

## THE DOCUMENTARY ART OF FILMMAKER MICHAEL RUBBO

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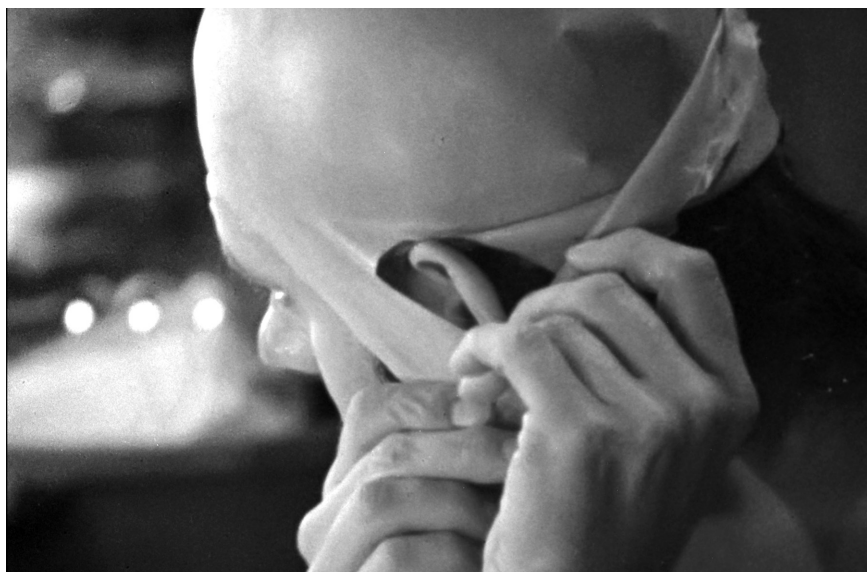


## Facial Expressions

*Yes or No, Jean-Guy Moreau;  
Daisy: Story of a Facelift;  
Not Far from Bolgatanga*

After probing the most public ideological crisis of his time in *Solzhenitsyn's Children*, Rubbo turned his attention to a tense but comparatively parochial political issue: Quebec separatism. Three years earlier, in the election that provided the context for Rubbo's *I Hate to Lose*, René Lévesque was elected premier of the province. He had promised that if victorious, the PQ would introduce a referendum calling for the establishment of an independent Quebec. Now he was keeping his promise. Rubbo had strong personal interest in the outcome. He was an Australian who had been living in Montreal for over ten years and had started a family there. If Quebec were to separate from Canada, what kind of future could he and his family look forward to? A majority of the province's Anglophones shared his anxiety, and they had little confidence in Lévesque's proposal of sovereignty with association.

For his film, Rubbo decided upon a portrait of Jean-Guy Moreau, a gifted impersonator whose most popular impersonation was of René Lévesque. Moreau was an inspired choice, and not only because of his talent: he was wildly popular in Quebec but unknown in English-speaking Canada. He thus exemplified a Canadian dilemma explored in *Two Solitudes*, a well-known (in Canada) 1945 novel by



9.1 Jean-Guy Moreau transforming himself into René Lévesque. Screen grab. *Yes or No*, Jean-Guy Moreau (1979). The National Film Board of Canada.

Hugh MacLennan about a man, Paul Tallard, who is torn between his conflicting English- and French-Canadian identities. Moreau himself isn't torn between two identities—he's French Canadian all the way—but the contrast between his fame in Quebec and his obscurity in English Canada reflected the gap between the two cultures. Additionally, Rubbo, the Anglophone, could be said to represent that half of the fictional Tallard.

*Yes or No*, Jean-Guy Moreau (1979), coproduced by the NFB and WGBH-TV in Boston, is built around several performances that Moreau gives to appreciative audiences in Quebec, as well as one in Toronto. Moreau is extremely good at what he does, and watching him is a pleasure. Rubbo shows how meticulously he rehearses his mimicry and transforms his appearance. For his Lévesque, Moreau uses a thin latex skin that he pulls over his face to suggest Lévesque's receding hairline and as a foundation for his makeup. Rubbo is showing us Moreau's process as an impersonator just as he shows us his own as a filmmaker. But it is not hard to make a reasonably entertaining film around an

entertaining or charismatic character. What makes *Yes or No* a serious film is its personalization and dramatization of what is potentially a highly charged issue. What makes it not just serious but engrossing is Rubbo's characteristic treatment of his subject.

