



May 2001

In this month's bulletin:

**Fortress Quebec II Noam Chomsky II Media-L
Recommended Resources II Upcoming Events
The Final Word**

Editor's Note: This will be Barry's final Bulletin until September 2001.

Fortress Quebec: Did the Media Tell the Story of the Summit of the Americas?



Source: *Toronto Star*, April 22, 2001

Fortress Quebec is Breached



Source: *Globe and Mail*, April 21, 2001

For background to this article, read "Protest in Quebec City, April 20-22: Anticipating the Media Coverage," from the April 2001 Bulletin.

It would be interesting to get immediate responses from a cross section of people to these front-page photographs. The old journalistic saw was exemplified, "If it bleeds it leads." The *Globe & Mail's* editors must have relished the one captioned "Fortress Quebec," a photograph that served to confirm people's worst fears about confrontation, assaults and bloody violence. (As an exercise in media analysis and the strangely postmodern, this same young man turned up four days later on the social message-oriented CBC television show "Counterspin!") The *Toronto Star's* picture of a defiant protester seemingly guiding the direction of the rainbow-arcing water cannon was aesthetically pleasing and somewhat quirky for a front page. It was hardly typical of the experience of those combating the watery blasts turned on them, to say nothing of the omnipresent tear gas.

My Toronto colleague, media critic Barrie Zwicker, pointed out an interesting pattern in reporting the actions of the protesters. On the CBC radio newscast, we kept hearing that "protesters threw rocks at the police..." Barrie's simple critique: "Most of the protesters were peaceful so why did everyone get tarred by the same brush?" (He actually convinced the CBC news-writer to change



his script for the next newscast!) In looking at the coverage in the *Globe & Mail* and the *Toronto Star*, one could find other examples of this unfortunate error.

On Monday April 22, CBC TV's nightly newscast offered us a retrospective twenty-minute feature story entitled "Two Summits." Starting with Prime Minister Chretien's speech and his venomous harangue of the rabble-rousing protesters, we then cut to the unsettling images of people being hauled away by the Darth Vader styled police and hundreds of people being tear gassed. Against this backdrop, the documentary was mainly anchored around the activities throughout the week of two high profile leaders, anti-free trade activist Maude Barlow and Tom Aquino, head of the Business Council on National Issues. For Aquino, the deals being signed for the implementation of the FFTA were a step forward; corporations are model citizens and of course, human rights and environmental concerns were to be enshrined in the process. "Maude is an extremist and is dead wrong," he exclaimed. "Maude offers the worst case scenario of free trade in which we would be selling off our sovereignty and our resources, and jeopardizing our rights." The camera followed her while she exhorted her followers at a planning session and then showed her participating at the peaceful march (20,000 people) on Saturday and then bravely deciding to go to the infamous security fence which guaranteed her being tear gassed.

By concentrating on two leaders with diametrically opposing views the CBC created a misleading dichotomy. There were at least four or five typical positions about the pros and cons of FFTA (some might claim dozens of different points of view) but the CBC simply delivered the predictable journalistic convention of giving us two opposite perspectives.

At the summit, it was obvious that the majority of the young people who were protesting understood the lack of communication between the two sides in which the men in suits on the inside were talking to themselves, discussing an agenda that no outsiders would see. That less than 25 per cent of people between 18-25 refuse to vote is an eloquent comment on their sense of futility in exercising their democratic rights to envision a world where they can make a difference. (Those who had participated in the parallel summit held earlier undoubtedly felt empowered.) Culture critic and social activist Naomi Klein correctly pointed out that for young people the subtext of the event was all about the rage and frustration that they were experiencing, before and during the summit. Naomi Klein's column in the *Globe & Mail*, April 25, "The bonding properties of tear gas," makes some trenchant criticism of what the event was all about:

The traditional institutions that once organized citizens into neat, structured groups are all in decline: unions, religions, political parties. Yet something propelled tens of thousands of individuals to the streets anyway, an intuition, a gut instinct – perhaps just the profoundly human desire to be part of something larger than oneself.

Did they have their party line together, a detailed dissection of the ins and outs of the FFTA? Not always. But neither can the Quebec protests be dismissed as vacuous political tourism. George W. Bush's message at the summit was that the mere act of buying and selling would do our governing for us. "Trade helps spread freedom," he said. It was precisely this impoverished and passive vision of democracy that was rejected on the streets outside.

