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Policy and Practice: Funding and Strategies for Short Film in New Zealand 1994-1998

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ABSTRACT

This research foregrounds funding influences on the strategies of short film practice in New Zealand. It seeks to connect the processes of policy and practice and the relationships of institutions and individuals as they impinge on short film. It also illustrates some of these processes as they jointly influence the types of short film that are finally produced. The research was based on the responses, from questionnaires and interviews, of over forty funders, producers and directors engaged in the relationships required for funding short film as well as an analysis of appropriate documents relevant to this funding area. The theoretical approach is context based and adapts Hall's concept of articulation in conjunction with Wartenburg's concept of alignment. Hall's theory links the collective influences in a particular context without requiring a dominant determining element as a focus for explanation. This approach characterises short film practices as part of a cultural formation - a formation of contexts - and implies that there are different combinations of influences within each of these contexts. This group of contexts and their respective influences together shape the funding influences on the strategies of short film. Wartenburg theorises the nature of the collaborative relationships involved in the cultural contexts in terms of alignments and these focus on the mutual discursive relationships that are necessary in order for individuals or institutions to achieve their goals. It assumes that the collective influence on these discursive strategies constrains the degree to which any one individual can establish a relationship of dominance. The foregrounding of discourse is important for this research, but only when it is integrated with the idea of "voice" which is based on an idea developed from Shohat and Stam. The concept of "voice" refers to the plurality of discourses individuals utilise to establish their own positions within any context. This helps to explain the dynamic nature of contexts with individual "voices" influencing the discourses of contexts by introducing elements of other discursive experiences. Taking a top-down approach, moving from the political agenda for funding to film makers and their strategies for funding application, this research foregrounds the importance of both the macropolitical and micropolitical insisting that while political and economic conditions have important consequences for funding the alignments established in the funding process are also influenced by a myriad of other social relationships. The research considers the discursive alignments involved in funding regimes of Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission especially in terms of the contexts of the Screen Innovation Production Fund and the Talent Development Initiative. It outlines the different displacements and re-alignments that have occurred in these funding contexts. It concludes that the intersection of funding policy and film practice is an important area of research and illustrates the various ways these contexts play their own roles in the shaping of the actual films produced. This thesis also offers a method of

researching the contexts of other related film practices such as the contexts of reception, critical interpretation, exhibition and marketing, and film pedagogy, and this is an approach suitable for other cultural practices outside the domain of film as it is useful in examining the ways contexts influence cultural artefacts.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Film making as a cultural and social practice is a complex process which involves countless creative, commercial, technical and tactical decisions before any film is produced, and then, just as many more when it comes to exhibition and reception. It is an interest in film making as a collaborative social practice which motivated this research on short film. Its focal concern is to examine how strategies can be developed that might help to describe at least some of the collaborative social relations involved in the practice of film production?

One model for this interest was the work of McMahon and Quin, who ask for an approach to media which 'will locate the text within the dynamic cultural context' (1996-97: 15). They believe that much of the current work in media education, including film studies, is differentiated into four different approaches. These they categorise as: the cultural malaise paradigm, which 'views the media as a corrupting influence' (1996-1997: 11); the popular arts paradigm, which views popular culture 'as capable of producing authentic works of art' (1996-1997: 13); the semiotics paradigm, where 'media texts are seen as coded cultural products which can be decoded to reveal the ideological messages contained within' (1996-97: 13); and the audiences paradigm, which 'emphasises the indeterminacy of the meaning of a text except as activated by specifically socio-culturally located members of an audience [and] the heterogeneity of audiences and therefore of potential meanings' (1996-97: 15). Above all, they believe that these approaches to the media 'can be guilty of fetishising individual texts' (1996-97: 17). They call for 'an approach that is critically more mature ... [giving] media education a political edge and a progressive political purpose of a practical nature' (1996-97: 17). Theirs is an approach that doesn't rely on the interpretation of objects or texts while neglecting their contexts, but rather focuses on these contexts and acknowledges the influences of the processes that shape any text.

McRobbie similarly asks for a more inclusive cultural analysis which avoids relying entirely on the analysis of autonomous cultural texts. For her:

This would involve reintroducing to the field of cultural analysis more institutional voices, more ethnography, more participant observation. It would also mean turning away from the temptation to read more and more from cultural products and objects of consumption, readings

which invariably are of most enjoyment to our own interpretative communities. Such a turning away does not mean being against interpretation, rather it means examining all of those processes which accompany the production of meaning in culture, not just the end-product: from where it is socially constructed to where it is socially deconstructed and contested, in the institutions, practices and relationships of everyday life around us (McRobbie 1994: 41).

McRobbie wants an investigation of all the processes of relationship and consequent production of meanings. She is interested in the recognition that these occur not only in the interpretation of cultural products, but also in the institutions and practices that are required to produce these products.

Cunningham also has an agenda which contextualises cultural production within a broad field involving institutions and practices. His approach involves a consideration of institutional voices and 'the relations between cultural criticism as practised in academic circles ... and cultural policy development as it is engaged in by government, statutory authorities, business agencies, unions, organised interest groups, and practitioners in the entertainment industries and the arts' (Cunningham 1992: xiii). According to Cunningham the relations between these areas of policy and criticism have not been easily integrated and his objective is that of 'enhancing connections between them' (1992: 3). This desire reflects a concern for the inclusion of all aspects of the processes of cultural production and an avoidance of the marginalisation of policy, which Cunningham believes, plays an important role in influencing cultural outcomes. ✓

A further precedent for this inclusive focus on cultural production and the necessity for collaborative relations is Wolff's work on the social nature of art production and her belief that notions of the creative role of the artist and the sociological focus on the structures involved in the production and consumption of culture are complementary. She believes that 'a proper understanding of each will expose their mutual interdependence' (Wolff 1993: 2). Wolff does not believe it possible to separate an individual practitioner from the social and argues that

any humanistic notion of an "essential" individual, pre-existing social experience (language, interpersonal relations, ideological influence and induction, and the social and material structures underlying all these) must be abandoned (1993:3).

Wolff focuses on the determining factors of creative production and understands these to be operating on various levels, pointing out that some levels have more explanatory value than others. She states that

there can be no doubt that any human act is determined. Not only that, but it is multiply determined - by social factors, psychological factors, neurological and chemical factors. A causal account can be given for any one act at a number of levels of explanation. Nor are these levels of explanation in competition with one another, in the sense of only one being right. (It can be argued, however, that some are more comprehensive than others and thus have better explanatory value) (1993: 20).

McMahon and Quin call for a theoretical approach which contextualises individual texts and McRobbie reinforces this wanting to investigate all of the processes involved in the production of texts. Cunningham believes that the integration of cultural policy with cultural criticism is a necessary objective in order to understand the processes of cultural production and Wolff focuses on the multiple factors which mutually shape the products of cultural practices. It is these precedents and their consideration of the collaborative relations necessary for any cultural production that have reinforced the research approach for this thesis.

The approach for this research is in agreement with this inclusive agenda toward cultural practices and within this domain the actual research focus is situated at the intersection of policy studies and film practice. It examines a cultural infrastructure foregrounding funding influences on the strategies for short film practice. These infrastructural relations refer to 'the integration of policy, institutions and industrial practices as they together provide mechanisms for defining, justifying and delivering culture to audiences' (Cunningham 1992: 4). The research seeks to connect the processes of policy and certain strategies operating in the practice of short film as well as the relationships of institutions and individuals as they work to influence short film practices.

How might this inclusive study of infrastructural relations be attempted? Why is short film a useful site to begin this object of study - the infrastructure of film practice?

Strategies for Short Film Practice

Pragmatically, short film practices are suitable as an object of research because within New Zealand they involve a reasonably easily accessible group of committed practitioners. Short film practices are also a very under-researched area of film making although they attract a lot of interest and involvement from aspiring film makers. Short film making involves competition for limited funding and an infrastructure has been established to distribute the funds that are available from the public purse. Therefore, short film practices occur in contexts that are strongly influenced by economic considerations and involve strategies that are designed to acquire and distribute funds. Further short film doesn't rate highly as a commercial activity, but many film makers use this form to gain kudos for future feature film projects. As a result, short film has a strong connection with feature film practice in New Zealand. These considerations suggest that this small but active practice might be a fertile and accessible object for the study of these infrastructural relations.

To place short film practices in terms of a national or cultural context, such as New Zealand, assumes that this context has a specific character, and shapes the practice of film making in particular ways. Two aspects are implicit in the defining of a national film context: the idea of a film practice, controlled by a certain group of people, and a product or text which somehow reflects the culture of those people. This research is interested in the idea of practice, including both institutional and film making practice, and defines the context of a New Zealand short film practice by the group of people involved in the collaborative relations needed for its existence. The basis for the research is the attempt to theorise and illustrate some of the ways this collaboration occurs.

After an initial wide ranging professional survey directed at a selected group of film practitioners the research focused on the state sponsored funding agencies supporting short film in New Zealand. This focus was again pragmatic and necessary. The social practices involved in the different contexts of short film making are both numerous and complex and for the terms of this research needed to be contained within a manageable arena. A further consideration for this particular choice of focus was the fact that state funding is a sensitive area, with a continuing argument between those who believe that cultural funding, especially funding of film, shouldn't be a prerogative of the state, and those who believe that state funding should be increased. Funding is also a matter of competition between applicants for the limited amount of available money and involves organisations to develop criteria for assessment and funding panels who decide on funding applications using these criteria. State

sponsored funding therefore, offers an important site for the intersection of policy and practice and would be a useful area to research ways in which the institutional processes integrated with the production processes of short film making. This research could also be a useful adjunct to Cunningham's own work in this field as well as supporting the calls for a contextual orientation made by McMahon and Quinn, McRobbie, and Wolff.

The research also documents a particularly interesting period of change in the funding of short film in New Zealand.¹ Over the last three years the two short film funding agencies sponsored by the state have been reviewed and then reorganised. This has made it possible to compare the changes in the agencies, discuss why they have occurred, and finally speculate on how they have influenced the types of short film practices that might occur in the future. It offered an ideal opportunity to observe changes in policy and the consequent changes, or lack of these, in short film making practices.

The theoretical framework developed for this research establishes the idea that within the contexts of state sponsored funding, numerous collaborative relationships are involved in making decisions about project applications. Strategies are necessary for application success and for deciding on those that will be successful. This thesis asks: what are some of the strategies involved in these funding contexts? and how can these strategies be theorised?

Chapter Two considers Novitz's conception of cultural context which he relates to a contextualising of individual commentator's interests and concerns. The chapter outlines the predominant interests and concerns foregrounded in the literature on New Zealand film and concludes that implicit in most of what is written is the assumption of the determining effects of a particular period of time, with its specific combination of political, economic and social influences. There is a recognition in this literature that changing historical conditions have had a powerful influence on the films produced. Specific discussions on short film in New Zealand are sparse and dominated by approaches that treat short film as a marginal or at best transitional practice. International scholarship on short film practice is also limited, although the Danish journal *p.o.v.*, which concentrates on short film, does offer some detailed analysis of specific New Zealand short film texts. Theoretical essays on the art of short film are also included in this journal.

¹A chronology of significant funding developments relating to Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission can be found in Appendix One Section Two.

Within this literature on New Zealand film there has been a lack of focus on the way in which cultural contexts actually shape film and film making in New Zealand. Although some attempts have been made there is a need to extend the range of contexts for film production and reception within the gamut of scholarship and, given the significance of the contexts of cultural production, as much energy should be given to research and scholarship which considers the policy toward film as well as the financing, production, distribution, marketing and audience reception of films as has been given to an analysis of particular films and their different interpretations. This chapter offers a number of "local" precedents that attempt to deal with some of these issues and consider these marginalised contexts.

Chapter Three develops a theory for the type of research that would be useful for this contextualising focus. It appropriates the idea of determining influences suggested by the previous literature on New Zealand film practices, but attempts to avoid a reductionist approach preferring to develop a theory of contexts each of which has its own conjunction of determining influences. This approach is designed to operate at a level sensitive to local circumstances and concentrates on the contexts of state sponsored funding for short film. Following Wolff, the theory acknowledges that there are a number of levels of explanation, but believes a contextualising approach offers a level of explanation suited to the examination of actual practices. The justification for this approach is also based on a disagreement with any theoretical perspective that foregrounds a dominant factor in any deterministic explanation. For instance, the idea that film practices can be explained solely through an economic, social, aesthetic or political framework is questioned. This approach is replaced by a more inclusive stance and accepts the focus taken by Williams concerning the "social" nature of culture. This emphasis is justified by adapting Hall's concept of articulation. This concept links the collective influences in a particular context. The importance of this approach is that it characterises film practices as part of a cultural formation - a formation of contexts - and implies that a different combination of influences could operate within each context and a collection of contexts are involved in the cultural formation of short film. Further, this theoretical perspective also acknowledges that the selection of contexts and the selection of influences is strategic and reiterates Novitz's concept of a strategic cultural context introduced in Chapter Two. However, Chapter Three does acknowledge that there are problems with the theory of articulation and justifies its use by agreeing with the approach taken by Kirk (1997) who acknowledges that there are significant determining factors such as economic conditions, which not only exert pressures, but also have limits in terms of their effects when assessed in terms of the combination of other influences operating in any

context. For instance, it is accepted that funding levels have a significant influence on the strategies of short film practice, but that these are not the only determining influence on the different strategies operating in the funding context.

A conception of social relationships using Wartenberg's (1990) concept of alignment also becomes an important element of the theory. This concept is useful as it theorises the mutual discursive interrelationships of those involved in these social practices rather than assuming an autonomous and one-sided relationship of domination and dominated. This conception of relationships allies itself with Foucault's idea of micropolitics, 'where actions constrain and are constrained by other actions not in a haphazard fashion, but rather in ways that possess their own logic and can be articulated' (May 1993: 3).

The research focus on discourse as a means of implementing strategic alignments in the contexts of funding is an important component. These alignments themselves are hypothesised as the motivating force behind the collaborative social relations of short film practices. Individuals align with each other to achieve their goals and this alignment occurs through discursive strategies. Further the alignments occur at significant axes of power which are found at different levels of the funding infrastructure. The thesis explains this by establishing a relationship between discourse and voice based on the work of Shohat and Stam (1994) and their conception of "voice" as a personal interplay of different discourses. Individuals are not constrained by the discourses of any one context, but utilise a hybrid discursive strategy, developed from their experiences of multiple contexts, when they are engaged in any particular roles in any context. This helps to explain changes occurring within contexts and between contexts. Finally the discussion in Chapter Three acknowledges the difficulties involved in foregrounding discourse as an explanatory device, especially when the thesis itself seeks an inclusive approach.

Chapter Four outlines the various methods utilised to generate data for this research using a conscious strategy of comparing perspectives and utilising different methods to establish a less biased perception of contexts by the researcher. These methods included questionnaires, interviews and document analysis, while an attempt was made to establish dialogue with any respondent who was interested. The willingness on the part of the researcher for an ongoing dialogue was an important part of the research process, and although not many respondents took up the invitation, some respondents were very generous with their time and experience and a number offered interesting and sometimes candid insights.

Chapter Five introduces an overview of the political rhetoric on funding, and characterises this rhetoric as being influenced by a New Right market orientation which pervades all areas of contemporary New Zealand life. This overview acts as a background for the following chapters. Political agendas concerning funding policy operate not only at the social and economic policy level, but are manifest in the actual processes of funding itself. The research argues that funding agencies align themselves with political agendas to sustain funding levels and they align their agendas with those of the state, appropriating the discourses of their political masters to convince them of the need for increased funding levels.

Chapter Six outlines the discursive contexts of Creative New Zealand and situates the Screen Innovation Production Fund, a conduit for short film funding, within these contexts. This chapter also introduces current issues involving film funding in relation to Creative New Zealand, and suggests how these issues have influenced the funding regime for short film. Shields' (1995) concept of filtering and imprinting is an important connection between the previous chapter and the following chapters. It is considered that while political agendas are filtered through the funding agencies, these agencies in turn imprint their own agendas onto the funding objectives. Chapter Six is used to illustrate this process through the analysis of the policy rhetoric developed for the strategic plan of Creative New Zealand and the ways in which this influences short film.

Chapter Seven focuses on the New Zealand Film Commission and the Short Film Fund in terms of the interpretations of objectives and criteria by individuals involved at the level of allocation decisions as well as some of the producers and film maker applicants who have had support from the fund. It focuses on the concept of "voice" and illustrates how this concept can be used to explain the various interpretations of aspects of a discursive context. Chapter Eight continues this discussion but with a focus on the new developments in the Film Commission's funding regime. This has resulted in the devolution from the Short Film Fund to the industry based Talent Development Initiative. Issues concerning funding in this context are introduced to illustrate the reasons for changes in the short film funding regime. Representatives of the production groups involved in this new regime offer their own perspectives on developments and the effects of the change in the regime are discussed.

Chapter Nine examines four case studies focusing on two short film projects that were successful in their funding applications and two that were not. The two projects that applied for funds through the Screen Innovation Production Fund are compared in terms of their funding application documents and conclusions are made about why

one was successful in this context. The other two projects are considered in terms of the film maker's motivations. This focus illustrates the significance of the funding process in terms of the overall creative, experiential and career motivations of actual film makers and shows that although short film practices are not entirely motivated by funding strategies, these strategies do play a significant role in the practice of short film making and are linked not only to creative endeavours, but also to career opportunities.

Chapter Ten outlines what strategies are involved in state sponsored funding of short film and summarises how these have been theorised. It then proceeds to discuss some of the outcomes of the research, particularly the intersection between policy and short film practice, pointing out that a detailed policy, involving objectives and justifications for funding criteria does not necessarily offer the most effective method of changing funding practice. Other consequences of policy changes are also outlined. Finally this chapter discusses the significance of the research approach to this thesis. This work is not only important as a study of the infrastructure of state sponsored funding of short film, but also offers an entry point for a study of other areas of cultural practice. It illustrates that a contextualising approach foregrounding the various voices of participants is a useful method to explore numerous cultural practices - not necessarily those related only to cinema. The chapter discusses the need for more research, not only within the context of funding, but within other contexts such as audience reception, critical interpretation, exhibition, festival competition, distribution and the teaching of film. All of these involve complex contexts in which the strategic alignment of agents influence the manner in which film is valued and experienced.

The object of these chapters is to examine a group of contexts selected to illustrate the discursive alignments involved in state sponsored funding of short film in New Zealand. Each chapter deals with different alignments and articulates different elements that influence these. The progression of the chapters is designed to develop from a general to a particular study of collaboration between those involved. The research attempts to theorise state funding by contextualising funding processes and to finally reach a stage where these processes culminate in examples of a concrete practice reflected in the strategic development of an application document for funding, and an analysis of the motivations of two short film makers who have sought funds for their projects. It is thought that this organisation of contexts and a process of progressive focusing onto specific practices and participants will help illustrate the complex collaborative processes that are involved in the state funding of any short film and assist in outlining the relationship of policy and practice.

CHAPTER TWO

Approaches to Contemporary New Zealand Film

Introduction

This chapter briefly reviews previous commentaries on film in New Zealand and helps to position the present research not only within the boundaries of this earlier work, but suggests why the research needs to extend these boundaries to develop a theoretical framework tailored to a different approach to New Zealand film. The review focuses on the strategy of contextualising which is implicit in the commentaries on New Zealand film and which plays an essential role in the theoretical framework and methodology of the research for this current thesis. Following Novitz (1989), these contexts are understood to be agenda driven and a variety of different frameworks are utilised by commentators in their discussions on aspects of New Zealand film. A neglect of certain contexts for film making practices is suggested by this review and prompts the conclusion that what is needed is further research in these marginalised areas. A number of precedents for a more extensive approach to these film making practices are considered and these have become the catalyst for the development of a theoretical framework considered in the following chapter.

National Cinema and Cultural Contexts

New Zealand film is frequently considered both in relation to the idea of a film practice, controlled by a certain group of people, and as a specific film product which somehow reflects the cultural contexts of those people. Cairns and Martin, for instance, ask the question: what is a New Zealand film? They answer that 'a working definition of a New Zealand film is one in which the production is principally controlled by New Zealanders and which in some form or other reflects the culture of its creators' (1994: ix).

The concept of culture is itself a problematic one, and the ways it is defined imply the imposition of perspectives reflecting particular regimes of power. New theoretical positions have attempted to frame a sense of national identity and its relationship with culture utilising a post-colonial perspective and have focused on diversity rather than exclusivity as an explanatory device. For instance, Turner, discussing the Australian context has called for a strategy that turns the

postcolonial condition to advantage and alters the ontological status and political potential of the category of the nation. The construction of collective identities [then] becomes a creative, resistant, cultural and political process of becoming - rather than a conservative, already completed, project of exclusion (1994: 124).

However useful this approach might be, in the New Zealand context, perspectives on culture are framed by complex issues of bi-culturalism, and often retain a Pakeha hegemonic bias. For instance, Blythe in his commentary on New Zealand film perceives a double bind involved in discussions about bi-cultural relations between Maori and Pakeha:

On the one hand, the Maori are declared to be "New Zealanders" by virtue of the Waitangi Treaty of 1840 ... On the other "New Zealand" is defined along British (Pakeha) lines ... And the second always comes attached to the first - a kind of double play which oscillates between annexation (assertion of nationalism) on the one hand, and exclusion (denial of bi-culturalism) on the other (1994: 7-8).

This bi-cultural framework, even if, as Blythe suggests it often encompasses a range of meanings inflected by a dominant Pakeha hegemony, helps to shape the range of cultural perceptions of contemporary film practitioners in New Zealand, just as the practitioners in their various ways contribute to bi-cultural perceptions, even if these are annexed or denied. A recognition of the ways this complex cultural context shapes not only the objects produced but also the practices involved in their production is an important consideration of any research involved in any cultural production, including film. The dilemma arises when considering how this shaping process might be both theorised and researched. Specifically, for the purposes of this current research, how can one approach particular processes of film practice within New Zealand's cultural context?

One approach stems from a strategy of focusing on particular practices within the cultural context and foregrounds the idea, offered by Cairns and Martin, that a New Zealand film is one controlled by a specific group of people. Instead of approaching the research in terms of a singular deterministic framework, for instance, analysing the effects of an overriding cultural context and becoming embroiled in the tensions about bi-culturalism suggested by Blythe, or basing an argument on particular political, economic, legal or social determining factors, an approach based on actual practices involved in the production of film could be a worthwhile alternative method.

This focus on particular practices within a cultural context might be a way of examining the conjunction of all of the determining pressures such as the economic, political, social and cultural, which shape these practices. In terms of this research, a focus on cinematic practices² rather than the way in which the film products of this practice reflect a particular cultural context, might offer a more accessible and inclusive perspective about the contexts of New Zealand film and their place within the cultural context.

This approach is a selective one, focussing on particular practices while accepting that these practices are implicated in the complex pressures of culture and nation. It is a strategy implied by Novitz's definition of culture when he states that 'we use [the term culture] to collect and bring together certain phenomena in certain ways. And, of course, what and how we collect, depends importantly on our concerns and interests' (1989: 282). Novitz suggests that the use of this concept of culture implies a discriminating focus, situating ideas in a selected framework. In terms of the motivation behind this research, the focus will be on selected cinematic practices situated in a framework which acknowledges various conjunctions of economic, political, social and cultural elements.

A Review of Approaches to New Zealand Film

This selectivity is also implied in discussions of New Zealand film. The introduction to *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand* suggests such an approach. The editors, for instance, state that their intentions are not to make a definitive account of film practices in New Zealand, but their text 'offers through the personal perspectives and histories of the film makers themselves, an opportunity to venture into the wealth and range of film making here, and become aware of its cultural context' (Bieringa and Dennis 1992: 6). However, Costa Botes in a review of *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand* questioned whether its contents reflected the actual wealth and range of the cultural context. He states 'this isn't so much a "celebration of the vitality and diversity of contemporary New Zealand film" as a manifesto of the culturally marginalised. Blokes and populists are out. Feminist, gay, Maori and experimental film-makers are in' (Botes 1992: 20). He believes that the interests and concerns of the editors and of the participating authors reflect their own cultural and political bias.

²Klinger states that cinematic practices are 'primarily all of the practices associated with film production, distribution and exhibition that shape the film the audience finally sees' (1997: 115). For this research cinematic practices also include the pre-production stage as well as the critical reception of the post-exhibition stage.

These differences of opinion reinforce the idea that the use of the concept of a cultural context is strategic and defines the selective framework necessary for any discussion. In using this concept of cultural context as a framing device, the editors of *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*, suggest that New Zealand film can be defined by a characteristic and identifiable cultural context, constructed through connections with the political, economic, social and aesthetic conditions. The authors of the contributing essays³ have similarly attempted to justify their commentaries by establishing a framework, based on a conception of distinctive conditions; a selection of political, economic, and social events. Different contributors, however, focus on a different selection of events. Therefore, implicit in their essays are different constructions of the cultural context they consider to be important.

For instance, assumptions of a process where different historical periods shape different attitudes to film making are implicit in Horrocks' survey approach and O'Shea's reflections in *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Horrocks uses the concept of cultural context to show that attitudes of a period, such as the 1960's or 1980's, are also displayed in attitudes found in the film making of these periods. He cites the communal spirit and scepticism towards the marketplace of the 1960's and more commercial aggression of the 1980's as examples reflected in the films produced in those periods. For Horrocks, this relationship is not simply one-way, as some films can work to suggest the shape of future cultural attitudes.

O'Shea implies the cultural context is one reflecting a community which reacts to dominant imported film forms and discusses the early Government commitment to funding film believing this to have had a positive effect on the shaping of the films made in New Zealand. Here specific political attitudes reflected in legislation are thought to be crucial in shaping the film making activity.

Contrary to all economic logic, film has been given safe haven in a country renowned these days for tight-fisted monetarism and a dedication to market forces. In return, film makers have, over the last decade and a half and largely under the aegis of its Film Commission, given New Zealand a quite unexpected reputation for fine film making (O'Shea 1992: 17).

³ Including John O'Shea, Roger Horrocks, Barry Barclay, Geoff Murphy, Gaylene Preston, Russell Campbell, Jonathan Dennis. See Bibliography.

Mita and Barclay focus on a cultural context shaped by what they perceive as the forces of colonisation, which, for them, are also embedded in the processes of film making. This is shown by the difference in what Mita, for instance, considers to be distinctive Maori and Pakeha thematic concerns. Further, according to her, the colonisation effects are found in actual film making practice. Pakeha and Maori film makers have different experiences, with the latter working in a context where they feel the need to demystify and decolonise their representations:

Maori film makers have to address several issues not of their own choosing when they decide on a project of fiction. They have to satisfy the demands of the cinema, the demands of their own people, the criteria of a white male-dominated value and funding structure, and somehow be accountable to all. As well, their projects have to show what Americans call cross-over potential, and the film maker has to raise about one third of the projected budget. Worse still is the knowledge that the Maori film maker carries the burden of having to correct the past and will therefore be concerned with demystifying and decolonising the screen (Mita 1992: 49).

Murphy personalises his early film making experiences, but still frames this within a particular historic period. His focus, however, is on the infrastructure, or more importantly, the lack of infrastructure of film making, and points out his own strategies of survival in the late sixties and early seventies when 'there was no funding and no market for New Zealand films' (Murphy 1992: 133). This latter aspect suggests that film making requires a variety of talents, some of which demand the ability to operate in fields outside the actual creative processes of film production.

Preston's approach to her experience of film making is similar, but her reaction is focused on the position of males within the context of a formative period of film making and her desire to establish an alternative position, both for herself as a woman film maker and for a female audience:

Whatever you might think about those New Zealand films, you know, that wave that happened in the mid-seventies, those people were still very much a part of their culture - a male culture that was bouncy and funny, quite abrasive, and blokey and matey and sexist. The films reflect the kind of place New Zealand was then. What I subsequently did was I started looking around at where women might come from (Preston 1992: 170).

Wells acknowledges his own experience as an audience member and the challenge of overseas films catalysing a desire to create his own images. By this he means a national as well as a personal imaginary. He attributes the constraints that shape this imaginary to the established local film infrastructure of the time:

We used to talk of an inverted pyramid: an unrealistic number of features up the top, with a very high-tech crew developing alongside it, very few ideas, indifferent scripts, and down the bottom a few short films being made as a way of getting people to learn the craft of film making. Because, as everyone knows, there was no film school in New Zealand, so you risk this ghastly reality, people making first features without much schooling in film dramas at all (Wells 1992: 178).

Implicit within all of the contributions to *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*, is a conception of the determining effects of particular historic periods and therefore the effects of a conjuncture of particular economic, political and social influences on the culture of the period. The assumption made by the contributors is that the influence of a "cultural context" is somehow inscribed within the films that are finally completed.

The second edition of *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*, published in 1996, introduces a new note to the perception of film in Aotearoa New Zealand. In the introduction, the editors concentrate their discussion on the current economic and political climate for New Zealand film makers. Despite the successes of *The Piano*, *Once Were Warriors* and *Heavenly Creatures*, they believe that there has 'been a failure to capitalise on the prominence New Zealand film making has had, and its cultural value has not been recognised' (Bieringa and Dennis 1996: 8). Further, this climate, which has seen the industry been 'driven by economic rather than creative imperatives,' (Bieringa and Dennis 1996: 8) is reflected in less 'energy and sense of discovery in short film making that is so important for the future health of the industry' (Bieringa and Dennis 1996: 8).

Bieringa and Dennis recognise the dynamic implications involved in the notion of cultural context, and that changing conditions - in this case especially those of the economic and political - have had a powerful influence on the types of films produced. These changing conditions are also important when actual cinematic practices become the focus of the research and any theoretical framework must be sensitive to the notion of the changing conditions that the commentators have foregrounded in their discussions.

International Influences

Cinema practices are not closed off from international influences and this idea has been an important consideration for some commentary on New Zealand film. O'Shea describes this in terms of the dominating effects of Hollywood products, and Horrocks as a response to this mainstream. Mita and Barclay focus on the effects of Maori cultural identities by the colonising pressures of British occupation; Murphy the adaptation of international genre forms; Preston the response to male dominated mythologising exposed by an influx of feminist theories from overseas; and finally, Wells, as a personal response to foreign film experiences causing a desire for his own imaginary.

Reid also covers the debate about foreign influence and the way this is perceived to influence indigenous practices, and thus, the cultural context of New Zealand films. Writing in the 1980's, he argues that

the fear persists in much of the New Zealand industry that productions with some offshore backing can soak up the available local private investment, create unrealistically high wage-rates and costs of services, and kill off any wholly indigenous venture. In the process, the argument goes, a distinctively New Zealand national identity in film is stifled. New Zealand becomes merely a "cheap backlot" for Hollywood - what Spain once was to the American and European film industries (1986: 16).

This domination of the industry by foreign influence is challenged, however, by the argument that the incorporation of characteristic indigenous elements within films is an effective commercial strategy. Citing the debate between Antony Ginnane and John Maynard in *On Film*,⁴ Reid includes Maynard's opinion that the New Zealand films which were 'remembered, appreciated and also commercially successful were all "films from somewhere" - that is films with a distinctively New Zealand flavour, such as *Sleeping Dogs*, *Good-bye Pork Pie* and *Smash Palace*' (Reid 1986: 17). In this perspective, the shaping influence of a characteristic cultural context was considered to be an important asset for commercial success.

⁴ *Onfilm* (1984), Vol. 1, 5, 'Pictures for Profit'; and *Onfilm*, (1984), Vol. 1, 6, 'Putting Your Gucci in Your Mouth'

As Preston points out, the influx of feminist theories was also an important determinant on film making attitudes. Shepard also considers this phenomena when she surveys the development of women's film from the seventies. She characterises male film making as "'boys' own" adventure stories brimming with action and anarchy where the women were sidelined as the "sex interest", or the butt of male jokes' (1993: 87), and reinforces Preston's reaction to male film makers of the seventies and eighties.

The feminist response to film making expressed in Preston's and others' feature films coincided, according to Shepard, 'with the entrance of a feminist theoretical voice into the New Zealand film criticism' (1993: 87). This statement parallels that made by Horrocks who suggests that changing contexts also changed the way films were received:

The 1980's generation has brought changes to both Maori and Pakeha film making, but particularly to the latter. Though young people were grateful that a film industry had been established in the 1970s, they read the films differently, stressing gender and race rather than localism. Though the industry loved to play rebel it seemed to them still an ally of the dominant culture. It was too male, too white, too provincial. The 1980s saw a number of assaults on the "New Zealand tradition" in literature and the visual arts by young critics committed to feminism, biculturalism, and deconstruction (quoted in Reid 1986:16).

Feminist perspectives are utilised in work by Seton (1986 and 1987), Hardy (1989,1990 and 1992), Sayle (1989), Clarke (1989), Watson (1990), Bilborough (1990), Lawler Dormer (1993) and Cairns (1996).

Feminism, however, is just one of a number of different theoretical approaches introduced from overseas. The forum for many of the theoretical approaches concerning the moving image is found in academic journals *Illusions* and *Sites* although further essays are scattered throughout other publications such as *Now See Hear, alter/image*, *The big picture*, *On Film* and the now defunct journal *Planet. Alternative Cinema* was an earlier forum for these discussions.⁵

⁵ See *Alternative Cinema*, Auckland: Alternative Cinema Magazine, and *Planet*, Auckland: Future Pacific Ltd.

A range of critical positions have been adopted, usually with a focus on an analysis of one or more texts. Such positions include: Pakeha ideology and identity, Campbell (1986, 1995) and McDonald (1995); cultural influence, Reid (1986), narrative, Aitken (1987) and Campbell (1987); semiotic analysis, Bilborough (1988); Maori representation politics, Barclay (1988, 1991), Parekowhai (1988), Edwards (1989), Cleave (1995), Blythe (1994) and Pihama (1995); genre analysis, Norris (1990) and Young (1990); Samoan perspectives, Samasoni (1990); gay perspectives, Kline (1990) and Carbutt (1989); postmodernism, Reynolds (1990) and Wilcox (1985); audience research, Watson (1990); and historical analysis, Maxwell (1995) and Churchman (1997).

New Zealand Short Film Scholarship

The majority of commentary on film focuses on contexts involving the practices utilised for feature films or else theoretical approaches to feature films. When short films are considered the discussion often implies the transitional nature of short film practice for film makers. The implication in this commentary is that short film is a stepping stone for feature film projects or a place of no commercial consequence, where film makers - especially women - can explore more personal approaches to cinema. For example, articles on women film makers include Bosshard et al (1986), Clarke (1989), McDonald (1994 and 1993), Horrocks (1991a and 1991b), MacKenzie (1991), Horrocks and Horrocks (1991), Evans (1994), Tilly (1995), and Margolis (1996). Another thematic frame focusing on short film is that of emerging film makers and this is considered by Loader (1989), Hyde (1994), and Clarke (1994-95). There is also a limited number of New Zealand commentaries which approach the short film employing a form of textual analysis including Bilborough (1991), French (1990), Amery (1994), Tily (1994) and Margolis (1996).

The Danish journal *p.o.v.* includes more in-depth discussions of New Zealand short film. These journal articles involve extensive textual analysis, with different scholars approaching the film text from complementary tangents. Also included are interviews with the film maker about the film and related contexts. Currently these studies have focused on *Avondale Dogs* (Thomsen 1996, Petrovic 1996, Kau 1996, Kolstrup 1996, and Raskin 1996), and *The Beach* (Raskin 1997 and Olesen 1997).

The art of the short fiction film, is also a focus in *p.o.v.* 5 with New Zealand films and the New Zealand context included. This work begins to examine theoretical approaches to short film with approaches by - Riis, Raskin and Yeatman. According to Raskin 'no serious research has previously been published on the short fiction film'

(1998: 165) and the three articles included are an attempt to address this lack. Raskin cites four other works which he considers to be the existing literature on the study of short film, but he believes that none of them 'contains anything even remotely resembling a new conceptual model' (1998: 165). He cites Phillips (1991), Cooper and Dancyger (1994), Levey (1994) and Cowgill (1997). He could also include Rea and Irving (1995). All these texts focus primarily on the methods of writing scripts for short film and do not consider specific frameworks for analysis of this form and, unlike the *p.o.v.* articles, the texts cited by Raskin do not consider the role that short films might play within the film industry and in terms of theory.

Riis reinforces the perception that short film practice is transitional, but, he believes, while short film making is useful as a learning experience it can also assist theorising aspects of film. He thinks that shorts are 'generally seen as an opportunity to practice and improve narrative skills without the costs and pains of a long production period' and are usually associated with studentship (1998: 133). However, he believes his own experience with short film has given him a new perspective on audience engagement and thinks that studying short films may 'lead us to new ways of seeing spectator engagement' (1998: 133). For Riis short film practice as a learning experience might offer an advantage of facilitating feedback and therefore encourage theoretical speculation. This can occur by 'testing hypotheses and assumptions about short films and films in general by seeing to what degree they actually aid the production' (1998: 134).

Raskin's approach to short film is to 'attempt to identify factors which make film stories function optimally' (1998: 163). He engages with short film in the role of a teacher who wants 'student film makers to design better stories for their films' (1998: 164) and states:

I have found it useful to work with *pairs* of properties that can be thought of as *balancing* or *completing* one another. Each set of properties constitutes a parameter. When the two components of a given parameter are both fully present in a filmic event, their interplay shapes and enriches that event. When only one is present, or when they are out of balance or there is no real interplay between the two, the filmic event will be that much poorer (Raskin 1998: 163).

Riis approaches short film as a practice suited to theoretical speculation and Raskin wants to develop an analytic model which will assist in developing student skill in

creating scripts. The short film as object or text is given prime importance as a focus of practice and object of theory.

Yeatman's essay attempts to approach short film from a different perspective and reflects a desire to extend the scholarship and research on film beyond the film text, but still remaining focused on cinematic practices. He states that

there are pressures, however, to make short films for reasons that go beyond telling stories, and although the value of the short films made can be judged through a reading of them as narrative texts, foregrounding, for instance, aesthetic structures, or an analysis of motifs, themes, images and ideologies, using whatever theory is suitable, they can just as appropriately be judged on their effectiveness at furthering the director's likelihood to get future funding for a feature. One very important story inscribed in short film is the shaping of short films by these extra-textual pressures (1998: 155).

It is this motivation to explore the extra-textual pressures involved in short film making, that leads to approaches to short film that consider the extensive contexts of cinematic practice. This is an approach discussed at the beginning of the chapter, which foregrounds actual practices involved in film production, rather than analysing film texts or focussing on audience responses. It is not designed to replace the perspectives briefly outlined in this review of contemporary literature about New Zealand film, but offers a more detailed analysis of some of the practices that have not been given much significance in the literature.

There is no need to dispute the quality and appropriateness of the work surveyed, but there is a need to focus on different concerns and interests. This arises from the lack of focus on the ways that cinematic practices shape the films produced. Further, the theoretical positions that have been applied to the contemporary New Zealand context of film making frequently marginalise the effects of funding, production, marketing and distribution on the types of films produced while they foreground a more general contextual overview and emphasise specific social or economic conditions.

Some attempts have been made to engage with these issues in the commentaries reviewed. For instance, Horrocks' work on experimentalism and the reaction to the mainstream or the debate about an indigenous industry and market influences. Murphy's strategies for making *Good-bye Pork Pie* are another example. None of these discussions have provided any significant theoretical support however, and the

implicit assumptions about context and effects of context have had little detailed examination.

Commentaries framed by theoretical perspectives do attempt an explanation of the processes assumed to shape the reading of film. However, much of this work is based on specific readings of either one or a selected few works, and thus, it seems, often create the impression that a film has significant autonomy from any political, economic or social conditions. Often in these theoretical perspectives little regard is given to the complex range of processes that influence the practice of film making.

Discussions of Policy and New Zealand Film

Other work has focussed on these processes in New Zealand. For instance, Jeffrey (1992), Watson (1992) and Poata (1992) have all contributed to policy questions, but their approaches have tended to involve an historical background, rather than engaging with the detail of actual policy and their effects on practices. For instance, Jeffrey's approach deals with the Film Commission, briefly outlining its beginnings and the change in the nineties to more accountability. She also discusses the changes in attitude to implementing policy from a past one of reaction to the present more proactive approach. She outlines two policy strategies that have been implemented: the Producer Operated Development scheme in which experienced producers 'can test development of projects to an early stage, and make their decisions about where things are going' (Jeffrey 1992: 48) and a scheme that assists producers in making contacts with the international market. For Jeffrey, 'the important policy initiative for the Film Commission in the nineties is going to be attempting to increase its funding base and to look at other sources of financing feature films in New Zealand' (Jeffrey 1994: 48).

Watson offers an approach which 'attempts to consider the extent to which New Zealand's national cinema has been helped or hindered by its society's involvement through its government agencies' (1994: 121). He outlines a brief history of the development of cinema practice from its beginnings in New Zealand in 1886 and also discusses the problems of defining New Zealand content and what content should be funded by government agencies, including political material critical of the government position. He believes that 'the most important problems to overcome in order for the industry and the culture to flourish are those of financial incentives and the provision of a distribution system that is sensitive and supportive of the product' (Watson 1994: 130).

Poata focuses on the effects policy has had on Maori film making practices and he reflects a feeling of the symbolic rather than actual recognition of the rights afforded to Maori through the Treaty of Waitangi. Although acknowledging that the New Zealand Film Commission and Creative New Zealand are attempting to come to terms with the Treaty of Waitangi he believes that 'when compared to support given to the New Zealand sport and world yachting events government funding is appallingly low to the arts, and film makers in general, and almost non-existent to Maori film makers in particular' (Poata 1994: 156).

These articles initiate a discussion on policy influences and begin to establish a focus on an area of New Zealand film which has found little favour with academic commentary or research. There is a need within the theoretical and critical commentaries on New Zealand film, for more of this work and approaches foregrounding the processes that influence the types of film made in New Zealand. Investigations of these processes might be useful in debating the influence of cultural context over cultural products. It is important to examine the assumptions that have remained unsupported in many of the discussions, as well as widen the theoretical scope to allow for a more comprehensive examination of the processes and practices that shape contemporary New Zealand film. An important area to begin these investigations is that of policy and the way this might impinge on the practices that shape New Zealand film making.

For example, what are the processes actually involved when Horrocks makes a connection between the communal and anti-market spirit of the sixties and that same spirit in Murphy's films? Similarly what are the processes involved in the eighties (and nineties) market oriented climate? How do these processes function within the relationships of funding, production and reception? If Mita and Barclay are correct in their discussion of colonising pressures within New Zealand film making, how do these pressures operate to create that perceived position for Maori film makers? If the feminist approach foregrounds the processes of patriarchal dominance reflected in language and the representations of women in film, are these the only processes that operate to disenfranchise or thwart a full participation for women in film? Are there other roles that women occupy, other positions that they take on, that show alternative sites of power for women? If Bieringa and Dennis are correct in their summation of the health of contemporary New Zealand cinema, what perspectives can be offered to contribute reasons for this malaise and offer possible directions for the future?

Local Precedents for an Alternative Approach

A number of "local" precedents for an approach which goes beyond an interpretation of the film texts and considers the processes involved in the shaping of these texts, can be found in some discussions centred on a New Zealand context, although these are more likely to refer to television than film. For instance, Hardy, in her review of *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*, challenges the implicit assumption of the privileged role of the auteur film maker in New Zealand film. She claims that there is a lack of recognition of film making as a collaborative activity:

Most of us know that film making is almost always a collective and industrial activity, requiring the creative and technical skills of many different people, and dependent on the persuasive skills of those who approach the funding organisations. Although all of the eight film maker author/interviewees pay tribute to others who have collaborated on their films, the way the book is arranged goes straight down the "auteur" track privileging the experience of the individual 'creative' people in film making, the directors and producers, in several cases eliciting what makes them 'special' or different from other people as well as what makes them "normal" or representative of this country (1993: 62/64).

Hardy is asking for recognition of the relationships that help shape the final film products, including not only the creative relationships within the production processes, but surely, the relationships involved in funding, marketing, distribution, and the reception of film. To do this a theoretical perspective is required which will foreground the range of processes involved in making film, rather than the range of objects created from these processes.

One text that does set a precedent for this "process" approach to cultural production in New Zealand is *The Arts in Aotearoa New Zealand*, which is intended by the authors to take the reader

behind the scenes and introduced to the cycle of artistic production, distribution and consumption. In doing this, we adopt a different stance from most writers on New Zealand art since we focus not so much on completed works as on the conditions under which they are made, marketed and evaluated (Beatson and Beatson 1994: 1).

The Beatsons' attempt to cover the spectrum of artistic practice in New Zealand, offering a range of perspectives on such practices as artistic production⁶ and its infrastructural constraints. They describe art making as 'an act of production involving the same economic and social factors as all forms of labour' (Beatson and Beatson 1994: 80). Their approach also covers funding, marketing, reception and critical commentary, as well as the social functions of art. It is a guide to a different approach to a commentary on film practices, but is too general to become a sufficient commentary for these practices.

Critical commentary on television in New Zealand offers support for an approach attempting to connect contexts with practice, and offering explanations for the relationships between them. For instance, Tyler-Smith deals with the impact of the political economy of broadcasting on 'the types and styles of programmes made, on the way they are produced, and on the viewer's experience' (1995: 1). He states that

limitations of budget, production time, technical resources and all the other restrictions brought about by changes in the political economy have sparked great innovation and development in New Zealand's television programme genres (1995: 4).

A specific instance of the influential relationship between the economic and legislative context, and the practices involved in programme making, can be found in the new possibilities arising from the conditions created by the Employment Contracts Act:

Here in New Zealand we can hire actors on a per programme basis and this means it gives us terrific flexibility in terms of how many storylines we can run and how many scenes we can have in any programme. Shortening the average length of a scene, means more scenes can be squeezed into the twenty two and a half minutes that make up a commercial half hour programme. Increasing the number of storylines becomes possible because it is now economically viable to employ more actors for a shorter time and the increase in scene

⁶ For the Beatsons, there are six different approaches to an understanding of artistic production: 'expression, art expressing an inner voice; reflection, art acting as a mirror; communication, art as a form of message; power, art appropriating particular forms or meanings; formalism, art being created solely for its own sake; and deconstruction, art 'as an agent of radical subversion' (Beatson and Beatson: 67-69).

numbers means more storylines can be handled (Tyler-Smith 1995: 11).

Tyler-Smith is describing how the Employment Contracts Act creates a different context for programme making, and these changes influence the form of the commercial half hour programme, which in turn allows for additional storylines. Changes in the form of a programme are directly linked by Tyler-Smith to changes in employment conditions, and this, in turn, is linked to a political climate totally unconcerned with televisual forms.

Horrocks has also commented on the changes that have arisen in New Zealand television programming because of a changed political and economic climate. In 'Conflicts and Surprises in New Zealand Television' he discusses the changing commercial priorities arising from the commercial environment of 1988-89.⁷

Such commercial priorities, as Horrocks sees them, include

an extension in the hours of broadcasting; increased advertising and sponsorship; more American programmes; a tendency for news and current affairs to concentrate on melodramatic 'human interest' stories and dramatic visuals; and a rejection of slower-paced and more complex modes of presentation. To this list we could add related developments such as a more aggressive corporate attitude towards competitors; an expansion in ratings and market research; an increased emphasis on strategic scheduling; the 'branding' of channels; a flood of promos for prime time programs; a battle for the rights to major sporting events as a key ratings weapon; and minutely detailed analyses of all financial inputs and outputs as the key factor in decision-making. In terms of program style, there has been an increased emphasis on accessibility, human interest, emotional impact, a 'feel-good' mood (so that tragic experiences are followed by an 'up ending'), and the rejection of any program the viewers may see as dry, highbrow or unfriendly (1996: 50).

⁷ 'In December 1988 the government turned TVNZ into a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE). This meant it had to operate as a successful business, each year delivering a sizeable dividend to its owner (the government). A new privately-owned channel, TV3, was allowed to go to air in 1989 as TVNZ's first direct competitor. The New Zealand economy went into recession in 1988-89 and this had an immediate impact on television advertising revenue' (Horrocks 1996: 51).

Horrocks outlines a number of significant changes that he believes have occurred because of the changed political climate and the influence of free market ideology. Dominant in his list are the direct and indirect relations between the economic and political and the practices and changing range of televisual forms that are now common in the local context. He claims that within this particular context the local is

distorted by political and legal pressures or by fears and speculations about the possibility of such interventions. The space of New Zealand television is defined and ruled by these forces - political, commercial and legal. The situation is set up in such a way that other energies - social, cultural or creative - do not have the power to override them, and can enter the space only with the support of one of the gatekeepers (1996: 61).

This perspective is a deterministic one foregrounding the political, commercial and legal as the dominant influences of cultural production and these become "gatekeepers" to the social, cultural or creative. However, Horrocks also calls for a theoretical model that focuses on the strategies involved in this political context. He wants an approach 'detailed enough to guide political action' (1996: 62) within the space of New Zealand television. To achieve this he wants to focus 'on the surprises, the verbal confusions, and constant collisions and trade-offs between competing forces, to help us create a detailed map of this battlefield - a map that is less utopian and less doctrinaire and thus a more practical guide to political intervention' (1996: 62/63).

Another precedent, more directly related to film, but situated in an Australian national context, is that established by Dermondy and Jacka. They understand their project as

an "anatomy" of the whole body of this strange entity - a commercial, publicly funded production of cultural artefacts that entered the domain of the social imaginary of this [Australian] culture. [They] wanted to find the correspondences between observable patterns of infrastructure, economics, and "public circulation" of the Australian film industry, and those in the films themselves, in their chronological emergence and generic groupings (1988: 3).

Dermondy and Jacka were not only attempting to find patterns in the Australian film industry shaped by both political and economic processes, which Horrocks regards as key, but also the "public circulation" or, in other words, the perceptions of the film

industry found in public discourses. This latter consideration was, for Dermondy and Jacka, as important, or even more important than the political and economic. For them the

public notion of the industry, demands quite as much close attention as the economic. It is arguably the far more powerful influence upon its social and historical destiny, since it affects governments and votes, and government policy decides how or if the film industry shall continue, regardless of its economic performance - at least so far, and for the immediate future (1988: 24).

This construct is created in numerous places, including the

rhetoric of lobbyists and journalists, taken up in the speeches and statements of politicians and on into parliamentary debates and even Acts. Other official texts that begin to reflect back the rhetoric are the annual reports of government bodies, union policies; the pamphlets and documents of contending interest groups within the industry, which give rise to (or represent) new lobby positions, reformulations of, and new tensions between, old rhetorical positions; and the cycle continues (1988: 24/25).

Dermondy and Jacka move away from a reliance on a political and economic frame to suggest that other factors, such as the various "voices" in the public domain also shape the notions of the industry, and its products. Their approach is to look at the many voices behind the scenes of film production and its reception. It is a broad and historicising approach, comparing the rhetoric of an industry with the changes in decision making of various aspects of that industry.

These alternative approaches look at the interrelationship between structures and individuals and consider the decisions made by those individuals involved in film practices and how they might be determined by a multiplicity of factors. The research focusing on the interrelationships of the various contexts of film making practices must in some manner acknowledge the processes of determination, consider how these might be theorised, and justify the value of the particular theoretical paradigm invoked for their explanation. This theoretical approach will be developed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

The Theoretical Agenda

Cinematic Practices

The theoretical agenda for this research was motivated by a desire to avoid a model which relies on a dominant reductionist focus; coupled with a desire to establish an approach which has a greater sensitivity to the complex of relations that are involved in the infrastructure of state-sponsored funding. This approach foregrounds the contexts which shape the strategic practices involved in producing films rather than focusing on an analysis of film texts.

These cinematic practices involve a complex range of collaborative⁸ relationships between a diversity of people including those directly involved in the production of a film, as well as those who take on roles in contexts that have a more indirect relationship to production. These practices are influenced by a conjunction of cultural, economic, political and social conditions, which in turn influence the production of actual film texts. The prime questions that direct this theoretical agenda are: how do the collaborative relationships involved in cinema practices operate? And how might these relations influence the decisions made by film makers and funders about the choice of projects to be produced? The agenda is motivated by a desire to investigate the different axes of power relations involved in these collaborative relationships of cinema practice. The metaphor of axis of power refers to the negotiated and dynamic conditions which influence decisions between individuals and the associated collective constraints that also influence these decisions. Specifically, significant axes are understood to be between the funding agendas of the state and those of the funding boards; the funding bodies and stakeholder/practioners who are involved with these bodies; the funding panels and individual members of these panels, and between these panels and the applicants applying for funds. Each of these areas establish an axis around which alignments and decisions are made.

⁸The word collaborative has been chosen to emphasise that despite any resistance, disagreement or different agendas, finally individuals have to work together on a film to finish the project. Collaboration does not disregard negotiation, compromise, or the possibility of autonomous decision making within the confines of different roles within the project.

Feedback from the Research

The theoretical perspective was grounded by feedback from the research. At the initial stages of this research an emerging hypothesis developed from responses to questionnaires concerning aspects of film makers' perceptions and practices. It was altered when further consideration was given to the implications of the data received.

For instance, in one important case a response from questions was received in the form of an audio tape. The respondent stated that she had difficulty responding to the questions because she did not know who the researcher was, she 'did not know [the researcher's] whakapapa' (Kaa)⁹. As the researcher, I was thankful that these reservations the respondent felt were out-weighed by her own aspirations to do research and was therefore sympathetic enough to help in mine.

This response, which was concerned about not knowing the researcher, helped to frame a theoretical perspective which incorporated the collaborative processes demanded by Hardy and theorised by Wolff; the effects of policy on practice exposed by Tyler-Smith and discussed by Cunningham; the practical guide sought by Horrocks McMahon and Quin; and the polyphony of voices suggested by Dermondy and Jacka.

