MINORITY FILMMAKERS, MEDIA INSTITUTIONS, AND PRESS DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

HYE SEUNG CHUNG AND JUN OKADA, WITH ASSISTANCE BY MAJA MANOJLOVIC
UCLA CHICANO STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER

Film scholarship has a bias toward studying mainstream movies, especially Hollywood film, and ignoring minority participation. By analyzing five film magazines, this study collates press coverage of the last quarter-century of African American, Asian American, Latino/Chicano, and Native American participation in other mediums, including avant-garde film, video art, documentary, short narrative, and public affairs television. Findings were that despite clear efforts to represent minority cinema, there was a significant lack of reporting on Latino/Chicano and Native American cinema. A comprehensive bibliography is provided.
This report emerges out of the CSRC Race and Independent Media Project, a collaborative effort started in 2001 that involves scholars and graduate students from around the United States. The project started based on two observations about scholarly research on race in film and television studies:

1. that racial groups tend to be looked at either in isolation or on the basis of a one-to-one relationship with the dominant culture; and
2. that Hollywood often serves as the predominant framework.

Recent work has challenged this narrow model, since minority racial groups should be understood in relationship to each other as well as the dominant culture and since many of these groups have had limited access to the resources and institutions needed for the feature-length narratives typical of Hollywood. There remains a need to develop a critical paradigm for a comparative race analysis that examines independent film and video production.

Based on wide ranging conversations with media advocates, festival programmers, foundation program officers, and independent producers, the CSRC Race and Independent Media Project began to focus on minority participation in independent film and television history, especially such understudied areas as:

—media institutions, including the minority public broadcasting consortia, professional advocacy groups, archive and research centers, festivals;
—production companies, including Blackside, Visual Communications, Paradigm Productions;
—public affairs series, including Black Journal, Silk Screen and Reflectiones;
—key film and video texts, including such documentary series as Eyes on the Prize, Chicano! and Images of Indians, but also hundreds of avant-garde and experimental works in Super-8, 16mm, and video;

—the underpinnings of independence, including funding, rights, access, contracts, and distributors.

In some cases, the need for such research is urgent, given the potential loss of senior filmmakers, institutional documents, or “orphan” film and video works. But there is an additional need to conduct this research in sound ways. Thus, the project’s primary goal is to provide an alternative to the Hollywood bias within film and television studies, thereby creating a new paradigm for researching the history of minority participation in avant-garde film, video art, documentary, short narrative, and public affairs television.

Our report takes a first step toward this goal by comparing print discourses about minority cinema in independent trade periodicals as well as in several related film journals over the past three decades. These periodicals are valuable historical documents that provide a narrative of the emergence of independent minority media practices, individual minority filmmakers, and the policies that foreground racial diversity in independent media. In our report, we compare reporting on African American cinema, Asian American cinema, Latino/Chicano cinema, and Native American cinema.

FINDINGS

Our findings reveal that film periodicals vary significantly in their coverage of both independent media policy and minority cinemas. While coverage of policy issues concerning racial diversity in independent media is virtually absent from more commercial periodicals, they take center stage in the institutional trade periodicals that function as a public sphere where filmmakers debate the politics of representation. Coverage of minority cinema in both trade and commercial periodicals illuminates the formation of distinct independent minority cinemas, with commercial periodicals emphasizing commercially successful directors and trade periodicals emphasizing directors with less commercial successes. Although both commercial and trade periodicals displayed consistent efforts to represent minority cinemas, there was a significant lack of reporting on Latino/Chicano and Native American cinema in all of the periodicals.

Below we discuss the various periodicals tracked in this report, review the findings regarding media policy and specific minority cinemas, suggest further areas for investigation, and provide an extensive bibliography of the race-related articles in these periodicals.

