The Cinema of the Quiet Revolution: Quebec's Second Wave of Fiction Films and the National Film Board of Canada, 1963-1967

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ABSTRACT

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Film historians situate the birth of *le cinéma québécois* in the late 1950s with the emergence – within the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) – of an Équipe française whose Direct Cinema revolutionized documentary filmmaking. The grand narrative of Quebec national cinema emphasises the emancipating qualities of this cinematographic language and insists that it contributed to a collective *prise de parole* and Quebec's ascension to modernity. Film historians mythologize the cinema of the Quiet Revolution (1958-1967) by inscribing the fiction films of the 1960s within the trajectory of Direct Cinema.

Borrowing from Jocelyn Létourneau, the present thesis uses the concept of community of communication to investigate the documentary-to-fiction transition that accompanied the creation of the NFB's Production française in the mid-1960s. The argument advanced here is that Quebec's francophone filmmakers, between 1963 and 1967, distanced themselves from documentary filmmaking – including Direct Cinema – to explore the dramatic form and feature length format. They formed a tightly-knit community of communication whose actions, written works and films explained, legitimized and promoted the notion that Quebecers needed a commercial feature film industry of their own. The most prominent members of the Production française – Gilles Carle, Gilles Groulx and Arthur Lamothe to name but a few – played a preponderant role in this process. They articulated and disseminated an elaborate narrative which allowed them to consolidate their status as *auteurs* within a post-Duplessis Quebec. The present thesis reconstructs and analyzes the above filmmakers' narrative to demythologize – and develop an alternative reading of – the cinema of the Quiet Revolution.

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INTRODUCTION

Quebec's love affair with cinema began in 1906 when Léo-Ernest Ouimet opened Montreal's first Ouimetoscope.[1] The subsequent opening of numerous other movie theatres provided impetus to a nascent industry concerned with the commercial exploitation of the seventh art. However, French Canadians had to wait until the 1940s to witness what film historian Pierre Véronneau calls "the first wave of Quebec feature films."[2] Between 1944 and 1953, nineteen French Canadian productions appeared on silver screens throughout the province.[3] This all looked very promising but it was too little too late. This first effort to promote domestic film production in Quebec failed to last a full decade due to the rapid proliferation of television sets and dwindling movie theatre attendances.

There is a general consensus in the historiography that the end of this first wave was no tragic event. Jean Quintal writes of an "essor maladif."[4] A "false start," corroborates Bill Marshall.[5] Robert Daudelin, Dominique Noguez and Gilles Marsolais describe the mid-1940 to mid-1950 experiments as the prehistory of Quebec national cinema.[6] The latter adds: "[Ces films] sont des souvenirs qu'on voudrait effacer comme des cauchemars."[7] Film historians insist that the above period constituted a dark age for filmmaking in Quebec. According to them, French Canadians did not experience a cinema they could effectively and self-confidently call their own until the late 1950s.

The period that extends from 1958 to 1967 marks the birth of Quebec national cinema.[8] The emergence of an outspoken Équipe française at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), the development of Direct Cinema (with its portable cameras and

synchronous sound equipment), the creation in 1964 of an autonomous Production française within the NFB and the beginning of a new wave of feature length fiction films are considered to be integral components of a collective nation-building project better known as the Quiet Revolution. Hence Yves Lever's use of the term "le cinéma de la Révolution tranquille" to describe the corpus of films produced in Quebec from the late 1950s to the late 1960s.[9] Film historians describe this period as a time of rupture, convergence and collective self-affirmation. Inevitably, one must turn to those turbulent years in order to revisit the founding myths of *le cinéma québécois*.[10]

The Direct Cinema of the Équipe française (1958-1963) occupies centre stage in the grand narrative of Quebec national cinema.[11] Film historians consistently celebrate the participatory and democratizing aspects of this revolutionary cinematographic language. According to Michel Coulombe and Marcel Jean, this new approach to documentary filmmaking offered a means of resisting the NFB's didactic and colonizing practices.[12] It permitted a *prise de conscience* and a *prise de parole* which opened the way to new representations of the *nation en devenir*. Marsolais notes that films such as *Les raquetteurs* (Gilles Groulx & Michel Brault 1958), *Pour la suite du monde* (Brault & Pierre Perrault 1962) and *Bûcherons de la Manouane* (Arthur Lamothe 1962) were mirrors of reality capable of enacting change and concretizing the aspirations of *le peuple québécois*.[13] "These films affirmed the validity and distinctiveness of Quebec society," further adds George Melnyk.[14]

The year 1964 constitutes a pivotal moment in the above narrative. On January 1st, the NFB's Production française officially came into existence. The creation of this completely separate and independent production unit was the result of a decade's worth

of efforts by the Équipe française. Véronneau remarks that it was "l'aboutissement d'un processus historique . . . ."[15] He adds: "Le cinéma francophone onéfien, comme la société dont il participe, de canadien-français devient québécois, désignant ainsi son appartenance."[16] Direct Cinema was at its height and a second wave of fiction films was in the making.

In August, *Le chat dans le sac* (Groulx 1964) premiered at the Festival international du film de Montréal (FIFM). Daudelin remembers: "Enfin nous étions face à un film bien à nous dans lequel nous étions heureux de nous reconnaître et de nous voir de près."[17] Groulx's first feature length production was one of many fiction films produced at the NFB between 1964 and 1967. This new wave served to exorcise the ghosts of the past. It rendered concrete the claim that Quebec society was en route toward its destiny and that it would soon have an authentic national cinema of its own. In the words of Peter Harcourt, 1964 was the "beginning of a beginning."[18]

Interestingly, film historians celebrate this second wave of fiction films using terms similar to those deployed to assert the earlier pertinence of Direct Cinema. The fiction cinema of the Quiet Revolution was "en prise directe sur la réalité, sur la société," writes Véronneau.[19] It was the "reflet actif d'une société agissante," notes Quintal.[20] Marsolais argues that "la pollinisation du cinéma direct" led to the blossoming of a new wave of feature length fiction films.[21] He adds: "Ces films, participant à ce courant de la prise de parole des années 60, marquent une rupture radicale . . . et ils contribuent à faire entrer à son tour le cinéma de fiction de plain-pied dans la modernité."[22] Noguez concludes:

> Le jeune cinéma québécois . . . a fait surgir de la neige et de la nuit une floraison merveilleuse de portraits ; plus vite et mieux qu'aucun jeune cinéma, il a contribué à donner à tout un peuple, dans tous les sens de l'expression, non pas seulement *un* visage . . . mais *des* visages, *son* visage – car ce visage est la multiplicité même.[23]

The above assertions concerning the cinema of the Quiet Revolution constitute convenient means of elevating the entire corpus to mythical proportions.

Yet a number of important questions remain concerning the documentary-to-fiction transition that accompanied the creation of the Production française: How did filmmakers whose practices were deeply rooted in the documentary tradition explain this urgent need to turn to feature length fiction films? How did they transpose the Direct Cinema notion of a collective and democratizing *prise de parole* to their project of a national *cinéma d'auteur*?[24] How did they reconcile their personal and professional aspirations with those of *le peuple québécois*? Finally, how did they embody this "rage de dire" that presumably accompanied the Quiet Revolution? [25]

The present thesis proposes to answer the above questions by documenting and analyzing how the most prominent members of the Production française – Groulx, Lamothe, Gilles Carle and Jacques Godbout to name but a few – negotiated their transition from Direct Cinema to fiction. The argument advanced here is that this group of filmmakers played a preponderant role in the development and consolidation of Quebec's second wave of fiction films between 1963 and 1967. Together, these filmmakers helped establish what Jocelyn Létourneau calls a community of communication – a group of individuals "[qui] fonde son existence consciente dans un

grand récit au sein duquel il se définit, établit les faits de son histoire et commémore sa destinée" – whose main objective consisted of legitimizing and promoting the notion that Quebec desperately needed a feature-length fiction film industry of its own.[26]

The fiction cinema of the Quiet Revolution did not happen by itself. It did not spring naturally out of the Direct Cinema of the early 1960s. On the contrary, it resulted from the concerted efforts of a community of communication eager to assert itself in a post-Duplessis Quebec. Through their films, actions and written works, Godbout and his colleagues constructed and disseminated an elaborate modernist narrative which they rooted in post-colonial theory. Using a variety of strategies, these filmmakers distanced themselves from documentary filmmaking – including Direct Cinema – in order to explore the dramatic form and feature-length format. They elevated the seventh art to the status of a "moyen privilégié d'expression culturelle" and made it clear that one could not disassociate the future of the *nation québécoise* from that of its film industry.[27] This allowed them to secure continuous support from Quebec's modernist intelligentsia while consolidating their status as independent artists.

In order to develop this argument, the present thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 provides a critical overview of the historiography with an emphasis on the works of Véronneau, Lever and Marshall. Chapter 2 focuses on the 1956 to 1963 period, tracing the development of a tradition of resistance at the NFB and exploring the coming together of the Équipe française as well as the discourses surrounding the development of Direct Cinema. This chapter provides a necessary overview of the events and developments that shaped the Équipe française's understanding of the place it occupied – and could occupy – within Quebec society.

Chapter 3 discusses the many strategies employed by francophone filmmakers – a community of communication – to secure greater autonomy and voice both within and outside the NFB between 1963 and 1967. There were campaigns that took place in the pages of *Parti pris* and *Liberté* or via the Association professionnelle des cinéastes (APC) which are analyzed in an effort to shed some light on the language used to legitimize and promote the need for a national *cinéma d'auteur* in Quebec. This chapter presents the key components of the narrative deployed to make possible Quebec's second wave of fiction films.

Finally, chapter 4 focuses on three films associated with the Production française's "Dossier hivers" – *Le chat dans le sac*, *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* (Lamothe 1965) and *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* (Carle 1965).[28] These case-studies offer a means of understanding how individuals such as Groulx, Lamothe and Carle negotiated their transition from Direct Cinema to fiction. This fourth chapter demonstrates how these founding films of *le cinéma québécois* served to reinforce and further disseminate the filmmakers' narrative discussed in chapter 3. The present thesis considers both the internal elements of these productions and their authors' combative postures in an effort to demythologize – and develop an alternative reading of – the cinema of the Quiet Revolution.

CHAPTER 1: DISCOURSES

The historiography of Quebec national cinema traces its origins to the late 1960s with the publication of Robert Daudelin's *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français*. Prepared in collaboration with the Ministère des affaires culturelles, this first monograph set the tone for the dozens of articles and books published during the last four decades. Indeed, Daudelin's claims that the cinema of the Quiet Revolution was "sans tradition," that it was "un cinéma de témoins," "une aventure d'équipe" and a means of "retrouver la parole" have been repeated numerous times in the works of Dominique Noguez, Gilles Marsolais, Bill Marshall and countless others.[1]

Interestingly, film historians have been hesitant to propose revisions to this narrative. There have been occasional disputes about the overall impact of Direct Cinema, minor disagreements over the importance of certain films and short-lived discussions concerning the exact birth year of *le cinéma québécois*, but no substantial debates concerning the nature of the discourses surrounding the cinema of the Quiet Revolution. Instead, the emphasis has been on retelling the story first told by Daudelin as if the future of Quebec's film culture and industry depended on the integrity of the above narrative.

It should be noted that trained historians have been slow to explore Quebec's cultural production which means that efforts to explain the Direct Cinema of the Équipe française and the second wave of fiction films had to come from elsewhere.[2] It therefore fell on the shoulders of scholars operating outside the history profession to articulate the grand narrative of Quebec national cinema. The authors of the first few monographs on

the topic – Daudelin, Marsolais and Noguez – did not have strong academic credentials in history. They were also active participants in the development and promotion of the seventh art in Quebec during the 1960s. Not surprisingly, their contributions reflected their commitment to the cinema of the Quiet Revolution.

Daudelin was chief editor of *Objectif*, a Montreal-based film magazine published between 1960 and 1967. He participated in the creation of the Festival international du film de Montréal (FIFM) and played a key role in the development and promotion of the Festival du cinéma canadien (FCC) which lasted from 1963 to 1967. Daudelin also acted as director for the Conseil de la diffusion du cinéma before accepting a high-ranking position at the Cinémathèque québécoise where he remained for most of the 1970s and 1980s. Marsolais, a prolific writer and film critic, completed graduate work in film studies. He founded the Association québécoise des critiques de cinéma and helped create a department of *études cinématographiques* at Université de Montréal. Noguez followed a similar route. He earned a graduate degree in film studies, contributed regularly to publications such as *Cahiers du cinéma* as well as *Vie des arts* and taught for a short period at Université de Montréal.

This is not to say that the works produced by these individuals must be dismissed. On the contrary, Daudelin and his colleagues were pioneers in their field but such recognition should not prohibit critical readings of their works. Writing in 1968, Noguez humbly admitted: "L'auteur de ces pages ne parle pas de loin. D'une certaine façon il est aussi très près, trop près peut-être puisqu'il se paie le luxe de quelques enthousiasmes et de certaines répugnances."[3] Yves Lever concurred when he wrote that the first few

monographs dealing with Quebec national cinema "tiennent davantage des célébrations des origines qu'ils ne ressemblent à des analyses."[4]

Pierre Véronneau and Lever differed from Daudelin, Noguez and Marsolais in their approach to film history. Since the early 1970s, they have invested considerable energies collecting, assembling and publishing material aimed at encouraging and facilitating research.[5] Their various contributions helped promote and refine the use of the historical method in film studies in Quebec.[6] In 1973, Véronneau joined Daudelin at the Cinémathèque québécoise where he coordinated a number of important dossiers on Quebec cinema. He also occupied the position of conservateur du cinéma québécois et canadien which he held until recently. Lever opted for a teaching career in film studies at Collège Ahuntsic. The CEGEP environment allowed him to continue his research work while introducing generations of young students to the notion that "le cinéma québécois reflète tous les problèmes, systèmes de valeur et idéologies de la société."[7] Véronneau and Lever's contributions served to promote film studies as a discipline, to establish *le cinéma québécois* as a valid object of research and to validate the belief that Quebecers possessed a genuine national cinema of their own.

Yet Véronneau and Lever did not deviate greatly from the narrative proposed by their predecessors. In 1980, Véronneau argued that first wave fiction films epitomized "the collective morbidity that marked [Quebec's] darkest period . . . ."[8] He eventually nuanced his position by questioning the notion that the 1940s and 1950s constituted the prehistory of Quebec national cinema, but he persisted in describing the films from that period as mirrors of a backward society.[9] In 2008, he wrote: "Ce cinéma . . . illustre bien cette sorte de morbidité collective qui animait l'époque, les valeurs catholiques

étouffantes et l'autoritarisme qui la réglaient, le traditionalisme et le conservatisme qui l'immobilisaient."[10] Lever showed a similar desire to explore Duplessis-era fiction films, but like Véronneau he chose to embrace the modernist sensibility that informed the works of Daudelin, Marsolais and Noguez by situating "la naissance du cinéma québécois moderne" in the late 1950s.[11]

Appearing shortly after the end of the Second World War, "la sensibilité moderniste" rested on the belief that French Canadians had to break away from their past in order to move forward.[12] Quebec's modernist historians – Michel Brunet, Guy Frégault, Jean Hamelin, Fernand Ouellet and Marcel Trudel to name but a few – shared a commitment to *la modernité*.[13] They rejected the paradigm of *la survivance* substituting in its place a vision of the future informed by ideas of modernization and *rattrapage*. Létourneau explains:

> Le Canadien français était un *sujet manqué* . . . qui, inspiré par des dirigeants à l'horizon idéel dépassé . . . était en train de rater le train de l'histoire, celui de la modernisation. Il était impératif de . . . l'inscrire dans une nouvelle temporalité, celle qui le ferait graduellement accéder à ce stade idéalisé du devenir des sociétés contemporaines . . . .[14]

"La sensibilité moderniste" helped validate as well as disseminate the rhetoric of a modernist intelligentsia whose projects served as catalysts for the Quiet Revolution.

By the early 1970s, film historians reached consensus on the notion that the period preceding the release of *Les raquetteurs* (Gilles Groulx & Michel Brault 1958) constituted the prehistory of *le cinéma québécois*. Writing in the late 1960s, Noguez asserted with much enthusiasm that "s'interroger sur les dix dernières années [de ce

cinéma] revient . . . à parcourir pratiquement toute son histoire."[15] He was not alone in his efforts to document and mythologize the cinema of the Quiet Revolution.[16] The first few monographs dealing with French Canadian films were characterized by a profound fascination with – and commitment to – the achievements of the 1960s. By forcing a rupture in the all-inclusive narrative of *le cinéma canadien*, the province's first film historians – Daudelin, Noguez and Marsolais – proclaimed that the birth of a distinctively unique cinematographic voice in Quebec coincided with – as well as contributed to – the end of the *Grande noirceur* and the entry of their society into modernity.[17] The above periodization proved helpful in conceptualizing the idea of a national cinema possessing a prehistory and a history. It also left no doubt as to where film scholars stood with regard to the tradition versus modernity divide.

In the grand narrative of Quebec national cinema, the transition from prehistory to history occurred in the late 1950s following the NFB's relocation from Ottawa to Montreal and the subsequent emergence of an Équipe française around the project of Direct Cinema. Quebec's francophone filmmakers welcomed the arrival of the NFB in Montreal. Its presence in the province's largest metropolitan centre fostered independence from Ottawa. The new Montreal offices and studios also provided better and less restrictive working conditions than those available elsewhere in Quebec under Duplessis. Film historians consistently insist on the importance of the NFB as a site of contestation and affirmation.[18] Marshall maintains that "it was that unique institution . . . which was the crucible for Quebec national cinema . . . ."[19] The NFB represented an alternative space within which francophone filmmakers could embody the *nation en devenir*.[20]

Direct Cinema proved a potent means of forcing a rupture with the past so as to make possible a "cinéma moderne" in Quebec.[21] Marsolais offers the following description:

> Ce nouveau type de cinéma (documentaire, à l'origine) qui, au moyen d'un matériel de prise de vues et de son synchrone, autonome, silencieux, léger, totalement mobile et aisément maniable, tente de cerner sur le terrain la parole et le geste de l'homme en action, placé dans un contexte naturel, ainsi que l'évènement au moment même où il se produit.[22]

The origins of Direct Cinema can be traced to the early films and experiments of Russian documentarist Dziga Vertov (Truthful Cinema) and American filmmaker Robert Flaherty (Docufiction).[23] However, the ideal of an authentic cinema really took roots in Canada, France and the United States at the turn of the 1950s following the technological developments described above.

