

IMAGES OF THE NATIVE CANADIAN
IN NATIONAL FILM BOARD DOCUMENTARY FILM

1944-1994

by

TANIS ELEANOR WILKIE

B.A., The University of Western Ontario, 1987

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Studies
(Sociology of Education)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 1996

© Tanis Eleanor Wilkie, 1996

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date 24 April, 1996.

ABSTRACT

For fifty-seven years the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) has been interpreting Canada to Canadians through documentary films which have simultaneously reflected and shaped the identity of this country and its peoples. This study is concerned with the NFB's documentary film portrayal of Native Canadians. Over the half century that the NFB has been making films about Canada's indigenous peoples their portrayal has undergone much change. Comparisons are made in this study between three of the earliest examples and three of the most recent examples of such films, with regard to attitude, voice, and technique. The effect these choices have upon representation is also discussed.

Changes in technical, artistic, and philosophical aspects of the documentary film genre have also had a significant effect upon representation of Native peoples over the past fifty years, and are considered as well.

Educationally, the study considers issues of manipulation of knowledge and hidden curricula. Playing an increasingly important role in education today, the media is a powerful tool both for teaching and for the inculcation of social norms. Suggestions are made as to ways in which this medium can best be used in the classroom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Chapter One Introduction	1
Chapter Two Literature Review	5
•Historical Background to Stereotyped Imagery of the Indian	5
•Documentary Film	12
•Documentary Film and Education	21
•National Film Board	25
Chapter Three Methodology	29
Chapter Four Films	33
•People of the Potlatch	33
•Peoples of the Skeena	42
•No Longer Vanishing	47
•Saltwater People	59
•The Washing of Tears	66
•The Learning Path	75
Chapter Five Analysis	86
Chapter Six Where Do We Go From Here? (Conclusions and Recommendations).	104
Endnotes	120
References	128
Appendix A	134

Dedication

I dedicate this work to
the memories
of my Mum and Dad,
with love.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank four of the best teachers I have ever had. During the course of my M.A. (Ed.) program these people have taught me - formally and informally - about the History of Native Education, Documentary Film, Anthropology of Education, and the National Film Board of Canada. More importantly however, they have taught me about the heart of Education itself; they have cared enough to help me discover what is important to me, and to encourage and inspire me to stay committed to it. At times this hasn't been easy, and yet, at every turn, these teachers have been there to discuss my ideas, and to help structure and refine them. The support they have unfailingly given has engendered within me a spirit of excitement and a desire to continue learning about my subject of interest.

Jean Barman has served as the best advisor one could hope for. Keenly interested, she has helped me to increasingly build confidence in my study, my writing, and my ideas in general. Her clarity of focus and motivational phone calls and meetings have been an invaluable help to get me organised and writing. She has intuitively known how to assist me in the process of unlocking a passion and gaining the strength to express it. I will truly miss our exchanges,

and yet the power they have helped me find I will carry with me always.

Ray Hall has also been a vital supporter of my ideas, and champion of my fledgling confidence in them. In our many discussions - in and out of class - he has prodded me to consider different aspects of the filmmaking world, and the various ramifications for humans who enter into it. A continuous inspiration about the creative process, he has refueled my belief in the importance of art and vision.

Thelma Cook has helped me appreciate the wonderful complexity of ethnographic work. Her undaunted enthusiasm for intercultural exchange and understanding has served to guide me in times of confusion and doubt. Her confidence and excitement in both myself and my project have been a great support, as has her tenacious ability to think positively, and to transmit that attitude to me.

Jan Clemson has shared information about the National Film Board and his career that has been undeniably difficult. Throughout the past year of unprecedented funding cuts, he has unceasingly made himself available to me to discuss both the wonders of the NFB and its heartbreaking demise. He has made me feel truly welcome in his world, by both sharing his thoughts and feelings and by opening a big window onto the NFB. His intense commitment to film,

education, and social responsibility have been an inspiring model. His warm, spirited support has been fantastic.

Robert Woollard has been a family doctor, councilor, and friend to me throughout the past five years. He has guided me through much emotional heavy weather surrounding the loss of my mother during this time. When I thought the storm would never end, when I wanted to hide in the fog and disappear, he extended a hand, and a calm voice so that I could again take control of my boat, and tack into the wind. He has been invaluable in helping me to find *my own* direction, and to listen to *my own* voice.

Last, but not least, my friends, family, and colleagues have also believed in me even when I haven't. They have continuously encouraged me to forge ahead when the going got tough, made me talk about my project even when I thought I had nothing to say, checked up on my deadlines, made me dinners, and generally held my hand when I needed it. I feel extremely lucky to have all these people in my life. The process of obtaining this degree has been a very interesting, if at times arduous and frustrating one indeed. I have learned a lot. More than anything I have learned to value myself and to stand up for my ideas, and thus to be a healthier member of the whole. Without the help and love of all the above people, I know I couldn't have learned this.

Many Thanks !

I INTRODUCTION

... colonization meant the destruction of their cultures, their voices, the silencing of who they were, in attempts to assimilate them into a mass. Decolonization on the screen means an assertion of identity. Of history of a particular people. Of their lives and their realities.¹

In a recent segment of a documentary series about filmmaking, entitled *Through the Lens* the theme was minority representation. Several filmmakers of various racial backgrounds (Native people, Metis, Chinese, African, Indian, and Japanese) spoke about their work and how their ancestry affected it. Issues regarding representation by the dominant culture of 'the Other' were approached by some of the speakers, who mentioned stereotyping and romanticization as being extensions of the colonial process of genocidal assimilation.

The overriding theme of the program (written and narrated by Loretta Todd) was that there is a need for cinematic representation of cultures by members of those cultures. Whether involved in exploration of overtly cultural issues in their films or not, all the filmmakers expressed a sense of relief and excitement at the prospect of questioning the ways in which their peoples have previously been depicted. A sense of freedom was in evidence in their comments, revealing that something important has

been repressed and is now bursting forth with enthusiasm and power.

The focus of my thesis is the portrayal of Native peoples in films made by the National Film Board of Canada, and how this representation has changed over time. It is my contention that a body which is federally funded and internationally reputed for its documentary prowess is an important locus for the study of the above concerns regarding the portrayal of cultures. Although countless NFB documentary films have received international acclaim, examinations of the films' portrayals of Canada's indigenous peoples have been limited. As the NFB is the largest single Canadian producer of films used in schools, the educational significance of such an examination is also paramount.

The issue of voice plays an important role in all forms of representation, of all people. The authorial voice affects the message and thus the portrayal, which goes on to influence attitudes of the viewer and shape views in society at large. Until fairly recently, National Film Board (NFB) documentary film representation of Native people in Canada has been dominated by White filmmakers.² Portrayal of Native people is the subject of this study, which also examines how this representation reflects the purpose of the films and the predominant attitudes that reside within the filmmakers' culture. Along with major shifts that have occurred in the realm of documentary filmmaking over the past fifty years,

attitudes toward Native people have also changed dramatically.

When I think back to my elementary school years, I recall social studies with the most excitement; the wonder and exhilaration of learning about different countries and cultures so diverse and unlike my own. Documentary films played a significant role in this learning, and enhanced the experience of studying other people and places in a profound way. The ability of film to draw the viewer into another world by way of visual and aural manipulation is, especially to a child, no less than magical.

Documentary films about Native Canadians, made primarily by the National Film Board played a substantial role in my elementary school education. My strong interest in both Native culture and in the medium of documentary film was inspired by this early exposure, and eventually fueled the interest for this thesis. As an educator I have used NFB films to supplement my lessons, and have always been impressed by the effect documentary film has upon people - at the very least a heightening of interest takes place, but often a complete shift in understanding results. It is unquestionably a powerful educational tool, and I am interested in both the way it works upon us, and how it can be better utilized.

The following chapter, the "literature review," is comprised of four theoretical components that have helped me understand and frame my ideas for this thesis. They are:

A. Historical Background to Stereotyped Imagery of the Native (Indian), B. Documentary Film, C. Documentary Film and Education, and D. the National Film Board of Canada. Following this literature review is the Methodology chapter. Chapter four is the heart of the thesis, the record of the films themselves, through my eyes; what I deem to be the core facets, what spoke to me. Chapter five analyses the films, both in terms of documentary film theory, and in regard to how the films compare and contrast. Lastly, in chapter six, I summarize my findings, and look at the direction documentary film representation of Native people is taking.

II LITERATURE REVIEW

While formulating this thesis topic I realized that I had various disparate areas of interest. As the topic took shape these interests began to coalesce, and eventually formed the background for this study. An investigation of both imagery and documentary film requires information from more than one body of literature. The thesis draws on four bodies of literature, each of which is introduced here: A. the roots of White attitudes, stereotypes, and imagery of the Indian, B. the various primary modes of documentary filmmaking philosophies and techniques, C. issues relating to better utilization of documentary films in educational settings, such as understanding hidden curricula and subsequent deconstruction through media education, and D. the National Film Board's commitment to documentary filmmaking, its connections to education, and its role in the representation of Native Canadians.

A. Historical Background to Stereotyped Imagery of the Indian

A phenomenon which has been widespread for thousands of years among peoples confronting and interacting with different 'others,' is the comparison of the 'Other' to oneself, or one's own people. From the need to explain differences in appearance and behaviour, attempts to

categorize, and to represent those differences have arisen. What Robert Miles calls "a dialectic between Self and Other in which the attributed characteristics of Other refract contrasting characteristics of Self, and vice versa,³" others have called counterimaging.

In the case of White Europeans encountering North American Natives, the contrast was great, and the comparative representation began immediately. Considering themselves to be morally superior to the Indian, Puritan immigrants conceived of the Indian as depraved and sinful, and therefore worthy of being exterminated in the name of eradicating evil.⁴ In a parallel way, any ambivalence regarding the superiority of White culture manifested itself in esteem for the Indian. From this counterimaging a dual representation emerged of a 'Bad' and a 'Good' Indian. The 'Bad' Indian embodied all the characteristics of savagery, from lechery, to cannibalism, to laziness, to dishonesty, to irrationalism, and to filth. The 'Good' Indian was given the attributes of friendliness, hospitality, physical beauty and strength, modesty, tenderness, independence, and dignity. In short, this self-reflexive classification was merely a means of coping with a frightening unknown, neatly judging and categorizing what was foreign and threatening.

With the growing enthusiasm for evolutionism in the nineteenth century came the trend to extrapolate theories of hierarchical order from biology to culture.⁵ Again stemming from fear, and a desire to impose a structured framework in

order to prevent a loss of control, this philosophy ranked all cultures from most to least evolved, implying also most to least civilized, intelligent, powerful, good, and even *human*. Within this philosophical construct, the European filled the uppermost position, whereas the Indian fit the bill of the "Original State of Mankind," or the proverbial bottom of the heap.

In America, in the aftermath of the Revolution, the new White nation was growing in political power, yet desperately searching for a cultural identity to express this autonomy. The romantic and nationalistic sentiment at this time craved an identity that was individualistic, free-spirited, and proud. Now that the Indian was indeed dying out, in both a physical and cultural sense, he was less of a threat to the lives and morals of White society. Therefore, the oppressed Indian, who embodied all of the desired cultural traits became an integral symbol for the nation in need of a face.

The most romantic of all romantic notions, the concept of the "Vanishing Race" - the glorification of a culture in its last dying days - took hold at this time and permeated the national consciousness in the form of paintings, poems, novels, and stage shows:

As numerous scholars have pointed out, the first truly popular literature in America was the Indian captivity narrative, a literary genre with hundreds of titles in print by 1800. Interest in and imaginings about

America's native inhabitants became a national leisure-time activity⁶.

As America embraced progress, cleared the land, and built cities, a fondness was spawned for what was being lost. Concepts of the wilderness, and values of organic unity, embodied by the simple, independent existence of the Indian in harmony with nature, became exalted and appropriated as part of the American identity. Thus, as White society became more established, representation of the image of the pre-contact Indian became increasingly popular. Safely in a dominant position, it was now possible for the White mind to transform the bloodthirsty demon into the Noble Savage. The message was clear: the Indian was dead.

In the early nineteenth century sentimental nostalgia turned, among anthropologists, into a desire to learn about and understand the "Vanishing Race" before it was truly gone. A major shift in scholarship, away from the popular conception of a monolithic Indian culture, to one which recognized a multiplicity of cultures, was pioneered by Franz Boas, founder of the Anthropology Department at Columbia University. His approach, which hinted at the beginnings of pluralism and relativism, implied a respect previously lacking for the Indian in her own right, not solely in comparison to the European. This new anthropology was based on a belief in "the wholeness and psychological validity of each culture."⁷ Although Boas made important advances by rejecting some entrenched attitudes and beliefs

- the existence of a hierarchy of races, and a different functioning of 'civilized' and 'primitive' brains, for example - his research was still rooted in the past; and Native cultures were studied as they had once lived, and not as the anthropologists found them. Thus, the 'frozen' image of the Indian as pre-contact-exotic-museum-piece was to be perpetuated for some time to come.

MAJOR STEREOTYPES

From the beginning "Indian" has been a misconception, a misnomer, a mistake; "The idea of the *Indian* or Indians in general is a White image or stereotype because it does not square with present-day conceptions of how those peoples called Indians lived and saw themselves."⁸ As has been mentioned, the rationale for this mistake not being rectified, but only becoming more entrenched and reified, is rooted in fear. Rather than make the terrifying effort to learn about something different, it was more convenient for White society to construct their own version of reality, and to further reduce this 'reality' to that of stereotype.

Indeed, as many scholars have noted,⁹ this notion of the Vanishing Race (and all the illusory ideas that accompanied it) heavily influenced the representation of the Indian over the four centuries of colonization before the medium of film was to continue the stereotyped imagery. R. J. Surtees¹⁰ delineated this stereotyping by dividing the imagery into four distinct roles that have emerged over the four hundred year history of Canada. He contends that the

ideologies behind them played a significant part in the determination of "the policies, legislation and social activities adopted by the whites with respect to Indians."¹¹ Prefaced by the Image of the Indian as *Noble Savage* (1535-1650), and *Warrior* (1650-1830), the image of Indian as *Social Nuisance* (1830-1950) became an important stereotype into the first half of the twentieth century. Jean Barman also comments (in her chapter "Disregard of Native Peoples" in The West beyond the West) on the White man's perceptions of Indians as "nuisances" and untrustworthy, inferior beings,¹² and on the ways in which federal policy regarding Indian affairs reflected such misconceptions.¹³

Several stereotyped characterizations have been recurrent in popular American culture, originating in nineteenth-century novels and continuing to appear in recent Hollywood movies.¹⁴ The 'Old Wise Chief' is a figure who is often supportive of the White agenda of the particular story. He recognizes the futility of opposition to progress, and is usually of the firm conviction that expropriation was not that bad, if viewed in terms of cosmic process and natural law. It is commonly the case that the chief passes on his 'wisdom' to a White man, coinciding with the belief that all secrets should be passed on to them, as they are superior.¹⁵ The 'Savage' is another prominent character, living in the wild, in an uncivilized, immoral, and animalistic fashion, and forever skulking on the trail of

the White man, whom he inevitably brutally murders and scalps. The 'Indian Princess' is a beautiful, young, self-sacrificing romantic woman, who is often seen to assist the White man, and sometimes fall in love with him.¹⁶ The 'Drunken Indian' personifies the degraded character who has absorbed nothing but bad influences from White society, and retained none of the redeeming features of his own. Finally, the 'Sorcerer,' or 'Witch Doctor,' is a figure who embodies all the mystery of the supernatural, non-Christian, unscientific alien consciousness of the Indian.

Clearly fictitious concoctions of vivid imaginations, these examples give a small sampling of the fascination of the White man for the Red. Unfortunately they also reveal, in the immediacy with which these figures can be brought to life in the minds of most North Americans, the power which stereotyped representation has had on the creation of an imaginary Indian. Certainly "We cannot dismiss the stereotypes as unimportant film portrayals because hundreds of millions of people the world over have acquired their beliefs about North American Indians through motion pictures."¹⁷ What is perhaps a more sobering thought is the possibility that even "modern American Indians draw heavily from these films in constructing their own views of their cultural heritage."¹⁸

B. Documentary Film

Documentary film has, from its inception, been considered an educational vehicle to convey information and truthful depiction of the world. The preservation and representation of actual events through the medium of a moving picture has for several decades held the esteemed position of having been believed in and revered as a valid and faithful means of portraying reality. As with the photograph, it is in the ability to capture and circumscribe, and then be subjected to repeated reference, that its power lies. Unlike poetry, painting or literature, the hand of the maker has been less discernible in non-fiction film, thus lending yet more credibility to its documentary nature, and claim to the 'truth.' Due to the high degree of faith audiences have had in the documentary film, as well as the degree to which it has been used specifically to educate, it is my opinion that analysis of images and messages and stereotypes must continue into this realm also. As will be explored, although the hand may not be discernible, it is most certainly there and perhaps because of its obscurity it needs a closer examination.

The fact that many differing definitions of documentary film exist is indicative not only of the myriad of types and functions of documentary, but also of the less than objective nature of the medium. From John Grierson's "creative treatment of actuality" to other documentarists'

definitions - "to reveal in terms of reality" to "a weapon, ... a tool for creating society" to "an agitational form of cinema" to a form with which to "reflect society, not to influence it" to an expression of "the reality, the actuality of man's relationship to his work, his environment, and his society"¹⁹ it is clear that to delineate the meaning of documentary is to engage in a philosophical debate.

