sit on the boards of every major bank in Canada, and various corporations that might influence their media contacts.

Winter has researched these kinds of board interlocks, but has not uncovered any smoking guns showing board influence on the media. "It's a very difficult thing to do because the only people who know about these influences are the people on the boards, and they're not talking," he says. But just by looking at these board interlocks, he adds, we can "infer that there's a lot of ear-bending taking place.

painted black

Conrad Black's feeding frenzy on Canadian newspapers has not gone unchallenged. Last year, the Council of Canadians (COC), a public interest group, launched a court action against Hollinger and the federal government's Competition Bureau. The Southam acquisition was approved by the Bureau just three days after it was announced in May 1996. The COC argued that the Bureau failed "to protect the Canadian people from corporate concentration in the media, particularly newspapers."

On December 16, the Federal Court of Appeal dismissed the action, stating that the COC had not applied within the 30-day limit after the Bureau decision, and that, in any case, the COC had no standing because they were not directly affected by the merger.

David Robinson, communications coordinator for the COC, says the judge really meant they had no commercial interest, and therefore it did not justify standing. Robinson says the COC has appealed the decision, arguing that the Competition Act exists not only to protect the commercial interests of other companies, but the public interest as well.

Robinson says the COC could not meet the 30-day limit because they had to raise funds for the court case. The Act has provisions to ignore the limit if there are special circumstances and the issue is very important. But Robinson adds that the COC's main goal is not to win the case.

"We hope that through the appeal process we can keep a public spotlight on this and generate more support, and get the word out there," Robinson says, "because I think there's a lot of concern out there bubbling under the surface."

Support has come from one group at least: the media unions. Besides giving financial support to the court action, union members at Southam and Hollinger papers are banding together to see what they can do about the Black onslaught. Joe Matyas, president of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild local and a reporter at the London Free Press, was present at a special union conference this past weekend in Ottawa. Representatives from newspapers spanning Vancouver to St. John's converged on the capital to form a loose coalition that has been dubbed the Southam-Hollinger Interunion Council.

"We're worried about the homogenisation of information," says Matyas. "And we're also worried about the editorial control of information, like everyone taking the same slant on things in commentary to story selection."

Matyas says the influence of the newspapers' owner is a big concern. "He is an owner that is not just interested in the bottom line, he has also demonstrated a great interest in content," says the reporter. "And it's no secret that he and his wife, right-wing columnist Barbara Amiel, have very strong views on society and politics. And they have made no secret of the fact that they despise people with views that emanate from a social justice perspective."

Matyas says no concrete action proposals came out of the conference, except an agreement to share information and work closely on common problems, which he believes will help avoid disputes. "There seems to be a genuine desire to work together for a common purpose."

Matyas says the unions also discussed the impact of Black on the widely-used national wire service, Canadian Press (CP). "People are just realising the fact that he can put his person in charge of CP, and basically bring CP to its knees," says Matyas. Each daily newspaper in Canada has one vote in the CP co-operative, and now that Black owns the majority of votes, he has forced massive lay-offs and purging of the board.

David Jolley, the chair of CP before Black came along, says, "CP is the major supplier of news in the country."

Aside from being used extensively by every daily in Canada, it also has a broadcast branch producing radio stories for stations across the country. Jolley also says that every major television station subscribes to CP, and use it as a source of information and ideas.

Robinson of the COC concurs. "CP is basically the central nervous system of information in Canada." He adds that this control of CP and its broader effects was also not considered by the federal Competition Bureau, and is another basis for their court case.

Despite Black's apparently unfriendly control, Winter says he believes positives might arise out of the situation. Over 2000 journalists were laid off because of Black last year alone, and journalism students are graduating from university all the time. "One of the obvious things for these two groups to do is get together and start up their own alternative media," says Winter. "And as they do that, people will turn to those outlets."

Even Jolley, who would not disclose the nature of his disagreement with Black that lead to his departure as chair of CP, says he is optimistic about the industry. In his opinion, capitalists like Black only reflect the trend to mergers in all industries, not just media.

Jolley has worked near the pinnacle of the industry for a long-time. He was president and CEO of the *Toronto Star* for 14 years before he moved to CP. On the whole, he says there is no reason to worry. There are far more magazines, television stations, and radio stations today than ever before, he says. Plus there is a whole new media, the Internet.

He concludes, "So a person that wants a wide variety of expressions can certainly find it, and I think that's very different than 15 years ago." For his own part, however, Jolley says he is leaving the media for a less "competitive" atmosphere. *jf*

Johal on ethics of ethnics

by Douglas Quan

When BCTV hired Jas Johal to be a reporter, he made sure he wouldn't be "the ethnic reporter." His attitude has softened somewhat over the years.

Johal says that while the local news media is improving its coverage of minority and religious groups, they have a long way to go. Until reporters are trained as "multicultural reporters," he said, stories which focus on a particular ethnic group will, in general, be covered better by a reporter from that group.

"When I started at BCTV, I specifically stated 'I am not your ethnic reporter and will not cover ethnic communities. I will not be stuck in some ethnic ghetto,'" he said.

"Along the way my stance has softened a bit because I want the stories to be covered properly."

Most recently Johal covered the conflict among members of the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple in Surrey. As a member of the Sikh community Johal feels he was better equipped to cover the issue.

"There are certain things [Temple members] would say to me that they probably wouldn't say to a white reporter," he added.

Other high-profile stories from the Indo-Canadian community he has covered include the Vernon massacre, the Dosanjh murders and the subsequent targeting of Bindy Johal and his associates.