Noam Chomsky's definition of democracy and Maude Barlow's insights also offer appropriate comments on these conflicts.



Democracy is a system of government in which elite elements based in the business community control the state by virtue of their dominance of the private society, while the population observes quietly. So understood, democracy is a system of elite decision and public ratification, as in the United States itself. Correspondingly, popular involvement in the formation of public policy is considered a serious threat.

Noam Chomsky from *On Power and Ideology*, 1987

One thing is clear: civil society politics are the politics of the 21st century. It is time to take them seriously.

Maude Barlow, from *Global Showdown*, 2001

- The media coverage of the protesters is problematic because people bring different expectations to an event of this magnitude. Like taking a Rorschach test, everyone finds his/her own dominant image and message.
 - What were your expectations of the Summit?
 - How well were they fulfilled?
 - How was the meaning/messages of the summit influenced by the behavior of both peaceful and confrontational protesters?
- If you were the executive producer for a television network, how would you have deployed your crew and interviewers in order to provide fair and comprehensive coverage of this complex event?
- Summarize the stories about the legacy and sociopolitical implications of the summit. Decide to what extent the dominant observations relate to "summit spin" – the conscious attempt to intensify a specific point of view while downplaying others.

Naomi Klein has an outstanding web site with an archive of her articles, links to alternative media sites and an opportunity to ask her questions: www.nologo.org.

An Inspired Radical: Media Education Perspectives on Noam Chomsky



Noam Chomsky is arguably America's leading dissident. An inspired radical, Chomsky looks at journalistic censorship and the corporate control of the mass media. He challenges the US view as a defender of democracy by revealing the hidden motivations of its policy makers. Many media educators have been influenced by his work and have applied his illuminating insights to many important examples of US policy, from the Persian Gulf war to the bombing of Kosovo. However, I would caution teachers to not accept everything Chomsky says; otherwise, we are accepting a monolithic view of the media (In short, don't be a blind Chomskyite!)



Several years ago, the Montreal producers of the very successful film *Manufacturing Consent* decided that an educational version of the 160 minute film would be desirable and edited out some of the slower moving sections and packaged the film in six, self-contained parts, varying from 12 to 43 minutes. The six videos in the *Manufacturing Consent – Noam Chomsky and the Media* series include:

1. Toward a Vision of a Future Society
2. A Propaganda Model of the Media Plus Exploring Alternative Media
3. A Case Study: Cambodia and East Timor
4. Concision: No Time for New Ideas
5. Holocaust Denial vs. Freedom of Speech
6. Noam Chomsky: Personal Influences

I was asked to prepare a study guide for the film (it appears in the inside jacket of the videos). In light of the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City where there was an immense amount of rhetoric about freedom and the values of democracy I felt it was appropriate to resurrect and update the applications of Noam Chomsky who continues to publish, lecture and critique our politicized world.

Even if you haven't seen the film or read Chomsky, I hope the following excerpts from the original study guide and the addenda will be an incentive to become acquainted with his philosophy. (See also the short reviews of the accompanying recent books about Chomsky.) The six-part video package is available as well as a very reasonably priced two-part video set. Contact The National Film Board for either Canadian or America rates 1-800-267-7564. An excellent introduction to the man and his ideas can be found in the companion book to this film: *Manufacturing Consent – Noam Chomsky and the Media: A Primer in Intellectual Self-Defence*, Black Rose Books, 1994.



Chomsky's Propaganda Model

When you can't control people by force and when the voice of the people can be heard, you have this problem. It may make people so curious and so arrogant that they don't have the humility to submit to a civil rule and therefore you have to control what they think. And the standard way to do this is to resort to what in more honest days used to be called propaganda. Manufacture of consent. Creation of necessary illusions. Various ways of either marginalizing the general public or reducing them to apathy in some fashion.

Throughout this series, Chomsky constantly challenges the status quo. *A Propaganda Model of the Media*, plus *Exploring Alternative Media*, provides an ideal introduction to the six modules in the package. Beginning with his response to a college student who role plays "Jane USA" (who naively believes she lives in a democratic society in which she can create her own destiny) the viewer is given a cross section of Chomsky encounters – some lively discussions and, occasionally, some acrimonious debates. Central to Chomsky's goal is the necessity of having free access to information, ideas and opinions. But what should be our democratic privilege turns out to be a major challenge because of the biases or "filters" of institutions, particularly the mass media. Through short case studies of the influential *New York Times*, and the managed news coverage of the Gulf War, Chomsky shows how governments and large corporations manufacture consent for their policies and ideologies.



