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Since film's inception, over a hundred years ago, women have been underrepresented as cinematographers. Affirmative action, feminist movements and governmental equal opportunity acts have managed to make little impact on this male-dominated occupation. By exploring the experiences of twenty-seven camerawomen from Canada and the United States, this research looks for answers.

There are many factors involved in women's underrepresentation behind the camera. Power within the Hollywood film industry certainly contributes to the difficulties women face as they attempt to find work. Women in the early days of cinema had more opportunities and were more successful at creating films due to the fact that the structure of the industry had not been "masculinized" yet. Once the industry's economic worth became evident, men assumed positions of power and forced women out of the system.

Another emergent theme is that women who have attempted to break into these technical positions behind the camera, experienced sexism, harassment and discrimination. Some camerawomen attempted to gain footing in the industry by taking on masculine characteristics. These women changed their appearance and dispositions in order to fit in with their male peers; however, they still experienced discrimination.

THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AS CINEMATOGRAPHERS:  
A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

by

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Approved by

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Committee Chair

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This work is dedicated to the following people;

My mother, Beverly Shimkus, who always encouraged me to follow my dreams. Her love, support and inspiration are the fuel upon which I fly. Thank you.

The late Dr. J. David Viera, professor of film, whose encouragement and training instilled in me a sense of confidence and a passion for cinematography that has never waned. Without his influence, I likely would not have had the courage to follow my dreams.

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Alexis Krasilovsky, a dreamer like me, whose passionate drive for women's equality behind the camera is unmatched and has profoundly influenced not only this research but me personally.

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and California State University, Northridge.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

“The artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without the work.”

19<sup>th</sup> Century French Novelist, Emile Zola

Art is an idea, an expression and a precious cultural commodity. It is one societal mainstay that lies within reach of all human beings. A painter must merely possess canvas, color and a paintbrush; a sculptor, clay and a poet, pencil and paper. Limitations imposed upon other areas of human existence often are purposefully excluded from the realm of art, leaving imagination as the only obstacle in an artist’s way, at least in theory.

In the late 1800’s a new form of art emerged, one that influenced our world in ways no other art form had done before or has done since. The birth of narrative filmmaking reportedly took place at the hands of a woman, Alice Guy Blaché (McMahan, 2002, p. 1). Upon being introduced to the cinematographe, Blaché created *La Fee Aux Choux*, what has come to be recognized by some film historians over the past twenty years as the first narrative film (McMahan, 2002, p. 12-13). One reporter offered his impression of Blaché after observing her at work. “I had an opportunity to see how efficient she was in her diversity of roles before the day was over and was amazed at her skill, especially in directing the action of a complicated scene” (Slide, 1986, p. 118).

Blaché's filmography spans from 1896-1920 and includes approximately 1000 films (McMahan, 2002, p. xxvii). She presented plays on the screen "operating the camera, writing or adapting the photodramas, setting the scenes and handling the actors" (Slide, 1986, p. 118).

Clearly, Alice Guy Blaché was a pioneer in the motion picture world; however, her achievements extend well beyond filmmaking. A writer for *The Moving Picture World*, a journal for motion picture discussion, commented that "Madame Blaché is a striking example of the modern woman in business who is doing a man's work. She is doing successfully what men are trying to do. She is succeeding in a line of work in which hundreds of men have failed" (Slide, 1986, p. 114-115). Blaché was an enigma to the male-dominated world in which she worked, and her career outlived many of her renowned male counterparts (McMahan, 2002, p. xxvi). However, Blaché did not understand why women were so scarcely represented in this industry. In 1914 she wrote an article for *The Moving Picture World*, and in it she said,

It has long been a source of wonder to me that many women have not seized upon the wonderful opportunities offered to them by the motion-picture art to make their way to fame and fortune as producers of photodramas. Of all the arts there is probably none in which they can make such a splendid use of talents so much more natural to a woman than to a man and so necessary to its perfection (Slide, 1986, p. 139).

In this same article, she confronted the issue of sexism and offered her opinions.

There is no doubt in my mind that a woman's success in many lines of endeavor is still made very difficult by a strong prejudice against one of her sex doing work that has been done only by men for hundreds of years. Of course this prejudice is fast disappearing, and there are many vocations in which it has not been present for a long time. In the arts of acting, music, painting, and literature, woman has long held her place among the most successful workers, and when it is considered how vitally all of these arts enter into the production of motion pictures, one wonders why the names of scores of women are not found among the successful creators of photodrama offerings (Slide, 1986, p. 139).

More than ninety years have passed since Blaché recorded these statements, and sadly, women are still extremely underrepresented in many areas of filmmaking, especially cinematography. Dr. Martha Lauzen, professor of communication at San Diego State University, explained that “[t]he 1910s and 1920s were considered the golden age for women in Hollywood” because “[i]n those early days, filmmaking was more of a curiosity than a business, and certainly not the big business that it is today” (Dean, 2002, p. 1). In an article published in 2002 discussing age, gender and race discrimination against Hollywood film and television writers, the authors offered another explanation for women's underrepresentation in Hollywood saying,

[T]here was no glass ceiling 75 years ago when women accounted for at least half of those writing for silent films in Hollywood and were among the most highly compensated professionals in the industry. By the time the studio became firmly established in the 1930's, filmmaking

had become centralized and hierarchical. As in other industrial settings, men soon dominated the most important positions on both the business and creative sides. By the end of the decade, many women were employed in low-level jobs such as script clerk, but they accounted for no more than 15 percent of screenwriters. Today men still outnumber women by more than four to one among those writing feature films and by nearly three to one among those writing for television (Bielby & Bielby, 2002, p. 26).

The same can be said of women cinematographers, except the numbers are even lower. Women's liberation movements, governmental equal opportunity employment acts and advances in the science and technology of filmmaking, which decrease the physical strength required to operate equipment, have managed to make very little impact on women's success in cinematography. If women in the early 1900's succeeded in creating motion pictures, why then in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are women still underrepresented as cinematographers in the film industry? Why has a woman never been nominated for an Academy Award in cinematography? Why is this still a topic of discussion in our society that prides itself on forward thinking and progress?

These questions have plagued me personally for many years. After graduating from college and with hopes of becoming a cinematographer myself, I moved to Los Angeles and began looking for work. It was not until this time that I realized how difficult the task was going to be. I was encouraged by my male professors in school and was aware that the technical part of the job would be challenging; however, I was confident in my skills. The reality of the industry began to sink in after attending the American Society of Cinematographer's open house event that occurs each year at their

clubhouse in Los Angeles. This is a prestigious society, and at this event, prominent cinematographers meet publicly with people interested in cinematography. While there, I met a well-known cinematographer who had shot many films I had seen and loved. I was excited to speak with him and hoped to hear something inspirational or encouraging from him. I told him that I hoped to work as a cinematographer someday, and his only comment to me was that I was going to have a very difficult time because I was a petite woman. Reality hit me like a ton of bricks and made me question my career choice.

Upon entering the industry, I was unaware that something I considered such an inspirational art form could be so heavily influenced by society's notions of gender. It was shocking and disheartening. However, despite the obstacles, I managed to work behind the camera on several feature films, granted only by volunteering my time. I worked as a camera assistant as well as a grip/electrician. The work was strenuous but certainly was manageable. My experiences with male crew members were, for the most part, very positive.

Sadly, needing to find more stable work, I eventually left Los Angeles and the industry; however, the passion for cinematography is still deeply rooted within me. I hope someday to return to filmmaking and contribute my visions to the world through films. In the meantime, I am determined to use my experience and knowledge of the film world and of social theory to make an impact on the industry and to help other women with a passion and vision for filmmaking reach their goals.

Alexis Krasilovsky, filmmaker and professor of film in the Department of Cinema and Television Arts at California State University at Northridge, has been fighting for the

rights of women behind the camera for years. She has conducted and/or compiled over ninety interviews with camerawomen from all over the world, documenting their struggles. Building upon Professor Krasilovsky's innovative work, the following research investigates this social phenomenon, looking for factors from a sociological perspective that might be common to the experiences of women cinematographers.

Using twenty-seven interviews from women cinematographers from Canada and the United States collected by Professor Krasilovsky, this study explores the experiences of camerawomen, current and past, in order to identify social obstacles and to search for other factors possibly contributing to women's underrepresentation in this occupation. One goal of this study is to develop hypotheses that may lead to further research and analyses of this problem. Another is to simply call attention to the occupational inequality so heavily etched in the film industry. Hopefully, news of this anomaly will reach the ears of movie lovers, policy makers, other researchers and anyone else who can put herself or himself in the place of a woman who simply wants to contribute her ideas and cultural impressions of the world to the universal stock market of art.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

“From the beginning, cinema was treated as an art form, and that should never be forgotten. Because of the power that cinema possesses, it can affect people’s opinions and perspectives” (Pizzello, 2005, Back Cover).

Cinematographer, Alik Sakharov, ASC

Filmmaking is not only a prominent art form, but it is also one of the most dominant forms of social and cultural exchange. Plights and pleasures of people from the last century and likely for centuries to come were and will be captured and conveyed through screened images. One message often relayed through these images is of triumph over hardship, whether it is a physical hardship like climbing Mount Everest or a psychological challenge like solving a murder. Focusing our attention on the screen, we commit to a journey that leads us into someone else’s world. The social goal is to make us think. Ironically, this influential means of cultural exchange masks a social hardship that exists right behind the camera. For almost one hundred years, men have dominated the field of cinematography. Perhaps it is time to turn the camera off and look at the world from another point of view.

The film industry is unlike other business-related industries with which most people are familiar. “Work” to most is a means to health insurance, vacations and steady income. Workplaces offering these amenities tend to exist under some type of governmental or corporate rules and regulations like equal employment opportunities and minimum wage. Working in the film industry offers few if any of the typical benefits of such businesses; filmmaking is unstable and unpredictable. It has been described as a “tenuous enterprise” that “occurs in a business and technical environment characterized by high stakes, risks, and uncertainty” (Bielby & Bielby, 1996, p. 249). As the author of *The Hollywood Job-Hunter’s Survival Guide*, Hugh Taylor, put it,

The business is complex, and different from other industries, so what you already know will probably be of little use. There is not much you can learn in school—even film school—which will prepare you properly to function in the work environment of the entertainment industry (Taylor, 1993, p. xvi).

Drawing from personal experience, finding work is difficult but finding paid work is an art in and of itself. Non-union or independent films, which are the majority of job options starting out, more times than not require extremely long work hours, sometimes highly unsafe environments and no payment other than your name in the credits. Taylor summed up starting out in Hollywood saying, “The reality of most entry-level jobs in entertainment, assistant or otherwise, is that they are stressful, demeaning, and low-paying” (Taylor, 1993, p. xix). But please do not let these descriptions of the industry

scare you; the rewards are often very much worth the risks. My most memorable and satisfying work experiences to this day came from working on a film set. I offer this comparison between the film industry and other general business industries simply to preface the forthcoming discussion of gender inequality as it relates to the film industry. Most research and writing concerning occupational gender inequality pertain to structures such as academia and corporate industries. In comparison, literature concerning the underrepresentation of women as cinematographers is sparse; subject matter for such literature is hard to find. Therefore, bear in mind that the film world is atypical of most regulated industries. As it has been described, the film business “is not a business. No rules here. Save that candy-striped business for the Wall Street crowd. It is show business. Punching below the belt is not only alright, it’s rewarded” (Alexander, Moore & Huang, 1994).

While the structure of the film industry is unique, gender inequality in general is all too familiar. Research on the subject of occupational gender inequality is fairly abundant, and studies focusing on women's struggles for equality in education and corporate industries offer insight into this cultural problem. However, while sociological studies of commonly recognized male-dominated occupations will answer some questions related to occupational gender inequality, they likely will not address problems specific to the film world. Thankfully, two pioneers have been collecting information and reporting women’s underrepresentation behind the camera for years.

Professor Krasilovsky’s first book on the subject, published in 1997, documents camerawomen’s experiences and is titled *Women Behind the Camera: Conversations*

*with Camerawomen*. Professor Krasilovsky is currently working on the second volume of *Women Behind the Camera* and is producing a documentary on the same subject. Her work is groundbreaking and crucial for those of us searching for answers to this social problem. Without her efforts, decades of historical information would likely have been lost and this research would likely not exist.

