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When we – Marc Glassman and I – agreed to take over the responsibilities for this issue of

*Take One*, we had no agenda apart from this: 1995 marks the 25th anniversary of the release of Don Shebib's *Goin' Down the Road*, and it seemed important, not to mention natural, that the event be marked in Canada's national film magazine. But how? Surely an entire issue devoted to a film that isn't even available on video seemed a mite insular, but we also knew – living in a country where talking about indigenous films often amounts to a form of activism – that if it wasn't done here it probably wouldn't get done.

Then we hit upon the idea of the abiding Canadian cinematic image of the road as a metaphor for historical consciousness: how did we get here from there, and where the hell were we anyway? What's the connection between *Goin' Down the Road* protagonists Pete and Joey's cautionary urban burnout and the concerns of Canadian movies today? What's the relation between the place called Canada in the summer of 1970, when *Goin' Down the Road* opened in selected (read: few) theatres, and the same-named place of today? Big questions obviously, but productively big: the kind that open windows to horizons of thought and speculation, that allow one hop in that old mental jalopy, take the top down and just cruise toward some distant point on the intellectual horizon.

In other words, we contacted people we knew were capable of artful free-association and we told them that they could write just about anything they wanted, provided it had some connection with that obscure object of desire called Canadian cinema.

What you now hold in your hands is the result of that vaguely specific mandate. Herein you will find

a healthy range of both opinions and style, from the rigorously analytical to the provocatively irreverent, and from the politically engaged to the hormonally activated.

Peter Harcourt, one of the key figures in the academic study of Canadian cinema, looks at that indistinct but impervious thing called The Canon, and offers some cogent insights as to why certain films have been favoured by history and criticism while others have been left in the dirt. Craig MacInnis, a clear-sighted movie reviewer for *The Toronto Star* arrives at a similar destination, but only after taking a different route. Using a grunt's-eye view from the trenches of the media mainstream, he wonders why the "twin pillars of the Canadian cultural establishment," *The Globe and Mail* and the CBC, have managed to miss what might be a dramatic shift in the very idea of Canadian culture. Stephen Cole, a Canadian living in Brooklyn, wonders why even in the one genre where you'd think Canadians might score some goals – the hockey movie – losers rule, while American hockey movies are all about winners. (Maybe that's why Gretzky went to L.A.) Award-winning journalist and filmmaker Kevin McMahon (*The Falls, In the Reign of Twilight*) contributes a fascinating reevaluation of Denys Arcand's *Jésus de Montréal*; Douglas Fetherling reviews Peter Harcourt's recently published memoirs; and, in the most flagrantly incorrect article we managed to commission, Boston critic Gerald Peary looks at women in Canadian movies and dares to call them something only someone living that far away might – "babes."

Also Marc Glassman looks at the road according to Bruce McDonald, and I glance back at Shebib's achievement and wonder why just the idea of a "Canadian classic" increasingly seems like a contradiction in terms. So sit back, buckle up, take the mental top down and enjoy the ride ●

**GOIN'  
DOWN  
THE  
ROAD:  
a Canadian  
classic**

from left,  
**Paul Bradley,  
Don Shebib,  
Jayne Eastwood,  
Doug McGrath**

