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Canada

The Progressive Philosophy of Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada - A Case Study of *To a Safer Place* (1987) -

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Abstracts

This thesis explores the relationship between the National Film Board and its audiences, with particular attention to the ways in which the NFB has tried to respond to the needs of Canadians for media representations of themselves,through the Challenge for Change program (1967 - 1978) and Studio D (1974 -). The focus of this work will be on the progressive aspects of NFB productions, which have frequently taken controversial stands against official government policy.

In the process, the place of the NFB within a politics of representation will be discussed, and its critical contribution to the constitution of a Canadian "national identity" will be examined. Finally, this study is part of an attempt to investigate characteristics of Canadian society, with respect both to the functioning of government and to the democratic use of film as a medium enabling culturally marginalized people to find their own voices.

Cette thèse explore la relation entre l'Office national du film et son public et accorde une attention particulière aux façons dont l'ONF a tenté de répondre aux besoins des Canadiens sur le plan de leur propre représentation médiatique, grâce au programme Société nouvelle (1967 - 1978) et au Studio D (1974 - .) Cet ouvrage porte principalement sur les aspects progressistes des productions de l'ONF, qui ont souvent été l'objet de controverses allant à l'encontre de la politique gouvernementale officielle.

Au cours de l'ouvrage, la place qu'occupe l'ONF au sein d'une politique de représentation y sera démontrée, et l'apport crucial de l'ONF à la composition d'une "identité nationale" canadienne y sera examinée. Finalement, cette étude constitue en partie l'effort d'un examen de ce qui caractérise la société canadienne, selon le fonctionnnement du gouvernement et de l'utilisation démocratique du cinéma en tant qu'outil permettant aux personnes culturellement marginalisées de découvrir leur propre voix.

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Table of Content

Introduction

The National Film Board (NFB) is the world's unique government institution whose mandate includes film production, film distribution, and the training of filmmakers. Because of its existence over half a century, many filmmakers and institutions abroad are interested in the Board's activities in the areas of documentary film, feature drama, animation, and advanced technology. Just as the number of co-productions in which the Board is involved is increasing, so the political and economic boundaries that divide those who work for/with the Film Board are disappearing.

In Canada, on the contrary, the NFB seems to be less well-known. In this respect, it is revealing that Canadian viewers watching the sixty-seventh Academy Awards show on CTV missed the appearance of Alison Snowden and David Fine, who won the NFB's tenth Oscar for *Bob's Birthday*. Ironically, the relative smallness of the Board's audience at home is related to the broader problem of Canadian film and film criticism; only a few scholars have been interested in the indigenous film industry, and most Canadian filmgoers prefer to see movies from the south.

However, the NFB has developed a grass-root production and distribution system in order to reach audiences in Canada and abroad. This study examines the relationship between the NFB and its audiences, with particular emphasis on how and why the NFB has attempted to empower people on the margins of Canadian society. The first chapter focusses on the Challenge for Change program (1967-1978), through which the idea of using film as a tool to "democratize" the media and as a catalyst to articulate problems from the viewpoint of "the

people" was implemented. Second, Studio D of the NFB will be discussed in an attempt to understand how feminist ideology has been integrated into the national institution.

In Chapter Three, audience reaction to Beverly Shaffer's *To a Safer Place* (1987) will be analyzed as a case study. The choice of this film is justifiable on a number of grounds. Firstly, the film gave rise to the public discussion of incest and domestic violence against women and children; and secondly, the feminist filmmakers' intention to use film as catalyst for consciousness-raising was realized in the process. Furthermore, this film provides an opportunity to examine the use of documentary filmmaking to "publicize the personal". As a whole, this case study will be an attempt to see if there is a link between the NFB's strategy to help marginalized people give voice to their concerns and the actual response from audiences. Finally, I hope that this study here can be part of re-evaluation of the Board, at a time when a drastic re-organization of this cultural institution is made necessary by economic and industrial imperatives.

This study presented here uses government reports as a key source of information. In addition, interviews conducted by the author were verified through consultation of archival material at the Board's library and other written documents. As primary source material, many NFB films were screened, including some archival footage.

In terms of previous work on the Challenge for Change program and Studio D of the NFB, there are several previous research reports. Both Taylor and Eveny-Taylor's report (1973) and Moore's dissertation (1987) deal mainly with the impact of video technology on people. Regarding Studio D, Scherbarth (1986) offers a historical look at the unit, drawing a portrait of the studio in the "first decade" of 1974-1984. Gary Evans has chronicled the

history of the Film Board from its creation to its fiftieth anniversary in the book, John Grierson and the National Film Board: The Politics of Wartime Propaganda, and In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949 to 1989. David Jones revised his ph.D. dissertation to publish an informative, detailed book, Movies and Memoranda: An Interpretative History of the National Film Board of Canada.

As Jose Arroyo (Arroyo, 1994) suggests, the Canadian film industry, like film studies here, were colonized by their American counterparts for a long time. From the 1970s on, several anthologies appeared (Feldman and Nelson 1977; Feldman 1984; Veronneau and Handling 1980; Waltz 1986; Clanfield 1987; Fetherling 1989), and concurrently, Peter Harcourt, Peter Morris, as well as filmmakers like Bruce Elder, wrote books on the Canadian cinema (Harcourt 1977; Morris 1984; Elder 1989). The emergence of film journals like *Cinema Canada, Cineaction, Take Two*, and the *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, founded in 1990, gave a space for those interested in English Canadian cinema. This body of discourse not only served to promote Canada's cultural heritage, and lobby for financial support from the government, but offered political, economic and cultural analyses of issues confronting Canadia cinema: from the broader role of government-funded institutions in constituting the "National Culture" through to the necessity of such a culture in the context of the overwhelming threat of American cultural commodities.

In the meantime, the 1980s saw the success of "New Canadian Narrative Cinema," led by Atom Egoyan's critical and commercial "hits," from *Family Viewing* (1987) to *Exotica* (1993), Patricia Rozema's features from *I've Heard the Mermaid Singing* (1987) to *When Night is Falling* (1995), Bruce McDonald's *Highway 61* (1991), to name but a few. Recently,

as a result of long-time demands made by home-based independent filmmakers, the Canadian Broadcasting Cooperation (CBC) began the *Canadian Cinema* program every Friday night in the Fall of 1994. Indeed, the last year seems to have marked the maturation of Canadian film culture, as illustrated by the exceptional event of the publication of three books (Madger, Posner, Steven), dealing with Canadian cinema.

While the development of a private-sector feature film industry has become a concern of many film scholars and critics, the role of the NFB seems less important than it had been in the 1960s and 1970s. From the 1980s onward, the NFB has been the subject of a number of government reports (Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee 1982; Fox 1984; Task Force on Broadcasting Policy 1986; Department of Communications 1989; Paul Audley and Associates LTD. 1991; Groupe Secor 1994). Many have criticized the Board from an industry-oriented perspective and in light of budgetary restrictions within the Federal government. In opposition to current suggestions that the Board be shut down, my study here aims to point to the importance of the Film Board within the Canadian film industry.

The starting point of this study, the NFB's progressive philosophy, is best highlighted through a comparison with other cultural agencies, like the CBC. To foster "Canadian culture," the CBC strictly regulates the percentage of its content which is Canadian, and constantly seeks Canadian programs. At the time of television's entry into Canadian households, television became an important outlet for the NFB Films. In 1955, approximately 50% of its films were made for television. However, the relationship between these two federal agencies has not been an easy one. The CBC was often reluctant to broadcast the NFB productions on the ground that they were "biased," "one-sided," and "imbalanced". With the

rise of young filmmakers protesting the pregiven structures and sponsored nature of most NFB films, and breaking free from these strictures in the 1960s, the CBC came to have fewer and fewer NFB films on its air waves.

In fact, the uniqueness of the NFB is most apparent in its divergence from other cultural agencies of the Canadian government. There is overlap among several government institutions: the CBC has its own production, both the Canada Council and Telefilm Canada can give financial support to filmmakers, and provincial cultural agencies may also co-produce films with the Film Board. Among the provincial agencies, one finds the Société générale des industries culturelles Québéc (SOGIC), the Ontario Film Development Corporation (OFDC) in Ontario, Manitoba's Cultural Industries Development Office (CIDO), formed in 1985, the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation (AMPDC) created in 1982, and B.C. Film. None of these institutions, however, has been able to play a role similar in scale or kind to that of the NFB. I shall now turn to a discussion of the NFB's social function.

Chapter One

The History of the National Film Board of Canada

And the Roots of the "Progressive Philosophy"

1. Background

In 1981, a Toronto-based filmmaker, Barbara Halpern Martineau, wrote that "[w]e are colonized from the outside and institutionalized from within" (Martineau 1981, 19). This was an accurate description of the situation in 1939, when the Canadian government established the National Film Board of Canada. Since its creation, the NFB has been a principal vehicle for Canadian filmmaking, in the face of foreign domination of our indigenous theatres. Canadian film policy on the whole has supported the indigenous film industry by creating national institutions instead of enacting quotas on imported films. As a result, among countries that have their own film production structures, Canada has failed to impose any quotas on films from abroad.

In this political and social context, the NFB has made a critical contribution to the constitution of Canadian "national identity" in a way very different from the Hollywood film industry's contribution to American national identity. Generally speaking, American movies have catered to a desire for entertainment for the sake of box office profits. In doing so, they have represented the "American Dream" through heros and heroines glorified on the silver screen. On the contrary, NFB films have been less entertaining, but more educational. More importantly, the NFB has defined "targeted audiences" instead of producing films for the

"masses." An examination of the NFB's role will thus be of importance to understanding cultural differences between Canada and the U.S. This section highlights how, and especially why, the NFB's function and its relationship to the government were changed when it remained a government institution after the Second World War.

The First World War made participant nations realize the importance of information in encouraging a patriotic mood among their citizens. Having suffered from the lack of a state-controlled information network, the federal government of Canada felt the need for an institution for war-time propaganda on the eve of the Second World War. The need for a centralized film institution in the government was felt also by three civil servants in London, England: Vincent Massey, then Canada's high commissioner to England, his secretary, Lester Pearson, and their staff secretary, Ross McLean. They decided to send John Grierson (1898-1972), whom they considered to be appropriately qualified, across the Atlantic Ocean to Canada. He had some ten years' experience with the institution then known as the Empire Marketing Board.

As soon as he arrived in Canada, in May 1938, Grierson submitted a report to the Government recommending the creation of a national agency to produce films. Although the intended function of the NFB as an instrument of wartime propaganda was never officially mentioned, its initiation was designed to help in the development of a centralized network through which the Canadian government would be able to disseminate information.

There was an intensive debate in the House of Commons over the mandate of the National Film Board. As Ted Madger (in 1993 Canada's Hollywood: The Canadian State and Feature Film) pointed out, the then Trade and Commerce Minister W.D. Euler had stressed

the function of the agency as a coordinating agency, not a body for film production. Euler explained that a film board would attempt to integrate the film sections of several government departments with the extensions of universities, other educational institutions, and libraries. When asked about the possibility of the new film board garnering revenues, more than once he offered the assurance that his government had "no intention through this medium of entering into competition with private business" (Canada, House of Common Debate 1939, 1665). Yet, at another point, Euler advanced the possibility that the NFB might encourage the production of "a national film," which might be of an educational nature.

Although Euler seemed to use the word "national film" to explain how different the NFB's films would be from those previously produced by individual departments in their own interest, it was suggested that a new film board's mandate should be defined in the light of international interests, namely those of attracting people from abroad and boosting tourism. It is interesting to observe how the national image of Canada overlapped with the notion of exotic Other within the viewpoint of the government. This might have reflected the conceptualization of Canada as a nation of immigrants, which has devoted a great amount of time and money to "pull" immigrants from abroad. It is not a mere coincidence thus that the Film Board was given the function to interpret Canada both to Canadians and to other nations. With a diverse population in a vast land, to produce a "national film" can mean representing its "foreignness" for both insiders and outsiders.

On May second, 1939, the NFB was established under the department of Trade and Commerce and was authorized "to initiate and promote the production and distribution of films in the national interest and in particular to produce and distribute and to promote the

production and distribution of films designed to interpret Canada to Canadians and to other nations" (National Film Act of 1939, Section 9-a). During the Second World war, the NFB produced so-called war-time propaganda, including the famous series *Canada Carries On* (1940-1959) and *World in Action* (1941-1945). It also developed international distribution agencies throughout North America, South America, and in Britain. In 1941, the Film Board absorbed the Government Motion Picture Bureau, and its staff numbered nearly eight hundred. Among the recruited members was Norman McLaren, Oscar-winner and excellent animator from Scotland. It should be noted that NFB production was not supported by an entirely Canadian staff, but counted two Scots, Grierson and McLaren, as well as Stuart Legg from England.

The close of the war brought the existence of the NFB into question. There were drastic cutbacks and a negative reaction on the part of the press upon the revelation of the function of the Board as an instrument of government propaganda. There was also little support within the government, with the exception of the newly formed Massey Commission. At this time, Grierson resigned to leave for the United States, because one of his secretaries was suspected of involvement with the Gouzenko affair in the context of Canada's cold war "red scare."

In spite of all these difficulties, the NFB survived. In 1950, the National Film Act was revised, and the Board came to exclude cabinet members from its own ranks in order to avoid government intervention in NFB policy. It came under the supervision of the department of the Secretary of State, with Ross Maclean's replacement of Arthur Irwin as a new film commissioner. The NFB estranged itself from government policy from this point on, although

filmmakers were largely self-regulating and chose "safer" subjects as a result of the conservatism dominant in post-war Canadian society (Burgoyne 1989). The NFB's survival proves that political and economic factors are not the exclusive reasons for state intervention into the Canadian film industry. If they were, the Film Board would have ceased to exist in the post-war period. In other countries, on the contrary, governments immediately withdrew from state-controlled film industries after the war, simply because there was no more need for war-time propaganda.

To explain the NFB's survival, I place particular attention on the grass-root networks on which the NFB depended: the National Film Society (which later became the Canadian Film Institute), "home cinema clubs," and the Film Council movement. In a pre-television age, the contribution of the NFB during war time was not limited to production, but also included distribution and the training of people as film projectionists in remote areas. It should be also noted that the NFB produced films dealing with agricultural techniques and the safety of factories as well as films containing wartime information. As discussed above, government departments had established their own film production units before the creation of the NFB, and the distribution of those films was one of the NFB's functions. The projectionists were pivotal in fulfilling the educational purpose of the films because of their ability to answer questions from audiences.

According to Grey (Grey 1977), himself a proud projectionist, the non-theatrical network developed by the Film Board provided grass-root connections with isolated communities where there were no theatres. In the early years, "NFB representatives" substituted a piece of a sheet for a screen, and car lights for lighting. Stuffing "necessities" in

a car, those "reps" travelled across Canada, showing film programs to up to 20 communities every month, in order to meet the audiences' demand in rural communities, northern outposts, lumber camp, shipyards, factories, schools, churches, and trade union halls. Isolated communities warmly welcomed "reps," who were also called "movie showmen," or "movie field men" (although not all of them were male). Because of the popular demand for films and the information these reps provided, the number of NFB projectionists increased from 30 in 1942 to 85 in 1945.

Movie Showman (1989) also stresses emotional commitments between people in the rural areas and "reps," as shown through interviews with former film projectionists. One projectionist recalled in the film that there was a "family feeling," or "family tie" between them. It is easy to imagine why some reps were called "evangelists" because of their role in "helping people help themselves, helping people educate" by bringing eye-opening information into communities. In the 1940s and 1950s, NFB reps were one of the important groups who brought outside information into isolated communities. Audiences went to the community hall, church, or Y.M.C.A., where "Canadian films" were shown: some people might expect to see their sons and daughters on the screen.

Another educational purpose of the NFB was the training of projectionists in communities. The availability of local projectionists meant that films could be seen without the presence of NFB reps. NFB reps also helped to organize volunteer groups within communities, the most important of which were probably the Film Councils. First organized in Kingston in 1945, these expanded to British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, then to virtually everywhere in Canada. There were 300 councils in 1951, and 550 in 1955. Other than

volunteer self-orienting rural film circuits like the Film Councils, there were also film circuits set up by the provincial departments. In Nova Scotia and Ontario, Departments of Lands and Forests organized Film Councils so that their local rangers and wardens could advocate fire prevention, and be made aware of issues of conservation, wildlife, and ecology through NFB films. In Quebec, two forestry associations carried films into lumber camps and remote settlements to sustain a program on forest conservation. L'Union des Cultivateurs operated several film circuits to serve farm groups. The Film Council movement created "film purchase pools," whereby individual film councils paid an annual membership fee and financed the rotation of film blocks by the Federation of Film Councils.