A tape was sent back in response and as a mark of the researcher's appreciation for the respondent's participation in the research process. It was also an opportunity to thank the respondent for what seemed to be an important insight into the research. The tape recorded the realisation that as the researcher listened to the respondent's voice there was a sense of who she was, and by sending her a tape of the researcher's own voice it was hoped the respondent could reciprocate.

The voice tells a lot about the person speaking. The pitch, intonation, rhythms, cadence, timbre as well as the metaphors and concerns mediated through the signifiers, all help to give an impression of age, gender, body size, state of health, personality, education and cultural affiliations. If short film is imagined as a voice, then a way to approach the research was to focus on the body that shapes that voice. The voice is like a signature of the body and, at least metaphorically, short films could be interpreted as a "signature" of the political, economic, social and cinematic practices currently involved in making short films in New Zealand.

⁹ All quotes from transcribed interviews or questionnaire responses are acknowledged with the surname of the respondent at the end of the quote. This applies in all cases, even when the name of the respondent is mentioned before the quote.

However this raises the question what is meant by the "body" that shapes the short film "voice" and, more importantly, how can it be accessed?

One approach, which became the initial hypothesis, was to suggest that there are a myriad of relationships operating in the collaborative processes necessary to make a short film and that these are *inscribed* in the short films. This can be theorised in terms of Grosz's model of the body. Her conception of inscription 'conceives the body as a surface on which social law, morality, and values are inscribed' (1995: 33). For Grosz

the inscriptive model is more concerned with the processes by which the subject is marked, scarred, transformed, and written upon or constructed by the various regimes of institutional, discursive, and nondiscursive power as a particular kind of body (1995: 33).

But can we actually recognise these inscriptions within short film and analyse them to see how they are shaped by the funding, production, distribution, marketing, and reception activities that have taken place before and after completion? Is it possible to analyse a film text and discover the complex system of social practices that were necessary for its initial production and continued existence? Can we see how it is 'marked, scarred, transformed and written upon or constructed'? (Grosz 1995: 33).

For instance, short films are shaped by the myriad choices made by producers and directors, and these in turn are constrained by available finance, which in turn is influenced by political and economic agendas. Short films are also influenced by the funders, who allocate the available finance, and whose decisions are coloured by the agenda of funding bodies. The "life" of a short film is influenced by marketing strategies and often it is those films deemed to have a narrative with a commercial potential that will be given access to an audience. However, the "success" of a short might also be in the potential it has as a calling card, a work of art, or else as a successful competitor in an international festival, and therefore, need not necessarily be judged only in terms of its commercial profile.

There are other voices behind the "voice" of the short film, but they are not necessarily easily differentiated within the form of the film text. Just because Tyler - Smith could discuss the changes in a television programme and find a determining cause in the political climate, it doesn't follow that he could track in the other direction and infer that there has been a change in a political climate because there

have been changes in the number of storylines in a programme. It is not possible to articulate the material and social processes, supporting the making of a short film through an analysis of short films themselves, although it is necessary to accept that any short film is shaped by these same processes.

Golding similarly supports this challenge to the reliance of analysis on film texts, when he states that

it is one thing to argue that all cultural forms contain traces of the relations of production underlying their construction, and of the structural relations which surround them. It is quite another to go on to argue that an analysis of form can deliver an adequate and satisfactory account of these sets of relations and of the determinations that they exert on the production process. They can't. In our view the sociology of culture and communications has been seriously incapacitated by the tendency to over-privilege texts as objects of analysis. Textual analysis will remain important and necessary, but it cannot stand in for the sociological analysis of cultural production (1989: 484-485).

This first hypothesis that somehow the processes involved in shaping a short film could be differentiated through an analysis of short film as text, because these processes were inscribed in the films produced, was abandoned.

If the analysis of the form of a film or films is not an adequate entry point for research into the social practices and material conditions involved in making short film, then what other options might be appropriate? For instance should we follow Horrocks or Tyler-Smith and consider the political and economic as the essential gatekeepers or determinants and, therefore, rely on a political economy approach to explain the shaping elements of short film practices?

The Political Economy of Cultural Practices

The political economy approach to a study of cultural forms foregrounds the material and economic constraints involved in cultural practices and suggests that ownership or control of the financial resources and means of production significantly influences the range and types of cultural product available. Good, for instance, suggests that analyses with this focus provide

a material context for interpreting the role of culture in reproducing social relations and identities; they provide an explicit account of the dynamics behind the production of ideas and the mystification of the whole production process, as opposed to explaining only content or effects (1989: 516).

The establishment of an economic context for short film practices is necessary because it is misguided to suggest that the amount of funding available is not an extremely influential element in the making of short films. However, are funding levels the only influential factor in the processes of funding allocation or are there other conditions which help shape these processes?

Garnham assumes that the material context has a dominant determining place. For him the

superstructure of culture is and remains subordinate, and the crucial questions are the relationship between, on the one hand, the mode of extraction and distribution of the material surplus (class relations) and, on the other, the allocation of this material surplus within the superstructure, for instance the problem of public expenditure (1990: 23).

The allocation of finance is an important consideration in the study of short film practice especially since a lot of energy is directed towards the allocation of funding and the management of funding structures. A consideration of the effects of limited funds is necessary when assessing the ways short film practices are shaped, but it is not the only determining factor. The amount of money available is important when it comes to making short films, but so are the complex web of social relations which constitute the practices involved in short film production. These relations need to be considered in terms that go beyond economic constraints. The motivation for this research seeks to broaden the analytic framework and extend its scope to include a profile of some of the practices important for the production of short film.

Mosco attempts to subvert a reliance on the determinism of a material base by foregrounding the role of power in a political economy approach, which he interprets as 'the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources' (1996: 25). This focus on social relations and especially power is an important addition to the constraints of the material. Horrocks similarly identifies the influence of power

relations in the political and legal, and for him, it is at these levels that other important determining influences on cultural practices operate. The question remains however, how do these power relations actually operate, and is it just the power of the political masters which has the determining influence, or are there other features that can be included in the theory?

Hall introduces another theoretical approach which is prompted by Raymond Williams' discussion of culture in *The Long Revolution*. He believes Williams challenges

the literal operations of the base/superstructure metaphor, which in classical Marxism ascribed the domain of ideas and of meanings to the 'superstructures', themselves conceived as merely reflective of and determined in some simple fashion by 'the base'; without a social effectivity of their own ... [Williams] offers, instead a radical interactionism: in effect, the interaction of all practices in and with one another, skirting the problem of determinacy (Hall 1980: 35).

This approach includes a greater complexity in the theoretical argument. It diffuses the binary oppositions of base and superstructure and therefore investment in a reductionist reliance on political influence or economic constraints as sole determinants. However, this inclusive approach only seems to complicate the concept of determinism rather than, as Williams might hope, to skirt the problem. Are there dominant determining factors in Williams' model or do all of these interacting practices have an equal value in the calculation of their importance? For instance, does political power, reflected in the levels of funding committed to funding agencies, remain a dominant determining factor or does Williams' model suggest that other factors, such as social practices, have equal determining effects?

A Cultural Studies Approach

The idea of an 'interaction of all practices' (Hall 1980:35) points to the important theoretical endeavour of cultural studies, which, according to Williams, accommodates a number of broad perspectives. Culture is not only the study of values 'which can be seen to compose a timeless order, or to have permanent reference to the universal condition' (1961: 41), and 'the body of intellectual and imaginative work' (1961: 47), but also it is 'a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour' (1961: 47). It is this inclusion of different perspectives on the idea

of culture, especially that of the last "social" definition, which suggests that the practice of cultural studies might offer an important framework for the theoretical approach which is being sought for the purposes of this research. The research focus could be motivated by an interest in the culture of funding, that is, following Williams, the meanings and values of the institutions and relations of those involved in funding processes.

Storey similarly offers an inclusive and possibly more contemporary perspective when he describes the role of cultural studies as one which 'seeks to keep in equilibrium the different moments of cultural production - material production, symbolic production, textual production, and the "production in use" of consumption' (1996: 2). For Storey, just as with Williams, the material plays a necessary role in any study of cultural production, but there are other factors that also need to be considered.

Hall discusses the cultural studies project as one that was catalysed from an engagement with the problem of economic determinism situated in a Marxist perspective and which resulted in

a contestation with the model of base and superstructure, through which sophisticated and vulgar Marxism alike had tried to think the relationships between society, economy, and culture (1992: 265).

According to Hall, developments in cultural studies occurred with a 'detour through Gramsci' (1992: 266), and then further theoretical conceptions based on feminism, race, and discourse and these in turn, generated their own questions about such areas as the personal and political; the notions of power, gender and sexuality; the subjective and subject; the unconscious; the politics of race, resistance and culture; the importance of language, notions of text and textuality; the heterogeneity of meaning; representation as a site of power and regulation; and the symbolic as a source of identity (1992:266-271). This plethora of concerns and questions deflected emphasis away from a reductionist approach and opened the possibility of a greater range of social practices as influential in the shaping of cultural production.

However this widening of deterministic effects also meant an even more complex theoretical framework and an increasing likelihood of an inability to construct an adequate theoretical account which would cover all options. For instance, according to Hall

[it] has always been impossible in the theoretical field of cultural studies - whether it is conceived either in terms of texts and contexts, of intertextuality, or of the historical formations in which cultural practices are lodged - to get anything like an adequate theoretical account of culture's relations and its effects (1992:271).

O'Regan also discusses this problem when he outlines his approach to a study of national cinema:

The national cinema writer must take on 'multiple and diverse points of view' This imposes practical limits on any analysis. National cinema analyses poach from these apparently more fully achieved domains, and are dependent on their innovations. They mix and match concepts and the innovations drawn from each field (thereby running the risk of failing to apprehend each sufficiently) (1996: 3).

How then can any theoretical frame deal with these problems satisfactorily? How can analysis of any cultural production also incorporate not only a material and political context and their determining effects, but also some of the myriad issues that have arisen from the development of theories surrounding social relations and practices? And how does the theorist escape the problem outlined by Hall and O'Regan, which suggests the extreme complexity of the task at hand?

The Concept of Articulation

One such possibility is through Hall's concept of articulation. This is a contextualising approach, which he developed following Laclau in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, to explain the processes of ideological struggle in cultural production. It is a concept which could also be usefully applied to approaches that are not necessarily motivated by ideological struggle. For instance it could be applied to the negotiations involved in social relationships in a cultural context, whether that entails ideological or any other agendas, and could be a useful concept in investigating the various axes of power established by these relationships for these negotiations.

For Hall, articulation is about linking the collective processes, material and symbolic, that operate at a particular time in a particular context, without necessarily attributing a dominant deterministic value to any one of these processes. It is this collective

assemblage of influential processes that are foregrounded as a basis for understanding the practices and relationships of any context.

The meaning of articulation has a double sense. To articulate is to differentiate, while articulation also refers to connecting and linking together. Implied in this concept then is a theoretical perspective that selects processes involved in cultural practices and connects these to explore their relationships as constitutive elements influencing cultural production. The theoretical focus is directed toward the ensemble of conditions that operate in a specific context at a specific time, or in other words the conjunction of political, economic and social conditions within specific contexts. This inclusive approach can be used to characterise any context's influence on particular cultural productions, including short film.

For Hall, the concept of articulation offers

other ways of theorising the elements of a social formation and the relations that constitute it not simply as relations of correspondence (that is, as reductionist and essentialist) but also as relations of non-correspondence and contradiction (1996: 117).

This necessarily changes the focus from one that has a defined reductionist framework and replaces it with an emphasis on contexts each with their own ensemble of determining factors which might or might not have contradictory effects on each other. The contexts can have a degree of autonomy, but they are also imbricated with other associated contexts, which in turn might or might not have their own determining effects.

This is an analytic approach which can only be partial even if this is simply because of the complexity of the relations and practices which can be articulated. It dilutes the demand for a single determining and general interpretative solution steering the theory to one offering the possibilities of different analytic perspectives. This approach therefore, moves away from the assumption that any group of cultural contexts can be theorised in terms of a single framework and accepts that these contexts can only be interpreted by various partial approaches.

However, it also introduces the problem of calculating the degree of influence that each of the interacting conditions or relationships might have within the ensemble of any context. This problem is stressed by Grossberg who states that

articulation falls back into a structuralism of empty spaces in which every place in the ideological web is equally weighted, equally charged so to speak. The cultural field remains a product of oddly autonomous, indeterminate struggles, an amorphous field of equal differences and hence, of equivalencies. Surprisingly, in the end, this seems to leave no space for the power of either the text itself or the historical actor to excite and incite historical struggles around particular discourses (Grossberg 1996: 167).

A route out of this dilemma is implied by Kirk in his discussion concerning the inheritors of the early British cultural tradition who he believes have 'taken issue with mechanistic models of society and with the reductionism as practised by the right, left or centre' (Kirk 1997: 323). For Kirk, the onus for these theorists was not on reducing the complex cultural contexts to single deterministic interpretative devices, which he would consider to be mechanistic, but was to explore

the limits and pressures (rather than necessary and lawed effects) of the "economic" on other practices and structures, the complex interactions between agency and conditioning, the extent to which structures exist and are part of cognition, degrees of "relative autonomy," and the nature, construction, meanings and social contextualization of language (Kirk 1997: 323).

This suggests that there are significant determinants on cultural contexts, but these are not only influential within different contexts, but also are influenced by other practices and structures within these contexts. For instance, the effects of significant determinants such as funding levels might be influenced by other social practices involved in the process of funding. Other influences might also be articulated, that are either limited by funding levels or have their own autonomy and, therefore, are not necessarily shaped by levels of funding at all. The concept of articulation allows a greater sensitivity to the complex pressures that act within the various contexts under investigation and does not marginalise pressures that arise from conditions within a context which are not dominating in their determining influence, but which do play particular roles.

Articulation offers a conceptualising strategy that allows for the inclusion of both the material and non-material, and their different combinations in different contexts. This means, for instance, that it is possible to regard certain conditions or processes as dominant in some contexts while they might have a lesser significance in others. The

interpretative framework establishes a model in which an analysis of combinations of both material and symbolic factors becomes the motivation for research and a focus for an explanation of the conditions for the production of texts. For instance, in terms of this research, the emphasis becomes one which focuses on a conception of *how* short films are produced. This is not to disregard the various interpretations of *what* is produced as short film, which often manifest in textual analysis of particular texts. This work could also be included in the theoretical conception of *how* short films are produced if the interpretative discourses of film texts are conceived as part of the processes of the production of short film.

The concept of articulation offers a different approach to film studies, displacing an emphasis on the analysis of the film text in favour of an analysis of the assemblage of influences and their various contexts of film production and reception. This concept implies a strategic response to the study of film, with film practice characterised as a cultural formation - a formation of imbricated contexts. The shaping of this cultural formation demands a consideration of the different effects of each of its contexts and the influences of their respective mix of determining pressures.

Slack for instance states of articulation that

epistemologically, articulation is a way of thinking the structures of what we know as a play of correspondences, non-correspondences and contradictions, as fragments in the constitution of what we take to be unities. Politically, articulation is a way of foregrounding the structure and play of power that entail in relations of dominance and subordination. Strategically, articulation provides a mechanism for shaping intervention within a particular social formation, conjuncture or context (1996: 112).

Articulation problematises the reliance on any one, or combination of influences that might be seen as sufficient determinants for an entire cultural practice and is more sensitive to contradictory or autonomous influences that might also have an influence in cultural practices. Slack argues that articulation foregrounds the constitutive play of processes that are influential in any context and this acts as a way of anchoring the meaning of their effects for that context. It also foregrounds the focus on 'the play of power', (Slack 1996: 112) which operates both within the borders of any context, and between any context and those that surround and overlap its domain. This leads to a conception of cultural production, and specifically in the case of this research object,

short film, as a formation of different contexts in which a combination of economic, political and symbolic influences play necessary constitutive roles.

For Grossberg as well, the concept of articulation foregrounds a contextualising approach:

Articulation offers a theory of contexts. It dictates that one can only deal with, and from within, specific contexts, for it is only there that practices have specific effects, that identities and relations exist. Understanding a practice involves theoretically and historically (re)-constructing its context (1992: 55).

What is meant by these practices, their effects, their identities and relations? According to O'Regan this collection of contexts and their constitutive processes can be described as 'an imperfectly integrated assemblage because it is a hybrid of people, texts, elements, social practices, discourses, and technologies with all manner of relations between them' (1985: 40). It is this hybrid mixture determined by the focus of specific contexts that becomes the site of enquiry for an approach to short film. This approach foregrounds particular contexts and within these contexts the disparate range of processes, material constraints and social relations that together shape decisions.

For the concept of articulation, an examination of the relationships between practices, policy and material constraints of different contexts is therefore essential and, for Grossberg, this is conceived as a process of progressive concretising which occurs by increasingly articulating more influences in any one context:

A particular event or practice, empirically given, has to be made concrete by constructing its context, by describing the complex systems of articulation which make it what it is. Our analysis becomes more concrete as we add more of the articulations (1992: 58).

Grossberg emphasises that with the concept of articulation, the focus on practices is based on a particular context and is established to the extent that contextual influences are differentiated and linked. This process is open ended and the analysis of the context becomes more extensive as more influences are articulated.

This approach has many similarities to that of Bakhtin's conception of cultural practices. Stam, for instance, discusses these similarities when he outlines what he defines as Bakhtin's theoretical grid:

His emphasis on a boundless context that constantly interacts with and modifies the text helps us avoid the formalist fetishization of the autonomous art object. His emphasis on the "situated utterance" and the "interpersonal generation of meaning" helps us avoid the static ahistoricism of an apolitical "value free" semiotics. The notion of the heteroglossia, finally, proposes a fundamentally nonunitary, constantly shifting cultural field in which the most varied discourses exist in shifting, multivalenced oppositional relationships. Heteroglossia, after all, can be seen as another name for the social and even the psychic contradictions that constitute the subject, like the media, as the site of conflicting discourses and competing voices (1992: 237).

The profile of cultural practice implicit in Stam's discussion of Bakhtin parallels that of the multicontextual domains discussed by Hall and Grossberg. The contexts are boundless, which means contexts themselves are articulated - differentiated and connected to extend to an ever-increasing field. The influences on practices within contexts are similarly boundless as they become progressively more defined with more articulations. The "utterance" is situated and, therefore, anchored within contexts. The notion of heteroglossia, which defines utterances as 'functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore resolve' (Bakhtin 1981: 423) suggests the mix of influences within any domain and the possibility of only a partial articulation of these influences. Finally Bakhtin's focus is a discursive one. The importance of the conception of the discursive will be considered later in this chapter.

Slack emphasises that this theoretical approach is a strategic one in the sense that theory is not 'an objective, formal tool, or even a "value-free" heuristic device' (Slack 1996: 113), and theorising is 'not measured by exact theoretical fit but by the ability to work with our always inadequate theories to help us move understanding "a little further on down the road"' (Slack 1996: 113). For her articulation should be understood in this way, 'articulation is, then, not just a thing (not just connections) but a process of creating connections' (1996: 114).

In terms of this research on state-sponsored funding the concept of articulation offers a 'mechanism for shaping intervention' (Slack 1996: 112) which involves the

construction of appropriate contexts and the articulation of their constitutive influences either material or symbolic. The process of connecting is determined by the research agenda which foregrounds the strategies involved in state-sponsored funding for short film. These strategies are shaped by the intersection of policy and the interpretation of this policy in practice. The theoretical framework for this research must therefore establish a formation of contexts and then develop a conception of the nature of the social relations involved in these contexts. The remainder of this chapter will proceed in this direction.

The Contexts of State Sponsored Funding

This thesis has established the premise that there are numerous collaborative relationships necessary for the production of a film. These include those directly involved in actual production of a film: producers, directors, actors and crew for instance, as well as those involved supporting a film culture or industry - the politicians, funders, marketers, distributors, festival organisers, audiences, critics and educators. These collaborative practices can be understood by constructing the set of contexts in which they are pressured and limited by the conjunction of political, economic, social and cultural conditions. This research utilises the foregrounding of short film funding strategies as a pragmatic constraint which overcomes the problem of contexts without bounds suggested by Bakhtin. This focus delimits contexts to those which are considered by the researcher to be significant for the research focus while acknowledging these contexts themselves are associated with a widening group of other contexts. This approach follows Slack's position on articulation and acknowledges that the selection of contexts is strongly motivated by the theorist's own agenda and the influence this has on the connections that are developed.

O'Regan reinforces this point when he discusses his own articulation of Australian cinema:

The various ways in which agents know Australian cinema depends on their place in this web [of contexts] (and this includes me). It also depends on the manner in which they negotiate its pathways, intersections and divergences (1996: 40).

For this particular research the focus on state sponsored funding is a strategic choice and was motivated by the fact that the context of state sponsored funding is a site of competition between applicants for the limited amount of money available and an arena of negotiation between political masters and funding agencies. It offers a

profitable area of research for an interest in social practices of film and their material constraints. This area of state sponsored funding is a site where the material and symbolic act together in various ways. Further, the period of the research coincided with changes in the funding regimes and therefore offered an opportunity to illustrate the dynamic nature of the cultural contexts through a comparative study of these changes.

To recapitulate, in each of the funding contexts the influences, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes contradicting each other, contribute to the strategies of collaboration. An attempt is made to differentiate and link some of these influences in this research and the methods applied to examine these articulations are discussed in the following chapter.

This process is not prescriptive. Using this theoretical strategy it is not possible to construct nor anticipate successful strategic formulas for collaborative relationships in the context of funding, but it is possible to describe some of the strategies that do occur and begin to map out the characteristics of the types of influences that might be operating in any contextual domain. Each film project generates its own profile and the options which result in success for one project will not necessarily be the same for another.

At best this research framework is partial and particular, selecting and examining some practices, focusing on the collaborative relations involved in these practices, while at the same time acknowledging the complex of political, economic, and cultural conditions which are influential on these collaborations. Further there is a dynamic aspect to these social relations and the theory is sensitive to the possibility of change in the mix of influences acting on these relationships both within contexts and between them.

It has already been acknowledged that this contextualising approach creates a number of problems. For instance, O'Regan points to the fact that an eclectic analysis must not only face the problem of avoiding superficiality, but must also acknowledge that the way contexts are articulated is dependent on the particular strategic motivations of the theorist or researcher. Also, because of the complexity of the web of contexts and their potential connection with a myriad of other contexts only a partial engagement with these processes is possible and a strategy is required to establish a selected focus to anchor the research and bracket the potential myriad of influences that might be articulated. A further complication arises with the dynamic quotient within the theory,

which means that each project has its own profile of influences although it might have a similar trajectory to other projects through contexts.

This research has acknowledged the agenda of the researcher, in terms of a focus on collaborative relationships and also that this focus is only one of many approaches that can be taken to theorise the practices of cultural production. The theoretical framework has focused on a limited number of contexts in the development trajectory of a short film - those of state sponsored funding and the strategic practices involved in this arena. The dynamic characteristics of these contexts is stressed by the theoretical framework.

Motivations for Cinema Practices

For the purposes of this theoretical perspective it will be assumed that film makers seek funds to make their projects, and they also aspire to survive in the industry through involvement in future projects. This means an investment in reputation as well as a desire for financial profit sometime in the future. These two aspects do not necessarily coincide however, and different roles within the industry invest in these two motivating strategies to different degrees. For instance, as this research will demonstrate, short film makers invest primarily in kudos, rather than profit, with their investment designed to give them the ability to make more projects, possibly feature films, which, in turn, might eventually entail a financial reward. Exhibitors, however, are primarily interested in financial reward and economic survival, and gaining cultural kudos within the industry does not necessarily rank as an important motivation compared to that of commercial success.

The Funding Contexts

The development of a short film can be described by differentiating a number of different contexts such as: script development; production partnerships; funding applications; funding assessment; project development; post-production; final cut assessment; distribution; promotion; exhibition; and reception. The associated contexts for funding applications and funding assessment will be the specific focus of this research.

Funding, for instance, is influenced by political contexts, the contexts of funding agencies, and the contexts of the film maker's motivations for making their projects. For a funding application, the applicant, producer or film maker, depending on the formal relationship demanded by the funding criteria, presents an application to the

respective funding body. This demands certain specifications which include such documents as the script, the profiles of director, crew, cast, as well as additional material such as a profile of previous creative endeavours, visual material to enhance the pitch and other appropriate documents. At the same time the funding body has a particular agenda, influenced by such things as the availability of finance and the motivations for funding projects. These in turn can be influenced by government policy and perceived opportunities available in the screen industry, which in turn are influenced by both government fiscal and cultural policies. It is these clusters of influence and the various collaborative relations of those people involved in the interpretations of these processes that shape the application package and assessment decisions and it will be these influences which will be articulated for the purposes of this research.

Alignments

As part of the theoretical model there is a need to establish a conception of the social relationships involved in the processes of cultural production and how these might influence each other as relationships of power. The theory needs to establish a definition of collaborative relations within the contexts of film practices as this is the major focus of the research.

A useful perspective for this area has been theorised by Wartenberg. He uses a contextualising approach when theorising social relationships. Wartenberg states that any relationship must be placed 'in the context of other social relations through which it is actually constituted as a power relationship' (1990: 142). This approach 'treats an agent's power over another agent as a result of the social field within which the two agents are themselves located' (Wartenberg 1990: 142). He explains that power relationships only exist in the context of a field of relationships supported by peripheral agents, who constrain the degree to which any agent can establish dominance. 'An agent's power over another is determined by the use the peripheral agents make of the two agents' actions and decisions' (Wartenberg 1990: 142). According to Wartenberg the potential for having power is not 'something that resides in social agents independently of the broader social context[s]' (1990: 147). These social relationships are defined by the concept of alignment. Social agents strategically align themselves with others in discursively mediated relationships to have 'control over certain things that [they] might either need or desire' (Wartenberg 1990: 150).

This conception of alignment is appropriate for a research perspective that wishes to theorise the way social relationships operate in a practice of cultural production such as short film making, where this practice involves the necessity of collaborative relationships between individuals in diverse roles. It is theorised that if these relationships operate so that projects can be achieved, then a conception of this mode of collaboration is necessary. For Wartenberg, this mode of collaboration is described as the mediation of the social relationships, through the discourses that are available, and further, that the strategic use of discourses develop alignments between prospective parties to facilitate this co-operation. Discourses then, are theorised as the site of power relations, but these power relations are determined not just by the discourses of individual agents, but by the peripheral agents and their recognition of the primacy of the discourses as well.

Wartenberg's conception of the relationships of power allies itself with Foucault's idea of micropolitics and rests on the assumption that there are reciprocal effects for all those involved in the collaborative relations. The exercise of power profiled by Foucault is conceived as

a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting-subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action (1984 : 427).

This idea of the mutual involvement of each party in the collaborative relationship makes the concept of alignment a powerful one. It undermines any sense that one party has a completely determining control over the decisions made by another party, and underlines the notion of collaboration rather than domination. It acknowledges the processes of contestation and that each party has a stake and influence on decisions, but also accepts that finally some form of agreement must be reached if production is to proceed. It is this sense of the reciprocal influences on any relationship involved in short film practices which is foregrounded by the concept of alignment with this reciprocity involving not only immediate relationships but also others associated in peripheral roles.

For the purposes of this research, alignments refer to those relationships made by individuals; or groups such as film makers and funders, funders and funding agencies; or between a funding body and government. Over time, it is theorised that an infrastructure develops, with its own series of discourses and axes of power (or

significant sites of alignment), which channel the types of alignments that might occur. The concept of an infrastructure is defined by Cunningham as 'the integration of policy, institutions and industrial practices as they together provide mechanisms for defining, justifying and delivering culture to audiences' (1992: 4).

These alignments, according to Wartenberg, 'can come into existence for specific purposes and for limited amounts of time' (1990: 151), but it is the ongoing relationships that are the 'primary locus of social power' (1990: 165) as 'the present actions of a dominant agent count on the future actions of the aligned agents being similar to their past actions' (1990: 170). At the same time these ongoing relationships change, and this research documents some of the changes that have occurred within the funding agencies over the period of 1994-1998.

This focus on alignment is a way of examining how institutions and individuals operate strategically within the contexts of cultural production and implies the potential for a range of possible strategies. It also implies that those institutions or individuals involved in the decisions of funding have opportunities to realign, and reinforces the notion that there can be more than one trajectory through the contexts of funding practices, and implicitly therefore, more than one series of options suitable to negotiate successfully through these contexts and their different power axes. For instance, film makers, who are unable to align themselves to suitable support, can potentially attempt a different strategy to achieve their goal.¹⁰

The establishment of alignments are therefore hypothesised as the motivating drive behind the collaborative social relations of short film practices. These alignments occur in a competitive climate constrained by material resources and different axes of power. They are strategic, in that they utilise the ensemble of influences in any context to develop connections. These alignments include formal relations and informal relations¹¹ and are determined by combinations of structural, discursive,

¹⁰ Short film maker Jonathan Brough's attitude to funding reflects this idea of alternative choices. 'Rejection is a marvellous thing. Not only does it greatly expand your cliché collection ... but it forces you to decide whether you really want to be doing what you *think* you want to be doing ... And to those people who have their scripts rejected - the only way to prove that you are serious about what you are doing is to make the film anyway. There are ways and means. Private and commercial sponsorships are viable, though difficult, and you can always rely on the generosity of the commercial production and facilities houses' (Brough 1994: 7). See also the case studies in Chapter Nine.

¹¹ These ideas are similar to Bourdieu's concepts of economic, cultural and symbolic capital. Thompson explains these concisely: 'We can distinguish between three principal kinds of capital: "economic capital", which includes property, wealth and financial assets of various kinds, "cultural capital", which includes knowledge, skills

economic, and personal conditions. But as Grossberg has already been quoted as suggesting, their actual concretisation by any analysis depends on their degree of articulation. This qualification reinforces the fact that any articulations of any context cannot finally include all possible influences, but must remain partial.

For instance the relationship between the producer and the Short Film Fund was a formal obligation if a funding commitment was to occur. This was a relation dictated by the rules of the fund. This relationship however was only significant in terms of the cluster of other influences such as the agenda of the Film Commission, the cultural kudos of the producer and creative team, as well as the economic constraints imposed by the available funds. Other considerations also had a degree of influence. These would include such elements as the personality of the producer, and the composition of the fund at the time of the decision. This formal relation was negated with the advent of a new funding regime which replaced the Short Film Fund, and other roles, such as script writer or director were recognised as being acceptable roles to instigate funding applications.

Informal relations occur through the strategy of establishing reputations or cultural kudos and by getting known to the 'right' people or people who have their own influence in various contexts. These informal relations are aimed at developing alignments which will make decisions generated from the formal structures more expeditious and are shaped by the discourses, such as films produced, reputations developed through the media, and through networking or other forms of alliance.¹²

Discourse

Wartenberg's theory of discursively mediated alignments suggests that the use of the discursive is an important form of strategic behaviour. But what is meant by discourse? This concept is a difficult one because of its use in many guises.¹³ Fairclough, for instance, outlines a number of ways it might be used:

and differing types of educational qualifications; and "symbolic capital", which includes the accumulated praise, prestige and recognition associated with a person or position.(Thompson 1990: 148).

¹²The significance of these informal relations in terms of funding is discussed in Chapter Eight.

¹³A discussion on the foundations of discourse analysis can be found in Potter and Wetherell (1987). However this approach is a limited one as it based on a definition of discourse ('all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds' (Potter 1987: 7) which seems to emphasise the discursive as a static object rather than a process in which strategic struggles take place.

"Discourse" is used in linguistics to refer to extended samples of either spoken or written language ... [It] is also used for different types of language used in different sorts of social situation (e.g. "newspaper discourse", "advertising discourse", "classroom discourse", "the discourse of medical consultations") ... [It] is widely used in social theory and analysis ... to refer to different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice ... Another important focus is upon historical change: how different discourses combine under particular social conditions to produce a new, complex discourse (1992: 3-4).

Fairclough's own model of discourse has three strands incorporating what he calls 'a combination of [a] more social-theoretical sense of 'discourse' with the 'text-interaction' sense in linguistically oriented discourse analysis' (1992: 4). For him, any instance of discourse is

simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice. The 'text' dimension attends to language analysis of texts. The 'discursive practice' dimension ... specifies the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation, for example which types of discourse ... are drawn upon and how they are combined. The 'social practice' dimension attends to issues of concern in social analysis such as the institutional and organisational circumstances of the discursive event and how that shapes the nature of the discursive practice (1992: 4).

The emphasis on discourse for this research will be placed on the idea of 'discursive practice', in the sense that discursive practices are utilised to mediate collaborative alignments, and 'social practice' in the sense that this mediation is a social practice focusing on cultural production. For the purposes of this research it is these levels which are appropriate for an investigation of the use of the discursive dimension as a strategic medium, while a discourse analysis focusing on linguistic details extends the focus of the research to a level of detail which is unwarranted.

The concept of discourse is used here to mean the social practices in which an associated group use specific clusters of concepts and structures to establish meaning and therefore strategically empower their relationships.¹⁴ The meanings of these discourses are established within each context. For instance, in the context of funding

¹⁴This definition is based on Shields (1995: 88).

allocation, at the level of the funding bodies, the discourses include the stated aims, objectives and criteria of each funding body. These discourses act as the framework within which decisions are determined and assessed.

Discourse then, in terms of this research, is understood to play an active role in the establishment of productive alignments and the way discourses are used is determined by specific funding contexts. Different contexts involving different determining conditions result in different articulations of discourse. This position is reinforced by O'Regan's perspective on the role of the discursive within contexts where discourse

circulates within different contexts. In these contexts it has different conditions for being articulated, it makes sense and plays its social role in relation to its institutional and discursive context (1985: 9).

O'Regan points to the juncture of the theoretical framework based on articulation and the establishment of the processes of alignment as a means of collaboration in the contexts of funding short film. It is the discursive strategies utilised in the processes of alignment and situated in specific contexts, that are the focus of attention for this research and which reflect the articulations that are utilised within each context. The discourses in each context are constrained by a conjunction of political, economic and social conditions.

Fairclough also suggests these conditions when he discusses the situated role of discursive practices as social practices:

"Discursive practice" does not ... contrast with "social practice": the former is a particular form of the latter. In some cases, the social practice may be wholly constituted by the discursive practice, while in others it may involve a mixture of discursive and non-discursive practice. Analysis of a particular discourse as a piece of discursive practice focuses upon processes of text production, distribution and consumption. All of these processes are social and require reference to the particular economic, political and institutional settings within which discourse is generated (1992: 71).

The particular economic, political and institutional conditions influence the range of discourse options available for use in the strategic alignments operating in the different funding contexts.

Context and Agency

Fairclough's emphasis on discourse as a social practice and his contextualising of this practice within particular, but broad settings seems to skirt the problem of theorising the relationship between individual agency and the influence of the discursive options available in any context. Are the discourses of any context the determining factors in that context and, therefore, is the individual voice entirely shaped by the discursive options of a specific context? What is the role and influence of the individual agent in this theory of discourse?

Shields hints at a solution to this problem with his discussion of the relationship between structure and agency. He relies on Anthony Giddens' work on "structuration theory", which posits a mutual relationship between structure and agent. Shields, quoting Giddens, states that

from a structurationist perspective, agents and structures are viewed as being mutually constitutive or co-determined; "... neither should be regarded as having primacy. *Each is constituted in and through recurrent practices*" (Giddens 1982, his emphasis). The powers and interests of agents are only possible in virtue of the social structure in which they are embedded, but they are not reducible to that structure. Social structure, in turn, only exists in virtue of the practices of agents, but the former are not reducible to the latter (1995: 83).

Shields also discusses this relationship in terms of modes of discourses which he conceives of as frameworks of interpretation. For Shields:

The discourse and its community of users can be understood as the holistic context within which specific clusters of concepts gain meaning. In this way certain strategies and solutions are socially approved while the recognition of others is inhibited. This does not mean that there is a blanket consensus among the community of users. Within a mode of discourse, a range of positions is possible, allowing for a degree of controversy. Agents are not "locked into" one mode of discourse. Indeed, in particular circumstances they may be positioned at the intersection of various discourses (1995: 88).

Shields' conception of discourse is similar to Fairclough's in that the discursive context allows for particular discursive and social practices. He does not see this

context as solely determining, but suggests that because of the overlap of discursive options, and because contexts themselves are not autonomous, 'agents are not "locked into" one mode of discourse' (1995: 88) and that different agents involved in the same social practices can take on a range of positions .

Shohat and Stam reinforce this idea of the nature of discourses in their description of the relationship between a discursive context and a conception of "voice". This emphasises the co-determining relationship between discourse and voice:

A voice ... is not exactly congruent with a discourse, for while discourse is institutional, transpersonal, unauthored, voice is personalised, having authorial accent and intonation and constitutes a specific interplay of discourses ... The notion of voice is open to plurality: a voice is never merely a voice; it also relays a discourse [or discourses], since even an individual voice is itself a discursive sum, a polyphony of voices (1994: 215).

The idea of voice, and its conception as a site of an interplay of discourses, helps to clarify the determining influence of the discursive options available in particular institutional settings. The idea of voice is a theoretical conception of the way an individual articulates the various discourses of an associated set of contexts and uses these to express a personal point of view. In terms of this research the voice is an essential element of the discursive context and it is through this personal voice, which reflects the personal perspective on the articulation of influences which assists in the articulations of any context. It is for this reason that the research is interested not only in the institutional discourses and their articulations in the documents of funding bodies, for instance, but also in the personal statements and perceptions of those individuals who are involved in relationships with these funding bodies.

The Discursive and Non-Discursive

Fairclough also considers that discourses can be associated with other non-discursive influences and here a problem arises with the differentiation of the discursive and non-discursive. Debate has raged over whether these two categories can actually be distinguished. Michel de Certeau, for instance, defines the non-discursive as 'the immense remainder constituted by the part of human experience that has not been tamed and symbolised in language' (1984: 61). Laclau and Mouffe find this differentiation of linguistic and non-linguistic acts irrelevant. For them, the 'totality which includes within itself the linguistic and the non-linguistic, is what [they] call

discourse' (1985: 100). Their emphasis lies not in the 'referential materiality of the objects' (1985: 100) which is implied by de Certeau, but on the idea that discourse is a system of social relationships and is socially constructed.

The problem of differentiating discursive and non-discursive influences is an important one for research motivated by an inclusive emphasis of influences rather than the positing of a reductionist rationale. For this framework to be appropriate to the research, there must be a challenge to Laclau and Mouffe's reduction of everything to the discursive and an acknowledgement of the possibility of non-discursive effects.

In this regard Williams challenges Laclau and Mouffe, by undermining an exclusive concentration on discourse and recognising the effects of the non-discursive. He acknowledges the importance of signifying systems, but also warns of reducing everything to these systems. The discursive mediates the relationships between non-discursive effects and attempts to give these meaning. He argues that

we have still to be able to discuss a social system in the most general and inclusive terms. It would be wrong to reduce it to the signifying system alone, for this would make all human actions and relationships mere functions of signification and, in doing so, radically diminish them. But it would also be wrong to suppose that we can ever usefully discuss a social system without including, as a central part of its practice, its signifying systems, on which, as system, it fundamentally depends. For a signifying system is intrinsic to any economic system, any political system, any generational system and, most generally, to any social system (1961: 207-208).

Hall also reminds us that although there are effects beyond the domain of the discursive, it is the discursive that is essential when we attempt to establish the meanings of these effects. He states that

real and discursive: events, relations, structures do have conditions of existence and real effects, outside the sphere of the discursive; but that it is only within the discursive, and subject to its specific conditions, limits and modalities, [that] they have [been] or can ... be constructed within meaning (1988: 27).

This acceptance of the inter-relation of the discursive and the non-discursive helps to diffuse Eagleton's warning about a complete reliance on discourse and a reduction to a reliance on the discursive as the interpretative device which he believes is the flaw of post-structuralist theories:

The new "transcendental" hero is discourse itself, which is apparently prior to everything else. It is surely a little immodest of academics, professionally concerned with discourse as they are, to project their own preoccupations onto the whole world, in that ideology known as (post-) structuralism (Eagleton 1991: 219).

The theoretical approach for this research accepts the irony of seeming to rely on an examination of discursive strategies while stressing the inclusive nature of its non-reductionist approach. It also acknowledges that the research has been motivated to foreground these discursive strategies as a means of engaging with the social practices of short film in terms of state-sponsored funding because its intention was to broaden the issues of film and investigate aspects of the contexts of production rather than the film products. Further, these discursive strategies are not isolated from the material influences of funding, but, following Kirk, the theoretical framework accepts that its focus is not just on the determining influences due to the constraint on available funds, but is sensitive to the pressures of this material constraint as well as the other influences including those that are not necessarily influenced by the lack of funds. The concept of articulation and its contextualising approach offers the possibility of both outlining material and discursive influences and the way these might or might not be inter-related.

The dilemma for this theoretical approach is that the articulated influences can only be made meaningful through a discursive framework. The strictures of the discursive also influence the possible and partial articulations that can be made in any context. This return to a reliance on the discursive also returns the theoretical perspective back to a reliance on the analysis of "texts" not only as an outcome of the research practice, which is situated as a discursive practice, but also because of the reliance on the range of "texts" that become the source of research material. An abandonment of the film texts as the focus of analysis, because they do not expose the contexts that influence their production, directs the analysis to a range of other primary sources such as: questionnaire responses; documents produced by funding organisations; interviews; and other statements made in published articles and personal communication. These are understood to be shaped by the discursive and non-discursive influences motivating and structuring collaborative relations.

The discursive mediations are the prime focus of the research but it is theorised that these are shaped by the conjunction of discursive and non-discursive influences inscribed in this range of *new* texts. However, it is not so much that the reliance on these texts is any more suitable as a research focus than the film texts, but that these different texts are a more appropriate entry point into the contexts that are being articulated and the discourses which are to be examined in terms of this particular research. These texts are not conceptualised as objects with established meanings, but arise from a variety of practices that shape the social collaborations of the funding practices of short film. Short films, just like the other "texts" involved in these funding practices, become part of a complex and continuing cultural process, and these texts are never at rest, since they are always on the way to becoming something else, or being deployed for some other goal in some other context.

Conclusion

This theoretical framework, which draws on the concepts of articulation and alignment as motivating principles for the research, is strategic, offering a guide for an investigation of some particular collaborative practices of short film making in New Zealand. It is neither meant to be a totalising framework, creating a coherent explication of all the interpretative possibilities, nor a model reducing any explanations to a set of dominant established conditions, either material or discursive. Rather it establishes a context for the research focus by situating this within a series of other contexts. These include the context of cultural production, the contexts of cinematic practices for short film, and the discursive alignments occurring in the contexts of state sponsored funding application and assessment. It is the latter of these that defines the research focus.

The framework that has been established succeeds in offering an open-ended strategy which acknowledges that the research and research outcomes can only be partial, while it also acknowledges that the dilemma of text dependency has not been overcome, but has been displaced so that a wider range of texts are now to be deployed. These texts become the source of evidence for the mediating discourses utilised for collaborative alignments in respective contexts and are themselves influenced by ensembles of the various economic, political, social and cultural conditions constituted in these contexts and articulated in the discourses.

The research focuses on the alignments established in the competitive climate of state sponsored funding for short film, and endeavours to illustrate some of the discourses

utilised for strategies of funding and funding application. To achieve this, the concept of the voice becomes an important device explaining the openness of discursive contexts and how other contexts influence the perspectives of individuals involved in the funding processes.

The theory fits into contemporary approaches to cultural studies with a postmodern orientation, if this means, as Seidman suggests, that postmodern perspectives abandon 'absolute standards, universal categories, and grand theories in favour of local, contextualised, and pragmatic conceptual strategies' (1994: 207). It is local, in the sense that it deals with aspects of a specific cultural practice in the New Zealand context and focuses on particular discourses and voices. It is also contextualised in terms of its focus, and is pragmatic in that it is motivated by a research strategy grounded in the research material and limited to a specific focus. The theory is open-ended, allowing for the inclusion of a wide range of influences, but at the same time acknowledging the partial nature of the scope of the analysis.

The theory does not dispute the determining effects of political, economic and cultural influences, both discursive and non-discursive, but situates these within contexts and processes of state sponsored funding. It is theorised that no single determining factor can be an explanation of these contexts and it is necessary to focus instead on possibilities rather than define actual determining forces. This approach offers an entry point into a profile of the conjunction of conditions in any context and is therefore a useful framework for an analysis of the strategic alignments necessary for the collaborative practices of funding short film.

For this research, state sponsored funding is conceived as a formation of imbricated contexts, each of which is influenced by various economic, political, social and cultural conditions., and each of which articulates a different axis of power in terms of the relations between those involved in that context. This funding formation is examined through the discourses used to mediate the alignments of those involved in relationships between contexts and within particular contexts. These discourses help to articulate the conditions of the contexts and illustrate the ways in which decisions about funding allocation are justified in terms of those who have the power to participate. This funding formation is a dynamic arena which involves the investigation of regimes of power operating to shape the types of decisions that must be made if any film production is to occur. Contestation occurs in this arena, but ultimately collaboration must occur if any production is to proceed. The concept of alignment is useful because it accomodates the possibility of contestation and the

processes of collaboration. The remaining chapters in this thesis discuss these discursive alignments and how they are interpreted in different contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Methodology

Progressive Focusing

The underlying research approach for this thesis was that of progressive focusing. This follows Burns, who defines the approach as one in which the researcher adopts

a stance as a naive observer avoiding placing self obvious categories on what is observed until considerable exploratory fieldwork has occurred and then permitting this learning and assimilation to provide guides on what propositions to offer and how to categorise and interpret the data (1994: 248).

The principle of progressive focusing operated on two levels in this research. Initially it was important on the level of the research process itself, with the research beginning by canvassing a range of issues concerning short film and then many of these were discarded to leave funding contexts as the focus for analysis.¹⁵ At this second level these funding contexts were also structured in the thesis document in terms of a progressive focusing on associated contexts. The context of political rhetoric on funding was examined, and this was then connected to the contexts of the funding organisations and their agencies. The perspectives of those making funding decisions under the umbrella of the funding agencies and perspectives of the practitioners applying for funds was the next focus. Finally four case studies were considered, with two application proposals compared and the motivations of two film makers analysed. The thesis document therefore, moves from a discussion of the political rhetoric of funding, through the infrastructural influences of short film funding, to a discussion of specific issues arising from actual practices, the application for funds and the motivations of two film makers. These case studies represented concrete practices which could be understood because of the examination of the other funding contexts that preceded them.

The combined approaches to this research also acted as a form of triangulation, offering more than one perspective on the processes investigated. There was an attempt to avoid a strong bias or distortion caused by the reliance on one method or

¹⁵ The reasons for a funding focus will be discussed later in this chapter.

perspective. Kellner discusses this comparative approach, justifying a "multi-perspectival approach" in terms of Nietzsche's perspectivism. For Nietzsche

all interpretation is necessarily mediated by one's perspectives and is thus inevitably laden with presuppositions, values, biases, and limitations. To avoid one-sidedness and partial vision one should learn how to employ a *variety* of perspectives and interpretations in the service of knowledge (1969: 119).

The range of research methods used included survey research, semi-structured and open-ended interviews, the content analysis of a wide range of appropriate documents, and finally case studies analysis used both to describe the application document, which is instrumental in the application process, and to consider the different motivations film makers have for undertaking their projects. Attempts by the researcher to establish dialogues with some of the respondents were also made and email was particularly convenient for the successful exchange of ideas¹⁶. Any statements included in the final thesis document were sent to their authors for further comments and an opportunity was given for respondents to either contest statements and interpretations, offer additional comment, or change the wording of statements. In a few cases this latter opportunity was taken up and earlier statements were either rephrased or extended.

This methodology was motivated by the belief that there are many voices involved in the collaborative relationships of short film practices and that an engagement with these voices required a multi-faceted approach. This approach was both pragmatic in the sense that it was based on a constrained budget and had to seek inexpensive methods; and limited, as it relied on the participation of those willing to collaborate in the research, as well as the documents that were available to the researcher.

The nature of the research paralleled that of the types of practices under investigation, as both involved collaborative relationships motivated by the establishment of alignments mediated by discursive practices. A qualitative research approach was therefore more relevant than one emphasising a quantitative agenda. The role as researcher and the researcher's alignments with participants was seen as an integral part of the data and its interpretation, especially as the researcher's assessments of data were influenced by the dialogues established between a few of the more

¹⁶ Costa Botes, Jonathan Brough, Grant Campbell, Francis Edmond, Keith Hill, Roger Horrocks, Simon Raby, Martin Rumsby and Bruce Sheridan, where all at times very helpful in this regard.

responsive participants. The dialogues with practitioners and funders were an essential element of the research process, as they not only helped to clarify ideas, but also grounded these ideas in the actual experiences of those who were engaged in the practices researched. These dialogues acted as a background context for the researcher's own engagement with the analysis of the data.

Research Design and Implementation

Despite the fact that the researcher knew some of the current issues concerning the practice of short film through articles in *The big picture* (Sellers 1994, Fitzgerald 1994, Drumm 1994, Tsoulis 1994, Douche 1994, Hill 1994 and Tsoulis 1995), there had been little previous contact by the researcher with practitioners before this research was undertaken and the need was felt to develop these. Contacts were initiated informally through the researcher's own networks and also by articles inviting expressions of interest in *The big picture* and *Onfilm*. These attempts resulted in a number of fruitful interviews.¹⁷ They were designed to broaden the researcher's horizons and generally develop impressions of what types of issues were actually of interest to those concerned.

The contacts made were a stepping stone for a pilot study focusing on directors and producers of films funded by the Short Film Fund during 1994-1995. There were a number of reasons for the choice of these films. It was important to focus on a specific period of contemporary film making, to set parameters based in present practices. This was a practical and strategic consideration as much as a theoretical one. It was desirable to send questionnaires to a limited number of people of similar background experience in order to canvas the range of opinion within this domain. The research orientation was to be left open although constrained by a perspective considering collaborative relationships and therefore it was important to canvas the types of relationships that film makers needed to develop. However, this focus wasn't to be confining in case it marginalised other issues which might also be important. The questionnaires were therefore designed to be open ended. This pilot study was also used to test the degree of response that would occur if questionnaires were sent to individuals involved in film making and the response helped to develop more effective research surveys for the later part of the work.

¹⁷ These included: Alex Cole-Baker, Greg Page, David Gunson, Keith Hill, Deborah Lawler-Dormer, Bruce Sheridan and Paul Swadel.

Over one hundred questions were compiled and were then trialed by David Gunson, a young film maker, who acted as the pilot respondent. He very generously answered these questions, and his responses allowed the researcher an opportunity to analyse the effectiveness of particular questions and any that seemed to cover common ground were not incorporated into the final research data. Approximately forty questions were distilled from this array of questions sent to Gunson, and these were discussed with Keith Hill, who has had wide experience as a short film maker and applicant for funds. He offered generous expert advice on appropriate wordings for the questions, as well as the types of questions that should be asked, and who he thought should be addressed, especially in terms of those who had previously had experience with the funding panels.

Finally questionnaires were sent to film makers and producers. The questionnaires were divided into distinct sections focusing on areas that were thought to be of possible interest. The first questionnaire was designed to encourage the director to discuss specific issues or aspects that arose from their project. It was structured to cover: creative intentions; issues of funding; the New Zealand context; the relationship between director and producer; conceptions of market potential; and perspectives on the reception of their film. The second questionnaire was designed to encourage the director to discuss their experience of the New Zealand short film milieu. This was targeted at a more general level to encourage comment on: perceptions of short film; contacts with other film makers; festival experience; local content; experiences of funding; perceptions of the culture/industry itself in terms of its power, and the director's power to act. The questionnaire for the producers was designed to elicit biographical details; perception of their role; and attitudes toward short film funding.

Responses To the Initial Questionnaires

The following directors were contacted by mail¹⁸: Rachel Anderson (*Para Recorder*); Andrew Bancroft (*Planet Man*); Andrea Bosshard (*The Baker's Brother*); Grant Campbell (*Dirty Creature*); Niki Caro (*Sure to Rise*); Grant Lahood (*Lemming Aid*); Stewart Main (*Twilight of the Gods*); Gregor Nicholas (*Avondale Dogs*); Christine Parker (*Hinekaro*); Simon Raby (*Headlong*); and Fiona Samuel (*Bitch*). Unfortunately neither Anna Reeves nor Christine Jeffs could be contacted.

¹⁸ Each contact was sent a printed copy of the questionnaires, a computer disc with the questions, an explanatory note and an envelop with the researchers address.

The following producers were also contacted: Stephanie Bauer, Vincent Burke, Norman Elder, Michele Fantl, Glenis Giles, Rachel Jean, Owen Hughes, John Keir, Robin Laing, Di Oliver, Rawiri Paratene, Don Selwyn, and James Wallace.

The response rate for directors contacted was four completed questionnaires (two of these directors were also interviewed). Of the rest of the sample: one returned a partially completed questionnaire and cited pressure of work as a reason for not filling in all the questions; one was not interested in participating but did reply to this effect; two were willing to do a telephone interview; one was willing to fill in the questionnaires but hadn't had time; and three directors didn't respond.

Four of the producers contacted completed questionnaires. Of the remainder: one was interviewed instead of filling in the questionnaire; three were willing for an interview, either personal or by telephone; and five producers did not respond.