Dr. Martha Lauzen, professor of communications at San Diego State University, has been publishing reports on the percentages of women behind the camera in the film industry for approximately ten years. Dr. Lauzen looks at the 250 top grossing U.S. films each year, and in 2005, she reported that women comprised three percent of all cinematographers working on the top 250 films (Lauzen, 2006b, p. 1). The numbers are similar for women working behind the small screen, television. In Dr. Lauzen's 2004-05 report of women behind the scenes in the prime-time season, the findings are just as dim. The study examined "2,419 individuals working behind the scenes on one randomly selected episode of every prime-time drama, situation comedy, and unscripted program airing on the six networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN, WB) during the 2004-05 season" (Lauzen, 2006a, p. 1). Only two percent of women held the position of director of photography on these prime-time programs (Lauzen, 2006a, p. 2).

Dr. Lauzen is very frank and outspoken about the sexism that exists in Hollywood. She stated in an interview that "in Hollywood, 'feminism' is a four-letter word" (Huttner, 2000, p. 1). Those of us interested in the subject try to remain optimistic that the numbers will rise; however, as Dr. Lauzen reminds us, "the real numbers on reel women reveal little change in behind-the-scenes-employment in recent years, suggesting

a protracted evolutionary journey filled with small victories and sustained hope” (Lauzen, 2000, p. 2). Filmmaker, Helena Lumme, stated quite bluntly that “[t]here hasn't been any significant progress in getting more women into the film industry...It's still a boys' town” (Dean, 2002, p. 1). And, in a passage from a text published in 2003 titled *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing*, cinematographer Zoe Dirse, CSC (Canadian Society of Cinematographers), echoed this sentiment saying,

The film industry is a very closed and guarded old boys’ club because of its glamour, its mystique (illustrated by the Marlboro cigarette ads featuring two leather-clad men in cowboy hats straddling a camera dolly), and its high-wage potential. Those of any other ethnicity, class, or gender who dare to break into the ranks must either persevere in the face of rejection, abuse, and intolerance or search out like-minded directors and producers in order to progress in their field (Levitin, Plessis & Raoul, 2003, p. 437).

Before diving headlong into opinions and theories of occupational gender inequality in the film industry, it is important to understand the role of the cinematographer in film productions and the paths one can take to reach this status. One cinematographer explained that “the function of a cinematographer is a very involved one because he [or she] must function in both the artistic area and the mechanical area” (Schaefer & Salvato, 1984, p. 235). Simply stated, “The cinematographer (or director of photography) [also known as DP] executes the director’s vision, lights the scenes, manages the crew and records what happens on film” (Lee, 1998, p. E-1). This is not to say that the DP chooses the set designs and costumes; production designers and wardrobe

personnel handle these tasks. The DP is responsible for the technical aspects related to the look of the film; type of camera and film stock or video format used, lighting, exposure of the film or video, and camera movements and framing, to name a few. The DP collaborates with the director to achieve the film's aesthetic tone. While the director handles the dramatic side of production, directing the actors and making sure the story is captured and constructed properly, the DP oversees the camera and grip/electric crew, making sure the shots are set and prepared for the actors when they arrive on set. One cinematographer characterized the role of a DP as the "CEO of the crew."

Working under the supervision of the DP are the camera operator, the first assistant [1<sup>st</sup> AC], the second assistant [2<sup>nd</sup> AC] and sometimes a film loader. *Wikipedia*, "The Free Encyclopedia" available on the Internet, describes these positions as follows:

The camera operator uses the camera at the direction of the cinematographer...or the film director to capture the scenes on film (Film Crew, 2006, Production: Camera).

The first assistant camera operator (1AC) is responsible for keeping the camera in focus as it is shooting. Since the 1AC is not looking through the camera and cannot see the results of his or her focusing in realtime, this job is considered to be extremely technically difficult. It is also the 1st AC's responsibility to maintain the camera during the duration of the filming period, apply or remove any necessary or unnecessary accessories (such as matte boxes, lens changes, filters, external viewing monitors, video assist devices, etc.), reload the camera (whether with film or video tape) and oversee the 2nd Assistant camera operator and any other members of the camera assist team (including designated loaders and camera production assistants) (Film Crew, 2006, Production: Camera).

The second assistant camera operator (2AC) operates the clapperboard [slate] at the beginning of each take and loads the raw film stock into the camera magazines between takes, if there is no additional specifically designated film loader. The 2AC is also in charge of overseeing the meticulously kept notebooks that records when the film stock is received, used, and sent to the lab for processing. Additionally, the 2nd AC oversees organization of camera equipment and transport of the equipment from one shooting location to another (Film Crew, 2006, Production: Camera).

The loader is the designated film loader. S/he transfer's motion picture film from the manufacturer's light-tight canisters to the camera magazines for attachment to the camera by the 1st AC. After exposure during filming, the loader then removes the film from the magazines and places it back into the light-tight cans for transport to the laboratory. It is the responsibility of the loader to manage the inventory of film and communicate with the 1st AC on the film usage and remaining stock throughout the day. On small production crews, this job is often combined with the 2nd AC. With the prevalence of digital photography, this position is often eliminated (Film Crew, 2006, Production: Camera).

The ladder analogy has been used to convey the notion of progress from one step to the next, culminating with the role of cinematographer; however, in a work titled *Women and Power: Thirty-Seven Case Studies of Women in the Motion Picture and Television Industry* by Arbus, Brickell, Dailey and Dobrow (as cited by Krasilovsky, 1997, p. xxiii), “‘moving up’ to a higher classification is difficult.” It is also possible to climb a different ladder to cinematographer through the electrical department. Rather than working up the ranks as a camera assistant and then camera operator, one would work as a grip or an electrician and eventually as a gaffer, “[t]he chief electrician on the

film crew” (Malekiewicz & Mullen, 2005, p. 241). These positions within the grip/electric department are very labor intensive, and the physical strength required is somewhat more so than for those within the camera department. Regardless of the path, the success rate speaks for itself; women seldom reach their destination.

These descriptions of the film industry and of women’s underrepresentation behind the camera certainly are not comprehensive; however, they provide a context within which to explore this gendered occupation. As most of us probably know, the overarching theme of occupational gender inequality is as follows:

Women tend to be perceived as unsuitable for, and tend to be excluded from, jobs (a) high in authority, such as ownership or high-level management (Wright 1997); (b) requiring physical strength (Bielby&Baron, 1986); (c) requiring blue collar technical skills; (d) including exposure to physical risk or physically uncomfortable working conditions (Kilbourne et al., 1994); or (e) involving authoritative social control, as in much police work (Heidensohn, 1992). On the other hand, women are seen as suitable for, and are more often found in, jobs requiring social skills, such as providing service to clients (Kilbourne, England, Farkas, Beron, & Weir, 1994) (as cited by Erickson, Albanese & Drakulic, 2000, p. 296).

These definitions explain gendered occupational assumptions in terms of social and technical skills; however, absent from these definitions is any reference to artistry. As cinematographer Mario Tosi reminds us, “The creative cinematographer is basically an artist” (Schaefer & Salvato, 1984, p. 235). Perhaps cinematography is distinct due to the fact that it can not be classified simply as an artistic occupation or a technical occupation

but rather, is a combination of both. German philosopher, Walter Benjamin, suggested, “if we think of a filmed action as neatly delineated within a particular situation – like a flexed muscle in a body – it is difficult to say which is more fascinating, its artistic value or its value for science” (Eiland & Jennings, 2003, p. 265). Using Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, which refers to “unconscious orientations that shape taste” and lead “people to ‘naturally’ choose things that fit with their class position” (Silva, 2005, p. 87), I will explore women’s underrepresentation as cinematographers in the film industry from both technical and artistic perspectives.

In terms of technical aptitude, parallels exist between cinematography and other male-dominated occupations, such as construction. For instance, both occupations require technical knowledge of electricity and tools of the trade, brute strength and working in unsafe and physically demanding environments. An established female cinematographer offered the following statement about women in the role of cinematographer, “there’s a fear that decisions we make affect the whole film, and it’s scary [to male producers] because women haven’t been seen as technicians” (Edwards, 1997, p. 5). Men are assumed to be more capable of using tools than women, and society reminds us of this on a fairly regular basis. The image of a woman covered with dirt and donning a tool belt is far from common; however, assumptions are often made about a worker’s knowledge by the tools they possess and how they use them (Pringle & Winning, 1998, p. 221). Research on women working in the construction industry, conducted by Rosemary Pringle and Anne Winning, found that “[i]t is the proper use of tools that is seen to determine a man’s status” (Pringle & Winning, 1998, p. 221).

“Worn, quality tools represent experience while skill is believed to be located in the ability to use those tools in an appropriate way” (Steiger, 1993, p. 538).

Working behind the camera involves quite a bit of technical work. On the camera side, camera assistants are in charge of assembling and breaking down the camera as well as setting up tripods and loading and unloading the film. Most assistants wear a small pouch on their belt and/or have a “ditty bag” that contains the tools (most often some type of a Leatherman with various types of screw drivers, knives, etc.) and other accessories (markers for writing the scene information on the slate, a tape measure to measure distance from the actor to the camera for focusing purposes and a small flashlight for checking the lens and inside the camera for any debris) they will need during the shoot. On the lighting side, grips and electricians handle the set up of flags, dollies, lights, generators and cranes, which sometimes requires the use of electric drills and other hardware. Working as an electrician also requires a strong knowledge of electricity since electricians must sometimes “tie in” to the power at an off-site location in order to get power to the lights. As described in an electronic book available from *Wikipedia* titled *MovieMakingManual*, a “tie-in is a method of tapping directly into the power that feeds from the city power-grid, thereby bypassing the limits of the circuits that are installed in the building. A tie-in is a dangerous activity which requires experience and skill. Improper methods can result in damage to city power-grids and death” (*MovieMaking Manual*, 2006, Production: Technical: Power Sources). Therefore, as you can see, positions behind the camera require knowledge of the tools and equipment used. Women entering a technical field such as cinematography may be viewed with uncertainty

because they do not appear to share the habitus of the trade (Pringle & Winning, 1998, p. 221).

Habitus, as social theorist Pierre Bourdieu explained, is a conditioned scheme of skills and habits we acquire from our environment (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 467). These habits exist in the form of perceptions and dispositions that “generate and organize practices” and act “as a system of cognitive and motivating structures” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53). Simply stated, “The habitus – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53). Crucial to this theoretical notion of habitus is the understanding that these habits and dispositions exist unconsciously to the agent (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 56). As Bourdieu described it, “The body...does not represent what it performs, it does not memorize the past, it enacts the past, bringing it back to life” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 73). Institutions such as the family, the church and the educational system are commonly recognized mechanisms through which these unconscious dispositions are transferred; however, films also provide an institutional outlet for transferring habits and dispositions. Walter Benjamin, suggested that “[i]t is through the camera that we first discover the optical unconscious” (Eiland & Jennings, 2003, p. 266). Elaborating on that notion, he stated,

Even the distracted person can form habits. What is more, the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their performance has become habitual. The sort of distraction that is provided by art represents a covert measure of the extent to which it has become possible to

perform new tasks of apperception. Since, moreover, individuals are tempted to evade such tasks, art will tackle the most difficult and most important tasks wherever it is able to mobilize the masses. It does so currently in film. Reception in distraction – the sort of reception which is increasingly noticeable in all areas of art and is a symptom of profound change in apperception – finds in film its true training ground. Film, by virtue of its shock effects, is predisposed to this form of reception. It makes cult value recede into the background, not only because it encourages an evaluating attitude in the audience but also because, at the movies, the evaluating attitude requires no attention. The audience is an examiner, but a distracted one (Eiland & Jennings, 2003, p. 268-269).

From Benjamin's description, it is evident that film functions, much like the other institutions mentioned above, as a means for the unconscious transference of habits and dispositions. Bourdieu suggested that these dispositions, habitus, are what enable “the institution to attain full realization” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 57) and therefore, are “inseparable from the structures that produce and reproduce them” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 42).

Since cinematographers are instrumental in the creation of films, they are also instrumental in influencing habits and dispositions of those who experience their films. As is the case with all forms of society, human beings constitute these institutions and structures through which these habits are transferred, and are in fact responsible, albeit unconsciously, for the perpetuation of these dispositions (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 85). To borrow a reference from Benjamin, just as “the audience is an examiner, but a distracted one,” members of society are participants, in spite of the fact that they are distracted

(Eiland & Jennings, 2003, p. 268-269). However, due to the fact that these perceptions and practices socially constitute the world around us without our awareness, social change can not occur simply through recognition and confrontation of the issues at hand.

One such issue is that of occupational gender inequality. Common sense and ample research indicate that men and women are socialized differently. From outward image to internalized beliefs and habits, men and women are raised diametrically opposing each other. According to Bourdieu, with these biological and cultural differences as the foundation, relational genders (male and female) are “constructed as two hierarchized social essences” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 22-23) that are “based upon masculine properties and order” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 5). The symbolic power of this masculine domination is “exerted invisibly and insidiously” through a symbolically structured system of domination (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 38). Both women (the dominated) and men (the dominant) perform the unconscious actions through which this masculine-ordered system persists; therefore, the “dominated, often unwittingly, sometimes unwillingly, contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting the limits imposed” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 38).