The non-theatrical distribution supported by the numerous volunteer film councils was one of the reasons for the survival of the NFB. More importantly, the NFB's reliance on grass-root film societies must have helped to change its social role from that of a war-time propaganda institution to that of an organization that fulfilled Canadian people's desires to be represented on the screen.

To sum up, as we have seen, the NFB was given a totally different role in Canadian society than the Hollywood film industry, where a self-regulation system has been developed since the creation of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association as a defense against political confrontation. Despite the fact that documentary filmmaking has been developed by governmental institutions in Canada, the NFB has actively produced films of a controversial nature by empowering people on the margins, instead of empowering the centre. The introduction of *cinéma diréct* in the late 1950s was a sign of the changing role of the NFB, and suggested a new "use" of film as a medium.

2. The Challenge for Change program (1967-1978)

During the years when Grierson was the Film Commissioner, everything was simpler. Not only did he determine the style and subject matter of films made by the Board, but he took control of everything, from administrative matters to choice of personnel. As a "father" of documentary, Grierson highly valued the method that Robert Flaherty (1884-1951) of the U.S. had established through the most famous of his films, *Nanook of the North* (1922), and, later, *Moana* (1926), which Grierson called a "poetic record" (Grierson 1926, 1989). While Flaherty tended to adopt an ethnological style, Grierson exercised what he called the "creative treatment of actuality." As propagandist, educator, and left-wing populist, Grierson suggested that film be used as a medium to promote belief in democracy and inform people from above. While many Canadian scholars, such as Morris and Evans, regard Grierson as one who greatly contributed to -- and actually turned the tide for -- the Canadian film industry, Nelson (1988) re-examines the "Grierson Legend" in light of the tensions between multinational capitalism and Grierson's own imperialist stance on Canada.

As a "microcosm of Canada," however, the NFB came to reflect "Quebec interests": in 1956, the NFB's headquarters moved from Ottawa to Montreal, accompanied by some 400 employees and their families. Guy Roberge was chosen as the first French-Canadian Commissioner two years later. In the realm of production, the frustration of French language filmmakers increased, due to inequities between the budgets of French and English films, and to the imposition of the Griersonian style of filmmaking.

When the French *Nouvelle Vague* developed in the late 1950s, it had a significant impact on French-speaking filmmakers at the NFB. In particular, a director's identification with subject matter was strengthened by the *cinéma vérite* technique, using portable cameras and on-location sound recording. In the context of the political, economic, and cultural dynamics of 1960s Quebec society, francophone filmmakers went out on location to shoot daily rituals in rural Quebec, searching for the roots of their identities. In 1962, Clément Perron documented the repetitive life of working people's in a paper-mill town in *Jour après jour*. Michel Brault, Marcel Carrière, and Pierre Perrault "revived" bulsa whale hunting to shoot the first documentary feature, *Pour la suite du monde* (1963), capturing a disappearing way of life with mystically beautiful pictures. Gilles Carle's *La vie heureuse de Léopold A* (1965), which followed Gilles Groulx' groundbreaking drama, *Le chat dans le sac* (1964), helped form the iconography of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. Claude Jutra directed one of the most memorable works in the history of the Canadian cinema with *Mon oncle Antoine* in 1971. Outside of Quebec, Acadian people became the subject of a number of films produced in the Moncton office created in 1974, spurred by Brault's *L'Acadie, l'Acadie?!?* (1971).

Young filmmakers on the English side similarly felt a "generation gap" dividing them from the Griersonians. The earliest example of *cinéma vérite* films was the *Candid Eye* series (1958-1961) made by the famous Unit B led by Tom Daly with Wolf Koenig, Roman Kroitor, Colin Low, and Stanley Jackson as its principal members. Peter Harcourt once called the viewpoint of Unit B that of the "Innocent Eye," through which films were presented as open-ended, such that a suspended judgement on the subjects contains "something undecided"

(Harcourt 1977). He observed "something very Canadian" in this body of work, which included an excellent documentary narrated by Pierre Burton, *City of Gold* (1957), *Universe* (1960), Arthur Lipsett's Oscar-nominated *Very Nice, Very Nice* (1961), and *Lonely Boy* (1962), documenting the off- and on-stage life of a teenagers' idol, Paul Anka.

In a 1977 essay, Bruce Elder also pointed to a difference between the Canadian and American adaptation of *cinéma diréct*, having to do with subject matter. While American filmmakers tended to choose "dramatic" subjects such as athletic competitions with winners and losers, or Jane Fonda's attempts to become a star on Broadway, the NFB members chose to present slices of life, especially the lives of ordinary people, with the idea being to "let the film speak for itself". Specifically, American documentary films in this period were more imitative of typical Hollywood narratives, with films moving to build up tension towards a climax and end with closure. In contrast, the Canadian filmmakers gained international recognition by suggesting a more "democratic" way of showing every day life.

The film which led to creation of the Challenge of Change program was *The Things I Cannot Change* (1965) which gives a close look at a family living in poverty in Montreal. This film made government authorities reconsider the "use" of film. R.A.J. Phillips, then Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet recalled in the interview conducted in the film, *Challenge for Change* (1968), that,

> ...there was a kind of a simultaneous realization that here was a new use of film as far as government is concerned...[The film was] probing the problem of the poverty that affects also government departments....There has never been this kind of joint, attack on social programs and problems by various department. There has never been a use for this purposeful coming together with the departments and with filmmakers.

As a result of the film's success, 1967 saw the birth of the Challenge for Change

program, sponsored by seven government departments and agencies. The ultimate purpose of the program was "to use film as media to gain people's voice in social change" (Hénaut 1969, 197). To borrow David Jone's words, the viewpoint of the program was from bottom up rather than the more Griersonian viewpoint of from the top down, and this view was a reflection of the Liberal party's policy to integrate marginalized people into the mainstream of Canada.

As Janine Marchessault suggests in her 1995 essay, 1967 was a pivotal year for Canada as a nation; first, Expo 67 in Montreal attracted millions of people from all over the world, giving Canadians a sense of unity; and secondly, a series of celebrations were organized to acknowledge the Centennial year of the Confederation. Simultaneously, Trudeau's Liberal party suggested the regionalization and democratization of culture, with an acknowledgement of the diversity of the Canadian population which peaked with the 1971 "Multiculturalism Act". At the NFB, members from Unit B devoted themselves to producing *Labyrinth* in the Expo pavilion, where 1.3 million viewers were surrounded by two giant IMAX screens. Other members of the Challenge for Change departed from the philosophy of Unit B's "innocent eye," and were ready to work towards a more problematic point of view. Interestingly, freelancers rather than NFB staff directors were more interested in making films for the program.

The subjects targeted by the program were, firstly, the problems of poverty, and, secondly, those of people who lacked a voice. To serve people on poverty, Colin Low made his famous series known as the Fogo Projects films. The communities were chosen as the subjects because Low and the filmmakers thought that they could be "some help in helping

the people to formulate their problems, to understand them, by discussing them" (Narration of *Challenge for Change*). The problems -- economic depression, religious and educational segregation in each community, geographic distance from the "centre," and the young generation's abandon of the island because of the lack of hope -- were common throughout Newfoundland's regions. The narration of *Introduction to Fogo Island* (1968) states:

> In its problems of isolation, Fogo is a microcosm of all Newfoundland. And perhaps of other encapsulated communities that are symbolic islands. All these factors made us feel the need for a new means of communication for interpersonal, inter-village, Island-mainland dialogue.

The filmmaking process was conducted with the co-operation of Newfoundland Memorial University and community members -- with, in other words, "insiders" who knew the community better.

At the time of the Fogo Project, the most urgent and concrete problem facing the islanders was the government-imposed restriction on fishery rights. Because Fogo Islanders primarily depended on the traditional way of fishing, which had difficulty competing with modern technology, they were forced to choose between resettlement or a redevelopment of their way of life in scattered villages. But, "if the community brings consensus, the government would help them" to reconcile their traditional lifestyle with modern needs.

While Islanders were presumably working hardest to reach a fruitful consensus among all habitants on the islands, the film ended with the narration:

> [The film crews'] challenge is to create confidence and people's ability to articulate and to communicate their problems in a belief that an aware community can best shape its own future.

Filmmakers worked in the hope that their film could function as a tool for

consciousness-raising. In the course of this project, process-oriented methods of filmmaking sprung up. These methods came to be known as the "Fogo process" in that film crews attempted to interact with people through film rather than completing a packaged film.

Later, the efforts of filmmakers went further, towards letting the people shoot footage by themselves. With the use of video technology in the filmmaking process, people became able to see themselves without the hindrances to this typically caused by the need to develop film stock and make use of film projectors. In *VTR St-Jacques* (1969), the NFB crews gave people in the community a video camera as a means of self-expression. Seeing themselves on television in the community hall spurred discussion among members of the community, and created the context for information exchange and interpersonal communication.

The other focus of the program, beside the problem of poverty, was to integrate the voiceless - namely, Amerindians and women - into the mainstream. Saul Alinsky's methods of organizing a collective to express an opinion of a group against government authorities were part of the philosophical roots of the Challenge for Change program. Alinsky is a controversial American activist, and was filmed in *People and Power* (1968), during his lectures in Canada as well as during an "off-stage" discussion with a group of Amerindians who were rather critical about his approach as an outsider.

In 1972, NFB film crews went to Mistassini to take footage of Indian and Inuit people who struggled against the James Bay project. *Cree Hunters of Mistassini* (1974) detailed the hunting life of three indigenous families during the winter time. According to the narration, this was the first time they had had white people around during the hunting season, and the film was made in collaboration with the Amerindian families.

After the success of the film about Mistassini, the NFB released more films dealing with aboriginal rights and life styles, including *Our Land is Our Life* (1974) and *Amisk* (1977). These not only took Amerindians as their subject matter, but offered these populations the means to their own self-expression. A year after the beginning of Challenge for Change, English Production started a training program for Amerindian filmmakers in conjunction with the Department of Indian Affairs and the Company of Young Canadians. *Ballad of Crowfoot* (1968) was one of the successful results, directed by a Micmac from Montreal, Willie Dunn, and completed entirely by Amerindians.

Unfortunately, however, these contributions by aboriginal and local filmmakers did not permanently transform the Film Board, since many of the film crews involved were hired for a particular project and were dismissed after the program was over. However, permanent change at the board did come as a result of the board's targetting of another audience, that of women.

Kathleen Shannon joined the board in 1956. After several years, she became interested in editing and participated in Mort Ramsen's *You Are on Indian Land* (1969). As the film crews inherited the filmmaking process developed by Low in the Fogo Island Project, they went back to the St. Regis Reserve where Amerindian people protested against the government authorities. As in other Challenge for Change films, the filmic representation of aboriginals who were previously neglected by the media had an electrifying impact.

Based on the protagonists' reaction, Shannon re-edited the rushes to make a 36-minute version of *You Are on Indian Land*, which is still widely circulated. According to Ginny Stikeman, the present executive producer of Studio D, this experience of helping

voiceless people to gain their voices "opened [Shannon's] eyes and ears" (Interview by the author 1995).

One of the few woman filmmakers on staff in the English Production, Shannon began research to prepare a proposal for working mothers' films as part of the Challenge for Change program. In the course of this research, she became conscious of how media manipulated the women's movement. Her "ressentiment" against a patriarchal media system was the source of her energy. In the interview in the *Gazette*, on 6 April 1984, she said:

> I had been misled! Suddenly, thoughts I'd had for years began fall into place. For two years I was in a rage. I couldn't speak to men (Kathleen Shannon, interviewed by Marianne Ackerman).

Her proposal for the *Working Mothers* series was approved, and she directed and co-directed 11 films in total. In the spring of 1974, she travelled with the first eight films of the series, then returned to Montreal having decided to create the "women's studio." Behind her decision was an unprecedentedly strong reaction from women. She began lobbying for the new studio, and submitted the proposal for its creation. As the result, Studio D was formed, as one of ten English production studios, on August 19, 1974.

3. The "progressive philosophy" at the National Film Board

In the Challenge for Change program, particular groups of people were targeted as film subjects and audiences. The collaborative methods of work between the NFB and the respective communities revealed the "progressive philosophy" of the Board, such that the Board sometimes criticized the federal government. Many people outside of Canada were

surprised to see the Challenge for Change films produced by government agencies, particularly because, despite their progressivism, they were often sponsored by departments of the same government they were criticizing.

At the very beginning of the program, however, the NFB was criticized on the grounds that it was exploiting the personal. When *Things I Cannot Change* was aired on the CBC on 3 May 1967, the Bailey participants suffered greatly from their neighbours' mocking. Before its release the protagonists granted the NFB the right to distribute and market the film, but the reaction from the audience was more than either the family or the Board had predicted. Although this portrait of a family's struggle within a capitalist society received record-breaking attention from middle-class Canada, the Bailey's moved to the east, leaving their apartment in Montreal.

From a critical viewpoint, the efforts by the Board to integrate marginal people into the mainstream were actually based on rosy idealism. Despite filmmakers' attempts to include the protagonists in the editing processes, it was too time-consuming in practice. In addition, the geographical distance between regional locations and the Montreal headquarters where the equipment is available gave the NFB more control over the images taken in rural places. The choice of the subjects was also problematic, since the NFB chose to make films in communities where the government had already intervened within people's life and created confrontational situations.

One could argue that the problem was one of the location of power. Did the NFB actually disseminate its power from the Montreal Headquarters and Ottawa Head Office to the regional filmmakers? To what extent was it effective and how? Just as the idealistic

Multicultural Act has been criticized on the grounds that it merely pays lip-service to diversity, so the goals of the Film Board also need critical examination. It is false to attribute the critical success of the Challenge for Change program simply to the NFB, because NFB productions would not have been completed without the help of numerous volunteers outside of the Board.

However, the image-makers at the Board surely did implement a new film ethics in that they did not simply "use" the people but did, in fact, "respect" them. It was Dorothy Hénaut who organized representatives in each regional office across Canada to meet their needs. Hired as an editor of *Access*, the internal magazine specifically dealing with the Challenge for Change program, she was one of the central staff members who contributed to listening to other voices outside of the Board.

Against the criticism of the NFB as an institution using power for itself, Hénaut protests,

> I think it's far more honest to say, "Yes, we have a power of an institution. We have power of having money, or having equipment." We want this power to service of people who are powerless...If ever power in this world was honest about the power they have, and sense the social responsibility of using it, we would have a lot fewer problem (Interview by the author 1995).

Indeed, this use of power should not be underestimated in the cultural context. In spite of the fact that the Challenge for Change program lasted over a decade in Canada, the American counterpart had little success. George Stoney, an experienced American documentary filmmaker invited to Canada for the Challenge for Change, was interviewed by Wiesner and said that the quality of civil service is much higher in Canada where,

> ...[officials] really mean it when they say they want to hear from the poor...and don't

> take criticism of their programs personally, I have never found an American who can adopt that attitude (Interview by Wiesner 1992, 89).

Ann Michaels, an official of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (O.E.D.) was also quoted as recalling that she intended to extend the Fogo Process developed by the "crazy idealistic Canadians". She contracted with the Board and invited filmmakers to Farmersville, California, Hartford, Connecticut, and Skyriver, Alaska.

In this respect, the Challenge for Change program epitomized Canadian democracy, which differs from that of the United States and other nations. In this light, the film-related ethics in the program can be interpreted as manifesting the very Canadian impulse towards collectivism, while the American film directors largely have used film as means for self-expression in an individualistic way. In the light of these social concerns, one might note the fact that Canada has been often referred to as socialist country in comparison with the U.S. Throughout the program, in fact, socialist concerns were expressed which often went beyond the policies of the Liberal party government.

The reasons for the socialistic messages carried by the program were, first of all, historical. Since its creation, the NFB films have tended to be far to the left of the government, in part because of Grierson's modus operandi of keeping "one inch to the Left of the Party in power" (Evans 1991, 5) Although NFB productions chose safer subjects to avoid having their mandate questioned during the post-war period, the social function of critically examining the role of the government in power became obviously clearer from the late 1950s. Although this was explicitly true for the French productions, English production also showed signs of a leftist direction. One year preceding the release of *The Things I*

Cannot Change, a fine Canadian documentarist, Donald Brittain, made *Bethune* (1964), a portrait of Dr. Norman Bethune, who set up the world's first mobile blood-donor clinics in civil war-scarred Spain and later went to China to help the wounded. Being aware of the political controversy which would surround the film, Brittain hardly mentioned Bethune's political contribution as a communist, for which he has usually been known. With regard to international distribution, there was debate between Guy Roberge, then the Film Commissioner, and External Affairs, which was responsible for the international distribution of the Board's films at that time. Just as External Affairs prohibited the film's circulation in China and other Communist countries, the film won a top award at the Leipzig International Festival in East Germany. This anecdote about *Bethune* is helpful in understanding how the NFB production could confront other government departments' policy, and how coincidentally the excellence of the film succeeded in winning applause from the world's audience.