Analysis of the Data from the Pilot Study

The level of response from the questionnaires was satisfactory considering the researcher was a stranger to the participants and also that the questionnaires required a major commitment with over forty questions to be answered. Even on this small number of likely responses (twenty-four participants) there had been a full response from nine participants and a further seven indicated that they were willing to be interviewed over the phone. It was reassuring that it was possible to establish contact with a range of people using the questionnaire technique, especially if this was supported by semi-structured interviews based on appropriate questions reinforcing the thrust of the questionnaire. It was also realised by the researcher that the extensive nature of the questionnaires was a major constraint on the response rate as it demanded such a large commitment of time and because of this the following questionnaires were designed to require less time and focused on more specific areas. These first questionnaires should not be considered to be a failure as they generated an extensive amount of data which helped to focus the research.

The dual relationship of questionnaire and interview was also considered by the researcher to be an invaluable tool. Responses from the questionnaire and interviews often created new questions or lines of inquiry, which could then be asked either to the same respondent, or else to someone who had not responded but was willing to be interviewed. Both these methods of eliciting responses helped to give a better perspective on the practices of short film at this level of commitment.

The responses were also invaluable for the researcher's own orientation within the practice of short film as they not only established a range of discourses which directors and producers used to communicate their perspectives but also indicated an appropriate focus for the next stage in the research. This new focus is discussed below.

As part of the analysis the types of discourses individuals utilised in discussing their perspectives on film practices were categorised. This process has been perceived by Fairclough as establishing the orders of discourse, or the 'social repertoires of discourse practices' (1995:61) involved in any social practice.

For instance, the responses from Simon Raby, one of the film directors who returned a completed questionnaire, were classified according to a number of different discourses he utilised in his response. They included two specialist discourses, those of film and film marketing which assumed a knowledge of specialist concepts. Other discourses he used were those using reference to a sense of identity including: that of the profession of film making, personal experience, gender, class, language, nationality and the specialist role of producer, and discourses referring to a relationship of power. These related to film making as a profession, film festivals as arenas of competition, short film as a show case of ability, the producer/director relationship, critical judgement, the role of the producer, and gender relationships.

A detailed analysis (in Appendix Three) outlines the way that Raby's response was interpreted as a primary example of discursive practice containing a social repertoire. The various discourses categorised contribute to Raby's "voice" which was theorised in this research as a hybrid of these discourses. This type of analysis became an important means of categorising and interpreting the questionnaire responses and appropriate elements of these discourses were included in the final text as examples of the discourses utilised by practitioners to interpret their perceptions on the funding regimes.

Conclusions from the Pilot Study

The combined techniques of questionnaire and semi-structured interview, which were recorded and transcribed, were useful methods of obtaining data, especially because of the generous good will of respondents participating in the research. Analysing data by applying general categories to the discourse repertoire offered the researcher a method of categorising the material based on a rationale determined by the research interest.

The study produced a wide range of data covering a variety of issues and it quickly became apparent that the research needed a more defined focus. Any of these areas of interest, such as the development of scripts in the New Zealand context, the establishment and sustaining of creative teams, or the marketing of films and the influences of festivals, could accommodate extensive analysis, and if they were all included could make the scope of the research too dispersed. It was therefore necessary to choose a particular focus for the next phase of the research.

Refocusing the Research

This next phase focused on issues of state sponsored funding and the discourses of those parties concerned with short film practices in New Zealand. This context of funding was important because it was conditioned by economic, political and social agendas. Statements implying this were frequently made by both directors and producers, and the research into this area would help expose not only the economic conditions of funding but also the other multiple influences assumed to be active. It was thought by the researcher this was an opportunity to indicate that the economic, although necessary, was not the only determining influence on funding decisions and consequently on the short films that were produced.

Restricting the focus to state sponsored funding bodies was not simply pragmatic. The responses received from the pilot study indicated that state funding was a sensitive area with constant tension between those who believe that cultural funding, especially funding of film, shouldn't be a prerogative of the state, and those who believe funding should be increased. Other tensions have also been reflected within the funding bodies, which have instigated their own reviews of funding criteria for short film. This has made it possible to compare the changes implemented by these bodies, discuss why these changes have occurred, and speculate how the changes that have occurred have influenced the short film practices.

Second Stage Research Design

The new research focus demanded a broader sample of respondents than those in the pilot study as it needed to include not only directors and producers, but also those involved in the allocation of funds. It was also considered that a survey of representatives of political parties and their comments should also be incorporated into the study. This would establish a background context framing the selection of

discourses justifying and challenging state support for the established funding regimes and it would offer a discursive repertoire for the political rhetoric on funding.

A second phase of questionnaires were sent to members and ex-members of the Short Film Fund, the Creative Film and Video Fund (which during the course of the research changed its name to the Screen Innovation Production Fund), as well as directors involved in applying for funds from this fund. Representatives of the main political parties were also asked questions on their policy for funding film production in New Zealand. An archive of documents relevant to issues of funding was also established. These documents, including funding brochures, application forms, published statements in journals, political party publications, and government statutes, were considered to be helpful as a supplement to the responses from people participating in the research. The inclusion of this material was also an important component of the research, as it was an important source of the actual discursive repertoire involved in funding alignments. These included statements of objectives and funding criteria, as well as commentaries on attitudes to funding and perceptions of current funding regimes.

New questionnaires were designed for each of these different groups of respondents. A similar process to that of the pilot study was used, with questions developing from feedback and information obtained from documents published by both the New Zealand Film Commission and Creative New Zealand. These questions were then discussed with Keith Hill and a final profile for each questionnaire was established (See Appendix Two).

Responses to the Second Stage Questionnaires

1. Political parties.

A questionnaire was sent to the main parties contesting seats for the 1996 elections. These included ACT New Zealand, Alliance Party, New Zealand First Party, New Zealand Labour Party, and New Zealand National Party. Representatives from parties solicited returned the questionnaire with completed responses. These responses are discussed in Chapter Five.

2. Creative New Zealand.

The members of the Creative New Zealand fund involved in 1996 were Jane Wrightson for New Zealand On Air, Athina Tsoulis for the New Zealand Film

Commission and Lisa Reihana for Creative New Zealand. Gregory Burke was also involved as Arts Advisor. Roger Horrocks, who was re-elected to the fund in 1997, also offered valuable information. Of these people only one person declined to answer the questionnaire, but was available for a personal interview, which, however was not followed through. Ten ex-members of the Creative Film and Video Fund were also contacted. These included: Leon Narbey, Roger Horrocks, Shereen Maloney, Gaylene Preston, Russell Campbell, Stewart Main, Jonathan Dennis, Jan Bieringa, Frank Stark and Pita Turei and of these four returned the completed questionnaire; one was not willing to participate; two were willing to have telephone interviews; and three did not respond. Of the directors granted funding from Creative Film and Video Fund, 1994-95, fourteen were contacted and of these seven responded in full, one responded over the telephone, and six did not respond. These responses are discussed in Chapter Six.

3. The New Zealand Film Commission.

Thirteen members and ex members of the Short Film Fund, as well as Catherine Fitzgerald, Director of Creative and Industry Development, Phil Langridge, Development Co-ordinator, Kathleen Drumm, Associate Director of Marketing were sent questionnaires and of these nine responded; one was unwilling to participate; and three did not respond. Eleven directors had already been contacted with the initial questionnaires and so had thirteen producers. The response rates for these have already been discussed above. Five representatives of the Talent Development Initiative were also interviewed. These responses are discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

4. Case Studies

To complement the survey one successful and one unsuccessful application for both the Screen Innovation Production Fund and the Short Film Fund were included and these two different application outcomes were compared. This was achieved through an analysis of the funding applications of the two projects applying for funding from the Screen Innovation Production Fund while the two Short Film Fund applicants were examined in terms of the film maker's motivations. In this latter case, although the projects were not deemed to be representative of all the project applications, consideration was given to the fact that one of the projects seemed to fit the characteristic profile of a short film funded by the Short Film Fund and the second hinted at the type of project that might develop under the new funding regime of the Talent Development Initiative. Each film maker was interviewed twice for these case studies and they also generously supplied their funding application documents,

although the visual material such as promotional videos were not included in this. The responses for these case studies are discussed in Chapter Nine.

Challenges to the Methodology

The researcher recognises that the activity of answering questionnaires about strategies involved in short film practices, instigated by an unknown individual situated on the periphery of short film practice, might not elicit the same statements from respondents as those made in other contexts, such as informal discussions between funders or fund applicants, or formal relations between funder and applicant. The act of responding to a questionnaire is certainly not the same experience as the process of applying for funds to make a short film, but when the questionnaire concerns the process of funding, the two experiences overlap. The research methods then are designed not to reconstruct actual film practices, but to mediate a reflection on these practices. The case studies have been introduced to offer examples both of actual application practices as well as to illustrate the mix of motivations for actual film makers.

At the same time, the use of a variety of research tools to elicit responses, the fact that a number of ongoing dialogues with people actively engaged in short film practice were established, and an acknowledgement of the integrity of those contacted, who were always generous and sometimes surprisingly candid, suggested that the responses received did reflect the perspectives of those questioned.¹⁹ In terms of the context of this research, where responses were voluntary and could not elicit any personal gain, it must be assumed that the range of responses collected was representative of the issues and perspectives that film makers and funders consider to be important for the funding of short film. The research focused on what perceptions were foregrounded rather than whether or not these perceptions were true or false.

However, following the openness of the theory of articulation, even the analysis of the data collected can not encompass all possible articulations of any context. It is acknowledged that the analysis must always be partial, be prejudiced by the material that is used, and by the research techniques that have been implemented.

Horrocks reinforces this partiality when he states that

¹⁹ Frequently I was given information that was "off the record". Although I respected this request, the information helped me to develop a different perspective on aspects of the research field.

while discourse provides useful clues as to why decisions were made, one should also consider the possibility that other (non-explicit, non-articulated, or unconscious) reasons have been operating. Or reasons that were not expressed in the particular documents to which you have access. Not that this is conspiratorial - but simply that film making and funding decision-making is a complex and time consuming process and there is no guarantee that all stages of the process are written down or subsequently remembered by participants (1997).

Acknowledging this partiality it is assumed, however, that this multi-faceted approach toward film practices overcame reliance on the bias of one particular method, such as responding to a questionnaire, and that the inclusion of all these different methods was useful in eliciting a range of discourses that might be used in contexts of short film. At the same time it is acknowledged that these techniques did not expose the 'non-explicit, non-articulated or unconscious reasons' or that which hadn't been 'written down or subsequently remembered by participants' (Horrocks 1997).

The assumption behind this research is that it was a collaboration between respondents and the researcher supplemented by an archive of appropriate documents. It is acknowledged by the researcher that there are a number of voices involved in the creation of the research data, although, in the final analysis, the work is framed by the researcher's own agenda and biases in interpretation.

This research, although not fulfilling Tyler's conception of a post-modern ethnography, because it does not involve participant observation as a major focus, attempts to align with his conceptions of a research practice which emphasises 'the co-operative and collaborative' (1986: 126). For Tyler this *ideal* position is one in which there is

the mutual, dialogical production of a discourse, of a story of sorts ... of [a] co-operative story making that, in one of its ideal forms, would result in a polyphonic text, none of whose participants would have the final word in the form of the framing story or encompassing synthesis - a discourse on the discourse (1986: 126).

This strategy however, although attempting to move some way towards overcoming the challenges to the research methods, has to acknowledge the inherent vulnerability to charges that it promotes particular power relations. No matter how the research information is generated, even with the full collaboration of respondents and the

researcher's openness to dialogue, the analysis of this information is still controlled by the researcher and the methods used for data collection and analysis. Scheurich points out this problem when discussing interview techniques:

The interview is drawn from the researcher's project, especially in terms of the researcher's social and institutional position. The researcher develops the questions and the interviewee answers them. The interviewer's transcribed words are what is under the control of the researcher (1997: 70).

The power relations in any social practice do not necessarily remain constant. Foucault, for instance, in his conception of strategies of power believes relations of power between agents to be dynamic, involving 'the free play of antagonistic reactions' (1984: 432) open to transformation and allowing changing subject positions. This is also accepted by Scheurich when he discusses his own experiences with interviewing:

I find that interviewees carve out space of their own, that they can often control some or part of the interview, that they push against or resist my goals, my intentions, my questions, my meanings (1997: 71).

This active participation by both researcher and respondent in these research methods reflects the same process of collaborative alignments investigated in the funding practices of short film and to articulate all the influences shaping the research contexts is not possible, especially considering that

the researcher has multiple intentions and desires, some of which are consciously known and some of which are not. The same is true of the interviewee. The language out of which the questions are constructed is not bounded or stable; it is persistently slippery, unstable, and ambiguous from person to person, from situation to situation, from time to time (Scheurich 1997: 62).

The position taken by the researcher toward this research was that it represents another context shaping the practices of short film. It attempts both to expose the discursive activities of short film practice while at the same time, by establishing collaborative alignments with some of the practitioners, develop a discursive practice in which to attempt this exposure. The research was not thought of as an activity taking a position outside the clusters of contexts of short film practice, but was

considered to be one of these contexts having its own effects on the social practices involved in short film practices. It is, finally, a form of co-operative story making, a discourse on the discourses of the state sponsored funding of short film.

CHAPTER FIVE

Political Alignments Between State and Funding Bodies

Introduction

The previous chapters have established the motivation and framework for this research and have introduced the idea of cinematic practice, focused on the relationships between those involved in these practices, and described the methods applied to establish representations of the discourses involved in these relationships. According to the theory that has been developed in Chapter Three, cinematic practices involve strategic alignments which are developed through the discursive options available in various contexts. The discourses articulate the conditions that influence the context but are not autonomous and are influenced by discourses from "outside". The metaphor of the "voice", which suggests this interrelationship and the plurality of interpretation is a pivotal concept for the approach to the research.

This chapter presents the empirical findings on the alignments established on the axis of the political level and funding bodies. It establishes the political context of contemporary film funding issues and, implicitly suggests how these relate to short film. The idea of alignment suggests that not only the perspectives of politicians need to be canvassed, but also the perspectives of those executives directing the funding regimes. These funder perspectives together with political agendas represent the axis of the funding relationship at the political level. The discourses used to justify this relationship articulate the conditions determining the influences on this level of the funding process.

The political parties justify their proposed funding commitments by aligning themselves with their perceived constituencies, while the funding bodies themselves justify their need to maintain their independence and increase the amount of funds they desire through strategies that respond to the political agendas and reflect the political discourses. The degree of commitment to fund and the desire to both maintain and increase funds are strong motivations for the types of discourses offered by the various representatives of the political positions and those executives involved in the policies of the different funding agencies.

In terms of the political relationship, this chapter establishes a brief profile of the political environment in the New Zealand context of the 1990's and introduces commentators who suggest how this influences funding and implicitly short film

funding. The positions taken by the political parties just before the 1996 elections are analysed as this moment was considered to be an opportune one, because it was thought by the researcher that responses to questions would be more forthcoming and the desire to represent alignments with each party's perceived supporters would be maximised. Questionnaires were sent to the main political parties involved in the election, and responses were received from them all. Further information was derived from the results of similar questioning published in *Onfilm* (1996: 5) as well as documents produced by the parties as policy statements on the Arts.²⁰

After the analysis of this data, the remainder of the chapter considers the attitudes of stakeholders and funders and the way they perceive their alignments with current political agendas. It suggests that funding agencies are aware of the need for new strategies to counter the present constraints on funding levels and that these strategies involve establishing justifications which emulate the current political discourses. The funding agencies articulate what they perceive to be the conditions influencing funding and these reflect similar articulations from the political masters.

The Political Environment

The current political environment has shaped a new funding policy towards the arts, one oriented toward market value, rather than the subsidy of the producer, and has been influential in the importation of new concepts reflecting the strategic use of a New Right discourse. In fact, this ideological "new environment" and its adopted discourses has become, according to McCormack, 'the new common sense paradigm [and] like all dominant cultures it advances its categories as positive, universal and eternal, shaping the culture in its own image' (1992: 5).

This New Right philosophy has challenged state involvement in economic and social domains, favouring privatisation, individual responsibility, and a reliance on market values:

What the New Right has set out to achieve has been to: deliver a sustained ideological attack on the role of the state in the economy and in society; provide a rationale for the removal of the state from various areas of

²⁰ These include: *Alliance Arts Policy*, August 1996 and *Labour's Arts Policy : Art For The Nation*, 1996. Neither of the two other major parties have a specific cultural policy documented in their manifestos. Similarly there is a significant absence of any discussions on cultural issues in the 1996 Winter and Spring editions of the National Parliamentary Research Unit's *Briefing Books*.

economic and societal life in which it has traditionally been involved; and justify further shrinkage of the role of the state and a consequent and concurrent further privatisation, marketisation and individualisation of everyday life (Harris 1996:5).

According to McCormack, its influence has also been reflected in the policies of cultural agencies responsible for funding:

Cultural agencies were placed under pressure to operate in what was described as the "real world" - another term for the prevailing value system. First came a new set of concepts with their own language. We learned to speak the language of accountability, transparency, management of objectives, strategic planning, maximising efficiency, optimum outputs, value for money and our marketplace. This language has been developed elsewhere and imported into the cultural sector (1992:4).

Volkering concurs with this change in the political approach to funding and characterises its distinction as a new emphasis on the consumer. He believes that 'during the era of Fordist state welfarism, the subsidised arts producer was paramount; in the contemporary post-Fordist state the diverse interests of the cultural consumer hold sway' (1996: 189).²¹

McCormack thinks that these changes are also evident in the language used to justify funding support. He believes that the justifications for funding have become mediated by discourses based in the New Right economic paradigm, which implies a focus on agendas that have quantifiable objectives accountable to market values. This is also reinforced by Tessa Duder, a New Zealand author and screenwriter, when she discusses the problems caused by the importation of New Right discourse into the domain of Creative New Zealand²². For Duder

²¹In the post-Fordist model, mass consumption is replaced by flexible production and niche-market consumption, while consensus politics 'gives way to a form of authoritarian politics apparently dictated by the discipline of the market' (O'Brien and Wilkes 1993: 21).

²² This discourse was also commented on in the McDermott Miller Limited report commissioned by Creative New Zealand and the Chartwell Trust. Responses to this review concerning Creative New Zealand policy indicated 'an alienating use of language evident from its publications, its policy pronouncements, its jargon-ridden responses to straight questions...' (McDermott Miller Limited 1998: 13).

the problems go back to the ideologically driven brave "new environment" imposed with minimal consultation on the arts community by Creative New Zealand three years ago. In the name of accountability, efficiency, transparency and cost-cutting (though this last is not really admitted as such) the "new environment" promised a "cross-disciplinary" scheme that was "bi-cultural" and "multi-contestable" based on a new, superior, cheaper and incorruptible method of assessment ... Now we are all assessed against "people goals" and "arts goals", pitting, apparently, children's writer against composer, theatre company against sculptor, orchestra against choreographer against publisher against film maker (1997:13).

One of the motivations for this New Right agenda, according to Duder, is state cost cutting or, as Harris states, 'the shrinkage of the role of the state' (1996: 5). Duder implies that this is not readily admitted, but is hidden by the smoke-screen of the promises concerning new opportunities and fairness in assessment. This discourse of "fairness" becomes a rationale for the state to withdraw from funding commitments while the restricted amount of funds that are available are exposed to greater competition from those desiring support. According to Duder, the New Right philosophy, with its market orientation, is really an excuse for opting out of supporting cultural activities which are not easily justified in terms of market potential.

This new environment leaves the funding bodies themselves in a vulnerable position. For instance, according to Horrocks

with many politicians from Labour as well as National ideologically opposed to anything resembling a quota or industry subsidy, arts funding bodies have to tread warily. If they are not commercial enough, they are in danger of being attacked as elitist and out of touch, if they go too far in a commercial direction, they are in danger of being privatised. It is a strange nervous dance step that public bodies are having to perform in order to survive (1994: 10).

Horrocks implies the underlying allure of the marketplace for the new political environment results in a delicate balance between, a perception of the arts as a cultural activity requiring subsidy, and the arts as a commercial activity needing to be self-supporting and therefore adapting to the marketplace. A polarity is implied between culture as a practice catering for an elitist taste reflected in the perceived

value of the artist producer and the cultural worth of an art object or product specified by its market value (Davis 1994: 10).

An instance of this latter position is represented in the cross-examination of *Treasury* by Tony Simpson, representing the Public Service Association, at a Royal Commission on Broadcasting during September and December 1985.

Simpson: Are you saying that the higher the quality the higher the audience?

Treasury : I'm saying that that's a measure of the quality of the programme.

Simpson: Are you saying that if more people watch it, it is a good quality programme?

Treasury : In the commercial system yes (Easton 1997: 57).

One of the most obvious sources of tension in this political environment is between the social/cultural and economic/commercial perspectives. The present New Right philosophies, catalysed by Labour's policies of 1984 and extended by subsequent Labour and National Governments, have encouraged an attitude which favours less government involvement in what is perceived to be commercial domains, but ironically, imposing greater control on cultural agendas. For example, there has been a commercial deregulation of television, but increased regulation via the Broadcasting Standards Authority. The funding of film is especially vulnerable because of the common political perception of film's strong commercial orientation. Current political agendas have been based on the philosophy of a free market economy which has fewer subsidies and implicitly involves policies reducing government participation. Any government funding could be perceived as undercutting this current political agenda, although some public involvement is still recognised as vaguely appropriate by most political parties at least in cases where it is considered that the market can't supply the "social goods". This latter case reflects political sensitivity to voter concerns, with even the strongest New Right advocates finding occasion to allow exceptions, although these exceptions need to be rigorously defined, justified and limited.

Economic and Social Perspectives for the Political Justification of Funding

One of the biggest hurdles for an analysis of political attitudes to funding is that this field is a complex web of inter-related and overlapping discourses involving a mix of both social and economic perspectives. Social policy justifications utilise discourses

based in economics, and economic perspectives similarly appropriate discourses implying social imperatives.

For instance, the Labour Broadcasting Policy 1996 reflects a reaction to deregulation and the open market policies of the preceding National Government.²³ The introductory statements of the Labour policy express a concern for a publicly funded service and therefore call on an economic discourse based on regulation:

Labour believes the community has a fundamental right to a publicly funded broadcasting service which engenders a sense of citizenship, promotes national identity, gives access to cultural and education programmes, and provides quality, independent news and current affairs programmes (New Zealand Labour Party 1996: 1).

Labour's rhetoric uses discourses implying cultural imperatives such as national identity, and cultural programmes, while invoking an economic perspective challenging National's economic position.

Similarly the *Alliance Arts and Culture Policy 1996* states that the Alliance Party support for film, as well as literature, arts, performing arts and music is intended to

improve quality of life in New Zealand, contribute to the economy in terms of local and overseas earnings, and to raise New Zealand's artistic and cultural standards and reputation both within this country and internationally (1996: 1).

This policy includes a mix of discourses originating from cultural and economic domains. The statement - 'improving quality of life' - implies both economic and social components, while the statements - 'contributes to the economy' and 'raising cultural standards' - have significance within economic and cultural frames respectively. The statement - 'raising New Zealand's reputation' - has both economic and cultural implications because it refers not only to perceptions of the standards of cultural goods, but also the standards of quality of any goods or services New Zealand might export.

²³Ironically, National's policies owe much to the monetary economics introduced by the Labour Party between 1984 and 1990. For a full discussion of this complex change in New Zealand's economic and legislative history see (O'Brien and Wilkes: 1993).

A different weighting is given to the importance of the social and economic agendas in the fields of cultural and broadcasting policy. Cunningham describes what he believes to be the difference in the Australian context:

The communications portfolios have placed greater emphasis on technological, engineering and economic factors in formulating policy than on cultural factors. In the same period as this structure was being consolidated (with the introduction of television in the mid-1950's), a subsidy or welfare approach by government to culture (understood first as the traditional arts and later film and emergent art forms) was developed and continues to this day (1992: 23).

There is a similar distinction in New Zealand, with state broadcasting policy foregrounding commercial agendas. This is reflected in the establishment of the New Zealand On Air, formerly the Broadcasting Commission, which funds culturally relevant programmes in conjunction with the commercial television and radio broadcast channels. One of its important functions is to 'promote, in its funding of the production of programmes, a sustained commitment by television and radio broadcasters to programming reflecting New Zealand identity and culture' (New Zealand House of Representatives 1989).²⁴

The agencies funding film, however, are given responsibility for both economic and cultural functions, although Creative New Zealand's responsibilities are weighted more to the cultural or "arts" end of the spectrum, and therefore the fund is perceived to be involved in subsidy, while the New Zealand Film Commission, associated more with commercial imperatives, is involved in investment within the film industry.

Analysis of Political Attitudes Toward Funding

The mix of social and economic justifications for funding is apparent when political attitudes towards funding are analysed. For instance, when representatives of political parties were asked to explain why the state should be involved in funding film, the following responses were given:

²⁴ See also (Easton 1997: 54-70) for details about the relationship between New Zealand On Air and commercial broadcasters.

Very important [for] employment, training of our young people. Very important cultural reflection. [The] government has an obligation to ensure our film industry is indigenous (Alliance Party).

In maintaining the present level of funding and support to the New Zealand film industry we are mindful of the industry's critical stage of development. As an increasingly important employer and export earner this industry may well develop (and will be encouraged to develop) a financial independence. We value the industry for its contribution to the development of our unique national character (New Zealand First Party).

The film industry is extremely valuable in promoting New Zealand overseas. There is inadequate private investment capital available (New Zealand National Party).

Labour is committed to giving the arts real support and encouragement. We believe that this makes good sense as both economic and social policy. The arts, including film, are vital to our view of who we are and how we see ourselves in the world. What we put into the arts, both personally and through local and central government, is a reflection of our confidence in ourselves and our future and our willingness to celebrate our history and diversity (New Zealand Labour Party).

A mix of cultural and economic agendas becomes apparent from these responses. The cultural agenda implies that film funding is justified because it reflects a particular cultural profile and sense of national identity. Film is also considered to be a way of knowing this identity by not only viewing 'who we are and how we see ourselves in the world' (New Zealand Labour Party), but by promoting a particular view of this identity internationally. According to these responses funding is also necessary to protect the indigenous character of the films produced, and this in turn reinforces a sense of cultural identity. The economic agenda implies that film is important for employment and training, must be protected as an indigenous industry, is a source of export earnings, and promotes New Zealand overseas. This latter idea combines with the cultural agenda, implying that New Zealand can be promoted for economic gain by profiling the nation as a cultural entity with a particular sense of national identity.

Many of these statements are open to challenge. For instance what proof is there that films do reflect a cultural profile and anyway, what might this profile be?²⁵ Do films actually show representations of who we are as a nation or do they construct narrative fantasies that have their own independent development history and entertainment values? If film does promote a particular image of New Zealand overseas, on what basis can this image be judged? Can there be any specific image considering the range of films produced, and does this image reflect New Zealand as a nation in all its diversity or simply the ability of New Zealanders to produce particular films? The data this research is interested in however, are the types of justifications political rhetoric uses to establish positions on film funding. The research is not trying to challenge these political justifications.

The research also heeds O'Regan's warning about the fallacy of perceiving political statements as rigorous, rational, and valid outside current political contexts. For O'Regan:

Many of the problems intellectuals have with the public domain of statements involve making fundamental category mistakes about the kind of discourse being dealt with. Arguments are paraphrased, concepts criticised and their implications denounced in the name of knowledge, as if the discourses in question were abstract but pervasive ideas that could be refuted. They are not. They are firmly situated within and inseparable from their historical situation ... If these discourses are invited to formulate valid definitions of film, they are being asked to undertake practices of textual writing and object constitution that they do not do. They are being asked to step outside the contexts which gave them their force (1985: 2).

Also, the political statements may be just the opinions of one party spokesperson and not represent the entire range of opinion amongst the spectrum of party positions.

Political Justifications for Funding Film

The following analysis of these responses articulates a number of common justifications for the political support of film funding. These involve a mix of reasons and reflect the rationale of particular political positions. They include the film

²⁵ Chapter Two discusses some of these difficulties.

industry as a source of export income,²⁶ as an area of employment creation, a means of reflecting national and cultural identity, as an area for future educational directions, and as a means for the promotion of an international image. Although these justifications are separated for the purposes of this present analysis, they are frequently utilised together, as a mix of discourses, when political representatives attempt to convey their positions on state involvement in film funding.

1. Export Income

The film industry is perceived by the political parties as a source of increasing export income, which is derived not only through film sales,²⁷ but also through the export of film making expertise, film making technologies and indirectly through the promotion of New Zealand's image as a tourist destination. For instance, when asked: "What role does your party think that film making plays in creating an international profile for New Zealand?" the following responses were given:

The New Zealand film industry is growing rapidly as a major export sector. Our films are of internationally recognised quality. An innovative film industry is able to reflect and explore the many strands that make up our present and our past, as an essential part of a confident people in a prosperous outward looking economy (New Zealand Labour Party).

Very important. Promotes 'clean green' image and New Zealand culture. Encourages tourism and joint venture projects with other film makers (New Zealand National Party).

This is several fold including, as an exporter of quality product, a flagship for New Zealand creativity, a promoter of New Zealand as a tourist venue, a leader in film making technology, [and] as an international employer (New Zealand First Party).

²⁶ Film has commercial potential locally as well as internationally. For instance, 'the number of cinema admissions for the year to December 1994 was 13.3 million, more than double the 6.1 million in 1991. Actual returns from sales of New Zealand films in 1994/95 were over \$7.1 million with over \$5 million coming from international sales. If television, excluding commercials, is also considered this rises to \$86 million in foreign exchange earned for 1994/1995 (*Onarts* 1996, Issue 4 November, 3).

²⁷The film industry can generate additional residual income, not only through multiplier effects in trade, but also through income generated from its labour intense production demands and expenditure generated to subcontractors and suppliers.

Very significant as an important part of national identity and character (ACT New Zealand Party).

Very important for our tourist industry (Alliance Party).

According to these responses film creates an international profile by establishing particular images of New Zealand. It promotes images appealing to tourism as well as showing that New Zealanders have a particular character. Other discourses are introduced to describe the role of film internationally and are primarily justified by concentrating on economic aspects (exporter of quality product, leader in film making technology, an international employer). The underlying tone of these statements is positive, in the sense that film is perceived by the politicians as reflecting a profile that is 'very important', 'clean green', 'internationally recognised quality', 'an essential part of a confident people', 'a quality product', 'a flagship', 'a leader', and 'very significant'. Implicit in these statements is that film generates a positive profile which enhances tourism, as well as offering economic opportunities in terms of joint ventures, the exporting of expertise and film technology.

2. Employment Opportunities

Developing employment prospects is another underlying justification of the political support for film funding. This is perceived not only as a way of supporting an industry with export potential, able to create funds through the export of the expertise of those trained in this industry, but also as part of a social agenda, by encouraging the training of young people as well as the creation of career opportunities for artist film makers, and a recognition of their positive contribution to the social and cultural fabric of the community.

Labour has a policy, for instance, which looks to 'offer artists [presumably film makers are considered here] an economic base which allows them to remain in New Zealand' (New Zealand Labour 1996: 7). Not only does Labour's proposed policy promote an increase in financial support for the film industry in terms of the 'creation of a capital investment fund through the New Zealand Film Commission' (New Zealand Labour Party), but also through

the enhancement of an arts infrastructure [which] will provide the base for improving incomes through expanded markets and sales. In addition, Labour will undertake a number of income enhancing strategies for young artists (New Zealand Labour Party 1996: 7).

This infrastructure would include 'training, arts venues, marketing and administration that will support artists and be a platform for their talents' (New Zealand Labour Party 1996: 5).

Alliance takes a similar approach and supports

developing New Zealand literature, arts, film, performing arts and music as career pursuits providing adequate livelihood and income for people working in these fields and related areas of employment. It is intended by this policy to improve quality of life in New Zealand, contribute to the economy in terms of local and overseas earnings, and to raise New Zealand's artistic and cultural standards and reputation both within this country and internationally (Alliance 1996: 1).

The Alliance Party also states it wants the Arts Council to have 'an advisory role with the Economic Development Fund in establishing the regional employment programmes for artists in communities. This aims to employ artists in their artistic area [who offer] ... a quality contribution to the life of their communities' (Alliance 1996: 3).

The motivation behind the employment strategies implies not only a focusing on an environment conducive to employment prospects through the support of an appropriate infrastructure, but also a desire to support an industry which has an awareness of local cultural concerns, can improve the quality of life and creative expression. The justification for employment opportunity is also tied in with justifications that film contributes to the economy and to the nation's creative reputation.

3. Cultural and National Identity

Film is also perceived by the political parties as a vehicle that can display a unique national character and is a means of reflecting culture, both locally and internationally, as well as conveying a unique and innovative creativity. It is a way of showing local audiences their own experiences and interests. According to the party representatives funding support is important because of the:

Recognition of the contribution of the film industry to the country's cultural identity' (New Zealand Conservative Party, quoted in *Onfilm* 1996: 5).

[The] development of NZ culture through film and TV, particularly where positive healthy values are portrayed (Christian Coalition, quoted in *Onfilm* 1996: 5).

[The] arts, including film, are vital to our view of who we are and how we see ourselves in the world (New Zealand Labour Party).

[The] value [of] the industry for its contribution to the development of our own unique national character (New Zealand First Party).

[The fact that film is a] very significant and important part of our national identity and character (ACT New Zealand Party).

Another justification for the support of film and its role in cultural identity is that it plays a part in the encouragement of creativity in education and participation in cultural practices. For Alliance, for instance, these are 'key factors in developing a creative society' (Alliance). Alternatively for ACT, the development of 'a more creative, flexible and innovative education system and progressively a more creative and enterprising society freer of state domination' (ACT New Zealand) is seen as a way to promote the New Zealand film industry.

Film is perceived as having various roles in education. These include training young practitioners; the development of an appreciation for the culture produced; and the establishment of new audiences both locally and internationally to widen the opportunity for this appreciation. Again, there is a mix of discourses to substantiate the importance of education and its relation, at least indirectly, to the support of film. Both economic agendas (training, new audiences) and cultural agendas (appreciation, new audiences) are introduced to suggest why there should be state support for film makers and the film industry.

4. Establishing an International Image

Another justification for the support of the film industry is its role in the promotion of an international image for New Zealand. Film is seen to be important on the economic front. For instance, it conveys a particular image - "the clean green image"- for the

tourist industry.²⁸ It enhances a reputation for quality in such things as film making technology, expertise, production facilities, in the level of creativity, and the unique styles that can be expected from a New Zealand film. It is perceived by the politicians to be prestigious because a "successful" film industry helps to bolster national kudos in the international arena. This is particularly valid if, as Sir David Puttnam suggests, 'the rising and dominant corporate symbols of success are almost, without exception, related to information media companies, entertainment companies, brand merchandising companies, software houses' (1996 : 15).

Political perspectives on the new information technologies, seem to be an area that has potential for future rhetoric. For instance, the National Government has already recognised the importance of the developing information technologies with the establishment, in 1993, of a Minister for Information Technology. For National, information technology (IT)

is a broad term encompassing the use of computers, modems, faxes, audiographics and CD ROM. Increasingly traditional data processing industries, telecommunications and broadcasting have become part of the information technology sector as they process information using technological means (National Parliamentary Research Unit 1996).

Maurice Williamson, the Minister for Information Technology, sees the development of these new technologies as a powerful force for future change. He states that:

The skills that are needed in tomorrow's society will be those associated with information and knowledge rather than the industrial skills of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Changing technology will affect almost every aspect of our lives: how we do our jobs; how we educate our children; how we communicate with each other and how we are entertained (1996: 2).

The impact of this new technology is perceived to have an increasingly profound effect on New Zealand society and, if some of these effects occur, will place strong pressures on government policies.

²⁸ Ironically, the most commercially successful New Zealand film *Once Were Warriors* does not present an ideal image for a tourist destination.

For instance the Information Technology Advisory Group, established to advise the government on the new information technologies, acknowledges that in education:

Government will need to encourage the development of national learning infrastructures in each of the primary, secondary and tertiary stages of education ... The tertiary learning infrastructure must provide for lifelong access by knowledge workers to re-training and updating. The private sector will become increasingly involved in providing education and training (Butler 1996: 12).

In the field of work it is stated that:

Knowledge workers will use networked information technology as an indispensable tool. They will be managed (or manage themselves) in flatter, more participatory systems in smaller units with considerable autonomy. There will be greater flexibility and mobility in work opportunities, including larger numbers of teleworkers and self-employed and greater access to work for those with disabilities. New Zealanders will increasingly work globally, learning particular communication and cultural skills (Butler 1996: 29).

In entertainment:

Through multimedia applications, Information technology will play a major role in facilitating hobby and sports interests and in providing recreational entertainment and relaxation, both interactively and passively (Butler 1996: 30).

Although this rhetoric seems somewhat utopian, it does reflect the post-Fordist perspective on the future dependence on information technology for economic advantage²⁹ and therefore will probably also change the perceptions currently held about the importance and nature of the moving image.³⁰ These new technologies are using digitalisation techniques, which are feeding into hybrid forms of media utilising CD ROM storage and interactive capabilities and they are also stimulating an

²⁹ See (O'Brien and Wilkes 1993:19) for further details on this issue.

³⁰ These changes have already been reflected in the change of name from The Creative Film and Video Fund to The Screen Innovation Production Fund, which implies a change of emphasis in funding targets. See Chapter Six for an in-depth discussion of this change.

increasing use of the Internet. They may cause major changes in all forms of screen presentation, image creation, image distribution, and the manner in which these media, including film, will be developed in the future. This of course is also dependent on the responses made by film aficionados and possibly even mainstream audiences, who will probably find it difficult to accept the demise of celluloid and continue to consider the cinematic experience a specific cultural experience that separates itself from the image making of the new technologies. However, despite this perspective, it is probable that the importance of new image making possibilities will be such that political perspectives on film will change accordingly. How these will change is still open to speculation, but it is likely they will affect short film, especially in terms of its distribution. Short film will more be more likely to have a greater access to diverse audiences and will become more attractive as a form of fascination and entertainment precisely because of its short length.

The Funding Commitments of Political Parties

Gunew believes that the level of expenditure on film funding³¹ is a strong indicator of the political will behind the statements made by politicians. For her:

The bottom line is always the inescapable fact that any funding is ultimately dependent on whichever political masters are in power so that there is no way one can ever really dissociate the agenda for subsidising the arts from its dependence on a political agenda (1994: 3).

If this is the case, statements made by the political representatives about actual funding commitment reflect the political will to implement their policies. When the political parties were asked what support they were willing to commit to film funding, the following responses were given.

ACT, although it 'does not have a specific policy in relation to the film making industry' (Harford 1996) thinks the industry should be self supporting and is against any governmental funding. At the same time, it believes it has policies which will promote the future of the film industry and presumably help it survive as a self-supporting industry. These include

lower taxation rate (19.5% personal and company tax), policies that reward innovation, enterprise and thrift, instead of penalising them,

³¹ See Appendix One for a breakdown of film funding from 1994 - 97.

and a more creative, flexible and innovative education system, and progressively a more creative and enterprising society freer of state domination (ACT New Zealand).

National has a proposed increase in funding levels of \$600,000 in 1996/97, the same in 1997/98 and a larger increase of \$900,000 in 1998/99 for Creative New Zealand, and for the New Zealand Film Commission an increase to \$250,000 in 1996/97, and 1997/98, and \$375,000 in 1998/99 (Ministry of Cultural Affairs 1996b: 3). The Government vote for Creative New Zealand was \$3,807,000 (1995/96) and for the New Zealand Film Commission was \$1,000,000 (1995/96) (Ministry of Cultural Affairs 1996a: 25).

New Zealand First is willing to maintain funding to the Film Commission although it wants the industry to be encouraged to develop a financial independence, while the New Zealand Labour Party wants to increase funding to remedy what it perceives as 'the 13.5% cut in government funding over the last five years' (New Zealand Labour Party). The Alliance Party stated it would also 'increase funding to support the film industry' (Alliance Party).

The Funding Bodies and their Alignments with Political Agendas

Political influence is such that funders are obliged to align themselves with the political masters if they are to succeed in either maintaining or increasing their funding levels. This desire to increase the funding levels is a strong motivating factor implicit in the funders' own attitudes toward their justification for funding. For instance, the perception of the funding levels for Creative New Zealand offered by Brian Stevenson, Chair of Creative New Zealand, emphasises the decrease of funding in real terms, and the consequent difficulties of fulfilling the mandate his agency has been set:

If we are to fulfil our mandate to foster the arts for all New Zealanders, we will need to grow the arts dollar. It is of some concern therefore that the direct funding available is falling in real terms. Income from the Lottery Grants Board, which provides 85 per cent of our funding, has shown limited growth, and income from the Ministry of Cultural affairs has fallen by 13.5 per cent in real terms over the last five years (1996a: 2).

The perception by those who are responsible for dispensing funds is that the funding situation for the arts, including film, could be a lot more robust. For instance, Alan Sorrell writes in the Chairman's introduction of the New Zealand Film Commission's Annual Report 1996 that

during the year the Commission made considerable efforts to secure an increase in funding, both to acknowledge and build upon the comparative success of our film industry in recent years. These efforts met with only modest success ... Increased funding is a matter requiring our continual attention and a necessarily innovative approach (1996a: 5).

Stevenson's comments of 1997 also reflect this ongoing concern over funding:

We are under no illusions about the funding environment in which we work. Even with the co-operation and contribution of our allies and partners, we will not be able to deliver every aspect of our Act's mandate while our funding remains at current levels (1997 : 5).

And Sorrell's comments in the Chairman's Introduction for the *Film Commission Annual Report 1997*, continue this litany of lack of financial support. For instance he states that

the bad news is that it is very difficult for New Zealanders to see themselves in the movies. There is so little financing available to film makers in New Zealand that we are relatively unseen storytellers in our own country. And we will continue to be until the New Zealand Film Commission has the resources available to make, and promote, sufficient New Zealand films (at least 6-9 per year), to have a significant, rather than marginal, presence in our very competitive market place (Sorrell 1997: 5).

Another problem that these funding bodies face is their vulnerability to the popularity of different modes of gambling as the majority of their funds is actually distributed to them through the Lotteries Trusts and Grants Group, which itself is reliant on only certain forms of games of chance for its income. This vulnerability to gaming fashions is expressed by Stevenson:

The introduction of sports betting through the TAB, which we [Creative New Zealand] opposed with the Hillary commission in a joint

submission to the Government, will provide no funding for the community in general or the arts in particular. The prospect of further casinos may have the same effect, as will the current increase in the number of poker machines and other forms of gambling (1996: 2).

His approach to overcome this problem is for the Government to provide for

a corresponding benefit in the form of a community services dividend. There should be a levy on all forms of gaming, not just the major lotteries. It should be used to create a much enhanced pool of funds to which cash starved social and arts related organisations could apply to fund projects of real social, recreational, cultural and artistic benefit (1996: 2).

Stevenson acknowledges that the Minister of Cultural Affairs 'has signalled the need for a review of the cultural sector' (1997:5) and that 'Creative New Zealand will work with the cultural sector to convince the government of the role the arts play in achieving economic, social and cultural goals' (1997:5). A perception all political parties, including the government, seem to share already. He acknowledges that 'the reasons for government support for the arts will need to be more directly identified' (1997: 11). Strategies that achieve this identification will help increase funding commitments.

For instance, Ruth Harley, Executive Director of the New Zealand Film Commission, outlines her strategy for the New Zealand Film Commission and its alignment with state funding policy and suggests the increasing sophistication of the strategies being developed to create profitable alignments:

We need to examine the reasons why the Government should be in this sector. Is it because of market failure? Is it because of public good? What are the economic arguments that work for our business? Until you examine them all quite rigorously from an economist's point of view, because that's the speak the Treasury speaks, you don't have a good chance of making a case in that environment ... I am going to retain the services of suitable economists to tease the arguments out so we know the best lines of approach which are most suitable for our sector. And they're probably going to be public good, in other words cultural (1997: 14).

Harley suggests that to align with the political she needs to develop strategies which will be understood by Treasury. These, she believes, are discourses based in economic contexts, but suggests this strategy will ultimately stress cultural reasons for the funding of the industry. This is clear evidence of the strategic mix of economic and cultural discourses which are to be implemented to develop an alignment with the political agendas and is also a recognition of the need to utilise the discourse of the New Right paradigm to justify support for the cultural component of the film industry. Harley is strategic in her alignments with the politicians, even if this is her own smoke-screen, and does not herself believe in the arguments she uses to justify funding increases.

Conclusions

The analysis of political discourses on funding has shown that political positions are established by utilising a mix of discourses based in social/cultural and economic/commercial domains. Support for funding is justified in terms of economic agendas, because of film's cultural contributions, and that it allegedly creates international prestige for the nation. However, the majority of parties suggest that, given favourable economic conditions, such as more private sector involvement or self financing through income from film distribution, the film industry should become self supporting. This economic bias reflects the current political New Right paradigm that discourages government involvement and champions the determining influence of the market place.

There is a tension between support for film as an important and strategic cultural practice, contributing to the sense of identity within a culturally diverse nation, and support for policies that are motivated to established the film industry as self-reliant in the market place. Implicated in this tension is the perception of the role of the market place by the policy makers and whether it is to dictate cultural worth.

Motivation for future changes in funding policy for the film industry might lie in the political perception of the strategic importance of the new technologies and the position of the film industry within this rapidly shifting environment. Film might be perceived as part of an important change in social and economic development associated with the new information technologies. According to Williamson it is predicted that there will be radical changes in education, work and entertainment and there is an increasing need for research and development which will not only anticipate these changes but also be able to implement activities benefiting from the new commercial possibilities. Short film might play an increasingly important role in

these new developments because of its versatility, not only as a form offering a wide range of potential styles and approaches, but also because of its short length and therefore its ease of access through the Internet. The possibilities for this role for short film are currently speculative, but also might offer a positive direction for the future encouragement of political investment.

This chapter has shown that the funding bodies themselves are seeking new strategies in an attempt to increase the financial commitment of the state. They recognise that not only do they have to justify their own positions through both cultural and economic agendas, but that for effective and profitable alignments to occur between themselves and the state their strategies will have to be based in the discourses currently used to justify political funding policy. These discourses are perceived to be based in the economic paradigm of the New Right, but will, at least according to Harley, finally justify the continued and increased financial support for film in terms of its cultural importance. It seems however, if this is the case, and given the current pervading and "normalising" political agenda, that cultural values will increasingly be judged, at the political level, in terms of market values and the tensions between support for the producers of cultural goods and the importance of the audience for these goods will remain.

CHAPTER SIX

Creative New Zealand and the Creative Film and Video Fund/ Screen Innovation Production Fund

Introduction

Chapter Five outlined the political context for funding film and the axis of power relations between political agendas and those of the funding bodies. It suggested that political agendas were motivated by a New Right market philosophy found not only at the level of political rhetoric, but also implicated in the strategic alignments between funding agencies and the state. This chapter will briefly outline the contexts of the state sponsored funding agencies for film and examine some of the discourses used to legitimise and justify allocation criteria in the context of short film practice. The concept of discourse, discussed in Chapter Three, is used in this context to mean the use of clusters of concepts and structures to establish meanings and therefore enable the social practices of an associated group of people. For instance, in the context of funding allocation, the discourses include the stated aims, objectives and criteria of each funding body. The aims and criteria of Creative New Zealand are different to those of the Creative Film and Video Fund or the Screen Innovation Production Fund and their discourses and therefore relations of power are different. However, the Creative Film and Video Fund or the Screen Innovation Production Fund are not autonomous agencies, but are also imbricated with Creative New Zealand's discursive contexts and are therefore influenced by them.

The state sponsored funding bodies have been created to establish the criteria for funding allocation and to allocate the actual funds available. These funding bodies are differentiated into various smaller components with their own specialist interests defined by their own allocation guidelines. These guidelines are in turn shaped by the interpretations and agendas of those people responsible for the allocation decisions.

The structures and allocation objectives of the agencies tend to remain constant over a period of time. It is the reliability of ongoing relationships in a stable context which results in productive relationships, because 'the present actions of a dominant agent count on the future actions of the aligned agents being similar to their past actions' (Wartenberg 1990: 170). The continuity of allocation objectives is an important means of establishing a context in which applicants can be assured their application strategies are not going to be undermined through constantly changing allocation

criteria. In other words, it needs a relatively stable context to learn to play the funding "game".

However, this chapter will show that these agencies are also responsive to those practitioners and stakeholders who cannot align themselves with what they perceive as the current policies and consequent outcomes of the funding bodies. These feelings of displacement and calls for realignment between funders and applicants introduce the possibility of change in the interpretation of funding criteria and can lead to the revision of these criteria, or even the reorganisation of funding structures.³²

The axis of power relations between funding bodies and stakeholders foregrounds the possibility that individuals can play a productive part in influencing funding regimes, and counters any suggestion that the political agenda is so strong that funding regimes are totally manipulated and determined by the political masters. The "micropolitics" involved in funding regimes would suggest that these bottom-up relations are as significant as the top-down influences of political agendas despite the fact that these agendas are instrumental in establishing the levels of funding supported by the state. The latter part of this chapter will deal with the micropolitics of short film funding in terms of the Creative Film and Video Fund/Screen Innovation Production Fund in more detail.

This chapter will also offer examples of the current issues foregrounded in discussions about funding allocation and the moving image in the context of Creative New Zealand and show how these have generated changes in the policies and structures of associated funding agencies. The consideration of current discourses functioning in state sponsored funding bodies, and the inclusion of some of the voices discussing these discourses exemplify how discursive contexts are influenced by other associated contexts. The concept of the "voice" is an important reminder that individuals, be they politicians, funders or applicants, bring with them a range of other experiences and related agendas, and that no context is autonomous, but is open to a wide range of imported ideas, desires and motivations.

To reiterate from Chapter Three, the relationship between discourse and voice, theorised by Stam and Shohat, helps to explain why discourses operating within a particular setting do not cause objectives and policies to remain "locked in". The objectives, structures, or funding criteria can be challenged when film makers and

³² The change from the Short Film Fund to the Talent Development Initiative is an example of this latter case. See Chapter Eight.

stake holders, for instance, consider that the alignments required for successful funding applications are no longer necessarily productive for them, and they feel that realignments are necessary.

Finally, this chapter will focus on the perceptions of members of the now defunct Creative Film and Video Fund as well as producers and film makers involved in successful application for funds. It will outline their justifications and interpretations concerning the criteria of this funding agency, their experiences of allocation processes, and their perceptions of the role the agency has in short film practices. The incorporation of these individual perspectives assist in illustrating the role of the "voice" and the instrumental use of discourses at the level of funders and film maker applicants.

This research is not exhaustive and it is acknowledged that other opinions, possibly with quite different perceptions, could have been canvassed. The purpose of this chapter, however, is not to cover the complete spectrum of possible points of view involved in the funder/applicant relationships, but to expose the way the institutional discourses, established through the documents of the funding agencies, are interpreted and responded to by individuals involved in funding decisions and therefore this chapter articulates another power axis in the contexts of state sponsored funding.

The material for this chapter was based on interviews and questionnaires sent to members and ex-members of the Creative Film and Video Fund. Film makers involved in the application for funds in this same period also contributed. Those participating included: Lisa Reihana (Fund member); Pita Turei (Fund member); Russell Campbell (Fund member); Jane Wrightson (Fund member); Roger Horrocks (Fund member); Frank Stark (Ex fund manager); Gregory Burke (Arts advisor); Miranda Harcourt (Film maker); Stephen McGlashan (Film maker); Jeena Murphy (Film maker); Lisa Perrott (Film maker); and Paul Swadel (Film maker).

Alignments and the Process of Filtering and Imprinting Agendas

Peter Shields, discussing the influences of state institutions on economic policy, suggests that 'large-scale economic forces should be understood as being filtered through state institutional forms in particular ways, the latter leaving their own imprint on policy outcomes' (1995: 89). This concept of filtering and the resultant imprinting is an appropriate description of the way state policies concerning the funding of film filter through the state sponsored funding bodies, with the latter leaving their own imprints on policy outcomes. It is an appropriate way to describe

the result of the negotiations and strategies involved in alignments, and the influences on those groups involved in these alignments.

Each funding agency is situated within a context of state departments and Government ministries directly accountable to the Government for funding policy decisions. These include the Department of Internal Affairs responsible for the Lotteries Grants and Trusts Group, and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs responsible for Creative New Zealand, the Film Archive and the Film Commission. Between 1994 and 1996 the Crown Entity New Zealand On Air was also involved in funding short film in partnership with the Film Commission and Creative New Zealand.

Other funding agencies are also found within the umbrella of the two funding organisations involved in funding film, Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission, and these have their own separate agendas responsible for the allocation of funds for particular cultural practices. The Creative Film and Video Fund/Screen Innovation Production Fund, for example, is responsible for the allocation of funds for innovative and experimental screen media.

As the government directed agendas, implied by those Acts of Parliament relevant to each funding body, filter through the different funding contexts, these contexts impose their own imprint through their objectives and allocation criteria. These objectives and funding criteria in turn, are interpreted and implemented through those involved in the roles of funders and funding applicants. These individuals also imprint their own voice on the agendas of the funding context.

The Lottery Grants and Trusts Group

As part of its brief, the Department of Internal Affairs is responsible for the Lottery Grants and Trusts Group, which in turn is responsible for contributing funds to Creative New Zealand and The New Zealand Film Commission. (See Appendix One for a summary of government and lottery expenditure on film for 1994-1997). The Lottery Grants money (\$140 million dollars in 1995) is collected from various games of chance³³ administered by the Lottery Group. The profits are distributed between Distribution Committees and Agencies, the latter receiving 41.5% of the quota of funds distributed each year. This amount in turn is distributed to the Hillary Commission for Sport Fitness and Leisure, who receive 20% of the quota, Creative New Zealand, who receive 15% of the quota and the New Zealand Film Commission,

³³ These include: Lotto, Instant Kiwi, Lotto Strike, Keno and Telebingo.

who receive 6.5% of this guaranteed proportion. For instance, in the year ended 30 June 1996, the Hillary Commission received an allocation of \$24 million, Creative New Zealand \$18.95 million and the New Zealand Film Commission \$8 million (New Zealand Lottery Grants Board 1996: 152).