At the centre of the debate is the nature of the 'truth' that is constituted by documentary film. In order for this to be unfolded, analysis of the relationship between film maker and subject and, ultimately, between subjectivity and objectivity is crucial. Within a medium which proposes to reflect, reveal and document, the role of the film maker would appear to be minimal, to simply set up the camera before the reality to be documented, collect the exposed film, and develop it. However, this is almost never how documentary films are made; many decisions are undertaken by the documentarist before, during, and after the 'reality' is recorded:

Our attempts to "fix" on celluloid what lies before the camera - ourselves or members of other cultures - are fragile if not altogether insincere efforts. Always issues of selection intrude (which angle, take, camera stock will best serve); the results are indeed *mediated*, the result of multiple interventions that necessarily *come between* the cinematic sign (what we see on the screen) and its referent.²⁰

As is noted by Arlene Moscovitch in *Constructing Reality*, Grierson's famous definition is perhaps the most useful, in that "it emphasizes the documentary form's concentration on the actual, its basis in real-life events, issues, and people. As well, it suggests that far from being transparent windows onto reality, documentaries - like all other forms of filmmaking - are mediated *constructions*, the result of countless decisions made by individuals struggling to produce coherent, thoughtful, and passionate (or so one hopes) *interpretations* of reality."²¹

Documentarists know that the 'truth' which results in the documentary film is a truth created both by the film maker and by the audience who watches the film. Because we are human it is impossible to be objective, bringing as we do experiences and attitudes to every situation (or 'reality'), which thus filter and affect what we encounter. The concept of a truth, one absolute reality being represented, is thus questioned by documentarists. However, as is noted by Philip Rosen, a myth has long existed among analysts of film regarding the possibility of portraying an untainted chronicle of an event, or an unfiltered version of reality:

Film historians and theorists have sometimes written as if the main pretense of documentary cinema has been the rather naive one providing unmediated access to an ongoing profilmic event, as if the main line of the documentary cinema tradition

consists in a constant attempt to convince the spectator s/he is watching the unfolding of the real, as if actuality could be reproduced through cinema.... We must keep reminding ourselves that the documentary tradition has rarely supposed that the photographic/cinematic "impression of reality" is, in itself, sufficient for knowledge.²²

Clearly, if this illusion is widespread among those trained and intimately involved in film theory, it is likely that the less-informed general populace subscribes even more wholeheartedly to this belief.

This question of interpretation becomes an important issue when we return to the role of documentary film as educator/shaper of attitudes. If indeed the spectator believes in the 'truth' of a film image or narrative, and is ignorant of the selection and mediation by the film maker, the message within the film will be powerfully communicated. Indeed, the entire interventionary process necessary to the production of that message is invisible, and for all intents and purposes, non-existent to that spectator. The authority of the real footage causes the uninitiated to accept the communication without question, and, often, the informed to suspend his/her belief. The biases, attitudes, and perspective of the documentarist are rarely considered, due to the powerful seduction of the moving picture. In the depiction of social issues, and in particular, race-related issues, awareness of these biases

is crucial to a full reading of the film, and an active dialogue between spectator and film.

A central element to the documentary film form is the need to construct and defend an argument. Bill Nichols likens this process to that of a legal argument being presented in a court. Just as in the latter situation, he says, the objective and responsibility of the filmmaker is to make a case, and, as effectively as possible, to persuade the viewer (jury) of the truth within.²³ He outlines the general format that documentary films follow in order to execute such a persuasion:

Documentaries take shape around an informing logic. The economy of this logic requires a representation, case, or argument about the historical world. The economy is basically instrumental or pragmatic: it operates in terms of problem-solving. A paradigmatic structure for documentary would involve the establishment of an issue or problem, the presentation of the background to the problem, followed by an examination of its current extent or complexity, often including more than one perspective or point of view. This would lead to a concluding section where a solution or path toward a solution is introduced.²⁴

Thus, the documentary filmmaker's goal is to present a version of a situation or event in a convincing manner that will instill interest and belief in the viewer. He or she does this by collecting a variety of visual and aural

evidence, which is then intricately edited into a logical whole.

Nichols delineates the primary modes of documentary film that have been made since the outset of the genre. In a brief examination of these different styles, it is possible to get a sense both of the ways in which society has influenced what is acceptable within this form, and how this has helped shaped its evolution.²⁵

The **expository** mode of documentary film is the earliest form, developed in the 1920's, with such well-known films as Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1920) and John Grierson's *Drifters* (1929) being classic examples. Emerging as a reaction to the entertainment-oriented fiction films, the expository form sought instead to speak directly about the real world, suggesting that the stories to be told therein were as interesting if not more so than fictional ones.

The hallmarks of this form are a "voice-of-God" commentary directed toward the viewer, and images carefully edited to illustrate the points being made. Being the front-runner in terms of introducing this form to the world, and being developed at a time when the 'scientific method' was popularizing the notion of neutrality, the expository documentary is understandably the one mode which *forces* the argument:

The expository mode emphasizes the impression of objectivity, and of well-substantiated judgment. This mode supports the impulse toward generalization handsomely since the voice-over commentary can readily extrapolate from the particular instances offered on the image track.²⁶

Thus, this form claims to present 'the truth' whatever the subject, with the utmost authority, and blind faith in the ability to assume a position of detachment. On the premise that somehow the evidence presented in the images is 'proof' of what is being said, the expository documentary asks the viewer to believe - without question.

The **observational** documentary is a form sometimes called cinema verite or direct cinema, and was developed in the 1960's with the advent of synchronous sound and portable cameras. Whereas in earlier films it was not possible for participants to speak as they were being filmed, this style allows for this, and made use of it. In direct contrast to the expository mode, this style ostensibly gives up 'control' of the events which occur in front of the camera, with the ultimate aim of the filmmaker being so unobtrusive as to merely 'observe' a situation, and thus not intervene at all.

Again attempting to reveal 'the truth' about a situation, the observational documentary presumes to negate its subjectivity by way of a seemingly transparent,

"unmediated and unfettered access to the world."²⁷ Although any ingredients extraneous to the observed scene are avoided in the purest examples of this mode, selection in regard to shooting and editing indeed exist, calling into question the 'reality' of the result.

Further utilizing the synchronous sound technology, filmmakers in the 1950's began experimenting with the idea of removing the "veil of illusory absence"²⁸ by overtly involving themselves, and hence creating the *interactive* mode of documentary film. Also in contrast to the expository mode, the authority of the text in this style is located primarily with the participants, and not the filmmaker. There is no voice-of-God, but, instead, voices of people who tell their own stories, or are interviewed by a seen or unseen interlocutor:

Various forms of monologue and dialogue (real or apparent) predominate. The mode introduces a sense of partialness, of *situated* presence and *local* knowledge that derives from the actual encounter of filmmaker and other.²⁹

Thus, objectivity has been exchanged for subjectivity in interactive documentary, which is embraced for its ability to attain *various* truths through interpretation.

The most recent mode of documentary film is the **reflexive** mode. In this style the focus is upon the *process* of representation, the way in which the argument is structured, and the film constructed. It consciously draws attention to the mechanics of the medium, manipulating the text to interrupt and expose it to the viewer. As the maker of the observational film seeks invisibility, the reflexive artist openly stamps his/her personality into the fabric of the text, by way of including any number of 'unrealistic' devices. Not only questioning the notion of authority, reflexive documentary questions epistemology and the notion of truth itself.

The reflexive mode emphasizes epistemological doubt. It stresses the deformative intervention of the cinematic apparatus in the process of representation. Knowledge is not only localized but itself subject to question.³⁰

Espousing a relativist view of truth, this mode denies the validity of objective, 'truthful' representation, and proclaims instead that "the representation of reality has to be countered by an interrogation of the reality of representation."³¹

C. Documentary Film and Education

As has been mentioned, documentary film has from its inception been appreciated for its educational properties. Whether in a formal scholastic setting or not, the ease with which this medium communicates knowledge is incontrovertible. Indeed, the potential to transport another world into a classroom, and the multitude of ways a creative teacher can utilise a documentary film to invoke discussion and generally provoke thought, make it an invaluable tool.

However, as with all tools, documentary film can be and often is manipulated. Questions regarding what knowledge should be shared, and how this knowledge is negotiated, are particularly significant in the realm of education. Philosophers as well as sociologists of education have examined what is learned explicitly and implicitly in schools, and how these curricula are connected to larger social agenda.

Much attention has been paid in the past two decades to the concept of the 'hidden curriculum.' Michael Apple has defined this as "the tacit teaching to students of norms, values, and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools, day in and day out for a number of years"³². Sometimes termed the 'implicit curriculum', it is

considered to encompass knowledge which is taught (intentionally or unintentionally) with the purpose of socializing students. The hidden curriculum is perceived by many theorists to reflect the omnipresent social concern with economy and efficiency. E.W. Eisner relates aspects of the school environment, from architecture and furniture to organizational structure, pedagogical rules, and reward systems to institutional values of order, cleanliness, and productivity.³³ Apple states that schools act "as powerful agents in the economic and cultural reproduction of class relations," echoing Bourdieu's theories regarding the role of education in the reproduction of cultural capital, and thus social inequality. Analysis of the interplay of 'selective,' 'legitimate' knowledge, and the social relations of classroom life, Apple says, reveals the inextricable ties our schools have to an external social order based in inequality.

Apple argues that analysis of the 'curricular' knowledge and its presentation are necessary if we are to discover "why and how particular aspects of the collective culture are presented in school as objective, factual knowledge"³⁴ ; or how the 'hidden curriculum' inculcates certain views about society.

Media plays an increasingly significant role in education today, and yet has been submitted to a paucity of

research by educational sociologists in the area of ideological representation, aspects of curriculum, and learning materials.³⁵ Elizabeth Ellsworth is in the forefront of this work, and has written on documentary film specifically. Noting that documentary film has always been more than mere reportage of facts, she says that its role has been "to solicit allegiance from the viewer in support of an interpretation about the social significance of an event, issue, or situation existing in the world outside of the film itself."³⁶

In keeping with Nichols' analysis of the 'expository' documentary, focused upon persuasion of an argument, Ellsworth attacks this motive of the medium for its manipulative goal of shaping and constructing ideas rather than educating about them:

... educational documentaries offer students a viewing experience that attempts to make pleasurable a particular social position: that of subject-of-paternalism. They do this by orchestrating aesthetics and rhetorics of protection, progress, certainty, and goodness, and then link these to racist, sexist, monoculturalist, authoritarian, and other dominant interests in ways that make such interests appear to be natural and for the common good.³⁷

She suggests that such naturalization of the dominant ideologies present in certain documentary films encourages the viewer to extrapolate his/her agreement/allegiance to larger social norms as well. This, she argues, is wrong, because, instead of encouraging questions in the minds of viewers, these films attempt to silence inquiry, in the name of protection and reproduction of a mythical consensus.³⁸

So, in the words of Jane Martin,³⁹ in her article "What do we do with a hidden curriculum when we find one?" Martin suggests that the hidden curriculum may be examined and revealed to its recipients. This option, favoured by Martin, is termed "raising to consciousness the hidden curriculum".⁴⁰

Martin describes the purpose of this 'consciousness raising' to be both preventive and transformative. Acquisition of hidden learning states is to be avoided, while the development of new, relevant learning states by students and teachers together is to be the focus. Through a process of analytic deconstruction of the "beliefs, attitudes, values, or patterns of behaviour"⁴¹ which constitute how and why the status quo is maintained, the 'hidden' knowledge will provide fodder for "critical thinking, analytical discourse, and learning through collective practice."⁴²

The key to uncovering the role of ideology in education, Ellsworth says, is to examine the materials and how they are used.⁴³ In order to deconstruct the structure, it is imperative to understand the form, and how it was constructed. Therefore, in terms of documentary film, media education is crucial if we are to learn how films are made, produced, funded, and used, and if we are to begin to pose the question "Whose knowledge, for whose benefit."⁴⁴

D. National Film Board

In a recent interview with the Education Liaison Officer of the National Film Board, Pacific Region, Jan Clemson, we spoke of the role of education in the NFB, media education, current changes the NFB is undergoing, and Native representation and filmmaking in the NFB. Clemson has been with the Board for thirty-five years, and, throughout the course of my research, has been an invaluable person.

As liaison between educational facilities and the NFB, Clemson's position has involved the promotion and development of curricular use of films, from elementary to post-secondary levels. Responding to teachers' enquiries and needs, he has helped develop their ideas for films as well as guides to accompany the films. This work has been a central facet of the National Film Board mandate:

Education has always been, and still is, our single most important audience for our materials. That is without any doubt. ... Whether that's provided through television or classroom film or videos and so forth.⁴⁵

Thus the production and distribution arms of the institution have been intimately linked, with an active dialogue existing between them.

Media education has also played an important role in the Board's educational activities. During the 1960's and 1970's, when film began to be considered an important curricular addition, much funding was available for workshops on how to best implement this new resource. Clemson regularly gives presentations to educators on how to use film in the classroom, the nature of film, and the filmmaking process. Recently a guide - *Constructing Reality; Exploring Media Issues in Documentary* - was produced by the NFB addressing the critical analysis of documentary film.

However, all of these educational programs are now either dead or dying, says Clemson. The link, which has for over fifty years been integral to the Board and all it has represented, is now being severed:

The educational forum program has been discontinued. The educational initiatives which we have been developing over the years are, as far as

we can tell, dead, and there's no interest in senior management shown at this particular time, as of November, 1995, to even address these issues as important, and field positions across the country are being abolished, and they will be concentrating on sales only. There is no recognition of the important link between the film board and its educational audience. My suspicion in two or three years it'll find out the dreadful error and it'll run around trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together again, and there'll be nobody there. I think that's a tragedy because what we've had now ... for fifty years now we've had important links to educators.⁴⁶

With the loss of all video lending libraries (August 1995) but three across Canada, as well as the demise of the Regional Educational Liaison Officers, it appears to be clear that the educational mandate of the NFB has indeed changed radically.

In terms of Native representation and involvement in filmmaking at the NFB, Clemson has witnessed dramatic changes in the course of his career. From the early days of patronizing White depictions of Indians as "anthropological curiosities" to the empowering treatises of a growing cultural renaissance and autonomy which the more recent films emphasize, Clemson feels much change has occurred. Again, a lack of funding is hindering the development of Studio 1, the Native Studio within the NFB, as well as the repackaging of some of the archival films, which Clemson

considers to be of educational value, revealing as they do how far the NFB has come.

Sadly, the interview cast a shadow upon the institution which I and so many people around the world have come to respect and depend upon for vision and information.

Seemingly unable to survive the harsh economic environment of its nation, the NFB is being dismembered to an alarming extent. Having had for over half a century "considerable freedom to challenge the status quo ... [and be] in the fortunate position of being able to foster creativity, Canadian content, and social values over making a profit,"⁴⁷ the NFB is no longer being given such privileges. There is no doubt that documentary film in this country is going to suffer this loss in great measure.

The four areas of my research combine to provide a base for the study and analysis of the subject - the documentary films themselves. Disparate, yet related under the topic of my thesis, literature on Native imagery, documentary film, media education, and the NFB has provided the theoretical underpinnings for my investigation.

III METHODOLOGY

In the initial stages of designing this study, I decided that I wanted to look at the earliest films made by the NFB addressing the subject of Native culture, as these were likely the ones which had impressed me as a child, and then compare them with recent films. Looking through the NFB catalogue, recording all the titles of films which were pertinent, I then took note of the titles which attracted my attention because of the implicit statement about Native culture being made within the title. My reason for doing this was rooted in the fact that potential viewers might also be so attracted to titles initially, when no synopsis was available. I then ordered these old films from the NFB archives in Montreal, and viewed them, recording my reaction on first and second viewings.

I chose the early films - from the few produced on this subject within the first two decades of the NFB - actually used in this study on the basis of the following criteria. They had to address Native culture in a broad sense, as opposed to a particularized focus such as hunting, carving, or moccasin-making, for example. I wanted to look at how these peoples had been seen and represented in terms of their thought, their belief, their customs, their art - their culture - and how it was shown to interface with that of the dominant society. I also wanted to choose films that displayed some variety in terms of artistic technique,

narrative structure, and intent. Out of the half dozen from this period that I initially viewed, three struck me as meeting all the above criteria.

As for the more recent films, - from the past decade - I chose primarily on the basis of content again. I realized that documentary films made today by the NFB, while speaking to the larger issues of subjugation of Native peoples within a White system and to the growing movement toward a Native autonomy, do this through addressing particular issues of a political or social nature. I therefore wanted to examine a variety of key issues - such as voice, attitude toward, and representation of Native culture - as well as different artistic techniques and directorial styles.

My interest all along has been to explore how the NFB vision of Native peoples has changed from the early days to the present. At one point I thought I would examine a selection of films from each decade from the 1940's to the 1990's, and document the ways in which the depiction changed historically. I think this would be a fascinating study, but decided that it was simply too large an undertaking for my purposes at this time. Instead I opted to consider the early and most recent periods as 'bookends' of the NFB, settling upon a more comparative approach.

After all the films were selected, I watched them repeatedly. Both without stopping the films (for continuity) and stopping them approximately every thirty seconds, I watched the films and took extensive notes on anything that

seemed important or interesting for any reason. I viewed each film at least three times specifically focusing upon 1)Language, 2)Visuals, and 3)Miscellaneous ideas, and then repeatedly throughout my research to keep them fresh in my mind.

After the viewing/notetaking I wrote up my impressions, emphasizing the most salient and memorable points that each of the films had communicated to me. At this point, no comparison or contrast between the films was attempted, as the purpose was purely to record the impact each of the films had made upon me.

As I watched the films several questions were in my mind. Although I did not directly apply each of these to the films, answering them one by one as I watched, I kept them present as an underlying guide, bringing them into more prominence as I wrote up my impressions. (The questions appear in Appendix A.)

After viewing the films and recording the data, the next step was to thematically analyse the data taken from the films, looking for connections; where did the films contrast, where did they share commonality? Using the theoretical framework gleaned from the literature review of documentary theory, I examined how technical aspects and intentions compared, as well as what effects the different artistic decisions had upon me, seen in comparison with contrasting decisions.

I then visited the National Film Board office in Vancouver to gain information regarding the biographical details of the directors of each of the studied films. In the same vein, I also interviewed the Educational Liaison Director (Jan Clemson) to gain information about how documentary films are used educationally in a broad sense, and how the particular films in this study have been used in B.C. schools. I wanted his impressions of the degree to which documentary films are being critically analysed and discussed by teachers and students, and how this has changed over time.

IV FILMS

The following discussion of the six documentary films of my study form the core of this thesis. It is a record of my impressions of what was striking and what I deemed to be significant about each film. The films are as follows:

People of the Potlatch, Peoples of the Skeena, No Longer Vanishing, Saltwater People, The Washing of Tears, and The Learning Path.

**People of the Potlatch
(1944, 21 minutes)**

This film is one of the earliest National Film Board films to address Native life and culture. Concerned with peoples of the British Columbia coast, it offers picturesque snapshots of various aspects of the Indians' lifestyle. Touching on fishing and logging practices, clamming, religion, trading, crafts, schooling, and sports day celebrations, *People of the Potlatch* serves to introduce the viewer to an idyllic existence of a happy people. Emphasis is placed on both the richness of the land and resources to which these people have access, and upon the successful assimilation that had occurred within their mindset and ways of life. The film attempts a portrait of a comfortable transition from traditional practices to White customs.