Masculine domination, as it applies to occupational structures, acts through three practical principles. First, “the functions appropriate to women are an extension of their domestic function – education, care and service” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 94). The late Janet Saltzman Chafetz, professor of sociology at the University of Houston, agreed with Bourdieu saying, “When women assume nondomestic work roles...when possible, they disproportionately choose those most involved with nurturance and helping others (e.g.,

teaching, nursing, social work, clerical jobs that involve personal services and emotional support for bosses)” (Chafetz, 1990, p. 76). Second, “a woman cannot have authority over men, and, other things being equal, therefore has every likelihood of being passed over in favour of a man for a position of authority and of being confined to subordinate and ancillary functions” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 94). Third, “men have the monopoly of the handling of technical objects and machines” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 94). Since our perceptions and practices are influenced by gender, then consciously or unconsciously, men may be more prone to seek out authoritative and technical occupations and women more prone to disassociate themselves with these occupations.

Unfortunately, for women attempting to gain employment in technical occupations, “Some of the essential skills are never explicitly taught because they are thought to be already part of the ‘habitus’ of the working man” (Pringle & Winning, 1998, p. 221). Hugh Taylor made an important point about breaking into the film industry. He stated that “[w]ithout the benefit of an institution offering formal training in assistantship, you will be expected to drop right in and start performing” (Taylor, 1993, p. xix). If that is the case, women are likely ill-prepared for the technical aspects of camera work. How can women obtain the technical skills that men presumably already possess without some type of training or mentoring program? And, if women do find some way to acquire the requisite technical skills, will they then be on even footing with men in terms of opportunities for work? Another social factor might play a part in answering this question.

Bourdieu suggested that as we move through social and institutional structures, we acquire capital, not just economic capital such as “money and material objects that can be used to produce goods and services” but social, cultural and symbolic capital (Turner, 1998, p. 512). “Social capital refers to opportunity” and “is a quality created between people” (Burt, 1998, p. 7). Cultural capital consists of “informal interpersonal skills, habits, manners, linguistic styles, educational credentials, tastes, and lifestyles” (Turner, 1998, p. 512). Symbolic capital refers to “the use of symbols to legitimate the possession of varying levels and configurations of the other three types of capital” (Turner, 1998, p. 512). As Bourdieu suggested, these types of capital we acquire influence our habitus and manifest themselves in our likes and dislikes or “taste” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 232-233). We seek out others with similar “taste” and form social networks. In the film industry, these social networks are crucial for success. An article discussing gender inequality and writers in the entertainment industry noted that “women writers are disadvantaged by limited access to informal networks” (Bielby & Bielby, 1992, p. 372). “In the male-dominated world of studio and network executives, male writers [and similarly male cinematographers] are better known and are perceived as better risks than equally successful female writers” and in this case, female cinematographers (Bielby & Bielby, 1992, p. 382).

The American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) is an important means of association for cinematographers working in the United States. The ASC was formed in 1919 by a group of Hollywood cameramen and is founded upon the following ideals: loyalty, progress and artistry (ASC, 2006, [home page]). Prestige is bestowed upon

cinematographers who are members of this organization and much legitimacy is derived from simply having the three letters, ASC, behind your name in a film's credits. It is important to note that "[l]ike a fraternity – and unlike Hollywood's major guilds – potential members are admitted only if recommended or 'sponsored' by three active or retired members" (Anderson & Chagollan, 2006, p. A1). Currently, there are "seven females among the ASC's 291 members" (Anderson & Chagollan, 2006, p. A1). According to past ASC president, Richard Crudo, there have only been seven or eight women invited to join the organization (R. Crudo, personal communication, July 2006). Standing true to the first ideal of the ASC, it appears that cameramen are a loyal bunch; loyal, that is, to their own kind.

In an article published in *The Hollywood Reporter* in 2002, the reporter asked the then-president of the American Society of Cinematographers, Steven Poster, what was being done to bring more women into the field (Holben, 2002, p. S-2). Mr. Poster responded, "That is something that is changing. We have 196 active members in the ASC, and six are women. Every woman cinematographer that we can identify at this point and who has a recognizable body of work is currently in this club if they want to be in it" (Holben, 2002, p. S-2). The same question was fielded to George Spiro Dibley, who at the time was national president of the International Cinematographers Guild (IATSE 600). He replied:

Don't blame the ASC or the union for lack of women cinematographers. We must look to the people who hire and fire in the industry: producers. There are a lot of

women who are qualified to be cinematographers, but nobody gives them a break. I have spoken to many producers—many of them women—who feel that women aren't qualified for the position: 'It's a man's set.' That's foolish. But the ASC and the ICG are working to change that as much as we can (Holben, 2002, p. S-2).

Currently, there are no programs supporting women cinematographers affiliated with the ASC. The ICG has developed a Diversity Committee, with cinematographer Kristin Glover as the chairperson, to “implement the 'Anti-Discrimination and Harassment - Free Workplace Policy'” that “makes it very clear that we [the ICG] will not tolerate any form of unlawful harassment” (Dunham, Retrieved 2006). Additionally, “the Diversity Committee's focus is on ways to encourage greater diversity in hiring within the local. In the works are a series of community outreach groups to bring men and women into Local 600 from varied ethnic backgrounds” (Dunham, Retrieved 2006).

However, if women currently are not included in these social and occupational networks, how will recommendations come about? As one female cinematographer explained, “For women to get jobs they need to be able to show examples of their work, but they need to be employed in order to create that work. Since there is no network for women (as there is for men) in the industry, this can be a real obstacle” (Levitin, Plessis & Raoul, 2003, p. 438). Keep in mind that, as another female cinematographer reminds us, “we probably don't even know who half of them [women shooting now] are because we're not seeing their work” (Lewison, 2003, p. 47). Women who are shooting films are most likely working in the low budget, independent world which often means their films

are not screened nationally. However, even if a woman cinematographer does gain some recognition for a film she shot, will she be considered equally for other open positions?

One female cinematographer would probably answer no to that question:

Joey Forsythe found that her first name got her interviews—only interviews. ‘I went for one interview, and the producer called me after it was over. He said, ‘I hate to tell you that until you walked in the door, this director was going to hire you.’ There have probably been a half-dozen times where somebody has called me to tell me that, which is a courageous thing to do because it’s not legal’ (Lewison, 2003, p. 47).

In the corporate world, the abuse of power is often addressed through sanctions and quotas; however, in the film industry a system of checks and balances appears to be missing. “Subjectivity, immunity from review, stereotypes and cliques are part of the context in which Hollywood executives make decisions about hiring” (Bielby & Bielby, 2002, p. 21). Those on top tend to suffer no repercussions for transgressions, such as discrimination, that in other industries would not be tolerated. As one writer explained,

Poor management is endemic to the entertainment industry. It’s not that entertainment executives are genetically bad managers; it is simply a necessary by-product of the haphazard way business is transacted. Many structures and partnerships are short-lived. Production companies are established and disbanded in the same year. A new president takes over the studio and everyone leaves (Taylor, 1993, p. xx).

It could be argued that with this continuous turnover in studio personnel the chances for women to step in and take over should be fairly abundant; however, these studio structures are embedded within the larger film industry. It has been suggested that “[a]s filmmaking became industrialized and rationalized, men dominated key roles in corporate channels of production, distribution, and exhibition” (Bielby & Bielby, 1996, p. 265).

According to past research, the entertainment industry has a “highly skewed sex ratio” where “the network executives who make decisions about program procurement and scheduling and those at the production companies who make decisions about financing new projects are almost always white males” (Bielby & Bielby, 1992, p. 371).

I contacted a member of the American Society of Cinematographers with whom I worked and asked for his input on the subject of women working behind the camera. I asked, from the vantage point of a member of the ASC, if he thought there was something preventing women from becoming cinematographers. He commented,

I know from my film school days that my incoming class was about half female, but fewer women were interested in cinematography. Probably due to a lack of role models and the pushiness of some of the men to fill those positions in film school. And I’m sure there is some resistance by some in hiring female DP’s for whatever reasons – maybe white male directors (the majority) feel more comfortable with white male DP’s (Anonymous, personal communication, 2004).

As research shows, gender is “a powerful basis of similarity, common culture, and attraction” which leads some to think that “people can work most effectively with those of the same gender” (Erickson, Albanese & Drakulic, 2000, p. 297). In an article posted on Variety.com in February 2006, the president of the ASC, Richard Crudo, boasted,

Writers? Forget about it: they can't stand each other.  
Directors? They're petty, jealous and hate each others guts.  
You won't see that with *us*. You get a group of *cameramen*  
together – disparate *guys* from all over the country, all over  
the world – and there's immediate affection for each other.  
And a respect for the work *we* all do (Anderson &  
Chagollan, 2006, p. A1, [italics added]).

One female cinematographer, interviewed for a work titled *Women and Power: Thirty-Seven Case Studies of Women in the Motion Picture and Television Industry* by Arbus, Brickell, Dailey and Dobrow (as cited by Krasilovsky, 1997, p. xxiii), stated, “Male crew members have had their ideas about ‘women’s place’ reinforced by their experiences, by the long-standing tradition of all-male crews. Most are not used to dealing with women on the set, let alone recognizing them as equals, peers, colleagues.”

Overall, women attempting to enter key roles in the industry likely are evaluated according to “organizational definitions of competence and leadership...still predicated on traits stereotypically associated with men; tough, aggressive, decisive” (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000, p. 2). Bourdieu suggested that in order for a woman to succeed in a male-dominated occupation she would need to do the following:

[P]ossess not only what is explicitly demanded by the job description, but also a whole set of properties which the male occupants normally bring to the job – a physical stature, a voice, or dispositions such as aggressiveness, self-assurance,...natural authority, etc., for which men have been tacitly prepared and trained as men (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 62).

Many approaches to gender inequality assume that

[S]tereotypical masculine traits must be emulated. Self-help books train women to minimize their deficiencies (meaning that they are not men) and focus on what women can do rather than how the workplace, men, and stereotypes can be altered. They imply that women will succeed in time through traditional masculine behavior (Buzzanell, 1995, p. 330).

Again, referencing my personal experience working in the film industry, when I arrived in Los Angeles after graduating from college, I had long hair and often wore it pulled back with a bow and dressed somewhat femininely. (See Figure 1).



Figure 1: On the Set of *loser*, Summer 1994

After working on one feature film, I cut my hair off and tried to dress more ruggedly, wearing dull colors and jeans most of the time. (See Figure 2).



Figure 2: On the Set of *Glory Daze*, Fall 1994

It was not a conscious decision at the time, but reflecting on it, I did not want to stand out or call attention to myself because there was already enough attention paid to me since I was a petite girl working behind the camera with all of the guys. I felt that to some degree my appearance seemed to at least convey to the other crew members that I was there to work hard and get dirty; it gave me some legitimacy.

Patrice Buzzanell, professor of communication at Purdue University, suggested that the culture of these male-dominated occupations must allow varied talent and

leadership styles to emerge. Women working within male-dominated organizations and according to men's rules will experience a minimization in their unique potential and will call themselves into question when by-passed for promotions (Buzzanell, 1995, p. 347). She also stated, "[T]here is no corporate answer because the reason lies in what they are not and cannot ever be—it lies in their sex, in language that continually relegates women's interests secondary to those of men, and in gendered workplace and social relationships" (Buzzanell, 1995, p. 347).

Women's efforts at adapting, in fact, reinforce the structure of male domination; therefore, acquiring cultural capital according to male standards is not the answer. As Patricia Inman suggested,

Success for women lies not in adaptation to a foreign reality, as has been suggested in past strategies for breaking the glass ceiling. Rather, power resides in that which is unique to each individual—a collection of diverse gifts formerly denied. This is especially true for women whose gendered voice is often silenced. These recommendations fly in the face of strategies of accommodation (Inman, 1998, p. 36).

Simply, women's unique talents and visions should be embraced rather than erased. As two authors discussed in *Women, Gender and Work: What is equality and how do we get there?*, a compilation of twenty-two articles published in the *International Labor Review* between 1996 and 2000,

There will always be social and institutional constructs around what is male and what is female, but they need not be unequal in value...To respect the equal worth of persons is, among other things, to promote their ability to fashion a life in accordance with their own view of what is deepest and most important (Loutfi, 2001, p. 4, 46).