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs administers funding³⁴ (\$88.44 million in 1995/96) to four Crown Entities and the Film Archive. These Crown Entities include Creative New Zealand, the New Zealand Film Commission and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, grouped together in the Arts section. The fourth Crown Entity, the Museum of New Zealand is grouped with the New Zealand Film Archive, a charitable trust, and these are positioned within the Cultural Heritage section of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Creative New Zealand

Creative New Zealand was established with the introduction of the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 1994.³⁵ Its purpose was to

establish a national body for the arts, named the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa; establish two arts boards, one being a Maori arts board named Te Waka Toi, and the other being a general arts board named the Arts Board: and to provide for the designation of community arts providers - to encourage, promote, and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders (New Zealand House of Representatives 1994).

Over three quarters (77.6%) of the funding for Creative New Zealand in 1995/96 was received from The New Zealand Lottery Grants Board, with the remainder from interest and the government vote.

The Arts Council consists of seven appointees, nominated by the Minister of Cultural Affairs, and is involved in carrying out the legislative functions determined by the

³⁴ See Appendix Three for proposed funding levels administered by Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

³⁵ This Act also repealed the Queen Elizabeth the Second Arts Council of New Zealand Act 1974, which legitimised the previous state sponsored funding allocations of the Arts Council.

Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 1994.³⁶ For instance, it formulates policy for the Arts Boards, determines levels of allocation and gives advice to the Minister. The Arts Council is also responsible for the Arts Boards which each consist of seven members appointed by the Minister. There are two boards - the Arts Board whose main functions 'include monitoring and managing grants, operational policy development and advice, and review and evaluation', and Te Waka Toi whose functions are 'aimed at maintaining, developing and promoting Maori arts' (Creative New Zealand 1994: 37). Under the auspices of the Arts Board, Creative New Zealand, in partnership with the New Zealand Film Commission, is involved in funding moving image projects through a funding body once called the Creative Film and Video Fund, but which has been renamed the Screen Innovation Production Fund.

As part of the obligations under the Act, the Council, after consultation with the public, has to prepare and publish a three year strategic plan.³⁷ The first strategic plan was published in 1994 and a draft strategic plan was published in 1997 to be used as part of the consultation process for the formulation of the second strategic plan implemented in July 1998.

The overall plan for the allocation of funds outlined by Creative New Zealand's first strategic plan was differentiated into three separate goals, the 'People Goal', the 'Arts Goal' and the 'Management and Administration Goal'. The first goal foregrounded participation, presentation, understanding and access to the arts, while the second goal involved development of the arts through supporting quality, maintenance of indigenous arts, professional development and international promotion. The third goal was 'to develop effective policies and an efficient administration to support Creative New Zealand's strategic goals and objectives' (Creative New Zealand 1994: 20). These goals themselves are to be achieved through a series of stated objectives and actions and it is these that are the basis for funding allocation. For instance, the objectives for the 'People Goal' include:

Arts in the community - to encourage participation in a wide range of arts activities, arts presentation - to assist in presenting arts to New Zealand audiences, Maori participation - to increase Maori participation in nga toi Maori, arts awareness - to increase access to and participation in the arts through extending knowledge, experience and understanding of the diverse arts of New Zealand, arts access - to increase access to

³⁶ See Appendix Four for details of the Act.

³⁷ *Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 1994* part 1, 10.

and participation in the arts for people and communities whose involvement is otherwise limited (Creative New Zealand 1994: 16-17).

The objectives for the 'Arts Goal' include:

Arts development - to support the creation of work of high quality and originality, Maori arts development - to support the maintenance and development of Maori arts and artists, Pacific Islands arts development - to support the maintenance and development of the arts of people from Pacific Islands living in New Zealand, International arts promotion - to encourage promotion of New Zealand arts internationally to enhance the country's cultural, social and economic interests, indigenous arts promotion - to assist in developing links between Maori artists and artists from other indigenous cultures and professional development - to support and encourage professional development of New Zealand's artists and arts workers (Creative New Zealand 1994: 18-19).

According to the strategic plan, the allocation criteria are designed to create an environment which will encourage involvement in the arts where that involvement 'can take the form of active or passive participation, of doing or watching or listening' (Creative New Zealand 1994: 15).

According to Stevenson, the second strategic plan was designed to build on this arts environment, by extending 'the successful elements of the first plan ... developing goals and objectives with particular reference to the principles of [the] guiding legislation ... [and] to ensure the plan reflected more clearly the interests of our artists and the arts, and their contribution to our society' (1998: 3).

This new strategic plan was a response from the consultation process initiated by Creative New Zealand³⁸ and resulted in a broader goal structure with the new plan having seven goals. These goals included: Arts in the Community; Arts Development; Arts Presentation; Advocacy; Tangata Whenua 'for Maori by Maori'; Pacific Islands Arts; and Organisational Development. The key changes from the previous strategic plan centred on a recognition of cultural diversity, and a focus on advocacy for the arts. Arts advocacy, according to the new strategic plan

³⁸ 'Creative New Zealand received 263 submissions, with 124 from individuals and the remainder from organisations. Submissions from community arts councils, local government, recreational and professional arts groups, and Maori and Pacific Islands groups represented the views of 1300 individuals' (Creative New Zealand 1998: 10).

is an important tool to raise awareness of the value of the arts as a life-enhancing activity and in any efforts to increase funding for the arts, promoting the importance of the arts, the rights of artists and the value of a strong arts sector is a vital part of [Creative New Zealand's] work (Creative New Zealand: 1998: 23).

The Advocacy Goal arose from a recognition of the constraints imposed by limited funding and a reliance on gambling as a funding source. The implementation of the advocacy of the arts suggests the need for a strategy to convince a wider range of potential funding sources of the importance of the arts as a rewarding social activity and responses from the consultation process suggested different strategies should be developed. Responding to feedback from the consultation process the strategic plan stated that

a clear message [Creative New Zealand] took from consultation was the need for a targeted approach to funding, while increased advocacy was seen as a way to promote the value of the arts and gain support for additional funding for the arts... The arts needed promoting to both the public and private sectors, and to the Government (Creative New Zealand 1998: 10).

Creative New Zealand's stated motivation to develop both this increased funding involvement as well as an increased participation in the arts was justified by invoking discourses based in the idea of the arts as expression as well as establishing the idea of a characteristic New Zealand national and cultural identity. These latter two discourses are sometimes separated, as in the case of the differentiation of Maori arts and the arts of Pacific Islanders living in New Zealand, and sometimes they are integrated. For instance, a justification for funding the arts and the implication of an inclusive identity, national and cultural, is offered in the *Draft Strategic Plan 1998-2001* where reference is made to a sense of a New Zealand identity:

Heading into the new millennium we anticipate there will be a greater awareness of the arts and cultural sector and more recognition of the centrality of the arts in the lives of New Zealanders. Our sense of identity as New Zealanders is expressed and defined through the arts. Greater emphasis will be placed on our New Zealand identity and the arts will continue to contribute to this (1997: 10).

The arts are interpreted in the Act to mean 'all forms of creative and interpretative expression' (New Zealand House of Representatives 1994: 219), but are defined more precisely by Creative New Zealand in terms of different art forms. Three overlapping categories have been defined as

language arts and literature, which include oratory, poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction, whaikorero and te reo Maori, performing arts, which includes dance, opera, music, mixed media, puppetry, theatre, kapa haka, waiata and taiaha, and also the visual arts, which includes fine arts, camera arts, craft arts, design arts, electronic arts, mixed media, raranga and toi whakairo (Creative New Zealand 1997a: 6).

The arts are defined in terms of particular forms of creative expression and interpretation, including the camera arts which incorporates photography, film and video.

The difficulty of using discourses based on the concept of identity as a strategy for funding justification is recognised by Creative New Zealand in the *Draft Strategic Plan*. Whilst its position is that 'a nation's cultural identity is not and cannot be prescriptive' (1997: 13) the development of identity is promoted through the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. This is a tautological justification, with Creative New Zealand stating that its agenda is to contribute to national and cultural identity, and while this cannot be prescribed it will be achieved by the funding allocations. Creative New Zealand are stating that its allocation decisions contribute to the establishment and reflection of a sense of identity although the "success" of this can only be considered retrospectively.

The criteria for the allocation of funds is perceived by Creative New Zealand to be motivated by a desire for the expression and definition of a national and cultural identity. This was to be achieved in the first strategic plan through the encouragement of involvement in the arts signified by the 'People Goal', as well as supporting a more professional practice in the 'Arts Goal'. In terms of the new strategic goals, the expression of a national and cultural identity is reinforced by aims which 'reflect, encourage and support New Zealand's cultural diversity' (Creative New Zealand 1998: 17) and the promotion of 'the contribution of New Zealand arts, and in particular those of the tangata whenua, in reflecting and shaping who we are as New Zealanders' (Creative New Zealand 1998: 22).

This justification of funding allocation through a discourse of identity, either national or cultural, is similar to that expressed by the politicians. The alignment with political agendas goes further however, and includes not only the focus on identity, but also incorporates Creative New Zealand's perceived relationship between the arts and economic perspectives. The rhetoric of the consecutive strategic plans aligns itself with the rhetoric of contemporary political agendas and uses economic as well as social discourses to justify the role cultural practices play in the nation's future. This is a strategic alignment with the political masters, a manoeuvre to convince the political decision makers why state intervention is necessary in funding culture,³⁹ and further, it is a ploy to convince possible funding sources of the value of investment in the subsidy of the arts.

For instance, statements made by Creative New Zealand anticipating future trends for the arts utilise this combination of social and economic discourses:

The arts will become increasingly important in the economy, and link more closely with commercial and economic developments. The contribution of artists to areas such as design, architecture, manufacturing, tourism and the quality of our environment will become more evident, improving our everyday lives and environment. The arts and artists will become an increasingly dynamic force in the country's economy (1997: 10).

Other funding justifications also include the need to assist new opportunities with new technology, to accommodate the changing education sector, a recognition of social and cultural diversity, and a need to enhance the opportunities for Maori in the expression and participation of their 'arts and culture on the marae' (1997: 11). These also align with the perspectives found in the political justification for funding discussed in Chapter Five.

There is then, a close alignment between the political rhetoric and the rhetoric of the strategic plans established by Creative New Zealand. The discourses used to justify allocation of funds utilise both economic and social imperatives. However, Creative New Zealand also imprints its own agendas giving a stronger profile to discourses with a social underpinning to justify the allocation objectives. For instance, this

³⁹ A similar strategy is discussed by Ruth Harley, Executive Director of the New Zealand Film Commission, in Chapter Seven. Although Harley recognises the usefulness of economic discourses she believes that cultural imperatives will have the most effect in justifying state involvement in funding film.

emphasis is apparent in both the 'People Goal' and the 'Arts Goal' of the first strategic plan and in the goals of the second strategic plan, especially in the new Advocacy Goal, which is justified because 'the arts enhance the quality of life for individuals and in communities, towns and cities' (Creative New Zealand 1998: 23).

The social imperative, emphasising "people", which includes amateur and professional producers as well as a range of audiences, rather than a more commercial market orientation, is also reflected in the aspirations of the *Draft Strategic Plan*. For instance the draft plan states that the Arts Council of Creative New Zealand is

striving towards a more equitable approach to the distribution of funding, a more active programme of advocacy for the arts, and the development of partnerships and alliances with arts organisations, the private sector, and central and local government (Creative New Zealand 1997: 4).

Creative New Zealand is advocating fairness in the distribution of funds and is thus emphasising a broader and more equitable access for creative and interpretative expression. At the same time it seeks greater access to funds through new alliances, in response to a funding environment perceived by the Council as 'static and vulnerable' (Creative New Zealand 1997: 5). The strategic goals introduced into the second strategic plan continue this emphasis on access to the arts, equity, and the development of new funding alliances. This focus can be found, for instance, in the Arts and Community Goal which supports 'opportunities for people to enjoy the arts in their community' (Creative New Zealand 1998: 16), the Tangata Whenua 'for Maori by Maori' Goal, which 'supports and helps protect Maori arts for the benefit of all New Zealanders' (Creative New Zealand 1998: 24) and the Advocacy Goal which promotes funding partnerships between Government as well as public and private sources.

In responding to current funding levels Creative New Zealand's strategies are to justify its objectives as both enhancing the opportunities for art practice and appreciation, while at the same time aligning itself with the market orientation of current political rhetoric. It does the latter by justifying the arts and artists as increasingly important for the economy. Creative New Zealand also seeks alignments with outside organisations to increase the funding base, which implies that these new alignments will impose new allocation criteria determined by the objectives of the new funding sources. This situation suggests that there are a number of influences shaping the rhetoric used by Creative New Zealand to justify the strategies necessary to fulfil its objectives. Economic justifications are used to enhance social goals, while

a wider funding base is sought in partnerships and alliances, which in turn, will demand a readjustment of allocation criteria. The perceived lack of funding has also caused the funding body to formalise a strategy encouraging a greater funding commitment, targeting not only the state, but also the private and public sectors. This strategy has been formally incorporated into the Advocacy Goal, which has an objective to raise an awareness of the social and economic benefits of the arts and therefore elicit further funding support from 'Government and New Zealanders' (Creative New Zealand 1998: 22).

Funding Allocations for the Moving Image Through Creative New Zealand's Funding Objectives

This discussion of the objectives of Creative New Zealand helps to define the context for its funding of the moving image. The motivations of this funding organisation suggest a desire to foreground creative expression and interpretation, while recognising the need for an alliance with government and private sector bodies that have a more market oriented philosophy. The moving image is just one of a number of different art forms that compete for funds through this organisation.

Funding options for the moving image include project funding for one-off arts activities; the Creative Communities New Zealand scheme, for projects benefiting communities; annual programme funding, for arts organisations to undertake a programme for the following year; and multi-year programme funding for funding at a fixed level for a three year period (Creative New Zealand 1997a: 7). For instance, these funding programmes include supporting the Moving Image Centre in Auckland. Currently Creative New Zealand has reduced its funding commitments to the Moving Image Centre and this has led to the demise of the magazine *The big picture* in print form, although it continues to be produced online through the internet.⁴⁰

There are also other options considered as 'Specific Projects' and it is under this option that funding applications can be made for one-off film and video projects.

⁴⁰ Currently The Moving Image Centre itself has its own alignment problems. These relate to difficulties between itself and other agencies such as Creative New Zealand, the Film Commission, Artspace and the Centre for Film TV and Media Studies. Although the details remain confidential, according to Martin Rumsby, a member of the Moving Image Centre Board, the particular difficulty with Creative New Zealand is as much to do with the Moving Image Centre's own lack of fulfilling the mandate as a national film and arts exhibition agency' as it is to do with any shifting in Creative New Zealand agendas and changes in funding policy.

These projects are funded through a partnership with the New Zealand Film Commission under the auspices of the Screen Innovation Production Fund.

Funding of projects is based on the ability to fulfil the requirements of a strategic objective. As part of the application procedure one goal and one objective is to be chosen by the applicant to best reflect the purposes of the project. Limited funding for film is found under a number of objectives. For instance in the first funding round of 1997-98, funding applications were successfully made under the objectives of professional development (\$12,000) and arts presentation (\$82,000). One-off short film projects are funded through the Screen Innovation Production Fund and applications are made under the Arts Development objective, whose allocation motivation is to support work of high quality and originality. Arts Development has become formalised as a goal in the second strategic plan and this goal has a number of objectives including supporting opportunities for

New Zealand artists to create new work ... innovative arts projects and practices ... continuing professional development ... artists to gain international experience and exposure ... informed debate on contemporary arts practices Maori and non-Maori partnerships (Creative New Zealand 1998: 18).

The Creative Film and Video Fund/Screen Innovation Production Fund

The Screen Innovation Production Fund evolved from The Creative Film and Video Fund established in 1984. At its commencement this latter fund involved not only the Arts Council and the Film Commission but also Television New Zealand.⁴¹ According to Frank Stark, the first fund manager

the partners nominated a member for a two-year term - with TVNZ usually sending the Commissioning Editor [of independent productions] and New Zealand Film Commission a practising film maker (not normally a Commission or Short Film Fund member). Once they were a part of the panel the members did not act as representatives of the nominating organisations, but as peers. Discussions of the policy objectives of the partners were not held with the panel, but were conducted at a staff level between the affected organisations. The panel's

⁴¹ Television New Zealand withdrew its participation in 1992 and in 1994 New Zealand On Air became a partner. This partnership lasted until 1996.

role was simply to evaluate and allocate funds to proposals put before them three times a year (1996).

The funding guidelines for this fund gave priority to the funding of low budget innovative work for both new film and video makers, and more established film and video practitioners. Funding allocation was separated into categories defined by projects of emerging video and film makers of promise; of experimental or fine art film and video makers; projects by artists exploring digital technologies giving priority to the moving image; and exceptional alternative non-commercial projects, where the form or content suggests that no other funding body would be appropriate (Creative New Zealand 1996b: 1).

This allocation criteria offered new film or video makers a chance to compete for public funding without the need for an extensive track record, as well as offering established practitioners an opportunity to explore non-commercial ideas in both film, video and new technologies. It was this emphasis on the non-commercial perspective that was perceived by the participants in the 1996 review⁴² as the funding body's strength. According to representative comments it allowed for creative freedom, risk taking and experimentation, provided opportunities for marginalised practitioners, offered opportunities for the funding of politically sensitive material, and gave an opportunity for film makers 'to find their own film-making voice before the homogenisation process kicks in' (Sutherland 1997: 19). This body then, seems to act as an ideological alternative to the main thrust of the New Right philosophy implicit in the discourses of state funding allocation. The perceived non-commercial emphasis in the Screen Innovation Production Fund is contrary to the strong market and commercial orientation of New Right politics.

This ideologically alternative site is an example then of the tension between the filtering process of state sponsored agendas and the imprinting of other agendas promoted by a specific funding agency. It seems at this level of funding the imprint of the agency's criteria is stronger than the political agenda and this situation illustrates the possibilities of contradictory discourses operating in different but associated contexts that was emphasised by Hall, Slack and Grossberg in Chapter Three. However, while there is some contradiction to the main thrust of political rhetoric, political presence is still felt in terms of other agendas, such as the

⁴² These included recipients of funds over the review period, plus stakeholders and those historically associated with the fund.

encouragement of identity and creativity, that remain implicit in the objectives of the Screen Innovation Production Fund.

Underlying agendas in terms of the applicants and the partnership in the fund blur this image of the previously named Creative Film and Video Fund and its innovative and non-commercial edge. For instance, the Creative Film and Video Fund was perceived by some emerging film makers as an opportunity to develop experience in narrative film and therefore move them closer to the opportunities of involvement with bigger budget projects. This agenda is still prevalent, especially since the advent of the Talent Development Initiative⁴³ and the redirecting of inexperienced film makers, who have applied to the Talent Development Initiative, to application for project funding through the Screen Innovation Production Fund. The increased contribution of \$50,000 by the New Zealand Film Commission also implies that the Film Commission believes that the Screen Innovation Production Fund has a role which is not solely about encouraging the experimentation with screen media.

Similarly with the inclusion of New Zealand On Air as a partner in 1994, there was a significant increase in the number of narrative films funded. For instance, in 1990-91 16 drama (\$200, 824) and 21 experimental or alternative (\$192,052) films were funded. In 1991-1992, 16 drama (\$243,800) 16 experimental/alternative (\$129,547); in 1992-1993 16 drama (\$247,136) and 21 experimental/alternative (\$187,230); in 1993-1994 19 drama (\$181,972) and 21 experimental/alternative (\$187, 230); while in 1994-1995, the period of New Zealand On Air's involvement with the fund, there were 31 drama (\$421,233) and 20 experimental/alternative (\$145,173) (Sutherland 1996: 9-11). These figures show a substantial increase in the subsidy of theatrical dramas during the period of New Zealand On Air's involvement.

This is not to suggest that narrative dramas cannot be innovative or experimental, but does suggest that the funding justifications of the experimental and the non-commercial reflected in the guidelines of the fund could be tempered because of the agendas of particular funding partners. The agenda for New Zealand On Air, is directed to broadcast related material and is weighted more to the promotion of programmes about New Zealand and New Zealand interests, as well as Maori language and Maori culture, based on 'the likelihood that the proposed programme or programmes, if produced, would be broadcast' (New Zealand Government 1989: 19). Implicitly then, given these objectives, less priority is likely to be given to

⁴³ See Chapter Eight for a discussion of this initiative.

experimental or innovative works, especially considering they have less probability of being broadcast on commercial television networks.⁴⁴

Review of the Creative Film and Video Fund 1990-95

In 1996 a performance review of the Creative Film and Video Fund was commissioned by Creative New Zealand, the New Zealand Film Commission and New Zealand On Air. Its objectives were to survey the performance of the fund, establish the perceptions of its strength and weaknesses, and analyse policy, administration, partnership issues and perceptions of trends. This review was an opportunity for the previous recipients of financial support and key stakeholders to voice their views on issues they considered to be important for the fund.

For instance, although the role of the fund is to allocate funding and not act as either a training institution or commercial distributor,⁴⁵ according to the review, 'over ninety-five per cent of recipients felt that the Creative Film and Video Fund needed to take a more active role in distribution' (Sutherland 1996: 17). The strength of the fund was perceived as its non-commercial attitude, while its weaknesses were perceived to lie with its administration, confusion over information about funding policy, funding procedures and a perceived funding priority that placed too much emphasis on narrative drama. The future direction for this fund was perceived to lie in the direction of experimental and innovative work. These included projects which placed an 'emphasis on process and experimentation - not product' (Sutherland 1996: 20), a commitment to 'challenging, risky and innovative work' (Sutherland 1996: 20), and projects that supported 'radical expression and representation of the voices of discontent in New Zealand' (Sutherland 1996: 20). It was considered by respondents that new technologies should be given a greater recognition and that this could be reflected within, for instance, the application forms and through the appointment of a specialist to the selection panel (Sutherland 1996: 21).

⁴⁴ This is reinforced by Wrightson's statements later in this chapter where she describes NZ On Air's participation with the Creative Film and Video Fund and the ultimate curtailment of this involvement because NZ On Air did not achieve a broadcast result.

⁴⁵ Support for distribution does occur however through the arts presentation objective of Creative New Zealand. Finance is provided, for instance, to the core funding of the presentation programme of the Moving Image Centre in Auckland. Also under the professional development objectives applicants are able to extend their knowledge and expertise in screen media. Further learning programmes are supported through sponsored workshops by film makers and the funding of resident film makers in educational institutions.

This response from the review reflected a reaction against narrative dramas and exposed the perception for a fund that was a site within state auspices, where discourses countering those of the New Right might find some expression. This was a desire for the fund not only to have an "arts" focus, in terms of innovation and creative risk, but to add a "political" dimension to the fund to allow for marginalised voices. This issue of the marginalised was also prevalent in the perceptions by Maori of the experience of Maori with the fund. For instance, Barclay commented on the lack of Maori applicants and suggested a need for policy encouraging Maori to apply:

The situation is there for all to see - the system is not delivering to Maori. We have a white fund, delivering to white youth. It's a situation that has crept up on us, myself included. Nobody at all intended it this way. On the contrary, considerable help has been given to at least a select group of Maori. And there are no quick-fix solutions. But that having been said, I am simply not going to stand on the same side of the street as anybody claiming there's not a problem here. We've wound up with a [structurally] racist fund (Sutherland 1996: 43).

Pita Turei, a Maori film maker, also felt that an awareness of the particular problems of Maori applicants was a significant issue for the fund to consider:

For Maori who are experienced in dealing with Pakeha (Government) organisations one recognises the need to overcome a cultural indifference. That is, to be a valid applicant we must first of all present ourselves as Pakeha in a Pakeha context to be evaluated with Pakeha values and terms of reference. One also learns that the reasons given for the failure of an application are often absurd in the context of the application and reflect the uncertainty of the panel on how to deal fairly with Maori issues. For Maori a 'no' from a Pakeha organisation means 'no' and will usually mean the applicant won't apply again for the same project. This is an ingrained post colonial cultural imperative. We are used to being denied and have no reason to expect any change as a result of re-applying whereas Pakeha applicants will apply over and over again firm in the belief that they have a right to resources that may not immediately be available or that a panel needs to simply look closer to recognise the merits and values (Turei).

Both Barclay and Turei suggest that the strategic alignments all applicants have to adapt are ones that fit comfortably only within a Pakeha approach. They believe

Maori have to present themselves as Pakeha and respond as Pakeha if they are to have any success in receiving funds for their projects. Barclay describes the fund as structurally racist because it does not cater for Maori discourses, while Turei calls for a programme that gives Maori applicants a greater awareness of the Pakeha approach so that they might deal with the implicit bias of the fund more strategically, and therefore be more comfortable utilising Pakeha discourses for their own ends.⁴⁶

Other perceptions arising from this review were based on a desire for a wider spectrum of projects to be funded. For instance it was suggested by stakeholders that the fund could be more proactive especially in terms of 'more ideas based projects' and 'projects with a more political/documentalist bent' (Sutherland 1996: 30). It was also thought that experienced industry practitioners should have representation on the panel and that budget levels for funding allocation needed to be examined with limits being placed on allocation amounts. This latter restriction would, it was assumed, encourage more practitioners, allow more experimental, risk-taking work and allow failure. At the same time it was acknowledged that flexibility in funding allocation was important.

Screen Innovation Production Fund.

As part of the response to this review, the Creative Film and Video Fund was changed to the Screen Innovation Production Fund in 1997. The stated objectives remained the same and despite the range of issues discussed in the review only some have been addressed. Gregory Burke, Arts Advisor for the Visual Arts/Films Programmes Unit of Creative New Zealand, believes that the name change was to clarify the funding focus on "screen innovation" which the 'Arts Council has had in moving image since the establishment of the Film Commission in 1978 (Burke 1996).' Claudia Scott, Creative New Zealand's Arts Board Chair, also stated that

the primary focus of the new fund remains the same - to support innovation in the moving image arts. However screen media these days includes more than just videos or films, and so we have decided on a new name and guidelines to encourage artists who are involved in innovative projects in any screen-based media. (Scott quoted in Creative New Zealand 1996d: 1).

⁴⁶ Dorthe Scheffmann suggests a way to overcome this disenfranchisement in Chapter Eight when she discusses her production group's attitude to attracting applicants for funding.

This indicates that the Screen Innovation Production Fund was attempting to clarify its policy of attracting moving image projects that utilise a variety of different screen technologies. This in turn implies that there is more competition for the limited funds and therefore less available for projects using film and video. The stated funding emphasis is on 'innovation in the moving image arts' (Creative New Zealand 1996: 1), rather than the support of a particular medium or form such as short film. Although the desire for an innovative and experimental emphasis remains an explicit criteria for funding allocation with the new funding panel, its stated guidelines do not explicitly consider the problems of Maori applicants nor do they address the desire for a more proactive attitude towards particular types of projects. The encouragement of documentaries and the expression of different political perspectives is not made explicit in the funding criteria. However, Kathleen Drumm, Associate Marketing Director for the New Zealand Film Commission, does suggest that the problem of the lack of distribution opportunities has at least been partially addressed, as the 'contract with Creative New Zealand for the Screen Innovation Production Fund allows [the New Zealand Film Commission] "first look" on all new films [funded by the Screen Innovation Production Fund] (1998: 1).

The criteria established for the Screen Innovation Production Fund does fulfil some of the mandate implicit in the Arts Development Goal of the new strategic plan. For instance, the emphasis on innovation and implicitly supporting opportunities for new work certainly fulfil the objectives outlined for the Arts Development Goal. Other objectives are not so overtly established in the criteria of the fund. For instance, there is no formal directive to encourage informed debate or to support joint projects between Maori and non-Maori artists and art organisations. It could be argued of course, that these practices could be supported covertly through the established criteria of the fund. The rhetoric of the new strategic plan suggests the need for a realignment for the Screen Innovation Production Fund, to make some of the arts development goals more explicit in its criteria.

Selection Guidelines For the Screen Innovation Production Fund.

The emphasis on innovation as a dominant motivating factor in allocation guidelines is apparent in the purposes of the Screen Innovation Production Fund. It is stated that:

The fund will give priority to innovative art projects and production proposals in the following categories: Projects by emerging video and film makers of promise that emphasise innovation within or between moving-image genres; projects by experimental or fine art film and video

makers; projects by artists exploring digital technologies giving priority to the moving image; and exceptional, innovative, non-commercial projects by established film and video makers (Creative New Zealand 1996c: 1).

Emerging talent is defined as a film maker 'who has not yet produced a substantial body of work, in particular work supported by Creative New Zealand or the Short Film Fund of the New Zealand Film Commission.' (Creative New Zealand 1996c: 1-2), but a definition of innovation is not included and it is therefore left to the panel members to assess for themselves whether or not projects fit this criteria and exemplifies the influence of individual voices in the assessment processes involved in the application of funds.

The realignment between the fund and stakeholder/practitioners instigated by the review of the Creative Film and Video Fund has not introduced significant change and seems to have ignored some of the areas, deemed by respondents of the review, to require some consideration. Structurally the fund remains the same, with a similar number of personnel on the panel. The objectives remain the same in terms of funding innovation and experimentation, while the criteria for funding has been clarified and opened to all screen media projects. Little has been done to address the problem of Maori alignment with the funding process, although the problem of distribution has been partially addressed through the New Zealand Film Commission's right of "first look".⁴⁷

A problem for the funding of film within these new developments is that the small adjustments in criteria have encouraged increased competition between other screen media for the limited funds. This competition for funds will also be enhanced by the Talent Development Initiative, which is focusing on experienced film makers and will probably encourage more unsuccessful applicants to apply for funds through the Screen Innovation Production Fund in order that they develop a track record. If this does occur, (and the New Zealand Film Commission seems to have anticipated it happening), will it compromise the stronger emphasis on innovation and experimentation that has been espoused by the Screen Innovation Production Fund? This question returns us to the issue of competing agendas between partners in the fund.

⁴⁷ See Chapter Eight for Kathleen Drumm's comments on the 'right of first look'.

Short Film and the Contexts of Creative New Zealand

This discussion about Creative New Zealand's objectives with a focus on the moving image has been framed by Shield's suggestion of the processes of filtering and imprinting. State policies, influenced by a mix of strong market oriented philosophies as well as social agendas, are filtered through the objectives of Creative New Zealand. In the case of this funding body however the social objectives are given priority and therefore Creative New Zealand's own imprint is developed. However, the discourses of the economic or market driven imperatives become important as part of a strategic rhetoric directed at securing and possibly increasing the funding base.

With the focus on the moving image and especially the Screen Innovation Production Fund, the funding criteria are again filtered and the specialised agenda imposes its own imprint. Although professional development and arts presentation are two of the avenues open for funding application, the major application route for film makers is currently through the Screen Innovation Production Fund, situated under the Arts Development Goal. The emphasis for this fund is innovation. Short film competes with other forms of the moving image for limited funds and these are applied for under criteria designed to offer a chance for both emerging and established practitioners to develop non-commercial innovative projects.

However, within the context of the Screen Innovation Production Fund, other contexts are also vying for influence. As funding partners change, so too do the actual allocation decisions. The influence of a more commercially oriented partner shaped the types of projects funded and new developments in short film funding caused by the Talent Development Initiative will probably also have an impact.

The *Review of the Creative Film and Video Fund 1990-1995* (Sutherland 1996) offered new challenges for the fund. These were responded to with a slight realignment and a change in name implying a clarification of criteria. However, the realignments carried out by the fund were only a partial solution to the problems exposed by the review.

These influences exemplify the complex processes operating through the contexts of Creative New Zealand, which in different ways, and with varying impact, shape the types of projects funded through the Screen Innovation Production Fund. An important aspect of these processes is the discourse used by Creative New Zealand to justify its objectives. This is an example of the type of language used by the New Right discourse commented on by McCormack and Duder who suggest that a

particular language has been imported into the arts environment. This is 'the language of accountability, transparency, management of objectives, strategic planning, maximising efficiency, optimum outputs, value for money and our marketplace' (McCormack 1992: 4). The "strategic plans" and "goals" of Creative New Zealand, and the ongoing process of "consultancy" through draft strategic plans, and the requirement of three year strategic plans, all outlined in this chapter, illustrate this New Right coding of arts funding.⁴⁸

There is not one determining influence on the funding environment of Creative New Zealand and its subsidiary role funding short films. The pressures of political agendas; the desire for social equity; the discursive structures imposed on Creative New Zealand reflecting a political demand for accountability; the need to secure and increase funds and the strategies involved to do this; the options for funding and the allocation decisions based on a conception of innovation; the pressures imposed on the fund by the differing agendas of the partners; the perceived cultural bias of the allocation process; and the competition for funds from a widening range of moving image technologies, are some of the influences that impinge on the allocation of funds.

The Screen Innovation Production Fund is positioned within the larger contexts of Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission. These in turn are influenced by the political context. These various influences all impinge on the funding guidelines and allocation criteria. The institutional discourses of Creative New Zealand have developed through the process of consultancy with stakeholders and practitioners, and these changes have not had a marked effect on the Screen Innovation Production Fund, although the new goals established by the strategic plan might cause more pressure on the limited funds available for the moving image as funds are diverted to fulfil different objectives. Further, the Screen Innovation Production Fund could be vulnerable in the future to pressures from the continuing consultancy process established by Creative New Zealand or to pressures from a political agenda which challenges the place of a funding body which encourages non-commercial work and, at least in principle, offers the opportunity for political dissension. The fund's partnership with the New Zealand Film Commission places it in a different structural relationship to much of the funding processes established by Creative New Zealand and this also might result in a redefining of the rationale of having a separate fund devoted to funding screen media.

⁴⁸ Duder has responded to the second strategic plan in a more positive manner and has been reported as stating that 'the terrible "management speak" had gone... and this strategic plan was "much more accessible" (Duder quoted in Carroll 1998: A13).

In terms of the funding agencies established for the moving image, funding guidelines and funding categories have remained stable over time, while the actual funding policies and outcomes have been influenced by the changing partnership structures as well as competition with a widening net of screen image media. Further areas of influence on funding decisions focus on the interpretations by the funders on the panel, and by the voices of stakeholders and applicants vying for their own influence on funding decisions.

The Perceptions of Fund Members and Applicants

The remainder of this chapter will outline the justifications and interpretations of some of the members of the Creative Film and Video Fund, focusing on funding criteria and allocation processes. It will then consider the experiences of some of the applicants for project funding and outline their perceptions of the strategic alignments required for funding success. This perspective will outline the process of the "voice" and indicate how the fund's criteria are interpreted by panel members in funding decisions. Case studies in Chapter Nine will investigate this strategic behaviour concerning project application in greater detail.

Interpretation of Assessment

The underlying motivation for the Creative Film and Video Fund/Screen Innovation Production Fund is the support of low budget innovative projects whether or not the applicants have a significant track record. If the dominant allocation criteria is based on the project's innovative nature, and no definition of innovation is given in the fund's documents, it would imply the interpretation of the meaning of "innovation" is dependent on the experience and mutual agreement of the funding panel.

When panel members of the Creative Film and Video Fund were asked what criteria they used to allocate funds and how innovation was assessed, the following responses were given:

[Allocation criteria include] previous experience of applicant and the overall budget and scale of the project. Also how the proposal relates to the Creative Film and Video Fund guidelines and whether the project was appropriate to the fund or some other funding agency. Also whether the project is adequately developed and ready to go (Reihana).

Reihana's response incorporates the discourse of the fund and she bases her response in terms of the guidelines the fund offers for decision making. These guidelines, according to Reihana, also act in a gatekeeping role, which differentiates those projects eligible for funds and those that would be more appropriately funded by other sources.

Anything that looked like it had been done a million times already seemed a pointless exercise. We were always reminding ourselves of the experimental nature of the fund and consequently funded projects that were definitely experimental but had few other attractive qualities. Anything and everything that attempts to break new ground [should be considered for funding] especially those projects that are beyond the scope and acceptability of other funding avenues (Turei).

Turei similarly prioritises the objective of the fund in terms of innovation and his decisions about funding applications are based on this objective even if the projects have 'few other attractive qualities'. Innovation for Turei is defined through the idea of the new and he discards what has already been done before. As with Reihana, Turei stresses the role of the fund in terms of other funding options, stressing the importance of the fund as one that accommodates projects outside the scope of other funding avenues.

In my experience, it was recognised that some projects (often those from students coming out of art school) were of their very nature innovative, while others were fundamentally traditional in form but nonetheless worthy of support if they were strongly creative within accepted conventions (Campbell).

Campbell is more open to interpretations of innovation and implies he is also accepting of more traditional forms of work. His perspective of funding appropriateness is based on the level of creativity within these projects rather than stressing the value of innovation.

Each panel member brings his or her own views and preferences to the table of course, but in practice, decisions are almost always based on a combination of affordability, talent and originality. Innovation underpins the work of the Fund. Emerging film makers are rarely judged on this criterion, especially if their project is modest, but experienced film makers would need to demonstrate this clearly, given the competitive

nature of allocating funding. It may be technical, creative or in collaboration with other art forms (Wrightson).

Wrightson bases her response to the application criteria on the discursive framework of innovation implemented by the fund, but she suggests that there are different approaches to judgement depending on the level of experience of the film maker applicants. For her, innovation is a criterion applied to the experienced film makers, although this too can be approached in different ways, such as technically, creatively, or the degree of innovation through collaboration.

This selection of responses reflect the complexity of the practice of allocation and suggest a number of important issues. Reihana and Wrightson, for instance, acknowledge the influence of the guidelines for the fund - the appropriateness of the project, the funding commitment required and its originality. Turei and Campbell suggest that it was their experience of previous work which helped to establish for them the innovative nature of applications. Innovation stresses approaches that 'break new ground', but this could be in both experimental or more conventional forms. For Turei the experimental nature was paramount, while Campbell states that, in his view, there was a divide between innovative experimental work and more traditional formats that also had innovative qualities. For Wrightson another division could be found between new film makers and those more experienced, and she suggests that different criteria were applied to these groups. It illustrates the importance of the "voice" and indicates ways in which each panel member responds to the interpretation of the discourse of the funding agency.

These different responses reinforce Horrocks' position concerning the fluid perception of allocation criteria. Even though the objectives might not have changed markedly, according to Horrocks, funding criteria have changed because of the changing priorities of the fund, and changing partnerships and personnel. He suggests that although the fund might encompass both experimental and a more traditional approach to film making, and at different periods the emphasis on these has changed, the influence of individual panel members and variety of applications make it difficult to stipulate any objective criteria for actual decisions. Horrocks states that:

Over the past twenty years these criteria have changed according to the current priorities of the organisations involved in the Fund [and] the personnel of the Fund. This complexity and change are unavoidable once one accepts the principles that there should be a turnover in personnel, and whoever pays the piper is entitled to call the tune. You

would need a five hundred page history to trace all the subtle shifts of emphasis in the selection process. I guess some large overall issues can be identified - e.g. the Fund has sometimes been more sympathetic to "experimental film making" (in some previous periods) and sometimes more interested in "industry training" (recent years). But I think any generalisations would be too general. The selection process is always complex because each panel and each batch of applications is unique. At the same time, in deciding on what is or isn't innovative, there is often a good deal of agreement among individual panellists because they have followed New Zealand film making closely and can easily recognise clichés (Horrocks).

This difficulty of predicting actual decisions is further enhanced by the multiple nature of the allocation criteria, with no one aspect being sufficiently determining. For instance, Reihana suggests, there are a number of considerations that need to be applied to any one project. A degree of innovation might be necessary, but this is not a sufficient consideration, because other criteria, such as budget, scale of project, applicability to guidelines, and level of project development are also important.

The complexity of alignments at this level of the funding process is evident. There is a mix of the personal voice of panel members, the pressure for mutual agreement based on the fund's guidelines, and also possibly other implicit underlying agendas that influence actual decisions.

For instance, it has been suggested in this chapter that the representation of the funding partnership might influence actual decisions. The inclusion of New Zealand On Air as a funding partner resulted in the increased funding of narrative driven short films suitable for television broadcast. With New Zealand On Air no longer involved, the tension between television broadcast constraints and less commercial expression may well have dissipated. Another tension between innovative forms and more traditional narrative projects is probably developing between the agendas of Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission.⁴⁹

Different perceptions of the tension between the priorities of the partners is found in the statements made by members of the actual funding panel. For instance, Wrightson, the representative on the panel for New Zealand On Air, believes that responses to projects are more personal than motivated by professional agendas.

⁴⁹ See Chapter Seven.

When questioned about the influences of partners, she responded that there is 'a lot of scuttlebutt about organisational influences, but my observation is that differences in responses are more to do with personal reactions to projects rather than professional' (Wrightson). This position reinforces Stark's comments expressed earlier in this chapter where he refers to the differences between the agendas of the funding partners and the decisions made by panel members about actual projects.

Wrightson disputes any claim that New Zealand On Air's involvement in the Creative Film and Video Fund resulted in an increase in narrative-driven short films suitable for television broadcast and has responded to this by stating that the 'original reason New Zealand On Air agreed to become involved in the Creative Film and Video Fund was to try and help get a diverse range of material on our television screens' (Wrightson 1998). Unfortunately this strategy was not successful:

It was hoped that broadcaster support could be encouraged ... We indeed had to withdraw from the Creative Film and Video Fund when it became apparent that no such support was likely, after two years of trying to obtain broadcaster interest (Wrightson 1998).

This broadcast agenda however, according to Wrightson, was not

directly connected to the individual Creative Film and Video Fund decisions themselves. [Wrightson] was always interested in projects which had the potential to be good of their type, on the basis that if they were, they would probably be selected for a curated television series of short films. The objective of such a series would most likely be to showcase the best New Zealand short filmmaking, and the traditional worries of programmers about mass audience appeal etc. would not be particularly relevant ... Panellists all tended to make judgements based on their professional expertise, which never seemed particularly influenced by whether they were representing the New Zealand Film Commission, New Zealand On Air or Creative New Zealand (1998).

Wrightson's comments suggest the different and sometimes contradictory alignments involved in her role as representative of New Zealand On Air on the Creative Film and Video Fund panel. She states that although she represented the panel, she, like her counterparts from the other funding bodies, did not endeavour to advance the particular agenda of the group they represented, but decided on the merits of a particular application, using their professional expertise. However, on another level,

Wrightson's presence on the funding panel was due to an agenda which endeavoured to encourage a broadcast result and when this strategy could not be achieved, the alignment with the Creative Film and Video Fund was displaced and funding from New Zealand On Air ceased.

Reihana, the Creative New Zealand representative, also stated that the professional and representational roles were separated within the panel. She believed that 'individual [panel members] had their own ideas about the "work" but were very clear about the priorities of the different funding agencies' (Reihana). Reihana however, does not offer a clear indication of the influence of the professional role on personal decisions, but is implying that the different priorities of the funding agencies played their part in the decision making.

In a later response to reading these comments⁵⁰ Reihana added that she believed

the panel should be able to discuss a full range of creative activities. As a fine arts trained person [she] felt able to speak on experimental/no-narrative, Maori, animation projects and digital technologies, whereas members of New Zealand On Air will have experience on drama, specifics of television screenings and censorship issues. Collectively the panel should be able to discuss all aspects of the types of proposals that came in. (Reihana)

Her comments here reinforce the idea of joint decision making in terms of the panel and that although individuals might have specialist knowledge and experience, collectively they are able to make informed decisions. This also illustrates the complex nature of the alignments at this level. Panel members are co-opted to the fund for their specialist knowledge and because of their kudos within their own particular practices, they bring their own particular "voice" shaped by their knowledge and experience as well as their cultural, gender and social affiliations, and they must integrate this "voice" to the final decisions made by the collective panel, which in turn, must align with the guidelines of the fund.

Funding decisions are subjective in the sense that they are made by individuals with their own taste formations, particular experience, interests and relationships with other panel members. They are also influenced by the mutual agreement between

⁵⁰ Respondents were offered the opportunity to comment on any statements attributed to them in this thesis.

panel members on whether a project satisfies the budgetary constraints and guidelines of the fund, and finally decisions can also be influenced by current funding agendas. It is these dynamic relationships, fuelled by changes in the fund membership and the constant influx of new applications competing for the limited funds, that makes any general prediction of funding decisions difficult. At the same time, however, this allocation process also reiterates the influence of the strategic alignments necessary between funders as well as funders and applicants.

Alignments Between the Fund and Applicants

The objectives and allocation criteria of the fund imply that the Creative Film and Video Fund/Screen Innovation Production Fund acts to encourage some forms of film making, while marginalising others. The degree to which this occurs depending on the balance of influences discussed in the last section. When fund members were asked if they thought they played a gatekeeping role in terms of the types of projects that were allocated funds a variety of responses were given.

In his questionnaire response Gregory Burke pointed out that the guidelines encouraged 'applicants to contribute to outcomes relevant to the objectives of the funding organisation' (Burke), but these objectives were very wide in their reach considering that the objective of the Screen Innovation Production Fund was arts development. Wrightson also stipulates that the fund's guidelines were used to prioritise the limited funds, but she believed that projects which 'are written up with compliance rather than creativity in mind ... rarely attract funding'(Wrightson). Stark and Campbell also believed that the fund's guidelines sent particular signals to applicants, but for Stark these were 'mediated by peer group panel assessment' (Stark), while for Campbell second-guessing the panel could just as likely strengthen the project as 'compromise the original vision' (Campbell).

The fund was perceived to play a gatekeeping role, but, according to Burke, the objectives were such that this was diluted to a large degree. The objective stressed by the fund and most panel members has been that of innovation. However, the review of the fund has also stressed the desire that the fund should be a forum for more radical political voices and has also expressed concerns about the implicit racist structure of the fund and the way this restricts access to those comfortable with Pakeha approaches. It could also be questioned as to why the idea of innovation is the overriding agenda for the fund and panel members and why is this the basis for the "art" imperative of the fund. Is this an inheritance from a modernist discourse, which seeks originality in the constantly new and innovative?

Wrightson thought that constraints were necessary to prioritise funding allocations, but anticipating the decisions of the panel usually led to an unsuccessful outcome. Anticipation of decisions might not be a necessarily productive strategy, as Wrightson suggests, but this doesn't preclude the possibility that there are strategies which will enhance possible application success. The fact that applicant's need to be strategic in their applications as well as choice of projects will be a focus for discussion later in this chapter.

Stark and Campbell concurred with Wrightson, agreeing that the panel played a pivotal role. These funders however do suggest that applicants attempt to align their projects and application package with what they believe to be the requirements of the fund and attempt to anticipate the interpretations by fund members of these requirements. Campbell suggests these strategic approaches by the applicants are not necessarily compromising in terms of the final quality of the project and he believes that the fund's constraints actually assist in strengthening the projects.

From the applicant's point of view, a strategic alignment with the funding agency was important, even if it was perceived by the applicant to be implicit in the choice of the project rather than a conscious strategy on the part of the applicant to develop particular types of projects. That is, at least some applicants did not perceive themselves as trying to anticipate the panel by consciously fulfilling expectations, but considered that their project was a suitable one for this fund as it fulfilled the conditions for application.

For instance, Miranda Harcourt states that in terms of her successful application for *Voiceover*, she

didn't consciously shape the film or the application to advance chances of getting funding. The story is very New Zealand, portraying a valuable aspect of the culture. And the film itself is adventurous in form and content. I think these qualities helped us to get the funding (Harcourt).

Harcourt is stating here that the project she wanted to develop also fulfilled the objectives of the fund in terms of its specific content and in the innovative form used. Similarly, Stephen McGlashan believed his application fulfilled the criteria for funding without him having to be too strategic, even though, in his response, he details what he perceives to be effective strategies:

There was no 'strategy' involved in getting funding. I gave an extremely thorough application to Creative New Zealand: a prize winning script, copious director's notes, full budget, cast and crew list etc. It was a good script, a good story, the script evoked visually what the film would look, feel and sound like. Plus I had a track record of "success" (albeit small) in the "industry". Plus it was made in the relative safety of a film school programme so the likelihood of completion was very high (McGlashan).

However, not all film makers thought their projects would necessarily fulfil requirements without a more conscious strategic manipulation. Film maker Jeena Murphy states that her project was one that was more consciously shaped by allocation criteria:

We wrote [the script] so that it would have a better chance of funding, with a simple story and few special effects. We formed a good strong crew and were supported by a well known mentor. [We also put] a lot of ground work into the application (Murphy).

Lisa Perrott was even more candid about her approach to the funding process:

Yes, I tried to get a crew together that would impress the panel. I used Greg Page as an adviser and Cushla Dillon as editor⁵¹. At the same time I was very impressed with Cushla's approach and personality and I wanted her anyway, but when I asked her she didn't remember me and said to put her name down anyway because that's part of the game of getting funding. After she saw my script she was happy to do it. I think people do use people's names and don't end up using them. I also was of the impression that Creative New Zealand was into funding conservative dramas. Suddenly about two weeks before cut off [of the application deadline] I decided to do something and I asked about it and found out that a lot of things had changed and they were more into funding experimental arty films. I sat down and worked through a script with the help of my partner (Perrott).

Perrott wrote a script motivated not only by her own interests, but also because she became aware that these interests would be looked on favourably within the current

⁵¹ Cushla Dillon was unable to act as editor because of the demands of other work commitments. Keith Hill has taken over this role.

policies of the Screen Innovation Production Fund. She also, however, took advice from experienced colleagues about material to include in her application and was encouraged by what she perceived as the experimental bias of the members on the panel:

I also talked to Keith Hill and he advised me that I should send my first film (the short puppet film) He knew who was on the panel and suggested that Athina [Tsoulis] wouldn't like the second drama. The first one was more experimental. I definitely thought about these things and thought about who was on the panel. I had seen some of Lisa [Reihana's] work and knew where she was coming from and had also read Roger Horrock's work and his interest in experimental film (Perrott).

The applicants' responses expose the necessarily strategic nature of their applications given the competitive demand for funding and suggests that the fund does have an influence on the projects that are funded, although the nature of this influence is complex and is often focused on elements outside the script. Perceptions of this alignment also differ among applicants. Harcourt believed her script fulfilled the guidelines of the fund, and although she doesn't mention this, it also had a well respected production team, MAP Film Productions, which had an extensive track record in film making and production.⁵² Her own informal alignments within New Zealand's cultural practices, especially her own kudos as an actor within the theatre world, would also have been an important influence and would enhance the assessment of the project for the panel members. McGlashan's approach was also strategic in the sense that he was aware of effective alignments, he was extremely thorough in his application, had a "track record", and believed his institutional affiliation would help guarantee completion. He believed all of these elements, plus a strong script would make his application more attractive for the panel. Murphy developed a project that would satisfy what she perceived as the guidelines for funding and also surrounded herself with a creative team which, she thought, would enhance her chances. Perrott's very candid responses show that she also made conscious strategic choices. She established a production team with professional kudos and presented an application that would be attractive to the interests of those on the panel. Further, she listened to others with whom she had developed formal and informal alignments, and took their advice about application strategies which were based on previous experience of applications.

⁵²MAP Film Productions is a partnership between Miranda Harcourt, Stuart McKenzie and Neil Pardington

Conclusions

The discussion in this chapter has considered the multi-determined nature of the funding environment for short film within the contexts of Creative New Zealand. It suggested that political agendas are reflected in the strategies used by Creative New Zealand to secure and increase funds and that in the second strategic plan the Advocacy Goal has formalised the need for strategies which will endeavour to convince different prospective funders, including the state, that support for the arts, in terms of funding, is important. Although this is not meant to suggest that the introduction of the Advocacy Goal will directly influence the types of short films which will be funded it is a recognition of the perceived limiting effects of the restricted level of available funds and the perceived need for all the arts, including short film, to attract more funding commitments. Whether extra funds will be directed to short films if the Advocacy Goal is successful is another question, which is dependent on the priorities of Creative New Zealand.

Political agendas are filtered through the funding contexts, which in turn imprint their own influences. These in part are also determined by the alignments the funding agencies make with stakeholders and practitioners, and in turn, between those of the funding panel and the film maker applicants. The obligation Creative New Zealand has for consultation is incorporated in the Act, and this process is expressed through the two strategic plans and the draft strategic plan published by Creative New Zealand. These strategic plans reflect not only the managerial discourse of the new political masters, which structures funding policy in terms of goals and objectives, and differentiates certain cultural and social areas for funding focus, but also reflects the process of alignment between Creative New Zealand and its perceived stakeholders and artist applicants.

The Screen Innovation Production Fund, although not necessarily playing a significant role in funding short film in relation to the New Zealand Film Commission's own initiatives, does offer an interesting example of a funding context for short film, imbricated with the context of the Creative New Zealand and Film Commission partnership and whose own discourses play a role in determining funding decisions. At the same time it has been observed that the Screen Innovation Production Fund imprints its own particular allocation criteria, and seems to act as an ideological alternative to the current commercial agendas. This imprinting aspect also occurs through the interpretation of allocation criteria by individual panel members,

who might influence the funding criteria for their own agendas, even at times using the New Right discourses as a smoke-screen in their strategies.

Stakeholders and participants have had their own opportunities to displace policy and offer new alternatives. However, the current realignment prompted by the review of the Creative Film and Video Fund has been one of clarification rather than actually addressing important underlying issues. This relatively limited realignment in terms of the Screen Innovation Production Fund will be contrasted with the more marked realignment of the Talent Development Initiative discussed in Chapter Eight.

