The White Man's Camera:

The National Film Board of Canada and

Representations of Indigenous Peoples in Post-War Canada

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the ways in which the National Film Board (NFB) delivered and promoted, through the medium of documentary films, Canadian government policies regarding Indigenous people to the Canadian population, as well as to Indigenous people, from the late 1940's to the mid-1960s.

The framework for the writing was that of an Indigenous scholar. This promotes the examination of an issue within the knowledge of the problem from experience and that methods such as storytelling are legitimate ways of viewing and sharing knowledge. The question driving the research was, were the filmmakers following government policy and is there any evidence of Indigenous agency.

First Nations peoples during the post-war period were still under the control of the Canadian government. Most First Nations still lived on reserves throughout the country and were marginalized from Canadian society, although rates of urbanization were increasing significantly. As contact increased in urban areas, the general knowledge regarding Indigenous peoples of many Euro-Canadians was minimal. The primary attitudes were that Indigenous peoples were the vanishing noble savage alongside the belief that they were lazy, drunken, slovenly savages unintelligent and incapable of change. Canada was experiencing a boom in the economy, population growth, both natural and immigration, increased need for natural resources and a stable workforce. It was the desire of the federal government that Indigenous peoples assimilate into the general population and adopt the cultural norms of Canada, which of course, had been the goal since before Confederation. However, in the post-war period,

government policy shifts also sought to enlighten Canadians about who Indigenous peoples “really were”, from an anthropological, colonial point of view of course.

The documentary *The Longhouse People* depicts the cycle of life and ceremonies on the Six Nations Reserve in Southern Ontario. It was filmed with the support of the community, highly unusual for the time, and is presented in a gentle and respectful manner. The documentary *No Longer Vanishing* presents a picture of the inherited attributes of the noble savage as strong physical specimens suited for laboring in the tough jobs of the new Canadian economy, whereas the film *Off to School,* gives the message that the only road to civilization for the Indigenous people was through the children as the adults were too backward and set in their ways to embrace any change. The film *Because They Are Different* portrays and emphasizes the negative stereotypes about Indigenous people in a patronizing manner. It implies the differences between Canadian society and the Indigenous population were the fault of Indigenous people.

These documentaries did not serve to advance the integration of Indigenous peoples into mainstream society. Neither did the films support attitudinal change among white Canadians. It should be noted that this work deals with difficult and sensitive subject matter, particularly should readers choose to view the films under study (all of which are publicly available online at nfb.ca.), and some readers may find the subject matter triggering and /or distressing.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Grant Froman, born on April 10, 1942, at Lady Willingdon Indian Hospital, Six Nations Ontario, and passed November 3, 2017, in Selkirk, Manitoba. Thank you for the stories, the teachings, and the love you could never express but I eventually realized was there. I love you Dad and miss you.

Introduction

She: kon (hello), my name is Karen Froman, and I am Kanyen'keha (Mohawk), Irish, English and Dutch. My father was Kanyen'keha from Six Nations of the Grand River territory, and my mother is a settler of Irish, English, and Dutch ancestry. I was born, raised, and continue to reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba, far from my father's homeland and extended family. The processes of colonization and rapid urbanization in the postwar period has ripped Indigenous peoples from their homelands, yet in many ways we remain connected to the land no matter where we may reside. I know where I come from even though I may not physically reside there. As Paulette Steeves asserts in her book *The Indigenous Paleolithic of the Western Hemisphere,* "Western educators in many academic institutions continue to ignore Indigenous knowledge, culture, and language…therefore, for many Indigenous scholars, writing is framed to privilege Indigenous knowledge. Introducing my ancestors serves cultural purposes and protocols, privileging Indigenous voices and acknowledging ancestors."[1]

This work explores ways in which the Canadian state promoted Indigenous policy to the general Canadian population as well as Indigenous peoples in the post-war period via the medium of documentary film commissioned (usually) by Indian Affairs and produced by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB). These federal policies towards First Nations peoples included citizenship, integration into the dominant society,

[1] Paulette Steeves, *The Indigenous Paleolithic of the Western Hemisphere* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021) 1.

education and training, urbanization, and economic development as part of the larger ideology of settler colonialism. These policies were yet another attempt by the Canadian government to solve the so-called “Indian problem” of poverty, dependence, and poor health. Yet, there was never a full understanding on the part of government officials or of non-governmental organizations such as the churches and other voluntary groups, that it was never an ‘Indian Problem’ but rather a ‘settler problem’ of colonialism and racism towards Indigenous peoples.[2] In Mark Anderson and Carmen Robertson’s *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers,* they identify what they call the “rule of three … essentialized sets of characteristics - depravity, innate inferiority, and a stubborn resistance to progress”[3] and these are clearly demonstrated in the majority of films from the era and provide a useful framework for analysis.

Thus, this work examines the history of the production of selected films portraying Indigenous (primarily First Nations) peoples in response to these policies produced by the NFB from the early nineteen fifties to the mid nineteen sixties, with a focus on three films in particular: *The Longhouse People* (1951), *No Longer Vanishing* (1955), and *Because They Are Different* (1964).

The post-war period in relation to Indigenous peoples remains understudied and is one reason why I was drawn to the research. More importantly however, it is this time period that my father and his siblings experienced the residential school system, and all

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[2] Adam Gaudry, “Researching the Resurgence: Insurgent Research and Community-Engaged Methodologies in Twenty-First Century Academic Inquiry,” in *Research as Resistance: Revisiting Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches,* ed. Leslie Brown and Susan Strega, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Women’s Press, 2015), 260.

[3] Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson, *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 6.

made the decision to relocate to urban areas. In a way, this research builds upon my MA thesis which examined identity and cultural questions among the urban born and raised generations with mixed ancestry.[4] However, what interested me more this time was "integration" policies and programs. This interest was triggered as I was reading Mary Jane Logan McCallum's work *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940–1980* and the chapter where she discusses the various "placement and relocation" programs.[5] This chapter brought up oddly familiar memories of stories surrounding how my parents met. This led me to question my parents prior to my father passing, and indeed, if it had not been for the various integration programs run by Indian Affairs in collaboration with "local agents and supervisors…Indian Health Services, missionary, and school staff"[6] during the nineteen fifties and sixties, my parents would never have met, and I would not be here today. My father, who was from Six Nations, ended up in Vancouver, BC, in 1963 to attend an adult upgrading and university prep program. His placement officer, Bob, had been unable to find my father suitable housing, so my father was living with Bob. My Euro-Canadian mother had recently spent a year as a community health nurse in Bella Bella and was renting a house in Vancouver with several friends when a young woman they had known from Bella Bella moved to Vancouver as a participant in a training program. Bob was also this young lady's placement officer, and the young woman moved in with my mother and her friends. The situation did not work out, the

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[4] Karen Froman, "The Undercover Indian: Explorations in Urban, Mixed-Ancestry Aboriginal Identity and Culture" (MA thesis, University of Manitoba, 2007).

[5] Mary Jane Logan McCallum, "The Permanent Solution: The Placement and Relocation Program, Hairdressers, and Beauty Culture," in *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940–1980* (University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 66–119.

[6] Ibid. 67

young woman went back to Bella Bella, and my mother and friends invited Bob for dinner. Bob brought my father along for the dinner, and that is how my parents met! Apparently, my mother wasn't terribly impressed at first, but my dad managed to charm his way to her heart.

As a result of the policy of integration in place at the time, and the choices made by my family, we became part of the exodus of Indigenous peoples from the reserves to the cities in the mid twentieth century.[7] In terms of Indigenous attitudes towards education and employment at the time, I consider my father and his siblings, all of whom came of age in this time period. My father and his younger siblings were all residential school survivors, and our family had very little in terms of material goods, land base, or stable employment. I grew up hearing stories of the entire family spending summers travelling by horse and wagon working as itinerant farm labour, picking strawberries for twenty-five cents a bushel. After my grandfather's death in 1957, the small one-acre plot of land the family had was sold back to the band council by my grandmother and she left for Toronto, leaving my father, who had left school by this time, to fend for himself and his younger siblings "to rot in the mush hole", (a term used by the children to refer to the Mohawk Institute). Therefore, there was literally nothing on the reserve for my father or his siblings. For this generation, the first to leave the reserve, education was the key to a better life. As my cousin Cammy Coughlin states in

[7] For an examination of the post-war Indigenous urbanization period, see Hugh Brody, *Indians on Skid Row: The Role of Alcohol and Community in the Adaptive Process of Indian Urban Migrants* (Ottawa: Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1971); Edgar Dosman, *Indians: The Urban Dilemma* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972); Jean Legasse, *People of Indian Ancestry in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1958); Mark Nagler, *Indians in the City* (Ottawa: Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, St. Paul University, 1970).

her dissertation, quoting her mother, my Aunt Debra, “Mom would say, – ‘You can have furniture like that one day, you know. You have to do well in school so you can graduate and get a good job. I don’t want you to have to work as hard as I do. I didn’t graduate and look at me – I now have to work two jobs to pay for this house and you kids.’ This message was a regular recording for me growing up.”[8] Like my cousin, I too had this message as I grew up.

However, our parents never saw this emphasis on education or our move to urban areas as “losing” our identity or as assimilation mainly because as visibly Indigenous people, they knew they couldn’t assimilate simply because of racism. However, they all outright admitted to choosing Euro-Canadians as marriage partners because of racism. In the words of my Aunt Debra, “The reason I married your father is because I wanted to have children who were fair-skinned like you. There were Indian men I could have chosen to be your father, but I chose your blue-eyed, blonde-haired father so that my children could have the benefit of looking White. I did not want you kids to have to go through life being judged on the color of your skin. Do you understand this?”[9] My father’s reasoning was much the same. At the same time however, as explored in my MA thesis, and echoed in Coughlin’s dissertation, while the emphasis was on ‘fitting in’, we were always taught to be proud of our Indigenous heritage, although this was confusing for us all as children. However, for some family members on my mother’s side, their marriage was seen as problematic. My mother’s sister never

[8] Debra Black-Froman, as quoted in Camela Coughlin, “A Mother’s Hopes and Dreams for Her Daughter: The Parallel Journey Between Two Mohawk Leaders in Different Contexts and Careers” (PhD diss., University of Victoria, 2011), 79.

[9] Ibid., 81–82.

acknowledged my father or my sister and myself as she did not approve of my mother's choice of husband. My grandmother was also disapproving at first, and I have known since childhood that she wrote her a letter expressing her disappointment and how she "couldn't bear the thought of her grandchildren growing up half naked and dirty on some God-forsaken reserve". This thinking on the part of my aunt and grandmother (who eventually changed her mind), is most clearly reflected in the film *Because They are Different.* I would therefore argue that what we are seeing in these films is both the continued bio-racism of the settler population and, on the part of Indigenous peoples, not so much evidence of total assimilation but rather the tentative, jumbled, and confused beginnings of a bi-cultural identity and culture motivated by limited economic choices because of colonialism. This is seen most clearly in the film *The Longhouse People,* as my father did pass on the limited cultural knowledge that he had, and in *No Longer Vanishing,* where we see young Indigenous people of this generation making the same choices my family did. As such, this work then is not a 'traditional' historical work in that it is intended more as "a narrative [that] might refute stereotypes or anti-Indigenous narratives that shape outsider's treatment of the community and its members."[10] I assert that this time period of urbanization and increased participation in the mainstream economy was less one of assimilation along the intended lines of colonial authorities and was more a period of adaptation, resilience, and cultural continuity. However, this in no way is intended to diminish or dismiss the very real experience of loss of language, culture, and identity for Indigenous peoples on or off the

[10] Susan A. Miller. "Native America Writes Back: The Origins of the Indigenous Paradigm in Historiography," *Wicazo sa Review* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 16.

reserve, there was also reclaiming and reassertion. For my own family, my father and aunties all worked hard to lose their accents and did not pass the language down to us, beyond a handful of words, even though prior to entry into the Mohawk Institute my father spoke Mohawk, Tuscarora, and some Seneca as well as English. In terms of culture and identity, again, this was limited due to my father's own childhood, but he did pass down the stories of Sky Woman and the thunder spirits as a couple of examples. However, in terms of my personal identity, as explored in my MA thesis, this was something I struggled with for years, as growing up in the nineteen-seventies, the word 'half-breed' meant I belonged nowhere. As Susan Miller asserts, "The ultimate purpose of Indigenous historiography is to place Indigenous peoples and communities at the center of historical narratives and to reflect their behavior and motives in terms of their own realties rather than the non-Indigenous realties that frame nearly all non-Indigenous writings about Indigenous peoples."[11] Furthermore, my occasional centering of myself or my family stories is done because, like Adam Gaudry, "I was now a historian documenting our family's history, a history that would soon be entered into the public records through my research … my responsibilities lay with my family."[12]

To date, the literature specifically examining the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) often fails to critically examine the representation of Indigenous people. General works on the history of the NFB include works such as Gary Evans, *In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949 to 1989*; D.B Jones, *Movies and Memoranda: An Interpretive History of the National Film Board of*

[11] Ibid., 18.

[12] Gaudry, "Researching the Resurgence," 254.

Canada; Brian Low, *NFB Kids: Portrayals of Children by the National Film Board of Canada, 1939–1989*; and Jerry White/William Beard (eds.), *North of Everything: English Canadian Cinema Since 1980*, to name some of the prominent studies. The few scholarly works that deal specifically with Indigenous peoples and the NFB are Joan Sangster, *The Iconic North: Cultural Constructions of Aboriginal Life in Postwar Canada*, Zoe Druick, *Projecting Canada: Government Policy and Documentary Film at the National Film Board*, as well as works by Bruno Cornellier, who examines the works of Alanis Obomsawin and Sherry Farrell-Racette, who looks at the photographs taken in residential schools, some of which were collected by the NFB.[13] When the existing literature examines Indigenous peoples it does so briefly, and most frequently in relation to the films produced through the NFB's Challenge for Change program, which produced films in the late 1960s to early 1970s,[14] or films from the 1970s onward. Further, while there has been much research done into the imagery and representations of Indigenous peoples in such areas as art, literature, history, and Hollywood film,[15] the

[13] Sherry Farrell-Racette, "Haunted: First Nations Children in Residential School Photography" in *Depicting Canada's Children*, ed. Loren Lerner (Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009); Bruno Cornellier, "The Thing about Obomsawin's Indianness: Indigenous Reality and the Burden of Education at the National Film Board of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies/Revue canadienne d'études cinématographiques* 21, no.2 (2012).

[14] See, for example, Thomas Waugh, M. Brendan Baker, and E. Winton, eds., *Challenge for Change: Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Gary Evans, *In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949 to 1989* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Brian J. Low, *NFB Kids: Portrayals of Children By the National Film Board of Canada, 1939–1989* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002); and Michelle Stewart, "The Indian Film Crews of Challenge For Change: Representation and the State," *Revue Canadienne d'Études cinématographiques / Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 16, no. 2 (Fall/automne 2007): 49–81.

[15] See, for example, Jacqulyn Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Michelle Raheja, *Reservation Reelism:*

portrayal of Indigenous peoples by the NFB is a relatively unexplored area in the social history of Canada.

Since its inception in 1939, the NFB was divided into four categories: educational, promotional, ministerial, and films designed to promote specific ideas and a sense of belonging among the citizens. The NFB was an integral aspect of Canadian nation building. The mandate of the NFB, as stated in the May 2, 1939, Act of Parliament creating the National Film Commission and as quoted on the NFB website, was "to make and distribute films across the country that were designed to help Canadians everywhere in Canada understand the problems and way of life of Canadians in other parts of the country."[16] The NFB was also responsible for "coordinating all the filmmaking activities of the various federal departments"[17], including the Department of Indian Affairs. The first head of the NFB, "John Grierson, was known as both a pioneer of documentary filmmaking and a specialist in the psychology of propaganda, and that he was a firm believer in the use of film as a tool for social change."[18] Christopher Gittings, in his work *Canadian National Cinema* questions the meaning of nation and how this meaning is represented across a range of Canadian films. Gittings somewhat awkwardly states, "The contested ground of the national-who

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Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Denise K. Cummings, Harvey Markowitz, and LeAnne Howe, eds., *Seeing Red – Hollywood's Pixeled Skins* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013).

[16] NFB Foundation: Our History, National Film Board of Canada, https://www.nfb.ca/history/about-the-foundation/.

[17] Ibid.

[18] NFB, "Our History."

belongs to the nation and who is excluded from that belonging … is constructed through the Indian Act, immigration legislation, the franchise, citizenship, biculturalism, and multiculturalism-has determined who has access to the production of cinematic images, and accordingly who is represented, and how."[19] Since the stereotypical images of Indigenous peoples both reviled as 'frozen in time', backward, childlike savages, or romanticized as noble, heroic but vanishing, both constructions in 'need' of 'civilization'[20] were firmly entrenched in the worldview of the general public, this image is really one that projects the "fantasies of the master race" and reduces its human subjects to "primitive obstacles to colonization or settlement."[21] Gittings, and many others, suggest that the continuing circulation of these stereotypes "provides cultural constructions of Aboriginality that contribute to a racist discourse advocating violence against First Nations and their resistance to ongoing dispossession" and that this "construction of Aboriginal difference … is inscribed not just in popular culture forms such as cinema, but in law."[22] Indeed, it is exactly this emphasis on difference that we see in NFB films of the era. This is hardly surprising, and Grierson's viewpoints regarding Indigenous

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[19] Christopher E. Gittings, *Canadian National Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 1.

[20] For example, see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992); Debra Doxtator, *Fluffs and Feathers: An Exhibit on the Symbols of Indianness* (Brantford, ON: Woodland Cultural Centre, 1992); Bruce Trigger, "The Historians' Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present," *Canadian Historical Review* 67, no 3 (1986); James Walker, "The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing," Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers* 6, no. 1: 21–51.

[21] Gittings, *Canadian National Cinema*, 196.

[22] Ibid., 196.

peoples were also well known and in keeping with his generation. While he believed the "Indian" was a 'dying race', somewhat contradictorily, he expressed his belief that the Inuit could be readily assimilated.[23] This, however, was likely due to the more romantic image held by most Canadians of the time towards Inuit, as Joan Sangster showed in *The Iconic North*.[24]

As one role of the NFB was to produce films for government departments, a brief overview of Indian Affairs is in order. Historically, responsibility for Indian Affairs has been under numerous colonial and federal departments, all reflecting different imperial mandates according to time period. For example, during the colonial era responsibility for Indian Affairs was vested in the British military. After Confederation, the policy of the state became one of assimilation of Indigenous peoples and the settlement of the west. As such, the Secretary of State for Canada was also the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. In 1936, as Canada began to exploit the far north in search of natural resources, the office of Superintendent General of Indians Affairs was abolished, and Indian Affairs was governed through the Minister of the Department of Mines and Resources. In 1950, responsibility for Indian Affairs was transferred to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration,[25] marking in my opinion, and others, a much more concentrated push for assimilation.

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[23] Low, *NFB Kids*, 36.

[24] Joan Sangster, *The Iconic North: Cultural Constructions of Aboriginal Life in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016).

[25] Treaties and Historical Research Centre, PRE-Group, *The Historic Development of the Indian Act* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1978).

Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherdale state that the key aspects of the post-war period in Canada were a prolonged sense of prosperity "due to sustained demand for Canadian resources … population growth due to a high birth rate as well as immigration with an increase in ethnic diversity, growing urbanization rates and the rise of suburbs." This era was also witness to the rise of the welfare state. Canada and her citizens began "responding to continentalism, to the process of Americanization … and in some cases to the process of Canadianization."[26] However, this work does not make the connection between increased natural resource extraction at this time and continuing dispossession of Indigenous peoples as direct result. The number of films that I could find that dealt with southern or urbanized First Nations peoples within the specified time period were limited, a grand total of six films, three of which are examined in this work.[27] There are dozens of films from the era that deal with all of the above mentioned topics, such as *Look To The North (1944)* which examines the development of the far north for wartime purposes and post-war planning. This film complete erases any Indigenous presence and reinforces the notion of an empty land free for the taking. Other early films that have Indigenous peoples as the main subject matter such as *Peoples of the Skeena (1949) and People of the Potlatch (1944)* attempt to depict the people as "existing in two worlds…[and] we see how other ways of life are being adopted."[28] In other words, white ways. Other films of the era promote everything from modern

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[26] Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherdale, eds., *Creating Postwar Canada Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945–75* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 2.

[27] The films identified are *Circle of The Sun, 1960; The Longhouse People, 1951; No Longer Vanishing, 1955; Because They Are Different, 1964; The Transition, 1964; High Steel, 1965*

[28] https://www.nfb.ca/film/peoples_of_the_skeena/ last accessed June 2021.

medicine in *On Prescription Only (1960)* to how health care is being delivered to isolated and Indigenous communities alongside economic development (*Pangnirtung, 1959; Canada's Awakening North, 1951; Our Northern Citizen, 1956; Down North, 1958).* One film that stands out simply because of its hilarity in contemporary eyes is *Survival in The Bush,* 1954, which, by sending out two NFB cameramen with an Indigenous guide, supposedly shows viewers what to do if they find themselves stranded in the bush with nothing but an axe The message that comes across is: have an Indigenous person with you.[29] In addition to a significant number of films dealing with the North, the NFB also produced dozens of films aimed at the integration of immigrants such as *Passport to Canada, 1949* and *A Foreign Language, 1958*, the latter of which chillingly acknowledges that "schooling is impossible if one doesn't understand the language…but the ordinary schoolwork of the class can't be held up on their account."[30] These films demonstrate that the pressure to assimilate to Canadian ways was placed upon immigrants in similar ways to Indigenous peoples, as examined by Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta.[31] Yet other films, such as *Farewell to Oak Street, 1953,* looks at ways levels of government are dealing with issues such as urban slums, post-war housing shortages, health and sanitation, safety and affordability.

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[29] *Survival In the Bush,* directed by Bernard Devlin (1954, Ottawa, National Film Board)

[30] *A Foreign Language,* directed by Stanley Jackson (1958, Ottawa, National Film Board), https://www.nfb.ca/film/foreign_language/

[31] Heidi Bohaker, and Franca Iacovetta. "Making Aboriginal People 'Immigrants Too': A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in Postwar Canada, 1940s–1960s." *Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (September 2009).

The films that deal with increased demand for resources and the push into the far North are the majority and all spin these economic endeavours in positive ways, particularly when including Indigenous subjects.[32] Joan Sangster's article "Constructing the 'Eskimo' Wife: White Women's Travel Writing, Colonialism, and the Canadian North, 1940–60" demonstrates not only how the Canadian state stepped up its colonizing projects in the far north partly in response to Cold War concerns, but also shows how these "imagined communities" were constructed from outside, as well as within. Sangster's article also underlines the ways in which race and gender were central to these constructions of nation. As the political, social, and cultural ties to Great Britain receded after the Second World War, English Canadian identity became defined in relation to, and often in opposition to, the USA. Such a redefinition frequently took shape on the cultural front[33] with the NFB being just one part of this cultural redefinition.[34] Sangster takes this further in her work *The Iconic North*, and in particular her chapter on the NFB clearly demonstrates that for the Department of Indian Affairs, the role of the NFB was to reassure Canadians of the wisdom and benevolence of government policy, to build up and further Canada's reputation on the international stage for humanitarianism, and most importantly, to instruct Indigenous peoples on how

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[32] See, for example, films such as *Our Northern Citizen* (1956), *Northwest Frontier* (1942), *How to Build an Igloo* (1942), *Land of The Long Day* (1952), *Look to The North* (1944), *Canada's Awakening North* (1951), and *Down North* (1958).

[33] Joan Sangster, "Constructing the 'Eskimo' Wife: White Women's Travel Writing, Colonialism, and the Canadian North, 1940–60," in *Creating Postwar Canada Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945–75*, ed. Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherdale (UBC Press, 2008), 24.

[34] For an excellent and amusing examination of the role of the NFB during the Second World War and immediately after, see *Shameless Propaganda*, director Robert Lower, 2014, https://www.nfb.ca/film/shameless_propaganda/

to live within a modern, industrial state. Sangster's focus is on the North and questions how producers of culture, such as filmmakers and writers, constructed cultural images of Indigenous peoples. She argues that such images were constructed by white southerners for white, southern audiences and rarely depicted Indigenous truths or realities. She effectively demonstrates that despite the fact these constructed images bore little resemblance to reality, they were nonetheless powerful in shaping public opinion of the North and of Indigenous peoples. Essentially, Sangster argues that NFB films of this era were either ethnographic salvage films to capture the last images of a dying Inuit culture, or, as in the case of the films under study in this work, the promotion of modernization and cultural change to meet the goals of the Canadian state.

In order to facilitate these ideas of nation-building and modernization, from its inception, and particularly in the pre-television era, the NFB distributed films to be shown in theatres as shorts before the main feature, but also, more importantly through churches, schools, and community centres.[35] Both rural and urban Canadians across the country gathered to watch a variety of NFB produced films on subjects ranging from nutrition to Canada's resource industry to an animated sing-along.[36] The use of "travelling projectionists" to service the rural areas of the country was one of the most important ways in which the NFB attempted to fulfill its mandate, and has been well documented by other historians of the NFB.[37] The majority of scholars of the NFB agree

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[35] Gary Evans. *In the National Interest*, 6; Zoe Druick, *Projecting Canada: Government Policy and Documentary Film at the National Film Board* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 80.

[36] Ibid., 6.

[37] Low, *NFB Kids*, 38.

that the aim of the distribution network was an attempt to "situate all cultures in Canada within a nationalist register, populated by culturally appropriate images and signifiers meant to garner a spectator response that would in effect define "Canada to Canadians and to other nations."[38]

As explored by Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta, the idea in the post-war period was to treat Indigenous peoples as "immigrants too," to encourage Indigenous peoples to "integrate" and become "full citizens" of the Canadian state as well as encouraging members of the dominant society to accept the integration of Indigenous peoples in similar ways as new immigrants.[39] While Zoe Druick's work *Projecting Canada: Government Policy and Documentary Film at the National Film Board* is primarily interested in documentary film and Canadian cultural policy in general, she does have a brief section dealing with Indigenous peoples and makes similar arguments to Bohaker and Iacovetta. Like Joan Sangster, Druick argues that early "NFB films romanticized Native customs as vanishing folkways"[40] and were romantic, ethnographic "salvage" films. She states that once Indian Affairs was under the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, "new representations of the relationship between the First

[38] Joel Hughes, "Film Exhibition at Indian Residential School, 1930–1969" (PhD diss., Concordia University, 2016), 105.

[39] For an excellent and detailed discussion of how the Canadian government constructed Aboriginal peoples as "immigrants," see Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta, "Making Aboriginal People 'Immigrants Too': A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in Postwar Canada, 1940s–1960s," *Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (September 2009): 427–61.

[40] Druick, *Projecting Canada*, 102.

Nations and the state was required"[41], particularly as Indigenous urbanization increased, thus, this was conceived as "simply a matter of internal migration, an analogue of overseas migration."[42] This sort of thinking led to films such as *No Longer Vanishing* (1954), which is examined in detail in Chapter Two. Zoe Druick argues that the films about Indigenous peoples in this time period are "the attempt to understand a population in relation to the Canadian state as a whole" and that all the films "demonstrate an active attempt to depict the indigenous population as a part of the Canadian state plan." Further, the films are also "providing a visual representation of this group for the wider society to understand its relationship to them."[43]

Zoe Druick effectively demonstrates the extent to which government media via the NFB in the post-war period became highly institutional in its perspective and support of government policy and overall authority. As Druick argues, non-theatrical film distribution and the use of travelling projectionists "corresponded to the Canadian state's work on integrating immigrant communities through public information" and "films were used to stimulate and monitor political discussion and to instigate the desire for modernizing projects."[44] In the post-war era, the NFB had "two approaches to non-theatrical screenings - one for the middle class and another for those who were creating problems for the Canadian state … First Nations and immigrants … precisely because they were problematic categories of citizenship; films were made to address their place

[41] Ibid., 104.

[42] Ibid., 104.

[43] Ibid., 109–10.