That which is most important to many working behind the camera is realizing their visual expressions through film and contributing to the world of art. As noted above, habitus, cultural capital and gender play important roles in women's struggle for equality as cinematographers; however, one factor that seems to get lost when discussing occupations is the artistic skill needed. The look and the feel of the film are in the hands of the cinematographer. Peter Pau, a cinematographer from China, was asked during an interview for CNN why he thought there were still so few women cinematographers. He responded,

I don't know why (laughing). Because I think women are very sensitive. Don't think of cinematography as always technical. I don't think of myself so technical. It is art. It is like how you paint a picture. The painter...there are lots of female painters. I mean there is no limitation on how you paint a picture...the imagination (Pau, 2001).

Certainly it is necessary to understand how to use the tools of the trade; however, it is equally important to have artistic talent and creativity. Another well-respected cinematographer offered his perspective on shooting a film:

For me, it's [photography is] writing with light in the sense that I'm trying to express something that is inside of me. With my sensibility, my structure, my cultural background, I'm trying to express what I really am. I am trying to describe the story of the film through the light. I try to have a parallel story to the actual story so that through light and color you can feel and understand, consciously and unconsciously, much more clearly what the story is about (Schaefer & Salvato, 1984, p. 220-221).

Unfortunately, the artistic side of the cinematographer, which is often the driving force behind pursuing such a profession, is overshadowed by other factors such as assumptions about technical ability, socialization of what is considered appropriate for men versus women, social capital and networks, and the struggle for power and acceptance. Prior to becoming a cinematographer, one woman worked in construction, which is not considered an artistic occupation, and found that “the male-chauvinistic construction industry was much more open to women” than the film industry (Lewison, 2003, p. 46). Perhaps the combination of artistic aptitude and technical know-how influences occupational gender segregation to some degree?

Walter Benjamin, addressed the crossover of art and science in his influential article, *Work of Art in the Age of Reproducibility*, stating that filmmaking “tends to foster the interpenetration of art and science” (Eiland & Jennings, 2003, p. 265). He also suggested that “one of the revolutionary functions of film will be” demonstrating that “the artistic uses of photography are identical to its scientific uses – these two dimensions having usually been separated until now” (Eiland & Jennings, 2003, p. 265). Critical

theorist, Theodor Adorno, provided a different perspective, stating, “Art is not an arbitrary cultural complement to science, but, rather, stands in critical tension to it” (Adorno, 1997, p. 231). Whether art and science complement or oppose each other is an important discussion; however, there has been debate since the birth of cinema as to whether or not filmmaking can even be considered art. Some argue that capturing images on film is simply a reproduction of the natural world and should not be classified as art. Adorno, made a profound statement countering this argument saying, “There is no aesthetic refraction without something being refracted; no imagination without something imagined” (Adorno, 1997, p. 4). In other words, everything comes from something. Rudolf Arnheim also argued against the notion of film as simply reproducing nature saying, “Film resembles painting, music, literature, and the dance in this respect -- it is a medium that may, but need not, be used to produce artistic results” (Arnheim, 1957, p. 8). In the following passage, Walter Benjamin compared film and painting stating,

In painting, the way from reality to the picture lies via the artist's eye and nervous system, his hand and, finally, the brush that puts the strokes on canvas. The process is not mechanical as that of photography, in which the light rays reflected from the object are collected by a system of lenses and are then directed into a sensitive plate where they produce chemical changes. Does this state of affairs justify our denying photography and film a place in the temple of the Muses? (Arnheim, 1957, p. 9).

Film is a versatile medium that meets society's needs for, among other things, documentation and communication; however, from film's inception, filmmakers “began

consciously or unconsciously to cultivate the peculiar possibilities of cinematographic technique and to apply them toward the creation of artistic productions” (Arnheim, 1957, p. 35). Adorno pointed out that the “discovery of the gestalt school,” which led to the notion that the whole of something is different than the sum of its parts (Behrens, 1998, p. 299), fits the idea that the work of art is not simply “an imitation or selective duplication of reality but a translation of observed characteristics into the forms of a given medium” (Arnheim, 1957, p. 3). As Benjamin pointed out, “Film can be characterized not only in terms of man's presentation of himself to the camera but also in terms of his representation of his environment by means of this apparatus” (Eiland & Jennings, 2003, p. 265). A filmmaker does not carelessly turn on a camera, disregarding the eyepiece, and randomly capture the world as it is. Cinematographers, directors and all those involved in the production of a film direct a great deal of energy toward the look and feel of the film. As cinematographer, Salvatore Totino, described it, “We [the director and the cinematographer] talk about the meaning of the shots, and how we are going to use light, camera angles and shadows” (Pizzello, 2006, Back Cover). Creating meaning through images is one very important goal of filmmaking.

The viewer's opinion of film as social commentary, simple entertainment or a work of art matters little to the arguments proposed within this paper. Film is socially, technically and artistically distinct from any other form of communication in our world. The creator of the film holds the power of the medium since she or he has the ability to influence the habitus of every individual who experiences that film. As Benjamin stated, “Defining the significance of an artwork...amounts to determining a distinctive capability

of the artwork -- namely its ability to make the period of its production accessible to the most remote and alien epochs – in terms of the history of its influence” (Eiland & Jennings, 2003, p. 121). Due to the power of cinema's influence, and the fact that women are systematically denied access to the means of its creation, the masculine domination that exists in the film industry must be addressed not only for the sake of occupational gender equality but for the sake of social equality. Cinematographer, Zoe Dirse, articulated best what I strive for by studying women's underrepresentation as cinematographers. She stated in an interview,

I believe it is crucial for women to take control of their art (and, in my case, of the cinematic images that show the world who we are) in order to subvert patriarchal assumptions concerning gender. If, in fact, the female gaze is almost absent from dominant culture, then the challenge is to change the patriarchal way of looking by imposing the female gaze on our cultural life (Levitin, Plessis & Raoul, 2003, p. 445).

Hopefully, the forthcoming qualitative analysis of a group of camerawomen's experiences in the industry will offer some insight into how women can gain some control of the art of cinematography and in doing so, perhaps change the world.

CHAPTER III  
OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES

Procedures for Collecting Data

In March of 2001 I attended a conference for women cinematographers held at Chapman University in California. One of the speakers was Alexis Krasilovsky, professor of film at California State University at Northridge. She had written a book entitled, *Women Behind the Camera: Conversations with Camerawomen*, and as far as I knew, it was one of the only pieces of literature published at the time focusing on women cinematographers' experiences. The book documents the stories of twenty-three individuals and their paths to becoming camerawomen. I spoke with Professor Krasilovsky at the conference and explained that I hoped to study women cinematographers for my thesis. She mentioned that she was interviewing women for a documentary she was producing of the same title as her book, as well as for volume number two of *Women Behind the Camera: Conversations with Camerawomen*, and offered to let me use her interviews for my analysis.

Professor Krasilovsky sent me the list of interview questions she was using for the books and documentary, and they captured exactly what I needed for my thesis. She addressed issues ranging from education, training and organizational affiliations to challenges in terms of work and personal issues, such as discrimination and childcare.

Each of the interviewees signed a consent form allowing Professor Krasilovsky to use her interview in volumes one and two of *Women Behind the Camera* and/or in her upcoming documentary on the same subject. Attached to this document are copies of the interview questions and a copy of the consent form the interviewees signed.

Professor Krasilovsky was an early member of an organization, Women Behind the Lens: An Association of Professional Camerawomen, established in New York, and through this group, mainly by “word of mouth,” she learned of and met many of the women she eventually interviewed. Her interviews included most of the prominent women who have worked or still are working as cinematographers or camerawomen in the United States and Canada. As the project grew, she discovered more women cinematographers through journals, networking and Internet research. I assisted Professor Krasilovsky in gathering information about past and present camerawomen through Internet and library resources. The majority of the interviews were conducted face-to-face by Professor Krasilovsky or one of her colleagues.

Research and networking are keys to Professor Krasilovsky's success in finding and interviewing so many women from all over the world, although the data set used in this analysis contains only camerawomen from the United States and Canada. Hopefully, future research will be conducted including an international component; having international perspectives will be extremely beneficial for comparing differences and similarities across cultures.

### Research Design: Methodology

The data set used in this analysis consists of twenty-seven interviews with camerawomen from the United States and Canada, which were conducted and compiled by Professor Alexis Krasilovsky for her book and documentary about women working behind the camera. By coding and exploring these interviews, I uncovered themes concerning camerawomen's experiences breaking into the film industry and attempting to work their way up through the system. In addition, I explored experiences of historical pioneers, like Alice Guy Blaché, in order to look for changes in the film and industry over time.

Qualitative exploration is an appropriate means of research for this topic due first of all, to the lack of quantitative data available and secondly, due to the nature of the business where each path to success is unique and dependent upon personal encounters and experiences. Contrary to most quantitative analyses, rather than narrowing the focus to a specific cause or explanation, qualitative research searches for and incorporates into the analyses causes from any and all directions in order to open doors of discovery (Becker, 1998, p. 214-215).

The method of discovery and analysis I used for this qualitative study, referred to as grounded theory, is “‘a detailed grounding by systematically’ and intensively ‘analyzing data, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of the field note, interview, or other document; by ‘constant comparison,’ data are extensively collected and coded. The focus of analysis is not merely on collecting or ordering ‘a mass of data, but on organizing many ideas which have emerged from analysis of the data’” (Strauss,

1987, p. 23). This methodology “was designed to help researchers elicit and analyze qualitative data to identify important categories in the material with the aim of generating ideas and theory 'grounded' in the data” (Burck, 2005, p. 244) regardless of whether the researcher generates the data her or himself or grounds the work in data collected by others (Strauss, 1987, p. 6, 26). Basing this research on the tenets of grounded theory, which is rooted in the notion “that theory at various levels of generality is indispensable for deeper knowledge of social phenomena,” I looked for emergent themes as I coded and investigated the data (Strauss, 1987, p. 6).

Howard Becker suggested that qualitative analysis was created for a different purpose than quantitative analysis, and that purpose is to consider connections between people, things and characteristics concerning certain complex historical events (Becker, 1998, p. 213). Simply stated, some researchers argue that “[m]acro-data...say little about daily life” (Krefting, 2003, p. 264). Randall Collins echoed this concern for studying groups solely on a macro level and proposed a shift in sociological research. He stated,

In social science, we generally accord the status of objective reality to statistics (e.g., the distribution of income, occupations, education); yet ethnographic observations are richer and more immediate empirical data. My argument is that microsituational data has conceptual priority. [For example,] [o]ccupational prestige can only be realistically understood if we can survey situations of occupational encounters and judge the actual situational stratification which takes place. The point is that we will not know with any high degree of plausibility until we shift our conceptual gestalt, away from accepting macroaggregate data as inherently objective, and toward the translation of all social phenomena as a distribution of microsituations (Collins,

2000, p. 19).

Quantitative analyses are certainly valuable to our study of society; however, a researcher's method of data collection and analysis, whether it is qualitative or quantitative, should be determined by the subject and the desired results rather than by the simple fact that structures exist for employing one but not the other. I also submit an unsophisticated, yet powerful, argument for the use of qualitative data in researching the underrepresentation of women as cinematographers. If so few women cinematographers exist, how can we discount experiences of those who do exist simply because their numbers are small? Perhaps this is why so few sociological studies have been conducted on this subject; the N was too small.

