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RACIAL DIVERSITY'S JOURNEY TO CONSTANCY: INITIATIVES FOR REDRESSING THE COLOUR IMBALANCE IN DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING AT THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

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July 2001

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the National Film Board's Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives (1997 -) whose aim is to redress the under-representation of filmmakers of colour in the English Program's documentary film production streams. Focusing on how these strategies and objectives have broadly tried to promote racial diversity (for instance, one way is through the goal of having one of four filmmakers be a person of colour), this thesis proposes that these Initiatives represent the NFB's most prominent and socially progressive raison d'être for the late 1990s and the new millennium.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse explore les initiatives intitulées *La diversité culturelle à l'oeuvre* (1997 -) de l'Office national du film et accorde une attention particulière aux façons dont ces démarches antiracistes tentent à résoudre l'absence des réalisateurs/réalisatrices de couleur dans les studios de documentaire du Programme anglais. Avec un centre d'intéret sur les façons dont ces stratégies et ces objectifs preuvent une plus grande diversité raciale (par exemple, l'une des façons s'efforce de faire en sorte qu'un(e) réalisateur/réalisatrice sur quatre soit une personne de couleur), cet ouvrage propose que ces initiatives sont les initiatives les plus progressistes sur le plan social et les plus prééminentes de la fin des années 1990 et de ce début du siècle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor Dr. Sheryl Hamilton for her unfailingly insightful advice and guidance throughout my entire research and writing process. Her confidence in my abilities motivated me to try, at all times, to challenge myself intellectually as an analyst.

For taking time out of their hectic schedules at the NFB to answer my numerous questions and to share their perspectives with me, my special thanks to Director-General of English Program Barbara Janes, the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity (producers Germaine Wong, Karen King, and Selwyn Jacob), and Executive Producer Louise Lore. I also thank filmmakers Ann Shin, Jennifer Holness, David Sutherland, and Cyrus Singhar Singh for enriching my work with their candid views. I alone take responsibility for any errors or omissions present in this manuscript.

For helping me gather essential information for my research, generous thanks to Bernard Lutz at the NFB Archives, to the librarians at the NFB Library, and to friend and colleague Pamela Mollica.

I gratefully acknowledge the generous financial support provided by Fonds pour la Formation de Chercheurs et l'Aide à la Recherche (FCAR) and by the McGill Chapter of Delta Upsilon Fraternity.

Many thanks to all my friends and professors in the Graduate Program of Communications and to my co-workers at the Canada-South Africa Education Management Program (CSAEMP) for their support.

Finally, my heart goes out to my parents and Stephen Lee for their unconditional love and encouragement, especially in stressful times.

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The National Film Board is established to initiate and promote the production and distribution [of films] in the national interest and, in particular, to produce and distribute and promote the production and distribution of films designed to interpret Canada to Canadians and to other nations.

Clause 9a of the revised official National Film Board mandate of 1950[1]

1. INTRODUCTION

Proclaimed by National Film Board of Canada's film commissioner Arthur Irwin fifty years ago, the aforementioned passage has been directly quoted, partially referenced, or completely paraphrased in numerous academic works that are devoted to a study of Canada's renowned government-funded cultural institution for the production and distribution of film, and for the training of filmmakers. Since then, the focus of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) has been to reinterpret its mandate in accordance with the ways in which its films would serve as reflections of Canada and, as such, represent the national interest. It is interesting to note that, from a "racialized" perspective, it has taken approximately six decades for the NFB to reach the full realization that "the production and distribution of films designed to interpret Canada to Canadians and other nations" could, for the national interest of a multicultural audience, be interpreted as *the production and distribution of films by Canadian filmmakers descended from diverse races, to a Canadian audience made up of diverse races.*

In the last five years, the NFB's stated desire to promote gender-neutral cultural diversity within its filmmaking environment has resulted in the creation of such initiatives as apprenticeship programs, workshops, and competitions, which all fall under the NFB's English Program's Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives rubric and which are reserved for people of colour. During this same period, the NFB's modus operandi has been to

ensure that by the year 2001 one of every four of its documentary films in its English Program would be made by a filmmaker of colour (1998-1999 *Strategic and Operational Planning* intranet report). By taking both of these facts into consideration, I contend that the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives serve as the English Program's most prominent, socially progressive raison d'être for the late 1990s and new century. Within this thesis, I more importantly wish to demonstrate that these Initiatives are, to date, the most formal, widespread, and effective responses to combating the under-representation of documentary filmmakers of colour within the English Program's documentary film production environment.

To illustrate this objective, I undertake an in-depth analysis of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives, from their inception in 1997 to the present year.[2] Specifically my research examines four relevant issues: (1) the English Program's three documentary production units' current definition of the term *cultural diversity*, in relation to the Multiculturalism Program's and New Initiatives in Film (NIF) Program's previous respective interpretations of the concept; (2) the origins and reasons behind the creation of these Initiatives; (3) the ways in which the English Program's three documentary production branches (Documentary East, Documentary Ontario, and Documentary West) have been implementing these Initiatives; and (4) the Reel Diversity Competition which is the most well known of all the Initiatives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main reason for devoting this thesis to the topic of racial diversity within the NFB is because little academic literature on the subject exists. Broaching an array of issues

including cultural policy in the arts, multiculturalism, race relations, ethnicity/identity politics, and film/media, this work functions neither as a thorough investigation of any of these fields nor as a study limited to any one single classification. Situated at the intersection of the aforementioned categories, this research serves instead to bridge these disparate themes.

For this reason, I inform my multidisciplinary work through literature that either sits at the crossroads of these given domains or that deals with one of them. Given the Canadian context of my subject matter, I try, as often as possible, to privilege Canadian sources. Generally I organize and discuss the literature in my field in relation to seven relevant themes. These motifs are (1) Cultural Diversity at the National Film Board; (2) Different Strands of Multiculturalism; (3) Legislated Multiculturalism and Cultural Hegemony; (4) Systemic Racism in Canadian Cultural Institutions and Anti-Racist Strategies; (5) Diversity qua Decentralization/Centralization; (6) Problematizing the Racial Label; and (7) From Abstract Parochialism to Concrete Social Change.

2.1. CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD

Although there exists a plethora of academic material on the NFB, there are, in fact, only two sources that, within a historical context, allude to the National Film Board's pre-1996 definitions of *cultural diversity*. They are Aiko Ryohashi's M.A. thesis and Gary Evans's chronological account of the NFB from 1949 to 1989.

Ryohashi's study, which examines various documentary filmmaking initiatives within the Challenge for Change (CFC) Program and the women's filmmaking studio Studio D, is significant for my own survey on the historical shifts in the connotation of

the term *cultural diversity* within the English Program's documentary film production environment. For instance, Ryohashi, at one point, correctly predicts that the NFB's future endeavor is to expand the focus of its documentary film initiatives on gender equality to include racial equality. Writing in 1995, she notes:

> In surveying Studio D films from early years to the present one [1995], one might note that diversifying images of women has been a consistent concern throughout. I would suggest that the contemporary shift towards considering issues of race is the reflection of a larger social trend (39-40).

Since she does not elaborate any further on her forecast, Ryohashi allows me to play her successor and explore the crystallization of this "larger social trend" in the form of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives.

Ryohashi does a formidable job of substantiating her research through the incorporation of internal NFB documents, archival information, and personal interviews. Her inclusion of non-academic material is something that I emulate in order to balance the theoretical side of my multidisciplinary argument with a practical facet. However, Ryohashi occasionally allows historical data to overshadow her critical voice. As a result, her work sometimes resembles a historical chronology more than a historical analysis. Within my own research, I endeavor to engage with my factual documentation as analytically as possible.

In his four-decade historical chronology on the NFB, Evans devotes a small yet informative section to the English Program's Multiculturalism Program. Although Evans indicates that films made under the Multiculturalism Program contain multiculturalism-oriented narratives, he does not mention whether the filmmakers responsible for such works were of a visible minority. My work will therefore explore the reasons why the Program, in fact, placed more emphasis on the multicultural content of its films than on

the race of its filmmakers.

2.2. DIFFERENT STRANDS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Three philosophical paradigms of multiculturalism – symbolic, feminist, and critical – figure prominently in this thesis since they form the theoretical framework for the Multiculturalism Program, the NIF Program, and the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives respectively. It is, at this time, worth defining these three terms and considering the main authors whose research focuses on them.

Symbolic multiculturalism is a paradigm premised on a hierarchical order of cultures that under certain conditions "allows" non-dominant cultures to participate in the dominant culture. Forming the ideology behind the 1971 *Multiculturalism Policy* and 1988 *Multiculturalism Act*, this conceptual model advocates that such democratic values as individualism, tolerance, and equality should extend to people of colour. As the separate studies of Audrey Kobayashi (1993) and Tator et al. (1998) point out, the limitation in symbolic multiculturalism is its inability to undermine systemic racism by challenging the hegemonic control of the dominant culture of Caucasian Canadians. These authors' works thus help me to illustrate how the Multiculturalism Program was restricted by its symbolic multicultural philosophy.

What is particular interesting about Kobayashi's essay is its usage of a chronology to frame the varying definitions of the term *multiculturalism*, in relation to the different historical stages of Canadian multiculturalism. I therefore appropriate Kobayashi's method of constructing a historical overview based on definitions for my own historical chronology of the English Program's different perceptions of the term *cultural diversity*.

Angharad N. Valdivia's book on feminism in communication studies and Jo-Anne Lee and Linda Cardinal's critique of feminism in Canada espouse the convergence of feminism and multiculturalism. These authors' support of a feminist multiculturalism paradigm derives from their belief that mainstream feminism privileges the concerns of White middle-class women but excludes non-Caucasian women's preoccupations with racial discrimination, strategies of racial inclusion, affirmative action programs, and North American media representations of visible minority women.

By relating feminist struggles to racial diversity amongst women, Valdivia's and Lee and Cardinal's writings consequently reinforce my contention that feminist multiculturalism underpins the principles by which Studio D, from the late 1980s to 1996, and Studio D's NIF Program, from 1991 to 1996, abided. Whereas these authors' works do not acknowledge that feminist multiculturalism excludes the concerns of men of colour, my research investigates how this conceptual model's gender-specificity was a particularly restricting factor for the NIF Program.

Implicit in the respective works of Tator et al. (1998), Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1994), Terence Turner (1994), the Chicago Cultural Studies Group (1994), and Peter McLaren (1994) is the understanding that critical multiculturalism arose in the late 1980s as the antithesis to the symbolic model of multiculturalism.[3] Acknowledging that a racial hierarchy exists that privileges the dominant culture over people of colour within Canada's multicultural society, this paradigm advocates the development of strategies to challenge this situation and engender racial equality.[4]

Although Lai Wan, in her essay, does not admit to being a critical multicultural supporter, her "multiple/different as constant" concept nonetheless functions as the ethos

of the critical model of multiculturalism. According to Lai Wan, this concept advocates that a multiplicity of identities should exist as "the norm" (28). However, one's ability to render difference the norm is only realizable if measures for diversity are implemented in an area where the dominant culture usually constitutes "the constant" (ibid).

Informed by Lai Wan's notion, critical multiculturalism asserts that any attempt to render racial plurality a normal part of any given society is possible if pro-racial diversity initiatives are integrated throughout an area where Caucasian Canadians usually constitute the constant majority. Only by implementing strategies for change in an environment where this dominant culture traditionally signifies the norm can critical multicultural advocates transform the norm to connote "a racially diverse group of Canadians."

Therefore it is not surprising that all critical multicultural principles or strategies resonate with the different as constant philosophy. For instance, Turner's principle emphasizes that minority cultures should not accept but challenge the "cultural hegemony of the dominant ethnic group...by calling for the equal recognition of non-hegemonic groups" (207). Moreover, McLaren's strategy stresses the need to enact social change by increasing racial diversity within a given community (i.e. community of filmmakers) rather than by privileging one cultural group (i.e. visible minority filmmakers) over another (i.e. Caucasian filmmakers) (58).

All of the aforementioned direct or indirect sources on critical multiculturalism reinforce my contention that the Initiatives, which aim to increase the presence of visible minority documentary filmmakers, want to make racial plurality a constant, normal fixture of the English Program's entire documentary production environment. Since my

research reveals that critical multiculturalism – of the three philosophical paradigms – offers the most far-reaching and practical vision to promote racial diversity, all of these writings help me to establish that the Initiatives, inspired by critical multiculturalism, are the Program's most widespread and effective means to challenge the existing colour imbalance.

It is worth noting the anti-multiculturalism counterparts to the three pro-multiculturalism discourses listed above. The studies by Neil Bissoondath (1994) and Garth Stevenson (1995) assert that multiculturalism, in any form, is detrimental to Canadian nationalism. According to these anti-multiculturalism critiques, multiculturalism is problematic since it encourages ethnic pride amongst minority groups and consequently prevents such communities from integrating into Canada's mainstream culture. Such works conclude that assimilation into the dominant culture is the only way that minority communities can reach their full potential as Canadian citizens. As such, this pro-assimilation perspective suggests that minority groups should suppress their cultural and ethnic identity in the public domain and conform to the values, beliefs, and traditions of the Caucasian Canadian majority.

My thesis does not conceal my preference for critical multiculturalism over the very limited notion of symbolic multiculturalism. To steer clear of an oversimplified schism in which members of the mainstream culture are all privileged oppressors and all racial minorities are victims of subordination, my research tries to assume Vered Amit-Talai's critical yet fair stance. In her study on Montreal-based ethnic minority community activists, Amit-Talai views identity politics not as a trivialized struggle between Whites and non-Whites but as a united struggle by both groups to incorporate the issue of racial

equity into the agendas of government institutions (93). Whereas Amit-Talai perceives such combined efforts for social change developing within political parties and municipal government, I see them occurring in the NFB's English Program.

2.3. LEGISLATED MULTICULTURALISM AND CULTURAL HEGEMONY

Among a number of authors who have written about Canadian cultural policy, Peter S. Li, Richard Fung, and Marlene Nourbese Philip (in "The Multicultural Whitewash") have all focused on the negative impact that the 1971 *Multiculturalism Policy* or the 1988 *Multiculturalism Act* has had on minority arts in Canada. Pointing to the dominance of European-influenced art forms in the country, these writers note how the *Policy* or *Act* equates minority artwork with folkloric or heritage art forms that glamorize traditions or stereotypes associated with the artist's ancestral roots. As a result, the *Policy* or *Act* overlooks artwork by minority artists that falls outside its narrow vision of what constitutes "minority art."

Just as they are significant for my examination on the Multiculturalism Program, so are these three works pertinent to my study on the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives since their authors' unrealized wishes are what the Initiatives, within the realm of Canadian documentary film, are trying to fulfill. The wishes comprise (1) Li's individual desire for a national professional organization dedicated to the development of minority arts (378); (2) Fung's and Philip's desires for qualified visible minority Canadians to occupy influential decision-making positions in a cultural institution ("Colouring" 50; "The Multicultural Whitewash" 22); and (3) Fung's individual desire for people of colour to have the financial means to create art and to gain access to the

tools for such artistic production ("Colouring" 51).

Li's essay, along with works by Lillian Allen (1993-1994), Zool Suleman (1992), and Marlene Nourbese Philip ("Gut Issues"), also deals with the notion of Eurocentrism in Canadian cultural agencies. These readings define Eurocentrism as these agencies' tendency to hold European art forms, motifs, and styles in higher regard than those of non-European cultures, and, in this way, to sustain a cultural hegemony privileging Western (Caucasian) culture over non-Western (non-Caucasian) ones. I take these sources into consideration during my analysis of the absence of visible minority filmmakers within the Multiculturalism Program in the 1970s.

2.4. SYSTEMIC RACISM IN CANADIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND ANTI-RACIST STRATEGIES

From the large pool of theoretical studies on either of the two themes in the given rubric, I have found three that are particularly relevant to my research. The first is Monika Kin Gagnon's essay "Building Blocks: Anti-Racist Initiatives in the Arts," which presents a summary of the different anti-racist initiatives suggested by various artists of colour to combat institutional racism within the Canadian arts milieu. Detailing the historical development of anti-racist policies in Canadian cultural bureaus, and illustrating the common traits of systemic racism, Gagnon's work is a useful reference for my analysis of the Cultural Diversity In Action Initiatives' function as anti-racist strategies.

The second pertinent reference is Scott McFarlane's examination of the 1994 *Writing Thru Race Conference*, a colloquium reserved for non-White Canadian writers. McFarlane suggests how the event's usage of an anti-racist political strategy that

abandons a "multicultural inclusionary paradigm" is one way to combat the homogenizing effect of symbolic multiculturalism. McFarlane's strategy is essential for my own exploration of the race-specific status of certain Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives.

The third notable source is Bailey's textual analysis of the language used by Canadian cultural bureaus to address the issue of cultural diversity in public or private documents. Bailey suggests that ambiguous, generalized, and ill-defined definitions of the various phrases used to connote cultural diversity reveal that the cultural institutions' mandates on the subject are unclear. Bailey's work inspires my own background study of the ways in which the English Program describes the term *cultural diversity*, in relation to the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives, in press releases and documentary filmmaking guides.

However, Bailey's argument would have been strengthened if he had included in his work the viewpoints of individuals responsible for such documents within the cultural agencies under scrutiny. This omission gives the impression that Bailey disallows any other voice of reason, except his own, to permeate his study. Within my own analysis, I therefore wish to juxtapose my theoretical voice with the perspectives of people who administer/oversee the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives and who have benefited from them.

2.5. DIVERSITY QUA DECENTRALIZATION/ CENTRALIZATION

Surfacing repeatedly in works about arts in Canada are the issues of decentralization (i.e. more localized administrative power over a regional cultural institution or a cultural

institution's regional branch) and centralization (i.e. more state control over regional cultural institutions). In their respective essays, Dot Tuer (1992) and Jennifer Kawaja (1995), for instance, voice their support for federal sponsorship of community-based arts centers. However, what makes the two issues particularly significant for my research is that, in the separate writings by D.B. Jones (1981), Kevin Dowler (1996), and Zoe Druick (1998), they address the relationship between the NFB and the notion of diversity.

For example, Jones devotes a chapter of his book to the NFB's Regionalization Program of the 1970s. In it, the author details how the Program aimed to enable filmmakers from a certain region (e.g. Canadian town or city) to profile a regional subject for a national subject, or to present, from a regional viewpoint, a national subject. Jones's investigation of how geography contributed to the creation of this decentralized Program motivates me, in my own work, to inquire how geographical differences can engender different ways for the English Program's three documentary production streams – Documentary West (which encompasses B.C., the Prairie Provinces, and the Northwest Territories), Documentary Ontario, and Documentary East (which encompasses Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces) – to implement the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives.

Unlike Jones, Dowler examines how, in the 1950s, the organizational structure of national cultural agencies – like the NFB – deliberately mirrored the centralized system of Canadian government that administers diverse regions of Canada. According to Dowler, the purpose behind the centralized organizational structure of these agencies was to bring diverse regions into the mainstream of Canadian life. By uniting these disparate geographical locales together under a "common culture," the government could then have a Canadian culture that was impervious to "tainting" by popular American cultural

imports (i.e. Hollywood films shown in Canadian cinemas) (338). As Ted Madger's essay on Canada's film and video industry indicates, the 1951 Massey report, which was the first full-scale review of Canada's cultural activities, reflected the threat that the Canadian government felt by the inundation of Hollywood films. For this reason, in its chapter entitled "Films in Canada," the report ominously stated: "Nearly all Canadians go to the movies; and most movies come from Hollywood...Hollywood refashions us in its own image" (qtd. in Madger 145).

Through his work, Dowler claims that federal cultural agencies closely follow the centralized system of government in order to produce works that endorse a common Canadian culture. By extension, Druick, in her essay, rationalizes that the NFB creates documentary film programs (i.e. Multiculturalism Program, the Challenge for Change Program) that reflect government social policies in order to have documentary films manifest this purported commonality among Canadians. According to Druick, films created through such types of documentary programs reflect the diversity of people from under-represented Canadian communities (i.e. non-Caucasian communities, impoverished communities) (127). As a result, these films paradoxically create a centralizing sense that Canadians are united through their cultural differences and dispersed populations.

While Druick's argument that certain NFB film production initiatives mirror government social policies is reasonable, I contend that such strategies do not arise solely from government policy and that they instead emerge from non-governmental and governmental factors. For instance, the Multiculturalism Program did emerge in 1972 to reinforce the Liberal Government's 1971 *Multicultural Policy*. In contrast, Studio D came to exist in 1974 as a response to two non-governmental factors: the feminist movement of

the 1970s and Studio D's founder Kathleen Shannon's vision for a studio devoted to the creation of films by, for, and about women.

The Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives do not convey Dowler's theory of a government-funded centralized cultural program, since these Initiatives do not actually function as a program but as strategies and objectives to be integrated throughout the English Program's documentary film production environment. Nevertheless, these Initiatives do carry, to some extent, decentralized and centralized aspects. The decentralized aspect derives from the fact that a division of power exists among the three documentary film producers Germaine Wong, Karen King, and Selwyn Jacob, who are collectively called the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity and who oversee the Initiatives within Documentary East, Documentary Ontario, and Documentary West respectively. Therefore, each of these Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers employs the Initiatives according to his/her own vision of how the province(s) for which he/she is responsible can benefit from them.

At the same time, these Initiatives possess a centralized feature since all three producers, for the most part, have similar objectives. For example, one collective goal is to enable emerging filmmakers of colour to create a "calling card" film, which these directors could use in their portfolio to find filmmaking work outside the NFB.

2.6. PROBLEMATIZING THE RACIAL LABEL

Associated with the Reel Diversity Competition, which is open only to non-Caucasian and non-Aboriginal filmmakers, are the terms *visible minority filmmaker* and *filmmaker of colour*. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of these two expressions, I ground my

analysis in a number of different theoretical perspectives associated with the subject of racial labeling in the Canadian arts.

Certain authors have demonstrated wariness towards the *visible minority* and *person of colour* terminology. Through their respective essays, Lai Wan (1993), Cheryl L'Hirondelle (1993-1994), and Anthony Synnott and David Howes (1996) posit that one restricting aspect of the *visible minority* expression is its potential for creating a racial polarization that equates the dominant culture with "the norm" and visible minority groups with "deviations from the norm" (Lai Wan 28). Likewise, Himmani Bannerji (in *The Dark Side)* argues that the *woman of colour* expression promulgates a generic or homogenizing term that encompasses all non-Caucasian women and that, as a result, disregards their racial, class, or ethnic differences.

These four pieces are essential for my study on the potentially limiting effects of the *visible minority filmmaker* and *filmmaker of colour* terms' affiliation with the Reel Diversity Competition winners. However, Lai Wan, Hirondelle, and Bannerji, unlike Synnott and Howe, do not mention that such expressions have the potential to produce positive effects. This omission compels me to juxtapose the negative and positive implications of such terminology in my own evaluation of the Competition. For instance, Monika Kin Gagnon's "overt politicization of racial identity" concept, which is present in her essay "How to Search for Signs of (East) Asian Life in the Video World," enables me to illustrate the reinforcing qualities of these two definitions.

As the notion of racial labeling can also refer to the act of defining a person based on his/her identification with a visible minority community, my research explores the relationship between racial identities and essentialism. Jun Xing's study on race-

motivated essentialism informs my work by theorizing that visible minority filmmakers (e.g. Reel Diversity Competition winners) can/cannot, by virtue of their race, present a richer, more accurate depiction of their racial community, and that they are/are not expected to make films that pertain to their ethnic group.

The concept of racial labeling, moreover, can relate to the race-specific status of some of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives since they serve as affirmative action strategies for increasing the presence of documentary filmmakers of colour. Consequently, Kobena Mercer's work, which centers on the burden placed on artists of colour to create art forms reflective of their racial communities, encourages me to reflect on the burden that participants of an affirmative action initiative – like the Reel Diversity Competition – could potentially face.