To augment *A Propaganda Model of the Media*, viewers may want to read the introductory chapter of *Manufacturing Consent* where the five filters of the media that comprise this model are outlined in the first chapter. Try applying these filters to some current situations. The following are some suggestions:

- The news coverage of some global hot spots, especially where American government and corporate interests are at stake. If there was an invasion by American troops, what was the language and terminology used?
- Examine the coverage of a government scandal (the equivalent of the Savings and Loans debacle). How was the news managed?
- The term "manufacturing consent" is the title of one of Chomsky's most widely read books and is a key concept which pervades his work. The term refers to how the dominant media create the conditions for our acceptance of their attitudes and opinions – the very essence of propaganda. To make this notion personally relevant, recall situations in your education, the workplace, or in encounters with government or any large institution or corporation in which you realized they had effectively engineered consent for a regulation, a policy, or conveyed a view on what was the proper attitude or political position to be taken. In your examples, try to identify the use of language and other techniques of persuasion.

There are several good follow-ups to Chomsky's description of the propaganda model. Examine the media coverage of a controversial issue – ideally involving government or corporate policy. Compare coverage in different news sources – newspapers, radio and television. Read some coverage in alternative media. What are the ideological dimensions to these situations? Who is privileged? Who is marginalized or left out?

- Chomsky discusses the immense power and information control of the media conglomerates. For more detailed information on the pressure of advertisers on the content of television, the use of PR flacks to put a good corporate face on such crises as Union Carbide's handling of the toxic gas leak in Bhopal, India or Clinton's scandals, you may wish to consult *The Media Monopoly* by Ben Bagdikian, Beacon Press, 1990 or books by Robert McChesney such as *Rich Media and Poor Democracy* and *Megamedia* by Dean Alger, 1998.
- Fortunately, there are alternatives to the mainstream media. From college radio and alternative stations in large urban centers to publications which systematically critique the news or cover important issues such as health care, environmental protection, sexism and racism. These include *The Nation*, *Utne Reader*, *This Magazine*, *Mother Jones*, *Extra*, *Lies of Our times*, and *Z magazine* (the last two publications feature articles by Noam Chomsky).

It's not the case as the naive might think, that indoctrination is inconsistent with democracy, rather as this whole line of thinkers observes, it's the essence of democracy.

The concepts of indoctrination and democracy are common threads in Chomsky's work.

- "Manufacture of consent. Creation of necessary illusions. Various ways of either marginalizing the general public or reducing them to apathy in some fashion." Based on your observation of the way the media work and/or your understanding of Chomsky, how do you think the public is marginalized or reduced to apathy?
- The Gulf War is case book study of propaganda and the ultimate management of the news. Apply the filters of the propaganda model to the coverage of the Gulf War or to some other important conflict such as the war in Kosovo or the wars in the Middle East.



- Chomsky refers to the process of people working within the elite system who see its many flaws and contradictions eventually internalizing its values "and then you regard your self – in a way correctly – as acting perfectly freely. You start saying things because it's necessary to say them and pretty soon you believe them because you have to" from Language and Politics). How do you think this process happens? Can you share any experiences of people who have done this?
- The second video concludes with reference to the role of alternative media. Why is this an appropriate conclusion? Consider some specific situations in recent years in which the insights of alternative media would be especially valuable.

The US media are alone in that you must meet the condition of concision. You gotta say things between 2 commercials or in 600 words. And that's a very important fact, because the beauty of concision – you know, saying a couple of sentences between commercials – the beauty of that is you can only repeat conventional thoughts.

The video on concision focuses on a major limitation of television – the way the very structure of typical programs, especially in terms of time limitations, shape the content and the ideological messages. We see Noam Chomsky in a variety of settings from college radio to mainstream venues such as Bill Moyers or the Macneil-Leher report. We learn about how the media handles controversy and Chomsky's unconventional views of government and media institutions. The program concludes with Chomsky participating in the constructed nature of the medium with a television camera shooting post-production footage for inserting introductory and reaction shots. Questions that media students may want to consider are:

- What news programs have you watched in which important ideas could not be explored because of the limitations of the format, of time restrictions, or of the biases of the host or newscaster. Try writing some 30-second sound bites on issues such as economic trends, environmental damage in North America, and American foreign policy. What did you learn from this experience?
- How have the media handled controversial issues and dissenters? Some examples might include the treatment of protest groups and leaders, and groups that tend to be marginalized – visible minorities, labor, women's rights.