SOURCES


Originally, both The Independent Film and Video Monthly and Release Print served the function of newsletters for their respective media organizations: the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) of New York and the Film Arts Foundation (FAF) of San Francisco. The first was begun in 1978 by the Foundation for Independent Film and Video (FIFV), the largest national organization representing independent media artists. In 1994, FIFV went into partnership AIVF and The Independent became The Independent Film and Video Monthly. According to the AIVF website (www.aivf.org), “The Independent is published ten times annually, with a
The journal's advocacy of revolutionary cinemas —including Third World, independent, and minority cinema—was understood to mean non-Western cinema only. But with the collapse of the Second World communist bloc, the increasing relocation of citizens from non-Western countries to the West, and the emergence of diasporic cultural expressions around the world, the meaning of the term began to shift. By the 1990s, works by diasporic and ethnic filmmakers preoccupied with exploring their hybrid identities and cultural roots while working in metropolitan areas of the West had emerged as the primary subjects of Third Cinema discourse. Accordingly, Cineaste's commitment to minority cinemas became more conspicuous and notable during the 1990s, though the journal intermittently highlighted individual minority filmmakers and their films in prior decades.

With the fitting subtitle "Radical Film Criticism and Theory," the commercial periodical CineAction likewise devotes attention to the cinemas of marginalized groups such as gays, women (of color), and black and Asian diasporas. As a Canada-based quarterly (of which film critic Robin Wood is chief editor), CineAction analyzes transnational ethnic filmmaking in a comparative paradigm linking American, Canadian and British productions.

**Filmmaker: The Magazine of Independent Film** occupies a liminal space between commercial periodicals and trade periodicals. Filmmaker is a joint publication of the Independent Feature Project (IFP) in New York and the Independent Feature Project/West (IFP/West) in Los Angeles. The two organizations’ previous periodicals—IFP’s The Off-Hollywood Report and the IFP/West’s Montage magazine—were merged in 1992 to form the quarterly Filmmaker. Although the magazine is available as a benefit of IFP membership (which currently numbers more than 10,000), over 50 percent of circulation copies are sold on newsstands and retail bookstores. As presenters of the major coast-to-coast indie film events—the annual Independent Feature Film Film Market, IFP Gotham Awards, and IFP/West Independent Spirit Awards—the IFPs and Filmmaker contribute to the popularization of independent filmmaking as a news-making phenomenon.

We tracked the coverage of media policy and minority cinemas in all of these commercial and trade film periodicals from their inception to the present.

**INDEPENDENT MEDIA POLICY**

The trade periodicals The Independent and Release Print have been more involved than the commercial periodicals in the coverage of the politics of funding, advocacy, and policy, probably because their function was to disseminate information and facilitate a dialogue among independent media professionals. Both of these magazines have always kept close tabs on congressional hearings and budget decisions regarding independent media. They did even more when the debates about funding and policy became particularly important during the late 1970s to the late 1980s, when many positive and negative changes in independent media occurred, including a growing awareness of minority issues, the Reagan administration’s deregulatory measures, and the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988, which paved the way for the Independent Television Service.¹

Both The Independent (1978) and Release Print (1976) were formed when the institutional frameworks of independent media and public television were just beginning to focus on
the representation and participation of racial minorities within the system. Their formation coincides with the publication of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s (CPB) A Formula For Change: The Report on the Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting in 1978, which, along with CPB’s response in 1979, sought to address inequalities in public television in representing and employing racial minorities. As coverage in The Independent shows, media policy and minority media are often overlapping issues.

One of the first articles to appear in The Independent that combined both a concern for minority media and the problems of funding policy was Pablo Figueroa’s “Beware of False Images: Proper Subject Matter for Minority Filmmakers” (May 1980: 9–10). Figueroa, a Puerto Rican filmmaker, described recent efforts by minority groups to get CPB to ban “negative” images of minorities. Figueroa summarized their Minority Task Force Report as “very explicit in the areas of stereotyping and positive/negative image making.” PBS responded to this report by getting rid of minority programs that PBS felt used negative stereotypes of minorities. This evaluation of stereotyping, he argued, was based on the opinions of directors and administrators of public television programs; that is, the “White-anglo-saxon-upper-middle-class-male establishment of public TV.” Figueroa decried the value judgments they made. Challenging the problematic dichotomy between positive and negative images, he called for the freedom to represent “faithful reflections of our people’s reality” without the censure of the white male majority. He stated, “I found it sad when the group of powerless minorities pressed the Board of CPB to support minority programs with ‘positive images.’ Of course, CPB jumped at the opportunity. No smart government would ignore an opportunity to perpetuate their image.” Written in 1980, this piece epitomizes the kind of independent media debate that The Independent was famous for among independent filmmakers.