[44] Ibid., 80.

in Canadian society."[45] Indeed, many of the films produced during the 1940s and 1950s that dealt with Indigenous peoples are precisely of this nature, the 'Indian's place' in Canadian society. As shown by Joel Hughes, it is evident that Indian residential schools, and possibly First Nations communities, were an important part of this non-theatrical distribution system.[46] Further, as the Indigenous population had been increasing, government expenditures had also increased accordingly and so a main concern of the Canadian government at the time was economic. As examined by John Leslie, the policy that the Indian Affairs branch developed in this period was one of hopeful optimism by reframing the "Indian problem" in the emerging welfare state terms.[47] It was felt by branch officials that increased government supervision, community development projects to enhance social services[48] and continued educational integration and adult education and training opportunities would encourage Indigenous peoples to gradually enter the mainstream while retaining certain (harmless) elements of culture such as arts and crafts, family, and community life. Of course, what, exactly, integration meant was unstated as this was "prior to the orthodoxy of multiculturalism."[49]

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[45] Ibid., 102.

[46] Joel Hughes. "Film Exhibition at Indian Residential Schools - 1930-1969" (PhD diss., Concordia University, 2016), 102.

[47] John F. Leslie, "Assimilation, Integration, or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943–1963" (PhD diss., Carleton University, 1999), 244.

[48] Ibid., 244.

[49] Ibid., 179–81.

Joyce Green argues colonialism and imperialism are intrinsically related and "economically motivated, but (are) also culturally embedded processes which create and suppress knowledge. Colonialism depends on a constructed, instrumental racism for its moral legitimisation … to demonstrate the superior nature of the coloniser."[50] The writings and thoughts regarding Indigenous peoples have been created within this colonial framework. As Joan Sangster writes, "Colonialism is, however, far more than a set of changing political and economic structures with its own contradictions; it is also a lived experience of domination, negotiation, and resistance – and a profoundly gendered one at that."[51] Further, stereotypes about Indigenous peoples are rooted in history, have been firmly established in the Canadian psyche, Indigenous and non, and have proven difficult to dislodge,[52] and many are seen in the films under study. As put forward by Kathy Absolon and Cam Willet, "the onslaught of distorted images continues through such media as television, movies, literature, school curricula, and popular

[50] Joyce Green, "Towards a Détente with History: Confronting Canada's Colonial Legacy," *International Journal of Native Studies* 12 (Fall 1995): 86–87.

[51] Joan Sangster, *The Iconic North: Cultural Constructions of Aboriginal Life in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 5.

[52] See for example, Sarah Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the 'Indian Woman' in the Early Settlement Era of Western Canada," *Great Plains Quarterly* 13, no.3 (Summer 1993): 147–61.

culture"[53] and Indigenous peoples "have never been able to stop the traffic in distorted and sensationalized imagery."[54]

Through these images, the Indigenous person of the imagination has been made more real than the Indigenous of actual existence. This idea of an authentic culture implies that the 'real' culture is only that which existed in pre-colonial traditions and customs. "The problem with such claims to cultural authenticity is that they often become entangled in an essentialist cultural position in which fixed practices become iconized as authentically Indigenous and others are excluded as hybridized or contaminated."[55] This perception of Indigenous cultures as static also promotes the idea that "it is more important to focus on Indians still "in the bush" than those that exist in contemporary urban and rural settings"[56] and serves to deny the rights of Indigenous peoples to modernity. Indeed, most of the films produced by the NFB during the period under study, of which there are several dozen, are those that focus on people "in the bush."[57] The number of films that focus on urban, modern Indigenous peoples and

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[53] Kathy Absolon and Cam Willet, "Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research," in Brown and Strega, *Research as Resistance*, 113.

[54] Susan A. Miller, "Licensed Trafficking and Ethnogenetic Engineering," in *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*, ed. D.A. Mihesuah (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 106.

[55] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 21.

[56] J. Mishibinijima, "Uneasy Balance: Aboriginal Identity in Leadership Development" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 2004), 18.

[57] Ibid., 18.

communities is limited and these primarily emphasize ‘successful’ assimilation along Canadian government lines.

In the context of Canadian government filmmaking, this image creation was the domain of the NFB. The relationship between Indigenous peoples and the colonial state was one where the settler population assumed that as the ‘conquering’ people, they held power and dominance over an inferior group. Colonization has deeply impacted the lives, knowledge, and identity of Indigenous people. As Bill Ashcroft et al state, “Decolonization is the process of revealing and dismantling colonist power in all its forms. This includes dismantling the hidden aspects of those institutional and cultural forces that had maintained the colonialist power and that remain even after political independence is achieved.”[58] This process involves an understanding of where Indigenous people have come from and a critical analysis of the history, the causes of oppression, the picture of the oppression, the role of both the oppressor and the oppressed and the degree to which the colonialist ideas and practices have been internalized by Indigenous peoples. We still live in a state of active colonialism. In order to justify the genocide against Indigenous peoples in this country, we must be painted as inferior–that’s the colonial game.

Cinematic images such as those produced by the NFB in the post-war period continue that process. The dominant culture therefore continues to marginalize Indigenous peoples, to ignore and erase our existence. We are taught every day, explicitly in classrooms, and implicitly through messages from the media, that our

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[58] Ashcroft et al., *Post-Colonial Studies*, 63.

cultures are something of the past, something that exists in negative contrast to western values, and that if we live modern lives and adapt our cultures to modern life, we have somehow become 'less' Indigenous. These stereotypical images feed into this ongoing cycle, and our contemporary existence, and therefore the real problems in our communities, simply don't exist in the minds of the dominant culture. As put forward by Mary Jane Logan McCallum, "Many Canadian historians seem profoundly uncomfortable with Aboriginal modernity, as evidenced by the chronologies and scholarship available to the student of Aboriginal history. Aboriginal history is heavily weighted on the eras of early contact and the fur trade." The use of "dismissive terms like 'irrelevant,' 'dependent,' and 'oblivion'" and the notion "that Indian history itself is said to have arisen out of 'relative obscurity' in the 1960s" further silences the voices of Indigenous scholars.[59] Indigenous cultures and identities have persisted in a modern, urban context despite the common assumption held by the dominant society that the successful adaptation to an urban setting by Indigenous peoples necessitates the loss of their identity as Indigenous. In other words, the 'successful' urban Indigenous person is no longer a 'real Indian', which implies cultural assimilation. The entrenched misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in nearly all aspects "of popular culture leads us … to seek validation in each other. This is a two-edged sword … generalized representations of Aboriginal role models can negate the reality of oppression. A minority of Aboriginal peoples who have successfully negotiated Western culture are too often held up as proof that the problems of oppression, racism, and inequity can be easily overcome or, worse, that the roots of these problems lie not within institutions or

[59] McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History,* 9.

systems of governance but within Aboriginal peoples themselves."[60] Indeed, the message in the majority of films under discussion imply exactly this, that it is the problem of Indigenous people and their failure to adapt or assimilate in a manner that is acceptable to the dominant culture. My family could be seen as a 'successful' adaptation to an urban, capitalist society, however the daily microaggressions and stereotypical assumptions that we faced were very real.

As Daniel Francis states, "Canadians did not expect Indians to adapt to the modern world. Their only hope was to assimilate, to become White, to cease to be Indians. In this view, a modern Indian is a contradiction in terms: Whites could not imagine such a thing. Any Indian was, by definition, a traditional Indian, a relic of the past.… To the degree that they changed they were perceived to become less Indian.… White society was allowed to change, to evolve, without losing its defining cultural, ethnic, and racial characteristics, but Indian society was not."[61] This notion has proven difficult to dislodge, and particularly for Indigenous scholars this results in what Antoinette Burton calls "being hit with the History stick"[62] as well as being hit with what Mary Jane Logan McCallum refers to as "the Identity stick," in that "Identity in many ways precedes what we write and reinforces a schism that makes Aboriginal people invisible as scholars and scholars invisible as Aboriginal."[63]

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[60] Absolon and Willet, "Putting Ourselves Forward," 109.

[61] Francis, Daniel. *The Imaginary Indian*, 59.

[62] Antoinette Burton, as quoted in McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History*, 237.

[63] McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History,* 237.

Thus, this work is one that attempts to examine how the NFB films of the post-war period presented these complex and interconnected questions of citizenship, integration into the dominant society, education and training, urbanization, and economic development to both the general population and Indigenous peoples. In Chapter One, I examine an unusual film in that it does not seem to promote or support government policy of the post-war period. The film under examination in this chapter is *People of the Longhouse*, (1951) and was written, directed, and edited by Allan Wargon. This film is an interesting one for several reasons, one being its very fair and accurate representation of the cultural continuity of the traditional Longhouse community, considering the government's mandate of integration and modernization at the time. This is also the only film in which the community of Six Nations was an active participant in the creation of this film, something that would not happen to such a degree until the Challenge for Change program in the mid-1960s. I argue that this is an example of not only the Haudenosaunee peoples' long history of utilizing settler methods and technologies to convey our message, be that cultural or political, but also of community control and agency. Furthermore, this is the only film that has not yet received any scholarly attention, save for a single obscure, and not particularly useful dissertation from 1972.[64]

In Chapter Two, I examine the film *No Longer Vanishing* (1955) which is a film promoting Canadian government policies of educational and occupational integration of Indigenous peoples. This film was a clear favorite of the department of Indian Affairs

[64] Sharon Kay Ruhly, "The Communication of Culture Through Film" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1972).

and was intended to inform the general public that Indigenous peoples were ‘ready and capable’ of joining Canadian society as ‘full citizens’ and takes as its subject matter southern First Nations who have, in the eyes of the state, successfully made the transition to modernity. Here, I argue that films such as this reinforce in the minds of the Canadian public that the government has been more than generous towards Indigenous peoples and that our failure to integrate into Canadian society is our fault, that we are somehow inherently incapable, inherently primitive, rather than recognizing this as a result of government policy over the course of more than a century. Additionally, this film fails to recognize or acknowledge the level of individual agency on the part of the people showcased as success stories. Part of the unspoken implication in this film and others of the era, is that, as Indigenous peoples move into urban areas and take up wage labour jobs, we have somehow left our identities and cultures as Indigenous peoples at the reserve border. That we are somehow ‘exceptional’, which echoes Deloria’s argument of Indigenous peoples being constructed as “unexpected” in modern spaces[65], that we somehow cannot be modern and Indigenous at the same time.

The final film under discussion, in Chapters 3 and 4, is *Because They Are Different* (1964), released about a decade after the films already discussed. This film explores the issues surrounding integration via a series of interviews. Much of the subject matter in the film deals with welfare and education and it is in many ways a disturbing film to watch, as despite it being in black and white, it could easily have been filmed in the last few years. The current description of the film on the NFB website

[65] Phillip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

states, “This short documentary explores issues surrounding the integration of Canadian Aboriginal people into social institutions such as the non-Aboriginal school systems and workforce. Questions arise about the viability and desirability of integration, and old prejudices are revealed in interviews and commentary from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.” In these chapters, I argue that despite the NFB insisting the film was a critique of white attitudes, the attitudes and images depicted in this film instead reflect a specific image and message of Indigenous poverty and degeneracy.

Despite the fact that all of the films examined were intended to convey to Euro-Canadian audiences the idea that Indigenous peoples were ‘ready and capable’ of full integration into the dominant society, they also serve to reinforce difference and the old stereotypes of poverty, ignorance, addiction, and neglectful parenting. Despite the fact that, in the last film in particular, we hear *do* criticisms of official policy, these messages of criticism and resistance are drowned out in the dominating message of continued difference and the ‘only’ solution being that of total assimilation/integration. Considering the fact that this is the time period in which residential schools were closing down in favour of integrated schools as well as changes to the Indian Act allowing for provincial child welfare authorities to provide services to reserves, one could suggest films like these served to justify the mass removal of children into the child welfare system at this time, now known infamously as the Sixties Scoop. As brilliantly argued by Allyson Stevenson in *Intimate Integration: A History of the Sixties Scoop and the Colonization of Indigenous Kinship,* “In the unilateral application of child welfare laws to First Nations and Métis peoples in Canada, a multitude of well-meaning and not so well-meaning

Canadians developed a consensus on Indigenous suffering. In doing so, social workers and social scientists in the post-war period diagnosed the enacting of Indigenous familial roles and responsibilities and the material deprivations derived from the multiplying effects of colonization as a lack of adjustment to Euro-Canadian middle-class norms. However, in their new drive for legitimacy as secular saviours, social workers, social scientists, and politicians employed the logic that had long animated state-based approaches to solving the "Indian problem": the removal of Indigenous children from the influence of their families, communities, and cultures. Beginning in the 1950s, First Nations and Métis peoples across Canada experienced an increase in interventions by child protection workers who apprehended Indigenous children and placed them in foster and adoptive homes for their purported protection".[66]

Indeed, one could also argue that living conditions on many reserves have not improved much since these films were made and that attitudes on the part of many Euro-Canadians have not changed to any great degree. Furthermore, given the overall generally positive portrayals of residential schools and the education and training provided to Indigenous children in these films and others of the era, it is hardly surprising that so many Canadian reacted with such shock and surprise, and indeed denial, when the truth of what really occurred in these schools was finally recognised. Despite the belief, or at least hope, on the part of Indian Affairs that by simply showcasing such things as a multi-cultural classroom, and well-dressed educated Indigenous people with jobs, then all problems of racial inequality and prejudice would

[66] Allyson Stevenson, *Intimate Integration: A History of the Sixties Scoop and the Colonization of Indigenous Kinship* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020). 3-4

be solved. Considering the fact that Canada is still struggling with these issues, it would seem that the medium of documentary film was hardly effective.

Chapter One:

The Longhouse People: Cultural Continuity

The film under examination in this chapter, *The Longhouse People* (1951, 22 min.) was written, directed, and edited by Allan Wargon and produced by Tom Daly, director of Studio B at the NFB during the 1950s and '60s. Allan Wargon was able to retain a remarkable level of personal control over this film as it seems it was not commissioned by any particular government department but seems to have been a 'pet project' of Wargon's, which is remarkable considering he had never made a film before and was a fairly new hire at the NFB.

This film is interesting mainly for its very fair and reasonably accurate representation of the Longhouse community, which is surprising given the historical time period and the government's mandate of assimilation. Also of note is the high level of community participation and control over the production and distribution of the film. The discovery of an online blog turned self-published e-book written by Allan Wargon himself has been incredibly illuminating into why this film is as accurate as it is, given the time it was made.[1] The first time I watched this film, which was many years ago and long before I began this research, I was both surprised and shocked by the reasonable accuracy and the gentle, if romantic, manner in which the filmmaker treated his subject matter. Although, I had some suspicions about it, particularly the False Face ceremony.

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[1] Allan Wargon, *The Birth of Hollywood North: Nice Idea, But Nothing Good Ever Came Out of Canada* (Shelburne, ON: Pied Piper Books, 2016), Kindle. This was first published online at http://allanwargon.blogspot.com/ and the relevant blog postings have now been removed from the website and repackaged as an e-book.

I understand enough Kanyen'keha (Mohawk) to know the language was correct, and I am familiar enough with several of the dances and songs to know that what was depicted in the film was accurate, if somewhat scripted. Although, as I researched the process of this film, it would seem that all the dances and ceremonies filmed were done without any direction on the filmmaker's part. With the exception of the False Face ceremony, the songs and dances shown in the film are relatively commonplace. As all False Face ceremonies are very specific and secret however, I had no idea if that segment of the film was accurate. Many years ago, a Longhouse Faith keeper I know confirmed the legitimacy of the film in a conversation. It was people from the Sour Springs Longhouse who participated in the film, and such a film could never be made today.[2] Indeed, according to Wargon himself, this portion of the film did indeed result in serious problems as will be discussed later.

A brief discussion of the filmmaker himself is in order to try to understand better how and why such a film was made so early in the NFB's history and in the social climate of the time. Interestingly, Allan Wargon began his career as an artist, and made a living creating displays as a freelancer for Eaton's. Although he had a desire to create films, he had no experience and was rejected several times for jobs with the NFB before finally being hired as head of the display department in 1948. His boss was Tom Daly, who took Wargon under his wing and began to teach him the film industry.[3] Wargon seems to have worked for the NFB until at least 1961, directing and / or writing eleven films. He also appears to have begun working with the CBC, writing and producing a

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[2] Sakoieta Wakathahionni, personal conversation, circa 2003.

[3] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North,* Kindle, chapt. 7, 26-7

television series called *Heritage* from 1958 to 1967 and a children's show called *Mr. Piper*, of which four episodes were produced in 1963.[4] Wargon has also written and self-published as Pied Piper Books a number of works of fiction and poetry, and owned Piped Piper Films from March of 1979 until December of 2019.[5] Despite several attempts to make contact with Mr. Wargon via his blog, LinkedIn, and Facebook accounts, I have received no reply to date. It would appear that at least until February 2018 he did still seem to be alive as he was trying to enforce Clearview Township, Ontario to prevent trespassing on his land, which is the location of an increasingly popular hiking spot, Lavender Falls.[6] Allan Wargon would be approximately ninety-five years of age as of December 2019, with the most recent posting on his blog dating to December 2018.

Wargon's inspiration to do an ethnographic film on the Iroquois came about as a result of a chance meeting with Dr. Marius Barbeau, then "chief anthropologist and ethnologist at the National Museum in Ottawa,"[7] who wanted to use the NFB's superior sound equipment to record Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) music. Barbeau of course, is well

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[4] IMDB, "Allan Wargon," https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0912229/, a filmography website listing all known films that Wargon contributed to, accessed December 22, 2019.

[5] "Pied Piper Films," Federal Corporate Information, Corporations Canada, https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/cc/CorporationsCanada/fdrlCrpDtls.html?corpId=565555, accessed December 22, 2019.

[6] Ian Adams, "Here's Why Clearview Township Is Trying to Stop Parking on This Sideroad," *Wasaga Sun*, February 15, 2018, https://www.simcoe.com/community-story/8132108-here-s-why-clearview-township-is-trying-to-stop-parking-on-this-sideroad/, accessed December 22, 2019.

[7] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North*, Kindle, Chapt. 8, 28

known still today for his anthropological work, and as discussed by Carol Payne, was one of many who adopted the use of the camera to document "the vanishing race."[8] Indeed, Barbeau is listed as a consultant on at least two NFB films of the era.[9] By this time John Grierson had been replaced by Ross McLean (Commissioner from 1945–1950), who, according to Wargon, was already close friends with Dr. Barbeau and thus inclined to support Barbeau's request. However, all government projects must be financially justified and so Wargon says Robert Fleming, an NFB staff composer, and himself "largely as an afterthought … to represent the visual side"[10] were sent to "investigate if Iroquois music could be of benefit to the Board."[11] It was ultimately decided not to pursue the project, however the trip and his exposure to Haudenosaunee culture did have the effect of inspiring Wargon's artistic sensibilities and a long-standing desire to express the cycle of life in a series of paintings. As Wargon states, "in the Iroquois nature symbolism, and in what I could sense of their philosophy, I saw at once, excitedly, my unfinished paintings!" [12] Wargon says he then proceeded to study as much as he could about the Haudenosaunee before proposing the film to Tom Daly. Despite his inexperience, Daly gave permission for Wargon to explore the possibility of

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[8] Carol Payne, "Through a Canadian Lens: Discourses of Nationalism and Aboriginal Representation in Governmental Photographs," in *Visual Communication and Culture: Images in Action*, ed. J. Finn (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press 2012), 316.

[9] Marius Barbeau is credited as a consultant on *Totems*, 1944, dir. Laura Boulton; and *People of the Potlatch*, 1944, dir. Laura Boulton

[10] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North*, Kindle, Chapt. 8, 29

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

such a film at the Six Nations Territory in southern Ontario. Most interesting, is in writing about this time in his life, and giving a simplified explanation of what he learned about the Haudenosaunee, Wargon recognizes that history is always more complicated than "what historians retain," acknowledges the debate surrounding the founding date of the Confederacy, and shows a good grasp of the basics of Haudenosaunee culture.[13] Clearly, in what would have been sometime in 1948, we have a settler individual who is not involved in academia taking it upon themselves to learn about an Indigenous people prior to proposing his idea to the community. Given Wargon's approach to dealing with the community, and his interest in the ceremonial aspect of Haudenosaunee culture, I would postulate he was highly influenced by Horatio Hale's work, *The Iroquois Book of Rites*. Hale "fought ideas such as biological racism and the evolutionary perspective" and was the first to attempt to articulate a concept of cultural relativism.[14] It is also possible that as the son of Jewish immigrants who faced overt anti-Semitism, he may have been more sympathetic towards Indigenous peoples.

With the help of an interpreter, Howard Sky, Wargon was introduced to a Cayuga Confederacy chief named Deskaheh, also known as Alex General, whom he asked for permission to create an "honest and authentic film that would express a life cycle based on their traditional ceremonies."[15] Wargon soon discovered that such a thing was not nearly as simple or straightforward as he may have expected. For instance, he

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[13] Ibid. Chapt.8, 30-31

[14] David A. Nock, "Horatio Hale: Forgotten Victorian Author of Positive Aboriginal Representation", in *With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal relations in Colonial Canada,* eds. Celia Haig-Brown and David A. Nock (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006). 32

[15] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North*, Kindle, chapt. 8, 31

discovered deep divisions and factions among the people at Six Nations, not only between the traditional hereditary Confederacy and the elected Chief and council, but also among Confederacy people themselves. In the production report dated October 21, 1949, and housed in the NFB's archives, Wargon describes both the filming and the long process of negotiations with Six Nations. The report indicates that filming was only agreed to after the NFB "had promised to respect the Indian's wishes on all matters of production and distribution. The elders were afraid that theatrical audiences might ridicule their religious ceremonies."[16] Further, as per the community's wishes which Wargon describes in his memoir as "a treaty,"[17] the film, in its entirety, was to be distributed for educational purposes only. Interestingly, despite the fact that Wargon had zero experience in filming or producing a film, Tom Daly agreed it was "a unique opportunity. And, with no doubt some misgivings, told me to go ahead."[18]

Wargon does describe the problems he had in terms of gaining the consent of the Confederacy council, and states that the main reason Deskaheh was in favour was that the film "would show a true picture of Longhouse beliefs, as a counter to the preaching's of the missionaries, who called the Longhouse people pagans."[19] I would also suggest that Deskaheh was asserting modernity on Haudenosaunee terms. In other words, we are modern people, living modern lives and participating in the modern

[16] NFB production file 12-147_1951-07-21-note 30, July 21, 1951.

[17] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North*, Kindle, chapt.8

[18] Ibid. chapt. 8, 34

[19] Ibid. chapt. 8, 33

economy yet we remain Haudenosaunee.[20] Indeed, even the above-mentioned report states the film "depicts the modern-day life of this minority group of Iroquois."[21] However, Wargon also states that other council chiefs remained opposed, resulting in Deskaheh withdrawing his support. Again, what we are seeing here is fairly normal in terms of how the Confederacy council operates, all must agree. This is a clear demonstration that not only was our political system still fully functional at this time (and still is), but that the message we were trying to convey to the settler world was one that we had been consistently repeating since the days of Joseph Brant.[22] After further negotiations, arrangements were made to have the ceremonial filming done in Ottawa as this "was necessitated by the attitude of conservative elements among the Iroquois hierarchy, who in the past has consistently prevented the filming of such ceremonials.… Only by bringing the Iroquois to Ottawa were we able to create the rare opportunity of recording on film and soundtrack these hitherto veiled ceremonies."[23] It is actually quite surprising that this film was made at all, and I would speculate that both Wargon and

[20] For a deeper discussion on modernity and cultural continuity among Haudenosaunee peoples, see Susan M. Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), Rick Monture, *We Share Our Matters: Two Centuries of Writing and Resistance at Six Nations of the Grand River* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), and Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

[21] NFB Production file 12-147_1951-07-21-note 30, July 21, 1951.

[22] For a deeper discussion of how Haudenosaunee people have utilized the written word, radio, film, and music see Rick Monture, *We Share Our Matters: Two centuries of Writing and Resistance at Six Nations of the Grand River* (Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 2014).

[23] NFB production file 12-147, *The Longhouse People*, Production Report to Harold Betts from Allan Wargon, 1949.

Deskaheh must have been excellent orators to convince the community of the project's worth.

With the eye of an artist and a fascination and respect for what he had learned about the Haudenosaunee people, Wargon set about having a replica Longhouse created at "The Little Theatre" in Ottawa which they rented for 6 days "at a cost of $50.00 per day"[24], and finding appropriate outdoor filming locations. The group of people from Six Nations led by Deskaheh arrived in Ottawa, only able to stay for the week, and Wargon had five days to film five ceremonies with a group of people who had never acted before and who all spoke different Onkwehonweneha languages. It was decided by Deskaheh and Howard Sky that the language used would be Kanyen'keha as they felt more people would understand it. The small group from Six Nations was supplemented with people recruited from Kahnawake and filming began in the morning just outside of Ottawa on land owned by Arthur Price, who was also Dr. Barbeau's son-in-law, and whose two-storey brick farmhouse appears in the film as the abode of the man in the opening scenes.[25] According to the archival documents, Price was also responsible for building the two indoor sets as well, apparently in a single night, with the second set reusing material from the first due to time and budget constraints.[26] Wargon's plan was to film five ceremonies, each depicting part of the life cycle as expressed in Haudenosaunee cosmology, Morning Prayer (birth), the Rain Dance

[24] NFB production file 12-147, *The Longhouse People,* Production Report to Harold Betts from Allan Wargon, 1949.

[25] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North,* Kindle, Chapt. 9, 36

[26] NFB production file 12-147, *The Longhouse People,* Production Report to Harold Betts from Allan Wargon, 1949.

(struggle for life), a Thanksgiving harvest ceremony (joy of life), and two False Face ceremonies to depict the decline of life as well as one for death.

The first two ceremonies, that of the Morning Prayer and the Rain Dance, were filmed on Price's land in the morning of the first day of filming.[27] The remaining ceremonies, including The False Face ceremony for the decline of life, were conducted in a bedroom set on the soundstage in Ottawa. While this scene symbolized, in Wargon's vision, the decline of life, the actual ceremony performed is a False Face healing ritual.[28] This fact is acknowledged in a note circulated by the NFB dated July 21, 1951, and seems to have been part of the NFB's general information regarding the film.[29] Wargon also states in his memoir that Howard Sky and Deskaheh explained to him that False Face ceremonies are not shown to outsiders and indeed are secret even among the Haudenosaunee people themselves, and that "even if we did it for you, none of us are willing to be the dying chief" as this could "invite mortal consequences."[30] Dr. Barbeau, who had provided the False Face masks from the Ottawa museum, was in attendance observing the filming. Dr. Barbeau knew of an elderly Mohawk man, a retired civil servant and a Christian who was living in Ottawa, so, at a moment's notice, the old man agreed to play the part, and indeed considered it to be an honour.[31] This

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[27] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North,* Kindle, Chapt. 9, 36

[28] Ibid.

[29] NFB production file 12-147, *The Longhouse People,* 1951-07-21, note 30.

[30] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North,* Kindle, chapt. 10, 41

[31] Ibid.

elderly man turns out to be Charles Angus Cooke, “one of the first Aboriginal peoples to work for the Federal Department of Indian Affairs” from 1893 to 1926.[32]

It is interesting that Wargon only perceives Cooke as an “elderly Christian” and does not question or wonder how Dr. Barbeau would know Cooke. Considering the tight time constraints on filming, it isn’t surprising that Wargon wouldn’t bother, however I was personally curious if I could uncover the identity of some of the actors. Cooke, as it turns out, was part of the group who splintered off from Kanehsatake in 1881 and relocated to the Gibson reserve in Ontario although he was never recognized as “status” under the Indian Act. Despite this,

> Cooke was an Aboriginal artist and writer and a federal civil servant who, by attempting to establish a library and publish a Mohawk newspaper and dictionary, and by his recruitment of Native soldiers in World War One, tried to bring the knowledge and ideas of Native people into the educational and political realm of the Department of Indian Affairs. Cooke sought to redefine the Western medium of the printed word for the social, cultural, and political benefit of Aboriginal peoples, without compromising Aboriginal cultural interests and beliefs. He was motivated by a sincere interest in protecting, strengthening, and promoting Aboriginal languages, histories, and cultural practices, and desire to create an environment where Aboriginal people could make meaningful contributions to Canadian political affairs.[33]

Thus, I would argue, despite the persistent perception that “Christianized” Indigenous peoples have somehow ‘lost’ their culture, for the Haudenosaunee at least, this is not necessarily always the case.

The filming of the first False Face healing ceremony was done without direction. Wargon indicates that he had no idea what the people were going to do, he simply

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[32] Brendan F.R. Edwards, “A Most Industrious and Far-Seeing Mohawk Scholar: Charles A. Cooke (Thawennensere), Civil Servant, Amateur Anthropologist, Performer, and Writer,” *Ontario History* (January 2010): 82.