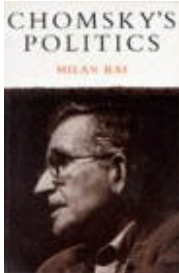
Regarding self-defense and patterns of intervention:

- Explain the following: "In a democratic society, I mean it may be paradoxical, but the freer the society is the more it's necessary to resort to devices like induced fear."
- Of particular interest to Canadians and Europeans is Chomsky's following comment "A part of the reason why the media in Canada and Belgium and so on are more open is that it just doesn't matter that much what people think." In light of the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, to what extent do you agree?
- "The US media are alone in that you must meet the condition of concision. You gotta say things between 2 commercials or in 600 words. And that's a very important fact, because the beauty of concision – you know, saying a couple of sentences between commercials – the beauty of that is you can only repeat conventional thoughts." Comment on this statement. Would you say that this is true for Canada as well?
- The connection between concision and the consequence of repeating conventional thoughts is important since it seems to be inherent in the format, the commercial base and even the attitudes of network programs to the realm of ideas. What do you think Chomsky is



suggesting in his dissatisfaction over "conventional thought"? How would you provoke unconventional thought in the mass media? Later he says "you can't give evidence if you're stuck with concision, you know. That's the genius of this structural constraint". If you did the sound bite exercise, how might that experience shed light on the issue of concision and "conventional thoughts"? Further perspectives on the challenges of concision can be found in the recent book *The Sound Bite Society* by Jeffrey Scheuer, 1999.

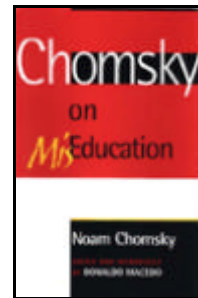
For those of you who are interested in Chomsky and his philosophy, there are a number of helpful resources to help you better understand the man and his work.



Chomsky's Politics by Milan Rai Verso , 1995. The very prolific and often dense writing of Chomsky can be very challenging. To fathom his politics, media and the role of intellectuals today, Milan Rai's book may provide an answer. The book claims to help those who are reading Chomsky for the first time as well as those who are familiar with his work. It also corrects some widespread misunderstanding. Here are the titles of the first four chapters: "The Propaganda Model," "The Culture of Terrorism," "Intellectual Self-defense" and "Patterns of Intervention."

Chomsky on Miseducation. Edited and introduced by Donaldo Macedo Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

According to Henry Giroux, the leading theorist of critical pedagogy, *Chomsky on Miseducation*, "is a book that should be read by everyone interested in education and the crisis of democracy." Macedo has accomplished an important task: to select the key ideas of Chomsky as they pertain to education. This includes a 22-page interview that touches on undemocratic classrooms, and American interventions in Vietnam and Kosovo.



The book concludes with debate with John Silber, "Unmasking a Pedagogy of Lies." The section on "Market democracy in a neo-liberal order" scrutinizes the deceptions of American politics and President Clinton's foreign policy. While Macedo has done a competent job in presenting Chomsky's ideas, teachers should realize that this book does not offer any practical curriculum or offer ways that the important exercises in democratic politics should be performed in the classroom.

If you have any ideas about using Chomsky in the classroom, please share them!

Media Clips

Media-L: A Listserve for Media Educators

Internet listserves – subscription-based electronic discussion forums that are distributed via e-mail – are always precarious instruments for meaningful dialogue. Used effectively, they provide a forum for some important issues and debates. Equally as important is the sharing of resources, an area that is essential to the constantly changing media classroom. I asked Bakari Chavanu, a California secondary English and media teacher and Chris Worsnop, my Association for Media Literacy colleague – both active participants on the Media -L – for their comments. Eager to debate ideas as well as generous in sharing what works in his media classroom, Bakari Chavanu seems to me to be the ideal listserve participant. Chris brings to the table his experience as a former English Coordinator for a large Ontario school board and his valuable work on media assessment.