Secondly, the NFB shed light on the social problems of the poor, the welfare system, and women in poverty, in a very democratic way. The people who participated were electrified by the idea of raising their voice through film and video, but this emphasis on finding a voice revealed the limitations of liberal democracy. The NFB filmmakers could have been just a group of mediators who "help the people raise their consciousness" enough to bring consensus among them, to "represent" themselves in one voice. On the other hand, the absence of government policies intended to follow through on the feelings expressed in these "voices" revealed the ultimate inadequacy of a program such as Challenge for Change. Despite the slow, bureaucratic procedures which seem endemic to any NFB production, the

Challenge for Change program was able to produce confrontational films which went far beyond those envisioned by their sponsors.

In a critical evaluation of the program, it should also be noted that, among groups of peoples on the margins, only women filmmakers found a space at the Film Board as image-makers. Amerindian filmmakers were hired on a temporary basis only, and only one, Alanis Obomsawin, remained at the Board as staff director and producer. (For her ongoing questioning of the media's representation of the First peoples, she was awarded an Order of Canada in 1983.) Except for her, people with Amerindian background as a whole had to wait until 1990, when Studio One was established, to have institutional support from the NFB.

In spite of this criticism, the Challenge for Change program epitomized the uniqueness of the Board's "progressive philosophy" in that "the people" expressed themselves in the name of social justice. The program was successful in encouraging marginalized peoples to gain access to a medium through which they could participate in mainstream discourse. At the same time, the program satisfied the pride NFB filmmakers had in themselves as liberal, even critical, civil servants who worked together with the people. In the process, one of the potentials of film as a medium was explored, with no concern for profit. In fact, many film scholars highly value the Challenge for Change (and its French counterpart of Société Nouvelle), and refer to these eras as the Board's "golden age". In the next chapter, I will analyze Studio D, both as a spin-off of the Challenge for Change program and as

the world's only state-funded "women's studio". In doing so, I hope to offer an assessment of the Film Board's impact.

Chapter Two

Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada

1. The Success of Studio D

Studio D productions have garnered a significant number of awards, including three Oscars, several "Blue Ribbon" Awards, and Gemini Awards, to name just a few. To prove the popular demand of Studio D films, *Maclean's*, 17 November 1986, noted that the NFB survey of circulation reported that the NFB received more requests for Studio D films than for those produced by any other NFB studio. Why has Studio D been so successful? Why have its films received so much media coverage? This section begins with an attempt to answer these questions.

Since the founding of Studio D in 1974, many people have regarded the studio as an exclusively "women's studio," but Shannon's experience in the Challenge for Change program should also be emphasized in order to understand the success of Studio D. As I have noted, Shannon's experience with *You Are on Indian Land* made her realize the importance of helping the voiceless to discover their voices. Based on this experience, she travelled across Canada with her *Working Mothers* series. Because of demands made by Canadian audiences, the screening tour, organized by Shannon and other woman distributors, was carried out twice in 1975. They often combined the screenings with post-screening discussions and workshops, which Laurinda Hartt from *Cinema Canada* called, an "innovative method of

distribution". These screenings also included a great deal of supporting material which automatically accompanied each film, so that people could "take off" on their own (Hartt 1975, 55). According to Shannon, the films were intentionally incomplete "to be completed by the viewers in discussion with each other" (Shannon, quoted in NFB's *Access*, 1975, 6). The underlying philosophy is that of a process-oriented filmmaking, precisely the one developed by the Challenge for Change program.

As a member of the Challenge for Change program, Shannon had realized the importance of a close linkage between production and distribution. It was extremely important for the members of the Challenge for Change program, and of Studio D, to ensure that the distributor be involved with the production process so that the distributor could more accurately identify the audience. This emphasis on the distributor's and filmmaker's role as screening organizers, who "use" film to start discussions, led Shannon to criticize television networks for their disinterest in post-screening discussion. She said:

> One of film's strongest advantages is its ability to bring people together. It is not a matter of simply *showing* (original emphasis) a film. I hate seeing films used as wallpaper during other activities, or run only for relaxation of diversion. What thrills me is to use films as catalysts for reflection and communication (Shannon 1989a, 14).

Shannon also suggested that:

> The most effective means to change our attitudes is hearing another individual person's own experience, that enables us to glimpse their unique point of view. And film is a wonderful medium for transmitting people's own stories and perspectives, especially as it communicates emotionally as well as factually. And I believe it is only through learning each other's stories that we will be able to overcome the deep divisions among us that prevent us from coming together to work on the issues on which our literal survival depends (Shannon 1989b).

Many Challenge for Change films depicted ordinary people talking about their lives from *their*

point of view. Shannon simply adapted the Challenge for Change motto "let people talk themselves," changing it to "let her talk herself." According to Shannon, this new filmmaking strategy allows for the rejection of patriarchal mediation and interpretation.

Indeed, male-voice narration is not used in Studio D productions, except for one film, *Eve Lambart* (1978). This film, detailing Everly Lambart's work at the Board from 1942 as an animator and important co-worker of Norman McLaren, credited not only Shannon but also Wolf Koenig as executive producers. Although it might be possible that the film was not completely under Studio D's control, in terms of commentary, I personally found it surprising to hear the male voice in the film. This is simply because the male voice is absent from all other Studio D films.

The early Studio D films were greatly influenced by the Challenge for Change program. Both programs foregrounded a "film ethic" based on avoiding manipulation of the visual image. The important fact was that Shannon and other women distributors in the community became determined to hear people's thoughts and feelings. Numerous "kitchen-screenings" gave women a space to conduct intimate discussions and to express opinions about their lives.

Furthermore, there was the timely overlap of Shannon's experience with Challenge for Change with the development of the Second Wave of Feminism and women's more general use of documentary technique in North America. As Julia Lesage (1987) has suggested, feminist cinema was partly a by-product of the early feminist movement in which the same types of films were used among consciousness-raising groups again and again. Most of the studio's productions are short documentaries, which was the preferred method for

representing non-stereotypical images of women for many early feminist filmmakers in English Canada and in the U.S. This choice of documentary style was not only founded on economic and practical reasons, but was derived from feminists' desire to produce "non-fictional" images on the screen. In fact, when Kathleen Shannon travelled across Canada with the first eight films of her *Working Mothers* series, she was almost overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of women audiences who saw the films. As a result, the overwhelming response to the series assured feminist filmmakers at the NFB of the "hunger" for films of, by, and for women.

As for visual style, most Studio D films are dominated by the "talking heads" of women and men, especially in the early films. The predominance of "talking heads" in the aesthetic was regarded as an endorsement of the "real" and "positive" image of women living ordinary lives. In the mid 1970s, many feminist filmmakers favoured "realism" in documentary filmmaking, and so did female audiences. The difference between feminist filmmakers in the private sector and Studio D members are that the former began to question the realist aesthetics of documentary and chose to use experimental and avant-garde forms as "counter cinema," while the latter continued exclusively to produce documentary films. Studio D's choice to represent "real" in everyday life met the needs of female audiences. These women wanted more representations of women on both sides of the camera.

Therefore, the studio can be considered as an example of early feminist filmmaking which foregrounded film's role as a catalyst for consciousness-raising. Such a process helped women "stand up" for their right not to be limited to representations such as those of Marilyn Monroe or Greta Garbo. Ackerman, from *the Montreal Gazette*, wrote:

[Shannon's] office is a womb of feminist ideology. Everywhere are cartoons,

> epigrams, posters, letters - all reminders that women, the oppressed majority, are safe and in control at Studio D (Ackerman 1984).

For feminists in the early period, renaming themselves as the "oppressed" was the beginning of the project to empower themselves. Shannon said that Studio D members often felt as if they were "vocation councillors" (Interview by Scherbarth 1987, 26).

In addition to those "outside" factors, I now detail Shannon's personal influence on the studio. For Shannon, to bring feminist ideology into practice was to challenge the dominant power from within a patriarchal institution. In a proposal to form "Unit D," Shannon stated:

> It is heartening that the NFB has realized that women are not a "subject" to be "dealt" with by making a film about it, but human beings who have long been denied the opportunity to develop professional skills, the opportunity to participate in decision-making... It has been emphasized that this unit is to be "just like any other unit". This I agree with in many ways...; however, I am convinced that an identical structure would not necessarily be a good thing. Many of the problems encountered in the present system have their roots in stable "stables" of producers and directors...(Shannon 1974, 1).

As Anita Taylor's study (1987) detailed, the hierarchical structures in the studio often contradicted Shannon's vision of Studio D as a collective. According to Taylor, however, Shannon's attempts to include all members in discussion on what films were produced sometimes resulted in a reassertion of her own considerable authority.

This was especially true in the early years, because film ideas basically came from the executive producer herself. Up to the 1994-1995 fiscal year, the studio has produced and co-produced 121 films. (This number includes 17 films co-produced with the Federal Women's Film Program, and 24 films co-produced with the private sector.) In the case of 81 films produced by the studio, Kathleen Shannon is credited either as executive producer,

producer, director, or narrator in each and every production, with the exception of only 8 films. As the founder of Studio D and the first woman executive producer at the Board, she was an energetic feminist and is now herself the subject of a short Studio D film.

Filmmakers inside and outside of the studio knew that Shannon had the best sense of what films needed to be made. Shannon herself was quoted as saying in the *Montreal Gazette*, 6 April 1984, that "the reasons for our success is that we have a very clear sense of who our audience is". In 1974, the institution was so out of touch "it had no idea half the population would respond to material that spoke to them." If the popularity of Studio D films can be attributed to Shannon's commitment to female audiences, this suggests the parallel to a commercial-oriented film industry, where similar marketing demands decide what film is to be produced. In the same interview, she continued that:

> too many people [at the Film Board] have no idea who they are making films for. To present the truth as you passionately perceive it is the only way to make good films.

In a way, the success of Studio D was realized by introducing audience-catered film ideas. Evans points out that Studio D's strategy to make films for small community audiences was also suggested by the Director General of the English Program, Peter Katadotis, in the mid-1980s when he feared that filmmakers had lost their sense of direction (See Evans 1991, 302).

In this respect, detailing the success of Studio D has been useful in understanding the problems of the NFB as a whole. In fact, the studio can be a good case study for a critical examination of the Board in a more general sense as producer of a national culture. In the interview by Marc Horton of the *Edmonton Journal*, 20 November 1987, Shannon said:

> I have a vision - I sometimes call myself a curable optimist - where all Canadians will have an opportunity to speak for themselves rather than have someone speak for them.

What is interesting in the above quotation is that Shannon used the word "Canadians" instead of "women". As I will discuss later, Studio D has not focussed exclusively on women's interests, but also on the national interest. The problem is that the studio had to reserve a space for its own purposes, which are distinct from commonly defined "national interests". I will return to this point shortly in order to examine the role of Studio D as a leader in bringing feminist perspectives to the predominantly patriarchal NFB. Before doing so, it is necessary to detail Studio D's entire body of work, which was produced within a space carved out by Shannon in the mid-1970s, when the Second Wave of Feminism was penetrating into society as a whole.

2. Studio D films

Since its creation in 1974, Studio D has produced and co-produced many internationally acclaimed films, including three Oscar-winning documentaries; *I'll Find a Way* (1978) directed by Beverly Shaffer, *If You Love This Planet* (1982) by Terri Nash, and Cynthia Scott's *Flamenco at 5:15* (1983). *If You Love This Planet* is probably the best known because of the controversy which accompanied it. The U.S. Department of Justice prohibited American distribution, under the provisions of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938. The justice department claimed that the film was "political propaganda from a foreign agent".

The film documents a lecture given by an anti-nuclear activist, Dr. Helen Caldicott, then the president of Physicians for Social Responsibility in the U.S. Including archival film footage taken by the American government, the bombing of Hiroshima and *hibakusha* (survivors of the atomic bomb), Caldicott's message is made strong and clear -- disarmament is urgent if humankind is to survive. The CBC rejected the film for telecast "because it takes a strong position on nuclear arms and does not give a balanced and objective view of the subject". Despite these incidents, the film was awarded an Oscar for best documentary short of 1982, right after which the CBC finally aired the film.

In the same fiscal year as *If You Love This Planet*, 1981 saw another famous documentary, *Not a Love Story: A Film about Pornography*, directed by Bonnie Klein and produced by Dorothy Hénaut. This film is the odyssey of the director and a sex-trade worker Linda Lee Tracy, who set out to learn what is happening "behind the door" of sex shops and the pornography industry. Because the film includes sexually explicit clips from hard-core pornographic films and magazines, the Saskatchewan Censor Board as well as the Ontario Censor Board banned it from public screening. However, there were about 300 private screenings in Ontario alone. In Montreal, the film became the largest grossing film in Film Board history as a result of a nine-month commercial run in theatres. The power of the film to incite debate regarding the regulation of pornography persists fifteen years after its original release. On March 14, 1994, the film was shown at "Sex in the media: a discussion on Pornography & Censorship" at McGill University. As a participant, I observed the screening and the post-screening panel discussion, in which Hénaut took part. The avalanche of questions and response among participants and panelists reflected a concern with the issue

of the necessity of self-censorship in the media.

Although the body of work produced by Studio D could be analyzed in light of a feminist aesthetic, I will briefly give an overview of the major Studio D productions by focusing on the themes and subjects of films. Purely "textual analysis" is too wide in scope for this study. By focusing on thematic matters, I will argue against Studio D's image as a "radical" feminist group making "imbalanced" documentaries, despite the fact that *If You Love This Planet* and *Not a Love Story* are the most well-known films precisely because of their controversy and socially provocative contents.

In line with the slogan, "the personal is political," women and politics is one of the central themes in the early Studio D films. *Some American Feminists* (1977) consists of several feminist activists in the U.S., including Betty Friedan and Kate Millett, being interviewed by two Quebecois women. Other films cater to the idea of "Canadian content"; *The Lady from Grey County* (1977) is about Agnes Campbell Macphail, who became the first female Member of Parliament in Canada in 1922. *The Right Candidate for Rosedale* (1978) chronicles the election campaign run by a Liberal Party candidate Anne Cools, and *Worth Every Minute* (1987) documents an energetic activist, Pat Schulz, who has strong concerns about working-class issues. Directed by a McGill graduate, Terri Nash, and Bonnie Klein, the anti-nuclear movement and disarmament are themes of films such as *If You Love This Planet, Speaking Our Peace* (1985), and its spin-off films; *A Writer in the Nuclear Age: A Conversation with Margaret Lawrence* (1985), *Nuclear Addiction: Dr. Rosalie Bertell on the Cost of Deterrence* (1986), *A Love Affair with Politics: A Portrait of Marion Dewar* (1987) (depicting interviews with Dewer, Ottawa City Mayor), and *Russian Diary* (1989).

Cultivating "hidden histories" against official history has also been an important mission for feminist filmmakers. *Great Grand Mother* (1976) gives a historical look at women in the Prairies. A director and painter Blake James made *Prairie Album* (1980), using his water-color paintings to describe a family's life during the Depression. In a similar vein, Susan Trow traces her marital roots, using still photographs in *Just a Lady* (1980). A strong and award-winning *Dark Lullabies* (1985) was co-produced with DLI Productions, tracing the journey of a child of Holocaust survivors. *Half the Kingdom* (1989) is a co-production, also exploring the lives of Jewish women who struggle between feminism and Judaism.

"Hidden histories" might include stories of ordinary women like Patricia Garner in *Patricia's Moving Picture* (1978). Garner led a very happy life with few doubts about her family life until she approached middle age and found it difficult to live as she had. With the help of a women's centre in B.C., she begins to change her life and becomes aware of possibilities other than child-rearing and house-keeping. Martineau highly valued this film because "many women in Garner's position feel threatened by the women's movement, erroneously convinced by the mass media that feminists don't value or respect women who work at home and raise children". (Martineau 1981, 31) The lives of women experiencing middle age is also the theme of *On Our Own* (1984), and *The Best Time of My Life: Portraits of Women in Mid-Life* (1985), a winner of the Red Ribbon Award at the twenty-ninth American Film Festival. The latter of these films depicts ten women talking about menopause and mid-life.