The grand narrative of *le cinéma québécois* accords great importance to the Direct Cinema of the Équipe française. Marsolais states that francophone filmmakers operating at the NFB approached the new cinematographic language in ways that were noticeably different from those of their Canadian, American or French counterparts.[24] He explains that Quebec's Direct Cinema did not limit itself to addressing aesthetic and technical concerns. It offered a means of challenging the NFB's didactic documentary tradition and Hollywood's hegemonic fiction cinema, both of which were seen as oppressive and alienating. Noguez supports Marsolais' assertion by insisting on the distinct nature of Direct Cinema as experienced in Quebec and as practiced by the Équipe française. French Canadians produced a "cinéma plus direct que les autres," he writes.[25]

Film historians situate Direct Cinema within modernist discourses by insisting that it forced a rupture with the past and contributed to Quebec's ascension to modernity. Just as it is difficult to disassociate the NFB from *le cinéma québécois*, it seems impossible to separate this new cinematographic language from the Quiet Revolution. Véronneau and Michel Euvrard write that "the blossoming of French production at the NFB . . . coincided with the awakening of Quebec."[26] Direct Cinema echoed "l'éveil de la société québécoise," insists Marcel Jean.[27] Marsolais adds:

> En utilisant une écriture du risque, en revendiquant l'existence d'un cinéma en liberté et en le pratiquant avec audace, les cinéastes francophones de l'ONF se donnent . . . les armes appropriées à leur action de libération, leur permettant de révéler sans ménagement la réalité de cette société aliénante. Inventant un cinéma de l'authenticité, ces cinéastes se distinguent donc au moment de la Révolution tranquille de 1960, par leurs tentatives de cerner, d'élucider la réalité québécoise, de retrouver leur vraies racines enterrées par le dominant, et par leur désir d'anticiper leur devenir.[28]

In other words, Quebec's Direct Cinema was a transformative experience that was central to both the birth of *le cinéma moderne* and *le Québec moderne*.

The potency of the above narrative rests in part on the fact that the Direct Cinema of the Équipe française did constitute a significant departure from the cinematic works that came before it. This new cinematographic language developed simultaneously in various parts of the world but evidence does show that Quebec's francophone filmmakers were at the forefront of the technological, aesthetic and ideological developments that

made Direct Cinema possible.[29] Its appearance on the eve of the Quiet Revolution was also significant as it coincided with the emergence of a cinematically and politically active Équipe française within the NFB. This particular intersection has given substance to the belief that this self-affirming group constituted a microcosm of Quebec society and that its trajectory mirrored that of *le peuple québécois*.

By focussing on this particular period (1958-1963), film historians have elevated the Équipe française and Direct Cinema to the status of founding myths. They persistently emphasize the participatory and democratizing aspects of this cinematographic language.[30] They argue that its emergence and development paralleled that of *le Québec moderne*.[31] The grand narrative of Quebec national cinema rests on a firm belief that *le peuple québécois* and *le cinéma québécois* were engaged on the same collective path toward modernity. This narrative demands consistency and clarity of purpose which explains why film scholars hesitate to explore this blurry area that is the transition from Direct Cinema to fiction.

Film historians are for the most part content with believing that Quebec's second wave of fiction films was the natural and inevitable extension of Direct Cinema. Marsolais writes: "Très tôt, les cinéastes québécois [récupérèrent] avec bonheur les techniques et les méthodes du direct pour les appliquer à la fiction."[32] Both he and Jean Quintal argue that Direct Cinema permitted "un déblocage bénéfique" for Quebec cinema.[33] Marsolais uses the expression "la pollinisation de la fiction [par le cinéma direct]" to emphasize continuity between the two cinematographic languages.[34] He adds: "La pollinisation . . . donne une première vague de films de fiction de long métrage qui, par leur ton et leur liberté d'allure . . . font dire que le direct . . . est passé par là."[35]

Daudelin concurs when he writes: "In a word, for fifteen years, an important part of the Quebec fiction cinema was . . . under the influence of the direct cinema as promoted by the NFB."[36]

There is some truth to these beliefs considering that many second wave fiction films were products of cinematic experiments involving pioneers of the Direct Cinema movement. However, the transition from documentary to fiction that accompanied the creation of the Production française was far from an easy process. Moreover, the reliance on Direct Cinema techniques was often a means to an end rather than a politically and aesthetically-motivated choice.[37] Most importantly, Quebec's second wave of fiction films includes a whole range of genres that go from *fiction-vérité – Kid sentiment* (Jacques Godbout 1967) – to traditional drama – *Le grand Rock* (Raymond Garceau 1967) – and comedy – *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* (Gilles Carle 1965).[38] Instead of exploring the richness of this corpus, film historians focus their attention on those productions that are closest, in both form and content, to the Direct Cinema of the Équipe française. It is easier to assert the pertinence of a politically-charged *fiction-vérité* film like *Le chat dans le sac* (Gilles Groulx 1964) than to explain traditional dramatic productions such as *YUL 871* (Godbout 1966) and *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* (Arthur Lamothe 1965) which appear disconnected from their "réalité ambiante."[39]

Unlike Marsolais and his colleagues, Lever refuses to mythologize the fiction cinema of the Quiet Revolution by inscribing it within the trajectory of Direct Cinema. He sees discontinuity between the two cinematographic languages. He argues that the themes and characters that populate the fiction films produced in Quebec during the mid-to-late 1960s did not reflect the collective optimism of the time. Consequently, these

productions could not serve as agents of change and mirrors of reality. Lever sees the commercial features of the 1960s as constituting a setback for Quebec National Cinema. He writes:

> C'est ce cinéma de fiction . . . qui semble évoquer une période de grande noirceur, davantage que celui de l'ère duplessiste ; pourtant, c'est à cette époque que le Québec est censé se libérer des carcans ancestraux et laisser éclater de nouveaux dynamismes . . . !"[40]

Lever asks: "Faut-il y voir une coupure entre le monde du cinéma et la réalité ambiante?"[41]

Lever is not sure how to make sense of these fiction films which he sees as incompatible with Direct Cinema and the nation building projects of Quebec's modernist intelligentsia. He argues that as the decade progressed, the province's francophone filmmakers became increasingly preoccupied with their status as artists and as intellectuals. Disillusioned by the lack of recognition and support it received, this "groupe social" – a loosely-knit clique of artists – started making films that were less relevant socially and politically.[42] Lever believes that the commercial feature films of the Quiet Revolution were but an "auto-psychanalyse du milieu intellectuel" that did little for cinema in Quebec.[43] He adds:

> C'est . . . la non-combativité du milieu cinématographique, conséquence de son propre désespoir, plutôt que celle de la société en général que les films reflètent. Elle renvoie avant tout à la morosité d'un groupe social qui ressent cruellement le déplacement du pouvoir de l'imaginaire des artistes vers les nouvelles élites politiques et

> technocratiques. . . . C'est probablement ce qui explique pourquoi le ton des œuvres n'est pas souvent à la rigolade ; il est même dramatique.[44]

Lever is partially correct in pointing out that the fiction films of the 1960s forced a rupture with Direct Cinema, but his reading of these productions – and ultimately the cinema of the Quiet Revolution – fails to take into account the combative posture of Quebec's francophone filmmakers from 1963 onward.

Between 1963 and 1967, Groulx, Carle, Lamothe, Godbout and their colleagues came together as a tightly-knit group with a clear and coherent agenda. These filmmakers were anything but non-combative, pessimistic and morose. During that period, they pressured the NFB to grant them artistic freedom; they took it upon themselves to explain the urgent need for a national *cinéma d'auteur*; they formed associations and organizations; they produced and sent reports, petitions and recommendations to various levels of government requesting support for a commercial feature film industry; and they produced works that reflected the full range of their creative vision. These actions are usually mentioned in passing or completely omitted from discussions that deal with the cinema of the Quiet Revolution. Most importantly, they never factor into analyses of second wave fiction films.

Marshall's *Quebec National Cinema* is no exception. The book proposes to explain what a "surprised . . . Lever sees as films that are . . . antagonistic to their historical context."[45] Marshall notes that French Canadians, during the greater part of the 1960s, faced the enormous task of re-inventing their collective identity. This was not an easy project with competing groups proposing various ways of negotiating the past, present and future. He argues that the Quiet Revolution "was part of a never-ending flux

of contestation, definition, shifting social meaning [and] becoming."[46] Quebec's ascension to modernity was therefore not a smooth and linear path.

In response to Lever's conclusions, Marshall argues that the francophone filmmakers who made works of fiction in the 1960s performed the important task of proposing ways of thinking through this process of identity-building. Their films were not mirrors of a particular group but rather a means of making an inventory of the various points of friction that defined the emerging collective identity. He writes: "Quebec films of the 60s are not direct expressions of a particular social class . . . but partake of this complex flux of meaning that is dominant or contested and that is profoundly marked by the links between past, present and future."[47] Marshall offers some interesting insights on the period yet he ends up bringing us back full-circle to the belief that the cinema of the Quiet Revolution was in complete osmosis with its surrounding environment.

Ultimately, both Lever and Marshall fail to see that Quebec's francophone filmmakers formed a dynamic and tightly-knit community of communication with a sophisticated and ambitious programme. Létourneau defines community of communication as "un ensemble de personnes qui participent, par l'activité communicationnelle, à une interaction et qui coordonnent leurs projets en s'entendant les uns les autres sur quelque chose qui existe dans le monde."[48] He adds:

> Cette capacité d'imposer . . . sa culture, sa conscience historique, son espace/temps, sa figure collective et ses icones, [est] centrale dans l'affirmation et le maintien consensuel d'une domination. Le pouvoir de représenter . . . s'enracine en fait dans la conquête . . . d'une capacité historique de représenter et d'un droit de dire.[49]

Communities of communication rely on elaborate narratives in order to impose their own sense of place and time in history. The ability of a group to construct, disseminate and maintain the inviolability of its narrative is a necessary condition for its fulfilment and survival. Borrowing from Létourneau, the present thesis uses the concept of community of communication as a means of investigating the documentary-to-fiction transition that accompanied the creation of the Production française.

CHAPTER 2: PRELUDE

The late 1950s and early 1960s marked the beginning of a new era for filmmaking in French Canada. It was during that period that Quebec's francophone filmmakers came together as a group for the purpose of pulling the cinema of their province out its *Grande noirceur*. Indeed, Gilles Groulx, Gilles Carle, Arthur Lamothe and their colleagues found themselves at an important juncture between 1956 and 1963. The NFB's relocation to Montreal, the growing presence of francophones within that federal institution, the press campaign of 1957 against the NFB and the coming together of an increasingly vocal Équipe française around the project of Direct Cinema all contributed to making possible Quebec's second wave of fiction films.

During this period, the above filmmakers formed a community whose struggles mirrored those of the society to which it belonged. The experience of Direct Cinema brought these artists closer to the subjects (their fellow French Canadians) of their films. It also allowed them to develop close affinities with various factions of Quebec's modernist intelligentsia. Yves Lever is therefore partially correct when he writes that "le cinéma québécois . . . est à la fois reflet, agent et historien de la Révolution tranquille entre 1956 et 1963 environs, . . . après, il s'en écarte au profit d'une auto-psychanalyse du milieu intellectuel qui . . . n'a fait progresser ni le milieu ni le cinéma."[1] Chapter 3 will show that the 1963 to 1967 period was not as grim as Lever claims it was. But for the moment, the present chapter focuses on the early years of the cinema of the Quiet Revolution as they constituted an important prelude to Quebec's second wave of fiction films.

The NFB played an important role in the development of cinema in Quebec despite the fact that relations between French Canadians and the institution were often tense. Formed in 1939, the NFB was meant to address the Federal government's need to improve the quality of Canadian film production. Its predecessor, the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau (CGMPB), had proven unable to keep up with the pace at which the American film industry was developing.[2] Following recommendations made by British documentarist John Grierson, the Canadian government replaced the CGMPB with a new entity whose mandate was to promote the production and distribution of films made "dans l'intérêt national."[3] In other words, NFB films were meant to "faire connaître le Canada aux canadiens et aux autres nations."[4] English was made the predominant language for production and distribution purposes which meant that French Canadians had to be content with films made in a language many of them did not understand. NFB productions were occasionally dubbed into French for Quebec audiences but this was hardly sufficient for a population which felt that the institution's mandate was to serve the needs of both francophones and anglophones.[5]

The situation was certainly not great for French Canadians opting for a career in cinema since the NFB offered most of the few opportunities available at the time. Yet things looked somehow positive in the early 1940s with the launch of *Actualité canadienne* (a NFB series produced between 1941 and 1946). A French unit was also created around that time but the experience did not survive the war. The above initiatives were quickly abandoned at mid-point in the decade due to budget constraints. All efforts to produce films in French were also discouraged since it was assumed that such productions would constitute a misuse of scarce funds. From the mid-1940s to the mid-

1950s, francophones at the NFB found themselves interspersed and marginalized within various English production units. "Many of them punned that the letters ONF [Office national du film] . . . really meant Organisation non-française," Gary Evans writes.[6] Pierre Véronneau adds that in the immediate post-war years, "les francophones sont à l'ONF en position d'assimilation."[7]

Quebec-born francophone filmmakers working at the NFB during the 1940s and early 1950s were frustrated in that they lacked the means to make films in their own language for the people of their own province. To make matters worse, they also faced resistance and animosity in Quebec because of their affiliation with an Ottawa-based institution. Premier Maurice Duplessis and the elite that supported him were particularly suspicious of the NFB's federalist agenda. They also believed it was a hotbed of communist propaganda. Using its Bureau de censure, the Duplessis government began by prohibiting cinematic works that promoted communism, atheism and revolution.[8] In February 1950, it succeeded in temporarily stopping the distribution of NFB films in the province. Quebec's newspapers helped ensure that the government's anti-NFB policies were well-received by the population. *Montréal-matin* insisted: "L'interdiction temporaire dont est frappé l'ONF fait jeter les hauts cris aux partisans des libertés civiles. Elle est quand même justifiée et ne constitue qu'un acte de saine prudence."[9] This was a difficult situation to be in for filmmakers looking for ways to pursue their art in French within a predominantly-English federal institution.

The NFB's relocation from Ottawa to Montreal in 1956 did more than any previous efforts to address the peculiar position that francophone filmmakers were in. At the turn of the 1950s, the institution was confronted with a Red Scare that originated from

both French and English Canada. The appointment of former *Maclean's* editor Arthur Irwin to the position of commissioner was meant as a first step to restore confidence in the NFB. Irwin skilfully diffused the crisis by dismissing three left-leaning employees. The threat of communist infiltration had been exaggerated but the experience convinced him of the need to put distance between the NFB and the politicians that occupied Parliament Hill.[10]

Montreal represented an ideal location as it offered a pool of capable candidates from which to choose. It also provided a means to follow in the footsteps of the Massey Commission. "If the film board were to operate effectively within the framework of the bilingual and bicultural postulates of the Massey Commission, there was only one place to go, and that was Montreal," writes Evans.[11] Hence, parliamentary debates often emphasized the fact that Quebec's largest city was a place where both anglophones and francophones could thrive:

> La ville très progressiste de Toronto . . . offre certes bien des avantages. C'est une grande ville et un centre culturel où les talents ne manquent pas, mais elle n'a pas le caractère rigoureusement bilingue de Montréal. Montréal est un centre de culture française et de culture anglaise. En même temps elle est située à proximité d'Ottawa. C'est une grande ville qui attire des talents, artistes, musiciens et techniciens des deux cultures qui y trouvent plus de débouchées qu'ils ne trouveraient ailleurs.[12]

The project was eventually approved and plans were made to move all offices and studios to Montreal. The relocation signalled a new beginning away from the pervading scrutiny

of Ottawa bureaucrats. It symbolized the dawn of a new era for filmmakers anxious to leave behind what they would soon call the distant past.

The relocation did not solve all problems overnight. Expectations were high during the early months of 1956 but discontent quickly set in once it became apparent that the NFB would not implement the reforms that were deemed necessary to improve the plight of its French Canadian employees. The news that Pierre Juneau would be made assistant film commissioner appeared to be a step in the right direction but the nomination was deemed insufficient by many in Quebec. A crisis erupted once it became known that Juneau was in fact going to be a minority voice within a triumvirate that also included Grant McLean and Donald Mulholland.[13]

On February 26, 1957, *Le Devoir* launched a press campaign against the NFB. In a series of articles, Pierre Vigeant criticized the institution for refusing to accord greater voice to its francophone elements. He wrote: "Comme on le voit, l'Office du film a très bien su résister à l'influence française que l'on craignait en s'installant à Montréal."[14] He also manifested indignation at the fact that anglophones were paid more than francophones for the same work and that the latter were continuously prevented from ascending to positions of influence. Most importantly, Vigeant denounced the NFB's refusal to create an autonomous French production unit. *Le Devoir* concluded that the NFB "demeure un organisme anglais où la culture française est traitée en parente pauvre et où les canadiens français ne sont tolérés que dans les emplois subalternes."[15]

Le Droit and *L'Action catholique* did not take long to take position on the issue.[16] They joined *Le Devoir* thereby forming a common front against the NFB. At the end of

March, *La Presse* threw its hat in the ring hoping to offer a less-biased reading of the situation. The articles it published between March 30 and April 6 only served to escalate the crisis which lasted until the nomination of Guy Roberge to the post of film commissioner (he replaced Albert W. Trueman who had succeeded Irwin). The news was welcomed with a certain amount of suspicion, but *Le Devoir* and its allies nonetheless chose to put their faith in Roberge and tone down their criticism of the NFB – the nomination of a francophone to the top position at the board was certainly cause for optimism.

