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It's a rainy night, and the nice old man is happy to get to the restaurant. He's obviously a regular and, in between reading his newspaper and attempting a crossword, takes pleasure in observing the others around him. Nearby trains rumble by, shaking the chandelier, but the warm and cozy little world enfolds everyone.

The tables are occupied by a fine variety of people – a family birthday party for grandmama includes a baby and the dog, and two smart little old ladies tackle a scrumptious tea. A group of businessmen solemnly discuss big deals, while a woman alone casts a roving eye around the room.

The old man leaves his newspaper and a tip for the waiter and departs into the night. The rain continues to fall.

A subtle and gently perceptive first film by animator Wendy Tilby, made over a period of eight months, as her graduating film from Emily Carr College, Vancouver. Using oil on glass, she creates wonderful figures, reminiscent of soft sculptures, that have a life and a believability. Her observations are deft, acute, full of warmth and never sentimental. A

## MINI REVIEWS

by Pat Thompson

first-rate debut film – remember this animator's name!

Winner of the Grand Prix de Montreal for Best Short Film in Competition at the 1986 World Film Festival in Montreal.

An animated film by Wendy Tilby. Col. 7 1/2 mins. 1986. 35mm/16mm/VHS. Availability (604) 731-0797 (1626 West 11th Ave. Apt 4, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 2B9).

### THE BIG ADVENTURE

Just hold on there – a commuter's ride on the Toronto subway was never like this – from Wilson in the north of the city to Union in the south in three minutes! Time-lapse photography hurls the viewer along at a simulated speed of 350 miles per hour, through tunnels, out into the light, past squeaky-clean deserted platforms, to a breathless standstill. The driving, pulsing music adds momentum to the wild dash along the rails.

Impeccably shot and edited, and accompanied by original music, it

has distinct theatrical possibilities and would wow an audience in 35mm...

Premiere at 1986 Festival of Festivals, Toronto.

A film by Colin Strayer (Northland Pictures). Orig. mus. Kevin Hunter. Col. 3 mins. 1986. 16mm/3/4"/1/2". With assistance from Toronto Transit Commission/Wellesley Sound/NFB, Ontario Region/Alex Ferguson.

### BARABA

The lawyer's business is picking up, but Mrs. Michaelson is not coping too well, so he wants to find a first rate legal secretary. At this point Baraba appears in his office. She can start right away, and does. On her first day, although the lawyer thinks she is "possessed," he has to admit that the continuously clacking typewriter is "music to my ears."

For two weeks Baraba appears to work day and night, and one weekend when the lawyer comes to his office, she won't let him in, "I

prefer not to open the door right now." Then Baraba stands by the window in her cubicle, "I have given up typing." And so it goes – in spite of every plea Baraba remains immobile and, finally, the lawyer says, "I will have to leave her," and moves his office. The owner of the building tells the lawyer to get her out of the vacated space, various suggestions are made, but Baraba remains until the police remove her to jail.

The lawyer, feeling some guilt, agrees that "She was a good employee, but a bit eccentric." He visits her in jail and Baraba says, "I know who you are and I want nothing to do with you."

This strange allegory, if that's what it is, skims over the soul and doesn't touch the heart. Its chilly perspective of a kind of nothing-world is difficult to appreciate, though perhaps others would care to impose their own interpretations and fantasies upon it. However, the first firm conviction that it is wilfully enigmatic still remains.

p./d./sc./ed. Aaron Shuster. Cam. Martin MacInally. Mus. Richard Nimmo. Col. 40 mins. 16mm. Lp. Lyle Nickle (Lawyer), Baraba (Cayle Chernin), Mrs. Michaelson (Luba Greenberg). Availability: (+16) 860-0534.

## SCAN LINES

by Joyce Nelson

# Voice Of America

Canada in any way attempt to restrict U.S. film distribution in this country. At one point Murphy unveiled the threat by stating that the U.S. would completely boycott Canadian screens, "no more Barbara Streisand," he added. Then Mr. Murphy revealed, in one phrase, the American perception that underlies his country's position. He said: "various two-bit countries have tried such restrictions" and failed. Though it is no surprise to hear a representative of the United States refer to other nations as "two-bit countries," what was surprising was to witness the effect that this imperial arrogance had on the proceedings. Two more strange things happened.