2.7. FROM ABSTRACT PAROCHIALISM TO CONCRETE SOCIAL CHANGE

Vered Amit-Talai and Caroline Knowles, the Chicago Group of Cultural Studies, Tator et al., and Angharad N. Valdivia are among the cultural activists who share a similar grievance in their various works, which detail the convergence of racism, racial representations, and Western culture. They all lament that many cultural theorists who explore the issue of identity politics, often do not examine the presence or absence of racial diversity among cultural producers within the environment where cultural products are produced. One reason for such a tendency is that numerous scholars find it "safer... to analyze texts [i.e. film content] rather than continue the struggle for political change [i.e. advocating the end to systemic racism in the film industry by, for instance, investigating the racial imbalance within a film production company's workforce]" (Tator, et. al. 25).

Admittedly I have been one of these critics who have, until now, solely analyzed racism before the camera lens rather than behind it. However, I want to illustrate, through this thesis, the concrete efforts that the English Program has undertaken, within its organization and within its policies, to achieve a greater racial balance among its documentary filmmakers. Consequently I focus my study on the documentary film production initiatives responsible for the creation of documentary films and keep film content analyses to a minimum.

3. METHODOLOGY

Tony Bennett notes that cultural critics must prudently employ "interventions." According to Bennett, interventions are styles of critique that aim to challenge the exclusionary effects of a given subject (e.g. styles of critique that comment on a modern art museum's perpetuation of intellectual snobbery) (310). The reason for Bennett's cautionary stance towards interventions is that they can themselves be elitist and therefore exclusionary if critics employ them in a manner that caters to one type of audience but that alienates all others.

In consequence, this thesis employs Bennett's notion of intervention in the construction of a methodological approach. Structured as a multidisciplinary approach, my style of intervention appeals to five potential audiences. They comprise – but are not limited to – Canadian arts and culture policymakers, cultural producers, artists, race activists, and scholars from such academic fields as film/media studies, cultural studies, and ethnic studies.

To appeal to these five envisioned and disparate groups of people, my

multidisciplinary intervention blends practical approaches with theoretical discourses. Practical approaches include a historical analysis in Parts One and Two of Chapter Two, an organizational analysis in Chapter Three, and a case study in Chapter Four. However I ensure that theoretical concepts, which derive from various academic disciplines such as postcolonial studies, communications, anthropology, and cinema studies, are present throughout my entire research. I also include a brief content analysis in Chapter Two.

Building this multidisciplinary analytical approach involved rigorous research into primary sources, most of which are from the NFB. To develop a three-decade long historical analysis, I examined internal and public NFB archival documentation. I limited my focus to material on the Multiculturalism Program, the NIF Program, and the Employment Equity Program. Internal print documents included annual reports, annual action plans, internal staff memos, NFB-commissioned reports (e.g. *Diversity On and Off the Screen* report) and case studies (e.g. Cynthia Reyes's case study of the NIF Program), internal program proposals, press releases, and brochures. I also watched some Studio D documentaries by women of colour. Public material on the NFB included newspaper and magazine articles. For my brief film content analysis, I watched the majority of documentary films created under the auspices of the Multiculturalism Program.[5]

To provide factual data for my organizational analysis of the English Program's implementation of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives and for my case study on the Reel Diversity Competition, I consulted similar types of NFB references, as noted above. In addition, I studied public NFB web press releases, internal (intranet) NFB web documents, general filmmaking guides for NFB filmmakers, public staff emails, Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives program guides, and Reel Diversity Competition

guidelines. Lastly I watched post-1996 documentary films that Reel Diversity and non-Reel Diversity filmmakers directed.

The most conspicuous factor shaping my multi-disciplinary style of critique is its multi-perspective spirit. To demonstrate this aspect, I conducted several in-person interviews and long-distance interviews. From such sessions, I extracted numerous quotes that reinforce, construct, or contrast various points that I make throughout my research.

I have two reasons for making my multidisciplinary approach multi-perspective via the views of the Initiatives' interviewed benefactors or beneficiaries. Firstly, such interest derives from my impression that, in several academic essays on racial equity and Canadian cultural agencies, theorists frequently include the views of artists of colour but neglect the perspectives of the individuals affiliated with the cultural institution under critique. People employed within a cultural industry can explain the financial or bureaucratic challenges that they face in incorporating and managing race-oriented initiatives; therefore, their views, as much as those of artists, ought to be acknowledged.

Secondly, I am, as an outsider to the English Program, restricted in my knowledge of the actual daily operations of its documentary film production branches. In her essay on "standpoint epistemology," Sandra Harding suggests that one's perspective as a feminist is limited if one is not a woman. Following a similar logic, I contend that my assumptions about the challenges, benefits, weaknesses, and strengths of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives are limited since I do not handle such Initiatives on a daily basis and since I have never been a recipient of these strategies.

For both reasons, I interviewed NFB-affiliated individuals who employ the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives within the English Program. My interview with

the Director-General of English Program Barbara Janes, who administered the creation of the first Initiative, the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity, enriched my understanding of how the Team emerged. My separate interviews with producers Germaine Wong, Karen King, and Selwyn Jacob, who comprise the Team and who oversee most of the other Initiatives, also helped me to clarify the purposes and effectiveness of these strategies. My interview with Documentary Ontario's Executive Producer Louise Lore allowed me to view the Initiatives through the perspective of someone who presides over a documentary film production branch. To get a non-film production take on the Initiatives' impact on the English Program, I also spoke with production personnel from the NFB publicity and archival departments.

Furthermore, I interviewed filmmakers who have profited from such strategies. My individual interviews with Reel Diversity Ontario Competition winners Ann Shin, Jennifer Holness, David Sutherland, and Cyrus Singhar Singh enabled me to comprehend the Competition through the eyes of filmmakers who won it.

It is worth considering that my interviews with Barbara Janes, Louise Lore, and Germaine Wong served additional purposes. My discussions with Janes and Lore extended to the topic of the NIF Program, since, for most of the Program's existence, Janes was the Director-General of English Program, and Lore was a member of the NIF Program's Advisory Board.[6] On the other hand, my interview with Germaine Wong included the topic of the Multiculturalism Program since Wong was the Program's coordinator in the mid-1970s. Through all three interviewees, I gained a much clearer understanding about how actual individuals felt about the Multiculturalism Program or the NIF Program. Such personal recollection is valuable since, from an ethnographical

context, it is more effective than print archives in conveying the mood and feeling of the environment in which either Program existed.

Aside from being constructed on primary factual data and from being inspired by diverse first-hand perspectives, this multidisciplinary style of critique is grounded in three assumptions. They are (1) Historically the NFB has suffered from an under-representation of non-White documentary filmmakers within its English Program. (2) Historically the lack of visible minority documentary filmmakers has limited the different, non-mainstream cinematic perspectives that they can bring to a documentary film. This absence has, in turn, prevented the Program from producing and then distributing films that are reflective (behind or before the camera) of Canada's racial diversity. (3) Since 1997, the Program has been implementing the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives in its three documentary branches in order to redress (1) and consequently reverse the outcome of (2).

The last two assumptions exhibit how I sometimes resort to "strategic essentialism" in order to argue that some filmmakers of colour bestow on their films a perspective that is different from that of their Caucasian counterparts. I am motivated to do so since the themes of cultural and racial identity, racism, and "Otherness" are often central to the work of many visible minority filmmakers. However, this is not necessarily the case for all filmmakers of colour. For instance, I do theorize, in my analysis, how non-Caucasian filmmakers who have become assimilated into the dominant culture may identify more with it than with their own ethnic community, and may therefore present a filmic perspective that resembles that of the former group.

To conclude this delineation of my methodology, I want to emphasize that I try, in

all accounts, to frame my multidisciplinary analysis within the spirit of optimism, not cynicism. During the time that I spent perusing academic literature for my literature review, I encountered numerous essays and books that mourn the racist state of cultural institutions. These same works offer theoretical suggestions for creating a utopian cultural institution, without any due regard for an organization's possible fiscal constraints and complex infrastructure.

In order not to succumb to this line of thinking, I position my work as a relatively positive reflection of the concrete measures that the English Program has been undertaking to redress the lack of racial diversity in its documentary production streams. In this way, I am acting as Cornel West's "critical organic catalyst." For West, this is someone who stays open-minded to what a generally mainstream institution [such as the NFB] has to offer but who maintains a firm grounding in affirming and supporting the concerns of non-mainstream groups [such as the communities of under-represented visible minority filmmakers] (216).

While I do ground my thesis in theory, I try to refrain from presenting my study as a purely abstract discourse on what ideologies can solve the racial imbalance within a cultural institution. In short order, I want to adapt a "How is the NFB actually addressing racial inequity?" rather than a "How should the NFB address racial inequity?" tone of voice throughout my thesis.

4. CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

To contextualize historically the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives' current perception of the term *cultural diversity*, I study the English Program's two other race-

oriented yet different interpretations of the term within the last three decades. For this reason, I provide, in Chapter Two, a historical analysis of the Multiculturalism Program's film production initiative, in order to demonstrate how the Program espoused the first interpretation from the early 1970s to the early 1980s. In the same chapter, I also utilize a historical analysis to showcase how the Studio D's NIF Program supported the second interpretation from the early to mid-1990s. Both analyses ultimately enable me to demonstrate how the Initiatives' current usage of the term is, of the three interpretations, the most favourable for documentary filmmakers of colour.

Through an organizational analysis, I examine, in Chapter Three, the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives' influence on the policies and practices of the English Program's documentary filmmaking environment. This type of analysis undertakes three tasks: (1) it delves into the origins of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives; (2) it examines six such Initiatives; and (3) it uncovers the purpose of the race-specific status of three Initiatives.

In Chapter Four, I construct a case study of the Reel Diversity Competition since it is the most well known of all the Initiatives. Apart from outlining the Competition's brief history, the case study addresses the following five issues: (1) the Competition winners' mixed reactions towards the term *visible minority filmmaker* or *filmmaker of colour*; (2) the reasons why a submitted film proposal focusing on race-related issues in Canada may/may not merit more consideration from the Competition jury committee; (3) the Competition winners' viewpoints on the strengths, weaknesses, and progressive aspects of the Competition; (4) the improvements or challenges that the Competition organizers have faced/may face/will continue to face; and (5) the overall effectiveness of

the Competition as a template for promoting racial diversity.

In my concluding chapter I reflect on the preceding chapters to gauge how the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives have fared over the last four years. I also illustrate ways in which the English Program assesses the success of such Initiatives. Lastly I briefly explain what lies ahead for the future of such strategies and objectives.

ENDNOTES CHAPTER ONE

[1] The original source of this mandate is the 1939 National Film Act which NFB founder John Grierson enacted in 1939. Quoted in Evans 16.

[2] The NFB's French Program in 1997 also developed its own version of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives that is called *le programme Diversité Culturelle.* Since the French Program functions as a separate entity within the NFB's organizational structure, I reserve the scope of my thesis to the English Program.

Although these Initiatives are supposed to effect change throughout all areas of the English Program, I wish to study specifically the Initiatives' influence in addressing the under-representation of filmmakers of colour within the English Program's three documentary film production units: Documentary East, Documentary Ontario, and Documentary West.

[3] In their separate essays, Turner (1994) and McLaren (1994) refer to symbolic multiculturalism as liberal multiculturalism, while The Chicago Cultural Studies Group (1994) refers to it as corporate multiculturalism. In contrast, Shohat and Stam, in their book *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and Media* (1994), equate symbolic multiculturalism with liberal-pluralist multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism with polycentric multiculturalism.

[4] Throughout this chapter *and* all successive chapters, I employ the term *dominant culture* or *mainstream culture* to refer broadly to Caucasian Canadians; in these same chapters, I also utilize the qualifiers *mainstream* and *non-mainstream* to mean *Caucasian* and *non-Caucasian* respectively.

[5] From the archival documentation that I consulted, it is not clear how many films were made under the Multiculturalism Program rubric. Nevertheless, at least 10 of this Program's documentary films exist within the English Program; these were the ones that I watched.

[6] Barbara Janes became Director-General of English Program in September 1992, a year after the NIF Program was officially launched.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PATH FROM ONSCREEN DIVERSITY TO OFFSCREEN RACIAL DIVERSITY

1. MULTICULTURALISM PROGRAM (1972-@1980)

We recommend that the National Film Board continue and develop the production of films that inform Canadians about one another including films about the problems and contributions of both individuals and groups of ethnic origins other than English and French, and that the National Film Board receive the financial support it requires in order to produce such films.

Recommendation 13

1.1. ORIGINS OF THE MULTICULTURALISM PROGRAM

My historical analysis of the English Program's interpretation of the term *cultural diversity* begins in the late 1960s since Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government, during this period, began to endorse a "multicultural Canada in a multinational world" (Marchessault 13). What rendered this endorsement significant was that, for the first time in history, the federal government wanted to make the Canadian public consciously view Canada as a "cultural mosaic." To show how the NFB became involved with this federal campaign, I must specifically commence my study in the year 1969.

In that year, the Royal Commission of Biculturalism and Bilingualism published a report entitled *Book IV: The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, which contained two recommendations – 12 and 13 – directed at the NFB, one of which is printed above. These two recommendations prompted the Department of the Secretary of the State to invite the NFB to participate in the national effort to reflect Canada's "cultural pluralism."[1] In 1972, a year after Prime Minister Trudeau officially inaugurated the *Multiculturalism Policy* in the House of Commons, the NFB manifested its acceptance of the Department's offer through the creation of the Multiculturalism

Program. This particular instance illustrated Druick's argument that the NFB can be "a project of a governmentalized knowledge-production about the everyday life of a culturally and geographically diverse population" (128).

Over the course of its next (approximately) eight years of existence, the Multiculturalism Program conveyed its commitment to the promotion of multiculturalism through its reinterpretation of the NFB mandate. This rephrasing, which would find its way into this Program's various internal documents, made the "Canada" in the "interpret Canada to Canadians" phrase signify "multi-ethnicity." For instance, the preface in a 1975 document reads:

> Through the National Film Board's Multiculturalism Program it would be possible to interpret Canada to Canadians of ethnic origins other than English and French and also to produce new films which would heighten awareness of the many different cultures present and the variety of heritages which would comprise and maintain our rich ethnic mosaic (Wong and Kent Preface).

This reinterpretation demonstrates that for the Multiculturalism Program the term *cultural diversity*, which was embodied in the term *multiculturalism*, was defined as Canada's diversity of ethnically Caucasian and non-Caucasian communities.

1.2. THE MULTICULTURALISM PROGRAM'S FILM PRODUCTION INITIATIVE

A historical analysis on how the Multiculturalism Program actualizes a multiculturalism-oriented interpretation of the NFB's mandate necessitates a critique of one of the Program's two major initiatives, the production of films related to multiculturalism.[2] This critique is divided into four parts. The first is a textual analysis of the films made under the Program. The second focuses on the Program's role as an innovative response to combat discursive racism. The third centers on the lack of racial diversity amongst films produced under the Program. The last part deals with how the Program's conceptual

grounding in symbolic multiculturalism rendered it unable to challenge systemic racism.

1.2.1. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM'S "MULTICULTURAL" FILMS

In response to Recommendation 13, the NFB's English and French Program Branches each developed a film production initiative for the creation of films that would portray Canada's various ethnically Caucasian and non-Caucasian cultures. This strategy's objective was to enable Canadians, who would be these films' broad target audience, gain a better understanding of one another (Wong and Kent 4). Under the supervision of Studio B's Executive Producer David Bairstow, the English Program's Multiculturalism Program through the initiative created, from 1972 to 1977, at least 10 documentary films: *Gurdeep Singh Bains* (1977), *Kevin Alec* (1977), *Veronica* (1977), *Kaszuby* (1975), *I've Never Walked the Steppes* (1975), *Seven Shades of Pale* (1975), *Bekevar Jubilee* (1977), *Our Street Was Paved with Gold* (1977), *People of the Book* (1973), and *Hold the Ketchup* (1977).[3]

Before I proceed with a textual analysis of such films, I should clarify my intention for employing this type of study solely for films produced under the Multiculturalism Program, but not for films created in Studio D after the late 1980s or made through the Reel Diversity Ontario Competition after 1997. The reason is that the Program's initiative focused on promoting multiculturalism through film content, and not through ensuring racial diversity amongst filmmakers. In contrast, Studio D, its NIF Program, or the current Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives emphasized/emphasize the need to increase racial plurality amongst filmmakers and championed/champion the notion that such an increase could engender non-mainstream cinematic perspectives.

I should also elucidate the approach employed in the textual analysis. This style of

critique combines the notion of cultural hegemony with Li's theory on the 1971 *Multiculturalism Policy*'s narrow definition of minority artwork. According to Li (1994), Shohat and Stam (1994), and Zuleman (1992), the concept of cultural hegemony, within the context of artistic production, suggests that a racial hierarchy exists in the Western world (i.e. Canada) privileging Western (i.e. White) over non-Western (i.e. non-White) cultural forms, motifs, and themes.

Furthermore, Li posits that what rendered the 1971 *Multiculturalism Policy*'s support of minority arts (e.g. paintings, plays, dances, etc.), under the "Performing and Visual Arts Program" of the Multiculturalism Directorate, limiting was its endorsement of artwork that mainly sensationalized the "foreignness" of the minority artist (who could be a non-Caucasian or a Caucasian of non-English-speaking ancestry) (381). The "exoticization" derived from the artwork's depiction of folkloric or exotic customs and traditions from the artist's ancestral country or country of origin. For the most part, the *Policy* usually excluded from its interpretation of minority art, works of art that reflected aspects of the minority artist's modern life in Canada.

Grounding my textual analysis in these two arguments enables me to ascertain whether or not the Multiculturalism Program's 10 films abide by the *Policy*'s view of minority artwork. More specifically, this approach helps me to determine whether or not such films portray ethnically non-Anglo Caucasian or non-Caucasian communities as exotic, folkloric people who seem extremely different from the dominant culture of Anglo descent.[4] Since such difference would create the false notion that "normal" and "true" Canadians are Anglo-Canadians (rather than people of various ethnicities), the false notion, as a result, would perpetuate a cultural hegemony privileging Canadians of Anglo descent over all other Canadians.

Nine of the 10 films refrain from defining ethnically non-Anglo Caucasian or non-Caucasian subjects or communities based on traditional customs and folkloric stereotypes. They fall under four multiculturalism-related themes. As part of the *Children in Canada* series, three short films center thematically on the daily life of a Canadian child and are told from his/her viewpoint.[5] *Gurdeep Singh Bains* (1977) focuses on a 13 year old Sikh Canadian boy from Chilliwack, B.C.; *Kevin Alec* (1977) on an 11 year old Aboriginal boy from the Fountain Reserve in Lilloet, B.C.; and *Veronica* (1977) on a 9 year old Polish Canadian from Toronto. Although all three films illustrate how the child retains certain traditional customs of his or her ethnic community, each documentary nonetheless also shows the child interacting with people external to his/her ethnic group.

Andre Herman's *Kaszuby* (1975), Jerry Krepakevich's *I've Never Walked the Steppes* (1975), and Albert Kish's *Bekevar Jubilee* (1977) explore the theme of an ethnic community caught in a cultural "tug-of-war." While some of the community's members want to retain customs of the "old country," others desire to assimilate into the mainstream culture of Anglo descent. While *Kaszuby* profiles the agrarian inhabitants of a Polish Canadian community in Barry's Bay, Ontario, *Bekevar Jubilee* focuses on a small Hungarian community in Kipling, Saskatchewan. Rather than focus on a large group of people, *I've Never Walked the Steppes* concentrates on the Kerecevich family whose different members offer varying opinions on what their Ukrainian Canadian identity means to them.

Two films concentrate on the search for unity amongst people of small ethnic communities that are separated geographically. Felix Lazarus's *People of the Book* (1973) examines small Jewish communities in northern Ontario towns; although physically far apart, they forge symbolical ties to one another through their religion. On the other hand,

Les Rose's *Seven Shades of Pale* (1975) focuses on the efforts of Art Criss, a Black United Front leader, to unite pockets of impoverished Black communities in various small Nova Scotian towns.

Dealing with the theme of Canada as a multicultural milieu, Albert Kish's *Our Street Was Paved with Gold* (1977) recounts the filmmaker's own experience of living on Montreal's St. Laurent Boulevard, which is home to people of diverse cultures.

Although they provide an informative account of how different ethnically non-Anglo Caucasian or non-Caucasian communities distinguish themselves from the dominant culture of Anglo descent, the aforementioned films are nonetheless limited. As creations of the Multiculturalism Program, which is founded on the conceptual framework of symbolic multiculturalism, these documentaries do not offer any serious critique to the privilege of Anglo-Canadians. In these ways, these films indirectly sustain the hegemonic control of this majority.

For example, *Gurdeep Singh Bains* and *Seven Shades of Pale* neither question why racism is a normal part of daily life for the person or community under observation, nor demonstrate how racial discrimination is, in fact, wrong. In *Gurdeep Singh Bains*, Gurdeep explains that, although a few kids mock him for wearing a turban, he is not ashamed for doing so and sees himself as their equal. Applauding Gurdeep's courage in tolerating the insults, the film does not focus on how such taunting is hurtful. It also does not examine if such mockery is linked to possibly latent discrimination against Sikh Canadians in Gurdeep's predominantly Caucasian town.

Although it illustrates a few Black Nova Scotians' experience with racism, *Seven Shades of Pale* does not offer any solutions as to how to redress past racial injustices and prevent future ones. The superficiality of symbolic multiculturalism rests on its

endorsement of racial tolerance without the core of the dominant culture of Anglo descent being altered or the rights of people of colour being ensured. Conceived in the spirit of symbolic multiculturalism, the two films may celebrate racial diversity or racial pride but ultimately lack any insight on how to combat racial intolerance or to hold perpetrators of racism responsible for their actions.

Of the ten films, the one that is most problematic is Albert Kish's *Hold the* Ketchup (1977). Dealing with the traditional cuisines of ethnically non-Anglo Caucasian or non-Caucasian communities in Canada, the film represents the very type of minority art that exaggerates a minority culture's "Otherness" and that, by doing so, perpetuates a cultural hegemony.

Throughout the film, Kish intercuts scenes of different ethnically non-Anglo Caucasian or non-Caucasian families making traditional dishes, with a scene wherein the camera focuses on a pair of hands – which spectators come to view as belonging to a non-Anglo Canadian – trying to prepare a "Canadian" dish and invariably botching the effort. For instance, in one "ethnic hands" scene, the hands are incapable of buttering bread; in another, they are messily squirting ketchup on bread. Layered over these scenes is a voiceover narration which continually alludes to an on-camera statement made by a Portugese Canadian woman earlier in the film: "We can dress like a Canadian, sleep like a Canadian, but we can never eat like a Canadian." Presumably intended to be tongue-in-cheek, these scenes and voiceover narration instead create, through the context of food, a "culinary cultural hegemony" within the narrative.

Unlike the traditional notion of cultural hegemony, this culinary cultural hegemony includes Caucasians from non-Anglo ethnic communities as much as non-Caucasians in a position of marginality. This prevalent narrative notion ignores the fact

that "Canadian" cuisine constitutes the food of all Canadian citizens. It instead advocates that "Canadians" refer to Caucasian Canadians of Anglo descent – who seem incapable of eating anything more exotic than buttered bread or recognizing any condiment other than ketchup. By insinuating that non-Anglo Canadians are "unable to eat like a Canadian," the motif makes these individuals seem like "lesser Canadians" who are inferior to bread-, butter-, and ketchup-consuming "legitimate" Anglo-Canadians.