For one thing, Rubbo's familiar demystification of the film's construction is more matter-of-fact than ever. Again and again, he tells us what he is doing and why. Over a series of shots of Moreau's different impressions, Rubbo explains that he "got these clips together to show you his range." Before a conversation in what appears to be Moreau's home, Rubbo offers a confession in voice-over: "Selfishly, I'd like to find out if there's a place for *me* here ... a transplanted Australian filmmaker with a ... bilingual kid." Rubbo tells Moreau that although he speaks French and has lived in Montreal for twelve years, he always feels like an outsider. For instance, Moreau's performances include inside jokes that Rubbo doesn't get. And Rubbo introduces a passionate separatist, Guy Fournier, whom he is about to film in discussion with Moreau, as a colleague of his at the Film Board, someone Rubbo says he has had in mind for some time to use in a film.

In several instances Rubbo lets us know the contrived nature of a scene. It's because he is disappointed in Moreau's lack of militancy, Rubbo explains, that they are going to meet the separatist from the NFB. Before another scene, Rubbo informs us that he has "arranged a lunch with a Portuguese family." Rubbo also contrives an appearance at a posh English-Canadian garden party, where one woman remarks on the presence of "the two solitudes" and acknowledges to Moreau that she had never heard of him. And when Moreau decides to perform in Toronto, Rubbo helps plan and execute the event. (He may even have instigated it.) "The ads are in the Toronto papers," Rubbo says in narration. "There's no turning back now. And I've become an impresario." Driving down a Quebec highway with Moreau, Rubbo notices that Corvettes—a model popular in Quebec, so we had just learned—keep passing them. The camera pulls ahead of their car, and we see that it is flanked by a dozen Corvettes. In what amounts to a wink at the audience, Rubbo observes that it seems a little more than a coincidence. (In fact, he and Jean-Guy had encountered a group of Corvette owners heading to some sort of gathering. Seizing the moment, they



9.2 An easy relationship. Screen grab. *Yes or No*, Jean-Guy Moreau (1979). The National Film Board of Canada.

persuaded the Corvette owners to drive along with them for a short while in order to construct the scene.)

And Rubbo's on-screen appearances, although not more numerous than in several of his previous films, are more relaxed. His son, now three years old, appears in several scenes, sometimes making the film seem almost like a casual father-son outing rather than a major documentary production. His interactions with Moreau are more easygoing than those he had had with subjects in his earlier films. Moreau takes no evident umbrage at Rubbo's remark about his lack of militancy; he laughs it off. In one amusing interlude, transitioning to the interview with the Portuguese family, Rubbo and Moreau chat while roller skating down a tree-lined street—conveying as laid-back a feeling one is ever likely to encounter in a documentary on a political issue.

And there is a fleeting moment in which Rubbo allows himself to be mocked. At the lunch with the Portuguese family, Rubbo, standing

behind Moreau, who is sitting at the table, mentions to the group that his three-year-old son speaks French “better than I do, which I speak quite well.” Apparently Rubbo believed his own French had improved considerably since *Solzhenitsyn’s Children*, in which he had called his French “rotten.” Moreau, whose face Rubbo couldn’t see at the time of filming but couldn’t miss in the editing, suppresses a laugh at Rubbo’s self-assessment of his French.