[33] Edwards, “A Most Industrious and Far-Seeing Mohawk Scholar,” 82.

filmed what was happening. Dr. Barbeau, who was in attendance for the filming of this False Face ceremony was, according to Wargon, extremely excited to be witnessing such a thing.[34] Wargon does go into some detail regarding what the people were doing during this filming and states that he understood "that when they donned the masks they became spirits" and that "their effect was psychic."[35] The following day, Wargon wanted to film the death ceremony, however, Deskaheh and Sky refused to do this. Wargon indicates at this point, after having worked with Deskaheh for several months with Howard Sky interpreting, that Deskaheh, in perfect English, stated "it's against our teachings to make a pretense of death" and instead suggested they "do the installation of a new chief, which begins with mourning and ends in celebration. Wouldn't that fit your cycle just as well?"[36] Wargon, after expressing his astonishment that Deskaheh had perfect English, writes that this idea "elated" him, as, to him, it demonstrated that Deskaheh understood not only Wargon himself, but also what he was trying to do, and that the installation ceremony was even better, as it symbolized rebirth.[37] As an aside, this little tidbit regarding Deskaheh concealing his command of the English language from Wargon is an interesting point to ponder. I would suspect that Deskaheh was "testing" Wargon and his commitment to the community and once he found this to be satisfactory, demonstrated his acceptance of Wargon by using English and later adopting him as nephew.

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[34] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North*, Kindle, chapt. 10, 43

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid. 43-44

[37] Ibid.

The final installation of a new chief and celebration ceremony was filmed in the Longhouse set on the soundstage. Wargon states that this ceremony was very long, but once he "had it in the can" he felt a feeling of satisfaction. The final dance scene, that of the "Fish Dance" was filmed at the NFB soundstage on John Street, also done in a single evening.[38] Wargon indicates in his memoir that after the filming of each scene, Deskaheh insisted on listening to the sound recording and if it did not meet his approval, the scene would be re-shot.[39]

Shortly after this part of the filming was complete, Wargon claims his vision and purpose of the film encountered problems. Wargon states that Dr. Barbeau, so impressed with the footage obtained, went to Ross McLean insisting the footage be made into five films, one for each ceremony for use in university anthropology courses. Wargon says he was appalled by this, for it violated everything he had done, the relationships he had made with the Haudenosaunee people, as well as the promises he had made to the people of Six Nations. Wargon understood that if the Haudenosaunee knew the film would end up being used for such a purpose, they would never have agreed to it. The idea had been for a *complete* film showing the true, modern nature of Haudenosaunee life, not merely a series of ceremonies to be analyzed, potentially misinterpreted, and studied individually. Technically, the footage belonged to the NFB, not Wargon, although he naturally had the artist's sense of possession over his creation. His states his protests over the proposed five films resulted in the footage

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[38] NFB production file 12-147, *The Longhouse People,* Production Report to Harold Betts from Allan Wargon, 1949.

[39]Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North,* Kindle, chapt. 9, 38

being shelved and him being regulated to obscure, unimportant jobs at the film board as punishment.[40] While I could not find any evidence of the film being "shelved" in the archival documents, considering that the filming of the ceremonies in Ottawa was done in 1949, but the film was not released until 1951, it is certainly possible. However, it is also entirely possible that the simple process of editing and obtaining additional footage could explain the time lag, as additional footage of everyday life at Six Nations was not obtained until the fall of 1950.[41]

Wargon then indicates that one night he discovered a co-worker, Tim Wilson, beginning to edit his footage into the five films proposed by Barbeau. He says that after explaining the situation, Wilson agreed to stop his editing work and Wargon began to secretly edit the film the way he wanted at night. Wargon states that he suspects the reason he was able to get away with it was due to a shake-up at the top of the NFB at this time. In the late 1940s, the NFB was caught up in the general fear of communism with accusations that several NFB staff members were involved in communist activity[42] and Ross McLean, who refused to fire anyone, was replaced by Arthur Irwin in February of 1950. Wargon says his activity seemed to either escape official notice or that they were simply "too distracted to care"[43] but eventually, sometime in early 1950, Wargon told Tom Daly that he had edited the footage into a single film and now needed exterior

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[40] Ibid., Chapter 11, 46

[41] NFB 12-147_11-09_Tom_Daly.pdf, memo to Grant McLean from Tom Daly, November 9, 1950.

[42] David MacKenzie, *Canada's Red Scare, 1945–1957*, Historical Booklet 61 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2001).

[43] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North,* Kindle, Chapter 11, 48

filler shots to complete the film. This meant that Daly would have to sanction the film as it was, rather than the proposed five films, as well as provide funds to finish the photography. Daly reluctantly agreed and Wargon returned to Six Nations to negotiate further filming.[44] Neither Wargon's memoir nor the archival records indicate how he managed this, especially considering his junior position at the film board, however, it is clear that one way or another Wargon got what he wanted.

Wargon states that he returned to Six Nations to speak with Deskaheh about further footage showing everyday life on the reserve in order to finish the film. Deskaheh told Wargon that because of the divisions in the community the initial filming had caused, the community would have to agree to allow him to film on the reserve, and in particular, the Onondaga chief who had opposed the initial filming would have to agree. Deskaheh also indicated that the community wanted to see what he had already done, and so a screening was arranged at the Council House in Oshweken.[45] Wargon states that after the initial screening, the community members in attendance at first fell silent, then began to talk among themselves before Howard Sky stood up and told Wargon they wished to see it again before asking questions about his further intentions.[46] Wargon told the crowd that the shots he needed were just simple, everyday scenes of work and life on the reserve. Wargon states that he was initially confused by the questions being asked of him, but finally realized that the main concern of the people was the fact that these ceremonies were sacred to them, they were not normally shown

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid. 50

[46] Ibid.

to outsiders, and they wanted to know how the film would be used. Wargon promised them the film would not be used for money-making commercial purposes and promised the film would be shown on the reserve every two weeks so everyone could see it. This was enough to gain the community's agreement and Wargon went back to the NFB.

Wargon says that when he told the new Commissioner, Arthur Irwin (1950–53), what he had promised, and that Irwin had to put it in writing, "like a treaty."[47] Irwin refused, and in outrage, asked Wargon, "What gave you the right, who were you, to speak for the Canadian government?" Wargon threatened to resign, to which Irwin replied, "So resign."[48] Wargon didn't resign, but at the time, says he was unaware that Irwin had already received a letter from the Department of Indian Affairs complaining about the film because it "was encouraging the Longhouse people to cling to their old ways, when the Department was trying to win all Indians to modern ones, to make ordinary citizens of them."[49] This memo is a clear indication of the governments' mandate in the 1950s of integration and assimilation, however, I could find no evidence of this memo or any negative indications from Indian Affairs in the archival records. Nevertheless, if one considers the government mandate of the time, it is highly probable that such a memo was indeed sent.

Wargon indicates that while Irwin now had to find a way to deal with him, his focus remained on that of getting his promises to the community fulfilled, and that he

[47] Ibid. 51

[48] Ibid. 52

[49] Ibid., Chapter 12. 53

"kept bugging Irwin"[50] until he finally told Wargon to write something up and he would sign it. A letter was written and printed on official government stationary and sent to Deskaheh for approval, clearing the way for final filming on the reserve. While Wargon does not make it clear in his memoir just exactly how he achieved this, beyond being a persistent pest, he must have been quite the personality in order to do it, especially considering his relatively junior position at the NFB and his total inexperience in film making. Further, the community's demand that the film be used for educational purposes only is clearly indicated in all official public information documents pertaining to this film.

Filming was completed on Six Nations with the assistance of cameraman Denis Gillson. Unfortunately, the exterior nighttime shots of the actual Longhouse at Six Nations that Wargon wanted were impossible to shoot at the time, as the NFB did not have access to the lighting systems needed to film at night. At Gillson's suggestion, Wargon decided to make miniatures of the scenes he wanted and have Gillson shoot them on a set. Apparently, Tom Daly was not terribly happy about this when he inquired how the shooting had gone and told Wargon "absolutely not!" in regard to the miniatures. Apparently, the very idea of using miniatures was too "outlandish, so Hollywoodish" was "horrific" to the NFB, the "citadel of documentary."[51] So Wargon proceeded to build them in his basement on his own time in order to complete the film. It is shortly after this that apparently a memo was sent to Tom Daly by Don Mulholland, Director of Production, stating: "We've already wasted $15,000 on this goddamn film.

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid. 56

When's it going to be finished?"[52] Again, however, this particular memo does not seem to be included in any of the archival files pertaining to the production of this film.

Wargon's memoir states the filming of the miniature scenes did not go well. The miniatures were finished in a rush, there was no money for filming, and they ended up using a small storage closet as a set. The finished scenes that were screened internally at the NFB looked like miniatures on film, rather than nighttime shots of the exterior of the Longhouse. Wargon indicates that at this time, while feeling utterly defeated, Grant McLean, head of the camera department, came to his aid. He offered to re-shoot the miniature scenes for free which resulted in successfully convincing nighttime shots of a Longhouse with smoke rising from the chimney which were then cut into the final version of the film and a date was set for an internal screening.[53] There was, however, still no soundtrack at this point.

Wargon says that there was simply no more money to compose a soundtrack, and that the film had taken so long he did not dare to ask Tom Daly for more funds. Clarke Deprato was the chief sound mixer and upon learning there were no funds for the soundtrack, took matters into his own hands. He went directly to Lou Applebam, who had previously been the NFB's music director, but had gone on to a prestigious career in Hollywood and was now back as a music consultant for the NFB. Deprato told Applebam that he had a film he wanted him to see to which Applebam agreed. Wargon indicates that he knew this was serious, as Applebam was a highly influential person within the NFB and so he immediately went and told Tom Daly that Applebam was there

[52] Ibid. 56

[53] Ibid., Chapter 13.

to see the film, Daly also went down to the theatre and took a seat directly behind Applebam. After the screening, Daly asked if Applebam thought it was worth spending more money to compose a soundtrack. Applebam's reply was, apparently, "I'm trying to think what we can do that won't spoil it,"[54] and so a score was composed by Maurice Blackburn using a recorder, which was as close as they could get to a Native flute. The soundtrack is indeed very quiet and unobtrusive. Narration was provided by Percy Rodriguez, chosen for his "earthy voice," and the film was released, going on "to become the most popular non-theatrical film the Board ever had. It was once shown theatrically … but that was a special occasion and had the prior consent of the Longhouse leaders."[55] Now, whether or not it was the "most popular non-theatrical film ever" is difficult to determine; however, a letter dated to January 1969 indicates that the film had been "seen by 1,320,000 people at 22,400 non-theatrical screenings … 82 television bookings and 68 prints had been sold."[56]

In most respects, the film is typical of the time period in the use of a male 'voice of God' narration, and, to a certain extent, it is presenting the Haudenosaunee as the 'exotic other'. However, considering that other films of the era dealing with Indigenous peoples are largely within the framework of Canadian citizenship and/or economic development in the service of the Canadian state, this film is a little different in that it attempts to assert an Indigenous directed cultural expose. Certainly, from a twenty-first-century perspective, this film is problematic in its romanticization of the Haudenosaunee

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[54] Ibid. Chapt. 13, 62

[55] Ibid. 63

[56] NFB files 12-147_1968-1969.

as ‘simple rural folk’; the reality was that at the time, the people of Grand River really were largely rural, small-scale farmers and labourers.[57]

The film begins with a Haudenosaunee man, played by Martin Hill, wearing a fringed leather vest in braids and headband giving thanks to the rising sun in Kanyen’keha (Mohawk), with subtitles. This recitation of the Morning Prayer symbolized, in Wargon’s view, the beginning of the life cycle, that of birth. The man is then shown walking across the field towards a large farmhouse, roosters crowing in the background. On the front porch of the house, he removes his vest, and the braids and headband are revealed to be a wig, as he carefully removes it and places it on a table and puts on a plaid work shirt. Standard for documentary film of the time, the use of a male “voice of God”[58] narrator begins by saying, “The Iroquois today is a twentieth century man. His house is built of processed siding and asphalt shingles, and steel nails. The clothing that he wears is mass produced in factories, his family is usually small. It is expensive to bring up children nowadays.” The imagery here is of a happy, clean, and well-dressed nuclear family beginning their day on the farm like any other rural Canadian, the emphasis here being one of ‘sameness’ as opposed to ‘difference’. The wife and young child remain at the house while the man climbs onto a tractor and goes out to the fields. The narrator describes how in the ‘old days’ children grew up knowing the stories, songs and dances and “how a parent then could count on everyone to provide a good

[57] Hill, *Clay We Are Made Of*; Personal communication over a lifetime with my father, Grant Froman (1942–2017).

[58] Payne, “Through a Canadian Lens,” 316.

example for his child. Now, well, he does the best he can. Life is different now. Of course, the white man's machinery is very good, but some Iroquois prefer the old ideas." Here, the film then cuts back to a scene of the wife and child on the front porch, and the woman is shown hand sewing. The narration continues, explaining that the preference for the 'old ideas' is why they still make ritual garments for ceremony and prayer. The narration continues by accurately describing some of the beliefs, such as the need to care for the land because it is our mother that we must live like good children in our mother's house and take only what we need. The imagery in this part is of the man on the tractor tending to the fields.

The film then shows a man and young girl climbing out of an old army jeep at a gas station while the narrator explains that "those Iroquois who still adhere to the old religion are known as the Longhouse People. Their everyday life is much the same as that of any other rural folk. They are farmers, labourers, builders, mechanics, but, old and young, they are Indian and proud of it." Again, the narration and the visual imagery is placing emphasis on the 'normalcy' of the Haudenosaunee people. In this scene there several people, old and young, gathered around the gas station and surrounding shops smiling and shaking hands in greeting. An old man kneels to smile at the young girl who wears a beaded headband as she smiles up at the old man. The narration explains that the Longhouse people are not numerous, that around 1200 live at Six Nations with more scattered in smaller numbers at other Canadian reserves and across the border in the United States. The narrator then correctly explains that most of the Haudenosaunee are Christians, but then asserts that despite the differences the Christian and Longhouse people "get along." This is one of the few slight inaccuracies of the film and given what

Wargon had learned by this point, I initially suspected that parts of his script may have been altered by government officials who wanted to portray a harmonious community. However, there is no evidence of this in the archival record and it would appear Wargon retained control over the script. Alternatively, it may very well be that this the message the people themselves wanted to convey and had communicated to Wargon. In reality, the religious and political divisions within the community of Six Nations are far more complicated and nuanced than traditional scholarship on the matter would have one believe.[59]

The film then shows the jeep travelling down gravel roads in a rural area before pulling up to a log cabin in the woods. The narrator explains the Longhouse was the symbol of the Confederacy and how it "came to mean a type of building and now, a church. Perhaps to the people it means something more. All the great names are still alive in it" and here the narrator simply lists all the nations that are part of the Confederacy. Now, for a Haudenosaunee viewer of the film, this requires no explanation. However, for the Euro-Canadian viewer, the lack of explanation on what this means may give the impression that the "great names" refers to the names of the member nations when in fact it refers to the personal names of the original founding chiefs of the Confederacy, whose names are passed down to new chiefs as old chiefs die, thereby keeping the name and the person 'alive'. The imagery in this segment is of

[59] For a deeper discussion of the traditional viewpoint that the community is sharply divided along religious lines, see, for example, Enos Montour, *The Feathered U.E.L's* (Toronto: Division of Communication [CEMS], United Church of Canada, 1973); Alma Greene, *Forbidden Voice* (London: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1971); and William Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998). A recent scholarly work that refutes the traditional interpretation is Monture, *We Share Our Matters.*

the young girl standing in the yard outside the log cabin Longhouse before the older man, presumably her father, comes to get her and they drive away. The narrator continues to explain the beliefs of the Longhouse people and emphasizes that in their ceremonies, they express the same hopes, fears, and sorrows as anyone else as the jeep drives away down a dusty rural road.

The next scene shows a parched field with withered corn plants, “the corn, food and life to the people, dries and withers in the fields” and an old man and a younger man are shown walking between the rows of corn looking at the dry earth and up at the sky with concern, “the only thing to do is pray.” Following this is the next ceremony depicted by Wargon in the film, the Rain Dance. This segment was part of the Ottawa shootings and was to represent “the struggle for life.”[60] This isn’t exactly a rain dance in the Western, Hollywood sense, but rather what happens in this scene is a prayer to the Creator for rain so that the crops may grow followed by a celebratory social dance and song. The film goes on to show the rain has come and now the people are harvesting the corn crop as a communal activity. Men, women, children are shown intermingling and working together with ease. Even though it is the early 1950s and most Euro-Canadian farms at this point have mechanized machinery, the people are shown still using horse-drawn wagons. This again is real, as my father has told me few people had cars or tractors on the reserve at the time and that they themselves used horses on their small farm during the same time period. My father would have been around eight years old when this film was made, shortly before he was sent to the Mohawk Institute.

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[60] Wargon, *Birth of Hollywood North,* Kindle, Chapter 9

The narration says the work is always shared by the Longhouse people and they all help one another, “the simple rule of working folk.” It is a slightly romantic image being evoked here, with images of an older era of farm life and a bountiful harvest. The film then says, “the people give thanks” and shows a Thanksgiving dance that was filmed inside the Longhouse set in Ottawa.

The film then cuts to a brief nighttime exterior shot of a cabin (one of the miniatures) before going inside to the end-of-life ceremony filmed in Ottawa that caused so much difficulty. Here we see the old man lying in bed with a woman playing his wife sitting beside him. The narrator explains the old chief is very ill. “A doctor gave him medicine, but medicine could not calm his troubled mind … last night, he dreamed he saw a False Face and then he asked that the old healing rituals be performed for him. The False Face Society was told, they agreed, and now have come.” Once again, this is accurate, as one must dream of a False Face in order to have any contact with the Society, and it is usually within the context of healing.[61] The narration continues, “the old man is no longer troubled … he has the support of an ageless past. His spirit is refreshed, and gratefully, he gives thanks to his Creator.” The scene then shows an exterior, nighttime shot of the Longhouse (again, the other miniature) while the narrator explains that the old chief has died. The scene then shifts to inside the Longhouse where the people are seen sitting around the perimeter of the room on benches in mourning. There is an accurate mourning song being sung as the people sit respectfully with heads down followed by a flute song. Again, this is accurate, as a similar song was

[61] For further details on the False Face Society, see, for example, Annemarie Shimony, *Conservatism among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

sung and played at my Auntie Debra's funeral by our Faith Keeper, Sakoieta. The narrator goes to explain that when an old leader dies, a new one is named to replace him. The ceremony then depicted in the film is again an accurate representation, as the Clan Mother is in attendance standing at the side of the new chief, as it is her responsibility to choose this man to be chief. The final comment of the narration is "As the years follow one another, so a new leader follows on the old. Men die, the people live." The film then concludes with a celebratory, upbeat, and happy social dance song with turtle shell rattles and a little boy water drum. The final shot is another exterior nighttime shot of the Longhouse with the credits rolling.

In terms of the critical acclaim and high praise the film received, Allan Wargon states that in 1952, he was traditionally adopted into the Cayuga Nation by Deskaheh as his nephew and given the name Hohdreewahsteestont, meaning "who is in charge," however, the archives contain a letter from Deskaheh dated July 9, 1951, that clearly indicates the adoption has already taken place. Deskaheh states the reason for Wargon's adoption was to recognize the fact Wargon had "done a great work in undertaking the task to show the people, and … hopes it will bring more respect to the Longhouse people hereafter."[62] In August of 1951, a memo is sent to Wargon from Don Mulholland, a fellow director at the NFB congratulating Wargon on his adoption, and the same person who sent the memo complaining about the cost of the film and when it was going to be done. Mulholland states that Wargon's adoption is "a very fine thing that you have been able to win and retain the confidence and friendship of these rather retiring people by the simple-and for that reason rarely performed-means of respecting

[62] NFB production file 12-147, letter from Deshaheh to Allen Wargon, July 9, 1951.

their point of view and traditions. This, I think, is an achievement worthy of honour. If more people respected more people, the human race might not find itself in such a Goddamn mess. Congratulations."[63] This, I feel, is an important comment on the part of Don Mullholland as respect for other peoples and cultures and having respectful relationships with each other is the underlying basis of all our treaties with the settler population. Unfortunately, he is also correct in his statement that because few people actually *do*, the world is indeed "a goddamn mess".

Further critical acclaim is confirmed in the archival record, which includes several letters from people and institutions such as William Fenton, then at the Smithsonian.[64] Fenton writes to Arthur Irwin at the NFB in October of 1951 indicating that the film had been seen at a recent Conference on Iroquois Research held in New York and had been very well received with Fenton expressing that he "enjoyed seeing as actors several of my best friends and informants." Fenton states that in his opinion, "the film has caught the spirit of the Six Nations and will do more for scientific ethnography and for the people themselves than almost anything written about them." Fenton goes on to propose the film be premiered in Washington for the Anthropological Society and requests a representative from the NFB to be in attendance. Naturally, Irwin suggests that Wargon be the one to attend as well as a representative from the Canadian Embassy in Washington.[65] Other letters sent to the NFB praising the film came from Dr.

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[63] NFB production file 12-147, correspondence, letter to Wargon from Mulholland, August 10, 1951.

[64] NFB production file 12-147, correspondence.

[65] NFB production file 12-147, correspondence

Marcel Rioux at the National Museum of Canada, H.A. Mathiesen of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, who requested a copy of the film for use in the United States Indian Service Summer School and to have in their general film library, and of course from Dr. Marius Barbeau. The letter from Barbeau, however, reflects the dominant thinking in anthropological circles of the time, that of a vanishing people, indicated in his comment that the film "constitutes a valuable and enjoyable document for posterity. The features it contains have not been made available otherwise by the Longhouse People, and they may not last much longer in their integrity."[66] In terms of evidence that the community retained some control regarding distribution comes from a letter written by Wargon to Deskaheh, dated Feb. 17, 1953, requesting his permission to allow the CBC to broadcast the film as part of "regular Sunday evening religious program." Wargon goes on to state that the NFB has previously refused American television networks permission to air the film but felt that "the CBC wishes to show it in the proper religious spirit, and that it would further the good influence of the film to allow them to do so."[67] However, it would seem that by 1960 this has been forgotten, as the short documentary *On Prescription Only*, an examination of "modern medicine," opens with scenes of traditional ceremonies from around the world, including parts of the False Face ceremony to depict how "In various times, in various places, man has sought to heal himself by faith. He has frequently invoked spirits in an endeavour to cure his ills."[68] This

[66] NFB production file 12-147, correspondence, Feb. 2, 1952, letter from Barbeau to Irwin.

[67] NFB production files, correspondence, Feb 17, 1953, letter from Wargon to Deskaheh.

[68] *On Prescription Only*, directed by Julian Biggs, script by Sally Lindsay (1960; NFB), timestamp 0:00–0:57.

unfortunately brings us back to Deskaheh's main concern, that our ceremonies would be mocked or dismissed as pagan superstition.

Interestingly, in the later months of 1968, seventeen years after the film's release, the NFB received at least two letters from Taiotekane Horn of the Caughnwaga Defense Committee. The first letter, dated September 26, 1968, and addressed to then NFB commissioner Hugo McPherson, is essentially an unsolicited job application wherein Taiotekane indicates he has some photography experience, is organizing an "Indian club in Montreal" and is "one of the defenders of Caughnawaga" and that he "can provide guidance on the accuracy of much of your Indian film footage and provide scripts or ideas that would be of value to the National Film Board."[69] The internal response to this letter, written by a Reta Kilpatrick to Frank Spiller, Director of Production, comes across as rather cranky, as it would seem that Taiotekane Horn's sister Kantineta had been "bombarding" the NFB with letters asking for and receiving screenings of the NFB's "films on the Indians – mostly the Challenge for Change films." The internal letter indicates that Kantineta Horn had purchased some of the Challenge for Change films and the NFB believed she intended to show them across the country, "although it is a little difficult to determine what she intends to do." Apparently, Ms. Horn had also written to the Governor General requesting he bring NFB films to the attention of the Queen "so that she may be aware of the Indians plight." The letter then goes on to accuse Ms. Horn of preparing a press release "full of inaccuracies in which she talks about the Board, includes "statements" by the Commissioner, speaks of the Alinsky films (and here she says Ms. Horn has been instrumental in having these removed from

[69] NFB production files 12-147, correspondence.

circulation), and generally trying to use the board for her own purposes." The internal letter indicates the matter has been turned over to a person by the name of Tom Johnston, who I was unable to find any information on, in order to "try and straighten her out" and that the press release had been sent to them "over the signature of Taiotekane Horn – and was signed as "Defender" and that all of this information was "merely background and may help you in preparing the reply."[70] The reply letter from Frank Spiller to Taiotekane Horn, dated October 29, 1968, is very polite in rejecting his application / request to be hired and blames federal government austerity measures as the reason why the NFB is not looking to hire, but goes on to call attention to the fact the NFB, in the last year, "undertook to give basic film-training to a number of young people of Indian blood" but that this was a new program at "an early stage" and that "a government agency is not necessarily the best place for all types of community media development and in this category Indian life and problems must be included" but that the NFB is ready to assist, within budget limitations. Essentially, Spiller is stating the new Challenge for Change and Indian Film training programs "rules out or makes unlikely the programming of films to be made by non-Indians about or for Indians, our need for an advisor, even if we were in a position to hire one, is far less now than it might have been." Spiller finishes the letter by stating that if an "isolated project were to arise requiring expert counsel on Indian life or culture, we would like to think we might call upon you for professional advice."[71]

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[70] NFB production files 12-147, correspondence, Oct. 1, 1968.

[71] NFB production files 12-147, correspondence, Oct. 29, 1969.

The next correspondence in the archives is dated November 1, 1968, is from Taiotekane Horn requesting the film have a new soundtrack recorded, as it is "excellent visually but very poor vocally," and suggesting a new soundtrack "similar to the excellent one on High Steel and if necessary, the use of a Mohawk voice." This is an interesting statement, as Wargon's memoir as well as the original production files clearly indicate "a Mohawk voice," however, I suspect they are referring to the narration in this matter and to the fact that the sound quality of the film is indeed of poor quality due to antiquated recording techniques. Taiotekane goes on to say that the Caughwnaga Defense Committee are showing these films extensively and that with the changes, the Longhouse People film "could be one of the most important films."[72] The response from the NFB is predicable, and the idea of a new soundtrack is rejected, as it "is an expensive business" and since the film was released in 1951 it would be impossible to recall all the copies already distributed, and that there was "very little distribution potential left"[73] but that the distribution department would be consulted for their opinion anyway and thanks Taiotekane for his interest. Now, neither Wargon's memoir nor the archival records indicate who, exactly, the people from Caugnawake (Kahnawake) were who took part in the original filming in Ottawa. If this was indicated, it could confirm or deny if any relations of the Horn family were involved, which would help to explain their interest. However, the reason for the request for a new soundtrack by the community of Kahnawake could also simply be the fact that by the late 1960s the sound quality of the film was indeed less than desirable. It is important to point out that

[72] NFB production file 12-147, correspondence, Nov. 1968.

[73] NFB production file 12-147, correspondence, Nov. 1968.

despite the sound quality issues, the community does indicate they like the film and would use it more often if the sound was of better quality. The *only* critique of the film at this time by Haudenosaunee peoples is the sound quality, *not* the content.