One of the earliest funding and policy issues that concerned The Independent and one that became a major theme in the 1970s to late 1980s in the periodical was CPB’s dissemination of funds to public television stations and independent producers. The Independent argued that independent producers and filmmakers should have an active role in garnering funds for themselves from CPB to ensure, as the original Public Television Act suggested in 1967, “the clearest expression of American diversity, and of excellence through diversity.” Whereas Release Print was interested in California state funding issues related to the local filmmaking scene, as well as politics involving the local public television and local cable access channels, The Independent tended to be concerned with national issues of public television as a democratic public sphere and independent filmmakers’ access to it through funding. The AIVF had the role of representing a large faction of independent filmmakers. Therefore, through the pages of The Independent it reported important news and discussions important to members.

For example, in 1979, The Independent recorded and transcribed the October 16 meeting of two CPB officials and fifty-two independent filmmakers and producers (November 1979: 6–9). This transcript, titled “CPB Pays a Visit: Discussion of CPB Draft Proposal on the Issue of Independents and Public Television, The Kitchen, October 16, 1979,” shows the earliest discussion at CPB regarding independents. The debate centered on who should have project selection authority, a definition of “independent film,” and the attempt to create diverse programming. As a direct transcript of the meeting, this article provides a historical document about the struggle for independent media and the specific attitudes taken by each side of the debates. The Independent continued its coverage of CPB’s Program Fund by transcribing congressional hearings with independent filmmakers and activists such as Lawrence Sapadin and Marlon Riggs. Ever since regular meetings between CPB and representatives of the independent filmmaking community were mandated in 1984, The Independent was vigilant about their coverage. Generally, The Independent’s articles were against corporate influence on public television and against the kinds of deregulation that would corrupt public television and independent programming.

As The Independent covered the important national issues relevant to independent filmmakers and public broadcasting, Release Print devoted much more of its space to the thriving local independent filmmaking community, covering local public TV stations, local indie filmmakers, state funding sources such as the California Arts Council, and local media centers and festivals. Much of this may be due to the rich tradition of independent filmmaking in Release Print’s home of the San Francisco Bay Area, in which the liberal community has supported many of the most successful independent filmmakers such as Marlon Riggs, Steven Okazaki, and Jon Jost. Although Release Print was involved in the coverage of national public television, its sections, such as the “Local Spotlight” column, were devoted to an understanding of the relationship of the local to the national. For example, Release Print’s coverage of the CPB meetings with independent producers had the specific perspective of the local independent filmmaking community of the San Francisco Bay Area. Marlon Riggs, a Bay Area documentary filmmaker and University of California, Berkeley professor, in many ways epitomized this perspective. Release Print published a report by him as a representative of the Association of California Independent
Public Television Producers (“CPB ‘Rides’ Public TV into Commercial Morass,” October 1986, vol. 9, no. 8: 3, 12–13). Riggs’s response to the meeting revealed a specifically urban and local perspective as he complained that “we were lectured by a representative from the Arkansas Network” and he pointed out “the difference between corporate America’s attraction to programs of conventional opera and the need for programs about AIDS.” The concerns of a filmmaker who had become a role model for controversial filmmaking is representative of Release Print’s own preoccupation with the local political context of independent filmmaking. Other articles such as “Notes on Bay Area Independent Feature Filmmaking” and Jon Jost’s “Reverse Angle: Some Thoughts in ‘Independence’” specifically address independent filmmakers who work within a local context. Upon looking through twenty-five-plus years of publication of Release Print, it is clear that what distinguishes it as a trade periodical for independent filmmakers is its preoccupation with the local filmmaking scene and its liberal politics regarding race, gender, and sexuality. Overall, The Independent and Release Print offer valuable historical documents about independent filmmaking within the last three decades from the national and the local perspective. In this way, they provide a narrative of an independent practice and its various participants.