The press campaign of 1957 was significant in that it legitimized and lent support to the idea that francophone filmmakers working at the NFB constituted a distinct group whose voice needed to be heard. It also served to align the struggles of the Équipe française with those of Quebec's population.[17] Most importantly, it made possible a *rapprochement* between francophone filmmakers and other groups eager to precipitate Quebec's ascension to modernity.

Sensing that it now had allies within Quebec, the then-emerging Équipe française began articulating a stronger critique of the Duplessis regime and its *idéologie de conservation*. In their films, Robert Devlin, Michel Blais and Louis Portugais to name but a few, offered reflections on the challenges facing industrializing and modernizing societies. Films such as *Alfred J.* (Devlin 1956) and *Les 90 jours* (Portugais 1959) challenged the traditionalist and anti-trade-union discourses that prevailed within certain strata of Quebec society at the time. These made-for-television films denounced the inertia of the old elite while celebrating the vigorous revolt of young labour leaders

whose *idéologie de rattrapage* closely resembled that of Quebec's modernist intelligentsia.

These productions helped solidify the ties that were forming between francophone filmmakers and those intellectuals – Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Marcel Rioux and Gérard Pelletier to name but a few – whose contributions appeared in *Le Devoir* and *Cité libre*. Indeed, the above NFB productions left no doubts as to where the Équipe française stood on the eve of the Quiet Revolution. "Non seulement, jamais des cinéastes québécois n'avaient été aussi loin dans leur dénonciation du Duplessisme, mais encore jamais n'avaient t-il marqué autant leur parenté avec l'idéologie de la revue *Cité libre*," adds Véronneau.[18]

Founded in 1950 by Trudeau and Pelletier, *Cité libre* stood in opposition to the conservative nationalism and anti-trade unionism of the Duplessis regime. The publication's championing of individual liberties, progressivism, social equality and a strong intervening modern state informed much of the early works of the Équipe française.[19] Most striking were the similarities between Portugais' *Les 90 jours* and Trudeau's introductory chapter to *La grève de l'amiante*. In his analysis of the latter work, Jocelyn Létourneau writes:

> Trudeau nous présente un monde . . . qui est pensé dans sa phase terminal. C'est cette vision qui détermine toute la logique argumentaire de son récit. C'est pourquoi la société québécoise d'avant la grève de l'amiante apparait au terme de la lecture du texte comme une société appartenant à un passe révolu, une société qu'il est nécessaire

> de quitter parce qu'elle ne correspond plus au temps de son époque. . . . Une histoire est à construire.[20]

Trudeau's claim that "the industrial workers of Quebec were suffocating in a society burdened with inadequate ideologies and oppressive institutions" found its echo in Portugais' 1959 production.[21]

Les 90 jours, in its sympathetic portrayal of labour strikes and critical reading of traditionalism, pursued the project of Quebec's modernist intelligentsia whose *idéologie de rattrapage* demanded a rewriting of the past. Based on a script by Pelletier and inspired by the Asbestos Strike of 1949, this dramatization of a labour crisis constituted a potent denunciation of the reactionary forces responsible for Quebec's presumably abnormal development. In this film, Portugais – as well as Pelletier – suggested that rupture was necessary in order to steer Quebec society toward a better tomorrow. By 1959, the Équipe française understood that it possessed the ability to re-imagine the nation so as to actualize this long-desired transition from tradition to modernity.

This does not mean that the Équipe française was a mere microcosm of Quebec's technocratic elite or that it was a pawn of *Cité libre*. Véronneau points out that one of the major points of friction between the NFB's francophone filmmakers and the publication was the latter's "antinationalisme."[22] He explains: "Cette question du nationalisme est probablement la pierre de touche qui indique les limites de l'influence cité libriste a l'ONF."[23] Véronneau pertinently notes that the Équipe française was composed of individuals from different age groups whose allegiances ranged from *Cité libre* to *Liberté* and *Parti pris*.

Liberté was a Montreal-based publication whose founding members included Jacques Godbout as well as scriptwriter and novelist Hubert Aquin. The magazine focussed primarily on the arts but it also served as a vehicle for promoting individual liberties (cultural, political and intellectual). *Liberté* was not openly nationalistic although it occasionally flirted with the notion of national independence. One could argue that it served as a bridge between *Cité libre* and the Marxist-inspired and pro-independence *Parti pris* whose influence was most apparent in the films of Groulx and Denys Arcand.[24]

The Équipe française participated actively in the construction and dissemination of discourses aimed at making sense of the challenges facing Quebec society at the turn of the 1960s. Véronneau explains:

> Les cinéastes onéfiens participent des différents courants contestataires idéologiques, politiques et culturels qui traversent la société québécoise. Ils s'en inspirent et y jouent un rôle actif, en même temps ils reflètent la diversité des attitudes et l'éclatement qui caractérisent la fin des années cinquante et le début de la Révolution tranquille.[25]

Quebec's francophone filmmakers were ready to investigate, document and think critically about the collective past and destiny of French Canadians. Direct Cinema proved a particularly potent means of fulfilling that mandate.

The Direct Cinema of the Équipe française constituted a significant departure from the traditional documentary approach that prevailed at the NFB during the 1940s and 1950s. The new cinematographic language developed out of a series of experiments attached to the Candid Eye series which aired on national television throughout 1958 and 1959. Candid Eye productions represented early efforts to document various aspects of

Canadian life using portable cameras. The authors of these short films hoped to capture reality objectively by positioning themselves at a certain distance from their filmed subjects.

Both anglophones and francophones participated in the Candid Eye adventure but it was the members of the latter group who felt most strongly the need to challenge the false discourse of objective truth that informed the series. Filmmakers such as Groulx and Michel Brault insisted on getting closer to the subjects of their films as they felt that the Candid Eye approach was both partial and unethical. Brault explained:

> Il faut que tu voies les gens, que tu sois près d'eux. En t'approchant d'eux, si tu arrives à les filmer et s'ils continuent à vivre pendant que tu es près d'eux, c'est qu'ils t'ont accepté dans leur groupe. Donc, tu ne les violes pas, puisqu'ils savent que tu es là à côté d'eux, ou, s'ils ne le savent pas, tu leur as donné toutes les chances.[26]

The Équipe française revolutionized documentary filmmaking by experimenting with different types of camera lens and sound recording equipment. Its members succeeded in projecting themselves right in the middle of the events they were documenting while capturing images and sound synchronously. Hence Gilles Marsolais' claim that "c'est surtout à l'équipe française que reviendra, historiquement, le mérite de pousser au bout de ses conséquences l'expérience originelle du Candid Eye . . ., et finalement de la dépasser."[27]

The emergence of Direct Cinema in the late 1950s was both timely and concomitant with the nation-building projects of Quebec's modernist intelligentsia. The technological developments associated with the new cinematographic language made it

possible for French Canadians to see and hear themselves for the first time on screens across the province. These developments coincided with an increased demand for made-for-television films which meant a larger public with which to engage. This growing market came with tight production schedules which proved to be a blessing for artists eager to circumvent the NFB's rigid production guidelines. The demand for films was such that filmmakers were often allowed to work without scripts. The Équipe française was able to take advantage of the situation to further experiment with Direct Cinema techniques. Most importantly, it was able to improvise and explore themes and topics that would have been proscribed under other circumstances. Marsolais notes that this context allowed francophone filmmakers to maintain full control of the creative process "en brouillant les pistes."[28]

This newly acquired freedom did not take long to transform itself into a revolt against the NFB. Scott MacKenzie notes that the Équipe française "was not interested in capturing individuals partaking in daily life . . . , they ignored individual traits in order to capture the Québécois as a homogenized group with an identity, history and tradition all its own."[29] David Clandfield concurs when he writes that Direct Cinema permitted a movement away from the picturesque toward the authentic. According to him, the Équipe française produced a cinema of familiarity and solidarity which betrayed a definite "commitment to the goals of the Quiet Revolution."[30] Clandfield adds: "To embark upon a project to define the new cultural identity was implicitly to take side for or against the old order; to assert one's own national identity within a federal organism . . . was to break away from the picturesque, the view of the outsider."[31] Direct Cinema was a liberating

experience which served the needs of the Équipe française, Quebec's modernist intelligentsia and the self-affirming *Québécois* subject.

The combative spirit of the Équipe française was nowhere more apparent than in *Les Raquetteurs* (Groulx & Brault 1958), a *film charnière* often described as Direct Cinema's manifesto.[32] This short film offered French Canadians a unique outlook on a convention of snowshoers held in Sherbrooke in 1958. Brault and Groulx had been asked to capture snippets of the event for a two minute film. Following their instincts, they amassed more material than needed using reels obtained without permission. Brault remembered: "Nous avions apporté un peu plus de pellicule que permis, au cas où . . . ."[33] Using hand-held cameras and portable recording equipment, they – along with Marcel Carrière on sound – threw themselves into the action. They captured images in natural settings and in a context where the people being filmed were aware and accepting of the camera's presence. The result was a refreshingly new form of dialectic exchange where both film crew and filmed subjects found themselves spontaneously projected onto the screen.

Not everyone was enthusiastic about the project. Upon seeing the footage, then-director of production McLean ordered that the reels be stored away in the archives. Unflinching, Groulx and Brault kept a working copy of the material which they assembled at night. "On peut presque dire que, à partir de ce moment, le cinéma québécois s'est fait dans la clandestinité," explained Brault.[34] The two filmmakers eventually obtained funds to finish the film which was received with much acclaim by Jean Rouch and others at the California Flaherty Film Seminar of 1959. The warm response Groulx and Brault received from their American and French counterparts gave

them – and the Équipe française – confidence to continue on the path they were carving for themselves within the NFB. André Loiselle adds:

> The atmosphere of secrecy that surrounded the completion of the film against McLeans' orders endowed *Les raquetteurs* with great symbolic significance. Here were two Quebec filmmakers making a film about a typically French Canadian pastime in defiance of anglophone authority.[35]

The film's production context, its technical achievements (the insertion of synchronous sound and Brault's innovative use of wide-angle lens) and its international resonance all contributed to making *Les raquetteurs* a landmark in Quebec film history.

Between 1956 and 1963, the Équipe française found itself developing affinities with groups and individuals anxious to leave the past behind. It was a period of convergence and self-affirmation during which Quebec's francophone filmmakers gained a sense of the role they could play in the new modernist narratives being written. During the founding years of *le cinéma québécois*, the Équipe française developed its own cinematographic language which it used to promote the *idéologie de rattrapage*. The early films of the cinema of the Quiet Revolution were both agents of change and mirrors of a society at a crossroad. Yet Godbout, Groulx, Carle, Lamothe and their colleagues understood that this *prise de parole* which they were helping make possible could be used to advance their project of a national *cinéma d'auteur*. From 1963 onward, they channelled their experiences and energies into bringing about and legitimizing Quebec's second wave of fiction films.

CHAPTER 3: DISSENT

To assume that the documentary-to-fiction transition that accompanied the creation of the Production française sprung naturally out of the Direct Cinema of the Équipe française is to overlook significant portions of this great chapter that is the cinema of the Quiet Revolution. Quebec's second wave of fiction films came about through the sheer determination and skilful manoeuvring – as well as lobbying – of filmmakers eager to build on experiences acquired during the 1956 to 1963 period. The present chapter focuses on the words and actions of the Production française's key members (Gilles Groulx, Gilles Carle, Arthur Lamothe and Jacques Godbout to name but a few). It is concerned with the language employed and the strategies deployed by a community of communication to legitimize and promote feature length fiction cinema in Quebec.

The first half of this chapter discusses the vehicles – the Production française, the Association professionnelle des cinéastes (APC), *Parti pris* and *Liberté* – used by the above filmmakers to articulate and disseminate the narrative upon which they founded their community of communication. The second half offers a reconstruction and analysis of that narrative. In his *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, Yves Lever writes that the francophone filmmakers who made works of fiction in Quebec during the 1960s were morose and non-combative.[1] The following pages will show that Godbout and his colleagues, from 1963 onward, were anything but pessimistic and passive.

The period we are concerned with here effectively began with the creation of the Production française. The project of an independent francophone production unit had been in the making for years. The press campaign of 1957 had made apparent the need

for substantial reforms and it fell onto Guy Roberge to face the important task of restructuring the NFB. By 1963, the Équipe française had gained enough momentum and support that it could no longer be ignored. That year, Roberge made plans for a new parallel structure that would be composed of a commissioner and two directors of production, one francophone and one anglophone, each responsible for overseeing the operations of one of the linguistic groups. The Production française became operational shortly after on January 1st, 1964.

The timing was right. The federal government's plan for a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism – the Commission Laurendeau-Dunton – had made urgent the need to address the Équipe française's grievances. According to Pierre Véronneau, the NFB knew that its "caractère quasi-monoculturel" would be denounced by the Commission if it did not take the initiative to create an autonomous French production unit.[2] Roberge and his team were also preparing for the NFB's 25th anniversary and so the creation of the Production française represented a convenient means of rejuvenating the institution while avoiding the bad publicity that would ensue from a discrediting report.[3]

The creation of a separate production unit with its own budget did not mean that francophone filmmakers had *carte blanche* to do as they pleased. A particular source of contention was the desire among many to embark on feature length fiction film projects. The Équipe française had successfully experimented with the dramatic form in its made-for-television productions and the short films of the *Femme hors foyer* series.[4] However, Roberge opposed the idea of using the NFB to make commercial films. "His idea was to

keep it producing documentary shorts, television fare, and sponsored work . . . ," notes Gary Evans.[5]

Pierre Juneau, the Production française's first director of production, felt otherwise. He believed that the NFB could support the production of feature length fiction films but only if "done traditionally, with a script and no improvisation."[6] By imposing these conditions, Juneau clearly indicated that he wished to maintain full control of the production process. The four executive producers he nominated –André Belleau, Jacques Bobet, Marcel Martin and Michel Moreau – were expected to assist him in this task. This particular situation created a malaise among francophone filmmakers who felt that Juneau's Production française was a means of curbing their creative spirit.[7]

The imposition of a rigid process and hierarchy was perceived by filmmakers as one more obstacle to the creation of a national *cinéma d'auteur*. "Le long métrage, à l'ONF, c'est le fruit défendu du Paradis," an exasperated Godbout told *Le Devoir* in 1966.[8] By then, Groulx, Carle and Lamothe had begun their transition to fiction cinema but they had done so clandestinely in ways that paid homage to *Les raquetteurs* (Groulx & Michel Brault 1958). Their three films – *Le chat dans le sac* (Groulx 1964), *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* (Carle 1965) and *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* (Lamothe 1965) – will be discussed in further details in chapter 4. Suffice it to say for now that the above filmmakers were aware of the fact that the Production française was but an imperfect means to an end and that they had to constitute themselves as a community of communication outside the NFB for their project to materialize.

Godbout and his colleagues were already hard at work organizing Quebec's francophone filmmakers by the time the NFB apposed its seal of approval to the project of a Production française. On February 5, 1963, a group of approximately 85 assembled in a small theatre located in downtown Montreal. The purpose of the meeting was to create an association that would defend the interests of filmmakers and their teams.[9] This project of a Montreal-based association resulted from the initiative of a provisional committee composed of Godbout, Lamothe, Claude Jutra, Jean-Yves Bigras, Jacques Giraldeau, Michael Belaïeff, Guy Côté, Claude Fournier and Georges Dufaux.[10] All of them had ties to the NFB as either current or former employees.

The February meeting lasted for more than five hours and culminated with the official creation of the Association des cinéastes du Québec – known shortly after as the APC[11] – whose initial mandate was to "étudier, défendre, développer et protéger les intérêts économiques, sociaux et moraux de ses membres."[12] Those present and voting chose French as the association's official language thereby following in the footsteps of the Équipe française's struggle for collective self-affirmation. Before adjourning, the association's active members proceeded to nominate and elect nine representatives. Of those chosen, seven had been, or were still, employed by the NFB. Godbout and Lamothe were elected to the positions of vice-president (government industries) and director (government industries) respectively.[13] In their capacities as members of the executive committee in charge of government-related affairs, they played a key role in shaping the association's vision of a national *cinéma d'auteur*.

Between 1963 and 1967, the APC worked tirelessly to legitimize and promote the idea that "le cinéma de long métrage dramatique est . . . le moyen privilégié d'expression

culturelle."[14] During this period, it produced a series of reports to pressure the provincial and federal governments into effecting changes in favour of a feature length fiction film industry in Quebec. The APC recommended to the federal government that it re-evaluate the role of the NFB, that it allocate resources for the creation and distribution of made-in-Quebec feature length fiction films and that it create a Centre de la cinématographie du Canada.[15] At the same time, it lobbied the provincial government for financial support while demanding that it create a Centre de la cinématographie du Québec and a "circuit d'exploitation." It also demanded revisions to the Loi de la censure and a re-evaluation of the Office du film du Québec's mandate.[16]

The APC also sought to push various organizations and institutions – the Festival international du film de Montréal (FIFM), the NFB and the Conseil des arts de la région métropolitaine de Montréal among others – into supporting initiatives aimed at giving voice and visibility to francophone filmmakers.[17] The association stressed the fact that French Canadians desperately needed a national *cinéma d'auteur* of their own:

> Il ne faut pas lâcher, . . . quand nous voulons une industrie cinématographique indigène ce n'est pas seulement pour pouvoir exercer notre métier convenablement, mais surtout parce que le peuple a besoin de voir des images nombreuses qui soient les siennes et que nous sommes ceux qui les lui peuvent créer.[18]

Within just a few years of its formation, the APC asserted itself as a force to be reckoned with. It became the vehicle of choice for a community of communication born out of the discontent of francophone filmmakers operating within the NFB.