Visually, *People of the Potlatch* is quite remarkable. Throughout, the shots are rich and varied. In several instances, the cinematography is unusually sensitive to the

subjects portrayed, showing an intimate and artistic representation of Native people that is rare for this period. When presented with footage that bespeaks a closer-than-average rapport and relationship between the camera-person and participants, it is difficult not to make the assumption that respect for this culture on the part of filmmakers has played a role. Certainly the effect of such beautiful filming is that the respect is transferred, and the viewer sees a much more interesting picture of these peoples than is often the case.

In the sequence wherein salmon is being prepared for preserving, the above respect is well evidenced. As the woman cleans and cuts open the salmon, and then hangs it on a drying rack, we are shown the fish in close-up in each instance. The wet flesh of the fishes as they hang in a line, glinting and deep pink, is both sensual and holy. One can almost feel and smell the wet flesh of the salmon as the woman splays each one out to dry. Against the sun, the rich colour is illuminated like stained glass windows, something very special indeed, held up to the camera for show. This sense of the glory and preciousness, and the ritualistic treatment of the object is further shown by the canning sequence. The hands of the woman cutting the fish into pieces so that it will fit into the gleaming silver cans are photographed in close-up. As she packs the flesh into each one lovingly with her thumbs pushing down, so as to get as much as possible inside, and then seals the cans, and puts

them into the canner, we are very close as viewers. As the sequence closes, a child is shown in close-up also, watching and learning from the woman. It is as if the camera has been doing the same thing.

A similar reverence for razor clams is shown in a sequence shot on a long sandy beach in the Queen Charlotte Islands. After an establishing shot of the beach and people digging in the sand, the camera zooms in on two clams on top of the sand, and again 'watches' them as they move, undulating, like a pair of dancers. Strangely their movement is in time with the rhythm of the traditional drumming and singing in the background. The overall effect of this unusually artistic close-up is the elevation of these food items being harvested to the status of precious beings, almost being worshipped before they are captured.

The section of the film addressing the traditional arts and crafts is again sensitive in its portrayal. In shots of a woman making a birch bark basket, two girls braiding cedar bark, another woman beading moccasins, another weaving a cedar basket, and a man making silver jewelry and an argyllite carving, we are shown intimate close-ups of their hands, their work, and their faces. Again children are watching, and there is a sense of the camera, and thus the viewer being in close connection to the subjects and the intricacies of their work.

The other sequence which overtly pays visual tribute to its subject is that of a chief dancing. Dressed in full

regalia, he is shot primarily from below, giving him a very large and eminent presence. The shot is held on the Chief for some time, with much of the focus upon his face as he smiles and sings.

Linguistically, *People of the Potlatch* is less innovative and much more conformist than it is visually. Generally the tone of the voice-over is authoritative, condescending, and propagandistic. The words are largely said in the past tense, indicating a sense of the old Indian ways being outdated and gone, in favour of those of the 'new, improved Indian,' who has become assimilated to White man's world, and is adjusting beautifully.

As the film begins the first shot with people in it is of fishers, using big wooden basket-like traps. We are told:

In former days the Indians were allowed to trap the salmon as they rushed up the river to spawn. Basket traps like these are no longer permitted lest the salmon become too scarce, and the Indians lose one of the chief sources of food.

Aside from a complete lack of discussion of the traditional fishing methods, how they were developed and made, this passage is interesting for other omissions as well. Making no mention of the White man's involvement in the process of the decreasing salmon population, wherein high-tech methods of fishing at the mouths of rivers were used to catch great numbers of fish, the blame for such mismanagement is placed

with the Indians. Historical rights of the Indians, and their ways of surviving and interacting with nature, for thousands of years, without interrupting the natural balance or depleting the resources are also conspicuously absent.

Directly following the fishing passage a similar dismissal through abnegation is made in regard to the potlatch:

An old custom of holding a winter feast called a potlatch was a distinctive feature of Northwest Indian culture. The potlatch was more than a feast, it was a great gathering when sons and daughters were married off, new chiefs were chosen, and every sort of economic, social, and political business was carried off.

Interestingly, no mention is made regarding the fact that this practice has also been outlawed by the White man; instead its passing is presented as something that simply happened, of the Indians' own accord. While this is being spoken, we see a shot of a woman hauling in an old-style fish trap, which has also been outlawed. The two 'customs of the past' are thus linked by the film-makers. The message is, apparently, that neither traditional fishing nor the potlatch were good for the Indians, so the White man has 'helped' them by taking them away from them, thus civilizing and 'saving' them. By completely neglecting the real economic and political issues involved in the obliteration

of such integral ways of these peoples, the narration of *People of the Potlatch* vastly misrepresents the situation⁴⁸ .

As well as discounting the disappearance of tradition, the narrative of *People of the Potlatch* tells us that the old ways, although quaint, were inferior to the modern means:

The fish are hung in the sun to dry before they go into the smokehouse for preservation and flavouring. In the past many an Indian family suffered from hunger during the long cold months. But modern canning methods now assure them of fish when winter comes.

and

For good fishing the fisherman must have good nets, and many kinds of nets. In former days, the coast Indians made their nets from nettle, the inland fishermen used hemp. Today the traders' stock, not the resources of the country determines the material.

In both cases, old practices are only briefly mentioned, and then degraded in comparison to White techniques. By widely generalizing, and superficially touching on the huge changes instigated by contact with Whites, these passages imply instead that the new nets and canning equipment have dramatically improved the Indians' lives. Nothing is said, however, about the fact that by needing such things they

have also necessarily become a part of the monetary system of the dominant society.

Further in this vein, old practices are more critically derided still, and in areas more culturally and spiritually profound, such as ways of learning and healing:

The Indian children go to the Canadian government schools. Many of them are somewhat nomadic, traveling with their families from cannery to forest camp, fishing and trapping with the seasons. For the months when families remain in the village, the children get the benefit of learning to work and to play together.

and

Contact with the White man has given the Indians many of the White man's ways. Children enjoy London Bridge in the land of the potlatch as well as they do on city streets.

As these comments are made, children are pictured doing military-like exercises in lines, and then playing London Bridge outside a school. The contrast between western schooling and what had been the traditional teachings from parents and grandparents about the natural world and how to live in harmony with it in these sequences is mind-boggling. To suggest that they had no knowledge of 'working and playing together' before being inculcated with conformist drills and foreign games comes across as ethnocentric and belittling. Even a chief is treated with this patronizing attitude:

In former days, the Indian worshipped his gods through his songs and dances. Now, he dances only to recall the old times, when by singing and dancing he could drive away sickness and famine, and bring food, health, and prosperity to the people. The ceremonial chief's dance has great dignity. Bear claws ornament the dancer's kilt, and his rattles add to the accompaniment of the drummer. Dancing in the shadow of Rochet de Bull, the beautiful old mountain of the rolling rocks, this tired old chief recalls the days when feasting and medicine making filled an important place in Indian life.

Suggesting that the spirituality of these people is dead, with words such as 'former,' 'recall,' 'shadow,' 'tired,' and 'old,' as well as the past tense in which this description is spoken, reveals an interesting contradiction; as is evidenced by this man's face and gestures, his power and the power of the centuries-old faith which moves him is very much alive and well.

Throughout the narrative the message exists that Indians are assimilating to White life amicably and smoothly. As the above examples variously illustrate, the dominant culture is clearly being portrayed as superior to that of the Indian, and thus the extinguishing of indigenous ways is presented as being for the good of all. Although 'adjustment' and 'transition' (from the life of the savage to that of civilized being) is stressed, a more subtle, yet equally, if not more important aspect of the statement is

that, however much the Indian is improved by colonization, she/he will always remain an Indian. In one passage about the fish canneries this is made clear in the final sentence:

For the summer months, these Indians of the upper Skeena River abandon their home villages and go down to live near the sea coast in cabins which are furnished for them by the big canneries. With the Indians' rapid adjustment to new conditions, many of the old traditions have disappeared. Modern industry and commerce have accelerated Native life. The west coast Indian, however, is still primarily a hunter and fisherman.

Loaded with hidden meaning, this passage both intimates that Whites are helping to bring the Indians into the twentieth century, while simultaneously ensuring the audience that the Indian will never be included in the power structure in any significant way. There is also an appeal to assuage any guilt-ridden viewers that, ultimately, Whites haven't really destroyed the lifestyles of these peoples, for they are still doing what they've always done. The final few sentences of *People of the Potlatch* encapsulate this stereotype of the carefree primitive living unfettered of responsibility in paradise:

The Indian takes life as he finds it.
His forests provide unequaled timber.
His streams are full of fish. When the
fish run, he fishes. When the sandy
beaches are pitted with razor-back
clams, he digs for them. His life gives

him pleasure for the art of living in this beautiful, mist-laden land.

Having no need for intelligence or agency, this tells us, the Indian passively accepts what comes, and adapts.

Peoples of the Skeena
(1949, 15 minutes)

This film is similar to *The People of the Potlatch* in tone, yet has none of the tension inherent in the latter film. Lacking in visual interest and consequent sense of intimacy, this portrayal has a very distant, voyeuristic quality to it. As if we are viewing a specimen under glass, or reading about a far-away culture, there is little vitality emanating from it, and the film thus has a rather nebulous impact.

We are shown shots of the land - mountains and river - interspersed with pans of the townscape. People figure intermittently in short sequences - children playing, a wedding scene, various crafts people working, loggers cutting trees, fishers catching fish, rodeo participants - but somehow no connection is made with them; it is as though one is passing though a town without stopping, or observing mannequins in a museum exhibit. This feeling is heightened by a tendency on the part of the narrator to make broad, sweeping statements about Native traditions and Native co-existence with Whites; neither the visual nor the linguistic components of *Peoples of the Skeena* generate a very

interesting picture. A feeling of dutiful reportage by the filmmakers, and dutiful participation on the part of the subjects is pervasive.

Nearly seventy percent of the shots in this film do not contain people. Roughly fifty percent of the footage is solely of the landscape, with lengthy shots of the river, mountains, valley, and the village, and it is indeed beautiful footage; it would be difficult to portray such spectacular scenery in a bad light. One almost expects the narrator to be describing places of interest, highlighting natural and historical sights for a potential tourist viewing a travelogue film. However, as the title indicates that the subject of the film is to in fact be the *Peoples of the Skeena*, the lack of representation is a curious statement.

On analysing the shots that do contain people, the impression of distance from the subject becomes yet more pronounced. Throughout the film, the shots of people are consistently uninteresting, both technically and content-wise. There is no sense of connection whatsoever with almost all of the participants of the film - it is as if the camera person were a voyeur, catching random shots quickly and unthinkingly, or that the people are merely enacting the director's vision of their life. Very little eye contact is made in *Peoples of the Skeena*, almost no close-ups occur, and a constant distance is maintained throughout, of a medium to long-shot range of shooting.

From a girl walking past the camera, to a boy walking down a hill to the river with pails on his shoulders, to a slow-motion sequence of children playing in the school yard, there is a strange sense of vacancy and removedness. Even in the next 'people shot' of a wedding party walking through a snowy street into a church, one does not feel either any closeness to these people, or respect for the occasion. As though they are actors in a play-wedding, the participants in the procession pass by the camera which shoots them from the side. Although this is a very special event, there is no sense of solemnity, or power in its presentation.

Two crafts people are shown in the act of their work - one, a woman basket-maker, and then a man making snowshoes. These are the only shots in *Peoples of the Skeena* that reveal any intimacy between the camera and the subject. Both their faces and their hands are shown in close up, which causes the viewer to really see them, and take notice of their artwork.

In the remainder of the film, men are shown in logging, fishing, and rodeo pursuits. Again consistently shot in medium-long range, there is very little that is engaging. The two close-ups in this section of the film are of a man using a machine in the preparation of logs, and of nets full of oolichan being pulled into a boat. In both cases, it is clearly the *action* and not the person that is being focused upon.

Linguistically, *Peoples of the Skeena* is very paternalistic. The authoritative voice of the narrator is in keeping with the camera in its distant, dismissive generalities. The consequent tone is one of seeing and judging from a safe distance, not having gotten one's hands dirty, but not having come to know very much either.

After a brief introduction regarding the River Skeena, the narrator tells us that life in this paradisaal region is not as simple as it may seem:

The Indian must understand the White
man's world and live in it.

Let alone it's being an imperative sentence, commanding the Indian to assimilate to the dominant culture, there is also an element of condescension, as though the speaker thinks this prospect is possibly too challenging. This effect is achieved subtly, by way of making a very general statement that is not necessary to make; the sentence makes clear that the power lies with the Whites and always will, whether the Indian struggles to "understand" or not.

Further passages gloatingly comment on how well the assimilative 'understanding' process is going. Bespeaking both amazement as well as relief that these people are no longer complete savages, the narrator notes that Indian children "dress and talk and play like any other Canadian children." Accompanying the wedding sequence, we learn that Native traditions are all but dead and gone: "In the towns,

you'll see Indian ritual replaced by White customs. White costumes, white rice and all." The tone is celebratory, as though the goal is deftly being achieved, and the camera has just happened to record it. Whether or not this wedding was indeed actual, or if the party was composed of actors, is impossible to know. It most certainly was a fact that assimilation had taken hold to a large extent by the time this film was made. What is crucial to this study, however, is the fact that White customs are represented and the Indian ritual is omitted. The impact of the above statement is enormous in the absence of adequate coverage of traditional life; one has the distinct impression that these people are turning White before our eyes.

As if to assuage guilt, certain other passages speak of the old ways of the Indian in a romantic fashion:

Out from the towns are the Indian lands.
Here they hunt the forests, and cut
their timber, and fish their rivers.
Some Indians have left the reserve and
taken to ranching. But most of them
still make their living from the
unbroken land; its animals and its
trees, or from the swift rivers and the
coastal waters, the salmon, the trout,
and the oolichan.

and

On the reservations you'll see the
ancient arts are *still* alive. The basket
makers *still* weave their cedar strips in
a great range of old designs. Baskets to
hold the berry crop next summer. And the
hunters and trappers *still* make their
own snowshoes with the skills they

learned as boys. Shaping the wooden frame, and threading the rawhide in the ancient way. They couldn't walk a mile in the forest in winter without them. (my emphasis on 'still')

Painted into a picture of primitive ignorant bliss, making tools to reap the bounties that nature has to offer, the unassimilated Indian is thus depicted as the noble savage, idealized and exoticized. Concomitantly in awe and condescension, the voice cannot help but use 'still' four times. Unbelieving that these traditions continue to exist, the narrator devalues the richness and complexity of these arts, degrading them to the level of crafts which service the "ancient" ways of surviving. This 'museumizing' of Native traditions indeed grants them some tribute, yet ultimately belittles them as being relics of a less civilized people, quaintly 'still' used to serve their quaint ways.

**No Longer Vanishing
(1955, 28 minutes)**

No Longer Vanishing, as the title suggests, is a film which shows the viewer that the Indian has been saved from extinction and is alive and well. Produced for the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, it is highly orchestrated and blatantly propagandistic. Structured as a series of vignettes, we are shown three 'successful,' or 'good,' Indians, followed by six short snapshots of occupations in which Indians are

'making good.' *No Longer Vanishing* is much more like a scripted feature film than the other documentaries in this study. Achieved through more than editing, this effect is the result of both visual and linguistic prescription. Presented as a document of the degree to which the government was succeeding in assimilating Native peoples, it is an interesting example of what was considered acceptable representation of the facts. Viewed by today's standards as a docudrama⁴⁹, the film sheds valuable light on both the social policy of the Indian Affairs Department and Canadian sensibility regarding Indians in the 1950's. Thus, much more so than in the other early films, *No Longer Vanishing* reveals the mindset of the dominant culture and its relationship to the Indians, and has very little to do with the Indians themselves.

Before the 'stories' unfold, *No Longer Vanishing* opens very dramatically. Even as the movie title appears, a strong message is executed by a graphic of an Indian's head, in a feather headdress which slowly changes to a hard-hat. The assimilative agenda is unquestionably set. Following this, a vast open plain, shot from above, fills the screen. Just as the viewer is lulled into the beauty of this place, the shot changes to a wire fence in close up. The voice-over tells us it is "An ordinary fence, designed to protect, but over the years a symbol of division and isolation. For this is no

ordinary land, but an Indian reserve." From the fence, the camera magically takes us back in time, into what looks remarkably like an Edward Curtis photograph entitled *The Vanishing Race* (from 1904, of the Navajo tribe), of several buckskin-clad, braided Indians on horseback. The slow pan across the plains shows them riding first toward the camera, then into a camp (replete with teepees and a peace-pipe circle), which we have seen in a hundred American Western movies.

The stereotypes in these brief sequences are extremely interesting in their overtones, and richness. Trading the 'hat' of the chief for that of the assimilated labourer, the cartoon tells us that the generic Indian culture is gone, and has been replaced with the role of 'builder' of a niche which will be acceptable within the dominant culture. Almost film-noir-like in its obliqueness and foreshadowing qualities, the shot of the fence alludes to borders and containment, both in terms of the land which has been colonized and the divisions between 'them' and 'us.' It is a short shot, but loaded with symbolism, and thus very powerful in its import. Although the images of the nomadic camp appear very cliched today, they were perhaps representative of 1950's popular conceptions of Indian life. Regardless of the facts that indigenous people in Canada had become westernized to a large degree by that time, and that very few still lived in teepees, this romanticized notion persisted, and still persists.

The next sequence is visually less conspicuous in its intent, yet linguistically flagrant. The short scene is comprised of a White man and three Indians in western dress walking through a field with a horse-drawn plow. After the establishing shot wherein we see them all, the camera closes in on the White man's face, is held there, then moves to pan across those of the Indians, finally presenting a close-up of the plow cutting through the rough ground. Just before the sequence ends, the camera pulls back to reveal one of the Indians throwing a stone over the group and into the field.