There the matter of re-working the film seems to have lain until March of 1977, when a memo from Kathleen Shannon, an NFB filmmaker, is sent to Tom Daly and Allan Wargon indicating that the NFB has received a request from the editor of Akwesasne Notes and founder of the White Roots of Peace group asking for a re-make of the film. Unfortunately, the original letter from Awkesasne Notes is not in the archival files and so we do not know what, exactly, they wanted re-made, whether they wanted an entire re-shoot of the film or if, as in the earlier correspondence, simply a new soundtrack. At any rate, while in 1968, such a proposal was met with outright refusal, this time it would seem that the NFB was more open to the idea. The memo from Shannon indicates that the NFB is willing to ask "Ernie Benedict, founder of the North American Indian travelling college and … a professor at Manitou College to write a new commentary" but that visually, no major changes would be made. This indicates to me that the community request was much like the first in 1968, simply to update the soundtrack and narration and that they had no issue with the films content. The memo proposes that the remake would:

> eliminate the 50s attitude of a "vanishing culture," the British- accent of the commentator which was always used at the NFB when dealing with things ethnic, the English-language male bias in speaking of a people or the Creator as "he," the implication that the Iroquois are just the same as any other rural folks, and we would recognize the powerful role of women in Iroquois society. We will emphasize that the ceremonies are not remnants of the past, but profoundly relevant to contemporary life. There has – since the fifties – been an increase in the number of people returning to traditional ways. Though these changes imply

> criticism of the film you made, I feel it treats the people with more dignity and respect than most NFB films of the time, not just as quaint relics.[74]

Attached to this internal memo is a detailed information sheet outlining all proposed changes, briefly described as "to revise to eliminate the 50s attitudes towards a 'vanishing race', provide commentary written by an Iroquois person, and to generally make the film relevant to the realities of today." One section of the form asks, "How does it relate to Studio or Branch priorities?" To which the response is "That people have the opportunity to speak for themselves rather than be spoken about by Caucasian androcentric "experts," and in another section that "It will be presented from the perspective of the people it's about, instead of that of white anthropologists." One of the final questions pertains to how the distribution department will respond, to which the report indicates the idea was "initiated by White Roots of Peace, who seldom use the film now but will use revision extensively" and that Anthony Kent, another NFB filmmaker, is "enthusiastically in agreement" and that the total costs of revision would be $8,600. It would seem this is as far as it went, as a memo dated June 10, 1977, indicates the idea was rejected and asks if Kathleen Shannon wished to keep it. The author of the memo, a woman named Rose, states she would like to keep it on file, "in case of – I don't know what yet." For the purposes of this research, I am glad she did! Also of interest, this single letter is the only document I could find in the archives that makes any mention of the "treaty" Wargon signed with the community of Six Nations against "mishandling or tampering" and that the "use of material not allowed separately." These are all handwritten notes on the original letter from Shannon to Daly and Wargon.

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[74] NFB file 50-433, correspondence, March 3, 1977.

Further, the handwritten notes indicate that “he” actually “doesn’t come up in the subtitles,” and that it was “translated in agreement with Indians of that time.” It would seem that either Daly, Wargon, or both were only willing to create a new info sheet and a catalogue entry indicating the film’s age.

In terms of some of the comments made in this memo, a closer look is necessary. The comment that a re-make would eliminate “the implication that the Iroquois are just the same as any other rural folks” needs unpacking. For starters, if we as Haudenosaunee people were not like “other rural folk,” then what, exactly, were we? I would argue that in many ways Haudenosaunee peoples were much like “other rural folk” in that we were farmers, machinists, clerks, and so on, and that we had “typical” rural things such as agricultural fairs and societies, but that this was all being done within Haudenosaunee frameworks and worldviews, as effectively demonstrated by authors such as Susan Hill and Rick Monture.[75] Further, the statement on the part of Shannon that a re-make of the film would “emphasize that the ceremonies are not remnants of the past, but profoundly relevant to contemporary life” is failing to see the point of the original film, which was exactly that! Deskaheh’s agreement for the film in the first place was that it would do exactly that, show that these ceremonies *were* “profoundly relevant to contemporary life” and that these ancient ceremonies and the Longhouse belief system were *not* incompatible with modern life. Haudenosaunee peoples have been adapting and incorporating since contact, always within our own cultural and spiritual frameworks and understandings. This does not mean that we have ‘lost’ anything or somehow become ‘assimilated’, but rather that we are resilient and

[75] Hill, *Clay We Are Made Of*, 190; Monture, *We Share Our Matters*.

capable of adaptation without loss of culture or identity as Haudenosaunee peoples. The persistent notion on the part of the dominant society is that once we demonstrate any form of modernity, we have somehow ceased to be Indigenous.

Despite the film's age and era specific problems, the difference between this film and others of the time is astonishing. Whereas most NFB films of the era approached Indigenous subjects with a sympathetic, yet colonial gaze, Wargon's approach was markedly different. Although sympathetic to the situation of the Indigenous peoples, most NFB filmmakers in the 1940s and '50s viewed Indigenous peoples as 'uncivilized' and were primarily interested in gathering ethnographic material before the culture vanished.[76] Wargon on the other hand, being only his mid-twenties at the time of filming and coming from a fine arts background, seems to have had a very different attitude and approach. Where filmmakers such as Boulton and Finnie were the ethnographic authority representing the march of Canadian progress, with the notion that 'the Indian' must assimilate or perish, Wargon was the student who took direction from an Indigenous community and showed the world that Indigenous peoples could be both traditional and modern at the same time without contradiction. However, all that being said, the film remains a product of its time and in many ways the film does perpetuate colonial ideals and a sense of 'othering'. As mentioned earlier, the use of 'voice of God' type narration and a generalized anthropological/ethnographic point of view is utilized, which is very much in keeping with NFB productions of non-dominant groups of the time. However, it does mark in my opinion, an early attempt to have Indigenous voices

[76] Payne, "Through a Canadian Lens," 316.

heard and similar films would not be produced again by the NFB until the Challenge for Change program began in 1967, sixteen years later.

Chapter Two:

No Longer Vanishing and Off to School: Education and Integration

In 1950, responsibility for Indian Affairs was transferred to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.[1] As argued by Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta, the idea in the post-war period was to treat Indigenous peoples as "immigrants too," to encourage Indigenous peoples to "integrate" and become "full citizens" of the Canadian state as well as encouraging members of the dominant society to accept the integration of Indigenous peoples in similar ways as new immigrants.[2] Further key aspects of the post-war period was a prolonged sense of prosperity "due to sustained demand for Canadian resources … population growth due to a high birth rate, an increase in ethnic diversity, growing urbanization rates and the rise of suburbs. This era is of course, also witness to the rise of the welfare state. Furthermore, the 1950s saw the beginnings of the closure of the residential school system in favour of integration into public provincial schools. An additional important note is the increase in natural resource development, which largely takes place on Indigenous lands or impacts Indigenous communities and territories in one way or another.

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[1] Christopher E. Gittings, *Canadian National Cinema* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), 196

[2] For an excellent and detailed discussion of how the Canadian government constructed Aboriginal peoples as "immigrants," see Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta, "Making Aboriginal People 'Immigrants Too': A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in Postwar Canada, 1940s–1960s," *Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (September 2009): 427–61.

Films dealing with Indigenous peoples had the aim of promoting the governments 'benevolent' Indian policy to the general Canadian public, as well as Indigenous peoples themselves. As Joan Sangster points out, the films produced by the NFB from the 1940s through to the 1960s reflect the "political economy of settler-Indigenous relations and the prevailing dominant ideological constructions of Indigeneity."[3] From its inception, and particularly in the pre-television era, the NFB distributed films to be shown in theatres as shorts before the main feature, but more importantly through churches, schools, and community centres.[4] In the post-war era, Zoe Druick states the NFB had "two approaches to non-theatrical screenings-one for the middle class and another for those who were creating problems for the Canadian state … First Nations and immigrants … precisely because they were problematic categories of citizenship; films were made to address their place in Canadian society."[5] Indeed, many of the films produced during the 1940s and 1950s that dealt with Indigenous peoples are precisely of this nature, the 'Indian's place' in Canadian society and the ways in which the Canadian government was promoting Indigenous integration. Films such as the ones under investigation imbed in the minds of the Canadian public that government policy towards Indigenous peoples has always been one of benevolent assistance and that it is our fault if we fail to obtain a decent education or employment. This sort of mind set

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[3] Joan Sangster, *The Iconic North: Cultural Constructions of Aboriginal Life in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 180.

[4] Gary Evans, *In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949 to 1989* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 6; Zoe Druick, *Projecting Canada: Government Policy and Documentary Film at the National Film Board* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 80.

[5] Druick, *Projecting Canada*, 102.

fails to address or educate the general population on the various systemic barriers faced by Indigenous peoples, both historically and today.

These films were intended to inform the general public that Indigenous peoples were ready and capable of joining Canadian society as full citizens and support the settler state agenda of integration with the emphasis in most films of this era being on education and training. The main film under investigation in this chapter, *No Longer Vanishing*,[6] was released in 1955 and takes as its subject matter southern First Nations who have, in the eyes of the state, successfully made the transition to modernity. In other words, assimilated. As Joan Sangster argues, for the Indian Affairs branch at this time, films produced by the NFB had several uses, one they could show the benefits of Indian Affairs programs to Indigenous peoples, secondly, they informed the general public of the value of these programs and policies, and thirdly, "they would "aid in the gradual assimilation of Indians into the "normal" Canadian way of life."[7] This film, referred to as "the Indian film" in the archival documents, was specifically aimed at providing "an understanding of the Indian problem by non-Indians, as well as showing the Indians themselves how some of the Indians have bettered their lives."[8] Additionally, this film appears to have been intended to coincide with the launch of the Indian Affairs department newsletter, *The Indian News*, which published a quarterly, then later a monthly newsletter from 1954-1982. The primary aim of the film seems to be intended

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[6] *No Longer Vanishing*, directed and written by Grant McLean (1955; NFB), https://www.nfb.ca/film/no_longer_vanishing/.

[7] Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 148-49.

[8] LAC, RG10, vol 8813, file 1/12-11-3.

to counter the prevailing image of the "indolent, improvident Indian"[9] but it presents those who are participating in the wage-based economy as anomalies, or unexpected, and in many ways actually reinforces the notion of Indigenous peoples as idle non-workers. However, as argued by Jarvis Brownlie, Joan Sangster, Mary Jane Logan McCallum, and other historians of Indigenous labour histories, Indigenous peoples have been participating in the economic systems of the newcomers since contact, often on our own terms, yet this image of us as being either unwilling or incapable of capitalist economic participation is one that persists into the modern day.

In February of 1954, a letter was sent out by the information division of the Indian Affairs branch of the Dept. of Citizenship and Immigration to all regional supervisors and superintendents across the country requesting "outline stories of community projects that indicate improvement in the status of Indians; we are interested in individual Indians who are taking their place beside non-Indians in the fields of education, religion, science, industry, government, etc."[10] Archives indicate that sixteen regional agencies responded to the request in variable ways ranging from "advanced" to "primitive." For example, the Manitoba regional supervisor of Indian Agencies, D.A.H. Nield, indicates that several individuals from Pequis First Nation after graduating from the Birtle Residential School have gone on to Manitoba Technical school or to Normal school and are now stenographers, teachers, and nurses. The letter indicates that one girl from Portage la Prairie is now a field nurse and that "at the Fisher River Indian Hospital

[9] Robin Jarvis Brownlie, "Living the Same as White People": Mohawk and Anishinabe Women's Labour in Southern Ontario, 1920–1940," *Labour/Le Travail* 61 (Spring 2008): 41.

[10] LAC, RG10, vol 8813, file 1/12-11-3.

ninety percent of the staff are Indians who assist in the operation of the hospital."[11] Supervisor Nield goes on to state that many from the Clandeboyne Agency work in Selkirk at the steel mill, Norway House has a lumbering operation, and the people from Nelson River work on the Hudson's Bay railway line. This letter has an overwhelmingly positive tone, particularly regarding the more southerly communities being more integrated into the mainstream. This of course makes perfect sense, as these communities would have had easier access to larger cities for employment. Further, these sorts of comments support Jarvis Brownlie's assertion that Indigenous peoples participated in the mainstream economy, but what these agents fail to see is the individual agency on the part of Indigenous peoples regarding waged labour. In contrast, another superintendent, H. Lariviere of the Abitibi Indian Agency in Quebec, writes that the Mistassini Band are:

> living a very primitive mode of life.… These primitives, during the summer months, although they have a very limited understanding of economy, etc., do make a definite effort to better their living conditions, such as going out with canoes to get logs to make for themselves improved tenting setup … the women have introduced regular clothes lines on pulleys and organized their life, for example during the a.m. hours they do all the chores, and during the p.m. hours sit in their tents doing knitting or sewing and … gossiping about the "town" activities … most of them make an effort to send the children … to the seasonal school. Finally, a good number of children are sent to a residential school. Here, they all accept with a smile. Keeping in mind that these Indians are very primitive, it is extraordinary how they can change from winter to summer activities.[12]

Here we see the continuing misunderstanding of traditional Cree ways of life and the fact that, even as late as 1954, the Cree of northern Quebec were able to maintain a

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

traditional economy and way of life. His expression of astonishment at the "ease" in which the people transition between seasonal activity is again a clear demonstration of a lack of understanding of the fact that the Cree have been making this seasonal activity transition since time immemorial. Further, in this time period and this region of Canada, wage-based jobs would have been few and far between and likely not close to the reserve community. This superintendent sent in a three-page letter detailing the activities of the First Nation communities under his jurisdiction also reveals the ways in which gender and notions of civilization come into play. For example, when he discusses the Waswanipi Band, he states they are "not as primitive … [and] the women have reached, comparing to Mistassini, an advanced stage: better dresses, more in line with the catalogs. Nearly all the girls wear slacks with fancy blouses … more so on Sunday, they stand up to what you see in white communities." And that "from this band we have a good number of girls who were taken from the bush, living a very primitive life, who have done very well at hospitals as maids, etc."[13] Much of this particular superintendent's response deals with how the people are dressing, particularly the women, and how well they are "imitating white people"[14] and his is not an isolated one either, as several others, mostly from northern areas, also make comments on how the people are dressing and the degree to which people are imitating the dress and lifestyle of Euro-Canadians. As argued by Myra Rutherdale, "this was important because clothing and comportment became markers of "civilization." Sometimes missionaries even imagined they represented Aboriginal people's conversion to Christianity, and

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

Aboriginal women's transition to more "Westernized" practices was seen as a hopeful sign of change and success."[15]

Further responses that declare "progress" come from the Tyendinaga, Cape Croker, and Sarnia agencies in Ontario, Fort Qu'Appelle in Saskatchewan, High Prairie, Alberta, and the Lytton and Cowichan agencies in British Columbia. Most of these responses indicate that many people are employed off reserve, or are engaged in primary industries such as agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Almost all responses highlight one or two individuals who have gone on to post-secondary education of some sort after residential school, usually nursing or education for women, and the clergy or skilled trades for the men. In addition, a majority of the letters from the Indian Agents also emphasise the success of Homemaker Clubs on reserves and how they are "working for the betterment of their own people."[16] Now, in terms of clubs such as these, aimed at women and intended to teach "feminine" skills, we see agents failing to understand that Indigenous women have been gathering together to share tasks and engage in conversation since time immemorial, as activities such as these would have been required for the survival of the community. Most of the positive responses from Indian agents come from British Columbia and Southern Ontario, with just the two from the prairie provinces, and these are mainly regarding bands in the southern regions. This is hardly surprising, as most Indigenous labour history has shown that peoples in

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[15] Myra Rutherdale, "'She Was a Ragged Little Thing': Missionaries, Embodiment, and Refashioning Aboriginal Womanhood in Northern Canada," in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*, ed. Katie Pickles & Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 230.

[16] LAC, RG10, vol 8813, file 1/12-11-3.

these regions of Canada had long been engaged in the settler economy. As pointed out by Jarvis Brownlie, most of this research examines the situation in British Columbia, but Brownlie effectively demonstrates that Indigenous peoples in Southern Ontario were also participating in waged labour in the early twentieth century. Indeed, my own family history and recent histories of my community by our own historians shows that Indigenous peoples of this region have been engaged in wage labour since at least the nineteenth century![17]

However, just as many agents respond with comments such as "I regret to say at the present time it is impossible to obtain material from the Indians for this project," "The Indians of the Yukon Agency are considerably behind in the progress towards modern economy … they lag approximately one generation behind the Indians of southern Canada," "The only material that may be of interest … would be the housing program … completed with all Indian labour," and finally, "As far as this agency is concerned, we have no worthwhile material to offer."[18] All of the letters indicating "less progress" came from the more northerly or isolated parts of the country, which is hardly surprising given the time frame. Additionally, almost all letters sent by regional supervisors and superintendents make some reference to the residential school system and all are framed in positive ways, as we saw earlier in the letter from H. Lariviere of the Abitibi Indian Agency in Quebec. There is zero criticism or any indication of the impact of

[17] See Hill, *Clay We Are Made Of*; Monture, *We Share Our Matters*; and Brownlie, "Living the Same as White People." My grandfather served in the First World War and worked off reserve as a mechanic while also maintaining a small farm on reserve. My father also told me that during the 1940s and '50s the whole family worked as migrant farm labour throughout the region.

[18] LAC, RG10, vol 8813, file 1/12-11-3.

separating children from their families had on the communities. Rather, all references to the residential school system focus on either how the children are “happy to go” or on the few ‘success’ stories of graduates who have gone on to some sort of post-secondary. Clearly, despite the official policy of integration into the public provincial school system during the 1950s, the residential school system remained an integral aspect.

In terms of the ‘success’ stories showcased in *No Longer Vanishing*, there is extensive correspondence between various officials in the Dept. of Indian Affairs and the NFB regarding where filming will take place, what will be filmed where, and who will be showcased. Most people and communities showcased in the film are in either British Columbia or Southern Ontario, with three sections of the film focusing on each of the prairie provinces. Again, this is consistent with the existing research on Indigenous labour in that BC and Southern Ontario generally had (and still have) higher rates of participation in the economic mainstream in one form or another. Based on the archival evidence, only one individual approached for the film outright refused to participate, Dr. Roger Ross, a dentist, and the son of Chief Percy Ross of the Songhee Band in British Columbia, while another, Magistrate O.M. Martin from Six Nations, was happy to participate so long as the NFB obtained permission from the Ontario Attorney General’s office first, which was of course granted. Also showcased quite prominently is Sgt. Tommy Prince of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation in Manitoba. In the preliminary commentary script for the film dated July 1954, Marion Ironquill Meadmore was also interviewed, as she was a 16-year-old pre-med student at the University of Manitoba at

the time.[19] However, she also left University in the same year in order to marry Ron Meadmore[20] and this is possibly the reason why the section of the film with her interview in a University classroom was cut from the final version. Meadmore would go on to found the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre in Winnipeg and obtain a law degree.[21] It would seem that this interview was intended to follow the one with Theresa Papanakus, a student nurse from Brokenhead First Nation, whose story does make the final cut and is interwoven with that of George Henderson, a student teacher, as the film follows them about while out on a date with Papanakus narrating. In the preliminary commentary script, she states that "George Henderson took me out to dinner the other night. He had heard of me from Mr. Marcoux in the Indian Affairs office."[22] This one single comment literally jumped off the page when I first read it, as I was immediately reminded of the residential schools playing match-maker and arranging marriages between students from the 1890s to the 1930s[23], yet here we are in 1954 and we clearly have some employee of the Dept. of Indian Affairs acting like a dating service! This also evoked memories of stories of how my parents met, in that my father was in Vancouver in an adult education upgrading program, which I now believe was part of the Placement and

[19] Ibid.

[20] https://umlarchives.lib.umanitoba.ca/marion-meadmore-fonds.

[21] Ibid.

[22] LAC, RG 10 Vol. 8813 File 1/12-11-3.

[23] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *A Knock On The Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2016), 65–66.

Relocation program, and was introduced to my settler mother by his social worker.[24] Other individuals include Dan Hanuse of Alert Bay, BC, who owned the Chesalakee Logging Company; Jim Sewid, also of Alert Bay, who owned three fishing boats, a sawmill, and a boat repair shop; as well as Ella Cyr from the Qu'Appelle valley, who worked as a lab technician at a TB sanitorium.

Overall, the tone of the film is patronizing and paternalistic and is very much the official government agenda placing emphasis on programs and policies of integration, which is just assimilation by another name and assumes a loss of identity and culture. There are two versions of this film, one of which is approximately twenty-seven minutes long, whereas the other one, titled *Return of the Indian*, is a mere ten minutes. Both versions begin with a very 1950s-era Hollywood image of Indigenous peoples riding across the prairies towards a small village of tipis. This part of the film was shot on the Blood Reserve in Alberta, and the communication from Evelyn Horne of the Information Division of Indian Affairs indicates what they had in mind for this shot: "Another sequence that we hope to get in Alberta is one that will represent the past, when the Indian lived here 'in balance with the forests, the plains, the waters and the animal life.' What we have in mind is possibly a scene showing a small Indian encampment as it might have been sometime during the latter half of the nineteenth century … some representative activity around the encampment as a small group of men return from the hunt … the men should be dressed as they would have been dressed for the hunt … no ceremonial dress or feather headdress! They should be *typically Indian, with good*

[24] For a closer look at the various education and employment placement programs run by Indian Affairs, see Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940–1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014).

strong faces."[25] Amusingly, Ms. Horne and Grant McLean, the director, ordered $48.00 dollars worth of fresh beef for the shot and did not pay for it, as the superintendent for the Blood Agency later sent the Indian Affairs branch an invoice for said beef.[26]

The narration, in a male voice, tells the audience how Indigenous peoples were once "independent, free, proud and capable before the arrival of the white man"[27] invoking the image of the Noble Savage. The narrator states that while the reserves were set up to "protect the Indians, while they learned the white man's way, they instead ended up setting a whole race apart," and that the "Indians survived but in dwindling numbers … a vanishing race."[28] The narration continues that the reserves were well intended, but good intentions don't always work out. That rather than a place of transition, the reserves "became a place of comfort where the Indian lost initiative and independence."[29] There is no mention of course, of oppressive policies such as the pass and permit system, the Indian Act, or the sub-par education received in residential schools. Rather, the narration is one that shifts blame and reinforces the notion of a saving, civilizing, settler society and benevolent government policy. We hear this when the narration states, "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

[25] LAC, RG 10 Vol. 8813 File 1/12-11-3 (emphasis mine).

[26] LAC, RG 10 Vol. 8813 File 1/12-11-3.

[27] McLean, *No Longer Vanishing*.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

terms of human understanding."[30] Now, as lovely as this may sound, it is clearly echoing the old notion of "the white man's burden" and reinforcing the stereotypes of the lazy, dependent Indian. As this narration is taking place, the film then shows a white male, one would assume the Indian Agent or the farm instructor, trying to teach a group of Indigenous men how to use a horse-drawn hand plow. It is unclear from the records where this was filmed, but in examining the landscape and the filming schedule, it is likely it was filmed on Peguis First Nation in Manitoba.

The film then quickly cuts to an Indigenous family on a reserve looking perfectly miserable, poor, and dirty, and apparently also filmed at Peguis First Nation in Manitoba. The father and several children are sitting on the ground outside a small log cabin. We then see the mother inside the tiny, sparsely furnished cabin feeding a baby while brushing away flies. These images are clearly meant to demonstrate to the Canadian public that Indigenous peoples remained in a "primitive" state in need of civilization despite the "white man's best intentions" to help. The narrator explains how as a result of isolation and paternalism, "they ceased to govern themselves and instead became dependent."[31] Again, there is no explanation or acknowledgement that this is a result of the Indian Act beyond a brief mention of paternalism. There is no understanding or explanation provided that Indigenous peoples had been self governing and independent peoples prior to the reserve and Indian Act era, nor is there any mention that the people of Peguis had once been a prosperous community prior to being forcibly relocated in 1906. Further, images as opposed to narration, is what is

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

more likely to stick in an audience's mind and so, despite a seemingly positive narration, audiences were more likely to have the image and idea of the poverty stricken and dirty 'Indian' reinforced. Without an explanation, however brief, of how and why Indigenous peoples "ceased to govern themselves and became dependent," I would argue the film fails in its stated intention.

The narrator then states that "in some, pride still lingered … and that some made good in the outside world on the white man's terms"[32] and we see Tommy Prince walking towards his mother on the reserve. We are a mere five minutes in yet have already seen contradictory "civ-sav"[33] images, a combination and contrast of traditional and modern. The section on Tommy Prince focusses on economic development and how the recently implemented elected chief and council under the Indian Act has been a positive thing for his reserve, as "my people were beginning to make their own decisions now."[34] The film goes on to showcase several Indigenous peoples who have successfully integrated, and it is highly gendered. In the longer version, the film tells the story of nine individuals, and two reserves that have been able to farm or cattle ranch profitably. Of the individual people showcased, only two are women, the previously mentioned Theresa Papanakus, a student nurse at St Boniface Hospital, and Ella Cyr, a lab technician at a TB sanatorium in Saskatchewan. This is somewhat unusual for the time period, as according to Mary Jane Logan McCallum, Indigenous women in the

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Emma LaRoque explores this concept in *When The Other Is Me: Native Resistance Discourse, 1850–1990* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010).

[34] McLean, *No Longer Vanishing*.

earlier part of this time period were mainly pushed into domestic service, unskilled health care work, secretarial or hairdressing work.[35] However, this is not to say that such fields as nursing were not attainable, and many young Indigenous women did indeed enter into these demanding jobs, as evidenced by McCallum's work and shown in this film. However, later sections of the film do indeed show several women in secretarial and hairdressing schools. In the shorter version, only the men are looked at and we only see a single image of the young student nurse. In either case, the narration throughout reinforces the notion that it is Indigenous peoples who need to change in order to integrate or if they encounter discrimination, it is somehow their fault. For example, in the scenes with Tommy Prince, one part of the narration talks about how some of the older people on the reserve did not believe Prince when he said he didn't encounter much discrimination outside the reserve and that the old man "was still bitter."[36] Another example comes when we see the young woman, Theresa Papanakus, in nursing school. She states that in order to get into nursing school, she "had to have more education than most of our people"[37] and explains that her mother only has a grade six and her father only went as far as grade two and they wanted her to get a "proper education." She then goes on to say how being away from home was lonely and that some of the other students called her "red Indian or savage" but she "had made a

[35] McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History*.
[36] McLean, *No Longer Vanishing*.

[37] Ibid.

few friends and perhaps she was too sensitive"[38], thus effectively blaming herself for the racist slurs directed at her.

Another young man profiled is George Henderson, who is attending Normal School in Winnipeg to become a teacher. We see his story narrated by the student nurse, Theresa, as she is out on a date with George. She tells us that George took a course while in the TB sanatorium before going to Normal school. She tells us that he "wants to teach in a white school before a reserve school and that education is the solution to our problems."[39] The audience is provided with some quick statistics on how many Indigenous peoples are in school at the time as compared to a decade earlier. This section of the film ends with Theresa and George watching the buffalo at Assiniboine Park and the comment that "the buffalo were once dying out, but like our own people, they are no longer dying but increasing in numbers."[40]

The film then profiles young female lab technician Ella Cyr and discusses how the health of Indigenous peoples is still below that of other Canadians and that "for a time it seemed as though the race might die out"[41] but that now the population had almost doubled since the turn of the century. This part of the narration apparently comes from the interview with Marion Meadmore.[42] The film then turns to Cyr's home reserve in the Qu'Appelle and how her people "are good farmers" but that some

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] LAC, RG 10 Vol. 881, File 1/12-11-3.

"Indians" found it hard to learn how to farm and use machinery.[43] This single comment is enough to reinforce in the minds of some Canadians the notion of the ignorant, stupid, incapable of learning Indigenous person. Indeed, even as late as the mid-1980s, I personally encountered teachers who told me to not bother because "the best you people can do is hairdressing or secretarial school."[44] The film then goes on to say, somewhat contradicting the earlier statement that some found it hard to learn to use machinery, that the farmers on reserve are no different than the white farmers around them and that this reserve has formed a co-op to grow, harvest, and sell the wheat. There is, of course, no mention of the permit system in place at the time which severely restricted Indigenous farmers ability to market their produce.[45]

Other profiles include a large cattle ranch on the Blood Reserve in Alberta, and that this was an easy transition, as it "suited the Indians" because we are natural horsemen and cattle ranching isn't much different than the prior bison hunts. The next section looks at a logging operation in BC. Here the narrator states that because Indigenous peoples are "good at most outdoor jobs calling for physical endurance and better than average reflexes, Indians are among the top workers."[46] So, here we have the perpetuation of the notion that we are only suited for manual labour jobs based on 'inherent' racial abilities. This notion is furthered when the film looks at a small

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[43] McLean, *No Longer Vanishing*.

[44] Personal experience.