AFRICAN AMERICAN CINEMA

The earliest treatment of African American independent media is Cineaste’s essay trilogy on black filmmakers authored by Charles D. Peavy: “The Films of Richard Mason” (Spring 1969 vol. 2, no. 4), “An Afro-American in Paris: The Films of Melvin Van Peebles” (Summer 1969 vol. 3, no. 1), and “Cinemas from the Slum” (Fall 1969 vol. 3, no.2). Apart from reviewing the first U.S. feature film made by an African American—Melvin Van Peebles’ The Story of A Three Day Pass—in the second installment, Peavy highlighted the role of so-called poverty film programs in the emergence of young black filmmakers such as Richard Mason (a New York inner-city high-school drop-out) and black film organizations such as the Twelfth and Oxford Street Film Makers Corporation (a former Philadelphia gang).

Cineaste covered the Santa Barbara-based Brooks Foundation film program that was responsible for funding a number of inner-city film projects in New York, Philadelphia, and Watts and providing opportunities to poor teenagers in urban areas. As Cineaste’s editors pointed out, these programs operated from the “perspective of a society that can write a check for a few thousand dollars to allow underprivileged urban youth to make films and then point with pride to its efforts in improving conditions in the ghettos while still refusing to really tackle the problems of this country’s inner-city living conditions” (vol. 3, no.2: 4). Although limited in its efforts, the Brooks Foundation served as a precursor to CPB’s minority consortia as a funder of public interest minority media.

The Independent’s coverage of African American independent media began in 1980 with St. Clair Bourne’s “Chamba Notes” (April 1980). This article launched an important voice in African American independent media. Bourne was a pioneering independent producer/director who worked on Black Journal, one of the first public television programs devoted to minority issues. In the article, Bourne called for scrutiny of the CPB and attention to the state of independent, publicly funded media. He used the early black news and cultural affairs programs of the 1960s and 1970s (Black Journal, Soul!, Interface, and Black Perspective) to talk about the history of minority programming and its needs as a developing field. He defined three generations of minority programming: the first arose as a reaction to the civil unrest of the 1960s and addressed the failure of media to represent minorities; the second amended the first generation’s work by trying to diversify its subject matter; and the third was based in “a view and interpretation of American issues based in the ‘minority’ experience” but also treated “issues, trends and phenomenon not necessarily directly connected to ‘minority’ life” (April 1980: 9).

Following Bourne’s lead was Marlon Riggs, who actively contributed to both trade periodicals—The Independent and Release Print—as a media activist and critic rather than just as a filmmaker to be interviewed. In Release Print’s October 1986 and November 1987 issues, Marlon Riggs, who was then the representative of the Association of California Independent Public Television Producers, reported on the yearly consultative meetings between the CPB Program Fund staff and the National Coalition of Independent Public Television Producers. Riggs expressed his frustration over the difficulty of negotiating the gap between policymakers and indie producers: “CPB and indies talk, but seldom achieve dialogue. Each side speaks a different language. They mouth the same words—‘public television,’ for instance—but the meanings are unconnected, grounded in radically divergent ideas of what public television is and should be” (October 1986: 12). A few years later, in April 1991, The Independent ran Riggs’ article “Black Macho Revisited: Reflections of a Snap! Queen,” which criticized homophobic representations of Black gay men among Black male rappers and filmmakers from Heavy D to Spike Lee’s School Daze. Later that year, in October 1991, The Independent reported the censorship debates surrounding Marlon Riggs’ controversial video Tongues Untied (“Tongues Tied: Homophobia Hamstrings PBS”; 4–6). Originally scheduled to air in July 1991 on P.O.V., a PBS series featuring independent
video and film documentaries, *Tongues United* was dropped by 104 stations, more than 50 percent of PBS affiliates carrying the series (most of those stations that did air the film relegated it to the late hours of the night). Affiliate cancellations of *Tongues United*, along with other programs with gay subject matter (such as Charles Atlas’ *Son of Sam and Delilah*) fanned controversy about public television's collusion with the mainstream silencing of marginalized groups. Riggs himself responded to this controversy in the pages of *Release Print* (“Tongues Retied!: Marlon Riggs Snaps! Back,” September 1991). He indicted not only arch-conservatives and religious executives who banned his work with the excuse of “community standards,” but criticized public television’s complicity with the “mythically patriarchal, heterosexist and usually white” community.