Martineau and other film commentators have criticized Studio D productions for their over-dependence on extraordinary individual women, who have achieved uncommon

historical, political, or personal and emotional heights. Despite these criticisms, it should be recognized that some of the films do give us an honest portrayal of these women's lives and often a candid portrait of distinctly Canadian women. Women artists are frequently subjects of Studio D films. Examples include *Maud Lewis* (1976), *Eve Lambart* (1978), and *Portrait of the Artist - As an Old Lady* (1982), which is about a socialist, Russian-Canadian artist, Paraskeva Clark. Women writers appear in *Firewords: Louky Bersianik, Jovette Marchessault, Nicole Brossard* (1986). Women who have found their professional careers doing "non-traditional jobs" are featured in films such as *Laila* (1980) about Laila Paattinen's opening of her own dry-wall installation company, *Louise Drouin, Veterinarian* (1982), *I Want to Be an Engineer* (1983), *Too Dirty for Women* (1985), *Adèle and the Ponies of Ardmore* (1984), and *Working Nights* (1989). The last film depicts both the positive and negative aspects of women working night shifts, by using still photographs and narration. *Spirit of the Kata* (1985) is a co-production which teaches viewers how to acquire physical, psychological and spiritual strength through Karate.

More controversial films dealing with once "taboo" subjects as abortion, pornography, and incest are *An Unremarkable Birth* (1978) offering childbirth at home as an alternative to birth in a hospital, *Not a Love Story* (1981), *Dream of a Free Country: A Message from Nicaraguan Women* (1984), *Abortion: Stories from North and South* (1984) and its spin-off, *A Mother and Daughter on Abortion* (1987), *DES: An Uncertain Legacy* (1985), and *To a Safer Place* (1987). *Abortion: Stories from North and South* gives a cross-cultural and historical overview of abortion issues in Ireland, Japan, Thailand, Peru, Columbia, and Canada. It is a winner of the Blue Ribbon Award at the twenty-eighth American Film Festival,

and the Grand Prize at the 28th International Film Festival in San Francisco. Also an award-winner is *DES: An Uncertain Legacy*. This film documents the public disclosure of a "DES daughter," Hariet Simond, and questions the use of DES, a synthetic estrogen which was used from 1941 to 1971 in both North America and in the "Third World" despite widespread knowledge of its side-effects. An international scope is also evident in *No longer Silent* (1986), a co-production dealing with issues facing the women of India.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, themes of spirituality, religion, and racial politics were foregrounded. *Behind the Veil: Nuns* (1985), *Goddess Remembered* (1989), and *The Burning Times* (1990) investigate the relationship between religion and women. Histories of African Canadian people are told in the recent film entitled *Older Stronger Wiser* (1989). *Long Time Comin'* (1993) focuses on two African-Canadian artists, who are trying to articulate the interrelated issues of politics, race, sexuality, and art. Sexuality is the central theme of *Toward Intimacy* (1992), which depicts disabled people and their sexual relationships. *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* (1992) chronicles lesbian culture in urban Canada since 1950s. In order to reflect the diversity of womanhood, *Motherland: Tales of Wonder* (1994) questions the image of the "perfect mother" as it is generally constituted by the media, and gives six portraits of women with different cultural, racial, and familial backgrounds.

As we have seen, Studio D films are extremely diverse, making it difficult to include them all in one generic or thematic category. The first two series are especially worth noting; *Working Mothers* series (1974-1975) and *Children of Canada* series (1975-1982), directed by Kathleen Shannon and Beverly Shaffer respectively. The *Working Mothers* series deal

sensitively with working women in various circumstances. These include an Abenaki singer/story-teller who is best-known as a director of *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993), Alanis Obomsawin, in *Our Dear Sisters* (1975), a Metis from Northern Alberta in *Like the Trees* (1974), an immigrant woman from Greece in *Luckily I Need Little Sleep* (1974), a university department head in the Maritimes in *Tiger on a Tight Leash* (1974). There is also "*...and They Lived Happily Ever After*" (1975) which won the AMER Golden Eye Award at the First Annual AMER Film Awards, in Dubuque, Iowa. These series were recently re-formatted in video with a total running time of 110 minutes.

In the *Children of Canada* series, young people across the country speak directly to the camera. Among 13 films are; *My Name is Susan Yee* (1975) documenting a life of a Chinese-Canadian girl living in Montreal, *Gurdeep Singh Bains* (1976), about a thirteen-year-old Canadian Sikh who feels and thinks as others do but is ostracized for wearing a turban, and an Oscar-winner, *I'll Find a Way* (1977), a story about a lively, positive, and smiling nine-year-old, Nadia De Franco, who is born with spina bifida. Similar to the *Children of Canada* series but more dramatic, *The Way It Is* (1982) by Shaffer, takes a close look at the way in which a twelve-year-old girl comes to terms with her parents' divorce.

In surveying Studio D films from the early years to the present, one might note that diversifying images of women has been a consistent concern throughout. I would suggest that

the contemporary shift toward considering issues of race is the reflection of a larger social trend.

3. The NFB's Response to the Second Wave of Feminism: Tokenism or Progressivism?

While "Studio D" became "brand-name" for documentary filmmakers throughout the world, there has been some criticism from the "right". Barbara Amiel from the *Toronto Sun* called the studio's films "left-lib films," catering to "narrow Marxist sisters". She wrote:

> Studio D, with its own budget and staff, is the studio for the party line of left-lib films directed, written and produced by women. Studio D gives us the standard line on unilateral favored special interest groups (Amiel 1987).

Amiel's observation may be regarded as a simple reflection of the NFB's tradition as a leftist institution, and in my opinion, Studio D films defy classification as such. The wide variety of subject matter and efforts by different filmmakers to bring a diversity of "women's issues" to the forefront of a broad social agenda support this claim. Studio D has facilitated projects ranging in theme from children's opinions on familial life to the personal and public politics of a considerable variety of women. Although *If You Love This Planet*, *Speaking of Nairobi* and *Behind the Veil* might represent "collective auteur" aesthetics, the image of "radical" productions does not apply to all productions. The first two series, the *Working Mothers* and the *Children of Canada*, and recent films concerned with sexuality and health consciousness would certainly not be considered "radical".

There is also criticism from the "left" which suggests that Studio D and the NFB are too middle-class and white. In order to incorporate a greater variety of voices, Studio D became a "haven" for many different types of programs. As this happened, it simultaneously began to struggle with the task of re-establishing its mandate.

When Shannon announced her resignation, the NFB could not find an appropriate

person because she was just irreplaceable. After Barbara Janes' short-term leadership, Rita Fraticelli became the head of Studio D in March, 1987. At the beginning of her two-year tenure, she wrote in the internal informational magazine at the Board that:

> Nothing and everything has changed since Kathleen Shannon first began the work... ...As a newcomer, I sometimes see Studio D as Grierson's perfect, albeit unexpected and sometimes troublesome, heir; not the heir he might ever have imagined, certainly, but nonetheless the legitimate off-spring of his philosophy of making films of frank advocacy, films that grapple with and reveal the implications and contradictions hidden within the viral issue of our day, films that shed a new light on these events and suggest committed or challenging new interpretations (Fraticelli 1987, 6).

As the successor of the "women's studio," which was called the "Jewel of the Crown Corporation," Fraticelli was well aware of the difficulties of finding a new vision. Probably the most radical action she took during her tenure was "disbanding" this Jewel in 1989. The year marked the NFB's fiftieth anniversary, while Studio D marked its fifteenth. In February, Fraticelli agreed to extend her original two-year tenure to oversee the reorganization. In the process, as of April first, six permanent directors, namely, Dorothy Hénaut, Susan Huyke, Bonnie Klein, Cynthia Scott, Beverly Shaffer, and Margaret Wescott, were absorbed into other documentary and drama studios. Officially, the purpose of this reorganization was to open the door to more freelance filmmakers and first-time women filmmakers, and in particular, to increase participation by aboriginal women, by women of colour, and by young women. Fraticelli pointed out in an interview with Brahm Kornbluth of *Montreal Magazine*, June 1989, that:

> We are very concerned that we don't stop at earning equal rights for white women of a certain class and regional background...No one woman or group of women can speak for all women. We have to do whatever we can, within our employment and financial constraints, to let more women speak for themselves.

By the eve of the 1990s, many people came to realize that "half the population" cannot be classified as one homogeneous group, and that the majority of women filmmakers in Canada are middle-class and white. In the same interview, she claimed that it was time for Studio D to "reinvent itself to reflect who Canadian women are". She continued by suggesting Studio D is "the first to act" to reflect the "real diversity of our population". After the restructuring, there remained a core group of administrators, producers, and staff writers. No directors were retained. The new administrative system allows filmmakers outside of the studio to have more opportunities, and is unique when compared to other studios where film ideas usually come from a given studio's staff.

To reflect its new emphasis on multiple voices, Studio D announced a project entitled "Five Feminist Minutes." This project invited independent filmmakers to submit film proposals for five-minute "snapshots of the world from a feminist perspective" (NFB 1991, 5). This "national pulse-taking" project asked fifteen filmmakers to make a five-minute short and supplied them with $10,000, five rolls of film, free developing services and loan of the NFB's film equipment. As a result, sixteen short films were produced in collaboration with Studio D, *Regards de femmes*, and NFB regional productions, although the NFB does not obtain the distribution right. The significance of this project is not only the dissemination of Studio D's power to independent filmmakers, but also the variety of "experimental" film styles evident in the project. The styles range from Anne Marie Fleming's *New Shoes* which consists of fantastic visual images and a "talking head" shot of a woman telling her personal story about her life with a suicidal boyfriend to *We're Talking Vulva* which uses the techniques of "rock video".

In 1990, Fraticelli and Sylvia Hamilton, a black Nova Scotian and co-director of *Black Mother Black Daughter* (1989), designed the New Initiatives in Film (NIF). It is a five-year program designed to increase employment for women of colour and women of the First Nations. This program was started with the strong conviction that minority women need and deserve the "independence and authority over their own creativity" (NFB 1991, 20).

While it is difficult to examine the effect of the NIF among women filmmakers of colour and of the First Nations, the importance of establishing the diversity among women was finally fully acknowledged by the studio. As of 1991, Ginny Stikeman, who participated in the Challenge for Change, replaced Fraticelli as the head of operations. The *Studio D Guidelines,* circulated under Stikeman's leadership, state:

> As a feminist studio, we have been committed to bringing to the screen women's perspectives and experiences and have endeavored to recognize the full range of women's realities; ethnicity, age, economic background, sexual orientation, spirituality, and physical abilities; respecting the integrity and uniqueness of woman while honouring her diversity.

We have detailed the mandate of Studio D. As a unique studio with a mandate "to support women of diverse backgrounds and regions of Canada who wish to speak on film in their own voices," Studio D has produced and distributed films depicting feminist visions and provoking social change and empowerment. As Studio D has seeked a new mandate, the NFB as a whole has also tried to integrate women's voice. Scherbarth (1986) pointed out that the establishment of Studio D supported the feminist project by institutionally acknowledging gender as a suitable method for establishing different studio mandates. Studio D was the first studio to be granted a mandate based on one particular political issue rather than one based on a particular film form.

Having said that, I am not arguing that having a separate studio would be the only way to establish the presence of women within the sphere of production nor would a separate studio be the only strategy for portraying more positive images of women on the screen. In fact, within the NFB there were two different approaches to the foundation of the "women's studio". In the French program, Anne-Claire Poirier produced and directed the *En tant que femmes* series, consisting of six short films. While both Shannon and Poirier were approached to be the head of "women's studios," English and French respectively, Poirier did not accept the offer. She feared that adopting a "separatist" approach, combined with a shoestring budget, would lead to the compromise of production standards and the ghettolization of women filmmakers. In fact, Studio D was located "down among the pipes" in basement offices. Their budget consisted of a modest $100,000 which was just enough to organize some training programs, to plan a few short films and conduct audience research. In the French Program Branch, it was not until October 1986 that a women's documentary filmmaking unit was created. This was entitled the *Regards de femmes* program and was under the producership of Josée Beaudet.

The *Regards de femmes* program came into being ten years after the release of the *En tant que femmes* series. Because of lessons learned from the latter, there were many discussions about whether of not the new unit should be a independent studio or a program integrated into given studios. There was also much debate about the issue of using film or video, as well as discussions regarding the choice of style, documentary or fiction. As a result, the new unit was created under the administration of Studio B of the French Program Branch, with the mandate to "make documentary films produced by women on subjects of interest to

women, favoring filmmakers who already have some experience but have not yet had a valid opportunity to express themselves" (Beadet 1987, 5).

Soon after its establishment, the *Regards de femmes* program also became active in the renewed Federal Women Film Program, which originally started in 1980. The FWFP is "an innovative and uniquely effective" program in which several government departments and agencies and the NFB pooled financial, human and technical resources to "meet identified priorities through the high-impact medium of film" (NFB 1993, 4).

The most significant characteristics of this interdepartmental program include its taking advantage of bilingualism, as well as the NFB's strength as a film production institution. By producing an equal number of films in both official languages and subsequently "versioning" them, the program solved the problem of dissonance resulting from "versioning" between the English and French Program Branches. One of the more sensitive debates at the Board has been, in fact, about the conflict between the two linguistic groups. The Board has been divided along linguistic lines since 1963, in the hope that the division might give francophone filmmakers more liberty to make the films they wish to, rather than "versioning" or following a Griersonian type of filmmaking. Yet the communication between the two programs does not seem easy, in spite of, or a result of, the separation of 1963. It might be of symbolic importance that all the people in the French Program Branch now use Macintosh computers, while the English counterpart is predominantly supported by PC technology, which sometimes impedes smooth communication between the two branches. Program like the FWFP are innovative in that they easily transcend linguistic boundaries within the Film Board.

The same year the FWFP was renewed, the Women's Market Development Group (WMDG) was formed as the third English distribution branch. The WMDG, especially, has had a close relationship with Studio D in order to meet community needs. In addition, the Employment Equity Program was also launched. The purpose of the program was to provide parity between women and men in all permanent and contractual positions, in all occupational groups and at all levels by 1996. In launching this program, the NFB became the first cultural agency to acknowledge the creativity of women in all filmmaking areas.

As a whole, the NFB's attempts to integrate women into filmmaking processes and at administrative levels seem to be effective and fruitful. The equity program is ongoing, Studio D is still producing highly acclaimed films, and the FWFP moved forward into its third phase in 1991. Specifically, Yi wrote:

> Given Canada's charged political climate and multi-racial demography, NIF seems timely. But it can be argued that the program is another example of cultural ghettolization, that instead of including marginalized groups in to mainstream, NIF represents how factionalized and segregated our society has become (Yi 1994, 40).

Though she allows that the NIF is a pro-active response to the historical under-representation of women of colour, Yi continues to point out that Studio D has been criticized for being "a propaganda tool," producing films in the "same predictable form," i.e., in a homogeneous documentary style, as has been the studio's perceived consistency in representing women and minorities as victims.

I would suggest that Studio D has been caught in a struggle between nationalism and feminism. Yet the gulf between these two has been difficult to fulfill, especially as the studio has attempted to shed light on other inseparable identifiers such as race, class, regionalism,

and sexuality. Studio D's apparent desire to pinpoint their feminism stance has probably contributed to a continuous search for a new definition of "communities" in which all imaginable definition of "the nation" interrelate. The penetration of feminist philosophy into mainstream society has provoked some fruitful and progressive action. On the other hand, the early feminists' rosy picture of "universal sisterhood" came under attack when they tried to speak for other "oppressed" people. Of course, as Rosana Ng (1993) argues, sexism, class conflict, racism, and even nationalism are interconnected and inseparable. Studio D could give us a good example of how previous notions of "the nation" and "the people" have been challenged and revised in light of the progressive tradition of the NFB. Considering the critical and commercial success of Hollywood movies dealing with such socially "sensitive" issues as race, gender and homosexuality, is a relatively recent phnomena, the NFB has been far more open-minded, giving a space for sexual identity.

At a time when "cultural difference *sells*" (Rutherford 1990, 11), it is interesting to note that Studio D seems to be moving towards a factionalization of women, instead of encouraging dialogue between nationalism and feminism. In an interview in the *CineGRAM*, 22-27 February 1995, Stikeman said:

> ...the challenge for us, in these times where we're being asked to produce revenue from the sales of our films, how are Studio D films different from other films produced by women? We know it's the range of women's perspectives that makes the difference so far. I know demographically speaking it's where the Film Board should be, but we've just gone farther faster than the rest of the Film Board (Stikeman interviewed by Bartok 1995, 5).

Studio D could be said to be the "first to act" in re-examining the status quo, and may have "just gone farther faster than" the rest of the Board. Nevertheless, given that the NFB is now

often referred to as a "dead tree," Studio D should not regard its mandate solely as a counter-action to the larger institutional framework of the Board. While Shannon questioned the NFB's status as a "white male institution," her successors had to face diversified needs from audiences, and complete with increasing number of "women's films".