The biggest liability of listserves? Well, it only takes one or two people to go on a sustained rant to test the goodwill of the list. This has happened several times on Media-L. At one point the Web master asked the list members if the offending party should be removed from the list. The vast majority said no, confirming what I sense is characteristic of most media teachers: tolerance for extreme views because they deserve to be heard, not censored. Another problem, which Chris has noted, is the result of the limitations of the inevitable Americentric bias. However, this could be construed as a strength because so many people are just starting their journeys in media education and they talk about issues with an engaging curiosity and enthusiasm. The liability is that that one has the sense of constantly reinventing the wheel... "What's a good way to teach advertising?" new listees often ask, evoking an audible groan!

Because most people want to read short one-pagers, there is a danger in trying to express ideas concisely which may deserve more in-depth treatment. A theory group was launched several months ago but, to my knowledge, has been silent for some time. I suspect that listserves are clearly not the best way to communicate challenging research issues. Regarding Media-L, there are too many people who make regular contributions to acknowledge fully, but here are a just a few samplings:

- My Toronto colleagues Derek Boles and Neil Andersen, who are always ready to weigh in on important debates.
- Mike Gange from New Brunswick whose column last year "Mike Gange's Diary" offered terrific insights into the media industry.
- The amazing resources and program alerts from Frank Baker, who conjures up an image of a multitasking producer in a studio working with five computers and watching ten TV monitors in order to select key information for media educators.
- Teachers such as Julia Robinson, Rose Pacatte and Terry Driska who share their resources and collectively offer an amazing diversity of material.

Ok, so how do I join?

1. Just send an e-mail message to this address listproc@nmsu.edu
2. The subject line doesn't matter.
3. In the body of the message itself, put this one line: subscribe Medial (your name), (your title), (your organization)

Try to make everything fit on one line... abbreviate the position and/or organization if needed. Don't type the parenthesis when you fill in your title and organization. For example: subscribe Medial Jim Ficklin, Owner, SouthWest Sound/Video

My Reflections on the Media-L by Chris Worsnop

Media-L is invaluable for getting hints and suggestions about good Web sites to visit, books to read, articles to check out etc. These come from all sides, but I have to mention Frank Baker as one of the chief purveyors

Media-L also keeps me up to date on some of the latest trends and issues in media education -- but only from a US point of view. I have to rely on other lists for a worldview. This is one of the disappointments of Media-L. Even when world issues of media education are introduced to the list, they seem to disappear quickly.

The presence on the list of annoying one-note-samba players who make ad hominem attacks on colleagues is the list's chief drawback. A good number of people have delisted in disgust or frustration -- people whose absence makes a difference to the quality and breadth of the list itself. Their loss is far greater than the contribution of the messianic tub-thumpers who have driven them out. Yet even so, I cannot bring myself to support banning the participation of these spoilers. Sending them to Coventry seems to be the best treatment.



But most of all, Media-L is a comfortable, daily reminder that I have a group of colleagues who are as interested as I am in learning more about media education. It is one of the most valuable uses I have for the Internet, warts and all.

My Reflections on Media-L by Bakari Chavanu

As a student and teacher of media literacy, the Media-L listserve has become a primary source for helping me keep current on the issues, ideas, and debates related to media education. If I'm putting together a media unit, say on news media, I can post a query to Media-L and within a few hours receive powerfully useful feedback from dedicated media literary teachers, educators, consultants, and activists, who share my goals of helping students critically explore, analyze, and respond to the media. And now that the messages of this resource are being archived, old and new members of the listserve will be able to access important messages about such issues as media violence, advertising, commercialism in the classroom, media literacy pedagogy, and a daily list of recommended Web sites, articles, books, videos and announcements. In my view, the listserve is an ongoing virtual panel discussion and kitchen table dialogue between some wonderfully supportive people.

How do we Convert people to Media Education? Is this a Case Study?

I have just received the latest edition of "The Change Agent: Adult Education for Social Justice (News, Issues and Ideas) Focus on The Media and You." This publication is published by the New England Literacy Resource Center. You can download this edition in pdf files from the NELRC Web site at www.nelrc.org/changeagent.

The 15 articles contain material familiar to media educators including definitions of media literacy, diversity and stereotypes; women and media; media and family; truth in advertising; the media giants; bias in the news; making our own media; media literacy Web sites.

For people starting out, there is some worthwhile material here. It is important that organizations not directly concerned with media literacy take up our cause. This is one of the best ways of gaining new followers. Clearly this organization is doing outstanding work in the domain of social justice.