Finally, the relationship between funding panel members and applicants helps to articulate another level of influences within the context of funding. These influences reflect the interpretations of the fund's objectives and policy guidelines, and suggest some of the individual positions that have been taken to establish alignments within the context of this fund. These alignments occur not only with fund members aligning themselves with the criteria of the fund by placing their own interpretations on these, but also between funders and applicants. The strategic nature of these alignments are clearly elaborated within the statements made by applicants for the funding of their projects. These alignments are not sufficient for success however, because the actual assessment process is in itself complex and a number of other factors impose their own influence. These include the subjective points of view of panel members, the alignments they have with each other, the current sympathies of the funding partners and the selection of scripts that are offered at each funding round.

This chapter has articulated some of the complex discursive relationships inherent in the context of Creative New Zealand's funding regime and has introduced some of the discourses utilised by the various players at the different levels of funding decision making. Although much of the detail of this chapter does not relate directly to the funding of short film, it does help to suggest the complexity and dynamism of the funding contexts and the manner in which the different funding contexts are influenced directly and indirectly by discourses and strategies operating in other associated contexts.

The top-down influence of political agendas are important in various ways. They initially establish funding motivations for the state, help determine consultative processes, and they determine the amount of financial support offered for funding by the state. In response to these funding levels Creative New Zealand attempts to develop strategies that will induce political agendas to align with its needs. This process has become formalised into the Advocacy Goal of the second strategic plan.

However, even as the political agendas filter down through the funding structure, these structures also imprint their own agendas onto the funding objectives to such an extent that a situation can be reached where a funding body can be perceived to be contradicting the market oriented commercial thrust of the political agenda. This process of imprinting also occurs at other micropolitical levels, such as the interpretation of individual fund members in terms of the objectives of the fund, and in the processes of determining actual projects for funding assistance. In turn, individual film maker applicants attempt to align themselves with what they perceive to be the requirements of the fund and individual members of the fund, and they attempt various strategies both conscious and unconscious to enhance the possibilities of their funding success. The top-down agendas can be perceived as intersecting bottom-up agendas and combined they form a complex of discourses which are used in various ways to form collaborative alignments in the funding contexts of Creative New Zealand and its auxiliary funding agent the Screen Innovation Production Fund.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The New Zealand Film Commission and the Short Film Fund

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the process of funding short film through the initiatives of the New Zealand Film Commission. It commences with a brief description of the funding structures of the New Zealand Film Commission and then examines the context of short film funding through the Short Film Fund. Finally, it considers the perceptions and interpretations of objectives and criteria of the fund by individuals who have been involved at the level of allocation decision, and also some of the producers and film maker applicants who have had support from the fund. Chapter Six developed the ideas of filtering and imprinting and related these to the concept of the voice and discourse. This chapter continues integrating the voice into the discursive contexts of short film funding, but now foregrounds the various alignments operating in the context of the Short Film Fund and the axis of power relations between funders and practitioners.

The research participants include: Christina Milligan (Chair); Catherine Fitzgerald (Director of Creative and Industry Development); Phil Langridge (Development co-ordinator for the Film Commission); Kathleen Drumm (Associate Marketing Director for the Film Commission); Costa Botes (Fund member); Alun Bollinger (Fund member); Rawiri Paratene (Fund member 92-95); Keri Kaa (Fund member 1988-95); Riwia Brown (Fund member); Robin Laing (Producer); Rachel Jean (Producer); Bruce Sheridan (Producer and Director); Bruce Morrisson (Producer and Director); Norman Elder (Producer); John Keir (Producer); Dorthe Scheffmann (Producer and Director); Grant Campbell (Director); Simon Raby (Director); Rachel Anderson (Director); and Andrew Bancroft (Director).

Their points of view were obtained from questionnaires and interviews conducted between 1996 and 1998.

The New Zealand Film Commission.

An alternative source of funding short film projects to that of the Screen Innovation Production Fund, can be found in the contexts of the New Zealand Film Commission

established by the New Zealand Film Commission Act of 1978⁵³. According to the Act the establishment of this Film Commission was designed to support the making, promotion, distribution and the exhibition of films, as well as to encourage and promote cohesion within the New Zealand film industry.⁵⁴

The Board of the Film Commission is made up of seven members appointed by the Minister of Cultural Affairs. Appointments are made on the basis of 'a combination of film industry interests and understanding as well as people with a strong commercial background' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 5.1). The Board sets policy direction as well as considering development decisions over \$75,000. There are three other committees. (1) The Development Committee, which was established in 1994 and was devised to 'make advanced development financing decisions ... As from April 1997, there are now two film makers or film marketing professionals on the Development Committee, along with the CEO and a Board Member in the chair' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997b: 2) (2) The Staff Committee which was established in 1996 to 'make decisions on early development applications up to \$15,000 per project; as well as applications for Producer's Market assistance' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997b: 2). (3) The now defunct Short Film Fund, which comprised five panel members appointed by the Commission, members coming both from the Board and industry. This fund was responsible for the development and production decisions on short films. Responsibility for the administration of this latter fund has now been given to production groups within the film industry.

Other initiatives and programmes have also been implemented and these include: the Feel-Good/Comedy Script Initiative which was established in 1997 with 'development decisions to be made by peer assessment' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997b: 2); the Kahukura Project, also established in 1997, with at least four ultra-low budget features to be funded and the 'selection of projects by producer (Larry Parr) and CEO' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997b: 2); the English Language Cinema Plan, launched in 1996, which is 'designed to share development costs on projects with co-production potential ... Development decisions made by Development Committee' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997b:2); the New Writers' Scheme, which was launched in 1995 but not continued; and ScreenVisionNZ, which was launched in May 1995 and was a joint initiative between the New Zealand Film Commission, New Zealand On Air, Television New Zealand and Portman Productions (UK). This

⁵³Jeffrey briefly outlines the historical development of the New Zealand Film Commission in her article 'Film Policy in New Zealand' (Jeffrey 1994: 45-48).

⁵⁴ See Appendix Seven for the complete statement of motivation legislated by the Act.

'provides a framework where financing is secured for six feature films over three years or so' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997b: 2). A Producer Only Development Scheme (PODS) was also introduced by the Film Commission in 1996 and 'was designed to enable more experienced producers to make their own decisions about projects to develop (New Zealand Film Commission 1997b: 3).

New Zealand Content

The criteria for the allocation of financial assistance stated in the Act is based on the definition of 'significant New Zealand content' (New Zealand House of Representatives 1978: 695). Legally, financial assistance can not be given unless the Film Commission is satisfied that this stipulation is fulfilled. In terms of the Act significant New Zealand content involves a wide range of options including

the subject of the film; locations; nationalities and places of residence of authors, scriptwriters, composers, producers, directors, actors, technicians, editors, and other persons who took part or are to take part in the making of the film; and the persons who own or are to own the shares or capital of any company, partnership, or joint venture that is concerned with the making of the film; and the persons who have or are to have the copyright of the film; the sources from which the money that was used or is to be used to make the film was or is to be derived; and the ownership or whereabouts of the equipment and technical facilities that were or are to be used to make the film ... Finally, a film had significant New Zealand content if it was made because of an agreement or arrangement between The Government of New Zealand or the Commission and the Government of another country or relevant public authority of another country (New Zealand House of Representatives 1978: 695).

This definition of content is obviously strategic in the sense that content is actually only one of the elements considered as a legitimising criteria for funding allocation. The main thrust of these different criteria is based upon the degree of national involvement in the project. This covers both nationals involved in production and finance, and also governmental agreements. It appears that in this discourse the word "content" stands for the involvement of national interest, either in terms of personnel, finance or government. The legislative constraints determining financial commitment reflect the top-down pressures of state involvement in the funding process and the motivation of the state to support national interest. National interest is perceived in

terms of nationality of the participants, the sources of finance and international relations.

The New Zealand Film Commission Objectives

To fulfil its obligations under the Act, the New Zealand Film Commission has a range of objectives including 'targeted assistance which reflects industry and community needs' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 5.1); supporting 'the development of creative and technical talent' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 5.1); improving 'the quality and diversity of film activity in New Zealand' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 5.1); attracting investment; and 'assisting in the development of film culture in New Zealand' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 5.1).

These objectives reflect a range of options involving a combination of economic and social agendas. Although these objectives include the recognition of community needs, which is a reference to the desire to support films that reflect a national and cultural identity, and the improvement of both quality of films and their diversity, the objectives also focus on supporting the film industry itself in terms of talent development and investment. These obligations also reflect the political agendas for film, but unlike Creative New Zealand which has a strong social agenda, in the context of the Film Commission there is a much more defined emphasis on support for the film industry and the development of agencies that assist its operations. This support is in terms of investment rather than subsidy.

One of the agencies established by the New Zealand Film Commission, and of particular interest for this research, is the Short Film Fund. It imprinted its own particular objectives designed to fulfil the talent development and industry support obligations of the New Zealand Film Commission.

The Short Film Fund

The Short Film Fund was established in 1985 'to meet a growing demand for a pool of funds specifically dedicated to making short films' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 2.1). Underlying the production of short films was the Film Commission's objective of encouraging 'the production of short film as entities in their own right; and to encourage the development of creative talent toward feature film making' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 2.1). These objectives reflect the placement of the Short Film Fund within the Film Commission's Creative and Industry Development Unit. This unit of the Film Commission is dedicated to encouraging creative talent,

skill development, and the fostering of innovation, as well as providing 'a focus for the independent film community through support for resource organisations' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 2.1).

Within the application criteria for the Short Film Fund there were a number of different funding categories available for project funding. However, the actual focus of funding commitment was to produce cinema shorts for theatrical release. These shorts had a budget ceiling of approximately \$100,000. One hundred percent of the production budget was provided if the film showed innovation and originality in script and direction, had a defined target audience, and involved high but achievable production values.

Other categories for possible funding included documentaries aimed at broadcast television. These documentaries were offered 'development and minority production financing' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 2.3). Other short film projects could be considered if they had other investors or didn't fit any of the above categories.

Between 1993 and 1997 forty-nine theatrical shorts, three documentaries, three animated shorts and three one hour dramas made for television (the Nga Puna Drama series), were assisted by funding through the Short Film Fund. None of the theatrical shorts were over fifteen minutes in length, most of them were between ten and fifteen minutes, with the average length approximately twelve to thirteen minutes. Three shorts (*Stroke*, *A Passing Moment* and *Decaff 2*) were between four and five minutes long.

Short Film Fund Criteria for Funding Assessment

The stated criteria for assessment included, completeness of application; quality of script and story idea; likely market performance of project; track record of applicant; financial requirements in relation to scope of project; and clear identification of target market' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 2.3).

Further characteristics for a successful short film project were implied in the *Film Commission Programmes of Assistance and Policy Guidelines Handbook* where it was stated that, the feedback from international marketers suggested successful short films had a particular profile, which included at least some of the following elements:

[The films should have qualities] that are shocking, original, funny or have a cutting edge; have something which 'leaps out' at the viewer; have

a well-resolved story with a strong ending; are visually strong and well acted; have high quality production values (1995: 23).

These criteria suggest a strategy of alignment for applicants in terms of suitable projects for Short Film Fund financing. These "marketing criteria" suggest that if the project applying for funds satisfied these criteria then they would be more likely to have funding success. These statements in the handbook were implicit suggestions rather than explicit directives about what was required, but for applicants not certain of what the Short Film Fund was seeking, these suggestions could act as a tangible guide. Through these "guidelines" the market driven criteria of the handbook could influence the type of shorts that would become projects for funding application.

Interpretation of Short Film Fund Objectives : The Voice of Fund Members

There were two objectives for the Short Film Fund: to produce 'short film as entities in their own right; and to encourage the development of creative talent toward feature film making' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 2.1).

The first objective, producing shorts as 'entities in their own right' seems to be ambiguous until situated within the context of the marketing regime of the Short Film Fund. There is a perception by fund members that the short film should be of a certain length, approximately 10-15 minutes, and should satisfy commercial considerations such as appropriateness for a television broadcast schedule or screening in commercial cinemas.

Kathleen Drumm, Associate Marketing Director for the New Zealand Film Commission, points out however, that this marketing profile was not a necessary criteria explicitly defined by the marketing arm of the New Zealand Film Commission and dictated to the Short Film Fund. In her role of marketing short films Drumm states that she did not direct what was required for the market, but worked with what was offered. However, there were times when there was a liaison between herself and fund members:

My role was to market the shorts that were offered to me. From time to time I was asked to comment on the film maker's previous work, including sales, film festival selection and prizes, New Zealand releases, feedback from buyers, theatrical distributors, reviews etc. I might also comment on where the film would fit into the marketplace, i.e. if it matched a certain style or genre that was working well, or if I felt

confident that buyers and film festival directors would be interested in the project under consideration (Drumm 1998: 1).

Drumm implies with her comments that there wasn't a strong input from the marketing arm of the Film Commission into decisions made about projects to be promoted. When she was involved her role was to offer a specialist marketing perspective, and therefore offer another "voice" in the decision making process.

Marketing considerations are reflected in statements made by panel members. Comments about marketing are directed to consideration of avenues for exhibition and, implicitly, these considerations shape the length and form of the projects that are given funding. The constraints are placed on the length and the form of the shorts, and these are dictated by the demands of commercial cinema, film festivals or television. For instance, Milligan, Fitzgerald and Botes express the influence of possible markets in their comments about Short Film Fund projects.

At present, the expectation is that most if not all of the money available to the Short Film Fund will be expended on films of less than fifteen minutes in length made specifically for cinema not television (Milligan).

Recently the focus has been on theatrical short films which tend to be less than fifteen minutes, preferably under ten minutes (Fitzgerald).

In terms of the Short Film Fund's objectives and criteria, I'd say the emphasis overwhelmingly falls on the area of 'theatrical shorts'. That is, short films suitable for screening in cinemas, film festivals, and television. Generally around twelve minutes long, up to a maximum of fifteen minutes. These lengths are dictated by commercial considerations - too long and the cinemas won't show them as shorts. Twelve minutes is a good length for television which shows them in blocks of two or three (Botes).

These responses acknowledge the specific type of film panel members believe the Short Film Fund was assisting. This profile includes shorts that are theatrical or narrative dramas less than fifteen minutes long, intended for film festivals and possibly the cinema, but more likely to eventually appear in television. Botes believes that the length was dictated by commercial considerations and repeats the marketing constraints stated by Drumm. Milligan believes that the emphasis was on cinema

rather than television, although, she agrees, most income was generated through television.

The idea then that short films are funded by the Short Film Fund as entities in their own right is misleading. The specific nature of the type of films that are deemed suitable for funding suggests that the criteria for allocation was specifically directed at cinematic narratives suitable for showing at commercial cinema venues, film festivals and eventually television. The marketing suggestions of the Film Commission handbook also imply strategic guidelines for applicants, while marketing constraints are even more explicit when Drumm's guidelines for her marketing catalogue are also considered. These guidelines are discussed later in the chapter.

The second objective, the development of creative talent for feature film production, places a different emphasis on the short film and prioritises the experience of the process of production and post-production. This objective has been interpreted by panel members in various ways and has also prompted debate about the appropriateness of the short film form as a suitable vehicle for developing feature film talent.

Fitzgerald, for instance, emphasises the role that the short film making experience can play in the professional development of the creative team and especially the director. For her, the second objective operates by giving

experience of working in a professional film making environment for the film makers (most particularly the director, many of the crew at all levels, and to a lesser extent the writer and producer). This not only involves the production and post-production techniques side, but also the business side in terms of agreements with investors, a sales agent etc. Short films in international festivals can attract international interest in the creative teams, though probably again this favours the director (Fitzgerald).

Langridge concurs with Fitzgerald, stating that the experience of short film enables the

producer, with the director, to work to a budget, on schedule, with a creative team and crew, telling a story in an effective and imaginative way, and in a smaller, less pressured environment recreate the

realities, creative and business wise, that a larger feature would demand (Langridge).

Similarly Kaa stresses the professional experience not only of film making, but also

of actually directing the process and in effect, in the jargon of today's New Right structure, the directors also acquire management skill. Now, for instance, people who want to, or hope to direct a big feature film, find that directing a short drama is a big learning experience because of having to direct actors, people, of varying temperaments skills and abilities. I think being able to manage that successfully in the making of a short drama is an enormous learning experience for people (Kaa).

Fitzgerald, Langridge and Kaa introduce the context of professional film making as their justification for short film making as talent development. They suggest that it is the experience of the professional environment in which this practice takes place, as much as the creative practice, which is of benefit to the film makers and future feature film making. Fitzgerald also adds that short films are a useful means of show-casing talent and thus attracting international interest.

Milligan agrees that short film is a means of displaying creative talent, either through success at festivals or as a calling-card for producers. She also recognises that shorts are not the only vehicles for show-casing talent, but believes that the lack of funds in other arenas means short film is an important option for this role. For Milligan:

It is difficult to convince funders at the feature film level to take a punt on a director without what is regarded in this currently auteur-driven industry as a "calling-card", i.e. an actual piece of work. Outstanding commercials will do it but we make few if any television dramas nowadays that are well-enough funded to enable the film maker to show off her/his potential cinematic skills. So short films have become de facto the very obvious way of practising and displaying one's artistic, technical and storytelling skills in the cinematic area (Milligan).

Milligan's belief that the short film plays a de facto role as a show-case for feature film talent suggests that this form might not be an ideal vehicle. The implication is that it is used as such because there aren't any other avenues given the current

commercial situation. Comments by others involved in the funding also query the adequacy of short films on the grounds that they are not necessarily suitable as vehicles for gaining experience in feature development. For instance, Paratene questions whether or not the experience of making shorts is useful for the experience of making feature films. For him this role is 'a shady area as it proves more difficult to make the jump from 10 minutes to 100 minutes, but it [does] prepare a director in his/her filmic approach' (Paratene). He suggests that the different lengths of the two forms requires different approaches, although he does concede that the short film offers experience in cinema.

Botes and Brown agree that although shorts are not ideal they have offered opportunities for directors. Botes believes that the shorts that have been made, despite not being entirely suitable to promote feature film development, are all that could have been made if the film makers were to get exhibition exposure. This situation has arisen because

in the last decade half hours have been impossible to market anywhere, cinema or TV. And one hours are hugely expensive, and require input from several different funding partners. TV have either been very reluctant to play ball or they interfere so much in the creative process that the resulting films have been worthless, or the people involved have been seasoned TV types rather than new film makers (Botes).

Brown stresses the experience of professional skill development and agrees with Paratene that short films do not offer the same experience as longer forms. However, short films do offer experience for new talent. According to Brown, she is

not entirely convinced that short film is the best vehicle for developing writing talent because the demands and craft of writing a short film are certainly distinct from that of a feature. It is seen as a better medium for new directors as it gives them an opportunity to work on film and also to work with a crew and a cast of actors. Working on short film gives actors the chance to hone and develop their craft and exposure for future work. It is often a way to advance new producers. Like the feature the short film has budget demands and constraints. New technicians have the opportunity to acquire skills which are applicable to future film making career (Brown).

Despite the range of voices offering differing perspectives the consensus of opinion for these fund members is that short film projects might not necessarily offer an ideal grounding for future feature film experience, but they are one of the few opportunities that film makers have to actually prepare themselves for this possible opportunity. It is perceived that the demands made on film makers for shorts are not the same as those made for features. Short film projects do offer new film making talent the experience of working with actors and crew, experience of management, and significantly are useful to show-case talent. The encouragement of talent seems to favour the director, although the fund members think that the enhancement of crew, cast and even producer experience are outcomes of these projects. The belief that the short film, is not necessarily the most suitable vehicle for feature film making experience, suggests the tension in the objectives of the Short Film Fund, which, according to its second objective, is motivated by developing creative talent for feature film production. This tension is one of the reasons for a change in approach to funding short film which has resulted in the creation of the Talent Development Initiative. This new structure will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

The Voice of Producers

When producers involved in short film were asked how they perceived the role of short film, the dominant response was based on the perception that their experience of short film was as a practice which fulfilled the vocational objective and was weighted heavily in favour of the director: For instance, Laing thought that 'in the New Zealand industry short films are pretty much seen as a training exercise' (Laing), while Sheridan thought that the motivation for many short film projects was that

[directors] want to make themselves a serious contender for a career as a film maker. I think it is careerist almost to one hundred percent now. There is the odd exception. When I started getting involved in short films ten years ago, there would have been a fifty-fifty split on that. Best case scenario, there is ten percent now doing it for other reasons (Sheridan).

Elder believes that shorts are used as a vehicle for show-casing talent and that they are seldom perceived to have any commercial viability. For Elder shorts are a means to an end utilised as a

demonstration of skills that would encourage TV drama and feature productions to use developing writers and directors on more commercial projects ... Do directors who have made features etc. make short films?

Not very often. They are more likely to make commercials to boost their income (Elder).

Keir thinks that the size of the industry restricts any commercial possibilities for shorts. He concurs with Elder that the function of the short film is to show-case talent rather than to assist in developing experience for feature productions. For Keir

the fact is the local film industry isn't big enough to sustain anyone as a "short film maker" - and I think most film makers regard their shorts as calling cards on the path towards bigger and better funded projects ... The reality is most successful short films are showcases of "style", of some one's clever single idea. They certainly do make useful calling cards when directors are trying to attract Hollywood agents but the skill to direct a feature (with an interesting and sustained emotional story arc) is something quite different - and that's not something that's immediately obvious to the young film maker flush with his first award from Cannes or wherever (Keir).

These producers agree that short films are useful as calling cards and to show-case a director's talent. Short films are not considered to be viable commercial products which could directly support a film maker's career financially. Keir implies that there are also negative features when he suggests that successful short film makers sometimes do not realise that success in one form does not guarantee that they have enough experience for success in a longer form.

This negative aspect of the role of the short films is supported by Sheridan. He thinks there are problems with using short film as a vehicle for establishing a convincing profile for feature film production. He believes that the availability of funds provided by the Short Film Fund gives access to an investment in production levels which distort an international investor's perception of the capabilities and experience of the short film director and, according to him, these investors have learnt to disregard short film as a genuine indicator of feature film ability:

When you go overseas and talked to distributors about getting a feature film off the ground and they want to know who might direct them and you start mentioning New Zealand short film makers, they are not interested. They are more interested in someone who has done an hour of television than someone who has done a short film, for very good reasons ... In New Zealand, if you are lucky enough to get funds from

the Short Film Fund, you can probably shoot on 35mm or 16mm and blow it up. You can make this pretty good looking film and most people overseas assume that you therefore have a body of work behind you because you couldn't have got access to that without the body of work. So what happens is, most of the directors get found out. When they are funded for features or drawn into the international context their lack of experience shows and a once bitten twice shy attitude operates overseas (Sheridan).

The producers all suggest that there are reasons for making short films that are motivated more by the enhancement of kudos in the industry rather than as a means of increasing experience for feature film production. They are suggesting making a short film is a strategic choice which will assist directors, and possibly other members of the creative team, in establishing an alignment with funding agencies both national and international. The strategy is to develop alignments which will fund future feature film projects. The problem that arises because of this strategic show-casing role for short film is that it can create a contradictory effect, because gaining kudos with a short film does not necessarily guarantee the ability to have enough relevant experience for making a feature film although this latter is an important object of the exercise for emerging film makers.

The Voice of Directors

Emerging directors perceive that short films play an important role in their career objectives. For instance, when Gregor Nicholas was asked if his short film *Avondale Dogs* affected his ability to make his first feature, he replied

oh, absolutely! Internationally it was recognised and acclaimed, and people in the United States, in particular, became very interested in me. I mean, Steven Spielberg saw it. I was actually getting feature offers after the success of that film. But I wanted to make *Broken English* (quoted in Amos 1997: 25).

However, Nicholas also points out that it was not his film alone that gave him the kudos to make a feature film. His relationship with a producer who had already achieved commercial success with a previous film was also significant:

I think what happened in the end though because of my relationship with Robin Scholes, who of course produced [*Once Were*]Warriors, we were

perceived as a fairly promising double act - with the success of my short film on the international festival circuit and likewise the critical acclaim of [*Once Were*] *Warriors* (quoted in Amos 1997: 25).

Andrew Bancroft has a similar perception of the usefulness of his successful project *Planet Man*:

This film has given me a profile with overseas production companies, especially Australian and American. They have kept contact up to a year after the project was shown at Cannes ... The success of this project also means that producers in New Zealand return my calls. The prize I won offered a pre-sale for another short film and I have been submitting projects to the French company Canal Plus. It also reassures the Film Commission and helps in their response to my future film projects (Bancroft).

Short film then, in the context of the Short Film Fund, was perceived to play a significant role as a vehicle for developing future feature film talent. Different perspectives have been offered to illustrate the positive and negative aspects of using short film in this role. Short film was perceived to offer some experiences conducive to feature film production but was also thought by some fund members not to be an entirely appropriate option, although, given the lack of alternatives, it was necessary. The consensus of opinion was that until other opportunities arose, talent development and show casing would be an important consideration in funding application decisions. Successful short film directors have stated that their success in film festivals have been a very effective means of establishing alignments with prospective funders interested in supporting larger projects. Bancroft also states that his success has given him greater kudos within the industry and has since gained easier access to funders. Nicholas acknowledges the effects of his short film's success but also adds that his ability to proceed with his next project was due not only to his reputation but also because of his alignment with a producer who also had kudos in the industry.

In Chapter Eight the Talent Development Initiative is shown to have inherited the role of promoting feature film talent and its changed criteria, especially in terms of flexibility in length of funded films, reflect a response to the difficulties perceived in the shorter form. Whether the Talent Development Initiative films will be as useful to show-case talent is a question that will have to wait to be answered, especially if it is

a much more difficult exercise to market films longer than fifteen or sixteen minutes and therefore making exhibition exposure for the longer films problematic.

The Support for the Director in Funding Short Films

Another issue that arises with an investment in short film as a vehicle for future feature film talent is the foregrounding of the director as the major benefactor for this experience and the consequent disenfranchisement of associated crew despite their own extensive investment in the project. For instance Campbell and Raby both believe that Short Film Fund projects have been produced only because of the generosity of supporting crew:

To make any kind of reasonable film, you have to call in every favour you have ever gained, with every person you have ever worked with. Now I'm not complaining, because as a director, if the film turns out well, it will generate "paying" work at a later date ... Most crew are working on the assumption that they will do this short film for free (or damn close to it) on the promise that the director will take them onto their first feature. Wrong: if you look at the crew lists of short films and then the first feature of the same director, you most invariably find that the director gets an entirely new crew, except for the producer and possibly the DOP (Campbell).

Raby agrees with Campbell, stating that although the short film is useful as a showcase vehicle, this process is only possible because of the support of industry professionals who make financial sacrifices so that the project is viable. He also suggests that they do this to act strategically, hoping their alignment with a director might be an investment for future projects. For Raby,

the vast majority of a short film crew is made up of industry professionals who usually charge half and up to as little as five percent of their daily rate. I believe this is a form of philanthropy, because film crews are proud of being creative people and are interested in making good drama in this country. But mostly this kind behaviour is an unspoken hope that should the director graduate onto greater things, then s/he will take those crew with them and the rewards will be shared. However I feel like the exception to the rule as time and time again I witness first time directors demanding huge amounts of effort from budget crews, only to abandon them when the time comes to move onto

greater things or fall by the wayside as so many wannabe directors do (Raby).

The suggestion is that if short film does act as a vehicle for future feature film talent, the most likely benefit accrues to the director, while other members of the creative team tend to invest in the project without the consequent likelihood of similar advantage. Campbell and Raby both believe that this situation arises because of the disparity between project ambition and budget. For Raby, it occurs because of the strategic use of the short film as a calling card and 'the ambition of the budding writer/director and producer usually stand in contrast to the modesty of the investment allotted to the film' (Raby).

Producer and director Dorthe Scheffmann, however, does not entirely concur with this seeming one-sided perception of the benefits of short film making experience. For Scheffmann the experience is beneficial for all of those who wish to practice their craft, because it at least allows them an opportunity to work in cinema, when opportunities for this experience are limited:

Short films are primarily about cinema in this country so you are formatting and composing and you are making a piece of cinema as opposed to a commercial. TV you are formatting differently, you are going at a different pace, your attention to detail is different. In that sense I've worked on a number of short films in my career and most people go into it with their own disciplines in the forefront thinking about how they can get better at their discipline - to get experience. It's like any craft field, the more you do, the more reference you have for the development of your own collaborative skills, the better you get (Scheffmann).

This discussion about the use of short films as a means to develop creative talent for feature films, illustrates the different perspectives developed by fund panel members, producers and directors regarding the role of the Short Film Fund. The objective to develop creative talent for feature film making by funding short film projects raises a number of issues. A common perspective is that short films are useful for show-casing talent, but given the constraints of length required for the exhibition of these films and hence the opportunity to show-case the work in different arenas, the short film form is not necessarily ideal for offering appropriate experience for feature film makers.

Fitzgerald, Langridge and Kaa emphasise the managerial experience gained by short film makers, Milligan, Paratene, Sheridan, Nicholas and Bancroft focus on the process of show-casing as the important priority for short films. Sheridan challenges the effectiveness of this process while Brown and Elder question whether short films are an effective means of giving film makers the experience required for features. Campbell and Raby point out an important problem with the talent development process suggesting that the director has most to gain. Scheffmann believes, however, that any opportunity to practice one's craft in cinema has to be positive and that short films offer the opportunity for all members of a creative team to gain experience. The different voices of the respondents suggest the variety of perspectives on the effectiveness of funding short films as a first step to feature film making. These issues will arise again when the motivations for the Talent Development Initiative are discussed in Chapter Eight. Different priorities are given to the development of creative experience for feature films and the show-casing of talent to attract feature film funding.

Perceptions of the Allocation Criteria by Fund Members

The criteria for the assessment of applications for the Short Film Fund, according to the New Zealand Film Commission's *Programmes of Assistance and Policy Guidelines Handbook*, include: the quality of script and story idea; the likely market performance of project; the track record of applicants; the financial requirements in relation to scope of project; and a clear identification of target market (1995: 2.3). Members and ex-members of the fund were asked how they interpreted the quality of the script, track record and the importance of the market and in their replies major emphasis was placed on the importance of the experience and knowledge of the creative team.

Assessment of the Script.

Fitzgerald believes that it was 'most unusual for [decisions about quality of the script] to be based simply on personal taste' (Fitzgerald). She thought quality was

assessed in terms of craft and originality by the agreement of the committee of industry practitioners using the significant range of experience on the committee and their knowledge of short film, and its possibilities (Fitzgerald).

Fitzgerald emphasises a conjunction of contexts, both specialist knowledge and range of experience of individual voices, as well as a collective agreement that aligns the voices into a consensus decision. Langridge similarly emphasises the importance of the different contexts of the group, the experienced backgrounds, specialist knowledge and kudos within the industry, but also believes that good scripts were obvious:

All panellists are appointed for their experience, knowledge and reputation with the film making community, and they each bring with them their own skills from their own backgrounds. In a panel situation, with sometimes forty scripts in front of them, the good ones do stand out (Langridge).

Milligan describes her approach to final decision making as one that involved a three tier procedure which incorporates the layered decision making process implied by the specialist knowledge and experience of individual members and the need to make a final consensus decision. For Milligan this process involved the decisions she made for herself, based on her own experience and knowledge, and the decisions made with the members of the Short Film Fund, which reflect the alignment of the group:

Each committee member comes to the funding meeting prepared to discuss each submission in detail. For myself, such preparation involves two detailed reads of each script (there are between thirty-five to about forty-three scripts generally per meeting) After my first reading, I make general notes regarding my overall impressions of each script. After my second reading I make detailed notes in terms of both the script and all the related submission material (director's notes, possible crew, budget etc.). I then have a clear picture of which of the submissions fall into the A group, B group, and C group. Interestingly, discussions around the table at the meeting usually change these convictions to some extent and I always find that we end up financing at least one that wasn't in my A group (but is usually in my B group) and at least one script that I'm passionate about doesn't make it through the funding process successfully. From what I know talking to other members of the panel, they go through variations on this sort of process (Milligan).

Milligan continues her description of the process by pointing out the type of project she is interested in supporting and this would suggest what she would consider to be a "good" script. Milligan was motivated by the:

originality of idea, clarity of story telling (whether it's conventional narrative approach or some form of unconventional approach), involving characters, lively and believable dialogue, and use of visual storytelling (i.e. facility with images) (Milligan).

The general consensus of assessing scripts is that this process involved both an individual component based on personal experience, and knowledge, and also a process of group alignment where individual projects have to attract a consensus of opinion. This is a significant axis of power in the funding regime, with its fulcrum around the individual panel member's own perspectives and the collective perspective of the group. Group discussions can change individual opinions and the projects that individuals might be passionate about funding do not necessarily reflect the group consensus. At the same time it is thought that "good" scripts do stand out from the rest. "Good" scripts reflect the implicit values of fund members and the scripts are good because they align with the criteria imposed by those making the judgements. These criteria are slanted to values based on story and character, and the manner in which these are conveyed, reinforcing the implied bias toward encouraging character driven theatrical narratives required by the marketing agenda.

The Track Record as an Inclusive Consideration

The presence of a track record is another criteria stated in the fund's guidelines and, as Fitzgerald points out, track record does not apply to just the director, but also included considerations of the producer and supporting personnel involved in the project:

The applicant is the producer. A producer who has never produced a film before would need to establish they had relevant production experience and could provide support systems for themselves - both in terms of their production department staff, and perhaps an experienced producer who would make themselves available for advice. This is to ensure that the producer has the information and systems they need to meet their obligations under the Acquisitions and Sales Agreement. The director will invariably have at least one film directing credit, most have more plus other film industry experience. Directors with no film directing credits can be funded but without exception to date, these people have significant professional experience in the film industry and the support of a very experienced production team (Fitzgerald).

Fitzgerald emphasises that producers and directors need to convince the funding panel they have experienced support. The track record of producer and director was judged on the basis of both experience and the industry alignments that they are able to bring to the project. Kaa agrees with this inclusive assessment approach of the track record. According to her:

Assessing the track record was very significant. It wasn't the number of projects the director or scriptwriter need to make to make their track records significant, it was the success they achieved with the rest of their team and in particular their budget. Whether they could bring their projects in on time and if possible on budget. That is how a significant track record was established. If the producer and director could get together a very good team, put them together, put together the project and follow the instructions of the Committee, because often the Committee had some very good film makers who would say your budget is too high or too low in some area. So generally a track record isn't to do with quantity but with quality (Kaa).

A track record also doesn't necessarily pertain only to film making experience. For instance Botes states that

some successful applicants have never made a film before. However, in those (very rare) cases, these people will have had some considerable compensating experience - they have made a mark as actors, writers, or in some other relevant field (Botes).

Milligan believes that the track record of individual film makers was not the most important determining factor for a successful application and she stresses the inclusive consideration of the support team. For instance, the acceptance of a neophyte was based on the track record of the supporting creative team. In Milligan's experience

some film makers are funded by the Short Film Fund with no previous track record in their particular area - e.g. a production manager may be producing for the first time, a writer may be directing for the first time. Judgements of whether people without demonstrated track records are worth funding are necessarily subjective and require the committee to weigh up all the material presented and the case that is made in

presentation, and then decide whether to take a punt. A good script always helps, as does surrounding the neophyte with the most experienced team possible (Milligan).

It is clear this perception of the track record as an application criteria involved an inclusive approach by fund members. The overall experience of the creative team was an important consideration and individuals who played a key role in the project, but did not have a significant track record, would be considered if they had experienced support. Campbell and Raby's problems with the foregrounding of the director seem to be unfounded in this approach to funding, but in practice, as has been suggested by these two film makers, the invested support of experienced key personnel could still be abused. This however was not a problem for the funding agency, but was determined by the types of alignments established within the production team. However, an issue arises because of the perceived value of the combined track record of the creative team. Campbell and Raby's disquiet over the use and possibly abuse of film crew, acting as a major support, especially for emerging directors, arises again in the guise of the need for an application to include a support team which has an extensive track record. Emerging directors need to be able to align themselves with the prerequisite professionals in the industry and this favours those directors who are able to develop these informal relationships. It would suggest that this funding process marginalised aspirant directors who had not developed the required kudos and connections in the industry and demanded the involvement of established professionals if a neophyte director was to be given the opportunity for show-casing their talent.

Market Influences on Funding Decisions

When asked about the perception of market, panel members believed that this criteria was not as important as other considerations. Although it was recognised that for films to be funded they should fit into the commercial considerations of television and cinema exhibition constraints of length and format. Botes reflects these considerations with his response that 'films longer than fifteen minutes have no market. Films shot or finished on 35mm have more theatrical potential' (Botes).

Fitzgerald emphasises that anticipation of a particular market was difficult because of their different demands⁵⁵ and that the dictates on style, form or type of film that

⁵⁵ See Appendix One.

might occur with pre-sales did not apply to the Short Film Fund films, because pre-sales didn't occur:

There is no sense that films are approved to meet the needs of any single buyer. Most buyers are television channels seeking original films, though this may mean different things to different buyers ... Pre-sales are virtually unheard of, and would be most unlikely to reach a level where they would influence content or style (Fitzgerald).

Also, immediate response to the market and perceived market demands was not as high a priority as offering film makers experience for future feature film making. Feedback from different markets about a film's performance was part of the process of funding, but this information did not dictate future funding decisions. According to Langridge

feedback from how films are received at festivals and markets is provided, and some general pointers given. For example, Kathleen Drumm returned from a film market a little while back with the word from short film buyers and distributors (not that there are many of them!), that shorter was better - easier to schedule, easier to sell. It wasn't a content or style call, it was merely a running time observation, and it didn't mean that suddenly only films five minutes long would get funded. It was something that was passed on through our briefing notes, and conversations with film makers as something to consider (Langridge),

Despite the perception that market considerations were less significant in funding decisions than those of talent development the profile of a film was important when it came to marketing considerations. For instance, Drumm has her own set of criteria when she selects appropriate films for her marketing catalogue. This is a competitive area for short films as the catalogue consists of about twenty films for one year, this limit allowing for ease of management. For Drumm significant criteria include: content; the director, writer and producer; production values; and the target marketplace. For instance, in terms of marketplace, she asks the following questions about the prospective film:

What film festivals will be interested in seeing this? Is it cinematic, under fifteen minutes and with a powerful story that will interest local theatrical distributors? Do I know of any buyers looking for the type of

work under consideration? What will the Spanish, French, UK, Scandinavians, Australians and Germans think of it? ... Could it fit into a known market niche? (Drumm 1998).

In terms of content she asks other questions:

Is it a strong script with an appealing/involving story? Are the characters engaging? Does the end work? Are the actors persuasive in their roles, and who are they? (Michael Hurst is a selling point at present.) Is it a work of style and substance which might win awards and acclaim and thus raise New Zealand film making profile internationally? Is the content important to New Zealand film making and how we are perceived internationally? (Drumm 1998).

Drumm's marketing profile for short film suggests the strategic process of alignment she needs to develop as a marketer. She attempts to link films with different international audiences, different buyers, markets and festivals. Her motivation is not just to sell films, but also to highlight the New Zealand film industry and raise New Zealand's international reputation, which in turn will assist in marketing the short films. Her questions illustrate the categorising process short films are subject to in order that they are directed to the most appropriate market. Those films that fit aspects of Drumm's profile will be those that have the greatest opportunity for distribution to those markets offering show-casing opportunities and the consequent enhancement of kudos for the film makers. Film makers who are motivated by this desire for kudos would therefore be advised to shape their projects to fit the profiles implied by the marketing pressures.

A tension arises then between the priorities of talent development and the desire to show-case talent. Market considerations might not be necessary when it comes to talent development but they are significant when dealing with the film's exposure in the international market and developing venues to show-case talent.

Responses from film makers about their motivations for making their films and their conception of a market for their work are more personal and lack strong commercial considerations. For instance, Anderson responds that she didn't direct her film to a particular national or international market, but it was

more personal. I was making a film for people, for my aunts and my friends and people that needed to see a strong woman ride across the screen into the sunset (Anderson).

For Anderson her main motivation for making *Para Recorder* was that she had a strong story and thought it was worth telling. Implied in her statement is that the strength of her story lay in the emphasis on the role of the protagonist, a woman who usurps the stereotypical role of the cowboy, but undermined this by refusing to save her male counterpart. This could be interpreted as a reflection on gender politics. Raby was similarly motivated to make his film for personal reasons rather than consciously aiming at a particular market, but he also stated that he played with gender roles in his film believing that this focus gave his story an international relevance. Raby states that he

was aware that the subject matter would be recognised and related to by a NZ audience, although I wrote the film for myself. I thought that the subject, especially the gender issue would relate on an international scale, though again I made no special allowances for accommodating the international scene (it fluctuates so unpredictably, it hardly seems worthwhile) (Raby).

Campbell believes the market was predictable and it wanted a good story:

What the market cares about is story and character. A good strong story told with a modicum of flare, with a unique twist, populated by characters that are engaging and interesting, 'Theme' is just a little extra added to give a bit of depth, and a reason to drive the film maker forward, it is important to have one, but it doesn't matter a toss what it is, if the story and characters aren't there, 'theme' won't save the film (Campbell).

Bancroft had a more proactive attitude in his responses to consideration of audiences and the market, and believes that the importance of these concerns have been underestimated in the past:

One area in which New Zealand film making has been deficient up until now is that it hasn't been very market driven. By that I mean film makers don't generally think in terms of the audience - what are the expectations of the audience, how can I play with these as well as

deliver them? Therefore I think that it's a mark of maturity when a film industry begins to think in these terms and to think ahead of what an audience needs at every stage of the process - when you are writing the script, when you are at the cutting stage, and so on, rather than being hermetically sealed in your own creative bubble. It is a positive advance. It's also dangerous because you need your own creative eye to judge and on the other side you can be blown by the wind when you consider the audience and lose all creative sense (Bancroft).

Considerations of the market tend to be downplayed in relation to the statements by both funders and film makers and they reflect their attitudes toward projects. For the funders, the priority was talent development, while for the film makers, there was a strong emphasis on more personal incentives. There was also a recognition that the market was an important consideration, but one that might also interfere with creative processes, if it became too dominant in the film making strategy. These funder and film maker attitudes tend to be out of alignment with the New Right political climate and probably reflect the perception of short film as a form useful in gaining film making experience and therefore was a practice which allowed a level of risk taking more inhibiting with the longer form and its greater financial risk.

Cultural Relevancy and the National Context

A further allocation criteria was driven by the New Zealand Film Commission's brief to develop a culturally relevant feature film production industry. Comments made by the panel on the perception of the meaning of culturally relevant frame the concept of culture in terms of a national context rather than emphasising differing cultural perspectives. For instance, Fitzgerald, Milligan and Botes situate culture in a national context. For Fitzgerald, culturally relevant meant 'relevant to New Zealand and New Zealanders in reflecting the culture of this country and its people' (Fitzgerald), while for Milligan culturally relevant

is something that feels in [her] bones and in [her] nostrils to be "of New Zealand". It can cut across all ages, genders, races and cultures within the New Zealand experience. It speaks to us of ourselves (Milligan).

Similarly Botes thought that

our films should be "ours", that is, they're from somewhere (here). A culturally relevant film is one that's fostered within an identifiable social

context, and that engages with that culture, maybe even becomes part of it (Botes).

Paratene endeavours to differentiate the cultural streams within the national context stating that cultural relevance meant for him 'relevant to the multicultural nature of New Zealand and supportive of the Maori and Pakeha cultures' (Paratene). These brief statements elicited from a questionnaire do not engage in detail with this very complex issue of cultural relevancy. However, these statements do suggest a common response framing culture within a national context and reflect a feeling that culture is perceived as an essential element of social and personal identity.

Film makers responded to this question of relevancy in a similar vein, finding a concise response difficult to make. Anderson reflects the difficulties that underlie this ideal of cultural relevancy questioning who had the authority to decide what defines the culture. For her there was a universal, or non-culturally specific element, in many stories and the specific characteristics she could bring as a film maker to her stories was the fact that she operates in a particular national context which had its own characteristic inflection. For instance, Anderson asks

who decides what our culture is? So much work in film is about translation of other cultures, genres etc. Film often comments on film regardless of cultural or national designations. The New Zealand Film Commission have a policy to only invest in New Zealand shorts that reflect New Zealand culture. I have had it stated to me that the shorts they fund must have an element that means they could only be made in New Zealand. The problem is that many shorts could have been made anywhere - stories are in many ways universal. Yet I would also say that a New Zealander making films in New Zealand, set in New Zealand with actors that speak with New Zealand accents surely this film is a New Zealand cultural expression (Anderson).

Raby agrees with Anderson that 'if a filmmaker is being true to him/herself, then this local cultural sensibility will naturally filter through' (Raby). Campbell also concurs believing that 'unless you deliberately try not to, you cannot avoid reflecting local or cultural perceptions' (Campbell).

However Raby also points out that situating culture within a national context is problematic considering the powerful influence international film culture places on any national film making practice. He believes that a specific national cultural

relevancy is challenged in terms of a perceived stylistic trend which has caused a stronger emphasis on particular cinematic forms rather than films that develop from the local cultural scene. Raby states that 'a disturbing trend [he] has noticed in the last few years is the tendency of the filmmaker to copycat American genres because film viewing appears to be their only sphere of interest' (Raby). The film maker's alignments in this case are directed towards emulating imported cinematic forms and ideas, allowing style to be the motivating element of the film making practice, rather than considering the particular inflections of the local context and the way styles might be adapted to express these.

Cultural relevancy means for both funders and film makers alike that the films made should reflect a particular place and way of life. They justify relevancy in terms of a national context and the influence of this context is unavoidable. The film maker respondents believe that this sense occurs through the process of New Zealanders making films in New Zealand and was not necessarily something that needed to be consciously developed. However, it was also noted that film culture itself plays an important part in the process of film making and acts as a source of inspiration for some film makers. These statements suggest that there is an intersection of alignments which arise from film practices occurring in a specific national context and film practices which emulate those developed in the context of an international film culture.

The Prioritising of Criteria by Fund Members

The specific objectives and allocation criteria, of the Short Film Fund, at least implicitly, shaped the types of short films funded through this agency. These criteria are not easily separated and are usually considered as an inclusive package, which is used jointly to help determine allocation decisions. However, the responses from fund members reflect a prioritising of the script as an influential factor in any decision. This decision in turn was not just made on the basis of the guidelines, but was also shaped by the experience, expertise and aesthetic predilections of the actual fund members, who were required to make both personal and then collaborative decisions about projects.

The influence of the script on decisions, accompanied by the inclusion of other allocation considerations was reflected in the statements made by fund members. For instance, Fitzgerald states that

a decision to finance a short film is made primarily on its script and the director's visualisation for that script, taking into account the resources both human and financial to realise that script as proposed. A proposal which has considered the profile and needs of its audience tends to display greater coherence and polish (Fitzgerald).

Milligan also prioritised the script, looking for 'its potential to make a good film that people will want to see, and its potential to stretch the director and help their development as a filmmaker' (Milligan). Botes adds that a good script had to also be accompanied with a convincing strategy for its production. He argues that 'the project should be strong in its own right, but the film maker has to be capable of delivering. Assuming these factors are well judged, all other outcomes are likely to be desirable' (Botes).

Paratene recognises the importance of the various factors required for funding allocation that have been previously mentioned in the chapter, but also agrees that what has priority is the 'story idea, [while] all other things are considerations' (Paratene). Similarly Langridge recognises the inclusive nature of allocation decisions, but the priority is 'story and craft, then talent and team development, [although] nothing is taken in isolation' (Langridge).

For the fund members these criteria were not perceived as a formula for shaping the short films produced, and they considered that the fund did not act in a "gatekeeping" role, channelling funds into particular types of short film. This attitude was reflected in responses to a question which asked if the allocation criteria created a set of specifications for particular types of film to be funded.

Fitzgerald responds that fund members were not seeking particular films and that the changing composition of the panel guaranteed that funding decisions could not be predicted by anyone. She continues that even if it was possible to observe trends retrospectively, these did not help in predicting future trends. She believes that there was

a considerable effort to dispel the myth that the committee is looking for any particular kind of film - my observations over the last five years, both as a committee member and latterly as the fund manager, is that committee members are not seeking any particular sort of film, simply ones that "stand out" from the pile in terms of writing craft, director visualisation, and overall originality. The committee membership tends

to vary from meeting to meeting as terms begin and end, and according to member's availability, consequently even one group of people could not be predicted to go for one sort or another. Types of films do tend to come in batches however. Needless to say trends can be observed retrospectively but they are the least useful guide to predicting future directions. I try to stress to all film makers that writing to please a committee is the least likely route to success and that film makers should use feedback to clarify their own vision for their film. There is no published set of specifications (Fitzgerald).

Milligan agrees with Fitzgerald that applicants attempting to anticipate the decisions of fund members and tailoring their applications to suit a perceived set of specifications were usually obvious and doomed to failure. She believes that

such submissions generally lack the spark of passion which drives the best storytelling, and they are often compromised by the desire to fulfil someone else's perceived wishes (i.e. the committee's) rather than the needs and intentions of the story and the theme the film maker wishes to explore. So the answer to this question is yes and no. Yes people do make submissions "designed" to appeal to what they think the funders want. Generally these submissions fail for the reasons just stated (Milligan).

Langridge also considers that there were no sets of rules on which to base funding applications. For him it was those stories or ideas that stood out which would have the greatest chance for funding:

There are no set of rules, if they [the funding panel] like it they will then judge the rest of the proposal - team, budget etc. There does seem to be a perception amongst some film makers that they can second guess what any panel wants! What they want is quality, and ability to realise it. Whatever the genre, style (Langridge).

Similarly for Kaa, the story was the most important indicator of possible success for funding. However, she also implies that part of a story's success was that it was also well presented. The application had a high chance of success if the project

was innovative, utterly different in the way the director or creative team has visualised the creative project and stand-out projects were exactly

that, they stood out from the rest. They were usually, as far as I can recall, and I have been away for it for over a year, stand out projects were often beautifully presented, highly organised in terms of how they were written up and the storyline was always the key thing (Kaa).

Alignments Between the Funding Panel and Fund Applicants

The fund panel members stipulate that they believed any conscious strategy, on the part of film maker applicants, to anticipate and enhance their chances of project success were doomed to failure. This was because they believe it was impossible to anticipate any group decisions because the composition of the funding panel was not constant and any trends in previous funding decisions did not imply future trends. Further, they consider that any strategies of this kind are likely to be obvious and would not result in favourable support. What the funders imply is that there are particular strategies implemented by some applicants that are not effective in their attempts to gain funding support. These are applications obviously tailored to suit anticipated expectations. The funders suggest that this type of strategy will not induce successful alignments between funders and applicants but this does not imply that alignments do not occur.

This chapter has outlined a number of alignments that do occur between fund members and applicants and it is on this level that the research is focused. It is these alignments which influence the types of short films which are finally funded and produced. It was theorised in Chapter Three, following Wartenberg, that social relationships are defined by the context in which they occur and these relationships are defined by other relationships within that context. These associated relationships constrain the degree of power any relationship might have. In the case of the Short Film Fund, the applicant's power to generate funds from the funding panel was obviously determined by the collective decision of this panel and this represents an axis of power which had a fulcrum about applicants and the funding panel. Funding success occurred when the funding panel agreed that the applicant and the project fulfilled the funding criteria. It has been shown in this chapter that personal decisions of individual members on the fund were finally determined by a collective decision which in turn was influenced by the interpretation of the funding objectives and criteria of the Short Film Fund. Again, this is another axis of power, which delineates the relations between individual members and the collective decisions of the group based on the constraints of the funding agency's funding criteria. The Short Film Fund's objectives are in turn influenced by the discourse of the Film Commission framed by the Film Commission Act.

The objectives of the Film Commission include the development of creative and technical talent and to improve the quality and diversity of film activity in New Zealand. These objectives are in part fostered through the objectives of the Creative Industry Development Unit which focuses on creative and skill development. The Short Film Fund was situated within this unit and its objectives were to support short film as a form, 'an entity in its own right' (New Zealand Film Commission 1995: 2.1) and to foster creative talent toward feature film making. The Short Film Fund's objectives aligned with some of the objectives of the Film Commission.

The discussion in this chapter has shown that the short film form has been influenced by the marketing criteria required to gain access to cinema, film festival and television markets. The length constraints on the short film has been a significant factor and so has the requirement that the shorts be cinematic narratives. Marketing has its own agendas as well, not only seeking particular types of films, but also to raise the international profile of New Zealand films and therefore create more opportunities for marketing. The criteria and objectives imposed by the Short Film Fund has also influenced the types of funding decisions that have been made by panel members. The presentation of a script with a "strong" story is a significant element for project success, but this needs to be accompanied with an "experienced" production and management team that will guarantee the project will be completed under the conditions of the funding contract. Other elements such as cultural relevancy and market orientation are also considerations, but these seem to be of less significance for final funding decisions.

From the perspective of the project applicants the funding of the project is not motivated by commercial gain, but is usually designed to establish further kudos within the industry. This is achieved by gaining professional experience and creating a calling card or by offering a show-case for their talent. They are investing in the future possibility of gaining funds for feature film projects. This process particularly benefits directors, although the remaining creative team participate to invest in their own future prospects.

The Film Commission is motivated to develop future feature film makers and uses the Short Film Fund as an agency to assist in this practice. The majority of film makers want to increase their chances at becoming feature film makers and use the Short Film Fund to assist them in this. Therefore there is an alignment created between the Short Film Fund and the film maker applicants. As Wartenburg suggests, social agents, in this case film makers and representatives of the Short Film Fund, align themselves in

discursively mediated relationships to have 'control over certain things that [they] might either need or desire' (Wartenburg 1990: 150). This chapter has outlined the nature of the discursive relationships that are involved in this alignment between the Film Commission represented by the Short Film Fund, the fund members, and the film maker applicants.