1.2.2. AN INNOVATIVE RESPONSE TO COMBATTING DISCURSIVE RACISM

Racist discourse refers to the deliberate omission of the viewpoints of visible minority groups in the cultural production of a Canadian identity (e.g. Canadian film production) by a cultural production organization (e.g. film production company) (Tator, et.al. 255). What therefore makes the Multiculturalism Program's film production initiative a pioneering endeavor is that it was the NFB's first strategy to focus wholly on the production of films about non-Anglo Canadian ethnic groups. Through the strategy, the Program gave voice to these communities by making them the subject of documentary films. By doing so, the Program challenged such racially discursive views as (1) only Canadians worthy of attention derive from the dominant culture of Anglo descent and (2) only Anglo-Canadians can define a Canadian identity.

Prior to the inauguration of the *Multiculturalism Policy* in 1971 or to the Multiculturalism Program's establishment in 1972, the NFB had already been producing and distributing films about non-Anglo Canadian cultures.[6] However, the problem with the creation of such films was inconsistency. They were not done on a regular basis since no specific program clearly designated for them existed. As an on-going initiative, the Multiculturalism Program, as a result, ensured some regularity. When the Program faced

the lack of government funding by the late 1970s, what therefore concerned Germaine Wong, who was the Program's coordinator from the mid to late 1970s, was that, if the Program ceased to exist, the regular production of multi-ethnic films would be uncertain (Wong *The Multiculturalism Programme* 1).

1.2.3. LACK OF RACIAL DIVERSITY BEHIND THE CAMERA

The impetus for numerous Canadian visible minority artists to have greater control over the making of their images in art stems, to a certain degree, from a distrust in Caucasian Canadian artists' artistic depiction of people of colour (Philip "Gut Issues" 21; Allen 48; Li 369). Artists of colour fear that Caucasian Canadian artists, of any ethnic background, may possess a Eurocentric bias. Were it to lend itself to artwork that portrays non-Caucasians as odd, primitive, and inferior beings, in relation to their sophisticated, sane, familiar, and superior Caucasian counterparts, such a bias would be akin to a racist discourse (Tator, et. al. 29).

Throughout its existence, the Multiculturalism Program, in certain cases, employed professional filmmakers who shared the same ethnically non-Anglo Caucasian heritage as the person or community profiled in their documentary films.[7] However, it is worth considering that none of the 10 films created through the Program was directed by a filmmaker of colour.

Two explanations account for the under-representation of visible minority filmmakers at the NFB in the 1970s. The first points to the actual shortage of filmmakers of colour in the Canadian film and television industry at that time. Reflecting on that period in history, Wong says: "There were so few [filmmakers of colour]...At that stage, even if the will to hire a filmmaker of a different cultural community [existed], the reality

was that there weren't any. In some cultures there were a little more possibilities than in others" (In Person Interview 2001).[8]

The second explanation stems from the Multiculturalism Program's connections to symbolic multiculturalism. Built on this conceptual framework, the Multiculturalism Program, as a result, believed that it could endorse racial harmony by way of film content; however, it did not question the absence of "a racial mosaic" amongst its filmmakers or producers who were with one exception all Caucasian.[9] For the Program, racial diversity therefore referred to cinematic depictions of multiculturalism rather than to the different perspectives that specifically filmmakers of colour could provide to challenge the potentially Eurocentric views of their Caucasian counterparts.

While it is useful to be on the lookout for a potentially Eurocentric bias in Caucasian filmmakers' films on visible minority groups, I however do not object to mainstream directors making films about non-mainstream subjects. The need for visible minorities to gain control and ownership of media production about themselves does not imply a rejection of Caucasian filmmakers' work on people of colour. The need, instead, centers on "opening a space for other interventions" or an "expansion of themes, voices, and perspectives" rather than a refusal of voices from the mainstream (Valdivia 22).

As a result, one unfortunate outcome of the absence of visible minority filmmakers within the Multiculturalism Program was the consequential absence of non-Caucasian directorial perspectives to counterbalance Caucasian perspectives on any given subject.[10] For instance, the lack of racial diversity amongst the English Program's filmmakers deprived the Multiculturalism Program from the ability to offer non-Caucasian perspectives on what it means to be Canadian in a multicultural milieu.

1.2.4. THE LACK OF CHALLENGE TO SYSTEMIC RACISM

Existing NFB archival documentation does not clearly indicate when or why the Secretary of the State stopped funding the English Program's Multiculturalism Program. Although it was never officially terminated, the film production initiative may have faded to obscurity by the early 1980s due to one plausible factor: the lack of institutionalization. While all individuals have agency at any given time, they must still operate within ideological formations and organizations with long histories and traditions of systemic racial imbalance (Valdivia 12). Therefore, a few individuals' efforts to challenge latent systemic racism throughout an organization may be in vain if the rest of the organization does not participate in the struggle for change.

The English Program's lack of initiative to render the creation of multicultural documentary films the objective of all of its documentary filmmaking studios, rather than solely the objective of the Multiculturalism Program in the 1970s, may have contributed to the overall disinterest by non-Multiculturalism Program NFB staff to concern itself with producing films illustrative of the Canadian mosaic. Wong, who was an active proponent of multiculturalism in that period, recalls:

> Certainly...there were individuals within the institution who were committed to the objective [of multiculturalism]. But for the institution, as a whole, it was not part of its strategic plan...It was like everybody agreed with the objectives and principles but nobody actually mandated by the institution sat down and said, "Okay this is how we're going to achieve these objectives with regards to multiculturalism" (In Person Interview 2001).

By limiting multiculturalism objectives to the Multiculturalism Program, the English Program may have led other departments to assume that multiculturalism was already being sufficiently addressed through the former and did not require their input.

Symbolic multiculturalism's influence over the NFB, during this historical period,

is one plausible reason for the English Program's disinterest in institutionalizing the concept of multiculturalism throughout all of its documentary studios. The major problem with symbolic multiculturalism is its promotion of a politics of diversity that preaches racial harmony but that ignores how undermining racial inequality requires dismantling the hegemonic control of White power and privilege in systems of cultural production (Tator, et. al. 260-1).

By adherence to this type of multiculturalism, the NFB, as a whole, would not have felt impelled to disrupt this hegemony through greater employment of filmmakers or producers of colour, at the film production level. Had critical multiculturalism – which endorses the empowerment of qualified visible minorities through their acquisition of representational power – been the "structure of feeling" of the 1970s, more concrete measures to integrate racial diversity throughout the English Program's documentary filmmaking environment may have emerged.

Any overt challenge to systemic racism throughout the English Program's documentary film production domain occurs only after the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives's emergence in 1997. For now, I turn my attention to the first formal response to promoting racial diversity through the empowerment of non-Caucasian filmmakers.

2. NEW INITIATIVES IN FILM (NIF) PROGRAM (1991-1996)

...more and more there is a need to make films politically as differentiated from making political films.

Trinh T. Minh-ha in *When the Moon Waxes Red*

2.1. RATIONALE FOR A STUDY ON THE NIF PROGRAM

In their separate studies on Studio D, the women's filmmaking studio, Anita Taylor

(1988), Chris Scherbarth (1986), and Aiko Ryohashi (1995) include an analysis of its inception in 1974. In contrast, I limit my scope to Studio D's activities from the late 1980s to the early to mid-1990s. Although I will focus on Studio D's other efforts to increase its representation of women filmmakers of colour in Chapter Three, I now want to analyze solely the New Initiatives in Film (NIF) Program. Studio D developed this five-year program to combat the under-representation of visible minority and Aboriginal women filmmakers in the Canadian film and television industry. I isolate the NIF Program from Studio D's other pro-racial diversity strategies since it functioned according to Black Nova Scotian filmmaker Sylvia Hamilton and Studio D's Executive Producer Rina Fraticelli – who both drafted, in 1990, the proposal for its establishment – as "the beginning of Studio D's formal response to issues of equity, and to race and representation" (Reyes 9).

Despite acknowledging the importance of the interrelations of race, ethnicity, and sex, North American feminist studies often focus on gender inequity that White, middle class, and educated women experience. Such works, as a result, end up fitting gender issues into preexisting analytical frameworks that are governed by the binary opposition of masculine versus feminine, and that therefore exclude the issue of race (Valdivia 9; Lee & Cardinal 217).

For this reason, I rely on the conceptual model of feminist multiculturalism to formulate my historical analysis of the NIF Program. This theoretical framework structures any study on women's equity within a broad spectrum of racial identities, rather than within a rigid binary "White male versus White female" framework. My research illustrates that the NIF Program was itself guided by a feminist multicultural approach since the Program upheld three of the paradigm's principles.

Understanding that feminism encompasses a racially diverse spectrum of female identities, the first principle shows how the creation of the NIF Program arose from Studio D's desire to end discursive racism, which had been previously caused by the absence of non-White female filmmakers and their perspectives in Studio D.

Recognizing the importance of linking diverse female identities to power, the second principle relates to the way the NIF Program empowered non-Caucasian women through an external Advisory Board, and through the initiatives that the Program implemented to combat discursive racism. Through this principle, I demonstrate how the Program was successful and unsuccessful in empowering non-Caucasian filmmakers. This critique draws extensively on Cynthia Reyes's case study since the work provides, to date, the most detailed account of the Program's various strategies.

Acknowledging the fluidity of one's identity in relation to power and to a plurality of identities, the last principle focuses on the way that the NIF Program, in its second to final year of existence, proposed to empower non-Caucasian male filmmakers. In this way, the Program exhibited its attempt to move from a feminist multicultural approach towards racial diversity to a critical multicultural one.

2.2. THE SPECTRUM OF FEMALE IDENTITIES AND NIF'S ORIGINS

Feminist strategies can sustain a racial hegemony if they are not conceptualized within a framework of spectrums. For instance, *some* women are more likely than other women to benefit from feminist initiatives designed to bring them closer to avenues of power, despite the assumption that, in a patriarchal system, all women are theoretically oppressed (Valdivia 16).

Recognizing that these *some* women referred to Studio D's Caucasian filmmakers

and that *other* women represented their non-Caucasian counterparts absent from the studio, and from the Canadian film and television industry at large, Hamilton and Fraticelli envisioned that the creation of the NIF Program would help to redress this racial imbalance. For them, the NIF Program would enable the artistic, technical, financial, and promotional empowerment of visible minority and Aboriginal women to flourish and, in this way, to serve as a formal answer to the *double discrimination* that they felt. Being female in a male-dominated profession was the form of discrimination that these non-Caucasian women shared with their White peers in Studio D. Caused from being non-Caucasian, the other discrimination was one that they however experienced through their exclusion from Studio D, which, before the late 1980s, comprised mainly White documentary filmmakers.

In fact, Hamilton and Fraticelli, in their proposal for the Program's creation, noted that the NFB had failed to live up to its mandate of "interpreting Canada to Canadians and to other nations." It had done so by ignoring and therefore undervaluing the importance of producing films by non-Caucasian women filmmakers:

> In its ongoing responsibility to reflect Canada ever more accurately to all Canadians and to people throughout the world, the NFB's programme must be designed and directed by a truly representative mosaic mix of our society...Native Women and Women of Colour have strongly identified with the growing critique of the media as impoverished, unbalanced, and exclusive...To effect change, Women of Colour and Native Women clearly recognize that they must gain control through their own empowerment; they must gain professional access, skills, and knowledge to produce cinematic work which articulates their history, experience, and perspectives, and which challenges contemporary stereotypes and attitudes...it is Canadian culture generally, and institutions like the NFB in particular, which have been disadvantaged and impoverished by the exclusion of Canadian Women of Colour and Native Women (qtd. in Reyes 8).

The passage illustrates how the NIF Program's definition of the term *cultural diversity* espoused the diversity of voices of women filmmakers from various racial backgrounds.

This contrasted with Studio D's view of cultural diversity that prior to the late 1980s overlooked the issue of race and only linked cultural diversity to the plurality of voices of different women filmmakers from diverse walks of life.

Before the late 1980s, Studio D had never rejected the creation of films by visible minority and First Nations women. Nevertheless, Black filmmaker Claire Prieto, who served as the NIF Program Producer from 1993 to 1996, in a 1995 interview with *Take One* magazine, implied that Studio D's previously Eurocentric environment had been caused by the studio's colour imbalance: "Studio D had been successful in its original mandate [of giving voices to female filmmakers but] there was a need [within the NFB] to respond and address issues of equity around race and representation (Perdue 49). Through Prieto's remark we see how Studio D eventually realized, unlike the Multiculturalism Program, that offscreen racial diversity amongst filmmakers is as important an issue to consider as onscreen racial plurality. As racist discourses can arise from cultural producers' refusal to acknowledge the voice of the "Other," the NIF Program emerged as one way to give credence to visible minority and First Nations women filmmakers and, in this way, challenge discursive racism.

2.3. IDENTITY AND POWER: ADVISORY BOARD AND PROGRAM INITIATIVES

The struggle for power can be seen through the empowerment of individuals and communities rather than through one group's "power over" any other group (Tator, et. al. 33). Through the NIF Program, Studio D wanted to empower Aboriginal and visible minority women in two ways. The first way was to create an Advisory Board to serve as an intermediary between the NIF Program organizers and these women's various communities.

Consisting of a maximum of ten non-NFB visible minority and Aboriginal women from diverse professional backgrounds, the Advisory Board was responsible for ensuring that the Program would meet the needs of aspiring non-Caucasian female filmmakers. In the absence of a Program Producer during the Program's first two years of operation, Ginny Stikeman, who replaced Fraticelli as Studio D's Executive Producer in 1991, worked closely with the Board to develop policies and program objectives.[11] Upon being appointed as Program Producer in November 1993, Claire Prieto took over the responsibility of working with the Advisory Board to meet the same ends. By employing the Board to consult with non-Caucasian communities to understand what their respective filmmakers wanted, Stikeman and Prieto acknowledged that honouring these communities' diverse voices required their participation, via the Board, in the decision-making process of the Program's vision.

The second way the NIF Program attempted to empower visible minority and Aboriginal women was to develop their filmmaking careers. For instance, to provide financial empowerment, the Program funded various stages of film projects through the Internship and Scholarship Programs, both designed for advanced filmmakers. One notable graduate of both programs is Mina Shum, who received NIF funding to post-produce her documentary *Me, Mom, and Mona* (1993). To offer technical and artistic empowerment to beginner filmmakers, the Program also gave basic filmmaking workshops called the Film Institute, and apprenticeships through its Apprenticeship Program. As well, it lent out video cameras through its Video Loan Program.

With regards to promotional empowerment, the Program co-sponsored networking events (e.g. International Women's Day community-sponsored activities) and published a quarterly newsletter that was distributed to other NFB departments,

community organizations, and government agencies. At the same time, it publicized and distributed the Resource Bank, a directory listing the names and resumes of film and videomakers. It also embarked on the Research Project, a research survey on the number of non-Caucasian men and women working as filmmakers/videomakers in Canada.

These various financial, technical, artistic, and promotional strategies and the Advisory Board collectively point to the Program's desire to empower non-Caucasian women filmmakers with the means to express their individual identities, via filmmaking. By advocating a racial plurality of women's identities behind the camera, the Program's feminist multicultural strategy, to a certain extent, shares one major critical multicultural objective of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives: to render racial diversity amongst a group of filmmakers a constant part of any filmmaking establishment.

2.4. THE HITS & MISSES OF THE PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Of the many financial, technical, and promotional initiatives that the NIF Program implemented, those that I suggest were effective stayed closer in objective to the Program's proposal's overall mandate to enable non-Caucasian women filmmakers to gain employment or to create their own films. To demonstrate my assertion, I must briefly undertake: (1) a comparison of the Film Institute, Apprenticeship Program, and Scholarship and Internship Programs; (2) an analysis of the Resource Bank's actual effectiveness; and (3) a study on the findings of the Research Project.

2.4.1. THE FOUR PROGRAMS

The Film Institute consisted of an intensive 14-day film training summer program in which non-Caucasian women filmmakers, depending on their filmmaking background,

were placed into advanced, intermediate, or junior filmmaking workshops.[12] The aim was to inspire and enable them to pursue their filmmaking objectives by providing them with the technical skills to do so.

Although the Film Institute was held over three consecutive summers (from 1991 to 1993), Prieto canceled the workshop in October 1993. Despite the large sums of money spent on each Institute (about $50,000 excluding the NFB staff's salary), few Film Institute participants were actually employed in the Canadian film and television industry; many had in fact returned to their communities without pursuing their filmmaking careers any further. This phenomenon illustrates how the Institute's cancellation resulted from its inability to help participants find actual work in their field. As Prieto notes: "You can't keep training people without giving them an opportunity to apply what they've learned" (qtd. in Reyes 16).

Unlike the Film Institute, the Apprenticeship Program, which ran from 1994 to 1996, allowed many of its 22 participants to develop actual work experience and to network with contacts who could provide them with permanent or contractual employment. Receiving a salary of $2000 a month, each woman selected her own apprenticeship and was teamed up with a mentor for a five-month period. Most apprenticeships, which ranged from research assistant to assistant cameraperson position, were available at the NFB's studios, and in such television broadcasting centers as the Women's Television Network in Winnipeg, and the CBC in Toronto.

Whereas the Apprenticeship Program actualized the NIF Program's mandate by helping women find film-related work, the Scholarship and Internship Programs upheld the mandate by capacitating women to develop their films/film scripts. Between 1993 and 1995, the Scholarship Program offered 75 scholarships at a total cost of $381,500. Aside

from receiving these funds for any stage of her film project, each scholarship recipient also acquired professional guidance and resources from the NFB.[13] Between 1994 and 1996, the Internship Program offered three internships, which varied from $25,000 to $70,000, to allow advanced level interns to develop a first draft of a film script, also with available NFB guidance and resources.[14]

By allowing her a high degree of creative ownership and by permitting her to work at a skill level appropriate to her development needs, these two initiatives helped each participant in some – but not all – stages of film production. Whereas the NIF Program could gauge the success of the Apprenticeship Program through former apprentices' employment as filmmakers and film craftspeople, the Scholarship and Internship Programs' impact on the participants' conditioning as filmmakers was harder to evaluate. Since these two latter Programs' participants were allowed to develop their film scripts/films in their own communities, and not necessarily in any NFB studio, it was harder for the NIF Program to monitor and measure their development process.

Through their cancellation, success, or indeterminate rate of success or failure, these three initiatives as a whole illustrate that the NIF Program's mandate supported a feminist multicultural strategy that links, within the filmmaking realm, multiracial female identities to a career- or production-oriented form of empowerment.

2.4.2. THE RESOURCE BANK

In 1988, Studio D hired a researcher to seek out the resumes of Aboriginal and visible minority women filmmakers. By 1993, all of such information was compiled into the NIF Program's Resource Bank. A precursor to the current Cultural Diversity Database, the Resource Bank was a computerized talent directory that contained the resumes of these

non-Caucasian women. Printed and circulated to NFB staff, non-NFB film and video organizations, government funding agencies, and community groups, the Bank functioned as a networking tool to enable non-Caucasian women to find employment in the Canadian film and television industry.

What rendered the Resource Bank ineffective is that it could not guarantee that anyone within the NFB or outside of the organization would hire these women. I suggest that its ineffectiveness stems from the "word-of-mouth" or "who-you-know" nature of hiring film crews in the Canadian film and television industry. According to Fung, in the domain of Canadian video art, little multiracial representation is present among video production crews since video artists tend to rely on one another as personnel (47). Since Canadian video artists are predominantly Caucasian, their crew members consequently end up being Caucasian. Fung's point is not limited to the video art milieu but to all of the Canadian film and television industry, wherein the general tendency among producers is to crew film productions with people – who generally are male and White – with whom they or their peers have already worked. Regardless of whether they are sympathetic to racial and gender equity, these NFB or non-NFB individuals consequently may not bother perusing an employment directory, like the Bank.

Although the Resource Bank served as a career-oriented feminist multicultural strategy, its ineffectiveness derived from its passive stance towards racially diverse female empowerment. Whereas the Bank waits for production teams to employ or contact non-Caucasian female filmmakers/film craftspeople, the Apprenticeship Program, for instance, more directly enables these women to develop their filmmaking skills and employment contacts on the job.

2.4.3. THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Beginning in March 1995 and costing over $40,000, the Research Project set out to acquire statistics of the total number of trained and/or employed Aboriginal and visible minority men and women filmmakers/videomakers in Canada. Questionnaires were sent to 700 individuals in every province of the country and, by March 1996, 495 individuals had participated in the survey. The Project pointed to the following facts:

> (1) Finding work opportunities posed the biggest problem for native people and people of colour, even for those who had high levels of training.
> (2) Some respondents who called themselves "directors," "writers," or "producers," may have had the technical training but had never found work or received credits in these roles.
> (3) The biggest group of respondents was operating at the intermediate level of filmmaking.
> (4) Virtually all native people and people of colour had failed to break through the glass ceiling of documentary-making into the advanced level. Their resumes showed that it was difficult to find work – the very work experience and credits which would help them to be accepted for top-level documentaries on television series (Reyes 30).

Albeit disheartening, these results were not surprising for Prieto and Stikeman. They knew that, despite the existence of the NIF Program or Studio D, numerous visible minority and First Nations female filmmakers still faced problems finding employment. If anything, the Project confirmed their assumption of two other equally significant problems. First, it was not just non-Caucasian women having difficulty finding filmmaking work but also visible minority men. Second, these male filmmakers of colour, unlike their female counterparts or even their Aboriginal male peers, lacked an equivalent to the NIF Program to address their under-representation within the English Program. [15]

The fact that these findings reinforced Prieto and the Advisory Board's interest in 1995 to address the English Program's lack of male filmmakers of colour shows that gender-specificity was one major limitation of the NIF Program's (or Studio D's) feminist

multicultural conceptual model. Since all of the NIF Program's pro-racial diversity initiatives were limited to women, Prieto and Advisory Board realized that they needed strategies benefiting both female and male visible minority filmmakers. By expanding their previously exclusionary vision to include men, Prieto and the Advisory Board demonstrated that they were trying to progress from a gender-specific feminist multicultural to a gender-neutral critical multicultural approach to racial diversity.

2.5. THE ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP A CRITICAL MULTICULTURAL STRATEGY

Until this point, my analysis has showcased the first two principles of a feminist multicultural strategy. I now want to demonstrate how the NIF Program attempts to expand on the strategy's third principle – the recognition of female identities' fluidity in relation to power. Specifically I will show how the NIF Program tried to progress from a feminist multicultural to a critical multicultural strategy by recognizing the fluidity of one's female *or* male identity in relation to power and a spectrum of diverse identities.

In a feminist multicultural strategy, a media producer plays an important role in ending racial oppression towards non-Caucasian women and in recognizing the diversified racial identities of female artists (Valdivia 16). Within the NIF Program, this media producer consisted of Prieto and the 1995 Advisory Board.[16] Knowing that the NIF Program would programmatically end on March 31, 1996, and that NFB would by 1996 be experiencing major budget cuts, Prieto and the Board put forth a proposal entitled *The Way Forward* to ensure that female and male filmmakers of colour would not be left out of the restructured NFB.

Presented to NFB Film Commissioner Sandra MacDonald, Director-General of English Program Barbara Janes, and Employment Equity coordinator Jean-Claude Mahé

on November 1, 1995, *The Way Forward* proposal requested that the NFB support non-Caucasian filmmakers once the NIF Program disbanded in 1996. Of the proposal's several recommendations, two pertained to film production in the English Program. The first wanted to ensure that five NFB producers of colour, located in different geographical regions, would be responsible for soliciting film projects from Aboriginal and visible minority filmmakers. The second wished to hire an Executive Producer to oversee these producers of colour.