"I was at the forefront covering them [because] they're big stories and I feel that they are important and they should be done properly."

He points out that currently all BCTV editors are white, as are 13 out of 16 reporters.

"That makes it difficult in covering these stories because of the differences in culture and language," he said.

However, he said that the media is beginning to recognise the need for more minority reporters.

"If you want to attract a diverse audience, you get minority reporters," he said. "It's good business sense, if you want to get down to it."

But Johal still rejects being labelled BCTV's 'ethnic reporter.

"If we want to cover these communities, reporters in general have to become better multicultural reporters, and sending Jas Johal to every East Indian event is not going to do that." *jf*

JAS JOHAL guest speaker at the Sikh students association conference last Sunday RON KERTESZ PHOTO

getting the NeW news

Is the daily newspaper dead?* The Ubyssey *looks at the rise of the new electronic media and the fall of the old.

by Andy Barham

"Sometimes we accommodate change in strange and wondrous ways," says Paul Sullivan, managing editor of the *Vancouver Sun*.

Sullivan worked in just about every form of mass communication there is before coming to the *Sun* two months ago. This gives him a unique perspective on the future of the daily newspaper.

"I think that there are a couple of issues we should think about when we think about this whole issue of whether or not the newspaper will be supplanted by some other medium. Whatever we think about, we've got to be practical. We've got to think about it from the point of view of utility, because that's mainly why people make choices."

"They will abandon old media only if the new media fulfill their requirements more handily than the old media."

PAUL SULLIVAN

Sullivan believes it is human needs that will determine whether or not electronic media supplants the printed word. "They will abandon old media only if the new media fulfill their requirements more handily than the old media."

Sid Taffler disagrees. As editor of *Simpatico Netlife*, an online magazine, Taffler believes cost will ultimately decide the fate of daily newspapers.

While the costs of producing a daily newspaper are initially borne by the paper's producers, ultimately, they are paid for by the newspaper's advertisers. This is not true for an electronic medium like the Internet.

Taffler points out that the proliferation of the home computer will make the expence of a $30 or $40 million printing press unnecessary. "You can get the same information to somebody over a modem and what you do is, you have the end user buy the hardware."

The newspaper will die when society reaches what Taffler refers to as critical mass. "You can't have it now because we haven't got critical mass." Critical mass occurs when there are enough people plugged into a new medium—like the Internet—that a switchover can happen.

Ultimately, says Taffler, it will be a newspaper's advertisers who will drive this shift when they realize the benefits of a medium like the Internet.

"When you think about it, few people will actually buy a product directly from a newspaper. There is some of it on television—they give you a phone number. But it's still not buying directly through the medium. The Internet is the only medium where, while you're consuming the medium, with a few clicks, you can actually buy the product. And that's very very powerful from the advertiser's point of view."

"The big, fat *Weekend Sun*... I look at the damn thing—it's just so fat—and I can see the slice of a tree in there,"

KALLE LASN

Some critics argue that it is not just economics that threaten the daily newspaper.

Kalle Lasn, co-founder of the Media Foundation which publishes *Adbusters*, sees newspapers becoming less and less relevent to the average reader.

"A lot of people, including myself, feel squeamish about picking up the *Weekend Sun*—the big, fat weekend Sun, because, I look at the damn thing—it's just so fat—and I can see the slice of a tree in there, you know? And then I turn the pages and there may be one or two in-depth stories that I really feel gave me something. The rest of it is just ads and stuff I'm not interested in."

Lasn points out television provides a much stronger sense of immediacy than the print media. reasoning that it is more satisfying, faster and convenient medium.

"I think that the combination of television and information hounds like myself surfing around the net picking up their information that way—I think that is sort of like a left-right punch for the daily newspaper."

But Sullivan insists the day of the daily newspaper isn't over yet.

"I think the point is that what we have is a dynamic and rapidly evolving industry right now. And for anybody to just sort of stand still and conform to some form of either-or analysis—it's really too simple a picture to paint." *jf*

"Whoever controls the media—the images—controls the culture."

Allen Ginsberg

Women headline as victims

by Theresa Chaboyer

Women are most likely to make the news as victims either of violence, flood or disaster: that's the word from Media Watch, the Vancouver-based media watchdog.

Shari Graydon, communications graduate and freelance columnist for the *Vancouver Sun* has been president of Media Watch for the last four of its 16 years. The portrayal of women in the media, she said, continues to shock her although she understands where it comes from.

"One of the reasons that we see the images of women that we do is because men still dominate both the advertising industry as well as the production industries in Hollywood," she explained.

The women we see on TV and in ads, she said, are more reflective of what men think women should look like than they are of women's views of themselves.

In TV news, for example, the female anchor still has to be more beautiful than average. "We have never seen a female anchor in Canadian television who approaches Lloyd Robertson in terms of age," Graydon said.

Established in 1981, Media Watch aims to ensure the realistic portrayal and equitable representation of women in the media. Its 1994 cross-Canada survey of women demonstrated there is a need for change. According to the survey, a majority of Canadian women are sometimes or often offended by portrayals of women in the media.

Although women rarely complain to offensive advertisers, 53 percent of the women surveyed waged a silent war against them by boycotting their products.

"One of the reasons that we see the images of women that we do is because men still dominate both the advertising industry as well as the production industries in Hollywood."

SHARI GRAYDON, PRESIDENT MEDIA WATCH

Producers and advertisers are beginning to get the message. "It makes bottom-line sense for advertisers to show women more progressively because women buy 50 percent of the products and it is counterproductive to insult them," Graydon said.