The alignments are strategic, in the sense that there are recognised procedures and discourses that need to be adhered to. The film makers must follow the rules of application, fulfil the criteria of the Short Film Fund and are in competition against other applicants to finally convince the panel members that their particular project should be funded. In turn, the Short Film Fund members develop their own strategic relationships with the projects, convincing each other that particular projects should be funded and justifying their decisions by aligning these with the objectives and criteria of the Short Film Fund.

These processes of alignment are complex and inclusive. Botes implies the multifaceted process of these alignments when he outlines the successful funding of one of his own projects:

It wasn't until I got on the Short Film Fund that it set me straight. I realised how hard you had to try, how much you have to do, how much work you have to do on the script, how well developed it has to be ... I had an idea that was very strong, that was well developed, I had a strong desire to tell it, I had a strong personal attachment to the idea, I thought it was a story worth making ... I was then in a strong position also to come up with a feature film idea not long after. So, as far as the Short Film Fund was concerned I suddenly became a prime candidate because of the whole notion of the Short Film Fund being a try out area for a longer form. I was also in a partnership with a producer who was also in a prime position to produce a feature film and he was going to be making this one with me. So basically all the planets lined up and away we went (Botes).

Botes believes that a group of alignments determined his success. Certainly he thought he had a strong story and this was a compelling factor, but he also thought he fulfilled the criteria of a director wanting experience for a future feature film project who was associated with a successful producer. It was this combination of circumstances that he believes gave him a successful alignment with the funding agency. A strong script, association with future feature film projects and a successful

creative team able to carry out its obligations and epitomised by a respected producer, were the criteria Botes believes gave him enough credit for his application success. He could add that his own kudos in the industry might also have been a favourable factor.

Conclusions

The political agenda for Creative New Zealand has a strong cultural emphasis, but the political agenda reflected in the New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978 is directed at the needs of the film sector of the screen industry. The legislation was introduced to support the making, promotion, distribution and exhibition of films.

The New Zealand Film Commission has imprinted its own agenda on the funding of short film, utilising this form as a vehicle for talent development for feature films, as well as establishing short film as part of the film culture, by foregrounding short film as an entity in its own right. This latter aspect implying that a wide range of short films were fundable on their own terms and not because they acted as a vehicle for talent development aimed at feature films.

However, market agendas have influenced the form of those films actually funded. These agendas are one of the influences operating on the multiple alignments that are found in the contexts of short film funding of the New Zealand Film Commission. These alignments, especially those operating in the context of the Short Film Fund have been the focus for this chapter. Although the fund members have stipulated that the script is an important factor in prioritising funding applications, other aspects, such as the track records of the production team, market prospects of the prospective film, and the particular national profile of the project, are also necessary determinants.

The chapter has suggested that there are a number of influences operating in these funding contexts playing their role in shaping final funding decisions. None of these influences can be explicitly quantified in terms of their degree of importance, and in the case of each project, it is probable that a different combination of influences leads to the success or failure of the application. One significant element that does emerge from this discussion is that of the mutual interrelationship of the personal and the collective. Funding decisions are the result of a complex selection of influences that range from subjective decisions to collective agreement based on budgetary demands, funding criteria, and marketing agendas.

This chapter has also introduced the tensions generated between the facility of the Short Film Fund films to offer calling card or show-casing opportunities, while implying that short films are not necessarily an appropriate vehicle to enhance feature film production. To make shorts for show-casing a director's talents, for example, the shorts need to conform to lengths dictated by marketing considerations, while feature film experience demands working with longer time frames. The next chapter will focus on the Talent Development Initiative and suggest how this developed from a demand for new alignments between the New Zealand Film Commission and practitioners, as well as an attempt to overcome the problems caused by a dependence for feature film experience on a limiting short film practice.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The New Zealand Film Commission and the Talent Development Initiative

The Process of Realignment

The viability of short film as a suitable form for talent development is one of a number of issues that have motivated changes in the funding regime for short film. Film makers have also called for a realignment of the New Zealand Film Commission policies because of a perceived lack of industry involvement in funding decisions. The influence of television and its effects on cinema practice have also been a cause for concern about some proposed policy and reflects a division between cinema and television practice evident in attitudes about these mediums.

The processes of realignment that have occurred in short film funding in the context of the New Zealand Film Commission offer a contrast to the cosmetic realignment that occurred in relation to the Creative New Zealand and Film Commission partnership of the Screen Innovation Production Fund. This chapter discusses the devolution of the Short Film Fund to the Talent Development Initiative and the changes involved help to illustrate the process of realignment and the establishment of a new axis of power centred around practising industry professionals and project applicants. It discusses the 1997 review of the Short Film Fund, notes some of the discourses involved in a call for change made by the Film Commission executive and the response to that call, and then describes the changes which occurred in relation to short film funding because of these pressures. Criticism of the policies of the Film Commission, catalysed by the Film Commission's perceived need for a more market oriented approach, prompted a realignment in terms of policies aimed at funding short film. This realignment was a process of mutual readjustment between the Film Commission and critics of its policies and probably will not be without its own consequences.

Alignment and Displacement Between Film Commission Policies and Film Makers

The demand for industry involvement and its justification using the discourse of specialist expertise and experience, was expressed in statements made by stakeholders for the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the New Zealand Film Commission.

They were reacting to the perceived policy agendas of the Board and its Executive Director Ruth Harley.

For instance in 1997, Harley believed that there was a crisis in the film industry. Discussing this crisis at that time, she stated that

the film business is at a cross-roads, possibly at a crisis point, partly because there has been so little production in the last three years and partly because there is so little money that the scale of the films which can be made is very small (1997: 14).

Her strategy to counter this was to fund smaller budget films which, she believed, would produce more films and therefore create a 'choice in the marketplace and a range of opportunities for writers and directors' (1997: 14). The crisis, according to Harley, was due to the lack of money available for funding and she considered that there were four possible sources of funds that might improve the situation. These included government, which she saw as problematic because of the lack of increased funding commitment; private investment, which she considered a better prospect; international investment; and finally she thought there was potential in better returns from film sales. This required, according to Harley, making the types of films which were popular. A need to develop 'a kind of feelgood stream alongside the art-house stream' (1997: 14).

To achieve better returns, according to Harley, required more money spent on marketing and making films that reflected popular taste, that is, films that 'work at the multiplex' (1997: 14). Increased returns 'means involving the exhibitors and the distributors in the decision making process - in other words, the market side as well as the production side' (1997: 14). To achieve this, Harley believed that people experienced in marketing should have a place on the board and in conjunction there was a need to establish systems that would assist in marketing. For instance, 'a marketing committee made up of industry people and chaired by a Commission member to allocate marketing funds for New Zealand releases' (1997: 14).

The implications for the direction of the New Zealand Film Commission, under funding levels that are considered to be inadequate, according to Harley, was to develop strategies that offered a broader range of choice, supplementing art-house films with more commercially oriented product. The films, she believed, need to have more market oriented input during production and then more effective advertising campaigns when they were distributed.

Harley was using a pragmatic rhetoric to inculcate a cultural role for film and outlined her commercially directed strategy by offering a mix of cultural and economic discourses to justify its effectiveness. For instance, she stated that 'if you want to have a significant cultural impact, you have that by impacting on a significant number of people' (1997: 14). This is reminiscent of the cross examination between Simpson and the Treasury quoted by Easton in Chapter Five and, no doubt, would ignite furious debate between those who have an elitist stance toward culture and those who situate themselves in the popular culture camp. Implicit in Harley's remarks however, was a desire to increase financial returns in a commercial climate which receives limited financial support from the state. It was a strategic response to the state's constrained funding support for the film industry which in turn has been influenced by an implicit New Right agenda.

This strategy operates on a number of alignments, not only focusing on commercial success in the market with more popular films, but is also linked to a plan seeking stronger alignments between the Film Commission, the government and the film industry. For instance, according to Harley, the alignment between the Film Commission and the government is being developed by creating a discursive interface between them. In other words Harley is seeking a common discourse to communicate their mutual positions, to convince the government to clarify their position on funding, and therefore identify common objectives which might assist in the increase of the funding commitment. She wants a strategy that is 'able to develop the case for cultural capital and how it interfaces with the government' (Harley quoted in *Onfilm* 1988: 12). The long term intention is to establish a place for 'funding of film in the government's broad strategies and its own key result areas' (Harley quoted in *Onfilm* 1998: 12). Harley is wanting to ask why the government should be participating in the funding of film and believes that it is only when this is answered that 'you may or may not be able to make an argument for the government providing more support to do it. (Harley quoted in *Onfilm* 1998: 12). This is a precarious strategy, especially if the argument the Film Commission develops is not convincing.

John O'Shea, producer and film maker, believes that there is a crisis with the Film Commission, rather than the film industry, and for him, this crisis is exacerbated by Harley's strategies. He believes the Film Commission is too timid in its decisions, focusing on small scale projects such as short film and low budget projects, as well as 'making deals a priority' (1997: 13). According to him the Film Commission has been 'diverted, losing its way, its nerve and its courage, failing to conjure up memories of its daring history' (1997: 13).

David Gascoigne, Chair of the New Zealand Film Commission 1985-1993, acknowledges a tension between the film makers and the Film Commission. He believes that 'the Film Commission has to insist on a level of professionalism and structured discipline, which the industry will always find uncomfortable' (1997: 15). However Gascoigne warns about a too prescriptive attitude toward the films that the Commission should encourage. 'A good film script is its own best argument. Trying to order up a film to fit a particular description simply means you would limit the range of what you might possibly receive' (1997: 15).

Ian Mune, an established New Zealand film maker, highlights these current tensions by pointing to the narrow range of representation of interests on the Film Commission Board. He is obviously in disagreement with Harley's prioritising of marketing and distribution expertise:

I believe the seed of the whole problem was planted with the formation of the first committee, when it was decided that the board would be stuffed with people who knew nothing about the industry. We've had builders, lawyers, accountants, bank managers, publishers and arts administrators; we even had a chairman who was an expert in fisheries. Now we have marketers ... How can they possibly be expected to understand the complexity of a budget and how it will differ from one script to the next, or one producer to the next, or director, depending on their interpretation of the project, what they are trying to achieve and how they are going to go about it? ... Of course, there are the industry representatives. But how broad an industry view do two representatives provide on a board of six plus chair? ... Let the industry administer the funds under the requirements of the Act, co-opting what specialist advice it needs, and we will have the possibility of improving the decision hit-rate, of sustaining production, of increasing and improving skills, and who knows, maybe even getting more money back (1997: 22).

Peter Jackson, another established New Zealand film maker, takes a similar position concerning the role of the current Film Commission. For him the allocation of funds at board level should be controlled by those experienced in the film industry. He wants more film making knowledge and script reading ability to be present at the funding decision levels, believing that this will improve the standard of decision

making. He cites film organisations in Australia where funding decisions are the responsibility of industry members:

Who should be on the board? Look at film organisations in Australia, such as the AFI [Australian Film Institute], AFC [Australian Film Commission], Film Victoria, or the South Australian Film Corporation: they all have boards made up entirely of industry members. Who is better informed about the "industry" than the people who work in it? It must be working well because their film industry is in a far healthier state than ours (1997: 64).

Not all film makers are in agreement with this position however. For instance, Sheridan, a producer and film maker who has been active politically in the short film community for the last ten years, believes that the makeup of the current board suits the necessary decision making ethos. He thinks that

the type of board now with the right kind of expert advice from the industry is the right thing for the feature film structure provided that everything else particularly the talent development that feeds it theoretically is devolved to the industry. A film maker is a subjective, passionate, non-analytical animal, who like it or not, consciously or unconsciously, has an agenda, that's the danger of putting too many of those people on the board (Sheridan).

A further criticism is directed at the initiative of the Low Budget Feature Film Programme, which Jackson believes is 'steering our talented young film makers into tele-feature debuts' (1997: 65) rather than nurturing stories that are more appropriate for the cinema. He interprets this policy of low budget features as one in which the New Zealand Film Commission can 'be seen to be turning out more product for less money' (1997: 65), which is precisely the strategy Harley is trying to implement. Jackson, however, wants a change in this attitude, because he believes it reinforces a television culture, rather than supporting film making and a focus 'on the unique qualities of New Zealand cinema' (1997: 65).

This frustration with the perceived gulf between funders and the film industry also underlines Sheridan's comments about funding practices:

It seems to me that what we are missing in New Zealand is a middle level of funding structure that operates either formally or informally in

most other places. That's the interface between the industry and the professional practitioners and the funding system. What we do here is we have an appointee based process where the idea is the industry comes into the funding system by being appointed to the Board or funding panels. Well the board has been gutted in that regard (Sheridan).

Sheridan would prefer a two tier system, with the Board being a final arbiter after applications have been through another level that is more production and industry based, and had reported on the actual feasibility and potential commercial prospects of the project.

Alan Sorrell, current Chair of the New Zealand Film Commission, believes that the Commission has already responded to these and other dissatisfactions through new alignments such as the creation of a development board, establishment of a marketing group and the 'devolving of the Short Film Fund administration entirely to the industry' (quoted in Gapes 1997: 28). Further, he believes that there is 'more input into the decision-making process than there ever has been. There's more skilled industry assessment on projects coming before the Board than ever before' (quoted in Heal 1997: 70).

Sorrell also points out that the choice of membership of the Board is a political one, with members chosen by the Minister of Cultural Affairs. For Sorrell, 'the issue as to the exact nature of the Board is a matter between the Minister and the industry and others. It is not a matter between the Film Commission Board and the industry' (Wakefield 1997/98: 1). He also warns of the delicate balance between offering criticism and jeopardising government funding. He is implying that a challenge to the current alignments between funders and film makers could just as easily jeopardise the sensitive alignments between the political masters and the funding body. He states that:

The issue is whether approaching these issues in this way, by this small but skilled and vocal group, with perhaps some would say disproportionately greater access to the media than their size or arguments would justify, is going to harm the industry overall. And I don't know the answer to that - wait and see the next budget round (*Onfilm* 1997/1998: 17).

Harley's strategy to cope with tight funding levels implies less emphasis on art-house film and an investment in films that have greater potential in commercial markets

such as the multiplexes and television. For her this means that market potential needs to be considered as part of funding decisions. This marketing orientation has become a prime objective for the Film Commission's strategy of sustaining a production agenda. It replaces an earlier strategy which 'has led at times to decisions by the Commission to invest in films in part for their value to those whose livelihoods depend on ongoing production' (Wakefield 1998: 1). This latter being an acknowledgement of a policy of investing in particular practitioners rather than an investment in financial returns which might help sustain future funding.

The funding strategy instigated by Harley, which seeks a closer liaison with government by establishing a common focus through shared discourse is reminiscent of the Advocacy Goal of Creative New Zealand's new strategic plan which similarly is attempting to enhance chances of increased funding. Both agencies, as well as New Zealand On Air, will probably in time, align together in developing a combined strategy for increased funding commitment from government sources. But this, according to Harley, will only occur if and when the Film Commission is able to get their own strategy right. She wants this strategy to be 'rigorously tested before it goes out and gets used' (Harley quoted in *Onfilm* 1998: 12).

The reaction to these new strategies by some stakeholders is a perception that prioritising a market oriented allocation criteria reduces the commercial risk, but also reduces the creative risk, and limits the range of work potentially offered for development. The low-budget strategy also diverts focus to a televisual rather than a cinematic emphasis and, therefore, some film makers would consider that it does not support what they perceive as the unique potential of New Zealand cinema. Another complaint is that the Board itself does not have the industry expertise to make suitable decisions on projects and more industry representation at board level is necessary to make those decisions that best suit industry development. Contrary arguments would suggest that it is not at Board level that film makers should have an important input, but at talent development level.

The debate about the relationship between television and cinema is a complex one although often fuelled by an implicit or explicit cultural ranking, with cinema favoured in some way as a superior medium. Film maker Dorthe Scheffmann, however, insists that cinema and television are quite different mediums. In her experience 'television is formatted differently, with a different pace and different attention to detail' (Scheffmann). Producer and director Bruce Morrison approaches this debate about television and cinema in a more inclusive way, believing that:

television and film have been proceeding down separate roads for too long. There is much more potential for crossover in terms of funding and releasing film/video projects in co-operation than there is by putting up an immovable wall between film and TV. It is a style wall, and a genre wall, and all sorts of other things. [Also] from a personal point of view I am very aware of certain areas in TV that are very compatible with feature films - in terms of documentary making for instance (Morrison).

These differences of opinion about the role of the Film Commission illustrate the range of voices influencing the policy initiatives of the Film Commission. New initiatives by Harley, with their emphasis on the involvement of market decisions in allocation decisions, and the need for a more secure financial base, are countered by practitioners who believe that their industry experience rather than marketing experience would best suit funding allocation decisions. They believe that although decisions about market viability have a place within the allocation criteria, a prescriptive emphasis on the types of films to be funded narrows the range of actual films made and inhibits the risks that funders are willing to undertake. This is a reaction to the changing emphasis from producer orientation to market orientation apparent in the contemporary political framework.

The Devolution of the Short Film Fund

Sorrell has stated that one of the responses to this dissatisfaction has been the devolution of the Short Film Fund and the consequent involvement of production groups from the industry in the role of executive producers. This realignment reflects Sheridan's acceptance of the need for industry involvement, but at a level removed from the actual New Zealand Film Commission Board. This new funding situation, at the level of short film initiatives, reflects the way new policy responds to a sense of displacement with established policy. The response, on the part of the Film Commission, in this case however, is not to capitulate to what is perceived by them as a small but influential group. Instead, as part of a multiple strategy, it has readjusted the funding agency for talent development in an attempt to answer both the challenge of increased industry involvement, as well as the need to find a more suitable method of developing talent for future feature film production.

A review of the Short Film Fund was made in 1997. This arose because of the contradictory effects arising from the fund's methods of achieving its objectives. It was thought that short film did not give prospective feature film makers adequate

experience with the requirements of this form, especially in relation to story development and working with actors 'on a sufficient scale' (*Onfilm* July 1997: 21).⁵⁶ It was considered by the review that short film did act as an effective vehicle for show-casing talent.

The strengths and weaknesses of the established Short Film Fund were compared in a discussion paper produced in 1997. The strengths of this funding agency included the fact that the high quality of the films funded had promoted and launched film makers. At the same time, however, the discussion paper considered that this career profile could be lost if feature projects were not also well developed. It was thought that a limited filmography, even of high quality, did not give the investor confidence that film makers could make features. Another perceived strength was that the fund gave creative freedom to film makers and provided the opportunity for crossovers from other screen media. Opposing this however was the view that the funding panel had been restrictive in their allocation of money and had not been open to some content or more experimental styles. Also creative freedom did not take into account market potential. In fact this lack of market awareness also often developed 'unrealistic expectations of [the successful applicant's] next step'⁵⁷ (New Zealand Film Commission 1997: 3).

It was concluded that the fund provided good opportunities for both successful and unsuccessful applicants because even the latter 'improve and develop their scripts, ideas, style and craft' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997: 3). However, the need for opportunities to 'make longer films targeted at a defined audience' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997: 3) was not being met.⁵⁸ This need reflected the fund's stated objective of encouraging creative talent for feature films and was symptomatic of the general perception by both panel members and applicants, that shorts were not an adequate vehicle for supporting this objective.

In a discussion paper that developed from the review of the Short Film Fund the most favoured option was considered to be that a partnership between the New Zealand Film Commission, New Zealand On Air, and a broadcaster, could contribute to the financing of twelve films, six twenty-four minutes in duration and the other six forty-

⁵⁶ See Chapter Seven for perceptions on the manner in which short film plays a role in feature film talent development.

⁵⁷ Chapter Seven also comments on this issue.

⁵⁸ Although it could be said that the potential to meet this demand is satisfied through the Commission's low-budget scheme. Two out of six films in development are to be given funding for production (*Onfilm* July 1997).

eight minutes long. These formats indicated television as the primary point of distribution and television audiences as target audiences for these projects. It was envisioned that 'most of the longer form films would be financed initially for a delivery on video for broadcast' (New Zealand Film Commission 1997: 6) although selected films could be financed for completion on 35mm film. It was also proposed that a further three short films up to twelve minutes long could be financed through the New Zealand Film Commission. It was proposed that the Film Commission would contribute \$1,000,000 of a total estimated budget of \$3,700,000 to the first twelve films and would invest \$300,000 in the three short films.

Discussions of a number of proposals were held with producers, directors and other stakeholders and the outcome of this was that yet another proposal was implemented. This alternative proposal also reflected the qualms that some directors and producers had about the reliance on broadcast television implied in the proposal outlined in the previous paragraph. Their concern was that there would be little room for creative development and that the potential range of possible project ideas would be reduced because of the constraints of commercial agendas. This parallels the similar debate that Jackson introduced in his criticism of the current policies of the New Zealand Film Commission. Against this antipathy towards the medium of television broadcasting however, were directors who believed that television offered the best opportunities both for working in the longer forms and also actually having their work seen by large audiences.

The final proposal was that the Short Film Fund would be devolved into the Talent Development Initiative. Three production groups would each be allocated \$250,000 through a tender system. It was expected that each group would finance up to three short films, while keeping \$30,000 as their executive producer's fee. It was hoped by the Commission that approximately nine short films would be made in each year with a total production budget of \$660,000. The final payment of the executive producer fee would be made on the completion of each group's three projects. The remaining funds in the budget, approximately \$250,000, would be utilised for post-production.

This outline of the process of realignment, documented in the review of the Short Film Fund and the various development proposals, illustrates the mix of discourses and agendas which helped to catalyse the change in the funding agency. The suitability of the short film making experience was questioned in terms of the objectives of the fund, especially that of developing talent for future feature film projects. However this was weighed against the effectiveness of enhancing careers and at least offering the production team experience with working in cinema. The

constraining nature of previous allocation decisions was also challenged by some stakeholders, as well as the lack of a strong marketing orientation in funding decisions. This marketing itself was problematic for some of those involved in the review, especially if that meant the encouragement of commercial television options. For some this meant a restriction on creativity, while for others this meant greater exposure for their work. The involvement of the industry in funding decisions was also an important factor in adjusting the channel for short film funding arrangements.

The options that resulted from these alignment pressures focused on a need for a wider range of short film possibilities, at least in terms of length, and these would be assessed by industry representatives. The emphasis would be on talent development for feature film and therefore only practitioners who had had previous experience and aspirations for future feature film practice would have eligibility.

The Talent Development Initiative

The Short Film Fund changed in 1997 from a panel of five members made up of people from the New Zealand Film Commission and the independent industry, to a situation where its funds were allocated to three producer groups. These groups had successfully tendered, in competition with fourteen others, for the role of allocating funds through the Talent Development Initiative. This arrangement was designed to last for twelve months and then other producer groups would be eligible to tender for the right to act as funders in a further round of funding allocation. Successful producer groups were eligible to tender in consecutive years.

The following section of this chapter outlines the strategies introduced by the successful production groups. It discusses each group's allocation criteria, and the strategies employed to communicate these. It then compares this new initiative with the replaced Short Film Fund regime, highlighting similarities and differences, and speculating on possible problems that might occur because of the changes. This comparison helps define the degree of realignment that has occurred because of the changes in funding regimes and also acts as a useful comparison to the changes instituted within the Screen Innovation Production Fund. This change in the funding regime has seen a shift in the axis of power from a single group, who finally made a collective decision over all applications, to three disparate groups each with a responsibility to make funding decisions for a final outcome of funding three short films each. This change in power relations has also seen consequent changes in the relations between the funding groups and the applicants.

The three production groups chosen for the first round of allocation were Morrison Grieve Ltd in association with Bruce Sheridan, MAP Film Productions, which includes Stuart McKenzie, Miranda Harcourt and Neil Pardington, and a final group involving Riwia Brown, Dorte Scheffmann and Kara Paewai. All of these individuals have had considerable experience in the film industry and, with the exception of Bruce Morrison and William Grieve, who have had considerable experience with features and television, all have had experience with the production of short films in New Zealand.

The research on the Talent Development Initiative was produced through extensive interviews with Bruce Morrison, Bruce Sheridan, Dorte Scheffmann and Neil Pardington, representatives of the three production groups involved in the new funding initiatives. Stewart McKenzie was also interviewed over the telephone and was questioned about funding outcomes for MAP Film Productions. This study of the Talent Development Initiative is therefore based on the points of view of these five individuals.

Objectives and Goals of the Talent Development Initiative

Very little official documentation of the objectives and obligations of the Talent Development Initiative has so far been published, but some documentation has been supplied by the respective production groups. For instance Morrison Grieve Ltd have distributed a letter which outlines their call for project applications and their proposed requirements. Their stated goal is

to develop and produce imaginative films of varying duration which succeed on their own creative terms and have a realistic chance of reaching a wide audience. [They] are primarily interested in narrative - strong stories and compelling characters - and intend to be proactive in the development of writing, directing, and producing skills on the productions to which [they] commit funds (Morrison Grieve Ltd 1997: 1).

Although Morrison Grieve Ltd are interested in a complete creative team, they also state that they 'will assist in putting teams together where the quality of an idea from a producer, director or writer alone suggests that this will produce the best overall result' (1997: 1). A commitment to engage in dialogue with projects which show promise, but which are in the executive producer's view 'deficient in some area [and] which could be improved by further work' (1997: 2) is also undertaken in this

document. Finally, according to the Morrison Grieve document, the proposal should contain

the script or treatment, précis of the script in less than fifty words, a production budget outline, a list of key creative personnel, any additional information which will assist in the understanding of intentions for the project, such as preferred shooting format, style notes or thoughts about casting [and] information about other funding applications which have been made for this particular project and their status (1997: 3).

In conjunction with this public statement Morrison and Sheridan visited Dunedin and Christchurch to talk to perspective applicants. They also used their contacts in Wellington and Auckland to advertise their allocation criteria and gather project applications. The approach they took, according to Morrison, was one open to dialogue. For instance, when he and Sheridan went to Christchurch they

advertised beforehand, and spent a whole day, spending roughly forty minutes with each group, and some of them were on projects we had already received and some were announcing projects they were about to send us. Some were developing things that weren't ready to be sent, but were likely be ready for the next round, but none the less we talked to them and offered whatever aid we could (Morrison).

Their approach to the criteria for funding, was one that they saw as different from that of the previous Short Film Fund. They acknowledged what they perceived as the previous regime's short film agenda of creating a calling card and a vehicle for displaying the director's talent for possible feature film projects in the future. Morrison states that they wanted to loosen the criteria and place less emphasis on a show-casing approach:

[We] didn't want to have a style agenda at all. In reflection I had heard from the Short Film Fund that form of short film was the way for directors to show what they termed 'the unique voice'. In other words style heavy things were a way of displaying what sort of flash a director had and how this might perhaps be applied to a larger feature project that they might be hoping to attract funding for (Morrison).

Their approach to talent development for future feature film projects was to widen the range of films they could fund, aligning themselves with a major impetus for changing the fund:

We wanted to broaden the type and range of product we could fund. For instance we don't want everything we fund to be 10-15 minutes long. We would like to do something in half hour or even hour projects, even longer than an hour but on lesser formats that cost less. [We would also like] to try and look at telling ninety minutes stories (Morrison).

MAP Film Productions were also motivated by an approach which they considered to be 'quite different from the existing funding structures' (Pardington). This difference was in the approach they took, perceiving themselves as

operating more as a film production company rather than as a funding body so that we could be more proactive in the way projects were developed and funded. Also more active in putting teams together. So we weren't just going to send out information to directors and producers, but also writers, people involved in theatre, short story writers, people who had written novels and plays (Pardington).

MAP Film Productions published a document outlining their criteria and requirements for application, distributing them through existing data base mailing lists, including the Film Commission, the Screen Innovation Production Fund, the Writers Guild, the Screen Producers and Directors Association, university film courses, and also a number of targeted individuals whose work was admired by the MAP partners. The stated aims of MAP Film Productions focused on the desire to produce films which were

strong stories, well told, [either] conventional or innovative in content and/or structure, [and which would] always be surprising and compelling. [Also these films should be] character based; explicitly or implicitly committed to reflecting contemporary, multi-cultural New Zealand; entertaining and market focused; motivated by a creative team with a shared vision; visually compelling and inventive; [and be] responsible to a realistic budget (MAP Film Productions 1998).

Other criteria included the proviso that applicants had to have a track record, with the director needing 'to have at least one substantial film to his or her credit. [While] other

members of the creative team may derive their necessary experience from involvement in related fields' (MAP Film Productions 1998). MAP Film Productions abandoned the formal requirement of producer led applications, stating that they were willing to consider applications from 'individuals taking on producer/director or writer/director roles' (MAP Film Productions 1998) and further, that 'scripts without directors or producers on board [would be] accepted' (MAP Film Productions 1998). This less restrictive approach was also a significant aspect of the criteria for the other two production groups.

The third production group was a partnership between Dorthe Scheffmann, Riwia Brown and Kara Paewai. According to Scheffmann, their principal objective was to fund 'film makers who are going to be making feature films some time in the next decade' (Scheffmann). The particular film makers they wanted to target were those that the three funders 'personally wanted to support. Women film makers, Polynesian and Maori film makers' (Scheffmann). This, Scheffmann believes, warranted a new approach to canvassing prospective applicants and her production group did not 'circulate on any kind of paper chase' and publish their proposed objectives and criteria. Instead, Scheffmann states that because they

didn't see any point in duplicating what was already there. If this was going to be tried and tested as a new way of funding then you had to take the ball and go with it. So in that sense we were very loose in our parameters really. We published our phone numbers and published our fax numbers and we invited people to phone us and ask for information and we published a submission deadline ... We wanted to be as accessible as possible. We wanted to have people feel they could ring us and we wanted to encourage that kind of relationship (Scheffmann).

This was an unorthodox approach, but was strategic in the sense that the people this production group were wanting to attract and support in film making practices were perceived to require a different approach, one that might be more conducive to eliciting a response. Scheffmann's statement about her group's approach in contacting prospective applicants implies a desire to dilute the influences of the formal approaches of the previous funding regime and to encourage a more informal approach, which she hoped would overcome some of the barriers disenfranchising the people she wished to support.

The people that we were particularly interested in were people that we felt would react better within a personal relationship and that we felt

traditionally had been perhaps disenfranchised. We wanted to make the information as accessible as possible [and] that is why we took that tack (Scheffmann).

This interest in developing informal relationships was a dominant aspect of each of the funding groups, although Scheffmann's approach was certainly the most unorthodox. All of the production groups took an active role in establishing these types of relationships. Paralleling Morrison Grieve Ltd and MAP Film Productions, the Scheffmann, Brown, Paewai group was also proactive in their contact with prospective project applicants. The group wanted to

behave as publishing house commissioning editors. We took the view that we should go through the data base and actually target film makers whose work had really interested us and who we wanted to support. To that end we did that and phoned all of those people up and we spoke to them about our views (Scheffmann).

Finally, according to Scheffmann, this group had an objective to encourage script development and with this in mind, initiated a programme of funding selected script writers:

To that end we decided that \$10,000 out of our production money we would simply invest in writers. In the first round we gave \$5000 out pretty much in \$1000 increments. We got scripts that could be taken to a second or third draft and we got short stories which we gave money to take to a script.

Each production group expressed the desire to introduce new strategies into the funding process and thought that their approaches countered some of the influences imposed by the previous funding agendas. Morrison Grieve Ltd wanted to reduce what they perceived as the style driven imperatives of show-casing and offer a greater range and type of short film that might be funded. MAP Film Productions wanted to be more proactive in the funding process and also wanted to encourage a wider range of applicant to apply. Scheffmann's group were also encouraging what they considered to be a previously disenfranchised group and to achieve this they introduced a more informal method of making alignments

A Comparison of the Talent Development Initiative with the Short Film Fund

As the new funding regime's name suggests, the emphasis is on talent development, with the added proviso that this development is directed at feature film makers. The contract with the New Zealand Film Commission to develop future feature film talent has necessitated decisions that restrict possible application success to applicants considered to have a suitable track record and a future in feature film production. Scheffmann, for instance, wants to support applicants who can not only make feature films, but who can survive independently in the industry:

It is pointless for us as a country to invest in people who don't have the legs to go. They have to go to LA and do a meeting. We don't want them to be funded forever. We don't want to as a country to invest in a film maker and a short film only to have to continually invest in this person because this person is unable to be self income generating (Scheffmann).

For Morrison, the talent development objective has meant disqualifying projects that weren't obviously fulfilling the objective, but were still viable as fundable projects:

We were required to foster projects that were going to advance skills applicable to a larger form. That single requirement has cut a few people out. With projects that were innovative, and creative, and otherwise worthy of support, but because they were patently not going to be feature film makers but were more projects of a different sort - maybe with a logical aim at TV - they were disqualified (Morrison).

MAP Film Productions also accept the overriding objective of the new regime, but remain open to the possibility of funding shorts that were not necessarily directed towards longer form experience. According to Pardington, their approach is one that is trying to create a balance between supporting an experienced director, and possibly supporting someone who has the ability, but not the experience, or even someone who is involved in a form that might not be conducive to feature development:

We have a commitment to honouring our contract to the Film Commission to support talent for features ... Having said that we are also interested in funding good short films and that is also one of our criteria. We are also looking at the range of funding decisions we make within the three to four films we fund so that we might strike a balance between

experienced director and fantastic writer who hasn't written for film before, or experienced director supporting an animator (Pardington).

Scheffmann and Morrison both seem quite adamant that this feature film imperative is an overriding factor in application decisions, while Pardington accepts the commitment for talent development, but seems to imply that talented inexperienced individuals will not be disadvantaged if an experienced creative team can be established around them. In practice, these attitudes are probably also tempered by the quality of the available projects and whether or not the supporting creative team has the ability to complete the project successfully. As Pardington suggests, the funders don't necessarily know whether applicants are interested in making feature films, but all they need to suggest this is to state it in a covering letter.

Taking into consideration accounts by members of the Short Film Fund, discussed above in Chapter Seven, and the Talent Development Initiative, the difficult process of deciding on the suitable scripts for final funding is very similar. Morrison, for instance, describes the assessment process his partnership undertook, one very similar to the process described by Milligan in the previous chapter:

We all read the script separately and then we get together. We decide on what ones to turn down. The others we will keep in the go pile and they will divide between those that have a unanimous yes and ones where there is a dissenting voice. Then we will go through at the end of the process slightly more exhaustively - firstly finding out whether there are any unanimous yes's then two yes's and an impassioned dissenting voice, or even someone who is really strong for and two against we will probably keep these in too (Morrison).

His indicators for potential projects are scripts that "grab" him because they

aren't drama exercises, they aren't exercises in style, but you've got somebody who is trying to use character and incident to either illustrate something about the human condition, tell us about who we are or what we are, or find an insight into any of the larger questions that assail all of us. I would like the scripts we do to somehow have a relationship to meaning if you like, I would like them to be about something. I would like them to have a progression, to have good character and incident that meshed in, grew out of, and was sympathetic with the character. I want a good story. I want it to go somewhere and I want it to be about

something that is not a film thing. I don't want it to be about film (Morrison).

Pardington outlines a similar strategy for MAP Film Ltd:

Stewart, Miranda and myself each read every script. We also had external readers so we had a reader who had worked in Britain and was now resident in Wellington and he read a short list of twenty of the preferred scripts and we also had another reader who was a cultural advisor on some Pacific Island material. We then had a very long and fraught meeting in which we evaluated the pros and cons of the different projects. There were all sorts of issues in terms of that evaluation. One thing though if you read the script and the story jumps out and grabs you then it has to be a good thing. There were at least twenty scripts that did that. In our first cut back we got to about thirty scripts we were very enthusiastic about (Pardington).

Their criteria for projects emphasise character driven narrative:

We are very interested in character driven narrative so we wanted good three dimensional characters. We are very interested in narrative drama, and New Zealand stories and stories that reflect on contemporary New Zealand society or attitudes of. So it could be an historical story but it could obviously hold some contemporary attitudes to it. I think the emphasis on strong characters would be one of the things that carry through in our criteria. On the other hand that didn't discount other projects. For example there is one project we have short listed that is a computer animation project which obviously fits into our criteria in different ways. That fits into the innovative visually dynamic part of our criteria. We really want films that have got great dialogue, great characters (Pardington).

Scheffmann's approach also looks for particular elements:

For me it is originality. Film is such a derivative art form that if I am looking at short films, if I'm just looking at a festival programme of short films, what am I looking for? Something that obviously moves me as an audience factor and often what moves me is that sense that here you are watching an original voice. A rare thing. Secondly you just want

proficiency. One of the things about the short film is that it doesn't impose the same rules that a feature film has imposed on it. You have a much shorter time, you can be much riskier, you're not so beholden to the audience in terms of keeping their attention, the rhythm, the structures of a feature film, which I think you have to acknowledge much more clearly. A short film you can be pretty experimental in a way you can't be in a feature film. You can't quite take the same risks. Some of the best short films I've seen have been really inventive (Scheffmann).

Each of these responses to what the funders are looking for in a script are very similar, and probably, the respondents would all agree with each other's requirements. Milligan, of the previous short film funding agency, wanted originality, clarity of story telling, character involvement, believable dialogue, and facility with images. Morrison wants a good story that is about something and involves a cohesion between character and incident. Pardington also stresses story and character and wants scripts about contemporary New Zealand. Scheffmann wants originality and proficiency and a sense of risk taking.

After decisions have been made on scripts the next step involves consideration of elements other than the script, such as the track record of the team, whether they can actually carry through their project, the feasibility of the budget, the actual final package of films that will best suit the available funds, and the possible market. This also remains similar in a number of ways to the previous regime.⁵⁹ Morrison, for instance, sees this part of the funding process as one involving the balancing of the different criteria:

The likelihood is that we will find five or six projects that we are all keen on having as a result of our custodianship of this part of the scheme and then it will be more a matter of balancing them with these other considerations. Who is going to do the best job, who has got the most experience, who has got all the bases covered, who is wildly out with budget? And in the end it might be a matter of dialogue. For instance this ones really great but the last scene sucks - can we get that changed? Or we would go with the project but they are letting themselves down by going with a certain actor (Morrison).

⁵⁹ A more detailed discussion of these elements of project funding for the Short film Fund is found in Chapter Seven

Even with this last group of projects, a further decision is required to assess what mix will actually suit the available finance:

That's where there will be a lot of dialogue at the end of this group, getting down to a very small last group, and then working out how we can balance out the best of that list with the amount of money we've got and hopefully find three projects that are compatible in the sense that there might be a long one, short one, and very short one, or there might be a 35mm and beta one. We haven't given ourselves any prescription about how we are going to divide the money up. For instance we might find a project we want to spend three quarters of the money on and we would have to find two other projects that we can either do for less or projects we can put the remaining money in and perhaps find other funds from elsewhere (Morrison).

Pardington similarly suggests that the final decisions will involve the balancing of a film mix, constrained by the available financial package, although he suggests that this also means, for him, that MAP Film Productions will endeavour to fund the three best films available:

Of the twelve projects we have short listed we would be happy to make any of those projects. We only short listed projects that we thought could be made. We expect the producers to be creative with their budgets. One of the things we will be doing will be getting back to them about these budgets because quite a few are higher than what we can cope with. So we will be getting back to them about this saying that for a film of this length we only have this amount of money ... we have to look at a whole package and divvy up the money with that in mind and actually say we can afford to do these two longer projects and we will then have to do a shorter one. My hope is to make the three best projects (Pardington).

A further similarity between the two funding regimes is the offering of feedback to the project applicants. According to Morrison, Morrison Grieve's commitment is to give advice on the project to the point that the projects are commissioned:

If we feel that they are on to a good thing but are missing something then we would be obliged to say that, but I guess loosely we are executive producers, we don't want to produce them and if something comes to us that we really want to do, but it hasn't got a producer, our

first thing that we would do is look around amongst the rest of the pool and see what was offering and who we know to see whether there was a producer who could take it on rather than produce it ourselves. I don't think there is anything prohibiting us producing them from here but we don't particularly want to do that, we would rather stay at one remove and have a whole production team that does the thing, rather than become part of the process (Morrison).

Pardington has a similar view although his commitment to the final projects is much more hands on than that offered by the Short Film Fund, who did offer advice through Catherine Fitzgerald, but remained distanced from the actual productions:

We see ourselves as executive producers of the projects, that seems to be a good name for the role, far more than just a funding role, and you need to be active in the role, not take them off the people in that sense, but actually have a sense of ownership and enthusiasm for the projects that you are putting money into. You have to direct enthusiasm into that project otherwise why would they want you anywhere near it? That's the role we want to have. We will be involved with advice, opinions. seeing the project through, giving energy to the project, rather than a regulatory body and rather than just giving negative comment. Being part of the team and producing an end product that we want to be as good as possible (Pardington).

Scheffmann however expresses a desire to distance herself from this degree of active commitment:

I have particular feelings about the editorial processes that investors make in films. I'm not here to be involved in these films. I'm here to facilitate these film makers in what they need, but I'm not here to run an editorial process on their creative process. If their creative process isn't strong enough that it really convinces me, then I think it's a no go. I don't want these projects to be anything to do with my process because then again something is being imposed on this potential artist. They have to be able to foot it in their own arena. I think that is an interesting arena of discussion because I think that anywhere you get public servants per se investing or funding any artist you get very dodgy areas of behaviour going on in terms of editorial processes (Scheffmann).

These attitudes toward the degree of involvement by the production groups indicates one of the differences between the new regime and the funding regime it has replaced. This difference lies in the variety of perceptions about their role that the different production groups think appropriate. For MAP Film Productions there is a commitment for major involvement, imbuing the projects with a sense of ownership and enthusiasm, while Scheffmann is more circumspect about this involvement, which she believes can lead to the imposition of an agenda that stems from the funder's own interests and, therefore, undermines the creative integrity of a project's creative team. The Short Film Fund did suggest possible changes to projects, but its members did not become directly involved in these projects. Any personal contacts with applicants were made by Fitzgerald.

Another obvious difference between the previous Short Film Fund funding regime and the new Talent Development Initiative are the structural organisations of the two funds. The first, had a panel of five voluntary members to decide on project applications, as well as Fitzgerald, Director of Creative and Industry Development for the New Zealand Film Commission. Fitzgerald had no decision making capacity in terms of the projects, but acted as a mediator and consultant between the panel and applicants. She perceived her role as one where she was

available to help all applicants to meet all the requirements of an application to give it its best chance. The great majority of applicants contact me well before the submission dates and I meet with them to discuss what they need to supply. If an application just arrives I contact the applicant and offer them the opportunity to supply any missing information (Fitzgerald) .

The new structure involves three different groups of individuals, each with their own objectives and application criteria, all of whom are actively seeking contacts and open to consultation with prospective applicants. These individuals work in supportive groups that have chosen to operate together in a professional capacity in the film industry.

Despite the suggestion that the criteria for a successful script do not seem to have changed between individuals involved in the two funds. Within the new fund, a greater diversity of projects is possible because of the differing interpretations of these criteria within each group. Each group, in turn, could be characterised in terms of a particular interest. Morrisson Grieve Ltd, as the more established group based on television production, experience in feature film making and, with Sheridan, long

experience in short film, while MAP Films could be classified as the young, more style oriented group. The Scheffmann, Brown, Paewai group stands out in terms of difference, as their target group is what they perceive as those who have in the past been disenfranchised, and their strategy for connecting with this group is an informal one.

Sheridan also stresses the difference in the Talent Development Initiative and the previous regime in terms of the onus on the choice available to the new groups, with the decision making placed on the interests of each production group, who can decide for themselves what projects they wish to follow through. This replaces the older regime, which had to give exactly the same weight to every project's potential. For Sheridan the Short film Fund

had to talk over a hundred films and thirty five or forty of these might be from people who had never made anything before and were never going to be funded, but every one of them had to be given exactly the same weight [and] had to have exactly the same material. We have the right just to say we don't like it. If you don't like us you don't like us. The group should stand or fall on what they fund and the group should be confident enough to reject stuff on the basis we believe that we can stand up and argue for what we make (Sheridan).

Another difference between the regimes is the manner in which contact is made between the fund and applicants. With the Short Film Fund, there was a single point conduit for consultation occurring through Fitzgerald as Fund Manager, while the new structure offers a more open contact with all those involved in the project decisions. Even if this contact does not lead to a successful project, other benefits can occur. One of these benefits has been the process of networking that has occurred through contacts the production groups have within the industry. Scheffmann, for instance, has actively engaged in this process:

One of the things that I have found in working the tender is that because I am fairly experienced in the industry I have been able to network for people. That is something I think is interesting in terms of this scheme, the nature of the scheme. I have had dozens and dozens of meetings with young film makers since this began and I think in half the cases probably I have been able to give them a name, a phone number, or pass scripts on, outside the work I have done directly on funding (Scheffmann).

A further difference with the new scheme has been that applicants now have three chances to have their work assessed and possibly accepted. Pardington, for instance, indicated that when applicants asked him if they should only apply to MAP Film Productions for funding, he encouraged them to apply to all of the groups. He saw the tripartite structure as conducive to more opportunity for the applicants and believes that applicants

would be foolish to send [their projects] just to one group because you can't really predict that they are the people for your script. Why shouldn't people try every avenue they can to get funded. I absolutely support people to send scripts to all three groups. Maybe not the ones that we have worked hard to get up and running, but if people have rung us and said do we just send the script to you we have said 'no send it to all if you wish to'. We don't want to jeopardise people's chances (Pardington).

The different funding structure, with its greater range of possible fundable projects, and its possible greater diversity of opinion about fundable projects, influences the types of short film that might be finally produced. This difference can be assumed from the comments made by members of the production groups about their observations of the film projects initially directed toward the Short Film Fund. They suggest that because of the lag time due to the change in funding structures, those projects developed under the aegis of the Short Film Fund became projects assessed under the Talent Development Initiative. According to Morrison, some of these projects had a characteristic look:

I was interested to note that quite a high percentage of the scripts we got fell into a particular category or style. There were all sorts of stories but the ones that fell together into a group in my mind were all 12 minutes long, quite structured, with a heavy emphasis on film noir lighting and various genre styles of visuals. These were straight line quirky tales with bizarre characters and a twist at the end basically. That would be the loose way to place an umbrella over them. Of course within that there were a lot of permutations. It seemed to me that the short film community had a style about it. An accepted norm of what a short film was. A lot of the scripts we saw it seemed had this prescription in mind (Morrison).

If this experience was common for Morrison and his partners, Pardington also recognised a common pattern in some films, but was less circumspect about the merits of this prescription:

I think the Short Film Fund certainly let them know what sort of films they were interested in funding, or what sort of films they felt would be successful from their knowledge of exhibiting and marketing short films abroad, that's probably it. They felt they had a certain insight into what was a marketable short film format and they were passing it on to film makers. I think that a number of scripts that have come in fit into that model, but equally a number of individualistic visions have also come in. I think that a short tale with the twist at the end is the generic view of what you might have thought the Film Commission wanted. I can think of a number of films like that which I have really enjoyed. *Planet Man* is one like that. We have probably made some of those ourselves (Pardington).

Sheridan, however, is a little more hesitant about attributing this short film style directly to the Short Film Fund and posits a reason for the types of short film that have a common profile:

I have a deeper theory which isn't talked about in the industry. My feeling is that New Zealand fiction as well as film making is pseudo factual - all of our ways of talking are based on the idea that what we are talking about somehow is real, that it exists. We are reporters, we write reports, rather than tell stories. Obviously in the Maori oral tradition there are differences to that (Sheridan).

Sheridan believes that there are cultural imperatives that influence the types of short films made in New Zealand and to attribute this type of film production entirely to the Short Film Fund and its funding initiatives would be wrong:

When we talk about the typical Short Film Fund film then I think what people are saying is that is a place, where because of the narrow definitions of money, time and resources that were available, the ultimate distillation of the limitations of New Zealand story telling would reveal themselves. All of the applications are short on story, thin on character and big on style, and almost always dark or reactive in some way - that's what typifies it (Sheridan).

Pardington also suggests that this sense of a common profile for many films might be a typical industry phenomenon.

[I] think that the whole film industry runs on this kind of model that a unique film comes along and then for sometime after that people try to emulate it and then it's the next film that comes along and is successful but also a unique and individual vision which changes it all (Pardington).

These different responses to the type of film perceived to have developed from the previous funding regime, and the reasons for this development, might also reflect the different experiences of Morrison, Sheridan and Pardington in terms of short film. For Morrison, this funding role was an introduction to contemporary short film and possibly gave him a more distanced perspective from which to evaluate, while Pardington, has been an active and recent short film maker, and therefore is more closely positioned within the current style oriented practices. Sheridan, on the other hand, has been an active participant in issues of making and funding short film for a long time and his attitude is coloured by his expectations:

I had been involved in the kind of short film projects that were going into the fund before and I could instantly recognise them. This Short Film Fund film evolved over time. Usually 15 min duration, dominated by style and almost always dark or reactive in some way ... I was surprised how few projects we got that weren't like that. The industry had been saying (including me) that the whole [funding system] was not broad enough and flexible enough and that implies that there is a whole lot of other things out there wanting to be done. My expectation was that now we have pulled the cork out we will see these things. They were just not there. We had to eventually phone people up and say look do you realise that this is a chance to throw anything at us and subsequent to having done that we have had material coming back - some from unknowns, some from known people. It is interesting that the more experienced film makers are the ones that seem more able to pick up the challenge in that regard (Sheridan).

This awareness of a particular style, shaped at least in part by the decisions of the previous funding body, but also possibly from other influences related to cultural

dispositions, also helps to suggest the differences in funding decisions that might possibly be made by the respective groups of the Talent Development Initiative.

Morrison's attitude was that he didn't want a style agenda at all, while Pardington was more open to the idea of style driven film projects:

I don't think films should be style driven, but they should have style. We keep saying that style is content, it can't exist on its own but it is content in itself. If a film has a strong narrative and characters and great visual style then that's surely better than a film that has strong characters and narrative but no visual style what so ever (Pardington).

While for Scheffmann these issues of style have much less relevance than the desire to support film makers who have the potential to survive in the film industry, and also film makers who she perceives as being currently disenfranchised.

A final difference in the two funding regimes is the fact that the funding participants have different motivations for their participation. The old fund used a voluntary group of people to act as adjudicators. They were given no financial reward, so their motives could only be attributed to their interest in participating in the funding decisions and supporting aspiring film makers. The current regime has a payment incentive, recognising an important role within the whole process of short film production. Further, the participants believe they are also benefiting from their active participation.

Scheffmann perceives her participation as an opportunity to contribute at a time when she was able:

Probably for the first time in twenty years I could participate in something like this. I felt I had the skill base to bring to it and as I had the time. Why not? The way I feel about the actual job is that for a brief period of time I am a public servant, I represent the public's interest in the sense that the public are investing in film. I am not going to waste it. I am going to make sure that we get the very best product and my judgement is governed by the fact that this is cinema (Scheffmann).

For Pardington, although the process of application assessment is long and arduous, it is also extremely rewarding:

Reading all of those scripts has been of great benefit to us as film makers because we have learnt a huge amount from the fantastic material that has come in. Intensively reading all those scripts helps you with your script reading ability as a director or your script writing ability. It's a really great learning curve for us. I would do it again. I absolutely loved it. It's fantastic getting people doing a pitch to us. Maybe we will learn how to do our pitches better. Those are all the fantastic aspects of the job, meeting lots of other people it's really great meeting other people out there who are interested in the same things you are interested in people who are enthusiasts about film. It is also great to be able to support some of those people and help in their careers (Pardington).

For Morrison, involvement in the fund has direct consequences for his company's own survival in the screen industry:

Our motivations were to do with the fact that television is moving really fast. Both William Grieve and I had come from the film industry prior to the formation of Morrison Grieve Ltd and we had every intention to move back into that direction, whether it be with television drama or in conjunction with TV drama. So we had a need to broaden our own horizons. We had been making documentaries for five years and working in a very specific area of TV. Movements within the TV world made it clear that the status quo wasn't going to remain forever and nobody had any security of tenure or supply with television, so we should really broaden our horizons and meeting the rest of the film community was part of that. And this brings a whole lot of film makers through our doors and we are meeting people and reading scripts. Basically if we haven't met all of them at least we have tuned into the rest of the film community and have become aware of who is doing what and what the shape and size and colour of those who are heading in the feature film direction is. It has been good research for us and it has been good on the human or networking side where we may meet people who, from the Morrison Grieve point of view, may be useful to us some stage in the future for another project that we may do ourselves. We may come up against a writer or director or production manager in the course of doing this whose contact may go further (Morrison).

This comparison of the two funding regimes has suggested that much of the assessment process and the attitudes towards the types of projects considered fundable remain quite similar. The differences in the two regimes focus more on the new structure and the increased direct participation of the funding members with prospective applicants. This relationship can encourage direct involvement in projects and is also useful as a networking conduit to other individuals in the industry.

This latter development is significant because it encourages the build-up of informal alignments between the industry and emerging talent, and helps newcomers to the industry to make connections and invest in future opportunities through these connections. Thus the rewards of application do not just flow to those few who receive financial support, but also to the many others who develop informal contacts with experienced professionals through the industry networks. These professionals themselves are also part of the gains of the process, with the possibility of making their contacts for further projects, gaining more experience in the processes of script and funding application, as well as supporting those film makers they consider to be deserving.

Consequences of the New Alignments

The realignment of short film funding has opened the possibility for a different regime to develop. A regime that might be less likely to develop a particular profile, as each tender will attract different groups, with their own agendas, and funding decisions will be more variable and less likely to be anticipated by strategic minded film maker applicants.