Although a certain amount of symbolism exists in the idea of the White man teaching the Red how to become domesticated, to stay in one place, to dominate the land and relinquish their ancient ways of living and being, the words that are said while this scene is enacted are even more potent:

The reserves were meant to shelter the Indian while he learned the White man's ways. At least, that was the plan. The intentions were good, and the White man tried to help. But good intentions aren't always enough. Something happened to the Indians. They came to feel at home only on the reserve, where many of them lost initiative and independence. The racial qualities are still there, and now the White man knows that he must recognize the Indian's pride and confidence in himself if the mistakes of the past are to be set aright. With a deeper sense of responsibility, the White man is learning to regard the

Indian not as an outsider, but as a fellow Canadian, to be helped on new terms of human understanding. In the past, too many have looked upon the Indian as inferior, but with the growing goodwill of other Canadians, the full value of Indian arts and culture is coming to be respected. Some Indians have done well on the reserves. They show what can be achieved. A beginning has been made. But a challenging task still lies ahead, in an attack at the very roots of the trouble, which has grown such unhappy harvest.

Here the philosophy of the film is laid bare. Although the "something" which happened to the Indians is clearly to be avoided and unexplained, the statement intimates a sense of guilt, and a desire to "set the mistakes aright," at all costs. The passage is a fascinating one in that it both seems to attempt a superficial treatment, to effectively sweep the deep socio-cultural issues under the carpet and focus instead upon the superficial aspects of these peoples, and to reveal an aggressive strategy of subjugation, to "attack at the very roots of the trouble." Interesting as well is the conjunction of the speaking of the word "trouble" and the throwing of the stone. As though to emphasize the 'challenge' of the task to civilize these savages, an act which could be seen as angry, vandalistic, and at the very least irresponsible and contrary to the plowing is how the scene is ended. Perhaps it was an unintended, unplanned event, but perhaps it was not. One has to indeed wonder at "the growing goodwill of other

Canadians" when an image which bespeaks an underlying tone of racism - the 'bad' Indian rebelling against the 'help' being offered by the White man - exists in such a carefully constructed film.

Following a short sequence showing a destitute family with no money and no hope, we are told with a burst of happy music that "Outside the reserve some make good on the White man's terms." We are thusly introduced to the first of the vignettes, about Tom, a young man in uniform returning home for the weekend from serving time in the armed forces. As he has been away for some time, he is reintroduced to his community, and taking note of the changes that have occurred in his absence. The viewer is thus shown the community through Tom's eyes. He is warmly greeted at the train station by his mother and brother, and the pride they feel for him is highlighted by a close-up of his ribbons. From there, his brother takes him to his place of employment, a construction site where bricks are being made and then fitted into a building. A close-up of the concrete being formed into a brick is the central image in this sequence. Lots of busy workers fill the background, yet the site seems inordinately clean and tidy. Again, the scene is more symbolically significant than documentarily. It is a scene of Indians at work, building anew, interestingly fashioning their own blocks, and it is a Native-run operation. Clearly the message, which was foreshadowed by the hard-hat image

and recurs in later sequences, is that social and cultural reconstruction, in a White format, is the only answer for the Canadian Indian.

Next, Tom attends a council meeting. The camera slowly pans across the men's faces in close-up. A White man presides over the meeting, taking notes and conducting a vote. Tom tells us that "My people were beginning to make their own decisions now." But the picture tells a very different story - the men appear as little boys obeying a teacher in class. Unlike most of the film this sequence is unaccompanied by dramatic or rhapsodic music, and thus connotes a serious tone. This is further developed by a very serious comment made to Tom by an elder. The subject of his monologue is the inherent difficulty in regaining autonomy on the reserve. He says:

It isn't easy to take responsibility
when you haven't had it for so long.
Like in the army, you get
responsibility, you get problems too.
But you've got to learn by making your
own mistakes.

In this scene, we see the Elder's face in extreme close-up, then Tom's in medium close-up, and then both of them in medium long-shot. As he begins to speak, mellifluous music begins again. This is the central point of the vignette, and it is glaringly presented as such. The use of an elder - a respected figure in Native society - to disseminate this

paternalistic morality is shockingly manipulative. Essentially a statement of abdication of responsibility by the colonizer for the colonized (with an underlying message of admonition for perhaps not always learning fast enough from one's 'mistakes'), the passage speaks volumes.

The issue of masking a White agenda in a Native guise is central to this film, and is evidenced in the 'Tom vignette' in several ways. When we are initially introduced to him, the voice-over tells us that "he can speak for himself," at which point the narrative is assumed by Tom. This statement is problematic for a number of reasons. By mentioning something as obvious as the fact that someone can speak for themselves automatically makes the veracity of the statement questionable. Having an undeniable paternalistic quality to it, both in terms of content and in tone, it sounds as though the authoritative voice is allowing Tom to speak for himself, just this once, or now that he is suitably assimilated. Ironically, the voice that speaks for 'Tom' is most definitely not a Native voice, which is corroborated by the fact that the credits tell us who the voices have been spoken by. Thus, clearly, Tom cannot truly speak for himself, or more rightly, is not being given the chance to. The tightly-constructed image of this Indian (as well as the others in the film) does not allow for the reality of his voice. Perhaps his grammar would not be perfect, or words chosen might not be 'appropriate'. It certainly would not have been acceptable for a White

audience to listen to a Native voice in the 1950's, because the majority of Canadians had never heard such a one, and it would have been far too shocking an experience. The voice that poses for Tom's is incongruously White, in every way. Most noticeably inapt are the structural nuances which belie a British mind, replete with etiquette, politesse, and class. The best example of this is, when Tom's brother is showing him around the construction site where he works, Tom tells us that "nothing would do, but he had to introduce me to his boss." Both linguistically and semantically this formal style seems extremely removed from a Native way of speaking. The structural style of expression often has as much or more impact upon the viewer than what is being expressed. The way in which the voice for Tom speaks tells us subliminally that he is just like a White person.

The next vignette is about Theresa, a young nurse working at her first job in a hospital. We see her in close-up giving a patient an injection, then the patient in close-up also, beaming at her nurse. She is then met by a friend, George - "one of [her] own people" - with whom she goes out for a walk. He is becoming a teacher. The message of this vignette is that education is the saviour for the Indian. Although Theresa talks about the challenges she faced in getting into nursing school, the majority of the ideas regarding education come from George, via Theresa. He tells her that 30,000 Indians are going to school now, which is twice as many as ten years previous, and that education is

"the real answer to the problems of our people."

Interestingly, he wants to work in a White school for the first two years, and then go on to an Indian school. George is a symbol for government values being issued through the education system. George, through Theresa, presents a harmonious picture of Native education which has very little basis in reality. To say that a horrendous situation is now good because it is better than it once was is a mistruth. He makes no mention of residential schools, which at the time of the film had been in existence for seventy-five years (and would be entrenched in the school system for another thirty years), or discusses what she means by an Indian school. Without any attempt to explain that Indians only needed western education because their ways of life and of learning had been obliterated, George's speech is patently propagandistic and vacuous.

The vignette closes with the pair happening by two buffalo in a pen. Theresa and George run up to the pen, and the camera presents a close-up of one of the buffalo's faces behind the wire. Theresa laughingly says that "George didn't have any statistics about the buffalo, but said that they had stopped dying out and were on the increase again, like our own people." The shot switches to a medium-long shot of Theresa and George smiling, then returns to the buffalo walking away. For such a brief scene, the pathos which it engenders in this writer is astonishing. Visually alone, the image of such a majestic beast in captivity is difficult to

look at, but the subtle concepts behind the dialogue and actions are even more astounding. Two Native people laughingly chatting about an animal that is a profound symbol for the traditions, culture, and spirit of their peoples, while it stands within a cage, is a very powerful statement indeed. Are the pair of animals not a mirror image of the two assimilated Indians? That the parallel is made in a positive sense is more interesting still.

The next vignette is extremely short, but says some important things too. Ella works as a lab technician analysing blood. We see a young woman in a lab dress putting blood samples into test tubes and shaking them. There is no voice for Ella, just the voice-over. We are told:

There's one thing Ella knows - there's no difference between White blood and Indian blood. In the test tube it reacts in the same way to the same test. But she knows too that there's still a great deal of work to be done before the Indian health record comes up to that of other Canadians. Although its improving. For a time there was even a danger that the race might die out. But the tide has been turned. Since the beginning of the century, the Indian population has increased by more than half.

Just as the buffalo is now being 'raised' by Whites, so the Indian population is being managed, becoming bigger and improved daily. Ostensibly addressing the poor health record of Indians, this passage speaks more subtly about the power

relations between Whites and Indians. Once again, the statement of an obvious fact such as "there's no difference between White blood and Indian blood" says more to cause one to question it because of its being stated. Without commenting on the fact that poor health within a social group is often linked directly to poverty, by this absence the passage insinuates a certain agency on the part of the Indian for his/her situation. No mention is made about the causes for the near extinction of Indians in Canada, solely due to colonization. Instead, the tone is purely that of praise for the custodians of this society for using science to 'turn the tide.'

The remainder of the film presents seven vignettes of occupations in which Indians are succeeding. In each short passage on farming, logging, fishing, academic professions, boat building, construction, and education, we are shown examples of men pursuing ways of life outside of the reserve. The message is clear. If one wants to succeed in this life, one must take responsibility, and leave one's culture behind. Littered with stereotypes - "they are good at most outdoor jobs, calling for physical endurance, and better than average reflexes," "inherent ability and tradition make them skillful at this job (boat building)," "they have a particular aptitude for working with sureness and confidence at great heights" - the focus is on Indians being able and willing to do labouring work in the White

man's world, and the picture created is that of achievement through assimilation.

Salt Water People
(1992, 122 minutes)

Salt Water People treats the issue of Native fishing rights in British Columbia in a blatantly biased fashion. More politically intense than any of the later films in this study, *Salt Water People* tells the story of the depletion and disappearance of seafood along the coast, and, from a Native perspective, what this has meant to the Kwakiutl people.

Using a Native voice-over intermittently to summarize and explain factual details, the film is largely comprised of various speakers bemoaning the changes in fish and shellfish stocks, due to over fishing and pollution. Time is also given to government officials - Department of Fisheries and Oceans officers speaking to a community meeting, as well as on board a Fisheries boat during the salmon-fishing season, and a salmon farm scientist - but the bulk of the film most definitely lies with the Natives.

Speaking about the old ways of living, subsisting from the land, and caretaking of the natural resources, as well as warning the viewer that this present mismanagement will have serious repercussions for humans, the Elders are

prominent interviewees in *Salt Water People*. The film moves slowly, and denotes a very serious tone.

Salmon are the chief protagonists of this film. A multitude of images of this coastal deity is presented to us; we see many beautiful shots (some in slow-motion) of silver bodies swimming in huge schools underwater, and thousands of fish hauled in nets, both on commercial and small boats. They are shown being beheaded on assembly lines in canneries, spawning in rushing rivers, and in ancient petroglyph paintings. We see the salmon in different coloured schools on depth-sounder monitors, and in graphics of Native art, in piles of dead bodies in a river, and in silver, wriggling piles in boats. We see them being raised in square fish-farm pens, and being lovingly cut open, stretched on frames, and hung to dry. We see the salmon being carried in a child's arms, thrown into an old man's wheelbarrow, cooked in a big pot, served at a feast, and eaten.

A central message running through this film is that Native people have skillfully managed their resources for thousands of years, through careful protection of their environment. The opening statement is that of an Elder in extreme close-up pointing out to the sea and saying "My farm is out there." Clearly, his meaning is that he has a relationship with the ocean and its animals that is highly sophisticated, having been consciously developed over time. In direct attack upon the prevailing stereotype of the

Indian 'taking life as he finds it' (as is said in *People of the Potlatch*), primitively hunting and gathering nature's bounty, with no sense of 'civilized' husbandry, this film stands in contrast to the message within *People of the Potlatch*.

Spoken primarily by Elders - the respected teachers and holders of the wisdom in Native society - are passages that challenge western epistemes. Intimating a spirituality that is foreign to the White man, we are taught in this film about the roots of Native ecology:

'Hah-houl-thi': a word in Wakashan language meaning 'the territory from the mountains to the sea, as far as the eye can see, how to use a territory, how to care for it for those yet to come.'

This term, we are told, expresses a West Coast concept, and is central to the indigenous peoples' way of life. Their way of caring for their environment is so old and ingrained as to be an innate feature of their culture. They cannot mistreat their land or resources because they are one with them:

For the First People, the salmon spirit is reality. There is a bond between them. They are what the salmon is.

This inability to divorce themselves from the natural world is what the speakers in this film use to attempt to explain

their position of anger at the White man's exploitation and greed.

The anger is meted out in *Salt Water People* in a judicious manner. Gradually, over the course of the film we are told a complex story, the many facets of which are unwound slowly and deliberately, culminating in a powerful effect. While not shying away from voices of bitterness and tales of woe, the interweaving of these with lively stories of old ways and times of plenty create a stronger message than one of mere gloom and doom. The emphasis upon the Elders' perspectives imbues the film with a tone of undeniable wisdom. Thus the anger that is present hits the viewer all the harder, for we are constantly shown how the fish stock once was, and how it could be, alongside the disastrous reality of what it is today.

The story of the White man appropriating the salmon stocks is told early on in the film, introduced by the voice-over, and then fleshed out with dates and facts by another voice. Both are women, and Native:

The European settlers made plans to exploit the great salmon runs. But first, the Indians had to be removed by laws and regulations. (new voice:) 1870: Land Ordinance prohibiting Indians from acquiring land for their own purposes. 1877: Fisheries Act prohibiting all net salmon fishing in the fresh waters of British Columbia. 1888: Fisheries Regulation restricting Indians to fish only for food. 1894: Fisheries Regulation prohibiting Indians to fish without a license. 1920:

Signature of Bill 13 enabling the reduction and cut-off of Indian reserve land. 1924: Indian Act restricting Indians from claiming their traditional lands. 1927: Outlawing the political activity by Indians. 1960: The right to vote has been denied to Indians until this date.

This passage is accompanied by archival footage of workers processing salmon in cannery assembly lines, sped up to twice natural speed. The effect of commercial rapacity is heightened by the sense of man as a machine handling an inanimate product, in an inhuman environment. Following this sequence is, in direct contrast, a very old man in extreme close-up speaking very slowly:

All along, around the island is just like that. When the White man come, they wipe out everything, they take over the island, and sell whatever they can sell. *Nothing* go to the Indians.

The raw simplicity of his statement speaks volumes. The greed that drove the White man to take over the salmon, and irrevocably changed the Native relationship with the rivers and the sea, is unquestionable. The recitation of laws and restrictions placed upon the Indian presented together with the visceral memory of an old person combine to make a compelling assertion.

This rawness continues with various excerpts of the film which unabashedly address the ways in which the fishery

in British Columbia has been mismanaged. In one passage, the voice-over introduces us to the theme of the Indian being blamed by the White man for the depletion of fish, with a summary of the traditional fish weir method. Archival footage of the weir system in use accompanies the narrative, and then the shot changes to a close-up of a middle-aged Native woman who explains why the weirs were subsequently outlawed and dismantled:

Those fish weirs were broken up because the Fisheries Officers thought that the weirs were stopping the salmon from going up to spawn. And, coincidentally, right about that time, the provincial government had given a commercial seine license to one White man, and he had exclusive commercial fishing rights to the mouth of the Cowichan River. And the real question that should have been asked at that time is what caused the salmon to stop spawning in the Cowichan River? Was it the weirs, or was it the over-fishing at the mouth?

Clearly this passage questions the authority of the government decision-making process regarding fishing rights. Caustically using the word coincidentally, in regard to the rights afforded the White fisherman, the speaker reveals her anger in a more subtle tone than some others. Her question regarding the correct placement of blame is blatantly answered by their voices. In reference to the deleterious effect the logging practices have had upon British Columbia

rivers and the life within them, an Elder tells us vehemently:

Nobody cares no more. They're not lookin' after the rivers no more. That's why it's dying.

As he speaks we are shown images of a river full of logs, sticks, and bark clogging its flow, reducing its mouth to a fraction of its size. He speaks of the way he used to take care of this river, fastidiously removing the debris. Shots of a massive clearcut and more waste are intercut with his face in close-up.

Everything's commercial now. It's destroyed the Indian way of living. Completely.

As other men survey a quagmire of bark chips, showing us the extent to which this build-up of refuse has impinged upon the fishing area, one of them concludes that "Maybe its about time we got angry." Two Elders embellish this sentiment with the angriest statements in the film:

... areas we once held have been ravished. They've been raped, dug up. We have nowhere to go. We are on the outside looking in to what they are doing to our people.

and

And the Europeans are telling me I am the cause of the shortage of the fish because I fish the rivers. I've been doing that for 5,000 years, and there's

never been a shortage of fish in that period of time. Where does he come in to tell me that *I* am the problem? *I'm* not the problem. *He's* the problem.

Other sequences in *Salt Water People* address different facets of the White man's mismanagement of the fishery. The voice-over delivers facts about the degree to which the beaches along British Columbia's coast are contaminated with pollution from industry, and shellfish which is being over harvested by new immigrants. A fairly lengthy portion of the film depicts an immense multitude of commercial fish boats being commandeered by a Fisheries Boat. The scenario is fraught with tension, as the boats manoeuvre amid a small bay awaiting word from the Fisheries Officer, releasing their nets (trying to avoid those of each other), and then hauling them in upon his command. Well shot, and edited in extremely short segments, the mood of chaotic furor and panic-stricken competition is effectively presented.

The Washing of Tears
(1994, 55 minutes)

The Washing of Tears unabashedly concerns itself with a complex and emotionally difficult subject: the connection between homeland and psyche. In telling very intimate, traumatic stories, the speakers of this film all speak of the difficulties they have experienced as a result of dislocation, from their land and culture.

Through in-depth interviews with people from the Nuchalnuth community of Friendly Cove on the west coast of Vancouver Island, we are told not only a tale of woe, however. The relocation of the people from their ancestral home due to White laws enforcing education on their children is openly discussed, as well as the tragedy of their new village being overshadowed by the mammoth pulp and paper mill at Gold River. But, far from emphasizing the actions and effects of colonization, this film discusses the direction people are turning to now, to heal their pain and rebuild their lives.

Using symbolic shots, no voice-overs, and extremely intimate sequences of speakers in situ at and in ceremonies, the film presents a bold representation that is uncannily imbued with a Native sensibility and ambiance. The sensitivity of the content as well as the depth to which it is explored bespeak a trust and collaboration between filmmaker and participants.