Television is also a hard place to find realistic images of women. Another 1994 Media Watch study revealed that female characters make up only a third of all characters on prime-time television, including news and Canadian programing.

Although TV dramas have been slow to respond to accusations of blatant sexism, news has improved since a 1982 CBC study found there were 12 male on-air anchors to every female on-air anchor.

Graydon said news has made a genuine effort to incorporate women: "Television news is one of the few places that there has been a noticeable increase. You still very rarely see a single female anchor in a prime-time news slot, although Gloria Macarenko is an exception—that's pretty recent. She used to share [the hosting] with Kevin Evans."

Graydon's master's thesis revealed that when the pressure was on and "the three major networks in the US were faced with greater competition from cable channels, the picture of women improved.

"When women have a choice between sexist and non-sexist [programming] they will gravitate towards the more progressive choice," she said. *jf*

- 30 percent of all bylines are by female reporters
- 17-20 percent of all newsmakers are women
- 53 percent of Canadian women have boycotted products sold offensively

Vancouver joins the fight to keep the CBC in BC

by Sarah Galashan

Small white signs of protest litter the lawns of Vancouver. It is becoming apparent that this city is one of many unwilling to accept the recent proposed government cuts to CBC funding.

Lawn signs, letter writing and petitions are all part of the 'Keep the Promise' campaign organized to speak out against the federal government's actions.

"We must make it known to the government that people are not satisfied, that there is not only a financial deficit, there is a cultural deficit," said Ken Johnson, one of the Vancouver organizers of the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting (FCB). The group is now lobbying 29 constituencies across Canada.

"We are a grassroots organization, we are all volunteering our efforts because we think it's an issue of prime concern."

Johnson said the campaign began in early November in only five ridings, but has since expanded in light of its success and the need to generate support for the sustained public funding of Canadian broadcasting.

Johnson refers to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as "the key engine driving the Canadian culture industry." But by providing the country with a prime time schedule that is currently 95 percent Canadian, the CBC struggles in a market which favours American domination.

The FCB stresses the liberal government's failure to keep its Red Book promise to provide stable, long-term funding for the CBC.

"The CBC's budget has been cut $400 million by the government," said Jim Thompson, FCB's Ottawa organizer. He ges voters to contact both federal politicians and local MPs to voice concerns and remind the liberal party of the upcoming federal election.

Local MP Anna Terrana is well aware of public concern over the cuts and held a public forum last Monday, at which the opinions of Vancouver residents were voiced.

According to Terrana's community liason, Jonathon Carrigan, the MP supports the CBC, but not at the expense of societal welfare. "Yes, she supports the CBC, but there are other priorities that people have to look at."

"Last year we held the exact same meeting when there were rumors of there being cuts and only two people showed up," said Carrigan. In fact this year over 300 residents were present.

Despite obvious public support the issues of child poverty and crime take precedent over CBC funding for Terrana, however she will be presenting the Liberal party with a petition of over 12000 names, all fighting for the CBC.

Most of the cuts have yet to affect broadcast, but come April '97 listeners and viewers will notice changes.

"I enjoy the CBC and it's important to me to do as much as I can," said John Lloyd, an avid CBC radio listener and one of many Vancouver residents working to save the CBC. *jf*

CBC CELEBRITY David Suzuki did the honors last Friday, launching the lawn sign campaign in Vancouver.. RICHARD LAM PHOTO

- Local radio programs will be cut from 7 hours to 3.5 each weekday.
- Morningside and Sunday Morning are to be merged into a single program.
- CBC television will suffer a 50 percent reduction to local and regional operations.
- News bureaus in New Brunswick and Saskatchewan will be eliminated.
- Regional arts and entertainment programming and several popular shows—including Man Alive, The Health Show, and Undercurrents—will be cancelled.
- Job losses will total 1850, all in the area of program production.

Busting the mainstream media

Kalle Lasn is changing the world one ad at a time. He wants to make the world media literate; it's a big task.

by Richelle Rae

KALLE LASN IS A MAN WITH A VISION, A VERY clear vision. He wants to change the world and make it a better place.

Lasn is the founder of the Media Foundation, the local group behind *Adbusters* magazine, whose mission is to create democracy in, out of all things, television.

And Lasn wants to teach a media literacy lesson to North America.

"There was a really big question of freedom of speech on television and democracy on the air waves," Lasn says, "and the more we looked into that the more it seemed to grow into this humungous problem that seemed to exist, and not just in Canada, but across the United States as well. It was this inability to buy 30 seconds of air time that started our Media Foundation and everything we've done since."

The foundation, started as a reaction to CBC's refusal to air a 30 second ad that came in response to the *Forests Forever* campaign.

Things got rolling quickly after that. Lasn explains: "As soon as we were unable to air it we got a press release and started getting some publicity and going on talk shows. Then it mushroomed into dozens and dozens of people all suddenly getting hot under the collar about it and it escallated from there into a newsletter which then grew into a magazine [Adbusters], you know, a B.C. magazine, and then by the third issue it was a Canadian magazine, by the fifth issue a North American magazine."

❖❖❖

THE IDEA IS TO REVOLUTIONISE MEDIA THROUGH culture-jamming, often subvertisements or anti-advertisements—spoofs of popular originals—designed to make people aware of its power.

Many networks, however, have refused to air the foundations' ads.