With the popularity of "women's films," produced both inside and outside of the Board, a feminist vision became increasingly difficult to define. Judith Mayne suggested two ways of defining "women's films"; one is films made by women filmmakers, and the other is films targeting female audiences (Mayne 1990). According to Mayne, the former can be called "women's film", while the latter is more suitable to be called "woman's film" because women as a targeted audience was commonly categorized in a group with particular interests in soap opera and some talk-shows dealing with "woman's issues". In terms of films' contents, Studio D has consistently aimed to produced "women's films", searching for filmic images distinct from those of "woman's films". The recent struggle of the studio shows the difficulty of representing differences among "women's films", rather than differences between two genders.

Studio D has played a critical role in bringing a gendered perspective to the NFB as a top priority within the context of a program of films produced and exercised mainly by women. In the process, the success of the studio should not be underestimated; it has been a matter of pride to the NFB in this time of organizational transformation and successive cutbacks. On June 2, 1984, Shannon was presented by the Senate of Queen's University Kingston, Ontario, with an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree for "having fostered the work of women film-makers in Canada and encouraged the production of films which speak to people from all over the world against sexism, violence". As further acknowledgement of her

contribution, she was awarded the Order of Canada in October, 1986. The previous year, the Canadian institute for Women's Culture declared Studio D a national treasure. These honors meant great recognition, not only for Studio D, but also for the NFB. In June 28, 1992, the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation presented the Ministry to Women Award to the studio in recognition of its contribution to speaking in a woman's voice, "spoken with the accents of womankind" since 1974, when the UUWF created the Award and gave the first honour to *Ms. Magazine*.

The strongest support for Studio D and the Board has sometimes come from abroad, especially south of the border. For example, Stikeman was invited to Hollywood where the American Cinematheque and the International Documentary Association led off the Documentary Saturdays in March Series with a special tribute to Studio D. The series began on March 4, 1995, and featured eight critically acclaimed films, including the Gemini-winning *Forbidden Love*, the Oscar-winning *If You Love This Planet*, and *Half the Kingdom*. At a time when the federal government of Canada was about to unveil a tighter budget for the 1995-1996 fiscal year beginning at the end of February, it was significant that Studio D was recognized in Hollywood.

In a larger framework, the struggle of Studio D to find a means of survival partly stems from the uncertainty of the NFB's national mandate. As the last decade witnessed the failure, or privatization, of national projects all over the world, the Film Board itself probably requires a fundamental reconsideration of its mandate. The disappearance of national boundaries is a rapidly spreading phenomenon in the film industry, and the NFB is no exception. In the process, feminism has influenced and challenged conceptions of "the nation"

and its boundaries. In this chapter, the ways in which the national institution has negotiated with feminist perspectives has been discussed with reference to structural changes within the NFB. As we have seen, feminists' persistence in seeking equality has been ongoing through Studio D, the FWFP, and the equity program. In the next chapter, Studio D's unique commitment to audiences through community-based organizations will be examined, as will the studio members' efforts for social change.

Chapter Three

To a Safer Place (1987)

"It's not just a film you want to see,
it's a film you want to *use*".
- Beverly Shaffer
(Quotation from the NFB 1988, 12)

1. Film Idea

"I was five years old when I first tasted the semen of my father."; the film begins with a soft voice-over by Shirley Turcotte, who is a survivor of a ten-year-experience of incest. *To a Safer Place* is a one hour documentary about a Vancouver woman living with a loving husband and a son, after having come to terms with her past. This nakedly personal story consists of interviews with her mother, elder sister and brothers, friends, psychotherapist, and former-neighbour. Without statistics, or "expert" analysis, this film's therapeutic tone nevertheless offers an effective way of dealing with the sensitive and horrific issues of child abuse and domestic violence.

When the film was premiered across the country, followed by numerous local screenings and telecasts on the both sides of the border, it unleashed an emotional, almost overpowering outburst from the audience. The film met with overflow audiences, such that the Women's Marketing Development Groups (WMDG) audiences responsible for each regional première organized second screenings to satisfy the hundreds of people lining up outside of the theatre. A massage therapist was hired for an overwhelmed and exhausted Turcotte, who travelled with the film. To diffuse the audiences' emotional responses, post-screening discussions, which often ran for hours and included the disclosure of

individuals' experiences, were organized with care by the WMDG and filmmakers. These discussions were designed to "sustain the mood and sense of comfort for the survivor throughout the evening" instead of "intellectualizing nor objectifying the issues - especially for the survivor" (Shaffer 1987b). When the film was broadcast on television networks, toll-free numbers were provided at the end of the film, as were the telephone numbers of various support groups. Ten million people saw this Canadian documentary on the U.S. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

In addition, *To a Safer Place* won many prizes, including an "Emily" award at the American Film and Video Festival, the Special Jury award of the International Documentary Association (IDA) (the equivalent of the Academy Awards in documentary) and the Special Award at the John Muir Medical Film Festival, to name a few. As proof of the film's lasting strength, it should be noted that this one-woman odyssey garnered the second highest booking among all NFB video offerings.

In spite of a wave of appreciation by audiences in Canada, and public attention accorded the film in the U.S., it was not so successful in the European context. The director of the film, Beverly Shaffer, suggests that the film's unpopularity in European film festivals was probably a result of its disturbing subject matter, which came "too early" for the Old Continent at that time. (In a similar vein, the CBC, afraid of problems related to the privacy of individuals appearing or mentioned in the film, only televised it in 1989, one year after the PBS' telecast.) In any event, the issue of incest came to be talked about openly and explicitly in other countries. In Japan, the film was translated into Japanese in 1993 by a former-Vancouverian and energetic distributor Tokiko Tagami, and was launched with the

support of regional women's groups.

However, the NFB's decision to produce *To a Safer Place* is worth recounting in detail in order to come to terms with the "myths" surrounding documentary filmmaking, especially where the filmic treatment of personal histories is involved. Why was it possible to make film on such a taboo subject in the mid-1980s, when society still tended to blame the victims of abuse? What was the filmmakers' intention, and was there a link between their intentions and the actual impact of the film? And finally, how were this "personal story" and the "national interest" juxtaposed in a context marked by the legacy of feminism? Drawing primarily on internal correspondence between filmmakers at the Film Board, press clippings and articles from magazines, this chapter details the ways in which the film was made and the issues raised in the process.

The manner in which this film took shape, both within and outside the NFB, is worth investigating in order that its departure from the normal methods of documentary filmmaking may be traced. Shirley Turcotte prepared a manuscript dealing with her early childhood in the late 1970s, unsure as to whether or not publishers would be interested in it. In fact, it was discovered by a member of the NFB's Studio D and brought to the Montreal Headquarters, where co-producer Gerry Rogers and Kathleen Shannon were impressed by the manuscript and decided to produce a film about incest. Some time later, Roger asked Shaffer to develop and direct a film, because Shaffer "would be wise enough to allow Shirley's story to come through and use her directorial skill to enhance it" (Interview by Sally Armstrong, 1988, in *TV Guide*, 9 April 1988).

This request from the producer to a staff director is unusual, since it is directors, not

producers, who normally provide the original ideas for films at Studio D. This marks a difference from the private film sector, where the producer's role may include the development of the film idea, the choice of director and other personnel, casting, funding, and all other negotiations and decisions having to do with the film from conception to completion. The resulting problem, for private-sector filmmakers, is that they rarely enjoy freedom of expression, since the underlying idea for a film typically changes in the course of negotiation with the producers, especially those providing outside sponsorship, who want to exploit the film for their own commercial ends. NFB directors, in contrast, are normally accorded complete freedom of expression without restrictions, since the NFB has functioned as a public institution "at arm's length". They have traditionally been accorded both freedom from the dictates of a "sponsor" and flexibility with regard to time schedules. They have taken "longer to research, not necessarily longer to shoot, but longer to edit and to carry out test screenings than people in either TV or private industry can usually afford to" (Hénaut, in NFB's *Info-film*, 31 March 1995).

To a Safer Place took several years to complete. The research budget was approved in May 13, 1985, and Shaffer began to research the subject of incestuous assault under the working title, *Breaking the Silence*. (The total budget for the film would be $182,247.) Butler's Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest (1978), Ward's Father-Daughter Rape (1984) from Australia, formed part of the body of materials on the subject available for general readers. What struck Shaffer was the discourse circulating around this "taboo," which had been marked by silence since Sigmund Freud's 1924 paper titled *The Aerology of Hysteria*. Public discussion had begun in the early 1970s in North America, as Christine

Dinsmore (1991) points out, and sexual violence against women became an issue with the spread of consciousness-raising groups. Incest was one of the subjects that feminists "rediscovered" and redefined whose meanings within their lives.

In 1980, Rush wrote Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children, followed by Kiss Daddy Good Night by Louise Armstrong, one of the first survivors to publicly disclose her abuse. In Canada, the conference entitled "Counselling the Sexual Abuse Survivor" was held in Winnipeg in February 1985. One of the participants was Diana Russelle (of The Politics of Rape: The Victim's Perspective, Rape in Marriage and Sexual Exploitation), who presented the results of a random survey of 980 women in San Francisco in 1978, including the surprising result that, statistically, one in six girls had had an incest experience before age of 18. One characteristics of the body of books on incest is that their authors were all women speaking from "personal" perspective, rather than objective analysis. For example, Sandra Butler writes in the preface:

> As I progressed in my work and became aware of the lack of dialogue and minimal services provided to members of incest families, I found it difficult to maintain my detachment as an observer and interviewer (Butler 1978, xi).

As a result, Butler drew directly on the voices of women and men interviewed wherever possible, so that she could represent survivors and their families directly. In terms of visual material, the NFB had released two films which targetted adolescent victims and were therefore not for adults. Furthermore, most of the films Shaffer had looked at treated women as "victims," and involved interviews with women whose faces were hidden by darkness and whose voices were artificially changed.

In contrast, she decided to make "a positive film about incest" drawing on the

first-person account of Shirley Turcotte. Although the director's perspective sounds typical of feminist filmmakers insisting on "positive image politics," this aesthetics has been observed in her early works. As she puts it, she prefers "to tell a small story that has universality" in the hope that her films "give people insight". It should also be noted that Shaffer has brought to light the concerns of children, from the films *Children of Canada* to the most recent *Children of Jerusalem* series, which had given her a rather unique status within Studio D, the "women's studio". "Unlike some of her colleagues," Ann Charney from Montreal wrote in the September issue of *Chatelaine*, "Shaffer feels that her commitment is more esthetic than ideological" (Charney 1983, 210). Scherbarth (1987) also notes that Shaffer did not have any political *a priori* but joined the studio simply because her proposal was accepted by Shannon. While Shannon once said that Studio D members understand themselves "first as women, Canadian women working at this time" rather than filmmakers, Shaffer's vision seems derived from her professionalism as a film director, one who had worked previously at PBS in Boston.

Under the directorship of Shaffer, the next step in the production of the film was the shooting, a step which inevitably becomes bound up with "traditionally hierarchical processes," with such issues as who has the power to control scenes or make decisions, when the interviewer becomes an "interpreter," and so on. The crews working on this film averaged six people, four of whom were freelancers, including Aerlyn Weissman, now known as the co-director of *Forbidden Love*. Unlike films which document the director's own investigation of the subject (e.g. *Not a Love Story*), Shaffer let Turcotte take the initiatives in interviewing people involved with her life. As a result, Turcotte seemed to have a control over what would

be asked, or what needed to be filmed. However, the strongest scene of the film -- that in which Turcotte stepped down to the basement where the abuse happened -- was suggested by the filmmakers. In an interview with Thane Burnett of the *Daily News*, 3 November 1987, Turcotte recalled that she did not think she could climb down the stairs, envisioning herself falling down the stairs and vomiting. In Marc Horton's interview, which appeared in the *Edmonton Journal*, 20 November 1987, she explained:

> They asked me to do it, and I knew I would be sick. But I didn't want them to know I was that vulnerable.

With a help of a hypnotherapist, the scene was shot and became the most emotional of the film. Turcotte meets part of her "splitted self" called "Jennifer" in order to reconcile her past with the present. In the completed film, the narration says that she just knew her journey would not end until she went to the basement. Unsurprisingly, the courage and energy required by this scene led to a nervous breakdown on Turcotte's part. The making of *To a Safer Place* continued with the help of Turcotte's friend, who accompanied the film crews at Turcotte's own expense.

The shooting as a whole took about one month, and footage was sent to Montreal to serve as rushes. Unlike dramatic feature films, documentaries does not usually have a scenario to follow, and visual representations are easily manipulated in the process of structuring scenes, adding music and inserting voice-overs. The *cinema direct* technique was adopted by NFB filmmakers to avoid the intervention of filmmakers in the lives of the people being represented, but the construction of the "story" depends on filmmakers at the NFB's main offices, not on the people being documented. As such, the editing room becomes the place

in which the actual completion of a film is accomplished.

The role of the editor, Sidonie Kerr, cannot be stressed strongly enough. Kerr, who even worked on segments "on the floor" for two weeks, literally knows every scene shot by the filmmakers. It was her idea -- chosen over the suggestions made by the director and other members of the studio -- to frame the film with Turcotte's departure and arrival in order for the audience to have "a sense of journey". However, the completed film was not structured along chronological lines.

Once the structure of the film was determined by the editor in consultation with the director and other members of the studio, the process of adding sound began. Music was composed by Loreena McKennitt, who released *the mask and the mirror* in 1994, and the narration was written by Turcotte in collaboration with Gloria Demers, the latter putting "into art" the ordinary words expressed by the former. As for narration, Shaffer has always let the central character in her films write and read the voice-overs. In the *Children of Canada* series, pre-teens provide their slices of life in their own voices, as was also the case in the *Children of Jerusalem* series. This involvement of protagonists in narration is meant to avoid detachment of the completed film from the people depicted. In the case of *To a Safer Place*, the narration was rewritten at least three times by Turcotte and Demers.

Outside of the studio, filmmakers consulted about the legal aspects with Legal Services in the Departments of Communications and Justice. With respect to the possibility of invasion of privacy and defamation of character, Shaffer notes, in a documented circulated internally, that,

[w]hat I want to do in the film is be able to film several women who were victims of

> incest. I want to show faces. They mention the name of their offenders, and we don't have to mention the names of the women (Shaffer 1987a).

Two years later, this attitude became an issue in negotiations with the CBC over telecast of the film. The questions raised by the Legal Department of the CBC had to do with: a) the conviction of Turcotte's father, b) the reference to an incident of sexual assault of a daughter of Turcotte's sister, Linda, and c) the reference to one member among the support group scene. After communication by mail and telephone intended to clarify the issues, the CBC finally decided to allow the film to be broadcast.

In addition to those legal issues, which had to do with protagonists within the film, a court case involving the filmmakers themselves appeared imminent at one point. From April to May of 1987, several *Memoranda* circulated having to do with the desire of the filmmakers for credits. Due to the gap between what one has done "in one's mind" and "in actuality," decisions made by a director sometimes cause dissonance among staff and freelancers involved with the film. Even Kathleen Shannon sent a two-page memo to Rina Fraticelli, as an "observer offering opinions" concerning credits for producers. She challenged the credits as decided upon by Shaffer, insisting the credits should read "produced and directed by" Shaffer and Rogers, who resigned from the NFB just before the film's release. Shannon writes that she "never authorized" Shaffer to go ahead and make major production decisions without Gerry Rogers' close involvement (Shannon 1987, 2).

It is interesting in such cases to note the contradictions between the ideal image which feminist groups hold of themselves and the traditionally hierarchical processes which evolve as a result of constant decision-making and the dynamics this creates. For example, Anita

Taylor (1988), in a case study of interaction among women, observed how Studio D members avoid emotional confrontation for fear of hurting each others' feeling. Ideally speaking, filmmaking at the studio is based on helpful generosity offered in a collaborative atmosphere. In a similar vein, Taylor noted, wihtin Studio D, a sensitivity typical of feminist groups in that members did not explicitly speak up in asking for credit but expected others to do so in their behalf. I assume that instances like this regarding with the way in which women filmmakers are confronted with tensions between themselves, are numerous within Studio D, and would be a rich subject of analysis for feminist scholars concerned with socio-political communication among women working in hierarchical institutions. Taylor's work is an example of such work on Studio D.

