Using Identity Politics to Address Artworld Issues: A Case Study of the New Initiatives in Film Program at The National Film Board Of Canada

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ABSTRACT: ***Using Identity Politics to Address Artworld Issues: A Case Study of The New Initiatives in Film Program at The National Film Board of Canada***

The Canadian government introduced its Multicultural and Employment Equity policies in a series of attempts to induce federally-controlled institutions to reflect the racial diversity of the Canadian population in their programs and workforces. This is a case study of one institution's response to these policies. It examines the implementation of the six-year New Initiatives in Film (NIF) program begun in 1990 by the now-defunct women's filmmaking unit, Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and exposes the fault lines along which the goals of the NFB's various constituent parts clashed and meshed with the diverse goals of various parties in NIF's target communities (i.e. "emergent aboriginal and 'of colour' women filmmakers"). I argue that because the NIF program was structured according to the politics of identity ("race" in this case), "artworld" issues of unfair hiring and funding practices in the Canadian film industry, became distorted and expressed as issues of identity. Obfuscating the professional dynamics in the world of Canadian filmmaking by using "race" as an organizing principle did not, in the long-term, assure the sustained inclusion of excluded groups within mainstream institutions. A more effective strategy, the data suggests, would have been for underrepresented groups to cultivate alliances with professionals in the filmmaking industry based on concrete occupational, rather than hypothetical race-based interests.

RÉSUMÉ: ***L'usage de la Politique d'Identité comme Outil De Promotion pour l'Insertion des Artistes Exclus des Institutions Etablies: Une Etude de Cas d'Un Programme Multiculturel a l'Office National du Film du Canada***

L'état canadien a introduit ses politiques de multiculturalisme et d'égalité d'accès au travail dans une série de tentatives pour persuader les institutions contrôlées par le gouvernement fédéral, de refléter la diversité raciale de la population canadienne dans leurs programmes et leur main d'oeuvre. Ceci est une étude de cas de la réponse d'une institution à ces politiques. Elle examine la mise en place du programme intitulé Nouvelles Initiatives en Film (NIF) auprès du Studio D (maintenant disparu), et expose les lignes de démarcation d'après lesquelles les buts des différents partis a l'ONF (Programmation anglophone) s'accordaient et s'opposaient à la fois aux buts divers des partis dans la population cible du programme NIF (c'est a dire, "les cinéastes émergents autochtones et 'de couleur'"). J'argumente que la structuration du programme NIF d'après la politique d'identité (la race, en particulier), servait à cacher des pratiques injustes (dans l'embauche du personnel, dans le système pour accorder les subventions) déja encrés dans l'industrie du film et plus particulièrement à l'ONF. Le fait que les femmes autochtones et "de couleur" voulant accéder aux ressources de l'ONF étaient obligées de s'exprimer dans le langage de la politique d'identité, offusquait leur compréhension des dynamiques professionnelles dans l'industrie du film au Canada, et les empêchait de s'assurer une place permanente dans cette industrie. Une meilleure stratégie pour les groupes exclues des foyers du pouvoir, d'après mes données, aurait été de créer des liens avec des professionnels dans l'industrie du cinéma, d'après des intérêts occupationnels et non pas d'après des intérêts hypothétiques de race. Une stratégie de politique d'identité qui semblait avoir réussi a court-terme dans le contexte du Studio D, n'assure pas une place aux exclus à long-terme.

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I wish to dedicate this work to the memory of P.K. Nambiar.

INTRODUCTION

This case study examines a period in the implementation of the six-year New Initiatives in Film (NIF) program begun in 1990 by the now-defunct women's filmmaking unit, Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB). By launching NIF as "an innovative program to provide filmmaking opportunities for Women of Color and Women of the First Nations", Studio D intended to promote multicultural filmmaking (within a woman-focused context) just as it had itself been launched to promote filmmaking that would "reflect the point of view.. and real life situations of women in Canada" (National Film Board 2003).

The final New Initiatives in Film Advisory Board communiqué, however, reported the following:

> In Spring 1995, the representation of "Visible Minorities" in both continuous and temporary positions at the NFB [was] at 4.8%. In the filmmaking occupational group [they] were listed at 4.4%. Aboriginal Peoples are listed at 0.6% and 1.1% respectively. Labour force statistics for 1991 show Aboriginal Peoples and People of Colour participating in the workforce at 12.1% nationally...In Montreal, People of Colour make up approximately 9.5% of the population, while in Metropolitan Toronto and Vancouver we account for approximately 11% and 27% of the workforce respectively. (NIF Advisory Board 1995, 8)

There was clearly still an under- representation of Aboriginal People and People of Color at the Film Board in 1995, five years after NIF began. Although three years prior to the start of NIF, an Employment Equity Directorate had been created at the Film Board, a report entitled *Diversity On and Off the Screen,* noted that the Equity Directorate mainly concentrated its efforts on increasing the representation of *women* in filmmaking and lagged considerably in the inclusion of "visible minorities" at the Board. The author of the report found the performance of the Directorate on racial diversity issues so pitiful that she made six pages of recommendations for improvement. The Equity Director herself complained about a lack of resources that led her to limit her Racial Diversity activities to attending the occasional dinner held by cultural community organizations:

> Our Equity Program has a budget of $150,000 a year for all of Canada. Other institutions our size often allocate $600,000 to $800,000 to their equity programs. Here, Equity is basically me and a secretary.

Despite its modest scope, by 1992, the NFB's Equity Program had allowed 27 women to undergo long-term training, and 300 women to attend short-term workshops in editing, sound, and camera offered in various regions of Canada (Toronto, Halifax, Vancouver, Edmonton, and Winnipeg). (Reyes 1997,19-26)

Equity initiatives at the NFB, however, were still not targeting visible minorities before the start of NIF in 1990. In the late 1980's, governmental pressure on the NFB and other public institutions, combined with lobbying by feminists of color for women's organizations like Studio D to become more racially diverse, contributed to the formation of the NIF program. NIF, however, did not offer regular employment for target groups, but only short-term contracts and some film, video, and professional development funding. A case study sponsored by the NIF Advisory Board and published in 1997, corroborates the observation that in terms of responding to "visible minority" target groups, the NIF program seemed to constitute the extent of the NFB's response:

> Despite claims to the contrary, the responsibility for Racial Diversity in the NFB seems to have mostly been shoved into a corner and left there. Between 1990 and 1996, Studio D and the New Initiatives in Film Programme were left responsible for most of the NFB's results in the area of Diversity... as one former Studio D producer noted, "year after year, NIF was the only thing the NFB management had to show" to the federal government's parliamentary committee on equity. (Reyes 1997, 103)

The Film Board was not the only employer lacking in enthusiasm for Equity Programming. Although the business of 'managing diversity'[1] had been gaining momentum in North America for two decades (Glastra et al. 2000; Wilson 1996), it remained unclear whether Employment Equity legislation was actually helping the designated groups in the workplace. One study assessing the legislation's impact on the disabled, identified an important problem in the application of Equity initiatives in Canada as being employers' tendency to

concentrate solely on showing an increase in the *numbers* of designated groups hired at their workplaces. Employers' eagerness to demonstrate their compliance with the law unfortunately failed to remedy some of the underlying reasons for employment discrimination. The author laments that this tack:

> will not lead to the development of strategies that would truly address structural or systemic barriers to workplace equality. (Raskin 1994, 80)[2]

As an antidote to a superficial accounting of diversity via numbers, participant observation and other forms of qualitative research that take an overall organizational outlook are important in fleshing out the story behind the numbers.

> Immigrants and indigenous people do not work together in firms as autonomous individuals, acting according to some original or innate identity principles (Cox and Finley 1995:84 ff.). They have to cooperate and compete on the basis of the structure, the rules, the ends and the means that the organization provides for them. Since organizational features vary widely, immigrants and indigenous employees will work and interact together under different rules and circumstances (Bader 1995). We argue that organizational features should be taken much more seriously. When frictions or conflicts arise, one should, first of all, look for a contextual logic. More often than not, the various problems, interests perspectives and expression of different social groups, institutional units or individuals are at stake at the same time. Their quite ordinary explanations of labor force circumstances, task structures, control over the arrangement of work processes and the quality of management should not be overlooked. (Glastra et al. 2000, 713-14)

Such a contextual approach would require the researcher to examine the organizational dynamics on-site where particular Employment Equity programs are being attempted. Much ink has been spilled over the past few decades on contemplating whether or not Canada's attempt to deal with diversity has racked up more successes than failures. Critical commentators (e.g. Troper and Weinfeld 1999; Tator et al 1998; Ulysses 2003; Lewycky 1992) have cut through the profusion of ideological and theoretical works to identify the need for more fieldwork evidence to be collected before a clearer picture can be had of Multicultural Policy as it was being instituted in particular work places. The present case study tries to contribute to the gathering of further grounded testimonies. Given that the case at hand involves multiculturalism in the realm of

the arts in Canada, it is worthwhile to briefly examine government policy directed at minority artists and these artists' responses to this policy.

Artists' Critique of Multiculturalism

Multicultural policy[3] as it was initially conceived in the 1970's, proved to be inadequate in addressing the discrimination that non-white Canadians were facing through the denial of access not only to housing and jobs, but also to the media and the arts.[4] The initial tack of assuming that assimilation would naturally occur by the second generation was not working with "of-color" Canadians. "Visible minority" immigrants and their children would continue to face discrimination based on racial stereotypes. The policy which was intended to "help break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies" was slow to take effect in the world of the Arts in Canada.[5] Two decades after its initiation, prominent Canadian Artists of Color still complained that little was being done to stimulate diversity in the artistic milieu. Instead of being lauded for promoting the participation of diverse cultures in the mainstream art worlds, Canada's multicultural policy was being accused of encouraging ghettoization. Independent artists led the attack with their vociferous critiques of how arts juries made funding decisions :

> On the one hand, we have the arts councils supporting an ahistorical, trans- contextual "excellence" in a capitalized art. On the other, the ministries and departments of multiculturalism promoting "the ethnics", with all the baggage and assumptions around non- Western, non- white work as naive, static and so on...Ballet is art, Chinese classical dance is multiculturalism... Multiculturalism shifts the focus away from the political and social questions of race such as housing, employment, education, access to power, into a political marketing of personal identity. It champions a notion of cultural difference in which people are encouraged to preserve cultural forms of song and dance they didn't practice before they came to Canada. Multiculturalism's function has been to co-opt and eclipse the potential threat in anti- racist organizing. (Fung 1990, 18)

Artists practicing non- European art forms or fusions thereof, felt that the mainstream cultural funding bodies like the prestigious Canada Arts Council had accorded them little recognition (Li 1994). Since Canadian arts juries conceived of their artistic endeavors as better showcased in traditional international folk and

craft festivals rather than in mainstream performance halls and art galleries, artists practicing non-European art forms were accorded little support as bona fide professionals. As a result of a lack of funding, these artists found themselves having to operate as amateurs, thus reinforcing the notion of their contribution to Canadian culture as insignificant (Troper and Weinfeld 1999, 10). In this vein critics noted that:

> Multiculturalism ... places emphasis on socializing rather than high skill, on amateurism rather than professionalism, and on service to a local community rather than distinction in the wider sphere of established arts. (Hill 1988, 8)

Since only European art forms were recognized as worthy of receiving mainstream arts funding, Artists of Color using styles and forms from Other[6] cultures had to seek support elsewhere. The provincially- based Multiculturalism[7] directorates were often the convenient and only alternative funding source; but, as one commentator noted about Ontario, this should not have excused mainstream arts organizations for their lack of ethnocultural members:

> In terms of arts funding, multiculturalism is the catch- all trough at which all but Ontario's anglophone, francophone and Native population must feed... There are some 85 ethnocultural groups in Ontario at present... How then do we explain the predominantly WASP nature of the OAC [Ontario Arts Council] board, its officers and its juries? (Nourbese Philip 1987,16).

A further problem that non- European artists appealing for funding to the multiculturalism directorates had to face was having to market themselves as "representing" their people. If one artist of African background, for example, received funds based on her ethnic identity, the next African- origin artist in line could not. This was because funding was often allotted only to one representative of each ethnic community. Such close association of multicultural funding with ethnicity rather than merit or skill in the practice of art, began to raise concerns amongst "ethnicized" artists. One filmmaker cautioned fellow artists about the downside of tailoring and marketing their work as representing a particular identity group and the stain this cast on their professional abilities:

> In our eagerness to embrace a variety of ethnocultural voices, the basic craft and art of filmmaking is sometimes overlooked. No one becomes an accomplished filmmaker or screenwriter overnight. As producers, we are sometimes too eager to grab our share of the pie without regard for long term effects. We actively participate in the "one of each" syndrome perpetuated by "multicultural" funding agencies when we announce that we speak for "our people" and demand funding on the basis of racial quotas rather than the merit of the work. We limit the content of our work to suit the criteria of the multicultural programs, instead of lobbying for diversity not only in content, but also form. (Onodera 1990, 30-31)

This critic points out how artists, in order to get funding, may be led to claim that they "represent" their specific cultural groups when in reality they work as individuals, unaccountable to their so- called communities of origin.

Besides vying for greater access to funding, minority artists also lobbied for greater control over the mass media, given its power in shaping the public's view of reality (Fleras and Elliott 2003: 323-324). When multicultural policy was introduced in 1971[8] awareness began growing amongst government media agencies like the CBC and the NFB that some improvement had to be made in their portrayals of ethnic minorities. But keeping track of improvements made in the *messages* put out by the media did not necessarily indicate a commensurate improvement in minority artists' job opportunities in the communications sector[9].

In the 1980's, multicultural policy was still based on a notion of ethnic relations. Given the influx of non-European, "of-color" immigrants in the same decade, it became clear that the policy would have to be modified to deal head-on with the change in demography and the resultant inter-group relations in Canada. *Ethnic* relations would have to be transformed to *race*-relations. But aggressive anti-racist measures were not the thrust of the new race relations focus of the Canadian government. Rather, the mosaic idea of adding cultural tiles to the old bicultural pattern, was carried into a new policy that upstaged Multiculturalism in 1986: i.e. Employment Equity[10]. Employment Equity did not focus as much on anti-racism and anti-discrimination, as on carrying on the mosaic tradition into government-controlled employment practices.[11]

It soon became evident that the Employment Equity Act of 1986 would have to be enforced more stringently if any improvement in government employment practices was to be expected. Media organizations as employers of personnel were neither setting nor reaching their voluntary targets for hiring minorities quickly enough[12]. Moreover, requiring them to meet numerical targets was not proving to be an adequate measure, judging from ongoing complaints from artists of color (see Tator et al. 1998). If successful Employment Equity solutions were to be put in place, it was becoming evident that the specific workplace dynamics in each media organization would have to be examined at close quarters to find out why minority artists were not being brought on staff.

In this vein, the present case study examines the background to an especially contentious period in the life of the multicultural, equity-inspired program at the National Film Board of Canada called New Initiatives in Film (NIF). The NFB was an especially good case to examine because as an organization, it has claimed, since its inception at the start of World War II, to be socially-conscious and in touch with the Canadian population. Even before the advent of Employment Equity, the NFB had been infused with a spirit of liberal humanism and had tried to represent the plight of the downtrodden in its film productions. However, despite its reputation as being the "eyes and ears of Canadians", it was only in response to the Canadian government's Employment Equity policy that the Film Board openly dealt with examining the proportions of underrepresented groups in its workforce.

Given the Film Board's strategic position in the production of government-sponsored messages, one could certainly make the argument that the NFB played an important role in the manufacture of state ideology, which since the 1970's included multiculturalism. Two lines of enquiry could be pursued in the further investigation of the role of a government-run arts body like the NFB in the "encoding process of multiculturalism" (Lewycky 1992, 389)[13]: i.e. to examine the types of people engaged to be the ideologues; and/or to examine the actual messages that are produced. In taking the first tack, one would look not only at the civil servants involved in policy making and implementation, but also

at the advisory groups that inform them. (Ibid, 391)[14] In taking the second tack, one would have to conduct a content analysis of the Film Board's multicultural film fare. In this case study, I concentrate on the first line of enquiry.

Those involved in the "encoding" process of multiculturalism in Canada have themselves taken two broad perspectives on the use and potential of diversity-based policy. The optimistic, "multiculturalism as incubator of a new world" perspective (McAll 1990, 178), assumed both by progressive[15] and business[16] supporters of Employment Equity, argues in favor of collective rights being accorded based on the notion of ethnic- or race-based communities as the best available palliative to past discriminations within a liberal democratic state. A more pessimistic view of Employment Equity and Multicultural policies, one that sees "multiculturalism as the artificial lungs that keeps the old world going " (Ibid), argues that collective rights should be accorded based on universal human rights. A range of ideologues from right to left can be found adopting this perspective: Loney arguing for a return to a neutral, non-affirmative action-based Canadian state that functions on the merit principle; Kahlenberg, influenced by the American war on poverty reformists, promoting a class-based rather than a race-based affirmative action; and finally, various Marxists[17] arguing that capitalism and the liberal democracies it spawns are not only incapable of leveling the playing field to remedy past race-based discrimination, but are in fact interested in maintaining social inequality to ensure the availability of cheap labor for profit maximization. Both optimist and pessimist perspectives of the potential of multicultural policy to effect social change, found a voice in the NIF program through various players.

[1] In the context of an internationalized economy and the resulting diversification of the world's populations through migration, this issue has become increasingly pertinent for countries like Canada which rely on a steady flux of immigrants to constitute their labor force. In Canada, large-scale diversity initiatives in the workplace were sparked by the 1986 Employment Equity legislation requiring all federal government institutions and federally funded workplaces to set up voluntary targets to comply with the law* whose general purpose was "to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities" (the designated groups). * "The purpose of this Act is to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfillment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences. Taken from web site: http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/E-5.401/48928.html

[2] see also Wallis (p. 73) on how employers' focus on collecting data was also a way to delay the implementation of their equity plans

[3] As the ink began to dry on Canada's 1967 constitutional parchment, it started to become apparent that the percentage of non-Anglo non-Franco immigrants who had been entering Canada over the last century, would make the binational/ bicultural framework intended to bind Canada together, problematic. Policy makers eager to smooth over inter-ethnic relations faced the disgruntlement of ethnic communities not included in the bicultural framework. Adjustments were quickly made to the two-solitudes conception of Canada[3] and to the bicultural framework, was added the policy of Multiculturalism (1971)[3]. As long as most new Canadian citizenships were issued to white immigrants from Europe, it was assumed that assimilation would occur automatically over a generation, with the second generation of immigrants blending in with the Anglo-Franco substrate without much interference from government. Hence, multicultural policy could get away with a laissez-faire attitude in integrating new citizens to Canadian society. Multiculturalism could simply focus on reassuring all the other ethnic communities not included in the bicultural framework[3] that they needn't fear losing their unique cultural practices or their mother tongues, that official Multiculturalism would ensure the availability of monies to preserve their traditions in the new Canadian mosaic.

[4] See Henry & Ginsberg's seminal work on racism on the labor market

[5] Prime Minister's statement, House of Commons, October, 1971,p.2.

[6] Here, I am referring to the concept of "The Other " which was popularized by Edward W. Said in his book, ORIENTALISM, New York: Vintage Books,1979.

[7] Multiculturalism has been housed under various rubrics, another being Department of Heritage, as part of the Secretary of State, & Employment Equity

[8] an official Multiculturalism *Act* was only passed in 1998

[9] see Ma, J. and Da Rosa, M. for employment statistics in the NFB

[10] Employment Equity legislation, Bill C-64, was tabled by Lloyd Axworthy in mid-December, 1994. He had been the minister under Trudeau's Liberals who in 1983 had appointed the Abella Royal Commission on Equality in Employment. The commission did its work during John Turner's brief reign and delivered its report to Mulroney's Conservatives in September 1984. It was Flora MacDonald, the minister of employment and immigration who oversaw the Federal Employment Equity Act on August 13, 1986. Abella had concluded that voluntary measures wouldn't work. The Act covered all federally regulated companies with 100 or more permanent full- or part-time employees, or about 5 percent of the Canadian labor force. [The Politics of Equity, Sandra Martin, Toronto Star, Saturday, November 18, 1995, B4][elaborate on details from article by Sandra Harris. The new bill C-64 would be broader and tougher, covering all employees in the federal public sector, including the Canadian Forces, the RCMP and CSIS. The Canadian Human Rights Commission would be given " the authority to conduct audits of the approximately

350 public and private employers covered under the Federal Contractor's Program, to hold tribunals, and to levy fines of up to $50,000 for non-compliance." [ibid B1]

[11] Much confusion has ensued over the extent to which Canadian Employment Equity resembles the American affirmative action. Attacks from the right have accused Employment Equity of promoting a quota system which serves to exclude white males. Defenders of Employment Equity have countered with arguments of the policy simply serving to force Employers to come up with their own plan to reflect the racial diversity of Canadian demographics . See T. Wilson, pp. 47-56 for a summary of American and Canadian legislated fairness policies

[12] "[I]n 2000, a study by Florian Sauvageau and David Pritchard at Quebec's Laval University revealed that 97.3 per cent of Canadian journalists across all media are white." (http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/ethnics_and_minorities/minorities_news.cfm)

[13] " Porter observed that the phenomenal growth of the civil service in the early part of the 20th century has created a governmental bureaucracy with a new and relatively autonomous system of power and decision-making. Van Loon and Whittington (1976) note that are the bureaucracy is a vital link in the whole public policymaking process in Canadian society. In fact they suggest that the bureaucracy is the core institution at the policy formulation stage. Through culling the official government Canada telephone directories since 1971, more than 250 bureaucrats have been identified in my research as having served during the last 20 years in work-related to multiculturalism. They have had an historic role in the "encoding" process of multiculturalism." (Lewycky: 389)

[14] "Frequently government departments may have a specific clientele as their raison d'etre.. And interest groups may seek a separate department to serve them...advisory committees of outside experts inform the bureaucracy. Van Loon and Whittington point out that virtually every department can boast of several advisory committees." (Lewycky: 391)

[15] the strategic essentialists like Spivak, Hooks, Tator and believers in multiculturalism

[16] promoters of globalization who promote tapping into the language and business connections of new immigrants to improve Canada's international market position; see Wilson for the Business Case for Equity

[17] See for example, Li, Mazurek, Singh-Bolaria, Sorenson

CHAPTER I: THE HOST: NFB & STUDIO D

A. The National Film Board of Canada and the Public Service Message

Before describing and analyzing the New Initiatives in Film program as a case study, it is important to examine the organizational undercurrents in the program's host institution, the NFB. In this vein, I attempt in this chapter to trace certain characteristics and trends in the Film Board that reappear in some form or the other, decades later in the NIF program.

Grierson's NFB: Filmmaker As Propagandist

Historians who have written about the birth of the National Film Board, largely concur that in the period of its inception between 1939 and 1943, the NFB functioned primarily as a national wartime propaganda unit, to " rouse the Canadian people to win the war.." (Kurchak 1977, 120). John Grierson, known as the "founder of the NFB", originally came to Canada from the British Empire Marketing Board on an exploratory visit to see how Canada's own Government Motion Picture Bureau (MPB) [1] functioned. During the war he became extremely powerful as the head of the Film Board which, by 1941 had absorbed the Motion Picture Bureau that Grierson had originally come to Canada to study. Furthermore, in 1943, Grierson was also given the directorship of the wartime information board. It is often times quipped that Grierson became the Canadian Dr. Goebbels, propagandizing not for fascism but for winning the war (Jones 1981, 19-31).

The NFB of Grierson's time did not claim to be an arts body. Grierson saw documentary production as group work and he frowned on those who wished to display personal credits on films. Grierson was averse to any talk of art for art's sake, lest such a trend become detached from public needs. In Grierson's thinking, the Film Board clearly ought to be a public service institution whose logical sponsor would be a body like the government of Canada with clear responsibilities towards the population. It would interpret Canada and more specifically, Canada's role in the war effort, to the Canadians. Organizationally,

Grierson thought that greater coordination was needed to keep track of the film projects undertaken by various branches of the government, so that similar scripts and shoots were not conducted by different departments. (Ibid, 21) There was also a need for some form of organizational base for film production so that the sponsorship of films could be directed at a team of filmmakers rather than at individuals. Documentary projects, in his estimation, should be assigned :

> " not on the basis of one director, one location and one film at a time, but on the basis of half a dozen directors with complementary talents and a hundred and one subjects all along the line". (Ibid, 14)

The philosophy on which Grierson harnessed the National Film Board during wartime, was to render an invaluable public service by producing films that would support the war effort. For this purpose, it was important, according to Grierson, to come up with a formula and format for wartime propaganda that would allow films to be "banged out, no misses". The solution he came up with was to hire neophytes. The first Film Board hires would hence need no basic knowledge of how to wield a camera. Grierson preferred inexperienced but idealistic people to staff the Board so that war time films could be expeditiously made without using a camera at all. On-location shooting was seen as too time-consuming, messy and unpredictable. Manipulating secondhand footage through editing, however, gave the director greater control over the persuasive message. In the heat of the war, the message (to keep the war effort going) was seen as more important than the cinematic skill with which that message was delivered. Bringing young Canadian neophytes on board "coincided with a need for a kind of filmmaking *tabula rasa* on which Grierson could impose his propaganda style..." (Nelson 1988, 62-63). Grierson's encouragement of Canadian apprentices to master the compilation technique[2] rather than to do direct camera work, kept these apprentices from fully controlling the image-production process. They did become good editors though.

Grierson greatly admired the filmmaking style of Sergei Eisenstein, the Russian filmmaker who is emulated by NFB filmmakers even today. Eisenstein was one of the first moviemakers to seriously use editing techniques as a way to order his films. These techniques were of great interest to NFB filmmakers due to

their keen interest in editing found footage.[3] Unfortunately, Grierson did not seem to be a particularly good student of Eisensteinian principles, for although the NFB wartime films attempted to use Eisenstein's metaphoric techniques, the techniques themselves did not yield an aesthetic product:

> ..there is no intimate relationship with the material, no exploration of actuality. The soundtrack in *Canada Carries On* and *World in Action* overwhelm the images. The commentary is shouted, the music shrilly dramatic. Artful the films may have been; art, no. They were tracts. (Jones 1981, 39)

The NFB's wartime production consisted almost always of compilation films, with an overbearing commentary as the only device that ordered the material. The format of using film footage acquired from foreign archives and imposing upon it, a "voice of reason" soundtrack became the Film Board's expedient modus operandi for producing wartime propaganda.

Grierson saw the exhibition of NFB films as having "an organic function in the life of the polis" (Ibid, 14) and deemed that the Board had a duty to reach the great many Canadians who did not attend theatres. For this purpose, non-theatrical circuits consisting of film libraries and vans equipped with projectors were set up. These non theatrical distribution systems built up during the war were rerouted during peacetime to help veterans reintegrate into civilian life. The Film Board then adapted its approach to making educational films that addressed specific problems identified by sponsoring government departments. The problem remained that the government-sponsored films produced by Grierson and the film making system he set up were top-heavy. They were messages from the government to the people and the people had little say in government policy

In 1950, the NFB also changed its organizational structure. The Film Board was a strange animal: partly government and partly business. It received an annual amount from the federal government, and additional monies from specific government departments sponsoring films, and from sales of theatrical films to distributors. After the war, another organizational change took place at the NFB: a system of four "units"[4], each having its own set of writers, producers, directors and editors, was set up. Each unit had its own executive producer who reported to

the organization's Director of Production. Cameramen and other technical staff were drawn from the technical service departments. The main object was to produce professional films that respected time and budgetary limits. This "professional" school produced good, solid, but fairly non-descript films.

During this period, however, a special group of filmmakers in one unit, Unit B, did value aesthetics and despite having at times to extend fixed schedules and overspend the budget, did produce memorable films. The 1954 *Faces of Canada* series, for example, asked filmmakers to find a "typically Canadian" person in their hometown and make a short vignette about them on a small budget. Colin Low's *Corral* (filmed on the Alberta ranch where he grew up), and Roman Kroiter's *Paul Tomkowicz: Railway Switchman* (about a colorful immigrant in Winnipeg), were successful in escaping the two-fold fault of earlier NFB documentaries: relying on collected material (often found footage) to illustrate certain pre-determined didactic tenets, or producing pseudo live-action documentaries that had been prescripted and pre-rehearsed. Both of these filmmaking strategies yielded superficial and highly contrived products. Unit B films, however, allowed the material from original live-action footage to determine the film's structure, hence escaping the label of "propaganda" that had tarnished much of NFB production until then. Unit B's work began to reflect the actual rhythms of life that documentaries[5] are supposed to portray, not allowing pre-determined content to overshadow the form and the aesthetic of the footage taken (Jones 1981, 59-65) [6].

The Independents

Independent filmmakers were left out of the NFB structure entirely unless they cooperated with the Film Board. These private sector filmmakers felt that the brand of Canadian nationalism promoted by Grierson and the NFB, staked out a space for the Board and those who were lucky enough to work in it, but completely dwarfed the Canadian private filmmaking industry.

Grierson had promoted the establishment of an entirely separate non-theatrical distribution circuit for NFB films, justifying it as a way to reach the vast number of Canadians who could not get to theaters. However, he also played a

big part in opposing a possible Canadian quota system from being instituted to the detriment of the American majors. This non-interference pact allowed Hollywood to continue with the vertical integration[7] of the film industry within Canadian borders. In 1939, Americans had near-monopoly control of film distribution and exhibition in Canada, with 95% of the box office and all first-run theatres in their hands (Kurchak 1977, 84).

> [T]he entire parallel structure of distribution and exhibition of NFB films for the non- theatrical circuits was .. a clear concession to Hollywood. Established in 1942, the non-theatrical circuits were an effective way of leaving the commercial box-office structure in place. [They] actually extended Hollywood's terrain while further marginalizing Canadian film. Though Grierson presented his non-theatrical circuits as a progressive and populist alternative, they might more realistically be seen as a way of maintaining the status quo in which Hollywood controlled virtually all of Canada's movie theatres and film distribution, thereby preventing indigenous production from gaining any more than a miniscule portion of screen time in Canadian theatres. (Nelson 1988, 89)

After the war ended, private filmmakers had hoped that the Film Board would reassume its prewar advisory role, thus making all government-sponsored film contracts available for open bidding. This did not transpire, however, and the irate commercial producers consequently spearheaded the claim that the Film Board was performing a job that could be done better by private industry.

The Canadian private producers were not the only ones to question the need for the Film Board after the war; the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (the CBC) was also wary of the Film Board's foray into what it felt was its domain: Canadian television. And more importantly, American subsidiary distributors and exhibitors joined the NFB's domestic detractors. The American film industry feared that the Canadian government, via the NFB or otherwise, would follow the lead of many European nations and impede Hollywood's distribution activities in the Canadian theatrical market through the imposition of film import restrictions (Jones 1981, 51-2).

Intense lobbying from Hollywood resulted in the restriction of Canadian independent films to the non-theatrical market:

> The Motion Pictures Association of America, headed for the last twenty years by Jack Valenti, acts as a shadow State Department. With offices around the world, the interests of the MPAA and American foreign policy seem intertwined. Valenti, accorded quasi-diplomatic status, lobbies at the highest government levels to counter legislation designed to protect a local, national cinema... In 1988 Valenti flew to Ottawa to exert pressure on the Canadian government to change then communications minister, Flora MacDonald's proposed Film Importations Act, the first ever by a federal government. The "obnoxious" limitations on the Majors' Canadian activities were removed from the final draft of the Bill tabled in Parliament. (Perlmutter 1991, 6)

The MPAA's concerted efforts to restrict the distribution of Canadian theatrical motion pictures resulted in the weak performance of Canadians' film and video sales in the domestic market.[8] Figures showed that sales of Canadian products in the non-theatrical market are considerably higher (24%) than in the theatrical one (3%).

Independent filmmakers felt that issues such as imposing tariffs and quotas on films imported from the United States were not given due consideration in Canadian politics because NFB filmmakers were too cushy with their own permanent jobs to help fight American incursion into the Canadian film industry.[9]

Identity politics: The Massey Commission Takes Up the Task of Defining What It Means To Be "Canadian"

One wonders why private industry did not prevail over the NFB and succeed to collapse it, especially in the post-war period when the immediate need for propaganda had dissipated. The answer surely lies in the role that the Massey Commission[10] (1949-1951) played in promoting Canadian nationalism through its defence of existing public institutions like the Film Board. Commissioners, chosen from Canada's cultural elite, got their inspiration from British rather than American sources, from journals like *Scrutiny* put together by F.R. Leavis and the New Criticism. The British intellectuals writing in the journal were nostalgic for a pre-industrial community that had been destroyed by modern industrial capitalism. British cultural authority, Mathew Arnold's liberal humanist ideas were shared by the high-brows of the Commission. Like Grierson, they:

> valued [culture] for its political effects far more than for its intrinsic merits. There was little advocacy of 'art for art's sake': culture had a role to play in forging the good society. (Litt 1992, 100-101)

Although intellectuals of the Massey Commission were products of an earlier era of Christian education and social concern, they knew that it was not a good political move to graft their religious Christian values onto a secular political culture. So instead, they placed their hopes in traditional high culture (Ibid, 92-3). High culture (e.g. in the form of NFB films, the national opera, ballet, symphony, etc) was cast as an antidote to the foreign threat of mass culture from America. Because Canada had an established tradition of state intervention in its national institutions (e.g. the railway, the CBC, the NFB), members of the culture lobby argued that if Canada retained some cultural independence, it could build a more civilized society than the US. Hence the liberal humanists of Canada's cultural elite, married their interests with those of Canadian nationalism to popularize their perspective (Ibid, 103-6). Thus nationalism in Canada would become the bearer of liberal humanist views. However, the problem was that there was no "natural" or historic unity to (English) Canada besides its allegiance to Britain. Now that the US connection was stronger than the British one:

> .. Canadian nationalism had little economic, ethnic, linguistic, or geographical foundation.. it was a political loyalty that needed cultural reinforcement if it was to exercise any real sway over Canadians. Massey thought the commission's great purpose was to reinforce.. Canadian nationhood. (French sociologist Andre Siegried cited in Litt 1992, 109)

But how was Canadian nationalism to be defined? It could be defined by *what it was not* or by *what it could be*. Due to the attachment of the members of the culture lobby to liberal economic principles, Canadian nationalism was certainly not anti-capitalist. In the context of the Cold War, it even posed cultural nationalism as a defence against "foreign" ideologies like communism. Due to the presence of French Quebecers in the Canadian polity, a bicultural principle promoting cultural interaction could possibly foster a common Canadianism. This principle was fragile, however, as the Film Board's own history shows. Many

francophones quipped that the ONF (Office National du Film: French for the NFB) was an abbreviation for "Organisation non-francophone"[11]. In 1964, the separatist Quebecois journal, Parti Pris, registered the complaints of a group of NFB filmmakers who accused the institution of allowing very little freedom of expression for Francophone culture.

> .. the film board is an instrument of colonization. It is a gigantic propaganda machine whose role it is to put the public to sleep and exhaust the creative drive of the filmmakers (Jones 1981, 109)

The Quebec separatists were not the only ones to take exception to the Film Board's philosophy which very much reflected the tenets of the culture elite, represented by the Massey commission and John Grierson himself. Many NFB filmmakers felt that Grierson and his followers had little feel for Canada as a country. NFB filmmaking had been dominated:

> by the educated elite middle-class: Grierson's boys. Very pompous... the whiz college kids with all the answers- mildly left-wing camp stuff very serious and scholarly but without great understanding of the country. (Colin Low cited in Jones 1981, 159)

Other NFB filmmakers felt that the Board's overbearing nationalism and concern to portray Canada as one country, led them to neglect contentious, social issues and cinematic trends:

> Will it ever be possible for filmmakers within the structure of the film board to talk about love and sex and political aspirations and social change and all those things which man holds dear? Or will they be confined to talk about the history of papermaking and asbestos mining and Canadian wildlife and urban development with slow zooms and quiet seagulls? (Ibid, 108)

Although the Canadian cultural elite had presented documentary film as an alternative to American commercial entertainment films, post-war filmmakers at the Board were growing weary of the Film Board formula. They were excited by developments in dramatic neo- realism which used documentary styles in making fiction films about social issues. [12] NFB filmmakers in this period were also influenced by the gaining popularity of the auteur theory on artistic production, which stated that the individual artist should be in total control of the product.

This theory is especially difficult to put into practice in an inherently cooperative art world such as filmmaking[13], for even the film director cannot control all aspects of the art, as auteur theorists required. Only one form of traditional filmmaking, [14] animation, affords the filmmaker the possibility to control all aspects of the production process because:

> The animator does not have to cope with uncontrollable reality in order to collect his material, and the editing problems are far less demanding. Nor does he incur responsibilities to living subjects (Ibid, 82).

Other than in the more individualized and controllable animation filmmaking process, the currency of the auteur theory had some practical effects on NFB film production. The Film Board's earlier tendency to deliberately leave out credits in the spirit of teamwork, for example, had inhibited filmmakers from showing off the specific tasks they had performed on films. NFB technicians or freelancers who worked in the private sector needed credits on their resumes to attract future contracts. Audiences for their part also grew curious about the filmmaking process and demanded to know who performed which role in the shooting of the film. Film festivals further emphasized the work of particular individuals, as did film critics. It was an age where the NFB's group philosophy was being pushed aside by the auteur trend and individual artists were being singled out for kudos.

Regionalization

Some concession to private industry had already been attempted by the NFB through Regionalization. In the early 1960's the NFB underwent a structural change when regional offices were established in Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Their main function was to gather new ideas and send them back to headquarters. In 1976, the offices that had been closed in 1968 due to cutbacks, were reopened as Studios and given decent operating budgets. Regionalization ideally would lead to democratization in at least two ways: through a decentralization of production to make technical support available locally in the regions of Canada; and through a sharing of authority with local film communities, including the private producers who had never seen eye to eye with

the Board. The creation of the studios in the regions would not only have the positive effect of stimulating local industries (like the building of post-production laboratory facilities, for example); it would also result in rekindling historic tensions with local independent filmmakers. With the NFB opening regional branches, some independent filmmakers felt that the Film Board would begin competing with private industry for money from provincial governments and foundations.

Other independents who were able to get technical support or do co-productions with the Film Board, resented the red tape that the NFB bureaucracy generated. Delays in the processing of payments often cut in on their rent and grocery money. Regional executive producers from the NFB, for their part, were torn between the rules and dictates of headquarters and the demands of local independents. One director described his dilemma:

> often I have to fly to Montreal in order to get something approved or accomplished. All in all we need at least a month's lead time for anything, and the waste, the money, the travel, the time is considerable. (Ibid, 188)

Furthermore, decisions about which projects would get approved were taken by a program committee at headquarters. This committee often relied on hearsay to make its judgments. One regional director complained:

> .. we wanted to make a film .. about two key characters in the 1979 Yukon federal election. This was scuttled by headquarters. Someone on the program committee had "heard from a friend" that these two characters were not very interesting or important. (Ibid, 189)

A prairie-based filmmaker described how the NFB's presence in the regions affects local community filmmakers' ability to work with realistic industry timelines:

> [The NFB's] way of spending so much time on a film can exercise its own kind of tyranny, because you're not working to a deadline, and you've got all that footage. This looks great to the outsider but it becomes a real trap. One of our people has been editing a 20-minute film for 13 months. (Ibid, 194)

A filmmaker from Newfoundland criticized the NFB for creating a homogenized film product, accusing the institution of stamping out individuality and uniqueness:

> The institutional touch shows up in all the films. By the time an idea emerges from the NFB as a film the film feels like every other film coming out of there. (Ibid, 195)

Despite producing a homogenized format and genre, those lucky enough to work at NFB headquarters over a period of time, did benefit from a long-established tradition of craftsmanship at the Film Board. Young filmmakers entering the production premises in Montreal had the opportunity to apprentice formally or informally with the hundreds of skilled personnel there. Young filmmakers who worked in the regions, however, did not have the same possibility. The determined young filmmakers residing in the regions, however, did gain competence in filmmaking by training in the private or grant-getting sector. Those who did get the occasional contract with the Film Board, tended to perceive the NFB as just another funding source, on par with other arts institutions and private media companies that gave subsidies to or hired independent filmmakers and videographers on contract. (Ibid, 191)

In the period I was conducting my case study, independents continued to accuse those working within the Film Board of siphoning away funds from the more creative, less bureaucratic artists such as themselves. Very specific complaints were leveled at the Film Board in the 1990's. Two NFB programs were being used by the independents: the PAFPS (Program to Assist Films in the Private Sector), and the ICF (the Independent Coproduction Fund). Those independents using the PAFPS program, which provided post-production services (like doing titles, processing rushes, edge-numbering, providing test prints, etc.), were fairly satisfied with the way the program functioned. The consensus seemed to be that PAFPS provided support to "non-profit organizations and cooperatives specifically created to assist developing filmmakers" [15] without unduly interfering in the creative or production aspects of the filmmaker's work.

