

The job is crucially important, for what is at stake is not only the vigor of our democracy. It also involves the survival of our nationhood. A nation is a collection of people who share common images of themselves. Our love of the land and our instinctive yearning for community implant that image in the first place. But it is the media – together with education and the arts – that can make it grow. Poets and teachers and artists, yes, but journalists too. It is their perceptions which help us to define who and what we are.

We all know the obstacles involved in this task. Geography, language, and perhaps a failure of confidence and imagination have made us into a cultural as well as economic satellite of the United States. And nowhere is this trend more pronounced than in the media. Marquis Childs on the editorial page. Little Orphan Annie back near the classified ads. Nixon and Tiny Tim and Jerry Rubin and Johnny Carson and Lawrence Welk and Timothy Leary on the tube. The Beach Boys and Blind Faith and Simon and Garfunkel on the radio. The latest VC bodycounts courtesy of A.P. and U.P.I. The self-image of an entire generation shaped by Peter Fonda riding a stars-and-stripes motorcycle. Need we continue?

We are not suggesting that these influences are undesirable, nor that they can or should be restricted. The United States happens to be the most important, most *interesting* country on earth. The vigor and diversity of its popular culture – which is close to becoming a world culture – obsesses, alarms, and amuses not just Canadians, but half the people of the world.

What we *are* suggesting is that the Canadian media – especially broadcasting – have an interest in and an obligation to promote our *apartness* from the American reality. For all our similarities, for all our sharing, for all our friendships, we *are* somebody else. Our national purpose, as enunciated in the B.N.A. Act, is “peace, order and good government,” a becomingly modest ideal that is beginning to look more and more attractive. *Their* purpose is “the pursuit of happiness,” a psychic steeplechase which has been known to lead to insanity.

One of the witnesses who appeared before us, Professor Thomas L. McPhail of Loyola University’s Department of Communication Arts, warned that “Canada has one decade remaining in which its members have to make up their minds whether they want to remain a distinct political, cultural and geographical national entity.” The C.R.T.C.’s Pierre Juneau, in his testimony, concurred in this assessment. So do we.

The question is, how successful have the media been in helping us to make up our minds? Here again, we must award less than perfect marks. There are too few Canadian stars, although there is plenty of talent. There are too few national news personalities in the manner of Walter Cronkite or Walter Lippmann. There is no *truly* national newspaper, no Canadian news-magazine, no Canadian hit parade (although Quebec has one), not enough things like the NHL and the CBC that we can all talk about and react to and love and hate and know as our own.