Lasn hasn't taken this laying down. In 1993, he fought back and launched a lawsuit against the CBC when it refused to air the Greenpeace and Media Foundation "Autosaurous" ad after some advertisers complained about it. The ad was aimed at attacking the auto industry and raising awareness about environmental issues surrounding it.

Last year, BC Provincial court found the crown corporation guilty of breach of contract, but dimissed the claim that it had violated the foundation's constitutional right to Freedom of Speech. Lasn launched an appeal which will be heard this spring.

"Everytime we go to court, there's this media blitz which educates Canadians about how their television system really works," he says. "It's like a media literacy lesson on the grand scale for Canadians."

Lasn wasn't surprised at the decision, though.

"We knew that our chances were very, very, tiny at this early stage," he explains. "But we do believe that we have a fighting chance of victory in the Supreme Court of Canada next year."

The foundation, Lasn adds, is currently launching a similar lawsuit in the US.

"We believe if we can win one or both these legal battles, then we can change the whole television landscape."

❖❖❖

ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SETbacks since the Media Foundation and *Adbusters* first began, there have also been some unexpected success stories.

The foundation has tried unsuccessfully for five years to organise the *Buy Nothing Day* campaign, but this year the world got the message.

"It was the most incredible campaign we've ever launched," says Lasn. "We must have been on at least 50 radio shows. It was like every five minutes there was someone phoning from all over the world, it was an incredble event that happened in nine countries around the world."

Why this year?

Lasn thinks it was a combination of two things. "This year we changed the date to the Christmas shopping season. And we also put it up on our Web site and somehow those two factors made it interesting and it caught on. We catalysed something that was way bigger than we imagined."

Although awareness increased, due in part to CNN running a national advertisement, Lasn feels the business community doesn't take the message seriously.

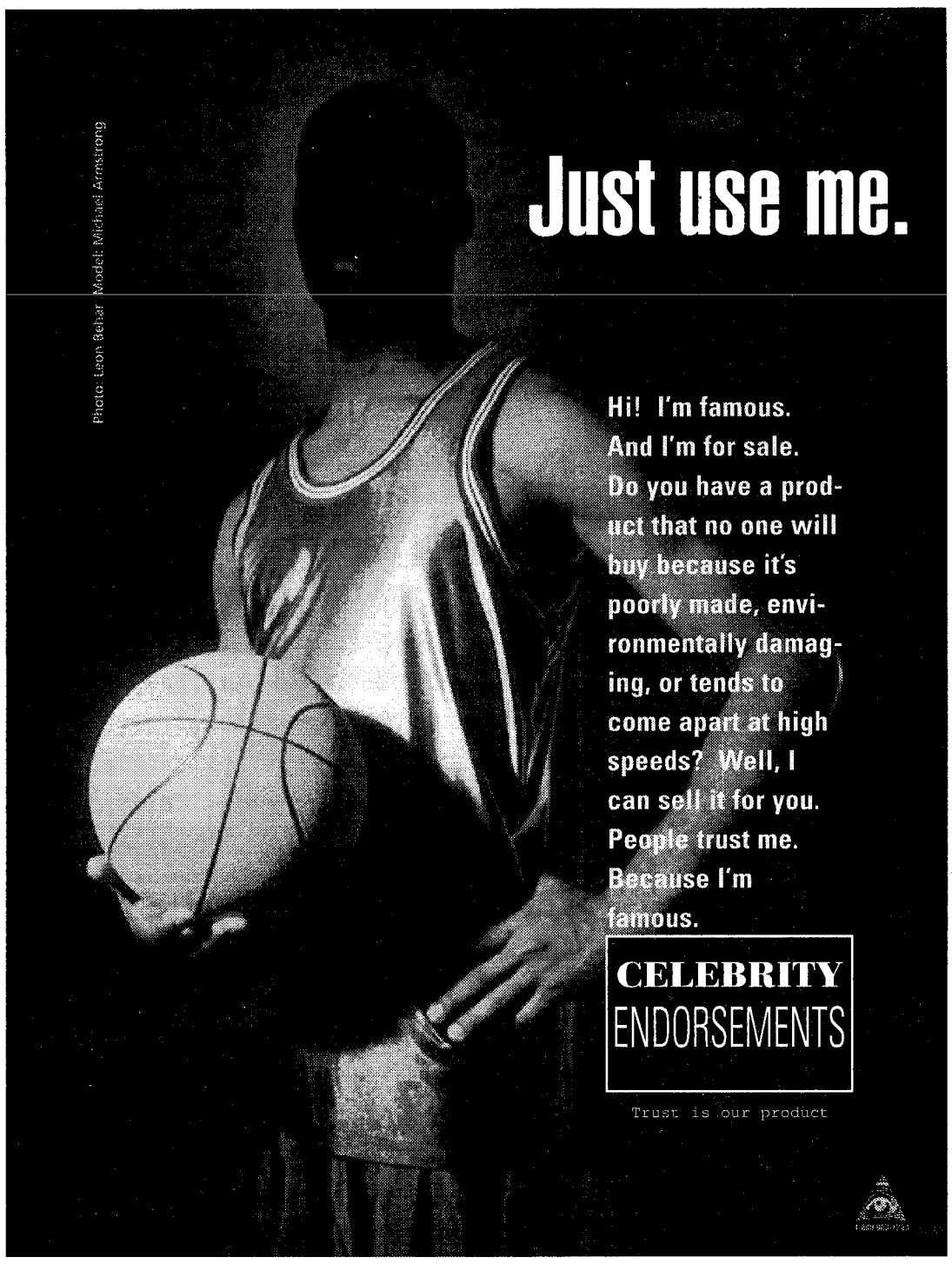
"They didn't quite see the environmental side of things," he says.