On the other hand, a second program aimed at independents, the ICF, it was felt, "disrupt[ed] the logical relationship between independent producers and distributors" (Baker 1991, 45). Through the Independent Coproduction Fund, the NFB demanded that the independent filmmaker, in return for financial assistance, give up all her/his "non-exclusive, non- commercial, non-theatrical rights" (Ibid). This meant that the independent producer receiving aid from the ICF program, had to relinquish at the pre-production stage itself, all potential alternate distribution revenues. If upon the film's completion the NFB decided not to market the product aggressively, the filmmaker's hands were tied, for distribution rights were already given over to the Film Board. Canada's funding system for independent filmmakers in the form of co-productions, independents claimed:

> .. amounts to a benevolent form of censorship which ensures the production of critical cinema while simultaneously preventing the widespread dissemination of the work, thereby creating an invisible cinema. (Rumsby 1991, 48)

If filmmakers *not* accepting the terms of the ICF program decided instead to approach private-sector distribution centres to market their films, they encountered the inability of these centers to compete with the NFB's pricing structure (100% government- subsidized). Independent filmmakers were then driven back to the NFB for sponsorship, with the result that:

> Independent production becomes more and more tailored in style, content and form to the criteria of the funding agency as financial dependency grows. Canadian independent films and videos become homogeneous with films and videos produced by a Canadian public institution. (Ibid)

To reiterate, this homogenization in content and style occurs because it was the NFB, with its institutional proclivities and biases for certain formats and messages, that decided on which independent productions would be promoted.

Challenge For Change: Filmmaker As Community Development Worker

It took two decades after the war ended for the initial spirit of the NFB as a public service institution whose purpose it was to "interpret Canada to

Canadians" to manifest itself once again. The stimulus was the beginning of the U.S. war on poverty, in response to which the NFB created the program, Challenge for Change. Instead of the *government* sending messages to the population, Challenge for Change would allow *citizens* to express their complaints to the government with the help of the NFB filmmaker. The original top-down process would now be reversed. Films would be used to foster social change and they would have three purposes: to explain a social problem to a government department or to the public; to help social workers and activists to effect change; and to promote film activities amongst the economically disadvantaged. (Jones: 159-160) However, there were practical problems with this new bottom up approach. Various types of criticism began to be leveled at the Challenge for Change program by community activists.

One criticism expressed doubt about how a government department which was supposed to administer government policy, could possibly go against its own dictates and carry out social change. An aboriginal woman commenting on Challenge for Change, gave a specific example:

> "the major unifying factor among Indians all across Canada is their common dislike for Indian Affairs" [15]. How could Indians and Indian Affairs work together?(Jones 160)

The Challenge for Change program ran into problems early on in its term (1966) with an hour-long documentary it made called, *The Things I Cannot Change.* The film was a portrayal of the life of a poor Montreal family with ten children and was intended to promote a change of attitude towards the poor in an era where a "war on poverty" was being led in the United States. Unfortunately, when the film aired on television, the family was ridiculed by its neighbors, and it ended up hurting, not helping the family whose life had been publicized. But the experience of this film taught the Challenge for Change filmmakers how important it was to seek the input of those being filmed before the film went public.

A prototype of the program's films was a series made by Colin Low, formerly of Unit B. The program's modus operandi came to be known as the

Fogo process, named after the Fogo Islands in Newfoundland, a community which participated in Low's series:

> [The Fogo process is one] in which the filmmaker is as much a community development worker as a filmmaker... [S/he] uses film as an instrument of inter- or intra-community awareness in order to help people find their strengths as a community... The filmmaker must go beyond his "rights" as an artist: he must be concerned with a "process" not just a "product". (Kurchak 1977, 121-122)

Low's method was to take the rough cuts to the subjects of the film and ask the people featured if the film reflected what they meant to convey and if there were any additions or deletions they wanted made. This process at least assured the subjects that they would be duly consulted about what they themselves had contributed, and democratized the filmmaking process to a certain extent. Fearful that the process itself would overtake the logic of production, critics of Challenge for Change worried that the filmmaker would simply end up acting as an animator or facilitator, using filmmaking as an activity to get people together and stimulate interaction amongst them. If indeed this were the case, the Challenge for Change program, for many, seemed like an expensive way to get people to communicate with each other. For example, on the Fogo series, Low had made twenty-three films at a cost of a one-hour television documentary. The worry was, however, that although a goodly number of films was produced, it remained a project that might only interest the small community of 5000 inhabitants which was the subject of the Fogo series. In response to these concerns, the Challenge for Change directors decided that for community development projects generating only limited interest among larger audiences, it would be wiser to use a cheaper way of recording motion pictures: i.e. video tape instead of film (Jones 1981, 166)[17].

A further concern expressed by critics of the English version of Challenge for Change was that depriving filmmakers of the opportunity to fully practice their crafts by placing an inordinate emphasis on the process rather than the product, would likely mean evacuating the films produced by the program, of their aesthetic components:

> The craft of filmmaking developed laboriously over three decades at the Board, began to lose currency. To edit carefully or imaginatively was an imposition. To choose the interesting angle or to compose an intriguing shot was a distortion. Music or effects were intrusions. To comment was an abuse of power. And perhaps more important, a working out of the structure for the material was to steal the right of self-expression from the subject. (Ibid, 168)

This process of virtually tying the hands of the Challenge for Change filmmakers behind their backs resulted in the prevalence of a certain film format in the documentaries produced by the program: the "talking head" film (Lesage 1984). In this format, most of the visuals involved non- moving pictures and uninteresting cinematography. They were mug shots of people being interviewed, with the only motion coming from any facial expressions or gesticulations the interviewee emitted.

Critics wondered what criteria would be used to determine the success of projects in the Challenge for Change program if so much emphasis were placed on *process* and not on popularity or critical acclaim. Defenders of the program replied that success would be measured by how much the participants enjoyed themselves and cooperated with each other (Ibid, 161-165). In the face of mounting criticism it became important for the Challenge for Change program to portray a positive image of its projects to the rest of the Film Board, the government, and the public. A Challenge for Change weekly called *Access,* published in the '70's, cast the program's projects as wholesale successes when they ought to have been classified as mediocre (if judged by the criteria normally used by film critics). This self-congratulatory tone went against the battle cry stated in the Challenge for Change guidelines. The program's mission statement urged activist filmmakers to:

> .. make a beautiful film with the highest quality of shooting and editing you can reach. Honest and sincere mediocrity is not enough if you want to make films that can help people change their world. In fact people expect you to bring your professionalism to your work. To involve people in the editing doesn't mean having them decide every shot. It means helping you judge whether you put the right emphasis & balance on what they have to say, or whether you've left anything out. They want you to be an artist as well as a filmmaker. (Dorothy Todd Henaut cited in Jones 1981, 174)

Unfortunately, going against the Challenge for Change philosophy, the *Access* newsletter cast a hagiographic public relations glow over on the program, neglecting to discuss its strengths and weaknesses.(Ibid: 167)

B. STUDIO D: DAUGHTERS OF GRIERSON, SISTERS OF FOGO

By the end of the 1970's, the Challenge for Change program had almost withered away; but Studio D, the women's studio at the NFB which was set up in 1974, took up the standard and became within the NFB, the new guardian, of the Challenge for Change process of community filmmaking. It is interesting to note that some of the key women involved in the creation of Studio D started their film careers in the Challenge for Change program[17]. The Fogo process that the program came to be known for, was adapted for use in the feminist movement and is illustrated by the following statement made by the Studio's founder, Kathleen Shannon, explaining the role that she saw her series on Working Mothers playing:

> "The women's movement is wherever a group of women meet together as women. I like to see the films in that context, used as ways to get people communicating. Such an approach shifts the focus in an important way: the people coming together are the event, and the films become a contribution to that event." In this sense, Kathleen says the films are incomplete; she intends them to be completed by the viewers in discussion with each other. (Access: 6)

This Challenge for Change philosophy of the filmmaker as social activist and community worker, concerned more with "process" than "product", was reiterated by Kathleen Shannon when she defined the worth of a film solely by its "usefulness" in the lives of specific groups of Canadians. (Scherbarth 1986: 30) Not only was Studio D's philosophy in keeping with the that of the Challenge for Change program, but it also directly related back to the propagandistic flavor of the NFB of Grierson's time. A statement from Studio D in 1985 claimed:

> When John Grierson founded the NFB in 1939, there was a war being fought, and films were made with the passion and commitment appropriate to a war effort. We make our films with the passion and commitment appropriate to fighting the war against sexism, racism, and

> other political and economic tyrannies which impact on all ordinary people and on our collective future as a Human race. (Ibid, 58)

From an assessment of Studio D's "top two" documentaries ("Not a Love Story" and "If You Love This Planet"), it appears that success in Studio D's eyes was gauged not only by the number of total bookings a film got, but also by the film's *political* impact:

> ..their remarkable track record in having sparked public dialogue, and moving people to action... "Not a Love Story is to the anti-pornography movement what the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin was to the anti-slavery movement" (Ibid, 98-99)

The continuity between the nature of the wartime NFB under Grierson, the Challenge for Change program, and Studio D distinguished the women's studio not only as "the daughters of Grierson", but also as "the sisters of the Fogo process". The elements of continuity, then, were, that each operated as a propaganda unit: Grierson's NFB as cheerleader for Canada's role in the Allied Forces; the Challenge for Change program as the Canadian wing of the American War Against Poverty; and Studio D as the vanguard of Canada's war against sexism. Challenge for Change and Studio D were smaller replicas (each with a smaller funding base than the wartime NFB) of the original Grierson model of film as propaganda[19].

The Genesis of Studio D

Describing her long years of service at the Film Board, Studio D producer, Petra [pseudonym], remembers how Studio D began:

> It got to the point that I was spending half days in one of the studios and half days.. finishing up the work in the Working Mothers series.. The director needed somebody who, if she said, 'I want a slash print', I'd know what she was talking about and what I needed: I needed the cutting copy in my hand, I needed a piece of paper for where I had to go to get a slash print, and to bring it back.

Petra's familiarity with NFB procedures was obviously invaluable to directors and producers who did not want to bother with the bureaucracy's paperwork. In preparation for the 1975 International Women's Year, money had become available to promote activities about women's rights. Kathleen Shannon,

an NFB sound and picture editor who was coordinating the *Working Mothers* series, decided to try and get money to make films about women. She and a group of supporters called for a meeting of all women working at the NFB. Petra described the process that resulted in the founding of Studio D in 1974:

> There were a lot of women there [at the first meeting].. It was really quite exciting.. So Kathleen got a little bit of money, 'cause you know, the Government of Canada signed the UN declaration for women.. which meant that it trickled down to the Film Board.. The Board then had to start doing something.. for women.. The first thing they started to do was to open up an English production branch for women and then one on the French side.. with I think something like $160,000 each.

The next step for the English production branch for women, Studio D, was to recruit members. Petra described how the first recruits were brought in:

> So having gotten this money, Kathleen said well I think Liv [pseudonym] has been there for a long time; she has a technical background, you have administrative background.. I'll see if Liv would like to work with us at whatever it is we plan to do. So Kathleen spoke to Liv, and she was very happy to come with us, and so we took it from there.. We thought.. How do we reach out to people? So we just sort of made phone calls and we had a big meeting.. So we only have a little bit of money, what should we try and do.. So we kind of thrashed all these things through..

I enquired why Kathleen Shannon and the women surrounding her in that period decided that Studio D should set up a separate "room of their own", rather than an affirmative action program that would pressure the entire Film Board to absorb new women filmmakers into their personnel. Petra explained their rationale thus:

> Oh, because we'd definitely have more control.. Because we could make the decisions as per which film we wanted to make, *who* we wanted to direct it, *who* we wanted to work on it.. Remember when we started, there were only camera *men* and sound *men* here.. There were no women.. and we kept pushing all the time for women, and that seemed to bother people that we had men who were on [NFB] staff who could be available to work on our films.. and we just used to say.. Look! The mandate here is for us to get women the craft experience that they need and this is the only way we're gonna do it. .. in a way we were kind of penalized 'cause we had to pay twice..

When I asked Petra how exactly the Studio would be penalized, she proceeded by explaining the structure of the Board and how the amounts for salaries and film budgets were arrived at:

> The Film board has money.. They take everybody's salary off the top... So my salary comes off the top, all the cameramen's salaries comes off.. it all comes off [salaries of the permanent staff].. So then what is left is moved over and it's called outside money.. and that's the free money we have to make films.. Say we get a certain amount and we put that aside for one film and we want to hire a cinematographer. Well all these cameramen, all their salaries have been paid.. and there's no woman. So we say, OK., we're gonna use a woman.. So we would have to take it out of our money [the Studio's budget] We just thought we were penalized.. but you know, when I look back again, I think it was worth making the stand and saying: This is what we want! But it's easier now 'cause two women are on staff as cinematographers.

Many at the Film Board wondered why Studio D was willing to make a sacrifice and take a cut in their production budget in order to strive for an eventual woman-only crew. Petra recalled that the men at the Board especially wondered:

> What's wrong with the use of Film board people? And we'd say, of course we'd like them, but look at it this way: If you're a male director, you could go down and make a crew automatically that was all men. What is wrong with our saying, as women, we want an all-woman crew?.. So in a way, we also had to educate the men.. And not that we wished to spend a lot of time on that.. But you *had* to, you know, in order to explain why you do certain things, and some things you think are *so* obvious and clear, they don't always see.

Filmmakers at the Board tended to characterize their peers by the studio they were associated with. Because of its political mandate, Studio D was perceived by filmmakers outside the Studio as being burdensome, as carrying out the role of sexism police or gender priestesses for the institution. The way that certain founding members of Studio D chose to "educate" men served at times to antagonize those who were the targets of their propaganda. One male filmmaker recalls:

> When I was first starting at the Film Board.. this must have been about ten years before Studio D got started.. I was having the first screening to my first film. I was young and pretty nervous. I had anticipated all kinds of criticism... but not what Sharon [pseudonym] did. When the screening began, she began counting the number of women characters in my film..

> *out loud.* "There just aren't enough women in this film", she said. I was quite shocked.

Another male filmmaker felt antagonized not only by Studio D but also by the content of films made by feminists in other parts of the Board:

> There just seems to be a lot of man-hating going on. This woman in the French section just made an animation about her own bad experience with her lover where in the end she turns into a chicken and the man ends up eating her.. For me, this is close to hate literature.

Women in the Industry

Despite Studio D's willingness to hire women and train them for potential participation in all-women crews, it had been forced by limited funding, to turn away many interested independent women filmmakers. These freelancers continued to harbor bad feelings towards the Studio. The problem was not limited to Studio D; it extended across the entire Film Board. Filmmakers on contract in the mid- to late 1970's (in the general period that Studio D was founded) constituted about 20 to 25% of the total NFB workforce. These contract personnel, had no job security, and no benefits like medical insurance, holidays, or sick leave. The Board was accused by the staff union of abusing filmmakers who had worked for a long time with the NFB by hiring them only on a contract basis. As a direct result of this union campaign, four freelancers joined Studio D's permanent staff as did numerous others in the rest of the Film Board. Nonetheless, countless other men and women filmmakers who worked regularly with the NFB were still not included on the Film Board's staff, continuing to be hired on a contract-by-contract basis.

Studio D's commitment to getting as many women on board as possible, resulted in its having a higher proportion of freelancers than the rest of the NFB. This caused tensions within a feminist body that attempted to promote collaborative decision-making (Taylor 1988, 287) while having at the same time, to deal with the ire of the freelancers:

> Women freelancers, who either honestly or cynically looked to Studio D as their best bet for equal opportunity at the Film Board, became discouraged and critical of the privilege held by the

> Studio's dozen permanent employees. Others knocked the Studio's apparent predilection for documentary, and equated its limited film inventory to limited imagination...What became more and more apparent as the '80's progressed was that Studio D was itself *the* Women's Program at the Film Board. And yet, it had only 10 per cent of funds for English Production. (Scherbarth 1987, 12)

For many, Studio D's high profile was seen as blocking women's access to other studios and to decision-making at the NFB. Women were especially underrepresented at the NFB as managers, camerapersons, and as recipients of film production monies[20]. Despite the public sector's better performance in percentages of women receiving funds[21], if one examines the figures at close quarters, it is evident that the NFB's record in providing equal access to women in all sectors of filmmaking was far from satisfactory:

> As a study of the film board has shown: "Female producers are to be found, although unevenly, in animation, documentary and multi-media films, for the most part. Multi-media, where women are most successful in their direct competition with men, is, as one producer explained, "sort of the bottom level because they make the slide shows and the film strips." Men, on the other hand, were found in all areas and they dominate fiction production, the most recognized and expensive productions. Women producers and directors were also disproportionately located within Studio D and the Federal Women's Film Program doing "women's films". In fact, if the special women's studios were closed at the NFB, over half the female producers and directors would disappear but almost all the men would stay. These studios provide opportunities for women who would not otherwise be able to make films, especially with content, and demonstrate the importance of introducing special programs for women. However, they can also serve to justify women's limited access to other areas and to working with other kinds of content. (Armstrong 1991, 7)

A refuge, like Studio D, may in the end, turn into a ghetto. This danger was also noted in a historical overview of women's presence in other Canadian media:

> Another pattern the herstory[22] reveals is the early establishment of women's programming-- the women's pages in newspapers at the turn of the century, the women's interests and *emissions feminines* departments at CBC/Radio Canada in the 1930's. This dedication of space to the female perspective was originally a progressive, even radical idea, for it represented a move out of the private into the public realm, gave women a voice in the public debate and, at the same time, a place to congregate

> within the profession. At times, then, these pages and programs have functioned as bastions providing training and opportunity not readily available to women elsewhere. But, inevitably, without a sustained effort to integrate women into the profession, the bastions turned into ghettos, and became career traps. (Crean 1991, 48)

The risk was that Studio D was turning into a ghetto rather than a refuge, and thereby stifling opportunities for women to enter the filmmaking profession through other channels.

Another danger arising from Studio D being such a crucial player in the production of English language feminist film was that this would result in a lack of variety in content and style in Canadian women's cinema. If the majority of the NFB's funds for women's programming (approximately 10% of its annual budget) got funneled through Studio D and the Federal Women's Film Program[23], how would women who did *not* do documentary get funded? The question below was raised regarding American independent filmmakers, but Canadian independents would surely make the same query:

> To what extent did funding sources condition the shape of the films produced? To what extent, that is, did funding agencies refuse projects that did not fit their ideologies or their notions of cinematic practice? And how far did filmmakers begin to gear their cinematic strategies to pleasing funding agencies, once they realized the kinds of film that did receive money? (Kaplan 1988, 196)

To what extent were independent women filmmakers excluded from funding by the NFB's practice of channeling them to Studio D where only Documentary, and, as some would argue, a certain brand of political documentary was given the green light? Anita Taylor, who did participant observation at Studio D in the 1980's before I began my study, discussed, among other things, how numerous women working in Studio D felt excluded from the decision-making process, either due to their insecure status as contract workers or because they felt uncomfortable with the Studio's use of feminist consciousness- raising techniques to deal with conflict (Taylor 1988: 277-301).

It was not only Studio D's prestige as the feminist media vanguard, but also Studio D's institutional power which discouraged feminist filmmakers from

criticizing it. Being one of the few places in Canada left (after the dissolution of Challenge for Change) that supported a community model of filmmaking, Studio D was often the only source of funding for filmmakers who were not of "industry standard". An article in a Canadian film magazine noted the fear engendered in potential applicants for Studio D funding:

> Many women filmmakers interviewed for this article requested anonymity, admitting that Studio D is the "only game in town" for funding their projects (Yi 1994).

Identity Politics and The Message

One by-product of Studio D offering opportunities to independent filmmakers to work with the permanent staff there was that the latter constantly felt guilty and uncomfortable with lower-status workers at their side (i.e. those with no job security or benefits). Both permanent staff and contract workers avoided openly discussing the power differential for different reasons. Studio D feminists expected such conflict to crop up only in patriarchal workplaces; but since they were attempting to fashion a more democratic environment within the studio, they did not want to acknowledge the existence of conflict. Free lancers, for their part, dared not to speak out, lest their next assignment be jeopardized. Anita Taylor interviewed scores of contract and staff workers at Studio D and found that:

> [A]lmost all recognized that it was common not to openly air disagreements of virtually every kind... members of the group attempt to avoid discussing unpleasant issues or matters in which conflict inheres, even though such disagreements eventually emerge, often in heated arguments or emotional confrontations (Taylor 1988, 293-294).

Taylor attributes these emotional confrontations to the women's lack of experience firstly in filmmaking due to their fairly late entry into the craft compared to the men at the NFB; and secondly, in using power, especially while negotiating with men. As women, they were accustomed to communicating using a more personal, "nurturing" style, and were protective of Studio D which was valiantly attempting to promote this style within the larger organization:

> [i]ndividuals are uncomfortable with the existence of conflict because they perceive it as an indication of their fallibility in achieving Studio D goals of a warm, supportive, caring atmosphere in which women may learn and practice filmmaking (Ibid, 295).

A frequent way of dealing with conflict in the Studio had been to personalize the source of conflict:

> Differences are perceived more often as differences among personalities than as arguments about abstractions or differences of belief (e.g. definitions of the studio's feminist goals or level of commitment to those goals) get described most often as differences of personality. (Ibid, 297)

A particular type of feminist politic may very well have been at play in Studio D which served, consciously or unconsciously, to exclude women who did not partake of that politic[24]. This politic, inspired by radical liberal feminism and summarized in the slogan, "the personal is political" included strategies that characterized much of the 1970's feminist organizing in North America[25]. "The personal is political" was initially generated through the consciousness-raising movement and later continued through the co-dependency movement[26].

A tendency to personalize structural problems in Studio D might have been also due to the overwhelming reliance since the Studio's birth, on the uncontested leadership of Kathleen Shannon, who was Executive Producer of Studio D for 13 years. Shannon's own evolution as a feminist was through the consciousness-raising movement and over the years, she hand-picked Studio D personnel who had experienced a trajectory similar to hers. One freelancer noted that it was almost mandatory for a woman to have undergone a process of personal development via consciousness-raising and co-dependency sessions in order to become trusted by Studio D's Old Guard.[27]

The inner circle of Studio D, hence, became suspicious of newcomers who had not entered the Studio through the consciousness-raising network. The decision-making hub in Studio D, the Programming Committee, often felt threatened by the less personal styles of presenting issues adopted by younger feminists. These styles, though commonly practiced outside a nurturing environment like Studio D, were perceived as being aggressive by the Studio's

regular members. Grace [pseudonym], a fairly new marketing officer at Studio D related her reaction to Studio D's subculture:

> [One younger member] was offering a critique of a film proposal that had come in, and obviously people were personally tied to it in some way but just weren't prepared to put that out on the table. So instead .. this one woman broke down and had a crying fit. So all of the other feminists ran around to comfort her and they left the woman who had offered the critique to feel like absolute shit.. just because she had offered a critique? It wasn't a personal critique on this other woman, it was a critique about the film project..

Another characteristic of Studio D's particular brand of feminism which did not sit well with the younger crowd of aspiring filmmakers, was its emphasis on victims. This trend can be seen in Studio D's overall opus which consists of "survivor" films (stories of victims surviving sexual abuse, culture loss, disabilities, etc.) or "challenge" films (stories of victims challenging pornography and war) (Taylor 1995: 293-306). New feminists complained that Studio D's philosophy was evident in its filmography[28] which:

> ..consistently reinforces the notion of women as victims... Their view of feminism is oppression, oppression, oppression. There's no celebration of feminism or acknowledgment of its successes. (Anonymous, cited in Yi 1994)

Regionalization via Studio D

At least two specific initiatives undertaken by Studio D had the effect of reaching out to budding filmmakers in the various Canadian regions. These were *Just a Minute* (1977)[29], and *Five Feminist Minutes* (1990)[30]. For *Just a Minute*, Studio D put out a call across the country for a one-minute film on women. Of 87 proposals received, 27 were given production support. For the Studio's fifteenth anniversary, another call was sent throughout Canada for proposals for five-minute films. This time, 200 proposals were received and 17,mostly from novice filmmakers, were chosen to get production and distribution support from the NFB. A highly energetic and colorful feature-length compilation, *Five Feminist Minutes,* was released in 1990. It contained creative commentary on a wide range of issues including sex education, police harassment and aging and is considered to be one of the most successful Studio D films. It delivered an entertaining mix

of messages about women's struggles in the 1990's, without a dreary backdrop of victimization or oppression clouding it. This new approach to content was perhaps a reflection of new leadership at the Studio under "Fran".[31] It showed how much creative energy was waiting to be tapped outside the Studio D cocoon, outside the NFB, and in the regions of Canada.

Not only were non-white women riding the new wave of change in the film world of the 1980's, so were many independent filmmakers, regardless of gender, phenotype or culture. The independents, as noted earlier, had gained little from the NFB's presence in the Canadian film industry. In 1987 when Fran [pseudonym] became the Executive Director of the women's unit, she spearheaded the restructuring of Studio D, opening it up for access by independent filmmakers. This expansion of the role of independents rankled many of the old guard in the Studio. In order to make space for the independents, in the words of Petra, a founding Studio D member:

> *Petra:* it was decided that six directors should move.. and I must say that that was one of the things that was not handled as well as it should be .. They were all very upset.. I think it took everyone a long time to get used to being in other studios.. but it's one of those things I think Fran thought she was handling in the right way, I mean.. but it seemed to bother everybody.. But I think they're now used to where they are and they're quite happy .. and they can still come back to Studio D .. That meant that . sort of like most of the money would go into productions from independents.. and that we would really try and work with people across the country, cause it certainly is more expensive.. It takes longer.. when people aren't here.. but we had to grow.. We'd always talked about growing.. We'd always wanted to do this..
>
> *GN*: How does it work? Do independents make proposals?
>
> *Petra*: We have some guidelines.. And we meet four times a year; and we have all these proposals. I think we have usually three or four go in one envelope, and so that all these envelopes circulate and we'd make our comments and then we meet and discuss the merits of each film, whether it's for Studio D or for some other studio.. One thing we have decided that we won't do is drama.. First of all, we don't have the expertise for drama.. and also, it's just too expensive.. So we feel that we're very happy with documentary.. I think the story is simply told. And I think it still works.. We try and help people if they have a project that's with video, and so that's how we go.. And if somebody has experience, we decide to help

them, we sort of ask to look at their previous work or something that is of their choice so that we get to know them and they get to know us..

GN: Is there a possibility to set up mentoring or apprenticeships?

Petra: We talked about that but that's something that we haven't resolved in our own minds... if it's the best way to do it.. how you select the people and what does it mean, and how much does it mean on *our* time, you know.. Like right now, I couldn't do that because I simply, with the pressures to finish the movie I'm working on now, I hardly have time to breathe.. 'cause I never know if something is going to unravel .. but if it's just say a regular production, I certainly wouldn't mind if somebody wants to learn from me.. we never had it, but I know some women have worked here and haven't been paid because they wanted to.. But that's difficult, because that means that somebody who maybe would LIKE to work with us, and can't afford *not* to be paid, because, you know, she has rent to pay or she has a child to look after.

Petra's comments reflect the challenges that Studio D faced on how to provide training to emerging filmmakers in a fair and ethically sound manner.

Studio D Responds To The Multicultural Challenge

The criticisms of discrimination leveled by artists of color during the 1980's finally received an institutional response from the NFB through Studio D on which the Film Board relied heavily to fulfill its target to hire non-whites. In trying to discover why Studio D was at the forefront of this new inclusionary wave, one would have to examine its strategic role as the cinematic voice of the Canadian women's movement. By the 1990's, Studio D, along with the largely white feminist movement in Canada, was beginning to experience a crisis. Demographic changes and the dictates of postmodernity made the particular feminism represented by Studio D, questionable. How could a select group of middle-class white women claim to represent *all* women? Studio D had to cast about for a way to justify its existence as a separate entity. Taking on the cause of Women of Color and of the First Nations for representation on screen was surely a timely platform for the feminist media vanguard to adopt.

Moreover, Studio D's social activist approach likely made the women's unit more receptive to the latest social trends than any other Film Board studio.

With its philosophy of keeping close interactive ties with its audiences, Studio D continued to be present and to show its documentaries at conferences, panels, and events focusing on women's issues. Hence, Studio D was probably the first to feel the pressure from groups criticizing the NFB for its lack of cultural diversity. Studio D's responsiveness to new constituencies is illustrated in the opinion of Petra, a founding member of the women's unit:

> *GN*: So is there really a need for a special program for Women of Color and of the First Nations?
> *Petra:* I think from what I'm told that it's the Women of Color that wanted it themselves... It didn't come from us.. 'cause I would prefer just to see women.

The question arose: if indeed Studio D was reluctant to start up a special program for Women of Color and of the First Nations, why did it then proceed to set up New Initiatives in Film which targeted not the universal woman, but rather, specific types of women? Moreover, this program would involve bringing in a lot of outside people who were not necessarily schooled in consciousness-raising and would shake up the workings of the Studio. One reason, it would seem, was because Studio D was being criticized from within feminist circles for being too Eurocentric. Another likely reason was because Studio D was summoned by the NFB to act as a lightning rod on its behalf, to show that it was complying with Employment Equity legislation. Since Studio D already presented a functioning "room of one's own" model to deal with affirmative action from within the institution, a convenient solution would simply be to apply that tried and tested model to NIF.

The creation of the New Initiatives in Film program in 1990 within the women's unit could also by construed as Studio D's greater willingness than the rest of the Film Board, to accommodate suggestions for improvement expressed by its constituency, even when those suggestions, at least in the eyes of Studio D's old guard, were not necessarily the best way to redress inequity of representation. The benefit for Studio D of constituting NIF as a separate entity from Studio D would be that the former's nerve center, the Programming Committee, would not then be exposed to too many unknown sources. A benefit

would also be enjoyed by Women of Color and of the First Nations who themselves were not keen on White women meddling in their deliberations. The Studio's ambivalence at adopting the program whole heartedly, combined with the growing pressure of independent filmmakers wanting in, led to the creation of an entirely separate administrative structure for NIF. This structure would be overseen by the NIF Advisory Board which would consist of " predominantly Women of Color and Native Women drawn from industry and the community". (Hannah and Fran 1990, 11) An arm's length financial control, however, would be maintained over the NIF Advisory Board and the NIF program, by Studio D via its Executive Producer, who clarified her role with regards to NIF by saying, "the buck stops here".

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[1] Canada's MPB was established in 1923 under the department of Trade and Commerce to show travel and promotional films

[2] Compilation technique: a modus operandi characteristic of NFB wartime films where pre-shot (often archival) film footage was compiled according to a pre-set theme or message enunciated by an expert narrative voice

[3] It was Eisenstein's capacity to visually explode two or three details to illustrate a society's social struggles that NFB filmmakers tried to copy. Eisenstein's most famous film, *Battleship Potemkin* about the 1905 revolution, is a powerful demonstration of Eisenstein's goals:
" the filmmaker should aim to establish in the consciousness of the spectators the elements that would lead them to the idea he wants to communicate. He should attempt to place them in the spiritual state or the psychological situation that would give birth to that idea..." These principles .. had a major impact on filmmakers .. for its stark contrast to "American-style" narrative montage. For more on Eisenstein, see web sites:
http://www.carleton.edu/curricular/MEDA/classes/media110/Severson/essay.htm and
http://www.abamedia.com/rao/gallery/old/eisen.html

[4] Units were given letter names: A,B, C, D, & each unit made films varying in subject (agricultural, scientific, cultural) & style (animation, documentary, theatrical, news) (Jones, 60)

[5] Raymond Spottiswood in 1935 defined documentary as " a dramatized presentation of man's relation to his institutional life, whether industrial, social or political; and in technique, a subordination of form to content", quoted in Jones 1981, 6.

[6] Jones offers wonderful and detailed descriptions of Unit B's work. Evan's book, *In the National Interest* was also heavily consulted in the process of deciphering the milestones in the NFB's history. Evans book which takes a more straight-forward chronological approach in order to be more objective perhaps, makes harder reading that Jones' more avowedly interpretive history.

[7] Control from production to distribution phases of an industry

[8] Canadian film and video sales performance in the domestic market 1985-86 (Statistics Canada)

DISTRIBUTION MARKET	% SALES IN HOME MARKET
Non-theatrical	24%
Pay TV	18%
Home video and regular TV	6%
Theatrical	3%

[9] It is important to note, however, that the "cushy" permanent NFB jobs and funding that independents so coveted were won only three decades after the inception of the Film Board. John Grierson had strongly discouraged job security, arguing that it would cramp the creativity of the organization and its films. Every employee was to be on a three-month contract. Many employees however, grew used to the institution and stayed working there for decades, signing countless contracts. Only in 1968, by the efforts of filmmakers, technicians and some producers, was a union, *Le Syndicat General du Cinema et de la Television- Section ONF,* formed. In 1967, the federal government finally passed legislation allowing collective bargaining to take place in the public sector, and the Film Board employees took advantage of this to fight pay and hiring freezes (Jones 1981, 136).

[10] Officially known as the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences

[11] In January of 1964, a separate French-language production branch was set up at the NFB with a French-Canadian director

[12] Refer to the work of filmmakers like: de Sica, Fellini (Italy), Truffault (France), Ray (India)

[13] Film as cooperative art world by Michael Chanan

[14] Private communication with Michelle Smith, Productions MultiMonde, April 2003: the possibility for auteur theory to realize itself through the use of digital video cameras and computer editing today, a process being encouraged by private industry and low budget television programs like Culture Shock which sends reporters out with PD5000 cameras to record interesting characters and events in their neighborhoods.

[15] Director-General, English Program, memo explaining the PAFPS program, NFB: June 18, 1990.

[16] Indian Affairs is the government department that was responsible for colonial relations with aboriginal people in the Canadian state.

[17] A deeper attempt at democratization process that gave people access to Film Board equipment so that they could make their own films, was undertaken by Robert Forget through Societe Nouvelle, the French language counterpart of Challenge for Change. This more fundamental attempt at giving power over to the people took shape as the Videograph project. In the two years that Videograph operated out of the NFB before it was taken over by the Quebec Ministry of Communication, 400 proposals were submitted, and 60 projects were completed using the Film Board's videotape equipment and professional consultants.

[18] E.g. In the context of Challenge for Change, Kathleen Shannon, Studio D's founder, worked on the Working Mothers series; and Virginia Stikeman, Executive Producer of Studio D at the time of its demise, worked on *Cree Hunters of Mistassini.*

[19] For a discussion of propaganda and art in the Soviet Union, see Eastman (1972).

[20] Addressing the question of how the Film Board as a larger institution has incorporated women in its workforce, a 1986 report highlighting Employment and Production Statistics at the NFB shows that:

- Men hold 78% of management and 69% of filmmaking positions.
- Women hold 93% of secretarial/clerical jobs.
- In the filmmaking category, women make up 46% of editors, 31% of directors, 25% of producers and 7% of camerapersons.
- Men filmmakers make on average $4,600 more than women.
- Almost twice as many dollars are spent on the services of male than female freelancers.
- Women produced 15% of NFB films in 1986, on 11% of the current production budget.
- Women directed 34% of NFB films in 1986, on 31% of the current production budget.

(Highlights from Fournier & Diamond 1987: 30)

[21] If one compares the public sector (demonstrated by National Film Board statistics) to the private sector (represented by statistics from Telefilm, the largest funder of private industry media

production- the public sector seems to have a significantly better record. Of the total number of projects receiving Telefilm investment, in 1987/88, the percentage of projects with female producers and directors is shown below, compared with NFB projects in the same year:

	Telefilm	NFB
female producers	10%	40%
female directors	9%	34%

(Studio D, NFB 1991, 6-7.)

[22] women's history

[23] The Federal Women's Film Program was "nurtured" by Studio D. It combined resources from various federal agencies to make films for the use of social service workers or for use in education.

[24] See Lesage in Waugh, "Show Us Life".

[25] For a sympathetic view of feminist organizing, see Eder et al. (1995).

[26] Kaminer worried in 1993 that, "The marriage of feminism and the recovery movement is arguably the most disturbing (and potentially influential) development in the feminist movement today. It's based partly on a shared concern about child abuse, nominally a left-wing analogue to right-wing anxiety about the family. There's an emerging alliance of anti-pornography and anti-violence feminists with therapists who diagnose and treat child abuse... Given this pervasive, overriding concern about violence .. victimism is likely to become an important organizing tool for feminism in the 1990's."

[27]"Carmen", a filmmaker who has worked on contract with Studio D, remarked that the Studio D old guard actively used the consciousness raising groups as a way to deal with challenges in all aspects of life. "The purpose of this form of therapy is to pair up with a partner who will provide peer counseling around day to day anxieties and problems as experienced by the individual.. both at work and at home... Sharon became Stacey's partner." (Carmen 1991)

[28] Julia Lesage in her article on Feminist Documentary, comments on the influence of consciousness raising on women's film: "The realist feminist documentaries represent a use of, yet a shift in, the aesthetics of cinema verite, due to the feminist filmmakers' close identification with her subjects, participation in the women's movement, and sense of the films' intended effect. The structure of the consciousness-raising group becomes the deep structure repeated over and over in these films. They are filmed in domestic space and their words serve to redefine that space in a new, 'woman-identified' way." (1984, 246)

[29] Producers of *Just a Minute* were Diane Beaudry and Ann Pearson.

[30] Producer for *Five Feminist Minutes* was Nicole Hubert.

[31] "Fran" was a vocal advocate of opening up the Studio to independent filmmakers.

CHAPTER 2: THE CASE STUDY: THE NEW INITIATIVES IN FILM 1991 SUMMER INSTITUTE

Shaping the NIF Program

The New Initiatives in Film program started by Studio D of the NFB in 1990, purported to address the concerns of "emergent" aboriginal and "of color" women filmmakers by giving them a chance to use filmmaking as a way of redressing their under- and mis-representation in the media. The NIF program, as conceived, would run for five years and would use a three- pronged approach to introduce "Women of Color and of the First Nations" into the film world: Firstly, a two- week Institute would be set up each summer. (Its design, reflecting the particular expertise of a newly hired NIF Program Producer, could vary from being a film survey to a hands-on workshop). Secondly, a resource bank, listing Women of Color and of the First Nations filmmakers and their individual skill levels would be put together and updated on a regular basis. And finally, several interns would be accepted annually for training within the Film Board.

