

emerged as a major theme of the conference, with general acknowledgment that current developments in state-of-the-art video games, virtual reality and the increasing capacity for contentious material to originate from outside Australia all posing complex problems for policy makers and regulators.

THE POST COLONIAL FORMATIONS CONFERENCE

Post Colonial Formations Conference, organised by the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Griffith University, Brisbane, 6-10 July 1993.

The conference was intended 'as a forum for discussing the relations be-

tween culture, policy and nation formation in post-colonial societies.' Post-colonialism was defined at the conference as, 'not a stage which has been reached, but a process which seeks to produce a knowledge of a state still in operation.'

Papers were presented by academics from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Issues discussed related to cultural policies for Government and cultural institutions, (with some emphasis on broadcasting and communications), and were presented from multicultural, feminist and indigenous peoples' points of view. More than a hundred and fifteen papers were presented over the four day period. In the sessions relating to Broadcasting and

Communications, speakers and topics included: Roy Shuker (NZ) - Cultural quotas for Kiwis: the television content and radio quota debates in New Zealand; Dr Liz Jacka and Stuart Cunningham (Aust) - Contra flow in television drama; Thomas Wilson (Canada) - Satellite television in the Canadian arctic: 1974 - 1992. Cultural replacement and regeneration; Michael Meadows (Aust) - Indigenous media responses to racism; Hart Cohen and Gerry Bostock - Anti-racist projects and media production pedagogy: a collaborative approach; and Helen Molnar - Indigenous Culture and media policy in Australia.



AN UPDATE ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE

**(INCLUDING NOTES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE, MONTREAL)
BY DEBRA RICHARDS, DIRECTOR, PROGRAMS, ABA**

The issue of television violence has been making headlines in the US recently. The US Congress has called for the television industry to come up with self regulatory measures to curb the amount of violence on television.

On 30 June 1993, in a move which pre-empted any legislative action by Congress, the four major US networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox Television) announced their agreement on a self-regulatory regime for the broadcast of violent programming. The Chairman of the Motion Picture Association of America, Jack Valenti, has been a prime mover in negotiating the proposed regime.

The networks have agreed on a two year test regime focused on parental advisories or 'warnings'. These are to be used at the beginning of programs, during commercial breaks and in all promotional material. The use of parental warnings in promos is a new step for the US industry. To date, the cable industry is not party to the networks' agreement although Ted Turner has endorsed the proposal and has said his stations will comply. Congress hopes this move by the networks will see a new era in 'parental empowerment' which will be

enhanced through technological developments.

These public moves in the US have come close on the heels of recent moves in Canada to try and cope with the increasing concern over television violence and children's programming.

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

The first International Colloquium on Television Violence, sponsored by the Canadian government and its Department of Communications, was a one day seminar held in Montreal on 29 April 1993. Its aim was to hear from other countries on measures taken to address concerns about television violence.

The concern in Canada was highlighted late last year when 13 year old Virginie Lariviere presented a petition to the Prime Minister of Canada, urging action on television violence. The petition contained 1.3 million signatures. This initiative provided the impetus for a number of efforts on the part of the Canadian broadcast industry, government and the public.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

In response to this growing concern

about television violence, the Canadian Minister for Communications, Perrin Beatty, formed an Organising Committee of the National Action Group. This comprised members of the broadcasting, distribution, advertising and production industries, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and the Department of Communications. The Committee has a number of priorities, including the development of uniform industry codes and a classification system for broadcasting to assist parents in determining the appropriateness of programming for their families.

In researching the measures taken by other countries, the Canadian government saw the benefit in gaining some insight into the international experiences of developing codes of practice, classification systems and viewer warning measures.

To this end a group of international participants met with Canadian broadcasters, cable operators, advertisers, producers and distributors in a public forum to talk about the development of such systems in their own countries. The day's seminar was broadcast live on the local cable station and the lively debate was facilitated by the Chair of the Organising

Institute of the Media, United Kingdom and Australia took part.

While not included on the 'official' panel, William and David Abbot, of the Foundation to Improve Television, USA, contributed to the debate by commenting on the growing concern in the US about television violence and the hearings held by Congress on the issue.

International panellists spoke about the factors that led to measures taken in their own countries and made general comments about classification systems currently in place to ensure suitable programming, especially for the child audience.

Topics discussed included voluntary

codes of practice, classification systems, warnings and penalties, industry/government cooperation in implementing remedies and mechanisms for international co-operation.

The measures taken in other countries vary from no specific regulation to a combination of regulatory and self regulatory measures. The Australian experience was used extensively throughout the seminar as an example for the options discussed. Of particular interest was the industry's development of codes to include a uniform classification system. The use of attitudinal research on community standards, the process of public consultation and requirements for spe-

cific programming for children were also noted.

In concluding the colloquium, Perrin Beatty warmly acknowledged the contribution of the participants, noting the work that still needed to be done in Canada. Specific outcomes for Canada include a public campaign to heighten awareness of the issue and development of a code of practice to apply to all sectors of the broadcasting industry which will incorporate a uniform program classification system.

A report of the proceedings of the colloquium is now available.

For further information please contact Debra Richards on (02) 334 7700.



THE INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE, MONTREAL

International participants and members and representatives of the Organising Committee for the National Action Group with Perrin Beatty, Canadian Minister for Communications.

BACK ROW: John Foss, Association of Canadian Advertisers; Antonios Kosmopoulos, Commission of European Communities; Rick Davies, Superchannel; Paul Raine, Dept of Communications; Jacques Boucher, RDSports; Claude Sylvestre, CRTC Commissioner; Al MacKay, Canadian Association of Broadcasters; Anthony Pragnell, European Institute of The Media; Louise Baillargeon, Association of Producers; Andre Caron, Centre for Youth & Media; Paul - Eric Mosseray, Belgium.

MIDDLE ROW: Laurier L. LaPierre, Chair National Action Group; Millard Roth, Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association; Ken Stein, Canadian Cable Television Association; Debra Richards, ABA; Trina McQueen, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC); Sandra McDonald, Canada Film & Television Production Industry; Lisa DeWild, The Movie Network; Andre Provencher, Tele-Metropole; Kevin Shea, YTV (Youth network) Canada.

FRONT ROW: Monique Auge-Lafon, France; The Hon. Perrin Beatty, Minister for Communications; Gail Powell, NZ Broadcasting Standards Council; Colin Shaw, UK Broadcasting Standards Council.