The Toronto performance, the film’s climactic scene, goes over fairly well despite—or because of—the fact that some audience members, seeming to take Moreau’s Lévesque as Lévesque himself, begin arguing with him. By now one can see why this might occur: Moreau’s impression of Lévesque—fidgety, nervous, shifting his glance left and right—seems both spot-on and representative of Lévesque’s views. Moreau may even—so it appears—have convinced himself at some level that he has become Lévesque. But what does Moreau himself think politically? Throughout the film, he has insisted that he tries to remain aloof from politics in order to be more accurate and cutting in his impersonations, while Rubbo tries to provoke him to reveal how he will vote on the referendum. At the film’s end, over credits, Rubbo asks, “So, Jean-Guy, how will you vote on this referendum?”

“It’s going to be *yes*, Mike.”

“Well, for me, I’m afraid, it’s gotta be *no*.”

“That’s okay,” Moreau replies, laughing gently.

The film lacks the bite of *I Hate to Lose*—Moreau exhibits passion only when he impersonates Lévesque—and it lacks the previous film’s underlying tension as well. No one really expected the referendum to pass. And it didn’t. French-speaking voters were split roughly down the middle on separation, and most other voters were against it.

In his next major film, *Daisy: The Story of a Facelift* (1982), Rubbo both advances and retreats from his personalization of documentary. His subject is a Film Board colleague and good friend of his, Daisy de Bellefeuille, an attractive, raspy-voiced daughter of the Austrian aristocracy in her mid-fifties who has decided to undergo a facelift operation. An early scene takes place in the Film Board cafeteria, where Daisy’s colleagues discuss her decision. To underline the film’s theme of “the face,” Rubbo edits the scene such that we only occasionally see the person who is talking, and mostly the reaction of those listening.