With a budget of less than $100,000 for the first year, two distinct strategic possibilities existed: i) to promote the employment of women in the film crafts (an industry model); or ii) to create producer- directors out of community people inexperienced in the film crafts (the NFB institutional model). Each possibility held advantages and disadvantages for Women of Color and of the First Nations. Learning specific craft skills would probably be the best way to find employment in the industry; however, for Women of Color and of the First Nations, it would mean both confronting any entrenched sexist and racist attitudes amongst film industry professionals (predominantly White and male), and not having any immediate input into the images produced. The second option (training to be producer- directors without first having gone through the process of learning at least one of the craft skills), would allow Women of Color and of the First Nations control over the *conception* of the film but only limited control over the actual image *production* (due to lack of cinematic skill). Moreover, with this option, Women of Color and of the First Nations would become dependent on Studio D for funding, the latter being one of the few places in the film world to

adopt the philosophy of promoting inexperienced film people as producer-directors.

The designers of the NIF Program chose the second option, which I call the "parachuted producer- director" model. The Program designers' rationale for basing NIF on the producer- director model was:

> As a rule, it is the director- producer team which generates the film project, it is they who are ultimately responsible not only for the form and content, but also the business of film. This team determines who else will be employed in every capacity on the film - from sound recordist to editor, from narrator to composer. They also determine both the artistic and political content, and cultural or commercial objectives of the film; as well as to which community or audience group they wish primarily to market/or provide their film... For this reason the Internships will focus on directing and producing. (Hannah and Fran 1990, 19)

This choice might have been made for two reasons: firstly, because it is the one that Studio D itself (and arguably, the entire NFB) was shaped after; and secondly, because it is in keeping with the dominant framework of multiculturalism, an ideology which no doubt directly influenced one of the designers of the NIF program who was seconded to Studio D from the Secretary of State, the Department responsible for the Multiculturalism Directorate. Insofar as multicultural policy supported the creation of government propaganda that would showcase a "happy face" diversity (Fleras and Elliott 2003, 280), it introduced an urgency in government media organizations to produce images that would reflect this version of multiculturalism. This urgency, felt by the NIF program designers, likely encouraged them to favor the "parachuted producer-director" model which emphasized an expedient dissemination of stories about Women of Color and of the First Nations. The other choice in the design of NIF, i.e. investing in the long-term training of Women of Color and of the First Nations in the film crafts, would not yield immediate results in the production of images reflecting Canada's diversity. NIF designers thus subscribed to an identity-based multiculturalism, believing that what one *is* (i.e. one's personal cultural identity) is more important than what one *does* (i.e. than the skills one possesses as a filmmaker). But by attempting to parachute the aspiring but inexperienced

filmmakers into the position of producer- director without first setting them on a career path to becoming professional craftspeople, NIF risked short-circuiting their normal path to skills attainment and perpetuating a pattern of Women of Color and of the First Nations operating at an amateur level.

The NIF Advisory Board

The New Initiatives in Film program was to be overseen by the NIF Advisory Board consisting of " predominantly Women of Color and Native Women drawn from industry and the community". The mandate given the Advisory Board was to "assist in the development of selection criteria for the Summer Institutes and Internships, as well as in the overall policy-making, planning and evaluation of NIF." (Hannah and Fran 1990, 11)

The first hurdle to cross was to determine who would sit on the NIF Advisory Board. Since Studio D was launching the program, *it* would make the initial allocation of members to the NIF Board. Stacey, head of Studio D, and Hannah, designer of NIF, who initially put the Board members together, explained their rationale thus:

> .. in the very initial discussions around Board membership, we decided on individuals drawn from different communities rather than trying to identify a process where there would be organizational representation. (Stacey and Hannah 1991, 1)

The strategy of choosing individuals already known to the Studio, instead of delegates from ethnic communities who were interested in film, may have been inspired in part by Studio D's need to have personally known the representatives beforehand. Also, in the tradition of Grierson's NFB, and the Challenge for Change program, more *non*-filmmakers than filmmakers were recruited. As the NIF Program Producer put it:

> You have these people who have *no* understanding of filmmaking or exposure to filmmaking, and that's very problematic because they bring with them a lot of baggage of what they *think* it's about.. and what they think *they* can do with it.. But historically they're the kind of people Studio D has liked. (Yi 1993, interview with Della)

In the two years I observed the program, the "racial" composition of the Advisory Board was the following: four Black women, three aboriginal women,

and three Asian women. The professional composition was as follows [*pseudonyms*]: Bev was the only member of the NIF Advisory Board who was an "insider", an actual filmmaker from within the NFB and familiar with the institution's day-to-day workings. Tannis and Opal were independent filmmakers. In addition, there were: Vivian (a television producer), Amy (a poet), Helga (a creative communicator with a non-governmental organization), Jill (a film curator), Vida (a federal government consultant on women's issues), Sacha (an educator), and Valerie (a communications professor). It would seem likely from this configuration of NIF Advisory Board members (only three filmmakers in the 10-member Board), that when the NIF Advisory Board met, it would focus two-thirds of its time on concerns other than filmmaking. And that is indeed what was reflected in the minutes of the NIF Advisory Board meetings. A typical example of the types of comments that were made at Advisory Board meetings is the following, where Jill, who had worked with race relations in film curating, suggested that the Resource Bank component of NIF (a directory of emerging filmmakers of color and of the First Nations)should be used for *community-building* rather than for promoting filmmakers:

> Jill suggested that we "re-frame" the resource bank to concentrate on community networking and that "professional standard" women could be integrated into other NFB listings.. It should be used as a daily networking tool to build a solid foundation for NIF. (NIF Advisory Board minutes, October 1991)

The composition of the Board determined the kinds of issues that were prioritized at meetings. Given the predominance of non-filmmakers who tended to extemporize on their own (non-filmic) expertise, Advisory Board meetings typically approached the issue of access of Women of Color and of the First Nations to film, from a non-filmmaker's point of view. During my period of observing the NIF program, the weighting of the NIF Advisory Board towards race-relations experts rather than filmmaking experts, was manifest.

In establishing guidelines for membership in the NIF Advisory Board, training Women of Color and of the First Nations in filmmaking was often *not* the overriding concern. Rather, the goals were:

- To enable the NIF program to reach communities' grass roots
- To enable the communities to assist in defining and developing sensitivity and responsiveness of the Board...
-To build the Women of Color and Women of the First Nations identity. (NIF Advisory Board minutes January 1992)

One can see that concerns other than those directly related to filmmaking figured prominently in these recommendations.[1]

The NIF Pilot Institute

NIF was to be officially launched in April of 1991, but preparations had to be made a full year in advance. " The 1990-91 fiscal year is designed as a period of development, consultation and planning leading up to the launch of NIF." (Hannah and Fran 1990) Hence, NIF began its activities by putting out a call for Women of Color and of the First Nations interested in being listed in a directory of film production hopefuls. A pilot Summer Institute was also launched in summer of 1990. A coordinator, an evaluator, and six workshop leaders were hired on contract for the Institute. It was organized as a series of workshops led by four independent and two NFB women filmmakers. Workshop titles like *Filmmaking as Storytelling, Interviewing: Theory and Practice, The Camera's Eye,* and *Audience and Works in Progress* allowed participants to get a feel for the debates taking place amongst filmmakers at the time. The half a dozen participants in their evaluations of the pilot institute, however, expressed a need to obtain practical experience in film*making*, not just to learn how to become film *critics*.

Hiring the NIF Program Producer

The next step in the program timetable was hiring a NIF Program Producer/ Coordinator to fill the following job description:

> She will be based in Studio D and will also be responsible for liaison within the NFB, and with the film industry professionals associated with NIF. She will also be responsible for communications related to NIF. As Program Coordinator, she will develop with the producer/director interns, a time-plan and series of goals towards the successful production of their films. She will organize seminars, and working sessions with other film professionals and will help to create opportunities for the participants to

address other craft areas, for example, sound or picture editing or sound recording. (Ibid, 17)

Della [*pseudonym*], with plenty of competence in community cultural work and organizational administration, and *some* experience in film and video production (script treatment, stage and sound production, and research), was hired to begin her job in April of 1991. During the interview process, the four interviewers (two NFB administrators, the Head of Studio D and an independent filmmaker) noted that those few Women of Color or of the First Nations in Canada with *considerable* filmmaking experience, were too well established in their career paths to apply for a largely administrative position like that of the NIF Program Producer.

Setting Up the 1991 NIF Summer Institute

The second Summer Institute of the New Initiatives in Film program (NIF) was held at the production headquarters of the National Film Board in Montreal from August 22nd to the 30th of 1991. I began my fieldwork in the spring while the NIF staff was preparing the Institute, and then attended the full ten days of workshops as a participant- observer.

Conflict almost immediately flared up at the start of my fieldwork and seemed to stem from a strategic disagreement between the philosophy of the designers of NIF and that of the Producer hired to coordinate the program. The designers had chosen the "parachuted producer - director model" for NIF, whereas the Program Producer found it more useful to emphasize the "crafts apprenticeship" route. The initial problem arose from the fact that not enough educational work had been done within the NIF target communities before launching the Summer Institute. Ideally, NFB officers would have been sent into various film schools, trades colleges, and cultural communities across Canada to inform people of the goals of NIF. Such a scouting process would have enabled NIF to attract the most suitable candidates aspiring to access the Film Board's facilities. But this process did not take place. Summer Institute participants were recruited largely by word of mouth and those who came had very little knowledge of film technique or of the Film Board.

The NIF Program Producer, however, assumed that those Women of Colour and of the First Nations who *did* apply to the NIF Summer Institute, came with: a) an already - formed understanding of institutional racism, and b) an eagerness to learn about the nitty-gritty steps in filmmaking. This assumption on her part, unfortunately, was inaccurate. The participants had uneven knowledge of the politics of the NFB, film, feminism, and race, and their expectations for the Institute varied. A senior Studio D member, Petra, worried:

> The program itself.. There are *different* expectations on it and I'm very concerned that there might be *too* many expectations.. Too many different expectations.. for them all to be fulfilled, you know.. It's a very modest program.. cause we don't have the money *or* the facilities to do more and it's all that can be handled at this particular moment.

Since the pilot 1990 Summer Institute participants had expressed a need to have more hands-on experience, the new NIF Program Producer decided to structure the 1991 Summer Institute differently from the year before, i.e. as a ten-day introduction to the variety of craft skills required to do film. After appealing to all the studios and departments in English Programming of the NFB, she was able to get the support of the Animation Studio and of Technical Services. These two branches of the NFB offered both resources and personnel to help with the Summer Institute. Studio D personnel, besides giving financial and administrative backing to NIF, were approached by the NIF Program Producer to offer their expertise in their individual craft specialties. However, due to their other commitments, none of the full- time staff members of Studio D was able to help in her professional capacity as a craftsperson during the ten-day Institute. Studio D members nonetheless wished to attend the evening sessions with NIF participants. The Program Producer, however, decided to restrict those sessions to the participants only, since the previous Summer Institute participants had all expressed the desire to have that time to themselves separately as Women of Colour and of the First Nations. This exclusion of Studio D members created some bad feelings which came to haunt the Program Producer later, when tensions mounted at the Summer Institute.

NIF 1991 Summer Institute Participant Selection Process

By July 1991, eleven applications had come in for the NIF Summer Institute. Given the lack of experience reflected in the applicants, the NIF Program Producer, in consultation with the NFB resource people, the Executive Producer of Studio D, and the NIF Advisory Board members, decided to offer two introductory-level workshops: one in Documentary and one in Animation.

The NIF jury, selected by the Advisory Board, sat on the weekend of July 13, 1991 to select Summer Institute participants for that year. The jury consisted of five people [*pseudonyms*]: along with Della, the NIF Program Producer (who would vote only in case of a tie), there were Vivian, a television producer from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (the CBC), Harriet, an animator from a children's art supply company, Annie, an independent producer and Opal, an independent director. Jurors selected nine of the eleven applicants; but they wondered why only those with little or no experience in film and not the more experienced women had applied. The independent director on the jury, Opal, opined that experienced independent filmmakers had shied away from the Institute because of their negative relation with Studio D. Other jurors were taken aback when Opal declared that she would quit the jury if overtures were not made immediately to the more experienced filmmakers. Della concurred with Opal's sentiment and it was decided, with one objection from the CBC Producer, that Opal draw up a list of more experienced women who might possibly be interested in attending the Institute that year.

A list of twelve women was faxed to Della the next day, and four candidates on the list [*pseudonyms*], Rita, Zora, Kayla, and Laura, immediately forwarded their applications for the workshop for the "experienced" emerging filmmakers. Their curricula vitae, oddly enough, did not reflect any greater level of filmmaking experience than that held by some of the entry-level women (like Sandra, a television producer with the Inuit Radio and Television Network of Nunavit), who were deemed to be inexperienced in the film world. In fact, Opal herself who had earlier said that her own experience as a director/producer would only warrant her the label of "entry-level" in the filmmaking industry, had more

experience that these new applicants. Why then did Opal classify these women as having more experience, Della asked her. Opal replied that what those she deemed to be more "experienced" had, was greater *political* expertise. Della consented; despite their inexperience, they had embryonic works in progress which could be shown to NFB editors for feedback.

Modifying the Summer Institute Program

Della was left with only two weeks to redesign the Institute to accommodate the so-called experienced filmmakers. As she was making the arrangements to add another component to cater to the general training needs of the new group, Della began to wonder why Opal had not mentioned her reservations on the topic of the lack of experienced applicants, a week before the jury sat, i.e. when she had first received the applications. Considering the shortage of preparation time before the commencement of the Summer Institute, should a NIF Advisory Board and Jury member like Opal not have brought up her misgivings earlier? Della, increasingly growing suspicious of Opal's intentions, decided to ask her boss, Stacey, whether there had been any problems with Opal in the past. Stacey told Della that an independent filmmakers group, called Angle, [pseudonym] which Opal belonged to, had brought up their concerns about not being consulted in the program design during the pilot NIF year. But according to Stacey, their concerns had been adequately dealt with, so there was nothing to worry about this year. It seemed to Della, however, that the Angle group might be resurfacing.

Nonetheless, Della and the skeleton NIF staff she had assembled, forged ahead with the work that needed to be accomplished before the start of the Institute. In the remaining two weeks, the four "experienced" women were allowed to design their own program (Program II) which would allow them to seek editing tips for their own works-in-progress from NFB filmmakers. Although they were given the option of having a *video* workshop, they strongly reiterated their preference to learn about *film.* In a letter to Della before the start of Summer Institute '91, Opal, who was assigned as facilitator of the newly formed

intermediate-level "Program II", confirmed that the new slate of participants was satisfied with their program as designed:

> I have spoken with everyone in my program at least once about the proposed schedule and they all seem fine with it. (Opal 1991)[2]

Since the filmmakers placed in the newly-designed "Program II" category did not necessarily have a stronger background in film technique than some of the women placed in the "entry-level" Documentary program, and since Opal had argued that it was the former's "advanced political expertise" that made them deserving of placement in Program II, Della tried to devise a way for the Program II women to share their "political" expertise with the "entry level" women. To this end, she set up a common forum, in the form of post-screening discussions to allow for this sharing of knowledge to take place. In the evening, discussions after the curated films would act as the element linking the three different groups of participants. Given that the majority of the Documentary and Animation participants were inexperienced in film critique and film politics, the Program Producer saw the role of the Program II women as especially important in the post-screening discussions. They could, at this time, expose the entry- level women to the hot topics in film discourse.

Three days before the start of the Institute, the NIF staff, five women from Studio D, and a community consultant from Inuit T.V. (two of whose workers, Sandra and Tara had been chosen as participants for the Institute) were invited to view the seven movies that the curator, Sara, had chosen for the participants to watch in their evening film viewing sessions. (See Appendix, 1991 Summer Institute Curated Films)

Preparing the Trainers and Facilitators

One day before the start of the Institute, a meeting was held to orient the NFB technical resource people and facilitators who would animate the NIF Summer Institute. Final details of programming for the entry- level women were reviewed. Most of the NFB personnel there were amazed at the fact that the lab had agreed to slip in the NIF workshop's final product on Monday night (Day 5 of the Institute). In order to squeeze the film into the lab's busy processing load, the

lab had requested that the public service announcements to be shot by the documentary and animation groups, be less than one minute long. When the banter about the lab's cooperation subsided, the trainers began to introduce themselves.

There was [*pseudonyms*] Peggy from animation, Mario from lighting, Nancy from sound editing, Maurice from the shooting area, Bertrand and Olive from titles and special effects, Carl from set design, and Doreen from database services. This latter explained to Glenda (an independent First Nations filmmaker and newly appointed head of Studio I, an aboriginal NFB video unit in Edmonton) who was serving as a NIF Summer Institute facilitator, how titles had changed from "Indian", to "Native," to the specific First Nations. Tony, an independent filmmaker, widely known as an "editing doctor" due to the number of filmmakers' works he had salvaged through his editing skills, came in and sat against the wall. When Della, the NIF Program Producer, explained to those gathered, that most of the participants in the Summer Institute that year had little or no experience in filmmaking, the trainers wondered whether such an ambitious 10 days could be pulled off. Despite their trepidation, however, they all vowed to do their best to make it work. After the technical people left, Della spoke to the Summer Institute facilitators, Opal and Glenda, reminding them to direct the participants to the simplest solution to any problem that may crop up in the process of learning the craft of filmmaking.

The 1991 Summer Institute Begins

Day One of the NIF Summer Institute began with breakfast at the Ramada Inn situated near the NFB production headquarters in Montreal. Participants got to know each other as they awaited the official introductions. Stacey, head of Studio D, began by explaining the "herstory" of Studio D. Della, NIF Program Producer, then shared with those gathered, the multiple challenges she had to face before the start of the Institute: incorporating the demands of the previous year's participants into the 1991 program, dealing with a lack of preparation time, and working with a restricted budget. Della then reminded the participants of their contractual

obligations: that the Summer Institute was designed as a *group*, rather than an individual process and because of that, attendance was mandatory.

After completing her general talk, Della proceeded to go over the schedules in detail with each group separately (Animation, Documentary, and Program II): By this time, all participants (except two Program II women who were not present) began to realize how demanding the 10 days would be. Two evaluators, hired from a Montreal Black women's consulting company, then explained how they would go about assessing the Institute. Unfortunately, the Program II women were not present for the evaluators' explanations. After lunch, the participants were shuttled to the NFB production headquarters where an animation screening was planned for all three groups.

Participants Experience the Art World of Animation

Theatre Five, a gray, cramped and vertical room, was not an ideal venue in which to kick off the NIF Summer Institute. Nonetheless, Peggy and Bill (the Animation Studio trainers) were enthusiastic. Peggy explained:

> Animation is ideal to portray the larger than life philosophical questions.. the mythical, the condensed idea...The work is long, labour-intensive.. It is really the auteur approach. You can play with all kinds of materials: use sand, back-lighting: you can use the human voice, an unconventional soundtrack, whatever: so much depends on you, the actual animator.

It was obvious that Peggy and Bill had done their homework: they knew the specific curricula vitae of each of the Animation Participants and had already thought of possible projects that could interest them. The participants proceeded to view a series of animation clips and vignettes. Bill said that the Film Board had been "fostered on animation" and continued with explanations of animation technique. One could work with a printed cel, a clear cel or a frosted cel, he said and the various elements one chose to animate, could be moved at different speeds. One disadvantage with animation filmmaking was that working alone in a labor- intensive manner could drive a person around the bend! The advantages in animation, however, by far outweighed the disadvantages: the work could be extremely personal, one could get a full view of the image just by standing back a

few steps, and most importantly, because animation is still viewed as "comic strips", it can be used to make political statements while escaping the censors.

Aucassin (one of the animation clips viewed), Bill explained, used paper puppets to create silhouettes on a background of tissue paper. A *Sufi Tale* (another animation clip shown) used clay and scratch technique and was back-lit. "To do animation," Bill claimed, "you don't have to know how to draw, you just have to know how things move." The simplest way to work is to lay the things to be animated on the floor, place a tripod above them, and lights on the side, and then use the optical camera printer and pixolation."

During the animated films I was sitting in the last row of the theatre beside Edna a soon-to-be Animation workshop participant. She seemed to be exhausted and kept yawning. At one point she told me she found it difficult to stay awake in a dark room. Unfortunately, shortly after the animation session started, the Documentary group was herded off to meet with Sam from Camera Equipment who could not attend their scheduled meeting the next day. Those remaining were somewhat demoralized by the exit of half of the crowd, feeling bad for the animation resource people whose enthusiasm was not matched by a substantial listening body.

That evening, from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., Animation, Documentary, and Program II (Editing) separated into their groups. Program II was to get an overview of their workshops; the Animation group was to decide with the trainers about the type of Public Service Announcement they would produce; and the Documentary group along with the NFB trainers, was to make decisions about who would be on the production team. Things seemed to have gone as planned that evening; but the next day, the NIF staff and NFB trainers were in for a shock.

On the morning of Friday, Aug. 23, I accompanied NIF staff person, Nadine as she prepared for the beginning of the workshops. Since I was an extra body and the short-staffed NIF program always needed a helping hand, I often played the role of a volunteer gofer. It was now around 9:30 a.m. of NIF Summer Institute Day 2, and the NIF staff people awaited the three groups of participants in order to direct them to their meeting places.

When the shuttle bus from the hotel arrived, facilitators Opal and Glenda immediately informed the NIF staff that the participants wanted to meet by themselves (without the presence of the NIF staff) to discuss the changes they wished to make to the program. The Animation group and Program II met in the lunch room and the Documentary group, in the cafeteria. While the participants met, the tight schedule that had been planned was already becoming backlogged: the Animation group would be missing their stock shot library tour and storyboarding sessions; the Documentary group would be missing the general preparation with Maurice, the stage manager; and Program II would be missing the screening of the trainers' work. The NIF staff was told that the meeting among the participants would last an hour. During this time, I once again accompanied Nadine as she went about informing the NFB trainers of the delay. When we returned to the NIF office, NIF staff people, Della, Yolande and Marian were all dumbfounded, wondering what in the world was going on. Marian, who had been present the night before and who was spending time at the hotel to make sure the participants' needs were catered to, was especially puzzled. She thought that things had gone extremely well at the Animation storyboarding session, and couldn't understand what could possibly have happened between that time and this morning. Something must have transpired at breakfast and during the ride from the hotel, she speculated. Somehow, any underlying discontent that the women were feeling about the packed timetable must have spontaneously gelled at that time.

Della was getting increasingly frustrated:" I can't cancel all these contracts!" she lamented. Sitting in the NIF office, the staff tried to put the pieces of the puzzle together. Della emphasized how difficult it would be to change the schedules since each event so closely and intricately dovetailed the next..."Nancy is even coming in the day before her wedding to do the sound editing... her time is already paid," said Della. Marian, still hunting for clues, remembered: "A lot of the women were not pleased with the hotel. They wanted to be downtown, not stuck out in Ville St. Laurent. They wanted to be driven downtown or get money from NIF to pay for taxi fare to go to the film festival. People wanted per diems

for attending the Summer Institute too." Della commented: " Well, we're not here to help them visit Montreal or provide per diem's. The NIF Summer Institute is supposed to be a training program!" Some of the Documentary and Animation participants wondered what the rationale was for placing women in Program II when the latter were almost as inexperienced in film as they were. They also wondered why they were not given the chance to shape their own workshops as Program II had.[3]

Everyone had known that the schedule for the 10 days of the Summer Institute was very tight, and that in order for the entry-level Public Service Announcement projects to be completed, things would have to proceed without a hitch. This was not to be, however, and the entire first day of the series of hands-on workshops (Day 2 of the Institute, Day 1 consisting of introductions) was disrupted. Here is the Program Producer's description of that day:

> The climate was extremely tense, with staff and resource people expressing concerns which could not be answered. At approximately noon, the staff were let in and told that the participants wanted ownership of the program and demanded changes which we had to provide. We were told that the staff were behaving in an authoritarian and paternalistic manner. I asked whether the participants wished to finish their Public Service Announcement, the answer was affirmative, and I then said that I needed to speak with the resource people to see what changes could be made and to discuss their concerns with the staff. After the meeting with the resource people, I asked the facilitators to meet with the staff. We expressed concern that we were shut out of a particular process, and attempted to explain the limits of changes which were possible. (Della, 1991, Report 9-10)

Not only was the NIF staff flabbergasted, so were the Animation trainers whose services were soon to be totally rejected by the participants. Walter, an Oscar-winning Animator and NIF trainer, described what exactly happened the previous night when the participants had met him and Peggy for a storyboarding session. His articulate and humorous rendition of the incidents constituting and leading up to his encounter with the NIF participants, deserves to be quoted at length:

The format was to be a ten-day intensive immersion in the N.F.B. world with the hope that a finished product- a twenty-second Public Service Announcement would emerge at the end of the ten days.

I figured these were pretty hefty goals and we would have to have miraculous luck to achieve them all. In the short time, the participants would be given crash courses in storyboarding, animating, sound effects, editing sound & picture, etc. Each of these fields involves a lifetime learning process for most successful professionals. Nonetheless I considered the project worthwhile, even if only a small subset of the goals were achieved.

Later we received biographies of the participants and their suggested treatments for P.S.A's. Unfortunately none of the treatments leapt out as a leading candidate for the project. Most did not lend themselves to animation; some were too long or too ambitious.

I won't go into the extensive preparations and sacrifice everyone involved made to make the workshop a success. I will however mention the many sleepless nights spent worrying over what might go wrong: what might spoil the event? Would there be cultural barriers? Misunderstandings? As a White male would my criticisms seem ill motivated? And yet I saw my main expertise as being in the field of story & concept and I have worked on many successful P.S.A.'s. How could I teach them what I knew without seeming patronizing and over- critical?

I decided that I would have to treat them as I would treat anyone else or they would not get the full benefit. Yet even my White male colleagues occasionally hurl film equipment at me as a result of over-frenetic story sessions.

Needless to say as the first day approached, I was not entirely free of apprehension.

Thursday August 22, Peggy and I went to the Ramada Inn on Cote de Liesse to meet the participants over dinner.

After a few minutes of friendly chitchat most of my apprehensions disappeared. No one seemed defensive or ill-at-ease...

We moved to another part of the room and began to discuss the project in earnest...We all agreed that we would collectively develop something from Edna's proposal. We would attempt to refine it in the next two hours and further in storyboarding sessions scheduled for the next day. Now the most fascinating aspect of animation filmmaking began; the brainstorm session, the general flavor of which was as follows:

' Maybe instead of narration we could use children during voiceovers talking about their religious beliefs?"

" Should we used the symbols of various religions like the cross or the star of David? The children could draw them.

" Each of us could do a section in our own style"...

Et cetera. I was delighted. The session proceeded in exactly the fashion of any good story brainstorming; everyone contributing.. all issues being discussed, whether verbal, visual, ideological or structural. This to

me, is one of the most important skills to develop in filmmaking; the art of honing an idea to shape with a group. Although one can often spend many days on this process, good progress was made during the two hours we had allotted. At the end of the evening the group broke up reluctantly. Everyone seemed eager to return the next day and continue. The parting was warm and friendly...

The next morning Peggy and I eagerly awaited the arrival of the participants. The time arrived but they did not show up. We were informed that instead of meeting with us, they had gone to a meeting called by the group. Apparently there was dissatisfaction with the schedule. We felt that any time lost in such a short program would be disastrous. We hoped that everything would work itself out quickly. Alas this was not to be the case. All day long we waited for the phone to ring.

On Monday Della met with us and explained that the entire program had been criticized by the group of participants as yet another aspect of the general institutional racism of the NFB. Every aspect of the schedule was attacked. It was said that Peggy and I had tried to push the participants away from a "strong political statement" and toward something visual. In any case Rose had joined the documentary group; Tara had disappeared; Edna and Bela were doing something else on video.

Peggy and I were devastated. What had happened overnight? We had been asked to share our knowledge and skills; we had agreed to do so. Then suddenly we were refused; turned away in a remarkably insulting fashion. Worst of all the participants were losing a valuable opportunity. Not only for themselves but for future applicants to future programs. We are filmmakers and we love our art; when spurned we are hurt. And who will be the facilitators next time if the present ones have been treated so cruelly?

I plead guilty to trying to lead the participants to an interesting visual treatment. Animation is visual; this is one of the concepts I would have tried to impart. Such skills and knowledge would have been valuable tools in making any future "strong political statement" truly effective.

Alas, some part of the group decided to play politics at a pointless and inappropriate time. I doubt anything will be gained; I know much has been lost. (Walter 1991)

Although the Animation participants abandoned their pre-planned workshops, the Documentary group decided to adhere to their timetable.

Lights! Camera! Action! NIF Documentary Participants Learn about Art World Conventions and Encounter the NFB Filmmakers

As the Documentary participants resumed their workshops, they were rudely confronted with the complex technical details of the filmmaking process and

began to realize that a long and arduous training process would have to be undergone before they could truly fulfill the hope that NIF had awakened in them of becoming producer-directors. When participants met the seasoned NFB personnel who were recruited as trainers for the Institute, they began to notice the wide gap between these professionals' expertise, and their own lack of knowledge of the ABC's of filmmaking. The NFB trainers who had honed their particular crafts over decades in the industry, were eager to impart their knowledge to new and fresh minds. Nonetheless, it was clear that the NFB wasn't geared for training[4] and that the crafts professionals who had agreed to serve on the program had made a special effort to accommodate the Summer Institute's training component in their busy production schedules. The workshops had been set up and intricately planned so that in the space of 10 days a short Public Service Announcement (PSA) of a minute or less, could be produced.

In order for this PSA to be put together, many preparations had to be made in advance. Hence, by the time participants arrived, one of the proposals submitted by applicants to NIF prior to the Institute (on homelessness) had been chosen as the theme of the PSA; a stage designed for this theme had been built; and technical people had been scheduled to give concentrated workshops to expose the women to each and every process that would go into producing the film. The participants' lack of awareness of the pre-production arrangements that had already been carried out and of the special effort the trainers were making to suspend their normal projects to give NIF workshops, raised the ire of Olwin, the cinematographer:

> Do these people want to have training or not? I've told the crew to hold back the lighting... Those huge lights take a lot of manpower to move, so we won't move them until we know for sure what's going on... Democracy is all fine and well, but they have to understand that we're stopping our work for this.

From the trainers' point of view, they had other duties to perform from which they were taking time away; and from the participants' point of view they wanted more control over the learning process they were about to undergo. As Marian, a NIF staff member noticed:

> [T]hese women are more concerned with the process than the product.. It looks like it doesn't matter to them whether or not there is a final product.. and this is how the Summer Institute is structured this year.. i.e. it's product-oriented.. They just don't seem to understand what an effort it was to put this program together... the women want to design everything themselves. They want to determine which resources to access.

Since the facilitators hired to troubleshoot during the Institute were independent filmmakers with no experience within the NFB, they were unable to explain the technological and institutional limitations of the Film Board to the participants. Olwin, the cinematographer and one of the main trainers, decided to meet directly with the women in the Documentary section himself to clarify the requirements of the filmmaking process:

> There are several things the participants must understand. There has been a lot of work put into organizing this institute. For example, there are a number of fixed expenses. The set and studio have already been built.. We can accommodate the women's demands to a certain extent... They can change around the nature of the Public Service Announcement somewhat if they want as long as they stick to the 8 shooting hours that have been set aside for them. But none of our equipment can go outside the Film Board unless it's accompanied by the appropriate person [pseudonyms]: Mario with the lighting equipment, Sam with camera, Harry with the sound equipment and Norman as assistant.... The reason we teach novices on the stage is because the results of their efforts can be seen immediately. There are a few things they can change around... They can do as many takes as they want because we've got two rolls of film to play with.

Filmmaking, the participants began to realize, involved certain constraints brought on by the use of expensive equipment.

> When a particular convention can be taken for granted, when almost everyone involved almost always does things that way, the understandings that shape convention can be embodied in permanent equipment (Becker 1982, 56-7).

The equipment acquired over the years embodied a permanent convention in the art world of NFB, and in order to participate in filmmaking at the NFB, one had to be familiar with the technology and how to handle it. It became obvious that the participants had very little knowledge of the conventions in the film world, but they were about to find out. Using field notes, I will take the reader through the same hands-on "tour" of the NFB's crafts facilities that the

Documentary participants went on. Quotes are from the various NFB trainers leading the "tour" in the specific craft areas.

Camera!

After lunch on Day Two, the Documentary group went off with Olwin to learn about cinematography in the stage area where an indoor shoot had been planned. Olwin was excited about finally getting things underway. He went on at length using terms that most of the women did not seem to understand. For example, he recited the types of film that were available to them: Fuji 250, Tungsten, DDV, RM, Dolby. Olwin continued with explanations about the two types of movie cameras that they could use: the SR and the Aeton (which, he elaborated, had greater maneuverability because it had a view-finder and was hand-held). One of the cameras even had a small video system attached to the side of it for convenience, he said. The participants in general seemed flabbergasted at the unfamiliar terms being thrown at them, but nonetheless gritted their teeth and resolved to absorb whatever they could. Once they had gotten a preliminary feel for the limits and possibilities of cameras and films, they had to proceed to make decisions about the plot and the set.

The Plot

Participants were dissatisfied with the "homeless people" story line that had been chosen earlier by the NFB trainers, and wanted instead to change to a plot based on the sentence often heard by minorities: "Some of my best friends are.." (the end of the sentence is usually a racial or ethnic group descriptor like Asian or Black or Aboriginal). The documentary participants wanted to make a plot that explored the significance of this sentence and conclude with the statement, "Some of my best friends are racist."

The Set

The way the Documentary group had envisaged the plot required them to change the set originally built for the homeless scenario. The first thing to be modified was the bedroom set which was no longer required. The participants decided to rearrange the bedroom furniture so that the set now looked like a living room. On the changed set, a party scene in which a racist act would take place,

would be enacted. While the women were in the process of examining the existing set, Rose tried to enter the bedroom through a fake door that fell off as she pushed. Carl, the NFB craftsman who had built the set, groaned. He looked somewhat upset that the women had decided not to use the set as he had designed it. Nonetheless, he pointed to a row of huge steel shelves in an open cargo area where various couches, chairs, tables, and other pieces of furniture were stored. He helped the participants to chose a couch and drag it back on a dolly to replace the bed on the set.

Lights!

Then Olwin managed to recapture the participants' attention in order to encourage them to take a few set- lighting decisions before Mario, the lighting man, left. Olwin confessed that when he did on-location shoots, he personally liked to shine light through any available windows. For example, he decided once to put lighting through the windows while filming on the sixth floor of a building. To achieve the effect that he wanted, he had to build six stories of scaffolding. "It can get pretty expensive", he admitted. Mario, who by then was on a forklift moving a set of huge cone lights, was visibly proud at finally being able to display some of his knowhow. The cone light that was rolled in was humungous, towering at a height of 12 feet. It had a 6,000 watt bulb, the equivalent of a 25,000 Tungsten light, the participants were told. It was used on a set at night when the director wanted to approximate a day-scene.

> But of course, if you are doing a documentary real-life shoot and you want to do outdoor shots, you are prey to the weather. Shooting in the studio environment has the advantage of the same weather every day.

As the documentary workshop proceeded, many participants had begun to appreciate the art and craft of filmmaking through the demonstrations they were witnessing from practitioners. Though all the information that was being meted out to them was overwhelming, it was also eye-opening. Participants began to understand how, in order for a film to be made, many people had to cooperate by contributing their own special areas of expertise. One participant who had had

some previous experience in video and had thought that filmmaking was similar, realized that:

> Film is completely different from video. I didn't realize to what extent, until I started working in film! In video, you shoot and the result is almost immediate. In film, you have to wait for the rushes to be processed, and you have all these crew members working with you to make the initial image. It's *completely different*!

Casting

On the following day of the Summer Institute, the participants needed to change the type of extras that would be required for the new, "Some of my best friends are racist" plot to be executed. The gofers on the NIF staff who had arranged for extras to be brought in, were informed that some of the "of colour" extras who had already been recruited (based on the initial story line), would have to be replaced by "White guys" who were to play the role of the "racists". The NIF staff spent several hours recontacting the extras, telling some to come as scheduled, and canceling others' appointments for work. Participants felt frustrated that they were not able to simply call their own friends to play the roles needed on a volunteer basis. They did not understand how important it was for the NFB, a publicly funded organization, to be on good terms with the national union representing performing artists, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA)[5]. ACTRA regulations required that extras be paid a certain amount of money to appear in an NFB or any other Canadian film. The frustrated NIF staff commented that the participants seemed not at all willing to work with what had been already set up by them in order to arrive at a final product. As NIF staff at the behest of the participants, made changes to the extras roster, the documentary participants did an on-location sound recording workshop with Harry, the sound man, after storyboarding in the morning.

The Shoot

The next day, the documentary group worked on the outdoor scene of their Public Service Announcement. Since it was a sunny day, they decided to shoot in the courtyard of the NFB and hence did not need to use any special lighting.

There was some debate about who would be camerawoman and who would be director. Three women were interested in handling a camera, so each of them did some shooting. Almost all the women vied for the position of director, corresponding to Becker's finding that:

> There will usually be an oversupply of people for the roles thought to contain some element of the artistic—in theater, that includes playwrights, actors and directors-- and a short supply of people with technical skills to do support work that does not share in that charisma. (1982, 77)

However, experience in the film world finally prevailed as the deciding criterion, and Corie and Leah, both of whom had worked in media before, were chosen as directors. On Day 5, the shoot continued, this time on the stage with the party scene. As extras gathered in the side room, Della, the NIF Program Producer, gave them green contract sheets to sign, and Leah, the director of the day, then came to give them instructions. Back in the stage area, the other Documentary participants were learning about a bell on the sound board which, when rung, indicated to the carpenters and other crew working on the set, to be quiet. A second bell would ring when the actual shooting began. I could hear Lana practising when to say "sound ready", "camera ready", and "Party Scene: Take One". Those working on sound (NIF participant, Sandra and NFB trainer, Harry) were literally on the stage holding a boom mike. Leah arrived with her extras . An extra with the darkest skin was chosen as the one to whom racist behavior was being directed. Two other extras were to turn away when she addressed them.

That night, the picture was taken to the lab for developing. The next day, as the lab was processing the film, participants listened to a talk by the NFB Employment Equity officer, and attended sound recording and picture editing workshops. On Day 7, the documentary women and the NIF staff went to Theatre 5 to see the "synch rushes" which had no sound yet. Everybody laughed and were amused at seeing the people they had filmed, on the big screen.

Picture and Sound Editing

After lunch, the Documentary women entered the picture edit room to decide on what "takes" to include in the Public Service Announcement. They discussed which shot to include to correspond to the opening statement of the

film. Would it be the shot of the actor saying: " Some of my friends are the worst racists" or the one of her saying, " Some of my friends have the worst racist behavior"? As the discussion was taking place, Sandra, one of the most technically experienced participants, quietly draped the "negs" on what resembled a coat rack. Since the participants had lost a full day of workshops (due to the closed door meetings held by participants on Day 2), Cathy, a picture editor with the NFB Animation studio, expedited the picture editing process by helping the participants to make quick decisions on which takes to include. She was sitting at a Steinbeck (a moviola), one of the NFB's 72 picture editing machines, each costing $80,000. She worked with amazing speed and dexterity, her fingers flying as she mechanically glued the various chosen frames together. The room was kept dark so that the women could see on the screen of the Steinbeck, which frames were being chosen. A NIF staff person was dispatched to locate the credits and titling that the animation department had prepared, so that Cathy could "paste" them onto the beginning and the end of the Public Service Announcement.