The impetus of this new funding regime is the promotion of potential feature film makers. One method of achieving this is encouraging film makers to have experience with longer films. This change in approach has occurred because short films do not necessarily offer the creative skills required to become a feature film. However, it has also been observed that they do offer other opportunities that are conducive to feature film experience. Short films can be influential calling cards and allow the showcasing of work at festivals. Andrew Bancroft, for instance, who has been successful at Cannes with his film *Planet Man*, expresses this positive aspect of short films despite the inadequacies of feature film skill development. Discussing short film, Bancroft states that

in terms of a calling card, it's about the best calling card there is and I was surprised by the number of offers I have had from Hollywood

companies to make films with them on the strength of *Planet Man* because I've only made two short films ... but look at the skills base required. Those skills can't be learned entirely in short film, it just doesn't work. My understanding of the Short Film Fund is that they fund shorts primarily as an investment in future feature film directors, which suits me fine because I am interested in features not shorts. I find shorts extremely difficult and rather unpleasant to make because I conceive of film as a dramatic medium and short film is not a dramatic medium. I think it is much more of a visual medium. I feel very cramped (Bancroft).

Kathleen Drumm, the associate marketing director of the Film Commission, points out that longer length shorts have few market opportunities. According to Drumm

there is little or no television market for films over sixteen minutes. Few channels have half hour slots; one hour slots are reserved for strip series like the X-Files or a channel's own product (such as the Channel Four or BBC dramas); our dramas are thus competing with the best of British drama for a few precious slots ... Length is also a consideration for film festivals. The major festivals have strict guidelines, and many do not select shorts in official competition if they are over fifteen minutes - including Cannes, Berlin, Sundance, and Montreal (Drumm 1998b).

If restrictions on length is important for exhibition, as the short films funded by the Talent Development Initiative get longer, so too will the opportunities for exhibiting these films become less frequent. Therefore, there is a major tension between giving film makers an opportunity to develop feature film experience with longer films and offering film makers a chance to show case their work at festivals and possibly through television exposure.

Drumm also recognises this problem. However, she believes that the Film Commission's objective of offering experience for future feature film talent is more important than the show-casing of this talent:

We want talented New Zealanders to have the opportunity to work with both short and longer length scripts, with the ultimate goal of developing more potential feature film makers. During this process, it is possible that some of the shorter films (less than ninety minutes) may not be seen by a wide audience, but as described, there is a bigger objective at stake ... all

participants in the Talent Development Initiative are aware of the vagaries of the market place, and know that some of the films they ultimately support may not achieve critical success or significant sales. However these less marketable films may serve to develop the skills of a new, exciting group of film makers (Drumm 1998a).

Drumm's statements also suggest that new marketing strategies will be required to achieve access to the markets for films that are too long to be easily marketed as shorts, but too short to be marketed as features. One such suggestion, discussed in the next chapter, is a packaging of two or more films that together might suit a feature length programme.

The dilemmas arising due to the possible range of shorts supported in this new funding regime also point out the precarious role of short film production. If short films are not an adequate vehicle for developing the skills of feature film makers, and if longer shorts will not be able to generate critical success because they cannot be marketed, and finally shorts do not achieve a significant level of commercial return when they are marketed, what is the point of continuing supporting short film production through the Talent Development Initiative? The consequences of the emphasis on talent development for feature film might in itself be the beginnings of the end of significant short film production on the part of the Film Commission. Under this criteria, given the context of the marketing discourses stressed by the Film Commission, it would make more sense to support more low budget features rather than the nine shorts proposed by the Talent Development Initiative.

Funding Outcomes

In July 1998, representatives of the three production groups were contacted by the researcher and asked about their funding decisions and their perceptions of the outcomes of the first round of the new funding regime. In terms of the length of short films actually funded, all of them were between ten to fifteen minutes in length and therefore the range in length of those short films funded remained the same as those in the previous Short Film Fund. MAP Films Ltd funded four short films, three between eight and fifteen minutes and a short funded from sources outside of the Film Commission. This film was seven minutes in length. At the time of enquiry Dorthe Scheffmann's group had funded one short at fifteen minutes long and were proposing to fund two others that were between eight and twelve minutes. Morrison, Grieve and Sheridan had funded three films between ten and fifteen minutes long.

Stewart McKenzie felt that the films his group funded were those that were strongest and he thought that this was so because of the expectations and experience of film makers established from the previous short film funding culture. He stated that the similar approaches were the result of a lag time between the two funding regimes and 'it would probably take one or two rounds for this previous culture to be discarded and for stronger longer films to be able to compete with these others' (McKenzie). Scheffmann felt motivated to fund films that could be viewed, 'they need to be of a length that can be screened' (Scheffmann) and her comment reflects the concerns that arise because of the marketing difficulties that might possibly develop with longer films. Scheffmann, in fact was seeking shorter films, five minutes or less in length, because she thought that this length not only had a market potential but was also ideal for show-casing. The Morrison, Grieve and Sheridan partnership did consider the possibility of funding a film longer than fifteen minutes, but this finally didn't get funded because the project lacked an experienced producer.

Sheridan thought that 'there wasn't the quality in the longer material and this was probably because of the lack of experience' (Sheridan). He also stated that any change would not be the result of simply waiting for it to happen, but that the funding groups themselves had to be proactive in changing the attitudes toward projects, so that shorter and longer projects would become serious contenders for funding. Unlike Scheffmann, he thought that the longer films could find a market, and that there was room to negotiate the lengths of projects at the marketing level.

The consensus of opinion from these representatives of the production groups was that entrenched attitudes from the previous funding model were strong and a more flexible attitude to the types of projects offered would take time. This attitude would need to be encouraged and promoted. Both Sheridan and McKenzie felt that marketing longer films would not be a major hurdle. For instance, agreeing with Sheridan, McKenzie felt that 'once the stronger films are produced at a longer length then there will be a greater flexibility in marketing possibilities and more flexible programmes will be developed to accommodate them' (McKenzie).

In terms of the overall effects of the new process, all of the representatives thought that there had been positive outcomes. For McKenzie, the process had enabled his group to 'advance films that reflected their own interests, namely films with a concern for everyday life, real voices expressing a depth of humanity' (McKenzie) and they had also been able to 'connect people who had not previously been involved with creative teams and this made the proactive approach the most important part of the whole process' (McKenzie).

Scheffmann also felt that this proactive engagement with film makers was a very important outcome. Given her group's policy of actively seeking projects from Maori, Polynesian and women film makers, she felt that they had achieved success because 'at least fifty percent of the projects came from Maori and Polynesian sources' (Scheffmann). Although they were not disposed to fund these projects Scheffmann felt that 'the good thing about the result was that they were beginning to develop a relationship with these people and this [for her] was the best bit of the scheme' (Scheffmann).

For Sheridan, the experience had been a positive one, although he felt that there had been difficulties because of the difference in attitudes between himself and his other partners. This was so, he thought, because they were coming from different film making contexts. He also realised, from the funding experience, the degree of embedded attitudes that there were within the short film making culture, and believed that a lot more energy would be required before a more flexible approach toward short films would become evident in the funding process.

Conclusions

A discussion of the response to policy initiatives concerning an increased desire for a more market oriented approach generated debate calling for increased industry involvement in funding decisions. An initial policy realignment, instigated by the Executive Director Ruth Harley, because of an alleged crisis in the film industry, displaced some stakeholder confidence and has initiated a change in alignments between funding policy and film makers. Amongst other developments this has resulted in the creation of a new funding agency for short film with the responsibility for talent development to be given to industry practitioners. This, in turn, has resulted in a new axis of power between funding groups and project applicants, resulting in new alignments, both formal and informal.

This chapter has outlined the objectives and criteria established for the new short film funding agency and has suggested that the significant changes have not been in the actual processes of script assessment and ancillary decisions about track record or budgetary levels, but have occurred because of the variety of options that the new structure offers through its diverse approaches. However, the flexibility of these options has not resulted in actual changes in the range of short films actually funded. It was considered by the funders that this was due to the embedded attitudes derived from the earlier funding regime established by the Short Film Fund.

A positive outcome of the new regime has been the development of more informal alignments that involve not only the successful applicants, but also many of those whose projects might not receive funding, but who have been introduced to networks within the industry. These contacts might lead to creative feedback, or even, in some cases, the possibility of employment on other projects within the industry. Also the production groups have suggested they are willing to develop creative teams around scripts that have been offered to the fund and this has loosened the previous producer led application criteria, encouraging writers who have no previous film writing experience, as well as film makers who do not have strong contacts within the film making community. The variety of options and the possibility of increased informality also offers easier access for those previously disenfranchised by the funding process and might be one solution to the perceptions of Barclay and Turei about the inherent cultural bias in the application strategies of the Screen Innovation Production Fund.

It was also suggested that a particular profile for short films was recognisable in some of the scripts offered to the new funding groups. The possibility of this resulting from the criteria of the previous regime, cultural disposition, or even film making strategies cannot be fully determined, but the catalogue of films that the new regime will produce over the next few years will offer a means of comparison. Representatives of the funding groups thought that this area required a more proactive approach if any changes were to be made in the future.

This new regime might not be ideal, but in terms of investment in potential feature film makers, it probably counters some of the problems caused by the constraints of the previous fund and their restriction to films of a marketable length. The changes in the funding regime, especially the loosening of criteria, in terms of the length of films, have also highlighted the problem of the role of the short film as a method of showcasing work. Drumm has pointed out the difficulties of marketing films over fifteen or sixteen minutes, and this implies that as the short films get longer, it becomes more difficult to gain exposure for them.

Developing a discursive framework to establish clearer alignments between the state and the Film Commission has become an important strategy, according to Ruth Harley. The tactic is to develop a clearer understanding of the role of government in funding culture and through this be able to convince those in political power of the need for a greater commitment to film. The need to increase funding has also resulted in a more market oriented strategy in terms of the types of films to be encouraged in

production. Responses to this by those disagreeing with this new market alignment have initiated a reassessment of the role of short film which in turn has created a new alignment between the Film Commission and industry. These changes have not necessarily influenced the types of short films that will be funded, but have highlighted the precariousness of short film production given the changed focus of the Film Commission. If shorts are not satisfactory in the role they have been given then the consequences might be that their funding will become even more constrained, or might one day cease.

Short film is situated in a vigorous and changing discursive environment in relation to its funding through the Film Commission. The changing focus of the Commission's approach due to the perceived lack of funding levels has its own effects on the role short film production plays. Changing the funding agency for short film has a number of consequences which in turn reflect on the viability of continued short film production. The outcome of the first round of this funding regime has shown that the range of short film actually funded has not changed and that the influence on the short film by the previous funding agency will take time to change and might need encouragement. The attitude toward the accessibility of longer films is mixed, with a perception that once quality longer films are available they will find a market. Shorts five minutes or less could also play an important role in the new funding regime, with these already having a market and having an important role on a director's show-reel.

This chapter has illustrated the multiple influences that have impinged on the realignment of the funding of short film in terms of the Film Commission and has focused on the changed axis of power between industry based funder groups and project applicants. The actual results of the changes invoked cannot be judged because of the need to allow for a transition from funding regimes. However, these changes have already indicated that they have introduced the opportunity for new alignments between fund applicants, funders and the industry, on both a formal and informal level, and it is these possibilities that have been seen as the most important consequence of the new regime.

CHAPTER NINE

The Funding of Short Film: Four Case Studies

Introduction

The last four chapters have outlined some of the more significant alignments involved in the contexts articulated by this research for the state funding of short film. Emphasis has been placed on state motivations for funding film; funding agency objectives and criteria; the dynamic relationship between funding agencies and film makers or stakeholders; the alignments of members of funding panels with application criteria; and the strategies involved in developing applications for funds and making decisions about these applications by members of the funding agencies. This chapter focuses on individual applicants and the alignments that occurred in the processes of funding their projects. It presents a profile of four film makers, two representing the context of the Screen Innovation Production Fund and two from the Short Film Fund. These individuals, in turn, represent applicants who have been successful in their attempts to raise financial support from these funding agencies as well as those who have been unsuccessful.

The chapter is divided into two areas. The first is a focus on the application document and the second a consideration of the film maker's motivations to invest in short film projects. The application documents used by the two film makers applying for Creative New Zealand funds are a focus for the first part of this chapter. This discussion outlines some of the strategies that have been invoked to establish alignment with the funding panel. The application documents are contrasted to suggest why one was successful and why the other did not attract support. Comments by one of the members on the funding panel that decided on the merits of the two projects, are also included and these offer another perspective on the application process. This chapter also examines the outcomes of the funding process for these two applications describing what the applicants' hope for their projects and their own future prospects as film makers.

A different emphasis is placed on the two applicants involved in the Short Film Fund with the research focus foregrounding the motivations for the projects. This specific focus provides an opportunity to consider the perceptions two film makers have of their practice of short film making and the reasons why they consider this practice important for their roles as film makers. It describes the application of funding for short film projects in terms of the creative, experiential and career motivations of film

makers who aspire to feature film. It establishes the multidetermining motivations of these film makers and establishes the fact that they make their films not only for creative reasons and to increase their level of skills, but also as a means of career advancement. The short film funding regimes, especially those initiated by the Film Commission have attempted to cater for all three of these interlocking desires, but it is shown in this chapter that there is a tension between the desire for creative experience and the desire for career development.

The intention of the chapter is not to establish a taxonomic framework by which all projects for funding can be categorised, but to articulate the perceptions of creative and funding strategies behind particular projects. But this is possibly a first step towards developing a taxonomy of project applications. There is still a lot of research to be done in this area, especially considering the fact that in the yearly round of funding for the Talent Development Initiative, for instance, only nine or ten films will be funded out of a total of well over one hundred scripts submitted to each funding group. Analysing this gamut of scripts would be a useful adjunct to this research, but problems of time and access make any current commitment to this work impossible.

The research for this chapter involved two intensive open interviews with each of the four film makers concerned, as well as access to the script and other application documents. Andrew Bancroft's film *Planetman* was the only film completed at the time of research, while Lisa Perrott's film *Scope* remains at the editing stage. Completion of the other two projects remains possible considering the optimism of the respective film makers.

The Analysis of Funding Application Documents for the Screen Innovation Production Fund

Case Study One: Lisa Perrott

A. The Background of the Project

Lisa Perrott was a successful applicant for funding through the Screen Innovation Production Fund, with her animation project *Scope*. It is the first film she has had funded by Creative New Zealand, but she has made other self funded films (*Highly Strung*, about the constraints of physical inhibitions, *Cage*, about a young boy dealing with his mother's death, and *Kamaea's Grapevine*, a documentary about a child accepting growing up in a single parent family).

Perrott has an extensive formal education in film, having completed a Bachelor of Media Arts at Waikato Polytechnic in 1996 and in 1998 will complete a Master of Arts degree, majoring in film, through the Film and Television Studies Department of the Waikato University. According to Perrott, she had aspirations to work in the film industry at a commercial level, but these have waned and her motivation is currently to make more experimental films and continue her academic studies.

"Experimental" for Perrott means that each project is

[something] that is a personal statement - rather than something that is made for an audience. I am making it for myself. The audience is important but I prefer to make things which come from within myself. I don't like the idea of making something to a formula so everyone will like it. I don't actively consider the audience but I want the audience to be emotionally involved and affected by my work. I hope some people will make the connection ... A lot of my work is autobiographical. It's like a healing thing - dealing with your own stuff and being creative about it (Perrott).

Perrott's statements about her creative motivations complement the attitudes of other film makers already mentioned in previous chapters. She disregards a determining market oriented strategy, thinking of her work as an expression of aspects of her inner self, a therapeutic process which she hopes might involve her audience.

While Perrott is interested in the personal, she is also interested in working collaboratively with others, and part of her motivation for making films is this desire to experience the balance between the personal and the collaborative. For instance, she describes this experience in one of her projects:

In *Cage* I had to get fifteen people together and had to somehow get my abstract idea across. I chose people who I had worked with in the past. This opened me up to other peoples' ideas. They helped me define the script, for instance, and this collaborative part was very exciting. It is a delicate thing though because it can go so wrong. I find it difficult to trust that people will come up with the same emotional intensity that I want (Perrott).

The motivation for *Scope* came from a desire to continue her own development in film, using it to 'learn about processes and in the end to be reasonably competent as an

animator' (Perrott). She is not interested in progressing onto feature film projects but would like the film to connect her with other animators who work in similar lines. The fact that she doesn't want to make feature films seems to belie the strong aspirations of many short film makers who have a desire, however unrealistic they think its realisation, that they would eventually like to be involved in making features. Perrott's attitude might reflect that she believes her films are more closely aligned with "art" practices, they are personal and are motivated from an inner self, rather than commercial entertainment potential.

Perrott also believes that she is motivated by certain themes and an interest in a particular style of film making, which, she thinks, occurs in all her work:

I think there is a distinctive emotive tone and a surreal style. I don't really do comedy. There is a sense of a tormented soul searching child. In the first film [*Highly Strung*] there was a positive emotion - a freedom from inhibition. In the second [*Cage*] it was more grief, with a young boy trapped in his own grief, but at the end again there was a sense of freedom when he let go of it. In the third one [*Scope*] there is a sense of entrapment with the humans in the zoo and then a final rebellion (Perrott).

B. Synopsis of *Scope*

Scope is a sixteen millimetre animated film, approximately nine minutes long. It features a small girl who discovers a toy zoo in a large wooden box and places the plastic humans she finds there into the zoo cages. She also finds a windup creature which she places in a room at the top of an observation tower. This creature, described by Perrott as a "dictator", turns a switch lighting the zoo, bolting the cage doors, animating the humans, and causing a train carriage to deliver food to the caged humans. He observes the feeding process through a telescope. A woman refuses the meat offered her, and this meat turns into a rat and repeatedly bites her foot. She retreats further back into her cage. A steel ball is fired from the observation tower. A child touches it and the ball turns into a uni-wheeled bike which the child attempts to ride. The dictator swings his telescope back to the woman, who tries to force the lock on the cage, but another steel ball is fired and turns into a musical instrument. The woman blows a note, and then another of higher frequency, inciting the other caged humans to react to this sound. The dictator panics and is knocked over by his telescope. He sees a magnified human eye looking at him and in fear switches off the power for the zoo. Lights go out, the woman climbs to the top of the tower and the lid

of the box containing the zoo shuts. The woman turns on the switch as the small girl who had discovered the zoo pushes the box under some junk.

To venture an analysis, this film seems to convey an interest in the structures of gender power, in which a dictator, representing male privilege controls others, particularly women and children. The female protagonist challenges this structure when it is threatened by an outside force, represented by the child's eye. The child also suggests a transcendent power who structures the relationships in the zoo. In relation to Perrott's own thematic concerns and given that she believes her films are a form of therapy for her, it is probably an expression of her own position in relation to patriarchal constraints and reiterates previous interest in the motif of constraint and escape that occurs in her earlier films. The god-like figure of the child adds another dimension to considerations of power, constraint and escape, and conveys the vulnerability both men and women have in their attempts to survive. The motif of the child continues Perrott's own preoccupation with the issues of power surrounding children.

C. Perceived Outcomes of the Project

When Perrott was asked how useful the film was in relation to her career as a film maker, she replied that it had a number of profitable outcomes in terms of experience and possible outcomes in terms of her future aspirations. One of these was that she wanted to continue making films and extend her experience, and she hoped she could use the film to obtain more funds for another project. She also believed that as there had been difficulties with the collaborative relationships on the film, she was more aware of being careful about choosing her creative team and this experience had made her 'become more able to pick the people she could work with' (Perrott). Perrott's negative experiences on this project had dampened her enthusiasm, but she did want to make more films. 'I will try and be a little more realistic about what I can achieve. Be more simple with the script and probably work with fewer people' (Perrott). Another aspect that was important for Perrott was that the project also assisted the other members of the production team, although sometimes their agenda was not necessarily hers:

Everyone had their own agendas, but some were really helpful and I didn't think others were. The camera operator is involved in lots of short films and works her butt off. She wants to be a director of photography and is really good and I think she genuinely had her heart in the project. The art director was using the whole project to put on her show reel,

which is justified, but I didn't feel that my own creative role was considered by her at all. The editor doesn't need to do this work, but she likes being involved in short film. I have learnt a lot from her (Perrott).

This statement expresses similar motivations that other film makers and funders perceive as important for short film making practice. The short film becomes important as a vehicle for show-casing and different members of the creative team use the work as a means of developing their formal and informal alignments. As Perrott suggests this pressure can itself cause problems in the creative processes of a project, especially if the desire to enhance personal kudos is stronger than the alignments required for creative collaboration.

D. Analysis of the Funding Application Document

Perrott's application document consisted of an extensive justification of her motivations for the project and included a crew list pointing out the substantial previous experience of those people she had nominated to assist her. This list contained individuals who have a respectable professional track record and have been associated with high profile commercial productions. Perrott's application also outlined the themes of the film. According to her there were a number of thematic concerns all considering aspects of power. They included

the absurdity of power playing within social systems; the power of observation and behaviour modification; the effects of oppression on revolution; the disruption of the ordered institution; the insanity of the concept of the zoo; the restraints of a social system and the idea that total freedom is a false hope; the power of divine creation; and the belief of divine existence (Perrott).

She also mentions her creative and conceptual influences, including well respected European film makers and a contemporary French historian philosopher. Perrott cites the film *Street of Crocodiles*, by the Brothers Quay, and Jan Svankmajer's animated films, especially those collected under the title *Dimensions of Dialogue*. According to Perrott the dreamlike quality of the Quay Brothers' films are an inspiration for her, while Svankmajer's themes and multi-layered style have also had a strong influence. Foucault is Perrott's source for the idea of surveillance, especially his idea of the panopticon and the fact that prisoners must assume they are always under observation.

The document continues with a consideration of style and form. Perrott states that she chose animation because it was easier to see the absurdities of human behaviour through inanimate objects. She briefly discusses camera angles, camera movement, lighting and her choice of the colour range, citing *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, *Metropolis*, *Delicatessen*, and *City of the Lost Children* as sources of inspiration. Further aspects of film making such as set design, editing style and sound are also included in this section of the document.

These statements situate her work both within the film making traditions of a European "art-house" practice and within a strong European intellectual tradition. They are strategic in the sense that they indicate Perrott has an intellectual understanding and knowledge of a range of film practices and her knowledge places her within a respectable tradition giving her own practice greater kudos.

A consideration of the audience experience is also included in the application, with an emphasis on the fact that audience identification is designed to be on both an emotional as well as thematic level. Perrott's strategy here is to justify international accessibility because of the lack of dialogue and what she believes are her use of universal themes. Her pitch for market orientation is directed at a relationship with an international audience on the level of an emotional connection.

[The film] will be universally legible, as the underlying themes are universally significant. There is no need for dialogue. Meaning will create itself through emotional response. The viewer will experience the film (Perrott).

In conjunction with developing possible audience profiles, marketing is another consideration in her application document. Perrott claims her film would have 'an international appeal, particularly in European countries, where there seems to be a prolific interest in experimental and animated film, and where the political climate is in a state of flux' (Perrott). She also believes that it would appeal to New Zealand audiences because of the 'innovative combination of animation styles and the experimental treatment of a well structured narrative' (Perrott). Although Perrott has stated previously that she doesn't consider a market when she conceives of her ideas, here she has been very strategic and covered her bases when it comes to convincing the funding assessors of the marketability of her work. It is marketable because it appeals to both international and local audiences.

Another section of this document discusses the structure of the film, the idea of conflict, and then the motivation of characters and the changing relationship between these main protagonists. It continues with the setting, a 'medieval toy set, a totally constructed world, magical, fantastical, gothic' (Perrott), the tone, which is 'dark introspective, cynical, but also entertaining and poetic' (Perrott), and the treatment, which Perrott states is theatrical 'like the characters are playing out some kind of twisted play or game' (Perrott). A detailed screen treatment is also included.

Accompanying this document is an outline of the budget and a supporting letter from Brett Nichols, a short film maker, as consultant, justifying reasons why the Screen Innovation Production Fund should support Perrott's application. It states that she has a significant track record with strong and innovative work and this new project 'would provide Lisa with the opportunity and challenge to satisfy her original creative vision' (Nichols 1997).

It is a strategic ploy on the part of Perrott to include Brett Nichols as consultant. This consultancy component is an aspect included by Creative New Zealand for inexperienced applicants. Perrott includes the letter, acknowledging the contribution of a consultant, to repress any doubts by the funding panel that she does not have sufficient experience for the project. Her own track record and those of her creative team suggest otherwise.

In terms of the criteria for selection, the application stresses that the project is innovative, that Perrott has a strong track record and includes a viable budget. It therefore fulfils all of the selection criteria outlined in the current Screen Innovation Production Fund document described in Chapter Six. Further strategies Perrott employs are the inclusion of a creative team who are well experienced and associated with a variety of commercial projects, consideration of market potential, a detailed analysis of creative intentions and techniques, supported by respected, exemplary European art films, and reference to the intellectual ideas of Michel Foucault.

It has already been stated in Chapter Six that Perrott presented the application document strategically in that she considered the need for a creative team with a respected track record, that she thought she had to emphasise the innovative nature of the project, and to communicate the nature of the project in an effective manner. The ability to do the latter she thinks, was an important aid in achieving success for her application.

I also talked to someone at Creative New Zealand and she said that I had to convey the idea well and that many people couldn't do this. I had to write in words how the viewer would experience it. I felt I was lucky enough to be articulate and could write in a way they could understand (Perrott).

E. Comments on Perrott's Application by Roger Horrocks, Member of the Screen Innovation Production Fund

According to Horrocks, funding decisions are made on the basis of many factors and Perrott's application fulfilled a number of these. He thought Perrott was 'at the right stage in her development for such a project. On the basis of her previous experience she was ready for a challenging project of this kind' (Horrocks 1998).

Another factor for Horrocks was that the idea of the film was unusual and was 'the sort of project no-one else but Creative New Zealand would fund' (1998). However, one of the questions that the panel had to answer was whether or not Perrott could actually achieve the project. This was approached in two directions by asking the questions - could the film be achieved on a practical level because of its complexity? And did the team have enough experience to make the film? According to Horrocks, it is these sorts of questions which require extensive discussion 'especially by the film makers on the panel who understand the practical challenges involved' (1998).

Also, according to Horrocks, a positive aspect about the application was that Perrott indicated she had thought about her project:

The film had a bit of intellectual energy (Foucault etc.). [Perrott] had looked at a range of relevant stuff (Brothers Quay etc.). This would have helped us at least to understand where she was coming from and what sort of film she wanted to make. We wouldn't give brownie points just because she was referring to a trendy theorist, but this information did suggest that she had done some useful thinking about her project (1998).

Budget was another important consideration. According to Horrocks, he and other panel members, 'had seen all sorts of disasters occur with film going over budget, so you don't fund a project unless you think the film makers know what they are doing' (1998).

Another important influence was the final mix of projects that the panel wanted to fund, considering all of the applications offered:

All the other applications would be discussed, and various short lists would be considered. Perrott's project made the "final cut". This final stage takes quite a lot of time - short listing projects, looking to see what sort of final mix of projects we end up with. We wanted some variety in the final selection - different types of project, not all the same genre (1998).

A final question, according to Horrocks, was whether Perrott's film added 'something to the range of current New Zealand films' (1998).

These considerations were instrumental in the final decision to fund Perrott's film and her application document was an important element in her success. The document itself was not the only determining factor, for Perrott did have the experience, a strong team, a feasible budget and an unusual film, and was fortunate that her film could be accommodated in the final package of films that were funded. Perrott's strategic approach to her application could only have helped her project "stand out" amongst the many others that were also vying for subsidy. She developed a strategic approach to her application after consulting with others already experienced in the context of the funding regime. Her proposal was deemed suitable for the fund to support and her team was considered able to carry out what was required within budget. Her previous experience also assisted her kudos in relation to short film and her suitability to be supported in another project. Further, the project itself was considered a way to enhance New Zealand's film culture. All of these elements helped to influence the final funding decision and the acknowledgement of these various considerations illustrates the multiple strands that influence that decision. It also illustrates some of the reasons⁶⁰ why it is impossible to develop a prescriptive application strategy that would guarantee selection for funding support.

⁶⁰ See also Chapter Six for other reasons that make any predictions impossible for this funding process.

Case Study Two: Stephen Lightburn

A. The Background of the Project

Stephen Lightburn was an unsuccessful applicant through the Screen Innovation Production Fund for his project *Retro*. Lightburn has not been funded by Creative New Zealand previously, but does have an extensive list of film making credits including director, editor, director of photography and sound operator. He has had commercial experience, working as a sound operator for Television New Zealand and as a trainee editor, camera operator and graphics designer for Vid Pro Film and Television Production. His list of credits include numerous music television videos as well as an experimental documentary *Te Ra* (!997), and experimental shorts such as *Icon* (1996), *Function* (1996), *Staunch the Bleak Flow* (1993), *In the Dark* (1994), and *I Contact* (1994).

Lightburn has an Audio and Video Certificate from Northland Polytechnic and a Bachelor of Arts in Film and Television Studies from Waikato University.

B. Synopsis of *Retro*

Visard, a member of SAB⁶¹, is knocked unconscious by Enforcers while apprehending Mark Fore, who is attempting to escape these enforcers. Rapture (22), Dirk (30), Silver (20) and Oko (26) attempt to rescue Visard from the Enforcer's bureau building while Visard is being interrogated. The interrogator implies that Visard is not male. After the successful rescue Oko hugs Visard and then comments that he doesn't suit his face. Visard transforms into a woman. All the characters "teleport" to the next location and the words "Next level in five minutes" appear on the screen. An icon appears asking if the game should be saved and the credits roll.

Implicit in this project is a repetition of a typical action thriller plot, with the hero caught and then freed by a band of intrepid compatriots. The transformation of the hero into a woman is probably a strategic ploy to counter the accusations of a "boys own" indulgence with the male hero typical of this genre. An interesting aspect of the film however, is the framing of the action as a computer game and suggests innovative possibilities for the narrative in terms of the form of the computer game. Lightburn suggests some of these possibilities in his own conception of the project:

⁶¹ There is no indication what this acronym might stand for.

I want to follow the game format and think of this project like a video game. The action occurs on one level and it could be repeated with different characters. [We could] bring in texts, bring in the idea of a failed game. Play with the game mentality, attitudes and strategies. I get my inspiration from these computer games rather than literature (Lightburn).

The script itself does not suggest anything that could be considered innovative or experimental, but the creative impulse behind this script does offer possibilities for innovation.

C. Perceived Outcomes of the Project

Lightburn's motivations for this project stem from a perception of market potential, a desire for a creditable calling card, and a desire to provide film making experience and kudos for his creative partners. He thought that science fiction enthusiasts were a market that had not been targeted in New Zealand short film and also thought that if he could make this film, it would put him and his creative team "on the map". At the same time, Lightburn also believed that to achieve funding for this project was going to be difficult, because

there was an actual backlash to science fiction, especially from women. People who were involved with funding who came to talk to us at university were saying forget serial killer, gangster movies, science fiction stuff, that kind of thing, because it's just saturated. But there is a market, people want to see it (Lightburn).

Lightburn was also motivated to apply for funds as a method of learning about the funding procedure:

If I don't get funds it's not going to stop me making films. I'm learning the strategies to help get funds, knowing the bureaucracy, the bull shit, the red tape, that you have to go through (Lightburn).

Implicit in this learning process was a scepticism about the tactics involved in application and a perception that the application document itself needed some creative manipulation:

You can't be totally honest with them. You amplify what you do. We don't belong to a scene. We can't drop too many names. We have produced plenty of material but not at a commercial level. We have an artistic resume but not at a festival level. We have made our projects bigger than what they seem (Lightburn).

Lightburn is suggesting with these comments that he was clearly aware of what he perceived to be the necessity of a strategic approach to his funding application. He also was candid enough to acknowledge that he did not know enough about these strategies and part of the application process was to gain experience for future applications. He also felt vulnerable because of his own perception of the marginalised nature of his practices in relation to the screen industry and funding institutions. In other words he had not developed strong alignments in these contexts. This prompted him to enhance his statements in the application form although he and his creative supporters had developed a significant body of work.

D. Analysis of the Funding Application Document

Lightburn's application document contains the script of the film, set out in standard script layout and presentation as required by drama applicants for the Screen Innovation Production Fund. It also includes the standard application form sent to applicants for this fund. In this Lightburn is asked to justify why his film complies with the arts development objective.⁶² This he does by describing the project as

a short innovative film project that combines the talents and aspirations of a hard working and dedicated group of Auckland and Hamilton artists ... The script itself is intended to be an exploration within visual realms of virtual reality as opposed to a style that is more narrative in form. [The film is] set in the confines of New Zealand's last remaining gothic metropolis, Uklan, where life is cheap and air is expensive (Lightburn).

This description does not give a concise indication of why the project does accord with the arts development objective, and reads more like a pitch for the film. There is no statement of why the film is innovative, except for a suggestion that it is an exploration in image rather than narrative. It does not state why it would be a useful vehicle for supporting a creative team, although an attempt to suggest this is made in the statement of objectives. Where Lightburn considers the project to be

⁶² See Chapter Six.

the perfect vehicle to gain experience as individuals while developing interactive working relationships within the boundaries of a limited budget. It fills a hole in the New Zealand short film "art-house action genre" and the project also helps foster an educational and supportive environment for the artists involved (Lightburn).

This statement of objectives illustrates Lightburn's inflated rhetoric in his pitch for project funding. Implicit in this statement is an expectation he has about the funding agency and its priorities, and this is reflected in the fact that he believes funding projects are given favour if they fulfil an "art-house" category. He situates his own work within this category, while at the same time creating a niche for it and implying market potential. The project is "art-house" therefore it will be attractive for funders and it is "action art-house" which implies it will fill a niche marketing slot within the range of New Zealand short film.

The application also contains a letter of support from Julian McCarthy, a lecturer in Video Production at the University of Waikato and a crew list outlining the roles of those involved in the creative team. Lightburn lists himself as producer, director, writer, editor and camera operator and this gives the impression that the responsibility for roles is very top heavy. A further eight people are also nominated as part of the production team fulfilling roles such as associate producer, sound, director of photography, prop design, sound effects, production assistant and accountant. Attached to the application document are curriculum vitae of participants.

Lightburn admits that he has been "strategic" about the nature of his previous projects, dressing them up and enhancing their significance. He has done this because he feels that although he and his associates have had a lot of experience, this has not been at a respected festival or commercial level, and therefore would probably not hold as much kudos with the funding panel. This also is reflected in his creative team, who again have been involved in other film projects, but are not associated with commercial projects. This contrasts with Perrott's application, which is backed by a convincing alignment of experienced creative personnel, the inclusion of which she believes was an important strategic consideration, even if these people did not finally become involved in the project.

Unlike Perrott, Lightburn restricts himself to filling in the application form, and although discussing his objectives, does not include any material on his creative intentions and techniques, and how he is going to achieve his proposal with a limited

budget. This is particularly significant in respect to his concept of the game format, and the innovative possibilities open to him in terms of a different approach to his genre piece. The lack of discussion about his conception of the format of the project, and the way it might operate, negates any sense that his project is at all innovative. The impression given by his script is that the work is derivative, reflecting at best a sequence of an action film set in a science fiction context. The lack of discussion about the proposed special effects and props, especially in terms of budget, would also encourage any funder to think that this project is underfunded and would require considerably more than the eight thousand dollars requested. Finally Lightburn does not include a market profile in his application, despite the fact that this is one of the motivating aspects for the project.

E. Comments on Lightburn's Application by Roger Horrocks

Horrocks agrees that Lightburn's application isn't the most convincing, but he does have a lot of sympathy for the application because of the fact that Lightburn and his collaborators have made projects on their own initiative. However, the greater competition for funding has negatively affected Lightburn's application.

In the early days of the fund (as I remember it) he would probably have got funded, because he had shown a lot of initiative and had gained quite a few technical skills. There were fewer applications then - today he must compete with a huge number (Horrocks 1998).

Horrocks believes that rejecting this application is not to say the project wasn't worth making, but that it simply didn't make the final cut, because of the intense competition from other applications. According to Horrocks, however, the application did have its failings:

I think the weakest aspect of [Lightburn's application] was clearly the script. It doesn't show any clear "innovation". It seemed to be put together from formulaic ingredients (from video games and second-rate science fiction) ... The panel had no objection to science fiction as such ... but it didn't feel that this script stood out ... Lightburn could get funded but I think he needs a more distinctive script, a few more surprises, ideas, striking details (Horrocks 1998).

Another element that might have enhanced Lightburn's chances was the supportive visual material he supplied and the impressions gained by the panel from this work.

Lightburn did supply a show reel of his previous work and according to Horrocks, 'if he'd submitted a video that was a knockout, then his application would have been taken very seriously indeed' (Horrocks 1998).

Comparison of the Two Application Documents

The comparison between Lisa Perrott's successful application and Stephen Lightburn's unsuccessful application suggests that there were a number of factors that could be attributed to success and failure of these applications. Whether or not either scripts could be regarded as experimental or innovative is a matter of opinion. Experimentation for Perrott relates to personal film making, and her theme of constraint and escape, reflects a continued interest in her expression of this idea. Lightburn's project derived from television cartoon series such as *Thunderbirds* as well as computer games such as *Doom* and the innovative possibilities produced with the intersection of these two genres was not mentioned in his funding application. The concept of the computer game as a framing device for the narrative could have strong innovative possibilities in alternative options he might use to construct his narrative.

The kudos of Perrott's production team overshadows that of Lightburn's own team, but this lack of commercial accreditation cannot negate the considerable experience that Lightburn and associates have also managed to accrue. Perrott's ability to describe her project in both creative and technical levels also overshadows Lightburn's lack of support information and probably reflects his limited access to advice on the application procedure. Perrott had access to experienced members of the School of Communication and Design at Waikato Polytechnic. Associated with this is Perrott's assured and articulate communication of the ideas in her application contrasting with Lightburn's own rhetoric, which sometimes becomes a little exaggerated as he attempts to "talk up" his own application objectives.

The content of the scripts is probably another element that would support Perrott's application and undermine Lightburn. Lightburn believes that the nature of his project might work against a positive funding outcome although this is refuted by Horrocks.

The comparison of these two applications implies that there are certain strategic approaches which might assist in a positive outcome. The potential to attract a positive funding decision is, at least in part, reliant on an application which does align itself to the attitudes of those deciding on the applications. Both projects have potential, and Lightburn's project could have considerable innovative possibilities, but the way he has approached the application and the fact that none of this potential has

been suggested in the application document, nor in the script, makes the reasons for his failure to get funds, in terms of the criteria of the funding agency, obvious enough.

Horrock's comments on these two applications are also very helpful in terms of suggesting the alignments between funders and applicants. Perrott was perceived by the panel as being at the right time in her career to be supported by the fund. She offered a project that was challenging, well supported by the creative team, had a realistic budget and was perceived to be adding to the range of New Zealand films, and therefore, contribute to New Zealand film culture. Perrott was also fortunate to have a project that fitted into the mix of other projects that were thought by the panel to offer a suitable range of different types of work. Horrocks implied a sympathy for Lightburn's application, because of the applicant's previous film making initiatives, but acknowledged the failing of the script to convince the panel of any innovative or experimental edge, and was therefore uncompetitive amongst the other applications.

This analysis reiterates the fact that there is not one determining factor in application success and decisions are determined by a mix of factors, and made by a panel of three people, each with their own perspectives. Final decisions require a consensus and collective agreement. The projects finally selected are also determined by what the panel considers an appropriate mix of projects to be funded at any one funding round and it is therefore possible that a project isn't selected because it doesn't contribute to the profile of this final package.

The Motivations for Making Shorts Funded by the Short Film Fund

The next two case studies focus on the motivations for submitting each project and consider how these motivations are influenced by creative intention as well as the career aspirations of the film makers. Andrew Bancroft's *Planet Man* won the critics' prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1996, and represents a successful Short Film Fund film, with a profile similar to that described by Morrison, Sheridan and Pardington in Chapter Eight. Keith Hill's film is a romantic comedy which breaks the constraint on length imposed by marketing requirements and is an example of the new scripts thought possible for the Talent Development Initiative.

Case Study Three: Andrew Bancroft

A. Background of the Project

In 1996 Andrew Bancroft was a successful applicant through the Short Film Fund for his film *Planet Man*. It was the second project in which he had been involved in state sponsored funding agencies. The first, *Made Man*, was assisted by the Creative Film and Video Fund. Bancroft has also recently successfully applied for funding through the Screen Innovation Production Fund for another project *Funded*. He has therefore established a respectable track record within the funding agencies.

Bancroft began his career in the theatre and in 1986 was involved in a film production course in Christchurch.⁶³ He also worked for a year as a film editor in Auckland returning to study film and literary theory at the University of Canterbury. He has taught at the Waikato Polytechnic in the School of Communication and Design. Now back in Auckland he has been directing in the theatre, has also directed solo comedy performances, made educational videos, and is writing projects for film and television.

B. Synopsis of *Planet Man*

The male protagonist wakes up to discover all of the women in the world have disappeared. The males keep behaving as though nothing has happened, but as time passes this changes. A semi-naked boy runs up to the male protagonist asking if he, the boy, is a woman. Another man demands his "girl" back and wants him to put a wedding dress back on. The male protagonist is worried he will also succumb to desires for another man. He is attacked and overpowered by a woman who demands his clothes, which she puts on. The man attacks and overwhelms the woman. She pulls a gun from her panties and shoots the male, saying to him, that if it was any consolation "he was her first". He falls into a swimming pool and the image repeats the opening sequence of a naked man lying face down in the swimming pool.

To venture analysis, this film seems to focus on a perceived male need for sexual relationships with women and has a dominant male heterosexual orientation. This sex drive is so strong that if the desire isn't fulfilled with a female it is projected onto other males. It is implied in this film that to desire these surrogate sexual partners is anathema and suggests a paranoid male heterosexual perspective. At the same time,

⁶³ This is now called the Film Production Training School.

the female role suggests women take power by usurping a male position, symbolised by the "phallic" gun. The film suggests an interest in the power of the female, both as a sexual object and as a controlling subject. This theme continues from Bancroft's earlier film *Made Man*, which created a situation reversing the conventional and stereotypical roles of male and female. The opening and closing sequences of Bancroft's film are reminiscent of the opening and closing sequences of the noir film *Sunset Boulevard* where a male also lies prone in a swimming pool with a voice-over narrating how the drowned figure has come to this predicament.

C. Bancroft's Motivations for Making *Planet Man*

Bancroft articulates his various motivations for *Planet Man* in terms of an interest in thematic and contemporary cinematic ideas, an exploration of a certain editing style, a calling card for future feature projects, and as an opportunity to maintain working relationships with a creative production team. He recognises the importance of short film making in relation to his career, although he does not believe that short films necessarily offer appropriate experience for feature film production:

My intention is to make feature films, so short film is most importantly a means to that end. However, I do believe that short films are fundamentally different to feature films. I don't believe they are the best means of learning about feature film but the way the industry is structured the conventional wisdom is that short films led to feature films. I need to focus on short films because it is a very good calling card (Bancroft).

This project was also a reaction to his previous film *Made Man* and in this new project he wants to make the film a lot visually stronger. He was sensitive to a younger audience, whose sophisticated cinematic expectations allowed directors to appropriate and combine different genres and this perspective implies a conscious market awareness for his film:

I wanted to make something that was more concept and visually driven [than *Made Man*]. That's the form, that's my understanding of short film form, that's what it does best. I also wanted to experiment with a combination of genres. My feeling is that there is a post-modern literacy out there in which genre literacy is so great, certainly amongst the younger cinema going audience, that a combination of genres is interesting, something like science fiction and film noir (Bancroft).

In terms of cinematic technique Bancroft also wanted to

explore a style of film making that was cut driven. [A style] that was moving the narrative forward purely in terms of the cut. The amount of information that is occurring in each shot is actually quite minimal. It is driven by the cut. I wanted to explore editing in that way (Bancroft).

Bancroft's motivation for *Planet Man* was in part a positive reaction to work by contemporary New Zealand female directors. This interest was also associated thematically with his earlier film *Made Man* which concerned a switch in stereotypical gender roles, with the female as active and dominating, while the male gives birth to the couple's child:

I had this idea of making a film for men. This is one of the places it started. There was Jane Campion, Niki Caro and Alison Maclean who all made films for women. They were concerned with women's experience and they were terrific films. And they gave to me extraordinary insight into that experience (Bancroft).

Bancroft was inspired to explore a male subjective experience, but not what he considered to be the heroic "boys own" Hollywood male stereotype, but one that he could relate to in terms of his own experience. 'What it is to be the kind of male that I am and my friends are' (Bancroft). The scenario he created was a result of removing all the women from his imaginary world. This led to developing a film noir style, as he considered this appropriate for the thematic ideas:

Film noir is a very masculine form - there are no women, there are only archetypes of women. There are archetypes of men too, but much more archetypes of women. Then I began to study film noir intensely and the thematic concerns there ... That style of film making suits the sense of shifting identities very well. [Especially] the moral complexity you find in film noir. The inability to clarify what is right and wrong. There are no clear markers to form a sense of identity. I wanted to put a character in that situation (Bancroft).

To achieve this he introduced a male character who would initially be sympathetic in relation to audience identification, but would then become ambiguous in relation to

the audience's sympathies. The character would be 'both victim and perpetrator, damned and redeemed at every stage' (Bancroft).

In *Planet Man* he develops a radical scenario designed to consider the dilemmas of men in a world without women. This theme of masculine crisis is visualised in a film noir a style of film making Bancroft considers ideal for his film. Bancroft also thinks that the short film form is conducive to an emphasis on visual style. The short form, according to Bancroft, is predominantly a visual medium rather than a dramatic one, because, he believes, the relationship between character and audience cannot be sustained long enough for any significant character development. Therefore although Bancroft's creative interests aspire to the dramatic, and to make features, he has abandoned this focus to concentrate on visual style. Alongside this, Bancroft was interested in exploring a technique of editing which could be applicable to either short or long form. He was also interested in maintaining a working relationship with the team he worked with in his previous film and felt that his responsibility in this area was to 'continue to get funding and therefore offer an opportunity to work on another project' (Bancroft).

Bancroft's motivations for this project are various, determined by a number of interests. He wants to make features, and believes under the funding regime⁶⁴ success in short film was a stepping stone to feature projects. The short he believes makes an excellent calling card, and his success at Cannes has given him a considerable career boost. He uses the short film form strategically in terms of his career to obtain kudos for future projects, but he also approaches it strategically in terms of his creativity, focusing on what he believes to be the strengths of the short film form. Further he is responding to other New Zealand films he has seen and is motivated to engage with a male perspective on gender issues that has been catalysed by these films. At the same time however, he suggests that the short film also offers an opportunity to play with cinematic techniques that might be useful when he finally does achieve his feature film aspirations. Bancroft suggests that short film making offers a number of opportunities for both his development in the film industry and his development as a creative film maker.

⁶⁴ The Short Film Fund has now been replaced by the Talent Development Initiative.

Case Study Four: Keith Hill

A. Background of the Project

Keith Hill was an unsuccessful applicant for the Short Film Fund round of funding in 1996 and 1997. His application, was for a film called *Ice*,⁶⁵ which was initially a twelve minute short and after it was turned down he resubmitted it in 1997 as a fifty minute project. This was also turned down.

Hill has had extensive experience in film making and associated creative activities. Currently he is the Programme Leader for Moving Image at the School of Communication and Design, Waikato Polytechnic. In 1996 he was a visiting lecturer for film at the School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury. Between 1993-95, he was the founding director of the Moving Image Centre, as well as a freelance editor for short films. The films he has directed include *And That is Cinema* and *A Way Less Travelled* (1996), *The Good Neighbour* (1995), *Pesky Digits: The Music of Gitbox Rebellion* (1990), *Where Fairburn Walked* (1988), *The Story of an Uneasy Man* (1987), *Ten Frames* (1985), *Days and Nights*, *Witchcraft* and *Guilt* (1984) and *War, Martyr, Martyr*, and *The Dreamers* (1983), and he has been involved in many other projects as either editor or director of photography. Hill has also published his first novel, *Blue Kisses*, which is set in contemporary Auckland.

B. Synopsis of *Ice*

Spike is released from jail and is seduced by Joanne who is staying with Emma, a friend of her mother. Joanne manipulates Spike with her games. She also claims that her mother's lover Roger has tried to seduce her. The mix of relationships intrigues Spike, who reads Joanne's diary, discovering Emma is involved in sexual bondage. Emma is worried about Joanne, asks Spike if he will help her reunite Joanne with Joanne's mother. This occurs at the climax of the film, with revelations of the "truth", and Spike discovering just how much he has been changed by his experience with these women as he puts on women's clothes, acting out this subterfuge as part of the finale.

This is a film about gender relationships and the effects these have on the male protagonist. The male is introduced to an intriguing and seductive world of women, which is epitomised by game playing and kinky sex. His identification with his

⁶⁵*Ice* has now been renamed *Pick Up*.

female counterparts draws him into further intrigue as part of a plan to entrap another male who is to be punished because of his indiscretions. As part of his transformation, the male protagonist identifies with female power, and this is suggested by his cross-dressing and his association with the women's revenge at the climax of the film.

C. Hill's Motivations for Making *Ice*

According to Hill, *Ice* is 'a comedy which takes a playful look at relationships, sexual attraction and game-playing' (Hill). This interest in dramatic comedy, was motivated by Hill's perception of a change in the market as well as a strategic choice in terms of a possible future directing feature films:

I've done my dark arty past. Audiences have changed and films like that don't work any more. Audiences are more conservative and you have to be savvy about that when you are building a career. Maybe the first film you make isn't going to be the great artistic statement, but if you get three films down the line then maybe you can make the great artistic statement. So you have to weigh up the balance (Hill).

Catherine Fitzgerald was also at this time trying to initiate the idea of backing longer films through the Short Film Fund, as part of the recognition that shorter forms were not necessarily suitable for talent development. According to Hill, *Ice* was used as a test case, 'an experiment in changing the way the Short Film Fund thought about projects' (Hill). The project became part of a strategy to realign the Short Film Fund criteria with the needs of creative practice and talent development for features.

This was presented to the Short Film Fund in February 1997, but even then Hill was doubting the value of the effort:

Even as we handed it [to the Short film Fund], I was thinking that we only needed another twenty-five minutes and it was a feature film ... Maybe we should be looking at it in terms of its viability out in the real world and turn it into a feature (Hill).

Another motivation for the project was to develop experience shooting a low budget film. According to Hill, his previous project *The Good Neighbour* used about three and a half minutes of each day's shoot, which he considers to be a necessary level of screen time material for low budget productions. Hill did not believe that this quota of usable footage for screen time was common with many short film projects funded by

the Short Film Fund and suggests that this could be a handicap when it comes to work in low budget features:

A lot of the people who get money from the Short Film Fund have seven or eight day shoots so they are getting one and a half minutes screen time every day. If they go into the low budget feature arena there is no way they can afford to shoot for one and a half minutes actual screen time on average each day. I think that the mentality people were bringing to the Short Film Fund projects is failing them when they come to low budget features (Hill).

For Hill, the project was also motivated by this desire to shoot at a rate which is conducive to a low budget feature, and to use other strategies that are also help maintain strict financial constraints.

The whole project was developed to use available locations, no sets, small crew, 35mm film, natural sound and no special effects. It followed models like Almodovar's comedies and also Woody Allen. There is also a proven market for these types of films (Hill).

Market considerations, and producing a film that was marketable were other motivating factors for Hill. His application document offers a possible distribution strategy and even includes a statement of support from Blue Angel Films, a New Zealand film distributor. The distribution strategy Hill proposes is to consider *Ice* as a mini-feature which could 'receive a full exhibition season in its own right' (Hill). His approach to New Zealand distribution is to either add appropriate Short Film Fund films to make up a full programme or else seek a longer short, possibly Australian, thereby also enhancing the Australian distribution potential of this film. Screening at Australian festivals as a mini-feature could also be considered. 'For strategies regarding international distribution, the New Zealand Film Commission's experience and advice would be sought' (Hill).

The lack of feedback from the Short Film Fund panel in relation to the consideration of market and the distribution strategies he suggested was one area that Hill thought was inadequate. He believed his application had greater potential than the recognition it received from the panel, whom he thought focused on a criticism of the script and the ending:

One thing that I did think that wasn't so good about their feedback at that stage was that Rena Owen was interested in acting in it and from a marketing point of view that was worthwhile. When I was pitching the project it was definitely a stepping stone towards features and things like casting and the audience profile were intrinsic aspects of the project. The feedback from the Short Film Fund was disappointing because all they talked about was the script and I didn't get any feedback or any acknowledgement even of the fact that there was a profile actor interested and a targeted audience which I considered to be the same as the audience for *Topless Women Talk About Their Lives* (Hill).

Hill also recognised that his project was a test case for a different approach to funding and acceptance was 'always going to be a long shot. We put it in to test the waters, to see if there was any interest' (Hill). His project then, was part of a strategic ploy, assisting in the process of realignment that eventually occurred through the Talent Development Initiative where the Film Commission responded to criticism by changing the structure of the funding agency.

The failure to get funding has motivated Hill to extend his script to a full feature length. His application for funds has now been directed toward the Low Budget Feature Programme, which has given \$6000 to fund another draft. Hill's perception of the script has change dramatically, and this strategic realignment both in terms of the length of the project and the funding agency has given him a chance to see the work in a new light:

I've just finished a new draft. I had to think the whole thing from scratch again. One thing I found was the degree of overwriting. With film it's kind of getting your head around dialogue and how to use it. I wanted to make the characters brighter and more in charge, although they still are loose cannons ricocheting off each other (Hill).