The April 1964 issue of *Parti pris* best conveyed to the public the dissatisfaction felt by the Production française's most prominent members. Godbout, Carle, Groulx, Denys Arcand and Clément Perron all contributed inflammatory articles to this special issue dealing with the NFB and *le cinéma québécois*. The publication caused an immediate stir within the federal institution. "[The articles] had the same effect as if the FLQ [Front de libération du Québec] had detonated a bomb at the NFB headquarters," writes Evans.[19] It did not help that Pierre Maheu, one of the most vocal contributors and administrators at *Parti pris*, opened the issue with a direct attack against the NFB which he described as "un instrument de colonisation."[20]

The five articles that followed Maheu's editorial were not as aggressive but they clearly indicated that the creation of an independent French production unit was insufficient if it was not accompanied by a genuine desire to grant filmmakers complete creative freedom. This special issue of *Parti pris* was both a plea for further reforms within the NFB and a reminder that Quebec desperately needed a national *cinéma d'auteur* of its own. Groulx summarized it all when he wrote:

> Nous ne voulons plus végéter entre l'auto-censure et le compromis. Nous ne voulons plus être tenus à l'écart du sort de notre peuple. Nous voulons que nos films reflètent notre tempérament et toutes nos préoccupations d'individus et d'artistes. Nous voulons rechercher les voies de notre épanouissement et celles de la nation qui attend de nous.[21]

"L'affaire *Parti pris*" was not an isolated incident and constituted one of many strategies deployed by a community of communication eager to bring about changes using all means at its disposal.

The multi-prong approach championed by francophone filmmakers was made most apparent in the March-June 1966 issue of *Liberté*. Bobet, Lamothe, Côté, Godbout, Dufaux, Fernand Dansereau and Jean-Claude Labrecque were amongst those who contributed to this special issue dealing with the topic of Quebec national cinema. Bobet's editorial picked up where his colleagues had left off in the 1964 issue of *Parti pris*. He accused the NFB of having initiated a counter-revolution aimed at silencing and neutralizing the Production française's most creative and promising artists. According to him, this "carnage culturel" resulted from the institution's refusal to modernize and liberalize itself.[22]

The language used in *Liberté* was consistent with the *idéologie de rattrapage* that drove the nation-building projects of Quebec's modernist intelligentsia. Lamothe explained:

> L'humanisme moderne sera en grande partie fonction de l'apport culturel du cinéma. Sous peine de stérilité culturelle, nous ne pouvons rester uniquement consommateur. Et toute stérilité culturelle a ses répercussions sur les attitudes de base des individus de la population, et partant, sur le dynamisme économique du pays.[23]

Quebec's francophone filmmakers could no longer accept to remain "servile servants."[24] They wanted to participate actively in the making of *le Québec moderne*.

This special issue of *Liberté* contained excerpts from documents submitted by the APC to various levels of government. It contained dozens of quotes extracted from articles and interviews published in *Parti pris*, *Objectif* and *Le petit journal*. Most importantly, it featured several articles dealing directly with various aspects of the narrative being elaborated by a community of communication anxious to consolidate its place in a post-Duplessis Quebec.

Quebec's francophone filmmakers asserted the pertinence of fiction cinema first by situating it in opposition to the NFB's long established documentary filmmaking tradition. Rupture with the past was necessary in order for a genuinely indigenous and truly liberating cinema to emerge. Carle noted that a "cinéma véritable" needed to include a full range of cinematographic languages. By prioritizing didactic documentary films, the NFB had given birth to a "cinéma incomplet pour ne pas dire aberrant."[25]

Criticisms were also directed at the myth of objective truth that accompanied most NFB projects including the Candid Eye series. Godbout explained:

> Le documentariste . . . est à la merci de son métier. Plus que tous les autres journalistes il devient cynique, à force de manipuler le réel, pris sur le vif, ou mis en scène, c'est à dire répété pour la camera. Le documentaire interprète la réalité ; au début avec passion, puis les années passent, les films aussi, il apprend comme la bonne image à sa juste place crée ceci ou le contraire. Le documentariste n'a même plus foi en des vérités multiples . . . . Au Canada français, je ne connais plus que deux attitudes extrêmes : la naïveté absolue ou le cynisme enjoué.[26]

According to Godbout and his colleagues, documentary filmmaking had reached a dead-end. It was no longer a viable avenue for Quebec's francophone filmmakers. In its report to the Conseil d'orientation économique du Québec, the APC pointed out that "le documentaire ne suffit plus."[27] In the early to mid-1960s, feature length fiction cinema was the only valid avenue left open.[28]

By insisting too much on the documentary versus fiction question, Quebec's francophone filmmakers risked compromising the Direct Cinema legacy of the Équipe française. They were able to circumvent that problem by focusing on the short versus feature length question. "Le court métrage craque aux entournures," wrote Bobet.[29] Short films were pertinent as a training ground but one needed something to look forward to as opportunities with this format were far too limited.[30] Unlike documentary shorts, feature length fiction films demanded patience and commitment. Feature films constituted a means of developing the skills and maturity that a national cinema demanded:

> Le court métrage parfois pardonne, c'est un rhume ; le long métrage vous change le sang. Ce ne sont plus les mêmes globules ; sans oxygène, peau écorchée, vous êtes plus près des hommes et du paysage que vous ne l'avez jamais été, vous sentez, vous pensez, vous vivez différemment, en attendant, en espérant, en préparant surtout l'accès suivant.[31]

Quebec's francophone filmmakers – a community of communication – presented feature length fiction films as a changing experience that could bring *le peuple québécois* closer together around the project of *le Québec moderne*.

Yet Godbout and his colleagues still needed to address the question of Direct Cinema. They did so by emphasizing continuity over rupture. According to them, this cinematographic language constituted a first step toward a new and authentic national cinema. Carle noted that the works of the Équipe française had made possible "une appropriation passionnée du milieu."[32] He wrote: "Le pittoresque a cédé la place au familier ; le mythe a cédé devant la réalité."[33] Godbout added that Direct Cinema had served as a kind of "psychanalyse sur le terrain" but that Quebec's francophone filmmakers now needed to transcend the documentary form.[34] They needed to work toward a "cinéma véritable" that would reflect both the culture and the aspirations of *le peuple québécois*.[35]

Quebec's francophone filmmakers argued that feature length fiction films were legitimate vehicles with which to approach reality. They were valid means of "cerner le réel."[36] Groulx remarked: "Vous aviez sans doute cru comme moi que la Vérité était documentaire. Eh bien, non. Pas plus que le long métrage n'est un tissue de mensonges."[37] At stake here was the notion that the images presented in fiction films were as potent – if not more – than those that appeared in the Direct Cinema of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Dansereau concurred when he expressed satisfaction at the fact that Quebec's francophone filmmakers were at long last embracing "la notion de spectacle."[38] According to him, feature length fiction films constituted effective means of helping French Canadians develop a greater sense of collective identity: "Il ne s'agit pas ici des doléances d'un petit groupe d'artistes capricieux, mais d'un peuple qui cherche son image."[39] The future of Quebec depended on the ability of filmmakers to provide audiences with new and profoundly engaging images of themselves and their reality.

In requesting support for a feature length fiction film industry, Quebec's francophone filmmakers wished to see their works projected in 35 mm on screens across the province. The narrative they disseminated placed emphasis on the fact that such productions represented an effective means of encouraging dialogue between Canada's two solitudes.[40] The APC stressed the point that cinema was an art form that was close to the masses.[41] In an appeal to both levels of government, it argued: "La diffusion dans les salles commerciales de longs métrages canadiens exprimant des réalités culturelles différentes serait de tout évidence souhaitable."[42] Yet this did not mean that francophone filmmakers wanted to make bicultural films.[43]

The filmmakers' narrative consistently emphasized French language productions as this was the project of a Quebec-based community of communication with roots in the NFB's Production française. Indeed, in a separate submission to the Conseil d'orientation économique du Québec, the APC noted that fiction films were easier to export and that Quebec had much to gain from spreading its image overseas. Fiction films were windows on other cultures and it is through them that nations developed an understanding and appreciation of the world surrounding them.[44] The APC recommended that all efforts be made to support a feature length fiction film industry in Quebec so as to fulfill "à la fois l'attente du public et le désir des cinéastes de traduire les aspirations de leur société, tout en servant, ici comme à l'étranger, le prestige du Québec."[45]

Quebec's francophone filmmakers sought to further legitimize their project of a national *cinéma d'auteur* by inscribing it within the modernist discourses that prevailed at the time. The narrative they developed presented cinema as the preferred medium of communication for modern nations. "Le cinéma est un art essential du 20ie siècle," stated

the APC.[46] It is the "medium privilégié de la civilisation actuelle," wrote Godbout.[47] The APC argued persistently that it was through their national cinemas that nations communicated with each other in the contemporary word.[48] A nation's ability to partake in those exchanges was a sign that it had reached a certain level of political and economic maturity.

The language used was consistent with the *idéologie de rattrapage* of the Quiet Revolution. It lent support to Bobet's claim that Quebec's francophone filmmakers could not be passive participants in this great adventure that was *le cinéma de la modernité*.[49] Quebec's filmmakers "ne peuvent pas se payer le luxe de laisser le long métrage se faire ailleurs sans eux," he argued.[50] Quebec had to emulate civilized nations by making cinema its primary means of expression.[51] Resisting this "marche du temps" or cutting French Canadians off from the rest of the Western world was no longer an option.[52] They needed a cinema "non plus . . . d'échec mais de conquête."[53]

This commitment to *le cinéma de la modernité* meant that second wave fiction films had to be elevated to the status of founding myths. Using the periodization championed by modernist intellectuals, Quebec's francophone filmmakers dismissed first wave productions as irrelevant and embarrassing.[54] "Quel progrès *Le rossignol et les cloches* et *Un homme et son péché* ont-ils fait faire à notre culture," Carle asked?[55] Pre-1960s fiction films had been both socially and morally "nuisible" for French Canadians.[56] It was therefore necessary to leave these painful memories behind in order to permit a *déblocage*.

With the *Grande noirceur* over, Quebec's filmmakers were free to break from the past and to give *le peuple québécois* the national cinema it deserved. Eager to solicit support for a second wave of fiction films, the APC reminded Quebec's Liberal government that a clear correlation existed between a nation's "indice de liberté politique et le niveau artistique de [sa] production."[57] Arcand echoed the APC's conclusions when he wrote: "Si notre cinéma a fait quelque progrès ces derniers temps, ces progrès sont parallèles à la conscience nouvelle que le Québec vient de se donner. Une production artistique nationale n'est méritée que par un peuple debout."[58]

The strategy employed here was to make it impossible to disassociate the future of the *nation québécoise* from that of its film industry. Arcand, Groulx and their colleagues stressed that point by elevating their art to the status of a "moyen privilégié d'expression culturelle." They persistently argued that cinema was the dominant art form of the 20th century. Its importance was such that it had profoundly influenced all other forms of art.[59] According to these filmmakers, cinema was the only medium that could embody the potentials of advanced technological societies.[60] It was the primary means by which modern societies developed their culture.[61] "Toute culture vivante s'exprime pas le cinéma," the APC argued in one of its reports.[62] It added: "Sans cinéma indigène, le peuple est comme un homme privé d'un sens majeur, celui de la vue."[63] Quebec's francophone filmmakers insisted that their films offered the means of giving substance to the *nation en devenir*. Hence Groulx's point that the emancipation of French Canadians was dependent on the creation of a genuine national *cinéma d'auteur*.[64] If used properly, cinema could be an "instrument de libération."[65]

Quebec's francophone filmmakers appropriated postcolonial theories in an effort to further legitimize their project. They argued that French Canadians were a colonized people and that their cinema reflected this particular condition. Sean Mills writes: "For [Montreal] radicals coming of age in the 1960s, the language of decolonization, with its emphasis on Quebec's cultural and economic alienation, provided a framework within which they could understand their own experiences."[66] Godbout, Carle, Lamothe and their colleagues were not radicals but postcolonial thought proved a convenient means of resisting American – and ultimately English Canadian – cultural colonialism.

These filmmakers reacted to the fact that American productions occupied most of the screens in the province. "Les salles de cinéma véhiculent exclusivement la culture des autres," complained the APC.[67] In one of their reports to the provincial government, Godbout and his colleagues compared the automotive and film industries stressing the idea that, unlike cars, films were a means of developing one's culture.[68] They added: "La dépendance économique dans un domaine comme le cinéma ne peut conduire qu'au colonialisme culturelle."[69] Quebec could not break from its past and elevate itself to the status of a great modern nation if it remained under the clutch of American cultural colonialism. The *peuple québécois* needed an indigenous feature length fiction film industry if it wanted to live autonomously within a strong *Québec moderne*.

Inevitably, the narrative looped back to the grievances of the Production française. Here were artists seeking to resolve once and for all their "situation de cinéastes colonisés."[70] Echoing Maheu's attacks on the NFB, Godbout and Carle accused the institution of trying to assimilate and silence those voices which dared speak for Quebec within the Production française. They condemned the NFB's pro-federalist and

Anglo-Saxon agenda insisting that it posed a threat to their cultural sovereignty.[71] Perron, Godbout and Groulx continued the assault by denouncing the agency's ongoing censoring of films deemed too personal or political.[72] Exasperated, the latter wrote: "Je constate une situation devenue menaçante . . . . Cet organisme . . . devra souscrire honnêtement et à brève échéance, à une politique d'auteurs de films et avoir la force de supporter la liberté d'expression dans tous ses droits."[73] Bobet concurred by insisting that the NFB had no options left but to support the initiatives of the key figures of the Production française.[74] It had no choice but to support the production of feature length fiction films and grant Quebec's francophone filmmakers the artistic freedom they demanded.[75] Quebec cinema had to be set free.

The filmmakers' narrative reconstructed and discussed above served as a foundation for a community of communication determined to assert its place in a *Québec moderne*. Godbout, Carle, Lamothe, Groulx and their colleagues skilfully appropriated various elements of the dominant discourses of the time to legitimize and promote the notion that Quebecers needed a national *cinéma d'auteur* of their own. They inscribed their project within those of Quebec's modernist intelligentsia by emphasizing rupture over continuity, championing the *idéologie de rattrapage* and demonstrating an unflinching commitment to the *cinéma de la modernité*. At the same time, they were careful not to dismiss the Direct Cinema of the Équipe française to ensure that critics and the public would accept – and not question – their transition to fiction.

These filmmakers presented fiction cinema as an extension of the work initiated by the Équipe française during the late 1950s. However, they argued that the destiny of *la nation québécoise* and *le Québec moderne* ultimately depended on the creation of an

indigenous feature length fiction film industry. They elevated fiction cinema to the status of a "moyen privilégié d'expression culturelle" and insisted that it constituted an effective means of resisting colonizing powers at work within Quebec.[76] The *peuple québécois* needed a national cinema of its own in order to exist and radiate in the contemporary world. "En fait sans le spectacle cinématographique les citoyens de ce pays ne sont que des demi-civilisés," asserted Godbout.[77] He added: "En attendant, nous ferons des films, coûte que coûte."[78]

CHAPTER 4: FICTION

A wave of fiction films swept through Quebec between 1964 and 1967. *Le chat dans le sac* (Gilles Groulx 1964), *La terre à boire* (Jean-Paul Bernier 1964), *Trouble-fête* (Pierre Patry 1964), *YUL 871* (Jacques Godbout 1966), *Entre la mer et l'eau douce* (Michel Brault 1967), *Il ne faut pas mourir pour ça* (Jean Pierre Lefebvre 1967) and *Poussière sur la ville* (Arthur Lamothe 1967) are but some of the feature length productions that made it onto the big screen during these pivotal years of *le cinéma québécois*. This increase in cinematographic production resulted from the sheer determination of filmmakers eager to make commercial feature films. Not surprisingly, many of these productions served to reinforce and further disseminate the filmmakers' narrative discussed in chapter 3.

It is impossible, within the scope of the present thesis, to analyse every fiction film produced in Quebec during the above time period. Hence the following pages will focus on three productions associated with the NFB's "Dossier hivers" – *Le chat dans le sac*, *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* (Lamothe 1965) and *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* (Gilles Carle 1965). These cases-studies will permit a better understanding of how individuals such as Groulx, Lamothe and Carle, in these founding films of the Production française, negotiated and legitimized their transition from Direct Cinema to fiction.

The idea of a "Dossier hivers" emerged out of a series of exchanges between NFB producers Fernand Dansereau and Jacques Bobet during the summer of 1963. In a letter to Grant McLean and Pierre Juneau, they manifested concerns that the NFB had yet to

explore "l'élément peut-être le plus caractéristique et le plus fabuleux de notre réalité : l'hiver canadien."[1] They proposed that the Production française undertake the shooting of four short films dealing with various aspects of winter life. According to them, such a series would allow filmmakers to investigate and reflect on this "fameux climat dont nous savons bien qu'il organise plus que notre mode physique d'exister, mais notre âme elle-même."[2]

The letter which Dansereau and Bobet submitted to their superiors prefigured in many ways their respective contributions to the March-June 1966 issue of *Liberté*.[3] They insisted on the need to use the dramatic form to "rejoindre la sensibilité la plus générale et la plus authentique de notre auditoire."[4] They recommended that filmmakers be given the opportunity to experiment with fiction in order to create a *rapprochement* between the Production française and *le peuple québécois*. They also wanted to encourage "la maturation créatrice" of those filmmakers who showed a willingness to venture into new territories.[5]

This project of a made-for-television series of shorts was quickly approved by the NFB. Of the four films planned, three went into production. In December of 1963, Carle began work on *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z*. Lamothe and Groulx waited until the official creation of the Production française, on January 1, 1964, to start shooting *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* and *Le chat dans le sac*. These three filmmakers were not going to let this opportunity to experiment with the dramatic form pass them by. Using ingenuity, they moved away from the topic of winter and skilfully transformed their respective projects into feature length fiction films.