The central message of *The Washing of Tears* is that a grave injustice was meted out to the Nuchalnuth people of Friendly Cove (as to all Native peoples of Canada), and that they are actively engaged in recovering from the damage they incurred. Through intensely personal (in terms of both content and camera techniques) interview sequences, seven people recount stories of pain and suffering, simply and directly to the camera. In each case a raw, completely unaffected, and genuine quality exists, which is more than

compelling. As one watches these people, in the privacy of their homes, (in extreme close-up) unfold tales of poverty, alcoholism, abuse, and fear, the viewer becomes deeply involved; somehow one is transported to their space, their home, their reality.

A middle-aged man functions as somewhat of a spokesperson for his community. He is whom we meet first. Unshirted, in close-up, standing outside at Friendly Cove, he tells us first about the whaling history of his people, and the sacred shrine that the whalers used to use as a spiritual 'well.' His ancestors performed secret rituals and ceremonies in this shrine to gather the inner strength they needed to perform the overwhelming feat of harpooning humpback whales. A vital element of their cultural, spiritual, and hunting life, this shrine, called by the Nuchalnuth "Che'esum," was sold to an anthropologist and taken to a museum in New York City in the 1920's. The speaker entreats the viewer to understand the significance of this action, and the imperative need for this shrine to return and be re-established at Friendly Cove:

Its gotta go back where it belongs. It was a part of us ... It represented our 'Hah-houl-thi'. It represented a lot of things. It represented our strength. That's what Che'esum meant to us, and I think that when that Che'esum was taken away from us it was a real shocker for our people. It took away our spirituality.

While he is speaking, we are 'taken in' to the shrine via a slow pan across an archival photograph of the Che'esum. As the camera zooms in on a myriad of carved wooden human figures, they stare out at the viewer, hauntingly initiating us with their gaze.

The next interview is with a middle-aged woman who tells us she is a whaler's daughter. Speaking directly into the camera, she tells of the virtual evacuation of all her people from Friendly Cove in the 1970's, and how this made her feel:

I felt really sad about it ... When my parents moved away, that was the hardest thing for me ... They just went away to die.

She and her children were some of the only people to stay in the village, after the Department of Indian Affairs shut down the school by cutting off funding, thus forcing the people of Friendly Cove to relocate, or have their children taken away to residential schools. As she sits in her house, beside a window, the camera shoots out the window and into an archival photograph of the village, panning slowly along the cove, revealing a thriving community of crowded houses and boats pulled up on the beach. Again, the camera draws the viewer in to this place, so mysteriously different in feeling from the lonely words of the speaker. One is struck

by the life that used to infuse this place, as opposed to the vacuum of today.

A similar mood prevails in the next interview with an old man in a rocking chair - the chief of the village. He sits in his home in the nearby reserve in Gold River, and is shot in close-up.

A chief should never break his roots ...
I had to go, 'cause there was nothing
there ... I don't seem to feel right
that I'm here. But what can I do? I want
to be home at Friendly Cove. I've been
feeling like this for about twenty years
now, since I moved here. I want to be
home.

He looks out his window to a dilapidated car forlornly beside a carved figure of a man, listing, and alone. Trucks speed noisily by to the nearby mill. It is a depressing scenario, and again in stark contrast to the place that was home.

Two middle-aged women follow, each with stories of great misery relating to alcoholic husbands who violently abused them, causing one to start drinking herself, so she "wouldn't have to feel the punches," and the other to run away to another city. The first woman later speaks of the healing she has done through becoming sober by reclaiming her Native spirituality. We see her dressed in full button-blanket regalia, participating in a potlatch ceremony in her honour. The first speaker - the 'spokesperson' - is her new

husband, and speaks of the power of their culture, and the successful physical and emotional healing that is occurring through participation in the 'cultural revival':

Our culture has done a lot more for our Mowachaht Nation than all the experts in this world. We can get the best experts in this world, and pay thousands of dollars for a workshop. *Nothing* comes close to our culture.

The growing resurgence of Mowachaht pride in their heritage, and the increasing participation in songs and celebrations can and is helping to rebuild his peoples' self-esteem and identity and is something he is passionate about. It is a central message in *The Washing of Tears*.

Two other speakers reiterate and illustrate this message. A young man in his late twenties to early thirties tells of his father's alcoholism and death due to a drinking-related accident. It is a very poignant moment in the film, as he falters while remembering this great loss. Then, he goes on to speak of his battle with alcohol, and how his son has helped him become sober. We are shown another ceremony where this man is present, and his son is a dancer.

Finally a young woman gives her testimony of pain; her husband and young son were killed in an accident, and, understandably, she has been through a great deal. She recounts a time, after their death, when she was walking on

a beach and came upon seven eagle feathers. It is very auspicious to find one such feather in Native culture, but this she considered to be an astounding gift. She speaks of the faith she had in the fact that the Creator was sending her a sign that her loved ones were with her. The next shot is of her in a button blanket. The camera zooms in on the eagle crest. She is then shown giving the feathers away in this potlatch given for those that helped her. All aspects of this sequence are very moving, but the potlatch especially shows the strength and warmth and sense of community of these people.

A very interesting portion of this film comes toward the end, when a group from the Mowachaht Nation travel to New York to view the Shrine at the American Museum of Natural History. Throughout the sequence there is no speaking. The filming technique is extremely intimate, showing the viewer everything as if we were one of the group. The first shot is from inside the taxi, winding its way through a noisy, busy street in the big city. The whaler's daughter is in the front seat, looking culture-shocked. We see the sign for the museum, replete with a statue of a man on a horse. Then, we are inside, and a woman is shown in close-up, opening a room-sized vault, like a ship's hold. The camera zooms in on her hands on the wheel-like handle, unwinding it, slowly. The symbolism of the unlocking, the releasing, the feeling of this pirated treasure is undeniable. The tension and anticipation are

emphasized. We are now inside the sterile room, and a gloved hand opens a drawer, revealing a mask lying upwards. The mask fills the frame for a few seconds. Then we see the profile of the daughter's face, looking very serious, as the camera then pans across the figures; life-size cedar men, standing, quietly, waiting. A skull fills the frame, showing the anthropologist's disfigurement: "Nootka 99/4568." The 'spokesperson' shakes a rattle, as the camera pans across the group of descendants in a solemn line, then closes in on the skulls, masks, and wooden heads. A series of interactions between the group and the objects in the shrine follow: close-up of a man's hands caressing a wooden whale, hands picking up and handling harpoons and water floats, and small carvings, one man smelling and then biting a small carved paddle. These are museum pieces that are not allowed to be touched, are they not? This is a sacred place where White man's rules do not apply, and yet, locked in a bastion of White establishment. The power of these actions being so sensitively and reverently recorded renounces the power of the colonization, and majestically venerates and consecrates the Mowachaht spirituality and culture. The ritual effect of the filming of this sequence, with shamanistic overtones heightened by the group's chanting as well as the quiet, mysterious way of shooting the objects, has tremendous potency. Without any words, this sequence acts as a brilliant culmination of the statement of cultural reclamation.

As this sequence comes to a close, one more interview begins, spoken by a man who was at the Che'esum in New York. His story is the verbal culmination and fulcrum of the same statement:

That New York trip was something else to me. Right away I could feel the power that was there. I never experienced anything like it in my life ... I started to pray - in my own language. Deep within. I asked for the knowledge, the self-sacrifice. All that it took to get that whale out there. I noticed that there was something strange was happening to me. I feel that I used to shrink away from problems - whether it be family or tribal, and I had, I was afraid of everything; afraid of making mistakes, and afraid of being rejected, and all the things that go with it. Today I have a hard time keeping quiet in our meetings, and workshops and everything else. Now I want to learn all there is to know about my culture. That's another real change, and we're picking up songs that our ancestors sang. I believe that my prayers were answered. Its like the whaler of yesterday going out, and I got the whale. Like I'll kill the whale. The whale is in my taxi boat, worth a hundred thousand dollars.

As the visuals switch to him in close-up, and then untying his boat at the wharf, and heading out for a day's work, one feels the unlocking, the freedom, and the healing of which he speaks. We understand the meaning in the shots of whales' flukes diving in slow-motion that have recurred throughout the film - the symbolism of the whale, the power to catch

such an animal, and the connection with the spirit of the whale is omnipresent in *The Washing of Tears*; the whale, or the taxi boat, or the land, or sobriety or the Whaler's Shrine all amount to the reclamation of this peoples' culture.

The final image shows a totem-pole raising. Very short and simple, the sequence speaks again very symbolically, and thus with great power. The pole is being raised inside a Christian church. The reformation has indeed taken hold.

**The Learning Path
(1991, 59 minutes)**

Addressing the area of Native autonomy in education, *The Learning Path* is a film which is simultaneously informative and artistically complex. Through the intertwining of interview sequences with experimental/dramatized sections and manipulated archival footage, this treatment of the subject is highly emotional, and very effective in its ability to bring the viewer to a visceral understanding of the importance of the issues discussed.

The three primary participants are Elder women who are educators of Native culture and language. Speaking at times of their work, of their mothers, or of their experiences of residential school life as children, they share very intimate and emotional stories with the camera. One feels as though one knows these women quite well after viewing.

Very carefully crafted, more so than any of the other films in this study, *The Learning Path* explores a multitude of techniques, and artistic effects to achieve a fairly calculated result. While it uses drama in part, the emphasis upon personal interview creates an overall effect of honest exposure and raw truth.

The sections of this film which consist of extensive informant interviews occupy most of the footage, and comprise the structural core of *The Learning Path*. As in *Saltwater People* and *The Washing of Tears*, the informants are not engaged in actual question and answer interviews in front of the camera, but tell their stories directly to the camera. Similarly also, there is no constant narration threading the film together. The voice of the director however does contribute narrative fragments at various points; comments which give information that is clearly and openly opinionated, and added in a conjunctive rather than over-arching manner.

The three primary informants in the film are all women, all teachers, and all Native. Eva Cardinal, Supervisor of the Sacred Circle Program, in the Edmonton Public School system, is a Native woman in her fifties. Olive Dickason, Native historian, Professor at the University of Alberta, is a Metis woman in her seventies. Ann Anderson, teacher of Cree language in Edmonton, is a Native woman of 86. We see them both alone and with their students, and in all instances they speak of education. Two of the three central

informants have experienced residential schools, and speak of their memories and of the effects thereof. Their personal stories occupy the majority of the film.

Eva embodies the heart of the film. In all of the six segments in which she speaks, she reveals herself in an extremely personal tone, addressing painful areas of her life, past and present. In two segments we hear her voice over footage of her interacting with classes. She speaks of Native knowledge, and its power to survive, as she teaches Cree to little children, and then demonstrates to a non-Native class about her peoples' food. In another two sections, Eva is seen in medium close-up giving very emotional, very difficult testimony about her painful experiences, her recovery from the pain, her insights into pain being a teacher, and an appeal to her children to understand her healing. She views her work in the area of Native education as making "a great dent in the learning path"; an attempt to give a gift to her people through her "breakthrough". By surviving and learning from the hell she has been through, Eva lives to pass on her knowledge and wisdom. In These sections, there is a quiet, slow, respectful mood. As one views the unfolding of this woman's suffering, one comes to know her. We are given time to listen and watch her crying, to see her face contort, and thus, be with her, and, on some level, to understand. For this level of intimacy to exist, it seems clear that the

camera person and director had a very trusting relationship with the subject.

The most powerful of Eva's segments is also the emotional, poetic centre of the film. It begins as a dramatization of a little girl walking down a snow-covered road with her grandmother. A car approaches, stops, and from it a man emerges to say that he must take the child away. She goes with him and disappears down the winding road. This is all in colour. Eva's voice cuts in at the beginning of the next shot, which is of moccasins walking up a stone stairway:

I remember very vividly walking down the road with my father. I was hanging onto his hand, and walking up the stairway. I was coming to this great building and wondering "Am I in the right place?" And I was taken down the hallway wondering what was going to happen to me . . .

As she begins to speak, the moccasins become black and white, and we enter the world of her past. We are led down a dark and ominous hallway, the camera at child height. The steps are slow and somewhat halting, finally reaching the end. The shot switches to Eva then, in long shot, standing outside the school building, leaning against the stone wall. Her arms are crossed, the wind is blowing, it is colour. The camera moves ever so slowly in on this symbol of strength, as she continues to remember that first day of confusion, being told never to speak her language, ("the language of

the Devil") again, not understanding this, being translated to by her friend, and finally answering to an English name. The shot closes with an extreme close-up of her face, stony as the wall behind it. Following this is a very interesting 'tour' of the school, wherein we see Eva walking up an internal staircase, and, reaching the top, the transition to black and white recurs. This time we are behind a nun who walks silently down a hall, and darts into a side room. Cutting back and forth from Eva (in colour) to the nun (black and white), the editing in this sequence creates an unnervingly real/surreal effect. Reliving her memory of wondering what the nuns did in the mysterious recesses of the school (Eva's voice over the images tells us), this sequence alarmingly allows not only Eva, but the viewer, to go back in time, and journey into a world of fear.

The interviews with Ann and Olive serve to give balance to Eva's segments by being of a more rational, controlled nature. Neither of these women show any anger or sadness outwardly, although some of what is said is disturbing. Ann says in voice-over while her image teaches a class, "I always wanted respect and equality. It was hard for me that we never get it. But now we do. Its beginning to." This elderly woman's strength and softness are beautifully revealed by the variety of the aspects of her life which are shown to us; teaching, sitting in a historic classroom reflecting, and walking down a snowy sidewalk to her class. An interesting sequence reveals the power of this woman's

work and contribution to her culture and the great respect which she receives from those around her. The first shot is of a sign advertising "Dr. Ann Anderson Native Heritage Cultural Centre," and Ann walking toward this building along a snowy sidewalk. Entering the building, she is greeted by a younger woman who takes and carries her bag for her. They pass a display which shows a stereotyped portrayal of Native life: White mannequins dressed up in buckskin outfits, and standing in front of a teepee with an assortment of cliched paraphernalia. The camera zooms in slightly. Then Ann's degree, a Doctor of Laws from the University of Alberta, is shown in close-up, and the camera zooms out to her office. The young woman is helping Ann with her coat, and then Ann sits down at her desk, and is shown in close-up, writing something. Clearly the meaning of this sequence is that this woman has devoted herself to the reclamation of Native culture, through the teaching of Cree, and is a respected figure therefore.

Olive is revealed fairly intimately as well. The academic of the three, she is shown primarily in her places of work - in the library, looking for a book, sitting at her computer, or teaching a class. A very personal sequence exists though, wherein she is shown at her kitchen table drinking a cup of tea, and recalling her childhood. She speaks of the times when her family would go trapping, and the taste of the tea when they were camping in the snow. We see a dramatization of this scene, with a little girl of

about ten being served a cup of tea, and drinking it bundled up in winter clothes, standing beside the fire. Then as she talks about her mother, and the teachings she gave her about the plants, nature, and the country way of looking at things and doing things, we see old photos of her and her mother in black and white. Previously shown in more formal aspects of her life, this portrayal reveals her understanding and esteem for the learning which comes from living, from family, and from the everyday.

The primary message of *The Learning Path* is the advocating of spiritual growth through healing. Each of the informants emphasizes a different aspect of this theme, and the narrator integrates and connects their experiences into a cohesive picture.

Eva's experience and consequent message to the viewer is that pain is a fact of life, and can be a tremendous teacher, if we listen to it, and learn from it. In telling of her residential school trauma, she recounts the lessons she has gleaned from having survived:

What I have shared is a thing of the past. The scars are still here, however. I have worked on myself, and I have been able to let go a lot, of those painful experiences I am where I'm at now, and have learned a lot. And I can bid those hard times farewell. They have been guidances.

Through the process of having explored the effects of the abuses she suffered, she has learned about herself, accepted herself, and become stronger. This healing, Eva says, is a necessary passage to travel through in one's life. Instead of angrily admonishing what happened to her, and prolonging her misery, she tells us that it has been important to her to fully understand the impact of the experience, and then to release herself from the pain.

Ann embodies the power of self-esteem. In her we see a woman who has overcome great pain and difficulty also, and has forged ahead, embracing something she passionately believes in. Having focused her energies upon the dissemination of her language, she presents the viewer with an example of pain transmuted into power. As such, she acts as a model both of personal accomplishment and of what can and is being achieved in Native education.

Olive represents the theoretical and academic underpinnings of the movement toward educational autonomy, as a facet of the larger picture of Native cultural reclamation. Giving historical background to the colonization process, speaking specifically about the denial by Whites of Aboriginal culture and rights, she legitimizes through fact where the others used feeling. Using a more rational approach to the issues, yet certainly not devoid of emotion, Olive speaks of her goal to illuminate what has very nearly been lost, in order to help in the strengthening, and revivifying of indigenous culture:

I hope that I am extending the knowledges of and the knowledges about the contribution and the role that our Native people have played in the development of Canada.

Cinematically, *The Learning Path* employs the intensely symbolic shot, and the manipulation therein to help communicate the theme of spiritual healing. Highlighting the issues of oppression and repression, various powerful images are used to seduce the viewer into a visceral understanding of the feelings associated with containment and despoilment of the spirits of Native children in White schools. Several examples are noteworthy.

At the outset of the film, we see a slow motion sequence of archival footage of children playing outside a residential school. The camera slowly pans across a gaggle of boys crammed behind a wire fence, looking startlingly like caged or trapped animals, or prisoners of war, desperately looking at the camera for help, as though appealing to a witness, or a saviour, a possible hand that might reach out to pull them out of their pain, and free them. In this shocking image of horror, the viewer is struck by the entrapment of both the wire fence and the suits and haircuts which shroud the children. It is a powerful opening shot indeed.

This sense of institutional control is soon again evidenced in a new black and white shot of a row of lockers.

We see a slow pan down the steel doors, all with locks. The symbolic import is profound, as the camera gives us time to bring our understanding of the meaning of these boxes to the image; grey repetitive icons of order, formal patterning, isolation, ownership, possessions, security, numbers, identification, conformity, uniformity, control, institutionalism, lack of individualism, locks that can only be opened with the right combination, the knowledge of the system, the correct ordering of numbers.

