

Bethune literary effort borders line between medium as message and mag monopolies

By HUMBERTO DaSILVA

Although generally resigned to the opinion that the Canadian magazine market is too small to support their own cultural expectations, Canadians occasionally go to heroic lengths to fulfill these expectations.

The magazine, a medium quickly losing ground as an arbitrary source of considered opinion, was historically the best suited medium for the dissemination of necessary cultural information to a specific group.

However, the very qualities that made the magazine the chosen weapon of guerrilla culture have led to its demise as a mass medium. The most widely distributed magazines today owe more to television than to any print tradition. Still, the magazine remains the fortress of Canadian culture, and Canadian culture remains essentially a guerrilla culture.

Now there is a new warrior on the scene. It is

Canadian, it is intelligent, and it mixes form and function in ways that would cause our beloved Marshall McLuhan to crack a smile. It's called *Border/lines* and it's a collective (interesting), non-profit (inevitable) enterprise originating from York's Bethune College.

What is truly revolutionary about it, however, is that it puts issues in the context of Canadian culture without a hint of the alternating inferiority and jingoism that pervades the Canadian media. In other words, it takes for granted that *Canada already has a culture*.

Border/lines delivers. The articles and reviews in the first issue include everything from a history of the laugh track machine to a study of how the pornography-censorship issue is co-opting feminism to institutionalized repression.

The artwork, photography and layout all accentuate the content with a calculated vengeance. Your eye may stray into the margin for

some poetry or for the digest of the next paragraph, but nothing you see or read will distract you. The relationship of everything on the page is symbiotic.

Similarly, you will be reading something on page 32 and suddenly remember one of Geoff Miles' previously inscrutable 'phototextes' on page 26, then you will return to page 26 to finish understanding what page 32 has defined for you. *Border/lines* does not proffer a mixture of random facts and ideas for your consumption, it gives you vision. Try getting that on *The Journal*.

That's the good news. The bad news is that, in all probability, *Border/lines* won't survive very long. Subsidies everywhere are drying up and most people today won't pay \$3.75 for a magazine that doesn't tell them whether or not to buy soybean futures next month. We are living in (and hopefully through) a time when

being informed is considered more important than gaining knowledge.

Border/lines may be too democratic to survive in such an atmosphere. Although most people will agree that the artistic man, the social man, and the political man can all be the same man, it is presently not approved policy to encourage such a coexistence. The southern cultural monopolies have divided and conquered us as Canadians so that in fragments we are indistinguishable from Americans. The wholism (not holism which is a double-think term coined by Jan Smuts) that *Border/lines* embodies may end up just an interesting footnote in an essay about a culture that almost was.

In this instance, what *Border/lines* represents is not the catalyst, but the litmus paper. If it survives in its present form I'd say the individuation of the Canadian identity is proceeding pretty nicely. If it doesn't, well . . .

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STANDING (Left to Right): Larry Nancekivell (Coach), Andy Woolford, Rowan Saunders, Jim Gresham, David Skuy, John Kalpouzof, Zlatko Cvitak, Demetrios Kokkinakis (Captain), Neil Sullivan, Mark Whitfield, Mark Macaulay, Rob Shaw, Chris Broadhurst (Trainer), Steve Church (Assistant Coach).
KNEELING (Left to Right): Terry McElrea, Dave Berto (Co-Captain), Craig Tsuji, Emmanuel Farrugia, Gary Chaulk, Trevor Figueira, Danny Kokkinakis.