As the Documentary group went to take a two-hour crash workshop in sound editing with Nancy, an NFB sound editor, Cathy managed to finish the picture compilation job in two hours. In the sound edit room, Nancy wanted each woman to at least have a chance at putting her hands on the machine (which looked like a larger version of an old-fashioned reel-to-reel tape recorder) since there was no time to do much else.

Titling

On the following day, the Documentary participants trooped to the second floor of the Grierson building for a tour of the titling department's facilities. There they discovered why subtitles in films were always white due to white wax being literally burned onto the film. The titling expert admitted, however, that the way titling is done is changing rapidly with the use of computers.

On Becoming a Professional

By the end of Day 8 of the Institute, participants, awed by the number of skilled people involved in making a short one-minute film, began to ask themselves how they could access the training required to be considered a

professional on par with other experienced filmmakers. Reaching a level of proficiency sufficient to be called a professional in a particular art world depends, according to Howard Becker, on the level of organization of that art world:

> ... the more organized the art world, the more likely it is to generate standards difficult for anyone but a well-trained professional to meet. (1982, 230)

The film world, an extremely organized environment needing high levels of cooperation during production, would require the filmmaker to meet high standards that would take years to obtain. The participants now got an overview of the entire film production process through the eyes of "Rory", head of the French Production's Camera department[6].

Rory began by asking if anyone had camera experience. Sandra said that she had shot on M3A, 3/4 video, and SR. Thanks to Olwin's earlier workshop, the other participants could now identify the name of at least one of the cameras. In order to become a full-fledged cinematographer[7], Rory said, one would have to work first on assistant camera for five years. During that time one would have to gain a certain amount of expertise and project enough confidence to "go up to camera". When cinematographers take up directing, their extensive knowledge of camera informs their decisions at every step. Camera people and directors are also helped enormously by any knowledge they acquire about editing.

Editing

Before becoming an editor, Rory continued, one should ideally spend about 7 to 10 years as an assistant editor. While editing a documentary, for example, which takes three to four months, an assistant editor would spend ten hours a day with the editor and director.

Putting a Crew Together

Rory reminded the participants that filmmaking is, in fact, 70% people-oriented and only 30% technique. Directors, for example, have to be confident people: they have to be able to keep track of a lot of information, impose new staff onto some old crews, and be able to handle the pressure of scheduling, respecting collective agreements, etc. Since the rumor mill is strong, one can

easily get a reputation for being slow and inflexible; so everybody goes through hard times. One dangerous mix, Rory continued, is when experienced people who know what will or won't work, are matched with an inexperienced director. Another explosive recipe is breaking up a team[8] that's been working together for years. A tight team will not be open to giving up a member or letting a new person into its ranks, Rory cautioned.

Since the private sector film industry offers no guarantee of a permanent job, one has to acquire a variety of filmmaking skills to stay working, Rory warned. But life is better for those who get hired on permanent staff at the NFB where the process of putting a crew together is somewhat different. I remembered Petra's description of assembling an in-house team:

> You find out when you want to go and film. You then talk to the head of cinematography and say, these are my days.. is so and so available? And if she is, you get her on board. Then you go to the sound department and you say you want someone to record sound and you get the person you want, if you want an electrician, you go and you talk to the head of the shooting stage.

Becker's contrast (below) of two job-finding systems, helped to make sense of the difference between how filmmaking teams are put together in private industry and at the NFB:

> [G]iven that a pool of interchangeable support personnel exists, how do these members get connected to particular art projects to which they contribute their services? At one extreme members of the pool work for an organization which carries on art world projects; their career within the organization provides the mechanism by which they are allocated to particular jobs. At the other extreme pool members contract separately for each project, in what might be called a freelance system. In either case successful members of the pool have a career, in an organization or series of them by virtue of building a network of connections which assures them of steady work. The two systems vary in the permanence of the relation between the support personnel and the artists for whom they work. (1982, 81)

Sound Mixing

The women were now about to witness the final stage of production. Andy (the sound mixer) who sat at what looked like a huge space consul, demonstrated

to the participants how he amplified the sound of the bump scene (one of the "racist" acts filmed for the PSA) to emphasize the violence of the act. He also highlighted the "threatening" sound of the footsteps on the gravel (the footsteps getting louder as the actual bump occurred, and then fading away as the perpetrator moved away). It is at the sound mixing stage, Andy told participants, that:

> I often get to drink champagne because this is where the director finally lets go of the product. There is not much more that can be done with the film at this point.

This is when the picture editor experiences what is known as the withdrawal syndrome because the film now definitively becomes identified with the director.

The Lab

Andy and Rory continued with their explanations about the steps required to finish a film. The mix of picture and sound now goes to the lab and a "neg" (negative) is made. The negative sound is married to the negative picture to yield the answer print; then the inter-neg is made. Participants looked awed by all there was yet to learn.

The Final Product

It takes about 6 weeks from this stage to the final product, Rory informed the participants. Distribution has now switched from film prints to video, so film gets transferred to one-inch tape and then to video. It's still cheaper to make film than video unless there are only talking heads, Rory said. NBC's Movie of the Week is never shot on video, for example, because when they sell it abroad they have to stick to a common standard. In North America the standard is 24 frames/second, he said and in Europe it's 25 frames/second. Although 16 mm film is used in the rest of the world (with Kodak being its only manufacturer) the United States uses 35mm film. Rory conceded that it wouldn't be long before video equipment is up to par with film; but since the NFB had so much invested in film, things wouldn't change so easily to video. As Becker noted:

> The existence of such permanent equipment (expensive, it goes without saying) makes it more likely that the conventional ways of doing things will continue because any change will be expensive. (1982, 57)

Evening Film Screenings

As the daytime activities at the NIF Summer institute continued, participants also attended evening film screenings and discussions. A look at the first screening and discussion will give the reader a feel for the nature of this activity. On Day 2, two curated films were to be shown: Barry Greenwald's *Between Two Worlds* and Alanis Obomsawin's *Incident at Restigouche.* Participants were reluctant to attend for they were tired and very much under stress from the closed door meetings earlier that day. Most were out in the courtyard, relaxing by lying on the grass or smoking. Sara, the curator, was getting agitated due to all the work she had put into preparing the exhibition of the films and no one as yet having appeared to watch them. The NIF staffers were scurrying about trying to entice the lounging participants to come in for the screening. The animation and Program II groups had left, with the exception of Edna, a First Nations participant, who was interested in the content of the screening that evening. Near the cafeteria, Tony, the "editing doctor" and NFB trainer for the Institute, was watching the participants through a hallway window overlooking the courtyard. (The Program II women had not viewed the film he wanted them to see that morning, Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin,* so he, along with other NFB people were well aware that trouble was afoot in NIF.) He asked," Those aren't the women involved in the *coup d'etat* ?" [9]

Sara finally decided to start screening the films about First Nations issues, even though no one had yet arrived in the theatre. The participants eventually sauntered in and patiently viewed both films one after the other. They then decided to hold the post-screening discussions on the theme of *cultural appropriation,* in the cafeteria. Sara posed a series of questions using dense, film school language. The participants, however, expressed the same ideas in more down-to-earth terms. Iris clarified the main topic at hand:

> I guess what you're asking is: can you make a film about a culture from *outside* that culture? Well, when I think of the film I just completed about my grandfather's cafe, I was looking from the outside, in too, because I'm Canadian-born and he's Chinese-born.

Edna then volunteered her point of view:

> For me the question is *who* is your audience? For example, when I went to see Rez Sisters by Thomson Highway, all of us First Nations women laughed, and the White people told us to be quiet.

Bev, a NIF Advisory Board member and NFB trainer during the pilot year, added:

> First, I think a film should serve the people concerned...then the audience is everybody else.. Rather that asking who we are making it for, we should focus on whose experience it is.

It was a healthy and frank discussion. Unfortunately, the Program II women who were to share their political expertise with the film world novices, were not present at the film screening and discussion.

Trouble Brewing

A conversation that Della had had with Rita (a Program II participant) before the start of the Summer Institute shed some light on why the Program II women had not attended. Apparently, the degree of participation required by the NIF Summer Institute was much too high for them. They wanted some free time to attend the Montreal Film Festival which was taking place concurrently. The NIF Program Producer had told Rita that if Program II women were clearly *not* intending to participate in common post-screening discussion times, then they shouldn't bother coming to the Institute at all. This comment had greatly antagonized Rita because she thought that she ought to be treated as a professional filmmaker, at liberty to choose which NIF activities to attend, rather than as a student obliged to take a fixed set of classes. From Rita's point of view, Program II filmmakers deserved the same consideration as other NFB professional filmmakers; just because they were independent filmmakers did not make them less worthy of respect.

On Day 3 of the Summer Institute, the Documentary group was the only one carrying through the program as designed. The two facilitators (Opal and Glenda) as well as Jill (a NIF Advisory Board member who had asked to be hired to give workshop on funding strategies for the Summer Institute) were blaming Della for all the dissent that had been expressed by the Animation group and by

Program II. The triumvirate followed Della to her office and accused her of not communicating with the participants or with the facilitators. Della was in tears. After two days of being stonewalled from the activities of the Animation group and Program II, Della felt it was not she, but the facilitators who had largely contributed to this standoff between participants and NIF staff. Knowing that Jill had gone through a similar ordeal in another agency, Della had hoped that she, at least, would be on her side. However, Jill did not lend her support to Della and the latter vainly tried to understand why:

> Jill [has] also been staying at the hotel and hears the complaints of other women. She tells me that these women are entitled, and that they know what they wanted.. I told them I found some of their concerns excessive... these three women proceeded to tell me that I am responsible for their mental health..

Jill had been influenced by the Program II women's analysis of the situation, painting Della as inflexible and dictatorial. Della felt isolated; her only support came from the NIF staff. One glimmer of hope remained, however. If the participants and NIF staff could speak to each other directly without the mediation of the facilitators, perhaps the air could be cleared. Opal, Glenda and Jill finally agreed with Della that a meeting should take place that evening to address the tension that had been created between the NIF staff and the participants. This would create the opportunity for all the women involved in the Summer Institute to speak for themselves and air their views directly to each other. Once the meeting was decided upon, it was left up to Della and the NIF staff to deal with the details of making arrangements.

The Unmediated Angst Meeting

The women were to be having supper at the hotel that evening. When the program was originally designed, the evening was intended to be a joyous occasion, but with the existing tension in the air, many women feared being placed at a table with members of "the other side". As we walked into the hotel to examine the rooms where the supper would be served, we saw Edna and Bela (from the Animation group) in the swimming pool. These two participants had complained that they could no longer continue to work within the oppressive gray

walls of the Film Board and that they needed an atmosphere that "fostered creativity" outside the NFB. The hotel and the pool seemed to have provided the ideal spot.

Before the women gathered for what later came to be known as the "angst meeting", there was a quick consultation between Opal, Jill and Della during which they decided to cancel Jill's scheduled talk that night on Funding Strategies, in order to allow the women enough time to "get it all out". Jill, however, seemed upset about her presentation being eliminated after all the preparation she had put into it.

The meeting took place in a conference room at the hotel, and all the Women of Color and of the First Nations involved with the 1991 Summer Institute sat in a huge circle. Opal was assigned to be the facilitator. We heard from the two Animation participants, Edna and Bela, who had "defected" to Video and whom we had seen a little earlier at the swimming pool. They affirmed how much they were enjoying working in the more nurturing atmosphere of the hotel where their creative juices could flow freely, unimpeded by the rules, regulations, and racism of the NFB.[10] The meeting continued with Rita and Laura of Program II saying how Della's paternalism and the NFB trainers' racism had offended them. Della described the accusations leveled against her:

> I'm told that people of colour are told "No!" every day of their lives in Canada and that this had to stop and that they were entitled to the ownership of this program.

Rita vehemently stated that none of the participants wished to be "observed like animals" by the evaluators and the observers and that the program as designed, did not empower Women of Color. The worst aspects of the NFB's history with independent film makers was being perpetuated, she declared. When she repeated the same point several times, other participants began getting annoyed at Opal for giving Rita a chance to reply to all the participants in turn. One woman lamented that not even the basic democratic rule of keeping a speakers' list was being observed by the facilitator.

Some of the Documentary group participants who had felt that they were in the process of learning something valuable from the NFB trainers, lashed out at the Program II women when they attempted to speak on *their* behalf. When Rita urged Leah, one of the Documentary participants to express herself, the latter replied:

> I don't have to speak if I don't want to[Silence] I resent you[r] saying what to say and what not to say.. I think you're preventing me from going ahead with my learning opportunity and that you have another agenda.

Lana and Leah, both from the Documentary group, voiced their irritation at being held back by too much political talk and at being painted by Program II women as politically incorrect for wanting to participate in the NIF training process. In defence of Della whom Program II women had accused of not informing participants about the demanding Summer Institute schedule, Lana clarified, " I had full information and was told about how intense this was."

The NIF staff then began expressing their frustration over how poorly the Program II women had treated them, at how they had been accused of not being qualified to work on NIF and to be "in it for the money":

> [The NIF staff] really resented that these women came in and started to question them on their right to be working on this program and what credentials did they have. The money they were earning was shit; they weren't doing it because it was good money, but it was a good opportunity. They really felt that they were making some small contribution to issues of concern for women of color.

In an attempt to dissipate the tension, Jill (NIF Advisory Board member and NIF resource person) read an excerpt from a poetic novel whose relevance escaped many of the participants. Opal then made a perplexing comment about how the pen she was holding wasn't really a pen. The meaning of this remark also seemed lost on most of the women. Certain participants also tried to divert the anger expressed at the meeting, by uttering pleasantries to the effect of how the program was such a positive process. The NIF staff was clearly annoyed by these attempts by the Program II women and the facilitators to mask the frustration they were feeling. Yolande, assistant to Della, said she did not appreciate the facilitators and others defining how she was feeling. For the NIF staff, this whole

process had not been positive in any way, and she resented people reaffirming that it was. Finally, the NIF Program Producer was given the chance to speak:

> It's 11:30 at night. I find it sad. We have so few opportunities and room to access resources, and when we do, we just end up fighting amongst each other.

The following morning, Della received a phone call from Opal, informing her that after the meeting had ended, the Program II participants had told her how resentful they were at having been made the scapegoats for the disruptions at the Summer Institute. The tables had been turned at this meeting and the Program II women were not happy about it. The women in the Documentary group had benefited from the taste of crafts training they had experienced over two days of the NIF Summer Institute, and were not willing to go along with the interpretation of the NIF program as oppressive.

On Tuesday August 27, NIF Summer Institute Day 5, a supper had been planned for the participants to meet the women of Studio D. Most of the Video and Program II women, however, did not want to attend. Two of them (Rita and Zora) came only to get food for themselves and for the Animation group (now turned to Video). Marian from the NIF staff had heard that the Program II women were beginning to resent the video women for two reasons: firstly, because the Program II participants were having to take time off from their NIF workshops in order to help the newly formed Video group; and secondly, because the NFB woman sound recording trainer, instead of sharing her expertise with Program II, had been reassigned (by Opal and Program II women themselves) to help the two Video participants.

The Video group meanwhile, had begun to shoot video footage in the hotel, unbeknownst to the NIF staff. Administrators at the NFB and the hotel wanted to know what was transpiring since shooting was supposed to take place at the Film Board, not at the hotel. To field these enquiries, Della advised Opal who had now been declared the facilitator for the Video group, that the NFB would not be responsible for any shooting taking place in the hotel and that such activity would be matter between Opal and the hotel. As for the lab services, there

was no guarantee that any product could be put through for the Video group, because the NFB lab was geared to process *film* not video. After hearing this, Opal, angry with the NIF staff at what she perceived were their attempts to block her initiatives, shook with rage as she gave Marian a list of supplies newly required by the Video women.

The Program II women, in the meantime, were going about booking conference rooms at the hotel at NIF's expense, without consulting the NIF staff. The situation came to a head when the Program II and Video women tried to arrange a 16mm shoot outside the NFB production headquarters, with NFB camera equipment. Olwin, head of cinematography, told Stacey, head of Studio D, " I don't want my equipment taken out!" Opal was quick to blame Della for Olwin's reaction, thinking that Della had incited Olwin against the Program II/ Video participants. However, since Olwin was adamant that NFB equipment not be allowed to leave the premises, the Video/Program II women went to Tony (the "editing doctor") and asked if they could use some of his "dead time" on the NFB shooting stage. (Tony was, at the time, using the Film Board's facilities to work on his own documentary.)

Maurice, head of the shooting stage, became livid when he got wind of this. He told the women that they could not use the shooting stage because a company outside of the NFB had booked it and unauthorized personnel were not permitted to wander around the premises. Della, realizing that she needed to maintain good working relations with NFB personnel like Maurice, stepped in and asked that Program II women not approach the resource people directly, since it was *her* responsibility to do so. Della subsequently agreed with Tony that he would give the Video/ Program II women his video equipment and a portion of his unused time on the shooting stage, in a private arrangement. This way, Della ensured that the NFB would not be liable if any of the equipment was damaged. If there was any danger, Tony would assume the responsibility.

Since the wherewithal for shooting video was now assured, Opal was well on her way to fulfilling her promise to the Video women that they would have a final product at the end of the NIF Summer Institute. Although she did not consult

the NIF staff before promising this to the Video women, she insisted that NIF now come up with the money for the new project. Since the Video group, assisted by the Program II women, had decided to go ahead with producing individual videos, substantial external costs (in addition to internal NFB costs) would be incurred. This was because the NFB's *film* production headquarters did not have on-line *video* editing facilities available. In order to edit their videos, the women would have to go to an outside video production facility which would charge approximately $3,000 a day for use of their equipment and services.

Instead of going through Della (the NIF Program Producer) to explain the situation and seek the additional funds, Opal approached Della's boss, Stacey directly (head of Studio D) and asked that Program II/ Video women be granted paid hotel meals, and the right to arrange meetings, book hotel rooms and shoot film as they saw fit. The latter demanded that Opal come up with a budget for the added costs and give it to Della. Before any budget was handed over to Della, however, the Video/Program II women met with Stacey privately, presenting an array of demands. They taped the meeting and threatened Stacey that they would expose Studio D in the media for the tokenistic nature of NIF if their demands were not met. Stacey succumbed to the pressure and granted the women all their wishes without consulting Della. When Della discovered what had transpired, she told Stacey:

> I feel what you've done is undermined me.. by making *me* the problem. What you should've done is first say, I'll speak with Della and get back to you .. by not doing that.. by just giving them what they wanted, you undermined me.

Stacey, however, refused to acknowledge that she had undermined Della. In Stacey's eyes, what she did in fact was support Della by taking pressure off of her; it was merely Della's *perception* that she had been undermined, she said.

To find additional money not already allocated to NIF's Summer Institute budget to finance the new Video project, Stacey had two options. She could either go directly to the NFB Financial Services where the process of getting permission for extra funds would normally take weeks or even months, with no guarantee of approval; or she could use her discretionary powers as the head of the Studio, to

divert funds already allocated to another Studio D project. Since Stacey had already committed herself to getting the video done by the end of the Summer Institute, her urgent need for funds drove her to utilize Studio D's funds.

When the overworked NIF staff saw that Studio D was suddenly finding thousands of dollars that had not been initially made available to the NIF program, they wondered why the money wasn't used to hire another NIF staff person or to grant them overtime pay. Why were budget constraints imposed on NIF staff when Stacey was giving money away to anyone who approached her in a confrontational manner, and why was money being freed up to do video when the Summer Institute was supposed to be about film, they wondered. Prior to the 1991 Institute, Della and Stacey had discussed the possibility of having a video workshop but had decided for two reasons that the 1991 Summer Institute should concentrate on film production: Firstly, it was being held at the NFB production headquarters which specialized in *film*, not video. Secondly, the Institute the following year was to be held at the Banff Centre for the Arts which specialized in video production. They had clearly decided together that given the Film Board's lack of video production facilities, the 1991 Summer Institute would concentrate on *filmmaking*. In light of this previous decision, Della saw Stacey's caving into the participants' demand for video without consulting her, as a breach of trust. Moreover, in the eyes of the Program II women, now, the White woman of Studio D would appear as the flexible benefactor, whilst Della and her women of color staff would be cast as the inflexible bureaucrats.

To further their claim over the NIF program, Program II women occupied Yolande's office (one of two rooms allocated to NIF staff), locked the door, did not allow NIF staff to enter, and made long-distance phone calls. In addition, unbeknownst to the NIF staff, Opal and the Program II women privately approached Stacey, head of Studio D for more money (between $3,000 and $6,000) for the Program II women alone. Their list contained additional demands for honoraria & per diems for attending NIF; for taxi money; and a car to take them to and from the Film Board and downtown for the period of the Summer Institute. It was Studio D's duty to underwrite all these expenses, they claimed.

Moreover, Program II would refuse to participate in the official evaluation process; hence, Studio D would have to consider the officially commissioned NIF evaluation incomplete.[11]

In the following days of the Summer Institute, the Documentary women continued to follow the program as the NIF Program Producer had designed it and the Video/Program II women used some of the NFB trainers that had been assigned to them and told others that they were not required. When the women were not busy with their production schedules, they listened to various talks delivered by funding and distribution representatives from Telefilm Canada, the Canadian Film Development Corporation, TV Ontario, and the Canada Council who had been invited to share their wisdom. Another meeting of the participants with the decision makers at the NFB was arranged on Day 8. In attendance were the heads of Marketing, Technical Services, English Programming and certain Studios. This meeting was supposed to give a chance to Women of Color and of the First Nations to address the gatekeepers at the NFB directly and tell them their concerns. Those in attendance avowed that there had been a good exchange of information and that they were satisfied with what had taken place. A closing party with the NFB trainers planned for Friday, Day 9 of the Institute, attracted no trainers at all. Surely the unpleasant experiences that many of the NFB personnel had had with NIF (their involvement being shunned by Video/Program II participants, and accusations of racism being leveled at them despite their sincere attempts to help) might have accounted for their absence. Although the NIF staff was not expecting a big turnout at the start of the last long weekend of the summer, two Studio D women who had been supportive of the NIF Program throughout the spring and summer, joined the Documentary women and the evaluators for a lame farewell. (The Program II and Video participants did not show up.) On the last day, the NIF Summer Institute activities fizzled out with a final information session and independent film screening by a representative from the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre.

[1] Similar recommendations appear in a document entitled *"New Initiatives in Film Advisory Board Proposal for the Way Forward"*, October 30,1995.
[2] Further confirmation that Program II designed their own program: Minutes from the NIF Advisory Board meeting, September 1991, p. 15.
[3] This can be compared to Stouffer's research on reference group dynamics, "Regardless of our situation in absolute terms, we gain our subjective sense of well-being by looking at ourselves relative to some specific reference group" (Macionis, Benoit, and Jansson 1999). The women perhaps became dissatisfied because they were comparing themselves to their peers in Program II who seemed to have gotten greater decision-making power over their schedules.
[4] NFB filmmakers' time was devoted to film*making* and producing films; no release time was earmarked for teaching or training
[5] ACTRA is a national organization of 18,000 Canadian performers working in the English-language recorded media: Film, Television, Video and all other recorded media. The Mission of ACTRA - and its predecessors - has always been to negotiate, safeguard and promote the professional rights of our Members. Interpreting this in its broadest sense, ACTRA also strives to increase work opportunities for our Members and to pursue performer-friendly public policies at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. ACTRA is affiliated to the Canadian Labor Congress and the International Federation of Actors." (ACTRA 2003)
[6] The NFB is divided along language lines into English and French Production with both sharing the Technical Services personnel.
[7] Cinematographer, cameraman, camerawoman, cameraperson all refer to the same profession.
[8] A basic team consists of a director, a cameraperson, an assistant cameraperson and a soundperson.
[9] Tony's choice of terms was especially timely on this particular week since not only Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (concerning the 1905 Russian revolution) was to be shown to the participants, but also since Gorbatchev and the Soviet communist system had just been overthrown a few days before.
[10] At this point, the Program II women and Opal had decided to help the two women who had left the Animation workshop, to shoot video footage. Only two of the four initial Animation participants remained because Rose had switched to Documentary and Tara, a participant from Inuit Broadcasting, had decided to leave the program. A community relations expert told the NIF staff that leaving a scene of conflict for a "time-out" period was an accepted cultural practice.
[11] The NIF staff was kept in the dark until after the end of the Summer Institute, that the Program II women had made these additional demands and that Stacey had agreed to them.

CHAPTER 3: THE NIF SUMMER INSTITUTE POST-MORTEM

Studio D Programming Committee meeting

After all the participants had left, the NIF staff performed their wrap-up duties for the Institute, dealing with administrative details like paying outstanding bills that had been budgeted for, and keeping up with ongoing projects like updating the NIF Resource Directory. The NIF Program Producer also worked on an assessment of the Summer Institute in preparation for an upcoming NIF Advisory Board meeting.

In the second week of September, it was time for Studio D's Programming Committee meeting, for which Stacey asked Della to prepare a report of the Summer Institute. Della suggested presenting the report that she had already prepared for the NIF Advisory Board, and Stacey agreed. The meeting took place over three days, from the 12th to the 14th of September. Eight members from Studio D were present in addition to Della and Yolande, her assistant. After Della's presentation, she was questioned by four Studio D members. Kelly blamed Della for the problems at the Summer Institute and stated that she had known from the start that the program as it had been designed would not work because it was not structured as a learning opportunity. Kelly had chosen not to tell Della about her misgivings because the latter had deliberately excluded Studio D women from participating in the Institute. Della was shocked at this accusation because she had thrice distributed drafts of the Summer Institute's program to Studio D for feedback and had invited Kelly to participate in an editing workshop. Della hoped at this point that Stacey, head of the Studio would clarify all this to her colleagues, but Stacey stayed silent.

Next, Wanda accused Della of having hand- picked the NIF Advisory Board members, to which Della retorted that the Advisory Board members had already been chosen by Stacey and Hannah (the designers of NIF) before Della was even hired. Again, Stacey offered no corroboration. Wanda continued by saying that Della did not adequately represent the community for which NIF had been designed; and Kelly added that if Della had represented the community, she

would have known that the participants did not want a product-driven program. Sharon, a founding member of Studio D then told Della that what NIF participants really wanted was to be mentored by Studio D and had Della been familiar with the constituency, she would *not* have excluded Studio D from the Institute. Della replied that Studio D had not at all been left out in the design of the program: They had had the opportunity to preview the curated films; the reason Studio D had not been invited to the screenings and discussions was because the pilot institute participants had not wanted Studio members to attend. Della reminded Sharon that three occasions had been officially scheduled into the Summer Institute expressly for Studio D to talk to participants: the formal presentations on Day One, a dinner meeting on Day Five and a dinner party on Day Nine. Once again, Stacey did not confirm or deny what Della said. Then Kelly asserted that the Summer Institute was supposed to be a program for Studio D members to learn about the NIF constituency. Della said she understood it was for Women of Color and of the First Nations. Again, Stacey offered no clarification.

After the meeting, Della approached Stacey and told her that she was stunned because Stacey had not supported her in any way when she was being accused of things she was not responsible for. Stacey expressed surprise that Della would feel the way she did and told her that it was just her perception. Three other women who were at the meeting, Petra (a founding member), Grace (a Woman of Color Marketing officer), and Yolande (NIF staff person) all affirmed that there was no mistaking the fact that Della had been mercilessly attacked at the Programming Committee meeting with no defence offered by Stacey.

A few days later, Grace, the Studio D Marketing officer asked Della if she was aware that Kelly and Jane (Studio D members who had made accusations against Della at the Programming Committee meeting) were going to represent Studio D at the upcoming NIF Advisory Board meeting. Della said she had no idea. For Grace who was familiar with the inner workings of Studio D, it was obvious that a certain feminist perspective[1] (reflected by Stacey, Kelly, Jane, Sharon and Wanda) was privileged at the Studio, and that only this inner circle

was considered worthy of strategically representing the Studio's point of view to the outside world. In Grace's analysis, the fact that there was no voting on major decisions, bred anti-democratic practice:

> At no time were Studio D personnel asked to vote on or discuss what the Studio's view of the Institute was. Yet, the following week, I found that Kelly and Jane had been selected to represent the Studio at the Advisory Board meeting. This process of selecting representatives was extremely problematic since there was no open discussion about who would attend the meeting. It implies that Kelly and Jane's perspectives do represent the perspective of all the Studio. The selection of staff members who echo the traditional form of feminism accepted within the Studio also illustrates which political perspective is considered to represent the Studio. As a member of Studio D, I have seen this process taking place at various meetings and am particularly concerned about how Della is being personally blamed for a situation which essentially is caused by unwillingness to tolerate differing politics in the Studio.

Grace wanted points of view held by Studio D members outside the inner circle to also be presented at the upcoming NIF Advisory Board meeting; hence she pressed for an invitation to attend the meeting.

Tabling of Program II letters

Another incident occurred just a few days before the Advisory Board was to meet. Jill (member of the Advisory Board and NIF Resource person at the Summer Institute) phoned Yolande, the NIF Program Producer's assistant, and asked for all the addresses of the Advisory Board members. She and Opal apparently had a package to send them. Yolande reminded her that the protocol was for the package to first be sent to the NIF office, whereupon the NIF staff would dispatch copies to the Advisory Board members. When Yolande asked Jill why she preferred to send the packages herself, Jill said it was to keep Della from previewing the contents before the Advisory Board meeting. On the morning of the Advisory Board meeting, Della was given the contents of the package which consisted of letters from the Program II and Video women, criticizing her, the NIF staff, the evaluators, and the Summer Institute. Della recalls her reaction to the various letters in the package at a trial which later ensued:

Lawyer: Look at Bela's letter. Can you comment on her statement, "As a member of the doomed "animation group", I had many questions about how working in animation would further my skills in documentary work."
Della: She knew she was going to be in an animation workshop. She would have been able to ask the animation personnel the questions she had. *She* chose not to continue.
Lawyer: Bela continues: " By Day 5, we were saving everything, plastic forks, paper, food, anything, just in case. If we couldn't have access to NFB resources, we still had each other."
Della: We were searching for them to provide their meals. No one prevented them from accessing resources they all could access as participants...
Lawyer: Now please look at the letter submitted by the [Program II] group. Could you comment on, " We had to organize our program in the face of repeated efforts to cancel our resource people, to cancel our access to even limited facilities.."
Della: I did not cancel any resource people. Two [NFB trainers] decided that they did not want to just wait around for the women. Rory walked out of his meeting with them because they just wanted to complain about Studio D and Stacey. He said when they were ready to talk about camera, he'd come back. We never limited their facilities. They never used the room we had available for them. They used the staff office and locked the door.
Lawyer: Look at "the program as set up by Della was .. structured in such a way as to oppress and intimidate."
Della: This accusation is so absurd. These [Program II] women were intimately involved with the construction of the program.
Lawyer: Please comment on a continuation of a letter signed by [Program II]. In it they give reasons why they opposed the presence of observers, "The observers did not properly explain the process they were using to "evaluate" the workshops."
Della: The [Program II] women were not present when the explanation took place. Rita had completely disappeared. Zora was in and out.
Judge: What made you conclude that Opal had a hidden agenda from the facts so far?
Della: For me, Opal definitely had an agenda. She had been intimately involved with the design, and the jury. She told me she was the spokesperson for the [Program II] and the Animation women. If Opal had problems, she could have told me. Any problems she did have, I responded to, I thought, satisfactorily.

Those who observed what had happened at the Summer Institute were baffled about why such a promising but hectic hands-on workshop, one that had gotten the support of the NFB craftspeople, had come to such an inauspicious end. What agendas were at play during the NIF Summer Institute that led some

members of Studio D and some of the NIF participants to level a seemingly inaccurate critique of the Women of Color that had put the Institute together? Many of the players in the NIF drama were left wondering what had happened. In order to put the pieces of the puzzle together, a more thorough investigation of the politics of diversity was required, beginning with the positions of Studio D and of the NIF Advisory Board on how to incorporate unrepresented portions of a population within an institution.

A Diversity of Feminist Standpoints

> Because women are divided by race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity and other differences, there can be no consensus among women as to how things are or should be. There is, therefore, no unitary category of "woman" to whose experience [one] can appeal, but only particular women and groups of women; not simply one female reality but multiple female realities; not one female standpoint, but multiple female standpoints. (Kline1989, 45) [2]

Accusations against the NIF staff and the NIF Program Producer at the 1991 Summer Institute certainly stemmed in part from the variety of expectations placed on the type of training that was to be had. (Would it be documentary, fiction, or docudrama; would it be in animation form with found footage and art work, with live interviewees and live actors, or using mixed forms; would it be in film or video?) And perhaps even more importantly in the eyes of some, was whether emphasis would be placed on the *process,* i.e. on how that training was to be meted out rather than the product. The constituency that NIF was to address had diverse interests when it came to accessing the world of filmmaking, and these interests were not necessarily related to their racial oppression.

The NIF Program Producer, Della, began having problems when Studio D discovered the divergence in their approaches to feminism. Differences became obvious, for example, when there was a discussion over the wording of Studio D's guidelines for independent women filmmakers applying for funds:

> One of the things I found problematic was.. they wanted to say they always represented women's points of view and experiences.. I thought, you *can't* say that. You *haven't.* And not thinking that this was an issue because in my generation of feminist struggles, and from Black women's experiences, there has been very much a dominant position that you *don't*

> speak for all women. And so I was very surprised that the early seventies position was still being put forward; and apparently this really offended and upset these women. In fact in later meetings I was told that they always represented *all* women. And I was totally stunned that this was where they were still coming from. Were they so isolated from the rest of the world? (Yi 1993)

Studio D's Grace argued that the NIF mandate indeed *required* the NIF Program Producer to present the diversity of views among Women of Color and of the First Nations in order to do her job properly:

> As program producer of NIF, Della needs to acknowledge different social and political analyses and strategies as they affect Women of Color and First Nations' women and sometimes even represent them to the Studio. However, she is being personally questioned for doing this.

Another Woman of Color, Sara, who had organized the NIF Pilot Summer Institute the previous year, wrote that Della was blamed personally for putting forward the belief (which by the late 1980's had become common currency amongst feminists of color) that given the sheer diversity of women, it was impossible to claim to represent all women. Sara herself had faced the same problem at Studio D Programming Committee meetings:

> During these meetings, there was a lack of clarity as to whether the perspectives I offered were interpreted as a representation, or a reflection of the community of women of the First Nations and Women of Color filmmakers, or as a personal opinion.

Members of Studio D, from their particular feminist standpoint, saw themselves as representing *all* women, regardless of race. Many other feminists, however, did not see their concerns reflected in Studio D films and questioned the Studio's claim to be representative of all women. Describing a Studio D Programming Committee meeting, Grace wrote:

> Sharon [founding member of Studio D] asked Della whether she in fact had seen Studio D films and that if she had, she would see their diversity. This does not recognize that though films may be viewed as being very representative according to Studio D's political context, other perspectives may analyze them as being problematic. This is another example of how political differences have not been permitted and have been personalized.

Della pointed out that it was those in power who decided when she would be considered to be representative of the Women of Color and of the First Nations community and when her opinions would be cast off as being her own personal views only:

> I know that they had a lot of problems with me vis-à-vis the politics of race.. They perceived anything I presented to be my own personal politic.. It was never that I was in anyway representative of those [Women of Color and of the First Nations] communities.. Yet at the same time I would be *asked* to be representing the communities.. Like for a project on Inuit women for example.. Stacey asked me, "Could you please read this and comment on it?".. If Women of Color came into the Studio, they'd be thrown at me.. or I'd be asked: "There's a film.. Could you come and watch it and comment on it?" So like on the one hand I *am* being asked to be representative .. Yet on the other hand, when I *did* say something that *they* didn't feel comfortable with or didn't like, then it was my own perception.. or my own politic..

To what extent had Studio D discouraged diversity? As mentioned earlier, admission into the decision-making nexus of the Studio was made easier for those who participated in feminist consciousness-raising sessions. Once admitted, those who had been inculcated into the Studio through this particular intimate, face-to-face network, were already comfortable with the method in which decisions were taken. Della points to an example of a particular type of behavior generated through the consciousness-raising movement and then the co-dependency movement, that excluded women who were not used to conducting meetings in that way:

> You know how feminist politics says you have to humanize the work place and that means we should consider things like, personal problems, and all this. I don't know if this is why I have so many problems 'cause for me there is a *professional* level of behavior that has to be present.. and when the people would have like breakdowns in front of you and temper tantrums, it was like, *Oh God!!!* There *must* be another way of humanizing the work force without having like the worst of victimology thrown at you.. Like you want to scream: "Go see a psychiatrist! Don't do it on my time!" Just, I don't know, get a grip! But it's such a power trip for these people to do that to you. What are you going to do when the person breaks down?

The negative side for newcomers to Studio D was that they did not necessarily wish to have their personal lives known by co-workers nor were they necessarily accustomed to an emotional, "bare-it-all" modus operandi for work-related meetings. Grace, a Woman of Color marketing officer at Studio D, wrote about how newcomers were subtly denied access to Studio D's decision-making body, the Programming Committee:

> Over the past year I have found that a climate exists at the Studio which does not tolerate political differences for those who do not share the Studio's interpretation of feminism. In certain situations, this manifests itself in a very personalized manner. This has created an atmosphere where only one form of feminism is accepted as appropriate.. From the onset, Della's feminism has been questioned. For example, at a programming meeting last spring, Sharon said it was difficult to have candid discussions where we do not all "know" or "trust" each other or share each other's feminism. As the example, she turned to Della and said that she did not know her and therefore it was difficult to discuss things with her. Since no context was provided by Stacey as Executive Producer of Studio D, these statements send a message as to whose perspective is acceptable in the Studio. If the criteria for colleagues to work together is to know and trust each other then only the women who have a personal history where they have developed this knowledge and trust are seen as being able to participate in the professional exchange and as having political validity. Knowing and trusting each other is presented as being essential to any work-related exchange and also implies that those who express different opinions are "unknowable" or "untrustworthy". The emphasis as a result shifts from different politics to personal ground.

Della noted that the Women of Color and of the First Nations to whom Studio D responded positively, were those who also posed their concerns in the language of victimization, as Studio D tended to do:

> Studio D hasn't progressed in the last years. They've been making the same damn films that carry the same message: women are victims. At first, White women made them , now they're getting women of color to make the same thing. (Yi 1993)

NIF Program Producer, Della, lamented over Studio D's lack of interest in learning about Women of Color and of the First Nations. From what she had witnessed, there was no genuine attempt on the part of Studio D women to expand their horizons, or to appreciate the diverse points of view expressed at conferences organized by Women of Color and of the First Nations communities:

> I'd go to conferences and our community events and the only people I'd see there from Studio D would be the other woman of color .., and on occasion, the Executive Producer.. but the rest of the time.. where *are* these people, you know.. If you're talking about access, they'd come and dump their pamphlets and leave.. Nobody sat around to hear *us*.. how *we* framed our own conferences.. to hear what *we* have to say.

NIF consultant and participant, Lana, remarks on how the director of a Studio D film with whom she worked as a Production Assistant/ Assistant Director, avoided involving herself personally in the multicultural research for the film. The Director, Ursula, seldom directly engaged herself in learning about other communities, preferring instead to subcontract the diversity dossier to Lana:

> *Lana:* As I was doing the interviews, I was learning about my community. But the filmmaker who needs to know wasn't learning anything about my community.
> *GN:* Why not?
> *Lana:* 'Cause she's not looking. She's not interested really.. You see, somewhere in the structure, somebody put pressure on her to include Black folks and so she just needed Black folks she could handle, or she could talk to.. or deal with.. She asked me to do the interviews with the Black women.. I told her *no*.. I think you should do some of your own work.. (laughter) I really thought she should... She didn't really want to learn anything.. She's not a better human being for this.. She's not grown for this, you know. What's the sense?