Later on in the film another new shot of a row of sinks becomes a variation on this theme of repetitive order. Slowly panning across a line of white sinks and silver mirrors, the camera closes in on just the sinks, and then, monumentally, on one in particular. The shot switches to archival footage of little girls in a line, each at a sink, brushing their teeth before going to bed. After their nighttime washing ritual, the girls, all dressed in identical flowered nighties, all with clean teeth, walk toward identical army-style beds in rows, in a big room like a barrack, kneel at their bedsides, say their prayers in unison, pull back their covers in unison, and get into their beds in unison.

Finally, a window is used symbolically in a shot of Eva in the residential school she attended as a child. Six squares within a rectangle, within a thick window frame, are shown in close-up. The camera then zooms in on one pane, which is cracked. Many cracks radiate out from the centre,

as though someone has thrown a rock at the window. Eva is then shown inside the room, looking out the window, holding a curtain back to do so. The image of the window is heavily symbolic; a way of seeing the outside world, yet also a barrier between the inner and outer worlds, a way of tantalizing the person inside with the illusion of knowing the outside world of fresh air and freedom, yet a part of the wall which contains, and, a square framing device imposed by the institutions of White society, to be used in the seeing/perceiving of reality. Emphasis upon the cracked pane in the context of this symbolism thus becomes an important feature of the sequence.

Thus, in a more conscious way than in any of the other films, inanimate objects - the trappings of White institutions - are used as reinforcements to the testimonies in *The Learning Path*. This symbolism is powerful in its experimental emotionalism.

V ANALYSIS

To understand the ways in which the films in this study compare and contrast in terms of their representation of Native people, it is necessary to apply the theoretical underpinnings to the data. The following chapter analyses the films according to both how the representations differ in terms of imagery, attitude, and cinematography. Theories regarding imagery as well as documentary film are therefore examined in direct relation to the films.

When comparing documentary films from the mid-century with films from the 1990's several things must be considered. The only accepted form of documentary film in the early years of the National Film Board was the expository documentary film, the qualities of which have been discussed. Thus, the implications for ethnographic documentary films, describing Canada's Indians to Canadians, were fairly straightforward. There was only one possible means of portraying these people, and that was with an attitude of superiority, and from a stance of safe remove. The only conceivable ends to be attained by making such films were a) to record the curious ways of peoples who once had unique cultures, but were now becoming assimilated into the dominant White society, and b) to assuage any remnants of guilt or worry on the part of White viewers about 'the Indian situation.'

Documentary films of an ethnographic nature being made today by the NFB have quite a different agenda. Instead of celebrating the death of Native culture, these films proclaim the urgent need to address injustices done to First Nation peoples, and rejoice in the rebirth and regeneration of Native culture, spirituality, and autonomy.

It would be dangerous and perhaps spurious to suggest that the present day owns a 'better' perspective than that of the past. It is certainly not my intent to condemn attitudes of the past, but instead to observe ways in which those attitudes have changed over time. As well as being documents of both the Indian of the mid-century, and the First Nations person of the 1990's, these films are, perhaps more accurately, records of the White man, and his evolving perception of Native people. It is in this light that the films will be analysed, interpreted, and compared.

Technical, stylistic, and ideological aspects of the films within each period will be discussed. Through investigating the ways in which representation of Native peoples has been constructed in these films, an understanding of both the results of such representation and the reasons behind it will be attempted.

In the two examples of 'classic' expository documentary film used in this study, *People of the Potlatch* and *Peoples of the Skeena*, both cinematic and textual (spoken) decisions reveal a limited understanding and propagandistic treatment of Indians and their ways of life. Embodying the underlying

position of the time that this indigenous 'race' was vanishing⁵⁰ the films serve both to embalm and romanticize the culture. This tendency of ethnographic film to represent 'the Other' by maintaining a distant, detached stance is explained by film theorist Bill Nichols as a manifestation of inherent power relations:

The objects of . . . ethnography are constituted as if in a fishbowl; and the coherence, "naturalness", and realism of this fishbowl is guaranteed through distance. The fishbowl experience allows us to experience the thrill of strangeness and the apprehension of an Other while also providing the distance from the Other that assures safety. The effect of realism is to allow the spectator to dominate the Other vicariously without openly acknowledging complicity with the very apparatus and tactics of domination.⁵¹

Complying with codes of realism, this rhetoric of detachment was necessary in order to maintain the status quo in terms of political power and conformity to the concensual posture toward the Native. As the projected audience for such films was comprised primarily of White Anglo-Saxon Canadians (most of whom had had little or no contact with Indians, and generally perceived themselves to be of a higher socio-political level than these people), the attitude to be purported naturally reflected that experience, one of

removed superiority and condescension. Since this race was dying, the notion went, it was the responsibility of the ones in charge to record its passing.

A subtle and complex image in these early films is the 'Social Nuisance' stereotype. Clearly understood to be at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder in Canadian society, the Indian was both deprecated and pitied for his situation. However, in answer to this unconscionable state of cultural apartheid, whereby the reality of Native poverty and spiritual destitution became an impossible legacy to accept, the concept of 'Social Nuisance' was permuted to that of 'Assimilation Success Story,' and actively projected to the public in documentary films. Thus the 'Social Nuisance' notion is essential in the need to portray the Indian as on the way to becoming White.

Hand in hand with the celebratory attitude of the assimilation of Indians into the dominant White culture was a dutiful homage to the customs that were seen to be dying out. As the 'Warrior' no longer had to be feared, it became acceptable to mourn the loss of the ways of the 'Noble Savage' through further romanticization.⁵² As less and less of the old ways were in evidence, it became imperative to document them, and present them as remnants of the past. Thus, in certain early documentary films about Native

Canadians made by the NFB, a combination of romanticization and denial of this culture exists.

This tendency is most notable in *The People of the Potlatch* and *Peoples of the Skeena*. As has been noted, the first film is a mixture of innovative camera work and conventional language. The narrative is composed of a voice-over that overtly suggests that the changes to the Indian's way of life have improved him, and bettered his condition. Through use of the past tense, and a tone of paternalistic authority throughout, the narrative imperiously condescends, thus constructing an image of a child-like people who must be looked after, and who are now, thankfully, less trouble as their indigenous ways of being are disappearing or indeed gone, and they are learning the ways of their superior.

The dichotomy between a reverence or, at least, a respectful acknowledgment for Native cultural ways and a tone of dismissive abnegation lies, in this film, in the division between the visual and linguistic treatments. As Nichols notes, a central aspect of documentary film is its basis in argument, or its attempt to persuade the viewer of some point of view. Expository documentary adheres most closely to this form, which relies heavily on the Word to present its case.⁵³ Therefore, the language is an extremely important element, as "Arguments require a logic that words are able to bear far more easily than images."⁵⁴ The

narrative text dominates the visual imagery in these types of traditional documentaries: "The rhetoric of the commentator's argument serves as the textual dominant, moving the text forward in service of its persuasive needs."⁵⁵ Thus although the visual elements of *People of the Potlatch* are at times stunning in their reverential portrayal of the West Coast Indian way of life, they are overshadowed and coloured by the much less positive commentary. An understanding of the duality inherent in these two facets of this film is gained by viewing it first with sound and then without.

A similar situation exists in *Peoples of the Skeena*, in that the visuals are dominated by a voice-over which is distant and patronizing in tone. The visual in this case are not at all interesting, but instead are voyeuristic and thus contribute to an overall sense of observing a museum-like recreation of a disappeared civilization.

As in these expository films, the argument is dominant to the point of being solely responsible for the meaning in *No Longer Vanishing*. In this film the stating of the case is evinced by dramatic episodes wherein Indians are shown as perfectly assimilated into White culture and society. Differing from the other films in this study, we would today term this a docu-drama, by virtue of its being entirely pre-scripted and enacted. The 'argument' or 'rhetoric' of this

film is much more intricately constructed than in either of the two previous films, and "the voices of others are woven into a textual logic that subsumes and orchestrates them."⁵⁶ Not only is the commentary attempting to persuade, but the whole body of the film (from the initial concept, to the script, to the sets, to the actors, and the way in which they present their lines) is designed to create an image of the Indian in keeping with a very definite and particular agenda. Made for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, it was very likely used both for training purposes (for both Indians and social workers, teachers, and government workers working with Indians) and for general 'education' about improving the Indian situation.

The message, for *whatever* purpose, is imminently clear in this film; Indians who assimilate to the dominant White culture succeed, and those who don't do not. Hidden just beneath the surface of this idea are two implicit statements. The first is that White culture is superior to Indian culture, and the second is that it is a simple matter of agency on the part of the Indian as to whether he or she assimilates and therefore experiences a better life. Both of these messages are implicit because they are presented through the omission of any alternative viewpoints. Examples of Indian culture or tradition, and perhaps a rudimentary discussion of the historical underpinnings of the Indian

'problem,' (or of the harsh realities of poverty and devastation which have resulted), would have provided such alternative viewpoints.

Instead of exploring the complex problem with an eye to learning about and presenting some sort of real picture of the situation, *No Longer Vanishing* was made in order to present an extremely simplistic solution to its audience. We are told and shown, with unabashed gusto, that the policy of cultural genocide (in the name of cultural assimilation) provides the most efficacious means of achieving prosperity for the Canadian Indian. In each vignette, a 'good Indian,' one who has left the reservation and embraced White society, is portrayed in an entirely positive, harmonious light, devoid of any trace of social, financial, or emotional difficulty. Each character is ebulliently happy, employed in a 'respectable' occupation, and, most importantly, blending into the dominant culture, and therefore no longer a 'problem.' He or she embraces such White institutions as the armed forces, the medical, educational, legal, and banking systems, science, technology, and the forestry, fishing and leisure-boat-building industries. In terms of customs, White food (tea and sandwiches with the crusts cut off) and courtship practices (male-dominated conversation and power structure) are embraced also. As if to hit the viewer over the head with the message of the Indian's amiable relinquishment of all cultural ways, we are even shown Indians in a band council meeting, apparently happily

accepting of the White government official who presides, and later, a scene in which two Indians laughingly dismiss the near extinction of the buffalo. In these highly unrealistic scenarios *No Longer Vanishing* suggests to the viewer that the Indian is on the way to leaving his world behind, and fully integrating into the dominant culture, and that this is indeed what is saving him from 'vanishing.' What is not addressed at all, and by its omission speaks loudly, is the issue of the profound deterioration of traditional Indian culture and way of life incurred by contact with the White man. By aligning itself with the romantic and arrogant notion of the charitable induction of a savage people into the realm of civilization, this film blatantly purports a propagandist missive.

Although the presentation of such material in the guise of a documentary film seems unbelievable and distasteful by today's standards, it is important to attempt an understanding of the perspective of the audience at the time of the film's release. Although every element of the film is completely White in form and character, the degree of accessible information, and knowledge of the Indian in 1955, was minimal within the general Canadian public; such a portrayal therefore must have been believable and acceptable.⁵⁷

On the theme of culture, the two periods vary widely. In the early films Native ways are either openly belittled or covertly criticized in light of the progressive, more efficient, and civilized ways of the White man. Whereas, in the recent films Native customs are depicted as being wholly good, in harmony with nature and thus environmentally sound, spiritually and culturally revivifying and thus politically correct. White ways are shown to be barbaric, inhumane, and generally destructive environmentally, spiritually, and culturally. The most striking examples of these attitudes are evidenced in the passages about fishing practices in *People of the Potlatch*, *No Longer Vanishing*, and *Saltwater People*, and in passages regarding education in *People of the Potlatch*, *No Longer Vanishing*, and *The Learning Path*.

In general, Native culture is portrayed in the early films as a problem to be eradicated and forgotten by means of assimilation. In the recent films we are told that Native culture is a powerful force for healing the damage inflicted by the oppressor. Most prominently in *The Washing of Tears*, and to a lesser extent in *The Learning Path*, the message is clearly that White culture has nearly killed that of the Native Canadian, and must in turn take the blame.

Interestingly, both the early and late films deal in propaganda. Both offer fairly simplistic, dramatic arguments which aim to persuade the viewer to believe a definite point of view. None of the films from either period offer alternative perspectives or contravening voices or arguments

which would ask the viewer to call the evidence into question.

In the more recent documentary films examined in this study, the expository style is not in evidence. All three films exhibit characteristics of the 'interactive' style, and one demonstrates examples of the 'reflexive' style also. A major difference between the expository and interactive styles, and thus the three early and three late films in this study, is the locus of textual authority. In the expository film this resides in entirety with the voice-over. The reasons for and implications of this have been discussed. In the interactive style, the perceived authority is situated in the mouths of the participants, to a large extent, if not solely.

Influenced by the currently accepted position that neutrality or objectivity on the part of the observer or researcher/theorizer is no longer a viable stance,⁵⁸ these new documentaries derive from an entirely different motivation than those of the early years of the NFB. Made in a time when Native peoples have vehemently protested their oppression, by way of multitudinous land claims and natural resources trials, and, more recently, by instigating violent rebellions, these films depict a very different political situation than that of the 1940's and 1950's. Undeniably, Native Canadians have more political power in the 1990's

than in the 1940's and '50's, and this is reflected in both the content and the presentation of the films.

Of the three later films, *The Washing of Tears* presents the clearest example of the 'interactive' style. Using the voices of the participants exclusively, with no voice-over whatsoever, the authority of their experience is thus emphasized, and indeed forms the message and meaning of the film. As has been mentioned, the film is unusual in terms of its degree of intimacy, and affinity to Native sensibility. These effects are not accidental, but very intentional; the director, when questioned as to the making of the film, at a recent screening of *The Washing of Tears*, emphasized the fundamental importance of the collaborative nature of the construction of the film, from its outset to completion.

There is a sense, in this film, of deep commitment on the part of the director, not only to the making of a good documentary, but to the issue and to the people it addresses. This intense personal involvement gives the work an integrity and richness which compels the viewer to engage in the story. It is because of this degree of commitment, and the decision to share the process of making the documentary, I believe, that when watching the film, one gets drawn into the culture and history of these people in a 'magical' way; the presence of the filmmaker disappears so that the speakers assume complete control.

In *Saltwater People* the intensity lies in its bold political position, as opposed to the more personal tone of

The Washing of Tears. Whereas in the latter film, the viewer is drawn into the world of the Nuchalnuth, in the former the viewer is taught about the Kwakiutl people's situation from the outside.

This perspective is intentional on the part of Maurice Bulbulian, director of *Saltwater People*. As he notes in a recent interview about his work, he has an affinity with the Native perspective due to his own background and political stance as an outsider.⁵⁹ He respects the autonomy of the subjects of his film, yet sees himself as the messenger for them, hence his need to "keep the didactical thing in mind"⁶⁰ in order to deliver the message with the appropriate importance.

The testimonies in *Saltwater People* are not as fervent, nor are the stories as personally tragic as those in *The Washing of Tears*. Instead of the majority of participants speaking in solo about their lives and experiences, directly into the camera, the informants in this film are often shot in groups, discussing the seafood situation together. Bulbulian explains his rationale for organising the speaking in his films in this way:

I never have one principle character in my films. It's always between forty and two hundred principle characters. With these public and collective issues I find that the best situations, when ideas and feelings really come out, is

when people are together. Now it's not cinematographic per se. But there's always moments when you get the basic statements and feelings coming from people wherever they are. If they're around a table, which is not an easy thing to film, and it happens there, so be it. You don't run away from it. More important is to be with people when they are together and things are happening. That's what I'm trying to do most of the time.⁶¹

Thus, these discussions are rich in their rational and analytical tone, and adhere more closely to the issue at hand, its history, and its possible solution.

This is complemented by the intermittent accompaniment of a commentary. A Native woman's voice contributes information in the form of scientific facts as well as references to the spiritual connections that exist between the people and their environment. Generally the tone of these voice-over sequences is detached and unemotional. As the content being offered is extremely significant and loaded with an onerous message, the effect of the cool, almost monotone delivery is ironically powerful. This is especially evident when the comment veers off the factual track, and enters the more Native terrain of spiritual and symbolic matters:

For the First People, the salmon spirit is reality. There is a bond between them. They are what the salmon is. They will become what the salmon becomes. If

the salmon disappears, so will they, but if the salmon is raised in captivity, is it not like the First People living on reserve?⁶²

The presentation of the language in this film is more rigid, in structure and in tone, than in *The Washing of Tears*, and thus embodies and emits more of the 'outsider's' perspective.

In *The Learning Path* there are elements of both the two other later films. At times the participants speak directly to the camera, and at times they are in conversation with the unseen filmmaker, and we are aware of her "situated presence." They are presented alone, and their stories are intensely emotional and personal, which likens the interview segments to those in *The Washing of Tears*. However, there is a Native woman's voice-over (the voice of the director), which gives the viewer additional information as well as moralizes, telling the hard-to-hear truths about what Native people have had to endure at the hand of the White man, and confronting the viewer with the urgent need for change and rectification for the past. Although the tone of this commentary is much more impassioned than that of *Saltwater People*, it serves a similar function; to focus and direct what the informants are saying, and to add emphasis to the film's argument. Bill Nichols speaks of the role of the commentary as being quite different from the "direct address" voice-over:

... commentary is a form of argument in which the voice of the film is seen or heard directly. ... Commentary gives didactic orientation toward the argument. Commentary guides our grasp of the moral, political view of the world offered by the documentary text. ... it diverts our attention from the world represented to the discourse of the text, to the representations of a documentary logic.⁶³

Rather than being the voice of the film, as is the direct address voice-over, the commentary adds to the voice(s) of the film, either in affirmation or contradiction. Indeed a manipulative device, it causes the viewer to further consider what is being said by the informants, and to either agree or disagree with them.

In *The Learning Path* the commentary serves to galvanize the viewer into a full emotional identification with the participants, and an awareness of the atrocity of the residential school experience in general. Together with the very intimate portrayal of the speakers, in terms of the content of their stories and the techniques of shooting discussed earlier, the effect of the commentary is at times almost that of a reprimand; the viewer is not allowed to be uninvolved or dispassionate, but must feel the pain, and somehow join the participants in their struggle.

The primary division between the early and late documentary films in this study lies in the situation of the authorial voice. Clearly not an uncomplicated issue in documentary film, as it is not in scholarship at large, the dramatic changes that have occurred in this particular medium and with regard to this subject are profound.

The most obvious transitions that have taken place affecting this issue are due to the current political reconstruction of the relationship between Native and White Canadians. This shift away from colonial domination toward a more equitable co-existence is having an undeniable effect upon the way in which Native peoples are represented in film. It is simply not acceptable any longer to devalue any culture in this country in any way.