## Research Design: Coding

Each of the twenty-seven interviews was downloaded electronically as a separate text document. After several passes of the data, I created a spreadsheet to log common themes. The following categories emerged:

### General Background;

Reported Country – USA or Canada

### Education/Training;

Reported Studying Film in College – Yes or No

Reported Studying Photography in College – Yes or No

Reported that Male Professors Were Unsupportive/Discouraging/Sexist – Yes or No

Reported that Professors (Male or Female) Were Supportive – Yes or No

Reported Participating in Camera Assistant Training Program – Yes or No

Reported Being Trained or Working for Studio D/National Film Board of Canada – Yes or No

Reported the Lack of Training/Mentoring – Yes or No

### Organizations/Affiliations;

Reported Being a Member of One of the Unions (IATSE or NABET) – Yes or No

Reported Being a Member of Behind The Lens/ Women In Film/Feminist Video Collective – Yes or No

Reported Being a Member of the American Society of Cinematographers – Yes or No

Reported Being a Member of the Canadian Society of Cinematographers – Yes or No

### Types of Film Work;

Reported Working in Documentaries – Yes or No

Reported Working in News – Yes or No

Reported Working in Independent Film – Yes or No

### Family Support;

Reported Having Family in the Business – Yes or No

Reported Family Members Were Unsupportive – Yes or No

Reported Family Members Were Supportive – Yes or No

### Work Environment;

Reported Experiencing Sexism/Hostility/Discrimination – Yes or No

Reported No Women/Only Woman/Very Few Women On Set – Yes or No

Reported Experiencing Sabotage – Yes or No

Reported Trying to Fit in with Guys (Appearance, Actions) – Yes or No

Reported that People on Crew Assumed She Slept with Someone to Get Job – Yes or No

Negative Experiences;

Reported Being Afraid of Being Blacklisted – Yes or No

Reported Not Getting a Job Because She is a Woman – Yes or No

Reported Getting a Job Because She is a Woman – Yes or No

Reported Because She is a Woman Her Ability Was Questioned – Yes or No

Reported Because She is a Woman She Was Not Taken Seriously – Yes or No

Reported that Her Strength Questioned – Yes or No

Reported Not Being Able to Cry/ Show Emotions on Set – Yes or No

Positive Experiences;

Reported Being Hired/ Given Opportunities by Men – Yes or No

Reported that Dancing Influenced Work – Yes or No

Opinions;

Reported More Jobs for Women in Independent Film World – Yes or No

Reported Having Women on Crew Was Important to Balance on Set – Yes or No

Reported Opportunities/ Lack of or Important – Yes or No

Mentions Affirmative Action – Yes or No

Mentions Glass Ceiling – Yes or No

Reported that Because She is a Woman Made Less Money – Yes or No

Reported that Guys Like Having Women on Set – Yes or No

Reported Women Doubt Themselves More than Men/ Don't Assume Can Do the Job –  
Yes or No

Reported that Female Producers/ Directors Were Afraid to Hire Female DP – Yes or No

Reported that LA/NY/Film in General Male-Dominated – Yes or No

Mentions Glass Ceiling Exists – Yes or No

Suggested that Others Follow Your Passion/ Do Work You Love – Yes or No

The frequencies were tallied and results were drawn according to the emergent categories.

CHAPTER IV  
REPORT OF DATA

Opportunities

Although the majority of the twenty-seven interviewees reported discrimination, sexism and hostile work environments, many of the subjects also spoke fondly of their career paths and emphasized the positive aspects of being a female cinematographer. Many reported that due to their career choice they were afforded opportunities to travel and experience cultures they otherwise likely would never have known. Several of the camerawomen worked in war zones, while others covered social issues such as women's oppression in Afghanistan. Their journeys took them to China, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Egypt, Russia, Nepal, Albania, Kenya, Liberia, Haiti, Lebanon, Vietnam and El Salvador, among others. One interviewee mentioned that as a woman she never thought she “would have a life like this.” Another spoke of “meeting new people and having new experiences.” One woman, while discussing seeing places she never would have seen, described her career as “a really remarkable opportunity.”

Many of the subjects also expressed the satisfaction they experience using their creativity behind the camera, capturing images and conveying stories of others. For example, one female cinematographer said, “I love to make beautiful images and tell stories visually.” Another spoke of the “essential need to express and create,” and others discussed their love of capturing the movement and light within the frame. One woman described her experience behind the camera saying, “When I put my eye to the

viewfinder, I allow the world to fall away around me.” Another explained that “[w]hen I’m framed up and the camera whirrs reassuringly next to my ear, the action begins, the composition forms, the clouds move, and the light changes—there my magic occurs, instinctively framing, selectively containing the moment as it unfolds.” Yet another stated, “I just love the play of light and movement. I love images...and being any part of a visual process is really gratifying.” Several of the women spoke of their passion for cinematography and encouraged young women entering the profession to follow their own passions and fight for their rights in the industry. One woman advised, “You have to follow your dream. You have to believe that you can accomplish the things you want to accomplish.” Another reminded us that “[w]e have to be aggressive. We have to push to make things happen.”

### Starting Out

Over half of the subjects studied film or photography in college, and of those, seventeen percent reported blatant sexism and lack of encouragement on the parts of male professors teaching film classes. One cinematographer recalled her professor commenting, “Why should I teach you how to work the camera? Because you're a girl, and you're never going to get hired anyway.” Another woman had a professor who “asserted in front of large groups of people that women could not do cinematography.” A few of the women mentioned that, although they did not experience blatant discrimination while in school, as soon as they stepped into the industry itself, they were surprised at the sexism and harassment they encountered and felt unprepared to deal with

such situations. One woman described her experience entering the broadcast news industry. She recalled, “I had been working in college campuses, and we're all artists and hippies and I came to New York and all of a sudden...these were real jobs, and this was big time business and they were very hostile in general. They, you know, made me very much feel like an outsider.” Frankly speaking, another camerawoman said, “once you get out in the industry, it's not supportive.” Yet another recalled, “It wasn't until I was out in the professional world, trying to get involved in camera work, that I started realizing that I was trying to enter an extremely male-dominated profession, and that if I wanted to do it, it wasn't going to be easy.”

A major hurdle for anyone entering the industry is gaining experience. Most often, newcomers are expected to work for free in order to gain the necessary training, regardless of college education. One female cinematographer explained,

People come to Hollywood from other states, other countries with the attitude of, 'I don't know. I need to learn. I have to pay dues.' They expect to be abused in exchange for learning. There is always somebody new to put up with that.

The reasoning behind “paying your dues” is that, in theory, someone eventually takes notice and hires you for a paying job or you obtain enough working days to join the union. However, many of the women discussed the hardships and frustrations they faced while trying to gain the necessary experience and “pay their dues.” One woman said, “I trained without pay for approximately two years.” Another interviewee stated,

I became very frustrated because the only jobs that were offered me as a director of photography were always jobs where I was asked to work for free. And, at one point, I considered a business card that said director of photography shooting for free since 1977. You know, funny but not funny. And I think that in looking back on it and talking to a lot of my women colleagues, I know that the men get asked to work for free too, but I don't think they get asked to work for free for twenty years...I don't think people are still coming to them in droves asking them to do everything for nothing.

Several of the women described starting out in the industry as a “Catch-22” since you must work to get the training or the days needed to get into the union, yet many women are having trouble getting hired in the first place. The problem according to one female cinematographer quite simply is that “[p]eople won't hire you until someone else has hired you, so who's the first person?” One camerawoman offered her opinion saying, “I felt like two things...one was I wasn't given the opportunity and the training. And the other thing I felt was that I was full of fear to make mistakes, and I noticed the guys would just...make mistakes and keep going. And the only way you learn is by doing it and making mistakes.” Along these same lines, one woman mentioned, “I didn't have a childhood where somebody brought me up taking things apart and putting them back together, because only boys did that. It was fascinating to me, but I also felt like I had to catch up to where the guys are.” Another stated quite frankly that the “[f]irst couple of years were hell.” Yet another woman, commenting on her time spent at one of the major networks, stated, “I felt that I was in a battle zone everyday just going to work.”

And even after some women have the experience and union membership, the jobs still tend to go to men. One woman said,

The guys tend to get work more often. They work more consistently...we're called as a last choice even if we're considered competent. We're still at the lower end of the list of people who get called to do the work. And thereby, you don't get to do the work so you don't get to develop your skills. So you never get to attain a level of accomplishment that the guys do, and then sadly, the guys can turn and say...see, she's not as good as we are. Well, why would you be? You haven't had the opportunity to practice. So, it...it's a very, very difficult road to walk because you have to show up and you have to be as competent as they are, as good as they are. And maybe you're not always because you just haven't had the opportunity to do that work.

### Organizations

Many of the women expressed the need for more training and mentoring opportunities, and at certain points in time, groups of women started organizing to deal with some of the problems. One woman recalled,

We discussed the need for some sort of more organized group that would meet on a somewhat regular basis that would give us some credibility. That we could support each other in the process of gaining skills and also because of our numbers, because of our gathering together and being a group, we could ask...equipment houses to give us demonstrations or to give us some sort of training that you wouldn't necessarily be able to ask for if you were just one, two or three people.

Several groups formed in order to provide opportunities for women to gain training and career preparation. Organizations such as Behind the Lens, Women in Film and Studio D, a woman's studio affiliated with the National Film Board in Montreal, Canada, were mentioned quite often as not only being places where women could share stories and frustrations but also a means of gaining training and information. These groups provided solidarity and legitimacy for women struggling to succeed in the field of cinematography.

Unfortunately, most of these organizations no longer exist. Behind the Lens was dissolved and Studio D lost funding. Women in Film still operates but is not specifically directed toward camerawomen; however, as one female cinematographer stated, “Women in Film also helps members with health insurance and insurance plans. It's a great resource.”

### Finding Work

In terms of finding employment opportunities, seventy percent of the interviewees reported working on documentaries. With lower budgets, often gender-specific content requiring a female camera operator, smaller crews and more flexibility in terms of shooting schedules and overall production value, documentaries provide a wealth of work for camerawomen. Similarly, the women in this study reported having more luck finding work in the independent film world rather than in the studio system. One woman stated, “I think it is still probably easier to find a movie to shoot as a female cinematographer in the independent film world, and chances are there are some pretty interesting stories out there.” Certainly, the down side is much lower salaries than compared with studio

productions, as is the case with documentary filmmaking, and also often rushed, stressful shooting schedules.

Several women spoke openly about the discrimination they faced from the larger studios. One woman commented, “sometimes I feel that we, women, have a much more difficult time getting in it [the big studio film system].” Even with powerful names recommending some of these women for work, the studios were not open to having a female cinematographer running a big budget set. One woman explained the problem saying, “It's accepted that women in front of the camera have power. Star power. But behind the camera, the common euphemism for DP is 'leader of men.' A woman calling the shots is naturally emasculating in an industry based on insecurity.” Another recounted that a well-known actor “was about to produce and star in a huge, huge Hollywood film comedy...Eighty-five, ninety days...way over 100 million.” The actor took the female cinematographer's reel to the studio to recommend her for the job, and the cinematographer reported that “the studio wouldn't meet me.” The same cinematographer mentioned that this is somewhat ironic because it seems that after working on such a tight budget and short shooting schedules, cinematographers in the independent world would likely be better prepared to work on a larger budget film where money is not an issue and the shooting time is sometimes double that of what they are used to having. Regardless, very few women are afforded the opportunity to work as a director of photography, also referred to as “CEO of the crew,” on big budget films.

## Unions

One factor contributing to camerawomen's struggles to gain employment is acceptance into the unions. As one camerawoman stated, "When the union came in, women were forced out. Unions have a male dominated hierarchy." Another woman described the union as being "closed with iron doors surrounding it." Upon entering the industry, she also admitted, "I was really naïve. I didn't understand the power of the "system." While most of the women in this study managed to gain membership in IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States and Canada) and/or NABET (National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians), several discussed the obstacles they encountered when trying to gain entry into the unions. Some discussed the intimidation they felt being surrounded by nothing but men during their tests or interviews, and one woman stated, "When I got in for a test, I heard a lot of discriminatory remarks." Several talked of working for years to gain entry and even having to file lawsuits of discrimination. One camerawoman commented that the unions "were too discriminatory, not just against women but against all non-whites as well." Several women also mentioned being accepted into the union or receiving employment through television stations as a direct result of affirmative action. One cinematographer said, "I think that I am a pure product of affirmative action."

Around the time of affirmative action, one of the unions offered a camera assistant training program where, after passing a test and an interview, a small group of people were selected. These people were trained, placed into jobs working on

professional sets and granted membership in the union (upon paying the union dues).

One camerawoman recalled the day she took the test saying,

I was totally intimidated. There were one thousand people who had applied for this opportunity...I was committed to going and taking the test until I got there and stood in line for an hour on this frosty morning. There were all around me hundreds of men talking. I mean, almost not a woman in sight. And the men were all talking shop...I got very discouraged so I started to leave. By sheer fate or luck, I ran into the guy who was administering the training programs. He saw me leaving and asked what I was doing. I said, 'well, you're never going to choose a woman anyway,' and he said, 'well, you never know.'

This same camerawoman and several others passed the test and were admitted to the program; however, they mentioned having to deal with the negative attitudes of the other men in the program and not being able to focus on learning the job. One woman stated, "I remember saying to friends that the nine guys in the training program get to use ninety percent of their energy learning the job, whereas I had to use ninety percent of my energy dealing with men's attitudes."