Hill's project is significant because it is associated with a change in the funding regime and heralds the initiating of a changed attitude to short film and its role as a vehicle for feature talent development. It also reflects a more market oriented attitude by the film maker, and a strategic choice about the type of film he wants to make to further his career. As he states, he has been through his 'dark arty past' (Hill) and now wants to choose a project that might have some success in the market. His choice is a project which he believes would be of interest to the same audience profile as that of

Topless Women Talk About Their Lives, a recent popular New Zealand comedy feature.

His attitude also implies a dilemma that film makers will face as they develop longer projects. As they move into longer forms, the potential to show-case the work diminishes because of the difficulty of finding suitable exhibition venues, while at the same time these longer forms offer a greater opportunity to experience similar creative challenges to that of the feature film. Hill illustrates this dilemma and has chosen to add another twenty-five minutes onto his project to develop a feature film length project which might be more viable in terms of marketing, exhibition and even kudos. As the length of the projects increase, the desire for film makers to invest in a feature length project must also increase and applicants will seek their funding through other agencies, especially since the Film Commission is indicating that it is directing its funding priorities to low budget features.

Conclusions

Individual motivation for making short films and the strategic approaches film makers invoke to achieve funding success, have been a focus for this chapter. A comparison was made between two applications and it was suggested that the strategies involved in establishing an alignment with the funding panel could make a difference to success or failure. The analysis of motivations for making short films showed these were multiple and related to career as well as personal creative agendas. For instance, a desire for personal expression is also coupled with a desire to work collaboratively, and a future hope that the project will led to new possibilities. In terms of the Short Film Fund projects, a desire for a future career in features was a strong motivation for the film maker although this experience of making short films was perceived as not necessarily conducive to the creative experience relevant to feature films. However, while the short form was considered to have particular creative demands it was also thought to be an effective vehicle for show-casing talent and registering this talent within the industry.

The practice of the short film form itself offers a variety of outcomes for a film maker. The initial creative impulse for these four film makers stems from their personal creative interests, which all relate to gender relations and an expression of the power dynamics in these relationships. Even Lightburn, who was interested in a more male oriented genre, was strategic enough to realise that the complete marginalisation of the female might not attract a sensitive response from the funding panel.

Hill's project, reflecting the possibilities involved in the new approach to funding implied the tension between making shorts that were of a suitable length for exhibition and longer shorts that would enhance talent development. It was a dilemma for those film makers who wanted to create alignments that would enhance a career in feature films, especially when the length of the longer shorts came closer to the length of a feature. As this lengthening of the short occurs film makers must surely become more attracted to funding possibilities which are given greater kudos by the Film Commission.

This chapter has outlined a complex of alignments that are involved at the level of film maker and funding panel. It shows that it is too simplistic to state that a film maker aligns with the panel to get funds to assist them in their creative pursuits. A raft of other agendas are also implicated in their motivations. The creative team is also an important area of alignments, both for the film maker applicant, who needs to convey the feasibility of actually completing the project and to do this must include a suitable creative team. Members of the creative team align themselves to the project for their own agendas. Some of these are related to their desire to support directors in their professional endeavours and others to enhance their own kudos within the screen industry.

The application documents discussed in this chapter illustrate the process of strategic alignment that operates to convince funding panels of the merits of a project which is competing with many others in a quest for funding support. The process of decision making based on the application document involves a mix of considerations and final outcomes are determined by reasons that relate to the merits of the application document, the script, the film applicant and the supportive team, as well as the range of projects that are competing for the limited funds in the application round. These in turn are dependent on the alignments required by the funding panel in terms of their own specialist knowledge, experience, and a collective decision making consensus. All of these alignments operate in various degrees in the funding decisions and this network of relationships, considerations and judgements make it impossible to single out any one determining factor influencing funding decisions or any particular reason why film maker applicant's wish to compete for short film funds.

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusions From the Research

State Sponsored Funding and Strategies for Short Film

The intention of this thesis has been to examine the contexts of state sponsored funding and to discuss how funding policy intersects with practices focusing on short film. It was motivated by a desire to ask how the strategies involved in these funding contexts could be theorised and described. This arose because of a fascination with the myriad collaborative relationships involved in cultural production. This fascination acted as a useful reminder that the research related not only to specific practices in short film in New Zealand, but was also relevant to the processes operating in a much broader cultural field. The research considered the implications of the "social" concept of culture developed by Raymond Williams and his perception of culture which foregrounded not only meanings and values 'in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour' (1961: 47). The practice of culture was perceived in this research not only in terms of final products, but also through the numerous relations that are developed in order that these products can be produced.

Accepting the implications of Williams' conception of culture, the research focused on the infrastructure of state sponsored funding for short film and showed how funding policy intersected with practice to help shape the strategies involved in short film practices. The theorising of these collaborative strategic relations has drawn on Hall's concept of articulation, which departs from a reductionist framework as an explanatory device, and has opted for a method of explanation which links collective pressures situated in specific contexts. This approach offered a more sensitive means of interpreting the various relations within and between contexts of funding.

Wartenberg's concept of alignment was used to theorise the process of collaborative relationships and it has played a pivotal role in orienting the focus for the research. This approach theorises that in order to achieve their goals individuals align with each other in the context of specific relationships. Collective relationships constrain the degree to which any one individual can establish dominance in any context. The concept of alignment characterises these relationships as strategic in terms of their outcomes. Alignments are established in order that individuals and institutions can achieve their goals, but they also operate within the context of other associated alignments and, therefore, these outcomes are influenced by collective constraints.

The theory has relied on the concept of discourse as the form of mediation in these strategic alignments and essential to this idea of the discursive has been Shohat and Stam's concept of "voice". This explains the dynamic nature of these funding contexts, which are not autonomous, but are influenced by associated and imbricated contexts, with the "voice" acting as a link. These associated contexts play an important role in the discourses of any context.

The theory also acknowledges the need to be inclusive in terms of both material and nonmaterial determining conditions and Hall's approach to this dilemma has been an important argument in countering claims of possible exclusivity in the research because of a focus on discursive relations. He states that

real and discursive: events, relations, structures do have conditions of existence and real effects, outside the sphere of the discursive; but that it is only within the discursive, and subject to its specific conditions, limits and modalities, [that] they have [been] or can ... be constructed within meaning (1988: 27).

After this theoretical framework was established, the second aspect of the research could then be addressed. Investigating the characteristics of the alignments for state sponsored funding involved empirical investigation through various techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, content analysis, and numerous one to one discussions with individuals involved in the funding contexts. The structure of the thesis developed through a framework influenced by a method of progressive focusing, which differentiated the contexts of funding and then associated these with the funding contexts that were more specifically related to individuals involved in funding application for short films. The research developed from the contexts of political discourses on funding film through to the discourses of particular film makers and their motivations for making films. It also considered other contexts related to important alignments in the state sponsored funding of short films. For instance, the research investigated relationships between the executive decision makers of funding bodies and political agendas; the contexts of the funding agencies and their discourses; the alignments between these agencies and stakeholder/practitioners; the relationships between the decision makers on funding panels and their interpretations of fund discourses; and the strategies involved in funding applications. These were considered important axes of power where significant and influential alignments are made in the infrastructure established for short film funding.

The structure has been imposed on the research more by choice, rather than to suggest a hierarchy of importance. The macropolitical is important, but it isn't the only determining factor in the relations of the funding processes in New Zealand. An attempt has been made throughout the research to stress the mutuality of influences involved in the alignments between different players in the funding game. On a general level, it was suggested that political parties align with their respective constituencies, while the executive decision makers of funding bodies align with political agendas utilising strategies designed to increase, or at least sustain funding levels. Funders align policy agendas with stakeholders, funding panels align in their decision making with their respective funding discourses, each other, and with the requirements of applicants, while applicants in turn attempt strategies that will assist in the success of their applications while also aligning with their own creative, technical and careerist concerns. The research has stressed that this micropolitics, represented by the various voices of those involved in these alignments, plays an important role in the funding contexts.

The Intersection of Funding Policy and Strategies For Short Film Practice

Chapter Five examined the political justification for state policy on funding film and articulated a number of different tensions arising from a New Right hegemony which characterised the political environment. These tensions arose from a pressure to remove state involvement and an emphasis on market value rather than producer support. Ironically, although a lessening of state involvement was a driving agenda in the political environment, the state has become more involved in determining approaches to cultural policy. Cultural agencies have been shaped by the new political environment and this influence of the New Right is reflected in the discourse of policy agendas and their justifications. For instance the language utilised by Creative New Zealand's policy documents is oriented toward accountability, strategic planning and the transparency of objectives. One perspective of this market value orientation is that the new discourses of cultural policy create a smoke-screen of promises concerning new opportunities and fairness in assessment, but this strategy is an excuse for opting out of cultural activities not easily justified in terms of market potential. The cultural policy seems to be establishing alignments with practitioners, but in reality is more effective in maintaining an alignment with the political masters while, at the same time, sometimes alienating practitioners.

Chapter Six outlines Creative New Zealand's funding policy agendas and the process of strategic planning that has been in operation since 1994 and which has resulted in the publication of two consecutive strategic plans as well as a draft strategic plan

designed to generate comments from interested parties. This process, establishing and justifying funding policy, has been extensive in terms of outlining policy agendas, consultative procedures and published documents, but the effects on actual funding practices in terms of short film have been minimal. Even the review of the Creative New Zealand partnership with the New Zealand Film Commission and New Zealand On Air, which resulted in the Creative Film and Video Fund changing its name to the Screen Innovation Production Fund has had little effect on actual funding practices.

The review of the Creative Film and Video Fund exposed a perception by stakeholders and practitioners that there had developed a preference for narrative in contrast to other innovative creative agendas and there was a problem with the lack of alignments between Maori film makers and the funding process. There was also a desire for a more "political" voice to be given access to funds. The change in name of the fund was an attempt to clarify its objectives in terms of supporting innovative screen media, but the problems of Maori alignment and the encouragement of a political voice were not integrated into the discourse of the new funding policy objectives.

Interestingly, however, the strength of the Creative Film and Video Fund was perceived, by respondents to the review, to be its non-commercial focus and this fund seemed to counter the policy of market value advocated by the current political environment. This contradiction illustrated the importance of the contextualising approach to the analysis of the funding processes as this approach was sensitive to the different policy priorities in operation at different levels of the funding infrastructure. The contextualising approach allowed for contradictions existing in different contexts and exposed the tensions between the partnership agendas of the Creative Film and Video Fund as well as those between the market oriented agenda of the Film Commission executive and the talent development initiatives of its short film funding policy. These examples illustrated the fact that alignments involve tension and sometimes contradiction and these in turn can have their own consequences. For instance, New Zealand On Air left the Creative Film and Video Fund because it could not support a broadcast result. The tension between the alignment with its own mandate and the project criteria of the Creative Film and Video Fund was too great, but at the same time, during the period of its participation, it supported its own representative in her role implementing funding decisions appropriate to the criteria of the Creative Film and Video Fund. It supported funding criteria which finally did not comply with the funding agendas of New Zealand On Air.

The effects of a complex and highly detailed funding policy outlined in the Creative New Zealand documents and in the consultative review of the Creative Film and Video Fund did not result in significant changes for the funding practices of short film under the auspices of this regime. This contrasted with the refocusing to a more market oriented approach within the agendas of the Film Commission and the review of the Short Film Fund with its consequent change to the promotion of production groups as the conduit of funding decisions. This was a realignment which itself involved tensions and uncertain consequences. Although the processes involved in decisions on project application were not significantly different between the Short Film Fund and the Talent Development Initiative changes to some practices did occur because the Film Commission policy on short film funding allowed production groups to incorporate their own funding agendas and practices.

The most significant effect on practices caused by these policy changes was the development of a greater potential to enable more informal contacts within the screen industry. This initiative occurred on a number of levels, with project applicants put in contact with other members of the industry; connections were established for applicants who were not associated with a suitable support team; and the production groups themselves benefited from contacts with projects and applicants. All of these alignment possibilities offered the potential for future productive relationships.

Another effect with the change in funding policy was that the production groups endeavoured to make contact with applicants in a proactive way, hoping to support applicants who would fulfil particular project interests. The three production groups offered a greater range of project selection, because each was open to different types of project. For instance Dorthe Scheffmann's production group abandoned any semblance of a formalised funding policy and sought informal contact through the telephone and the fax. This strategy was designed to develop alignments that would attract those people it was thought had been previously marginalised by funding policies. According to Scheffmann, based on her comments in Chapter Eight, this practice was effective, attracting fifty per cent of funding applications from Maori and Polynesian based projects. This different approach, one abandoning the complexities of the Creative New Zealand discourses, offered a useful counter strategy to a funding regime which concentrated on an intricate funding policy without focusing on changing funding outcomes.

Other changes to short film strategies have also arisen because of the changes in funding policy established by the Talent Development Initiative. The most significant consequence is the attempt to widen the options for the length of short films that

could attract funding. This has arisen because of the Film Commission's objective to focus on short film as a means of developing feature film talent, coupled with a realisation that experience for feature film requires longer projects. A dilemma has arisen however because of the constraints imposed by market restrictions on the length of shorts, with twelve to fifteen minute shorts being the optimal length. A tension arises between the need for film making experience and the need to show-case work at festivals, on television, and on commercial cinema. The shorts funded by the new regime have been of similar length to earlier work and this has been perceived by the funders as a result of the embeddedness of expectations inherited from the previous funding body. To date no longer projects have qualified for funding and similarly very short films have not attracted funding support.

This dilemma concerning the constraint on the length of short films might in itself be insignificant. Scheffmann, for instance, is more interested in shorter shorts, films that are five minutes or even less. She believes that these films are easily marketable, and are ideal for a director's reel. They are flexible in terms of market opportunities and they offer an economic method of show-casing talent. She believes a proactive strategy is required on the part of funders to encourage these shorter projects. It has also been suggested that longer shorts will find market opportunities even if they need to be packaged with other films to satisfy the appropriate marketing demands. The focus on talent development and the tension with market potential does illustrate the uncertainty of the effects of policy changes and also highlights the need for a contextualising approach which can articulate the ensemble of determining conditions in different contexts.

The use of short film as a stepping-stone to feature films seems to compromise any objective of developing a short film culture which produces shorts for what they might offer in themselves as a particular cinematic form and the new Film Commission funding regime has further marginalised this encouragement of short films as a form in their own right. This pressure on short film has arisen because of the lack of other venues available for talent development in cinema practice and the policy focus of the Film Commission on supporting feature film production. However, tensions also arise with this emphasis on talent development as short film is not necessarily a suitable form for feature film experience although it is perceived to be useful as a form of show-casing the products of the creative talent. As films get longer potential markets seem to become more restrictive and new attitudes to marketing are required to implement strategies that will expose these films to audiences and therefore allow show-casing opportunities. This illustrates the ramifications of a change in policy which can resonate through the funding

infrastructure and influence practices, which in turn need to respond strategically to the pressures of the new policy environment.

Funding Levels and the Establishment of Alignments.

The theoretical framework of this thesis has tried to be inclusive and has avoided relying on a single determining factor as an explanatory device in understanding the pressures involved in the funding of short film and the consequent strategies involved in the practices influenced by these pressures. It is difficult however to ignore the effects of the limited funding levels that are available both to short films funded by the Screen Innovation Production Fund and the Talent Development Initiative. Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission have both focused on what they perceive as the difficulty of fulfilling their objectives given the limited amount of finance offered from the public purse. This lack of financial support has resulted in the establishment of an Advocacy Goal in Creative New Zealand's new strategic plan which is designed to increase funding through contacts not only with the state, but also with public and private sources. Ruth Harley, in her role as Executive Director, has also instigated a policy which is designed to seek more funding opportunities. Part of her strategy is to develop an appropriate discourse between government and the Film Commission and thereby establish a dialogue to debate justification for state involvement in funding film. Harley believes that justification will be through cultural rather than economic reasons, although this research has shown that political justifications involve a mix of both the cultural and economic.

Both Creative New Zealand and the Film Commission have been investing energy in strategies that they believe might assist in increasing funding levels. At the same time the political parties seem reluctant to significantly increase the current funding levels and their statements imply that the Film Commission particularly, should become more self sufficient, despite what is perceived by the politicians as the various benefits of funding film culture. Further, the policies of both Creative New Zealand and the Film Commission have been such that the potential funds available for short film projects have become even more vulnerable. The Screen Innovation Production Fund, with a decreased funding level due to the loss of support of New Zealand On Air, has broadened its funding category so that short film has to compete with other screen media for its funds, while the Talent Development Initiative is investing \$90,000 of its available money in executive producer fees, rather than in short film projects.

Following Kirk (1997), funding levels are conceived as a significant determinant on funding practices, but this constraint on available finances is only one of the factors that shapes the alignments involved in funding strategies for short film. The research has shown that the agendas of the funding agencies, the interpretations of these agendas both in terms of stakeholders and panel members, the strategies involved in competing for funds by applicants, as well as the careerist and creative motivations of the practitioners also contribute to the complex and imbricated pressures that shape and limit the short films produced.

Alignments and their Role in Cultural Production

The thesis has articulated the strategic discursive alignments that are necessary for the production of short film and these are often initiated because of competition for limited available funds. The concept of alignment has been an important feature in this research and has proven to be a useful explanatory device for the social processes involved in the respective contexts of funding. The focus has been on the collaborative relationships that are required in the production of shorts and the research has also implied that these collaborations are necessary and significant in any cultural production if the implications of Williams' "social" concept of culture are to be accepted.

The infrastructure of state sponsored funding for short film has been a useful entry point to illustrate the complex practices involved in the cultural context of short film production. In this context, where policy and practice intersects, a foregrounding of discursive alignments, as these have been articulated in various contexts, has been an important means of examining and illustrating aspects of the relationships that occur. The concept of alignment is particularly significant because it foregrounds the processes involved in establishing collaborative relationships and it invokes the numerous factors that shape decisions as well as acknowledging the reciprocity of influences in the relationships involved.

For instance, Given establishes a formation of contexts similar to that developed in this thesis when he discusses film policy and process. For Given :

Parliaments make policy, ministers make policy, their departments make policy, statutory agencies make policy, funded organisations make policy, but so too, unfunded organisations make policy, film makers make policy, broadcasters, engineers, distributors, exhibitors, the media,

academics and even audiences make and implement policy every day (1994: 59).

His description of the policy process does not incorporate the mutual interrelationship of policy and practice that has been shown in this research to be a significant aspect of the policy process. Certainly the groups Given includes make policy, but this policy also involves pressures on practice. The concept of alignment, as it has been used in this thesis, does indicate the reciprocity of influences on collaborative relationships, it integrates policy and practice, and helps to explain the reasons both for funding policy and for the responses to that policy in practice.

The concept of discourse developed by Fairclough has also been useful for an explanation of policy and practice, but it demands integration with the concept of voice. Throughout the research, the individual voice has been considered a significant factor in the funding processes. The concept of discourse on its own is too limiting and does not allow for the dynamic interchange between different but associated contexts. For instance the examination of the funding criteria for the Screen Innovation Production Fund or the Talent Development Initiative would be inadequate without the inclusion of some of the voices of the participants in the respective practices. This concept has been used to indicate the various positions that can be taken within any context and illustrates how different criteria are given priority and how these criteria are interpreted by people in different ways and at different times. It also offers an explanatory device for the dynamic nature of the funding processes. This dynamism is the result of the various strategic alignments made not only between applicants and funders, but between funding panel members, between the panel and the criteria of the fund, the fund and the strategies of Creative New Zealand or the New Zealand Film Commission, as well as the informal relations that are developed.

The effects of these alignments have been compared to Shield's idea of filtering and imprinting and his metaphor indicates the negotiated and mutual intersections of the different individual and collective positions emphasised by the concept of alignment. Policy discourses are engaged dynamically within the funding processes as these are challenged and reinterpreted by competing and collaborating voices in different contexts. These alignments can result in changes within the funding system. The process of change cannot be abrupt as there is a need for a stability in the funding regimes so that funding expectations are not constantly undermined. The changes that have occurred within the time-frame investigated have not caused a rupture in funding expectations. A degree of inertia remains within the funding regime with the

influences of the old funding regime frequently found in the new. This effect has been illustrated by citing examples from the short film funding agencies discussed in this research. Significant changes have occurred in the policies and discourses of the funding bodies and in some of the practices that have resulted with changes in these policies. These changes are particularly significant in the contexts of the Talent Development Initiative.

The Scope of this Research and the Consequences for Further Research

Very few short films are viable commercially, and their value is attributed more to their role as vehicles for either personal expression or, especially for those who have gained some kudos in the screen industry, as a transitional practice leading to future feature film projects. For these people, at least, the practice of short film is perceived as a form of investment for future opportunity and short films themselves act as a form of currency in an economy of exchange - an exchange of influence and support, of kudos and opportunity. This currency is exchanged by various people in various roles to finance their ongoing survival in their cultural games and for many of the directors of short film as well as the policy makers of the funding agencies, this currency, in the form of completed short films, is seen as an investment in future projects.

This economy of exchange implies that a definition of short film as a cultural object becomes a little slippery, especially if it no longer relies on a definition based on its constraints as a particular aesthetic form different from other film forms such as a feature film or documentary. The research has illustrated that the short film object is inscribed by complex cultural processes that involve different contexts, which, in turn, influence and shape short film in different ways. For instance, in Chapter Nine Lisa Perrott approaches short film as an experimental practice which, for her, is therapeutic, but at the same time she is hoping that her investment in her project will assist in generating kudos for future funding applications. Andrew Bancroft believes short film is a visual rather than a dramatic form, but it is also a way for him to respond to the gender discourses he believes have been developed by other film makers. Short film for him is also perceived as an ideal show-case for his talent and is an effective means of furthering his film making career. In terms of the Talent Development Initiative discussed in Chapter Eight, short film is perceived as a vehicle for developing future feature film talent and this determines an investment in shorts with strong characters and narrative form. Within this regime, however, MAP Film Productions Ltd acknowledge an investment in shorts that might not be motivated by this agenda. The Screen Innovation Production Fund define shorts in terms of their

innovative or experimental attributes, but again, different interpretations of this agenda by members on the funding panels influence the types of shorts which will finally be produced. Short films, in terms of the political agenda, could be defined in the way they assist in employment, develop skills, and establish cultural kudos internationally. Short film then, should not be defined solely in terms of its form, as a film constrained by a certain length, but should be acknowledged as the product of complex cultural games that shape the processes involved in its production.

This thesis has demonstrated that short films are influenced by the demands of these cultural games and this economy of exchange. They have been influenced by the different contexts and empowered by the different alignments described in the text. These contexts are influential in dictating what types of films are made and how they might be valued. The processes described when discussing the Talent Development Initiative, for instance, suggest that of the many scripts submitted for funding, only nine or ten will actually be produced and only a few of these will be seen by audiences. This would suggest that there is a wealth of data on the relationships between funding policy and creative practices that waits for analysis and which might offer new insights into the cultural fascinations of not only the nation's film makers but also the other arbiters of culture involved in the various alignments of funding. The funding contexts are just some of a number of contexts that influence the shaping of these short films, but an analysis of these contexts does suggest that culture is not just a reflection of the products, texts, or films that are finally produced for audiences, but includes the numerous practices involved in the shaping of these products.

The theoretical approach, adapted from Hall and Wartenberg and others such as Grossberg and O'Regan, discussed in Chapter Three, offers a versatile and sensitive means of examining the different contexts of cinematic practice and suggests other areas remain to be examined. For instance, as it has already been suggested, within the funding contexts of short film the examination of rejected scripts might be an interesting and productive area of study. Speculation on the potential influence of the new technologies on attitudes toward short film in the future, might also be worthwhile as a focus and might anticipate the changes in future cinematic practices. Outside the contexts of funding, other studies using this context oriented approach could focus on audience reception, critical interpretation, exhibition, festival competition, film pedagogy, distribution, national and international marketing relationships, and the myriad of discursive alignments that these entail. The questions asked in Chapter Two could also be answered with this contextualising approach. What are the connections between film making practices and the political climate? How do colonising processes operate in policy and film practice? What processes

disenfranchise women in the film making infrastructure? What strategies can be offered for future directions in New Zealand film strategies? All of these areas involve complex alignments shaped by dynamic discursive contexts and they all influence the final films which are produced, viewed, and discussed in the various cultural contexts of the nation.

Another significance of this approach, is the consideration of not only the macropolitical, but also the micropolitical. The inclusion of the individuals involved in these contexts and the way that they are empowered or disempowered within organisations through the strategy of alignment is an important and necessary consideration for the understanding of not only the funding infrastructure, but of any cultural infrastructure. The individual, acting on the level of the micropolitical, is an important focus because it is at this level that there is potential for change in many contexts. This would suggest that recognition should be given to the importance of those individuals involved in the numerous collaborative relationships of cinematic practice who offer creative and constructive approaches to these practices. These people, possibly politicians, funders, distributors, audiences or critics can be as significant in their creative endeavours and the implementation of empowering strategic alignments as those actively engaged in the actual production of a film no matter what its length.

APPENDIX ONE

Section One

Income from Government, Lottery Board Grants and Films

New Zealand Film Commission

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Government	\$888,889	\$888,889	\$888,889	\$1,111,110
Lottery Board	\$7,475,000	\$7,832,500	\$7,995,000	\$8,775,000
Films	\$1,666,636	\$3,489,460	\$1,075,352	\$693,164

(New Zealand Film Commission 1994, 1995a, 1996, 1997a)

Income from Government and Lottery Board Grants

Creative New Zealand

Government	\$3,384,000	\$3,384,000	\$3,384,000	\$3,917,000
Lottery Board	\$17,250,000	\$18,075,000	\$18,950,000	\$20,250,000

(Creative New Zealand 1994a, 1995, 1996e, 1997b)

New Zealand Film Commission: Production Finance for Short Films

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Short Film Fund	\$1,053,967	\$1,056,091	\$918,326	\$1,113,741
Creative Film Fund	\$175,750	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$200,000

(New Zealand Film Commission 1994, 1995a, 1996, 1997a)

Creative New Zealand: Production Finance for Creative Film and Video Fund/Screen Innovation Production Fund

Creative NZ	\$196,406	\$195,000	\$195,000	\$200,000
NZ On Air	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$0

New Zealand

Film Commission	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$200,000
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(Creative New Zealand 1994a, 1995, 1996e, 1997b) and (Sutherland 1996)

Section Two

Chronology of Funding Developments for Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission

1974

- Queen Elizabeth the Second Arts Council of New Zealand Act 1974 which established the Arts Council

1978

- New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978 which established the New Zealand Film Commission

1984

- Establishment of the Creative Film and Video Fund

1985

- Establishment of the Short Film Fund

1994

- Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 1994 establishes Creative New Zealand, replacing the previous Arts Council established in 1974
- First Strategic Plan 1995-1998 published by Creative New Zealand
- NZ On Air joins partnership of Creative Film and Video Fund
- Development Committee established by the New Zealand Film Commission

1995

- ScreenVisionNZ established by the New Zealand Film Commission
- New writers Scheme established by the New Zealand Film Commission (this initiative not continued)

1996

- Performance review of the Creative Film and Video Fund
- NZ On Air relinquishes partnership with Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission on the Creative Film and Video Fund
- Staff Committee establish by the New Zealand Film Commission
- Producer Only Development Scheme established by the New Zealand Film Commission

- English Language Cinema plan established by the New Zealand Film Commission

1997

- Establishment of the Screen Innovation Production Fund by Creative New Zealand and the New Zealand Film Commission
- Draft Strategic Plan 1998-2001 published by Creative New Zealand
- Review of the Short Film Fund undertaken by the New Zealand Film Commission
- Establishment of the Talent Development Initiative by the New Zealand Film Commission
- Feel-Good/Comedy Script Initiative established by the New Zealand Film Commission
- Kahukura Project established by the New Zealand Film Commission

1998

- Second Draft Strategic Plan 1998-2001 published by Creative New Zealand

APPENDIX TWO

Questionnaires

A. Questionnaire Focusing on the DIRECTOR and a Specific Film Project

Background details

Name:

Age:

Film making experience:

Name of Film:

Genesis of Your Film

1. Why did you choose to undertake this project?
2. What motivated others to become involved?
3. How did the collaboration of others change your perception of the film?
4. Was the film influenced by other factors such as other film makers, films, music video, comics, advertising, film theories?

yes no

Please elaborate:

Your Intentions

5. What are the thematic concerns in this film?
6. What specific aspects of New Zealand or New Zealand culture does the film concern itself with?

7. Were you consciously engaged in making a film for a New Zealand and/or an international market?

8. Why did you think that this market/these markets would be interested in the themes you have outlined ?

9. Did you consciously shape this film so that it might more easily get funding?

yes **no**

If so, how did you do this?

Film Production

10. What was the producer's role in this film?

11. Is it important to strengthen ties with one producer or do you think it is better to have different producers for different projects?

one producer **different producers**

please elaborate:

Audience For Your Film

12. Where has your film been screened?

13a. What responses or feedback have you had from:

(a) audiences:

(b) critics

13b. How did you hear about this? e.g. word of mouth, magazines.

14. Do you think that there has been an adequate and informed critical response to your film?

yes **no**

please elaborate:

15 Do you think it is important for your film to be represented at film festivals in New Zealand?

yes **no**

please elaborate:

Film Funding

16. How did you find out about funding opportunities for your film?

17. How many times did you apply for funding before you had any success?

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

18. Were there any changes to your film requested by the funding body?

yes **no**

If you answered yes, what were these changes?

19. Do you think that the project assessment process - i.e. the panel system-demanded by the funding body is satisfactory?

yes **no**

please elaborate:

20. Do you intend to continue to work in short film?

yes **no**

If you answered yes have you applied for further funding to either

The New Zealand Film Commission
Creative New Zealand
Business
P r i v a t e

B. Questionnaire Focusing on DIRECTOR'S Experience of the New Zealand Short Film Culture

Name

Short Film

1. What do you see as the objectives of short film making?
2. What would you consider to be the limits on your own short film making practices?
3. If you eventually want to make a feature film how do you see making short films help you achieve this goal?

Please elaborate:

Contacts

4. What contacts do you have with the film industry ?
 - a/ New Zealand
 - b/ Overseas.
5. What are your sources for information about short film? (e.g. network of friends, magazines like Pavement or Planet, Moving Image Centre, etc.)

Film Festivals

6. Do you attend any of the short film festivals in New Zealand?

yes no

Please elaborate:

7. Do you think that short films made in New Zealand should reflect distinctive local and/or cultural perceptions?

yes no

Please elaborate:

8. How do you think short film production will change with the advent of commercial exhibition through alternative distribution sites such as CD ROM, the Internet, cable television or local television channels?

Funding

9. How have you gone about getting funding for your films?

10. Is contact with the funding body you have dealt with easy to maintain?

yes **no**

Please elaborate:

11. What do you think the objectives are of the funding body you have dealt with?

funding body

objectives

12. Do you think that these objectives are reflecting in the types of film that are actually accepted for funding?

13. How frequently did you apply for funds before you had some success?

1 **2** **3** **4** **5** **6**

14. How do you feel the funding bodies constrain the types of films you would like to make?

Power

15. Where do you think the most important sites of power exist in the short film industry/culture? For instance, directors, producers, funding groups, critics, distributors, audiences..

16. What areas in the organisational infrastructure of short film need to be changed? Why?

17. In what ways do you think **you** could change the current structures and attitudes within the short film industry/ culture?

Perceptions

18. Do the short films produced each year by the New Zealand Film Commission or Creative New Zealand reflect a narrow or wide range of creative activity?

narrow

wide

Please elaborate:

19. What subjects would you expect to be included in any selection of current New Zealand short film shown for public exhibition?

20. What subjects have been largely ignored in New Zealand short film?

21. What areas of research do you think are important in terms of the production, funding, marketing and exhibition of short film?

C. Questionnaire Focusing on the Experience of the PRODUCER in Short Film Production

Name:

Production Company:

Short Films Produced:

Background

1. Why and how did you become a producer of short films?
2. What would you consider to be the strongest constraints on your activities as a producer?
3. What role do you think short film plays in the New Zealand film industry?

Role

4. At what stage of the development of a short film project do you consider it appropriate that **you** as a producer become involved?
5. How involved do you become in the creative development of a short film?
6. Is it important that you establish a relationship with a small number of directors with whom you would work again or are you open to working with as many directors as possible?

small number of directors

as many directors as possible

Please elaborate:

7. Are there any types of film that you would not act as producer?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

Funding

8. What has been your experience with **Creative New Zealand** in terms of receiving funding for projects?

9 What has been your experience with **The New Zealand Film Commission** in terms of receiving funding for projects?

10. What has been your experience with **private investors** in terms of funding for your projects?

11. What areas in the short film infrastructure could be changed to benefit short film production?

12. In what ways do you think **you** could change the current structures and attitudes within the short film industry?

D. Questionnaire Concerning Political Responses to Funding Issues

1. Does your party think it is important that film making is at least partially funded by the state?

yes

no

2. If you answered yes could you please explain why the state should be involved in funding the film industry?

3. If your party has the power, will it increase or decrease the levels of funding that have been given to **The Film Commission** and **Creative New Zealand** in the last financial year.

4. What role does your party think that film making plays in creating an international profile for New Zealand?

5. What policies will your party implement to promote the future of the New Zealand film industry?

E. Questionnaire Concerning the Experience/Opinions of Members of the Creative Film and Video Fund.

Name:

Assessment

1. What criteria are used by the **Creative Film and Video Fund** to judge films for funding?
2. How is excellence assessed for short film in the context of the **Creative Film and Video Fund**?
3. How is innovation assessed for short film in the context of the **Creative Film and Video Fund**?
4. Is there a difference in the response of individual members of the **Creative Film and Video Fund** to the types of short film to be funded because of the differences in priorities between **Creative New Zealand, The Film Commission and New Zealand On Air**?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

5. What types of short film and/or content in short film is considered inappropriate for funding?
6. Do you think that **The Creative Film and Video Fund's** gatekeeping role encourages a compliance to the particular specifications film makers believe will be most likely to receive funding?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

7. Do you think any feedback should be given to short film makers on the decisions about the funding of their films? For instance is there any critical evaluation and suggestions for improvement sent to them?

8. In what ways are the skills of producers, script-writers, DoPs and other technical people considered in terms of the funding of short film?

9. Are the considerations of audience demand for particular types of short film an important factor in the evaluation of films for funding?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

10. What research programmes do you as a member of the **Creative Film and Video Fund** consider to be of importance for the future development of short film?

F. Questionnaire Concerning CREATIVE NEW ZEALAND'S Policies and Programmes In Relation to Short Film

Name:

Role:

Policy

1. The new funding structure for **Creative New Zealand** combines short film with a range of other art practices under the rubric of the visual arts. How will this enhance the opportunities for making short film?
2. Where does **Creative New Zealand** rank short film in respect to the funding of other art production?
3. The Strategic Plan of **Creative New Zealand** offers a wide range of strategic goals and objectives that short film makers could use to gain acceptance for their projects. What particular goals or objectives for short film making are given priority? (For instance will a short reflecting an 'ethnic' perspective be given more priority than one concerned with 'experimental cinematic form?')

Programmes

4. What strategies are implemented to help encourage and develop the work of those short film makers who have been rejected for funding?
5. What relationships have been developed with the **Short Film Fund** of the **New Zealand Film Commission** to encourage a short film making practice which will benefit practitioners who wish to develop a career path?
6. What policies have been implemented to encourage individuals to develop skills as **producers, writers and other technical crew** in terms of short film production?

Funding

7. Are changes in short film making and the types of short film made anticipated by the funding approach implemented in the new strategic plan?

yes **no**

Please elaborate:

8. One of the 'Arts Goals' is "the raising of excellence across all forms of artistic expression". How is excellence assessed in respect of short film?

9. Another goal is the encouragement of innovation. How is innovation assessed and which is considered more important, in terms of short film, excellence or innovation?

10. Does **Creative New Zealand** need to compromise its objectives because of its partnership with **New Zealand On Air** and the **New Zealand Film Commission** in terms of the **Creative Film and Video Fund**?

yes **no**

Please elaborate:

11. Do you think that **Creative New Zealand's** gatekeeping role encourages a compliance to the particular specifications film makers believe will be most likely to receive funding?

yes **no**

Please elaborate:

12. What programmes have been implemented by **Creative New Zealand**, other than the connections with **New Zealand On Air** and the **New Zealand Film Commission**, to encourage corporate, business or private investment in short film production?

Communication

13. What programmes have been implemented to publicise the fund to those short film practitioners who might wish to finance their projects?

Audience

14. What programmes have been implemented by **Creative New Zealand** to ensure that funded short film is accessible to the widest possible target audience both nationally and internationally?

15. How will **Creative New Zealand** implement programmes to encourage the use of new technologies, such as CD ROM, the Internet, and cable television, as a means of producing and exhibiting short film projects?

16. How is **Creative New Zealand** encouraging the development of a constructive critical response to short films?

17. Are there areas of short film making which **Creative New Zealand** thinks have been largely ignored or could be profitably developed in the future?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

Research

18. What research programmes does **Creative New Zealand** consider to be of special importance for the future of short film?

G. Questionnaire Concerning Experience/Opinions of Ex-Members of the CREATIVE FILM AND VIDEO FUND.

Name:

Opportunities

1. The new funding structure for **Creative New Zealand** combines short film with a range of other art practices under the rubric of the visual arts. Do you think that this will enhance the opportunities for making short film?

Programmes

2. Do you think that there should be programmes implemented to help encourage and develop the work of those short film makers who have been rejected for funding .

yes no

Please elaborate:

3. Do you think that there should be relationships developed between the **Short Film Fund** of the **New Zealand Film Commission** and the **Creative Film and Video Fund** to encourage a short film making practice which will benefit practitioners who wish to develop a career path?

yes no

Please elaborate:

4. Do you think that there should be programmes implemented by **Creative New Zealand** to encourage individuals to develop skills as **producers, writers, cinematographers and other technical crew** in terms of short film making?

yes no

Please elaborate:

Assessment

5. How is excellence assessed for short film in the context of the **Creative Film and Video Fund**?

6. How is innovation assessed for short film in the context of the **Creative Film and Video Fund**?

7. Does **Creative New Zealand** compromise its objectives because of its partnership with **New Zealand On Air** and the **New Zealand Film Commission** in terms of the **Creative Film and Video Fund** ?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

8. What types of short film and/or content in short film should be considered inappropriate for funding?

9. Do you think that **Creative New Zealand's** gatekeeping role encourages a compliance to the particular specifications film makers believe will be most likely to receive funding?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

10. What feedback is given to short film makers on the decisions about the funding of their films? For instance is there any critical evaluation and suggestions for improvement?

11. Are there any areas of short film making that have been largely ignored or could be profitably developed in the future?

yes

no

Future

12. What areas of research do you think would be of special importance for the future of short film development?

13. How do you think the introduction of new technologies such as CD ROM, the Internet, cable television etc. will influence the development of short film production?

H. Questionnaire Involving DIRECTOR'S Experience of the Creative Film and Video Fund

Background Details

Name

Age

Film making experience

1. What is a short film?
2. Why are you making this film?
3. What were the influences (i.e. film makers, films, music, comics, advertising, theories) that helped shape the way you made this film?
4. What elements of film making did you focus on?(i.e. narrative, style, exploring form, experimenting with technology or effects)
5. What specific aspects of New Zealand or New Zealand culture does the film concern itself with?
6. Where has your film been screened?
7. What feedback have you had from
 - (a) audiences
 - (b) critics
8. How did you raise the funds for your project?
9. How did you shape the film so that it might have a greater chance of getting funding from the **Creative Film and Video Fund**?
- 10 How could the **Creative Film and Video Fund** funding process be improved?
11. What plans do you have to make more films?

I. Questionnaire Concerning the Policies and Programmes of the NEW ZEALAND FILM COMMISSION

Name:

Role:

Policy

1. One of the **Film Commission's** stated objectives is to 'encourage the production of short films as entities in their own right.' What do you consider to be a short film?

2. Another objective is 'to encourage the development of creative talent towards feature film making.' What characteristics make short film suitable as a vehicle for developing future feature film talent?

3. Do you think that the **Film Commission's** gatekeeping role encourages a compliance to a set of specifications film makers believe will be most likely to attract funding from the **New Zealand Film Commission** ?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

4. What strategies does the **New Zealand Film Commission** have to help develop and direct the large group of aspiring film makers/ script writers whose scripts are rejected ?

6. What content would make a film unsuitable for funding by the **New Zealand Film Commission**?

Cultural Relevance

7. As part of the cultural brief of the **New Zealand Film Commission**, it aims to develop and sustain a 'culturally relevant feature film production industry.' What is implied by culturally relevant?

8. Does this need for cultural relevancy reflect the implicit mandate of state policies or are there other reasons for its importance?

9. Is this cultural relevancy reflected in the short films financed over 1994/95 period?

yes **no**

Please elaborate:

Funding

10. One of the criteria for assessment for short film funding is the ' quality of script and story idea'. How does the funding committee assess this quality?

11. Another criteria for assessment of short film funding is the 'track record of the applicant'. How many short films does a director/script writer need to make before their track record is significant and how is the track record of an individual director/script writer assessed by the funding committee?

number of films

1 2 3 4 5

assessment of track record:

12. Do the demands of an international market affect the requirements of the form and content of the short films which are accepted for funding and distribution?

yes **no**

Please elaborate:

13. Are there other models of funding that have been considered by the **New Zealand Film Commission** for the development of short film ?

yes **no**

If you answered **yes**, what are these?

14. Does the implementation of The New Writers Programme imply that the **New Zealand Film Commission** is operating a new strategy to separate the roles of director and script writer?

yes no

Please elaborate:

15. Why is it that the **New Zealand Film Commission** seems to be focusing on theatrical shorts when there are also other types of specialist forms, such as surfing movies, gay film and feminist film, for instance, that also offer film making and marketing opportunities?

16. How is feedback encouraged between the audience reception of funded films, the marketing arm of the **New Zealand Film Commission** and the funding committee for short film?

17. What function of the **New Zealand Film Commission** is given greatest priority when it comes to funding short film; audience development, sales, film maker experience, film maker profile or **New Zealand Film Commission** profile?

Please elaborate:

18. Have developments of new technologies such as CD ROM, the Internet, and cable television, influenced current policies and programmes?

yes no

Please elaborate:

Performance

19. What are the strengths and weaknesses of short films currently being produced under the influence of the **New Zealand Film Commission** policies of assessment, funding and marketing?

i/ Strengths..

ii/ Weaknesses..

20. Are there problems with assessing a film, seeking funding, on the merits of its script when the completed film can potentially be so different?

Please elaborate:

21. Should the **New Zealand Film Commission** change any policies or film making practices to benefit future short film production?

yes

no

Please elaborate:

Research

22. What research activities, concerning the short film industry, does the **New Zealand Film Commission** consider to be of special importance for the future?

APPENDIX THREE
Analysis of Questionnaire Response as a Discursive Practice

A. Data

Questionnaire focusing on the DIRECTOR and a specific film project.

Background details

Name: Simon Raby

Age: 35

Film making experience:

Professionally involved since 1981.

Full time freelancer since 1988.

Predominantly a cinematographer, I learned my craft alongside some of short film's up and coming directors, such as Niki Caro, Scott Reynolds, Stewart Main, Christine Parker.

*I wrote and directed my first govt funded film in 1995. Called **Headlong**, it was funded by the NZ Film Commission and produced by Rachel Jean of Frame Up Films. It was awarded best film at the 1995 Canterbury short film festival.*

Name of Film: *Headlong*

Genesis of Your Film

1. Why did you choose to undertake this project?

I was keen to prove a long held belief that it is possible to engage and develop characters within a 12 minute format. I also wanted to explore a limited time frame to realise a fully rounded narrative with a 3 act structure. Mostly, I wanted to demonstrate my ability as a director, especially with the performances of actors.

2. What motivated others to become involved?

Rachel Jean the producer encouraged me to submit a treatment, I guess because she has faith in my abilities and the desire to develop a long term working relationship. Heads of Dept. such as DoP and editor were keen to prove themselves, as they were first timers in their given responsibilities.

The Film Commission became involved because I assume they liked the script.

The crew become involved after much pleading and cajoling, for most experienced crew around this time were sick to death of doing short films on little money and demanding schedules.

3. How did the collaboration of others change your perception of the film?

I realised that there are many ways to tell a story , and it helps to have a clear idea of the story telling before you start.

That it will always take 3 times as much time and money as you think

That clear and repeated communication is the only way to get things done correctly.

4. Was the film influenced by other factors such as other film makers, films, music video, comics, advertising, film theories?

no

Please elaborate:

Headlong is essentially a human comedy drama, and I was keen for the filmmaking techniques to remain as invisible as possible. If anything, I was over zealous in my desire to keep technique out of it, for the film takes on an almost theatrical feel at times. Headlong is essentially a road movie, a well worn movie genre, but I think the inspiration for the movie came more from personal experience than other film references.

Your Intentions

5. What are the thematic concerns in this film?

The changing perceptions of gender power structure and etiquette within contemporary NZ society. The way men and women perceive each other, and the changing boundaries of acceptable behaviour between the sexes.

6. What specific aspects of New Zealand or New Zealand culture does the film concern itself with?

The perceptions of right and wrong values between white middle class NZ and white underclass NZ, men vs women. (underclass in this instance defined as Westie social beneficiary). Certainly the linguistic colloquialisms of the characters relate directly to a NZ audience.

7. Were you consciously engaged in making a film for a New Zealand and/or an international market?

I was aware that the subject matter would be recognised and related to by a NZ audience, although I wrote the film for myself. I thought that the subject, especially the gender issue would relate on an international scale, though again I made no special allowances for accommodating the international scene (it fluctuates so unpredictably, it hardly seems worthwhile)

8. Why did you think that this market/these markets would be interested in the themes you have outlined ?

Because the themes I explored have relevance across the board. All cultures have conflict between gender, usually based around the same issues; i.e. sex power, trust, pride, love, bonding through shared adversity etc., etc.

9. Did you consciously shape this film so that it might more easily get funding?

yes

If so, how did you do this?

I was very attentive to the film's structure, and the way it goes about its storytelling. It deliberately had a clear, streamlined narrative that wastes no time in getting to the heart of the story.

I worked hard on the treatment and script, paring back the scenes to bare essence, so the film would be story and performance driven.

Film Production

10. What was the producer's role in this film?

Critical appraisal of the script and treatment prior to submission, budgeting the film, assistance with the submission, first hand contact with the film commission, assistance in crewing the film, providing office space as a base for the production, overseeing the entire preproduction, production, postproduction period of the film(i.e. the buck stops with the producer - Rachel had the right of veto over pretty much everything due to her complete control over the finances).

*Because a producer has the rights to produce the film they are responsible for seeing the film is completed on time, on budget and the final product fulfils the brief. This entitles the producer to override the director should they deem it as necessary to help the film.. Most producers have more than one project on the boil at any time, so a strong trust between producer and director helps both to carry out their jobs properly. Rachel trusted me with **Headlong** and gave me a free hand to oversee all the creative processes (in her case a desirable situation due to her extremely busy schedule). After the film was finished it was duly handed over to the Film Commission for marketing (in accordance with our contract), but Rachel assisted me in exploring new marketing for the film, for which we had to get the Film commission's permission.*

*This involved persuading Village cinemas in Auckland to trial a run of **Headlong** as a stand alone player in one of the multiplexes cinemas during lunch hours as a test to see if it would take off as a concept. Rachel was involved from the outset in approaching Village force and negotiating the trial run. We also released **Headlong** as a CD single and accompanying music video for which we received money from NZ On Air. Rachel was involved in helping to negotiate all of these proceedings.*

None of these concepts made money for a variety of reasons; not least due to our combined lack of marketing experience and advertising resources. The Film commission gave us its blessing but was tied up at the time with promoting the 5 for 5 screenings.

11. Is it important to strengthen ties with one producer or do you think it is better to have different producers for different projects?

one producer**different producers**

please elaborate:

I think one develops a relationship with a producer just as one develops a friendship - some relationships are closer than others. It really depends on the strengths of the individuals involved. Some directors feel a strong loyalty to their producer and wouldn't dream of going with another. Others may feel badly burned by the experience and shop around. I think the strength of the director plays a part in how this relationship develops. For instance, if a director is a hot item and is being wooed by other producers, their contractual bargaining power increases and they may do better to shop around, if only to improve their power within an existing producer relationship. Producers always have their own agenda however, and it pays to have an understanding of how that producer works before plunging in. Sometimes the devil you know is indeed a preferable thing.

Audience For your Film

12. Where has your film been screened?

Auckland Flm Fest 1995

Canterbury Short Flm Fest. 1995

Melbourne International Film Festival 1995

Channel 4 UK 1995

Hamburg Short Film Festival 1996

Village 8 Newmarket 1995

13a. What responses or feedback have you had from:

(a) audiences: *strong positive response in the cinemas from Joe public. Laughter and screams in appropriate places. Compliments after screenings etc.*

(b) critics : *strong for or against. Winner of the best film at the Canterbury festival in 1995, voted most popular film at the Auckland film feast 1995.*

13b. How did you hear about this? e.g. word of mouth, magazines.

Word of mouth, people talking to me directly,

14. Do you think that there has been an adequate and informed critical response to your film?

no

please elaborate:

*Although **Headlong** has done quite well as short films go, the lack of public viewing opportunities restricts critics interests in the medium.*

15 Do you think it is important for your film to be represented at film festivals in New Zealand?

yes

please elaborate: *It's usually the only opportunity for the public to see the film*

Film Funding

16. How did you find out about funding opportunities for your film?

General knowledge

17. How many times did you apply for funding before you had any success?

1

18. Were there any changes to your film requested by the funding body?

yes

If you answered yes, what were these changes?

Reduction in profanities.

19. Do you think that the project assessment process - i.e. the panel system-demanded by the funding body is satisfactory?

yes

please elaborate:

Its certainly improved with the addition of an independent filmmaker on the panel. At the 1994 Independent Producers and Directors Guild heated discussion pointed out the ambitiousness of some of the projects financed in the past, leading to problems with crews being overworked and badly underpaid. I think this problem is being addressed more often now at the funding stage.

20. Do you intend to continue to work in short film?

maybe - I intend to break from short film for a while for financial and mental health reasons.

If you answered yes have you applied for further funding to either

The New Zealand Film Commission

Creative New Zealand

Business

Private

B. Analysis

Following Fairclough, the object of this analysis was to categorise which types of discourses were drawn upon in the responses to the questionnaire and to note how they were combined.

It was assumed that there were the number of different discourses which acted as the source of Raby's responses.

1. Short film as a specialist discourse which is used to communicate aspects of film making practices and concepts.

Examples of discourse statements in questionnaire:

develop characters/ formats/ limited time frame/ fully rounded narrative/ three act structure/ performances of actors/ treatment/ heads of departments/ DoP/ editor/ human comedy drama/ invisible film making techniques/ theatrical feel/ road movie/ structure/ structure of storytelling/ streamlined narrative/ heart of the story/ script/ scenes/ story and performance driven.

2. Film marketing as a specialist discourse

Examples of discourse statements:

trial run/ stand alone player/ multiplexes/ marketing experience/ advertising resources

3. Discourses of identity, where an object, individual or group is differentiated from others.

A. Film making as a profession (implies a select group with a particular level of experience and knowledge which needs to be gained)

Examples from response:

involves a craft/ directors progress in reputation and experience (up and coming)/ first timers in/ given responsibilities/ giving services for little money/ independent/dependent film makers.

B. Personal experience/ and pleasures (implies an individual subject different from other subjectivities. In this case the subjectivity of the respondent)

Examples from response:

wrote film for myself

C. Gender power (implies relationships of power between men and women)

Examples from response:

conflict between gender in all cultures/ based on sex., power, trust, pride, love, bonding through shared adversity.

D. Class (implies different classes have different values)

Examples from response:

class values

E Language contexts (implies language differences can be recognised in terms of their contexts)

Examples from response:

linguistic colloquialisms

F. National context (implies there are identifiable national groupings and therefore identifiable relations between them)

Examples from response:

New Zealand audience/ New Zealand culture/ difficulty of differentiating it fluctuates so unpredictably.

G. Producer as role (implies producer can be differentiated because of particular responsibilities)

Examples from response:

critical appraisal of script and treatment/ budgeting/ assistance with submission/ first hand contact/ crew assistance/ providing base for production/ overseeing/ power of veto/ complete control over finances/ rights to produce film/ responsibilities - fulfilling brief

3. Discourses of relationship where relationships between individuals or groups imply particular positions of power.

A. Film making as a profession

Examples from response:

directors progress in reputation and experience (up and coming)/ independent/ dependent film makers.

B. Film festivals as competitions (implies value judgements can be made as whether something is good or bad depending on some criteria)

Example from response:

involves winners [and losers]

C. Short film as a vehicle to demonstrate ability (implies skills involved in making film and these can be demonstrated to professional judges)

Example from response:

to prove themselves

D. Producer/ director relationship (implies director and producer have a particular connection)

Examples from response:

long term working relationship/ similar to friendship/ strengths of individuals/ agendas/ and different types of connection based on degrees of power.

E. Responses of judgement.

Examples from response:

for or against/ critical interest.

F. Producer as role (with particular powers)

Examples from response:

critical appraisal of script and treatment/ budgeting/ assistance with submission/ first hand contact/ crew assistance/ providing base for production/ overseeing/ power of veto/ complete control over finances/ rights to produce film/ responsibilities - fulfilling brief

G. Gender power

Examples from response:

conflict between gender in all cultures/ based on sex, power, trust, pride, love, bonding through shared adversity.

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