enough of a refuge for Peter and Hawley to seek shelter, as a respite from the catastrophes of their national history. In the age of distancing principles, Canada, perhaps, still holds the possibility of an interior – Deserts shows Canada only as interiors (Manuforfs and a view of the vastness, is crushing to the native-born, it offers to the voluntary exile, to those who have abandoned the official ideals, a vantage-point from which some self-understanding can begin.

As a contribution to the distinct Canadian possibility, Deserts offers a glimpse of such a vantage-point. In the continental amnesia of these times, that is no small achievement.

Michael Dorland


Gurkhas Of Nepal is filled with subtle contrasts which, in a very understated manner, gently expose the ironies of the culture. The draft grasses blowing in the wind, we see the solemn and formal changing of the guard, the contrasted with the peaceful, languid scenes in their Himalayan village. The warlike demeanour of the Gurkhas in service contrasts with the gentle way of life in the village and the Hindu philosophy of acceptance. revealed in the voice-over narration. Throughout, Sarin weaves these contrasts like threads in an intricate tapestry. Perhaps the most emotionally moving moments in the film occur near the end, where the old Gurkhas of the village gather to reminisce about their wars and display their medals for the camera. Something in the combination of faces and gestures, lighting and camera work and composition all come together here to reveal a profound understanding of the human condition. There is a poignancy here that truly speaks across cultures and generations in the language of the heart.

Gurkhas Of Nepal is a recent winner in the 1983 New York Film Festival. It deserves wide-spread viewing and acclaim.

Joyce Nelson


One of the lesser, but nonetheless chilling, statistics is that 20-25% of adults in North America and other industrialized countries of the world are considered to be functionally illiterate. Don't Call Me Stupid looks at how a group of women tackled their own problems of illiteracy and took steps to deal with a lack of education.

When Alison's children were small, she had no problems with her disability. She was able to communicate effectively with others including her family. When her children grew up, she realized that her disability was more than just a physical problem. She began to question whether she was truly illiterate. She wanted to learn to read and write. She decided to take the first steps towards improving her literacy skills. She enrolled in a literacy program and began to work hard to overcome her difficulties. She practiced writing and reading every day. She gradually became more confident in her ability to read and write.

Women talk of recurring illness during childhood, of having only 10% vision, of moving around the country with a father who was in the Forces, as contributing factors to illiteracy. The women in this film started by approaching the principal of their children's school. She urged them to find more women who wanted to improve their literacy and take steps to deal with a lack of education. Then they went to school and brought home written work, and needed a note for the teacher, and asked for a bedtime story to be read to them. And came the unintentionally hurtful remarks. "My kids kept calling me stupid – you're stupid, they'd say. Then I thought to myself I am stupid. I really am stupid..."

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Inward Passage

Inward Passage was made for the Discovery Theatre at Ontario Place, Toronto, and played for half-hour throughout this summer. The three screens side-by-side as if to form one, were filled (most of the time) with images from three 35mm projectors, and Dolby sound.

The centre screen opens the film with a grabber – a helicopter circling over a Coast Guard ice-breaker chomping its way through the icy mouth of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

And it's off and away on a Cook's Tour of the 'inward passage' through the Great Lakes. The visuals unfold on two and three-front screen. And central site magnificently into three screens: Queen Elizabeth and U.S. President Eisenhower are interpolated in archive footage, showing the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Molten, hot red steel spills from right
David Lancaster cam. Mark Irwin

The filmmakers have taken great pains to illuminate the individual works: exploring the canvases, relating them to each other and to the land, and also finding a subtle composition or remark which will further reveal the heart of the paintings in McCarthy herself. This intimacy makes the film intense and poignant. By the film's end, we care deeply about this person who has shared so much of herself in her art, her teaching, and this film. A sequence in the closing moments of Doris McCarthy: Heart Of A Painter summarizes much. McCarthy aged 74, is figure-skating on the ice, performing a series of graceful figure-eights for the camera. The filmmakers give us a freeze-frame of her, poised as if for flight: having one foot traced the symbol of infinity.

Joyce Nelson

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