What concerned Janes was that these two recommendations did not aspire to promote racial diversity throughout the entire English Program's regular documentary production environment, wherein a lack of racial diversity was apparent among filmmakers and producers. Instead, they wanted to "ghettoize" the issue of racial inequity and create a separate studio for Aboriginal and visible minority filmmakers. Within this studio, an Executive Producer would oversee these producers in their efforts to produce works by such directors. Having perceived the relative ineffectiveness of the separate model structure for Studio One, Janes did not accept the recommendations. She explains:

> I can actually remember the day the Advisory Board met with Sandra MacDonald, and me, and Jean-Paul Mahé to discuss this. I said to them, "I share your goal but I'm not sure that I agree with your model; I think absolutely we want to end up in the same place that you do. We want to make sure that people of colour have their position and have their presence in the English Program. But I'm not sure the model you're setting up is the one that I would choose" (In Person Interview 2001).

Janes's rejection of a separate studio model and her support for a broader way to address racial diversity illustrate how *The Way Forward* proposal's two recommendations functioned as "inclusion strategies" that would have little effect on the English Program's overall institutional structure. Inclusion strategies that do not emphasize rendering an institution's total environment racially diverse are ineffective since they leave

"structuring institutional dynamics of inequality untouched" and subsequently perpetuate a "hierarchical categories of difference" (Lee and Cardinal 224). If a separate studio for female and male visible minority and Aboriginal filmmakers were created, it, like such separate programs as Studio One, the Multiculturalism Program, and even the NIF Program, could inadvertently allow a racial imbalance to flourish outside of its domain. Were it to exist, this racial diversity studio, for instance, would take full responsibility of tackling racial inequity and would therefore absolve people outside its studio of dealing with the issue themselves.

A critical multicultural approach's quintessential objective is the implementation of racial equity strategies in an area where Caucasians usually constitute the norm since such strategies aim to render the norm racially pluralistic. In their suggestion to create a racial diversity studio that excludes the mainstream culture (i.e. Caucasian documentary filmmakers and film producers), these two recommendations reveal how they were unsuccessful in enabling the NIF Program to shift from a gender-specific feminist multicultural strategy to an inclusionary gender-neutral critical multicultural one.

Through the NIF Program's failed attempt, we can also see that the most limiting aspect of the Program's strategy was its exclusionary stance on racial diversity. In her critique of the Program, Yi writes: "[I]t can be argued that the program is another example of cultural ghettoization, that instead of including marginalized groups into mainstream, NIF represents how factionalized and segregated our society has become" (40). Yi has good reason to be concerned over the Program's inability to integrate marginalized groups (i.e. visible minority filmmakers) into the mainstream (i.e. filmmaking studios predominantly populated by Caucasian filmmakers and producers). As the English Program's first formal response to addressing racial diversity amongst

filmmakers, the NIF Program, throughout its five-year existence, was restricted by its inability to develop a way to promote the issue outside of its or Studio D's confines, and to make it not just the responsibility of Studio D or Studio One but of all filmmaking studios.

That racial diversity did not figure prominently in the objectives of Studios A, B, C, and G is telling. It points to the possible belief, amongst these studios, that since the NIF Program was already focused on redressing the colour imbalance, the subject did not really warrant their involvement. These studios' apathy is reminiscent of the Multiculturalism Program's inability to drum up interest for multiculturalism outside of the Program's realm, two decades earlier.

Although the Advisory Board had its last meeting in March 1996, the NIF Program ended in June 1996. During that same month of summer, Studio D disbanded and the English Program announced plans to establish a Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity. This Team's members would be responsible for overseeing the institutionalization of racial diversity initiatives within the English Program's three newly formed documentary production streams. In the next chapter, I will study this Team and other racial equity strategies and objectives that I collectively term "Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives."

ENDNOTES CHAPTER TWO

[1] The term *cultural pluralism* refers to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's desire, through the implementation of the 1971 *Multicultural Policy*, to provide modest ethnic cultural support while favouring the integration of ethnic groups in Canadian society (Evans 209). Through the *Multiculturalism Policy*, Trudeau acknowledged that although Canada should have two official languages, no official language should exist and no one ethnic group should take precedence over another.

[2] Since my research focuses mainly on film production initiatives to promote racial diversity among documentary filmmakers or in documentary films, I have refrained from analyzing, within this chapter, the Multiculturalism Program's second initiative: third language film versioning.

In response to Recommendation 12's call for the NFB to produce film prints of its films in languages other than the two official languages, the NFB's Distribution Branch, in 1972, set about versioning films that had originally been versioned for distribution abroad for domestic use.

Prior to the Multiculturalism Program, the NFB had versioned a variety of its films in 45 different languages. Although these films had been distributed abroad, no prints of these versions had been available for local distribution. In June 1972, the Multiculturalism Program's Distribution Branch started making versioned films available at NFB offices across the country and at five NFB libraries in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. By 1976, there came to be 1677 prints of 165 titles in 19 languages (Wong *The Multicultural Programme* 2).

From a financial perspective, what may have led to the end of the versioning initiative was the fact that by April 1975 the Distribution Branch lacked any more funds to provide for the versioning of any more films and for the promotion of such versioned films in ethnic newspapers. (Wong and Kent 16). However, from a theoretical aspect, this strategy's demise by the late 1970s could have also arisen from its lack of success in capturing a sizeable audience among ethno-cultural groups, and in this sense, failing to uphold Recommendation 12.

For example, from March 1974 to February 1975, the cumulative figure for the nationwide number of bookings – which refers to the number of times a person books time to watch a third-versioned film in NFB film libraries – was 1500. Considering the expectation had been for 7800 bookings, this was reportedly a disappointing figure for the Distribution Branch (Wong and Kent 15).

[3] Since I limit my study to the English Program, I do not cover the French Program's Multiculturalism Program. However, I should mention that the latter Program produced at least three films: *Il n'y a pas d'oubli* (1975), *Cousins germains* (1973), and *20 ans après* (1977).

[4] In this chapter and *all* successive chapters, I often employ three specific terms. First, the term *dominant culture of Anglo descent* or *Anglo-Canadians* refers specifically to Caucasian Canadians who derive from English-speaking ethnic groups (be they of Scottish, Irish, or English extraction) and who collectively represent the majority in Canada. Second, the term *ethnically non-Anglo Caucasians* refers to Caucasians of non-English-speaking ancestry. Third, the term *dominant culture* or *mainstream culture*, like in Chapter One and in all other chapters, still refers broadly to all Caucasian Canadians.

It is evident that the dominant Caucasian culture in the province of Quebec consists of Caucasians of French descent. However, since I do not analyze the NFB's French Program, I limit my perception of the term *dominant culture* to meaning Caucasian Canadians of English-speaking ancestry.

[5] The *Children in Canada* series was a joint undertaking between Studio D and the Multiculturalism Program, and was partially funded by the Educational Support Program.

[6] During the same period as the Multiculturalism Program, the Challenge for Change (CFC) Program (1967-1978) also existed to give voice to marginalized non-Caucasian groups in Canadian society, via film content. Unlike the Multiculturalism Program, CFC however did not focus only on ethnic minorities but also on Aboriginal people (e.g. *Cree Hunters of Mistassini* (1974)), and welfare recipients (e.g. *Up Against the System* (1969)).

[7] These three filmmakers were Polish Canadian Andre Herman, Ukrainian Canadian Jerry Krepakevich, and Hungarian Canadian Albert Kish who directed *Kaszuby, I've Never Walked These Steppes,* and *Bekevar Jubilee* respectively.

[8] The possible reasons for why numerous people of colour distanced themselves from a filmmaking career in this era – which can include familial pressures to enter a lucrative position and a lack of visible minority role models in Canadian film – would serve as an interesting research topic. However, it requires an extensive ethnographical study of specific ethnic groups in Canada and therefore goes beyond the scope of my present research.

[9] The one exception is Japanese Canadian Yuki Yoshida who was the producer for *Gurdeep Singh Bains, Veronica,* and *Kevin Alec.*

[10] I should note that are always exceptions to the norm. For instance, one prolific Aboriginal documentary filmmaker is Alanis Obomsawin whose NFB filmmaking career spans three decades.

[11] According to Documentary Ontario's Executive Producer Louise Lore, who was a Board member, the Board identified two strategies that it wanted the NIF Program to satisfy. Designed for women with little or no experience in filmmaking, the "community-based" strategy called for the Program to develop initiatives to provide women, particularly those from remote communities, with basic filmmaking skills. Oriented to intermediate or advanced filmmakers embarking on a professional career, the "industry-based" strategy required that the Program develop initiatives to allow them to make a professional documentary film.

[12] While the first unofficial Film Institute was held as a pilot program in August 1990, the first official Film Institute was held in August 1991 (Reyes 13). The Film Institute is sometimes called the Summer Institute.

[13] The 1993 advanced level scholarship recipients included Fumiko Kiyooka and Gita Saxena. Entry or intermediate recipients for the 1993-1994 fiscal year included Cat Cayuga, Carolyn Wong, Daisy Lee, and Cilia Sawadogo.

[14] Between 1994 and 1996, three internships were awarded to Mina Shum, filmmaking team Midi Onodera and Meherenz Lentin, and Premika Ratnam.

[15] The English Program from 1991 to 1996 maintained an Edmonton-based Aboriginal filmmaking studio called Studio One. It was created to enable both male and female Aboriginal filmmakers to make films from their viewpoints. There are at least two reasons for the studio's closure in 1996. First, the English Program, in the winter of 1996, evaluated Studio One's performance and concluded that the studio had not been successful in serving the needs of Aboriginal filmmakers across Canada, and that the First Nations film community throughout the country wanted the studio to be structurally decentralized (Pederson 12).

Second, the disbanding of Studio One came at a time when the NFB was, due to budgetary cuts, eliminating the studio structure and replacing it with a system organized around programming rather than geography. Section 1.2. of Chapter Three deals with this organizational restructuring in greater detail. This section also briefly comments on the Aboriginal Filmmaking Program (AFP). The AFP is the decentralized First People's program that arose in April 1996 and that has been providing funds for the use of First Nations filmmakers.

From 1987 to 1996, the NFB maintained an Employment Equity Program. Although this Program was initially created to have all women – regardless of their race – account for 50% of the NFB workforce by the year 1996, it expanded its vision in 1989 to create special measures for increasing the employment rate of First Nations people, visible minorities, and the disabled.

Nevertheless, this Program, throughout its nine years, concerned itself more with women than with the three other target groups. For instance, it was only after June 1992 that members of the three other underrepresented groups were allowed to participate in filmmaking and technical trade apprenticeships and workshops (*Employment Equity Program* 15).

However, the fact that this Program after 1992 still gave second priority to these three target groups – who had to compete for the same limited available number of apprenticeship and workshop

positions – shows that it was not as specialized a program as the NIF Program and Studio One. While the former centered only on the needs of visible minority and Aboriginal women, the latter focused its attention entirely on Aboriginal men and women.

[16] From 1991 to 1996, some Advisory Board members left and were replaced by new members.

CHAPTER THREE: CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ACTION INITIATIVES (1997-PRESENT)

Certainly within the English Program...there was no doubt in my mind – and I think that was shared to a great degree by middle management that reported to me – that cultural diversity was important and that it had to be included in whatever direction we were willing to take from 1996 onwards.

Director-General of English Program Barbara Janes (Personal Interview 2001)

1. ORIGINS OF THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ACTION INITIATIVES

Since 1996, the term *cultural diversity* by itself or with the word *initiatives* has, within the English Program, referred to strategies and objectives to address the under-representation of visible minority documentary filmmakers *and* to render racial diversity a normal part of the Program's documentary filmmaking environment.[1] Within this chapter, my organizational analysis focuses on these particular strategies and objectives that I collectively call Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives.

It is necessary to precede a study of these Initiatives with an explanation of the emergence of the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity. This is significant because the Team is the first Initiative that the English Program created to oversee further Initiatives. A examination of the Team requires that I first focus on Studio D's non-NIF efforts to foster racial plurality, the studio's closure, and the federal budgetary cuts that forced the NFB to restructure its organizational framework in 1996. Indirectly or not, all of these pre-1996 factors were linked to the post-1996 creation of the Team.

1.1. STUDIO D'S RACIAL AWAKENING AND CLOSURE

As the first force within the English Program to recognize, in the late 1980s, that racism could consist of the lack of non-Caucasian women filmmakers within its domain, Studio

D, from this period on, espoused the notion that racism was a natural extension of sexism. By advocating that the two "isms" needed to be addressed simultaneously, Studio D began to adhere to a feminist multicultural philosophy.

For this reason, Studio D in April 1989 relocated six permanent Caucasian women filmmakers to other documentary studios in order to provide space for non-Caucasian women to take up a filmmaking residency.[2] In fact, Studio D's Executive Producer Rina Fraticelli, in an interview with *Montreal Magazine* in June 1989, indirectly reveals how the relocation responded to her desire to prevent Eurocentrism by enabling non-Caucasian women to make films from their viewpoints. Specifically Fraticelli says:

> We're 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 what we can, within our employment and financial constraints, to let more women speak for themselves (qtd. in Ryohashi 42).

The increased presence of visible minority women filmmakers incited a surge of their films to pour out of Studio D, from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s. Such works include Sylvia Hamilton and Claire Prieto's *Black Mother Black Daughter* (1989), Sylvia Hamilton's *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia* (1992), Dionne Brand's *Sister in Struggle* (1991) and *Long Time Comin'* (1993), Michelle Wong's *The Journey Home* (1993), Christene Browne's *Them That's Not* (1993), and Dora Nipp's *Under the Willow Tree* (1997).

In 1995, the English Program sensed that Studio D had outgrown its usefulness as a filmmaking studio reserved solely for women. The studio, by this time, had become – as its Executive Producer Ginny Stikeman, who succeeded Fraticelli in 1991, remarked – "a victim of its own success" since women filmmakers were creating nearly 50% of all English language programming (qtd. in Zeleke 9). Since 1987, the NFB's Employment

Equity Program's objective had been to achieve parity (50%) in employment between women and men in all occupational groups by 1996. The fact that by 1995 Studio D and non-Studio D women filmmakers were creating nearly half of all NFB films impelled the English Program to terminate Studio D's existence as a separate studio. Reflecting on Studio D's closure, the Director-General of English Program Barbara Janes says:

> That was a controversial decision because some people who were supporters of Studio D felt that it should continue to exist for reasons of ideology as opposed to one of equity...the only reason to continue Studio D as a separate structure would be if it could be demonstrated that women still faced barriers in having access to work at the Film Board...and that clearly was not the case (In Person Interview 2001).

Although it discontinued Studio D in 1996 and turned gender equity into a broad institutional objective, the English Program by 1995 realized that racial equity still needed to be addressed. Through Studio D's revelation that racial inequity could be equated to the lack of non-Caucasian female filmmakers, the English Program by this year realized that it needed specifically to redress the under-representation of female and male visible minority and Aboriginal filmmakers. In fact, Maria De Rosa's NFB-commissioned report *Diversity On and Off the Screen* provided statistical data of the under-representation of visible minority and Aboriginal groups in NFB filmmaking positions (31).[3] The report as a result confirmed in writing the need for the English Program to develop concrete measures to resolve such racial imbalance.

Intent on redressing this issue, Barbara Janes was nevertheless reluctant to act on Studio D's NIF Program's proposal to create a studio reserved for visible minority and Aboriginal filmmakers. As I indicated in Chapter Two, Janes declined the NIF Program's recommendations since she wanted to infuse cultural diversity throughout the English Program, and not to limit it to one department. Expressing her wish for a more critical

multicultural strategy, she remarks: "I didn't feel that setting up a separate studio for people of colour [and Aboriginal people] was the way to go. We had to find something more organic that didn't ghettoize the issue but brought it into the mainstream" (In Person Interview 2001).

1.2. NFB'S BUDGET CUTS AND RESTRUCTURED ORGANIZATION

The NFB's post-1995 decision to end its studio structure demonstrates that it would have been impractical for Janes to accept the proposed studio model. Anticipating that its annual federal funding from the Department of Heritage would decrease from $80 million for the 1994-1995 fiscal period to about $60 million for the 1997-1998 fiscal year, the NFB decided to restructure its filmmaking environment and downsize its personnel in order to absorb these severe budgetary cuts.

Consequently the NFB in the 1996-1997 fiscal period condensed its various filmmaking studios (Studios B, C, D, and One) into three documentary production streams – Documentary West (encompassing B.C., the Prairie Provinces, and the Northwest Territories), Documentary Ontario, and Documentary East (encompassing Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces).[4] It also physically merged Studio A and Studio G into two Animation, Children, Interactivity Program (ACI) production streams.[5] The demise to the studio structure led to the phasedown of numerous permanent positions for directors as well as for location production staff (e.g. camerapeople and electricians).[6]

Aware of the considerable financial constraints that it experienced in the last two years and would continue to face for two more years, the English Program in the 1996-1997 restructuring phase understood that any cultural diversity strategy had to be cost-effective. The initiative also needed to be something that could be integrated into the

three post-1996 documentary production streams that would each have four producers and an Executive Producer.[7] It therefore had to be present in Documentary West, which has offices in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Edmonton; in Documentary Ontario, which is situated in downtown Toronto; and in Documentary East, which is headquartered in Montreal but has an office in Halifax. Ultimately the financially sound, horizontal strategy that Janes adopted was a suggestion offered by an unusual source: the management consulting firm of Ernst and Young.

During the restructuring phase, Ernst and Young management consultants came to the NFB to guide Janes and various English Program senior managers through their revisioning of the Program's infrastructure. When Janes stated that she needed a way to institutionalize cultural diversity into the Program's reorganized framework, the consultants recommended the creation of a "special mandate team." The special mandate team consists of permanent employees (i.e. documentary producers) who work within a regular organizational structure (i.e. the three regular documentary production streams). Since they are not an "add-on" group of employees, the team members perform the same tasks as their peers (i.e. produce documentary films). The sole difference is that they have the additional responsibility of integrating an objective (i.e. infusing cultural diversity initiatives) throughout the organization (i.e. documentary film production environment).

Viewing this strategy as an effective first step to institutionalize cultural diversity, Janes arranged for the development of a Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity, and in June 1996 announced the decision to form it. It is worth quoting at length Janes's explanation for adopting this method:

> Unlike Studio D, which was a separate studio off by itself, the members of the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity are regular producers working within the three strands of the Documentary Program (Doc East, Doc Ontario, and

> Doc West) and reporting to the Executive Producers of the strands. When E & Y [Ernst and Young] explained the concept, it struck me as the best way to integrate cultural diversity objectives into our program in a very organic way, so I adopted it. I wanted at all costs to avoid dedicated studios to accomplish equity objectives, because they tend to work in isolation from the rest of the organization and end up ossifying (Email Interview 2001).

Since it wanted at least 25% of its 12 documentary producers to be people of colour, the English Program decided to have three visible minority film producers form the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity.[8] The resulting challenge was how to hire these three new producers at a time when budgetary constraints were forcing Janes to lay off unionized NFB film producers. However, the unionized members showed their support for incorporating cultural diversity into the Program by accepting Janes's request to hire three qualified non-NFB documentary producers of colour. The only condition was that Janes had to fill the remaining producer positions from their ranks.

In actuality, only two of the three Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers came from outside the NFB. In October 1996, Germaine Wong, who had been managing the NFB's Paris office, was hired as the Mandate Producer for Documentary East. The two non-NFB film producers Selwyn Jacob and Karen King were hired as Mandate Producers for Documentary Ontario in February 1997 and Documentary West in May 1997 respectively (see Appendix A for the three Mandate Producers' bios).

Prior to its search for the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity, the English Program had developed a separate initiative to address the under-representation of Aboriginal filmmakers. Established in April 1996, the Aboriginal Filmmaking Program (AFP), like the Team, is a strategy to integrate Aboriginal filmmakers into the Program's three post-1996 documentary production streams. Since the Edmonton location of the Aboriginal filmmaking studio Studio One did not provide a convenient way to reach out

to Aboriginal filmmakers across the country, the AFP serves as the Program's decentralized response to address their concerns.[9]

The emergence of the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity, as well as of the AFP, reflects the first concrete measure that the English Program took, from 1996 onwards, to honour its racially pluralistic vision for the new millennium. Such a vision, to a large degree, reflects principles illustrative of the critical multicultural conceptual framework for racial diversity.

First, the vision coincides with Lorna Roth's observation that proof of a media organization's pledge to racial plurality is that the organization, even in times of budgetary constraints, enables a fair number of visible minority individuals to occupy positions of power (78). In this way, the organization would be realizing – consciously or not – the critical multicultural objective of ensuring that the policies, programs, and decisions of an organization do not reflect merely the concerns of the dominant culture.

The fact that Janes and the English Program's senior managers developed a way to institutionalize cultural diversity in a period of organizational financial upheaval therefore reflects the Program's commitment. Since "the way" assumed the form of three film producers of colour, who are responsible for monitoring the integration of cultural diversity in their respective documentary production streams, these three individuals ensure that the policies, programs, and decisions within these streams address the need to resolve the lack of visible minority documentary filmmakers and their films.

Second, the vision reflects Tator et al.'s argument that the implementation of racial equality involves challenging the mainstream culture's monopoly on authority within a cultural production organization (33). Employing Germaine Wong, Karen King, and Selwyn Jacob as documentary producers therefore renders certain that a producer's

decision-making power, which mainstream documentary producers previously monopolized, is shared fairly amongst mainstream and non-mainstream producers.

Bestowing upon Wong, King, and Jacob the added responsibility of representing Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers also certifies that the practices and measures needed to render the documentary production streams permanently racially diverse are in place. Reflecting on King's duty as Documentary Ontario's Mandate Producer, Chinese-Canadian Louise Lore, who has, since 1996, been the branch's Executive Producer, notes:

> You do not make fundamental change unless you actually have an on-going presence of cultural diversity people within your production staff...I suspect that we wouldn't be making these strides in terms of cultural diversity had we not had Karen [Karen King] here; that's really one of her objectives. She recognizes that that's her dream to make sure that filmmakers of colour are part and parcel of the way we program...She doesn't have to do all the work. That's for all of us to share. But she's there to chide, to make sure that that's part of our everyday thinking. And I think that that has become so (In Person Interview 2001).

Both critical multicultural principles demonstrate how the inclusion of a Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity espouses a multiple as constant mentality. That the three Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers are overseeing cultural diversity initiatives in an area (i.e. the three documentary production streams) where the dominant culture (i.e. non-cultural diversity producers) is usually present attests to the triumvirate's ties to this philosophical cornerstone of critical multiculturalism. The physical presence of the three Mandate Producers establishes that, at the producer's level, what should constitute the norm is a mixture of cultural diversity and non-cultural diversity producers. Through its efforts to resolve the lack of visible minority documentary filmmakers and their films, the trio, in turn, is confirming that what should represent the norm, at the filmmaker's level, is a racially diverse community of directors.

2. IMPLEMENTING THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ACTION INITIATIVES

At an English Program management meeting in September 1997, the three Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers presented a discussion document entitled *Diversity in Action* that contained preliminary ideas on how to integrate cultural diversity into the NFB. Rather than speculate on whether or not any of the Team's initial suggestions have become current initiatives, I concentrate on three factors.

First, I study the formal and informal ways through which the English Program has been integrating cultural diversity into the three documentary production streams. Whether formal strategies or informal objectives, I call all of them Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives. Such Initiatives, which the Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers usually oversee, include (1) facilitating the working relationship between non-cultural diversity producers and filmmakers of colour; (2) ensuring the presence of cultural diversity filmmakers through the regular documentary film selection process and the Filmmakers' Assistance Program (FAP); (3) allowing cultural diversity filmmakers freedom of topic; (4) providing apprenticeships and workshops; and (5) employing the Reel Diversity Competition as the means to create a "calling card" film. Second, I analyze the Cultural Diversity Database to demonstrate that it is the least successful Initiative. Third, I conclude the organizational analysis with an examination of the racially specific status of the apprenticeship, workshop, and Reel Diversity Competition Initiatives.