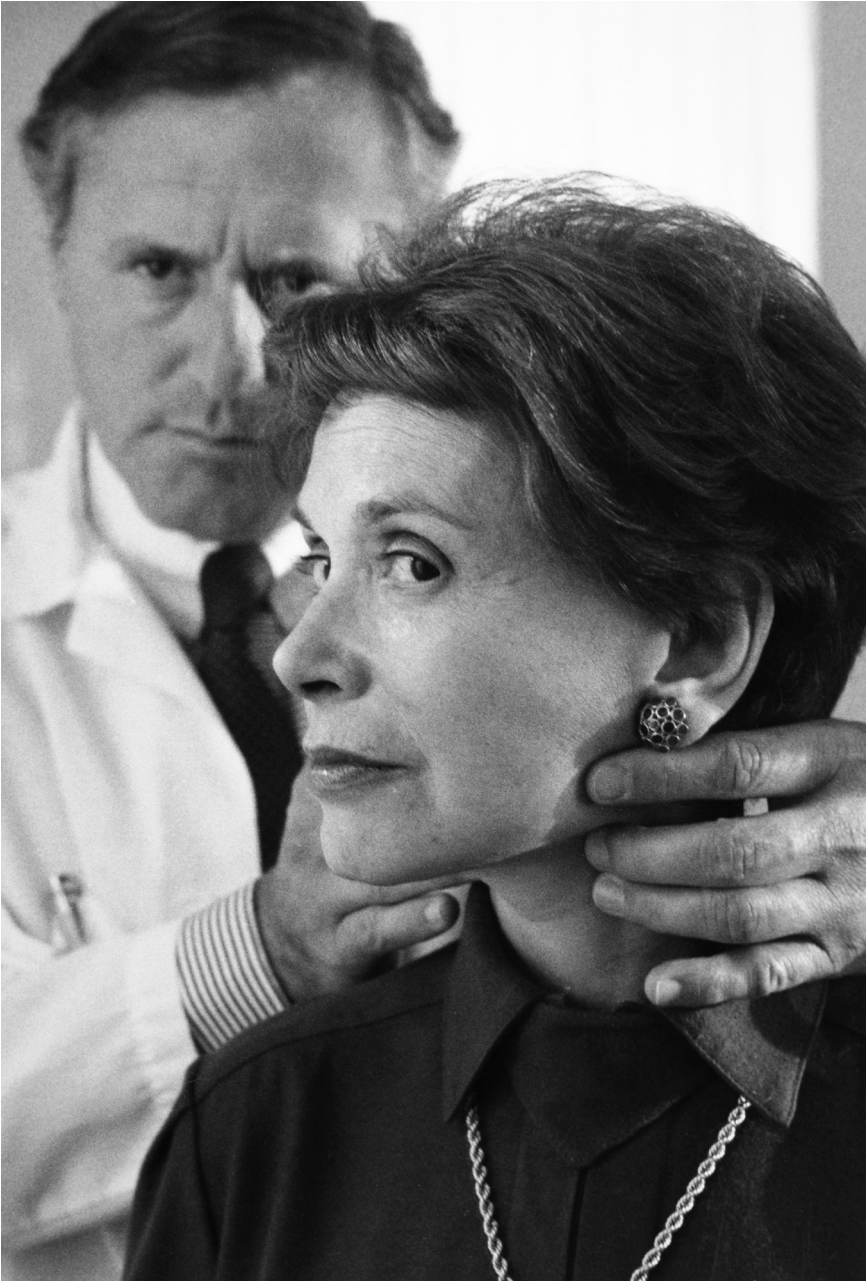


But while the film includes a few scenes shot at the Film Board, its connection to the NFB is not made explicit. Given Rubbo's identification of Guy Fournier as a Film Board colleague in *Yes or No, Jean-Guy Moreau*, Rubbo's decision to downplay the substantial Film Board connection in *Daisy* seems odd. But this was not Rubbo's original intention. He had hoped to include a debate from the program committee over whether or not to fund the project. One complicating issue was that since Daisy was chair of the program committee, which had a key role in deciding which proposed films would be funded, she embodied a serious conflict of interest and recused herself from the committee's discussions about the film.

Some of Daisy and Rubbo's colleagues at the NFB thought that the subject was trivial. What need was there for such a film, some asked, given all the larger problems facing Canada and the world? And there probably was an unacknowledged objection to Daisy herself as the subject of the film: she was an outspoken lover of men and sex. At the Film Board, where political correctness had made early inroads, she was a living, breathing—and cheerful—rebuke to the institution's emerging gender ideology.

And while Rubbo himself is prominent in the film, it is mostly as a supportive friend who remains off camera except for occasional reaction shots and some interludes not involving Daisy. Perhaps Rubbo felt, consciously or not, that pulling back to a degree from his now familiar physical intrusion into the story would help him treat Daisy with affection and delicacy. She had agreed, after all, to put herself in an extremely vulnerable position by participating in the film. Intimate at times but mostly maintaining a respectful measure of emotional distance, Rubbo follows her from the days leading up to the operation, to the operation itself (mostly elided), and, occasionally, for several weeks after it.

Daisy is candid about her motivation. She wants to look better—for men. She acknowledges her romantic view of love, which in her case has led to serial relationships, including three failed marriages. She can laugh at herself: she says she seems to be good at getting married and getting divorced, but not so good at what comes in between. She notes the irony that while she has spent so much of her life with a man but no career, she now has an excellent career but no man. Part



9.3 Daisy, pre-op. Production photo. *Daisy: The Story of a Facelift* (1982). The National Film Board of Canada.



of her charm—although feminist viewers are prone to deride her for it—is that she is open and self-mocking about her sexual attitudes. She had served in the air force—Rubbo thinks it was the RAF, but it might have been the Royal Canadian Air Force—as a young woman. There was a poster, she recalls in a mischievous tone, that said, “Join the air force and serve under the men that fly.’ And that appealed to me somehow.”

Rubbo constructs two substantial sequences in which he goes off alone, without Daisy, to look into the role the face has played in Western culture past and present. At the New York Public Library, he begins a brief informational excursion into physiognomy, which we learn was popular in the eighteenth century. He constructs an amusing sequence on physiognomy’s main theorist, Johann Kaspar Lavater, who believed, in Rubbo’s words, that one could infer a person’s “inner character from the outer mask.” Over portraits of various faces from Lavater’s writings, Rubbo quotes Lavater saying such things as this person’s nose indicates he is lustful, that person’s lower lip suggests listlessness, and so forth. Rubbo also interviews a psychologist and a job counselor. The latter cites evidence that one’s facial appearance affects employment prospects, opportunities for love, and even grades in school.