The emphasis upon disappropriation of voice, so prevalent at the present in most disciplines, is facilitated in documentary film by the fact that filming techniques are becoming increasingly advanced. In the early days of the NFB facilities were not yet available to record sound synchronously with image; a technique which greatly expedites the ability to give voice to the participants of a film.⁶⁴ Now cordless microphones the size of a thumb and small, unobtrusive cameras enable an informant to speak onto film in almost any environment.

Another factor affecting the change that has occurred in terms of authorial voice is the degree to which the film director is subjugated to his/her producer's ideas regarding the film. Whereas in the early years of the NFB the director had very little control over creative and technical decisions, and had to acquiesce to the institution, today, the personality of the director is often prominent.

A relatively recent development in the filmmaking situation at the NFB, this directorial control has been given more freely to certain directors (such as Brody and Todd) who have established a reputation with their work of being innovative and powerful. Although very different in their approaches and results, clearly the films of these two directors are indicative of this creative freedom. Their approaches to disappropriation of voice are also different, and yet both make extremely potent statements about voice, which reflect their very subjective, personal agendas. As conceptual, political, and technological advances continue to be made, we will undoubtedly witness further shifts in the representation of Native peoples in documentary film. As to whether or not the changes will be as dramatic as those we have encountered in this century remains to be seen, but will be conjectured in the following chapter.

VI WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

In a recent article in the Globe and Mail, Sandra MacDonald, the new Film Commissioner of the National Film Board, speaks of her vision of the future directions of the organisation. She uses a documentary film analogy:

Our mandate is to make films in the public interest. My interpretation of that is to tell the truth to the best of your ability. You don't go out and do an investigative documentary with the conclusions already in mind.⁶⁵

She posits an attitude of openness, a willingness to look deeply into a problem or situation with an eye to attempting to understand it and, through such understanding, to shed light upon it. Embodying the more recent ways of perceiving and making documentary films discussed in this paper, this approach has significance for me, as I attempt to sum up my study, or investigation.

When I initially formulated my thesis topic, I most definitely held a position; a preconceived notion that the old films would reveal nothing but negative portrayals of Native peoples, poor film quality, and generally a simplicity that would thus afford limited usage or interest. The new films would be manifestations of a growing respect

for Native autonomy, and be devoid of stereotyping or negative representation. Needless to say, such notions changed as I studied the films, and explored the meaning of documentary film and its implementation.

In my investigation of the problem of Native representation in documentary film, it soon became clear to me that the real question, and the fascinating heart of the issue, is the degree to which dominant White values are revealed in the constructions made to explain 'the Other.' As racism and its roots and function have long been an interest of mine, the evolution of White attitudes to Native Canadians swiftly became my focus. Of course, as I learned more about the evolution of documentary film, the focus here too shifted and deepened from study of the films as vehicles for information and attitudes, to examination of their artistic, theoretical, and practical facets as well. Linking these two foci has been my interest in issues regarding hidden curricula. Documentary film thus became for me a way to examine implicit reproduction of social constructions in curriculum, and the need for understanding and deconstruction of such mechanisms.

Another finding which contributed to the shift in my preconceptions was the fact that similar themes had been addressed in the old and new films, and that propaganda existed in both periods' treatments. Somehow through comparative analysis of parallel subject matter, it became easier to see the biases inherent in the newer films,

although it is significantly less obvious than in the older films.

The ways in which representation of Native people in National Film Board documentary films has changed became more important to my study, than a judgment upon the representation itself. Within this evolution lies much fodder for exploration in the areas of White attitudes toward Native people, documentary film theory and practice, and the issue of appropriation, or speaking for others.

The pro-assimilation ideology glaringly evident in the early films is reflective of an era in which the Indian was disregarded as being an inferior nuisance. The federal government was actively engaged in administering policies which would strip the Indians of their cultural ways, and forcibly inculcate the dominant culture upon them. The films not only reflected this attitude, but were made to shape and reinforce it also. Films today which vehemently deplore the colonial wound, proclaim victorious cultural regeneration, and support land and resources retribution and self-rule for Native people in Canada are also involved in both reflecting and constructing an attitude. The disparity in ideologies in the earliest and most recent NFB films about Native people could not be greater.

A tremendous transformation has occurred in the realm of documentary film in the past half century. From a form which once proposed to state *The Truth* about any given situation, in as removed and *objective* a fashion as was

possible, it has become a form which is wholeheartedly embracing the validity of *subjectivity*, and celebrating the value of the personal and individual nature of truth.⁶⁶ There has been a movement away from the realist concept of universal, unequivocal *Truth*, toward what Michael Renov calls a more "fictive construct" of reality:

The truth of aesthetic forms in the classical mode has been rendered through a kind of "crucible effect" in which reality is subjected to the heat and pressure of the creative imagination - the passage of truth through fiction.⁶⁷

Increased media awareness on the part of viewers, coupled with advancements in technology, have at once demystified and complicated documentary film. In other words, as the ways in which stories are told become more subtle, audience understanding of the manufacture or construction of filmic argument is becoming more developed, allowing for this opening up of the form to take place. To quote Renov again, this expansion of the form is positive:

That a work undertaking some manner of documentation renders that representation in a challenging or innovative manner should in no way disqualify it as nonfiction because the question of expressivity is, in all events, a matter of degree. All such renderings require a series of authorial choices, none neutral, some of which may

appear more "artful" or purely expressive than others. Moreover, the ability to evoke emotional response or induce pleasure in the spectator by formal means, to generate lyric power through shadings of sound and image in a manner exclusive of verbalization, or to engage with the musical or poetic qualities of language itself must not be seen as mere distractions from the main event. Documentary culture is clearly the worse for such aesthetic straightjacketing. Indeed, the communicative aim is frequently enhanced by attention to the expressive dimension; the artful film or tape can be said to utilize more effectively the potentialities of its chosen medium to convey ideas and feelings. In the end, the aesthetic function can never be wholly divorced from the didactic one insofar as the aim remains "pleasurable learning."⁶⁸

The freedom of expression which is now in evidence in documentary filmmaking does not impinge on the telling of the truth, but rather encourages it.

The shifts in both attitude and artistic expression are indicative of profound philosophical and political changes occurring now in regard to voice.⁶⁹ Many disciplines are actively questioning the validity of speaking for others. The discourse suggests that in the act of representing another person (either speaking for or about them), one is participating in the construction of who they are, and thus engaging in a practice of disempowerment of the represented and hegemonic control on the part of the speaker.⁷⁰

The issue of voice has direct bearing, on the subject of this thesis. In regard to future directions for the representation of Native people in documentary film, many directors are currently speaking and writing about the problematic of voice, and how it is influencing the ways in which they make their films.

Bulbulian speaks of the process he goes through both before making a film and during the filming:

It was the same in B.C. I spent nearly a year in research, meeting people, talking to them. I always present my hypothesis for the film: "So far my ideas are like this." They tear it apart or they add something, and I go on like that until the moment we start filming. But at the moment we start it becomes my film. There's only one person running a film. It has to be this way.⁷¹

More and more I worry about how the crew is feeling, how the subjects are feeling, and all these relationships. The entire crew has to work well together. Because if you have trouble working together don't expect to see any magic on the screen. There is something which is not what the camera sees, and not what the sound records, and not the intention of the director; it's beyond that - the something which is magic in film. Like everybody drinking from the same bottle of wine.⁷²

Although clearly at the helm of his documentary films, Bulbulian's comments indicate a growing interest in the

interactive dialogue between the subjects and the filmmakers. Cognizant of the fact that without rapport and trust and camaraderie the product will not be as interesting, Bulbulian reveals an increasing attraction to an approach which involves the sharing of his visions.

Hugh Brody, director of *The Washing of Tears* spoke passionately on the same issue when questioned regarding the editing decisions involved in making that film:

I worked very closely with the Nuchalnuth people at every stage of the filmmaking. All decisions were made collaboratively.⁷³

The attitude of letting the subjects speak for themselves is evidenced in this film, as it is in his other work. Brody's involvement transcends the importance of the end result. He imparts in his films, writing, and when answering questions, a commitment borne of relationship. The products are most definitely important political instruments, yet clearly the process of making his films is an equally integral facet of his message; within the collaborative making of his films, is the respect and the empowerment of which they ultimately speak.

Of the three directors of the late films in this study, - Bulbulian, Brody, and Todd - Loretta Todd (*The Learning Path*) speaks most ardently of the centrality that issues of voice and process occupy in her work. In a lecture series

she organised, entitled *The Death of Documentary/Long Live the Documentary* (Museum of Anthropology, UBC, November, 1992), Todd spoke at length about the role NFB documentaries have played in regard to the representation of Native people, how she perceives the documentary form to be changing, and how she positions herself in this process of transformation:

What's transforming documentary is those people who have been the subjects of documentary, those people who have had the documentary camera turned on them, those people whose life has been spent being scrutinized by the camera, scrutinized by an eye that's outside looking in at you. And what's happened, when those people have got that camera, now have that eye, what are they doing with the documentary?

In my own work I try to go beyond the voyeur, and sort of dispense with the convenience of realism and the sort of obsessive desire for truth that is achieved through this idea that the image is real. Because I think there's a real risk there that it collapses our Otherness into this whole homogeneous model, so the image of our Otherness, of our subjectivity again will continue to signify, and reinforce that filmmaker, and view it as a sense of themselves rather than my sense of myself, or that person's sense of the pain and suffering or even joy that they might be trying, the film is trying to communicate.

Someone asked me "How do you make a documentary?" and I said I ask people how they want to be represented. I ask people to imagine images, to recall memories, and someone said "Well, then aren't you afraid of giving up your authorship?"

You're inviting their imagination into this filmmaking process." And I said, that's where, first of all, where I'm breaking down documentary, by inviting their point of view, inviting their authorship to the process. And I said then the artist in me comes into play because they give me insight into their memory and their imagination and then as a filmmaker, as an artist I then find my interpretation of that vision that they've given me, that dream that they've given me. So I don't see it as incompatible with documentary because what it means is I think it's making more of documentary, it's taking it beyond its colonial history, and turning into, allowing us to sort of reinvent it.⁷⁴

Clearly embracing a personal and political approach to her films, Todd's comments reflect a passionate commitment to her subjects as people.

Adamant that Native Canadians become involved in making documentary films about themselves, Todd argues well that as the power balance shifts between the dominant society and those who have been oppressed, so should the power shift in terms of representation. Openly questioning the authority of the outsider's realist perspective, she embraces the subjective world of the imagination and memory, arguing that these make up their truths, and must thus make up the truth of her films. Inviting access to the construction of their depiction, Todd not only makes an overt political statement, but relies on the collaboration with her film subjects for her inspiration. Both the involvement of her subjects and

her intimate involvement with their stories make Todd's work very personal in nature.

The three cited directors are in the forefront of documentary filmmaking in the area of Native representation for the National Film Board. Although it would be questionable to extrapolate from their thoughts and words to other directors who make such films, it would be safe to say that their perspectives are highly influential within their field, in this country and internationally. Therefore, it seems safe to conjecture that the above questions of disappropriation of voice, collaboration, and interaction between directors and subjects of documentaries, and an increasing experimentation with reflexive techniques which investigate the process of representation, will continue to be prominent aspects of documentaries addressing Native issues.

In regard to the future applications of documentary film in educational settings, I think a key factor in the efficacious use of this tool will lie in an emphasis upon media education. Before people can understand the implicit messages that exist within any documentary film which contribute to the overall message, and the *truth* being disseminated, it is imperative that they be taught about the mechanics and underpinnings of filmmaking.

Presuming analysis, or deconstruction of documentary films to be a valuable pursuit toward a deeper understanding of the content being taught, a literacy of the medium will

be necessary. As Michael Apple suggests, the *unquestionable* in a society is dangerous,⁷⁵ in that if we are not somehow engaged in a critical dialogue with knowledge or information, it has the potential to control us. If we do not examine curricular materials as to their hidden "political, social, ethical, and economic interests and commitments that are uncritically accepted as 'the way life really is',"⁷⁶ we will, as educators, be participating in the reproduction of social myths and norms based on inequality.

In documentary films depicting Native people, there is need for educational material which guides students critically through the films, provoking them to probe what they see with an eye to discerning the subtle attitudes as well as the not-so-subtle prejudices and stereotypes in evidence. An excellent example exists in the form of First Nations; The Circle Unbroken - Teacher's Guide, developed in 1993 by B.C. First Nations educators in conjunction with the National Film Board.

Designed to enhance usage of National Film Board documentary films about Native people, the guide offers an exciting and comprehensive accompaniment to a selection of films. The selection of thirteen shortened NFB documentary films provides an introduction to a variety of contemporary First Nations perspectives on history, culture, spirituality, education, justice, the environment, racism,

colonialism, and Aboriginal title to land. They range from more general discussions of culture and history (for younger students) to more complex and controversial issues of political concern, aimed at older students.

Addressing a lack of teaching materials of this kind for this subject area, First Nations; The Circle Unbroken was developed to educate about First Nations issues, the media, as well as epistemology. Using the films as the catalyst, the series aims to "explore possible misconceptions"⁷⁷ about Native people, and "to help the teacher generate a safe environment where students can explore their knowledge and enlarge and *complicate* their thinking by dealing with a specific, focused inquiry."⁷⁸

The series implements Native perspective, tradition, and approach in the realization of these educational goals. Openly biased toward this orientation, one of the writers of the guide - Lorna Williams, First Nations Education Specialist for the Vancouver School Board - explains that in the process of sharing one's stories, "the stories becomes truly owned by the story teller"⁷⁹ in Native tradition. Thus, by choosing particular films which tell stories in positive, non-victimizing ways, the subjects are portrayed as strong people, and by careful transmission of the films, the power stays with the speaker.

Gary Marcuse, documentary filmmaker, and one of the producers of the series, notes that First Nations; The Circle Unbroken was born of a variety of necessities. He, as a filmmaker, enjoys making films that address controversial subjects, as a means for teachers to engender "real discussions"⁸⁰ that get to the heart of difficult issues. Native educators had been finding a dearth of films about their people in which they were not portrayed as 'the victim'. Teachers at large needed films that were of a length that would be useable in a fifty-minute class situation, which would allow for pre- and post-viewing discussion. Thus the series came about, to an overwhelmingly successful reception.⁸¹

Based upon a pedagogy designed "to help educate students for social responsibility", the series "enlarges and complicates" students' thinking by way of activities that reflect a philosophy of critical thinking and deconstruction.⁸² Demanding that students analyse their knowledge and the sources of their knowledge, the viewing activities focus on close investigation of the films, and the stereotypes, biases, and attitudes inherent within them. An element that I find most interesting and adventurous in the series is the 'Integration' portions of the activities. In these exercises, the student is asked questions drawn

from the content of the film but extrapolated to incorporate his/her experience, and to leap beyond the strictures of the subject into the realm of the student's life. This process of personalizing the issues demands a high degree of participation and commitment from the student, causing an understanding to occur through internalization and consequent empowerment.

First Nations; The Circle Unbroken illustrates an example of what can and is being done to educate in both the areas of Native issues and media literacy. Thoroughgoing and innovative, the series presents a model to be followed in terms of using documentary film for consciousness raising and the deconstruction of myths.

It is hoped that the analysis of the six films in this study reveal the type of deconstruction that would be helpful. Instead of negating them for their outdated and racist perspectives, keeping them tucked away on sixteen millimetre reels and buried in archival vaults, why not actively use the older films to show how the dominant viewpoint has evolved? Is denial not just as dangerous as blind acceptance? Just as the early films bear analysis, so too do the more recent. A system of critical appraisal of the documentary film as educational tool would be applied to the 'politically correct' perspective as rigorously as to that of the 'voice-of-God.'

As the National Film Board of Canada faces massive cutbacks which are affecting both the production and

educational facets of the organization, the role that documentary film will play in the coming half century is less certain than it has been in the past. Closing all but three video lending libraries in 1995, eliminating educational liaison officers, and reducing the number of filmmakers and films produced is most certainly going to change the ways in which Canadians perceive the NFB documentary.

Decreased production and distribution will undoubtedly stifle the creative output we have come to associate with this national institution. The shift toward television broadcast of films as the primary locus of viewing will radically change the nature of the documentary experience. Instead of local cinemas offering documentary evenings, groups renting documentaries for the purpose of discussion or work-related sessions, and teachers planning lessons around certain films, Canadians will for the most part catch the occasional documentary film on the specialty television cable channels, perhaps unaware that they are seeing National Film Board material. We are being told that these changes will not be so dramatic, and yet with the most recent announcement of the eradication of the Montreal studio facility, major layoffs of established and internationally renowned filmmakers, as well as further cuts to distribution⁸³, how can this be so?

I can only hope that whatever the ultimate demise of this acclaimed purveyor of information and art, the National Film Board, we as a society continue to value the medium of documentary film. Having taken for granted the rich resource that is a national and international treasure, we are faced at the very least with the possibility of a much paler version of this institution. Less money means not only fewer but less adventuresome projects; practicality and efficacy will unquestionably reign over innovation and experimentation. Therefore, it falls upon us all to appreciate and utilize those documentaries that have been made, on a range of topics, and from all periods, not only with an eye to persuading our Ministers of Education and Heritage and Culture that we demand this piece of our culture to remain alive, but, perhaps, so that we can know what we've got *before* it's gone.

Endnotes

1. Yasmin Jiwani, filmmaker, Through the Lens, television performance, Knowledge Network, 12 February, 1996.
2. See Gary Evans, In The National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949-1989 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 169-171 for a historical outline of Native involvement in national Film Board films. Studio 1, the NFB studio run by Native filmmakers, has been in existence since the early 1990's. It was established both to train Native filmmakers and provide an environment whereby creative control could become established.
3. Robert Miles, Racism (London: Routledge, 1989), 11. Also see Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., The White Man's Indian; Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 27.
4. See Berkhofer, loc. cit. Also see Jean Barman, The West Beyond the West (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 154-6.
5. For a discussion of this philosophy of Social Darwinism see Berkhofer, 47-55, and Barman, 154.
6. Marsden and Nachbar, "The Indian in the Movies," History of Indian-White Relations, ed. Wilcomb E. Washburn, Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 4 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 608
7. Berkhofer, 65.
8. Ibid, 3.
9. For a thorough discussion of this concept see Berkhofer, 25-31, 72-80, 88, 101, 144-45, Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian; the Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 16-60, Leslie Monkman, A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), [literary history] 65-95, and Terry Goldie, Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989).

