

form, eschewing spectacle, illusion and virtuoso technique. It would be mistaken to call the movement qualities 'natural' — the term has been borrowed to describe at least four distinctly different dance styles this century, and it's time it was abandoned. Rather, they use a kind of minimalism where a tiny shift of one body part can seem enormous, while genuinely large movements achieve grandeur. It's a style at once loose in its use of weight and rhythm, yet extraordinarily intense in impetus. In a work like Tufnell and Greenwood's *World Rhythms*, where the movement is arbitrarily juxtaposed with the sound of volcanos, earthquakes and rivers, the human contribution can seem eerie and vulnerable. In something like Butcher's *The Site*, where the dancers can inflict their rhythms more forcibly, the movements convey a sensation of infinite power which can be deeply absorbing.

Are You Right There Michael, Are You Right? was Fergus Early's investigation into his father's colonial past. Slides and taped interviews with relatives were played over a series of dances which jauntily satirised the pompous stiffness and petty, hypocritical gentility of the epoch. It ended with the father back in Worthing, having been crippled in Korea, then taken to drink in despair. Early's slow and agonising exploration of this state contrasted drastically with the brisk and callous thoughtlessness earlier. It was a study in which the scrutiny of one life was extended into a minute examination of global issues.

The season ended with a variety of dances from new choreographers. Gaby Agis has produced exciting work before, but her *Surfacing* failed to sustain itself. Starting promisingly with dancers involved in anarchic fun — the chucking around of bits of metal in a riot of comically

ill-tempered noise — it then developed into the kind of waffly improvisation more rewarding to do than to watch. The beginning of Gregory Nash's *Not Resolved* involved soft tumbles and dancers in clusters of slow motion tangles. This warmth and cuddliness was dissipated by the addition of some easy listening mush, matched by the dancers' group ensemble of predictable steps. From then on, it resembled a danced advertisement for shampoo.

The most devastating work of the evening was Michael Clark's *New Puritans*. A bright red spotlight scanned the stage and audience while *The Fall's* post-punk music blasted into the auditorium. Clark billowed across the stage and gobbled on the floor — a gesture repeated, at him, by his partner, Ellen von Schuylenburch. What followed was a fast and furious *tour de force*, incorporating moments of terrifying aggression, caustic wit and chilling suspension — the repeated sequence of an anarchy salute, goose-steps, a roll of the hips and a freedom sign turned over to 'up yours'. There was also a form of murmured eroticism in which movements of limp passivity, roguishness and ecstasy were exchanged confusedly between the partners. There was hard domination and tough resistance, intimate concerns that were infected with power struggles. Few art works could have depicted the broad disruptions of our age so intricately yet with such immediacy. None of it was literal. All impressions were conveyed by a radicalised and dynamic dance technique, performed with frightening vigour. It was a performance whose memories cut in on your sleep.

Dance is a valid source of enlightenment in performance, but in recent years has also provided new opportunities for diverse forms of active involvement. Most modern

companies, in addition to choreographing and performing, run workshops and classes in which members of the public are encouraged to participate. Pioneering work in this field is threatened with constriction through government cuts and the abolition of the GLC. These will restrict all of dance's myriad activities, ones which, rare in the arts, actively involve 'ordinary' people and which, if allowed to expand, could transform not only ways of living but ways of thinking. In the face of more immediate requirements, the case for something such as dance can be overlooked. The case for a freer acknowledgement of physicality is a political one, however, and is worth fighting for, alongside more obvious concerns.



Miranda Tufnell and Dennis Greenwood

2-WAY COMMUNICATION

Joel Cayford

Non-broadcast video has found a special place in the toolkit of British management, and in recent years its planned use has been shown to be very effective, not only in education and training, but also for 'sharing information' with the workforce. Increasing sophistication in company video communications has played an increasing role in the management achievement of a range of

objectives, such as workforce attitude-change, the implementation of redundancies, and the reduction of strike action. But the British workforce watches a lot of television, so company videos have to be very good to have the desired effect.

Last year one of the largest privately owned companies in Britain wanted to lay off 2,000 workers. It wanted to do it quietly

and with minimum reaction. A plan centring on the strategic use of video was adopted. In the beginning a video programme was made and shown to the workforce through a rapid series of screenings to small groups. This first video described 'the company problem' and was presented by an interviewer normally associated with TV programmes about



One of NALGO's videos

trade unions. A month later another programme was made and shown. It was about 'the company solution', and depicted some uncomfortable 'discussions' between an interviewer (who appeared to confront) and management (who appeared to sweat). The video programme went on to develop the arguments and led inexorably to the predictable, paid-for-by-management conclusion. Because the questions asked in the programme were typical of the questions that might have been asked by shop stewards (had they been given the opportunity), the effect was to occupy workforce ground and undermine the trade union position. The workforce were dismayed and defused, the redundancies initiated, and the management satisfied.

Video can be a powerful tool, and the trade union movement needs to understand how management are using it. But more especially, unions themselves can use video to aid the achievement of their own aims and objectives. Some unions have begun to explore the use of video, from training in health and safety issues through to education in current struggles such as privatisation and Tebbit-King law. NALGO recently produced a set of three programmes about privatisation in the health service as part of their 1983 campaign. One of the videos was short and punchy and was designed for public information, another which dealt with the arguments in more detail was used at union branch meetings, and the third was designed to be used by negotiators as support while presenting the arguments to employers. These tapes are now being used all over the country.

To communicate clearly and persuasively trade union videos need to be *very* good. They need to be fully researched and well put together both visually and technically.