The present chapter uses these productions as case-studies to better understand how Quebec's francophone filmmakers – a community of communication – constructed, disseminated and maintained the inviolability of the narrative discussed in chapter 3. The following pages will discuss the content, but also the genesis and production context of each of these three films. They will not be treated as autonomous texts detached from the circumstances of their creation. The language deployed during interviews by Groulx, Lamothe and Carle to explain and legitimize their mid-to-late 1960s transition to fiction will also be analyzed.

Le chat dans le sac, *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* and *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* proposed three different ways of approaching fiction cinema: *fiction-vérité*, traditional drama and comedy respectively. These films differed from one another both in terms of cinematographic genre and their depiction of the challenges facing Quebec society in the mid-1960s. Yet despite their differences, these productions ultimately served the overarching purpose of promoting the notion that *le peuple québécois* desperately needed a national *cinéma d'auteur* of its own.

Gilles Groulx: *Le chat dans le sac*

Born in 1931, Groulx studied commerce before turning to fine arts. As a painter and poet, he flirted with the automatists but his career path eventually led him to Radio-Canada where he developed a reputation as a talented film editor. In 1956, he relocated to the NFB and joined the burgeoning Équipe française. Between 1958 and 1963, he co-directed and/or directed five documentary shorts – *Les raquetteurs* (Groulx & Michel Brault 1958), *Normétal* (1958), *La France sur un caillou* (Groulx and Claude Fournier

1960), *Golden Gloves* (1961) and *Voir Miami* (1963). In 1964, he directed *Le chat dans le sac*, a landmark film in Quebec national cinema which Robert Daudelin enthusiastically describes as "le véritable point de départ du cinéma canadien-français."[6]

Groulx's first feature length production opens with the following statement: "Ce film représente le témoignage d'un cinéaste sur l'inquiétude de certains milieux de jeunes au Canada français. Vous êtes en 1964, à Montréal."[7] The film revolves around the doomed relationship of two individuals: Claude (a young French Canadian journalist) and Barbara (an aspiring anglophone actress of Jewish origins) "vivent les derniers jours de leur intimité."[8] Barbara studies theatre. She is curious and enthusiastic about the possibilities that lay ahead despite the fact that she and Claude are drifting apart. Claude believes that "le théâtre c'est de l'agitation."[9] He is preoccupied with the socio-economic and political fate of his people. He needs to find himself before he can determine what course of action to follow: "Je suis canadien-français donc je me cherche."[10] He spends the first half of the film looking for a job that will allow him to develop and refine his political views. Unsuccessful, he leaves Barbara and relocates to the countryside where he hopes to find the answer to the one question that troubles him: "Révolté? Oui. Révolutionnaire? Je ne sais pas."[11]

Le chat dans le sac showed Groulx once again defying his superiors at the NFB to create a unique and powerful film. He began work on this new project in the same spirit that he approached *Les raquetteurs* half a decade earlier. Groulx was expected to direct a 30-minute short on winter, but he was so focussed on making a feature length fiction film that he forgot about the project's *raison d'être*: "Je tournais l'hiver, je considérais que c'était assez."[12] He developed an ingenious plan to maximize what he could do with the

resources at his disposal. The synopsis he submitted to Bobet – his producer – was sufficiently vague that it could be adapted or modified as needed.[13] He also developed a script keeping in mind that he had to keep costs and delays to a minimum:

> Je me suis toujours dit qu'on pouvait faire un long métrage avec peu d'argent à condition de trouver la manière de le faire, de trouver des ellipses qui ne mettent pas en danger ce que vous voulez, qui permettent d'aller rapidement en se contentant de situations simplifiées au maximum et en refusant toute espèce de scène qui coûterait des jours de tournage ou une équipe trop considérable.[14]

Groulx also decided not to look at rushes to save time and prevent his superiors from bringing the project to a halt.[15] Once completed, he presented *Le chat dans le sac* as a *fait accompli* and went on to win Grand Prize in the feature film category of the 1964 edition of the Festival du cinéma canadien (FCC).

Groulx's first feature shared many qualities with the Direct Cinema of the Équipe française. The director's reliance on improvisation, his use of non-professional actors and his decision to shoot in natural settings instead of NFB studios all attested to his appreciation of approaches developed between 1958 and 1963. However, Groulx could not be content with the "révolution technique" associated with Direct Cinema:

> Nous n'avions qu'à braquer une caméra sur un milieu ; c'est une façon de résoudre le problème du technicien, pas celui de l'auteur cependant. Un cinéaste au fond doit être fait de la même essence qu'un romancier : il cherche à s'exprimer à travers ce qui lui ressemble le plus. Un romancier ne peut pas se contenter de raconter une histoire ; il

> faut qu'il se définisse, donc qu'il définisse ce dont il parle. Montrer ce n'est pas commenter . . . .[16]

The deployment of approaches borrowed from Direct Cinema represented a cost-effective means for Groulx to fulfill his desire to direct a feature length fiction film. Reflecting on the early years of the Équipe française, he noted: "Nous considérions chacune de nos demi-heures comme un long métrage, nous tentions de forcer le documentaire vers le cinéma d'auteur."[17]

Le chat dans le sac proved to be a stimulating experience for Groulx. It confirmed his belief that fiction cinema was a profoundly effective means of engaging with reality:

> Je ne savais pas vraiment ce qu'est le cinéma avant de faire *Le chat dans le sac*. Peut-être parce qu'enfin je pouvais travailler sur un film d'une heure et demie et que j'ai été amené à penser les choses un peu plus en profondeur. Mais peut-être aussi parce que pour la première fois je ne faisais pas que rapporter des événements tout à fait d'avance ; je ne suis pas parti avec une caméra vers des choses qui préexistaient, il a fallu que je provoque chacune des choses qu'il y a dans le film.[18]

Ultimately, Groulx believed that "le cinéma peut-être infiniment plus fort que le réel . . . il peut le créer de toutes pièces."[19] Cinema was an art form, a "moyen d'expression" and a "moyen de réflexion."[20]

Groulx insisted that Quebec needed a national cinema of its own and that feature length fiction films represented an effective means of addressing questions of collective identity and choice: "Au moment où nous nous posons la question de survivance nationale, nous découvrons un moyen d'expression qui s'adresse à une nation."[21] In *Le*

chat dans le sac, Groulx sought to illustrate what he believed were the preoccupations of a generation coming of age in the midst of Quiet Revolution. He used his male protagonist to reflect on a wide range of topics including consumerism, nationalism and revolution. Claude was the prototype for a "personnage-type canadien-français."[22] His indecisiveness and political immaturity were meant to reflect "l'engagement canadien-français . . . [au] moment du choix."[23]

The character of Barbara served a different purpose. The film's female protagonist was but a means for Claude to define and construct his national identity. Groulx explained:

> On rencontre beaucoup d'étrangers ici qui sont d'accord avec la révolution, qui vont même poser des gestes positifs ; mais le poids est plus lourd pour nous que pour eux. Leur identification est ailleurs, ici ils n'ont que des sympathies. Pour nous il s'agit de survivance, pour eux il s'agit d'idées.[24]

Claude hopes that Barbara can support him on his quest for emancipation but she cannot. Dissatisfied, he tells her: "Vous les anglophones, vous nous ignorez complètement, et du haut de vos cartels vous nous méprisez."[25] His attempts to draw parallels between the decolonization efforts of Quebec radicals and the civil rights struggles of African-Americans fail to move Barbara. At mid-point in the film, he makes the following remark: "Les Noirs américains attendent des Juifs qu'ils les comprennent mieux par ce qu'eux aussi ont souffert."[26] "Et alors, les droits appartiennent aux individus et non aux races," she replies.[27] Their relationship has reached a dead-end. Claude leaves Barbara whom he feels is unable to validate and understand his nationalistic inclinations.

Le chat dans le sac featured an original score by John Coltrane, an African-American saxophonist whose music was often associated with Black Nationalism.[28] The film's jazz soundtrack was *dans l'air du temps*. It echoed Louis Malle's *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* (1958) and John Cassavetes' *Shadows* (1959) which featured contributions by jazzmen Miles Davis and Charles Mingus.[29] However, the music also serves to validate the language of decolonization which Claude deploys throughout the film. Groulx's main protagonist reads Frantz Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre*, Louis E. Lomax's *La révolte noire* and *Parti pris*.[30] Claude, a *nègre blanc d'Amérique*, listens to jazz as he plans his revolt.[31] "Il bute ses idées dans des cafés et, tard dans la nuit, va dans des boites nègres," explained Groulx.[32] Coltrane's music legitimizes Claude's quest for emancipation in ways that Barbara cannot.

Le chat dans le sac dealt with questions of collective identity and choice but it was first and foremost a *film d'auteur*. Groulx's first feature constituted a means for him to reconcile his concerns for the destiny of *le peuple québécois* with his personal and professional aspirations as an artist. When asked if *Le chat dans le sac* was a *film d'auteur*, he replied:

> Oui. Si un film ne devance pas l'exigence collective ce n'est pas un film d'auteur. Un auteur est toujours un individu et l'individu quel qu'il soit est toujours en avance. Le cinéaste est un des privilégiés parmi les créateurs qui puissant parler en leur nom personnel tout en reflétant une façon d'être qui appartient à leur collectivité.[33]

Groulx skilfully appropriated auteur theory in an effort to explain and legitimize his transition to fiction. By focussing on the political undertones of the theory, he was able to

provide a definition that accounted for both his needs as an *auteur* and those of the *collectivité* to which he belonged. Most importantly, it allowed him to articulate a strong critique of the NFB.[34]

According to Groulx, "il y a beaucoup de travail à faire à l'ONF dans le sens du respect aux auteurs de films."[35] He was particularly disappointed by the fact that the NFB did very little to distribute *Le chat dans le sac*. He believed that this was a form of censorship which betrayed a disregard for filmmakers and their works. He also criticized the NFB's policy of prioritizing made-for-television productions. According to him, Quebec's talents and resources were being wasted on 30-minute shorts that ultimately ended-up collecting dust on shelves in *cinémathèques* across the country.[36] *Le chat dans le sac* represented an effort to resist this policy. It constituted a means of dealing with his status of "cinéaste colonisé."[37]

The films he made as a member of the Équipe française – *Les raquetteurs*, *Normétal*, *Voir Miami* and *Un jeu si simple* – had all been subjected to one form of censorship or another.[38] When asked if he had made his first feature length fiction film "librement," he replied:

> Non. La liberté est tronquée en entrant dans une institution comme l'Office national du film. On sait très bien à quoi on doit s'attendre, et si on ne sait pas on l'apprend vite, cette espèce de censure implicite qu'on ne nomme jamais mais qui est omniprésente.[39]

Groulx recognized not having faced serious censorship problems with *Le chat dans le sac*. "Je me suis censuré bien prudemment avant," he added. Yet he managed to retain a

stark remark which he directed – via Barbara – at the NFB. At mid-point in the film, she tells Claude that it would be absurd to claim that "le cinéma n'a pas l'âge de raison parce que j'ai vu un film de l'ONF."[40] This was a subtle way for Groulx to let his employers know that the NFB was *en retard* and that Quebec needed a national *cinéma d'auteur* that could compete with those of other nations.

The fact that *Le chat dans le sac* existed in a feature length format made it possible to address the question of distribution. Groulx realized that few efforts would be made to distribute his film so he used its release as an opportunity to discuss the issue of American cultural imperialism.[41] He explained:

> L'emprise des capitaux américains au Canada est telle qu'ils contrôlent notre vie nationale à tous les niveaux . . . . Le cinéma n'y échappe pas, pour ce qui est de nos films, nous sommes libres d'aller les projeter dans les collèges et autres soirées d'amateurs. Aucune loi, aucune règlementation qui permette au cinéma canadien d'exister normalement. Sans législation cinématographique, le cinéma canadien, c'est de la fumée sans feu . . . .[42]

Groulx also raised the issue in his film by inserting a still image of a French issue of *Maclean's* which dealt with cinema. The following question appeared on the cover: "Pourquoi pas des films canadiens dans nos cinémas?"[43]

Ultimately, *Le chat dans le sac* served as a vehicle by which to advance the cause of Quebec's francophone filmmakers whose destiny, as Groulx pointed out, was tied to that of *le peuple québécois.* "Il ne saurait être question de notre cinéma sans qu'il soit aussi question des conditions qui prévalent au Québec," he concluded.[44]

Arthur Lamothe: *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan*

Born in France in 1928, Lamothe immigrated to Canada in 1953. He spent a few months as a lumberjack in the Abitibi region before relocating to Montreal where he began university studies in economics and politics. While at Université de Montréal, Lamothe operated a *ciné-club* for French immigrants. He also contributed to *Découpage* and *Images*, two film magazines that were popular among university students at the time. In 1961, he joined the NFB's Équipe française as a scriptwriter. He worked on *Manger* (Carle & Louis Portugais 1961), *Dimanche d'Amérique* (Carle 1961) and *Pour quelques arpents de neige* (Georges Dufaux & Godbout 1962). Lamothe did not take long to make the jump from scriptwriter to director. In 1962, he shot *Bûcherons de la Manouane* and *De Montréal à Manicouagan* (Lamothe 1963).

By the mid-1960s, he was ready to make the transition from documentary to fiction. In 1965, he directed two fiction films: The NFB production *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* followed by Coopératio's *Poussière sur la ville*.[45] Unlike *Le chat dans le sac*, Lamothe's first fiction film failed to win the vote of local critics such as Daudelin: "Prétentieux aussi bien dans sa forme ampoulée que dans son propos trop confus pour être réel, *La neige* est un échec pénible."[46] *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* remains nonetheless a pertinent tool with which to investigate the documentary-to-fiction transition that accompanied the creation of the Production française.

The film tells the story of Monique, a young woman from Shawinigan, who leaves her hometown to follow her husband Marc who has been hired to work on the great Manicouagan hydroelectric dam.[47] The relocation puts the newlyweds' relationship

to the test. The cold and desolate land brings no comfort to Monique who dreams of greener pastures. The day she decides to leave Marc, the plane gets delayed forcing her to relive some of the key moments of her life. The plane eventually lands but Monique has changed her mind. She returns to her husband with the hope of starting anew. Accompanying her is Gilles Vigneault's now famous anthem: "Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays; c'est l'hiver. Mon jardin, ce n'est pas un jardin; c'est la plaine. Mon chemin, ce n'est pas un chemin; c'est la neige."[48]

When asked by *Objectif* when and why he decided to make a feature length fiction film, Lamothe dismissively replied he had never wanted to make one.[49] In fact, *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* more accurately falls into the *moyen métrage* category since the film ends just short of the 60 minute mark.[50] A few years later, Lamothe confided to Léo Bonneville that he was terribly disillusioned after completing the film because of the conditions – time and budget – within which it was made. He explained: "Le défi touchait la témérité : tourner un film en quatre jours avec une équipe extrêmement réduite, sans script, sans assistant-réalisateurs, sans ingénieurs de son."[51] "J'étais vraiment malheureux," he added.[52] The project of turning a short film on winter into a feature length fiction film proved to be a particularly challenging experience for a director with only two documentary shorts under his belt.

From January 1964 until the film's completion in the summer of 1965, Lamothe tried everything he could to transform *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* into a feature length fiction film. The project's initial producer – Bobet – was sympathetic to Lamothe's plan to stretch the project beyond the 30 minute mark. However, relations between the two quickly deteriorated:

> Manicouagan n'est pas mon choix. Ce lieu de tournage m'a pratiquement été imposé par le producteur qui refusait d'autres projets sous prétexte que je n'avais pas d'éléments visuels puissants . . . . Il m'a suggéré, à plusieurs reprises, et de plus en plus fortement de placer mon scénario à Manicouagan.[53]

Lamothe also complained that Bobet forced him to include a car crash in the script: "Il voulait qu'il arrive quelque chose . . . le film aurait très bien pu marcher sans l'accident."[54]

The above changes added to the costs of producing *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* which meant that Lamothe had even less to work with to make a feature. Marcel Martin eventually replaced Bobet as producer but it was already too late. Lamothe completed the film with a reduced team (from 4 to 2).[55] He also relied on post-synchronization since it was more economical.[56] In the end, the film was still too short so Lamothe followed Groulx's advice and recycled footage used a few years earlier in *De Montréal à Manicouagan*. Discontented, Lamothe described *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* as "un film bâtard : un film inachevé."[57]

Lamothe's reputation as a capable director and pillar of the Équipe française was already established when he made the decision to experiment with fiction in 1965. *Bûcherons de la Manouane* had won prestigious awards both here and abroad. Jean Rouch had even described the project as one of the most remarkable films to come out of the NFB's Équipe française.[58] This did not prevent Lamothe from partaking in the activities of the Association professionnelle des cinéastes (APC) whose mandate was to promote the establishment of a feature length fiction film industry in Quebec. He saw no

contradictions there since he believed that cinema was first and foremost an "outil de communication audio-visuel."[59] According to him, *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* fulfilled that role.

At the time, he felt no special attachment to Direct Cinema and the discourses that surrounded it. He was particularly critical of the notion that this cinematographic language permitted a direct rapport with reality:

> [J'interviens dans *Bûcherons de la Manouane*], mais tout le film est une intervention. Le fait de faire un film est déjà une intervention. Les images elles-mêmes sont un choix. D'abord, le réel en soi n'est pas compréhensible ; il faut l'ordonner, et fatalement faire un choix. Ce n'est pas la réalité telle qu'elle est qui est intéressante, c'est celle que l'on conçoit.[60]

Fiction cinema, as an "outil de communication" and a means of approaching le *réel*, was therefore a viable medium.