One of the notable differences between commercial periodicals and trade periodicals output on African American media is their avoidance of the Spike Lee phenomenon, which drastically changed African American film’s relationship to mainstream Hollywood. *The Independent* and *Release Print* had focused on minority directors with less commercial successes (albeit more critical accolades) such as Marlon Riggs, Charles Burnett, Julie Dash, and Cauleen Smith. Although the commercial periodicals also discussed these more obscure directors, their emphasis was black filmmakers with crossover appeal such as Spike Lee, Mario van Peebles, John Singleton, the Hudlin brothers, and Darnell Martin.

However, in vol. 20, no. 2, 1993 *Cineaste* printed an abridged version of the chapter on black film in Ed Guerrero’s book *Framing Blackness: The African-American Image in Film,* This surveyed the collective tendencies of minority filmmaking, going beyond the works of individual filmmakers. The article eventually led to the “Race in Contemporary American Cinema” series that began in 1994 and continues today (published intermittently in some 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000 issues). The series was launched under the aegis of Dan Georgakas, a senior editor of *Cineaste,* and Jesse Rhines, assistant editor. Partially funded by the Eastman Foundation, the series covered many African American related topics, such as “Re-Creating Their Media Image: Two Generations of Black Women Filmmakers” (vol. 20, no.3, 1994), “Daughter of the Diaspora: A Filmography of Sixty-Five Black Women Independent Film- and Video-makers” (Ibid.), “Tragically Hip: Hollywood and African-American Cinema” (vol. 20, no. 4, 1994), “The Political Economy of Black Film” (vol. 21, no. 3, 1995), “Race, Class and Gender in Darnell Martin’s I Like It Like That” (vol. 22, no. 3, 1996), and “St. Clair Bourne: Documenting the African-American Experience” (vol. 26, no. 3, 2001). Jesse Rhines’s “The Political Economy of Black Film” in particular provided useful information about the profile of black film production, distribution, and exhibition from the late 1960s (when Gordon Parks, the first black director in Hollywood, made *The Learning Tree*) to the early 1990s, an era dubbed as the “Black Film Renaissance.” Despite a number of talented young black filmmakers entering the mainstream Hollywood industry, most of the profits from these directors’ works were controlled by white-owned distribution and exhibition companies, making reinvestment in black filmmaking difficult. Rhines urged the community to venture into alternative distribution and exhibition markets such as cable, satellite, direct-to-video, and CD-ROM/interactive disc arenas.

*Cineaste* also addressed a number of African American women filmmakers, including Kathleen Collins, Julie Dash, Alile Sharon Larkin, Monica Freeman, Camille Billups, Leslie Harris, Darnell Martin, and Daresha Kyi. *CineAction* ran two major articles concerning African-Canadian women filmmakers: “A Cinema of Duty: The Films of Jennifer Hodge de Silva” (no. 23, Winter 1990–1991) and “Don’t Go to Dat Place and Fool Around Like Rich Girls: Black Canadian Women Filmmakers

ASIAN AMERICAN CINEMA

In 1995, Peter Feng wrote that “perhaps it does not matter whether ‘Asian American Cinema’ makes any political or esthetic sense—after all, the term has currency in the cinematic marketplace, as evidenced by the National Asian American Telecommunications Association, the Seattle Asian American Film Festival, the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film and Video Festival, and New York’s Asian American International Film Festival” (“In Search of Asian American Cinema: Race in Contemporary American Cinema, part 3” vol. 21, no. 1–2, 1995: 32).