Having surmounted these difficulties, the film finally reached completion in October 1987, two years after the end of the location shooting. There were other reasons for these delays, beyond internal conflicts among those making film. Since the Conservatives came to power in 1984, the NFB had experienced budget restrictions. In particular, at the end of August, 1986, all Studio D projects save those at the editing stage were suspended because of a lack of funds. As a Vancouverian, Turcotte was not able to come to Montreal to record narration until early November, so the revised narration was recorded in Vancouver due to budgetary limitations. Although the final narration was recorded in the Montreal Headquarters, filmmakers had to wait for two and a half more months for sound equipment to be available. During this period, the sound recording theatre had been booked for *The Last Straw* (1987), the last film of Giles Walker's docu-drama trilogy.

On first consideration, a two-year post-shooting schedule could be seen as sapping

the creative energies of filmmakers. The bureaucratic mode of filmmaking within the NFB has been notoriously slow, and has been one reason for the scorn which it has sometimes received from those working within the private film industry. Nevertheless, as my analysis of the film's reception will show, the issue addressed by the film was by no means out of date at the time of its release. In spite of a two-year post-production process, the executive producer's clear sense of what kind of film would be made, and the patience and sensitivity of NFB staffers in maintaining a sense of trust with the protagonists offers a model for filmmaking which differs from that of news programs. I would argue that this bond between those behind and those in front of the camera is one of the NFB's hallmarks, despite any emotional dissonance which might arise between them, in this as in many productions made throughout the NFB's history. It is precisely because of the emotional conflicts between those on either side of the camera that TV documentary's tend to choose "safer" subjects, and that home video usually depicts "happy" events. *To a Safer Place* in one of the finest products of this tension, and would have been impossible without collaboration between the protagonists and those representing the National Film Board.

2. The Audience Response to the Film

2-1. Methodological problems in audience research

Before analyzing the audience reaction to *To a Safer Place*, I will address some of the methodological problems endemic to audience research. Robert Allen writes that,

> film history had been written as if films had no audiences or were seen by everyone in the same way, or as if however they were viewed and be whomever, the history of 'films' was distinct from and privileged over the history of their being taken-up by the

billions of people who have watched them since 1894 (Allen 1990, 348).

For Jackie Stacey (1993), there are two reasons why audience research has been overlooked within film studies. The first is the strong, traditional link between film studies and a text-oriented literary studies, particularly in North America; the second is the practical difficulties in conducting audience research and the greater ease with which textual analysis may be carried out. As she argues, textual analysis was long dominant in film studies because of the alliance between literary and film studies, and methodologies were developed based on the assumption that textual analysis was definitely the preferred disciplinary method. This prevented film scholars from debating, even questioning, the range of methodologies adopted from literary theory and studies.

In stark contrast to film studies, television studies have focused on the audience and attempted to develop theoretical foundations for audience research. With a background in political science, Dutch scholar Ian Ang analyzes the audience of the American soap opera *Dallas* in Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination (1985). Morley (1991), from Britain, emphasizes ethnographic research. According to Morley, there are two approaches to understanding the audience -- those of micro- and macro-level research. Criticizing claims that there exist homogeneous and universal audiences who are totally passive when faced with the intervention of media, he stresses the importance of micro-process(es) in understanding macro issues, on the condition that such studies refer to the broader cultural, political and ideological questions at stake. Thus, researchers need to develop a 'double focus,' neither assuming the totally passive audience normally imagined by

scholars,nor endlessly describing what a group of people perceive and do during television watching.

More and more, scholars have come to discover "active audiences" who watch television programs selectively and on the basis of different interests. Indeed, the ethnographic approach seems to become the preferred method for audience research. However, Bobo and Seiter (1991) criticize the selection of the audience to be interviewed, observed and researched by academics. Pointing to the demographic profile of the U.S. academy, they draw attention to the overwhelming white-ness in cultural studies work on audiences, as characteristics of everything from the audience samples used to the scholars themselves. Indeed, they note the racial politics present at all levels of academic work, from the granting of tenure to the awarding of grants. As ethnographic studies require a great amount of time and money, ethnic differentiation of audiences is one of the issues that scholars should consider.

In film-oriented audience research, such anthropological and ethnographical approaches are not as dominant as they are in television studies. Janet Staiger's approach to audience response research involves using major press clippings and reviews, and she reexamines traditional studies by taking a context-sensitive approach. In trying to understand the development of a media-oriented popular culture, she questions the centrality of a middle-class, white, male audience in her 1992 book, Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema. Jackie Stacey, on the other hand, in her Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship (1994), explores audience research as part of the contribution of feminist film studies. Her goals is to analyze the impact of

Hollywood films in the 1940s and 50s on British, white, and female audiences, using 350 letters and 238 questionnaires.

The work of these two scholars, particularly with respect to what might be considered the "data" of audience research, has been groundbreaking within film studies. Although the most easily accessible resource for scholars is film periodicals, these are inseparable from the interest of the institution in which they are produced, as Staiger argues in her 1986 paper. However, Stacey refutes Staiger's statement that "stumbling blocks" implicit in film periodicals can never fully be overcome, on the grounds that Staiger implies an unproblematic source of audience response beyond "mediation and distortion". She says:

> I would argue instead that all audience researchers must deal inevitably with the question of representation, but not as a barrier to meaning, but rather as the form of that meaning. Given that language itself is a system of representation, any expression of taste, preference and pleasures, and necessarily organized according to certain conventions and patterns. Perhaps some material is less defined by the institutional boundaries of the film industry, but all audience 'data' has its textual formations, produced within particular historical and cultural discourse (Stacey 1993, 267).

In my own case study, I rely mainly on press clips taken from newspapers, film journals, and magazines. Since, for the most part, documentary films are not dealt with in the popular magazines, my analysis will focus on local papers, and on articles by women reporters in the "lifestyle" sections of newspapers, or in such periodicals as *The Canadian Nurse*, *Healthsharing* and *Women's News*.

As I deal with the documentary film, the audience research presented here will be unique inasmuch as previous research has focused on popular narratives, such as those of soap opera and melodrama. Canadian scholars must confront and overcome the relatively underdeveloped body of research dealing with documentaries, in order to understand the

indigenous film culture which has taken shape under the leadership of the NFB. The study of documentary audiences is challenging, and I hope that the analysis of the audiences of *To a Safer Place* exemplifies this importance.

2-2. *To a Safer Place*

To a Safer Place was one of the first films on which the Women's Marketing Development Groups assisted with distribution, through supplying many support materials and human resources. The national premières began on November 3, in Halifax, and after passing through St. John's, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Edmonton, ended in Vancouver on November 30. Throughout the entire month, Turcotte and Shaffer travelled with the film, sometimes accompanied by Rogers and Kerr, in order to interact with audiences across Canada. Each screening was carefully organized by the WMDG on the basis of pre-screening tests, and there was much discussion regarding the "format" of the post-screening discussion. Emphasis was placed on "healing" the traumatic experience of survivors among the audience, and on raising the awareness of non-survivors. To help people break the silence, local resource persons were invited to screenings, to place their focus on the healing process and provide people with basic information as to where they might turn for help.

Turcotte herself reported, in the interview by Burnett (1987), that the filmmaking was a healing process for her own mother as she asked herself, on watching the finished film for the second time, why she was not able to do something to stop the abuse. Before the public release, the NFB invited all family members to a private screening, before which the Board

asked that they sign a contract indicating that all rights of production, distribution and exhibition belonged to the Film Board. This private screening was a reunion of family members after ten-years in which they had not seen each other.

The use of film as a catalyst for discussion and as an eye-opener was stressed. In the *Vancouver Sun*, 30 November 1988, Turcotte says:

> I want to let other survivors know they're not crazy, not alone and to celebrate the ways in which they survive. I'd like to let them know they can communicate and speak. I'd like them to have dignity and to come from a place of health.

In the similar vein, Shaffer states, in the interview by Heather Solomon of the *Canadian Jewish News*, 4 February 1988, that "[o]ne of the reasons we made the film was to encourage [survivors] to speak. That's the first step to healing".

Given these intentions, the film on Turcotte's family seems to offer a ray of hope in spite of the nightmarish story told within it. One WMDG member, Ann Vautier, observed première screenings in Halifax, St. John's and Montreal, and wrote that although the subject of incest provokes sentiments of anger, rage, shame, blame, and anti-male feeling, the mood was one in which most people were left "felling good and full of hope" (Vautier 1987).

Ambivalently, but somewhat positively, the *Edmonton Journal*'s Marc Horton wrote that this documentary is 'both hauntingly disturbing and eminently inspiring" (Horton 1987). David Famming, the executive producer of the PBS' *Frontline*, put it in similar terms:

> Shirley Turcotte's story is both horrifying and inspiring. We hope her remarkable personal story will provide some measure of strength and hope to the millions of abuse victims who are still struggling to reconstruct their lives.

The Boston Herald's Dyke Hendrickson further argued that the broadcasting of *To a Safer Place* adds "another dimension to the tube's capabilities: therapy" (Hendrickson 1988). In a

similar vein, some reviews suggested,

> Through the frank disclosure of Shirley and her siblings, *To a Safer Place* shows how the deep psychic wounds inflicted on victims of incest can be healed. It encourages survive to break through silence and betrayal to recover and develop a sense of self-worth and dignity (*Now*, 12-18 November 1987).

> Ultimately, we get an intimate "glimpse" into the life of a woman who symbolizes the spirit of hope for incest survive - and the fight for happiness. The result is a powerful, inspiring and heart warming film about one woman's survival of childhood incest (Malloy, in the *Charlatan*, 26 November 1987).

As well, public discussion of the issue of incest and child abuse frequently took the film as a point of departure. Lot of reviewers claimed that long-silenced issues like this should be regarded as social, not personal, problems. *Women's News* asked the question:

> A woman's film? It depends on your definition. Do you find child sexual and physical abuse to be an issue for only women? Do you consider the lack of responsibility taken by neighbours, police and the schools for sexually abused children to be a "women's issue"? I don't and neither does Shirley Turcotte (*Women's News*, November 1987).

Departing from clichéss, Dafna Kastner from the *Westmount Examiner* wrote:

> A Common myth is that incest occurs only in lower socio-economic levels. It crosses all class lines and race lines. People who have been abused and the offenders don't look different. They don't have horns. On the exterior, they are average, normal-looking people (Kastner 1987).

In addition to emphasizing the "normality" of survivors with respect to class and race, the number of reported survivors was stressed and widely quoted by reviewers in order to force the public to confront the issue. One in six, or one in four women were reported as survivors of childhood incest, according to *Feminist Action*, the magazine of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Canada's largest women's group. This shocking number helped non-survivors realize how widespread and frequent were incidences of incestuous assault.

These processes of "public consciousness-raising" seem to reflect the discourse on sexuality previously initiated by the feminist and gay movements in the 1960s and 1970s. As Tom Waugh has suggested, the public impact of the "Kinsey Report" of 1948 was significant, especially for gay communities, because of its "official" statements that one in six adult white American males had experienced some degree of same-sex contact sometime in their lives; now the hidden homosexual man Elsewhere became the invisible Everyman Everywhere (Waugh : 161-163). The same logic appeared in the discourse circulating around *To a Safer Place*. One of the goals of feminist filmmaking has been to shed light upon "women's issues" previously defined as private, individual, domestic, or in short, minor problems. The act of letting survivors speak for themselves involves acts of self-definition without the presence or mediation of patriarchal authorities. The disclosure of personal stories to be shared with other people has been one of the strategies deployed by numerous consciousness-raising groups. Outside of the feminist movement, speaking out about one's experience has often provoked catharsis which allows groups of people to achieve cohesiveness. Some religious cult groups and many Anonymous organizations offer good examples of these processes of speaking out.

However important the films' role as catalyst, equally necessary is action which would bring this neglected issue into the public and political spheres. Helen Lenskyj[*sic*] concluded:

> In giving Shirley and her family a voice, *To a Safer Place* challenges male power and male violence. In stating unequivocally that child sexual abuse is a major social issue, it will give voice to the one in six women in the audience who is an incest survivor. And this is just the beginning (Lenskyj 1988, 11).

Finally, what became clear as a result of the film was the lack of resource materials and of a support system for survivors of incest. Claudia Peel of the *Standard-freeholder* noted that the

Family Counselling Centre did not have enough material resources to support survivors. *Healthsharing*'s Joanne Liutkas (1987) stated critically that the film was only the first attempt to provide a space for women-centred, feminist organizations, and that there should be more in the future. One of the four executive producers credited in *To a Safer Place*, Fraticelli, was quoted as arguing that the film was only one film looking at the problem of child abuse "when we probably need 10 such films" (Interview by Horton 1987b). Thus, the Film Board produced a series of films as support materials for survivors of sexual abuse, including the 1990 documentary *Sandra's Garden*, which covers one lesbian woman's attempt to cope with her past, while nurturing the nature surrounding her. The film has a healing message similar to that of *To a Safer Place* conveys, and has been a great help for those who used to be exploited, but came to learn how to be given affection and love.

As we have seen, this film was a successful example of films that have garnered public attention and used this to open up discussion of hitherto hidden subjects. The use of film as a catalyst worked effectively in this case, and has provided important evidence of the potential of NFB productions. The collaboration between production and distribution, and with the grass-roots community organizations, was necessary for the popularity of the film. Outside of the national premiers and broadcasts, some screenings took place in community halls, regional hospitals, public libraries, church halls, and medical conferences, with the help of the WMDG. While discussions of a film's "success" generally mention commercial revenue and the number of moviegoers when Hollywood feature films are involved, the audience reaction of *To a Safer Place* reveals the power of NFB documentaries, which have tended to be dismissed by film scholars as well as Canadian audiences. In fact, letters sent to the director

show a high level of appreciation of the film, and, most of the time, refer to the sender's experience of domestic violence. For letter-writers, it is this film, and not those listed in box-office popularity charts, which is the memorable one.

If, on the one hand, the claims of documentary film to represent "reality" encourage audience identification, the intimate "bond" between visual representations and private lives can, on the other, have a harsh impact on the lives of documentary's protagonists. Making this film affected Turcotte's life dramatically; she had a hard time dealing with the avalanche of telephone calls and letters directed towards her, and with the line-up of people wanting to be heard and healed. One year after the CBC telecast, in 1990, Turcotte was once again under the spotlight of the press. The *Toronto Star*'s Judy Steed detailed meeting Turcotte, her long-lasting therapist/friend Harvey, and his spouse, Mary Armstrong, and introduced the first-half of Turcotte's life by describing her as an "unlikely candidate for stardom". Stardom, in this case, refers to her status as a full-time counselor, named the 1990 woman of distinction in health and education by the Vancouver YWCA, and in high demand by incestuous survivors. In contrast to reviews written directly after the film's release, the *Toronto Star* report focuses on Turcotte's successful career as a clinical counselor and psychotherapist, and points out how significant the film's impact was on her life. Because of the non-stop calls from all over the world, "wherever the film is shown," she decided to leave the telephone company where she had worked for 17 years as a telephone technician and supervisor. The range of classifications of child abuse -- including torture, ritual abuse, cult abuse -- appears in Steed's article, showing the extent to which the issue has become more open and analyzed by more and more professionals. The *Globe and Mail* also mentions her name in a 1993 article

regarding the Kids Help Phone for which Turcotte works part-time, and notes her father's ethnic background as Metis living in Winnipeg. The emphasis on these local and ethnic ties presumably encourages children to identify with the person on the other side of the line.

For Turcotte and thousands of people who are living with traumatic memories of childhood, the fight to survive is not over yet. As far as individuals of survivors are concerned, the film was only a start and cannot itself offer long-lasting, organic support. Nevertheless, letters sent to the director show an outburst of emotion and gratitude for having produced a positive, strong, and personal film, and for encouraging survivors to recover their self-esteem.

One has only to compare the powerful disclosure of abuse in this film with the Academy Award's Best Film of 1994-1995, *Forrest Gump* -- in which the heroine's child abuse was only suggested "silently" as one of the subplots -- to see the "progressive philosophy" of the Film Board. This philosophy has been a particular feature of Studio D productions, and of the ways in which they target audiences and stimulate discussion throughout the distribution process.

At a time when the NFB's mandate is being questioned and reconsidered, one should not forget that feminist concerns expressed in the films of Studio D have found audiences beyond the boundaries of political interest groups. Our examination of the audience reaction to *To a Safer Place*, and of public discussion triggered by the film, shows the continued importance of the NFB.