Of the four debaters, Murphy's speech was the only one interrupted by applause from the largely Canadian studio-audience for statements like, "The arts transcend national borders," and "We've got too damn many administrators in the arts." It was also the only speech followed by applause at its end. And once Murphy had finished speaking, moderator Chalmers Adams strangely neglected to follow previous procedure and call for a question from Crane or Roth. Instead, he began to introduce the next speaker (Roth), by passing the opportunity for ques-

tioning Murphy's remarks. David Crane had to interrupt Adams' introduction and remind him of the right to question Murphy. It was as though this Voice of America had hypnotized the room.

Like a metaphor for U.S.-Canada relations, Mr. Murphy's arrogant remarks seemed to weave a strange, hypnotic effect on the proceedings. The only voice carried through the loud-speakers aside from Chalmers Adams' neutral moderating voice, this technological accident synchronistically revealed the larger dynamic at work: the imperial (and threatening) Voice of America, easily heard, is answered by the Canadian voice of moderation. For other voices, we must strain to hear. And as happened here, this Canadian voice of neutrality literally neglects to allow for questioning, or for challenging the American position. It is as though that arrogant Voice of America paralyzes and hypnotizes at the same time: paralyzes the ability to question, hypnotizes with its power. One result of hypnotized paralysis is voiceless applause.

Another result is a serious clouding of perception. And here we must look to the otherwise cogent remarks of David Crane and Stephen

Roth. At one point in the debate, Roth stated the often-heard position that Canada's population of 17 million movie-going consumers is "insufficient to support the industry." That perception is debatable in itself when one thinks of countries like Sweden and Cuba which manage, with a smaller population base, to support their indigenous industries. But the perception becomes much more problematic when it is placed in juxtaposition with a remark stated by Roth's debating colleague, David Crane. Crane informed us that although Canada has half the population of Britain, last year the number of movie theatre tickets sold in this country was **double** the number sold in Britain.

That fact, unremarked upon in the debate, must be central to Canadian thinking. It tells us that the more accurate perception of Canada is that it, as an image-consuming nation, is actually twice the size of Britain. In media terms, it is time to stop thinking of Canada as a small ("two-bit") country when, in actual fact, its 17 million movie-going and TV-viewing Canadians out-consume most other countries on the planet. This alteration in perception is crucial to recognizing not just the importance of the Canadian box-office to U.S. entertainment conglomerates' interests, but to realizing that in terms of image-consumption patterns and figures, Canada is quite literally one of the largest countries in the world and therefore fully able to potentially support its own film and TV industries. The Voice of America, however, would have us think otherwise.

We assembled in the ROM Theatre to be the studio-audience for a television show entitled "Free Trade And the Film and Television Industry" – a debate staged for the Trade Forum in Toronto's Festival of Festivals. At the TV director's cue, the large white screen at the front slowly rose to reveal the set: moderator Chalmers Adams at the podium, flanked by *Toronto Star* writer David Crane and Stephen Roth to his left, economist Steven Globerman and head of the U.S.C. graduate management program Arthur Murphy to his right. Over the next two hours, these four would debate the resolution "that a free trade agreement between Canada and the United States will be of significant benefit to Canadians in the Canadian film and television industries." Crane and Roth took the negative position on the resolved, while Globerman and Murphy (the only American) argued the affirmative.

During the course of the proceedings, some very odd things happened. These odd things seem worth pointing out. First, it became clear that the only microphone for the four debaters which was actually working was the one placed in front of Arthur Murphy, spokesman for the American film and TV industry. Thus, his voice was carried easily to the audience, while we had to strain to hear the Canadian voices, even that of Globerman, Murphy's debating team-mate. As the third speaker (after Globerman and Crane), Murphy's remarks were highly provocative and arrogant, including a number of veiled threats should