Nevertheless, it had become evident that the sense of the term Asian American Cinema needed to be explained, both in academic terms as well as within the community of independent filmmaking. Feng’s definition in Cineaste explicates the complex historical and ideantarian politics involved in the term and called for a critical dialogue on the quickly shifting and extremely diverse filmmaking practice. The article laid out the limitations of an all-inclusive (as well as exclusive) definition of Asian American Cinema as either a cultural, aesthetic, or political term. One of the clear problems with the term Asian American Cinema was its use by external forces and its definition by market forces. Feng’s article noted that this did not endear the term to individual Asian American and Asian Canadian filmmakers. However, the article also showed how this term could be helpful to filmmakers in getting funding to show their films in an increasingly bureaucratic and fiscally competitive system, one sustained by such institutionally viable labels as Asian American Cinema. Therefore, by suggesting how the term could be used for ongoing political activity—through the media centers that were engendered by the Asian American Cinema Movement of the 1970s—the article demonstrated that Asian American Cinema had a historically specific function.2

The periodicals also make evident a historical shift in Asian American independent cinema around the beginning of the 1980s. This period saw the grassroots efforts of Asian American filmmakers and media activists consolidate into a nationally viable media organization, National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA). This shift meant greater recognition and funding for Asian American films and filmmakers. It also marked greater opportunities for Asian American filmmakers to move beyond the community-based filmmaking that marked the 1970s, which sought to use media largely for the purposes of social change. This shift in purpose began to be evident in the independent media periodicals, which reported on a ‘new generation’ of Asian American film that was markedly different in subject matter, style, and political commitments than the films of the 1970s. The periodicals showed the range and diversity of Asian American Cinema through their interviews and profiles of such “old school” filmmakers as Robert Nakamura, Loni Ding, Renée Tajima-Peña and with such “new generation” filmmakers as Greg Araki, Spencer Nakasako, Jon Moritsugu, Quentin Lee, Justin Lin, and Rea Tajiri as well as new video documentarians, Spencer Nakasako, and Deann Borshay Liem. Also, articles such as Kevin Sun’s “Youngbloods: A Toast to Asian American Independents” in the March 1997 issue of Release Print featured filmmakers Quentin Lee, Justin Lin, Chris Chan Lee, Eric Nakamura, Michael Idemoto, and Rea Tajiri, and discussed their films within the framework of post-1970s issues.

Not only does comparative linear historicization appear through the various issues of The Independent, Release Print, CineAction, and Cineaste, but also filmmakers and video artists who defy easy categorization. Such filmmakers as Trinh T. Minh-ha, Arthur Dong, Christine Choy, and Valerie Soe made films with political, aesthetic, and cultural concerns that eclipsed those dominant in “Asian American Cinema.” They embraced other markers of “classification,” such as those of gay/lesbian film, avant-garde film, or Third Cinema. For example, starting in the early 1990s, several articles and interviews with Greg Araki and Jon Moritsugu, whose films are engaged with camp aesthetics and queer issues, appeared in CineAction and Release Print.3 Furthermore, The Independent featured articles about Trinh T. Minh-ha throughout the 1980s and the 1990s.4 Trinh, in particular, came to represent independent filmmaking in the Bay Area during the 1980s and 1990s. As a feminist, Asian, exile-in-America, University of California, Berkeley professor who is also an artist, documentary filmmaker, and producer, she epitomizes the kind of politically and intellectually informed independent filmmaking practice advocated by the Independent.

As the variety of coverage shows, independent media periodicals are a useful tool for navigating the history of minority independent filmmaking. Since the 1970s, the two trade periodicals, The Independent and Release Print, have traced the development of Asian American independent media from grassroots community organizing to national.
media distribution. Since many Asian American independent filmmakers were also media activists, the trade periodicals revealed how those responsible for making many of the first Asian American fiction films and documentaries were also responsible for the establishment of Asian American media organizations. Since the early 1980s, Renee Tajima-Peña has been an editor and reporter for The Independent. Not only has she been an important figure in Asian American independent media as a filmmaker—Who Killed Vincent Chin? (1988) made with Christine Choy—Tajima has been the founding member of media organizations such as Asian CineVision in New York and NAATA. She has also brought exposure to and equal opportunities for the economically challenged, women, and people of color. Tajima’s involvement with The Independent along with her coverage of such filmmaker/activists as Steven Tatsukawa, Jim Yee, and Deann Borshay Liem, reveal the interconnectedness of Asian American independent media. Other articles concerned with the institutional side of Asian American independent cinema include those about Asian American film festivals and profiles of such media organizations as NAATA.

