

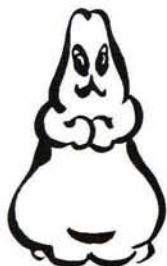
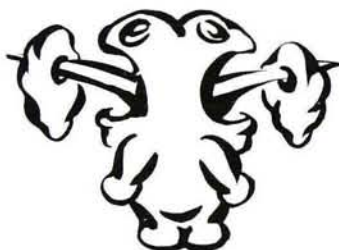
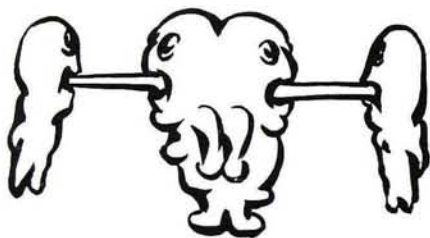
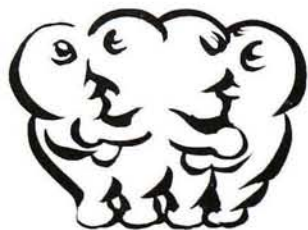
# FILM REVIEWS

## Rien Qu'un Petit Chanson D'Amour

The National Film Board, a microcosm of the country it represents, is split down the belly button between French and English. Even in the cafeteria at noon, tables are divided into the red and the blue and perhaps the only contact between the two cultures occurs in the washrooms waiting for a free towel dispenser.

One of the more amusing manifestations of this xenophobia is in the fact that there are two animation departments at the Film Board; each with separate autonomy and distinctive styles; located at opposite ends of the huge building and light years apart in sensibility. A sad consequence of this split is that while the McLarens and Ryan Larkins and Don Ariolis get widespread and well deserved publicity, not much is known about their franco-phone counterparts. A case in point is the work of Vivienne Elnécavé and her recently completed film *Rien Qu'un Petit Chanson D'Amour*, (Just a Little Love Song). This particular love song is drawn in a black and white style reminiscent of the Krazy Kat cartoons of the thirties but it is not a cute or pretty or colourful animated film. Using what must be an animated equivalent of psychoanalytical free association, the film takes us on a ten minute odyssey through the terror and pain of love; from an infant's desperate attempts at closeness with its parents to an adult's relationship with a cruel and isolating world.

The film begins innocuously enough with a rocking chair oscillating to the country sound of a five-string banjo. When the rocking chair metamorphoses into a man, we are not surprised. So far it just looks like good animation. But then this first level of reality is shattered as the arms of the rocking-chair-man smash through a wall and pull out a struggling bird. It is like some form of raw energy has been pulled up from the unconscious. Later in the film, the bird becomes a child, a child who is killed by its parents, its chest split open by a dagger, as we go deeper into the chest and are plunged into a deeper level of the unconscious. The pulsating heart metamorphoses into a man crucified by a nail to the relentless rhythm of a flamenco. The film now becomes a dance, perhaps one of the most painful dances ever choreographed on film. The man becomes two and then four. The



dancers swallow each other, regurgitate the meal, come together and then split into four. The splitting and fusion continue. A dancer removes the heart of his partner through the mouth and the heart splits and reveals two more dancers. The action becomes faster and faster and the process continues into a blinding infinite regress of broken hearts.

Searching for Vivienne Elnécavé's predecessors, one does not think of Disney or McLaren. The names which come to mind are Dali, Buñuel and Edgar Allan Poe. She uses the medium not just on the level of cartoon or moving abstraction but, through the metamorphosing of shapes and personae, as a reflection of what is going on deep in the subconscious. It is a personal statement and yet universal enough to trigger powerful emotional reaction, sometimes attraction, sometimes revulsion but with the universality of one's own dreams.

Ronald H. Blumer

## Coming Home

The concept of applying use of media to an intense, personal situation is not brand new, just new enough to make further attempts in the area interesting to the viewer. Allan King's *A Married Couple*, and the PBS Series *An American Family*, each demonstrated the technique and its possibilities. *Coming Home* works on many levels as a tool for improving the difficult relationships inside this particular film, and the film itself is helping others to gain insight and understanding in their own family relationships.

Bill Reid left a Ph.D. programme when he realized that academia would teach him no more about what he felt were the important aspects of life. He started off as a production assistant at the NFB and while there, had access to a Portapak video tape outfit. That outfit accompanied him on a trip home to Sarnia where he again found himself caught up in his unpleasant relationship with his family, specifically his father.

The Portapak recorded a family argument of some 20 minutes duration, and that tape sparked the idea for a more detailed film project that would capture the family in its natural state, and work as a tool to assist in settling its long-established differences.