2.1. THE INITIATIVES

2.1.1. THE PRODUCER-FILMMAKER WORKING RELATIONSHIP

Alluding to the tasks of the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity, Barbara Janes notes:

> The objective of cultural diversity is something that is shared by all producers in the English Program. It's not just the responsibility of these three people. It's everybody's responsibility. But these three people, because we have some catch-up to do, will be taking some special initiatives to help us in that...at some point, if everything goes well, everybody will be working with a variety of filmmakers (In Person Interview 2001).

Janes's quote reveals that the formation of working relationships between mainstream documentary producers and non-mainstream filmmakers is one strategy that the Team is employing to infuse cultural diversity into the three documentary production streams.

In fact, the introductory paragraph of Documentary West's and Documentary Ontario's *Diversity in Action* booklets state that although each documentary production stream has a Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer, all NFB producers work with visible minority filmmakers and film craftspeople. Read in between the lines, the paragraph implies that, although the Mandate Producers do produce works by filmmakers of colour, the English Program also strives for its mainstream producers to work with such individuals. Mandate Producer Selwyn Jacob offers his view on this goal:

> [It] is to get producers who would not normally tackle subject matter outside of their domain with people outside of the mainstream...because...what we are trying to address here is the reason that people wouldn't dare to tackle certain stories is that they wouldn't feel comfortable working in that particular subject matter or working in that particular community (Telephone Interview 2001).

Two cases illustrate Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer Karen King's aim to provide filmmakers of colour access to mainstream Documentary Ontario producers. The first example consists of an incentive King calls "micro-meetings." In 1997, she organized a one-day open house for filmmakers of colour. During the event, she invited 47 filmmakers of colour, in small groups of five or less, to meet Documentary Ontario's other film producers and Executive Producer at the branch's Toronto headquarters. On the same day, King also organized one-on-one meetings between the invitees and

producers.

The second example is King's creation of the Reel Diversity Competition. Although Chapter Three focuses on the Competition in greater detail, I should note that the Initiative, which provides emerging visible minority filmmakers the chance to create their films at the NFB, creates an actual context in which filmmakers of colour can work with non-cultural diversity producers. As a result, the 1998 and 1999 Reel Diversity Ontario winning filmmakers have all collaborated with mainstream documentary film producers. On the production of her film *Western Eyes* (2000), 1998 winner Ann Shin worked with producer Gerry Flahive; on their production *Speakers for the Dead* (2001), the 1999 winning team of Jennifer Holness and David Sutherland worked with Peter Starr. At Documentary East, the 2000 Reel Diversity East winner Atif Siddiqi has been developing his film *Chances* (work in progress) in cooperation with producer Mark Zannis.

It is equally important to note that, as documentary film producers, the Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers also produce Reel Diversity or non-Reel Diversity films by filmmakers of colour. With regards to films by 2000 Reel Diversity winners, King is, at Documentary Ontario, currently producing Cyrus Sundhar Singh's *Film Club* (work in progress), while Wong, at Documentary East, is producing Kaveh Nabatian's *645 Wellington* (work in progress).

With regards to past works by non-Reel Diversity filmmakers of colour, Wong co-produced Florchita Bautista's *When Strangers Reunite* (1999), which focuses on two Filipina women who are separated from their families in the Philippines due to their work as maids in Canada. For her part, King co-produced Nadine Valcin's *Black, Bold, and Beautiful* (1999), which centers on Black Canadian women's hairstyles; and Ali Kazimi's

Some Kind of Arrangement (1998), which focuses on the arranged marriages of South Asian women in 1990s North America. She also produced Jari Osborne's *Unwanted Soldiers* (1999), which focuses on a Chinese Canadian World War II veteran's experience with racism during his service in the Canadian army.

It is equally significant to consider that all three Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers are not restricted to producing works only by cultural diversity filmmakers. For example, Selwyn Jacob has produced *Jeni LeGon: Living in a Great Big Way* (1999). Focusing on Vancouver resident Jeni LeGon, the first Black woman to sign a long-term contract with a major Hollywood studio, the film was directed by Caucasian filmmaker Grant Greschuk.

Nevertheless, the three Mandate Producers, in general, tend to produce more films by filmmakers of colour than by mainstream filmmakers. Germaine Wong explains:

> There is nothing that stops me from working on a project by a white filmmaker. But I think that there was a belief – and it certainly is mine – that change happens from the inside out, as opposed to the outside in. My feeling is that if you're going to affect change within an institution, then that institution has to fundamentally reflect that change. I feel that although I'd like to think that my sensibilities don't limit me to only projects by filmmakers of colour, I do feel committed to soliciting projects from them because it's my experience that television screens and theater screens have not been reflective of my reality. If I have any responsibility and power then I would like to use that to redress that lack of representation (In Person Interview 2001).

At the time of this writing, all three Mandate Producers, along with their mainstream colleagues, are producing works by cultural diversity and/or Aboriginal filmmakers in the English Program. The chart on the next page shows a slate of their films, which are works in progress or which were completed during the 2000-2001 fiscal year.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY / ABORIGINAL CHART 2000-2001

A – film by Aboriginal Person
C – film by Person of Colour

I - Investigate[10]
R & S – Research & Script[11]
P.P. – Post-Production[13]

C.F. -Completed Film
P- Production[12]

FILM	FILMMAKER	A/C	NFB PRODUCER
DOC EAST			
ATANRJUAT (C.F.)	Zacharius Kunuk	A	Germaine Wong
INDIAN GAMES (C.F.)	René Sioui-Labelle	A	Germaine Wong
LISTUGUJ (I)	Alanis Obomsawin	A	Germaine Wong
CHANCES (REEL DIVERSITY) (I)	Atif Siddiqi	C	Mark Zannis
FOR JACKSON (P)	Leila Sujir	C	Germaine Wong
IMPORTED CONFLICTS (R & S)	Leonce Ngabo	C	Germaine Wong
SHIPS OF SHAME (P)	Michelle Smith & Malcolm Guy	C	Germaine Wong Joey Calugay
645 WELLINGTON (REEL DIVERSITY) (P)	Kaveh Nabatian	C	Germaine Wong
WHO IS ALBERT WOO? (C.F.)	Hunt Hoe	C	Germaine Wong
DOC ONTARIO			
REDSKINS, TRICKSTERS, AND PUPPYSTEW (C.F.)	Drew Hayden Taylor	A	Silva Basmajian
BOLLYWOOD BOUND (P)	Nisha Pahuja	C	Karen King
FAST DATA (R & S)	Ann Shin	C	Gerry Flahive
FILM CLUB (REEL DIVERSITY) (P)	Cyrus Singhar Singh	C	Karen King
JOURNEY TO JUSTICE (C.F.)	Roger McTair	C	Karen King
RAISIN' KANE (C.F.)	Alison Duke	C	Karen King
SLIPPERY BLISSES (C.F.)	Jeanette Loakman	C	Silva Basmajian
SPEAKERS FOR THE DEAD (REEL DIVERSITY) (C.F.)	Jennifer Holness/ David Sutherland	C	Peter Starr
THURSDAY'S CHILD (R.S.)	Dana Inkster	C	Karen King
DOC WEST			
DONNA'S STORY (C.F.)	Doug Cuthand	A	Jerry Krepakevich
RED RUN (C.F.)	Murray Jurak	A	Jerry Krepakevich
TOTEM (P)	Gil Cardinal	A	Jerry Krepakevich
CEMETERY AT HARLING POINT (R & S)	Ling Chiu	C	Selwyn Jacob
LESRA MARTIN STORY (P)	Cheryl Foggo	C	Selwyn Jacob
LETTERS FROM HOME (P.P.)	Colleen Leung	C	Selwyn Jacob
MINOR KEYS (R & S)	Mieko Ouichi	C	Jerry Krepakevich
OBAACHAN'S GARDEN (C.F.)	Linda Ohama	C	Selwyn Jacob
SISTER KAY (C.F.)	Guo Fangfang	C	Joseph MacDonald

Evidently the chart shows the Mandate Producers producing most of the films by non-Caucasian filmmakers. Nevertheless, the fact that some mainstream producers are also working with cultural diversity filmmakers illustrates how the Initiative, which is

tied to this collaboration, connotes one critical multicultural principle. According to this principle, the equality of races within a cultural production organization calls for the organization's mainstream community (e.g. mainstream documentary producers) to dissociate itself from a monocultural approach to cultural diversity (Tator, et. al. 24).

Whereas a monocultural approach to cultural diversity would allow the mainstream producers to leave the responsibility of promoting the issue to the Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers, a critical multicultural approach demands that the mainstream producers share in the responsibility. For this reason, working with cultural diversity filmmakers on their films enables these producers to contribute to the creation of a filmmaking atmosphere wherein racial diversity – or what Peter McLaren calls "differences in relation" (58) – is the usual order of things.

2.1.2. THE REGULAR FILM PRODUCTION PROCESS AND FAP

Within the regular film selection process, all documentary filmmakers, regardless of their colour, can submit film proposals to any documentary producer. However, what guarantees that the selection process is reflective of cultural diversity is the post-1996 Initiative to ensure that at least 25% of the selected proposals derive from cultural diversity filmmakers.

Separate from the regular selection process, the Filmmaker's Assistance Program (FAP) is designed to help all emerging filmmakers complete the post-production portion of their film project. Offered on a first-come-first-serve basis at each of the three documentary production streams, FAP provides each applicant a maximum of $5000 for post-production costs. To allow a fair percentage of cultural diversity filmmakers to benefit from FAP, another post-1996 Initiative ensures that 25% of the FAP budget is

earmarked to filmmakers of colour (1998-1999 *Strategic and Operational Planning* intranet report). In the 1997-1998 fiscal period, FAP's total budget was $500,000.[14]

Allowing a quarter of the English Program's films to offer cinematic perspectives that possibly differ from those of mainstream filmmakers, the two Initiatives' 25% quota consequently reflects critical multiculturalism's somewhat postmodern principle. This view posits that different interpretations of truth originating from diverse cultures are what "truth" comprises (Tator, et. al. 222). Since an ideology that propagates solely a Caucasian perspective risks promoting the dominant culture's cinematic viewpoint as the indisputable truth, the two Initiatives' critical multicultural logic espouses that a multiplicity of racially diverse perspectives are more "truthful" and should be customary in the Program's films.

2.1.3. VISIBLE MINORITY FILMMAKERS' FREEDOM OF TOPIC

During the selection process of film proposals by visible minority filmmakers, all three Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers do not limit the choices to topics that focus only on race. Explaining whether or not she supports films that are for, by, and about people of colour, Germaine Wong responds:

> "By"— I have absolutely no qualms about that. To me it's very clear that if you have filmmakers from every possible culture then your films are going to be as inclusive and as representative of different cultures as well. Now the "for" and the "about," I'm less clear about this, because my feeling is that if you make a film about an interesting subject then it should be of interest to everyone. I mean if you make a film about Black history in Canada, it should not only interest the Black communities of Canada. It should interest all of Canadians. The same thing about "about," because my feeling is that if the history of the story of a culture is only the responsibilities of that culture, then I don't think that's an improvement (In Person Interview 2001).

Open to an array of storylines from visible minority filmmakers, Selwyn Jacob

comments on why many of their films deal with ethnicity: "I think that when you have a community that is under-represented, of necessity you will find that the stories they want to tell are stories of identity. It's just a simple process that people go through; it's part of their identity process" (Telephone Interview 2001).

To express her support for a cultural diversity filmmaker's freedom of subject matter, Karen King refers to Chinese Canadian filmmaker Jeannette Loakman's NFB film on kissing:

> *Slippery Blisses* has nothing to do with people of colour at all. There are people of colour in the film kissing, however, and there probably wouldn't have been if it hadn't involved a filmmaker of colour. So you get another point of view of the subject and there's value in doing that. You get a fresh take on issues (qtd. in O'Reilley).

King's response points out that the more opportunities that visible minority filmmakers have to create films, the greater the possibility that non-mainstream cinematic perspectives will surface. These points of views would, in turn, reinforce, within Canadian cinema and television, the critical multicultural notion that a "normal" narrative voice need not always be Caucasian.

The three Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers' united stance to resist classifying films by filmmakers of colour acknowledges that cultural diversity filmmakers possess a multiplicity of interests that cannot be pigeonholed to reductive categories (Li 365-69). Their position is therefore diametrically opposed to the symbolic multicultural tendency to compartmentalize visible minority art.

2.1.4. APPRENTICESHIPS AND WORKSHOPS

From an annual equity budget of $132,000, the three Mandate Producers receive funds to provide apprenticeships and workshops for visible minority filmmakers and film

craftspeople. Karen King and Germaine Wong both receive $44,000 to administer these two Initiatives in Documentary Ontario and Documentary East respectively. At Documentary West, Selwyn Jacob shares the $44,000 with producers Jerry Krepakevich and Joseph MacDonald.

At all three documentary production streams, the objective of the Cultural Diversity Apprenticeship Program is identical: the aim is to hone the professional development of visible minority filmmakers or film craftspeople in key creative roles (i.e. director, cinematographer, editor, and sound recordist). Similar to the participants of the NIF Apprenticeship Program, the Cultural Diversity Apprenticeship Program apprentice is partnered with an experienced mentor and paid for the duration of the apprenticeship.

In contrast, the Cultural Diversity Workshop Programs vary in the three documentary production branches. At Documentary West, Jacob has funded cultural diversity filmmakers to attend film and professional development workshops, such as the Woman in the Director's Chair workshop at the Banff Centre for the Arts and the 1999 Western Canada Film Finance Forum. At Documentary East, Wong has funded filmmakers of colour to attend grant proposal writing workshops at Main Films, a Montreal film cooperative for independent filmmakers. Wong's rationale for sponsoring individuals to attend this seminar is to immerse them in critical areas of the filmmaking business. She explains:

> A lot of people are going to be applying for Canada Council [for the Arts] and they're going to be applying for any kind of funding source...But do they know what the requirements of these funding sources are? Do they know how to prepare their proposals in such a way as to be competitive? When you go to film school, you learn a whole bunch of things, but you don't really learn these things. (In Person Interview 2001).

At Documentary Ontario, King funds filmmakers of colour to attend the Robert

McKee Story Seminar. According to King, this is a fundamental writing workshop that every filmmaker presumably needs to have on his or her resume. As an independent film producer in 1991, King, along with filmmaker Clement Virgo, lobbied for a scholarship from the NFB Equity Budget to enable them to afford the workshop's $300 admission fee. At the workshop she noticed how she, Virgo, and filmmaker Jim Russell, were among the few people of colour present and how the majority of participants were Caucasian. As a Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer, King now ensures that a portion of her $44,000 sponsors filmmakers of colour to attend the workshop. She says:

> One of things that I feel strongly about is getting us into those spaces because in those spaces are also the places where people see you and see that, "Oh, you're here. Oh, you must be serious." You make friends at those workshops and friends are how this business is operated...For me the ultimate goal is that we are part of the industry. We have had a separate industry for quite some time, and what I'm trying to do now is move us into the industry. So it's making sure that we're there, and not that we have separate workshops for us (In Person Interview 2001).

Critical multiculturalism acknowledges that different racial communities do not "exist autonomously but are deeply interwoven together in a web of interrelationships" (Tator, et. al. 260). King's goal to enable cultural diversity filmmakers entry into the same networking events (i.e. the McKee workshop) that mainstream filmmakers attend is therefore telling. It manifests the critical multicultural notion that racial diversity should encourage the interaction between the visible minority filmmaking community and the mainstream filmmaking crowd, and not the former's isolation from the latter.

For this reason, critical multiculturalist Terence Turner would support King's resistance toward separate workshops. For Turner, initiatives that try to redress racial inequity independent of the mainstream community inadvertently sustain the status quo, since they ratify "the divisions and inequalities imposed by the social system they aspire to change" (412). By perpetuating the notion that visible minority groups must isolate

themselves from the dominant culture to create racial diversity, these initiatives do not pose any challenge to mainstream individuals' monopoly on the Canadian film and television industry. They, as a result, end up emitting a "different from constant mentality" which is the antithesis to the different as constant notion (Lai Wan 26-28).

By funding filmmakers of colour to attend film finance, grant-writing, and scriptwriting workshops, and to hone their filmmaking skills via paid apprenticeships, the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity is enabling them to form valuable contacts in the Canadian film and television community and to be competitive and competent enough to penetrate it. In this way, the Team is indirectly trying to redefine what represents the norm in this market. Although what usually constitutes the norm in this market is a predominantly mainstream crowd, the Team, through its various efforts, wants to transform the norm into a racially diverse crowd of filmmakers and film craftspeople.

2.1.5. THE REEL DIVERSITY COMPETITION'S "CALLING CARD" FILM

Although the Reel Diversity Ontario and Reel Diversity East Competitions are both annual filmmaking Initiatives reserved for emerging visible minority filmmakers, two elements distinguish one from the other. First, the Reel Diversity Ontario Competition thus far selects only one winning filmmaker or filmmaking team per year, whereas its Eastern counterpart chooses two. Second, Reel Diversity Ontario guarantees that Vision TV and CBC Newsworld's *Rough Cuts* series will broadcast Reel Diversity Ontario films; in contrast, Reel Diversity East, for the time being, offers no broadcasting commitment to its winners. [15]

Despite the differences between the two Competitions, both King and Wong agree that the Initiatives enable filmmakers of colour to create a calling card film. Serving as

concrete proof of the winning filmmakers' ability to make a polished, professional one-hour documentary, this type of film represents a portfolio piece for securing funding for future film projects from television broadcasters and funding agencies.

One factor that renders the filmic calling card significant is that it exemplifies a "Canadian film." For many people, the NFB, whose very mandate is to reflect Canada to Canadians, epitomizes an organization that creates quintessentially Canadian films. Consequently the fact that the NFB is producing the calling card of a non-Caucasian filmmaker reinforces the film's authenticity as a "true" Canadian film. The validation of the film's "Canadian-ness," in turn, can undermine stereotypes that label non-Caucasian Canadian artists' work as ethnic, folkloric, "Other," and therefore un-Canadian (Philip in "Multicultural Whitewash" 16; Tator, et. al. 79; Li 371). In this roundabout way, the Initiative challenges monocultural assumptions and projects the critical multicultural notion that both mainstream and non-mainstream perspectives can legitimately reflect Canadian points of view.

At Documentary West, geographical logistics play a major concern in Selwyn Jacob's reluctance to create a Reel Diversity West Competition. Apart from creating a filmic calling card, another purpose for the Competition is to get the winning cultural diversity filmmaker to work, if circumstances permit, with a mainstream documentary producer. The problem is that the four Documentary West producers, unlike their Documentary Ontario and Documentary East counterparts, are spread out in different provinces.[16] While Jacob and producer Tracy Friesen are located in the NFB's Vancouver Office, producers Joseph MacDonald and Jerry Krepakevich are situated in the NFB Offices in Winnipeg and Edmonton respectively.[17] Jacob explains the probable difficulty of partnering the Edmonton or Winnipeg producer with a Vancouver-based Reel

Diversity West winner:

> If we have a competition here in the West and the winner comes from, let's say, Vancouver, and I have certain amount of workload. Then I have to then try to put that person with the next producer who is in Edmonton, or the next producer who is Winnipeg. That's based on the fact that 90% of the people that I'm dealing with are based in Vancouver. So invariably I would think that there's a 90% chance that the winner of the Reel Diversity will be in Vancouver. So again it comes back to my plate and sort of defeats the reason for that [Competition] (Telephone Interview 2001).

One way that Jacob and his fellow Documentary West producers network with filmmakers from B.C. and the Prairie Provinces is by conducting the production stream's monthly programming committee meeting in different cities across Western Canada. Whenever possible, the committee, which comprises the documentary producers, Executive Producer, and marketing representatives who congregate to discuss about new film proposals, invite filmmakers in the host city to attend the meeting.[18] Jacob explains how he acquaints himself more specifically with filmmakers of colour in these regions:

> When I go to a different community, I try to set up a meeting with the filmmakers of colour in that particular region. So that's one of the ways that I do my outreach, which is different from, let's say, Ontario and Montreal, where they do not have regional meetings; there is no need to have regional meetings. You see, each region operates differently. In some cases they [Documentary East and Documentary Ontario] bring the filmmaker to participate in the programming process. In our case, it would be difficult because the budget would just be horrendous, bringing filmmakers across. So it's a different way of operating (Telephone Interview 2001).

Although it is different from a Reel Diversity Competition, Jacob's aforementioned outreach method is, nonetheless, a more practical way for Documentary West to encourage different cultural diversity filmmakers to create films that exude their diverse, non-mainstream directorial voices.

2.2. THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY DATABASE INITIATIVE

All of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives that I have analyzed so far show effective signs of institutionalizing cultural diversity throughout the three documentary production branches. As exemplary models of critical multiculturalism, these strategies promote the equal representation of visible minority groups within the documentary filmmaking environment and want to create such equity by transforming this area from a monocultural to a heterogeneous one.

I want to turn my attention to Cultural Diversity Database since it is the one major Initiative that has been relatively unsuccessful in its efforts, as a talent directory, to address cultural diversity. On March 1 1997, the English Program made this directory, which lists the names and resumes of cultural diversity and Aboriginal filmmakers and film craftspeople, accessible to NFB producers, Executive Producers, and other NFB personnel. That this Database resembles the NIF Program's Resource Bank is no coincidence; the former is, in fact, a modern incarnation of the latter.

Prior to disbanding, the NIF Program made arrangements to ensure that, after 1996, its Resource Bank, which contained the names and resumes of non-Caucasian women filmmakers and film craftspeople would be expanded to include those of their male counterparts. The Program foresaw this future talent directory as a vehicle through which the NFB could find visible minority and Aboriginal people to employ in film crews.

Like the Bank, the Database is unsuccessful in achieving its objective for three reasons. First, the Database is susceptible to inaccurate information. Numerous non-Caucasian filmmakers and film craftspeople – like their mainstream counterparts – are transient and therefore change addresses more often than the Database gets updated.

Second, film production teams in search of a film crew are wary of the Database because they are uncertain if, as one source within the NFB notes, "it's a real list or someone's wish list." Such a directory cannot prove that people who list themselves as editors actually have sufficient professional experience to execute their craft. Third, the Database is impractical within an industry that hires based on word-of-mouth contacts, on previous working relationships with the employee, or on familiarity with the employee's work. Another NFB source summarizes how the Canadian film and T.V. industry crews films:

> When you're making a film and you're the director, are you going to say, "How am I going to introduce diversity into my film?" You're thinking, "Who's the best cameraman I can hire for the job, who's the best editor I can find for the job?" [19]

The fact that word-of-mouth contacts, previous working relationships, and familiarity with a person's work are how filmmakers or film craftspeople usually get hired suggests that all of the Initiatives analyzed prior to the Database are vital for racial diversity. By rendering visible minority filmmakers and film craftspeople competent and competitive within the NFB, these strategies are helping them to become a constant part of the English Program's documentary filmmaking community.

2.3. RACIAL SPECIFICITY: A REQUIRED CRITERION OF SOME INITIATIVES

While they may be racially inclusive in their objectives, such Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives as the Reel Diversity Competition, the Cultural Diversity Apprenticeship Program, and the Cultural Diversity Workshop Program are reserved specifically for people of colour. In two ways I demonstrate why these particular Initiatives have reason to be racially specific. The first way focuses on the difference between two concepts that I call the "dominant culture's liminal identity" and the "visible minority culture's static identity." The second way concentrates on the necessity for these Initiatives to reject what

Scott McFarlane calls a "multicultural inclusionary paradigm" (18-31).