The technical quality of a video tape determines if it can be duplicated to make copies, or whether it can be broadcast on TV. But a broadcast quality programme will probably cost a hundred times more to make than a home produced video. Production requires a constant juggling act between cost, quality and audience demands. The NALGO tapes are distributed on domestic video cassettes, and excerpts have been shown on TV. NUPE has installed over £100,000 worth of video equipment to produce real-time records of conferences. Yet their set-up cannot be used for anything else as there is no programme-making or editing capacity within the union. It takes time, training and experience to make effective use of video, and to incorporate that use into existing structures. Unions already using video have gained valuable experience which needs to be shared so that newcomers to the technology don't have to fight the same battles.

It is not always necessary for a union to make its own videos. There are many organisations and groups both willing to work with unions in the production of programmes, and committed to passing on understanding and skills. The NALGO tapes were made in a collaboration between the Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre (TURC) and the Birmingham Film Workshop. Many similar workshops and other independent film and video workers are working throughout Britain under ACTT recognition. Their practices are characterised by new and radical uses of film and video, and by arguments calling for the democratisation of the media. An example of this work occurred in a recent strike action in Merseyside, where the pickets were being subjected to police harassment — possibly because the event

was not under media scrutiny. A video team from the local Open Eye workshop visited the scene and set up their equipment. The police retreated without a shot being taken.

There are many ways in which video can be used by the unions: magazine format news videos, mass action information videos, political education videos, trade union executive communications videos, and workplace training videos. Much useful material already exists, and is being distributed by a variety of independent distributors. It is here where the crucial problem lies. It is not enough to produce only useful programmes. They must be seen to be useful, and they must be distributed to be seen. Distribution goes beyond supplying video to union branch meetings. TURC have distributed one hundred copies of the NALGO video programme throughout the union movement in Britain, as well as supplying copies to a video distributor in Australia, and to the public sector unions in New Zealand. (In a recent letter of acknowledgement they wrote, 'we have seen the future' — privatisation is two years away in New Zealand.)

British management are spending large sums on video based communications — both in terms of production costs and the capital costs of playback equipment for screenings. At branch level shop stewards may have to counter a management video with a handful of pamphlets in the course of a worktime screening. Because works committee agreement is required before management are able to show the workforce a video, perhaps that agreement should be conditional on the unions having equal opportunities to present their views using the same equipment.

There is usually more to a successful

branch screening than just playing a video. At times it makes sense to show more than one video to highlight different aspects of an issue. Video programmes by themselves rarely provide answers, but they are good at asking questions and getting an informed discussion going. Good communications are two-way communications. A screening without feedback is like a ballot without information. Grassroots feedback from shopfloor screenings is valuable and can be fed into the union's programme production and distribution policy.

For this struggle to be effective trade unions need to make programmes which can be used at branch and shopfloor level. This year a typical union with half a million members will have a turnover of about ten

million pounds. About 10% of this will be spent on paper communications: pamphlets, newspapers, newsletters and postage. If 20% of that budget was put into video production then more than twenty programmes could be made and distributed annually. A proportion of general information videos could be made, along with other specific videos to meet the needs of special groupings within the membership.

The development of a distribution strategy is central to the use of video in trade unions. The strategy would recognise that broadcast TV provides an alternative distribution channel (if access can be obtained), and that it is useful to distribute original footage for use in other programmes to avoid needless extra production (many

unions share the same concerns). A recent initiative has been the setting up of a steering committee called TU/TV by representatives from unions using video, independent video workers, and union resource centre workers. The committee is aiming to promote the use of video in unions and is holding a day school in early summer which will be attended by officers from the major unions in Britain (enquiries to TURC).

New technology is here to be used. Video is a flexible medium that can communicate well. If trade unions are going to take education seriously then they need to take a good look at video, and consider the establishment of a video distribution network.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

Deborah Cherry

The Pre-Raphaelites is an exhibition which celebrates artistic creativity as decisively masculine! This exhibition brings together works by five 'major' male artists — Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones, William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti — and their 'followers'. Everything is constructed in terms of individual achievement.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of seven artists and writers, is said to have been dominated by Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti, described as 'three enterprising and variously (but hugely) gifted young men' who developed their own different and highly individual paths. The lengthy period — from the founding of the Brotherhood in 1848 to Rossetti's death in 1882 — is reduced to a chronology of individual development marked by switches in artistic style and lifestyle. The catalogue entries put the works into a narrative of the artist's personal and artistic life, relations with his models. Little attention is given to the critical reception of the paintings or public debates about them. Life and art have been collapsed together, presented as mutually explanatory: art is a matter of private biography.

Pre-Raphaelite art is therefore offered to us as a domain where changes occur because of personal impulses. It has been effectively taken out of its historical context, the social and material conditions in which it was produced and consumed.

In this exhibition art practice is considered to be the outcome of the innate talent and genius of artistic personages. This celebration of innate genius is an account of the past which actively denies the class struggles and gender conflicts of nineteenth-century society, the ways in which historical individuals were formed by and acted within class and gender power relations.

Artistic creativity is presented in this exhibition as the prerogative of men, the attribute of the male artist, of his masculinity. *The Pre-Raphaelites* includes only one woman artist, Elizabeth Siddall; in this showing of 250 items her work is represented by two water-colours. The exhibition has signally failed to include works by the many other women artists of this cultural group such as Rosa Brett, Catherine and Lucy Madox Brown, Georgiana Macdonald (later Burne-Jones), Marie Spartali. This exhibition denies the historical existence of women artists, refuses to acknowledge that women were producers of culture. Moreover, because the exhibition deals with fine art, the work of women such as Jane Burden Morris in embroidery and textiles has once again been erased. Indeed the omissions and silence on women artists are structural to this hagiography of great masculine genius. High cultural events such as *The Pre-Raphaelites* function powerfully in the production of patriarchal ideology. Male



Arthur Hughes: *The Long Engagement*