LATINO/CHICANO CINEMA

In the periodical literature, the words most associated with Latino/Chicano filmmaking are “dearth of” and “neglect.” Despite Cineaste’s consistent efforts to cover minority cinemas (primarily those by African Americans and Asian Americans), Latino/Chicano cinema was almost invisible in the periodical.

Gary M. Stern’s article “Why the Dearth of Latino Directors?” (vol. 29, nos. 2–3, 1992) suggests that “the forces that have worked to encourage black filmmakers in America in recent years have not applied the same pressure to promote Latino filmmakers” (45). Stern points out that while Spike Lee’s much-publicized success helped to create a climate for other black filmmakers to make feature films in Hollywood, Luis Valdez’s $100 million-grossing La Bamba did little in saving Latino directors from unemployment.

The focus of articles having to do with Latino/Chicano independent media in The Independent related to its role in covering the rapidly increasing population of Latinos in the United States. For example, one of the first articles was Jesús Salvador Treviño’s and José Luis Ruíz’s “A History of Neglect” (October 1979). Treviño and Ruiz lamented that “less than 1% of programming funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting over the past ten years has been programming specifically focusing on Hispanic communities in the United States” (12). They juxtaposed this neglect with the likelihood that Hispanic Americans would comprise the largest minority in the United States by 1985. They asked, “How has the Corporation for Public Broadcasting endeavored to meet its obligation to program for the ‘convenience, interest and necessity’ of all of its publics, including Hispanic Americans?” (13). They had high hopes that the CPB Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting’s long document “A Formula For Change” (1979), would provide much needed attention to the deficit in Latino-produced programming.

Most of the articles on Latino media in The Independent follow this line of thought, with articles such as “Generation Ñ, Que Pasa with LA’s Second Largest Population Group” (April 1999) regularly emphasizing the paucity of Latino independent media. Other articles covered such Latino video makers and filmmakers as Lourdes Portillo, Hector Galan, and Luis Valdovinos.

Cineaste’s interview with Gregory Nava (vol. 21, no. 4, 1995) and Filmmaker’s cover story on Edward James Olmos (Spring 1992) as well as interviews with Nava and Portillo (Spring 1995) are among the few articles that lent visibility to Latino/Chicano filmmakers.

NATIVE AMERICAN CINEMA

In Cineaste, Native-American cinema passes virtually unrepresented, although the “Race in Contemporary American Media” series included a couple of articles by Angela Aleiss about the image of Native Americans in Hollywood films (“Native Americans: The Surprising Silents” [vol. 25, no. 1, 1995]; “Iron Eyes Cody: Wannabe Indian” [vol. 21, no. 3, 1999].

Like its coverage of other minority groups’ independent media, The Independent’s articles on Native American media focused on media initiatives and the general collectivity of media making. The December 1994 issue of The Independent contained the journal’s most extensive coverage of Native American media, including a main article by Native American filmmaker and media activist Victor Masayeseva called “Through Native Eyes, The Emerging Native American Aesthetic.” Also in the issue was Beverly R. Singer’s article entitled “Replaying the Native Experience,” which discussed six Native American independent media productions made between 1984 and 1994—Alexie Isaac’s Eyes of the Spirit, Arlene Bowman’s Navajo Talking Picture, Phil Lucas’ The Honour of All, Victor Masayeseva’s Imaging Indians, and Sandy Johnson Osawa’s Lighting the Seventh Fire. Singer emphasized the significance of communities, ancestral lifeways, and identities in these works. In terms of media organizations, The Independent’s October 1985 issue contained an article by Renee Tajima entitled “Thinking Globally Acting Locally—Native American Indian Media and the Atlanta Media Project,” which discussed the role of the Native American India Movement (NAIM) throughout the United States. The Filmmaker (Winter 1998) issue ran...
the article “Alien Nation,” a conversation with director Chris Eyre and writer Sherman Alexie who collaborated on Smoke Signals, the first commercially distributed film written, directed, and coproduced by Native Americans.