Both commentators above expressed frustration at the fact that Studio D women did not make a sincere and sustained effort at cultural exchange via NIF's multicultural mandate. The Women of Color and of the First Nations in the NIF program, for their part, were concerned with issues other than filmmaking too. An important part of the NIF program became the project of defining which elements constituted the Women of Color and of the First Nations community. Studio D's Executive Producer kicked off this definitional process by giving her personal opinion of a woman of color being a "non-White, non-European, self-identified member of a cultural community", and a First Nations woman being a "self-identified member of an aboriginal nation".

Continuous attempts were also made by NIF participants, employees and board members to define the Women of Color and of the First Nations

community. Different people defined the community differently. The NIF Program Producer, for example, felt that if self-definition was the main criterion, then the NIF program would be open to all kinds of interpretation, some even trivializing racial oppression. She gave the example of a White Rastafarian woman who had claimed that she should be included in NIF because she was a "visible" minority woman and elaborated on another example of a White Latin-American woman who claimed to be a woman of color:

> I'd met Laura before- she was Latin-American. When I met her, I thought she was a White woman. My understanding of Latin America is that they have White people there. I questioned Opal that she [Laura] was a White woman. Opal said she was colored. I said she speaks Spanish but she's not a woman of color; what makes her different from a White Polish woman who doesn't speak English? Neither speaks English but that doesn't mean they're women of color. But Opal says Laura defines herself as a woman of color.. so according to self-definition they were women of color. Who is going to know she's not a White woman. Just because she has an accent somehow trivializes the experiences of people who cannot escape at all the fact that their skin is dark and their eyes are different. It flattens it.

The September 1991 NIF Advisory Board Meeting

The NIF Advisory Board met in late September, 1991 to assess the NIF program's milestones to date. During the meeting which took place at the Chateau Champlain in Montreal, the subject of filmmaking was overshadowed by questions like who should be considered representative of the Women of Color and of the First Nations community, who the NIF program staff should be accountable to, and who in fact would be appointed to the NIF Advisory Board if *it* became the body that would eventually pronounce on the legitimacy of members of the NIF community. Diversity again, reigned in opinions on how questions of identity should be handled within the NIF program.

Members of the group of filmmakers/ videographers from Toronto called Angle felt strongly that *they,* and not Studio D were the ideal candidates to judge who represented the Women of Color and of the First Nations communities. They felt that any film or video programs claiming to include Women of Color and of the First Nations filmmakers should be made accountable to them, since they were the only group in the country who had thus far taken the trouble to organize this constituency. Sara, the producer of the pilot NIF Summer Institute, however, questioned the basis on which these Women of Color and of the First Nations

filmmakers/ videographers from *Angle* could claim that *they* represented the communities:

> Soon after I was hired as coordinator of the pilot Institute Stacey and Hannah met with Angle, one of the few groups of Women of Color filmmakers in the country, whose members had reservations with the program as it was delineated in the NIF document. While Angle had valuable and necessary input, including their concern that NIF should have professional industry standards[3], the question arose concerning the extent to which these women, all with some measure of filmmaking experience and based in Toronto, represented the concerns and needs of the "national communities".

Many Women of Color and of the First Nations thought that the NIF Advisory Board should become the body that the NIF staff should be accountable to, but only on condition that it become more regionally and professionally representative of Women of Color and of the First Nations filmmakers. (An examination of the geographical composition of the Advisory Board members in the 1991-92 years showed that five were from Toronto, two from Ottawa, two from Montreal, and one from Vancouver.) One Advisory Board member stated that under no circumstances should the Advisory Board take absolute power of NIF, at least not until proper regional representation had been achieved:

> There is currently not enough representation of the Advisory Board from the west, from rural areas, and certainly not from the north... I for one want to get on with programming and development of NIF. The producer should report to Studio D, to Stacey in the immediate, with checks and balances in place to ensure responsiveness to the Advisory Board... Those checks and balances should not include ultimate authority by the Advisory Board, until the Advisory Board truly reflects the diversity of voices and interests throughout the regions.

Another, more pragmatic set of questions was spawned by the discussion of whether or not the NIF Advisory Board as it stood, represented the Women of Color and of the First Nations community. I.e. Who should the NIF Program Producer and other NIF hirees be accountable to, and what should be the priorities of the NIF Program Producer's job (since it was the only "permanent" NIF position).

Tannis pointed out that although she thought that Della should be accountable to the Advisory Board only if it became truly representative of the Women of Color and of the First Nations communities in Canada, it would still be

difficult for her to answer to the government *and* be an advocate for the "community". Opal acknowledged that the NIF Program Producer was indeed required to perform an intricate balancing act, i.e. to be financially accountable to Studio D's Executive Producer, while at the same time being accountable overall to the various communities via the NIF Advisory Board. Vivian, wanting to get the rest of the NIF program underway, especially the apprenticeships, interjected that they should stop wasting time on long discussions over defining community and instead, concentrate on aiding the Program Producer to improve the concrete aspects of the program with all its limitations.

Amy's conception was that the Program Producer ought to be accountable, first and foremost, to the "community". Since there was no geographically or politically-bound Women of Color and of the First Nations community, however, how was accountability to the Women of Color and of the First Nations "community" to be measured? When one member cautioned that many concerns had to be balanced: regional, skills, expertise, communities, etc., Amy replied that the Advisory Board itself should be considered the community of Women of Color and of the First Nations that the NIF Program Producer should report to.

By the end of the September 1991 Advisory Board meetings, Amy's position had prevailed and she, along with Hannah (one of the designers of the NIF program), was mandated to act as the liaison between the Advisory Board and the Program Producer. Della, reacting to this, expressed her concerns about the lines of accountability not being clear with the new arrangement that Amy was putting forward:

> In the Advisory Board becoming a decision-making party and I having to be accountable to them in a legal process, what is the relationship of the Advisory Board vis-à-vis Studio D and the National Film Board?

Della's reaction to Amy's proposal posed some thorny administrative and legal questions, which put the Advisory Board on the defensive. Certain members of the Advisory Board began perceiving Della as uncooperative. Amy wrote back to Della, expressing her frustration and reiterating that all legalities aside, Della ought to acknowledge her obligation to answer to the "community":

> . the Advisory Board's approach was based on a widely held community notion: that as long as all parties agreed, anything could work

> .. you are still primarily responsible for the management and development of the NIF program, as its paid Program Producer/ coordinator. What the Advisory Board is providing as I understand it, is additional support.. to enable you to carry on this job.. particularly in such a way that it builds community".

The term, "community", was beginning to be used more and more frequently by Amy and those supporting her; however, the NIF program had not arrived at a common understanding of the term. The Program Producer's job description was no longer clear if "community building" was being added to her tasks in an important but ambiguous fashion. Moreover, not only the Program Producer's job, but the role of the NIF Advisory Board itself needed to be clarified in light of the new prominence given to "community building". The cloudiness over the Advisory Board's function left ample room for misunderstanding, causing it to expend much precious meeting time deliberating over its own role and membership. If NIF's priority was to assure Women of Color and of the First Nations entry and training in film, the Advisory Board should presumably have been composed of more filmmakers, and its time used more judiciously to create sustainable filmmaking training and production opportunities for their target community. However, emphasis was not being placed on film training, but on debates over defining the boundaries of "NIF community" membership.

One thing was clear by October of 1991: Della had inadvertently managed to antagonize three important sets of players in the NIF drama: the Program II/Video women, the Studio D old guard, and now, the NIF Advisory Board too. Although the Advisory Board had been supportive of Della during the September 1991 meeting and had given her endorsement for her work as the Producer of the NIF program, it soon began to perceive her as obstacle. Her insistence on her rights as a worker in being provided a job description, was coming in the way of the Advisory Board's attempt to assert *itself* over the Program Producer as the party that would direct the NIF program.

Since no tangible job description for the Program Producer's position was forthcoming after months of discussion on the part of the Advisory Board, and

since Della was personally being blamed for the problems in the Summer Institute, she viewed the attempt by the Board to make her accountable to them, as an abrogation of her rights as a worker. The Advisory Board had, up to that point, only received the package of written assessments from the Program II/ Video participants. The other participants had not felt the need to send in individual evaluations since the official Evaluators of the 1991 Summer Institute had taken note of their opinions already. Given the accusatory tone of the documents the Advisory Board had in hand, Della thought it wise to start defending herself. She began by soliciting evaluations of her work from the various NFB trainers who had participated in the Institute. Although the Animation Studio trainers came to her defence, Della was disappointed that most other trainers chose not to meddle in another Studio's business:

> Most of them didn't want to be bothered. Most of them reacted: We've seen this before.

The NFB Human Resources staff relations said that an investigation of internal studio practice could only be conducted by the studio's Executive Producer. If Della wanted to defend herself against what she saw as unfair practice, she was now left with no recourse but to appeal to the NFB employees' union (Le Syndicat General du Cinema et de la Television- Section ONF) to defend her. She could not stand alone when discussions on her role as a Program Producer were being carried out on the basis of unclear definitions of community accountability, and as her rights as a worker were being compromised as a result.

Della was determined *not* to quit her job although the atmosphere at work was becoming intolerable. One of the Advisory Board members had told her that if she did not apologize to the Advisory Board, then the Board would recommend that she be dismissed. In order to find out why this rumor was circulating despite her boss having told her nothing about the matter, Della approached her union to assist her in filing a grievance. She wanted to complain about Stacey's lack of support for her in the carrying out of her duties as a Program Producer. The union advised her to first see the NFB staff relations

officer, Fannie, who was on holidays till the end of October 1991. Another Advisory Board meeting, however, was scheduled before Della could see Fannie.

The October NIF Advisory Board Meeting

At the October Advisory Board meeting Della was questioned about the finances of NIF. Since her boss, Stacey, had, without informing Della, promised the "Program II" participants honoraria as well as expenses for attending the Summer Institute, the monies that were finally allocated to the Summer Institute exceeded the amount Della had reported in September as being the Summer Institute budget. The discrepancy between the September and October budgets made the Advisory Board members think that Della had had control over discretionary monies that could have been mobilized to meet the changing demands at the Summer Institute, but that she had deliberately chosen not to do so in order to keep power to herself. The fact of the matter was, though, that it was Studio D's Executive Producer only who could access the discretionary monies. Stacey allowed the confusion to persist in the minds of the Advisory Board members without intervening to clarify. As long as Della was the one being accused of being inflexible and insensitive, Studio D would be not be blamed.

Della found out about Program II participants' expenses being paid when one of the participants in Program II wrote in to the NIF office enquiring when the honoraria would be sent out. Della immediately sent a copy to the Advisory Board because this was an expense she was not aware of when she had submitted the Summer Institute financial report to them, and she thought they had better know about it too. Amy was extremely angry at Della for providing the Advisory Board with a copy of Program II's request to follow up on their private agreement with Stacey. Amy probably anticipated that some Advisory Board members would be suspicious of the arrangement. She proved to be right. Bev, for one, wondered why Program II got money while the other participants did not. She wondered if the other participants even knew that honoraria had been awarded to the Program II participants. Della said that it must have been a well-kept secret, for she herself had only learned of the entente with Stacey after the end of the Institute.

Opal interjected by saying that the honoraria were no longer an issue since they had already been paid out. Della wondered how Opal knew this because these extra expenses were not reflected in any of the bills that Della herself had had seen paid out. Bev again demanded why the other participants had not received any extra money. Amy replied that it was those other participants' problem if they hadn't ask for it. At this point, it became obvious that preferential treatment had been accorded to Program II in the context of a program that Della was supposed to be in charge of; yet she had no inkling of the arrangement. It was no wonder that Della felt undermined by Stacey. Della complained:

> I'm supposed to be the NIF Program Producer and I don't know anything about this.

As the October Advisory Board meeting progressed, Della's misgivings about the intentions of the members increased. One Advisory Board member warned her that the Advisory Board "had it in" for her job.

After the lunch break, Della was asked to give the Advisory Board an interim report. She had not been asked for such a report beforehand so she had to prepare one on the spot. In the report she wrote that everything in the NIF program had come to a halt, since the staff was waiting for a clarification of the Advisory Board's relation to the NIF Program Producer. She also said that rumors were being circulated about her imminent dismissal. This is what happened next at the meeting, in Della's words:

> Women are shocked. Rumors? What rumors are you talking about? I go, well, rumors about my endorsement. They say, why should there be rumors, Della, we endorsed you. I am told I can leave and they'll let me know whether they want me to come in again. Stay near the phone. I get called next morning by Sacha [the facilitator] to come in at 10:00. Yolande was asked to come in at 10:30. We decide to go together. I get called in alone. The whole Advisory Board is there, and nobody is looking at me. I walk in and it's a big square. Sacha is sitting at the front and she goes, Della, I've been asked to read this statement to you on behalf of the Board.. I knew they were still gunning for me, people like Opal, but I didn't know what they were actually going to do. From what people were telling me, I knew something had to be going on between them and Stacey because all of these women were saying that I was going to be gone and Stacey was avoiding dealing with me in any way, and had been constantly undermining me. I knew something was going to happen. I knew the key would be the Advisory Board. I just didn't know what they were going to

> do. At the very least I thought I would be given a reason: that they'd come up with some charge that I've done something so this was why I had to go. But instead they read this statement saying that they could not endorse me. They wanted to thank me, but they felt that the program required someone with greater professional skills, and they recognized that the Studio, the Film Board had inherent difficulties with a program of this magnitude, and they would always be there for me.

Della was shocked that the Advisory Board did not give her a concrete reason for their non-confidence vote. Nor were they allowing her a chance to defend herself.

> I said, I don't understand: a month ago you endorsed me; a month later, I'm not endorsed. So what did I do in a month that all of a sudden I can't be endorsed? Nobody answers. And I go, what's this about Studio D and the NFB having inherent difficulties with a program of this magnitude? What does this have to do with me? Nobody says anything. I said is somebody going to answer me? Am I not at least given that respect? Finally, Sacha goes, I want you to know that I'm not now speaking on behalf of the Advisory Board, I'm speaking for myself personally: I'm worried about your mental health and for that reason it's best to go. I said to Jill: You know, Jill, you told Michelle (a Woman of Color employed at the NFB) that I would be resigning before anything had happened. I never said that, I never said that, she's going on like this. Vivian says, Della, I want you to know that this was not a unanimous decision.

Because Della did not agree to the process of community-building as defined by certain Advisory Board members like Amy, a renegotiation of power with Studio D was being blocked. Della's ostensible lack of regard for the Advisory Board's attempt to assert its power was creating a bottleneck in the process they had envisioned.

In the eyes of certain Women of Color and of the First Nations involved in NIF, Della was not doing her job properly if funds could so easily be made available by Studio D for NIF. How had Stacey so readily come up with money to underwrite the costs of video editing at the Summer Institute whilst Della had not? For some, this implied that Della was not a strong enough lobbyist for the cause of Women of Color and of the First Nations. What these women did not realize, though, was that the funds Stacey had made available using her discretionary powers as an Executive Producer, had come out of another filmmaker's production budget. Della, for her part, wanting the NIF program to last, tried to avoid creating resentment amongst the other non-Women of Color

and of the First Nations filmmakers. However, some Women of Color argued that lobbying for the interests of Women of Color and of the First Nations over everybody else's interests was the NIF Program Producer's job. Hence, not pushing for the release of NFB funds at every possible occasion was an indication that Della was not doing her job properly. Not lobbying for discretionary monies that were so readily available, showed that Della was a bad producer, incapable of rolling with the punches and coming up with funds when required. Stacey herself used this point to criticize Della in an evaluation of her performance:

> I have questions about your judgment and flexibility in certain production situations, especially in relation to the Summer Institute which could be compared to a production where major changes could be called for; as a producer you were not able to find creative solutions on the spot.

Stacey artfully continued to let Della be blamed for everything that went wrong with the NIF 1991 Summer Institute; and interpreted her own undermining of Della as Della's incapacity to deal with a realistic production situation. Stacey allowed Della to be discredited in front of NIF Advisory Board, the novice participants and the Angle slate who had had previous problems with the NFB.

From Della's point of view, she had been led to believe that as Producer of the NIF program, all final decisions about the Program would be taken by her, in consultation of course, with her boss. However, on these two crucial issues, where a decision was taken by Stacey to fund the videos of the novices and to give per diems and expenses to Program II participants, the NIF Program Producer, who was supposed to decide how the NIF program would run, was stripped of her authority and made to look like a useless petty dictator. Stacey would go unscathed and continue to appear as the Studio D feminist who opened her coffers to Women of Color and of the First Nations[4], whereas Della would lose the reputation she had carefully built up over the years as a community worker[5]. The NFB employees' union was the only avenue left which might allow Della's side of the story to be heard by a relatively impartial judge. Della described how she got the ball rolling immediately after the October Advisory Board meeting:

> I have my meeting with the personnel officer at the NFB and the union rep. So I tell her what's been going on: how I feel I haven't been given support, and the atmosphere is negative. I know that she's received some

letters. She took notes and notes. She said she was going to speak with Stacey and arrange a meeting between the four of us. Stacey finally calls me into her office and says: I've got to talk to you about what happened on the weekend. She said, oh, I feel like I've been put through a torture chamber. She just went on and on about what a victim she was. I thought, what's going on? I'm the one who's being kicked out of here.

I said, look, Stacey, you and I've had meetings before and when I come back, you tell me that what was said wasn't said, that it was all my perception. I'm not about to be placed in that situation again so why don't you write down what it is you want to say to me, and I'll read it and we don't have to waste our time and there will be no misunderstandings about perceptual gaps.

Stacey asks again, why do you want somebody here? I said, Stacey, you said I could have something in writing. She starts to cry. Shit. This is my boss. It's not the first time. I've seen those crocodile tears before. Finally she lifts her head up to see if I'm noticing and I look at her and say, what's the problem with having it in writing and she says OK.

One might hope that when components of a new initiative fail in an organization, recommendations are made for changes and the program is improved in future years with the benefit of hindsight. In the NIF case however, Della was in an awkward position. She was caught between the Advisory Board which was trying to gain more control over funds for NIF, and Studio D which had difficulty acknowledging the diversity of feminist politics as manifested by the Women of Color and of the First Nations in NIF. Although Studio D did not see eye to eye with Della, Della had excelled in her job, and the Studio had found nothing concrete to reproach her with[6]. However, when a group of Women of Color and of the First Nations themselves claimed that Della did not understand their communities, Studio D finally found a good reason to fire Della.

The Firing, the Grievance, and the Court Case

On November 28, 1991, Stacey recommended in her evaluation of Della's work, that she be fired on the grounds: that she did not possess "adequate knowledge of the filmmaking process"; that she was "not able to anticipate certain solutions"; that she did not "budget realistically"; and that she had "difficulty in maintaining effective communications with.. NIF participants, facilitators and Advisory Board members. Della was then informed by Emma, Head of English

Programming at the NFB, that her employment would be terminated on December 20,1991.

Evidence marshaled from the Women of Color and First Nations community to justify Della's dismissal consisted mainly of: three individual letters and one group letter from the Program II/ Video participants, amounting to 12 pages of text, evaluating their experiences at the Summer 1991 NIF Institute. Opal, the Program II/ Video facilitator also weighed in with a 9 page assessment of the Summer Institute. Once these letters were received by the Advisory Board and given to Studio D's head, a more thorough investigation of all parties involved, surprisingly, was not conducted. Nonetheless, after Della's non-endorsement by the NIF Advisory Board, several craftspeople at the Film Board volunteered their perspective of the Summer Institute events to round out the incomplete evaluation process:

> As you know, I was a [trainer] in the Animation section of the N.I.F. project, and therefore a first hand observer of events. Although my views have not been solicited, I offer them anyway. Della did a remarkable job in organizing an unbelievably difficult project. Thanks to her efforts, the project would probably have been a smashing success, had it not been pointlessly sabotaged by some of the participants. Della dealt with an impossible situation with remarkable skill; even with benefit of hindsight, I cannot imagine what more she could have done. Della deserves a medal. She was shot down in the line of duty. Let us not make the classic error of blaming the victim for the crime

Walter, the Oscar winning filmmaker who penned the above was subsequently warned by Emma, Head of English Programming, not to interfere in an internal Studio D matter. Aside from Walter, Peggy, Cathy and Bill from Animation; Nadine, Yolande, and Sara from the NIF staff, as well as Grace from Studio D wrote individual letters consisting of 38 pages of text relating a completely different perspective from the one delivered by the Program II/video women. In addition, there was the official 1991 NIF Summer Institute evaluation in which the private consultants summarize the responses of the six Documentary group participants:

> The Institute 1991, with its given constraints, has succeeded in that.. respondents have left with a sense of accomplishment whether it be in the

area of technical experience, a sense of how the NFB functions, or a focus on one's personal role in filmmaking

Although Della defended the NFB in performing her job, neither the Film Board's Human Resources nor the Head of English Programming (who happened to be a Studio D alumna) came to her defence. The employees union, however, did. The union's lawyer wrote an assessment of Della's chances of success. In it he raised the suspicion that Stacey, Della's boss, had attempted in bad faith to cast her dismissal as if it were due to Della's incapacity to carry out her duties:

> In order for Della's grievance to be adjudicable, her termination of employment must be viewed as disciplinary action.
>
> There is at present tremendous jurisprudential controversy on the issue of what constitutes disciplinary action as opposed to a non-disciplinary or administrative action. The distinction is generally believed to rest upon the nature of the employee's conduct. If the conduct sought to be controlled is voluntary, intentional or willful and thus correctable, the action of the employer in regard to such conduct will be seen as disciplinary. If, on the other hand, the termination of employment results from factors beyond the employees control such as physical incapacity or incompetence in the strict sense (i.e. inability) the dismissal will be said to be administrative..
>
> When reviewing the evaluation of November 28th 1991 which subsequently led to the discharge of Della, we notice that primarily non-disciplinary allegations are being raised. Indeed Stacy raises several "professional incapacities" by Della although in many instances she does not provide details to support the charges made. On the other hand it appears the most of the conduct being reproached is corrigible behavior in the sense that the invoked weaknesses cannot be said to be beyond Della's control...
>
> In the present case a lack of qualifications is invoked against Della. Even though she was hired with full knowledge and understanding of her background and experience; she was only given one formal evaluation and never given the chance to improve on it; she was terminated even before the end of the alleged probation period and she has plausible explanations to the reproaches made against her.
>
> These elements point towards a "disciplinary" action by the employer either camouflaged as rejection during probation or carried out in bad faith... The evaluation which led to Della's discharge has been cleverly drafted to at least appear as if all reproaches being made were administrative in nature...
>
> ..if the grievance is found to be adjudicable, we believe on the basis of documents reviewed, that chances are good that the termination will be found to be without just cause.

Della's dismissal was indeed deemed to have been a disciplinary and her case adjudicable. The case was brought before the Public Service Staff Relations Board for arbitration in November of 1992 by the NFB employees' union (the Societe Generale du Cinema et de la Television- section ONF) against the National Film Board. After an incomplete trial, in December of 1993, two years after the dismissal, Della won an out-of-court settlement worth one-fifth of her annual salary and issued a letter of recommendation.

Picking up the Pieces: the 1992 Fall Institute

While Della's case was going through the three internal levels of grievance at the NFB, the NIF program continued its operations with the convening of more Advisory Board meetings, the updating of the Resource Bank, and the hiring of a new coordinator to organize the 1992 Fall Institute. Yolande, Della's former assistant still worked as an Administrative Assistant for NIF. In the fall of 1992, NIF welcomed eight participants who would learn how to shoot on video with the assistance of some of the same trainers like Olwin (NFB cinematographer) from the previous year who enjoyed passing on knowledge of their crafts to newcomers. The eight participants, after deliberating together, split into two groups of four: one group working on a common video (portraying the experience of a Black woman preparing for job interviews), and another group working on four separate vignettes, with Iris (a Documentary group participant in the 1991 Institute) as animator. All five videos dealt with topics concerning the participants' identities as Women of Color and of the First Nations.

Changes were made to the program with the benefit of hindsight from the previous year's recommendations, like putting participants up in their own private rooms in a downtown hotel, paying them honoraria, and leaving evenings free of scheduled activity. Although the NIF budget remained the same as in 1991, the fact that there were five fewer participants in 1992, allowed more money to be allocated to each participant. The Institute coordinator, to protect herself from blame if things took a turn for the worse as they had done in the previous year, made sure that any important decisions she took were signed by Stacey, the head

of Studio D. The Institute ran smoothly, as some remarked, due in part to the fact that no participants that year had an axe to grind. (Reyes[7]) Another addition to NIF in 1992 was a Video Loan program which allowed Women of Color and of the First Nations to borrow one of two video cameras from the NIF office for their own projects.

By the time I had stopped my active daily participant observation activities at NIF near the end of 1992, monies had still not been found to support an Apprenticeship program through NIF (Playback), and the NIF Advisory Board was still trying to get more control over NIF funds by lobbying to have two Women of Color and of the First Nations of their choosing to sit on Studio D's Programming Committee.

Although "Studio D launched NIF as an "innovative program to provide filmmaking opportunities for Women of Color and of the First Nations" (National Film Board 2003) oddly enough, training the NIF constituency to become bona fide filmmakers seemed *not* be a priority. Of its three components, i.e.: the Summer Institute, the Resource Bank, and the Internships only the first two had been put in place. But it was widely agreed amongst filmmakers that neither the Summer Institute nor the Resource Bank was an adequate avenue to groom NIF participants for a professional career in filmmaking. The Summer Institute had only served as a quick introduction to film crafts and cinema critique. The Resource Bank for its part, acted as a vehicle to circulate the curriculum vitae of "emerging" Women of Color and of the First Nations filmmakers; but because most of the participants' inexperience in film technique was manifest in their work experience, they had little to recommend them to film producers and directors seeking qualified personnel. It was the third component, the Internships, which would serve as the key mechanism to ease newcomers into sustainable filmmaking careers. In the film world, apprenticeships are considered to be the one of the most important ways to launch new entrants on a sustainable career path in the industry. Given the importance of the Internships in NIF, I wondered why such a critical element of the program had not been prioritized, after three years of NIF's projected five-year trial period. How serious was NIF about

integrating Women of Color and of the First Nations as professionals in the film industry, if the normal access route to the industry remained closed?

Near the end of the program, some improvements were starting to be made. For example, in the last two fiscal years of NIF (1994-95 and 1995-96) $45,000 were given out in the form of scholarships to emerging, mid-level and advanced filmmakers, and 23 apprenticeships were set up for emerging filmmakers:

> Most of the apprentices worked as directors, producers and writers, but others were researchers, assistant camera and assistant editor. Some were attached to programs within the NFB, while others chose to work with independent filmmakers, production companies, and television programs airing on the CBC or WTN... apprentices worked in the cities where they lived. (Reyes 1997, 85)

By the end of NIF's five-year term, however, the program was denied further funding by the Film Board. In NIF's moribund wake followed the death of Studio D in 1996 (Winnipeg Free Press 1996).

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[1] Stasiulis points out that feminist strategies of consciousness-raising (used by Studio D) which draw on personal experiences of male oppression, aim at personal transformation and avoid questions of power and economics (1987)

[2] There is also, at the end of this article, an extensive bibliography on diversity.

[3] The idea that the NIF program should aim to get Women of Color and of the First Nations enough skills to be on par with industry professionals...

[4] Stacey at the trial, lists her credentials in promoting race-sensitivity.

[5] Della's curriculum vitae has a long list of voluntary work in arts promotion and social activism.

[6] Stacey says in trial that Della did nothing wrong.

[7] Reyes offers the Advisory Board perspective on the NIF program.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

Three Strategies

For the bulk of the life of the NIF program, the three strategies which I will elaborate on presently, were not clearly and openly presented by their advocates as choices to be voted on. Rather, they were remarked on by many of the program participants during the field study, as being the motives underlying the seemingly mysterious actions of various players in the NIF drama. Since I have had to reconstruct the strategies from the data, I present them here as *hypothesized* strategies.

The first strategy, which I will call the ***race relations*** approach, involved utilizing the Women of Color and of the First Nations entering NIF, as "race" experts to aid Studio D and the NFB to improve their image in the eyes of various cultural communities. This strategy can be seen as a subset of the public relations strategy that the NFB had been using since its inception, i.e. manufacturing propaganda to entice the Canadian public to first support the Allied Forces in World War II, then to build Canadian nationalism during peacetime. Studio D, when it was founded, used this same public relations strategy to fight the war against sexism. This model was favored on the one hand, by the hosts, Studio D and the NFB because it was familiar to them; and on the other hand by the parties on the NIF Advisory Board who were part of what might be called the "race relations industry". These latter wished to become producer/ directors in order to expedite the dissemination of propaganda countering racism.

The second strategy, which I will call the ***crafts*** approach, involved utilizing the professionals in the NFB to train apprentices from a pool of interested Women of Color and of the First Nations, for the purpose of eventually giving the latter, sustainable professional options for work in the film industry. This strategy was favored by the NFB trainers used in the NIF program, and by the deposed NIF Program Producer.

The third strategy, which I will call the ***author*** approach, involved diverting as much money and resources out of the NFB into the projects of the small private film and video producers. This was the option favored, not

surprisingly, by the independent film and video artists who had historically blamed the NFB for siphoning potential government funding away from them.

The Race Relations Strategy (Lana's Story)

Hope for finding further work in film was offered to NIF's target population through the NIF Resource Directory. Emerging filmmaking hopefuls from the NIF constituency who sent in their names and summaries of their expertise, would have this information listed in the NIF Resource Directory and circulated to the NFB personnel and to any other parties interested in hiring Women of Color and of the First Nations. Testimonials from several women recruited to work on films via the NIF Resource Directory showed, however, that they were, more often than not, hired to do *race* work rather than *film* work. Some NFB filmmakers who had begun to use the Directory, seemed to regard NIF as a potential pool of experts on the issue of race, rather than as a bank of possible entrants into the film industry.

The Women of Color and of the First Nations applying to the NIF program hoped that the NFB and Studio D would ideally facilitate their becoming producer-directors to create and manage their own films, as stated in the NIF mandate. But instead of focusing on skill development in filmmaking, NIF's resources in the first four of its six-year life were channeled towards the components of the program which had more to do with demonstrating the race-sensitivity of Studio D and the NFB. This meant concentrating on the Summer Institute and Resource Bank components of the program which would give the Film Board more political mileage at least cost, while keeping the Internship component on the backburner.

Petra, the senior Studio D member I interviewed also expressed concern that the Resource Bank was not necessarily serving the interests of the Women of Color and Women of the First Nations listed in it, as it should:

> My concern is that it gets ghettoized. One of the things I've been told is that we have this resource book, that people who are in it only get called on when it's productions that are, you know, for Indians, with Indian subjects, and they're not sort of mainstreamed. And I would sooner that everybody uses this book, that they consider these women for *every* production.

Lana (NIF 1991 Summer Institute Documentary group participant and evaluator of the NIF pilot summer institute), three years into the NIF program observed:

> This thing has three components: a resource bank, a training component, and an internship program, and you realize something. The most important part is the internship program; and nobody bothers with it.. It's like we're stuck on listing who's out there. It's like this system is slightly backward. It still wants to count the numbers of non-whites. What is this? What is this obsessive census-taking, asking how many of us exist? I resent that.

Lana nonetheless placed her name in the Resource Bank and hoped for the best. She was advised that the way to get into the business was by "schmoozing" (Strauss 2002), by mingling with producers and directors. Those who got lucky could find themselves offered jobs as Production Assistants. Lana thought she was well on her way to doing all the right things when she listed her name in the Resource Directory and was then hired to work on a Studio D film as a Production Assistant. She hoped that this job would give her the crucial opportunity to get to know people in the industry who would then help her to acquire skills as a filmmaker. However, she soon realized that the Director who hired her via the NIF Resource Bank, wished for her to act as a consultant on *race* issues. Although Lana was fully used in her capacity as a *race* expert, her position as Production Assistant allowed her neither the chance to learn about film technique nor to the opportunity to gain entry into the film industry:

> *GN:* What was the reason stated for getting you on board?
> *Lana:* That they needed to do some research in the Black community. And they would like me to assist and help to contextualize ideas. I got a job as this curious beast: as Production Assistant (PA)/ Assistant Director (AD). I had a lot of difficulty getting clarification on what those roles were from both my producer and my director. I happened to know that the PA is the person who assists the producer in production coordination on the set. I thought: You want to tie me into the project and so you made me the gofer? I looked at it that way, and I said, well, be conscious, you know, it's sometimes necessary for you to take a position where you're at the bottom so you can get an overview; and perhaps this is an opportunity to do that; and so I took it in good faith. So I said Ursula [the director] means well and she's giving me an opportunity. She is trying to give me a foot in the door. That is how many people get in the door, so I'll take it, right? And somebody says to me, Oh, you'll get another call. Well, it's been over a year now and I've got one call from that resource bank and it was from Studio D. And I'm grateful for the opportunity and I've worked and so on, but I know too that it served them. It was very self-serving.

Lana's experience on the Studio D film project made her feel used. She had given the director of the film the best of her own expertise on race issues in hopes that she would receive some film skills training in return. But in her eyes, the Film Board had not fulfilled her expectations by reciprocating with training. The NIF Resource Bank had not facilitated her entering the industry. It had only helped those with already-allocated resources at the Film Board to make their films more race- sensitive.

The director in question had utilized Lana's good reputation in dealing with race issues, to legitimize her own project. And it was this legitimacy, gained through Lana's race coaching, that would help the director get further funding for having carried out a politically correct piece of work:

> *Lana:* I think they took advantage of the fact that I had done previous work with the Film Board at the national level and that that had been successful and that I have something of a voice when it comes to race politics, and that they benefited from my participation in it, both practically and politically in terms of what thoughts went into making the film.. politically in terms of how much resistance and questioning there would be from the big wigs about this.. 'cause they already know my work.. What I didn't like, though, was that when I was given my contract, I was the Production Assistant, but when Ursula [the director] had to defend the final product to the Programming Committee of Studio D and to English Programming's national meeting where all the big wigs come together.. *That's* where I figured as her AD. I'm her Assistant Director *then*.. I mean I got real acknowledgment there for the thinking work that I put in and when I look at that proposal, 60% of what's written there came out of my head, OK? So when it was politically expedient, I was her AD.. and then when it came to *real* giving back, what I was given back was the ice bucket.. like bring me some water.. That's what you do as a PA.. you fetch the water.. You know, that's what you basically do: you serve!.. I do think I was there, after all is said and done, to support people around issues of race, racism, and multiculturalism. That was the *real* function I performed there. I'm still doing *race* work; I'm not doing *film* work!

By doing race work on behalf of the NFB, not only was Lana shut out of the technical training required to enter the film industry on her own steam, she also had to risk her own legitimacy in the communities she worked for originally. The value of Lana performing a race relations function for the NFB was that she would presumably enjoy greater legitimacy than a white person in approaching members of other subaltern communities.[1] I will once again quote Lana's tale at

length because she is such a good storyteller. She relates how she experienced Ursula's racism, and how she was put in an awkward position vis-à-vis her own reputation as a Black community worker making inroads into the South Asian community:

> I was asked to look into the [South] Asian community at one point. I mean, I *am* a community worker and that's one of the things that I was trained to do. So there I am going through the community in a professional way, informing people of what I'm doing and asking for their cooperation and people are cooperating, and they are getting together and they are talking with me about this project, they are looking around for me, and the networking has begun.. The project was introduced to the [South] Asian community in a way in which I felt pleased. You know, it was like I hadn't let down the Board, and I had not let down the [South] Asian community either. I didn't betray anybody. Then suddenly [the director of the film] began talking against the [South] Asian community. It's like she seemed to have some difficulty with the kinds of [film subjects I picked]. I realized that she didn't *know* anything about the [South] Asian community really. So she would say things like she was looking for somebody who respects the spirit of women more; and *I* would come back with things like well I don't know another culture that really has female gods *still* you know.. So it's like *who* do you want? (laughter) She said maybe we should talk to people who are into goddess worship, because it's one of the new fads in, you know. I would say to her: Well I'm in the right community then because they *do* have goddesses! And it's like she would *forget* these kinds of things, like *where* some things came from, and how cultures persisted. She sent me into that community and then in the entire time I was working with her, she was trying to pull me back out of it. And so, when she would come up with these statements that were real racist. When you tell me that you want somebody who is more spiritual and you don't think you're gonna find it there, that's not a good comment to make about a group of people; that's derogatory, isn't it? (laughter) When you decide that in a particular community, without doing the investigation, that this group of people doesn't deserve your attention, that's racist, isn't it? It's like I caught Ursula in a myriad different ways like that. Finally after about a month of this, I said to her. Well it seems like you really want a White woman in this role. (laughter) I think that's too bad, because what you want to do is make a White woman's film about White women and the Board really ought to allow you to do that, you know. It should allow *you* to do that and it should allow *me* to make *my* film about me and Asian people films about themselves. What we're doing here is multicultural programming so we're obliged to look around. I think it's because I was so blunt, it was sort of up for discussion.

But in the process of working on behalf of the NFB, a multicultural worker like Lana was called upon to exploit her community connections in a way that would cause her to burn the bridges she had built to do her own community work. Lana continued with her depiction of what subsequently happened:

> *Lana:* I think we were into September or almost October, we still didn't have this other character and she pulled this Chinese person out of the hat, and the Chinese person actually was well suited to the role. So I didn't have a problem there. But that's what I mean by exclusion/ inclusion. It's like how dare you? How dare you make me fight this hard? How dare you make me work this hard? How dare you make me feel so useless? As long as we're focused on the [South] Asian community, we're looking particularly at brown-skinned people, alright? Then we exhaust that. And if you want to move on to yellow-skinned people, then you have every business to let me know we're moving in this place next; but she didn't do that, you see. So she left me having to sort of clean up, and tie up an investigation that hadn't come to fruition with the group of people who were working with me and it really pissed me off.
> *GN:* Because it also reflects on *your* reputation later on if you have to work in that community ?
> *Lana:* Exactly, yes. It really bugged me, you know, so those are the kinds of trials that I had working with her and like I said, I wasn't doing film work. I was doing *race* work, OK? - where the major part of my energy went into dealing with the race issues. I was not learning about the technology or the film world, or the structure, or anything and it was an unpleasant experience for me.

According to Lana, channeling Women of Color and of the First Nations into race rather than film work, allowed the NFB to expediently fulfill the government's multicultural requirements to produce politically correct cinema, without disturbing the status quo or overly taxing the NFB's depleting resources. Race experts recruited through NIF^2 would act as advisors, coaching the NFB personnel already in place on how to make their films more politically sensitive to various minority communities. It is interesting to note that what the involvement of Studio D in race politics may have facilitated, is the use of *female* rather than male race experts at the Film Board when such expertise was required. Since the cause of people of color became conflated with that of women via the housing of NIF within Studio D, this may have given *Women* of Color and of the First Nations an edge over *Men* of Color and of the First Nations to be hired for race relations

contracts within the NFB. Furthermore, by focusing NIF on race work, the high costs of training Women of Color and of the First Nations in the film crafts were avoided.

I wondered out loud to Lana if it was not possible to enter the film world by using race work to make connections with potential mentors. There seemed to have been at least one example in NIF of this having been a successful strategy for entering the industry:

> *GN:* Someone like Hannah made the cross-over from being a consultant on race to making her own film. Do you think you could do that now?
> *Lana:* No. Not right off like that, no. I think I actually need to learn more about the political game that you play. If you present yourself in a certain way like Hannah.. She doesn't know anything about film. She doesn't know a camera. It's like I would like to know the camera; I would like to know the lights.
> *GN:* Well how did someone like Hannah do her film then?
> *Lana:* Well she got a lot of support from her co-director. She co-directed the film O.K.? Which is to say that she had somebody who'd take responsibility for many of the technical aspects of the work and would help her to work out what the end product would look like on the *film* part of the stuff; and that *she* really was there to provide the story.