### Job Mobility

Once admitted into the unions, however, women tend to cluster on the lower level and have a difficult time moving up the ladder. One interviewee stated bluntly, "Unfortunately, there's still a glass ceiling. There's more opportunity for women to enter on the ground floor. As you go up to camera operator, DP, the numbers shrink

drastically.” Although some progress has been made in terms of getting more women into lower level positions, lack of opportunities for advancement and sheer frustration with the harassment and discrimination cause women to leave the industry without reaching their goals. One cinematographer, discussing a friend who was a camera assistant, stated, “She has...been doing it for ten years, and she's just quitting. Because she's just had it. She can't climb up that ladder any further. She's fed up.” This same cinematographer also commented,

I just heard the story of a young woman who was a camera assistant for several years. And she's just totally fed up. She wants to quit and go into something else. When I hear that from younger women, I get discouraged, because I had hoped—because I've been in the industry for 25 years—that by this time the playing field would be much more equal. And it still isn't.

Another mentioned, “I do know a lot of women who got out completely because they couldn't take it anymore.”

### Obstacles

Those who managed to endure the hardships of getting access to training and eventually moving up the ladder continued to face road blocks of discrimination. One woman recalled the first time she attended a meeting as a member of the American Society of Cinematographers,

Standing at the door of the ASC, as I went to go in, was this elderly gentleman with a walking stick, and as I opened the door to walk in, he stood there...you don't belong here. You don't belong here...But he, and I'm sure many other men, felt that I just didn't deserve to be there. Don't think it was personal. I think it was like when I got in the union. They just felt that women didn't deserve to be there.

Although not a personal affront, it is a social obstacle nonetheless.

Many of the women reported that because they were women, they were not offered a job they were qualified for, their technical abilities were questioned, their physical strength was doubted, it was assumed they slept with someone to get their job or they simply were not taken seriously. One woman said, "I think there is an unconscious bias against women in camera. I feel that. I think people don't feel that women are as capable." Another stated, "Certainly, I've come into situations where there's...you know...questions about my ability to be able to do something simply because I'm a woman." One woman recalled, "because I was starting out and there were no other women around, grips [anyone] would never help me do anything. They would just stand back and wait and see if I could do it." Another commented,

You feel like you're invisible...the feeling I had when I started on set, and I've had it over and over again is one of invisibility. It's like you don't exist. You're not seen. You're not supposed to be there.

One female cinematographer mentioned that "I very often had a male camera assistant, a

male gaffer, a male sound person...because in many ways, I felt like not only physically but mentally I needed to be supported by these men that were bringing me up to the next level.” Another camerawoman, however, worked on a shoot in France, and had a completely different experience in terms of stereotypes and attitudes. She recalled,

I worked on a feature in France some years ago, and before I went I was very worried about what I assumed was going to be a lot of male chauvinism that I would encounter there, and what I found was just the opposite. In fact, it was such a startling contrast for me with what I had encountered in America, in Hollywood, which was quite a lot of chauvinism back in those days, a lot of doubting. And, when I got to France and went to work with the French crew...what I found was that they assumed that I knew how to do the job. They assumed I'd been hired because I was competent. They expected me to be intelligent. They expected me to be talented, and it was just wonderful. And, I hate to say it, but it's kind of exactly the opposite of what my experience had been in the US where the expectations were always the opposite, and you always had to prove yourself...and prove yourself...and prove yourself and every time you showed up on a set...over and over again. So, that was a terrific experience.

The issue of strength is another obstacle that many women have to face. For some the problem is difficult but surmountable. One woman discussed the issue stating,

I'm not a particularly large woman, and people would always come up to me and say, 'isn't that heavy? How do you handle that?' And it was never much of a problem; it was never a big deal. It never should have been an issue to stop women from being camerawomen. It's perfectly balanced. It's perfectly easy and if you look around at a lot

of male cameramen who are French and Italian, they're smaller than I am.

Another woman, however, acknowledged the difficulties for a smaller person working behind the camera. She stated, “I can imagine that women that are physically smaller that are working as cinematographers may have had more problems—especially dealing as camera assistants—in terms of their strength.” In terms of the strength issue, a camerawoman working on a shoot in France again had a positive experience. She stated,

When I was in France working on that feature, we had assigned to our crew a camera grip who was a big, burly guy who carried all the heavy equipment. And at first I fought it because I had been trained LA-style, to do all the heavy lifting myself, and in fact in Los Angeles in order to become a cameraperson, in order to work your way up through the system, a huge emphasis is placed on physical strength....And what working on the French crew made me think about and made me reconsider was what does being a big, burly guy or girl have to do with becoming a great cinematographer? Nothing...absolutely nothing. And for that to be a road block that is put in people's paths, both for men and women...it's not just the women. You know, guys suffer too, terribly from being forced to carry these heavy things on their shoulders. I know many men who are injured, as well as women, from carrying things they never should have carried. That should have been either carried by two people instead of one or somebody bigger and stronger should have been given that assignment.

Another woman voiced her opinion saying, “Attitudes are as important as being able to carry the camera.”

Several of the interviewees discussed the negative stereotypes they faced on set. One woman recalled, “Oh, you get things like the electric who asked you who are you sleeping with to get this job?” Another woman echoed this problem saying,

When I used to show up on film sets as a camera assistant when I was starting out, it was always, always assumed that I had screwed someone to get that job or that I was somebody's daughter, sister, niece, somehow related to someone who was in power. That that was why I got the job. It was never, never thought that I got the job because I could do the job.

Along with verbal harassment, a quarter of the subjects reported experiencing some type of sabotage, such as tampering with equipment, by male co-workers. One woman said, “And then I just started to realize that things were just being sabotaged. I was being given equipment that had something broken or they had taken the controls and taken...taken the camera lens out...there's things I wouldn't see right away.” Another offered the following story:

Well, he [the person working as first assistant camera] would do things like when he was pulling focus for me and I was on a tight shot, he'd be leaning on the tripod and the tripod would be moving. I would see out the corner of my eye that he was leaning on the tripod, and he would say, 'No, I didn't.' So it was, it was just—it's difficult to talk about these things because they're painful. He was a very disturbed young man—very abusive with drugs and alcohol—but he came from a powerful family, and he was protected.

Almost half of the subjects mentioned being the only woman on the crew except for the script supervisor or those women working in wardrobe and makeup. Several talked of having no role models. One interviewee said, "I remember for many years, I would be the only woman on the set." Another stated, "I am often the only female." Yet another remembered, "In L.A., it really sank in that women didn't do it, and that there were no role models, so there were nobody's footsteps to follow in." Many of these women were pioneers in the field and faced the challenges of working as a female camera or lighting technician alone. One interviewee said, "I didn't think of myself as a pioneer, although I certainly knew that there weren't, particularly when I went into broadcast television, that there weren't all that many women around. And that was a struggle." Speaking of the broadcast industry, one woman mentioned, "When I first worked in a television station, I was usually one of two women out of sixty men working at these places. And generally, I felt like an outsider. I felt like I was kind of an oddity." Another woman recalled, "When I worked at these TV stations, I felt...most of my colleagues were men and I felt that most of them were against me." Yet another said, "When I first started out ...there just were no other women. So it was a real shock when I came onto the set. People didn't really like it because it wasn't the norm." Several women mentioned trying to fit in with the guys by dressing and acting like them. Discussing a situation in which one woman met with the camera crew she was going to be working with, she stated, "It was very much a boys' world back then. They'd actually taken me to a hotel that was sort of a strip club kind of thing for lunch." Yet another said,

“I spent years and years and years and years wanting to be one of the guys.” One woman recalled,

I was either an outsider or I was like the new animal in the zoo and people would come to take a look, you know, like the zoo. It was such an oddity. And all the time, I never knew how to act...I never knew how to dress. I didn't know if I should try to look very tough or if I should...it was just always a plunder because I couldn't...there was no way I could fit in.

One of the Canadian camerawomen offered an interesting perspective, having worked in both French and English Canada. She stated,

Well, for example, I think women are socialized differently than men, and we have perhaps a different approach to our work. For example, when I first started working in camera, I was almost bullied into trying to be like them, and for a period of time I took on a lot of behaviors and mannerisms as the men did in order to fit in. At one point I was confronted by this when I was working with a crew in French Canada—which is very different than English Canada—and it was the men on the crew who said, 'Why do you have to look like this? Why do you have to behave like this? Why don't you just be who you are?' I went through a transformation in terms of my hair, my dress, my clothing, my whole perception that I could be who I am. That to me was because there is a huge cultural difference between French Canada and English Canada, and my development as a cinematographer developed in French Canada.

A common theme conveyed was that of not being able to express their emotions.

Many times the women mentioned being so frustrated or upset that they wanted to cry; however, “you can't cry on set” was voiced by several women. One woman recalled,

They weren't happy about having me there and I felt a lot of hostility. I didn't know how to handle it. And I didn't even expect it. It was very, very difficult. I felt very bad inside. I wanted to go home and cry. And a lot of days I did. But I certainly didn't want to show it to them while I was working. But I...I didn't know why they resented me so much.

Several reported rushing off of the set to find a place to cry and compose themselves before returning. One cinematographer said, “I try not to cry right there in front of everybody, but more than once I've walked behind the stage or a set and cried by myself, wiped it off, and walked right back onto the set like nothing's happened.” Another mentioned that “as many times as I've wanted to cry, you're not allowed to cry...The few times I've really needed to cry and wanted to cry, I've gone running to the bathroom and just closed the door and had my moment to get over and come back because you're not allowed to do that.” Yet another recounted her experience saying,

To bring up that whole era makes me, makes me shiver inside...it was so difficult. I was so young. I would go home and cry at night. It was just terrible. I was afraid to show my emotions there.

Another said, “You can't have a tantrum on set—no way. You have to figure out some

way of maintaining a professional attitude, get the job done, and try to make it easy for people to work with you, because that's the most important thing.” Some of the women talked of not wanting to call attention to themselves since they already stood out as women behind the camera. One woman recalled, “I wouldn't have wanted to call attention to myself, or to any perceived weakness. I was into being 'macho' as the guys who were being macho.”

When asked why more women did not file complaints or pursue sexual harassment lawsuits, several women reported being afraid to speak out. One interviewee said, “I don't like to talk about the rampant sexism in this business, and neither do my friends who are camerawomen. You don't want to get blacklisted.” Another mentioned,

I didn't feel that I could complain to anyone, in management or anyone else, because I felt like that would be a betrayal. And I was trying to be one of the boys. And so, I didn't want to betray my fellow camera people, who didn't like me anyway. I don't know why I didn't want to betray them, but I was trying to fit in so desperately to prove myself that I never told anyone.

There is the fear that word would spread throughout the industry circles that these women were troublemakers, and they likely would have a difficult time getting hired. One woman recalled, “I was very easily pressured—particularly as a woman, I think—into doing whatever needed to be done to please everybody. I certainly was in dangerous situations way too often and never spoke up. Men didn't speak up, and certainly, as a woman, I was very reluctant to complain even when I thought I was in danger.” Another

woman, looking back, said,

I should have fought back. I should have complained but at the time I didn't feel like I had any allies. I didn't feel like I could complain to anybody. It was kinda like you were in an army and so you didn't want to betray anyone. And these people didn't accept me anyway, and I desperately wanted to be accepted all the time. So I certainly didn't want to say people were doing bad things to me...and I didn't feel for a long time, I didn't feel like I had anyone that I could go to. I just felt, I just felt that I was on trial all the time. And it was very, very difficult.

Several women mentioned not knowing where to go or who to talk with about their problems. There was discussion that groups such as the Writers Guild and Director's Guild had women's committees set up to handle such issues; however, the unions and organizations for camera and lighting technicians had nothing at the time in terms of women's committees.

### Success

Those women who did manage to break through the barriers and eventually find work as cinematographers mentioned the importance of having a balanced set with a combination of men and women on the crew. One woman explained that “it benefits everybody, and it really is great to have a balance of women on the set. And I hear that from all the guys, and they really like having women on the set.” Another said,

I think it keeps a nice balance. I think the guys like to have women around, too... But I think there might possibly be some truth to the fact that you could have nothing but the best as a female cinematographer...if you're going to bring a lot of women onto your crew, they've got to be beyond excellent, technically, and inspired, creatively.

Yet another stated, "I think it's very important to have balance. I think it's to make a balance in our society." Some of the subjects said that they heard directly from some of the men on their crews that they enjoyed having women working behind the camera or in the lighting and grip department. One interviewee reported that "grips love having women on the camera crew, in my experience."