La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan owes little to Direct Cinema aside from the fact that it contains footage used in *De Montréal à Manicouagan* and that two of the three main actors – Monique Miller and Vigneault – retain their names in the film. Lamothe did not want to improvise. He relied on professional actors, post-synchronization and a detailed shooting script: "Rien n'a été fait au hasard."[61] In 1965, he was determined to make the transition from Direct Cinema to fiction. He added: "Ce qu'il m'intéresse de faire ici, c'est un cinéma d'une certain manière traditionnel, avec un scenario prémédité, solide, élaboré. C'est primordial."[62]

Lamothe did not want to inscribe *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* within the Direct Cinema tradition. He sought to create a "film hiératique" that paid homage to the *chefs-d'œuvre* of contemporary European cinema.[63] His passion for fiction was apparent in the *auteurs* he listed as influences: Jean Renoir, Luis Bunuel, Roberto Rossellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, Louis Malle, Alain Resnais and Jean-Luc Godard to name but a few.[64] Lamothe admitted that Monique shared a lot of qualities with the protagonists of Antonioni's films.[65] His use of travelling, light, voice-over narration and the film's rhythm all attested to his admiration for Resnais.[66] *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* represented a valid effort to take Quebec cinema out of its *Grande noirceur* and into *le cinéma de la modernité*.

Lamothe's first fiction film was consistent with the *idéologie de rattrapage* that accompanied the Quiet Revolution. His depiction of the great Manicouagan hydroelectric dam and his celebration of French Canadian ingenuity served to inscribe his film within the modernist narratives that prevailed at the time. A few months prior to shooting, he explained:

> Un long métrage dramatique réalisé, par exemple, dans le cadre du barrage de Manicouagan, fera prendre conscience, mieux que tout documentaire, de la possibilité qu'a le Canada français de réaliser par lui-même de grandes choses modernes, techniques, au niveau de l'Occident. Il exorciserait, pour une part, les idées régressives sur le plan du comportement économique, du repliement sur soi, du retour éternel aux sources, du nationalisme conservateur.[67]

Lamothe could not have explained in clearer terms how feature length fiction films could be used to support the projects of Quebec's modernist intelligentsia.

The story of Marc and Monique served to illustrate the challenges associated with Quebec's ascension to modernity. The couple's rocky relationship was a metaphor for Quebec in that it suggested that the path to progress and modernity was not an easy one. It suggested that some sacrifices were needed but that Quebecers could overcome these challenges if they worked and stayed together. Marc and Monique are reunited at the end of *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan*. Their story is not one of rupture but of commitment, endurance and faith in progress.[68]

La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan provided Lamothe with the opportunity to discuss other kinds of challenges, namely those associated with being a francophone *auteur* at the NFB. Like Groulx, he saw his early work censored by his superiors.[69] *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* reached completion unhampered by censorship but Lamothe still felt that he had been denied creative freedom. He explained: "J'ai eu une complète liberté de création à l'Office ; comme les moyens étaient très limités, la liberté était très illusoire."[70] He added: "J'ai été très libre dans le mesure où, dans l'édifice de l'ONF, on peut se sentir libre."[71] Lamothe would have preferred to make the film elsewhere but that was not an option when he began work on the project in January of 1964.[72]

Lamothe was particularly dissatisfied by the fact that NFB productions were mostly confined to *cinémathèques* and TV networks.[73] For that reason, and because of the lack of creative freedom that francophone filmmakers endured, he adamantly opposed the

idea that the NFB should embark on the production of feature length fiction films. This might have seemed like a contradiction but Lamothe's stance was consistent with his work within the APC. *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* provided him with the opportunity to expose problems inherent to the NFB while soliciting support for a independent film industry in Quebec. "L'Office fait de la concurrence carrément illicite à des entreprises qui se voudraient des entreprises normales de production," he argued.[74] He believed that Quebec's francophone filmmakers had to be given control of their destiny and that the NFB represented an obstacle to the development of an indigenous and truly dynamic film culture in Quebec.

As a key figure of the APC, Lamothe sought to force changes by soliciting support outside the NFB. He argued persistently that both the Provincial and Federal governments needed to clearly delimit the NFB's area of competence while putting in place regulation and incentives in favour of an independent film industry in Quebec. He also pointed out that "les autorités québécoises et montréalaises n'hésitent pas à investir près de 20 millions de dollars dans une salle de concert et d'opéra, arts qui . . . sont destinées à une classe économiquement privilégiée qui comprend relativement peu de Canadiens français."[75] Quebec needed a national cinema of its own because it was through that medium that *le peuple québécois* could develop its culture. "Tant qu'une loi-cadre ne sera pas présentée au Parlement de Québec . . . la seule existence d'un Ministère des affaires culturelles du Québec constituera une indécence," he added.[76]

Lamothe had no reason to believe that *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* would be widely distributed by the NFB, but like Groulx he took advantage of the film's release to discuss the issue of cultural imperialism. He denounced the government's

inactivity in the face of monopolistic structures that prevented domestic films from being screened in theatres across the province. He also demanded that legislation be passed to help Quebec producers compete on the market: "Le problème c'est que les films américains, français et autres, arrivent ici déjà amortis. Il y a une concurrence illicite. L'État a pourtant le droit d'appliquer un contingentement sur les salles de cinéma."[77] Lamothe celebrated the Ministry of Cultural Affairs' decision to financially support the Festival international du film de Montréal (FIFM) but he also expressed concerns that this "aide au Festival . . . ne fait qu'illustrer le rôle du Québec d'éternel et exclusif consommateur de culture étrangère . . . ."[78] According to him, *le peuple québécois* had much to gain from having its own feature length fiction film industry because "le cinéma est un moyen d'expression nationale très important."[79]

Gilles Carle: *La vie heureuse de Léopold*

Born in 1929, Carle spent his formative years in the Abitibi region. In 1944, he moved to Montreal where he enrolled at the École des Beaux-arts. From the fine arts, he branched out into literature and founded the *Éditions de l'hexagone* with a group of friends that included poet Gaston Miron and NFB filmmaker Louis Portugais. Between 1955 and 1960, he made a living as a graphic artist for Radio-Canada. He also wrote screenplays which his employer repeatedly rejected. At the turn of the decade, the NFB offered him the opportunity to write scripts for two documentary shorts – *Tout l'or du monde* (Raymond Leboursier 1959) and *Le prix de la science* (Leboursier 1960). In 1961, he joined the Équipe française and discovered Direct Cinema. *Dimanche d'Amérique*, his directorial debut, was followed by *Patinoire* (1963), *Un air de famille* (1963) and *Percé on the rocks* (1964) to name but a few.

Carle began experimenting with the dramatic form in *Solange dans nos campagnes* (1964), a short film released as part of the *La femme hors foyer* series. *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* provided him with the opportunity to complete his transition from documentary to fiction. Released in 1965, the film "a été accueilli par un public enthousiaste, très réceptif, ému, amusé, et qui a salué peut-être le meilleur et le plus exportable de tous les films tournés au Canada français."[80]

Carle's first feature length fiction film follows the adventures of Léopold Z, a Montreal snow truck operator who finds his Christmas Eve plans compromised by a massive snowstorm. Besides trying to fix his truck, borrowing money to buy his wife Catherine a fur coat, doing favours for his friend and superintendant Théo and picking up Josette, his wife's cousin who has just arrived from the American South, Léopold Z does his best to participate in the city's snow removal operations. Luckily for him, the storm dies down and he manages to join Catherine at Mass where their son Jacques, a choirboy, is performing. The film ends with a rendition of "Les anges dans nos campagnes" while Josette, a *chanteuse de variété*, prepares for a night of singing.

When the NFB approached Carle to do a short film on winter, his response was: "La neige ça ne m'intéresse pas. C'est blanc. C'est tout."[81] Instead, he proposed to do a documentary on snow removal in Montreal. Bobet – his producer – approved the project and an initial budget of $32,000. Carle knew from the beginning, that he wanted to do a feature length fiction film about Montrealers.[82] "Je n'avais nullement l'intention de braquer ma caméra sur la montagne enneigée et de croire que je faisais un grand film canadien," he explained.[83] He spent the first winter shooting interior scenes. Not only did he not amass footage of snow-plough operators, he also purposely left out essential

scenes so that the material he had could not be assembled.[84] He then met with Bobet requesting a second budget to complete the film. After a few months of deliberation, Juneau told Carle to proceed.[85] The latter summarized the film's genesis in the following terms:

> Donc c'était tout d'abord un documentaire sur la neige. Ensuite un documentaire sur les déneigeurs. Ensuite un film de fiction de 45 minutes sur les déneigeurs. Ensuite un film d'une heure quinze sur quatre montréalais et même plus particulièrement sur deux d'entre eux : Guy L'Écuyer [Léopold Z] et Paul Hébert [Théo].[86]

La vie heureuse de Léopold Z was completed during the summer of 1965, just in time to win Grand Prize at the third edition of the FCC.[87]

Carle's transition from documentary to fiction was consistent with the critical stance he adopted when he joined the Équipe française in 1961. He described his first three projects – *Dimanche d'Amérique*, *Manger* and *Patinoire* – as "films scolaires."[88] These productions allowed Carle to familiarize himself with the art of filmmaking while taking position against the NFB's long tradition of didactic documentary films: "Lorsque j'ai fait *Patinoire*, je voulais abandonner le documentaire didactique et retrouver le poème cinématographique . . . . Je voulais enfin que mon film aille dans les cinémas."[89]

Carle completed one film – *Un air de famille* – that fell within the category of Direct Cinema. "Je ne pouvais pas échapper à ça," he explained.[90] However, he was not content with simply documenting events: "J'ai essayé de couvrir la vie canadienne-française, avec cette différence que je m'y impliquais."[91] He felt limited within the confines of the genre and confided that he would have been more successful had he

recreated the events he was trying to document instead of relying so heavily on Direct Cinema approaches.[92] He noted: "Après *Un air de famille*, il n'était plus question pour moi de faire du candid."[93]

Solange dans nos campagnes best exemplified Carle's cynicism vis-à-vis Direct Cinema and the whole Candid Eye adventure. This short film tells the story of Patricia, a TV host who is looking for an authentic young woman from rural Quebec for the next episode of *Soyez notre vedette*. Patricia and her film crew travel to the countryside to meet Solange, a supposedly poor 16 year-old orphan who has been chosen to appear on the show. They hope to capture reality on film but quickly realize that Solange is not an orphan and that her family owns a large industrial farm. Unapologetic, the young lady offers to play whatever role Patricia and her crew want to assign her. This short fiction film ends with a *mise en abyme* which reveals that Patricia herself is acting and that there is no objective truth in cinema. "J'étais . . . conscient de satiriser un certain cinéma," explained Carle.[94] He added that *Solange dans nos campagnes* was his first experience with professional actors and that it taught him much about the importance of character development and the possibilities that accompanied the dramatic form.[95]

By the end of 1963, Carle had set his mind on making a feature length fiction film. He defined cinema as "l'art du détail" and believed that the feature format – "un type [de film] plus large, plus complet" – was the most effective means of capturing, not just the essence, but the totality of life.[96] When asked about his decision to turn *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* into a feature film, he answered:

> La forme du long métrage charrie une réalité qui est tellement plus grande. La longueur du film était essentielle car vivre physiquement avec des personnages et une réalité pendant une heure et demi, c'est déjà un poids qui est indispensable pour exprimer certaines choses.[97]

This was particularly important for Carle as he felt that Quebec films needed to reach and communicate something concrete to Quebec audiences.[98]

His first feature length fiction film fulfilled precisely that role. "J'ai fait *Léopold Z* pour . . . passer a un type de cinéma plus local, d'expression plus immédiate part rapport à la vie d'ici," Carle explained.[99] He noted that the film permitted an immediate rapport with reality.[100] It represented a genuine effort to examine the forces at work within Quebec society. Carle described *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* as a family enterprise: "On se connaît, on se reconnaît, on se voit, et aussi, je l'espère, on se critique."[101] He found that Quebec's francophone filmmakers were only as good as the society to which they belonged – their destiny was linked with that of their fellow French Canadians. Hence the importance of making feature films that examined *la société québécoise*.[102] Carle added: "Il faut avant tout travailler en fonction de notre public, et aussi apprendre à exprimer ce que nous sommes, ce que nous avons vécu."[103]

In *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z*, Carle used comedy to shed light on certain aspects of Quebec society which he felt obstructed its path to modernity. He found that this cinematographic genre constituted an effective means of coming to grips with reality. He explained: "C'est ça . . . la vérité de la comédie : faire une synthèse rapide et caricaturale d'une vérité qui est très juste et parfois assez pénible."[104] Carle exaggerated

some of Léopold and Théo's traits in an effort to denounce the inertia and complacency of certain groups of French Canadians. "Léo et Théo sont toujours face à une réalité qui les dépasse et qui, il faut bien le dire, est une réalité coloniale," explained Carle. Using humour, he depicted a society that had yet to liberate itself from English domination and the ghosts of Duplessis-era Catholicism.

Carle's first feature film offered a strong critique of mid-1960s Quebec. Léopold Z is a folkloric character whose daily life is filled with trivial concerns.[105] "Il n'a pas pris connaissance ni conscience de ce qui joue contre lui," noted Carle.[106] The film's main protagonist knows how to manoeuvre around the small problems that life throws at him but he is unable to truly assert and/or empower himself. He drives around Montreal admiring the city's new landmarks – the *Place Ville-Marie*, the *Métro de Montréal*, the underground city – but all of this seems out of his reach. He is a man with limited means who is overcome with guilt when the time comes to borrow money from the bank: "Emprunter de l'argent, ça devrait être un acte rationnel, peu émotif, mais Léo fait un transfert des valeurs religieuses dans le domaine civil et se comporte exactement comme au confessionnal."[107] Léopold is a "personnage-type canadien-français" whose existence is reminiscent of a bygone era: "C'est un personnage pré-révolutionnaire, qui tourne en rond."[108]

The soundtrack to *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* served to reinforce Carle's critique of a society that had yet to liberate itself from its past. The director's reliance on Christmas carols and folkloric music contrasted with Groulx's use of jazz and Lamothe's efforts to promote an emerging singer-songwriter – Vigneault – whose music reflected the optimism and nationalism of *le Québec moderne*.[109] The diegetic music one hears in

La vie heureuse de Léopold Z echoes Léopold's pre-revolutionary attitudes.[110] Josette is a *chanteuse de variété* who persists in keeping "Le rapide blanc," a Duplessis-era classic of Quebec folklore, in her repertoire. Her performances fail to wake Léopold and Théo out of their stupor. Like them, she is a folkloric character who has yet to break from the past so as to move forward.

Carle's championing of *l'idéologie de rattrapage* was also apparent in the way he criticized the NFB during interviews. He found that the institution was archaic and too rigid. Its policy of prioritizing made-for-television films represented an obstacle to the emergence of a genuine national *cinéma d'auteur* in Quebec.[111] [La télévision] absorbe trop d'énergies créatrices . . ., elle impose une hiérarchie des valeurs et certains concepts de culture."[112] The NFB had sufficient resources at its disposal to invest in commercial feature productions yet it denied its filmmakers the freedom and means to make those kinds of films.[113] "Je suis en train de m'aider moi-même . . . parce que L'ONF ne s'ouvre pas," Carle lamented.[114]

Finally, Carle pointed out that government intervention was needed in order to make possible a stable and prolific film industry in Quebec. Governments had to pass legislation to regulate the market. They also had to make funds available to stimulate private productions. In the meantime, Quebec's francophone filmmakers had to take initiatives and use ingenuity to make their own films.[115] Waiting was no longer an option: "Il faut d'abord penser film. Surtout penser au prochain film à faire. Il faut aussi produire, même si l'on a pas les moyens . . . ."[116]

Between 1963 and 1967, Carle, Lamothe and Groulx did exactly that. The films they made for the NFB's "Dossier hivers" were a testament to their vision of a national *cinéma d'auteur*. As members of a community of communication, they contributed to the elaboration of a sophisticated modernist narrative which explained and legitimized the documentary-to-fiction transition that accompanied the creation of the Production française. They asserted themselves as *auteurs* and demanded that *le cinéma québécois* be set free from both the clutch of the NFB and that of American cultural imperialism. Quebec needed a national cinema of its own. It needed a feature length fiction film industry so that its francophone filmmakers could refine their art and provide *le peuple québécois* with the images – and culture – it needed.

The success of their enterprise was not dependent on their ability to inscribe their project of a feature length fiction film industry within the trajectory of Direct Cinema. As a matter of fact, Carle, Lamothe and Groulx refused to be determined by that cinematographic language at the moment of making their transition from documentary to fiction. Direct Cinema did not feature prominently in the interviews they gave. It dictated neither the form nor the narrative structure of the films discussed above. Of the three filmmakers, Groulx is the one who relied most heavily on Direct Cinema techniques but he also borrowed from other sources to create a profoundly unique and original work that defies easy categorization.[117] The "Dossier hivers" revealed three filmmakers bent on making fiction films on their terms.

La vie heureuse de Léopold Z, *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* and *Le chat dans le sac* proposed three different ways of approaching fiction cinema in mid-1960s Quebec – comedy, traditional drama and *fiction-vérité*. The *auteurs* of these films used

all means at their disposal to take ownership of their work and provide impetus to the project of a commercial feature film industry. The strategies they deployed and the stories they told varied but their discourse remained the same: Feature length fiction films were the “moyen privilégié d’expression” of modern nations and Quebec had no choice but to fully participate in this great adventure that was *la modernité*.[118]

CONCLUSION

In 1965, Arthur Lamothe told a Montreal journalist that three more years were necessary for a real "déblocage" to occur.[1] History proved him right. Between 1967 and 1970, Quebecers witnessed a further increase in the production and distribution of domestic commercial feature films. This change was due in large part to a series of reforms that addressed many of the demands of the Association professionnelle des cinéastes (APC). The incessant lobbying and skilful manoeuvring of Quebec's francophone filmmakers had finally brought results.