Lana thought that Hannah's mentor was more interested in Hannah's personal history as content for the film rather than in teaching her film technique so that she could eventually make her own films without the help of Studio D. And Hannah, being a race relations expert already, and not in need of a new career, likely agreed to this formula. Lana, however, was not prepared to settle for a solely race-relations career; she wanted to attempt to follow the crafts route.

The Crafts Approach

The NIF Program Producer in 1991, Della, offered the NIF participants another strategy: a *crafts* approach by which to access the film industry. By encouraging the Women of Color and of the First Nations coming through NIF to avail themselves of the learning possibilities offered by NFB's Technical Services, she was attempting to point them to the surest way of acquiring the job skills required by the film industry. To examine the validity of Della's claims, I consulted several studies and people on how to become a filmmaker.

Studies I consulted on the requirements for entry into the film industry in Canada concurred on the need for practical, hands-on training. One chronic problem in Canada was that existing film schools transmitted theoretical knowledge to their graduates, but not the practical skills required to fit into the Canadian (or American) film industry (Coopro 1991, 203-4). Film schools tend to produce many more film *critics* than film*makers*.

In its 1992 Submission to the Task Force on Professional Training for the Cultural Sector in Canada, Studio D itself emphasized the importance of training through apprenticeships:

- apprenticeships continued to be the major way that filmmakers became filmmakers.. (p2)
- the training programs at the NFB have a far better result in actual employment of graduates than do the film schools.. Many film/communications courses rely heavily on theory- which prepares people to be better film critics than filmmakers... Most film schools are short on practical work, besides not being able to provide a community of working professionals as trainers and mentors. (p3)
- We have explained that apprenticeship and on-the-job training is of critical importance, compared to theoretical academic learning only. (p8) (Studio D Submission to Task Force on Professional Training 1991)

The NFB had long been considered an ideal middle ground between film school and the film industry, because it had both the technical facilities and the experienced craftspeople in place to be able to offer film school graduates and other aspiring filmmakers the hands-on training they sorely lacked. Gearing the NFB to focus on training was by no means a new idea (Milne 1991). The NFB's Technical Services Section was often pinpointed as an invaluable watershed of craftspeople available to act as mentors to new apprentices. By formalizing a process that would match qualified apprentices with seasoned craftspeople, the possibility existed for a whole new generation to benefit from the invaluable experience of teamwork in producing a film at the Film Board. In this way, both the practical training needs of film students and the labor market needs of the film industry could be met.[3]An expansion of the existing NFB training programs would allow filmmaking hopefuls to tap into the rich human and technological

resources of the NFB. In 1982, the Applebaum-Hebert Report recommended that the NFB stop producing and distributing films and become a research and training center. Although the NFB rejected this recommendation, personnel at the Film Board were shaken by the possibility of not being able to make films; any further proposals in this vein opened old sores (National Film Board 2003).

I also sought the opinions of NFB filmmakers on how to become a bona fide filmmaker. I was told that one pre-requisite for potential filmmaking apprentices was to first and foremost, gain some basic knowledge about the range of film crafts practiced in the industry. There were several ways for the potential apprentice to end up in the film industry, said NFB production manager, Maurice, but one major route seemed to prevail:

> [I]n order to decide what she really wants to do in film, she should go out and try to get an undefined sort of job, as a Production Assistant or as a driver in the film industry itself. From this perspective, she will have the opportunity to observe all the different groups involved in the filmmaking process. From that point, she can decide what really turns her on; or by coincidence, she will get a break.

Another way of gaining familiarity with filmmaking was through workshops and seminars, but professionals like Petra were convinced that nothing could replace practical experience:

> Workshops and seminars are very good to update you and for you to meet people; but I think the best thing is always to have hands-on. You know, you go out and try something! The only way you're gonna learn is to look at something and see what your mistakes are. I mean it's a nice idea to have the workshop, providing there is some kind of hands-on, you know, but there's nothing like working on a production.

This view was corroborated by production manager Maurice when he offered his opinion on the utility of training programs and workshops:

> Read my lips! They're all very good, but there is nothing like the shoot to really understand the stress levels and requirements of the film business! You have to get out into the real world! You can go to film school, workshops and all that. These can all help keep your fingers in it, but the only really efficient process to learn, is on location. I'm not talking about editing and sound and all that. I just don't know much about those aspects of filmmaking. But for production, a location shoot is the best way to learn.

Once aspiring filmmakers obtained some sort of training that familiarized them with the basics, how would they then go about finding work with an actual film company? I put this question to the head of production on the shooting stage, and he told me that he himself entered the film industry totally by accident:

> I started driving trucks. I was delivering flowers to a film company once, and the secretary there said that they were desperately looking for a driver, and would I be prepared to take the job. I said sure, so I started by driving the equipment truck around for the film company. Then I learned how to use the lights and how to handle the equipment. After that I worked on assistant camera, then as assistant director for years. I got introduced to the Film Board when we did a co-production with them. When that was finished, someone said that there was a job opening for this position. By that time I had kids and was ready to settle down to a steady job, so I applied and got it. That was eight years ago.

Would the experience be any different for Employment Equity programs that strived to get women or minorities into filmmaking? I put the question to Petra, founding member of Studio D. She compared the merits of apprenticeships and workshops, two training techniques tried by the Studio in 1976:

> *Petra*: We only had enough money for about six women.. and I thought this is a very nice way, but it's too slow...like if we can only help six women, we'll never get anywhere. But in the long run, when I look back, this was actually the best way.
> *GN:* What did you mean when you said that the slow process in the beginning of Studio D was the best?
> *Petra*: Yes. Well, the contract that was made up.. a blanket contract that was set to hire six apprentices to work on various Film Board productions.. and I just thought.. Oh my goodness, if we have a workshop, we can have 12-20 people in a workshop. Then they've got all this knowledge, then they can go out.. This way there's only six people working on one film one year.. One production doesn't make them very experienced.. They're gonna take five years in order to work on a film, very often it's one film a year.. so maybe that's five years.. So that's not a lot.. But when I look back, after *that* film's finished, invariably they got a second job and a third job, and they kept on working.. So then they multiplied.. They started to meet other people, and help other people.

Not only did the apprenticeship approach allow inexperienced filmmakers to make contacts and get training inside the Film Board, but also to obtain jobs outside, in private industry.

> Once someone has learned to perform some portion of what is required, he can learn still more and can offer himself as a member of the pool of competent technicians. (Becker 1982, 80)

An NFB cameraman describes the trajectory of a woman who was hired as an apprentice in the camera department with Employment Equity money:

> She came to learn about the latest developments in technology by working for us in camera repair. She got some basic training, and then we gave her more and more difficult things to take care of, and she learned a lot. Even before her year-and-a-half apprenticeship was through, there was a job opening at Panavision. She went for an interview, and they saw that she had the required knowledge to do the job!

Convinced that training to industry standards, under realistic production conditions should be the goal of NIF, the Program Producer tried to set up a program which exposed Women of Color and of the First Nations to the skills and levels of competence required by the film industry. In the deposed NIF PP's words:

> They *do* have a training program at the NFB. They'll look at areas where they require people- say one of the lab areas, where women haven't traditionally been present. And so they'll put out for a position of internship for approximately a year, and then they'll hire somebody and train them. That doesn't mean the trainees will all get jobs at the NFB afterwards, but it does mean that they will be trained to industry standards, and therefore they can then go into the industry and look for jobs.

Applicants for apprenticeships would be judged on whether or not they possessed sufficient know-how to begin learning efficiently from hands-on work with a professional in a particular craft. For example, if an apprenticeship in sound recording were to become available, the successful candidate would be required to have a background in electronics. According to this scenario, would any special program be then necessary for Women of Color and of the First Nations? The NIF Program Producer addressed this question by suggesting that an expansion of the already-existing technical services training program could go hand in hand with

an inclusion of Women of Color and of the First Nations on the basis of Employment Equity criteria :

> It seems to me that there's that training program already in place.. So why doesn't the NFB merely expand that program to include Women of Color and of the First Nations? If they just took the hundreds of thousands of dollars that they're spending on NIF and search.. really look for these promising people from different backgrounds and communities.

The NIF Producer based the NIF 1991 Summer Institute on the elementary assumption that whoever came to an institute at the National *Film* Board, would be coming to learn about *film.* Even if the entrants to NIF had not already attended workshops or entered the film industry by way of a production assistant's job, the NIF Program Producer assumed that these entrants at least had a definite interest in learning about the film medium itself.. that they had, at the very least, acquired some theoretical knowledge about the film industry. They were, after all, coming to a training program at the National *Film* Board. She thought that the NIF Summer Institute could help them in their filmmaking career paths by allowing them to get an overview of the various capacities in which they could work as craftspeople in the film industry. With this in mind, the NIF Program Producer concentrated the Summer Institute on giving the participants an idea of all the various film crafts that were involved in filmmaking:

> To work in the industry, unless you're prepared to work as assistant or as secretary or in the areas like public relations, marketing or administration, etc. you have to have one of the crafts. So the program I designed was very heavy on the craft: editing, sound, cinematography, etc.: simply an overview of what those areas are because the great part of the industry *is* those things. You're not going to get hired to shoot a t.v program just because you're an assistant director; the CBC is not going to hire you.. Who's going to hire you? And so, in terms of getting into the real world, that is what the industry is all about.

And it seems that the Program Producer wasn't entirely wrong about there existing a need among Women of Color and of the First Nations for training and apprenticeships in filmmaking per se, especially among those who had already acquired some filmmaking knowledge or experience. These latter certainly saw the advantages of learning by apprenticing with an experienced filmmaker. As one NIF participant said:

> Just watching.. just hands-on experience.. Just *doing* it.. I understand the thing about mentors because it's very frustrating without them, because there are some mistakes that are unnecessary.. loading the camera.. technical things.. You shouldn't have to make mistakes especially when you're using expensive equipment.. You've got minimal budgets... Yea, definitely, yea, apprenticeship is good.. very good.

In the eyes of the NIF Program Producer, working in the context of the NFB could also be extremely enriching for NIF participants:

> To meet these filmmakers or craftspeople and realize just what love they have for their work and how very willing they are to share their knowledge. It was just a wonderful thing to be presented with. And then the sheer history of the NFB, you know, regardless of its imperializing history.. In many ways it was the best of what one could ask from WASP[4] Canada.. you know.. and the whole Grierson interpretation of film as social good.

The NIF Program Producer said that she was not promoting the NFB as the *only* training ground for aspiring filmmakers, nor was she promoting NFB's specialization in documentary as the most desirable film form. All she was doing through NIF was attempting to introduce Women of Color and of the First Nations to the best traditions represented by the institution, while at the same time acknowledging the existence of other learning opportunities:

> Even though I've been mentored by filmmakers, I've also fed myself by taking classes or going around with other filmmakers because it's important.. There are different forms of filmmaking. The NFB is known for a *particular* form of filmmaking: particularly documentary or cinema verite.. There are so many explorations of filmmaking being done better elsewhere.. Like there's hybrid films.. But this is what the NFB is about.. So for me, you offer the best of that.

One of the problems that the NIF program faced was that many of the participants it attracted were total neophytes, not having yet developed any specific interest in film technique. Many had not even had any basic exposure to how films are made. Hence, attempts to encourage them at such a preliminary stage to expose them to the details of the film crafts during the short Summer Institute, was clearly premature.

The Author Approach (Laypeople and Independents)

The NIF program attracted not only people like Lana and Hannah who had professional community relations experience, it also attracted women who had some measure of experience in video or television, who now wanted to learn about filmmaking. A third clientele also came to the NIF Summer Institute. These latter were women who had done some measure of political or artistic work but were entirely unfamiliar with the production of motion pictures, hence total novices to the industry. They came to the Institute eager to learn how to promote their unique cultural, political or artistic messages in the quickest and easiest way possible. The urgency of their need often meant that the means they chose to tell their story seemed secondary. These novices' lack of knowledge about filmmaking, and their ensuing inability to commit to film as their primary medium of expressing their unique perspectives, allowed them to be swayed by the easier accessibility of video.

Edna (an Animation-turned-Video NIF 1991 Summer Institute participant), came to NIF with a mission to author her own story of how she had experienced the 1990 Oka crisis, an event which tautened the already tense relations between aboriginal people and the Canadian state. In my interview with her, she admitted to being leery about coming to a program hosted by the Film Board, an arm of the Canadian state. She also acknowledged her lack of knowledge about the film medium in her reflections on the advantages of video over film:

> Everybody has a VCR. How many people have a projector? You know, so your general audience is much broader in the sense that it's much more easily accessible than film.. and I like video because it's more intimate. One person can sit and watch it in their house.. instead of going with a group to a feature film.. for the time being, I prefer video.. it's cheaper.. I think it's more expendable than film.. But then I don't know a whole lot about film.

When I asked Edna if she was satisfied working in video, she replied that the results of videomaking were more immediate, and could be harnessed right away for the purposes of a political cause. She especially emphasized that she had no particular commitment to film; and that although film had more status, if video got the message out, that was fine too:

> I don't care what medium you pick: if it's slides, if it's 3-D, or video, if I can cause an effect then fine.. I don't care.. Video, like I say, right now, is expensive; but it's cheaper than film. I have no revenue . I depend on the mercy of my patrons, you know. I find it easier, less hassle generating an audience. The audience is there already: you just make the tape available. The tape I made at NFB, all proceeds from my tape went to the Defence Fund[5]. So I was raising money for the fund. I was a woman with a cause.

Participants who had come to NIF with a mind to creating their own individual works, and who had no prior film education, were rudely awakened to the film world. Edna compared her expectations of the NIF program with what actually transpired:

> I was gearing my mind as to OK how was I going to do this in animation.. I was going to learn a new technique and work with it.. So then [the NFB animation instructors] come in with a treatment already picked.. the treatment basically is a twenty-second spot of a rose emerging and unfolding.. and I was sitting there and there was no way that this depicts my reality as a First Nations woman who had climbed barricades through land struggles and political struggles.

In their applications for the NIF Summer Institute, potential candidates had to submit a sample of a story they would like filmed. Once accepted to the program and duly informed that they would have to work on a common group project, those participants most unfamiliar with filmmaking continued to hope that they would develop the personal projects they had presented in their applications. When neophytes like Edna realized that their individual projects would have to be set aside for the time being in order to focus on learning film *technique,* they became unhappy. Edna's frustration gelled when she found out that other participants in her group also felt the same way. She recalled what happened on the evening of Day One of the NIF Summer Institute:

> So then that night, Bela and I got together because we were in the same group to talk about this thing.. I was under the impression that it was OK with them and I didn't want to be a shit-disturber.. So we were kind of polite with each other.. and I tell her Yea, it's gonna be good, yea, right, OK.. Later on, we got more comfortable and I said I don't want to do this .. Like for Bela, that's not our reality..

Although participants at the Summer Institute had been informed before their arrival that the ten day workshops would involve a cooperative effort, many

still hoped to see their individual scripts on screen ; and were reluctant to submit to a common project. There was a remarkable difference in perception between what the professionals felt had been accomplished at the first meeting and what the participants felt. The latter did not seem to understand the limitations of film: how crucial the cooperative element was, how much could be accomplished, how fast. In the trainers' eyes, much had been accomplished the first night but this had not been the view of the participants. The neophytes, because they were under the impression that it is possible to author a film like it is possible to author a book, expected each person to be able to make her own political or artistic point without having to work on a common visual project. The NIF Animation-turned-Video participants' impatience with learning the nitty-gritty details of film technique highlighted their lack of awareness about the filmmaking medium.

Like many lay people, neophytes entering NIF expected filmmaking to be like video making, where each artist could wield her own camera and be an auteur. There was little appreciation for the fact that filmmaking involved a cooperative work environment, with different people contributing a variety of crafts skills to a common project. NIF participants also seemed unaware of how much equipment was required in the filmmaking process. Maurice, an NFB trainer, graphically illustrated the difference between the sheer weight of taking film technology along for a shoot and just using a video camera. Pointing to a shelf-full of film equipment against the wall, Maurice said:

> Say you decided to do a basic documentary film on 16mm about your sixty-year old mother and her life: You would have to take along about a dozen of these boxes to the shoot. (These were the sturdy silver boxes in which sound and camera equipment is transported.)
> GN: So filmmaking is very different from video?
> Yes. They are hysterically different!

Ironically, the neophytes who so wanted to author their own individual films, were placed in the workshop in Animation, the filmmaking medium most amenable to authorship. Animation filmmaking is less dependent on collaboration than other forms, relies on the creativity of the animator and allows the author to be present at almost every stage of production. Animation filmmaking would have

allowed the neophytes to feel in control of almost every process of production in a very labor-intensive fashion. It was remarked on by Vivian and Opal (NIF Advisory Board members) that the videos that the Animation/Video participants made would have looked much better in animation format than they did on video. However, the equipment (the fixed camera and the computer-aided animation technology) was too daunting for the Animation workshop's intended participants.

The Independents

One of the reasons that the process of learning about the filmmaking crafts got aborted was because the charismatic leaders of the independent Women of Color lobby, Angle, were able to present an analysis to the neophytes that helped them make sense out of their frustrations. Proponents of the Angle Lobby who got invited to NIF as Program II participants, successfully framed their demands in a language of entitlement, a language broad enough to appeal to the authorist urges of both neophytes and independent videographers/ filmmakers. It is to be noted, however, that these would-be leaders from the independent filmmakers did not have a common approach on how to access the NFB in order to gain some measure of control over its resources. At least three different approaches existed amongst the independent filmmakers who were active during the 1991 NIF Summer Institute and its immediate aftermath. NIF Advisory Board member Tannis's approach was that of an activist filmmaker; coming from the West Coast, far from NFB Production Headquarters, one of her major concerns was that resources to make films be decentralized and financial power given over to the regions. Opal, NIF Advisory Board member and Summer Institute facilitator, for her part, thought that the NFB's role was to support, in one way or another, independent Women of Color and First Nations filmmakers striving to achieve professional industry standards. Rita, a vocal advocate of the Angle lobby, however, pushed for the NFB to be divested of its production role altogether and for government monies to be redirected to independent filmmakers. If the reader will remember, *Angle* had wanted to boycott the NIF program entirely. The lobby consisted of independent Women of Color filmmakers from Toronto who

belonged to the umbrella organization, the Independent Film and Video Alliance (IFVA). This alliance organized regular meetings to discuss, organize and lobby around issues of import to independent filmmakers in Canada[6]. Coincidentally, the IFVA president in 1991 was NIF participant, Rita. Another *Angle* member, Opal was also a member of the jury determining which participants would be accepted to the Summer Institute '91, was responsible for introducing the slate of promoters of the Author Strategy to the Summer Institute '91. It would not be too far-fetched to conjecture then, that *Angle* mutated their initial boycott tactic of 1990 into a sabotage tactic for Summer Institute 1991. The Author strategists argued that the NFB should have no truck in deciding which "of color" films should and should not be promoted. It was rather, the independents who should have access to the filmmaking monies accorded to the NFB by the Canadian government to author the films that they thought to be relevant and that independent juries would deem to be appropriate to fund.

NIF documentary participant, Lana, reflected on why she thought the blow-up at NIF occurred:

> I believe the political agendas were quite different for the people participating. Their relationship to Studio D for example.. I think there had been certainly some difficulties between some of those participants and Studio D.. that people came to the Institute a little apprehensive.. Just given the smallest reason to raise opposition and to make protest.. they did so.. and it is not necessarily the place for you to settle your political problems 'cause NIF is just a small program.. It cannot accommodate the bigness of the issue.. Those are big issues that the women were raising, you know.. I think they were raising issues about artistic space.. How much room should there be given to create? I think they were raising issues about resources.. Is the institution going to respect my choice as an artist.. to give me those resources to develop a product I want to develop or is the Institution going to force me into a particular mold? I'm thinking about the people who broke away from the program. The other thing they were asking is how will the system tolerate my rebellion? What will it do if I say no? Studio D specifically has responded to them.. has shown actually that some of their rebellion was worthwhile.

The Program II women were able to mobilize the neophytes behind the banner of authorship and control. However, these questions were put to a NIF staff which consisted almost entirely of new, part-time, non-permanent contract workers who

were hardly representative of the NFB as an institution. Unfortunately, these contract workers did not have the power to respond to the independents' demands, for Studio D accorded only limited funds to the NIF program and kept control of discretionary funds firmly in its own hands.

NIF was also played out against a general institutional backdrop of retrenchment created by the cutbacks in the late 1980's and 1990's, which bred an unwillingness on the part of the heads of NFB English Programming to make any changes or additions to the structure of the Board. When claims for inclusion came from the NIF target group, claimants were directed towards video, an economical solution. In the choice of the NIF clientele, the history and politics of the Film Board and Studio D tended to favor "community" women, unfamiliar with film as a highly technical medium, who, as it turned out, were more interested in a quick way to get their urgent public service messages out. The women involved in the animation program, perhaps the least attuned to the complicated conventions of filmmaking, too easily interpreted the steep learning curve required to become familiar with these conventions, as being rather, a reflection of institutional racism.

Their ignorance of film technique allowed them to be directed by the *Angle* lobby which provided a simple explanation for their feelings of dissatisfaction with the ambitious, product-driven workshops of the NIF 1991 Institute. The independent filmmakers of Program II were able to convince the neophytes overnight that the reason they were not allowed to develop their own individual concepts was because of the NFB's institutional racism, and not because of technical limitations. The *Angle* lobby cautioned the novices that if they followed the NIF crafts route, they would be prevented from conveying their urgent political or artistic messages. Furthermore, neither of the facilitators who were supposed to advise these neophytes, reminded the participants of the importance of acquiring the proper skills in filmmaking so that their message would become visually appealing to audiences accustomed to sophisticated images. Neophytes needed to be reminded that audiences would show no interest in their videos if the images presented did not reflect a certain level of technical

mastery. The neophytes mistakenly attributed the dictates of cooperative film production to the institution's supposed racist need to stomp out their political or artistic message.

One of the main reasons for the NIF Program Producer, Della's dismissal in December 1991, surely lies in the emphasis placed by Studio D and the NFB, on one particular aspect of the job, i.e. public relations. The head of Studio D, Stacey, stressed this in her evaluation of Della's performance:

> In the Program Producer position, it is crucial that you have credibility and a good relationship with members of constituent communities i.e. Women of the First Nations and Women of Color, to which groups belong the NIF participants, facilitators and Advisory Board members.

Granted that the numerous contradictory pressures placed on the NIF Summer Institute by the NIF target population's diverse interests made it impossible for Della to satisfy all parties. However, what Della had underestimated in assessing priorities for the NIF Summer Institute, was the weight that had to be placed on maintaining good race relations between the NFB and Studio D on the one hand, and the NIF clientele on the other. Though Della had focused on skill development in filmmaking, which was ostensibly a fundamental element in the NIF mandate, many factors pointed to public relations as being an even more crucial element.

Employment Equity and Fair Employment Practices

Although studies done on the NFB addressing the question of training, overwhelmingly reiterated the importance of apprenticeships and on-the-job training as the best way to incorporate newcomers into the film industry, another problem identified was the lack of fair employment practices at the NFB.

> In response to the question, "In your opinion, what are the other things the NFB should do in order to ensure equal opportunity?" There were two main suggestions. The first was that the NFB establish information, training and apprenticeship programs directed at job access. And the second was to eliminate favoritism and ensure opportunity for all those who are interested, through courses, fair job postings, apprenticeships, etc. (Green 1985, 6)

Of the initiatives taken by Studio D to fund or hire Women of Color and of the First Nations, several examples of unfair practices will illustrate the contradictions between the "politically correct" language that Studio D used and its actual day-to-day practice. At one Studio D Programming Committee meeting, when film proposals were being looked at, it was pointed out that the guidelines that Studio D had put in place were not being adhered to. For example, an incident occurred where questions were raised about an unfinished project proposal being submitted without enough substantiation. A Studio D supporter of the incomplete project retorted, in the NIF Program Producer's words:

> She said, " We have a history with this person. And we know what she is thinking and what she's intending to do." And so I said is this one of the guidelines to get accepted? The answer was yes. And I said, given the job that I was hired to do, what happens when all of the women from NIF and filmmakers who do *not* have a history with the studio? What happens with *their* projects if one of the criteria is familiarity with their history? For me, this was an old-girls network, identical to an old-boys network. There is something wrong. How come this isn't an issue here, just because it's all women?

In the Program Producer's words there was definitely a difference between equal access and preferential treatment. Equal opportunity programs have often been wrongly blamed for injustices accorded on the basis of preferential treatment due to already existing unfair practices. The NIF Program Producer argued that it was these entrenched unfair practices that determined which Women of Color and of the First Nations would be favored by Studio D. There seemed to have been in past practice, two ways to access Studio D funds: by establishing relations of personal compatibility with a Studio D member, or by threatening to discredit the Studio in front of the women's "community". Both methods seemed to have worked in the NIF Summer Institute. A third method, to start a tradition of democratic and open decision-making, which the deposed NIF Program Producer employed, lost out as a strategy. Della provided an example of how the personal compatibility route was used by Iris. Iris, a NIF participant, was granted an apprenticeship with an editor she had befriended; but no notice had been posted as to the availability of the mentorship opportunity:

> I have a problem with Iris's process.. And the process isn't so much that she was mentored; the process was *how* that was done.. Like it's a continuation of favoritism.. that whole thing.. was not advertised for people.. Like there has to be a fair process.. And it means that if you have access, then you are going to benefit.. Iris had access through coming into the NIF program. And that's not fair to all those other women who should have been given the opportunity to put forward their proposals too. And it's not a thing where Studio D says, "Well, anybody can put in their proposal.. Here's the guide.." That's not good enough! If you don't know anything about the NFB, you don't know where to send it to; you don't know *how* to send it.. And maybe you have something really in your head .. You need somebody to help you work that out.. As most of these women do because they haven't *had* access to film schools, etc. And it seems to me that there has to be a fair process. Like, who was to know.. I mean when I found out that Iris had been given this money for her film and I asked about this and I said, "Is this a policy of Studio D.. if you go through the NIF program , you don't have to write a proposal.. like there was this white woman.. same as Iris in terms of background, etc.. and she had to go through this whole other process.. But beyond what that then sets up as a division between Women of Color and working class white women, it presumes favoritism that shouldn't be there in the first place.. So is this a *policy* of Studio D? 'Cause if it is then surely all of these other women who went through NIF should know about it so that they can apply too.. Oh no, no, no! It's at the discretion of the Executive Producer.. Well, shit! You know, I mean, that's just not good enough.. *discretion* .. That's always been used as a tactic to divide and rule us.. It's always been a way to take the resources away from us by using your *discretionary* powers.. That's not fair and it's not even a question of utopianism, it is that it doesn't take much to make that a fair process.

Lana, a Documentary Summer Institute participant, pointed out that if the process were fair to begin with, a program like NIF would probably not even be required. Studio D, she suggested:

> ..can present themselves as a division or as a part of the National Film Board that has this special outlook.. you know, it has a feminist outlook... It is particularly interested in making films by, about, for women from a feminist perspective.. That's fine with me.. and I think that they can let people know that this is how they go about doing things.. You submit your proposal, you let people know what the Studio process is.. But no one knows! If you have a fair process, you don't need all these special little components.. You know, if you are governing yourself in a way that is fair and open, you don't need to target me necessarily if your own thing is set up right.. because I'll come to you.. It has to make sure that many perspectives are reflected in that process.. It has to be an accommodating process.. that accommodates divergence and difference.. I wonder if it can.

What was meant by Employment Equity, according to her, was that people be made aware of the existence of opportunities and that they be given a fair adjudication process of their work. Lana elaborated on how the process could be made fairer:

> The information doesn't reach us about what that process is.. I don't hear about when deadlines are for grant applications. I don't hear about what funding requirements are. I don't hear when there is money I don't hear when there are special opportunities to learn. I don't hear when there is new equipment. I am the one who has to come all the time and find out, find out, find out.. I think the institution should present itself to our communities so that people know they're approachable.. People just don't know.

Several NIF participants complained that even the availability of opportunities to *train* was left to chance or personal discretion. Training positions and entry-level jobs were not automatically and widely advertised to newcomers interested in filmmaking. NFB filmmakers defended themselves by insisting that successful films could only be made if professional filmmakers were allowed the artistic license to constitute their own crews. NIF critics agreed that filmmakers should have the right to choose which artists they wanted to work with, but questioned the practice of choosing *apprentices* without undertaking an interview process. Mentors should select from a wide range of candidates who had been informed about the availability of the opportunity and had formally applied, they argued. Claims by filmmakers about artistic license were often inadvertently used to bypass a legitimate selection process for trainees. The rationale for putting together a production team of *professionals* was often used to circumvent a fair process for taking on *apprentices*, they critiqued.

One way to ensure greater access to opportunities and resources, and to spread Employment Equity across Canada, was to set up regional production facilities, critics like NIF Advisory Board member, Tannis stated. Since many emerging filmmakers were neither able nor willing to leave the social networks they had built in their own communities, establishing apprenticeships in the regions would be an important step for the Film Board to take to ensure fairness

in employment. The formula of matching apprentices with filmmaking mentors who were professionally active in each region, and offering stipends to attend occasional workshops at NFB's production headquarters, would ensure the creation of skilled new Canadian filmmakers. Creating production centers in the various regions of the country would make Employment Equity also geographically equitable. This formula was better than bringing apprentices for several months or years to be trained solely at the Film Board headquarters, for the latter would tend to school its apprentices in a particular form of documentary filmmaking that might not assure the apprentice's employability in either the larger American theatrical film industry or in the Canadian regional micro industries. This solution was given some credence in the final two years of the NIF program with the setting up of a dozen internships annually.

The Turn to Video

Another concern with NIF was that emerging filmmakers were being directed to video production rather than filmmaking. In a meeting with Dot (Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the NFB) during the 1991 NIF Summer Institute, Glenda (a Summer Institute facilitator and the director of the new Studio I for Aboriginal people) wondered why the NFB was channeling aboriginal people interested in making motion pictures, towards video rather than film, if it claimed to be so committed to film. Dot replied:

> *Dot:* We have to do our best to make sure NIF is transferred to all of the NFB.. Another structural change is already underway in the setting up of Studio I [an NFB Studio for aboriginal videomakers based in Edmonton] which Glenda has under her wing. We have to learn how to use the institution without becoming ourselves institutionalized. Film is one of the best tools of communication because it can be viewed by a large audience and it is more powerful than video.
> *Glenda:* Then why should we only do video in Studio I? I'm afraid of Studio I becoming ghettoized . I'm against the stagist theory where Studio I is first separate and then it gets incorporated later into the NFB.

Other Women of Color and of the First Nations also questioned the Film Board's promotion of video to new hopefuls entering the NFB. Lana (NIF Documentary participant), for example, suspected that channeling Women of Color and of the

First Nations to video was one way of not sharing the NFB resources in *film*making with excluded communities. I again quote Lana at length to preserve her engaging narrative style:

> Lana: I think that racism is prevalent.. Yea, because filmmakers from our communities *are* making films.. and certainly not doing it with the NFB.. They're scrounging around for funds to make films.. If the Film Board said "Come on, make a film with us!" If the Film Board said "We'll support your film project!", *that's* recognition.. That's respect.. That's care.. That's investing in the future too.. of both the Film Board and the filmmaking community.. and I don't see that happening.. And I think that's unfair.. It's not just a question of not having enough money.. I think it might be a question of protecting position and jobs.. um.. But I don't accept that from an institution.. If it wants to, it can find the justification to ask for more.. to do more.. It can find it because we're here.. We can give it the justification.. We can give them the ideas.. We can give them the reason.. Our communities watch a lot of film.. Our communities are very diverse with many different interests.. Our communities make good film.. boy.. Everybody flocks to see them.. you know.. From inside and outside of our communities.. So there's no reason for the Film Board to stand here and doubt whether film is still viable .. Why is it questioning itself all over again?
> GN: I don't understand...
> Lana: One of the things that's happening right now is that people are asking how relevant is film.. They're saying that video is perhaps a more important medium.. because it is more accessible.. more popular and so on.. and video seems to be the way of the marketplace.. But the Film Board is after all a *Film* Board.. Its priority is production of film.. The technology exists for them to make *film* and to project in that old style.. you know, big screens and so on and to also transfer those products onto videotape and distribute them.. So you don't really lose anything by making film.. In fact you gain because the video technology is not advanced enough yet from my understanding at any rate, .. to make us comfortable about the life of the product itself.. It's like the tape doesn't keep for as long as film does.. So as far as I'm concerned there's no question that we still need film.. It's not something.. not a technology that's gonna die.. and we're still teaching people to make film as a fine craft.. I think that it's not something that's going to disappear.. If we look in other parts of the world.. we see that film is not dying out.. It's not dying in the States .. It's not dying.. certainly not in Africa.. African cinema is alive and well... I'm from the Caribbean myself.. I know in the Caribbean everybody wants to make *film*.. not video necessarily.. *film*.. Um.. festivals are flourishing all over.. You name it.. Every town that can claim to be cosmopolitan or Capital of something or somewhere offers you a film festival.. Film isn't dying.. right now.. But our Film Board is sitting down

and asking this question all the time, you know.. It doesn't make any sense.. (laughter) While it's busy looking at its navel string like that and looking to see whether or not its existence is still justified.. I think that within that institution people are really feeling.. that they have an uncertain future.. and that they really don't have the space or the energy even to reasonably deal with those of us who are still outsiders.. That's the political climate that exists.. So when you turn up as a person of color.. whatever color.. and you go towards the Film Board looking for work.. they send you towards.. you know.. a group of women in Studio D who happened to get a couple of video cameras from Canon, and video becomes your thing.. and it's like : "Don't worry us. We have some profound navel gazing issues that we're dealing with here.. And you go on and you deal with the High 8 [video] cameras.. We have important things to talk about that really don't involve you". I don't buy that.. I really don't buy it.. and I don't think that in the non-White communities we talk enough about that.. I think NIF should make it very clear to people that their commitment is to *film*.. You know this whole business of diverting people into video.. I think they must be careful not to do that.

In addition to the NFB promoting video to save costs and meet community demands, certain members of the NIF target community themselves were actively promoting video as a community-oriented medium, more suited for the demands of the NIF program's neophytes[7]. This was reflected in meetings of the NIF Advisory Board itself where recommendations were made to modify the Summer Institute:

- The Institute should reflect the concerns of the women it serves. Video as a community- based tool, must be acknowledged. The film/ video relationship should be integrated into the structure of the Institute to best serve the participants' needs. Hands-on experience should reflect the needs of the participants- the "real world" as opposed to an idealized production set-up.
- The (Institute) Sub-committee acknowledges that there are two possible types of training: the personal approach to filmmaking and the technical (craft) area.
- The hands-on component of the Institute should be scaled down to focus on the community realities of the participants (i.e. instead of top-of-the-line equipment with video assist and a dolly, use of Bolex, etc.)
- video (Hi-8) should be included as a possibility; outside video facilities should [be made available to] women [in] video.

I asked a respected Studio D producer, Petra, to compare film and video:

Petra: The thing about video is that it's instant and you can use the same tape over and over again. When you're doing film, you don't see it till the

> next day.. There is a certain grammar to film.. I mean you have to have a wide shot, you have to have a medium shot, and you have to have angles, and then you have to have loads of cut aways.. In video, it seems to me, you don't have that kind of restraint.. Some people shoot long interviews and they don't have cut aways.. I'm not into video myself.. but what I've seen is it doesn't have the same kind of grammar.. But anyone who takes the knowledge of a film background into video, I think shoots better video because they understand frames and what it is you have to look at.. You can't in a way, look at a talking head for seven minutes; You have to, you know, move out.. If somebody said something.. Like if they're talking about the farm, as soon as they talk about the farm, it's nice to visually switch to the farm.. you know.. But sometimes in video I just don't find it as filmic.. But I understand that you can just pick it up, and it's very cheap.. the tape's very cheap.. and it's very instant.. It's very good like that.

Because of its lower costs and greater accessibility, the NFB pointed new communities vying for NFB resources to video, even though the NFB was not set up to shoot and edit on video. The fact that the NFB decision- makers shied away from openly declaring the Board as a *film* production place to Women of Color and of the First Nations, prevented the latter from truly understanding the limitations of the Board's technical capacities. The more down-to-earth Petra, however, did not hesitate to state the NFB's limitations:

> Well, I think we are a film production place.. And we don't have the space *or* the money to go into video.. and certainly, some shoot on film and then it's converted to video and then I think that they only release in video, so.. That's one way to do it.. And some people shoot in video, but we're not equipped and we have some people who are very knowledgeable in video, but the Film Board would have to make a very large financial commitment before it could do that.. I mean, right now we work in film, we complete our films in both film and video.. And certainly the video sales are now outpacing the film sales.. But that's good.. I mean, but it's nice to see films on the big screen.. and I would like us always to continue to look at films.. Maybe the first year, everyone sees them on screen, and *then*, in the second phase of marketing, then they go into video.. and that's a whole new area: people rent them, take them home, and sort of have groups of people there.. But there's something about seeing something on the big screen.. I don't think film will ever go away.. I think video has its own place.. the same as film has its own place.

The NFB's legacy of making overtures to film neophytes surely propelled the move towards video. The NFB's unwillingness to share its dwindling resources with new constituencies was quite possibly another factor preventing

the Film Board from openly declaring that its expertise lay in *film* and not video. It was also the NFB's philosophy of being the voice of the entire Canadian people which kept them from openly avowing the limitations of the organization. It was this ideological stance which confused lay people and increased their expectations of what the NFB was capable of doing. Anything that would spoil the NFB's public image as a liberal Canadian voice, any initiative compelling the Board to publicly admit its constraints, would detract from its all-inclusive image.

The Multicultural Worker : Powerlessness and Tokenism

What positive role could a multicultural worker like Della or Lana play, if any, from within an institution? Did a program like NIF necessarily need to be co-opted by the public relations bent of the NFB which now, in the age of multiculturalism, sought legitimacy from underrepresented groups? Della, NIF Program Producer, reflected on her predicament as a multicultural worker:

> There is no possibility as a worker to work in multicultural politics without so fundamentally compromising yourself .. I mean I don't want to always be on the outside because I think there's too much an element of romanticism about that...Certainly that lobbying effort needs to be present at those times because that's the only way any real change gets effected. But because you don't ever control how the bureaucracies which[are] always successful at cooption of anything ... which for me NIF was a perfect example of cooption.. the outside screaming and screaming, "We need to have Women of Color, Women of the First Nations!" Right, yes, ok, but then it co-opts it, frames it, etc. So because you don't have any of that control, I do believe at some level you have to enter into .. be interventionist on some level.. That has always been my politic. But if anything, I just can't simply see how.. how do other cultural workers successfully do that? I don't know. I don't know of anybody.. I mean, certainly I know people continue to do it.. Like Hanna continues to do it.. but successfully? I don't know that they do. Hanna came up with this program and it's so deeply flawed... The state or those institutions just *use* you .. I don't know how you maintain your integrity in that process.. *my* way of maintaining my integrity was essentially to end up being fired.

Questions about why the most important component of NIF (the internships) were not implemented till the very end of the program's life, had to be put not only to the NFB, Studio D, and the designers of the program, but also to the Women of Color and of the First Nations sitting on the NIF Advisory Board. Once again, the issue of political expediency can be posed as a possible

explanation. Could Studio D and the NFB simply get more political mileage from spending a substantial portion of NIF finances on assembling a set of high- profile consultants on the Advisory Board who would then spread the good word to various artistic and ethnic communities about the inclusiveness of the institution? Investing NIF's annual $75,000 to $100,000 budget on setting up apprenticeships for a handful of NIF's target clientele perhaps simply would not have allowed the Film Board to reap as many public relations kudos.