At the 2001 Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC) Colloquium, at which I presented a paper based on my preliminary research on the Initiatives, an audience member voiced a concern that numerous individuals have. It focused on the fact that these three Initiatives sport the name "cultural diversity" but are exclusively reserved for filmmakers of colour. He pointed out that since Caucasian people come from diverse ethnic communities they are also "culturally diverse."

The assessment that the English Program's post-1996 usage of the term *cultural diversity* in relation to pro-racial diversity initiatives is misleading is reasonable since members of the dominant culture do derive from a multitude of different ethnic backgrounds and thus can regard themselves as culturally diverse. However, there are difficulties with the position that these Initiatives should extend to Caucasian filmmakers from ethnic communities that do not belong to the dominant culture of English-speaking ancestry (i.e. Irish, Scottish, English Canadians).

By virtue of their physical lack of racial differentiation from Canadians of Anglo descent, Caucasian Canadian filmmakers of non-Anglo ethnic communities can, with relative ease, shuttle from their individual identity as members of their respective ethnic groups to their collective identity as visibly "passable" members of Anglo-Canadian culture. Since their "Whiteness" compensates for their ethnicity, these non-Anglo Caucasian Canadian filmmakers, as a result, possess a liminal identity (Tator, et. al. 250). Their ability to identify with the dominant culture of Anglo descent therefore does not disrupt the Canadian film and television industry's confidence to employ them to create or direct films/television shows whose perspective appeals to Anglo-Canadian audiences.

By virtue of their visible racial difference from Caucasian Canadians, many

visible minority filmmakers, on the contrary, are often wrongly defined and understood based on stereotypes of their collective identity. Such reductive stereotypes do not accurately represent the multiplicity of ways in which filmmakers of colour understand or describe themselves. These filmmakers thus are carriers of a mistakenly "static identity." Were it to base the directorial ability of visible minority filmmakers on their static identity, the Canadian film and television industry may assume that they are only able to create or direct "folkloric," "heritage," or "ethnic" films, which would be uninteresting to *all* Caucasian Canadians, and, for this reason, may be unwilling to employ them.

Rather than oppose the racial specificity of the Reel Diversity, Apprenticeship, and Workshop Initiatives, I argue that these three strategies need to reject a multicultural inclusionary paradigm. Endorsed by supporters of symbolic multiculturalism, the paradigm stresses that multicultural harmony can arise from practices, policies, and activities that acknowledge visible minority groups as Canadians deserving of the same benefits and opportunities as all other Canadians (McFarlane 28).[20] The catch however is that these policies, practices, and activities should be available to all Canadians. Consequently they end up being too generalized to resolve the specific concerns of a particular community, such as a community of visible minority documentary filmmakers.

As a result, many cultural diversity filmmakers require some temporary assistance to break into the Canadian film and T.V. industry and to have their directorial voices heard there. Once inside, they can then prove to this market that their perspectives, albeit non-Caucasian, can be as interesting as those of Caucasian-Canadians to the general audience. I therefore contend that the race-specificity of these Initiatives, is, at the present time, justified. In the next chapter, I provide a case study of one of these race-specific strategies – the Reel Diversity Competition.

ENDNOTES CHAPTER THREE

[1] In this chapter *and* subsequent chapters, the term *cultural diversity*, when used as a qualifier for such nouns as *subject*, *person*, *community*, and *filmmaker* is synonymous with the modifier *visible minority*; in these same chapters, the qualifier *non-cultural diversity* means specifically Caucasian.

It is also very important to realize that when NFB staff and I employ the term *cultural diversity* as a noun within this chapter and successive chapters, it means both promoting racial diversity as the norm and redressing the lack of filmmakers of colour and their films in the English Program. Nevertheless, when I employ the term *racial diversity* as a noun or its modifier *racially diverse*, I am, like in previous chapters, more generally referring to racial plurality.

[2] These women filmmakers consisted of Dorothy Hénaut, Beverly Shaffer, Margaret Westcott, Bonnie Klein, Cynthia Scott, and Susan Hyke.

[3] As an evaluation of the Employment Equity Program from 1986 to 1995, the *Diversity On and Off the Screen* report noted that the presence of visible minority and Aboriginal groups in filmmaking occupational positions was significantly lower than their overall representation in the labour force. While visible minorities in NFB filmmaking positions in 1994 were listed at 4.8% and Aboriginal people at 0.6%, the overall visible minority representation in the 1991 Canadian labour force was 9.1%, and the overall Aboriginal representation in the same labour force was 3% (De Rosa 31).

[4] Prior to 1996, Studio B focused on feature-length films and documentaries, while Studio C concentrated mainly on documentaries. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, Studio One, which was established in 1991, was an Edmonton-based filmmaking studio for Aboriginal filmmakers.

[5] While ACI East is situated in Montreal, ACI West is located in the NFB's Vancouver and Winnipeg Offices. Prior to 1996, Studio A was the NFB's Animation Studio and Studio G was the NFB's multi-media studio. The latter studio focused on the production of audio-visual material for children-oriented educational kits.

[6] We can reasonably assume that the downsizing of permanent staff directors would have pleased NFB founder John Grierson. Throughout his tenure, Grierson believed that staff impermanence is necessary for the NFB's creative vigour since, for him, it provides a better chance for filmmakers from diverse regions in Canada to make films within the NFB (Jones 186).

[7] In each documentary production stream, an Executive Producer oversees the four film producers. The four must consequently report to the former.

[8] English Program's decision to have at least 25% of its 12 producers come from visible minority groups and to have 25% of its films be by visible minority filmmakers may have links to the NFB's 1987 *Employment Equity Policy* and the federal government's *Employment Equity Act*. To this day, the *Policy* and the *Act* aim to ensure that four target groups – women, Aboriginal people, visible minority people, and disabled people – are fairly represented in the NFB's workplace. Thus the 25% mark may derive from the fact that visible minority people constitute ¼ of the target groups.

[9] For more information on Studio One's closure in 1996 and on the NFB's plans to create the AFP, see Pederson.

[10] Investigate refers to the preliminary proposal-writing stage. See Appendix B for a broader description.

[11] Research and Script (also known as Development) refers to the script-writing stage. The film has, at this point, not reached the production stage (i.e. shooting stage). See Appendix B for a broader description.

[12] Production refers to films in the shooting stage. See Appendix B for a broader description.

[13] Post-Production refers to the editing and sound mixing stage.

[14] In the 1997-1998 fiscal period, $200,000 was allocated to Documentary East, $150,000 to Documentary Ontario, and $150,000 to Documentary West (*Evaluation of 1996-97 Program & Action Plan 1997-98* 7).

[15] Three factors give Documentary Ontario an edge over Documentary East in getting Vision TV and CBC Newsworld's *Rough Cuts* broadcasters to commit to a presale (a commitment to purchase a film prior to its creation) for Reel Diversity Ontario films. First, geographical proximity plays a significant role in Documentary's Ontario's ease to network with Vision Television and CBC broadcasters since both television networks, like Documentary Ontario's headquarters, are located in downtown Toronto. Second, the strong professional bonds that Executive Producer Louise Lore, who is a former CBC producer for the *Man Alive* series, maintains with her CBC colleagues, have helped to gain CBC support in Reel Diversity Ontario films. Third, King's personal objective to involve the Canadian TV broadcasting industry impelled her, during the planning phase of the first Reel Diversity Ontario Competition, to seek broadcast licenses.

[16] In contrast, Documentary Ontario's four producers (including King) and Executive Producer Louise Lore are in the Toronto office. In Documentary East, three producers (including Wong) and Executive Producer Sally Bochner are in the Montreal office. Only one Documentary East producer, Kent Martin, is stationed in the NFB's Halifax office.

[17] Producer Joseph MacDonald, at the Winnipeg Office, is responsible for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while producer Jerry Krepakevich, at the Edmonton Office, oversees Alberta. Documentary West's Executive Producer Graydon McCrea is also located in the Edmonton Office.

I should also note that each of the three offices are also responsible for a section of the Territories: the Vancouver Office handles the Yukon; the Winnipeg Office, the Central Arctic; and the Edmonton Office, the Western Northwest Territories.

[18] While each of the three documentary production streams has its own monthly programming committee meeting, Documentary Ontario and Documentary East have an additional programming committee meeting for the Reel Diversity Competition, each year.

[19] In fairness, I should note that one way in which the Database is an effective technique is in its function as information outreach directory. For instance, one can send invitations for a special NFB event, such as a film launch, to addresses on the directory.

[20] McFarlane uses the example of the 1994 *Writing Thru Race Conference* to illustrate his support for the rejection of the multicultural inclusionary paradigm. *Writing Thru Race* was a Canadian literary conference that restricted participation only to Aboriginal and visible minority writers. It consequently garnered severe criticism from the mainstream press.

I am neither opposed to the *Writing Thru Race Conference* nor to any racially exclusive event. However I suggest that any pro-racial diversity strategy that works in isolation from the mainstream culture risks being ineffective because the initiative does not impact the mainstream community. By failing to influence the mainstream culture, the initiative inadvertently ends up sustaining the status quo (i.e. racial inequity).

I consequently appropriate McFarlane's theory of moving away from a multicultural inclusionary paradigm to argue *solely* for the racially specific status of the three Initiatives. However, I am not arguing that the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity should use these Initiatives independent of the mainstream culture. Only by employing these Initiatives in areas where mainstream individuals are present (e.g. a documentary production stream, a script-writing workshop, etc.) can the Team be able to render the notion of a mainstream community synonymous with a racially diverse community.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE REEL DIVERSITY COMPETITION (1998-PRESENT)

> There are some filmmakers of colour who won't have anything to do with cultural diversity because they feel that it stigmatizes them as affirmative action kind of people rather than being [credited based] on their own merit. My position on that is that there were many years when we [filmmakers of colour] weren't provided access because of our colour and now we're being provided access. And if it is because of colour, it is because we are trying to correct a wrong.
>
> Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer Karen King
> (In Person Interview 2001)

1. BACKGROUND OF THE REEL DIVERSITY COMPETITION AND ITS WINNERS

In 1998, Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer Karen King launched the first annual Reel Diversity Competition at Documentary Ontario. Since that year, the Reel Diversity jury committee has chosen the winner based on the strength of his/her film proposal.[1] Once selected, each filmmaker, under the guidance of a documentary producer, turns his/her film proposal into an actual documentary film. To do so, he/she must undergo the four stages of the NFB programming process for any NFB documentary film. Such stages comprise the investigate, the consult, research and script/development, and production (for a broader description of each stage, see Appendix B).

Winning the first Reel Diversity Ontario Competition enabled Korean Canadian Ann Shin to bring to fruition her film *Western Eyes* (2000). The film focuses on two Asian Canadian women – Filipina Canadian Maria Estante and Korean Canadian Sharon Kim – who contemplate undergoing cosmetic surgery since they are both dissatisfied with their Asian appearance. While the former wishes to make her nose narrower, the latter is interested in implanting folds in her eyes to make them appear deeper, and, thus, more Caucasian. Initially *Western Eyes* was supposed to be 30 minutes long. However, because they realized that the broadcast opportunities for a half-hour documentary were limited, King and Executive Producer Louise Lore decided to make Shin's film longer to fit the traditional hour-long broadcasting slot. Since then, King has kept the duration of

successive Reel Diversity Ontario films at 40 minutes.

Winning the 1999 Ontario Competition enabled the Black Canadian filmmaking team of Jennifer Holness and David Sutherland to create *Speakers for the Dead* (2001). The film focuses on the recent efforts by some residents of Priceville, Ontario to locate the graves of Black families who were the first non-Native settlers in the town.

A year later, Indian Canadian Cyrus Singhar Singh won the third Ontario Competition through his film proposal for *Film Club* (work in progress). The film centers on a film club founded by Singh's Grade Eight history teacher in the early 1970s. The club consisted of young teens – including Singh – who were of different ethnic backgrounds and who were all recent immigrants to Canada. The film details their search for belonging during the heyday of Trudeau's *Multiculturalism Policy*.

In the same year, Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer Germaine Wong launched the first Reel Diversity East Competition at Documentary East. At the time of this writing, the two Reel Diversity East winners Atif Siddiqi and Kaveh Nabatian are working on their respective documentary films. While Siddiqui's *Chances* (work in progress) focuses on relationships, Nabatian's *645 Wellington* (work in progress) profiles the residents of an Old Montreal building, which, unlike the rest of the buildings on its block, has not been turned into a multimedia firm.

2. CASE STUDY OF THE REEL DIVERSITY ONTARIO COMPETITION

I want to focus my case study on the Reel Diversity Ontario Competition and its winners since it has been in existence longer than Documentary East's Competition. As well, the Reel Diversity Ontario winners have already completed their Reel Diversity films or are close to completion. They can therefore offer a more comprehensive account of their

experiences as winners. However, I make mention of Reel Diversity East in instances that require a comparison between the two Competitions.

The case is divided into five parts. The first analyzes the varying attitudes that the three winning Reel Diversity Ontario filmmakers of the last three years feel towards the term *visible minority filmmaker* or *filmmaker of colour*. My reason for this inquiry is the fact that the expression becomes automatically attached to the Reel Diversity winner, through his or her affiliation with the Competition.

Given that the English Program's documentary producers support non-race-oriented works by visible minority filmmakers, the second part investigates the reasons why a film proposal that focuses on race-related issues in Canada may or may not merit more consideration from a Reel Diversity Ontario or East jury committee. This section consequently answers three relevant questions borrowed from film theorist Jun Xing's work: (1) Does the making of a cultural diversity film require "insider" cultural knowledge and similar historical experience? (2) Who possesses the authority to direct a film about a visibly ethnic group? (3) Does the mere racial background of a filmmaker ensure that he/she will make "truer" representations of his/her racial group?[2]

In the third part, I address the opinions that the Reel Diversity Ontario winners offer with regards to the strengths and progressive aspects of the Competition. I also take note of their suggestions for how it can be improved. In the fourth part, I survey, through the perspectives of Karen King and Louise Lore, the improvements that have occurred from one Reel Diversity Ontario competition to the next. I also examine the challenges that they have faced in the past, or may continue to face in the future. Concluding the case study, the last part evaluates the Competition's overall effectiveness as a template for promoting cultural diversity within the three documentary production branches.

2.1. VISIBLE MINORITY FILMMAKER / FILMMAKER OF COLOUR

The term *visible minority filmmaker* – which the English Program uses interchangeably with the term *filmmaker of colour* – is unmistakably linked, within the context of the Reel Diversity Competition, to the winning filmmaker. The connection arises from the fact that the Initiative is reserved exclusively for non-Caucasian (and non-Aboriginal) filmmakers. The condition that participants must be from visible minority groups is clearly stipulated as an eligibility criterion in the promotional ads for the two Competitions. It is therefore interesting to assess how Reel Diversity Ontario filmmakers Cyrus Singh, Ann Shin, Jennifer Holness, and David Sutherland feel about being regarded as visible minority filmmakers or filmmakers of colour. Each filmmaker or filmmaking team views the terminology from a different perspective.

For many non-Caucasian filmmakers, the term *visible minority filmmaker* risks conveying the impression that their films interest only their various racial communities and that they, as directors, are consequently unable to create films that could appeal to all people, regardless of race. Such is the rationale that Singh provides to explain his unease over the term:

> I would not be comfortable with the term *visible minority filmmaker* because I think it is phrases like those and it is intent like that that ghettoizes what we do. It is not necessarily our work but it is the way our work is put out. So if you preview [the film] visible minority filmmaker, you're already tainting it, I think, in a mass audience, before people are allowed to see your expression... I see Reel Diversity as an opportunity to make my vision, but the vision is not limited to Reel Diversity. I didn't think, "Oh, you know what, I want to make a film that is going to speak to my people." I want to make a film that is going to speak. Period. (Telephone Interview 2001).

For critic Lai Wan, the term *visible minority* (which is interchangeable with the term *person of colour*) engenders a racial polarity that divides the dominant culture from non-white cultures in Canada. For this theorist, the term makes non-Caucasian seem like

second-class citizens since it creates the impression that White Canadians are what "normal Canadians" should look like and that non-White Canadians are "deviations from the norm" (28).

I am not insinuating in any way that Singh and I advocate Lai Wan's view. [3] However, I am contending that what generally passes as marketable fare, within the Canadian film and television industry, are movies and television series that appeal to the broadest audience. Since this crowd implicitly refers to the largest demographic in Canada – Caucasian Canadians of Anglo descent – the pressure rests on filmmakers to present films or T.V. programming that interest this target group. Consequently, certain non-Caucasian filmmakers who want to penetrate the industry may agree with Lai Wan's comments. These directors would view their affiliation with the *visible minority filmmaker* designation as a limiting factor since it might create the impression that they, by virtue of their racial difference from Anglo-Canadians, are unqualified to write and direct films and television programs that would appeal to them.

Jun Xing notes that certain East Asian American filmmakers possess a "dialectical attitude" towards any categorization of themselves (45). On the one hand, they oppose any kind of race-based classification since it may create the false assumption that they are able only to make East Asian-themed films. On the other hand, they agree that a category like "East Asian American filmmaker" is useful for understanding the significance of their work.

Rather than project a dialectical attitude, Reel Diversity Ann Shin explains that her acceptance or refusal of the term *visible minority filmmaker* depends on the context in which the expression is juxtaposed with her name.

Most people just call me filmmaker... I accepted the articles about the Reel

> Diversity funds and they were talking about me and my Korean background, and it was pertinent to the story and to the Reel Diversity fund. I didn't mind that. But I would certainly mind if I was being interviewed now by someone and they were saying, "You're a visible minority. What's it like?" I really don't perceive that at all (Telephone Interview 2001).

With regards to the affiliation between the terminology and the Reel Diversity Competition winner, Shin notes:

> To be the winner of the Cultural Diversity [Reel Diversity] Competition implies the label, and I think that I had some struggles with that. But I think ultimately I felt good about the process and the film that came out of it. So, in that way, I don't think that it was a marginal enterprise, and I was never treated like it was a marginal enterprise (Ibid).

Shin's impression that her filmmaking experience at Documentary Ontario was not a marginal enterprise points to English Program's commitment to enable Reel Diversity filmmakers to work with mainstream film producers – such as Shin's producer Gerry Flahive – and not separately from them.[4] The integration of non-Caucasian filmmakers into the English Program's documentary filmmaking environment consequently upholds the critical multicultural concept of rendering the three documentary production streams' racially pluralistic.

I respect the aforementioned theories and personal views on the limitations with the visible minority filmmaker label. Nevertheless, I, as a person of colour, sense that, regardless of whether I like it or not, the visible minority categorization will remain an unavoidable fact of my life – and the lives of other visibly non-Caucasian individuals in a country where the dominant culture is White. My perspective is therefore reflective of Carl James's observation that one's sense of self as a racial minority is always situated within a set of meanings that are socially situated and defined by systems of cultural representation (qtd. in Tator, et. al. 235). James's argument mirrors Germaine Wong's own view towards the *visible minority filmmaker/filmmaker of colour* terminology. Wong

says: "I agree with filmmakers of colour that it's a drag to be labeled. The whole need to have labels is a drag. But the fact of the matter is if you have any physical trace, you are going to be labeled" (In Person Interview 2001).

Filmmakers Jennifer Holness and David Sutherland are both aware of this fact. They not only accept their identification as filmmakers of colour but also sense how they can offer a uniquely Black cinematic perspective through their film *Speakers for the Dead*. Sutherland explains:

> We [Jennifer and I] will always be filmmakers of colour. Until the day when I am no longer Black, I will always be a filmmaker of colour. So I can't change that and I don't want to, because that is my experience; that is part of what I can contribute to the world. But that said, we can comment on any story out there from our point of view. Somebody asked: "Do you think that, *Speakers for the Dead*, two White filmmakers could have come up with the same film?" I say, "No, because this is from our point of view; we have a specific way of looking at the world." We've always had to rise above that. So that goes into our world view; that goes into language. So nobody else could have made this film the way this film was made (Telephone Interview 2001).

Agreeing with Sutherland's statement Holness adds: "They [Caucasian filmmakers] could have made a film equally as good but in a different way...It always shocks me how people would think, how people would pretend that my colour has nothing to do with how people perceive me" (Ibid).

Since their racial identity contributes to their artistic vision, Sutherland and Holness show how they can, as filmmakers of colour, bestow upon their films a Canadian viewpoint that is different from that of their Caucasian peers. Through *Speakers for the Dead*, Sutherland and Holness consequently prove that Canadian films should not have to be restricted to a Caucasian filmmaker's perspective since what should constitute the norm in Canadian cinema is a myriad of cinematic voices from a racially diverse pool of directors.

2.2. THE POLITICIZED RACIAL IDENTITY AND "STAR FILMMAKER" PHILOSOPHY

Accepting that the visible minority filmmaker/filmmaker of colour label is an inescapable fact of life for non-Caucasian Canadian filmmakers, I posit that the Reel Diversity Ontario Competition can empower the artist through the terminology. I also argue that the Competition ultimately prevents this designation from setting boundaries on the types of films that the Reel Diversity filmmaker can direct in the future. While the Competition's "overt politicization of racial identity" accomplishes the first goal, Karen King's "star filmmaker" philosophy helps to attain the second objective.

According to Monika Kin Gagnon, the politicization of an oppressed racial identity shifts the marginalized individual from a subjective place of invisibility to one claiming powerful status of identification ("How to Search" 100). Within the context of the Competition, the overt politicization of the term *visible minority filmmaker* enables it to lose any implication of second-class citizenry. The Competition empowers the label by viewing and promoting the Reel Diversity filmmaker as someone who has the present ability – and not just the future potential – to create an engaging, professional film from a possibly non-mainstream perspective. According to Holness, Sutherland and she found the Competition's constant belief in their talent a confidence-booster since both had been struggling for several years to gain recognition within the Canadian film and television industry. Holness remarks:

> My problem working within the industry is people, often times, because of colour, think you might not be able to do it. That is a thing you have to battle. So programs like the Reel Diversity, what they do is that they give you the benefit of the doubt that might not have been there (Telephone Interview 2001).

With regards to her star filmmaker vision, King admits that a vital goal of the

Competition is to help filmmakers of colour quite literally develop a name for themselves within a star-driven business. The way to attain this objective is to make Reel Diversity winners stars unto themselves:

> So Jennifer [Holness] and David [Sutherland] are the stars for this year [2001]. They are the best and brightest of what we have to offer. That's what it's really about: It's about providing them with a platform, providing them with some profile, and launching them into the broadcast milieu, so that they can actually become working, surviving documentary filmmakers (In Person Interview 2001).

Supportive of King's vision, Louise Lore, who is the Executive Producer on all Reel Diversity Ontario films, explains the need for the creation of star filmmakers of colour:

> There are fewer, what we might call "A-list" filmmakers around who are cultural diversity people. Because the documentary film industry has been largely limited to a small group of people. Most of them historically are non-cultural diversity; they are from the mainstream. So it is trying to change that reality, which is the tough one: To have the really high-profile filmmakers be filmmakers of colour. That's the hurdle that we are working towards. Karen and I have always talked about creating a program that would grant filmmakers of colour to that level, because it is possible. Obviously not everybody that we support in the Reel Diversity Competition is going to be an A-list, big-name internationally famous filmmaker. But if you support enough talent, some of these people are going to rise to the top (In Person Interview 2001).

In essence, the Reel Diversity Competition is attempting to create prominent visible minority filmmakers whom the Canadian film and television industry will recognize on the basis of directorial talent – and celebrity – rather than on racial background. In this way, television broadcasters and film producers would feel confident to broadcast or to provide funding for the future films of famous visible minority filmmakers – films that could pertain to any subject. It would seem that the Competition has already helped to launch the filmmaking career of one past winner. At this time, Shin is creating, within the NFB, a documentary entitled *Fast Data* (work in progress). Focused on the global information technology industry, the film has nothing directly to do with the theme of race.