In August 1967, a provincial law replaced the archaic Bureau de censure with the less draconian Bureau de surveillance du cinéma.[2] The Société de développement de l'industrie cinématographique canadienne (SDICC) was created the following year. This federal initiative was accompanied with a budget of 10 million dollars, one third of which was invested in the production of French language feature fiction films. The SDICC contributed to "une industrialisation rapide du milieu cinématographique québécois et à une nouvelle idylle entre le public et le cinéma d'ici," write Michel Coulombe and Marcel Jean.[3] In 1969, the Conseil québécois pour la diffusion du cinéma (CQDC) was created to promote the works of Quebec's francophone filmmakers.[4] Taken together, these initiatives helped propel Quebec national cinema to new heights. Yves Lever and Pierre Pageau concur: "[À partir de 1968], le cinéma québécois semble vraiment parti pour la gloire."[5]

Not everyone feels that this increase in the production of commercial feature films was beneficial to Quebec. Gilles Marsolais argues that this supposed *déblocage*

compromised the advances made possible by Direct Cinema during the 1958 to 1967 period. He writes:

> La SDICC favorisa le développement d'un cinéma de fiction fort traditionnel, calqué sur le modèle hollywoodien, négligeant totalement les ressources du cinéma direct qui représente l'un des facteurs-clés de l'évolution de la modernité filmique et qui constitue l'héritage le plus précieux qui ait été légué aux nouvelles générations.[6]

Marsolais' lament overlooks the fact that the discourses surrounding the development of late 1960s commercial feature films find their origins in the works of the APC, the founding films of the Production française and the actions of Quebec's francophone filmmakers between 1963 and 1967. Direct Cinema did play a part in the early development of Quebec's second wave of fiction films – it did pollinate some of the cinema of the Quiet Revolution – but its impact was certainly not as determining as Marsolais claims it was. The turn to traditional fiction cinema which Marsolais decries was already well underway by the mid-1960s.

From 1963 onward, Quebec's francophone filmmakers worked tirelessly and collectively to promote the notion that Quebec needed a national *cinéma d'auteur* of its own. The language they used and the strategies they deployed reflected their increasing commitment to the feature-length format and dramatic form. In a letter to the NFB, Jacques Godbout explained:

> Les sociologues, les historiens, les politiciens, les écrivains ont assez dit que le peuple canadien souffre d'une carence culturelle grave qu'il faut se dépêcher de combler avant que toute la place ne soit prise pas des mythologies étrangères et déracinantes,

> qu'il est aujourd'hui de mise de ne négliger aucun effort pour permettre aux artistes du Canada de créer ces images-miroirs dont l'homme a besoin. Nous ne tenterons pas de vous faire la démonstration que le cinéma de long métrage dramatique est aujourd'hui le moyen privilégié d'expression culturelle, vous le savez aussi bien que nous.[7]

The articles Godbout and his colleagues published in *Parti pris* and *Liberté*, the countless documents and letters they produced via the APC, the films they made and the interviews they gave all served to legitimize and rally support for their grand project of a feature length fiction film industry.

As a community of communication, Quebec's francophone filmmakers spent the greater part of the 1960s articulating and disseminating their vision of *le Québec moderne*. In their films, actions and written works, they promoted a "conscience historique" and an "espace/temps" that emphasized rupture over continuity as well as *rattrapage* instead of *survivance*.[8] The sophisticated narrative upon which they established their community of communication served to reconcile their personal and professional aspirations with those of *le peuple québécois*. Most importantly, it allowed them to elevate fiction cinema to the status of a "moyen privilégié d'expression culturelle" so as to legitimize their project of a national *cinéma d'auteur*, solicit support from Quebec's modernist intelligentsia and consolidate their position within a post-Duplessis Quebec.

The francophone filmmakers who made works of fiction in Quebec between 1963 and 1967 were – despite Lever's assertions to the contrary – neither pessimistic nor passive. They were active members of a tightly-knit community of communication whose

actions brought about the *déblocage* that accompanied the creation of the SDICC. During this period, Godbout, Lamothe, Gilles Groulx, Gilles Carle and their colleagues progressively moved away from Direct Cinema so as to complete their long-desired transition from documentary to fiction. Their films were not an "auto-psychanalyse du milieu intellectuel" but rather a means of giving form to this project of a domestic feature length fiction film industry.[9] Cinematographic works such as *Le chat dans le sac* (Groulx 1964), *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* (Lamothe 1965) and *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* (Carle 1965) were integral components of this grand project. These productions were a testament to the creative vision and determination of artists bent on making films with or without means.

NOTES

Introduction

[1] For more information on Léo-Ernest Ouimet and Montreal's first movie theatre, see Léon-H. Bélanger, *Les ouimetoscopes : Léo-Ernest Ouimet et les débuts du cinéma québécois* (Montreal: VLB, 1978).

[2] Pierre Véronneau, "The First Wave of Quebec Feature Films, 1944-1953," in *Self-Portrait: Essays on the Canadian and Quebec Cinemas*, eds. Piers Handling and Pierre Véronneau (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1980), 54.

[3] First wave films include *Le père Chopin* (Fédor Ozep 1945), *La forteresse* (Fédor Ozep 1947), *Un homme et son péché* (Paul Gury 1948), *Le curé du village* (Paul Gury 1949), *Les lumières de ma ville* (Jean-Yves Bigras 1950), *La petite Aurore l'enfant martyre* (Jean-Yves Bigras 1951) and *Ti-coq* (René Delacroix and Gratien Gélinas 1952) to name but a few. For a full list, see Véronneau, "The First Wave of Quebec Feature Films," 54-63.

[4] Jean Quintal, "Le court métrage des longs métrages québécois," in *Le cinéma québécois : Tendances et prolongements*, ed. Yvan Patry (Montreal: Éditions Sainte-Marie, 1968), 14.

[5] Bill Marshall, *Quebec National Cinema* (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 2001), 18.

[6] Robert Daudelin, *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français* (Quebec: Ministère des affaires culturelles, 1967), 9; Dominique Noguez, *Essais sur le cinéma québécois* (Montreal: Éditions du jour, 1970), 13; Gilles Marsolais, *Le cinéma canadien* (Montreal: Éditions du jour, 1968), 21.

[7] Marsolais, *Le cinéma canadien*, 29.

[8] This first phase of *le cinéma québécois* began in 1958 with the release of the NFB short *Les raquetteurs* (Gilles Groulx and Michel Brault 1958). This first phase ended a decade later. By 1967, Quebec's francophone filmmakers had elevated their art to unprecedented heights and a new phase of development was on the horizon. Moreover, Quebec's filmmakers no longer had to rely exclusively on the NFB to make films. In 1967, both *Objectif* (one of Quebec's most important film magazines) and the prestigious Festival du film international de Montréal (FIFM) terminated their activities. The times were changing. These changes coincided with the introduction of new government initiatives that included the Société du développement de l'industrie cinématographique canadienne (SDICC), the Bureau de surveillance du cinéma and a new system of classification for films which reduced the impact of censorship. The above, along with Expo '67, Charles de Gaulle's visit to Montreal and the political events of the 1968 Saint-Jean-Baptiste parade prefigured a series of transformations that culminated with the October crisis of 1970.

[9] Yves Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec* (Montreal: Boréal, 1995), 143-149.

[10] Gérard Bouchard offers the following definition: "[Le mythe fondateur est] une utopie inversée, c'est-à-dire une vision du monde qui se projette (ou feint de se projeter) non pas dans l'avenir mais dans le passé et qui, au lieu de s'exprimer dans la pure fiction, entend s'incarner dans des évènements et des personnages historiques donnés comme véridiques. Ces derniers, pris à témoin, sanctionnent en quelque sorte les contenus du mythe en lui procurant un fondement empirique, en quoi il diffère de l'utopie. Mais, à l'image de l'utopie, le mythe fondateur demeure porteur d'une valeur, d'un idéal, d'une espérance . . . . En conséquence, son sort dépend de sa véracité intrinsèque mais aussi . . . de son efficacité symbolique et sociale, de sa capacité à incarner l'orientation collective qui le soutient." Gérard Bouchard,

"Une crise de la conscience historique," in *Les idées mènent le Québec*, ed. Stéphane Kelly (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2003), 29.

[11] Marsolais writes: "Cette idée révolutionnaire du cinéma direct qui s'implanta au sein de l'ONF fut surtout le fait des cinéastes francophones qui, forts de l'expérience acquise au sein du Candid Eye (1957-1959) . . . poussèrent celui-ci au bout de ses conséquences et le dépassèrent afin d'implanter l'idée d'un cinéma neuf, entre 1958 et 1963, dont l'écriture était fondée sur l'urgence et la mobilité . . . ." Gilles Marsolais, *Cinéma québécois : De l'artisanat à l'industrie* (Montreal: Triptyque, 2011), 11.

[12] Michel Coulombe and Marcel Jean, *Le dictionnaire du cinéma québécois* (Montreal: Boréal, 2006), 143.

[13] Marsolais, *Le cinéma canadien*, 103.

[14] George Melnyk, *One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 129.

[15] Pierre Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation : La production francophone à l'ONF, 1939-1964* (Montreal: Cinémathèque québécoise / Musée du cinéma, 1987), 51.

[16] Ibid., 54.

[17] Daudelin, *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français*, 23.

[18] Peter Harcourt, "1964: The Beginning of a Beginning," in *Self-Portrait: Essays on the Canadian and Quebec Cinemas*, eds. Piers Handling and Pierre Véronneau (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1980), 64.

[19] Pierre Véronneau, "L'histoire du Québec au travers de l'histoire du cinéma québécois," *Cinémas* 19, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 88.

[20] Quintal, "Le court métrage des longs métrages québécois," 15.

[21] Marsolais, *Cinéma québécois*, 31.

[22] Gilles Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct revisitée* (Laval: Cinéma les 400 coups, 1997), 117.

[23] Noguez, *Essais sur le cinéma québécois*, 17.

[24] "A theory of film popularized by the critics of the French journal *Cahiers du cinéma* in the 1950s. The theory emphasizes the director as the major creator of film art, stamping the material with his or her personal vision, style, and thematic obsessions." Louis Giannetti and Jim Leach, *Understanding Movies* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 2005), 433.

[25] Michel Houle, "Quelques aspects idéologiques et thématiques du cinéma québécois," in *Les cinémas canadiens*, ed. Pierre Véronneau (Montreal: Pierre Lherminier and the Cinémathèque québécoise, 1978), 146.

[26] Jocelyn Létourneau, abstract for "Le Québec moderne : Un chapitre du grand récit collectif des Québécois," *Revue française de science politique* 42, no. 5 (1992): 765-785, doi: 10.3406/rfsp.1192.404341.

[27] Jacques Godbout to Guy Roberge and Gordon Robertson, 5 March, 1966, APCQ Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.

[28] The NFB's "Dossiers hivers" proposed to explore the theme of winter through a series of four shorts. In the end, three feature length fiction films were created in a spirit of resistance and self-affirmation. The "Dossier hivers" is discussed in further details in chapter 4.

Chapter 1: Discourses

[1] Daudelin, *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français*, 7.

[2] Véronneau remarked that this was still the case in 2006: "De leur côté, les départements d'histoire demeurent conservateurs dans leurs champs d'études, et le terrain culturel, tout spécialement celui des représentations, y est particulièrement négligé. Cela explique peut-être

pourquoi peu de personnes formées à la discipline et aux méthodes historiques font du cinéma leur territoire et y appliquent les procédures d'analyse, de critique et d'interprétation." Pierre Véronneau, "Écrire en dépit des trous de mémoire," in *Le cinéma au Québec : Tradition et Modernité*, ed. Stéphane-Albert Boulais (Montreal: Fides, 2006), 15.

[3] Noguez, *Essais sur le cinéma québécois*, 9.

[4] Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 13.

[5] For instance, see Pierre Véronneau, *L'Office national du film : L'enfant martyr* (Montreal: Cinémathèque québecoise / Musée du cinéma, 1979); Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation*; Yves Lever and Pierre Pageau, *Cinémas canadien et québécois : Notes historiques* (Montreal: Cégep Ahuntsic, 1977); Yves Lever, *Le cinéma de la Révolution tranquille : De Panoramique à Valérie* (Montreal: Cégep Ahuntsic et l'Institut québécois du cinéma, 1991).

[6] Their approach to the study of cinema reflected their academic training in history. Véronneau earned a doctorate degree in history and Lever completed a Master of Arts in theology. The latter's research dealt with the Church and Quebec cinema from a historical perspective.

[7] Yves Lever, "Le cinéma québécois : Plan de cours," *Yves Lever : Enseignement*, http://pages.videotron.com/lever/Enseignement/quebecois.html (accessed November 4, 2011).

[8] Véronneau, "The First Wave of Quebec Feature Films," 63.

[9] Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation*, 125; Véronneau, "Écrire en dépit des trous de mémoire," 16.

[10] Véronneau, "L'histoire du Québec," 85.

[11] Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 154.

[12] Stéphane Kelly, introduction to *Les idées mènent le Québec* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2003), 3.

[13] For a detailed discussion of Laval and Montreal historians, see: Ronald Rudin, *Making History in Twentieth-Century Quebec* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

[14] Jocelyn Létourneau, "La production historienne courante portant sur le Québec et ses rapports avec la construction des figures identitaires d'une communauté communicationnelle," *Recherches sociographiques* 36, no. 1 (1995) : 16.

[15] Noguez, *Essais sur le cinéma québécois*, 13.

[16] Daudelin, *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français*, 9; Marsolais, *Le cinéma canadien*, 21.

[17] Daudelin wrote: "Et bien qu'ils soient en retard de 70 ans, [les cinéastes du Québec] arrivent en même temps que leurs collègues français, italiens ou tchécoslovaques, parce que leur jeunesse même et la jeunesse de leur pays appartiennent intimement à un âge qui veut retrouver la parole." Daudelin, *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français*, 7.

[18] For more information on *l'idéologie de contestation*, see Pierre Véronneau, "L'idéologie de contestation chez les cinéastes francophones onéfiens," in *Dialogue: Cinéma canadiens et québécois*, eds. Pierre Véronneau et al. (Montreal: Médiatexte and La Cinémathèque québécoise, 1987): 57-70; see also Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation.*

[19] Marshall, *Quebec National Cinema*, 19.

[20] Gary Evans explains: "The thrust was that the French group wanted . . . the ability to express true French Canadian thought . . . , they were arguing for recognition as a distinct society." 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), 45.

[21] Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct*, 61.

[22] Ibid., 12.

[23] Ibid., 17-30.

[24] Ibid., 61.

[25] Noguez, *Essais sur le cinéma québécois*, 10.

[26] Michel Euvrard and Pierre Veronneau, "Direct Cinema," in *Self-Portrait: Essays on the Canadian and Quebec Cinemas*, eds. Piers Handling and Pierre Véronneau (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1980), 80.
[27] Marcel Jean, *Le cinéma québécois* (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1991), 43.
[28] Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct*, 92.
[29] For an in-depth analysis of Direct Cinema, see Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct revisitée*.
[30] See Daudelin, *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français*; Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct revisitée*; Coulombe and Jean, *Le dictionnaire du cinéma québécois*; Euvrard and Veronneau, "Direct Cinema."
[31] See Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct revisitée*; Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*; Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation*.
[32] Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct*, 92.
[33] Quintal, "Le court métrage des longs métrages québécois," 17; Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct*, 100.
[34] Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct*, 117.
[35] Marsolais, *Cinéma québécois*, 31.
[36] Robert Daudelin, "The Encounter between Fiction and the Direct Cinema," in *Self-Portrait: Essays on the Canadian and Quebec Cinemas*, eds. Piers Handling and Pierre Véronneau (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1980), 95.
[37] For more details on this question, see chapter 4 of the present thesis.
[38] Marsolais defines *fiction-vérité* using the following terms: "Par allusion au bref courant du cinéma-vérité du début des années 60 dans le secteur documentaire, cette expression viserait à désigner une démarche de fiction qui a recours à certains éléments de la démarche documentaire pour renforcer son climat d'authenticité . . . ." Gilles Marsollais, "Les mots de la tribu, " *Cinémas* 4, no. 2 (1994) : 142.
[39] Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 210.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 212.
[44] Ibid., 210.
[45] Marshall, *Quebec National Cinema*, 47.
[46] Ibid., 50.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Létourneau, "Le Québec moderne," 767.
[49] Jocelyn Létourneau, "La saga du Québec moderne en images," *Genèse* vol. 4 (1991): 45.

Chapter 2: Prelude

[1] Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 212.
[2] Jean further adds: "Certaines productions du bureau sont taxées de propagande mensongère, on dénonce le manque de professionnalisme qui y sévit, tout en déplorant l'absence de leadership au sein de l'organisme." Jean, *Le cinéma québécois*, 28.
[3] Véronneau, *L'Office national du film*, 33.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Evans, *In the National Interest*, 22.
[6] Ibid., 34.
[7] Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation*, 22.