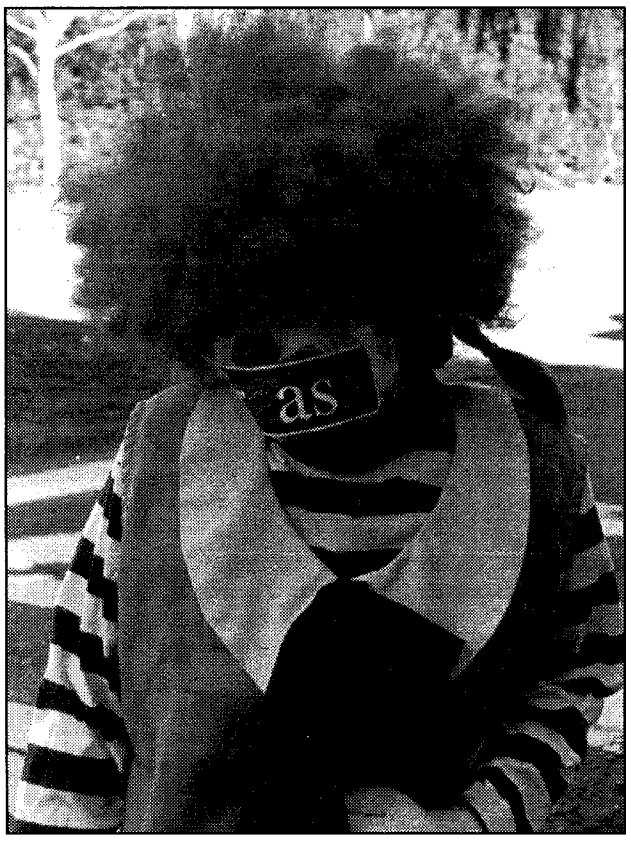
The Media Foundation has championed some other lesser known causes over the last six years as well. They've produced roughly thirty different television campaigns, as well as helping other environmental groups out around the world.

Support for the foundation is growing, Lasn points out. "I know that there is a huge percentage...in the advertising industry who actually aren't very proud of what they are doing," he says. "They know that their industry is kind of ethically neutral. When they look at *Adbusters* they sort of can't resist coming up with an idea and shooting it to us clandestine. If it came out that they were helping us they would probably get fired from their advertising agency."

In the future Lasn wants to increase the circulation of *Adbusters* from 30,000 to 50,000 across North America. He also wants the magazine to be bi-monthly next year, but that takes capital, which is hard to come by.

"I'm not looking to retire at all," says Lasn who believes there is still a lot of work to do. "I'm just looking for more good people to join our organisation. The next step is to turn *Adbusters* into a truly international magazine and get rid of this really American flavour it has now." *jf*





The Jammers stick it to McDonalds. RICHARD LAM PHOTO

Student activists jam the culture

by John Zaozirny

UBC's Culture Jammers are upset. They're upset at the growing commercialisation of education. Upset at the increasing corporate presence on campus. And upset to hear people say the situation is, though unfortunate, unchangeable.

But they're doing something about it.

"If you're by yourself and you get upset, you feel there's nothing you can do," says Culture Jammer Jonathan Oppenheim. "But if you know that there's other people upset, then as a group you can do something."

Originally formed as a group where people could discuss consumer culture, Culture Jammers' main objective is to open peoples' eyes, and send a signal that there *are* other opinions, other alternatives.

This openness is what separates Culture Jammers from other groups, explains member David Jago. "People can bring their own concerns and projects to the round table," he says.

And if the group has accomplished anything, Singh adds, it has been to show students they can take charge of their own environment.

Well-publicised actions like the deflating of the Ronald McDonald blow-up at Storm the Wall last March are an integral part of the Culture Jammer strategy—they generate media attention for their cause.

Oppenheim stresses, however, the main goal of Culture Jammers, which is to raise awareness as opposed to telling people what to think.

"We don't expect to change people's minds," he says. "We want to get people thinking about it."

The rest, he adds, is up to students.

"Some people may think we're a bunch of lunatics," he says, "and that's okay, too," adding that even then Culture Jammers have done their job, creating a debate that didn't exist before.

Jago adds that it's important for students about the alternatives. "There is an alternative to the corporate [agenda]," he says, "which is basically sell, sell, sell. It's a philosophy of the dollar." *jf*

Letters cont from p.6

allowing one of its councillors to sensationalize issues to a level that would rival the activities of Fleet Street.

Perhaps the most disconcerting statement David makes is his claim that "the audit and court action, plus the costs attending to turmoil in the food and beverage operations, worsened the ongoing central problem of the Society's deficit/debt." Such a statement is tryly incredible for a member of the finance committee to make. As he well knows, for the fiscal year (Jan. to Dec.) 1996 the GSS will break even. This constitutes a vast improvement over fiscal year 1995, which resulted in a 28,000 deficit. The success that has been achieved is due completely to the diligent and patient efforts of the finance committee, the executive, and council in addressing the hard issues surrounding our operational inefficiencies.

While David is free to express his opinion on these issues and the executive and council welcome critical approaches to our decision making process, members must consider that the best interest of the Society includes responsible public statements. In the face of efforts to include David Murphy in the processes of the GSS, full disclosure of the issues to GSS member, his public statements fall short of this most basic requirement.