2.3. CRITERION OR NOT: THE THEME OF ETHNICITY IN CANADA

Since the Reel Diversity Ontario and East Competitions aim to promote cultural diversity and since the themes of the first two Reel Diversity Ontario films were race-related, I am impelled to ask the following sensitive albeit unavoidable question: although the Competition stresses that film proposals need not pertain to racial diversity, would Reel Diversity applicants' storylines that nonetheless dealt with race and/or visible minority communities merit more consideration from jury committees?

For one jury member, the answer is negative: "Not for me. Because I think the bottom line is always: 'Is this a good story? Is the content of the film going to be of interest?' I always try to say, 'Okay, if the film is finished, is anybody going to want to see it?'"[5] Commenting on why some visible minority filmmakers' early films focus on their respective racial communities, the same individual points out:

> If you're talking about emerging filmmakers, every filmmaker's first few films are always autobiographical, to some extent...So there's a good chance that their films might be based on their life experience or is something inspired from the old culture.

In contrast, another jury member admits to a preference for film proposals whose subject matter focuses on non-mainstream communities:

> I'll be honest with you. When it comes to sitting on that panel and making those decisions, I'm the only one who feels that way. Everybody else feels that it's about developing the filmmakers and we'll just make the strongest film. My feeling is that it's an opportunity. If this competition is going to get a higher profile than a regular short film would get, then let's also take them [the audience members] some place where they haven't been before, let's tell a story that hasn't been told before. Let's open the door to a world that they don't know. These are the things for me that are important.

Jun Xing theorizes that certain visibly ethnic filmmakers through their cultural knowledge enjoy some edge over Caucasian filmmakers in portraying the former group's culture in a more sensitive way (34). According to the second jury member, the edge that

filmmaker of colour have over their mainstream counterparts is the ability not just to portray their racial community with greater sensitivity but also to provide an entry point into it:

> I don't think that we will have accomplished our goal if we have filmmakers of colour making films that anybody else can make. I think that what the advantage of filmmakers of colour...is they have access to stories and communities that nobody else has access to. That's their strength. That's what let's us or forces us to give them an opportunity to make their film because we want their story.

Open to film proposals of all topics, a third jury member nonetheless brings up a judging criterion for determining the substantiality of a film proposal about non-mainstream communities:

> I think that something that we don't articulate but that is implicit, particularly if it is a story about a cultural diversity community is, "Is this a story that will celebrate or provide a useful touchstone for that cultural diversity community?" In that way...that *Speakers for the Dead* speaks to issues of historical racism in Canada and served the Black community very well from that point of view. Certainly Ann's project on *Western Eyes* [was] an insight that Ann could provide into that community, which is largely the Korean community, that wouldn't be available to a non-Korean.

Despite their varying opinions, all three jury members stress that the Competition's foremost concern is to develop filmmakers of colour, and not to create films about people of colour. It is therefore useful to consider that the themes of recent winning Reel Diversity film proposals are not specifically about racial identity or visible minority individuals. For instance, Atif Siddiqi's *Chances* focuses on what different people want in relationships, while Kaveh Nabatian's *645 Wellington* focuses on blue-collar workers and artists living in an Old Montreal building. Although Cyrus Singh's *Film Club*, like *Western Eyes* and *Speakers for Dead*, focuses on a search for belonging in Canada, it does not center solely on visible minority individuals.

Just as cultural diversity filmmakers should have a right to direct films about any

topic, so should mainstream filmmakers have a right to make films about non-mainstream individuals or communities. However, the second jury member's two statements present a convincing "strategic essentialism" argument. The contention is that a filmmaker's "insider" cultural knowledge into her ethnic community and a filmmaking team's own similar experiential brush with racism can develop perspectives that a mainstream filmmaker, who is directing a film about a non-mainstream community or about racism, may be unable to provide.

For instance, Shin's exclusive insider knowledge that some Korean Canadian women are pressured by their mothers to "Westernize" their eyes via surgery bestows upon *Western Eyes* culturally exclusive information, information to which non-Korean filmmakers probably would not have had access. Similarly, Holness and Sutherland's own personal experience with racial discrimination adds a personal dimension to *Speakers for the Dead*'s narrative on bigotry against Black Canadians. Had the film been directed by a non-Black filmmaker, it would have lacked the personal insight into how it feels to be discriminated against for being Black in Canada.

Although I support the second jury member's strategically essentialist argument, I oppose the logic that *all* visible minority filmmakers, by virtue of their ethnicity, can present "truer" or "more authentic" cinematic representations of their respective racial communities. For instance, I refute Werner Sollors's extremely essentialist argument for "biological insiderism" (qtd. in Jun Xing 37). According to Sollors, the blood ties that a person shares with a particular visible or non-visible minority group enables him/her to comprehend instinctively its value system (i.e. philosophy, psychology, customs, moral codes). As such, this person, by virtue of his/her genealogical link to this community, is able to create authentic artistic depictions of it.

A major reason for my opposition to Sollors's line of thinking is that, in many instances, filmmakers of colour, especially those who are second or third generation Canadians, have assimilated into the dominant culture. As a result, these artists, regardless of their physically non-mainstream physical appearance or blood ties to a visible minority group, would identify more with the dominant culture rather than with their respective communities. These types of circumstances considerably undermine Sollors's biological insiderism theory.

However, what would enable filmmakers of colour to provide an informed account of their racial community is if they were to possess, like Shin, Holness, and Sutherland, the "cultural references" that would grant them access to it. Such cultural references, which Marlene Nourbese Philip calls "cultural idioms" (in "Multicultural Whitewash" 22), includes functionality in their community's language or knowledge of its customs, traditions, and/or history.

2.4. WINNERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ONTARIO COMPETITION

In her essay on "standpoint theory," Sandra Harding argues that one's social situation sets limits on what one can know (240). As I have not participated in the Reel Diversity Ontario Competition, much less worked in the English Program, my knowledge of the winners' viewpoints on the Initiative would, without their actual perspectives, be limited to the suppositions of an outsider. To understand the Competition's weak, strong, or progressive aspects from their perspectives, I relegate my assuming voice to the background and bring the winners' impressions to the foreground. The sole time that my critical voice conspicuously returns to the forefront is when I present a brief analysis on the opinions of the Competition's detractors.

For Ann Shin, one limiting factor of the Initiative is the bureaucratic way the NFB dispenses production funds. A film project cannot receive production money (i.e. for shooting the film) until the production meeting, which occurs in between the Research and Script/Development and Production phases, takes place. During the making of *Western Eyes*, Shin recalls that Sharon, one of the two people profiled, underwent cosmetic surgery prior to Documentary Ontario's production meeting. As a result, Shin lacked any production money to hire a complete crew to film and sound-record Sharon's operation. Fortunately, Shin's producer Gerry Flahive acquired some development money to hire one cameraman to shoot the graphic surgical procedure, which is arguably the film's visual highlight.

As a way to address this limitation, Shin suggests the existence of emergency production funds to cover the costs of filming unexpected events. Nevertheless, she admits that her concern is minor. She notes that non-NFB independent producers face relatively deeper financial constraints to the point that "the whole story has to be put on hold" until they receive production funds from such agencies as Telefilm Canada and the Canada Television and Cable Production Fund. She also emphasizes that her concern is not specific to the Competition but to the post-Competition film programming process, which mirrors the regular film programming phases experienced by all NFB filmmakers.

For Singh, one limiting factor of the Initiative is the lack of clarity in the post-Competition film programming process. What concerns him is the absence of comprehensive guidelines to help first-time filmmakers understand what they must do at each of the four stages of programming. Singh notes the general overview that Documentary Ontario's *Filmmaker's Guide* gives of these four stages – investigate, consult, research and script/development, and production – is too broad (for general

description, see Appendix B). He suggests that what would have helped him during his pre-production stages is a detailed step-by-step account of what these four stages constitute and what is expected of the filmmaker at each of them.

For Reel Diversity winners who have already undergone, at the time of this writing, the Competition's whole film production process, the most rewarding factor of their experience was full artistic freedom. While Documentary Ontario's producers offered Shin editorial suggestions on *Western Eyes*, she notes that they gave her *carte blanche* for format and story. In a similar vein, Holness and Sutherland are also satisfied that Documentary Ontario's producers left them to their own creative devices. The filmmaking team also points out that another positive aspect was the luxury of having readily available technical resources at their disposal. Sutherland elaborates:

> We benefited from the NFB's institution because there were a lot of things we didn't have to worry about as independent filmmakers. We're not worrying about an editing suite. We usually have to worry, make a huge deal for the editing, make a huge deal for the sound. Make all these crazy deals, and then the stress is on the deals as opposed to the filmmaking (Telephone Interview 2001).

Although the winners offer different views on the Competition's progressive aspect, they all indirectly broach the Initiative's identity as an affirmative action program. For Sutherland and Holness, the progressive aspect is its retributive function to combat a history of systemic racism within the Canadian film and television industry. As Sutherland says: "I think that [Reel Diversity Competition] is right because it seeks to redress errors in the past" (Telephone Interview 2001). Aware that some people may cast a negative light on the Competition winners for making a film through an initiative reserved for visible minority individuals, he adds: "It's like the unspoken thing: Any program that seeks to redress injustices in the past is looked upon as a concession, as a weak type of thing" (Ibid).

For Singh, the progressive quality of the Competition is its providing accessibility to non-Caucasian filmmakers. Specifically, he says: "I think whatever can stake out the barriers that stop that accessibility is good, and it's a means to carry you over the barrier" (Telephone Interview 2001). Explaining how he does not feel that an affirmative action strategy, like the Competition, should place limitations on his creativity, he continues: "But in the end my aesthetic philosophy is about the work, regardless of the worker" (Ibid).

For Shin, the progressive aspect of the Competition is that it is responding to the need to create "a level playing field." She notes that certain "people of colour feel loathe" that they can, by virtue of their race, attain opportunities that their Caucasian friends cannot. Rather than share their view, Shin supports such opportunities. She explains: "If the system is such that there are still not many people out there making films then ultimately I think a program like this [Reel Diversity Competition] is great" (Telephone Interview 2001).

Shin's comments are interesting since she alludes to the issue of people of colour who dissociate themselves from affirmative action programs – the same type of people whom King's quote brings up at the start of this chapter. For every past, present, and future Reel Diversity winner who views the Competition as a progressive strategy, there have been, are, and will be visible minority individuals who have refused, refuse, or will refuse to join it. The latter individuals' fear for joining may stem from a fear of what I call "the burden of affirmative action."

Kobena Mercer theorizes how artists from a particular visible minority community are often faced with the burden of "speaking for" their entire community through their artwork (235). Mercer's "burden of representation" concept differs from my burden of

affirmative action notion, since the latter explains the potential criticism that some visible minority filmmakers feel that they may endure through participation in an affirmative action program, such as the Reel Diversity Competition. Specifically they dread the possibility that their success and presence in the film and television production industry may be seen as deriving from race-based preferential treatment rather than from talent. What their logic does not acknowledge is that an affirmative action program, like Reel Diversity Competition, exists to redress the race-based preferential treatment that the industry has historically afforded Caucasian filmmakers.[6]

2.5. THE COMPETITION'S PROGRESSION OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

To provide a factual report of what the Reel Diversity Ontario benefactors regard as the Competition's improvements and challenges over past three years, I turn now to the viewpoints of its organizer Karen King and its Executive Producer Karen King. The fact that numerous Canadian cultural theorists, within their essays on Canadian cultural organizations, ignore or omit the views of individuals employed within such institutions reinforces this approach.

Over the past three years, King has seen a noticeable improvement in the quality of the film proposals. To explain this, she refers to the 2000 Ontario Competition to which 29 film proposals were submitted. Although the grand prize was awarded to Singh, the competition was so tight that the jury committee ended up giving two runner-up prizes, which consisted of development funds, each totaling $5000 (CDN). Just as the quality of film proposals has been improving, so has the applicant pool of new filmmakers of colour been on the rise. In the first year of competition, King knew everybody who submitted proposals. In 2000, out of the 29 applicants who submitted

proposals, she, in contrast, knew only two.

For Lore, the biggest "pay-off" is that Documentary Ontario's profile has improved among aspiring filmmakers within Ontario's cultural diversity communities. Lore notes that the Competition has inspired many first-time filmmakers of colour to pitch their ideas to her producers. A possible reason for their reluctance to approach the NFB prior to the Competition is that they may have perceived the NFB as an institution for seasoned filmmakers. It is therefore logical to link the increase of film proposals from unknown filmmakers of colour to the possibility that, over the last three years, more and more of them have been learning about the Competition and have been mustering up the courage to apply to it.

Since the Ontario Competition's inception in 1998, one overt challenge that has remained is the additional workload that the Competition bestows upon all of Documentary Ontario's producers. Apart from producing non-Reel Diversity documentaries, one producer, each year, must oversee the production of a Reel Diversity winner's film. What sometimes renders such supervision a time-consuming task is that the winner, who, in certain cases, is a neophyte in the filmmaking world, requires more guidance than an experienced filmmaker. For instance, producers may spend additional time instructing the winner on how to write a standard *Investigate Report* or documentary treatment – something that they would not have to do for experienced directors.

With regards to a future challenge, Lore hopes that the Ontario Competition never creates a "coterie of cultural diversity filmmakers who function as in-house filmmakers" (In Person Interview 2001). Her wish is that former Reel Diversity winners will have the opportunity to pursue their profession independent of the institution, once their careers are launched, and once they have completed their first two films there. After all, the

presence of the *same* filmmakers of colour could possibly engender nepotism or could prevent other cultural diversity filmmakers from getting their first "big break" via the NFB. Although this "cultural diversity clique" has not yet developed, it is interesting to see how Documentary Ontario's commitment to diversity *within* cultural diversity transpires in the years to come.

2.6. A TEMPLATE FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

To end this case study, I evaluate the Reel Diversity Competition's effectiveness as a template for promoting cultural diversity within the three documentary production branches. This section answers three questions: (1) What makes the Competition an effective model for promoting cultural diversity within an organization? (2) Why is the contest an effective technique for Documentary Ontario and Documentary East, but not for Documentary West? (3) What will serve, in time, as the ultimate sign of the Competition's effectiveness as a strategy?

What exhibits the Reel Diversity Competition's effectiveness as a pro-cultural diversity strategy is its "pro-active" nature. Were Documentary Ontario and Documentary East to wait for cultural diversity filmmakers to approach them with film proposals, they would be demonstrating a "reactive" approach to instilling cultural diversity in their respective filmmaking environment. However, the fact that both documentary streams, via the Competition, are actively encouraging filmmakers of colour to submit their storylines illustrates their determination to enable these artists to create films at the NFB.[7]

A central aim of the Competition is to facilitate – as I mentioned in Chapter Two – the working relationship between new filmmakers of colour and documentary producers. We must therefore realize that a combination of geography and demographics, to a large

extent, determines why the Initiative is an appropriate model for the Documentary Ontario and Documentary East, but not for Documentary West. In Chapter Three, Jacob noted that the Western branch's four producers are spread out across the Western provinces and that the majority of visible minority filmmakers under the branch's jurisdiction reside in Vancouver. This illustrates that the creation of a Reel Diversity West Competition would be problematic since distance would impede any working relationship between a Vancouver-based winner and Edmonton- or Winnipeg-based producer from forming.

At the same time, this point indirectly reveals why this relationship-oriented Initiative is effective in Documentary Ontario and Documentary East. Both streams have their head office and most or all of their documentary producers located in Montreal or Toronto. As Montreal and Toronto constitute two of Canada's three main film and television production hubs, these two multiracial cities have a large pool of resident filmmakers – be they visible minority or mainstream – from which the majority of Reel Diversity East and Ontario winners originate. Although the racially diverse Vancouver, wherein the NFB's Vancouver Office is located, is the third hub and boasts a large number of local mainstream and non-mainstream filmmakers, the dilemma remains that two of Documentary West's documentary producers are not Vancouver-based.

Consequently the suitability for a "Reel Diversity B.C. Competition" and the lack of such an Initiative reveal how the underlying problem may neither be that most cultural diversity filmmakers are in Vancouver nor that documentary producers Jerry Krepakevich and Joseph MacDonald reside outside of B.C. From one perspective, it may be the fact the English Program's Vancouver Office, which is located in a metropolis with its own thriving filmmaking community, needs additional documentary producers.

From another perspective, it may be the possibility that the Vancouver Office, like the Ontario Office, should be functioning as a separate documentary production stream. If the main reason that very few cultural diversity filmmakers reside in the Prairie Provinces stems from their exodus to the three filmmaking hubs, it would seem reasonable for a Vancouver-based Documentary B.C. to exist. As a separate branch, the B.C. Office would have an increased workforce (i.e. two additional producers) to develop the works of a far greater number of local and transplanted cultural diversity and non-cultural diversity filmmakers. However, we should consider that the post-1995 budgetary constraints may be one significant reason why this set-up may never come to fruition.

To understand how the Reel Diversity Competition is agency-driven is to comprehend three facts: (1) Karen King masterminded the idea for it; (2) King has been spearheading Reel Diversity Ontario for the last three years; and (3) Germaine Wong has been overseeing Reel Diversity East since 2000. The risk of any agency-driven organizational strategy is that if the agent (i.e. King or Wong) were to leave the organization, no one else might assume the responsibility for implementing it.

Were the Reel Diversity Competition designed to be a permanent initiative, the English Program would have reason to worry. However, any potential risk is, in the long run, offset by the fact that the Competition, the Cultural Diversity Workshops and Apprenticeships, and King, Wong, and Jacob's additional roles as Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers are all temporary strategies. Having been created to begin the process of forming a racially diverse environment of documentary producers and filmmakers, these Initiatives will cease to exist once this type of environment is permanently in place.

As a result, these Initiatives' outdatedness is what in time will attest to their overall effectiveness. In short order, the ultimate sign of these Initiatives' success will be

their critical multicultural role in *having made* a racially diverse workforce a normal part of everyday life within the Program's documentary production streams.

Far from restricting the notion of multiplicity as constant to a mere abstract vision, the English Program laid out, in the 1998-1999 fiscal year, four criteria to render this vision a reality. A portion of my next and final chapter focuses on these objectives.

ENDNOTES CHAPTER FOUR

[1] For the past three years, the criteria for selecting the winning film proposal have been: cultural and social significance of the film, originality of concept, creative treatment, innovation and artistry, and a commitment to the filmmaking profession.

[2] See Chapter One "A Cinema in the Making" of Jun Xing's book *Asian America Through the Lens: History, Representations, and Identity* (31-86).

[3] While I endorse Lai Wan's multiple as constant concept, I disagree with her argument that the *visible minority* or *person of colour* terminology is a deterrent to this concept. For this reason, I offer an analysis of the terminology's positive aspects in Section 2.2.

[4] One might assume that the mainstream producer-non-mainstream director working relationship sustains a racial hierarchy since the producer's seniority and expertise may make him/her domineering towards the filmmaker. However, this was not the case for Reel Diversity winners Ann Shin, Jennifer Holness, and David Sutherland, who, on their winning films, all worked with mainstream producers. For instance, all three note that their producers gave them complete artistic license.

[5] To ensure the confidentiality of the jury members, I have not listed their names and have not mentioned if they were part of Reel Diversity Ontario or Reel Diversity East.

[6] An affirmative action program's negative reputation may arise from the strategy's inability to gauge the participant's talent. However, what makes the Reel Diversity Competition unique is that it provides proof of the filmmaker's merit: the documentary film that the winning filmmaker must create provides a concrete product through which he/she can demonstrate his or her worth.

[7] The Reel Diversity Competition is not the only pro-active approach that the NFB's English Program has utilized in the last decade. From 1994 to 1999, the English Program maintained another pro-active initiative called the Fast Forward Documentary Internship Program. This initiative invited emerging Canadian filmmakers to submit film proposals to the NFB. Selected filmmakers would then be able to participate in a paid internship through which they could create a documentary film.

Although the Fast Forward Program was not a competition based on race, two of the six filmmakers who were accepted into the Program were non-Caucasian. They were visible minority filmmaker Eisha Marjara who created *Desperately Seeking Helen* (1998) and Aboriginal filmmaker Daniel Prouty who made *First Nation Blue* (1996).

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ROAD FROM RACIAL TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

> Eventually my feeling is that cultural diversity at the Film Board will just be a part of everything and you won't have to identify its special effort – pretty much like Studio D. All these initiatives, if they succeed then their demise should be an indication of their success.
>
> Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer Germaine Wong
> (In Person Interview 2001)

1. RETRACING THE JOURNEY

Throughout the previous pages, my thesis has demonstrated that the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives are, to date, the English Program's most formal, widespread, and effective means to combating the under-representation of filmmakers of colour within its documentary filmmaking environment.

My research has conveyed this initial claim by focusing on four major questions: (1) How has the English Program's documentary production units' post-1996 definition of the term *cultural diversity* been benefiting filmmakers of colour more than the Multiculturalism Program's and Studio D/NIF Program's interpretations of the expression? (2) Why were these Initiatives not enacted during the period in which Studio D or the NIF Program existed? (3) How are such Initiatives more influential than the Multiculturalism Program and Studio D/NIF Program in rendering the whole English Program's documentary filmmaking environment conscious of racial diversity? (4) Why is the Reel Diversity Competition the most profitable of all the Initiatives? Before I explore the English Program's criteria for gauging such Initiatives, I want to summarize my analysis of these queries.

My study has exhibited that the English Program in relation to its three different interpretations of the term *cultural diversity* has come to realize, over the course of the last three decades, that racial diversity behind the camera is vital to the promotion of

racial diversity before the camera's lens. Grounded in the conceptual framework of symbolic multiculturalism, the Multiculturalism Program's definition of *multiculturalism* qua cultural diversity placed the emphasis of ethnic diversity more on film content than on the filmmakers. While it espoused multiracial films, the Multiculturalism Program did not stress the need for racial plurality amongst its filmmakers. Consequently, the Program lacked the different non-Caucasian perspectives that filmmakers of colour – who were absent in the Program – could provide to contrast or even challenge the overtly Eurocentric content of Albert Kish's Program-produced film *Hold the Ketchup*.

Unlike the Multiculturalism Program, Studio D defined the term *cultural diversity* as the importance of racial diversity amongst women filmmakers. Through its interest, from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, to increase the creation of films by women of colour, and through its 1991 creation of the NIF Program, Studio D manifested gender equality within a wide spectrum of racial identities, rather than within a narrow "White male versus White female" binary structure. It, in this way, showed that racial diversity amongst women directors was significant for engendering a multiplicity of mainstream and non-mainstream directorial perspectives. Since Studio D's feminist multiculturalism vision was limited to its filmmaking environment and to the NIF Program, Studio D's gender-specific understanding of racial diversity did not help to address the under-representation of visible minority male filmmakers within the English Program.

The English Program's post-1996 definition of the term *cultural diversity* is categorically confusing. By itself or with the word *initiatives*, the term means promoting racial diversity *and* redressing the under-representation of visible minority filmmakers and their films within the Program.[1] By connoting strategies and objectives for increasing the presence of male and female documentary filmmakers of colour and their films, the

term, within the phrase Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives, is consequently more beneficial to such filmmakers than the gender-specific interpretation espoused by Studio D/NIF Program.

Engulfed in the spirit of critical multiculturalism, the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives' perception of the term *cultural diversity,* moreover, considers the significance of the directorial perspectives of filmmakers of colour. The Multiculturalism Program's well-intentioned bent on promoting multi-ethnicity before the camera overlooked how the lack of visible minority filmmakers behind the camera could risk endorsing the Caucasian filmmaker's perspective as the sole way to view Canada in the English Program's documentaries. Wary of this monocultural cinematic perspective, the Initiatives advocate that a more democratic way to project Canada should derive as much from non-Caucasian as from Caucasian viewpoints. Animated by critical multiculturalism's multiple as constant vision, the Initiatives enable the diverse voices of Canadian filmmakers of colour to be heard via their films.

