



they want to change the situation, they can start by telling the truth about this country. The reason why we have an artistic crisis, a “crisis of identity” in the cultural life of Canada, is because so many writers, playwrights, artists, and directors—and the people who fund them—are all caught up in a lie about WHITE only society. Their work has no appeal and no vitality because it’s a lie. It ignores a large segment of the Canadian population where there is a tremendous amount of vitality and creative diversity.

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“The mass media, but especially advertising, are very powerful messages about what is considered normal and acceptable in a society. They have a tremendous impact on young people, and if the young person happens to be non-white, the message is that there is no place for you in this country. Well, isn’t that the message that you would get, if you never saw anyone who looked like you in any of these commercials? What has this got to do with me?”

“I am so concerned about the media, not for myself, but for my daughter and other young non-whites in Canada. All young people are suffering strains today that were never known before. They worry about having no jobs when they get older, they worry about the lack of meaning in the educational system, and they worry about politicians and militarists blowing everyone up with nuclear bombs. No generation has been under such intense psychological pressure as the children and teenagers of today. Now, add to this the problem of being a non-white in a country where all of the commercial messages are white-only.

“It’s deeply troubling and dispiriting for a young black to grow up in a place like Toronto. They have no identity. All of the values of success are white values. All beauty is white beauty. The future is a dead-end when day-after-day you receive the implicit message that your skin colour will prevent you from acceptance and respect, no matter how hard you try.

“I’m a fighter and a survivor, and that’s what I want to contribute to young Canadians who are non-whites. The first step is to bring economic pressure on the advertisers to change their policies. As far as I can see, there is only one way to do that—hit them in the pocketbook. We are now working to establish a general boycott policy in the ethnic communities—so that on certain days, all non-whites and ethnics will begin to boycott the products and services of particular advertisers.