And why was NIF's focus placed on training more producers and directors? These were occupations in which women were already fairly well represented at the Film Board, compared to other more technical craft- oriented occupations like camera, color- timing, etc. These latter craft skills, if women acquired them, could be used to find more regular employment in the industry. Consequently, filmmaking would become a more attractive and sustainable career option for Aboriginal people and people of Color. As the Studio D Submission to the Task Force on Professional Training stated:

- We have.. heard testimony that young people of groups that experience discrimination in employment are often urged by their parents to enter fields that are "safer" than those in the arts. (p. 4)
- Media occupations must be made more secure, so that they will be considered as professional options by larger numbers of people from communities that have historically experienced discrimination in employment. (p. 8) (1991)

Feminist filmmaking hopefuls familiar with the Studio D parachute producer/director model, came to believe that it was possible to get incorporated into the film industry in a nurturing setting, with a mentor close by, looking after their needs and being sensitive to the message they wanted to send out. In this ideal manner, they would be parachuted to the role of producer/ director, in control of the filmmaking process. Unfortunately, this romanticized model was not a realistic option for most filmmaking aspirants because jobs tailored along this model were supplied only occasionally by units in the NFB like Studio D. Nonetheless, the perception persisted due in part to the high profile enjoyed by a few token Aboriginal women and Women of Color who had been molded in the parachute model. For example, the career path of Wanda (being offered training as a producer while being paid by the NFB) was held up as a trajectory to follow. Wanda, however, was the only Woman of Color filmmaker in Studio D, and no

one besides her had been given a similar opportunity. However, women in NIF dreamed and even expected to emulate Wanda's example.

Another example put before the participants in NIF was that of Bev, an aboriginal woman filmmaker who enjoyed an enormous amount of prestige at the Film Board due to the success of the films she had directed. This filmmaker's strategy of going on the offensive and demanding that the institution give her the resources she needed, was seen by other aspiring subaltern filmmakers as a way to induce the NFB to share its resources. But it was Bev's credentials as the Film Board's only Aboriginal Filmmaker with a long-standing reputation, that made people at the NFB listen and cough up resources. Other aboriginal women, some of whom apprenticed with Bev, neither had her lofty status, nor the film credits under their belts to make similar demands.

Alliances Encouraged by Employment Equity

Because advocates of the crafts approach strongly adhered to a policy of equal access through fair job postings, they challenged the way in which Studio D had been used to making discretionary decisions at their programming committee meetings. Furthermore, because women adhering to the crafts approach did not word their demands in the language of identity politics, they were perceived by Studio D as pesky and uncooperative.

A special dynamic seemed to have set in at the NIF Summer Institute in 1991. According to conventional wisdom, one might have expected women of color, in the face of the NFB's White "malestream" bureaucracy, to have "stuck together", to have perceived themselves as being "on the same side" due to their common racial oppression. However, what transpired instead were alliances formed along occupational and political lines.

First of all, there was the Studio D Executive producer, Stacey. She was a White woman but saw herself as championing NIF within the women's studio in the spirit of feminist diversity. She had spent two decades in Studio D, and with only a few years left before retirement, was seeking a way to leave her mark on the NFB. Having produced films about Black, Arabic, and Inuit women, she

wanted especially to be identified in the eyes of Women of Color and of the First Nations as the Studio D producer who had fostered diversity at the Film Board.

The second group of Toronto filmmakers and videographers whom I call the Angle Lobby, were angry that Studio D had written up a proposal to address the needs of Women of Color filmmakers without consulting them. Angle wanted independent producers like themselves, to make up the bulk of the NIF Advisory Board. They had been lobbying for this for a long time, and felt entitled to play an important role in designing any program intended for Women of Color film and video producers. Due to their track record of fighting for Women of Color to be included in feminist arts organizations, they felt that they had the right to be considered the official voice of the constituency from outside of the NFB.

. Thirdly, members of the NIF Advisory Board, made up of a diverse group of women of color involved in the arts, but not necessarily very well versed in filmmaking, formed their own identity as a group and felt that they should have control over the NIF Program. (Reyes 1997, 74)

All three groups were rankled by the proactive initiatives taken by the NIF Program Producer. The latter, instead of keeping NIF confined within the women and Women of Color communities, made a special effort to liaise with other NFB personnel. In planning the 1991 Summer Institute where a group of women of color would come to production headquarters in Montreal to learn about film crafts, she did not limit her search for mentors to inside Studio D. She actively sought out craft professionals from other studios like Animation, and successfully mobilized considerable resources from Technical Services. This effort to solicit the cooperation of NFB personnel outside Studio D was probably not seen too favorably by Stacey, who wanted Studio D to be known as the prime initiator of NIF. Getting an array of White male craftsmen on board must have also irritated the Angle lobby which already perceived the NFB as an alien and oppressive institution controlled by White men. The Advisory Board for its part, may have felt somewhat left out because their non-film expertise was not really needed in the type of technical training workshop that Della was planning.

The Program Producer, for her part, was clearly a vocal advocate of the crafts approach. She strongly adhered to a policy of equal access through fair job postings and challenged the way in which Studio D members had been used to making discretionary decisions at their programming committee meetings. Furthermore, because the crafts approach all but ignored the discourse on identity politics that Studio D and some of the Women of Color and of the First Nations were actively using to frame their grievances and demands, its proponents were deemed to be alien and oppressive. Promoters of this approach did not receive due consideration during the Summer Institute or its post-mortem period, because they did not use the language of identity politics to communicate their point of view.

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[1] Subaltern is a term used by Gramsci and taken up by many Asian social scientists to denote colonized peoples and peasants. See for e.g. Mukhopadhyay (2004) or Lal (2004).

[2] Some evidence showed that another program at the NFB called the Anti-Racism series also used race relations experts. A letter sent to the Series coordinator by script writing hopeful, "Gaylene" [*pseudonym*] complained that her story was appropriated by the series directors and that she was given no further input or training in how the screenplay would be crafted.

[3] Pendakur shows that Canadian film jobs are in film services and labs (1990, 177).

[4] Acronym for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant

[5] For people from her community who had been imprisoned for political reasons

[6] A declaration circulated during the IFVA annual conference in 1992 in Montreal, reflects how the Independent Film and Video Alliance members view themselves:

> IFVA/ AVCI makes a unique contribution to the film/ video sector. Our representation is critical as we are unique. I find that we are one of the last national film and video organizations-
> * that is concerned about cultural democracy;
> * that is not interested in colonizing other cultures or being colonized by other countries or cultures;
> * where we make work because we have something to say not because someone is willing to pay for it;
> * where our scripts are not written with a commercial break every 12 minutes;
> * where our work is the source of inspiration for future trends in the industry;
> * where so often we are ahead of our time, we find ourselves alone and having to wait for the rest of the world to catch up;
> * where we do not confuse "independent" with the word "corporate sector";
> * that cannot accept federal and provincial governments abdicating their responsibility towards artists, a fundamental part of society and positive change.
>
> Our artists subsidize the economy with their work , their ideas and energy. We employ people in projects that make the country a better place. (5)

A quote from the National Coordinator's Report reveals the Independents' view on their relation to the NFB:

> Even though the NFB has a huge place on the film scene, it is not the only one with credibility. Alliance members play a necessary role and are often the only ones capable of acting efficiently because their structure is lighter. (Report distributed at IFVA conference, June 1992)

[7] For a discussion of digital video in community-oriented projects like the Challenge for Change program, see MacDougall's article on the effect of new technology on ethnographic films (2001).

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION: REVISITING THE LITERATURE IN LIGHT OF THE CASE STUDY

In attempting to pinpoint the forces that gathered to create the debacle which the NIF '91 Summer Institute became, many were quick to lay the blame on multiculturalism per se, and to take a general jab at affirmative action. "See?" I heard it whispered in the hallways of the NFB, "We gave the minorities the chance they asked for, and they blew it." When one examines the awkward and antagonistic manner in which proponents of multicultural agendas posed their demands in NIF, it is easy to see why people at the NFB might have blamed them for immaturity and opportunism. Upon closer scrutiny, however, the results of my observations must be seen in light of the structure and politics of Studio D, the NFB, and the Canadian film industry. In order to understand why a program like NIF got labeled as a failed experiment, one must seriously consider the limitations imposed by an organization like the NFB, hosting Employment Equity reforms. It is important to keep in mind that the actors in the NIF drama were operating within an institutional framework which favored certain ideologies and practices. These ideologies and practices placed severe limitations on how issues of "race" were dealt with in NIF.

In assessing the successes and failures in carrying out reforms in a particular work environment, the structures in place and the ideological reasons the organization offers for its existence must be looked at. In a media-based environment like the NFB where the production of state ideology in the form of Canadian nationalist public service messages is the organization's main goal, it becomes even more crucial to scrutinize the ideological justifications offered to promote particular messages.

Structural Limitations To Employment Equity

I propose two sets of variables to account for the problems that arose in and around the period of the 1991 NIF Summer Institute: (1) the *institutional* constraints within which a program targeting a new social group must operate; and (2) the ideologies & strategies that the program's *target groups* adopt.

The Institution

The first set of explanatory variables, arrived at, in large part, through an overview of the history and development of the National Film Board and of Studio D (Chapter I) can be elaborated on in the following way: Given the climate of economic restraint in Canada following the 1985 recession, Women of Color & of the First Nations vying for space within the NFB had to deal with the following institution-imposed constraints. The NFB, in the 1990's clearly had limited resources to share with newcomers. Around the period when NIF closed shop, hundreds of NFB personnel were being laid off. A convenient way to deal with new demands for inclusion imposed by Employment Equity was to contain the NIF program within Studio D, which functioned as a propaganda unit. It is much cheaper to fund a propaganda unit (concerned with its community advocacy role) than a full-fledged artistic production unit concerned with the cinematographic excellence of its products.

Furthermore, ideological constraints were imposed by the Institution.[1] Nationalism and feminism in their specific Canadian manifestations to a large extent predetermined how NIF would be constituted. Practices adopted by the multicultural constituents of the NIF program were in many ways, imitations of the practices of certain hegemonic strands of Canadian nationalism and Canadian feminism. Because the NFB has been a Canadian identity-making machine, its nationalist mission to interpret Canada to Canadians, placed real restrictions on how new voices and faces of the Canadian mosaic would be included in the project of manufacturing propaganda on Canadian identity. The structural racism in Canadian institutions had historically placed strong barriers on who was allowed to define Canadian identity[2]. There was a palpable unease[3] amongst the Canadian cultural elite about giving over the task of Canadian identity determination to new elements of the Canadian population i.e. to those defined as "non-founding" peoples.

The enterprise of identity creation that was the mainstay of the NFB, reproduced itself in the Film Board's various units (more strongly in some than in others). Studio D, the women's unit, was one that was strong on identity creation,

basing itself on the premise that a common identity was shared by all women. NIF also replicated the general atmosphere of identity politics current in the NFB. In the NFB's historical bag of tricks, both propaganda-making and community development had been popular. Given that the women's studio which housed NIF, had vigorously taken up these two strong traditions in their own war against sexism, it was only a natural progression for NIF be set up to manufacture public relations propaganda as well (with the public this time being Women of Color and of the First Nations). The added advantage for the NFB was that producing "talking head" documentaries, the preferred format of Studio D and of the NFB's English section, was much less costly to finance than dramatic on-location shoots. Moreover, it had more immediate public relations returns in that the community wishing to be represented got the impression that it was sharing authority in the filmmaking process. But it may be that, as Jay Ruby has said,

> [F]ilms of shared authority are an impossibility. Have the filmmakers trained the subject in technical and artistic production skills, or are the subjects merely "subject area specialists' who gauge the accuracy of the information and pass upon the political and moral correctness of the finished work?.. If subjects become knowledgeable as filmmakers in order to be collaborators, why would they need the outsider? Wouldn't they want to make their own films? (Ruby 1992, 51-54)

Why indeed would there be a need for "shared authority" if sufficient technical and artistic resources were made available both in film production and distribution to "Canadians" to "poor Canadians", to "Canadian women" and to "aboriginal Canadian women and Canadian women of color? In quotation marks, I refer to the targeted beneficiaries of the NFB, Challenge for Change, Studio D and NIF, respectively. The strategy of "sharing authority", for all intents and purposes, gives the impression that those already holding the reins of power in the production and distribution of film in Canada are willing to share their resources with the excluded others (whether they be poor communities in Newfoundland or non-whites in urban Ontario), when in reality they are not. This notion of "shared authority", was, I conjecture, the subterfuge that allowed the NFB, a nationalist propaganda unit, to successfully contain the feminist challenge within Studio D,

i.e. into a smaller replica propaganda unit within the confines of the NFB. And the NFB and Studio D in turn, contained NIF within an even smaller propaganda unit, within the confines of Studio D. NIF's main purpose, hence, was not to share the authority of filmic voice with aboriginal and "of color" women, but rather, to act in the service of Studio D and the NFB to parry any accusations leveled at them about their lack of workforce diversity. By keeping NIF housed within a propaganda unit like Studio D, the NFB would not have to allow itself to be challenged by the entrance of new communities and their demands. Since in a climate of economic restraint, no money was available for expansion, it was perhaps judicious for the NFB and Studio D to use a containment strategy.

Let us remind ourselves that as early as 1927, Grierson had conceived of a containment strategy: i.e. the idea of a "supplementary" distribution- exhibition plan which would not interfere with Hollywood's vertical integration. The NFB non-theatrical circuits instituted by Grierson during the war actually extended Hollywood's terrain while further marginalizing Canadian film. It is interesting to note that Grierson presented his non-theatrical circuits not as a containment strategy on the part of Hollywood but rather, as a progressive and populist alternative, based on the goal of forging a national Canadian identity (Nelson 1988, 89).

Any institution which has successfully undertaken a project of identity creation or promotion, I submit, can, more easily use that same language of identity politics to justify programs based on the rationale of "shared authority" (read: *not* shared power and resources). If identity politics becomes the raison d'etre of a new program of inclusion, then any other logic of professional development or leadership development gets pushed aside or subsumed by identity politics. A logic of entitlement sets in which overshadows important concerns germane to that particular work world: It invites "experts" of identity rather than of film. Questions of identity displace the more crucial underlying issues of training, jobs and redistribution of resources.

In instituting "diversity" and "employment equity" programs targeting aboriginal people and visible minorities, governments have based their rationale

on the notion that one's ethnicity or race is the cause of one's oppression. This draws attention to the victimized "ethnicized" or "racialized" individual or group rather than to the process which ethnicized and racialized them. Reverting attention to the latter would implicate the state in its own active role in the oppression process. Rather than investing in the training of new filmmakers of professional caliber, the state could trickle its NFB Employment Equity money to, in Ruby's words, "subject area specialists who gauge the accuracy of the race-related information and pass judgment on the political and moral correctness of the finished work" (op. cit., 1992).

Leaving aside the little technical training that was given NIF participants, there are further bits of evidence that the NFB was either unwilling or unable to direct sufficient funds to a program of inclusion like NIF. As an employment equity initiative, for instance, NIF did not create any full-time, continuous conventional jobs. The only "employment" that was offered was short-term contracts, mostly in administration rather than in filmmaking. Some film, video, and professional development funding was given out in the final years of NIF. A NIF employee pointed out that the NFB went so far as to claim the employees hired on short-term contracts for the NIF Summer Institute as their employees in order to keep government employment equity officers at bay. The producer for the 1991 Summer Institute told me:

> The NFB was trying to pass [as complying with Employment Equity legislation]. To show they were doing something, they asked me what color were all these women [hired by NIF]. They were claiming them as employees. They asked me to say what groups they belong to. *I* don't know *what* they called themselves.

Since Studio D where NIF was housed, was more of a propaganda unit, than a bona fide filmmaking unit, they were more interested in public relations and community-building than in providing access for Women of Color and of the First Nation's into the film industry. To respond to the accusations of racism leveled at them by non-White women, Studio D feminists were in dire need of renewing their tarnished image of representing all women. They needed to show that they possessed a racial "diversity" of women in their ranks. Therefore, even

though Studio D claimed to have devised a program to train Women of Color and of the First Nations to become filmmakers, from what I observed, it only seemed interested in engaging in race relations to resuscitate the "progressive" image it had cultivated so carefully. Multicultural policy, as artists have complained, has basically been used by arts organizations in a hands off manner to keep minorities engaged in their own folkloric traditions. The policy has not encouraged non-European-origin artists to engage in the already-established power-holding institutions of the mainstream. The discourse on diversity and multiculturalism suited the NFB well as a way to confine Women of Color and of the First Nations in Studio D. A hands-off policy would not require them to get involved in either expanding their own cultural parameters or in questioning their own work practices.

For the NIF program, a special NIF Advisory Board was created, in the eyes of Studio D, to advise the Old Guard on issues of import to Women of Color and of the First Nations. Using Lorde's conceptualization, Studio D wanted to be taught by the Women of Color and of the First Nations. They did not engage actively in the process of finding out about racialized communities that were to be NIF's constituency. In a piece called, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House", Lorde asserts that White feminists expect non-European women to educate them just as men have expected women to edify them:

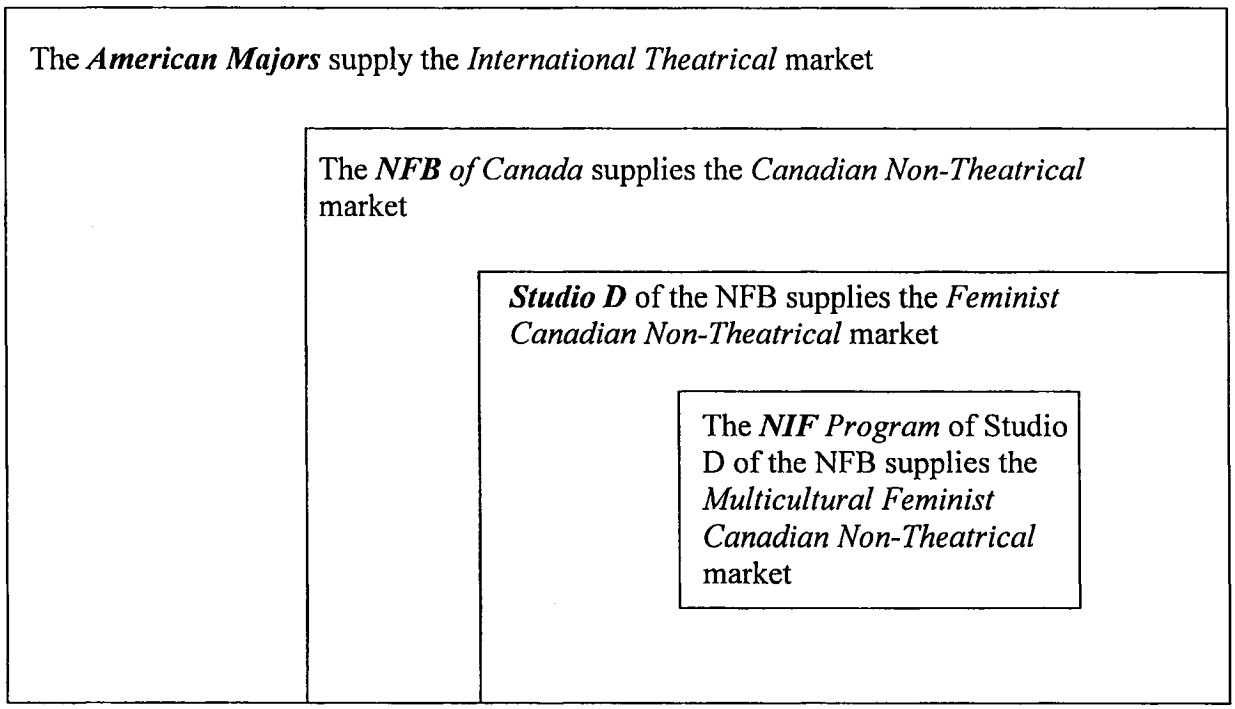
> Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance, and to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns. Now we hear that it is the task of black and third world women to educate white women, in the face of tremendous resistance, as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival. This is a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought. (Lorde in Moraga and Anzaldua 1983, 100)

To conceptualize the structural limitations pre-imposed on the NIF program, I hereby present what I call the Matrushka[4] model which can serve as a visual aid to understand the constrictive strategies used:(a) by Hollywood whose

monopoly on Canadian audiences was potentially threatened by the formation of the National Film Board of Canada; (b) by the NFB, whose exclusion of women was challenged by Studio D's feminist lobby; & finally (c) by Studio D, whose exclusion of Women of Color of the First Nations was contested by the NIF target constituency. The largest box represents organizations and markets enjoying the greatest industry funds and is followed by ever-decreasing box sizes:

THE MATRUSHKA MODEL

ever-decreasing box size =ever-decreasing funding base & distribution network



As we go down the list, the market (or distribution network) becomes narrower, and as a result, the funding base becomes more restricted. I propose further, that it was the ideologies of nationalism, feminism and multiculturalism, all forms of identity politics, which convinced the contained parties to accept their containment. The NFB was formed in the name of Canadian nationalism to counter American imperialism; Studio D in the name of feminism to counter sexism within the Canadian nationalist project; and NIF in the name of Canadian multiculturalism to counter racism in the feminist project. Multiculturalism,

which is under scrutiny in this case study, is based on the politics of identity, or the politics of difference. It has been deeply inspired by the popular movements of nationalism (see F.Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove, 1967) and feminism (J. Lacan's *Ecrits: A Selection*. A. Sheridan, trans. N.Y. W.W. Norton,1977, and S. De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. H.M. Parshley, trans. & ed. N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1974) which are themselves, I would purport, forms of identity politics (Calhoun 1994) Multiculturalism drew from these movements in fundamental ways, but also added to the mixture, its own twist of postmodernism (J. Derrida's *Writing and Difference*, A. Bass, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978; Fanon 1967 & hooks 1990).

To reiterate, what was being replicated in the ever-decreasing boxes, is the model of a propaganda unit, with documentary as the format. The unit does not have art as the main item on its agenda but rather social commentary. This formula prevented most motion pictures produced by these units from gaining distinction according to the standard aesthetic criteria of the conventional art world of film. The expediency of producing film quickly in the Grierson propagandistic fashion certainly held some attraction for those interested in "getting the message out" quickly and at comparatively little cost.

The Target Group: Identity politics within the NIF "community"

Given this set of structural constraints, to what extent was the Matrushka model put in place with the actual participation of those who eventually got boxed in? An attempt to answer this question resulted in the proposition of a second set of explanatory variables: Adherence on the part of Women of Color & of the First Nations to the ideologies of (a) Multiculturalism, & (b) Art as Epiphany, led them to come up with strategies that contributed to their containment in NIF (or, it might be argued, to the extent that the women were diverted to *video*making during the 1992 Fall Film Institute, to their exclusion from the *film*making world entirely.)
This case study has illustrated in part, how certain women from the so-called community of Women of Color and of the First Nations, decided to whom access to the film industry should be allowed, and how that access should be accorded. But who were these women? How did they come to be in this position? Who appointed them to construct the community of women of color and women of the first nations? Let us reexamine why alliances that were expected to take

place, unraveled or did not form at all. Scott's case study of a women's organization in California showed that:

> political alliances based on racial identity were a logical response to a legacy of white racism. However, though identity politics were important to the creation of these multicultural organizations, there were limits to the uses of identity politics. These limits were revealed by the moments in which the expectations of alliance gave way to the contradictory experience of lived reality, and racial/ethnic identity proved to be insufficient grounds for consistent political and personal connection. The culture of every day life could not sustain clear definitions of racial boundaries and oppositions...beliefs women held in simple correspondences between identity and positionality, [reveal] the limits of such beliefs. (Scott 1998, 418)

Identity-building on the basis of race can be much more problematic than identity-building on the basis of gender, given the very many ways of defining race and the very many people of different class, cultural, religious and geographical backgrounds that have been racialized by the colonial process (Li 1999).

In a program like NIF, participants felt it necessary to engage in a sort of double-speak. Since the reason they had been gathered together in the first place was because of their identity as Women of Color and of the First Nations, they had to justify any further actions in the context of the NIF program, on that basis. Tensions were created in part because the language of racial identity, in which participants had to frame their demands, did not contain the vocabulary necessary to describe underlying filmworld problems. Because NIF was premised on identity politics, participants were compelled to predicate their filmworld actions with justifications from the language of identity politics. In order to have currency in the NIF program, participants had to frame their proposals as if they were designed primarily to defend members of the so-called Women of Color and of the First Nations "community" from racist victimization.

If affirmative action and employment equity policies based on identity politics are used as a rationale to "level the playing field" and allow discriminated groups to access the workplace, then once on the job, the worker (chosen in part due to her/ his identity), must take heed of two sets of dynamics: those in the industry and those in the organization. By industry dynamics, I am referring to the

material and human resources needed to *get the job done;* and by organizational dynamics, I mean the human and structural *relations* in the workplace. The risk for the worker if s/he develops her/his career path without paying full heed to these dynamics is that s/he remains associated with identity-related issues.

The Strategies

Three strategies proposed by women in the NIF program, on how to deal with diversifying the feminist film world, were mentioned earlier: the crafts, the race-relations and the author strategies. These were not openly presented as platforms to vote on but during my observations, elements of the strategies came to light. Although all three strategies espoused the principles of equal opportunity, the proponents of the "**race relations**" strategy (who were mainly to be found in the NIF Advisory Board) were content to spend their NIF time constructing what they deemed to be the "community" of Women of Color and of the First Nations. These race relationists expended a considerable amount of effort thrashing out issues of identity politics: on who was eligible to represent whom. Both the institution and the target groups can be seen as having used this strategy. On the institution's side, Studio D wished to demonstrate that it still represented all women by making an effort, in the spirit encouraged by the Multiculturalism Act, to reflect the diversity among Canadian women. On the side of Women of Color and of the First Nations, discussions over race representation and accountability were promoted by those hoping to get a piece of the action i.e. money set aside for race relations activities. The race relations strategists' main vehicles in the NIF mandate was the resource directory as a community-building tool, and the hope of eventually being parachuted to producer-director positions. Becoming producer-directors, they hoped, would allow their own stories to be fast-tracked onto the screen without their having to first follow a painful and protracted training path in film crafts.

Advocates of the "**author**" strategy were well-versed in the film world, albeit from an individual standpoint. As independent producers, they had no big industry or institutional affiliations. They saw multiculturalism as state ideology, as a manifestation of the interests of big government. They were sparked by the

idea of the artist having full control of her product, deeming that awarding scholarships to independent artists should be the goal of NIF. Many were videomakers and not prone to appreciating the collaborative efforts required by film production. In fact, in all three strategies, those who were most unfamiliar with the art world of film, were most likely to espouse the idea of art as epiphany, as an inspired creation, and to underestimate the high levels of training and cooperation required in the production of cinema.

Supporters of the "crafts" strategy were most familiar with filmmaking from an industry perspective, viewing filmmaking as an inherently collaborative activity involving the skills of many master craftspeople. In this view, apprenticeships were the most important element in NIF, and the rich professional training capability of NFB technical services and certain studios was especially valued. The "**craft**" strategists saw the way forward as a collective endeavor.. that anti-racists should focus on integrating into the industry not as authors, but as craftspeople first. Hence the road to creating a filmic product that would best convey an anti-racist[5] message, would be a long and arduous one. Such a view was not shared by most of the NIF players assembled in the 1991-1992 years, and the Program Producer who promoted this strategy was ousted.

The New Initiatives in Film program became a battleground where questions of identity displaced the more crucial underlying issues of training, jobs and redistribution of resources. If some of the strategists' proposals addressed more general filmworld questions, in order to have currency in the NIF program, they had to frame their proposals as if they were designed primarily to defend members of the so-called Women of Color and of the First Nations "community" from victimization by the hidden racism in established institutions like the NFB. Common alliances based on the assumption of common victimization were implied where they did not necessarily exist. NIF became the terrain on which pre-existing conflicts within the Canadian film industry were reenacted (e.g. between the NFB and the independents, between the craftspeople and the producers/directors), but this time, using the language of entitlement, identity and

victimization. Those strategists who refused to use the vocabulary of identity politics (i.e. the craft strategists) found themselves shut out of the NIF process.

The tragedy of NIF was that few of the contenders in the ensuing battle had the forthrightness or the understanding to avow that the source of their dissatisfaction with NIF was due more to the way resources were allocated in the Canadian film world than to questions over identity. Charges of racism were leveled where instead attacks on strategy over filmworld issues would have been more appropriate. In all the flurry, the goal of facilitating newcomers to acquire the necessary expertise and resources to become full-fledged filmmakers, was forgotten. The solutions proposed by either the "craft" or the "author" strategists could have been of universal benefit to all newcomers to the film industry, regardless of their race or sex. The adoption of identity politics, however, severely limited Women of Color and of the First Nations' access to the film industry.

The Auteur Strategy

A group of independent filmmakers belonging to the Independent Film and Video Alliance formed a women of color lobby group, *Angle,* to divert funds from the NFB into their own coffers. They wielded the language of identity politics to put forward their auteurist claims. The Angle Lobby had some experience in the film world, and much political expertise in using the language of racial victimization. Members were able to frame their own interests successfully to the NIF Advisory Board's race relations strategists. The auteurist Angle lobby presented itself as a problem solver. Their original claim to boycott NIF altogether was reformulated as a plan to take over the NIF Advisory Board and get Studio D to include them in their nerve center, the Programming Committee[6]. Although they agreed with the crafts strategist on many points like improving their professional capacities, these auteur strategists, from long years of lobbying on behalf of independent artists, had mastered the multicultural lingo of victimization to legitimate their claims. The vocabulary they marshaled was familiar to the race relations strategists in both the NIF Advisory Board and Studio D, and hence these latter more easily responded to their auteurist cries.

An example of how the Angle lobby operated is a letter which was sent to the NIF Advisory Board by the women in NIF SI Program II (almost all Angle members), questioning the ability of two Black women evaluators to do their job with sensitivity to Women of Color and of the First Nations. The evaluators from a local consulting firm known in the Montreal Black community, had been hired to assess the Summer Institute. The authors of the letter claimed that the evaluators did not understand that observing people of color was an oppressive act. The implication was that the evaluators had no right to assess their behavior or speak on their behalf.

Critiques of Studio D were automatically extended to Women of Color and of the First Nations who had been employed by the Studio on a contract basis. The accusation of lack of representativity and authoritarianism was leveled at the NIF staff and at anybody who disagreed with the Angle lobby's definition of Women of Color and of the First Nations, and the accusation of institutional racism was leveled at any White folk impeding the contest to gain hegemony over the process of defining the category, "Women of Color and of the First Nations".

As the project of identifying "community" intensified, it was claimed by some of the Advisory Board members that because Della was light-skinned, upper-class, and not a lesbian, she supposedly could not be sensitive to the needs of the NIF constituency. The NIF Program Producer's job then became the main contested terrain, the object of defining accountability. In setting up accountability, each group of strategists attempted to encourage those who would support their strategy on the NIF Advisory Board.

Because Della was a powerful advocate of the crafts strategy and had convinced the participants in the Documentary section of SI '91 of the importance of learning craft skills, she was seen by the auteur and institutional race relations strategists as a cumbersome obstacle to be dispensed with. What both the race relations and auteur strategists had in common, was their identity politics. Della, a crafts advocate, urging that NIF lay aside identity politics as a way to access the film industry, was attacked not on the content of her strategy (which was hardly addressed either by Studio D or the Advisory Board: neither talked about her

concrete proposals to improve NIF) but because she refused to play the identity game.

What was unfortunately not recognized by the auteur strategists was that the crafts strategists in fact sympathized with the Independent Filmmakers' ongoing complaints about the NFB blocking their growth in the industry. For example, craft strategist, Della had agreed with Opal at the Summer Institute Jury, on the importance of including skilled independent filmmakers as participants in NIF. Auteur strategist, Opal, moreover, had expressed at the Advisory Board meetings, an appreciation for Della's difficult position as a multicultural worker. But efforts were not made by the auteurist Angle lobby to get Della and the NIF staff on their side. Had the Angle Lobby openly voiced their platform, the possibility for an effective united strategy could have been created, with all the women involved in New Initiatives in Film lobbying for more funds and jobs. As it was, however, the independents misjudged the position of the Women of Color and of the First Nations NIF staff, unnecessarily alienating potential sympathizers to their cause. One NIF staff member pointed out that the new NIF workers on contract could all have been allies to the participants, putting forward demands in a constructive way to further Women of Color and of the First Nations' cinematic development.

The Angle slate had been busy framing Della as an oppressor, along with anyone who supported her, including the NIF staff and the NFB craftspeople who were eager to impart their knowledge to the women. Della's role was twisted and simplified by the Angle slate, and Della was recast in the parable as the essence of a racist institution. The bond of identity politics that the Angle lobby shared with the race relationists of Studio D and the NIF Advisory Board, strengthened to override Della's rights as a worker. In the short term, the particular members of the Angle lobby were successful in getting limited funding for their own individual projects.

The Novices

However, this was at the expense of the more naive neophytes who were kept operating at an amateur level, and left with no avenue to penetrate the

artisanal world of filmmaking. Because of its lower costs and greater accessibility, the NFB pointed new communities vying for NFB resources, to video, even though the NFB was not set up to shoot and edit on video. The 1992 Fall Institute held a year after the problematic 1991 Summer Institute, for example, was carried out entirely in video with two NFB trainers. A loan program was also set up from which community Women of Color and of the First Nations could borrow a high-8 video.

The neophytes' point of view reflected not only ignorance about filmmaking. It also typified the compulsion for authorship engendered by independent filmmakers and the expectations created by multiculturalism that each diverse culture should be able to keep its identity and express itself the way it saw fit. The notion of Art as Epiphany, the most commonly- held view of artistic practice among lay people (see below), also played a role. Those inexperienced in a particular artistic medium were especially unaware of the time and training required to perfect the artistic practice. Women from the NIF target group who were community activists were the group most likely to hold this view. They tended to look for the most expedient ways in which to purvey their urgent political and artistic messages. They were the most likely support the parachute model, and to most easily believe that it was possible to be a good producer-director without any prior experience in film. It was interesting to note how the community activists placed in the Documentary group in the 1991 Summer Institute, heightened their appreciation for the craftsmanship of filmmaking after undergoing their series of workshops. The group that switched from Animation to Video did not have the opportunity to interact with the world-renowned NFB craftspeople of the Animation studio; and hence stayed unenlightened about the filmmaking process and still adhering to the parachute model.

Art World Notions Rationalizing Containment: The Notion of Art as Epiphany

One of the most common ways of looking at art and its creation is as engagement in an activity *outside* the drudgery of work. It is an activity that liberates one from the routine. If art is liberating, how can an artist who presumably engages in art full-time, sustain this liberated sentiment? The artist

must be a gifted and inspired individual, for s/he is not engaging in "normal" productive work as defined by society. The artist must indeed possess some supernatural ability to sustain creation. This is the Kantian notion of Art as Epiphany[7], of art as the product of a divine moment of clarity and creativity. This romantic notion of authorship conjures up images of the artist communing with her inner forces in an attic.

Those inexperienced in a particular artistic medium are especially unaware of how much *perspiration* surrounds the generation and execution of an inspired work. They tend to overlook the time and effort spent in getting the training & the experience with the techniques, aesthetic language and materials in a particular artistic form. When one examines how works of art are actually produced, one realizes the extent to which the making of art requires cooperative networks, and a social structure to sustain it.

Aesthetic Labor

Various art forms require various levels of cooperation. The more complex and organized an art world, the more cooperation is required. The film world is an extremely organized environment with high levels of cooperation required during production. The reality is that the art world of filmmaking is much more artisanal than artistic. Yet it is a milieu which cannot be totally regulated or mechanized because the personnel involved must contribute what Chanan has termed their *aesthetic labor*. What differentiates the worker bees in an art world from the worker bees in a normal production site, is aesthetic labor. Filmmaking is not only one of the most organized art worlds, and one which calls for high levels of cooperation between members, but one in which the technicians and support workers involved in making a film must also give of themselves; they must use their judgment at each turn. There is a constant need for the human element to be present with all its discretionary power, during the production of a film. From the cinematographer who decides on long or medium shots, down to the last gofer who can influence the morale of the actor s/he is in charge of bringing water to, each element plays a role in how the film will turn out. This constant presence of the human element in the production of art, has made the

largely artisanal world of filmmaking (with its often shop-floor like dynamics that includes unions, craftspeople, equipment, etc.) (Chanan 1976l, 71-2), amenable to claims for authorship. And since film is such a powerful medium, those who control the screens are able to wield tremendous ideological power on the viewing public. It is no surprise then that many groups in society who do not see themselves represented on the screen vie for the chance to gain the authorship of films.

Claiming authorship would not be such an issue if we were talking about writing a novel, painting a picture, taking a photo, or even shooting a home video. These artistic endeavors can easily be undertaken by an individual author. That is what is so confusing to lay-people when filmmaking organizations, in the name of "taking the camera to the people" promise authorship to various communities.[8] When those unfamiliar with film production think they are getting authorship, they tend to overestimate the role of the director and neglect the role of a myriad other crafts people involved in the filmmaking endeavor. The onset of the video age has further led to this confusion in people's minds. They think making a film simply involves manipulating a hand-held camera, recording what the artistic eye sees, and then editing the footage shot. Digital technology of today facilitates this process even more since editing footage can also be done on personal computers. Hence, claims for authorship of the image-making process multiply.[9]

Conflict inevitably arises when the author concept interferes with the necessity for specialized training and cooperative labor in film production. When, furthermore, the individualistic notion of authorship presents itself in the form of identity politics, the compulsion to relate one's story oneself, without outside interference becomes so great that it contradicts the need for other creative personnel to be involved in the storytelling. The dependence of the author (in the case of film the author would be the producer/ director) on the film production team, causes resentment at the latter's presence. She sees their power over her as oppressive. And the fact that the NIF Program Producer kept insisting on the necessity of skilled team work in the production of film, underscored their powerlessness. The would-be authors saw the NFB as an oppressive institution

consisting of unfathomable technology and hostile While craftsmen, out to appropriate their stories and to stamp out their individual creative and learning styles.

Clearly, problems arise at the outset when such a gap exists between the extent of individual creativity a novice "author" expects from the film "process" and the artisanal reality of collective authorship required by filmmaking. The NIF 1991 Summer Institute was an example of what can happen when the logic of individual authorship is introduced into such a highly organized environment as film production. The general ignorance about filmmaking prevalent among so many of the women attending the 1991 NIF Summer Institute led the NIF Program Producer to conclude that the entire NIF process as it was structured was a waste of time and money. Initially, she thought that NIF could at least have served to introduce newcomers to the NFB's crafts expertise. But this was based on the assumption that Women of Color and of the First Nations entering NIF all recognized that working with the NFB's resources was an invaluable opportunity. It seemed, however, that the Studio D had structured NIF to attract neophytes, and had not recruited potential participants on the basis of their knowledge of the film industry. When Studio D, in its heyday, had given preference to neophytes, it had invested the time and resources to train them (spending more than a decade in some cases). The hitch in the case of NIF was that the resources to nurture those newcomers in the filmmaking process were not forthcoming. The only way to keep up the tradition of attracting neophytes in conditions of scarce resources was to channel them to video where those uninitiated in film would have the impression of being involved in filmmaking, without the institution having to cough up the resources to train them in bona fide filmmaking. What resulted was that the neophytes ended up making three of their own individual videos, thereby entirely bypassing having to learn about filmmaking.