When asked what it might take for women to reach equality with men in terms of respect and opportunities behind the camera, several discussed the lack of leadership skills and confidence women possessed, contrary to men who seemed to be much more sure of themselves and able to lead a crew. One camerawoman stated, "Women have to deal with discovering how to empower themselves so they can be leaders, and how they can run a set, and how they can work with men collectively. That is something that has to be learned in the process. I don't think women always get that from an early age." Several of the women discussed their perspectives as teachers. One woman said that "as a teacher now, watching my students, the hardest thing for women is getting the training and the opportunity." Another recalled, "I taught for about five years a cinematography course and...when I send the girls out on shoots as trainees and the boys go out on shoots, the boys just move up the ranks quicker. And you know, the girls are great. They're

smart. They are some of my best students. It's an energy on the set that is just not welcoming to them." Yet another said,

Well, what I try to do, and what I've done in the past when I've been teaching cinematography, especially to the women students, is to teach them courage. Courage: first of all, to have the courage to do the job and not to have fear and not to be intimidated by the technical process. So the first thing I teach them is knowledge. Knowledge about how to handle the equipment and how to feel confident in the equipment. And I feel once they have that, then the rest of those skills kick into place.

Another stated,

When I was teaching...the most talented cinematography students were women, unquestionably. They did the best framing and the best lighting, but do I think that they are going to be big time in the industry? They're going to have a much harder road because they didn't have that tough veneer. They were not naturally inclined to be bossy of the crew....So part of my job was to help mold them toward what the future was going to bring and how they were going to have to deal with it. And also, how you, unfortunately, have to behave as a woman to be respected in many aspects. And that's not just on the film set. That's with the producers. That's with the studios. That's with Kodak. That's with Panavision. That's with Arriflex. That's with every aspect of the industry. It's a big job. It's not just about talent. And it's tougher for women than it is for men, unquestionably. It's tougher for minorities than it is for even some white women.

### Suggestions for Change

A few women mentioned the need for producers and directors to provide more opportunities for women, and others mentioned that networking was an issue because women's names were not being suggested for jobs because people did not know them.

One woman stated,

I really think it has to change at the top. I think it really has to change where producers and directors are really willing to work with women and bring them in. I know that there is much higher percentage of women DP's in France per capita than in England, Canada or the US. ...I really believe that if producers and directors are more open-minded to hiring women in key positions, then that's when things will start to change.

Another stated,

I think the simplest way that producers and directors could increase the number of women working on projects is just to look at them and hire them. I can't tell you how many times I've gone for an interview for...and I've got a pretty substantial resume. I've got a ton of awards...had what I thought was a pretty good interview and discovered they're hiring this young guy who's like three years out of film school—no awards, very little shooting, but they've hired him and I think why is that, you know, I think sometimes guys are just happier working with guys. Younger men are different though. Younger men seem much more easy to work with women. They are more used to having women around and they seem to be much less...I just think that younger men find it much easier to work with women. They're just more accustomed to it.

Discussing what it will take to bring about a change in the industry, one woman said, “Just seeing a woman's work and knowing a woman shot that is really all it's gonna take.” Another stated, “We have to get our work out there so someone can see it.” Many felt that progress had been made but it would take quite a long time before women ever caught up to men in terms of salary and status. One woman felt that it would take “a lot of time” and suggested that “[j]ob discrimination will change when our coworkers, our crew brothers, accept us as a natural course of events, when we're more than a rarity.” Another stated, “The bottom line is until they [women] are accepted on the set and given the compassion to be trained on set, it's always going to be very difficult. Until they feel they belong there. Until they feel like they have a right to be on set in the camera.”

One woman was asked at this point in her career, if she were a man if she thought she would be shooting anything other than low budget features. She responded, “Yes. Of course, we'd all be much further. I know fabulous women DP's, and we are up against stiff, stiff competition from guys who have done one feature, two features.” Another woman stated frankly, “I think that if, in fact, I were a man and had the exact same experience and commitment level, I might very well be getting more money for doing the same thing.” Speaking of breaking ground as a female cinematographer, one woman called it “the final frontier.”

Finally, most of the women were very frank about the realities of the industry and offered their own thoughts and perspectives. One woman said, “I think all

camerawomen go through a struggle. I think it is delusional to think that there isn't a struggle." Another stated, "In this business, you're better off if you're a man. If you want to put the strikes against you, probably being a woman is more of a strike than being an Asian." Yet another said, "I think that gender is always an issue." One woman offered her opinion, stating that "one of the difficulties, I think, of being among the early pioneers of being cinematographers in the industry is that most of us were not raised thinking that actually we were equal to men."

Several women spoke of the irony in being a female cinematographer. One woman offered the following story saying, "I have a good friend, a woman, who complained to me at one point that she only gets love stories and stories about children, and she hasn't been in love in ten years and she's never had a kid. So why does she, as a woman, always get those kinds of scripts?" Another also mentioned the irony of the situation stating, "it's always surprised me, actually, that there were so few women in lighting. Something that comes very naturally to us, since we're raised from very young to make beautiful environments...Trying to make a room, a home, something beautiful." Another woman stated that "[t]he sensitivity of women to camera and lighting is equal to or greater than that of men. It's proven time and time again by their work. It's just that the opportunities to do the work are rare." Yet another mentioned, "I think that my being a woman cinematographer is a great asset because part of what women are usually criticized for is being too emotional, but i find incredibly influences my work. People think that that element comes through, and it informs my work and helps me to shoot with my heart as well as my head." This same interviewee also stated that

“there are huge sacrifices to be made being in the film industry and being a woman cinematographer.” As one woman related her experiences behind the camera she stated,

I feel like I've 'found myself' finally. It's taken me a long time to feel kind of comfortable in my role as a cameraperson and...also in a role of leadership. And to feel confident that I have something to give. I feel that I started off very inspired and creative, and then I went through years of dealing with the 'reality' in the technical and political aspects of getting through the 'bloody' film industry. And feel like I'm finally getting back to being creative and I don't know if that's a woman's issue or just part of the business.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

“Film is a key site for imagination, creativity and cultural experimentation, for breaking boundaries and challenging mainstream” (Steele, 2004, p. 16).

Films influence our perspectives. They introduce us to people and places we would otherwise never know and challenge what we learn from personal experience. Films such as *North Country*, which focuses on a woman battling for the right to work as a coal miner in a hostile, male-dominated coal mine in Minnesota during the 1980's, take us into the lives of women who experience sexism and break through walls of discrimination. It is ironic that this highly male-dominated occupation exists beneath this façade of social and cultural morality. Perhaps we need to turn the camera off and look at the film world as it really is. We are seeing most images represented on the big screen and the small screen through the eyes of men. That is not to say that I object to seeing films shot by male cinematographers; I discovered my own passion for cinematography while watching films shot by Conrad Hall, Roger Deakins, Bill Butler and many others. The issue at hand is that women's visual expressions are being lost as the decades pass. Perhaps this is irrelevant to most, but to women who long to express their artistic visions through moving pictures, the problem is profound.

As is the case with any problem, identifying the source of the issue is the first step in finding a solution. With sociological dilemmas, individuals are going to play some sort of role in the problem since people constitute society; however, this does not mean that blame can be placed on anyone's shoulders. Society should be viewed as an organism in and of itself, and so as we investigate the question of gender inequality behind the camera, we must remember that the objective is to uncover mysteries of men and women and the world they inhabit. No one person or group of persons is at fault. In fact, fault is an inappropriate term to use in the case of sociological inquiry. Perhaps we should consider sociological investigation as a means of diagnosing a disease, rather than solving a problem. Like some diseases, social issues mutate and metastasize over time, spreading throughout the organism. What we search for is a cure.

The data contained within this study allude to a social disease within the film industry. Women over the past hundred years have been and still are underrepresented as cinematographers. Regardless of education and experience, a majority of the women upon which this study is based reported being overtly and covertly discriminated against by those in positions of power and harassed by their male peers. Hostile sexism and harassment are described as being "rampant" within the world of filmmaking, and those women who managed to overcome these obstacles and make their mark on the film industry are truly pioneers. But how do we begin to diagnosis this illness? As Bourdieu pointed out, "A genuine understanding of the changes that have occurred both in the condition of women and in relations between the sexes can, paradoxically, be expected

only from an analysis of the transformations of the mechanisms and institutions charged with ensuring the perpetuation of the order of genders” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 84-85).

One prominent and fairly obvious issue associated with gender inequality in the film industry is that of power. The Hollywood film industry is a microcosm of society that contains its own social order, an order uniquely developed over the past century where power and status are structurally reinforced from one generation to the next. With mostly men in positions of power, women are being passed over for executive jobs in the studio systems and are being denied opportunities to work behind the camera as cinematographers. Perhaps some type of governing body should be formed to ensure that, within the studio system, discrimination is addressed and defeated. However, in an article discussing gender inequality and writers in the film industry, the author explained that even though writers [and likewise cinematographers],

are legally and technically employees of large organizations, the actual circumstances of their employment are similar to those of outside contractors hired for the duration of a short-term project. As a result, gender barriers to career advancement cannot be linked to formal organizational structures and policies such as segregated internal labor markets or biased hiring and promotion criteria (Bielby & Bielby, 1992, p. 382).

Therefore, “with no effective accountability regarding a policy of equal opportunity and blurred lines of authority, it is not clear who would establish such a policy and how accountability and enforcement might be implemented” (Bielby & Bielby, 1992, p. 383).

Discrimination also exists within social and technical film organizations where women are excluded by vote or through other social barriers. This makes networking, an important means of obtaining work and a valuable source of social capital, an enormous obstacle for women cinematographers. According to two experts on gender and organizations, “Institutions change as a result of the action of organizations. Whenever an organization intervenes in the life of a community, it has the ongoing choice whether to challenge or support existing community gender-related norms” (Rao & Kelleher, 2003, p. 143). Organizations such as the American Society of Cinematographers and Women in Film could perhaps create committees, such as the Diversity Committee developed by the International Cinematographers Guild, to deal with some of the sexual harassment and discrimination issues camerawomen are struggling with, as well as to arrange for organized training and mentoring. These suggestions related to the studio system as well as to social and technical organizations in the film industry are merely band-aids and will simply, if anything, slow the spread of gender inequality or possibly mask it but will not cure it. The disease is complex.

One of the main messages conveyed through the data in this study is that women entering the male-dominated world of cinematography are ill-prepared, not only in terms of technical and specific job-related skills, but in terms of social habits and dispositions that the men seem to share. These dispositions, *habitus*, are unconsciously embedded in individuals through institutions such educational systems, family and, as I suggested earlier, films. Since the women did not share the *habitus* of the men, they were considered incompetent and subsequently were harassed, ignored or simply not hired. In

hopes of compensating for their “deficiencies,” some women in the study spoke of trying to dress and act like the men. Several women mentioned being so upset on set that they wanted to cry; however, in order to keep up the appearance of being strong and masculine, they either suppressed those emotions or found a place to be alone. In taking on these masculine characteristics, they managed to superficially share the habitus of the men or as Bourdieu might say, the women were able to supplement their habitus with other forms of symbolic capital; however, these women, myself included, who changed their appearance and attitude to match those of the men, were compromising their identities and in fact reinforcing the structure of masculine domination.

According to Georg Simmel, social theorist, meaning for human beings is derived through relationships, with the most important meaning-giving relationship being through gendered interactions (Simmel, 1984, p. 102). For society to be balanced, it must contain both masculine (objective) and feminine (subjective) elements. If women are “masculinized” in order to work behind the camera, not only are they being made to deal with internalized conflicts of identity, but society as a whole is off balance. Therefore, our understanding of gender and its place in society is compromised. By excluding women from cinematography, our culture is suffering because mostly male perspectives are being relayed to society; a feminine perspective is lost. In order to counterbalance this dominating, masculine culture, and to restore symmetry to our world, a sphere of “feminized” culture should be allowed to emerge. Film, by virtue of what it is, could be the ideal place to begin to integrate the “feminine lens” and thus culture into the mainstream.

Ideally, there should be no gender-specific qualifications to work in a job. As one female cinematographer stated in her interview used for this study, “[the work] should be what defines every cinematographer, not their gender or their size or their race or any of those things. It should be about the work, and it should be about how you work...and how you collaborate.” Bourdieu suggested, however, that since “social positions themselves are sexually characterized” men are trying to protect “their most deep-rooted idea of themselves as men” by dominating certain social categories due to the fact that they “owe much, if not all of their value, even in their own eyes, to their image of manliness” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 95-96). Through this masculine domination, men seem to have transferred many typically male characteristics to the positions behind the camera. Therefore, jobs such as camera assistant and grip or electrician are in fact somewhat gendered in that women are being judged socially in these positions according to their male counterparts who preceded them. It could be said that individuals and structures share their identities with each other. As Bourdieu explained it,

The object of a history of relations between the sexes is thus the history of the successive combinations of structural mechanisms (such as those which ensure the reproduction of the sexual division of labor) and strategies which, through institutions and individual agents, have perpetuated the structure of the relations of domination between the sexes, in the course of a very long history, and sometimes at the price of real or apparent changes (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 83).