My analysis has pointed to one reason why the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives did not emerge prior to Studio D or without the existence of Studio D. As my study indicates, Studio D was the first force, within the English Program, to realize that racism could consist of the under-representation of visible minority and First Nation women filmmakers within its filmmaking environment. Through its loyalty to combating sexism, Studio D brought the issue of racial inequity into the open.

Consequently, the Initiatives did not develop prior to Studio D's racial awakening in the late 1980s because the Initiatives' mandated commitment to redressing the lack of male and female filmmakers came to exist as a natural extension of Studio D's formal pledge, through the creation of the NIF Program, to address the studio's lack of non-

Caucasian women filmmakers. It is thus interesting to note that the NIF Program served as the catalyst for the Initiatives' birth, considering that the Program, by virtue of its exclusionary stance to racial diversity, had been unsuccessful in its own attempt to progress from a feminist to critical multicultural conceptual model.

A logical question that readers are bound to ask is: why did the Initiatives emerge only after 1996 and not after 1991? One possible reason is that, from 1991 to 1996, the English Program was re-assessing its priorities vis-à-vis its commitment to resolving its organization's under-representation of particular groups of individuals. During this period, the Program was realizing that the racial inequity amongst documentary filmmakers was a problem throughout all of its documentary studios, not just Studio D. At the same time, it was sensing that it had nearly attained its goal of having 50% of its filmmakers be women. These five years, as a result, gave the Program time to verify the need to shift its energies from creating gender equality initiatives to developing strategies for racial equality.

My work has illustrated how the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives are more influential than the Multiculturalism Program and Studio D/NIF Program in rendering the English Program's entire documentary filmmaking environment racially pluralistic. Just as the Multiculturalism Program's symbolic multicultural objectives for inspiring multiculturalism remained only the responsibility of its organizers, so did the feminist multicultural practices for sustaining racial equity among women filmmakers remain solely the concern of Studio D and the NIF Program.

In contrast, the Initiatives aim to institutionalize racial diversity throughout the English Program by encouraging filmmakers of colour to work with mainstream documentary producers and to develop their filmmaking talent within the regular

documentary production streams, not separate from them. These critical multicultural measures show how they, unlike symbolic or feminist multicultural strategies, are making racial diversity not just the responsibility of a specified unit of people, but of the entire documentary staff. They, in this way, are offering broader, more inclusive means for resolving the colour imbalance within the documentary filmmaking environment.

By promoting racial plurality in an atmosphere where individuals who normally constitute the majority belong to the dominant culture, such Initiatives are ultimately attempting to transform the term *mainstream culture* from implying "Caucasian Canadians" to meaning "racially diverse Canadians." As West points out, the aim of the new cultural politics of difference (read critical multiculturalism) is to redefine the very notion of "mainstream," "margins," "difference," and "otherness" (217).

By enabling filmmakers of colour to participate in non-NFB film finance, grant-writing, and script-writing workshops usually attended by mainstream filmmakers, the Cultural Diversity Workshop Program Initiative is enabling them to network with their mainstream peers and to form contacts with members of the greater Canadian film and television industry. By helping visible minority filmmakers establish their filmmaking careers, all of the aforementioned Initiatives, along with the Workshop and Apprenticeship Programs, are indirectly trying to render the industry – which encompasses private film production companies, television broadcasting companies, television shows, film festivals, etc. – racially diverse as well.

Evidently, the scope of my thesis has mainly centered on the Initiatives' role within the English Program's documentary production branches. Nonetheless, we can reasonably assume that these Initiatives, by enabling visible minority individuals to create films, to hone their filmmaking skills, and to hobnob with colleagues, film producers, and

television broadcasters, are, in the process, providing these filmmakers of colour with the skills, connections, and solid portfolio to survive in Canada's film and television community. Their presence would subsequently result in the perpetuation of normalized differences within this audio-visual milieu.

However, it is still essential to realize that the Initiatives, beyond the confines of the NFB, cannot control how the greater Canadian film and television industry chooses to support racial plurality before or behind the camera. For instance, what concerns Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer Selwyn Jacob is the knowledge that several Canadian television broadcasters – with the possible exception of Vision TV and CBC Newsworld's *Rough Cuts* – are still generally less inclined to air films, whether by visible minority filmmakers or not, that focus on a non-Caucasian subject matter. Jacob elaborates:

> When you take it [the film on a cultural diversity topic] to the broadcaster, I still find that there is a stumbling block there, in terms of [the broadcaster] saying that this program is only going to appeal to a quota minority audience, it's not going to go mainstream...I think that part of the other problem that we're dealing with is that you're not necessarily getting the mainstream exposure, and ironically, that is where it is needed. I think that people from the cultural diversity communities already know these stories. It's the community at large that needs to be exposed to these stories (Telephone Interview 2001).

Through Jacob's concern over T.V. broadcasters, we see that the problem of getting commercial channels to air documentaries about non-mainstream subjects is beyond the control of the English Program. This type of situation calls for these T.V. networks to re-evaluate their own philosophical stance towards the general lack of on-screen racial diversity – or what Bannerji would define as "racism by omission."[2] While I have no room in this research to deal with Canadian television broadcasters' policies on programming content, it is an essential subject matter that warrants critical attention in a

separate study.

Of all the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives, what renders the Reel Diversity Competition the most appealing for any emerging visible minority filmmaker is that it allows the winning filmmaker to turn his/her film proposal into an actual calling card film. As my extensive research on the Competition has pointed out, this portfolio piece serves as the most concrete proof of a visible minority filmmaker's talent and merit, and as the way to convince film funding agencies and television broadcasters to invest in his/her next project. In fact this film would be even more influential than the English Program's organizational commitment to racial diversity, in inspiring its documentary producers to produce that person's next film. As a source within the Program points out: "You can talk till you are blue in the face to people in the Film Board about ideology [i.e. racial equity, gender equity] and their eyes will glaze over. But you bring them a good film and you have their attention."

However, the factor that has most compelled me to devote an entire case study on the Reel Diversity Competition is neither the Initiative's emphasis on production nor its stress on the formation of mainstream producer-cultural diversity filmmaker working relationships. It is not even the Competition's ability to broach an array of relevant race-oriented topics such as racial labeling, race-specific essentialism, and the burden of affirmative action. Instead, it is the fact that the Initiative's pro-active stance (on reaching out to under-represented filmmakers rather than on waiting for them to approach the NFB) represents a portable strategy that the English Program can employ, in the future, to draw film proposals from other under-represented filmmaking groups such as Aboriginal people and the disabled. Tator et al. stress that an existing paradigm of diversity can be reexamined and refashioned in order to incorporate the aesthetic agendas of racial

minorities and communities marked as "others" (32-33). Abiding by the principles of a critical multicultural paradigm, the Initiative is a strategy for diversity that can be reshaped to respond to the filmmaking aspirations of these two other groups who, like visible minorities, have traditionally been marginalized within the Canadian filmmaking arts milieu.

2. CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS AND THE FUTURE OF THE INITIATIVES

According to West, what demonstrates a critical organic analyst's commitment to the new cultural politics of difference is his/her ability to sustain a specific type of discourse. This discourse is capable of deconstructing earlier strategies for identity formation, of demystifying power relations, and of constructing multivalent responses to address the complex practices of people of colour (212).

In my effort to serve as such an analyst, I have provided this discourse through my evaluation of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives. Through historical analyses, I have deconstructed earlier symbolic and feminist models of multicultural strategies for diversity, and have shown such methods' limitations in challenging the institution-wide lack of visible minority filmmakers. Furthermore, I have constructed and employed a multidimensional approach (i.e. via a multi-perspective case study and organizational analysis) to study the Initiatives' promotion of cultural diversity.

However, what I should now examine is how a cultural organization, like the English Program, functions as its own critical organic analyst through its own evaluative discourse of its Initiatives. Although it refrains from deconstructing its previous strategies for racial diversity, the Program nevertheless utilizes, like me, a multivalent style to gauge the effectiveness of its current ones. What renders this appraisive approach

multifaceted is its usage of four disparate criteria for success. Present in the English Program's 1998-1999 *Action Plan*, these four objectives which the Program aimed to accomplish by the year 2001 focus on: (1) the visible minority filmmaker's fame; (2) the film's broad exposure; (3) the film's content; (4) film production output qua numerical benchmark (29).

With regards to fame, the Program wanted, by this year, to have its Initiatives enable at least two directors of colour to become recognized as A-list filmmakers within the Canadian television and film industry. With regards to exposure, the Program wanted, in the same period, to have such strategies allow at least two films by filmmakers of colour to achieve a high profile within the industry through a major festival award, a prime-time national broadcast, or a cross-country semi-theatrical release.

Attributing the former goal to the acquisition of the latter aim, NFB sources are confident that one filmmaker of colour who is surely destined to become an A-list filmmaker is Chinese Canadian Jari Osborne. They relate her impending celebrity to her directorial debut on the NFB-produced *Unwanted Soldiers*. Broadcast on CTV as a 1999 Remembrance Day special, the documentary garnered several prestigious awards including the Hot Docs 2000 Award for Best Historical Documentary, the Yorkton Festival Kryshi Cash Award, and the Chinese Canadian National Council's 1999 Media Award.

While it is reasonable to suggest that Osborne is on her way to becoming a star documentary filmmaker, it is certain that her stardom is still in a growth stage and needs more than three years to render her a "household name." For this reason, a more effective way to measure her fame – as well as that of other visible minority filmmakers – is to have the three-year time frame extended to at least a decade. At the end of this ten-year

span, the Program could then assess if any of these filmmakers of colour who made films at the NFB during the Initiatives' existence are making films that are either being televised or being screened in theatres and film festivals.

To measure specifically the success of Reel Diversity winners, the Program can, after these ten years, also assess if the films that they are directing have bigger budgets than that of their filmic calling card, whose budget ranges from $100,000 to $150, 000. The logic is that a larger budget would connote the greater confidence that the film's investors (e.g. producers, funding agencies, and television broadcasters) would have in a filmmaker's capabilities.

These three constructive measures – longer time frame, filmmaker's long-term career survival, and bigger film budgets – would be able to confirm that these visible minority filmmakers are indeed a constant, permanent fixture of the Canadian film and television scene and are, via their presence, rendering the multiple as constant.

Although the English Program needs to rethink its criteria for attaining its A-list filmmaker objective, it has, however, been quite successful in achieving its high profile objective over the last three years. While *Unwanted Soldiers* has captured major documentary accolades and has been aired on national television, both the 1998 and 1999 Reel Diversity Ontario films *Western Eyes* and *Speakers for the Dead* have been aired, during prime-time, on Vision TV and CBC Newsworld's *Rough Cuts*. Within the festival circuit, Jeannette Loakman's *Slippery Blisses* was screened at the 2000 Montreal World Film Festival. In February 2001, Alison Duke's *Raisin' Kane: A Rapumentary* (2000), which focuses on Black Canadian hip-hop artists attempting to break into the music industry, toured the country in a series of screenings hosted by Black university student organizations.

The overwhelming achievement of this measure of success testifies to the efforts by the Special Mandate Team for Cultural Diversity to ensure that works by filmmakers of colour are targeted not only at select crowds (e.g. *Raisin Kane*'s audience of young Black Canadians) but also at mainstream individuals (e.g. viewers of CBC Newsworld, festival-goers). Such endeavors to diversify (and not to ghettoize) these films' audiences manifest the English Program's far-reaching, inclusionary approach to promoting racial diversity via film distribution and marketing.

Based on film content, the English Program's third criterion for assessment examines if the Initiatives have led to a marked increase in the use of people of colour as both film subjects and on-screen experts. This objective is, like my evaluation, strategically essentialist since it assumes that the increased presence of filmmakers of colour would beget some films whose narratives include the viewpoints of non-mainstream individuals. Considering that a number of completed films by visible minority filmmakers in the 2000-2001 fiscal period contain cultural diversity interviewees (see Chart on page 67 for some film titles), it would seem that the Program has premised correctly. Through the success of this objective, the Program demonstrates that the more opportunities that visible minority filmmakers have to create films (via the Initiatives), the greater the possibility that the "normal" narrative voice behind and before the camera of Canadian documentaries will not simply be Caucasian.

Of the four evaluative criteria laid out in the English Program's 1998-1999 *Action Plan*, the one that was listed first and that was even singled out in the 1998-1999 *Strategic and Operational Planning* intranet report was a numerical goal. The objective was to have, by the year 2001, one of every four films – in the three documentary production streams and two ACI production streams – be made by a filmmaker of colour.

My research suggests that, in this year of 2001, that 25% has not yet been achieved in the combined national output of the three documentary production streams.[3] Thus far, I have not found any formal statistical report giving an accurate account of the percentage of the English Program's documentary films by filmmakers of colour since 1997. Nevertheless, my interviews with the three Cultural Diversity Mandate Producers enabled me to develop a position regarding the percentage of documentaries by filmmakers of colour, in each of the three documentary production streams, in the 1999-2000 or 2000-2001 fiscal period.

Due to its expanding pool of emerging visible minority filmmakers from the Toronto area, Documentary Ontario, which undertakes 10 to 12 productions annually, has, for the past two years, been surpassing the 25% target. This amount includes film projects in the investigate, consult, research and script/development, production, and post-production stages. At Documentary East, which averages a yearly output of 10 completed documentary films, Wong estimates that, for this fiscal year, the percentage of projects by filmmakers of colour is close to 25%.

Documentary West, whose Vancouver, Edmonton, and Winnipeg Offices work collectively on 40 to 45 projects a year, completed, in total, 14 projects in the 2000-2001 fiscal year. Nonetheless, Jacob admits that, while his share of documentary productions by filmmakers of colour over the last three to four years may add up to 25%, such a percentage does not necessarily reflect 25% of Documentary West's total output of films by visible minority documentary filmmakers. Jacob estimates that close to 80% of Documentary West's competent, emerging filmmakers of colour are Vancouver-based and are therefore supervised by him. Since there are fewer film projects by visible minority filmmakers in Documentary West's Prairie Provinces, the two producers

responsible for these regions usually oversee documentaries from mainstream filmmakers.

As a result, Documentary West is still in the process of creating practical, cost-effective ways to support filmmakers of colour from these provinces, where the population of these directors is relatively smaller compared to that of Vancouver. As I have mentioned earlier in my study, one such way is by having Documentary West's programming meeting in different major cities across Western Canada and by having Jacob, during his stay in these cities, meet with the local visible minority filmmakers.

Documentary West's support to cultivate filmmakers of colour who want to pursue their filmmaking careers away from Canada's filmmaking hubs of Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal is admirable. However the fact that 80% of Documentary West's documentary films by people of colour derives from Vancouver indicates that the Vancouver Office could serve more of the city's large pool of visible minority – and mainstream – filmmakers. One way could be if the office had more producers to undertake film projects from such filmmakers and to render the existence of a "Reel Diversity B.C. Competition" a reality. The other way could be if the office existed as a separate documentary production branch. In the latter case, the existence of the office as a separate stream would also enable it to have additional producers.

It took Studio D approximately two decades to near its numerical goal of having 50% of its documentary productions be by women filmmakers. If we consider this fact, it becomes apparent that the three-year time frame to have 25% of the English Program's documentary national output be by filmmakers of colour is too short a time period to see any major results. Some time needs to elapse before I, or anyone else, can determine whether the Program reaches or surpasses this minimum numerical standard required to

sustain a different as constant documentary output. Recalling her own desire for immediate results upon her appointment as Cultural Diversity Mandate Producer, Karen King notes how she became acquainted with the virtue of patience:

> You know when I came in here, I was very anxious about making things happen right away...and Barbara Janes would say to me, "It's like imagining a ship in a sea, and we just happen, happen, happen, and we'll eventually turn." Things happen slowly but they happen surely (In Person Interview 2001)

Meeting all four aforementioned benchmarks of success is ultimately how the English Program will confirm the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives' effectiveness in redressing the under-representation of documentary filmmakers of colour. At the same time, attaining these four objectives will signal the maturity of the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives in the sense that they will have outlasted their usefulness. Explaining that the Initiatives still need some more time to run their full course, Barbara Janes notes that, when they complete their journey, Karen King, like Selwyn Jacob and Germaine Wong, may no longer have the additional responsibility of overseeing them. Specifically the Director-General of English Program remarks:

> It will take us a few more years for us to get there. I think that we're not completely there yet. But there are some really good films being made and at a certain point, I think, we will have a colour-blind organization. When we have that, then Karen King will just be a producer. There won't be a special mandate producer anymore, but it will always be our goal to have a cultural diversity workforce (In Person Interview 2001).

We must realize that the acquisition of these four goals does not serve as a signal for the English Program to relegate the issue of racial diversity to oblivion. How Janes will sustain a racially diverse workforce is by turning racial equity, like gender equity, into a constant, institutional objective.[4] However, I anticipate that, by the time all four criteria are met, racial plurality will have become a normal, daily part of the Program's documentary filmmaking environment. The ability for the issue of racial diversity to

serve as an institutional objective that is taken for granted would be the ultimate victory for all advocates of critical multiculturalism.

Despite the fact that the Cultural Diversity in Action Initiatives utilize the term *cultural diversity* in their name, my thesis has constantly insisted that their objective is to render racial diversity the norm. In retrospect, I now realize that this is not their ultimate goal. If these Initiatives exist to ensure that racial diversity becomes "second nature," a documentary film production environment wherein a racially pluralistic mix of cultures comprise the mainstream would, as a result, no longer have any use for the word *race* or its qualifier *racial*, in its vocabulary. This area would just be left with a normalized mix of cultures. Following this logic, it becomes evident that the objective to equate racial diversity with the norm is, by extension, realizing the ultimate goal of progressing from a state of normalized racial diversity to one of normalized cultural diversity. For this reason, it is clear that the Initiatives have every reason to retain, within their rubric, the confusing albeit progressive term *cultural diversity*.

ENDNOTES CHAPTER FIVE

[1] The confusing aspect of the English Program's post-1996 term *cultural diversity* is exacerbated when we look at the press release for the NFB's first annual Reel World Film Festival (April 5-9, 2001) held in Toronto.

According to the press release, the Festival focuses on the work of "talented Canadian and international film and video makers who come from *racially diverse and culturally diverse communities*" (italics mine). The festival featured the works of visible minority filmmakers (including Shin's *Western Eyes* and Holness and Sutherland's *Speakers for the Dead*), Aboriginal filmmakers, Caucasian filmmakers of non-Anglo descent, and race-related works by Caucasian filmmakers of Anglo or non-Anglo descent.

Consequently, the press release had to refrain from using the qualifier *culturally diverse* to mean *visible minority* and instead had to connote visible minority filmmakers through the phrase "racially diverse communities," and Aboriginal and Caucasian filmmakers through the phrase "culturally diverse communities."

We should consider that the press release takes note of the NFB's work to address "cultural diversity" and lists the address of the website (www.nfb.ca/culturaldiversity) that focuses on the subject. Anyone who visits would automatically see that cultural diversity refers to the initiatives to address the under-representation of visible minority filmmakers and their films in the English Program.

[2] The author employs this concept in her book *Returning the Gaze: Essays on Racism, Feminism, and Politics*.

[3] The English Program's accepted rationale for this 25% figure is that it is in keeping with the minimum figure that the federal government's Employment Equity Act requires for achieving a balance with respect to four designated groups. Apart from people of colour, the other three target groups include women, Aboriginal people, and disabled people. Each group must thus account for 25% of the workforce.

[4] One way that the English Program demonstrates gender equity as an institutional objective is by noting in its yearly *Action Plan* how it is dealing with the issue. In fact the Program occasionally still creates strategies to maintain gender equity. For instance, the Program reported that the percentage of documentaries which were directed or co-directed by women and which commenced shooting by March 1997 was 35% (*Evaluation of 1996-97 Program & Action Plan 1997-98* 26). Since this figure was significantly lower than the previous year's release, the Program noted that four producers would for that 1997-98 fiscal year be part of a Special Mandate Team for Gender Equity to ensure that sufficient importance would be given to the issue in program planning (Ibid).

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Shin, Ann. Telephone Interview by author. Montreal to Toronto, 9 November 2000.

Singh, Cyrus Sundhar. Telephone interview by author. Montreal to Toronto, 29 January 2001.

Wong, Germaine. In person interview by author. Montreal, 7 February 2001.

APPENDIX A

(Source: http:www.nfb.ca/E/4/films/culturaldiversity/producers.html.
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SPECIAL MANDATE TEAM OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY: PRODUCERS' BIOS

Selwyn Jacob

Selwyn Jacob holds a Master's Degree in Film from the University of Southern California. Prior to joining the NFB in 1997, he had been an educator and a media consultant for over 15 years, in addition to producing or directing his own films. They include the NFB's **The Road Taken** (1996), a history of Black sleeping-car porters in Canada which won a Gemini Award in 1998, and the award-winning short drama **Carol's Mirror** (1992), as well as the independent productions *We Remember Amber Valley*, *The Saint From North Battleford* and *Al-Tasmim*.

Karen King-Chigbo

Karen King-Chigbo is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre, and the founding Vice-President and Programming Chair of the Black Film and Video Network. She has more than 15 years' experience as a producer in both documentary and drama, and is also an award-winning filmmaker. Her role on the critically acclaimed *Rude* made her the first Black woman to produce a theatrically released dramatic feature film in Canada. *Rude* had its world premiere in the Official Selection at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival.

Germaine Ying Gee Wong

Germaine Ying Gee Wong started out at the NFB as the Coordinator of the Multicultural Program. Over the course of the last 28 years she's had many roles including Executive Producer of the English Program's Atlantic Centre in Halifax and National Marketing Manager in Montreal. In 1996 she was named as one of the three producers on the Cultural Diversity Special Mandate Team.

APPENDIX B

(Source: *A Filmmaker's Guide to the NFB: Ontario Centre.* 2001. p.7.
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THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS

Once your proposal has been accepted it enters the NFB English Program's programming process which has three stages, the Investigate, Research and Script, and Production. Each stage requires approvals.[1]

THE INVESTIGATE STAGE

The *investigate stage* is a compulsory first step for all NFB films. A budget is assigned to develop the initial proposal under the direction of a National Film Board producer. This stage results in the *Investigate Report* which indicates the direction in which the documentary will be developed; what is interesting and important about the subject; what is stylistically original or innovative; and identifies the intended audience and the potential market.

THE CONSULT

At the end of the *investigate stage*, the project is submitted for evaluation and feedback through the *consult process.* The Investigate Report is reviewed by a group of experienced NFB producers from Toronto and across the country and in a consultation session with the documentary's director, producer, and Executive Producer, the project is examined and assessed. The consult process is advisory not prescriptive and provides the production team with the opportunity to get wider, national feedback. A summary of the consult discussion is submitted to the Director-General, along with the Investigate Report for authorization to proceed to the next stage.

RESEARCH AND SCRIPT

The *research and script* stage is separately funded to develop the content further and produce a detailed shooting script, a production budget and specific research regarding target audiences and Canadian and international marketing objectives. At this stage the documentary treatment should include all completed research materials and reflect all the specific structural elements of the production. This final script is submitted first to the Executive Producer of the Ontario Centre, then to the Director-General for approval.

PRODUCTION [2]

The production is greenlighted to completion once the script is accepted, the budget is reviewed and a preliminary marketing plan is drawn up by the NFB Marketing Officer. The NFB producer and staff work with the filmmaker to deliver the production on time and on budget. The final cut requires approval by the Executive Producer of the Ontario Centre and the Director-General, English Program. Productions finished on film require the approval of the Director-General, English Program.

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[1] Since I treat The Consult as a stage, my thesis presents four programming stages, as opposed to three.
[2] I assume that the post-production stage is included under this category.