10. R. J. Surtees, "The Changing Image of the Canadian Indian: An Historical Approach," ed. D.A. Muise, Approaches to Native History in Canada (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1977), 111-125.

11. Ibid, 113.

12. Barman, 152-4.

13. Ibid, 154-6.

14. Gretchen M. Bataille and Charles L.P. Silet, The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1980), xxvii.

15. Vine Deloria, "Forward: American Fantasy," ed. Bataille and Silet, xi.

16. Marsden and Nachbar, op. cit., 609-10.

17. John A. Price, "The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures", ed. Bataille and Silet, 75.

18. Ibid, 76.

19. This is a synopsis of various documentarists' views. For a thorough discussion, see Robert Edmonds, Anthropology on Film (Dayton: Pflaum Publishing, 1974), 11-15.

20. Michael Renov, Theorizing Documentary (New York: Routledge, 1993), 26.

21. Arlene Moscovitch, Constructing Reality; Exploring Media Issues in Documentary (Montreal: National Film Board, 1993), 2.

22. Philip Rosen, "Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts," ed. Renov, 87.

23. Bill Nichols, Representing Reality; Issues and Concepts in Documentary (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 17.

24. Ibid, 18.

25. The following is a summary of Nichols' historical analysis of the evolution of documentary form. A thorough discussion may be found in Representing Reality, 32-75. See also Paul Rotha, Documentary Film: The Use of the Film

Medium to Interpret Creatively and In Social Terms the Life of the People as It Exists in Reality (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952).

26. Nichols, Representing Reality 35.

27. Ibid, 43.

28. Ibid, 44.

29. Ibid, loc. cit.

30. Ibid, 61.

31. Ibid, 63.

32. Michael Apple, Ideology and Curriculum (New York: Routledge, 1990), 14.

33. E. W. Eisner, The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 96-7.

34. Apple, 8.

35. Ibid, 14.

36. Elizabeth Ellsworth, The Ideology of Images in Educational Media; Hidden Curriculum in the Classroom (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990), 1, and Elizabeth Ellsworth, "I Pledge Allegiance: The Politics of Reading and Using Educational Films", eds. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Critchlow, Race, Identity, and Representation in Education (London: Routledge, 1993), 201.

37. Ellsworth, I Pledge Allegiance, 204.

37. Ibid, 202.

38. Ibid, 209-10.

39. J.R. Martin, "What Should We Do With a Hidden Curriculum When We Find One?" Curriculum Inquiry 6, 1976, 135-51.

40. Ibid, 148.

41. Ibid, 145.

42. Henri Giroux, "Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 53, August 1983, 293.

43. Ellsworth, The Ideology of Images, 3.

44. Apple, 16, Ellsworth, I Pledge Allegiance, 214.

45. Jan Clemson, Education Liason Officer, National Film Board, Pacific Region, November, 1995.

46. Ibid.

47. Moscovitch, xvi.

48. For a thorough discussion of the history of the White disavowal and outlawing of the Potlatch see Douglas Cole, and Aldona Jonaitis, Chiefly Feasts and Beastly Cheats: Salvaging and Savaging the Kwakiutl Potlatch, (Vancouver, B.C.: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992).

49. A docudrama is a dramatized film based on real events.

50. Regarding this notion of saving through acculturation, and the consequent policies established therein, see Berkhofer and Francis.

1. Nichols, 223.

52. Berkhofer documents this process in part three of The White Man's Indian, "Imagery in Literature, Art, and Philosophy: The Indian in White Imagination and Ideology", 71-111.

53. Nichols, 34-5.

54. Ibid, 21.

55. Ibid, 35.

56. Ibid, 38.

57. The history of Indian/White relations is beyond the scope of this thesis. For comprehensive treatment of this subject please refer to Olive Dickason, The Canadian Connection: A Reader of Early Amer-Indian/Early European Experiences (Athabaska, Alberta: Alberta University Press, 1995), Olive Dickason, Canada's First Nations; A History of

Founding Peoples from Earliest Times (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), and J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).

58. Linda Alcoff introduces the salient points regarding issues of appropriation of voice in her article "The Problem of Speaking for Others," Cultural Critique, Winter 1991-92, 5-32. Arguing that by speaking for others, one is engaged in representing who they are, and thus participating in the construction of an image, Alcoff's article provides valuable insights to the nature of this thesis.

59. Although being a Quebecois aligns him somewhat with the position of Native people against English Canada, he is also aware of his connection to a province with an extremely bad reputation for prejudice towards its Native people. These facts, coupled with his being the son of immigrants who fled pogroms and genocide in Europe, cause Bulbulian to both fight for social justice and also to empathize with and respect the position of the Other. See Peter Steven, Brink of Reality; New Canadian Documentary Film and Video (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993), 103, 108.

60. Ibid, 109.

61. Ibid, 101.

62. Voice-over, Saltwater People.

63. Nichols, 129.

64. In the early 1960's various filming equipment was developed which allowed for visual and audio tracks to be recorded simultaneously. This is termed 'synchronous sound' recording, and the cameras concerned were the Eclair NPR, and the Arriflex BL, as well as the Nagra portable tape recorder.

65. Ray Conlogue, "Carving out a new role for the NFB", Globe and Mail, A15, 30 January, 1996.

66. Many contemporary documentarists and theorists are avid proponents of such changes. See theorists such as Renov, Rosen, and Trinh Minh-ha (both in Renov) for further explanation of these ideas.

67. Renov, 6.

68. Ibid, 35.

69. The issues concerning voice and its appropriation are complex and thus beyond the scope of this theses. Alcoff provides a good introduction. See also Paul Rabinow, "Discourse and Power: On the Limits of Ethnographic Texts," in Dialectical Anthropology, 10-1 and 2 (July 1985), 1-14, Edward Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," Critical Inquiry, Winter 1989, Volume 15, Number 2, 205-225, and Trinh T. Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

70. See Alcoff, 9.

71. Steven, 101.

72. Ibid, 102.

73. Hugh Brody, speaking at a public screening of The Washing of Tears, Ridge Theatre, Vancouver, B.C., March, 1994.

74. Loretta Todd, speaking at the UBC Museum of Anthropology, November, 1992.

75. Apple, 13.

76. Apple, 14.

77. Geraldine Bob, Gary Marcuse, Deanne Nyce, and Lorna Williams, First Nations; The Circle Unbroken - Teacher's Guide (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1993), 6.

78. Ibid, 7.

79. Ibid, 6.

80. Gary Marcuse, March, 1996.

81. First Nations; The Circle Unbroken has been a best seller, selling roughly five times the average number of package sets in Canada, says Gary Marcuse, March, 1996.

82. This philosophy is evidenced in the following, reprinted from 7 of First Nations; The Circle Unbroken:

THE TEACHING PROCESS

The pedagogy used in this series is designed to help educate students for social responsibility. The key elements of the teaching process are:

- an emphasis on the concept of social/cultural/environmental/global interdependence
- a recognition of the importance of building a community within the classroom and the school, and an emphasis on developing decision-making skills within the context of a democratic classroom
- an emphasis on giving students a voice and listening to their questions and concerns. This approach begins with what the students already know; helps them to examine critically the sources of their information and the assumptions and biases inherent in those sources; and then moves on to questions the students raise.
- the inclusion of multiple perspectives; seek wisdom from all ages
- an emphasis on communication (verbal and non-verbal) as an attitude as well as a skill; on seeking common ground; and on tolerating ambiguity and the uncertainty of knowledge
- a recognition of the importance of forming and acting upon convictions and commitments, while staying open to new ideas and the possibility of being wrong
- the inclusion of activities for information, feeling, and action, facilitating the integration of spirit and mind
- to create a climate where all are teachers, all are learners.

83. The Federal Budget tabled on March 6, 1996 outlines reductions in funding to the National Film Board of ten

million dollars (from \$75,800 in 1995-96 to \$65,184 in 1996-97), which Film Commissioner Sandra Macdonald calls "a major budget cut for the NFB". Jan Clemson commented upon these cuts as follows (March 22, 1996):

Distribution has been virtually eliminated across the country, including all video lending libraries except Montreal [this latest termination of the Toronto and Ottawa libraries due to occur in the summer of 1996], except for a small marketing staff and publicists, whose sole responsibility is to stimulate sales on a cost-recovery basis. The success of the National Film Board over the last fifty-seven years has obviously been in the quality of its productions, but also very important has been its ability to connect with the Canadian public on the use of films and provide a valuable two-way communications link. The disappearance of distribution activities and community liaison will reduce the NFB in the eyes of the public to a remote film producer or funding agency, which could easily be absorbed by either Telefilm Canada or the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

References

- Adams, John W. 1979. Representation and Context in the Ethnographic Film. Film Criticism Vol. IV No. 1: 89-100).
- Alcoff, Linda. 1991. The Problem of Speaking for Others. Cultural Critique Winter 1991-92: 5-32.
- Apple, Michael. 1990. Ideology and Curriculum. New York: Routledge.
- Appleford, Robert. 1995. Coming out from behind the Rocks: Constructs of the Indian in Recent U.S. and Canadian Cinema. American Indian Culture and Research Journal 19:1: 97-118.
- Barman, Jean. 1991. The West Beyond the West. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bataille, Gretchen M. and Charles L.P. Silet. 1980. The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press.
- Berkhofer, Robert. 1978. The White Man's Indian; Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Berton, Pierre. 1975. Hollywood's Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Bob, Geraldine, et. al. 1993. First Nations; The Circle Unbroken, Teacher's Guide. Montreal: National Film Board of Canada.
- Boulton, Laura. People of the Potlatch 16mm. 21 min. Produced and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada, Montreal.
- Brody, Hugh. 1994. The Washing of Tears videorecording. 55 min. Produced and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada, Montreal.
- _____. 1994. Unpublished question and answer period following screening of The Washing of Tears, Vancouver, B.C.

- Budd, R. W. et. al. 1967. Content Analysis of Communications. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Bulbulian, Maurice. 1992. Saltwater People videorecording. 122 min. Produced and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada, Montreal.
- Clemson, Jan. 1995-96. Various conversations at the National Film Board Pacific Region office.
- Cole, Douglas and Aldona Jonaitis. 1992. Chiefly Feasts and Beastly Cheats: Salvaging and Savaging the Kwakiutl Potlatch. Vancouver, B.C.: Douglas and McIntyre.
- Conlogue, Ray. 1996. Carving out a new role for the NFB. Globe and Mail (p A15). Toronto: January, 30, 1996.
- Cooke, Katie. 1984. Images of Indians Held by Non-Indians: A Review of Current Canadian Research. Ottawa: Research Branch Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
- Dickason, Olive. 1992. Canada's First Nations; A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.
- _____. 1995. The Canadian Connection: A Reader of Early Amer-Indian/ Early European Experiences. Athabaska, Alberta: Alberta University Press.
- Edmonds, Robert. 1974. Anthropology on Film. Dayton: Pflaum Publishing.
- Eisner, E. W. 1985. The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs. New York: Macmillan.
- Ellsworth, Elizabeth. 1990. The Ideology of Images in Educational Media; Hidden Curriculum in the Classroom. New York: Teachers College Press.
- _____. 1993. I Pledge Allegiance: The Politics of Reading and Using Educational Films. In eds. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Critchlow, Race, Identity, and Representation in Education. (1993). London: Routledge.
- Evans, Gary. 1984 John Grierson and the National Film Board: The Politics of Wartime Propaganda. Toronto: Toronto University Press.

- _____. 1991. In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949-1989. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Fisher, Robin. 1988. The Image of the Indian. In eds. Robin Fisher and Kenneth Coates Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman.
- Fleras, A. 1991. Beyond the Mosaic: Minorities and the Media in a Multiracial/Multicultural Society. In ed. B. D. Singer, Communications in Canadian Society. (344-368). Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1991.
- Francis, Daniel. 1992. The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian In Canadian Culture. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.
- Feldman, Seth and Joyce Nelson. 1977. Canadian Film Reader. Toronto: Peter Martin Associates.
- Giroux, Henri. 1983. Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis. Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 53, August 1983: 257-293).
- Goldie, Terry. 1989. Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures. Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queens University Press.
- Gray, C. W. 1977. Movies for the People. Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada.
- Hardy, Forsyth. 1946. Grierson on Documentary. London: Collins.
- Holm, B. and George Irving Quimby. 1980. Edward S. Curtis in the Land of the War Canoes. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre.
- James, C. R. 1977. Film as a National Art: NFB of Canada and the Film Board Idea. New York: Arno Press.
- Jarvie, I. C. 1983. The Problem of the Ethnographic Real. Current Anthropology Vol. 24, No. 3: 313-325.
- Jiwani, Jasmin 1996. Through the Lens. Vancouver, B.C.: Knowledge Network.

- Jones, D.B. 1977. The National Film Board of Canada: the Development of its Documentary Achievement. Stanford University Press.
- Jacobs, Lewis. 1979. The Documentary Tradition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Jones, D. B. 1981. Movies and Memoranda: An Interpretive History of the NFB. Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute.
- Jiwani, Yasmin 1996. Through the Lens. Vanouwer, B.C.: Knowledge Network.
- King, T. et. al. 1987. The Native in Literature. Toronto: ECW Press.
- Kuhn, Annette. 1978. The Camera I; Observations on Documentary. In Screen, 1978, Vol. 19, #2:71-83.
- MacCann, R. D. 1973. The People's Films. New York: Hastings House Publishers
- Marcuse, Gary. 1996. Conversation over the telephone.
- Marsden, Michael T. and Jack Nachbar. 1988. The Indian in the Movies In Wilcomb E. Washburn (Ed.). Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 4: 607-616. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
- Martin, J. R. 1976. What Should We Do With a Hidden Curriculum When We Find One?, Curriculum Inquiry 6, 1976: 135-51.
- McLean, Grant. 1955. No Longer Vanishing 16mm. 28 min. Produced and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada, Montreal.
- Miles, Robert 1989. Racism. London: Routledge.
- Miller, J.R. 1989. Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Monkman, L. 1981. A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Moscovitch, Arlene. 1993. Constructing Reality; Exploring Media Issues in Documentary. Montreal: National Film Board.

- Nash, M.T. 1983. (Unpublished PHD thesis). Images of Women in National Film Board of Canada Films During World War II and the Post-War Years (1939 to 1949). Montreal: McGill University.
- Nelson, Joyce. 1988. The Colonized Eye: Rethinking the Grierson Legend. Toronto: Between the Lines Press.
- Nichols, Bill. 1985. The Voice of Documentary. In Bill Nichols (Ed.) Movies and Methods Volume II: 258-273. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 1991. Representing Reality; Issues and Concepts in Documentary. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Peoples of the Skeena. 1949. 16mm. 15min. Produced and distributed by the National film Board of Canada, Montreal.
- Price, John A. 1980. The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures. In The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies, eds. Gretchen M. Bataille and Charles L.P. Silet, 75-91. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press.
- Rabinow, Paul. 1985. Discourse and Power: On the Limits of Ethnographic Texts. Dialectical Anthropology 10.1 and 2: 1-14.
- Renov, Michael. 1993. Theorizing Documentary. New York: Routledge.
- Rotha, Paul. 1971. Documentary Film. London: Faber and Faber.
- Ruby, Jay. 1980. Exposing Yourself: Reflexivity, anthropology, and film. Semiotica 30 - 1/2 : 153-79.
- Said, Edward. 1989. Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors. Critical Inquiry, Winter 1989, Vol. 15, No. 2: 205-225.
- Sealey, D. Bruce. 1973. The Indians of Canada: An Historical Sketch. In eds. D. Bruce Sealey and Verna J. Kirkness (1973). Indians Without Tipis; A Resource Book by Indians and Metis, 9-38. Winnipeg: William Clare (Manitoba) Limited.

- Stam, Robert and Louise Spence. 1985. Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction. In Bill Nichols. Movies and Methods Volume II, 632-648. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stedman, Raymond William. 1982. Shadows of the Indian. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Steven, Peter. 1993. Brink of Reality; New Canadian Documentary Film and Video. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Surtees, R. J. 1977. The Changing Image of the Canadian Indian: An Historical Approach. In ed. D.A. Muise Approaches to Native History in Canada, 111-125. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada.
- Swan, Susan. 1984. Educative Activities of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and The National Film Board of Canada. Ottawa: The Ontario Educational Communications Authority.
- Thistle, Paul C. 1993. Images of Native People Associated with the Kelsey Event. Native Studies Review 9, No. 1: 33-112.
- Todd, Loretta. 1991. The Learning Path videorecording 59 min. Produced and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada, Montreal.
- _____. 1992. Unpublished Lecture. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, November 17, 1992.
- Trinh, T. Minh-ha. 1989. Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- _____. 1993. The Totalizing Quest of Meaning. In Theorizing Documentary, ed. Michael Renov, 90-107. New York: Routledge.

Appendix AQuestions Which I Considered as I Viewed the Films.Technical/Factual

- 1) Who is the film's audience?
- 2) Does the film follow a narrative storyline?
- 3) What is the cinematic structure of the film?
- 4) What visual elements are used in the film (e.g.: archival footage, photographs, animation, news footage, etc.) and what effect do these have?
- 5) How does the film construct the image of the Indian?
What camera techniques does this film use? What effects result? (e.g.: close-up, medium/close, medium, longshot, low angle, high angle, wide-angle, slow-motion)
- 6) Does the film have an unseen narrator other than the voices of the subjects?
- 7) Does the film manipulate the soundtrack significantly?
How? What kind(s) of music does it employ? Is the music used to heighten the impact of what is being said, or to create a sense of drama?

Conceptual

- 8) What is the central message? What are the hidden messages? Does the film have an argument? Does it have a political agenda?

- 9) Is the film of the Expository, Observational, Interactional or Reflexive mode of documentary?

Conclusion

- 10) Does the film respect this culture?
- 11) Does the film portray guilt re. White/Indian relationship?
- 12) Does the film romanticize Indian culture? How?
- 13) Does the film romanticize White culture? How?
- 14) What is the film's tone? Does it have emotional resonance?
- 15) Is the film exciting visually? How so?