[8] Quoted in Véronneau, *L'Office national du film*, 9.
[9] Ibid., 10.
[10] Evans, *In the National Interest*, 17.
[11] Ibid., 18.
[12] Quoted in Véronneau, *L'Office national du* film, 40.
[13] Instead of assistant-film commissioner, Juneau was nominated executive director. He was the sole francophone voice within a triumvirate set in place by film commissioner Albert W. Trueman. See Evans, *In the National Interest*, 44.
[14] Quoted in Pierre Véronneau, *L'Office national du film*, 44.
[15] Ibid., 45.
[16] *Le Droit* and *L'Action catholique* differed from *Le Devoir* both in terms of readership and political inclinations but these French publications rallied behind the NFB's Équipe française during the early months of 1957.
[17] Lever concurs when he writes: "Car se vivent a l'ONF, exacerbés pas les sensibilités personnelles de ces artistes, les mêmes tensions, luttes, dénis de différences, oppressions que dans le monde politique. " Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 151.
[18] Véronneau, "L'idéologie de contestation," 64.
[19] For more on this topic, see Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation*.
[20] Jocelyn Létourneau, "Québec d'après-guerre et mémoire collective de la technocratie," *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* 90 (1991): 83.
[21] Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "The Province of Quebec at the Time of the Strike", in *The Asbestos Strike*, ed. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, trans. James Boake (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1974): 66.
[22] Véronneau, "L'idéologie de contestation," 65. For a more nuanced reading of *Cité libre* and its critique of nationalism, see Michael D. Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-Nationalism, 1945-1960* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1985).
[23] Véronneau, "L'idéologie de contestation," 65.
[24] Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation*, 114.
[25] Ibid., 116.
[26] Quoted in CQDC, *Cinéastes du Québec : Michel Brault* (Montreal: Conseil québécois pour la diffusion du cinéma, 1972), 24.
[27] Marsolais, *L'aventure du cinéma direct*, 89.
[28] Ibid., 91.
[29] Scott Mackenzie, *Screening Quebec* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 124.
[30] David Clandfield, "From the Picturesque to the Familiar: Films of the French Unit at the NFB (1958-1964)," in *Take Two*, ed. Seth Feldman (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1984), 122.
[31] Ibid., 114.
[32] Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 15.
[33] Quoted in Léo Bonneville, *Le cinéma québécois par ceux qui le font* (Montreal: Éditions Paulines & A.D.E., 1979), 133.
[34] Ibid.
[35] André Loiselle, *Cinema as History: Michel Brault and Modern Quebec* (Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival Group, 2007), 38.

Chapter 3: Dissent

[1] Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 210.
[2] Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation*, 51.
[3] Ibid.

[4] For more information on the *Panoramique* and *Femmes hors foyer* series, see Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*.
[5] Evans, *In the National Interest*, 95.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Véronneau, *Résistance et affirmation*, 51.
[8] Quoted in Alain Pontaut, "Dans deux mois, *YUL-871*," *Le Devoir,* February 19, 1966.
[9] APC, "Procès-verbal de l'assemblé de fondation de l'Association des cinéastes du Québec," 5 February, 1963, APCQ Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.
[10] APC, "Lettre d'invitation à l'assemblée de fondation d'une association professionnelle des cinéastes," 23 January, 1963, APCQ Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.
[11] The Association des cinéastes du Québec operated under the name Association professionnelle des cinéastes (APC) for the greater part of the 1960s. In 1968, the organization changed its name to Association professionnelle des cinéastes du Québec (APCQ) "pour affirmer l'originalité du travail de ses membres." Coulombe and Jean, *Le dictionnaire du cinéma québécois*, 19.
[12] APC, "Procès-verbal," 5 February, 1963.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Godbout to Roberge and Robertson, 5 March, 1966.
[15] APC, "Mémoire," 1966, APCQ Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Jacques Godbout to Gordon Sheppard, 18 January, 1966, APCQ Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal; APC to Jean Drapeau, 15 March, 1967, APCQ Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal; Clément Perron to Pierre Juneau, 15 November, 1966, APCQ Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.
[18] Jacques Godbout, "Assemblée générale : Rapport du Président," 16 May, 1966, APCQ Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.
[19] Evans, *In the National Interest*, 99.
[20] Pierre Maheu, "L'ONF ou un cinéma québécois," *Parti pris* 7 (April 1964): 2.
[21] Gilles Groulx, "28 minutes, 25 secondes," *Parti pris* 7 (April 1964): 24.
[22] Jacques Bobet, "Éditorial," *Liberté* 8, no. 2-3 (March-June 1966): 7.
[23] Arthur Lamothe, "Cinéma et culture," *Liberté* 8, no. 2-3 (March-June 1966): 21.
[24] Evans, *In the National Interest*, 97.
[25] Gilles Carle, "L'ONF et l'objectivité des autres," *Parti pris* 7 (April 1964): 14.
[26] Jacques Godbout, "L'année zéro," *Parti pris* 7 (April 1964): 7.
[27] APC, *Cinéma et culture* (Quebec: Conseil d'orientation économique du Québec, 1963), 17.
[28] Godbout to Sheppard, 18 January, 1966.
[29] Bobet, "Éditorial," 5.
[30] APC, "Citations : Mémoire de l'APC," *Liberté* 8, no. 2-3 (March-June 1966): 94.
[31] Jacques Godbout, "Une expérience," *Liberté* 8, no. 2-3 (March-June 1966): 161.
[32] Carle, "L'ONF et l'objectivité des autres," 13.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Godbout, "L'année zéro," 9.
[35] APC, *Cinéma et culture*, I; Carle, "L'ONF et l'objectivité des autres," 14.
[36] Carle, "L'ONF et l'objectivité des autres," 14.
[37] Groulx, "28 minutes, 25 secondes," 23.
[38] Fernand Dansereau, "Pour l'espoir," *Liberté* 8, no. 2-3 (March-June 1966): 75.
[39] Ibid.
[40] APC, "Cinéma et culture à travers les mémoires de l'APC," *Liberté* 8, no. 2-3 (March-June 1966): 10; Lamothe, "Cinéma et culture," 21.
[41] APC, "Cinéma et culture à travers les mémoires de l'APC," 13.

[42] Ibid., 10.
[43] Bobet, "Éditorial," 6.
[44] APC, *Cinéma et culture*, 17.
[45] APC, "Recommandations de l'APC au Gouvernement du Québec," *Liberté* 8, no. 2-3 (March-June 1966): 49.
[46] Ibid., 43.
[47] Godbout, "Une expérience," 166.
[48] APC, "Cinéma et culture à travers les mémoires de l'APC," 10.
[49] Jacques Bobet, "Lettre ouverte au commissaire du Gouvernement à la cinématographie," *Liberté* 8, no. 2-3 (March-June 1966): 105.
[50] Ibid.
[51] APC, *Cinéma et culture*, I.
[52] Lamothe, "Cinéma et culture," 18.
[53] Denys Arcand, "Des évidences," *Parti pris* 7 (April 1964): 21.
[54] Godbout, "Une expérience," 161.
[55] Carle, "L'ONF et l'objectivité des autres," 11.
[56] Ibid.
[57] APC, *Cinéma et culture*, 43.
[58] Arcand, "Des évidences," 21.
[59] Lamothe, "Cinéma et culture," 19.
[60] Godbout, "Une expérience," 162.
[61] APC, "Mémoire," 1966; Godbout, "Une expérience," 168.
[62] APC, "Cinéma et culture à travers les mémoires de l'APC," 12.
[63] APC, "Mémoire," 1966.
[64] Groulx, "28 minutes, 25 secondes," 24.
[65] APC, *Cinéma et culture*, II.
[66] Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 35.
[67] APC, "Cinéma et culture à travers les mémoires de l'APC," 11.
[68] APC, "Mémoire," 1966.
[69] APC, "Cinéma et culture à travers les mémoires de l'APC," 11.
[70] Arcand, "Des évidences," 19.
[71] Godbout, "L'année zéro," 8; Carle, "L'ONF et l'objectivité des autres," 14.
[72] Groulx, "28 minutes, 25 secondes," 23; Godbout, "L'année zéro," 9; Clément Perron, "Un témoignage," *Parti pris* 7 (April 1964): 16.
[73] Groulx, "28 minutes, 25 secondes," 24.
[74] Bobet, "Lettre ouverte," 104.
[75] Ibid., 110.
[76] Godbout to Roberge and Robertson, 5 March, 1966.
[77] Godbout, "Une expérience," 168.
[78] Ibid.

Chapter 4: Fiction

[1] Fernand Dansereau and Jacques Bobet to Grant McLean and Pierre Juneau, 28 August, 1963, *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Bobet, "Lettre ouverte," 104-111; Dansereau, "Pour l'espoir," 73-77.
[4] Dansereau and Bobet to McLean and Juneau, 28 August, 1963.

[5] Ibid.
[6] Daudelin, *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français*, 24.
[7] *Le chat dans le sac*, VHS, directed by Gilles Groulx (1964; Montreal: Office national du film, 1993).
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Michel Patenaude, "Entretien avec Gilles Groulx," *Objectif* 64, no. 29-30 (October-November 1964): 6.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Groulx et *Le chat dans le sac*," *Objectif* 66, no. 35 (May-June 1966): 16.
[16] Patenaude, "Entretien avec Gilles Groulx," 10.
[17] Ibid., 5.
[18] Ibid., 12.
[19] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Groulx," 12.
[20] Patenaude, "Entretien avec Gilles Groulx," 12; "Les 101 questions," 11.
[21] Patenaude, "Entretien avec Gilles Groulx," 10.
[22] Ibid., 7.
[23] Ibid., 8.
[24] Ibid., 14.
[25] *Le chat dans le sac*.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] For more on this topic, see Frank Kofsky, *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970); LeRoi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: Perennial, 2002); Philippe Carles and Jean-Louis Comolli, *Free jazz : Black power* (Paris: Champ libre, 1971).
[29] Cassavetes worked with Charles Mingus for the soundtrack to *Shadows*, one of the founding films of American independent cinema. Malle's *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud*, a landmark film of contemporary European cinema, featured the music of Miles Davis. For more on the use of African-American jazz in these productions, see Gilles Mouëllic, *Jazz et cinéma* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 2000).
[30] Claude shows these books to the camera at the beginning of the film.
[31] The *nègre blanc d'Amérique* metaphor finds its origins in the writings of Quebec intellectuals who – from the late 1950s to the early 1970s – appropriated the language of decolonization in an effort to force changes within Quebec society. For more on this topic, see Mills, *The Empire Within*, 62-84.
[32] Gilles Groulx, "Il suffit d'un peu de neige," 1964, *Le chat dans le sac* Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.
[33] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Groulx," 18.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 12.
[37] Arcand, "Des évidences," 19.
[38] For example, Groulx's *Voir Miami* and *Un jeu si simple* both suffered attacks from NFB censors. The latter contained footage of the riot which followed the suspension of Quebec hockey player Maurice Richard. NFB administrators ordered Groulx to remove the footage

from his film. *Voir Miami* contained material which offered reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis but these segments were removed from the film "pour des raisons directement politiques." Yves Lever, Pierre Hébert and Kenneth Landry, *Dictionnaire de la censure au Québec* (Montreal: Fides, 2006), 296.

[39] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Groulx," 19.

[40] *Le chat dans le sac*.

[41] Groulx remarked: "Il n'y avait aucune raison de croire qu'on distribuerait *Le chat dans le sac*." "Les 101 questions," 12.

[42] Quoted in CQDC, *Cinéastes du Québec : Gilles Groulx* (Montreal: Conseil québécois pour la diffusion du cinéma, 1969), 8.

[43] Groulx also tried to depict Montreal as having a dynamic film culture by using posters of the FIFM and a 1963 issue of *Objectif* as props.

[44] Quoted in CQDC, *Gilles Groulx*, 8.

[45] Coopératio was a film cooperative set up by former NFB filmmaker Pierre Patry.

[46] Daudelin, *Vingt ans de cinéma au Canada français*, 54.

[47] Lamothe wanted Groulx to play Marc but the character was eventually assigned to Jean Doyon who plays the main protagonist in Portugais' *Les 90 jours*. "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe et *Le neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan*," *Objectif* 66, no. 36 (August 1966): 22.

[48] For more details on the film's theme song, see Robert Proulx, "Mon pays ce n'est pas un pays... c'est une chanson thème," *Séquences*, no. 226 (July-August 2003): 22-24.

[49] "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 20.

[50] This did not prevent *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* from appearing in the feature length category of the 1965 edition of the FIFM. A longer version of the film might have been available during the 1960s. Lamothe's website suggests that the film's duration was originally 65 minutes. Arthur Lamothe, "Les fictions," *Films et documentaires*, http://www.freewebs.com/arthurlamothe/filmsetdocumentaires.htm (last accessed on 29 December, 2011).

[51] Quoted in Bonneville, *Le cinéma québécois*, 491.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Arthur Lamothe, "Description de projet," 1964, *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan* Papers, Cinémathèque québécoise, Montreal.

[54] "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 26.

[55] Ibid., 22.

[56] Ibid., 24.

[57] Ibid., 21.

[58] Lever, *Le cinéma de la Révolution tranquille*, 110.

[59] "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 20.

[60] Michelle Gélinas, "Arthur Lamothe," *La petit journal*, December 19, 1965.

[61] "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 23.

[62] Michel Favreau, "Arthur Lamothe, Manicouagan, et le cinéma tout court...," *La Presse*, July 24, 1965.

[63] "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 23.

[64] Favreau, "Arthur Lamothe," July 24, 1965; Gélinas, "Arthur Lamothe," December 19, 1965; "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 22.

[65] Favreau, "Arthur Lamothe," July 24, 1965.

[66] Gélinas, "Arthur Lamothe," December 19, 1965; Favreau, "Arthur Lamothe," July 24, 1965.

[67] APC, *Cinéma et culture*, 19.

[68] Lamothe noted being pleased by the fact that his film was well-received by the people of Manicouagan. He explained: "Ça m'a impressionné parce que ces gens là m'intéressent

beaucoup. Ça me tracassait de connaître leurs réactions parce qu'eux, ayant vécu la réalité du film, pouvaient s'y projeter facilement." "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 25.

[69] In 1962, the NFB asked Lamothe to make a number of changes to the voice-over narration that accompanied *Bûcherons de la Manouane*. Lever writes: "Ce court métrage révèle que [l'ONF] . . . reste chatouilleux devant la critique du pouvoir économique et celle de l'Église catholique." Lever, Hébert and Landry, *Dictionnaire de la censure au Québec*, 92.

[70] "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 23.

[71] Ibid., 26.

[72] Ibid., 21.

[73] Lamothe remarked: "Le handicap à l'ONF est de ne pas pouvoir entrer dans les grands circuits commerciaux." Favreau, "Arthur Lamothe," July 24, 1965.

[74] "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 21.

[75] Quoted in CQDC, *Cinéastes du Québec : Arthur Lamothe* (Montreal: Conseil québécois pour la diffusion du cinéma, 1971), 13.

[76] Ibid.

[77] "Les 101 questions : Arthur Lamothe," 27.

[78] Quoted in CQDC, *Arthur Lamothe*, 13.

[79] Favreau, "Arthur Lamothe," July 24, 1965.

[80] Michel Favreau, "*La vie heureuse de Léopold Z*," *La Presse*, August 9, 1965.

[81] Carol Faucher and Michel Houle, *Cinéastes du Québec : Gilles Carle* (Montreal, Conseil québécois pour la diffusion du cinéma, 1975), 24.

[82] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Carle et *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z*," *Objectif* 66, no. 35 (May-June 1966): 22.

[83] Jean Pierre Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," *Objectif* 66, no. 34 (January 1966): 14.

[84] Faucher and Houle, *Gilles Carle*, 24; "Les 101 questions : Gilles Carle," 24.

[85] Léo Bonneville, "Gilles Carle nous parle de *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z*," *Séquences*, no. 45 (April 1966): 39.

[86] Faucher and Houle, *Cinéastes du Québec : Gilles Carle*, 24.

[87] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Carle," 25.

[88] Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," 9.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 10.

[93] Ibid., 12.

[94] Ibid., 13.

[95] Bonneville, "Gilles Carle," 40.

[96] Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," 13; "Les 101 questions : Gilles Carle," 22.

[97] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Carle," 22.

[98] Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," 7.

[99] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Carle," 22.

[100] Bonneville, "Gilles Carle," 47.

[101] Ibid., 43.

[102] Ibid., 47.

[103] Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," 7.

[104] Bonneville, "Gilles Carle," 45.

[105] Ibid., 43.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., 42.

[108] Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," 14.

[109] For more on Vigneault and the soundtrack to *La neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan*, see Robert Proulx, "Mon pays ce n'est pas un pays," 22-24.
[110] Carle noted that the film's diegetic music was not chosen in an effort to please audiences. The music one hears in *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z* is what Léopold likes to hear. Jean Pierre Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," 13.
[111] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Carle," 22.
[112] Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," 15.
[113] "Les 101 questions : Gilles Carle," 22.
[114] Ibid., 27.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Lefebvre, "Entretien avec Gilles Carle," 15.
[117] Lever concurs: "Le métissage des genres atteint une certaine perfection avec *Le chat dans le sac* . . . que tout spectateur peu préoccupé de technique classe spontanément dans le direct." Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 167.
[118] Godbout to Roberge and Robertson, 5 March, 1966.

Conclusion

[1] Gélinas, "Arthur Lamothe," December 19, 1965.
[2] Lever explains: "En 1967, le terme même de censure disparaît de la Loi du cinéma, laquelle crée un bureau de surveillance qui refuse ou accepte les films tels que présentés, sans possibilité de le couper ou de les modifier, et qui impose une classification par groupes d'âges (Tous, 14 ans, 18 ans)." Lever, Hébert and Landry, *Dictionnaire de la censure au Québec*, 18.
[3] Coulombe and Jean, *Le dictionnaire du cinéma québécois*, 690.
[4] Yves Lever and Pierre Pageau, *Chronologie du cinéma au Québec* (Montreal: Les 400 coups, 2006), 120.
[5] Ibid., 113.
[6] Marsolais, *Cinéma québécois*, 13.
[7] Godbout to Roberge and Robertson, 5 March, 1966.
[8] Létourneau, "La saga du Québec moderne," 45.
[9] Lever, *Histoire générale du cinéma au Québec*, 212.

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Kid sentiment. DVD. Directed by Jacques Godbout. 1967; Montreal: Office national du film, 2011.

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