Conclusion

Since its birth, film has been used as a means of propaganda, communication, and artistic expression, to challenge and transform our cultural landscape. Some films have a significant impact on the general public, while others simply disappear. One of the risks in filmmaking is the difficulty of predicting just where audiences are: in theatres, festivals, educational institutions from primary school through university, conferences, libraries, museums, or at home where family members watch television and home movies. In the case of the Hollywood film industry, films are principally made to fill the "basic loop," in that a movie should garner enough commercial success to compensate the investment in filmmaking, advertisement, and distribution, and to make money for the production of new films. In this system, producers are very careful to avoid commercial failure, and so seek to decipher the desire of the general public, a desire to be satisfied within the imaginary space of film. Prior to its release, no one can tell if a film will find a large enough audience to generate sufficient revenues for the production of more films. For filmmakers as individuals, it is the release of a film which is the most exciting event. Critical success does not necessarily coincide with box-office success, but may point to the potential of the director, producers, and cast. In spite of Hollywood filmmakers' efforts, the vast majority of films fail to catch the attention of audiences or critics, and fail, at the same time, to make back the costs of their production.

Indeed, few countries have had so much difficulty in finding an audience for the films of their domestic industry as has Canada. During the short-lived "Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) boom," in which investment in films was encouraged through tax write-offs, many

films were made as imitations of Hollywood product, and failed miserably.

The use of an abstract conception of a film's audience is problematic. Whether or not a film will be a hit depends on the timing of its release, its subject matter, style and the public appeal of its protagonists. Under such conditions, the NFB has developed its own distribution network for the purposes of avoiding direct competition with the private sector, and has had as a principle the targeting of audiences who were previously neglected by the major media.

In this study, the emphasis has been placed on the emotional, and ethical connection between the NFB and its audiences. Democratic methods of documentary filmmaking were detailed through an examination of the Challenge for Change program and the "women's studio," Studio D. In particular, what has become clear is the excellence of the body of work produced by Studio D, work rooted in the strong identification of feminist filmmakers with their protagonists and in their consistent professionalism.

The NFB has survived by finding its audiences among people living in poverty, Amerindians, and women. At the same time, however, the NFB has sometimes ignored what the "masses" want to see. Many criticisms have been levelled at the Board on the ground of its unfriendly relationship with television networks, and as a result of its departure from accepted standards of film form and style. In short, from the audience's point of view, NFB films have posed the problem of accessibility, and when Canadian students see them in the classroom, they often find NFB films "uninteresting," if not boring. For young adults used to "zapping" from program to program according to their own whimsical interests, a thirty-minute documentary imposed upon them by an authority figure must not be exciting. This is often the case even when the film costs them nothing. In such cases, what is required

from teachers is the ability to generate student interest in a particular subject, and, in so doing, to "set the mood" for a film. This requires that teachers be trained to choose proper materials; it requires, as well, of NFB distributors, that they recommend the most appropriate films from among the thousands contained within the NFB's distribution system.

The NFB's unpopularity among the public at large seems to be derived from the latter's desire that the Canadian film industry be a "Hollywood of the North". We must be aware, however, that the American film industry has made every effort to build a space for its output, by organizing publicity campaigns in which advertisements, posters, television commercials and so on are central, and that these strategies very often take up half of a film's budget. While Hollywood films occupy an important place within the public sphere, this is not a direct result of their quality.

Beverly Shaffer was interviewed by Jean Paré of *Info-film*, 29 May 1995, with respect to her winning an Oscar in 1976, and said:

> Whatever film I make, I'm introduced as Academy Award-winning Beverly Shaffer, which is nice. It gives you a bit of status...[but]...You know, in the movie business, you're really only as good as your last film... The Oscar came as a surprise, very early in my career. I don't think I'm the greatest filmmaker at all, absolutely not! I just happened to have made a film that captured the hearts of the one or two hundred people in Hollywood who came to the screening that year.

On the whole, and with the combination of pride and humility which characterizes people working within it, the NFB has tried to meet the needs of the public. At the beginning of the 1980s, the Film Commissioner, James de B. Domville, established priorities concerning ways in which the NFB might serve the the public interest. In response to the Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee (1982), known as the Applehaum-Hébert

Committee report, which basically proposed the transformation of the NFB into a research and training center, Francis Fox, then Minister of Communication, unveiled a National Film and Video Policy in May 1984 which supported NFB production. The NFB itself reacted immediately. The new film commissioner, Francois Macerola adopted a Five-Year Operational Plan intended to complement Fox's policy.

The influence of the Applehaum-Hebert Committee's report was felt, not only on the administrative level, but at the level of production, of film style. To attract the attention of a public more interested in fiction films than in documentary, a new approach to docu-drama, or so-called Alternative Drama, was developed by Giles Walker and John N. Smith. One film within their trilogy, *90 Days* (1986), premiered at the World Film Festival in Montreal and was shown in theatres in Canada and in U.S. This approach -- making "drama without a script" -- was also used in films like *The Company of Strangers* (1990) directed by Cynthia Scott.

As the NFB became revenue-oriented, its relationship to the private film industry became more crucial than ever. The NFB announced that most sponsored films for government departments would be in the hands of the private sector in 1981. In 1982, English Production created the Program to Assist Films in the Private Sector (PAFFPS), opening the way for co-production with the private sector, while the French counterpart established the Aide au cinéma independent, Canada (ACIC) to assist francophone filmmakers. As I noted in the beginning of the first chapter, provincial and municipal governments also began to support local filmmakers in the 1980s. In terms of production, the NFB seems to have become more documentary-oriented for its own films, and to depend on co-production

agreements when it gets involved with feature-length drama. Examples of the latter include Denys Arcand's *Jesus of Montreal* (1989) co-produced by Max Films inc. and Gérard Mital Productions, John Smith's *Boys of St. Vincent* (1992) co-produced by Télé-Action, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1994) co-produced by the NHK of the Japan public broadcasting corporation, to name but a few recent films.

In the meantime, the NFB encountered further stress as uncertainty over its specific *raison d'être* as a producer of films came under question. Especially from the mid-1980s onward, the NFB has often boasted of its technological achievements and innovations -- from the introduction of the first computer-controlled animation system in the industry in 1968, to the IMAX system introduced on an experimental basis at Expo '67, through the innovation of DigSyc™ (digital footage, frame and time counter/calculator) in 1989, Cine-text™, an electric film titling system that enables one to revise subtitles without having to reprint the film in 1990, and to the NFB Montreal's CineRobotheque, which is the first large-scale audiovisual server in Canada, with 9,000 titles ready for consultation by the public. On television, the NFB has found outlets for its productions in newly-licensed cable channels, such as Bravo! And the Women's Television Network, each of which is available to millions of viewers.

To sum up, the NFB has attempted to reach the widest possible audiences through a technologically-advanced distribution network. At the level of production, it remains at the centre of documentary production in Canada, while involving itself in the co-production of fictional features. With respect to grass-root distribution, by 1996 the NFB had shut down all the regional offices which do not have production facilities. While NFB authorities argued

that audiences in the communities could still have direct access through toll-free telephone line and delivery service from Montreal headquarters, it cannot be denied that the link with numerous grass-root organizations became weakened. Regional educators have been concerned about the NFB's emphasis on too much centralized technology.

Unlike the private film industry, the board's productions has been protected by in-house distribution systems. This exclusiveness has contributed to the respectable quality of documentary films with points-of-view, but resulted, as well, it might be argued, in self-indulgence. For independent filmmakers who chose to deal with the "larger public" rather than the Film Board's bureaucracy, the Canadian situation is a harsh one because of insufficient support in the areas of both production and distribution. Within the board, recent debate (in two issues of *Info-film*, March 1995) over the NFB's becoming the National TV Board showed the mixed feelings of directors and producers -- on the one hand, there was a desire to take advantage of tv's possibilities; on the other, there is concern over the concessions which television might require, such as the re-editing of films for presentation in prime time. Although television-phobia seems a tradition at the Board, television itself, especially in an era of specialized satellite or cable services, is not incompatible with the Board's project of targetting audiences in order to engage them with issues of public concern. In this sense, the traditional problem for documentary film of finding and defining a public has become, in a larger sense, the concern of the NFB as a whole.

In 1994, ten years following the report of the Applehaum-Hebert Committee, the Tory-funded *Secor report* was submitted, raising the possibility that the NFB withdraw from all activities except that of training, on the grounds that the NFB's other activities overlapped

with those of other institutions in the government, and thus, could be absorbed or dismissed with the help of the private film industry. John Griffin, of *The Gazette*, wrote an article (1994) entitled "These days, it's not whither the NFB, it's whether the NFB," and interviewed Magnus Isaacson, who expressed awareness of the criticism about the NFB as "a bit [of a] bureaucratic monster" but protested:

> ... if your concern is freedom of expression, then the film board is tremendous resource... Whatever outmoded principles exist at the NFB are outweighed by the total editorial freedom.

Isaacson, who "tries to rock the social and political boat a bit," and is also co-chairperson of the Quebec section of the Canadian Independent Film Caucus, got financial help from the board for a 1992 film, *Uranium*, which met with no interest from the private sector. On the eve of the announcement of the federal budget for the year 1995-1996, Pierre Perrault, Colin Low, Andre Melançon, and Beverly Shaffer went to Ottawa to hold a news conference, carrying boxes containing some 6,000 letters opposing budget cutbacks to the board. Newly appointed chairperson Sandra Macdonald stated in Jean Pare's article "First interview with Sandra Macdonald" *(Info-film*, 3 March 1995) that she is "not devoted to any status quo. Never have been and never expect to be". Under her leadership, the NFB plans to handle a five per cent federal budget cut by "protecting" production. In an interview published in *Playback* (8 May 1995) she says:

> The board has a role which in a cynical age people may be inclined to discount, but may be more than is wise. We are a country with very few recognizable icons, and once you get past the Mounties, the film board is one of them.

In June 1995, a review committee was organized to investigate the mandate of the NFB in comparison with that of Telefilm Canada and the CBC. The future of the film board

seems uncertain and rumours make employees feel somewhat fearful of their jobs. Nevertheless, it is especially important at a time like this that the NFB find a way to function based both on what it has been and what it is expected to be. We have seen how the NFB has reflected Canadian society as a whole. While, for many Canadians, the NFB might be one of the inconspicuous cultural institutions in the government, the role the NFB has played in the development of a politics of representation has helped to disseminate an image of Canadian "liberal democracy" and of relational identities. In a world in which a nationalism based on exclusiveness has been radically challenged, the flexibility of Canadian society is a landmark phenomena in the maturing of North American Culture. As this study has, hopefully, shown, to look at the NFB's history is also to examine the Canadian construction of an "imagined community."

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Appendix 1

Chronological Filmography of Studio D, Co-production, and the Federal Women's Film Program, 1974-1995.

1. Studio D Productions

Working Mothers series. Produced by Kathleen Shannon.

Extensions of the Family, 1974. Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 14 min.
It's Not Enough, 1974. Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 16 min.
Like the Trees, 1974. Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 14 min.
Luckily I Need Little Sleep, 1974. Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 8 min.
Mothers Are People, 1974. Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 7 min.
They Appreciate You More, 1974. Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 15 min.
Tiger on a Tight Leash, 1974. Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 8 min.
Would I Ever Like to Work, 1974 Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 9 min.
The Spring and Fall of Nina Polanski, 1974. Co-directed by Joan Hutton and Louise Roy. 6 min.
"...And They Lived Happily Ever After", 1975. Co-directed by Kathleen Shannon, Irene Angelico, and Anne Henderson. 13 min.
Our Dear Sisters, 1975. Directed by Kathleen Shannon. 15 min.

Children of Canada series. Directed by Beverly Shaffer.

My Friends Call Me Tony, 1975. Produced by Yuki Yoshida. 12 min.
My Name is Susan Yee, 1975. Produced by Yuki Yoshida. 12 min.
Gurdeep Singh Bains, 1976. Produced by Yuki Yoshida. 12 min.
Kevin Alec, 1976. Produced by Yuki Yoshida. 16 min.
Beautiful Leonard Island, 1977. Produced by Yuki Yoshida. 24 min.
I'll Find a Way, 1977. Produced by Yuki Yoshida. 26 min.
Veronica, 1977. Produced by Yuki Yoshida. 14 min.
Benoit, 1978. Produced by Beverly Shaffer. 20 min.
Julie O'Brien, 1981 Produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 19 min.
It's Just Better, 1982. Produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 15 min.

Great Grand Mother, 1975. Co-directed by Anne Wheeler and Lorna Rasmussen. Produced by John Taylor. 29 min.

Just-a-Minute, Parts I & II, 1976. (Collection of one-minute film clip). Produced by Diane Beaudry. 13 min.

Maud Lewis: A World without Shadows, 1976. Directed by Diane Beaudry. 10 min.

How They Saw Us: The Women's Archival Film Study Package series. Directed by Ann Pearson, produced by Yuki Yoshida.
How They Saw Us: Careers and Cradles, 1977. 11 min.
How They Saw Us: Is It a Woman's World?, 1977. 29 min.
How They Saw Us: Needles and Pins, 1977. 11 min.
How They Saw Us: Proudly She Marches, 1977. 18 min.
How They Saw Us: Service in the Sky, 1977. 10 min.
How They Saw Us: Wings on Her Shoulder, 1977. 11 min.
How They Saw Us: Women at War, 1977. 10 min.
How They Saw Us: Women at Work, 1977. 12 min.

The Lady from Grey County, 1977. Directed by Janice H. Brown, co-produced by Margaret Wescott and Kathleen Shannon. 26 min.

Some American Feminists, 1977.Co-directed by Luce Guilbeault, Nicole Brossard and Margaret Wescott, produced by Kathleen Shannon. 56 min.

Sun, Wind and Wood, 1978. Directed by Dorothy Todd Hénaut, produced by Edward Le Lorrain and Margaret Pettigrew. 25 min.

Eve Lambart, 1978. Directed by Margaret Wescott, co-produced by Margaret Wescott and Edward Le Lorrain. 52 min.

Patricia's Moving Picture, 1978. Directed by Bonnie Sherr Klein, co-produced by Margaret Pettigrew and Ann Pearson. 26 min.

An Unremarkable Birth, 1978. Directed and produced by Diane Beaudry. 52 min.

Prairie Album, 1979. Directed by Blake James, produced by Edward Le Lorrain. 15 min.

The Right Candidate for Rosedale, 1979. Co-directed by Bonnie Sherr Klein and Anne Henderson, co-produced by Margaret Pettigrew and Bonnie Sherr Klein. 33 min. [Part of *People and Power* series].

Sea Dream, 1979. Directed by Ellen Besen, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 6 min.

Boys Will Be Men, 1980. Directed by Don Rennick, co-produced by Edward Le Lorrain and Margaret Pettigrew. 29 min.

Just a Lady, 1980. Directed by Susan Trow, produced by 21 min.

Laila, 1980. Directed by Diane Beaudry, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 26 min.

Rusting World, 1980. Directed by Laurent Coderre, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 6 min.

Louise Drouin, Veterinarian, 1981. Directed by Margaret Wescott, produced by Louise Spence. 22 min.

Not a Love Story: A Film about Pornography, 1981. Directed by Bonnie Sherr Klein, produced by Dorothy Todd Henaut. 69 min.

If You Love This Planet, 1982. Directed by Terri Nash, produced by Edward Le Lorrain. 26 min.

Portrait of the Artist - As an Old Lady, 1982. Directed by Gail Singer, co-produced by Margaret Pettigrew and Gail Singer. 27 min.

Dream of a Free Country: A Message from Nicaraguan Women, 1983. Co-directed by Kathleen Shannon and Ginny Stikeman, co-produced by Edward Le Lorrain and Kathleen Shannon. 60 min.

I Want to Be an Engineer, 1983. Directed by Beverly Shaffer, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 29 min.

Too Dirty for Women, 1983. Directed by Diane Beaudry, produced by Signe Johansson. 17 min.

The Way It Is, 1983. Directed by Beverly Shaffer, produced by Diane Beaudry. 24 min.

Abortion: Stories from North and South ,1984. Directed by Gail Singer, co-produced by Signe Johansson and Gail Singer. 55 min.

Adèle and the Ponies of Ardmore, 1984. Directed by Char Davies, produced by Susan Huycke. 14 min.

Behind the Veil, 1984. Directed by Margaret Wescott, produced by Signe Johansson. 130 min.

This Borrowed Land, 1984. Directed by Bonnie Kreps, produced by Signe Johansson. 29 min.

The Best Time of My Life: Portrait of Women in Mid-Life, 1985. Directed by Patricia Watson, co-produced by Margaret Pettigrew and Patricia Watson. 59 min.

DES: An Uncertain Legacy, 1985. Co-directed by Bonnie Andrukaitis and Sidonie Kerr, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 55 min.

Speaking Our Peace series.

Speaking Our Peace, 1985. Co-directed by Terri Nash and Bonnie Sherr Klein, co-produced by Bonnie Sherr Klein and Margaret Pettigrew. 55 min.

A Writer in the Nuclear Age: A Conversation with Margaret Laurence, 1985. Directed by Terri Nash, co-produced by Bonnie Sherr Klein and Margaret Pettigrew. 9 min.