[45] See Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian reserve farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990)

[46] McLean, *No Longer Vanishing*.

commercial fishing fleet in BC. The narrator in this section is supposedly the local bank manager who decides that Jim Sewid is a "good risk" to give a bank loan to in order to establish a commercial fishing business, as he had a "good reputation among his people."[47] There is no real explanation in this part of the film as to why it was difficult if not impossible for Indigenous peoples on reserve to obtain a bank loan, as everything is technically owned by the federal government and as such, individual Indigenous peoples on reserve have no "collateral." Considering that this fact is not explained, it gives the impression that Indigenous peoples are able to get a bank loan just like anyone else. At any rate, Jim Sewid is indeed a successful businessman, and his picture appears in Indian Affairs publications well into the late 1960s. However, as successful as Sewid was along dominant capitalist lines, he also was instrumental in revitalizing traditional practices in his community as well as writing a book about his efforts.[48] I suggest that this is further evidence of Indigenous peoples adapting and bringing our cultures forward into modern times without the elimination of our identities and cultures.

However, like the sections on ranching and logging, here the narration again reinforces the notion that Indigenous peoples on the West Coast are "natural fishermen," while at the same time supporting the idea that we were relatively recent arrivals in the Americas by saying that we had been fishing for only "a thousand

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[47] Ibid.

[48] James Sewid, *Guests Never Leave Hungry: The Autobiography of James Sewid, a Kwakiutl Indian* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

years."[49] The section with Jim Sewid ends with him going to pick up his children from the integrated high school. The narrator, still supposedly the bank manager, states that this makes Jim happy, as his kids going to school with white kids will make things easier for them when they must go out and make their living. The narration goes on to explain that 25% of Indian children in BC attend mixed schools, and wherever local school boards go along with it, "it makes the youngsters fit in with Canadian life as a whole, helps them make the transition."[50] This comment segues the film into the final section which emphasizes the policy shift away from residential schools to integration into mainstream public provincial schools. In this scene, we see the utopian notion that simply by educating Indigenous children together with non, the problems of racism and discrimination will somehow magically vanish.

The film explains how more and more Indigenous peoples are entering vocational schools to learn trades and skills to "enable them to compete with other Canadians on equal terms" and that "young people of Canada's oldest racial heritage are getting the sort of chance that is the right of any Canadian."[51] However, what we are being shown here is much the same as we saw earlier, lower working-class type jobs. This notion that we are somehow inherently only suited to these type of labour jobs is one that began in the residential schools and is one that really has not yet been dislodged. Furthermore, there is no comment or indication of the abysmally poor education that Indigenous peoples had received to that point via the residential school

[49] McLean, *No Longer Vanishing*.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

system, which was an integral policy element that prevented Indigenous peoples from full participation in the mainstream economy. The narrator then explains that when Indigenous people leave the “shelter of the reserve, shyness and suspicion vanish” if we encounter “friendly help in the modern world” and that if given a “reasonable start” or “response to the right kind of training indicates that, in time, the exception could become the rule.”[52] Again, this narration is reinforcing the notion of being primitive, that we are suspicious of the modern world and must be helped by our white saviors. Further, this notion of successful Indigenous people being somehow exceptional is one that is still with us.

The film goes on to say, “Some have shown fine examples to their people”[53] and shows us Dr. Greslouis, a medical doctor in Courcelle, Quebec, Dr. G.C. Monture, a geologist and chief of the Mineral Resources Division of the Mines Branch, and O.M. Martin, a police court magistrate in Ontario discussed earlier. We also see scenes of a boat building yard in the United States and that the skilled craftsmen who commute across the border have “perhaps inherent ability and tradition play a role”[54] in the skill these men have. It would appear from the records that the people filmed in this section were from the Sarnia reserve. In the scenes with Kanyen’keha (Mohawk) steel workers the narrator again attributes this type of work to so called inherent abilities. However, the narration is also rather contradictory, “They have a particular aptitude for working with sureness and confidence at great heights, so they’re in big demand, not in spite of

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

being Indians, not *because* they're Indians, but simply because they rate among the best steel workers in the world."[55] (emphasis original) So here we hear the narration begin with a statement of "inherent ability" and then quickly contradicts this by saying that Kanyen'keha men are simply skilled steel workers. Overall, though, the message is that the reason for success in all these highly varied industries is attributable to "the Indians ancient skills and inherent abilities" and that we are somehow inherently suited to labour work, and indeed my own father spent the majority of his working life as truck driver. The narration then states, "those who have made the transition show what can be done."[56]

The film ends with a classroom of both Native and Euro-Canadian children, possibly filmed in Hazelton, BC, with the narration emphasizing the positives of integrated schooling and the teacher is an Indigenous man, although it is not George Henderson whom we saw earlier, and this man is unidentified in the records. Here, the narration states that "more education alone is only part of what is needed to enable the Indian to fit into Canadian life as a whole." That "old prejudices are disappearing wherever the sons and daughters of old Canadians, new Canadians and original Canadians are able to study together" and with improving health and education, someday "all of Canada will gain from the heritage of a people no longer vanishing, but growing yearly in numbers, in confidence, and in strength."[57] Once again, the narration is reinforcing the idea that it is Indigenous peoples who must change in order to fit in

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

and that by simply educating everyone together, this will eliminate racism. One small element in the archives that speaks to notions or race in post-war Canada is found in the file containing the preliminary narration and filming sites. Here, the side notes indicate a "dolly shot past row of different types-including perhaps a Chinese or Japanese boy or girl … end on an Indian child."[58] It would seem the Department of Citizenship and Immigration felt that by simply showing a multi-cultural classroom then all problems of racial inequality and prejudice would be solved. Considering the fact that Canada is still struggling with these issues, it would seem that a simple film was hardly effective despite the effusive praise the film received. Noted in the archives as "newspaper tribute", a transcription of the February 1956 issue of Food for Thought, apparently an Ottawa area newspaper column, a review of the film was published which ends with stating the film will be "particularly valuable in breaking down the stereotype of the Indian as lazy and shiftless, incapable of learning the white man's ways in a technical civilization.… The film's emphasis is unequivocal – the Indian is a productive, contributing Canadian, like the rest of us."[59]

Throughout the film, the major emphasis is on education and training, with only passing references to the poor schooling received so far, and there are no references at all to residential schools in this film nor to restrictive policies that effectively curtailed educational opportunities and economic development. While this film is clearly intended to showcase success stories and emphasize the positive, it nonetheless reinforces the

[58] LAC, RG 10 Vol. 881, File 1/12-11-3.

[59] NFB, 54-210. The memo in the archives does not indicate what "Food for Thought" was but based on the file name as "newspaper tribute" one can assume it was a newspaper column from most likely an Ottawa paper.

general notion in the mainstream of Canadian society that Indigenous peoples are somehow less than, and in need of help from the dominant society and that the only way to achieve this is to integrate, i.e., assimilate the Indigenous population. Furthering how education was being delivered to First Nation communities and presented to the general Canadian population, the film *Off to School*,[60] released in 1958, continues the theme of education and training as the key to integration. This is an eight-minute-long series of three shorts showing how students in remote areas of Canada are educated. The first two shorts, one in BC and one in northern Ontario, focus on Euro-Canadian children whose parents are involved in primary industries such as fishing, logging, and mining. The final short, entitled *"Northern Schooldays*" looks at a residential school in Moose Factory, Ontario. It is approximately three-and-a-half minutes long yet manages to convey several messages to the target audience of mainstream, Euro-Canadians. As argued by Jane Griffith, this film:

> offer[s] a false equivalence. In the first two scenarios, the state is shown to have creatively ensured that students attended school, but not at the expense of returning home each night. In contrast, residential schools could hardly be deemed creative, particularly in 1958, after a system marked by failure was nearly 100 years old. The solutions of ferry and train accommodated the professions of the children's fathers, as these were stated in the film. The fathers participated in an extractive resource economy, working as fishermen, railway workers, loggers, and trappers; the film states that they were "men whose work takes them to places where there just aren't any regular schools."
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> In these narratives, parents pack lunches and assist with homework, whereas children in residential schools—the voice-over explains matter-of-factly— "may be orphans. They may come from broken homes. Or they may be isolated in remote settlements." According to this explanation, parents are

[60] *Off to School*, no director (1958; NFB).

> negligent or even non-existent; the film frames the state, in contrast, as a solution to a decontextualized and unnamed problem.[61]

It begins with a shot of a map with a finger pointing towards James Bay, "At the southern tip of James Bay, about 500 miles north of Toronto, a schoolyard full of activity on a crisp winters day." We see a large, modern building and a mixed group of children outside playing. The narrator states, "It's the community of Moose Factory and the children are Indians. Students at the Canadian government school. There are more than 200, and they're a lively bunch."[62] The children are all shown playing ball, skipping rope, and smiling. However, a closer look reveals that few are properly dressed for the cold. Few of the children appear to be wearing mitts, scarves, or toques, and many of the girls are in dresses with bare legs.

The narrator then discusses how popular hockey is and how the boys compete to win a spot on the school team and says, "Who knows? Maybe there's a big-league hockey star amongst them."[63] Of course, there is no comment on how realistic such a result is given the expense and time commitment required nor is there any mention of the chronic underfunding the schools faced. The film then shows the viewer shots from inside the school and a Valentine's Day class party. The children are all shown to be happy and smiling with a smiling Euro-Canadian female teacher and the classroom appears bright, clean, and well equipped. The narration says that the children have an

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[61] Jane Griffith, "*Off to School*: Filmic False Equivalence and Indian Residential School Scholarship," *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 30, no. 1 (Spring / printemps 2018): 70.

[62] *Off to School*, NFB.

[63] Ibid.

"opportunity to dress up a bit and to use that flair for decoration that so many Indian children seem to have."[64] Here we see the continued notion of inherent ability that we saw in *No Longer Vanishing*, in this case implying that all Indigenous peoples are natural artists. More problematically, the narration states that students receive special attention to hone their individual skills and interests. However, we now know that this sort of individualized education and teacher attention did not occur in most Indian residential schools.[65]

The narration then goes on to say, "Pupil's with names like Jimmy Otter, Norman Icebound, and Able Trapper soon learn that getting an education doesn't have to be sheer drudgery."[66] By pointing out the names of the children, the narration effectively 'others' the children in the eyes of Euro-Canadians and the statement that "The school at Moose Factory reflects the government's aim of trying to make the country's 150 thousand Indians increasingly independent and self-supporting" reinforces the mainstream idea of the lazy, dependent Indian.[67] Furthermore, as pointed out by Jane Griffiths, "The camera cuts to a portrait of the queen and a spelling list—vocabulary such as "purchase," "desire," "wealthy," and "grateful" suggest a curriculum concomitant with capitalism."[68] There is no explanation that Indigenous peoples became dependent

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[64] Ibid.

[65] There is an extensive body of work detailing the experiences and quality of education at Canadian residential schools, including by J.R. Miller, John Milloy, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

[66] *Off to School*, NFB.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Griffith, "*Off to School*," 70.

and no longer capable of being self-supporting as a direct result of isolation on unproductive land, chronic underfunding of residential and on-reserve day schools, and oppressive government policy. Certainly, there is no mention of how the Canadian state and settler citizens have benefitted from this Indigenous loss of land and resources. Rather, we see more images of happy, alert and engaged children in the classroom and in a machine shop while the narration goes on to say, “Education is the keystone of this policy and workshop training on such jobs as repairing motors has many practical applications in Canada’s expanding north.”[69] Again, the emphasis here is on basic manual training for low level jobs as Canada industrializes the north in this time period. The imagery in the film is meant to show that the residential school is not much different from any technical school anywhere in urban Canada at the time. We then see a shot from inside one of the dormitories where two girls are playing ping pong. The dorm is a large, rather barren room with double rows of bunk beds all perfectly made, and the only visible recreation is the ping pong table. The narration states: “In the girl’s dormitory, time out for recreation. This is a residential school, one of 69 in key locations from the American border to above the Arctic Circle. More than 10 thousand children attend these schools, children who, for various reasons, can’t go to regular day schools in Indian communities. They may be orphans, they may come from broken homes, or they may be isolated in remote settlements. So, they come to Moose Factory in September and stay until June and seem to enjoy it thoroughly”[70] The film then shows a group of girls doing exercises in a makeshift gym class, all happy and smiling, then we see two

[69] *Off to School*, NFB.

[70] Ibid.

small children, a boy and girl, laughing as they pull on a church bell rope. The narrator says “About ninety-eight percent of Canada’s Indians belong to Christian denominations and this school is staffed by the Church of England. Spiritual as well as educational needs are catered to at this flourishing, modern school for Canada’s young Indians.”[71] And this is where the film ends. In this brief 3 minutes, audiences are given the idea that residential schools are clean, well equipped, well-staffed modern schools and that the Church is doing an exemplary job. It is little wonder then that the general Canadian public reacted with such shock, disbelief, and even outright denial when the truth of residential schools began to come to light. As stated by Jane Griffith,

> Residential schools also perpetuated settler colonial goals through approaches that separated children from their languages, parents, extended families, communities, political structures, spiritualities, and ceremonies—further ties to land. *Off to School* groups together these three scenarios, but not to feature their larger colonial links. Rather, their superficial similarities of education and distance mute these connections: two narratives depict the benefits of settler colonialism for settlers, and one denies the violence of settler colonialism directed at Indigenous peoples. Settler denial was not left back in 1958, but instead persists today. Viewing *Off to School* now, post-TRC (but not post-truth or post-reconciliation), opens up much for contemplation about the many changes and continuities concerning schooling and colonialism since 1958.[72]

As we have seen in just these two films, the settler state representation of Indigenous peoples is one that clearly reflects the primary concerns of the Canadian state of the time, that of resource development, particularly in the far north, and the total integration of Indigenous peoples into urban areas and the modern economy, thus divesting the Federal government of its constitutional responsibilities to Indigenous

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Griffith, “*Off to School*,” 72.

peoples and lands. Further, it reinforces in the minds of the Canadian public that the government has been and is, more than generous towards Indigenous peoples and that our failure (or refusal) to integrate into Canadian society is our fault, that we are somehow inherently incapable, inherently primitive, rather than recognizing this is a result of government policy over the course of more than a century. Additionally, these films fail to recognize or acknowledge the level of individual agency on the part of the people showcased as success stories. Part of the unspoken implication in these films is that as Indigenous peoples move into urban areas and take up wage labour jobs, we have somehow left our identities and cultures as Indigenous peoples at the reserve border. That we are somehow exceptional, which echoes Phillip Deloria's argument of Indigenous peoples being constructed as "unexpected" in modern spaces,[73] that we somehow cannot be modern and Indigenous at the same time.

[73] Phillip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

Chapter Three:
Because They Are Different: The Film

The film under discussion in this chapter is *Because They Are Different*, 1964, directed and written by Jack Ofield, narrated by Pierre Berton. Of the three films under examination, this is the most disturbing. It perpetuates stereotypes of the drunken, lazy "Indian," the same logic and rhetoric of the residential school era and foreshadows the proposals of the 1969 White Paper. While the stated claim of the film was to educate and stimulate dialogue surrounding issues of integration, in my viewpoint, it worked in the opposite way and perpetuated stereotypes. While the previous films examined are very clearly intended to convey a positive message, albeit from a settler government point of view, this film does the exact opposite. Despite over a decade of various programs and policies intended to integrate Indigenous peoples into the mainstream economy and culture through public school integration and programs such as the Placement and Relocation program[1], the underlying issue of colonial imagery and racism remains. In terms of the previous films examined and the overarching theme of integration via education and training, this film presents a stark contrast to the 1954 production, *No Longer Vanishing*. While both purports to promote or examine government programs of integration, *Because They Are Different* presents a picture of failure on the part of Indigenous peoples. In this film, Mark Anderson, and Carmen

[1] For a discussion of this program, see Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work and History, 19401980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014).

Robertson's "rule of three … essentialized sets of characteristics - depravity, innate inferiority, and a stubborn resistance to progress"[2] are clearly demonstrated and provide a useful framework for analysis.

The current NFB website description of the film states: "This short documentary explores issues surrounding the integration of Canadian Indigenous people into social institutions such as the non-Indigenous school systems and workforce. Questions arise about the viability and desirability of integration, and old prejudices are revealed in interviews and commentary from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians."[3] In November of 1964 the information division of the NFB provided a short film description prior to the airing date of the film on CBC on the "Wednesday night series *NFB Presents*, November 25, 1964 at 10:30pm EST."[4] In this document, the film is described as "a penetrating portrayal of progress and problems associated with integration of Canada's Indians … camera crews travelled across the country for on-the-spot views of the large-scale government program to integrate Indian school children with white."[5] The description goes on the state that very few are integrated, that Indigenous peoples "still regard the reserve as their world," and that since "it is not easy for older people to change, the federal program of integration is directed primarily at the children."[6] Here,

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[2] Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson, *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 6.

[3] *Because They Are Different*, directed by Jack Ofield (1964, NFB), 28 min. Available online at https://www.nfb.ca/film/because_they_are_different/.

[4] NFB production files 63-103.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

what we are hearing is the notion of a “stubborn resistance to progress,” and, considering that this was written in 1964, it is disturbingly close to the rhetoric surrounding the establishment of the residential school system. The common understanding of the time was, according to John Milloy, who states that J.A. Macrae, the Department’s inspector of schools in 1886, was of the opinion adults were “unfitted to bear such a complete metamorphosis”. Further, the founder of the Shingwauk residential school felt that adults were “the old, unimprovable people,” thus the focus had to be on the children.[7]

So, although seventy-eight years separate the thinking of government officials of the late nineteenth century from the film release information sheet, we are still hearing the same words, the same ideology, the only difference being the word assimilation has now been replaced with integration. Furthermore, it is one of only two NFB produced films of the era that I was able to find that deals directly with the residential school system, the other being the final three minutes of the 1958 short, *Off to School*. More problematic, both the historical and current description of the film state the intended purpose is to examine questions surrounding education and integration. However, as we will see, the filmmaker spends an inordinate amount of time on the lazy, drunken Indian stereotype, the “depravity” trope, and the continuing “logic” of the residential school era.

[7] John Milloy, *A National Crime; The Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879–1980*, 2nd ed. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, Winnipeg, 2017), 25–26.

Pre-production on this film began in April of 1963 and "was the second film in what was to be a long-term integrated series of films."[8] Mort Ransen, a director with the NFB had been "assigned to research and write a half hour documentary film … on Indian school integration"[9] spent the month of April travelling to British Columbia, Manitoba, and northwestern Ontario meeting with government, church, and education officials. Letters from June of the same year indicate that Ransen and his interviewees were concerned whether a half-hour television show would "give accuracy and perspective to a subject as complex and sensitive as this one."[10] It would seem that a number of government and school officials had voiced concern about the film's subject matter and if a half hour film could accurately express the complexities of school integration during Ransen's initial field trip. For example, Ransen tells Lyman Janpolsky, the regional superintendent of Indian Schools in BC, that based on his suggestions, extended filming time was agreed to by the NFB to ensure that they have "sufficient time in the filming to study the problems in depth and to give them proper national attention."[11] Ransen expressed similar concerns to Jean Lagasse, then Director of Community Development Services in Winnipeg, in a letter dated June 12, 1963. This would have been shortly before Lagasse left provincial service in late 1963 to take up a

[8] NFB production files 63-103.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

federal position with the citizenship branch, where he served as director until 1970.[12] In the majority of the letters from June, Ransen indicates that he has been given three months of shooting and editing time, beginning in April of 1964, which is more time than the "few short weeks … usually given" in order to more effectively deal with the subject matter. In a letter to Selwyn Dewdney, author of several books on First Nations art and spirituality, Ransen indicates the film will be produced by Richard Gilbert and that Ransen will not only be writing the film, but that he "will definitely be directing it myself."[13] In this same letter, Ransen goes on to state that "quite frankly, I don't know yet whether or not the half-hour film will be able to deal with anything other than statements directly concerned with Indian school integration."[14] It would seem, based on the correspondence, that Mort Ransen had some serious and valid concerns about the production and effectiveness of this film.

Interestingly, by March of 1964 just prior to the start of actual shooting, letters to the same officials interviewed by Mort Ransen are now coming from producer Richard Gilbert or from Jack Ofield, who is the person who ended up directing and writing the film. In a letter dated March 19, 1964, to Mr. J. Boys, the Indian Commissioner for BC, Richard Gilbert indicates that Jack Ofield will be arriving on April 6 and that "last year our researcher talked with Lyman Jamplosky and he suggested Port Alberni."[15]

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[12] Will Langford, "Jean Lagasse, Community Development, and the "Indian and Metis Problem" in Manitoba in the 1950-60's, *The Canadian Historical Review* Volume 97, no. 3 (September 2016): 373-4

[13] NFB production files 63-103

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

Somehow, and for some reason not indicated anywhere in the archives, Mort Ransen seems to have been removed from this film, and all of his research and script writing for the film seems to have been scrapped, as Jack Ofield is credited as script writer. I would speculate that Ransen was removed, as he appears to have been quite vocal in his concerns about being able to adequately convey such complex subject matter in a mere half hour. However, it is also entirely plausible that he was simply re-assigned to direct and co-write *The Transition*, a film about Indigenous urban placement and relocation programs.[16] I would further speculate that Ofield either did not read Ransen's notes or preliminary script, if there was one, or if he did, chose to ignore them. Further, there is no indication in the NFB archives that Ofield did any of his own research other than using the contacts previously identified by Ransen prior to setting out to film.

The correspondence in the NFB archives indicates that filming would take place in Port Alberni, BC; Red Lake, Ontario; the Keewatin and Kenora districts in Ontario; and at Six Nations and Brantford, Ontario. While certainly the filmmakers did travel across the country, it is hardly a "cross-country" perspective being presented, as touted in the release bulletin. Further, the vast majority of the film is from the Red Lake and Keewatin/Kenora area, a district which in the 1960s, had limited economic development or educational opportunities for Indigenous peoples, and had been so for generations by this point in time.[17] I argue that this location was deliberately chosen by Jack Ofield because it fit his idea of Indigenous peoples, that of a people trapped in time and in

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[16] "Mort Ransen," *Canadian Film Encyclopedia*, TIFF, http://cfe.tiff.net/canadianfilmencyclopedia/content/bios/mort-ransen.

[17] See Brittany Luby, *Dammed: The Politics of Loss and Survival in Anishinaabe Territory* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020

desperate need of the white man's benevolence, with high levels of poverty and addiction problems, and where he would be sure of finding racist attitudes.[18] This will be expanded on as I examine the transcribed interviews.

The list of people interviewed for the film is not terribly extensive; a total of twenty-three people were interviewed by Ofield, of which nineteen made it into the final cut. Ten of these are identified on this list as "Indians" and only six are identified by name, the other four are simply "Indian woman," "Indian girl" and two listed as "Indian," assumingly male.[19] Interestingly, Lyman Jampolsky, the regional superintendent of residential schools in BC, was interviewed, but was cut, as Ofield felt that he, along with three others, "contributed little."[20] However, if we look back to the limited correspondence on file, it would seem that Mort Ransen and Mr. Jampolsky had had an extensive and detailed conversation during the initial research stage and Ransen hoped that Jampolsky "would appear on camera yourself, for a long and complete interview, not just about British Columbia but covering many of the subjects we discussed."[21] Clearly, as regional superintendent of Indian schools, Jamplosky had a lot to say, but it would seem that whatever he did have to say, Ofield deemed it useless. In any case, of the four people whose interviews were scrapped, only two are preserved in the archive,

[18] The Kenora and Keewatin districts are well known for problems with race relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. For a historical example, see the occupation of Anicinabe Park in Kenora, the deaths of several Indigenous students in Thunder Bay, and Brayden Bushby's manslaughter conviction for killing an Indigenous woman by throwing a trailer hitch at her, also in Thunder Bay.

[19] NFB production files 63-103.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

that of Isaac Beaulieu, then Secretary of the Indian-Eskimo Association of Toronto and Major Robert Davey, Chief of the Education Division of Indian Affairs. Of the people interviewed and listed only as “Indian,” all from the Red Lake, Ontario, region, only one is identified in the transcribed interviews as a “Mr. Loonfoot” and the rest remain unidentified. This could be because they declined to give their names, but I would suggest that Ofield simply did not see it necessary. The transcribed interviews and the questions posed clearly demonstrate Ofield’s attitude and stereotypical thinking, and this will be examined in the next chapter where I analyze the complete interviews.

Regarding the construction of the film, to contemporary eyes it is a disjointed, bizarre, and difficult to follow film. The subject matter is supposedly concerned with current government policies and programs of educational integration, yet the imagery and soundbites perpetuate racist stereotypes. There is no storyline, rather it was intended to be a “man on the street” sort of film, and as nobody is identified and we rarely hear the questions being posed, just the responses, it can be difficult to figure out just what, exactly, is going on or how each person speaking connects. An additional problem with this lack of identification is the lack of context in terms of geographical location or relationship to Indigenous peoples. In many cases, the interview is little more than a brief soundbite before jumping to the next person. The narration, by Pierre Berton, is somewhat sparse and, while intended to serve as a transition to or explanation of the next sequence of interviews, provides a somewhat contradictory narrative, as we will see shortly.

The opening sequence of the film very much sets the tone for the film. The film opens with a shot of a hotel entrance as a child sings the genocidal nursery rhyme,

"John Brown Had a Little Indian"[22] in a very creepy, slow voice. The purpose of this is unknown, as there is no mention of this song anywhere in the archived documents. To contemporary ears and eyes, however, it does have the immediate effect of eliciting a strong reaction of horror and distaste. We then see a small, disheveled Indigenous child sitting outside the hotel, reinforcing the ideas of depravity and innate inferiority via the image of neglected children and incompetent parenting. The film then shows drunken Indigenous adults staggering about the street and urinating against the building. As argued by Mark Anderson and Carmen Robertson, alcohol abuse is an example of the "moral depravity" assigned to Indigenous peoples by the settler population and is "as old as the press in Canada." Further, they support Elizabeth Furniss's argument that Indigenous alcohol abuse is seen by Canadians as "common sense" and thus, images of drunken Indigenous peoples elicit little "more than tsk-tks or knowing nods of the head."[23] As the song comes to an end, the camera pans in on an elderly Indigenous couple sitting on the curb and the film title is superimposed over them.

Immediately after this image is when we hear George Clutesi, a renowned Tseshaht artist and cultural teacher, speak about the hypocrisy of white people when it comes to drinking and jobs and begins with "I used to go many of your dances and invariably there would be a young man so drunk he would be crawling all over the floor, but he wasn't bad, he was a good fellow. But you see an Indian stagger on the street,

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[22] Julian Jennings, "The History of 'Ten Little Indians,'" *Indian Country Today*, October 11, 2012. https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/the-history-of-ten-little-indians-q1WdVbswNEu5Hat3KCQoAA, accessed November 18, 2020.

[23] Anderson and Robertson, *Seeing Red*, 7–8

and all Indians are no good drunkards."[24] He goes on to say "the same thing applies to jobs" in that if we dare to quit a bad job, we are labelled as undependable, yet white people can quit jobs anytime and not be judged for it. While this is an excellent and important point to open the film with, considering the dominant message in the film, this could be easily lost or forgotten by viewers by the end of the film. Further, as it appears this film aired only once and it really needs multiple viewings to truly grasp what is going on, I argue that what stuck with most viewers at the time were the negative statements as opposed to the few positives.

The film then shows several Indigenous men sitting on the street as the narration by Pierre Burton tells us that "There are almost a quarter of a million Indians in Canada, few of whom are integrated. They are sometimes hated, sometimes ridiculed, and very rarely found in responsible positions. The white man was often dishonest with the Indian and rarely understood the people whose land he took away. Opinions and attitudes that existed generations ago still exist today."[25] This last sentence is intended to prepare the audience for the next people interviewed in the "man on the street" style and here we meet two young men, identified in the archived documents as Ray and Gerry Beyerhold of Trader's Finance Inc. in Keewatin, Ontario. The response to Ofield asking about what kind of effect the local Indigenous people have on the community is the soundbite we hear, and the two men state there is "too much welfare … they have been treated as children for too long … they need to learn to live for tomorrow." The stereotype we are hearing here is the "lazy Indian" and likely justified by Ofield to show evidence of

[24] NFB production files 63-103

[25] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 1:39–2:00.