As I see it, habitus plays two distinct roles in this process. Not only does it influence women in terms of their gendered habits and dispositions, but if women are allowed to maintain their identities behind the camera, the material they produce will likely influence the habitus of all those who consume it. Thus occupational change, in terms of women being accepted as cinematographers, will bring about social change.

Similar to Bourdieu's concept of habitus is Janet Chafetz's theoretical notion of engenderment, an internalized social process through which men and women acquire gender-specific qualities and, through these qualities, maintain gender inequality (Chafetz, 1990, p. 71). In contrast to Bourdieu's theory of habitus, however, engenderment occurs as a voluntaristic process rather than unconsciously. From the accounts of the camerawomen in this study, the process of engenderment might be occurring in some cases; however, it is occurring in a different direction than it normally does. In the case of women working behind the camera, they are being pressured to take on masculine characteristics, rather than feminine characteristics, in order to gain acceptance into this male-dominated occupation; therefore, perhaps we should refer to the process as regendering rather than engendering. Once the women gained some "acceptance," they felt a sense of loyalty to the men with whom they worked; however, they were not reaping the benefits of status and power from these male qualities as the men were. Instead, they were still being discriminated against in terms of access to jobs and salary equity, but due to the sense of camaraderie they felt, the women were afraid to betray their male co-workers and superiors. By accepting the role of engendered female, "male," camerawomen are suppressing the gifts and talents unique to themselves as

individuals and as women, and in the process are in fact losing a true sense of their place in society which likely influences the images and stories they convey through the films they make.

Physical strength is another obstacle for some women since many of the jobs starting out behind the camera require carrying large, heavy equipment. Surprisingly, most of the women who commented on the strength issue, some of whom are very petite, reported that they were able to manage the lifting and when necessary simply asked for another person's assistance. Having worked as a camera assistant and grip/electrician myself and being only five feet tall, the physical aspect of the job was challenging but completely manageable. In my opinion, once the men realized that I was working as hard as I could and was capable of handling the technical aspects of the camera or the lighting equipment, they simply offered a hand when something was too heavy for me to pick up by myself. Several women commented that the large film cameras are in fact about the weight of a small child.

Perhaps the American film industry should take a cue from the French industry. From the accounts reported by several of the women in this study, the French film system is organized differently than that of the American system. Competence and ability behind the camera are not based on how much one can lift and carry but on how one handles the equipment and operates the camera. In fact, one camerawoman, while describing her experience working on a French film shoot, said that there was a specific person assigned to carry the camera equipment so that those working behind the camera could focus on their jobs. Another female cinematographer reported, "European women

in the film business were heads above American women in what feminism was, what it meant to be a woman, the closeness of women.” Apparently, there is even a difference in structure and attitude between the French Canadian and the English Canadian film industries.

Fingers have been pointed in different directions, but as is the case with many social issues, the direction is circular so each person involved in the loop must contribute to its recovery. Thus, change must come from within society itself and not necessarily from atop it. Bourdieu suggested that for social change to occur,

[O]ne must reconstruct the history of the continuous (re)creation of the objective and subjective structures of masculine domination, which has gone on permanently so long as there have been men and women, and through which the masculine order has been continuously reproduced from age to age. In other words, a 'history of women' which brings to light, albeit despite itself, a large degree of constancy, permanence, must, if it wants to be consistent with itself, give a place, and no doubt the central place, to the history of the agents and institutions which permanently contribute to the maintenance of these permanences, the church, the state, the educational system, etc., and which may vary, at different times, in their relative weights and their functions. It cannot be content, for example, to record the exclusion of women from this or that occupation, this or that branch or discipline; it must also take note of and explain the reproduction both of the hierarchies (occupational, disciplinary, etc.) and of the hierarchical dispositions which they favour and which lead women to contribute to their own exclusion from the places from which they are in any case excluded (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 82-83).

More simply stated, investigation of gender “should aim to describe and analyse the endlessly renewed social (re)construction of the principles of vision and division that generate 'genders'” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 84). Once these principles have been defined, the cycle of masculine domination “can only be broken through a radical transformation of the social conditions of production of the dispositions that lead the dominated to take the point of view of the dominant on the dominant and on themselves” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 41-42). Men and women must confront the structures within the film industry that perpetuate this cycle of masculine dominance. A conscious effort must be made to restructure the male-dominated occupation of cinematography so that women may participate equally with men in the production of moving pictures without sacrificing the qualities that make them unique. And in return, society as a whole will benefit from the balanced influence of both women and men working behind the camera.

While researching film's impact on society for this paper, I stumbled across an article discussing the UK film industry. I found that the topic covered and the substance included were profoundly important in terms of not only the British film industry but in terms of film in general, regardless of geographic location. “The UK Film Council established a Research and Statistics Unit in order to gather data relating to film to inform the development of UK Film Council strategy and to provide an information service to the industry, government, the arts and cultural sector and the wider research community.” This council “identified a range of effects that together could be said to constitute the cultural value of film” (Steele, 2004, p. 5). They are as follows:

Film is the most elaborate medium of contemporary visual culture, with the feature film having emerged as the classic form for telling complete audiovisual stories, comparable to the novel in literature;

Film is a key site for imagination, creativity and cultural experimentation, for breaking boundaries and challenging mainstream;

Film engages with universal human themes in the lives of particular people in particular contexts, helping us understand who we are and reflect on our past, present and future;

Film gives us a chance to identify with people and situations different from our own;

The stories told on film by UK film makers give expression to national identity (in a multi-faceted sense) and help citizens celebrate and explore the diverse national experience;

Successful films boost national prestige, confidence and self-esteem;

Film reflects and engages with contemporary social and political issues and facilitates the communication of ideas, information and values about the world we inhabit, and;

Film plays an important role in social communication and relationship formation by providing people with a common conversational currency (Steele, 2004, p. 16-17).

These descriptions of film's influence on and importance to society should sit atop the Hollywood Hills next to the Hollywood sign. Everyone involved in the production of a film should take to heart the social impact of this medium.

The American film industry is ill and a remedy must be found for the rampant inequality that currently exists behind the camera. By all accounts, women are as capable as men are of capturing moving images. One of the earliest filmmakers, Alice Guy Blaché, stated in 1914,

There is nothing connected with the staging of a motion picture that a woman cannot do as easily as a man, and there is no reason why she cannot completely master every technicality of the art. The technique of the drama has been mastered by so many women that it is considered as much her field as a man's and its adaptation to picture work in no way removes it from her sphere. The technique of motion-picture photography, like the technique of the drama, is fitted to a woman's activities (Slide, 1996, p. 141).

And, according to some of the interviewees who have taught college film classes, the women in these classes are often as naturally gifted at cinematography as the men are. The technical aspects of the job are certainly more difficult for some, both men and women, to overcome; however, from the data in this study, the skills are certainly attainable. In order for true change to occur behind the camera, awareness must be raised, attitudes must change and stereotypes must be broken at all levels of filmmaking. Women with a passion and talent for cinematography must be accepted, encouraged, trained and supported throughout their careers, and they must not succumb to social pressures to become like men. Producers and directors must take chances on female cinematographers in order to provide opportunities for women in the field, and men at all

levels of film production need to put themselves in the place of women struggling to work behind the camera.

While some may watch a film and absorb the social meaning conveyed, others may be moved emotionally by the images and music. Regardless of the viewer's personal impressions, a world projected onto a movie screen is an interpretation, a transformation, a creation that manipulates our senses and influences our understanding of society. Each of us working behind the camera or in any facet of motion picture production needs to understand that filmmaking is not only a form of entertainment; it is a very strong social force in our world.

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Appendix A. Consent Form

Alexis Krasilovsky, Director  
“WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA”

“WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA” - RELEASE

I hereby give and grant Alexis Krasilovsky the right to use my name and/or the right to use video/audio created wholly or in part by me for this project, and to photograph/videotape my physical likeness and/or the right to record and reproduce my voice for use in a video entitled “WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA” (Working Title) and Vol. 2 of the book, “WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA: CONVERSATIONS WITH CAMERAWOMEN,” and I hereby consent to the use of my name, and/or said photographs, videotapes, likenesses and any reproductions thereof and/or the recordations and reproductions of my voice and other sound effects, by you, your Licensees, successors and assigns, in or in connection with the production, exhibition, distribution, advertising and exploitation and/or other use of any of your photoplays and/or otherwise.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please print your name here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
email, if available

## Appendix B. Interview Questions

### "WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA"

Director: Alexis Krasilovsky

#### Questions for Camerawomen:

December 4, 2001

(Please note: Many of these questions are overlapping. Please review these before the interview, with or without the camerawoman. Please pick the questions best suited for the interview at hand, keeping in mind cutaways from demo reels and/or other forthcoming footage. It is not necessary to answer all of the questions: better is to take the interview in the direction of the individual camerawoman and her situation, adding some of the other questions to provide a context, as needed. Recommended basic questions are starred "\*".)

- \*1. In your childhood, was there a decisive moment when you knew you would be behind a camera?
2. Describe your training process as a camerawoman.
  - a. Who were your major influences? and/or: Have your influences been gender-oriented?
  - b. What was the training program/cinematography course like?
  - c. What about hands-on training?
3. What's the best (or most meaningful) thing about being behind the camera for you?  
  
AND/OR: What is one of the most exciting camera situation that you have worked on?
4. What the worst thing about being behind the camera for you?
- \*5. Describe the resistance and support you've gotten from parents, lovers, co-workers, organizations such as unions, support groups, etc.
  - a. (If active in a union:) What is the union policy regarding issues pertinent to women, including pregnancy leave, etc.

- b. Have there been support groups for camerawomen that you have been a part of? How has this been a benefit to you and/or other camerawomen?
  - c. Which women have made the greatest contributions to cinematography? How?
  - d. Which men have most helped women cinematographers (in the U.S./in France/in England, etc.) How?
6. Are there any other dilemmas which you face personally as a camerawoman?
  7. What are some of the other challenges which you have had to face personally in order to become a cinematographer?
  8. What are the challenges that face women cinematographers today?
  9. What kind of a relationship does your work behind the camera have to rhythm, pace, color, light, movement, etc.?
    - a. What, stylistically, do you offer a director, and how did you develop your personal style?
    - b. Do you work differently with women directors than with men directors? How?
  10. Do you feel that there's a difference to how men and women shoot (or, if a feature DP, to how men and women approach visual storytelling)?
  - \*11. Do you seek changes in the manner in which gender issues are portrayed on screen/on television? (i.e. stereotypes, exploitive sexuality, denial of women's sexual desires, violence, etc.?)
    - a. What is difference between how women are portrayed on screen and the lives of the women that you know behind the camera?
  12. Why do some camerapeople rise to the top so quickly? How long does it take most camerapeople to progress--is it different for men than women? How long did it take you, and what was the process?
  - \*13. What about children? Childcare issues? Is it difficult managing a personal life (i.e. children, marriage, art-making, etc.) with a career in cinematography? How do you juggle/cope? (Would it be possible to follow her at home so that we can get a sense through the camera of what

this is like for her?)

- \*14. Do you see your role as a filmmaker/cameraperson containing an element of social responsibility? Please explain.
- \*15. How is the \_\_\_\_\_ (French/Korean/Indian/Mexican/German/other - as appropriate to this interview) film industry different with regards to camerawomen, than that of Hollywood? (or of some other country, if applicable.)
- 15. What was it like filming with \_\_\_\_\_ (anecdote about a well-known director or star or public figure that this particular camerawoman worked with or filmed).
- \*16. What is it like filming in \_\_\_\_\_ (their country, or a foreign location, i.e. a war zone, a mountaintop, the Arctic, etc.)?
- 14. What does \_\_\_\_\_ (the major film on which this camerawoman worked, for which we can most likely obtain permission to use a short clip) tell us about women today, and how did the cinematography play a role in shaping this image of womanhood?
- \*15. To whom do we write for permission to use clips of your work from this(these) film(s) on which you have worked?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Contact name, address and email)

- 16. Re: unions: How many cameramen are there in the \_\_\_\_\_ (French, Mexican, Indian, or other country, as appropriate) camera union (and what is it called)? How many camerawomen? How many of the women are Lighting Cinematographers? Assistant Camerawomen? What have been some of your or other women's experiences/issues/accomplishments in the union? How long does it generally take to become a DP? Are there any stories that you can tell us to illustrate some of the experiences you or other camerawomen have had with the union?
- 17. What are the ways that the \_\_\_\_\_ (French, Mexican, Indian, other) film industry has increased or is increasing the percentages of camerawomen in (French, Mexican, Indian, other) television and film?