Nuclear Addiction: Dr. Rosalie Bertell on the Cost of Deterrence, 1986. Directed by Terri Nash, co-produced by Bonnie Sherr Klein and Margaret Pettigrew. 19 min.

Love Affair with Politics: A Portrait of Marion Dewar, 1987. Directed by Terri Nash, co-produced by Bonnie Sherr Klein and Margaret Pettigrew. 27 min.

Russian Diary, 1989. Co-directed by Terri Nash and Bonnie Sherr Klein, co-produced by Terri Nash, Bonnie Sherr Klein, and Signe Johansson. 27 min.

Firewords: Louky Bersianik, Jovette Marchessault, Nicole Brossard, 1986. Directed by Dorothy Todd Henaut, produced by Barbara Janes. 85 min.

Speaking of Nairobi, 1986. Directed bu Tina Horne, co-produced by Sign Johansson, Barbara Janes and Barbara Doran. 56 min.

The Man Who Stole Dreams, 1987. Directed by Joyce Borenstein, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 11 min.

A Mother and Daughter on Abortion, 1987. Directed by Gail Singer, co-produced by Gail Singer and Signe Johansson. 12 min.

To a Safer Place, 1987. Directed by Beverly Shaffer, co-produced by Gerry Rogers and Beverly Shaffer. 58 min.

Worth Every Minute, 1987. Co-directed by Catherine Macleod and Lorraine Segato, co-produced by Catherine Macleod, Margaret Pettigrew, and Sign Johansson. 28 min.

Adam's World, 1989. Directed by Donna Read, co-produced by Margaret Pettigrew and Signe Johansson. 19 min.

Illuminated Lives: A Brief History of Women's Work in the Middle Ages, 1989. Directed by Ellen Besen, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 6 min.

Studio D 15th Anniversary, 1989. Directed by Sidonie Kerr, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 57 min.

Unnatural Causes, 1989. Directed by Maureen Judge, produced by Ginny Stikeman. 7 min.

Women and Spirituality series. Directed by Donna Read.

Goddess Remembered, 1989. Co-produced by Margaret Pettigrew and Signe Johansson. 54 min.

The Burning Times, 1990. Co-produced by Mary Armstrong and Margaret Pettigrew. 56 min.

Full Circle, 1992. Co-produced by Heather A. Marshall , Donna Read, Silvia Basmajian, Margaret Pettigrew, Dennis Murphy, and Kathleen Shannon. [co-production]. 57 min.

Women at the Well series

Older Stronger Wiser, 1989. Directed by Claire Prieto, produced by Ginny Stikeman. 28 min.

Sisters in the Struggle, 1991. Co-directed by Dionne Brand and Ginny Stikeman. 49 min.

Long Time Comin', 1993. Directed by Dionne Brand, co-produced by Nicole Hubert and Ginny Stikeman. 52 min.

Working Nights, 1989. Sarah Butterfield, produced by Signe Johansson. 20 min.

Fragments of a Conversation on Language, 1990. Directed by Nora Alleyn, co-produced by Dorothy Henaut and Margaret Pettigrew. 19 min.

Mother Earth, 1991. Directed by Terri Nash, co-produced by Kathleen Shannon and Terri Nash. 11 min.

Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives, 1992. Co-directed by Aerlyn Weissman and Lynne Fernie, co-produced by Margaret Pettigrew, Ginny Stikeman, and Rina Fraticelli. 85 min.

Toward Intimacy, 1992. Directed by Debbie McGee, produced by Nicole Hubert. 61 min.

Hands of History, 1994. Directed by Loretta Todd, co-produced by Margaret Pettigrew and Ginny Stikeman. 52 min.

Motherland: Tales of Wonder, 1994. Directed by Helene Klodawsky, co-produced by Signe Johansson and Ginny Stikeman. 90 min.

Widening the Circle: A gathering with Young Women, 1994. Production Team: Danielle Dyson, Cheryl Sim, Barbara Hutchinson, Patricia Diaz, Annette Clarke, and Nicole Hubert. 25 min.

Early Chinese Women in Canada (Upcoming release)

Beyond Borders: Arab Women's Voices (Upcoming release)

Talking Women series (Upcoming release)
Part 1 Adrinne Rich/Dionne Brand
Part 2 Kathleen Shannon

Making a Difference (Upcoming release)

Where Is the Dream (Research)

Healthy Women (Research)

(N.I.F. Internship Program)
Roll Over Mahatma
Fatale (script development)
Deadlove (script development)

2. Co-productions

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse, 1980. Directed by Evelyn Lambart. 5 min.

Flamenco at 5:15, 1983. Directed by Cynthia Scott, co-produced by Cynthia Scott and Adam Symansky. 29 min.

On Our Own, 1984. Directed by Laurette Deschamps, co-produced by Michèle Renaud-Molnar and Margaret Pettigrew. 27 min.

The Treadmill, 1984. Directed by Dagmar Gueissaz Teufel, produced by Susan Huycke. 43 min.

Turnaround: A Story of Recovery, 1984. Directed by Moira Simpson, co-produced by Jennifer Torrance and Moira Simpson. 47 min.

Waterwalker, 1984. Directed and produced by Bill Mason. 87 min.

Dark Lullabies, 1985. Co-directed by Irene Angelico and Abbey Jack Neidik, co-produced by Irene Angelico, Abbey Jack Neidik, Edward Le Lorrain, and Bonnie Sherr Klein. 81 min.

Spirit of Kata, 1985. Directed by Sharon McGowan, produced by Jennifer Torrance. 27 min.

No Longer Silent, 1986. Directed by Laurette Deschamps, co-produced by Laurette Deschamps and Barbara Janes. 56 min.

The Legacy of Mary McEwan, 1987. Directed by Patricia Watson, co-produced by Patricia Watson and Margaret Pettigrew. 56 min.

Half the kingdom, 1989. Co-directed by Francine E. Zuckerman and Roushell Goldstein, co-produced by Beverly Shaffer and Francine E. Zuckerman. 59 min.

African Market Women series. directed by Barbara Doran.
Fair Trade, 1990. Co-produced by Barbara Doran and Ginny Stikeman. 27 min.
From the Shore, 1990. Produced by Barbara Doran. 16 min.
Where Credit Is Due, 1990. Produced by Barbara Doran. 27 min.

After Montreal Massacre, 1990. Directed by Gerry Rogers, produced by Nicole Hubert. 27 min.

Faithful Women series. Directed by Kathleen Shannon produced by Signe Johansson.
Part 1 Gathering Together, 1990. 53 min.
Part 2 Texts and Contexts, 1990. 53 min.
Part 3 Harmony and Balance, 1990. 54 min.
Part 4 Working Towards Peace, 1990. 53 min.
Part 5 Priorities and Perspectives, 1990. 53 min.
Part 6 Through Ignorance or Design: A Discussion of Stereotypes, 1990. 53 min.
Part 7 I'll Never Forget You, 1990. 54 min.

Toying with Their Future, 1990. Directed by Claire Nadon, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 30 min.

Wisecracks, 1991. Directed by Gail Singer, co-produced Gail Singer, Ginny Stikeman, and Signe Johansson. 93 min.

Women in the Shadows, 1991. Directed by Norma Bailey, co-produced by Christine Welsh and Signe Johansson. 55 min. [Part of *Keepers of the Nation* series].

On the Eighth Day: Perfecting Mother Nature, 1992. Directed by Gwynne Basen, co-produced by Mary Armstrong and Nicole Hubert.
Part 1 Making Babies, 51 min.
Part 2 Making Perfect Babies, 51 min.

Return Home, 1992. Directed by Michelle Wong, co-produced by Margaret Wong and Michelle Wong. 29 min.

When Women Kill, 1994. Directed by Barbara Doran, co-produced by Jerry Acintosh, Barbara Doran, Annette Clarke, Signe Johansson, and Ginny Stikeman. 48 min.

Keepers of the Fire, 1994. Directed by Christine Welsh, co-produced by Ian Herring, Joe MacDonald, Christine Welsh, Signe Johansson, and Michael Chechik. 55 min.

Sadness of the Moon (Skin Deep) (Upcoming Release)

As If People Mattered (Research)

3. Federal Women's Film Program

Attention: Women at Work!, 1983. Directed by Anne Henderson, produced by Margaret Pettigrew. 28 min.

Head Start: Meeting the Computer Challenge, 1984. Directed and produced by Diane Beaudry. 27 min.

Next Step series. Directed by Tina Horne, co-produced by Gerry Rogers and Tina Horne.
Moving On, 1986. 28 min.
A Safe Distance, 1986. 28 min.
Sylvie's Story, 1986. 28 min.

Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief, 1986. Directed by Carole Geddes, produced by Barbara Janes. 29 min.

The Impossible Takes a Little Longer, 1986. Directed by Anne Henderson, produced by Barbara Janes. 46 min.

(International Youth Year Training Program) Co-produced by Micheline Le Guillou and Gerry Rogers.
Beyond Memory, 1986. Directed by Louise Lamarre. 14 min.
Children of War, 1986. Directed by Premika Ratnam. 25 min.
First Take Double Take, 1986. Directed by Paula Fairfield. 9 min.
Thin Dreams, 1986. Directed by Susie Mah. 21 min.

Elder Women series. Produced by Chantal Bowen.
The Power of Time, 1989. Directed by Liette Aubin. 29 min.
Pills Unlimited, 1990. Directed by Sylvie Van Brabant. 29 min.
When the Day Comes, 1991. Directed by Sharon McGowan. 29 min.

In Her Chosen Field, 1989. Directed by Barbara Evans, produced by Chantal Bowen. 28 min.

A Time to Reap, 1989. Directed by Dagmar Teufel, produced by Chantal Bowen. 28 min.

No Time to Stop ,1990. Directed by Helene Klodawsky, produced by Chantal Bowen. 29 min.

Women and Work series. Produced by Chantal Bowen.

A Balancing Act, 1992. Directed by Helena Cynamon. 24 min.
The Glass Ceiling, 1992. Directed by Sophie Bissonnette, 28 min.
Careers to Discover, 1993. Directed by Ginette Pellerin. 24 min.
A Web Not a Ladder, 1993. Directed by Bonnie Dickie. 24 min.

Appendix 2

Films Cited

1. NFB films

90 Days, 1985. Directed by Giles Walker, co-produced by David Wilson and Giles Walker. 100 min.

L'Acadie l'Acadie?!?, 1971. Co-directed by Michel Brault and Pierre Perrault, co-produced by Guy L. Coté and Paul Larose. 117 min.

Amisk, 1977. Directed and produced by Alanis Obomsawin. 40 min.

Ballad of Crowfoot, 1968. Directed by Willie Dunn, produced by Barrie Howells. 10 min. [The *Challenge for Change* series]

Bethune, 1964. Directed by Donald Brittain, co-produced by Donald Brittain and John Kemeny. 59 min.

Black Mother Black Daughter, 1989. Co-directed by Sylvia Hamilton and Claire Prieto, produced by Shelagh Mackezie. 29 min.

Bob's Birthday, 1993. Co-directed by David Fine and Alison Snowden, co-produced by David Fine, David Verrall. Alison Snowden, and Barrie McLean. 12 min.

The Boy's of St. Vincent, 1992. Directed by John N Smith, co-produced by Sam Grana, Claudio Luca, and Colin Neale. 92 min.

Le chat dans le sac, 1964. Directed by Gilles Groulx, produced by Jacques Bobet. 74 min.

Challenge for Change, 1968. Directed by Bill Reid. 24 min. [The *Challenge for Change* series]

City of Gold, 1957. Co-directed by Wolf Koenig and Colin Low, produced by Tom Daly. 22 min.

The Company of Strangers, 1990. Directed by Cynthia Scott, produced by David Wilson. 101 min.

Cree Hunters of Mistassini, 1974. Co-directed by Boyce Richardson and Tony Ianzelo, produced by Colin Low. 58 min. [The *Challenge for Change* series]

En tant que femme series

J'me marie, j'me marie pas, 1973. Mireille Dansereau, co-produced by Anne Claire Poirier and Jean-Marc Garand. 81 min.

A qui appartient ce gage?, 1973. Co-directed by Susan Gibbard, Clorinda Warny, Francine Saia, Jeanne Morazain, and Martha Blackburn, co-produced by Anne Claire Poirier and Jean-Marc Garand. 57 min.

Souris, tu m'inquiètes, 1973. Directed by Aimée Danis, and co-produced by Anne Claire Poirier, Nicole Chamson, and Jean-Marc Garand. 57 min.

Les filles c'est pas pareil, 1974. Directed by Hélène Girard, produced by Anne Claire Poirier. 58 min.

Les Filles du Roy, 1974. Directed by Anne Claire Poirier, produced by Jean-Marc Garand. 56 min.

Introduction to Fogo Island, 1968. Directed by Colin Low, produced by John Kemeny. 17 min. [The *Challenge for Change* series]

Jesus of Montreal, 1989. Directed by Denys Arcand, co-produced by Roger Frappier and Pierre Gendron. 120 min.

Jour après jour, 1961. Directed by Clément Perron, co-produced by Fernand Dansereau, Hubert Aquin, and Victor Jobin. 28 min.

Kanehsatake: 270 years of Resistance, 1993. Directed by Alanis Obomsawin, co-produced by Wolf Koenig, Alanis Obomsawin, and Colin Neale. 119 min.

The Last Straw, 1987. Directed by Giles Walker, co-produced by David Wilson and Giles Walker. 99 min.

Lonely Boy, 1961. Co-directed by Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroitor, produced by Roman Kroitor. 27 min.

Mon oncle Antoine, 1971. Directed by Claude Jutra, produced by Marc Beaudet. 104 min.

Movie Showman, 1989. Directed by Harvey Spak, produced by Jerry Krepakevich. 29 min.

New Shoes, 1990. Directed by Anne Marie Fleming.[*Five Feminist Minutes* series]

Our Land Is Our Life, 1974. Co-directed by Boyce Richardson and Tony Ianzelo, produced by Colin Low. 58 min. [The *Challenge for Change* series]

People and Power, 1968. Co-directed by Bonnie Sherr Klein and Peter Pearson, co-produced by John Kemeny and Barrie Howells. 17 min. [The *Challenge for Change* series]

Pour la suite du monde, 1963. Co-directed by Pierre Perrault, Michel Brault, and Marcel Carrière, co-produced by Jacques Bobet, and Fernand Dansereau. 105 min.

Sandra's Garden, 1990. Directed by Bonnie Dickie, produced by Joe MacDonald. 34 min.

The Things I Cannot Change, 1966. Directed by Tanya Ballantyne, produced by John Kemeny. 58 min.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead series

The Tibetan Book of the Dead: A Way of Life, 1994. Co-directed by Yukari Hayashi and Barrie McLean, co-produced by Atsushi Kawamura, Barrie McLean, and David Verrall. 46 min.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation, 1994. Co-directed by Hiroaki Mori, Yukari Hayashi, and Barrie McLean, co-produced by Atsushi Kawamura, Barrie McLean, David Verrall, and Naoyuki Kibe. 45 min.

Universe, 1960. Co-directed by Roman Kroitor and Colin Low, produced by Tom Daly. 26 min.

Very Nice, Very Nice, 1961. Directed by Arthur Lipsett, co-produced by Colin Low and Tom Daly. 7 min.

La vie heureuse de Léopold A, 1965. Directed by Gilles Carle, produced by Jacques Bobet. 68 min.

VTR St-Jacques, 1969. Directed by Bonnie Sherr Klein, produced by George C. Stoney. 26 min.

We're Talking Vulva, 1990. Co-directed by Shawna Demsey and Tracy Traeger. [*Five Feminist Minutes* series]

You Are on Indian Land, 1969. Directed by Mort Ransen, produced by George C. Stoney. 37 min. [The *Challenge for Change* series]

2. Other Films Cited

Exotica, 1993. Directed by Atom Egoyan. 102 min. Alliance Communications Corporation.

Family Viewing, 1987. Directed by Atom Egoyan. 86 min. Cinéphile.

Forrest Gump, 1994. Directed by Robert Zemeckis. 142 min. Paramount Pictures.

Highway 61, 1991. Directed by Bruce McDonald. 110 min. Cineplex Odeon corporation.

I've Heard the Mermaid Singing, 1987. Directed by Patricia Rozema. 81 min. Cinéphile.

Moana, 1926. Co-directed by Robert Flaherty and Frances Hubberd Flaherty. 85 min. Paramount Pictures.

Nanook of the North, 1922. Directed by Robert Flaherty. 86 min. Revillion Freres.

When the Night Is Falling, 1994. Directed by Patricia Rozema. 93 min. Alliance Vivafilm.