"Opinions and attitudes that existed generations ago still exist today."[26] Following this we once again hear a brief narration stating "But tomorrow, for many Indian children, will mean a new way of life in a government integrated school. Some Indian parents are distrustful of the government plan." This comment is then followed by a series of comments from three Indigenous men, the first is identified in the records as Bill Smith, a farmer from Six Nations. Although brief, his statement regarding integration, that "the Indian, he doesn't want it and they want to force it on him"[27] is an important one, but one that's real meaning I would argue was lost on not only the director but also the viewing audience. Here, I suspect it was included to support the narrator's earlier statement of "distrust of the government's plan" but also the notion of the stubborn resistance to progress. However, what I interpret this to mean is that many Indigenous peoples have never seen the need nor have had the desire to integrate with the settler population. Given that this comment comes from a Haudenosaunee person, we have always maintained our separate identity from the settler population in that we are not you and we do not wish to be you. This assertion of sovereignty on the part of the community of Six Nations is older than Canada and well documented.[28]

This brief segment is followed by George Clutesi, who says, "the government agent said there's no use in giving them an education because they only go back to the reserve … but that is what we want, we want them to come back and teach us something." Here, we are hearing the tension between what Indigenous peoples wanted

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[26] Ibid., timestamp 1:39–2:00.

[27] Ibid., timestamp 2:42–2:54.

[28] See, for example, Rick Monture, Audra Simpson, and Susan M. Hill.

from education versus what the settler government wanted. Since the inception of the Residential School system, part of the goal was always to prevent students from returning to the reserve and to encourage relocation to settler dominated areas, be that in urban areas or on settler -style individual farms. However, as demonstrated in Mary Jane Logan McCallum's work, for Indigenous peoples in the post-war period, education was often pursued with the goal of returning home to work for their community.[29] The segment with Clutesi is followed by Pete Seymour, an employee of the Dept. of Lands and Forests in Kenora, Ontario who discusses the need for integration due to the loss of traditional ways as a result of overfishing, overhunting and logging on the part of the settler population. He states that because of this loss of traditional economic activity, some people will "have to integrate in order to survive." Seymour, I would argue, is a realist. He is acutely aware of the impact loss of land and livelihood has had, and that the situation is unlikely to improve. However, although he doesn't state he feels such traditional economic activities are a thing of the past, the way in which his soundbite is framed is intended to give the audience the impression of an Indigenous person who has fully accepted the integration policy. Importantly, there is no mention in the film of how the settler population benefits from resource extraction on Indigenous lands at the expense of Indigenous peoples.

Immediately following this, we see scenes of overcrowded and impoverished reserve homes with plates of rotting food covered in flies and piles of garbage while the narration tells us that "an impoverished home is not necessarily an unhappy home. A poor home does not of necessity breed people who are poor in spirit, but for many

[29] McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work and History*.

Indian people the home has become a refuge from a world that is strange to them. The Indian reserve is their world, the reserve does not bewilder them. It makes no demands; the reserve is familiar, and it is always waiting to claim them."[30] Here we are hearing and seeing contradictory messages. While on the one hand the narration is seemingly positive, the images we see are in stark contrast and serve to reinforce the idea of filth and poverty being a normal and acceptable part of life, what Mark Anderson and Carmen Robertson refer to as "depravity." Disturbingly, the comment that the reserve is "waiting to claim them" gives the viewer the eerie impression that the reserve is a place of death or stagnation, and the notion of resistance to progress. The narration continues in this lamenting tone by commenting that "the melody is faint now; the Indian can hardly hear it. Their song was the song of the woods … the woods are empty now, the hunt is over, the songs and dances are no more … but the reserves are becoming overcrowded. Someone has got to integrate. If it is not the older people, then it must be the children. The barriers are formidable."[31] Here we are hearing a number of stereotypes, one the romantic notion of the 'vanishing Indian', second, the notion that Indigenous culture has been permanently lost, and more disturbing and one that repeats the residential school logic, the idea that only the children are capable of change.

The problematic nature of the film continues following the "barriers are formidable" statement where we hear from Mr. Greenhaugh, identified in the archives as a teacher at the Port Alberni Residential School. Here Mr. Greenhaugh informs us that

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[30] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 3:47–4:23.

[31] Ibid., timestamp 4:23–5:04.

he has conducted a study of his students and that of the group that "should be in Grade 10," most have dropped out, some are in jail, and many of the girls have babies already. Following this interview, the film cuts to a man identified in the records as Mr. MacDougall of Red Lake, Ontario. Here we hear and see a somewhat bizarre and difficult to follow rant about going from freezing homes to warm schools which then abruptly cuts to a young Euro-Canadian woman identified in the records as Carol Olsen, a teacher at the Keewatin integrated school. This segment is extensive, Ms. Olsen's comments are edited and framed in a way to have her appear to be an authority or at least knowledgeable about conditions on reserve. Her comments begin with the statement that "what is just essential to us, they don't have. They don't have furniture like we do, most of them sleep on the floor … in the summertime I know most houses out there don't have any windows, don't have any doors, there's flies and it's filthy." As she begins to discuss the living conditions, we see scenes from an unidentified reserve providing visual confirmation of what she is saying. Olsen's commentary ends with her saying, with a laugh, the children will only attend school if they have white bread, and that "if you give them just white bread and butter, then they'll come."[32] These segments are designed to reinforce in the minds of the average Canadian the settler colonial notion of primitiveness, indolence, sloth, and poverty being somehow inherent to Indigenous cultures. These racist ideas serve the settler state in two ways, one they convince the general public of the need for state intervention and the supremacy of Euro-Canadian culture, and secondly, reinforce racist attitudes that it is Indigenous peoples who need to change their thinking, rather than the other way around. Rather

[32] Ibid., timestamp 6:34–7:15.

than fostering cultural understanding or opening a dialogue, as it claims to do, the film merely works to reassure Canadians in their racist beliefs.

As the story of white bread ends, the narration by Pierre Berton continues over shots of the reserve as he asks the viewer, “If a child grows up in a home that has no bathroom … no electricity and eleven brothers and sisters, will that child have ample opportunity to study? Will his parents help him to be a self-sufficient student? Can they encourage him to stand on his own two feet?” We are hearing a couple of stereotypes here, mainly aimed at the parents and designed to reinforce the settler notion of ingrained poverty and incompetent parenting, both of which were used as justification for the removal of children during the residential school era to today and is brilliantly examined in Allyson Stevenson’s recent work *Intimate Integration: A History of the Sixties Scoop and the Colonization of Indigenous Kinship.* The film confirms to the viewer that the best course of action is to remove the child from such physical living conditions, rather than addressing the structural reasons for it. This is one of the most disturbing aspects of this film, in that despite being fifty-seven years old, we are still dealing with this thinking and children are still being removed from the home for these reasons. The film continues to reinforce stereotypes after this narration segment with a shot of several unidentified Indigenous people being asked by Ofield what they think of a variety of topics such as welfare and the family allowance as well as cultural loss. Seven people are interviewed for this segment, six of whom are Indigenous and of these six; only one, a Mr. Shyres, the undertaker at Six Nations, is identified by name in the records. None of these interviews are preserved in the archives and so I assume they were never transcribed. This could be perhaps due to the interviews being very

brief, or considering Ofield's apparent pre-conceived racist notions, did not see it as necessary. Further, this is one of the few times in the film where we hear the questions being posed by Ofield.

The first interview in this segment is with a young Indigenous woman, and Ofield asks if she thinks welfare is a good thing, which is affirmed. Ofield then asks if she thinks the government "could do more to help the Indian?" The reply here is again, yes, and when prompted to explain how or in what ways, she replies that the kids who go to school need to buy their own books, so people need help with that. The next person interviewed is asked about the loss of "the Indian way of life," and here we see an older man explaining that the younger generation has no interest in learning the "old ways." The film then cuts to a woman in a doorway, loud music in the background, whom Ofield asks if she knows of places "where white people are not nice to Indians?" The woman interviewed here, like all in this segment, speaks broken, accented English, and when she replies that in one town people are not nice, Ofield asks "What is something that happens?" Her response: "Because sometimes the Indians kill the ministers." Ofield, in a surprised tone, repeats her statement in a questioning way and she merely replies with "umm hum." This is not only bizarre, but also totally unexplained or contextualized in the archival documents. The only conclusion I can reach regarding this interview is that it was designed to show the constructed idea of innate moral depravity and inclination to violence on the part of Indigenous peoples.[33] The film then cuts to an older Indigenous man, also being asked about his thoughts on welfare. He begins by saying that some people "do nothing, they just go out trapping," thus reinforcing the notion of

[33] Anderson and Robertson, *Seeing Red,* 7.

both indolence and resistance to progress while at the same time showing the mainstream audience that criticism of this also comes from Indigenous peoples themselves. When asked about welfare, this person replies that “well, yeah, I think it’s alright” and is then immediately asked, “So what if they closed the reserves off and cut off all the welfare and there was nothing for the Indians, how would that be?” The interviewee looks surprised by this question and replies, “Well, I don’t know.” This is disturbing, as it foreshadows the proposals of the 1969 White Paper, and this notion of termination will be further discussed in the following chapter. The next person we see is Mr. MacDougall, previously seen discussing the freezing homes and warm schools. Ofield asks him what he thinks the Indians think of the governments’ efforts in the area, to which MacDougall replies, “Well, they just think that the white man is crazy!” and goes on to explain how a family from Bearskin Lake has been living successfully in Red Lake for several years, that the children attend the regular school, but that the government forced them to go back to the reserve and that if they couldn’t find work there, then the parents would “be supported” and the kids will be sent out to residential school. MacDougall also explains the vast difference in the cost of living between Red Lake and northern reserves and seems to share the opinion that the government “is crazy.” The film then cuts to the only Indigenous person identified in the records, Mr. Shyres, the undertaker at Six Nations. Here, he states that “some of our people don’t want education … they say what’s the use of sending them to school? I think they send them to school more or less to draw that baby bonus, if they don’t go to school, they can’t get the baby bonus, it’s cut off.” What we are hearing in this interview is two-fold: we hear the continuing assertion of Haudenosaunee sovereignty and, more importantly,

the economic reality of many Indigenous peoples. The final interview in this section is with another Indigenous man, who is asked if he thinks there is “discrimination against Indians by white people” and in response relates a story of being refused service at a restaurant.[34] However, it is important to note here that he does not assign blame nor does he condemn non-Indigenous peoples. He not only refuses to say the name of the town in which he experienced this discrimination, but he also states that he does not understand why “some people are like that.” I would argue that what we are hearing here is the sort of thinking and behaviour that I grew up with and I commonly observe in other Indigenous peoples, in that we tend not to react with loud outrage and anger, but quiet, sometimes confused acceptance and a wish for a better relationship with the settler population.

The film then cuts back to the narration stating, “Some young Indians are totally integrated into modern society, and they have few doubts about their particular equality with the white man.”[35] Here we see an extensive segment following a young Indigenous high school student, identified as Margaret Jamieson from Six Nations. This section is clearly staged as we hear Jaimeson’s voice dubbed over scenes of her browsing books in a library intersected with the narration. This part of the film is intended to show mainstream audiences an example of successful integration and how Indigenous people can succeed but only if they completely change to conform to middle-class Euro-Canadian standards. However, Jaimeson’s final comment counters this notion and asserts, however hesitantly, Indigenous agency when she states, “and I don’t see why

[34] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 7:38–11:54.

[35] Ibid., timestamp 11:55.

the white person has to be such a superior race, because they weren't here first." Unfortunately, this is silenced by the narration stating, "This kind of self-confidence is rare … this girl has learned to present herself so that people will accept her … and has chosen a life away from the reserve." The narration continues to explain that Indigenous children will all have to make this choice, "to learn new ways and even a new language. The vital process of integration naturally poses some special problems." Again, we hear the idea that the only solution is total and complete change on the part of Indigenous peoples to Euro-Canadian ways, that it is vital for Indigenous people to learn English (or French) and adapt to the mainstream. The so-called 'special problems' are dealt with in the next section of the film, which deals not only with the question of language, but also hygiene.

Following the apparent success of Margaret Jaimeson, we hear from a Mr. Forbes, identified as the principal of the Keewatin integrated school discussing the problem of head lice. This is designed to show the moral depravity and inherent inferiority of Indigenous peoples and further emphasize the lack of hygiene in Indigenous communities in a manner that places the blame on them, rather than the lack of infrastructure and services. Mr. Forbes explains that a Mr. Carson, a teacher in the day school on the reserve "has taken upon themselves to treat the children," and we see a young boy having something rubbed into his hair while covering his eyes. We then see Mr. Carson's day school reserve classroom and a group of students reading aloud. This is followed by Mr. Carson discussing the language issue, that language and the lack of English is the number one reason why children are failing in school. While he does say that "the people sometimes feel that they're losing their own rights, privileges,

culture and tradition," he continues to assert that the only way for Indigenous students to succeed is through the use of English in the home, and that "his problem is absolute language." This attack on language, like the focus on the children, is a continuation of the logic of the residential school system, which has a well-documented history of punitive methods of teaching English or French at the expense of Indigenous languages. This comment from the Euro-Canadian teacher is quickly followed by another segment of the interview with Pete Seymour, who supports the assertion by explaining that many Indigenous people who attend day school on reserve are not comfortable speaking English because they are able to use their own language on a daily basis, and hence have not learned enough English to be comfortable speaking it. Now arguably, and well documented, this also occurred in residential schools, and the film does cut to a residential school immediately after Seymour's comments.

The narration and imagery that accompanies the scenes filmed inside the Port Alberni Residential School is disturbing in multiple ways, which will be analyzed later, but the main message is that these are not terrible places, that "without the residential school the Indians education would be extremely limited" and the *only* negative is the fact that "At a residential school, the Indian child is a long way from being integrated and a long way from home."[36] We hear again from Mr. Greenhaugh who explains how they have "too many students who drop out and … give up" but without seeming to understand why, but oddly seems to understand that the education being provided to the girls is woefully inadequate in terms of learning how to be a housewife and mother, a standard expectation for all women at the time. He seems to understand that the

[36] Ibid., timestamp 18:28–18:32.

things a child learns from their parents simply cannot be replicated at the residential school. He goes on to explain that most girls after leaving the school have few options beyond marriage or prostitution, and that the girls who get married do not have enough education to properly manage a household and that he feels they "should know how to avoid babies" which is a surprising statement given that it is 1964 and birth control had yet to be legalized![37] The film then returns to Carol Olsen, and begins with her saying "Well, the parents don't really care one way or the other. The parents are both alcoholics … they don't try to get them to go to school, they don't make them work, they just bum around and all they're interested in is going out into the bush fishing or whatever they can do, just to get out of school. They don't want to come to school." This is followed by a scene inside a public school with the narration stating, "The government does want them to come to school and has begun integration on a large scale." The narration goes on to explain how the children may be "shy at first. But gradually they will lose this shyness as they work and play, grow and move out into the larger community." This part of the film is also where it is revealed to the viewer that Carol Olsen is, in fact, a teacher at the integrated school. This revelation was particularly disturbing as one must wonder how she treated the Indigenous children in her classroom considering the racist opinions she clearly articulated. The narration here is repeating the dream end goal of the integration policy, and we heard this utopian ideal in the earlier film, *No Longer Vanishing*, which also expressed the notion that simply having white and Indigenous children attend school together would somehow magically eliminate racism.

[37] "History of Family Planning in Canada," Canadian Public Health Association, https://www.cpha.ca/history-family-planning-canada. Last accessed September 2020.

Given the clearly displayed racist attitudes of Olsen, it becomes clear why and how such a vision was bound to fail. The failure of this utopian dream is also clearly shown as the film cuts back to Ray and Gerry and their thoughts on Indigenous peoples joining the "larger community."

Following a scene of children in the integrated school during morning assembly singing *God Save the Queen* and reciting the *Lord's Prayer*, intended to emphasize colonial normalcy and supremacy, we hear Gerry first, "They seem to hold back the community as far as the tourist trade and such goes, the fact that they're not a first-rate citizen" and then Ray with "I think these integrated schools and getting the younger Indians out to see what they can do, and what they can do if they work and if they use their tools of education and get them away from the reservations where the money comes in from the government and they spend it and when it is gone, there is more coming in, this is something they have got to get away from."[38] Here what we are hearing is the still common belief of depravity, that Indigenous peoples are lazy and don't want to work because we get free money from the government rather than an understanding of the economic circumstances of many reserves, particularly in the Kenora/Keewatin district. Following this, Gerry does state that "granted, this was Indian territory long before we came here, but still, they are still living by these standards. I feel if the government cut out completely or even cut down on the privileges which they allow the Indian, they would have to get out on their own and work more." Ray then interjects with how "they live from one day to another and if they get enough to eat, well then they stop until they get hungry again … or until they can get some liquor." Again,

[38] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 22:14–22:33.

the notion of depravity and innate inferiority is shown here. As argued by Mark Anderson and Carmen Robertson, “Alcohol served as a backdrop for much of the Aboriginal violence reported and it supported the long-standing idea that Indigenous peoples could not resist alcohol,” and this long-standing idea is indeed repeated throughout the film both verbally in the interviews and visually. An attempt is made to counter this notion by the next interview with Jean Lagasse, noted in the “list of people interviewed”[39] as acting director of the Citizenship Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Lagasse tries to explain how social and cultural dislocation and disintegration can lead to alcohol abuse in anyone, but that “reintegration of the individual or his group” can solve the problem of “anti-social behaviors diminish automatically without paying too much attention.” It would seem here that while he does seem to partially understand the root causes, he is holding the official government (and Western) notion of placing focus on the individual first, community second, and that if people are “integrated” into mainstream society then everything will be fine.

The next section of the film is intended to deal with the subjects of both Church and education, but without transitional narration this part of the film can seem slightly confusing. It cuts back to Mr. Greenhaugh stating that the current problem in “Indian education is that it has two controllers. It has the Church on one hand, and let’s face it, the church has done a worthy job in the past, it has the Church on one hand, and it’s got the administrators of the federal government on the other.” This pre-dates the separation in 1969 between the Churches and the government over the operation of the residential school system, and obviously Mr. Greenhaugh is concerned for his job

[39] NFB production files 63-103

security. However, it does point out some of the inherent problems with the education system as it stood at the time. The film then cuts to George Clutesi discussing the Church, that he belongs to the church, but also how the Church not only confused them but just assumed that “we were heathen to the core.” Following this, we see Bud Thomas, supervisor of Special Services – Community Programs Branch in the Ontario Department of Education. In this brief soundbite, Thomas discusses that one way of thinking or one religion may be fine for one culture, but not necessarily so for another, “teachers and clergy sometimes are guilty of superimposing a dogma, a belief that is fine for one society under certain conditions, but it may not be necessarily fine for an Indian community. My personal opinion is that all too often we’ve neglected to respect what is there now, and to say that an Indian is irreligious or a pagan just because he hasn’t been quote, Christianized, end of quote, is certainly not a comfortable feeling for me.”[40]

Given that this is a government official, it is clear that this individual is questioning the appropriateness or logic of both social attitudes and official policy. This is one of the few positive and thought-provoking moments of the film, and one that I think would have stayed in the minds of some viewers. It is followed by a topic shift back to education, without transitional narration, with more commentary from Jean Lagasse who discusses the problems faced in “remote areas … the difficulty in learning enough of the outside world to give motivation to their children, the difficulties in having their kids go to a school that teaches a different culture than their own. To have to agree … your child is going to be taught things which may lead him to have less respect for his

[40] Ibid., timestamp 24:28–25:04.

own people."[41] This is an important point, in that it clearly explains why some Indigenous parents may be resistant to integrated education for their children, yet it is one that I think may have lost on many viewers at the time. The final interview goes back to George Clutesi with his comment, "you can give an Indian child all the chances in the world, but if he has no pride in himself, if he has no pride in his race … he will fold up as soon as we let him go. So now I say bring back that pride of heritage when he's young enough." Here, Clutesi is referring to how the education system has worked to make Indigenous peoples feel ashamed of themselves, their cultures, their identities, as discussed earlier in the film by Lagasse.

The film then ends with more scenes of the reserve depicting poor living conditions. Over these images, we hear the final narration stating, "It's not easy to bring back pride of race when many of the older people have lost faith in their values and themselves. If the children move out into the world, away from their families, discovering new values, who then will help them acquire this pride of race? The white man, whom they distrust? Why does one man seem less than another? What is it within us that causes one group of people to reject another, because they are different?" While this is clearly intended to make the mainstream Canadian population think about this question, as per the film's stated intention, I argue that most Canadians simply walked away from this with their "common sense"[42] racism intact. As the narration ends, we hear the rumble and honking of a bus and see two children walking through the bush. The "John

[41] Ibid, timestamp 25:04–25:44.

[42] Anderson and Robertson, *Seeing Red*, 7–9.

Brown Had a Little Indian" song is sung again as we see children running towards the school bus and then disembarking at the integrated school as the credits roll.

While there are attempts to dispute these stereotypes in the film, the manner in which the film is edited and the interview bits chosen, has the effect of minimizing the people who try to explain, and rather what leaps out at the viewer is the perpetuation of stereotypes. Rather than the messages stated by the interviews standing out, it is the negative imagery that remains in the viewer's mind. If the intent of the film was to foster discussion and to counter or challenge mainstream Canadian racism as well as federal government policy, I would argue that it failed spectacularly.

Chapter Four:

Because They Are Different: The Interviews

In this chapter, I examine the transcribed interviews to determine what the filmmaker included, and what he left out and the impact these choices had on the overall message of the film, both intended and perceived. As Joan Sangster states, "The filmmakers thought that they were creating a critique of white attitudes and Indian poverty that would spark debate about discrimination and racial prejudice against a 'people whose land [whites] took away,' but the film's unrelenting look at Native misery and its negative assessment of Indian policy damned it in Indian Affairs' eyes as 'atrocious.'"[1] However, I argue that while the idea of creating a 'critique' was certainly the defense posture taken by the filmmaker and the NFB, the film did the exact opposite of what they claim to have intended. Whether this was the result of Ofield's inexperience in conducting interviews and general lack of knowledge regarding Indigenous peoples, if he was simply playing "devil's advocate," or if he genuinely held racist attitudes towards Indigenous peoples, remains open to speculation.[2]

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[1] Joan Sangster, *The Iconic North: Cultural Constructions of Aboriginal Life in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 151.

[2] Very little biographical information on Jack Ofield could be found. It seems he began his career in the theatre before his work with the NFB. He then moved on to work with several American broadcasters before becoming a film professor. He is currently listed as Emeritus Professor of Film at San Diego State University, https://ttf.sdsu.edu/faculty/emeriti, https://www.folkstreams.net/filmmaker-detail.php?id=202, accessed April 11, 2021.

While Joan Sangster does briefly discuss the negative feedback received in reaction to the film after it aired, she does not analyze the interviews and it is here that questions about the intentions of the filmmaker arise. Additionally, the feedback is also revealing in that it was largely negative, and it is certainly a film that did not support the Department's desired message of presenting Indigenous peoples as being "at [the] crossroads of modernity"[3] unlike earlier films such as *No Longer Vanishing*. In the transcribed interviews there is little consistency to the questions posed, and most interviews are somewhat rambling conversations. Only three questions are consistently asked, although with slightly altered wording. Almost every person interviewed is asked why they think most Canadians see Indigenous people as "drunken, lazy and degenerates," and if not asked, then the interviewee has already volunteered their thoughts on this as in the interview with Carol Olsen, a schoolteacher at the integrated school in Keewatin, Ontario. The other two consistent questions asked are if they think integration is a "good idea" and effective in "solving the Indian problem" and what they think about the idea of "cutting off the welfare, shutting down the reserves and forcing everyone into the cities."[4] In other words, termination as proposed in the 1969 White Paper. Furthermore, if part of the aim of the film was to "put the white man on trial," it is important to note that the only people we see asked about racism or discrimination in the film are Indigenous. Of the non-Indigenous people interviewed who were asked or volunteered their thoughts, none appear in the final cut.

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[3] Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 151.

[4] NFB production files 63-103.

A brief discussion of the social, cultural, and economic context of the time is necessary to fully grasp what the filmmaker was attempting to convey and perhaps why he was fixated on these three questions. The post-war period in Canada is generally presented and thought of as one of general and widespread prosperity,[5] and the majority of the NFB films of the era are ones that portray increased prosperity, natural resource development, job creation, new housing, and immigration.[6] Indeed, *No Longer Vanishing* is of this nature, one that portrays Indigenous peoples enjoying this economic growth like any other Canadian. However, as Brittany Luby points out, "Indigenous peoples did not form part of Canada's affluent society after 1945…. Postwar Canada was not an affluent society; it was (and it remains) a colonial one."[7] By nineteen sixty-four, the policy of integration had been in place for about fourteen years, consisting of public-school integration, increased welfare and community economic development schemes. This was mainly the result of changes to the Indian Act in 1951 and a general re-examination of Indian Affairs policy, programming, and effectiveness at integration was being undertaken throughout the nineteen fifties and into the early sixties. Despite the fact that this time period marked the beginning of Indigenous organizations and representatives being invited to the policy table, policy remained firmly in the hands of

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[5] See, for example, J.M. Bumstead, "Prosperity and Growth in the Post-war World," in *The Peoples of Canada: A Post-Confederation History*, 4th ed. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[6] There are dozens of films from the 1940s through to the mid-1960s that deal with these topics, such as *Northwest Frontier* (1942), *Look to The North* (1944), *Canada's Awakening North* (1951), *Farewell Oak Street* (1953), *Passport to Canada* (1944), and *A Foreign Language* (1958), to name just a few.

[7] Brittany Luby, *Dammed: The Politics of Loss and Survival in Anishinaabe Territory* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020), 13.

the government advised by non-Indigenous NGOs such as the Indian Eskimo Association.[8] Although renowned academic of the time, Diamond Jenness, proposed to "liquidate the Indian problem in twenty-five years"[9] during the 1946–48 Joint Committee hearings, the general policy framework following the hearings and the subsequent changes to the Indian Act in 1951 moved away from "assimilation" to the more "gentle" term of "integration." Here it is helpful to briefly discuss the influence of Jenness. As argued by Peter Kulchyski, "Diamond Jenness is considered an eminent - perhaps pre-eminent - figure in Canadian anthropology. His career spanned five decades - from 1913 until his death in 1969 - and took him across Canada. Jenness's career spanned a critically important period in the development of State policy towards Native people, a period when the State shifted from using primarily coercive methods to achieve its objective of assimilating Native people, to relying primarily on an ideological apparatus. This shift towards greater reliance on ideology was marked by the 1951 revisions to the Indian Act, a process Jenness participated in and may have had some influence on".[10] Kulchyski further argues that "Jenness was no "ivory tower" academic, isolated from worldly concerns; not only was he involved in extensive fieldwork, he was also concerned about government policy towards Native people and could accurately be characterized as a contemporary critic."[11]

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[8] John F. Leslie, "Assimilation, Integration, or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943–1963" (PhD diss., Carleton University, 1999), 134–35.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Peter Kulchyski, "Anthropology in the Service of the State: Diamond Jenness and Canadian Indian Policy", *Journal of Canadian Studies,* Vol. 28, No. 2, Summer, 1993, 23

[11] Ibid. 24

As shown by John Leslie, the policy that the Indian Affairs branch developed in this period was one of hopeful optimism by reframing the "Indian problem" in the emerging welfare state terms.[12] It was felt by branch officials that increased government supervision, community development projects to enhance social services[13] and continued educational integration and adult education and training opportunities would encourage Indigenous peoples to gradually enter the mainstream while retaining certain (harmless) elements of culture such as arts and crafts, family, and community life. Of course, what, exactly, integration meant was unstated as this was "prior to the orthodoxy of multiculturalism."[14] Further, as stated by Peter Kulchyski, "Although coercion remained a technique, after 1951 it lost its primacy. Many of the physically restrictive aspects of the Indian Act…were removed. While the goal of achieving assimilation remained, coercive techniques were slowly replaced with more intensive ideological mechanisms. Contrary to the prevailing orthodoxy in Indian historiography, the importance of this shift should not be underestimated because, although assimilation remained the State's objective throughout, the dynamic of struggle between Native people and the State was markedly transformed".[15]

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[12] John F. Leslie, "Assimilation, Integration, or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943–1963" (PhD diss., Carleton University, 1999), 244.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 179–81.