Kevin Dwyer
GSS President

Consumption Kills

January 27 to 31, 1997 is Environment Week at UBC. The Student Environment Centre will be having a number of speakers and interesting displays throughout the week, in the SUB conversation pit.

I remember a few years back we used to hear about the environment all the time. Polls said that it was the most important issue to Canadians. There were high profile blockades at Clayoquot Sound, the Temagami Wilderness in O and other areas. Scientists around the world were telling us that we were in real danger of undermining the life support systems of the planet, and governments around the world were listening and actually taking some concrete action. There were at least two international protocols on protecting the ozone layer in which most of the world's nations agreed to phase out the use of ozone depleting chemicals. The 'Earth Summit' was held in Brazil to try to get the world's governments to agree that it is in everyone's interest that our activities do not threaten the very things that allow humans to survive and to reach agreements which ensure that this is the case. It nearly succeeded...

Why does it seem that governments have now slipped back into complacency about these issues? Part of the answer lies in the first part of this little story. The poll. governments are political entities that react to 'public opinion', and their pollsters tell them right now that the environment is far down the list of things that are important to the public right now, behind defecits, taxes, and jobs. These things are vitally important but what we forget is that our entire economy is absolutely dependant on the health of the natural world. Everything that we use comes from the earth. Economic wealth is created by turning natural resources into things of value to humans. Other parts of the economy such as services, money speculation etc., redistribute wealth but they do not create it. Therefore, we cannot have an economy at all if there is not a viable environment. Questions of jobs, deficit, and taxes are irrelevant if the natural systems that grow the basic materials on which our economy depends are threatened or undermined. Even the materials that we get from deep within the earth such as petroleum or minerals, are not much good to us if we are unable to grow enough food to feed ourselves. My point here is that it only makes sense that the environment should be our first concern, because all other issues that affect our lives depend on the health of the environment. Perhaps if we replaced the word "environment" in daily usage with the word "life" we would feel different about things. Since we cannot survive without air, water and natural materials (food), in effect their meanings are the same.

So, as we have seen, governments are bodies that react to public opinion. Although resolving some of the environmental problems that threaten our survival will require both personal changes as well as national and international agreements, governments will not act until they perceive that they will lose popularity if they don't. The late '80s and early '90s were a time of action by governments because their citizens were demanding that they act. Therefore, the responsibility for saving the environment relies on - you guessed it - you! Luckily, this is quite easy to do. The first thing is to understand the threats to "life" posed by some of our human activities. Keep aware by critically reading the newspaper or watching the evening news. Also, the Student Environment Center is holding its yearly environment week beginning next Monday, January 27. This is a full week of information displays and speakers from various environmental groups, municipalities and organiziations. Each day has a different theme. Environment week will be held in the SUB, with the information displays in the conversation pit and speakers in various other rooms. Watch for signs.

Once you begin to learn more about the threats to the environment you will begin to realize that virtually all of them have the same cause...Our level of consumption in the industrialized world. The second thing to do in saving the environment is even easier. It just involves thinking about your consumption and realizing which parts truly give you satisfaction, and which parts are just fleeting pleasures that leave you less fulfilled in the long run than you were before (junk food comes to mind, for example). You may find that just by doing this, your financial situation gets a whole lot better - and you are saving the planet!

These are changes at the personal level, but by educating yourself and by lowering your consumption and therefore simplifying your life, you automatically begin to change public opinion

By doing these things, you automatically begin to change public opinion - and therefore to prod your government into action.

Jeremy Forst is the S.E.C. secretary.

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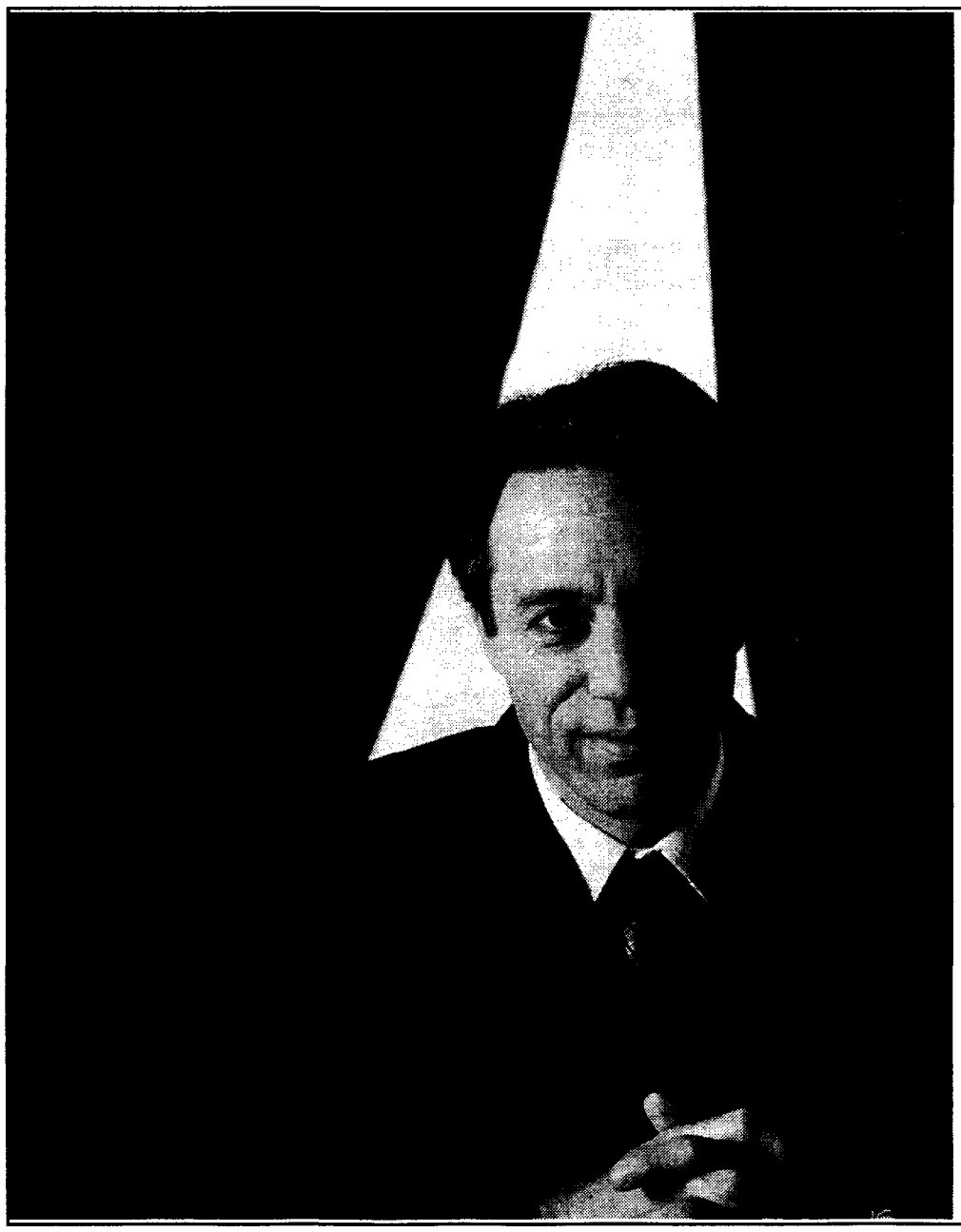