However, I have one important quibble. Except for "Making your own media," every article addresses some negative aspect of the media: bias; stereotyping; pernicious effects on our health etc. Don't we do our selves a disservice if we concentrate exclusively on media bashing? Couldn't we investigate topics such as reading the social messages of the *Simpsons*; learning how to appreciate a compelling documentary; discussing the social and cultural impact of digital media? You get the drift.

Now I know this opens up the pro and con arguments associated with media literacy and the protectionist position but all I am a looking for is a balance, an attempt at the golden mean. If we aim for the latter, isn't there is a much better chance that our fragile movement will grow?

Recommended Resources



NetiZen: An Internet newsletter with a difference

www.ecommons.net

We often hear about the liberating powers of the Net – that we will all be wired up, enthusiastically sharing our altruistic concerns and envisioning a more meaningful world. Yes, there are dozens of committed alternative groups with listserves and social justice organizers whose use of the Net is a basic survival tool. Sometimes, academics who get into this game create more rhetoric than reality. I trust that my colleague Liss Jeffrey in her new NetiZen News and eCommons listserv from the McLuhan program at the University of Toronto will deliver us material of substance and inspire us to action. I invite you to visit her web site to tune in to the constantly changing content and join the discussions at eCommons.

Executive Editor's Welcome

Liss Jeffrey

Hello to newcomers and welcome back to NetiZen News readers. We have now reached 1000 plus subscriber e-mail addresses, many of which go to groups. Our purpose is not mass circulation, as most of you know, it is selective recycling of news in the public interest. Our editors at eLab and eCommons/Agora aim to call attention to relevant news and research on closing the digital divide and fostering community development, as well as the growth of the Electronic Commons/Agora Electronique national public space network. We hope you will find this carefully selected information useful and timely. This NetiZen Newsletter includes original articles and also draws from the news posted regularly in the NetiZen News section of our Web site www.ecommons.net.

In addition to selectively filtering news, one of our core purposes is to encourage inclusive civil discussion and citizen engagement in ways that avoid ideological impasses.

Need for citizen engagement in public space

The Summit of the Americas official sessions and protester gatherings in Quebec City provide a significant moment to reflect on how new media are -- or are not -- in use as citizen technologies. We will be reporting in the NetiZen News on the Summit and counter-Summit, focusing especially on the role of the media and of civil society and the need for public spaces for active civic engagement. (For more, see our special section on links to summit information, below.)

When it comes to the Internet, positively speaking, activists can mobilize more easily, complex information can be shared, and alternative media outlets can spring up -- without costly overhead -- and bypass the traditional agenda-setters of the mainstream media. Negatively speaking, there are few opportunities for those who are not protesters or summiteers to engage in deliberation and dialogue by weighing evidence, learning from different opinions, and trying out new ideas in a constructive manner. Mostly a process of "narrow-streaming" takes place, whereby participants attend selectively to those views that they agree with, and tend to sign onto e-mail lists to hear from those they share opinions with, and visit the Web sites of those they already agree with. (Psychologists call this avoiding cognitive dissonance, or selective attention. We all do it daily, and it may help us stay focused and avoid information overload.) So, despite the promise of the new online media, the right stays right, the left (what is left of it) stays left, and most citizens would rather play games or go shopping.





Important Feature on Media Education's Biggest Controversy: Commercialism



The Winter edition of *Telemedium: the Journal of Media Literacy* is now available. It is 28 pages in length and contains a major feature on media education and commercialism. In addition to coverage of the Summit 2000 conference in Toronto, there are book reviews on the following: Jean Kilbourne's *Deadly Persuasion*, Paul Rutherford's *Endless Propaganda*; Anne Pailliotet and Peter Mosenthal's: *Reconceptualizing Literacy in the Media Age* and the CNN-Turner: *Media Matters: Critical Thinking in the Information Age*. As well as media education news, there are photographs of the Summit 2000 conference held in Toronto last May.

I edited the section on "Media education and Commercialism." There are 16 short articles from media educators representing seven different countries, many of them familiar names. United States: Frank Baker, Renee Hobbs, Jeff Share, J. Lynn McBrien, Rose Pacatte, Fran Trampeits; Western Australia: Robyn Quin and Barrie McMahan, Canada: Neil Andersen, Barry Duncan, Mike Gange and Chris Worsnop; Spain: Roberto Aparici; UK: Cary Bazalgette and Robert Ferguson; South Africa: Costas Criticos.