[15] Peter Kulchyski, "Anthropology in the Service of the State: Diamond Jenness and Canadian Indian Policy", *Journal of Canadian Studies,* Vol. 28, No. 2, Summer, 1993, 24

However, by the mid-nineteen sixties, it would seem that both the government and the general public were becoming frustrated with the apparent lack of progress. A rapid increase in the Indigenous population combined with increasing expenditures on welfare and community development programs helped fuel this frustration. Indeed, the narration of the film itself states that “The reserves are becoming overcrowded, someone has got to integrate.” It is also clear from the line of questioning posed by Ofield that what integration was or meant, or even if it was working, was still unanswered. Further, despite official government statements repudiating notions of termination, his question regarding this foreshadows the proposals of the 1969 White Paper, but what is more interesting is that Ofield is asking these sorts of questions before the Hawthorn Report or the White Paper, and in the interviews with Indian Affairs officials, (along with almost everyone else), the response to this is always negative. Almost every person asked the question regarding shutting down the reserves and cutting off welfare responds in a similar manner, in that such an idea is impossible and not feasible for a variety of reasons, of which some go into. For example, although not included in the film, Isaac Beaulieu of the Indian Eskimo Association of Toronto mildly states he thinks the reserve system will continue, but “no longer the Federal government directly responsible to the reserve, but that people themselves will start to work out their own system.”[16] In other words, some form of self-government. Jean Lagasse, acting director of the Citizenship Branch of the Dept. of Citizenship and Immigration in Ottawa, also stated that the reserve system was here to stay.

[16] NFB production files 63-103.

In the interview with Bud Thomas, Supervisor of Special Services in the communications branch of the Dept. of Education, the manner in which Ofield poses the question is chilling. Ofield states, “Mr. Thomas, lots of people have said about Indians that the best thing to do is to line them up against the wall and shoot them, but many people have indicated not quite as strongly as that, it would be a good thing if the older Indians could be pushed back – way back into the woods and kind of left there and the children pulled out and put into the schools. What do you think of that kind of reasoning?”[17] Not only is this horrifyingly violent, but it also echoes the thinking of the early nineteenth century such as that of Lt. Gov. Francis Bond Head and the Bagot Commission in terms of “pushing back into the woods” and the removal of children into the residential school system.[18] Thomas’s response is calm and measured as he states, “That’s a little bit drastic and all we have to do is look at ourselves and try to determine how we would feel about it. I think all of us tend to cling to what’s familiar and to make too rapid a transition for anyone is asking for problems.”[19] Thomas goes on to clearly explain how the economic, social, and cultural differences on reserves across the country means they will continue to exist, and that “I don’t think there is anything necessarily bad about this.”[20] Furthermore, he also offers his thoughts on what he thinks

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[17] Ibid.

[18] For a discussion of Bond Head and the Bagot Commission in relation to residential schools and isolation of reserves, see, for example, John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879–1986,* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017); J.R. Miller. *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

[19] NFB production files 63-103, interview transcriptions.

[20] Ibid.

white society could learn from Indigenous peoples in terms of generosity and a general disinterest in the personal accumulation of “things” and appreciating “the value of the moment.” However, none of this makes the final film. If the point of the film was to “put the white man on trial”, then the comments made by Bud Thomas do exactly that, yet were mostly cut.

The more interesting responses come from two teachers, including Rev. Carson, the teacher at the day school at Rat Portage, who responded by stating:

> You’d have a most deplorable condition. The Indian must have a home to which he can return because he must have some shelter from the competitive society into which he may be pushed. The white man himself is not too awfully successful in some instances of withstanding the pressure of his own society. Therefore, if you take some poor soul who knows nothing of those things, he is lost before he begins. He must have his reserve to which he may return. To cut off the bit of allowance that he gets is not going to do any good unless he is provided with jobs economically suitable to take care of this and more. And I feel however that vast greater numbers of Indians would prefer to earn their own living and be free people, but they are timid because they don’t want to let one thing go for fear, they won’t be able to hold onto the other. Now they talk about closing reserves and taking off that relief, I don’t think such measures should be used, they are too drastic.[21]

Mr. Greenhaugh, a teacher at the Port Alberni residential school, who responded, “Well, you’d have a revolution I think and I would be with the Indians … after all, I would object if you came and took away my home, and the reserve to an Indian is his home.”[22] Mr. Greenhaugh is interesting in that he also understands that the “vagaries of the Indian Act”[23] are part of the so-called “Indian problem,” but more so in his response to Ofield’s

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

question of how to make non-Indigenous people more aware of Indigenous issues. Here, Greenhaugh states:

> Well, there is one suggestion that I made that I may have the R.C.M.P. after me, but it seems to me that people who have something to shout about should shout. I don't think the ordinary people in Canada will take an interest in the Indian until the Indian takes an interest in himself, until he marches down the streets with banners flying if you like, until he makes his demands heard. His demands may not always satisfy, but the mere fact of him shouting and asking and demanding that he should have an equal right and an equal opportunity will make people aware that we have a most valuable part of our population not being part of Canada.[24]

Indeed, within a few years of this film's release, Indigenous people were "marching down the streets."[25] However, none of these comments from these two teachers regarding closing down the reserves appear in the final film. In other interviews, such as with Ray and Jerry Beyerholde, while the question is not directly posed, it does come up in a roundabout way in that both men express the opinion, which we hear in the film, that both integrated schools, cutting off welfare, and "getting them away from the reservations … where they would have to get out on their own and work more"[26] is the solution to the "Indian problem." Of the twenty-three people interviewed, these are the only ones who feel the reserves should be shut down and welfare cut off. Of the Indigenous peoples interviewed and asked this question, and as we see in the film, the majority uncomfortably respond with some variation of "Oh, I

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[24] NFB production files 63-103.

[25] See, for example, James Burke, *Paper Tomahawks: From Red Tape to Red Power* (Winnipeg: Queenston House Publishing, 1976); Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians* (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1969).

[26] NFB production files 63-103.

don't know," with the single exception of Margaret Jamieson, a high school student in Brantford who states in response to young people and integration that "I don't think that there could be a reserve in 25 or 30 years. I don't think there will be, but I think we have to preserve our heritage some way."[27] However, it is important to note here that she does indicate cultural preservation as important. I would further argue that whether her statement was commonly held or not, she is reflecting what she was seeing around her at the time, in that many young Indigenous people in southern Ontario were indeed relocating to urban areas, and indeed had been doing so for some time already.[28]

Regarding the questions about the general perception of Indigenous peoples as drunks and degenerates, once again not everyone is asked, and the question is posed in a few different ways. Mr. Greenhaugh states he thinks that Indigenous peoples are neither drunks nor degenerates but that they are seen that way "because we see his name too often in the paper." Greenhaugh further goes on to explain the Indian Act liquor offenses and that "it was an easy thing for an Indian … to be picked up and charged."[29] When Ofield poses the question to George Clutesi, the first thing he says is "I think it's strictly racial discrimination" and goes on to state the soundbite we hear at the start of the film where he points out the hypocrisy he has witnessed at dances and on job sites. In the interview with Carol Olsen, in response to Ofield's question about her student's academic performance, she says that they are lazy, and when asked why she

[27] NFB production files 63-103, interview transcriptions.

[28] See Brownlie, Robin Jarvis. "Living the Same as White People": Mohawk and Anishinabe Women's Labour in Southern Ontario, 1920-1940." Labour/Le Travail, 61 (Spring 2008), 41-68.

[29] Ibid.

thinks that she states, “I don’t know, people have said that it’s the Indians around here, that it’s just their tribe or whatever.” Her comments about the parents being alcoholics, which we hear in the film, comes in response to Ofield’s questioning if she knows anything about the background or environment the children are coming from. So, while he does not directly ask her why Indigenous people are perceived as drunks, he does not need to, as she has volunteered her opinion. When the question is posed to Ray and Gerry Beyerhold, Gerry’s response is “Because this is the way the people see them. Walk down any street of Kenora here, you’ll see it constantly.” Ofield then asks him if he thinks Indigenous peoples are “basically degenerate and drunk?” Gerry responds with “Most of them,” and Ray offers up the opinion that “Once they get into the city and they get a hold of liquor they are drunk. Out in the reserve, you don’t find them drunk too much because they are still lazy, they sit around.”[30] We hear several comments in the film from these two, and I would argue that it is the comments from these two as well as the teacher, Carol Olsen, that would have “stuck” in the minds of viewers.

Isaac Beaulieu, whose interview does not appear in the film, stated that for most Canadians, they “meet Indians on the street and never know they are Indians…but sometimes they do meet an Indian … and he happens to be drunk … you make your conclusions.… I think this is one of mere ignorance rather than, you know, a fact.”[31] Pete Seymour, an Indigenous man who works for the Department of Lands and Forests in Kenora, responded with “Well, I don’t know, they judge them by what they see on the

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

streets." Bud Thomas, once again, provides an extensive and thoughtful response by pointing out the "thousand prejudices in any society" and how "individual cases always stand out … then all Indians are drunk … this is not true. Perhaps for every one that gets in trouble there are hundreds that never cause any trouble…. I don't think you can indite the whole situation on an isolated case."[32] Margaret Jaimeson indicates that she is aware of the stereotype and says that while some people do spend their pay on drinking, "the people who do these things make it bad for the rest of the people who are trying to make good and it's just a shame."[33] However, none of these comments appear in the film and the final comment we hear regarding alcohol comes from Jean Lagasse: "Of course, liquor abuses in any situation arises from disintegration of the individuals personality or from his culture and if you re-integrate either himself or his group then the incidences of anti-social behavior diminish automatically."[34] However, given that this comment is stated rather mildly and comes after Ray and Gerry's abrasive comments about Indigenous peoples not working or only working enough "until they can get more liquor," I would argue that this is also a comment that would be lost on the average viewer.

The third and final question consistently asked was about integration in general. The majority of people interviewed were asked what they thought integration meant or was, and some were asked if they felt it was working. Most of the responses are in line

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., timestamp 23:05.

with the general academic and NGO thinking of the time, and which would be repeated in the Hawthorn Report of 1966–-67, which states:

> To many Indians the maintenance of a separate culture is important; to others it does not matter, and many of the young in particular would prefer to see the past transferred to the pages of histories and ethnographies rather than have it continue into the present. But those who cherish the language, the religion, the special relationships of kin and association, the exchange of goods, support, and obligation, that mark some Indian communities today should have their right to these affirmed by any program of government rather than diminished.[35]

Indeed, as argued by John Leslie[36] and as shown in the interviews, most Euro-Canadians with any experience with or knowledge of Indigenous peoples generally supported integration into mainstream Canadian society alongside cultural preservation with the implicit understanding that this was a long-term process. For example, Mr. Greenhaugh, the Port Alberni Residential School teacher, in response to Ofield asking if "the assimilation of the Indian into white society is desirable," states that he feels it shouldn't be any different than someone from Europe who comes to Canada and retains some of their culture yet become part of Canada, and that Indigenous peoples have many "qualities that made the Indian … a very worthy person." When questioned further by Ofield if this is even possible, Greenhaugh responds with "Well, why shouldn't it be?" and further says that "Surely assimilation does not mean total drowning."[37] George Clutesi also speaks in favour of integration, and we do hear his thoughts on this in the film, but what we don't hear, is him pointing out the main obstacle is the attitudes

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[35] H.B. Hawthorn, ed. *A Survey of The Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies. Part 1* (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, 1966), 10.

[36] Leslie, "Assimilation, Integration, or Termination."

[37] NFB production files 63-103, interview transcriptions.

of the dominant population. He says that in order to compete on an equal footing, Indigenous children must be educated alongside Euro-Canadian children, but in order for it to really be effective, “the white people, the white parents must open their hearts a great deal more in order to help the child to see something that is desirable for each one.”[38] This is an important point, but again, fails to make the final cut. So again, one must question if the film is truly “putting the white man on trial.” The other Indigenous people asked this question, Pete Seymour, and Margaret Jaimeson, also both respond positively to the idea and goals of integration, but both indicate adequate employment opportunities and cultural preservation as being important components. Seymour for example, is aware that traditional methods of making a living such as fishing and trapping are no longer economically viable due to industrial development and non-Indigenous fishers and trappers, hence the need for alternative employment. Jaimeson also indicates that integration is “a good thing because it broadens the minds of an Indian … and I think the Indian has the same opportunities as a white person … but I think we have to preserve our heritage in some way.”[39]

Teacher Carol Olsen states that she thinks integration is a good thing but that it “will take a lot of time and a lot of patience.” The other teachers, such as Mr. Carson and Mr. Greenhaugh, also express the opinion that integration is a good thing but that in order to work, children must be sent to integrated schools as young as possible. This reveals the ideology surrounding the founding of the residential schools is still firmly in the minds of the dominant population despite over a decade by this point of official

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

school integration. When we look to see what Ray and Gerry Beyerhold had to say, we hear the nineteenth century thinking of older people being “unimprovable” and the only hope for the future is the removal of the children. “No matter how you do it, I think the best way is to get rid of the old ones … to separate the younger generation from the elder generation because living with the elder generation they are subject to the environment and hereditary. If they get away from this then they can be brought up in a new aspect of life and they’ll have some goals or standards to go by.” Ray’s response, which is what we hear in the film, is supportive of the idea of removal. “I think these integrated schools are getting the younger Indians out to see what they can do, and what they can do if they work and if they use their tools of education and get them away from the reservations where the money comes in from the government and they spend it and when it is gone, there is more coming in, this is something they have got to get away from.”[40] Here what we are hearing is the still common belief that Indigenous peoples are lazy and don’t want to work because we get “free money” from the government rather than an understanding of the economic circumstances of many reserves, particularly in the Kenora / Keewatin district. As a finance company working with Indigenous peoples in the area, they should have known this, and indeed, they do indicate in the interview they are aware of the economic issues surrounding commercial fishing. However, their awareness seems to be somewhat contradictory, as on the one hand they claim the younger people are “coming up better” and that old ones “just sit around … but there are a few older ones that cast a good influence,” and that “there are

[40] NFB production files 63-103, *Because They Are Different*, timestamp 22:14-22:33.

a few of them that can be trusted … most of the time they are just poor."[41] So while they indicate they understand there is an issue of poverty on reserve, they clearly do not see or know the reasons why.

In terms of the interviews in general, the first to appear in the transcriptions is that of Mr. Greenhaugh, the teacher at the Port Alberni residential school. This interview is six pages long, and the sections of the film in which we see him are the ones in which he speaks negatively about his students, in terms of being in jail or "doing nothing" or "having babies." However, as already discussed above, it would seem that he is more aware of the larger issues than comes across in the film. For example, when asked by Ofield, "Is there any truth in the fact that Indians have any trouble finding employment after they leave school?" Greenhaugh affirms this to be the case in the pulp and paper industry, but he does not know why. He goes on to say that academically his students are average but once "they get out of school there is a frustrating point," and here we hear the soundbite in the film where he states too many drop out or just give up and that for girls in particular there "isn't much hope of getting a job."[42] Ofield asks if the reason why unemployment is so high is if "many people say that so many Indians don't show up," to which Greenhaugh replies that there may be some truth to that, but then goes on to give an example of the Nanaimo "Placement Officer … has managed to place eight Indians in the pulp mill … and these Indians are doing well."[43] So although he seems to have a certain level of awareness of the barriers faced by Indigenous peoples, he

[41] NFB production files 63-103.

[42] NFB production files 63-103, interview transcriptions.

[43] Ibid.

doesn't seem to understand or see the racism on the part of non-Indigenous peoples as the root cause.

Jack Ofield's interview with well-known and highly regarded artist and traditional knowledge keeper George Clutesi[44] is the second in the transcriptions, and George Clutesi is the first person we see interviewed in the film, although nobody throughout the film is actually identified. The transcribed interview is seven pages long, and Clutesi demonstrates polite patience to a few of Ofield's uninformed and stereotypical questions. The interview takes place at the Port Alberni residential school, which Clutesi had attended as a child and four brief bits of his interview are interspersed through the film, which also ends with a comment from Clutesi. The main problem with this, as with all the interviews, is that the soundbites we get are taken out of context and the interview question is rarely heard. And while they clearly had an extensive conversation, only twelve sentences in total appear in the final cut. Ofield begins by asking Clutesi about his time at the residential school and if anything had changed since his time. This is an intensely personal question, and Ofield continues to ask these sorts of questions throughout the interview. As we will see later, he does this again with Margaret Jaimeson. Speaking from personal experience here, this is the sort of invasive, demanding questioning on the part of non-Indigenous people, framed as mere curiosity, that is often faced by Indigenous peoples. He then asks Clutesi to elaborate on the strained relationship with his father, which Clutesi eloquently explains as being part of his education, "this feeling of my own people being so inferior … we became to almost

[44] "George Clutesi," Influential Figures, History and Culture, Tseshaht First Nation, https://tseshaht.com/history-culture/influential-figures/george-clutesi-2/, accessed October 2020.

hate our own parents." The next question posed by Ofield pertains to "cultural traits" that "make it difficult" to integrate, which he further elaborates on by asking "what is there in his upbringing and in his family's upbringing that makes it more difficult for him, that is different than the more materialistic way that in which white people live?"[45] Clutesi then quite clearly explains the cultural differences surrounding notions of community sharing versus personal wealth accumulation. This then moves on into a discussion of the potlatch and its purpose and meaning, and again, Clutesi quite clearly explains the economic and social reasoning behind it and there Ofield seems to let the matter drop, as his next question concerns what Clutesi thinks would "help the Indian of today." This part of the interview is the final quote in the film where Clutesi talks about "pride of race" being important, but he also states that the real key to Indigenous success is "the white people, the white parents must open their hearts a great deal more in order to help the child to see something that is desirable for each one."[46] However, this incredibly important statement is cut from the final film. Considering that the NFB's response to criticism of the film was to claim it was "a positive statement against prejudice" and "places on trial the white man much more than the Indian," yet almost every statement by the interviewees that criticized the behaviour of whites was cut, makes one question if this was truly the intent of the filmmaker or if the filmmaker was really that ignorant and blind.

The conversation then moves to the Church and Christianity and Clutesi's comments on how the Church has "caused confusion" and assumed "that we were

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[45] NFB production files 63-103.

[46] Ibid.

absolutely heathen," makes it into the film. During this conversation, Ofield asks about "the Indian religion" and if "the happy hunting ground" is like heaven and if there is "a hell in your religion?"[47] I literally cringed when reading this and then had to laugh as Clutesi very politely tells him there is no such thing as "the happy hunting ground" on the west coast and goes on to explain how coastal peoples perceived death and supported the grieving family. Another cringe-worthy moment is a little further on when Ofield asks first about the nomadic nature of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous concepts of time. Again, Clutesi politely explains that nomadism "may have applied to the prairie Indians … but here on the coast they remained pretty nearly in the same small area." Regarding the concept of time, again, Clutesi tries to explain that 'time', in the western, industrial sense, meant nothing. It was not that time was spent doing nothing, but rather that time was spent "trying to create something in his mind that he was going to make with his hands."[48] None of this however makes it into the final cut of the film. Rather, it seems that these questions were more intended to confirm Ofield's own stereotypical assumptions and when they failed to do so, he simply ignored them and moved on to the next, usually unrelated, question. Other aspects of the interview included Ofield asking Clutesi's views on the Department of Indian Affairs and why he thinks "so many of the Indian people seem to depend on the white man,"[49] to which Clutesi bluntly replies, "you are dealing with the products, 100% products of your own

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

schools." Oddly, although the film is supposedly about education and "putting on trial the white man," this also does not make the final cut.

The next person interviewed for the film that I wish to deal with in some detail is Margaret Jamieson. Although her home community is not identified, like all communities in the film, given her last name and the fact she is a student at Brantford High, she is clearly from Six Nations. Her interview is by far the longest, at sixteen pages of transcribed notes. At the time of the interview, she is a high school student at Brantford High and is living in foster care. Despite the fact that she is underage, there doesn't seem to be a guardian present, nor is there any indication of consent given in the archival records. Like the questions posed by Jack Ofield to George Clutesi, the questions asked of Margaret Jaimeson are inappropriately personal at times, especially considering that she is a minor, and often do not seem to be relevant to the film's subject matter. For instance, Jack Ofield asks her, like he asked George Clutesi, if she had ever heard of people saying that "Indians have a different (sense) of time," to which Jaimeson seems confused and asks him what that means. Ofield laughs, and replies, "I'll tell you another time," and then immediately asks her about the image of the drunken, degenerate Indian. Jaimesons response is somewhat scrambled, hardly unusual for a teenage girl who has bounced around with her family and in the child welfare system, information she has given in other parts of the interview. She does, however, show an awareness that while some Indigenous peoples certainly do behave this way, as noted earlier, she also states that it "makes it bad for the rest of the people who are trying to make good and it's just a shame."[50] The conversation then moves on

[50] Ibid.

to Ofield asking if she or her family speak their language, to which Jaimeson replies in the negative, and then he asks her about recent family funerals and how she felt about it. This struck me as both inappropriate and frankly rather bizarre, considering the films purported subject matter. Part of this conversation also included Jaimeson explaining how she moved around a lot with her father and that she is somewhat estranged from her mother's family. While there is no explanation given, likely because as a teenager she wouldn't know or understand but considering the time it is likely that her father was highly mobile in order to find employment. She does say she is uncomfortable with this sort of questioning about her family; however, Ofield persists, and later in the interview again brings up her grandparents' funeral and again questions her about her mother.

Ofield then asks her if she believes in God and what she thinks a Christian is. Again, a rather odd topic of questioning for a teenager and seemingly irrelevant to the films subject matter. Ofield then asks her what she wants in the future, to which Jaimeson replies "happiness and money," when pressed to elaborate, she continues to emphasize her desire for money, "I think that money is the most important thing to me … because I have never had money … and when I see something in a store window … I'll go and buy it without any trouble."[51] I would argue that what is being expressed here is the frustration with what was, by this point, intergenerational poverty and the desire to escape it. This desire to escape poverty and enter the capitalist workforce wasn't anything unusual for the time, as clearly shown in both Mary Jane Logan McCallum's *Indigenous Women, Work, and History* and Jarvis Brownlie's "Living the Same as White

[51] Ibid.

People"[52] as well as my own family. Further, this had less to do with a desire on the part of Indigenous people to assimilate but more to do with economic considerations.

When asked about inequality, Jaimeson insightfully elaborates on what she sees as some of the problems facing youth on the reserves, mainly a lack of things to do and no sports or recreation facilities and that this is a contributing factor to issues such as youth violence and dropping out of school. She further states that most families on her reserve are good, hardworking people but that poverty is the main issue in terms of the upkeep and maintenance of housing. She understands that this poverty results in her community being judged, that "children are ashamed to bring their friends," and that in the integrated schools "Indian kids they tend to keep to themselves, they don't try to mix, they get along, but they don't have anything in common and so therefore they hang around with other Indians." [53] None of this shows up in the film and reminded me of a conversation with my father long before he passed away. I had asked him about his school days after he left the residential school and why he didn't go beyond Grade Eight. He told me that the kids on reserve were bussed into town, either Hagersville, Caledonia, or Brantford, depending on where you lived on the reserve. He told me he would have been bussed in to Hagersville, but he, and most kids, didn't want to go because they knew they would be bullied by the non-Indigenous kids. Jaimeson seems to have an awareness of this, although she doesn't directly articulate it. She does,

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[52] Mary Jane Logan McCallum Logan, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940–1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014); Robin Jarvis Brownlie, "'Living the Same as White People': Mohawk and Anishinabe Women's Labour in Southern Ontario, 1920–1940," *Labour/Le Travail*, 61 (Spring 2008), 41–68.

[53] NFB production files 63-103.

however, seem to be somewhat conflicted when asked if she thinks Indigenous peoples face inequality. As stated above, she indicates the Indigenous kids don't mix with the non-Indigenous kids at school, but she says she agrees with integration because "I don't like the feeling of inequality." It is here we get one of the soundbites that make the final cut when she goes on to say, "I think the Indian has the same opportunities as a white person, and I don't see why the white person has to be such a superior race."[54] I would suggest here that while Jaimeson is of the opinion that Indigenous peoples should be equal, she is also aware that Indigenous peoples are not always seen as such with her "superior race" comment. Her later comment in the film that as more young people become educated and leave the reserves, then the reserves will "simply vanish" is again what I see as a common way of thinking in the mid twentieth century. My own father and aunties expressed similar sentiments, in that there was nothing for them to do on the reserve as kids, there was "nothing there" for them and the only way to get anywhere in life was to leave, and their frustration with never being seen as equal to whites. I would argue that this sort of thinking on the part of these post-war generations was the result of the long term, deliberate, systemic neglect and underfunding of on-reserve infrastructure and services on the part of the federal government. Not to mention the message that it was better to 'be white' drilled into them in the residential school. If conditions on the reserve are bad enough, then the youth will leave, and eventually fulfill Jaimeson's prediction of no more reserves. This, of course, was (and arguably, remains) the ultimate goal of the Department of Indian Affairs since Confederation and foreshadowed the proposals in the 1969 White Paper. The historic

[54] Ibid.

and ongoing underfunding of on-reserve infrastructure limited economic opportunity, and continued removal of children, combined with an increasing population and a shrinking, already small land base works to push people into urban areas. However, as already stated, Jaimeson also states that there must be some way to "preserve our heritage," which was also expressed and attempted by my own family.

Despite the interview consisting of sixteen pages, a mere nine sentences or three minutes of her speaking make the final cut. This is the only section of the film that is obviously "staged," as most of her commentary regarding how she enjoys learning and that she likes to read books is spliced together from the interview and dubbed over a scene of her in a public library browsing the stacks and checking out books. This section of the film also includes the narration, by Pierre Berton, stating that "this brand of confidence is rare, it is not usually found in Indian children. This girl has learned to present herself so that people will accept her."[55] This is a means of 'exceptionalizing' her, of presenting her as 'unusual', an 'aberration', and this sort of microaggression is, in my experience, something commonly applied to 'successful' Indigenous people. I personally have had numerous experiences of non-Indigenous people reacting to me with surprise and then saying how unusual, or exceptional I am and how proud my family must be because so few of us "get an education." Rather, I would suggest that the narration comment "this girl has learned to present herself so people will accept her" goes much deeper. In the residential schools, the method of instruction was very much a 'monkey see, monkey do' and the lessons of outward appearance were literally beaten into the children. This gets passed down the generations, as some of my most

[55] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 13:50.

vivid memories from childhood are of my father being overly concerned with our appearance and clothing, and the lesson that when in an unfamiliar situation or people, then we were to "stay quiet, watch, and imitate." We learned the lesson of how to blend in at a very young age, not because we were an assimilated family, but rather so we would not be negatively judged.[56] We see this sort of judgment based on appearance in other interviews in the film where several people, notably Carol Olsen, make comments regarding cleanliness, hygiene, and clothing. This sort of judgment also appeared in the archival records pertaining to the earlier film discussed, *No Longer Vanishing.*

The next interview I wish to examine in more detail is that with Ray and Gerry Beyerhold of Trader's Finance Inc. in Keewatin, Ontario. The narration "The white man was often dishonest with the Indian and rarely understood the people whose land he took away. Opinions and attitudes that existed generations ago still exist today"[57] is intended to prepare the audience for the next people interviewed in the "man on the street" style and here we meet two young men, identified in the archived documents as Ray and Gerry Beyerhold of Trader's Finance Inc. in Keewatin, Ontario. These two are interesting in that in the film they come across as incredibly ignorant and appear to know nothing about Indigenous peoples beyond the stereotypes. However, the records indicate that these two men had extensive dealings and familiarity with Indigenous

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[56] For further examinations of the ideas surrounding clothing and appearance in Indigenous communities and residential schools, see Milloy, *A National Crime*; Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*; and Myra Rutherdale, "'She Was a Ragged Little Thing': Missionaries, Embodiment, and Refashioning Aboriginal Womanhood in Northern Canada," in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*, ed. Katie Pickles & Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

[57] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 1:39–2:00.

peoples, yet still clearly held these attitudes. Ofield's first question in the transcribed interview is if they have had much contact or dealings with Indigenous peoples, to which Gerry replies "Oh yes, quite a bit … in their credit aspect." This comment is cut from the film and instead we only hear that "they don't care for anything themselves nor their families, they don't seem to, they live for today and that's it, to heck with tomorrow."[58] This first question and response, however, is not the first soundbite in the film, rather it is a response to a much later question in the interview regarding what they think the "solution" to the "Indian problem" is.

An anecdote shared by Ray that does not make the film tells how they know that "the Indian is far from stupid, we've run into … quite a few cases where they pulled a few fast deals on us." He goes on to recount how they had driven out to Shoal Lake to talk to a local fisherman and had stopped at the local store to inquire as to where to find the man they were looking for. After being sent over to the other side of the reserve, they ended up back at the store to realize the man they were looking for was the one who had sent them! Ray goes on to say, "they are not stupid, they know which way is up, and I think they can compete very well if they just got rid of their laziness and the bad habits that they have developed over the centuries."[59] So, while is a small level of understanding here, there is the larger framing of cultural misunderstanding of what is valued and what is not. Further, they have clearly failed to not only see and understand the humour in this, but they also failed to understand it as a 'test' of their behaviour.