CONCLUSION
In our research, we have addressed institutional policies and journalistic discourses surrounding minority independent media by using a comparative, interethnic paradigm. By focusing on two different types of periodicals—institutional trade periodicals for independent film/video-makers (The Independent and Release Print) and more commercial and journalistic periodicals targeting a broader readership (CineAction, Cineaste, and Filmmaker)—we were able to provide a comprehensive overview of the coverage of and formation of distinct ethnic cinemas. We have suggested in this report that minority independent media is not only a subject of functional production practices but also can be situated within larger critical discourses in cultural studies and diasporic Third Cinema. For further research, we propose to investigate the following areas: (1) the relationship between policymaking and funding institutions and each minority consortium; (2) coproduction case studies in which two or more minority groups are involved; (3) the potential of digital technologies and new delivery system as alternative production, distribution, and exhibition modes for under-funded minority filmmakers; and (4) the comparative study of such PBS omnibus programs as POV and Frontline which regularly feature documentaries produced by minority filmmakers.

NOTES
1. As the result of PBS’s increasing corporate sponsorship and narrow programming of science and opera programs, independent producers convinced CPB to return its focus to the representation of diversity in television. The resulting Public Telecommunications Act of 1988 mandated that CPB directly give a $6 million annual budget to the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers (NCIPBP) to develop programs through ITVS. The result was problematic in many ways, including the determination of what was deemed ‘diverse’ and ‘independent’ for national broadcast.
2. See Feng’s follow up article (1999).
ARTICLES ON INDEPENDENT MEDIA BY ETHNICITY

CINEACTION (CA) (1985-2001)

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN CANADIAN CINEMA/MEDIA


Crichlow, Warren. 1995. “Doin’ Diaspora: Toronto International Film Festival Inaugurates Planet Africa Programme.” CA no. 39 (December) [Contemporary World Cinema].

Hezekiah, Gabrielle. 1993. “Don’t Go to Dat Place and Fool Around: Like Rich Girls: Black Canadian Women Filmmakers and Video Artists.” CA no. 32 (Fall) [Race-ing Home: Race and Cultural Identity].

Hurst, James A. 1990. “Fuck Sal’s Pizza: Spike Lee’s Do the Right Thing as a Product of the Hip Hop Movement.” CA no. 21/22 (Summer/Fall) [Rethinking Authorship].

Julian, Isaac. 1993. “Confession of a Snow Queen: Director’s Notes on the Making of The Attendant.” CA no. 32 (Fall) [Race-ing Home: Race and Cultural Identity].

Lightning, Robert K. 1992. “Spike Lee’s Homophobia.” CA no. 29 (Fall) [Revaluation Hollywood: Contemporary and Classical].

———. 1995. “Planet Africa: Three Shorts.” CA no. 39 (December) [Contemporary World Cinema].


Marks, Laura U. 1995. “Ghosts of Stories: Black Audio Film Collective’s Who Needs a Heart?.” CA no. 36 (February) [Reviewing the Toronto Film Festival/Black Audio...John Wool...].


Walcott, Rinaldo. 1992. “Keeping Black Phallus Erect: Gender and the Construction of Black Masculinity in Boyz ’N the Hood.” CA no. 30 (Winter) [Framing the Family].

ASIAN AMERICAN CINEMA/MEDIA


Minh-ha, Trinh T. 1989. “Black Bamboo.” CA no. 18 (Fall) [Imperialism and Film] [Cover: Peter Rist’s introduction of Third Cinema Festival].


LATINO/CHICANO CINEMA/MEDIA

None.

NATIVE AMERICAN CINEMA/MEDIA

None.

GENERAL


Stam, Robert. 1993. “From Stereotype to Discourse: Methodological Reflexions on Racism in the Media.” CA no. 32 (Fall) [Race-ing Home: Race and Cultural Identity].

CINEASTE (C) (1967-2001)

AFRICAN AMERICAN CINEMA/MEDIA


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