Tendencies to Note Within the Art World of Filmmaking

Howard Becker's book, *Art Worlds,* contains many insights that have proved useful in understanding the dynamics of the art world examined in this case study. He noted that people attracted to any art world tend to be drawn to the

artistic jobs (those, that require greater levels of, in Chanan's terms, aesthetic labor) rather than to the technical, support jobs. This usually results in an oversupply of people wanting to perform the charismatic artistic jobs like actor, director or writer (Becker 1982, 77). In the popular media, there is a clear overemphasis of the role of the *actor*.[10] More "serious" books highlight the *director*'s vision of a film and these books far outnumber the ones describing the tasks of the skilled craftspeople required to produce a film[11]. There is a clear bias in the industry: the technicians that occupy the long list of credits appearing at the end of a film, are relegated to a lower status. Recruitment channels for these craftspeople are through vocational, technical, or trade school networks; whereas directors and film critics "schmooze" in more educated social networks. Clear lines are drawn in the industry between the worker bees and the queen bees, between art school and technical school graduates.

The Worker Bees

Becker notes that artistic support personnel have been dehumanized to the extent that they are considered "resources" like material resources (Ibid, 77). These technicians, if they have attained an adequate battery of skills to perform the craft at industry standards, can then become part of a stable "pool of interchangeable support personnel" (Ibid, 81). The way craftspeople "get connected to particular art projects to which they contribute their services" (Ibid) differs according to whether they work in private industry or for an organization. If they work in the former, their reputations are extremely important to build and maintain for it is by word of mouth and reputation that the next contract can be gotten. But if technicians work for an organization, they can rely on it to :

> Determine.. what they do, tell.. them what is needed for any particular project... When hiring and firing are dominated by bureaucratic rules, or tenure protection imposed by union contract or a governmental or private organization's own rules, make the connection more permanent. (Ibid, 82)

Directors and producers who are also part of large organizations rather than private contract-based industry also, by logical extension, need to worry less about their reputations if their jobs are also protected through the implementation of rules and regulations. Their concern for establishing a reputation in the wider

art world of filmmaking is hence likely to be reduced as a result. The queen bees (the directors) in an organization like the Film Board, hence run the risk of becoming like worker bees or simple government bureaucrats producing not art, but propaganda.

Artworld Conventions

> [O]rganizations are equipped to handle standard formats & their resources will not permit the substantial expenditures required to accommodate nonstandard items... Conventions make art possible in another sense because decisions can be made quickly, plans made simply by reference to a conventional way of doing things, artists can devote more time to actual work. Conventions make possible the easy and efficient coordination of activity among artists and support personnel...Conventions make collective activity simpler and less costly time, energy and other resources"(Ibid, 28-35)

The conventions in operation at the National Film Board of Canada have been detailed in the case study. Some obvious ones involved in the production of *film* at the NFB were the battery of equipment invested in by the institution, the reliance on set bureaucratic rules to get work accomplished, a division of personnel at the production headquarters into producer/directors who were part of the Studios and craftspeople who were part of Technical Services (akin to a resource pool of support staff).

Subculture

> [O]ccupational subcultures may derail the best of intentions. Those informal groupings that characterize all organizations not only exercise control over members' behavior, but also have the ability to subvert the implementation of inclusiveness initiatives. (Fleras and Elliott 2003, 315)

A special environment existed at the NFB, whereby films were produced less with film quality in mind than propaganda value. The formula and format (Gitlin 1994, 520-523) of the NFB film could be characterized as the talking head documentary. The identity politics active at the Film Board due to the importance placed on supporting Canadian nationalism and white liberal feminism, colored the way in which multicultural Employment Equity would be incorporated into the organization.

It is interesting to contemplate in what ways those who participated in the Employment Equity initiative described in this case study understood the conventions and the subculture of the organization. The NIF Employment Equity initiative might indeed have been more beneficial to those with a greater understanding and willingness to conform to the subculture within Studio D and the NFB. The extent to which specific parties involved in NIF contested or threatened the subcultures within the host institution, may have determined their fate in the program.

The Craft Strategy: Subcultural Threat to Studio D

This case study showed how the NIF Program Producer became a target for the frustration felt by each party dissatisfied with some aspect of NIF. Della became personally identified with NIF's problems. One plausible explanation for why this situation come about was Della's open contestation of the subcultural conventions of the art world represented especially by Studio D, through its parachuted Producer-Director model. Her subcultural violations were sixfold:

i) Subcultures .. have a protective dimension, helping to shelter members and their collective interests from the external world. (Rothman 1988, 46-47)

She sympathized with the independent filmmakers outside of the NFB who were crying out for inclusion and welcomed them as participants and facilitators in NIF, thus piercing Studio D's protective skin and exposing it to the external world. Della agreed with former Studio D head, Fran's opinion that:

> As far as I was concerned, we had the right to be artists, not just social workers. I wanted these women filmmakers to challenge the form of filmmaking as well as the context, and I think other women at the studio had a problem with this.

By placing as facilitators (those responsible for trouble-shooting for the participants) in the NIF Summer Institute, two *outside* independent producer directors (who were unfamiliar with the organizational conventions at the NFB), Della deprived herself of help from *insiders*

when the going got tough. Had she positioned NFB *insiders* as facilitators, she might have gained support from within the institution when the independent Angle lobby surfaced. Furthermore, by excluding Studio D from the NIF Summer Institute film screenings, she antagonized members of the Studio D Old Guard, making them reluctant to help her when she encountered problems with the Angle lobby and the neophytes.

ii) "Rate busters" are never popular for they threaten the character of the group. (Ibid)

Della was likely perceived as a rate buster because she tried to introduce a meritocratic logic to NIF: that the participants had better pull up their socks and learn the craft skills if they intended to make inroads in the film industry. The enormous amount of work that she accomplished in the four months before the Summer Institute may have been perceived by certain government bureaucrats at the Film Board as outpacing their own normal rate of productivity. With the general threat of job cuts hanging in the air, Della may have showed up the public relationists for their indolence.

iii) Members of Studio D's Programming Committee who were used to a more nurturing, problem-evading style felt uncomfortable with Della's straight-shooting executive business style. As Anita Taylor had noted, the Studio D felt guilty about showing power. Della's openly asking questions about procedure at Programming Committee meetings was perceived as overly aggressive behavior. As a newcomer, Program Producer Della had expected to receive some kind of orientation about how the Programming Committee (which took most of the Studio's decisions) functioned. Since she did not receive any information about the decision-making process, Della decided to go on the offensive and openly ask questions about procedure at Programming Committee meetings:

> What's its purpose? What's its intent and how is it framed? They come in and they go on with business.. It's like, excuse me, I'm new, and you have to tell me what this is about! What are we doing here.. or why are we here? And of course as soon as you start asking questions in Studio D, they become defensive.. But they don't seem to realize that you don't know these rules. It's not written anywhere for you to know. And each studio has developed its own way of doing this stuff.

iv) Della, by introducing the craftspeople (many of them male) from outside the Studio as the expert trainers in the NIF Summer Institute, showed her crafts bias. However, in the greater art world of filmmaking, the technicians were considered the drones or *worker* bees, not the queen bees. Women of Color and of the First Nations aspiring to become filmmakers did not want to become the *workers* in the filmmaking process as Della was suggesting, but rather, queens of the images they would produce. There was an inherent bias, not only in the larger film world, but also at the NFB that the *directors* were the real authors and not the technical crafts people. It was the directors and producers who were in the studios whilst the craftspeople were classified separately in a resource pool called *Technical Services.* NIF participants, wanting to be parachuted into the directorship of their own films, resented being pointed to the technical service occupations by Della. She was hence cast as a dictator, directing the women to onerous and oppressive activities they had no inclination to partake in.

v) Within the group, conformity or deviance with respect to sub cultural standards and expectations influences internal prestige and power. (Ibid)

Della's criticism of the Producer Director model led her to tap into expertise from a studio which did not espouse this model: Animation. In Animation, the craftspeople were the artists too. Holding the Animation studio up as "stars" alongside the Technical Service craftspeople, again showed up Studio D as

housing no true artists, only lame, parachuted ones. Della's criticism of Studio D reflects her attitude on this matter:

> One of the historic criticisms of the studio has been the position that any woman can make film and that technique isn't the important part of filmmaking. So theoretically even a housewife, and not to disparage housewives in any way, but even a housewife can make film. And what that's done is to create a very particular perception amongst women.

vi) Finally, by openly insisting on fair job practices at Studio D and at the Film Board, Della ardently refused the "level playing field" argument put forward by promoters of government-sponsored Employment Equity. The playing field cannot be leveled in a climate of dwindling funds, she argued, for resentment would grow amongst older employees when monies were redirected to affirmative action programs for novices, rather than to their own productions. The assumption amongst older employees would be that they merited any available funds more than newcomers financed purely because of their identity rather than their skill.[12]

Concluding Remarks

What became evident was not only the diversity of approaches taken by the so-called women of color and of the first nations "community" to deal with racism in the film world, but also their incompatibility. It became clear that the assumptions made about the participants coming to the Institute with an already-formulated appreciation of institutional racism and of filmmaking, was wrong. It was also wrong to assume that no programmatic diversity existed among Women of Color and of the First Nations, and to assume that these women from diverse backgrounds formed a "community" in the first place. Just like any other artificially-constructed group, members of the so-called Women of Color and of the First Nations "community" each had their own individual interests at heart, motivated by their material circumstances. And whatever group interests they may have had did not necessarily fit into the common interest that Women of

Color and of the First Nations were supposed to possess, as the designers of NIF had conceived of it.

Unfortunately, few of the individual or group interests were openly avowed during the Summer Institute. Had the underlying strategies used during the NIF debacle been openly discussed and deliberated on, it could be argued that NIF might still be in existence today. On the other hand, given the general climate of budget cuts to the public sector in Canada since the mid-80's, arts funding was bound to be a casualty, with the newest programs having the least permanent employees, first in line for cuts. However, given the passage of the Multicultural and Employment Equity acts, one might have expected affirmative action programs like NIF to have enough government support to withstand budget cuts.

It was perhaps then the identity-based nature of NIF which led it to the executioner's block. New Initiatives in Film had fashioned itself on identity politics partly because the NFB itself had been established as a tool to shape Canadian national *identity*. Furthermore, Studio D, the unit which hosted the NIF program, was also premised on asserting the gender *identity* of women as a kinder, gentler sex. It was no accident then, for an Employment Equity measure undertaken within the confines of Studio D of the NFB to take on an identity-based flavor. The attempt made by Della to mainstream the NIF program by channeling it through the crafts route, also failed because the race-relationists attracted by the initial identity-based design of NIF, concentrated their NIF activities on defining their identity as a community of Women of Color and of the First Nations. (Ng 1986; Carty and Brand 1988) [13]

The demise of an identity-based program like NIF in hard economic times, seems to suggest that identity politics did not serve filmmaking hopefuls from NIF's target population very well. The language of identity politics may have been useful for the elites who wish to portray themselves as progressive while hiding behind their power politics; but it did not prove useful for movements of resistance. One strategy for a way forward (Cameron 1992) might have been supported by both the independents and the NIF Program Producer i.e. to take public monies allocated to institutions like Telefilm Canada and The Jewison

Centre, and allocate them instead to low-budget Canadian filmmakers, Canadian screens, and training facilities (this latter by changing the NFB from a Public Relations to a training center)[14].

The Philosophical Underpinnings of Multiculturalism

This case study has also highlighted problems in instituting policies that already contained deep philosophical flaws. An examination of the philosophical underpinnings of multiculturalism as a form of identity politics will help us to understand the case as a manifestation of a certain political trend which exposes universalism as a hoax and posits strategic essentialism as a temporary measure to counter the hegemony of the colonizers who hide behind universalist platitudes. If Canadian identity was described and determined by elite Anglo-origin men, then those elements that were non-elite, non-anglo, and non-male were likely left out of the definitional process on what constitutes Canadian culture. Those sitting at the decision-making table fashioned what "Canadian" and "culture" meant, through their own lenses. Here we come up against the crux of the problem faced by identity politicians. If membership in a group is based on members' personal identities, how, when diverse identities clashed, was cohesion to be achieved, and action taken? The definitional process itself[15], as we saw in the deliberations of the NIF Advisory Board, became the subject of concentration for identity politicians. The inordinate emphasis placed on *special* rights and determining to whom those special rights would be accorded, diverted attention being paid to the granting of basic liberal-democratic rights (such as fair hiring and opportunity for skills acquisition) to members of the NIF target community. As Troper and Weinfeld have noted:

> Canadians are now in the difficult process of negotiating new ways to preserve liberal-democratic values within a national community respectful of an unprecedented pluralism of origins and cultures. (1999, 7)

An inherent problem in affirmative action policies of multiculturalism is that they try to remedy a global, collective problem at an individual small-group or minority level. The multicultural challenge includes the entire human population in all its diversity; hence, no limited project claiming to include

diversity is likely to be successful in the long term. The multicultural project demands universal democratic criteria and nothing less can fundamentally address the global nature of the multicultural project. This challenge cannot sincerely be framed in terms of minority claims or as claims of victimhood and attempts to do so, as seen in this case study, seem to perpetuate the interests of those already in positions of power.

The spirit of encouraging a multitude of cultures to co-habit and learn from each other is a notion that may propel diversity efforts forward, for the effects of mass migrations from different parts of the globe are ever present (Hall 1997, 14-15).[16] Postmodern times call upon us to deal at close range with ways of being that may be alien to our understanding of how things ought to be, with people whose traditions are foreign to ours[17]. Ideally, multicultural policies should stimulate us to broaden our horizons to accommodate these different ways of being, to learn from them along the way, allowing them to transform our own ways of being (Gadamer, Dewey, Rockefeller in Taylor 1994).

Given the increasing plurality of origins of members of Canadian society, from what philosophical stance did the perceived need for special employment equity programs stem? How could policies based on targeting special groups remedy the discrimination they faced? What justification could be presented to suspend (at least temporarily) the well-accepted liberal notion of universal human rights? How could Kant's prescription that each individual be accorded dignity simply on the basis of his/her universal potential to act as a principled rational agent, be abandoned? Should everyone indeed not be treated equally, and no reference being made to individuals' or groups' particular attributes? Should rewards not be granted purely according to merit? If everyone is treated with equal dignity, what need is there to burden the notion of universal human rights with a politics of difference - a politics which asks us to acknowledge something not universally shared, to recognize the unique identity of particular groups? (Taylor 1994)

Such a need does indeed exist, retort proponents of the politics of difference.[18] Universal human rights are, unfortunately, neither extended

universally nor "blindly" to all. Many humans are born into situations offering them little opportunity for improvement. The world is socially stratified, with hegemonic groups possessing greater resources to develop their potential. This uneven socio-economic playing field leaves those in power with greater means to acquire merit (Taylor 1994). Resources are withheld from underprivileged groups through a process of discrimination which either ignores their concerns or casts them as inferior. This lack of recognition or misrecognition in the public sphere, argue politicians of difference, is what prevents discriminated groups from reaching their full potential and expressing their original, authentic identities. The only way to remedy the violation caused by the assimilation of these groups into the dominant cultural identity, it is argued, is through Equal Opportunity policies. Discriminatory practices on the part of the hegemonic culture must be countered by adopting the temporary measure of reverse discrimination in order to level the playing field- until the inferior images of the subaltern are revised and the subjugated are duly recognized. (Fanon cited in Taylor 1994; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, 173-4)

The problem with identity politics, or the politics of difference is that the notion of the authentic self is given such inordinate "philosophical weight that it becomes fixed as simple identity rather than complex relationship" (Calhoun 1994, 9). Identity politicians argue, however, that such fixed identities are required in order for subaltern groups to carve out spaces and resources for themselves in the public sphere. For example, in his comment on the popularization of "black" culture by the commercial media, Stuart Hall notes that historically, condensing the multifarious dimensions of black cultural life into the signifier "black" allowed the entry of African Americans into mainstream popular culture (Hall 1997, 471).[19] bell hooks has stated that a "touch of essentialism" is required, as Gayatri Spivak has, by the same token, promoted "strategic essentialism"(Ibid, 472) Must, as these theoreticians state, simplified identities be posited publicly in order for subaltern groups to gain power in society?

Further problems are then thrown up by this project: the choosing of a "condensed signifier" to popularize the group's plight, and the forging of a

community around the notion of an authentic group-self. It is important to note that historically, groups have often not chosen to constitute themselves as a group; rather, a group name was imposed on them through a process of colonization and conquest. With increased migration and miscegenation in the postmodern era, soil and blood as bases for collective identity have been replaced by culture. So the classic juxtaposition of nature versus nurture is no longer the main bone of contention in discussions over multiculturalism. The contested terrain involves battles of culture versus culture (Bauman 1995), with each culture generating its own social glue as strong as blood or soil (Herder cited in Taylor 1994). The various strands of identity politics have this in common: "they have collective goals that are defined in cultural terms" (Habermas in Taylor 1994, 116-7).

How then does a social glue based on culture, get formed? Philosophers of the authentic self submit that human identity is created dialogically: through a communicative process that involves public deliberation where groups identify through a common forum, which are the elements that bond them together as a community (Gutman in Taylor 1994). In the process of this deliberation, groups, in their quest for their collective identities, seek uncontentious social space: space in which group members feel comfortable enough to manifest their true selves (Bauman 1995; Taylor 1994). In order for subaltern groups to win this uncontentious social space though, they must base group membership on a naïve notion of populism.

The cornerstone of the equal opportunity policies they generate as a result, has been the assumption that no inherent conflict can arise in the process of people gaining empowerment, that the interests of all the disadvantaged of the world are progressive and reconcilable (Yuval-Davis 1993, 13). Such strategies of uncritical solidarity, however, do not rise to what Mercer calls, the "challenge of sameness", which poses the reality that the subaltern are also capable of doing oppressive things to each other[20]. There is nothing inherently progressive or reactionary about any social identity (Mercer 1994; Bauman 1995). Within any one social collectivity, people can be working at cross-purposes, defending opposite interests. Moreover, specific individuals are usually members in more

than one collectivity (Yuval-Davis 1993). The race, class, gender rhetoric which has enjoyed common currency in academic analyses of discrimination[21], however, also falls into this trap in that people are inadvertently placed in separate camps and at times play themselves off of each other (Mercer 1994; Scott 1998).

It may very well be easier for people hesitant to invest their time in complex social movements, to adopt the politics of identity (Calhoun 1994). Identity politicians tend to find it simpler to vie for more representation for their constituencies within already-existing institutions rather than confront deeper issues like poverty and uneven distribution of wealth, in the larger political arena (McAll 1990). Alternative political strategies that challenge the status quo on many levels[22] may likely bring subaltern groups greater equity in the long term; but this requires the building of social movements with clear strategies for political change. In the postmodernist age, identity politicians tend to be suspicious of grand ideologies like socialism and communism (Gitlin 1993).

Post-modernism has indeed augured the break-up of all-encompassing identities (Calhoun 1994) and the collapse of Enlightenment theories (Gitlin 1993, van den Berg 1996) As a result of this loss of a common human vision, of a common solution, the difference between constituencies is exaggerated (Calhoun 1994) and it is assumed that groups of people must remain incomprehensible to each other (Gitlin 1993). That is why identity politics is also known as the politics of difference. This politics of difference, however, masks the reason why so-called racial and ethnic minorities should come together in the first place. One reasonable basis of unity might be to fight the effects of imperialism and the resultant unequal distribution of wealth and resources. What cannot be argued is that simply because people face racism in this country, they necessarily have something in common culturally (Li 1999). What they do have in common is political in nature, that they experienced in one way or another, the ravages of colonialism. That is why they have been disparaged, because they have been the losers in the imperialist wars, and the ideology of racialization (Satzewitch 1993, 160-177) in the process, has cast them as inferior (Bannerji 1990).

Multiculturalism, however, can be understood in different ways and many varied policies parade under the rubric of multiculturalism (Fleras 2003). Therein lies the catch. Due to their being locked in the logic of identity politics, very few of these policies deal in a healthy way with assuring true equity. This can be achieved economically, with a universalization of fair workplace practices and a fair redistribution of wealth; and culturally with a broadening of our appreciation of the cultures of the world (Bannerji 1990; Harney 1988). Previous strategies at the Film Board relied on identity politics and shaped the dominant strategy amongst several that were put forward at NIF. It was Studio D and the NFB which selected the strategy that was given credence. The public relations strategy was legitimized and meritocratic strategies which went against the grain of an organizational subculture based on the parachuted Producer Director model, were discouraged. Precursors of Canadian multiculturalism (nationalism and feminism) were successfully contained within the institutional framework of the NFB. Multiculturalism, however, in the form of identity politics, did not have the necessary number of "insider" advocates within the system (partly due to the NFB's and the Canadian state's historic racism) to be able to package the demands of Women of Color and of the First Nations in such a way as to be institutionally compatible. To add to the difficulty, by the early 1990's resources were being taken away from public coffers and people were becoming defensive about their jobs and reluctant to share resources with new constituencies. This is the climate in which NIF was introduced to the Film Board.

In the NIF example, identity politics meant posing racial identity as a reason for inculcation into the film world. This approach not only masked already existing unfair practices in the Film Board, but in the end, proved to be detrimental also to the intended beneficiaries of the program. The approach promoted amateurism because it did not encourage the chosen race representatives who participated in the program to acquire skills to enter on an equal footing with other aspiring professionals. Refracting "artworld" issues of unfair hiring and funding practices in the Canadian film industry through the

prism of identity politics, this case study suggests, does not facilitate a sustained inclusion of excluded groups within mainstream institutions.

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[1] For a serious look at the structural and economic constrains placed on filmmakers by the Canadian motion picture industry and its particular dynamics, see Pendakur (1990).

[2] In addition to John Porter's classic 1965 work, *The Vertical Mosaic*, for examples of structural racism in Canadian institutions, see also: Henry, Tator, Mattis, and Rees's *The Color of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* (1995), Li's (Ed.) *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada* (3rd ed.) (1999), and Fleras and Elliott's *Unequal Relations: An Introduction to Race and Ethnic Dynamics in Canada* (4th Ed.) (2003).

[3] This unease goes back to the whole process of world colonization and imperialism. In Canada the process was reflected in the British and French colonizers' treatment towards the aboriginal nations: using them to explore the land, then taking away their land and corralling them into reservations. The Indians came to be seen as "problem peoples". The Canadian population was further racialized by Canada's immigration laws which, until the early 1960's officially discriminated against non-Europeans, deeming them to be unadaptable. But I won't go into that now. Suffice it to say that racism has deeply stained the fabric of Canadian identity.

[4] Nesting Russian dolls

[5] Theorizing around anti-racism in the 1990's is reflected in works by: hooks and Wallace (1990), Minh Ha (1989; 1991), Moraga and Anzaldua (1983), Parmar (1989), Spivak (1987), Stasiulis (1999), Tang-Nain (1991), and Wallace (1990).

[6] A demand was made for two NIF Advisory Board members to sit on Studio D's programming Committee. Unfortunately, Studio D itself folded.

[7] See Arnold Hauser's (1982) *The Sociology of Art* for a detailed exposition of the Artist as Genius thesis, and John Berger's (1980) *The Success And Failure Of Picasso* for an exposition of Art as Epiphany thesis.

[8] For more on authorship in film, see Jay Ruby (1992).

[9] Sequencing: analog footage has to be kept in sequence; digital footage can be easily manipulated after the shoot; you can put the beginning at the end and back again.

[10] With shows like Entertainment Tonight and other spinoffs, and magazine interviews

[11] Books like Sarris's (1969) *Interviews with Film Directors* (1969), Robinson's *Satyajit Ray: the Inner Eye* (1989), and Falsetto's *Personal Visions: Conversations with Contemporary Film Directors* (2000) are more abundant on general bookstore shelves than books about "all the little people in the credits" like Brouwer and Wright's *Working in Hollywood* (1990).

[12] Maintaining merit in diversity initiatives is promoted by business consultants like Trevor Wilson in *Diversity at Work: the Business Case for Equity* (1996).

[13] Ng elaborates on the role that the government played in the construction of the "immigrant women" category (1986), and Carty and Brand about its role in the construction of the term, "visible minority" (1988).

[14] The mass layoffs and retirement of skilled craftspeople in the mid 1990's would no longer make this option feasible.

[15] See Lewinberg's discussion in Troper and Weinfeld (1999) on the political role of ethnic gatekeepers in the process of defining the make-up of a group and its representation to the outside world.

[16] Stuart Hall presents the migrant as prototype of postmodern condition (1997).

[17] Zygmunt Bauman states that societies deal in phagic-inclusive or emic- exclusive ways with new entrants into society (1995).

[18] Identity politics and politics of difference are used interchangeably.

[19] One example of this is the way in which big record companies have participated in framing rap music as necessarily sexist and violent, turfing out progressive rap like Gil Scott Heron's, how definitions are often imposed on groups.

[20] See Michel Foucault (1977) on how power seeps into all social formations so that no race or class is immune to it.

[21] Even the left-wing Canadian Society for Socialist Studies has an issue labeled Race, Class and Gender, though notions of being doubly or triply oppressed are used.
[22] Like the anti-globalization movements which target the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

At the end of 1990, I had completed a decade's training and work as an opera singer while concurrently conducting graduate studies. This dual activity led me to spend a good deal of mental energy ruminating on the practice of art from the standpoint of a "visible minority" woman. In the spring of 1991 while casting about for a suitable thesis topic, I learned about the impending launch of New Initiatives in Film, a multicultural experiment to be started in a public arts organization. I jumped at the opportunity to empirically observe and reflect on how race would be dealt with in the context of the production of culture in Canada. I formally sought and gained permission from the head of Studio D to "hang out" and watch the NIF program in action[1].

My fieldwork was conducted in nine interconnected phases. I recorded extensive field notes as a participant observer:

1.) in the Spring and Summer of 1991, witnessing the 4-member contract staff of NIF making **preparations** for the NIF Summer Institute;

2.) over the ten days of the 1991 **Summer Institute** from August 22 till August 31;

3.) of the NIF program up to and including the NIF **Advisory Board meetings** of September 21-22 and October 25-27, 1991;

4.) of the NIF **Fall 1992 Institute**: October 16, 22 and 27

5) of several events involving the NIF constituency: the Independent Film and Video Alliance Conference (June, 1992), the launch of an independent film, *Manufacturing Consent* (Concordia, October 29, 1992), the Illuminations conference (McGill, October 25, 1992), the Black Women's Community Film conference (Concordia)

6) at the Labor Board trials: Aug 18, 1992, November 24, 1992, and November 26, 1992.

The next two stages of research involved conducting in-depth interviews (which were all tape-recorded unless the interviewee requested otherwise):

7) with NFB personnel from:

NIF: Della (producer: August 4, 1992), Yolande (administrator: July 1991 & 1992), and Nadine (gofer: July 1991);

Studio D: Stacey (producer: July 9, 1991), Wanda (editor: September 11, 1991), Grace (marketing: September, 1991), and Petra (producer: August 12,1992);

Studio A, Technical Services, Administration: Cary (head of Technical Services, July 1991), Paul (creator, August 10, 1992), Walter (creator, Animation Studio: October 9, 1992), Charlotte (Equity Officer: November 10, 1992), and Maurice (head of shooting stage, Technical Services: November 4,1992).

8.) with NIF 1991 Summer Institute participants: Iris (July 24, 1991),Lana (July 24, 1992), Cory (July 29, 1992), Edna (July 28, 1992).

9.) In order to complete the collection of documentation relevant to NIF, I visited and photocopied material from the offices of: the NFB employees' union (Le Syndicat General du Cinema et de la Television- Section ONF); the NFB Documentation Center; and the NIF program.

Once the important primary documents relevant to the case study were in hand, I concentrated on analyzing the data. Of course, analysis and observation in grounded research always progress concurrently (Burawoy 2003, Burgess 1982, Denzin 2000, Struass & Corbin 1990, Lofland 1971, Jensen 2002). As one observes, one also thinks on the books one has read to make sense of the observations.

I used Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version 3.0.4 to sift through the piles of field notes and interview transcriptions in order to build categories from the data.

Rather than rely on my own perceptions to build the categories, I placed considerable weight on the insights offered by those directly involved in NIF, to make sense of their own experiences with the NFB's effort at incorporating the "race" element into Canadian film. I first came up with a coding format that bunched comments on similar issues together: institutional racism, feminist politics, community-building, victimization, access to the film industry,

awareness of industry conventions, finding jobs, filmmaking skills, working in multiculturalism, needs of the institution (NFB).

These general categories, however, did not allow me to identify the specific players in the NIF drama, nor to examine the case study data in enough detail. I turned to the symbolic interactionists' contributions to demarcate the various social groups involved in the case study (Spector and Kitsuse 1977; Schneider 1985). I began by characterizing those targeted by Employment Equity and the NIF program, as claims-makers, i.e. as proponents of various forms of the strategies outlined below. In order for their claims to see the light of day, some institution or group with a certain amount of power in the social structure must respond to them. I continued by examining the NFB and Studio D to see how they could be characterized in organizational terms before the advent of Employment Equity. In this way, I attempted to determine how fertile a soil the Film Board and its various sections (studios, departments, services..) were to diversity initiatives. The Matrushka model (diagram p.139 above) was conceived as a result.

The claimsmakers, the "Women of Color and of the First Nations" targeted by NIF, were a diverse group whose interests often were not openly avowed. However, from the positions and actions taken by them during the Summer Institute, I came up with an interim classification which helped me to situate their claims. I labeled each group and attached a "mission statement" to each:

1) The Institutional Professionals (the exceptional lone wolves): `We are the role models to future generations of WCFN by being managers in the mainstream institutions and being twice as good as anyone else.'

2) The Free-Lance Consultants (the roving experts): `We interpret the WCFN communities to the mainstream in the latter's language'.

3) The Pragmatists (the bread-and-butter workers): ` We must get WCFN employed as regular workers in the film industry through apprenticeships in the crafts'.

4) The Entitlement Seekers (the politically-correct in rhetoric): `We are oppressed artists and demand that institutions give us ownership of, and entitlement to our stories now!'.
5) The Community Activists (those who feel accountable to their constituencies): ` We as grass-roots women, want to become directors so as to control how images of our communities are portrayed'.

Among the 38 Women of Color and of the First Nations implicated in the 1991 Summer Institute, I classified six as Institutional Professionals, three as Consultants, eight as Pragmatists, four as Entitlement Seekers, and three as Community Activists. There were fourteen Women of Color and of the First Nations whom I could not classify because they did not express strong enough positions during the course of the 1991 Summer Institute. Alliances were made along the following lines: Among those supporting the NIF Program Producer and staff were the Pragmatists, some Community Activists and some Institutional Professionals. Those supporting the irate senior were the Entitlement Seekers, the Consultants, some Institutional Professionals, and some Community Activists. Briefly, the Entitlement Seekers were already bitterly antagonistic towards Studio D from previous, unsuccessful efforts to vie for space within the latter and the NFB as low-budget independent filmmakers. Those with some experience in film world institutions, took the Pragmatist stance, thinking it best to make full use of any opportunity offered them for entry into the film world. The Community Activists, most with little or no experience in film, were attracted to the parachute model put forward by Studio D. At the same time, they did not feel comfortable with Studio D's claim to be the speaking for *all* women, especially given the few Women of Color and of the First Nations in their ranks. Although the Institutional Feminists tended to agree with the Pragmatists, their adherence to institutions made them unwilling to rock the boat against a sister institution such as Studio D, with prestige in the feminist community. The Consultants, for their part, depended on Studio D for financial support in the way of contracts, and hence sided with Studio D as well. This exercise of categorizing the claimsmakers permitted me to order the data.

One problem that I encountered was that during my field work, as tensions grew in the NIF Summer Institute and things came to a head, and I was labeled as "on side" with one particular party in the conflict that developed[2], i.e. the NIF staff. In the current language of American news journalists in war zones, I became "embedded"[3]! To deal with this challenge and ensure objectivity, I made special efforts to rely as much as possible on documents, and interview and meeting *transcripts,* instead of my field notes. I also took special precautions wherever possible to use evidence that was corroborated by others. For example, I used Yi's transcript of an interview with Della instead of my own, and made numerous phone calls to see if the field notes that I did use, were corroborated or refuted by other people directly involved in NIF.

A further challenge I faced was to find literature that spoke to my research findings. The case spanned the domains of art, filmmaking industry and technique, organizations, feminism, nationalism, racism, identity politics, government equity legislation, government policy, work, and social change. Needless to say that much time was spent sifting through material in search of relevant concepts and ideas.

One advantage I did enjoy was that of being able to "pass" as one of the group of Women of Color, NIF's target clientele. Another advantage I had over the layperson was an appreciation of art world conventions due to my own training in another art world.

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[1] As I prepared to gather field notes, the radio blared, "Gorbatchev ousted: coup in the Soviet Union." As my imagination flew, I wondered if this momentous change in world politics would somehow foreshadow the fate of the study I was about to undertake. Little did I suspect at the time that the spark ignited during the NIF five-year plan would flame and consume the Studio D politburo!

[2] Problems of researchers' participant observations being impeded by becoming associated with one group have been eloquently discussed by J. Macleod's methodology appendix of *Ain't No Making It* (1995).

[3] See for example: T. Engelhardt, "Is Embedded Journalism Really New?" (2003).

Appendix II: 1991 Summer Institute Curated Films (Field Notes)

Displaced View by Midi Onodera about herself trying to communicate with her grandmother. Some of the sentiments that came through were: resentment toward her mother, the trials of coming out... This film seems to be part of a trend (in Canada?) to tell personal stories through the use of a mother, or grandmother... This particular film was vivid and colorful (as compared to Richard Fung's My Mother's Place).. The former was shot in film and the latter in video.

Two Lies by Pam Tomm in black and white tells the tale of a mother who gets an eye operation to make her look Caucasian, told through the eyes of one of her two daughters. The setting is in desert country in the States and the three locations are: at home, at a swimming pool, and at a touristy reconstruction of a pueblo.

Sari Red by Pratibha Parmar.. an experimental video about the attack on three South Asian college girls in England. I've seen it before while viewing possible videos for a community pot luck. I still found it preachy the second time. Also, visually it was washed out.

Tongues Untied by Marlon Riggs... fantastic... a wonderful combination of a range of artistic forms: rap, snap, interviews with divas, poetry, dance, talking heads, drama... A film that contests the homophobia of the black community in the States...the story of a black man who internalized racism in thinking of white men as the sole objects of desire, and who then begins to discover his black gay brothers...

Quaggiq by Zacharias Kunuk, the videomaker who filmed this, apparently insists that he is not a professional director... It is about life among an Innu community. The events that are covered are life inside an igloo.. One really gets a feel for snow, ice, the cold, frozen meet, hot tea and sugar...A dramatic element enters in when a young man (not the community beauty) asks for the hand of a young girl. The latter's father refuses, but her mother takes things into her own hands and vetoes his decision. The video ends with the quaggiq, a celebration after the hunt.

Between Two Worlds by Barry Greenwald a depressing voice-of-god movie, typical of NFB documentaries, about the life of the most photographed Inuit man: Joseph Idlout. Uses old clips of him hunting, welcoming the white man, living in squalor, working on the army base...and interviews with his son and the man who most filmed him.. It tries to go through the reasons for his suicide.. The pain of trying to fit into the white man's world and in the end being chewed up by it.

Incident at Restigouche. by Alanis Obomsawin.. about the Sureté du Quebec raids on the Micmac nation's salmon fishing season... an empowering film, containing an interview with the Attorney General at the time.. A lot of humour... a couple who were to have a wedding when the raids occurred advises:" Don't get married in salmon season!"

APPENDIX III: GLOSSARY OF MOTION PICTURE TERMS[1]:

A & B CUTTING: A method of assembling original material in two separate rolls, allowing optical effects to be made by double printing (A and B Printing).

ANSWER PRINT: The first print (combining picture and sound, if a sound picture), in release form, offered by the laboratory to the producer for acceptance. It is usually studied carefully to determine whether changes are required prior to printing the balance of the order

BOOM: A long, adjustable arm used to position a microphone during production.

CEL: A thin, flexible, transparent sheet of acetate, which has been punched, onto which the animators' finished drawings are transferred-either by inking or xerography-and painted. The clear cel does not show when photographed, so when it is placed over the background, the characters appear to be within the setting.

CEL ANIMATION: An animation technique in which the figures to be animated are drawn and painted on cels, placed over a background, and photographed frame by frame. Cel animation has been the standard technique for studio animation since its invention in 1915.

CONTACT PRINT: Print made by exposing the receiving material in contact with the original. Images are the same size as the original images, but have a reversed left-to-right orientation.

CREDITS: Titles of acknowledgement for the production.

CUTTING: The selection and assembly of the various scenes or sequences of a reel of film.

EDGE NUMBERS: (Key Numbers / Footage Numbers) Sequential numbers printed along the edge of a strip of film by the manufacturer to designate identification.

EDIT: To arrange the various shots, scenes, and sequences, or the elements of the sound track, in the order desired to create the finished film.

EDIT SYNC (LEVEL SYNC) (EVEN SYNC): The relation between the picture and sound records during editing, when they are in alignment and not offset as for projection.

EDITING: The process of selecting the shots and sequences that will be included in the final film, their length, and the order in which they will appear.

EDITOR: The individual who decides what scenes and takes are to be used, how, where, in what sequence, and at what length they will appear.

FILM GAUGE: Width of the standard sizes of motion picture films

FPS: Frames Per Second, indicating the number or images exposed per second.

GAUGE: Refers to the format of the film stock, i.e., super 8, 16 mm, or 35mm.

GOFER: goes fer anything - especially coffee and donuts

INTERNEGATIVE (DUPE NEGATIVE): Color negative made from a color negative. For making release prints.

MOVIOLA: A trademarked name for a machine with a small rear-projection screen and the capacity to play back several sound tracks. Used in editing and for reviewing portions of the film during production. Also used to synchronize or interlock picture and sound track in editing. Newer devices called "flat-bed viewers" are slowly replacing the upright Moviolas."

NEGATIVE: The term "negative" is used to designate any of the following (in either black-and-white or color): (1) The raw stock specifically designed for negative images. (2) the negative image. (3) Negative raw stock that has been exposed but has not been processed. (4) Processed film bearing a negative image.

POST-PRODUCTION: The work done on a film once photography has been completed, such as editing, developing and printing, looping, etc.

PRINT FILM: Film designed to carry positive images and sound tracks for projection.

PROCESSING: Procedure during which exposed film is developed, fixed, and washed to produce either a negative or a positive image.

ROUGH CUT: Preliminary stage in film editing, in which shots, scenes, and sequences are laid out in an approximate relationship, without detailed attention to the individual cutting points.

RUSHES: The synced images of all takes are known as "Dailies" in the States and commonly referred to as "Rushes" in Europe.

STORYBOARD: A series of small consecutive drawings with accompanying caption-like descriptions of the action and sound, which are arranged comic-strip fashion and used to plan a film. The drawings are frequently tacked to corkboards so that individual drawings can be added or changed in the course of development. Invented at the Disney studio, the technique is now widely used for live action films and commercials, as well as animation."

SYNCHRONIZE: or "sync" Align sound and image precisely for editing, projection, and printing.

TAKE: When a particular scene is repeated and photographed more than once in an effort to get a perfect recording of some special action, each photographic record of the scene or of a repetition of the scene is known as a "take." For example, the seventh scene of a particular sequence might be photographed three times, and the resulting records would be called: Scene 7, Take 1; Scene 7, Take 2; and Scene 7, Take 3.

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[1] From the Eastman Kodak Glossary of Motion Picture Terms accessed via: wwwnl.kodak.com/US/en/motion/students/ handbook/glossary8.jhtml, cited December 13, 2003.