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[58] NFB production files 63-103.

[59] NFB production files 63-103, interview transcriptions.

This lack of cultural understanding, the still relevant assumption that Indigenous peoples have 'extra privileges', and the continuing insistence on the part of the larger Canadian population that it is Indigenous peoples who must change is furthered by Gerry's comments in the film. When Gerry states, "granted this was Indian territory long before we came here but still, they have been living by those standards. I feel if the government cut out completely or even cut down on the privileges which they allow the Indian, they would have to get out on their own and work more,"[60] we are hearing the common settler complaint and perception that somehow Indigenous peoples get 'more' and 'do nothing'. In the documents, Ray Beyerhold says he thinks some of "the tribes around here some of them are fairly rich like the ones around Morrison (Big Grassy) and they got too much money for what's good for them, they don't have to work for it … they just sit around." Here the conversation is edited for the film, and we hear the rest of Ray's response as "I think there is too much welfare, too much freedom. I think it is just like unemployment insurance with some class of a white man, they just get too much money, and it spoils them. As well as that, I think they have been treated as children for far too long and it's about time that they got out to work like men and women and not sit around street corners as they do here."[61] We then hear from Gerry, "they don't care for anything themselves nor their families, they don't seem to, they live for today and that's it, to heck with tomorrow."[62] However, both men are failing to see not only their own racism, but that of the larger society that prevented, and still prevents, full economic

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[60] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 22:33–22:54.

[61] Ibid., timestamp 2:01–2:21.

[62] Ibid., timestamp 2:21–2:23.

participation on the part of Indigenous people. Ray finishes their part in the film by noting that “they live from one day to another, if they make enough to eat then they stop until they get hungry again, until they get thirsty, or until they can get some more liquor until they feel they need some more.”[63] Once again, further reinforcing in the minds of viewers the “lazy Indian” stereotype and completely ignoring the economic situation of Indigenous peoples in the Lake of the Woods district at the time.[64]

This stereotype is further reinforced in the film with the interview with the female teacher at the integrated school in Keewatin, Ontario, identified in the interview transcripts as Carol Olsen. In the film she is clearly being presented as an authority figure and it seems as if she has first-hand experience of reserve life when she describes the reserve in great detail describing the flies and lack of windows and doors. However, in the transcripts it is clear that she herself has never actually set foot on a reserve and is basing her statements from what others have told her. Her interview is a short one and shows some of the contradictory thinking still around today. To begin, she states that the Indigenous children in her class “are a little backward” but “if you got them involved in situations where they could be with the others, they were fine.” She further states that the children are “lazy, you have to keep at them.”[65] After this comment, Ofield asks her about attendance, and this is where we hear the story in the film about how the kids “won’t come to school unless they have sandwiches made out of

[63] Ibid., timestamp 22:54–23:03.

[64] Luby, *Dammed.*

[65] NFB production files 63-103.

white bread."[66] Just prior to the white bread story, she describes how living conditions are and how they "don't have furniture like we do," and as we hear her telling this story, we are seeing images of the reserve and poor living conditions, garbage strewn about, and unsanitary kitchens. However, the first part of her response is cut, as she says she understands why this one child has poor attendance, and it is because of a lack of food in the house, but she doesn't seem to understand the reasons behind the poverty. In terms of how she perceives the parents, she clearly sees the mixed reality. For instance, she says that "more of the parents are getting involved in work" and that "one family I have been to see, and the house was spotlessly clean … and I also know that some of the parents really don't care," but the part that makes the film is when she says "some of the parents are both alcoholics, and perhaps just one of them is an alcoholic. They just bum around, and all their interest is just going out into the bush fishing or whatever."[67] So while she can clearly see that some families are 'doing fine' according to Euro-Canadian standards and others are not, she cannot see the reasons why. Rather, what is clearly expressed in her interview is the continuation of Indigenous peoples being judged based on white, middle-class standards of appearance, economic participation, and material goods.

While there are attempts to dispute these stereotypes in the film, the manner in which the film is edited has the effect of minimizing the people who try to explain and rather what leaps out at the viewer is the perpetuation of stereotypes. For example, immediately following Ray's comment that "they live from one day to another, if they

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[66] Ibid.

[67] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 20:04.

make enough to eat then they stop until they get hungry again, until they get thirsty, or until they can get some more liquor until they feel they need some more," the films cuts to Jean Lagasse, acting director of the Citizenship Branch of the department of Citizenship and Immigration, and we hear him state "Of course liquor abuses in any situation arises from disintegration of the individuals personality or from his culture and if you re-integrate either himself or his group then the incidences of anti-social behavior diminish automatically."[68] Part of the problem with this soundbite is that it begins in the middle of his response to Ofield's question but it is also decontextualized, as the part that is cut is where Lagasse emphasizes a return to culture along with "economic improvements and social activities"[69] as being key, in his opinion, to reducing addiction issues.

An additional attempt to dispute stereotypes or to challenge white people comes in a brief but important comment from Bud Thomas, Supervisor of Special Services in the Communications Branch of the Department of Education in Toronto, who states in the film: "I think that teachers and clergy men sometimes are guilty of superimposing a dogma of belief that is fine for one society under certain conditions but may not be necessarily fine for an Indian community. My personal opinion is that all too often we neglected to respect what is there now, and to say that an Indian is irreligious or pagan just because he has not been 'Christianized' is certainly not a comfortable feeling for me."[70] Interestingly, when Ofield brings up that he had recently read a book by a

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[68] Ibid., timestamp 23:03–23:35.

[69] NFB production files 63-103.

[70] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 24:27–25:03.

minister on the West Coast that discussed him trying to remove “silly superstitions”, Thomas states in blunt response that “He didn’t look at his own silly superstitions”[71], Ofield abruptly ends the interview. Here, I argue, is evidence of Ofield rejecting anything that did not conform to or confirm his pre-existing beliefs regarding Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, like all the interviews, we are only getting a tiny soundbite, taken out of context. In the interview with Jean Lagasse, in response to Ofield’s query as to whether Indigenous parents care about their children’s education, Lagasse states that schools should be “teaching enough about the Indian culture and history so that Indian pupils will gain and maintain a high understanding of their culture. So often the teachers do not have background to do this; they do not know too much about the culture of the Indian.”[72] Interestingly, this part of the interview is scratched over in the original documents and what is circled, and makes the film cut, is the first part of Lagasse’s answer where he explains, “the difficulties in having their kids go to a school that teaches a different culture … going to be taught things which may lead him to have less respect for his own people.”[73] So here, the editing process effectively places the burden and the blame upon Indigenous peoples rather than the competence and understanding of the teachers. Further, the scratched over section is one that puts responsibility on the dominant population, the supposed aim of the film. So once again, we must question the true intent of the filmmaker here.

[71] NFB production files 63-103.
[72] NFB production files 63-103.

[73] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 25:04–25:43.

In total, very few comments that strongly counter racist stereotypes make it into the final cut, and several Euro-Canadian people interviewed either fail to understand why Indigenous people cannot find work or, as in the case of Mr. Forbes, principal of the integrated school at Keewatin, Ontario, seem to be willfully blind, who outright says "I don't think that there is any strong prejudices against the people on the basis of race. I don't think there's any particularly violent prejudices either."[74] Considering that he is in the same region as the Beyerholds and indeed, the comments made by his own staff member, Carol Olsen, this is a classic example of the denial on the part of the dominant society. Indeed, the high levels of violence directed towards Indigenous people by the non-Indigenous population in the Kenora/Keewatin district is well known, well documented, and ongoing. While Ofield does ask some of the interviewees if they think non-Indigenous people know enough about Indigenous people and histories, most of whom reply in the negative, none makes it into the final cut.

This is an important note, since during the special Joint Commission of the Senate and the House of Commons between 1946–47 and throughout all the various hearings and commissions into Indian Affairs policy through the 1950s and '60s, there was a recognition that it was the dominant population that needed to "be educated." For example, during the 1959–60 Joint Committee hearings under the Diefenbaker government, the Indian-Eskimo Association's presentation stated that one dimension to the so-called "Indian problem" was that "the dominant society had to be educated to accept Indian people into their midst, to be more appreciative of distinctive native cultures and the historic role Indian people had played in Canadian economic and

[74] NFB production files 63-103, interview transcription.

political development."[75] Further, they argued that it was the responsibility of the federal government, particularly Indian Affairs, to play a significant role in promoting greater public awareness. The Anglican Church took it a step further by stating outright "that racism existed in Canadian society and it was imperative to educate non-Indians to accept and respect traditions and cultures which were not founded in Judeo-Christian thought."[76] Indeed, it is this apparent failure to address these issues of racism on the part of the dominant population that comes out most clearly in the responses to the film received by the NFB.

As briefly examined by Joan Sangster, the feedback to this was largely negative, and it is certainly a film that did not support the Department's desired message of presenting Indigenous peoples as being "at [the] crossroads of modernity"[77] and promoting integration programs and policies in a positive manner, unlike earlier films such as *No Longer Vanishing*. Indian Affairs not only pulled funding from the NFB[78] but also said to an "NFB employee who came to preview the film … that if the NFB wanted to show the Indian as a "second class citizen," then it had done a good job."[79] At least four letters made their way directly to the NFB to complain about the film, of which three are in the archives. Eileen Smoke, welfare administrator for the Alderville reserve, charged that the film "ridiculed and belittled" Indigenous peoples and the focus on

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[75] Leslie, "Assimilation, Integration, or Termination," 344.

[76] Ibid., 359.

[77] Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 151.

[78] NFB production files 63-103 memo from George Pearson to Ian MacNeill, April 23, 1968

[79] Joan Sangster, *The Iconic North*, p. 151

isolated, impoverished reserves painted an incomplete and inaccurate picture.[80] W.H. Cumberland wrote that he felt "the on-site interviews with Indian men and women were very abrupt and harsh. It struck me as unfair and perhaps even degrading … what disturbed me most … was the brash, insensitive, almost "smart-alec" attitude of the interviewer. It is this sort of attitude from which an Indian will retreat … the result was that the Indians who were interviewed tended to look woefully inadequate." This letter writer goes on to say that he "found their lack of sensitivity very disturbing."[81] The final letter is from Grant Rayson, a sixteen-year-old non-Indigenous boy who wrote, "I think that you were very unfair and unjust to the Indians," and went on to critique the opening shots of intoxicated people, stating, "Those first scenes would immediately prejudice very many people against the Indians." This young man also goes on to complain about Gerry Beyerhold, "the young man … who had the dark glasses and was chewing gum every time you saw him. I think that if he has such strong views against the Indians that he should first look at himself … I think this is one young man who is strongly prejudiced against the Indians, but he does not really know what he is speaking about."[82] The response to all these letters on the part of the NFB is defensive and (except the one to the sixteen-year-old) two pages in length.

The letter sent in response to Grant Rayson is two brief paragraphs thanking him for his letter and stating the reason the film showed intoxicated Indigenous peoples was

[80] NFB production files 63-103, letter from Mrs. Eileen Smoke to the NFB, December 10, 1964

[81] NFB production files 63-103, letter from W.H. Cumberland to Richard Gilbert, January 14, 1965.

[82] NFB production files, 63-103, letter from grant Rayson to the NFB, November 26, 1964.

"simply because it is one of the many stereotyped images of present-day Indians."[83] The response to Eileen Smoke states, "In our opinion the film quite rightly places on trial the white man much more than the Indian.… The film is a positive statement against prejudice.… We believe our film will promote discussion of the need to tackle the problems realistically."[84] While the initial letter is not preserved in the archives, the response sent to Mr. C.M. Isbister, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, which housed the Indian Affairs Branch, was much the same. This letter states that it was the opinion of the film board that the film would "contribute to a better understanding by the general audience of the position of the Indian in the Canadian community" and goes on to quote the final line of the film, stating, "In that context, the film is a positive statement against prejudice."[85] This, in my opinion, is more than a bit of a stretch. However, it is clear that the people involved in the production of this film did not see its flaws, or if they did, deliberately diminished them. Interestingly, in a letter from Jack Ofield to "Dick," presumably the film's producer, Richard Gilbert, Ofield requests a copy of the film, as "it is my best job at the board and one film that could lead to work for me in that area. Someone told me that it was being revised at the direction of Indian Affairs because they objected to a lot of the material in it.… Anyway, I want a print of our version of it. Not the cleaned up official look at the Indian problem."[86]

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[83] NFB production files, 63-103, letter from Grant McLean to Grant Rayson, December 7, 1964 (emphasis in original).

[84] NFB production files, 63-103, letter from Grant McLean to Eileen Smoke, December 28, 1964.

[85] NFB production files, 63-103, letter from Guy Roberge to C.M. Isbister, December 23, 1964.

[86] NFB production files 63-103, letter from Jack Ofield to "Dick," August 30, no year.

Presumably, this letter is prior to the film's release, as Ofield closes the letter with a comment that he is "awaiting further instruction and information on the film" and that "early September is a great time for me to work on the commentary if it that far along by then."[87] Given that Indian Affairs was less than impressed with the final version, it would appear that they did not manage to make any changes to the film prior to release. I would suggest that what is going on here with Ofield's thinking, and several of those interviewed is evidence of how firmly embedded nineteenth century thinking regarding biological racism was. Rather than engaging with his subjects or taking the time to do any substantial research, Ofield seems to have simply relied on old stereotypes.[88]

Thus, despite the filmmaker's assertion that they were creating a critique of white attitudes that would spark debate about discrimination and racial prejudice, the film's unrelenting look at Indigenous poverty and discriminatory comments by non-Indigenous people did the exact opposite of what they claim to have intended.

[87] Ibid.

[88] For an excellent study on bio-racism and stereotyping, see Stuart Ewen and Elizabeth Ewen, *Typecasting: On the Arts and Sciences of Human Inequality* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008).

Conclusion

Images and words profoundly influence our perceptions of the world and the people who inhabit it. This research has explored how Canadian society viewed Indigenous people through the medium of NFB documentary films in the post-war period. The journey of how colonialism impacted the lives of Indigenous people in Canada is an important story that is still changing. The passage of the British North America (BNA) in 1867 paved the way for control of the Indigenous people of Canada, and the Canadian government assumed control over the lands and the people under the Constitution. Early solutions to solve the so-called Indian problem included actions such as perpetuation of the reserve system on marginal lands, total control of the movements of people, starvation, withholding resources such as farm implements, accusations of Indian leaders as traitors resulting in imprisonment and death, massacres of people under the guise of protecting the settlers and so on. The goal of these actions was to destroy the Indigenous population although to "be gentle" and not to declare outright war on the Indigenous people. Through this period settlers learned to fear Indigenous people and to see them as savages.[1]

Colonialism constructs a world view where those who are different from the colonizers are seen as 'other', separate from Canadian society. The other is viewed as

[1] See, for example, Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); James Daschuck, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Indigenous Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013).

subhuman and incapable of intelligent, rational thought and actions. The belief systems ascribed to the other are they are dangerous to their colonial masters. It is to be abhorred and feared as dangerous to the functioning of society. A construct of the 'Indian' as a vanishing group proposed an image of a noble savage, standing tall and straight dressed in full regalia gazing upon an ancient land of majestic rivers and forests. Depiction of the savage is also seen in the proud male Indian in full buckskin regalia astride his noble horse holding his bow and arrow. Hollywood films of the era portrayed the Indian as either being killed or outsmarted by the cowboys or a broken English-speaking person subservient to his master. Literature of the time tended to be romantic novels of the Indian Princess swept away by her white noble rescuer. The image of Indigenous people is created by the colonizer and bears little to no connection to the reality of the lives, beliefs, and personhood of Indigenous people.[2]

For Canada, management of Indigenous people was accomplished through the establishment of the Indian Act. This Act – which further defined the legal definition of who was an Indian, who was eligible for treaty rights, who could participate in tribal government, who could access Indian land and resources – continued to provide inclusive control over the people by the government. In early 1939 the National Film Board was established to produce films designed to ensure that Canadians across the country would understand the way of life and problems of their fellow Canadians. Film was seen as tool for introducing social change. The unstated goal was to facilitate the assimilation/integration of two problem groups – non-English speaking immigrants and

[2] See, for example, Emma LaRocque, *When the Other Is Me: Native Resistance Discourse, 1850–1990* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010).

Indigenous people – into the belief system and culture of the Anglo-Canadian mainstream. During the 1940s and 1950s, films focused on Indigenous people as a vanishing culture that was dying.

Two of the three films examined in this research support the goal of the colonizer by showing that the Indigenous population needs to be assimilated into Canadian society in order to be properly managed. Post-war Canada of the 1950s and the 1960s was experiencing an economic boom. Development of land resources increased economic prosperity, increased movement to urban areas, development of suburbs, and an increased birthrate reflected the changes in Canadian society. Increased numbers of immigrants of diverse cultural backgrounds also created issues for the government colonial policy of adherence to the norms of a white, predominantly English-speaking country. Negative attitudes towards the Indigenous population continued to reflect the beliefs of the majority population. Indigenous peoples were slovenly, living in dirty hovels, lazy, and did not want to work to have a better life. Those who worked off the reserve were unreliable and as soon as they had some money, they would leave the job and go spend the money on booze. They were a drunken blot on the landscape. They preferred the comfortable life on the reserve where they only had to rely on government handouts to survive. They were seen as subhuman beings, too stupid and therefore unable to take advantage of the opportunities of the Canadian society. My mother, who grew up in a small town in Saskatchewan during this time period, recalls that the subject of Indigenous people was not a part of daily life. The only two instances where a discussion about “the Indian” happened were if Indigenous peoples came to town to shop, they had to pitch their tents at the town garbage dump, known as the nuisance

ground. The second was to not go to the end of the main street in the closest city, as it was full of drunken and dangerous “Indians”. This was a simple factor of her settler privilege, the ability to simply not ‘see’ or ever have to consider Indigenous peoples. The silence of the times is further reflected in her high school yearbooks. As I was flipping through them, what immediately struck me was the large number of common Metis surnames. When I pointed this out to my mother, she seemed surprised and said, “oh, those were the Catholic kids”. To her, and to her Catholic (Metis) friends, there was never any mention of Indigenous heritage, this was silenced because racist views prevailed in the white communities. An article in Maclean’s magazine in 1963 describes North Battleford, Saskatchewan, as the “Alabama of the North.” The article describes how a group of young white men pulled an Indigenous man out of his tent and murdered him. It then describes the ways in which Indigenous people in the area are discriminated against. The article ends with the following quote: “Unless the Indian will change his ways completely-change his values, his language even his religions – he can hardly hope to be accepted into our world. But have we the right to make our values his? Or can we afford not to force him into our mold?”[3]

The government of Canada was faced with this dilemma. They wanted to drag the recalcitrant Indigenous people into the modern world but how could they go about it and retain the image of a kind and benevolent father to these people. The easiest medium was film. The film *No Longer Vanishing*, and others of the era such as *Off to School*, were designed to encourage Canadians to develop a less racist attitude toward Indigenous peoples and to encourage Indigenous peoples to fully embrace integration

[3] Peter Gzowski, “This Is Our Alabama,” *Maclean’s*, July 6, 1963.

into Canadian society. The film adopts a glorified version of the Indigenous person describing in glowing terms the proud and free person of the past, truly a group of noble savages. The emphasis on the inherited physicality and skills of their forebears supports the focus on jobs that require the skills and ability of labour-intensive employment. These sentiments are visualized through such depictions as rounding up cattle as they used to round up buffalo, fishing the waters of the West coast, manning the construction of skyscraper structures and an Indigenous co-operative successfully running a combine on a farm in the prairies. The few speaking parts from Indigenous people, such as the student nurse and the teacher in training, support the need for education for the people. Tommy Prince, arguably the “star” of the film, talks about the lack of discrimination he has experienced and how wonderful it is the with an elected council on his reserve, the community is able to make their own decisions. The film shows pictures of successful Indigenous people, including a doctor, a scientist, and a lawyer, but there is minimal dialogue regarding these individuals. The short film *Off to School* was examined in concert with *No Longer Vanishing* and focuses on the wonders of education and training. The film was intended to show the general public the ‘benefits’ of residential schooling and depicts happy Indigenous children learning in the classroom, playing in the school yard, young boys learning skills in a machine shop and playing in the dormitory. The film was shot in a residential school in northern Canada and portrays the supposedly wonderful education that was being provided to Indigenous children. This film portrays images and words that feel false and patronizing to modern eyes and ears. The average Canadian would not have rushed out to hire Indigenous people and many Indigenous people would not have been inspired to adopt the

Canadian way of life. Together, these two films imply that the failure of education and employment of Indigenous people is their own fault for not being capable to make the necessary transition.

The images and words in the final film Because *They Are Different*, perpetuated stereotypical beliefs about Indigenous people. The film was intended as a critique of white prejudice and failed government policy that would promote a discussion to examine the “Indian problem.” However, the images in the film result in the opposite effect. The film opens with a mournful sounding rendition of “Ten Little Indians” while we see images of a scruffy little boy sitting outside a hotel. It then cuts to images of drunken Indigenous men, staggering and urinating on a building. The viewer is immediately assaulted with the depravity of Indigenous peoples and the inability to function as responsible parents. These images set the tone for the remainder of the film and ensured the inability to hear any positive messages for the integration of Indigenous peoples into mainstream society or any critiques of white attitudes. The narrator declares that there has been a history of poor relations between white Canadians and Indigenous people before the film moves to man on the street interviews. The majority of those who are interviewed reinforce the negative stereotypes. A litany of disjointed interviews depicts their negative view of Indigenous people. They are described as drunken fools, lazy, good for nothing people who just live for their welfare cheques, living in squalor with inadequate shelter, food, and clothing, resistant to change and leaving the protection of the reserve, no desire to join mainstream society, unable to hold down a job, resistance to education for themselves and their children, and no idea of what the future could or should be. One of the Indigenous persons interviewed,

George Clutesi, attempts to provide a reasonable narrative to explain the perspective of his people but his words are lost in the total message of the film. The film is difficult to watch, as it is disjointed and there is a lack of focus and understanding of the intent of the film maker. The examination of the transcripts of the actual interviews showed a lack of consistency in the questions asked people as well as cherry picking the responses to be included in the film. This resulted in messages being out of context and making little sense. The film was not well received by government officials, and it seems it was not widely distributed following the initial airing the CBC.

Of the over twenty films viewed from the era, *The Longhouse People* is the only film of the era that I could find that did not seem to support the policy of integration. The film was unusual for the times, as the filmmaker not only asked permission of the community, but it was also supported by the people from the Six Nations territory and focused on a positive view of the people. The narration of the film focuses on the normal life of the community, and I argue that the level of community control and direction was a way of asserting Haudenosaunee sovereignty. Although it utilizes the 'voice of God' narration style, this was typical of the time, and despite the romantic nature of the film, also typical of the time, it is still a respectful work of cinematic art. Despite apparent government displeasure that the film supported the continuation of traditional ways, this film won critical acclaim for its sensitive portrayal of Indigenous people.

The films reviewed all need to be seen and understood within the context of their time, and most supported the research question that the goal of the Canadian government via the medium of NFB documentary film was to assimilate Indigenous peoples into the mainstream Canadian society and to encourage Canadians to accept

Indigenous peoples. The success of the films in accomplishing this goal from the perspective of more than seventy years later suggests they were not able to achieve what they set out to accomplish. While on the one hand, many Indigenous peoples in this era did indeed integrate into mainstream society, this had mixed results. As explored in the 1970s by scholars such as Edgar Dosman,[4] much of the research suggests that the majority of Indigenous peoples are maladapted to urban, industrial centres and suggests that those who have adapted, are somehow no longer "truly Indigenous." Further, more contemporary research into the urban Indigenous population has largely remained fixated on the problems faced in urban areas, such as housing and employment.[5] I would imagine that some may look at my own family as an example

[4] See, for example, Edgar Dosman, *Indians: The Urban Dilemma* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972); Hugh Brody, *Indians on Skid Row: The Role of Alcohol and Community in the Adaptive Process of Indian Urban Migrants* (Ottawa: Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1971); Larry Krotz, *Urban Indians: The Strangers in Canada's Cities* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1980); Jean Lagasse, *People of Indian Ancestry in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Queens Printer, 1958).

[5] See, for example, Brandon J. and E.J. Peters, *Moving to the City: Aboriginal Migration to Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: CCPA, 2014); E.J. Peters, "Aboriginal Peoples in Urban Areas" in *Urban Canada: Sociological Perspectives*, ed. H. Hiller (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2013), 188–211; E.J. Peters and O. Starchenko, *Neighbourhood Effects and Levels of Segregation of Aboriginal People in Large Cities in Canada* (Ottawa: CMHC 2008); S.L. Wouters and E.J. Peters, "Urban Aboriginal Settlement Patterns and the Distribution of Housing Characteristics in Prairie Cities, 2001," *Prairie Perspectives* 10 (2008): 30-46; E.J. Peters, "'I like to let them have their time': Hidden Homeless First Nations People in the City and Their Management of Household Relationships," *Social and Cultural Geography* 13, no. 4 (2012): 321–38; E.J. Peters with PAGC Urban Services, "Everything You Want Is There": The Place of the Reserve in First Nations' Homeless Mobility." *Urban Geography* 30, no. 4 (2009): 1–29; E.J. Peters, *Report on Summer and Winter Daily Mobility Patterns of Aboriginal Homeless People in Saskatoon* (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre, 2009); E.J. Peters and V. Robillard, "Urban Hidden Homelessness and Reserve Housing," in *Aboriginal Policy Research*, ed. J.P. White, P. Maxim, and D. Beavon (Toronto: Thompson, 2007), 189-206; J. Distasio, *First Nations/Métis/Inuit Mobility Study: Final Report. Western Economic Diversification Canada*. (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, 2004).

of “successful integration” and may see us as being no longer “truly Indigenous.” However, while my family may appear on the surface to be just like average white people, both phenotypically and economically, the Haudenosaunee values of family, kinship, generosity, honesty, and openness remain. Arguably, all cultures hold these same values, but the ways in which they expressed are subtly different and difficult to articulate. I suppose the best way to explain would be when my Euro-Canadian son-in-law explained how he was at first very confused by how we interacted with each other: our casual, informal, relaxed, and teasing family dynamic was quite alien to him. Particularly the playful teasing aspect. My daughter was similarly confused by his family dynamics, the rather stiff formality and palatable tension among family members disturbed her, and she came home to say to me, “Mom … we’re not really white, are we?” I couldn’t help but laugh at this and ask her what her first clue was. So, while on the one hand, we are ‘invisible’ Indigenous peoples because, as Pierre Berton states in *Because They Are Different*, we have “learned to present [ourselves] so that people will accept,”[6] and many of us can physically ‘pass’ as white, there has been profound loss in my family as a result of urbanization and integration into mainstream society, such as the loss of language, specific cultural practices, and a strong sense of identity. It has been a struggle to both maintain what little my father and his siblings had after leaving Residential School, and to reclaim what was taken from them. Racism, discrimination, denial, and dismissal have all been daily realities in the lives of my parents, myself, and my extended family members. This is best exemplified in my family history by the reaction of my mother’s family to her marriage. My grandmother was, to put it mildly,

[6] *Because They Are Different*, NFB, timestamp 13:50.

perfectly horrified. She even wrote my mother a letter expressing her disappointment in my mother's choice and how she could not bear the thought of her grandchildren growing up on some godforsaken filthy reserve. Ironically, this was from a woman whose own mother, my great-grandmother, refused to attend her wedding because she married "an immigrant." Now, my maternal grandmother did eventually change her tune, but nonetheless, words such as "savage" and "half breed" were a normal part of her vocabulary. It should also be noted that my maternal aunt, my mother's older sister, never once acknowledged or accepted my father, myself, or my sister. Today, as we see the second and third generations of our family urban-born and raised, many of us continue to reclaim and reassert our Indigenous identities in the face of continued colonialism.

Thus, the ultimate goal of government policy in the post-war period, one of Indigenous integration and their acceptance by mainstream society has had mixed results, with the issue of mainstream acceptance, in other words, the "settler problem,"[7] remaining.

[7] Gaudy, Adam. "Researching the Resurgence: Insurgent Research and Community-Engaged Methodologies in 21st-Century Academic Inquiry," in *Research as Resistance: Revisiting Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches,* 2nd ed., ed. Leslie Brown and Susan Strega (Toronto: Women's Press, 2015), 260.

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