I went into public relations to

help the people

who help themselves...

The people who ran the corporations and the engines of international commerce. The people who were always under attack by special interest groups — environmentalists, activists, students. Because the attacks were getting worse. Some of these groups were even winning court cases. I decided I had to do something. I joined Burston-Marstellar.

I'm glad I did. My name is George Nelson. I've been with Burston-Marstellar now for fifteen years. Over that time we've become the leader in three areas.

International Relations. When the former military junta in Argentina disappeared 35,000 problem citizens, they called us in to manage the world press. Today we're looking after Indonesia: same problem, bigger numbers. If the former government of South Africa had called us, we could have saved apartheid.

Crisis Management. When a client kills a lot of people or devastates the environment, we make sure their version of events dominates the news. We handled Exxon Valdez, and the Union Carbide problem in Bhopal. We also smothered health care reform for the US health insurance industry.

Astroturf Organizing. We create grassroots groups to serve our clients' needs. We organized the National Smokers Alliance for Philip Morris to drown out the anti-smoking fanatics. And we put together a coalition of women's groups for Dow Corning to protest in favor of breast implants.

Well, you can imagine how proud I am to be part of the BM team. I'm not sure who to thank for this chance to serve the people who serve the public. Perhaps my mother. She used to say, "George, I never know when you're telling the truth."

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Much ado about a Dane

Kenneth Branagh once found *Hamlet* intimidating. But now, he hopes, audiences will be better prepared for his four-hour movie adaptation.

by Peter T. Chattaway

There comes a moment in every actor's life, says Uncle Monty in *Withnail & I*, when he knows he will never play the Dane. If that moment ever came to Kenneth Branagh, it fast disappeared. Branagh first essayed the part at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts when he was 20; since then he has played the character hundreds of times on stage, and today his massive four-hour film adaptation opens at the Varsity theatre in Vancouver.

Don't expect the usual melancholic interpretation, though. Branagh, who met with *The Ubyssey* at the Hotel Vancouver two weeks ago, says he moved the story into the opulent 19th century to make his *Hamlet* more exciting. His decision was inspired, in part, by *Mayerling*, a 1968 film starring Omar Sharif and Catherine Deneuve about an Austro-Hungarian prince who falls for a commoner.

"The world of that film was all candles and mirrors and corruption. I just felt it was very, very decadent, and it seemed to be very right for Hamlet. I wanted to get away from the kind of gothic, gloomy, glowering castles and things, which has been done, and done very well, in previous versions.

"And you know, in the 19th century, borders were always changing, countries were changing hands with intermarriages and things. It was all very unstable, lots of military movement and stuff, so it felt like a good place to get right away from gothic gloom and into something that was a bit more vibrant."

Restored to its full length, *Hamlet* may be difficult to follow for those who aren't familiar with the larger political ramifications of Hamlet's family troubles. Invading armies marching across snowy plains, huge mirror-filled sets, and a bombastic score by Patrick Doyle all contribute to the film's sheer magnitude. Branagh claimed in his 1989 autobiography that *Hamlet* made him feel "terrified, intimidated and small," but he's clearly over that now.

"I suppose I felt small and intimidated because the play is so vast, and the more I did it, the closer it seemed to get. And also it felt like there was a necessity to give it size and splendour, to make the connection between the intimate personal lives of a small family and events that end up changing the head of state, the ruler. So it's a fantastic thing to be able to do in a play, to say that, almost from the problems between a mother and son, an entire nation changes hands by the end of the play.

"That study of the nature of power is one of the things that makes the play big, that resonance, and I came around to the idea that a full-length version of all of that had to be engaged with, so," he laughs slightly, "I guess I felt less intimidated."