Why are these articles so valuable? Media education and commercialism is, arguably, the most important site of struggle in our media classrooms, our conferences and our casual conversations. I noted that "this issue of *Telemedium* attempts to provide a multiperspective view of the important issues... A complex topic full of contradictions, it is no surprise that the views of the contributors cover a wide range of pedagogical practices and ideological concerns and positions, from Robert Aparici's assertion that the taint of commercialism means "the end of teaching for freedom, and is education for indiscriminate consumerism," to Fran Trampiet's belief that teachers and students are quite media savvy "We overlook the ability of teachers to make wise choices."

You will find many trenchant insights throughout. As professionals, I think it is important to support non-profit media organizations which are trying to push the media education movement forward. The next issue of *Telemedium* will be written primarily by presenters at the National Media Education Conference conference in Austin, Texas next June. For more information, contact:

National Telemedia Council, Inc.
1922 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53705
Tel: (608) 218-1182
E-mail: Ntelemedia@aol.com.

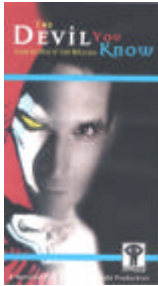
The National Film Board in Canada has been active in media education since the mid-1960's. From compelling documentaries to mind-expanding animation, their film library is comprehensive in its scope, even though government cutbacks in the last ten years have taken their toll.



Under the heading of a short catalogue entitled "Media Education 2001," they have brought together over 20 films in video format (ten of them are recent) which address topics such as making media, media violence, the Internet, spin doctors, global media and media tycoons.



Typically, individual videos sell for \$39.95 and thematic sets (4-7 videos) such as *Media and Society*, *Constructing Reality*, and *Manufacturing Consent* are in the range of \$200.00 to \$400.00. These three packages have outstanding teaching guides and should be in the library of every secondary school or college. While media teachers will want to use them, there are plenty of cross-curricular applications.



In subsequent bulletins, I will review the most useful but I will conclude here with some short comments on the of *The Devil You Know: Inside the Mind of Todd McFarlane*, a 77-minute production. Suitable for high school, this video looks at the amazing career of the Calgary born Todd McFarlane whose comic book "Spawn" has made him the most successful comic strip artist in history. Todd is a wild and delightfully eccentric character. And kids will love him. Comics is such a neglected area in media studies that this production should serve as an ideal catalyst for discussion about and projects on the comic strip medium.

Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal

By Eric Schlosser. Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

All of us have some connection with fast food and probably know that the best known icon in the world is the golden arches of McDonald's. *Fast Food Nation* will both amuse and shock you with its in-depth investigation of behind-the-scenes in the industry. There are so many angles covered in this book from exposes of meat packing companies to the globalization of fast food.



The book is, in effect, media and cultural history at its best. Media teachers now have the data and valuable insights to be able to make connections with advertising, cross-marketing (see the film and get the product tie-ins) and teens' obsession with eating food that is nutritionally disastrous. (I loved and shuddered at the chapter, "Why the fries taste good.") An award-winning journalist, Eric Schlosser writes cogently and he handled himself well in the one television interview I managed to catch in which he debated his research with a fast food industry spokesperson.

Global Showdown: How the New Activists are Fighting Global Corporate Rule

By Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke. Stoddart, 2001.



Published just before the Summit in Quebec City, *Global Showdown* is a manifesto for social and political change, a handbook explaining how the crisis in democracy came about and what we can do about it. Barlow is the leader of the Council of Canadians, the major group that has opposed NAFTA and free trade and helped to defeat the MAI (multilateral Agreement in trade proposal). Clarke is the founder of the Blue Planet Project, a global citizen's movement.

Upcoming Events

National Media Education Conference



The most important North American media education conference will be taking place in Austin, Texas, June 23-26. For more information on the conference, visit the National Media Education Conference Web site at: www.nmec.org.

And a reminder about the Media literacy Graduate Program (mentioned in the April Bulletin) in North Carolina Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C, July 9-24. For information go to: www.ci.appstate.edu/programs/edmedia/media.

The Final Word

Alex Carey, the social scientist who pioneered the study of Americanization, described the three most significant political developments of the 20th century as "the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy."

From periodical *The New Internationalist*
April edition on "Mega Media"

"Barry's Bulletin" will return in September. I have enjoyed your comments. Keep them coming and don't hesitate to send me any media education news.

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