Branagh almost had to settle for a shorter film. Distributors, mindful of Polonius' adage that "brevity is the soul of wit," were afraid that audiences outside of Los Angeles and New York would not want to sit through four hours of Shakespeare, so they commissioned an edition half as long, just in case. Branagh now says the shorter version will probably stay locked away, though he notes, "It's amazing how well it works in a version that is two hours and five minutes long. It's hard to imagine what's cut, isn't it? You have to be extraordinarily savage, and yet somehow the story does work."

Ironically, the one scene that might be cut the easiest also happens to be one of the best-known moments in all of theatre. "If you took the 'To be or not to be' out of the play, it would not affect the story one iota. That's the one point which is kind of truly meditative, in a general sense; Hamlet doesn't refer, in that speech, to anything specific about what's happening with him."

Branagh's solution? Reintegrate the soliloquy into the narrative. In fact, he says, most actors tend to forget that Hamlet appears in the scene only after he's been summoned by Polonius. "When Hamlet comes into that scene, he really ought to be playing, in some sense, 'Where are they? Why have I been sent for when no one's around?' So we play a bit of that, where he walks into the hall and, when he starts that soliloquy, he knows they *might* be listening. And maybe you could explain why he doesn't mention anything to do with the specifics of his story. He never mentions Claudius, he never mentions his father in that speech. He just sort of throws out the idea that he is considering whether actually being alive is a very good option, given the whips and scorns of time and all that kind of stuff."

A PALPABLE HIT? Kenneth Branagh hopes his **HAMLET** will score a bullseye with the university crowd. ROBIN YEATMAN PHOTO

Branagh's career was initially inspired, in part, when he saw Derek Jacobi play Hamlet on the stage some years ago. Jacobi has since become involved in much of Branagh's work, and he directed Branagh in a stage version of *Hamlet* ten years ago. Now the tables have turned, with Branagh directing Jacobi in the role of Claudius. Did Jacobi ever try directing his director? Did he ever say anything like, "Come on, Ken, I told you not to do that ten years ago!"?

Branagh tilts his head cautiously. "He didn't *say* it. I'm sure there are tons of things that he would disagree with in my performance, but I think, like me, he believes these things change and evolve, and what you do ten years on is different. Having played it a lot and thought about it a lot, I tried, from take to take, to just react in the moment, and not *repeat* anything or try and capture anything that I've done on stage.

"I felt confident enough to just do it, and let the play and the part speak for itself. It's a risky business. You really do have to have done the work to let the part play you, that sort of magic state we all want to get to where it's surprising, it's just coming out, you haven't planned anything, and it's spontaneous and real. And you get to that stage having worked very hard on what it means and having practiced it a lot. I think Derek feels that, and he's one of those actors who's happy to give away things. Might have worked on one take, but throw it away this time and try something else. *Trust* is the thing."

Branagh *is* sensitive to the notion that *Hamlet* might play mostly to people with a "snob value" factor. "It's very easy for people—and I've benefitted from it enormously and spuriously—to be aggrandised by an association with Shakespeare. Some people will assume that I am far more intelligent than I know myself to be, because Shakespeare can make those people look much cleverer than they are, and that happens with some kinds of audiences. They congratulate themselves on having seen it."

Branagh has tried to break out of the Shakespearean mold before, but audiences have been lukewarm at best to *Dead Again*, *Peter's Friends* and the calamitous *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. More recently, Branagh seems to have resigned himself to the works of the Bard, playing Iago in Oliver Parker's *Othello* and directing *A Midwinter's Tale*, a comedy about volunteers in a low-budget *Hamlet*. Does he worry that audiences won't let him be more versatile?

"No, I don't worry about it, because you just have to follow your nose, and you get typecast in the last thing that was successful is what happens, I think. And there are worse things to be typecast as. It may be that I'm dogged in future by people who find it difficult to accept me in a modern role when they think I should have a pair of black tights on."

"There are worse things to be typecast as. It may be that I'm dogged in future by people who find it difficult to accept me in a modern role when they think I should have a pair of black tights on."
KENNETH BRANAGH

I suggest, tongue in cheek, that he'll be asked someday to replace Laurence Olivier as Zeus in a remake of *Clash of the Titans*.

"Oh, well, I don't know about that," Branagh says, grinning widely. "Maggie Smith's in that as well, with all the gods up there, they're all looking into that wee pool, aren't they? That was Ray Harryhausen, wasn't it, who did *Jason and the Argonauts*? I loved that. It's a great picture. It still holds up. Even though the special effects are what they are, it still holds up, all those little skeleton men, and that big bird."

Between his enthusiasm for such flights of fancy and the fencing prowess he flaunts in *Hamlet*, Branagh would seem to be a natural for the part of the young lightsabre-wielding Obi-Wan Kenobi in the upcoming *Star Wars* prequels. Rumours to that effect have circulated for years now, but Branagh insists there is nothing to them.

"We actually had to ring George Lucas's people and say, 'Look, we're not lobbying for the part, the rumour didn't come from us.' I didn't want to have that conversation. I didn't want to embarrass him or me, by him having to say, 'You couldn't possibly play this! How dare you!'"

He smiles coyly. "But, you know, if they give me a call, I'm taking the call, there's no question." *jf*

UBC Humanists' Society
"Free Speech and the Internet: Principles and Controversy"
A lecture by Richard Rosenberg of the Dept. of Computer Science
12:30pm, January 28th, Buchanan D205

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