But while these sequences convey interesting information, the emerging portrait of Daisy is absorbing and moving. Cautiously and patiently Rubbo draws her out. We learn there are layers to Daisy that go deeper than her romantic views of love. A man’s looks have never mattered to her, she says. No man ever appealed to her until he opened his mouth: “For me, sex starts in the head.” She may be a romantic, but she’s neither dependent nor a clinger—she’s existential. And she is grateful to her parents for not burdening her with “Anglo-Saxon guilt.” They taught her to accept that “marriages come and go, children come and go, money comes and goes, careers come and go. The only thing you’re stuck with is yourself.” While she is having her hair done at a salon, Rubbo asks her how she feels about getting old. “Terrified,” is her answer. It’s upsetting “when the past becomes more interesting than the future, and you don’t know how to act anymore.” When she says this, we realize that for her the facelift is an attempt to revive her interest in the future. At her home, as she is about to go to sleep, Rubbo, off camera, says, “You look depressed,” to which Daisy replies:

“It’s not an easy thing, aging.” She says that the only reason she agreed to do the film is that lots of people are thinking about having plastic surgery because “it is a sort of ... way ... to ... stave off ... whatever horrid future one has to face.”

The only time Rubbo enters obtrusively into Daisy’s emotional space is in the plastic surgeon’s waiting room. One other person is there, a man. With Daisy framed in a tight shot, reading *Vogue*, Rubbo (off camera) whispers in her ear, “Daisy ... ask him what he’s in here for.” Without looking up from her magazine, she whispers back, “We can’t do that, that’s terribly rude.”

“Well ... just find some excuse.”

“If someone did that to me,” Daisy protests, “I’d smash his block off.” Rubbo insists: “Do it.” She does it, and a pleasant but brief and inconsequential interchange ensues.

The scene was contrived. “There is no way,” Rubbo recalled decades later, “that I could have intruded without prior warning. That being so, I should not have used the whispering. I’ve never been called out on this, not to date.” Yes, Rubbo could have said in narration that he invited this other patient to participate, and then showed the conversation. However, the conversation itself is not very interesting. By contrast, Rubbo’s whispered prodding, and Daisy’s initial resistance, are fun to watch and hear. And the prodding as well as the overture is improvised, not rehearsed. Daisy was a natural performer, and her initial discomfort rings true and appears to be in character.

The contrivance sets up, for later in the film, a fascinating if hard-to-watch sequence showing the face-lifting process—not Daisy’s facelift, which is not filmed, but someone else’s. Here Rubbo interacts not with his subjects—the surgeon, his assistants, or of course the anesthetized patient—but with his audience. “You remember Peter—the man who Daisy met in Dr. Schwartz’s waiting room? Well, this is his facelift. I’ll announce the bloody bits before they appear, so that those who want to can close their eyes.” We watch skin below Peter’s eyes being snipped, and some stitching around the eyes. “Not very bloody. Here comes the nasty part, so close your eyes.” If we don’t close our eyes, we see a glob of fat being lifted from a large slit in the skin below Peter’s chin. “Take a quick peek, now. The skin is free, right down to the neck.” (Although Rubbo doesn’t say so, the stretched skin has an uncanny resemblance



9.4 “Here comes the pull.” Screen grab. *Daisy: The Story of a Facelift* (1982). The National Film Board of Canada.

to the latex mask Jean-Guy Moreau pulled over his face to prepare to look like René Lévesque.) “You see? Our faces are really ... masks. By now, you may be able to stay with us. I hope so, because here comes the pull, which makes the lift. Seeing this is worth a thousand words ... and may ... save you a few thousand dollars.” Then, “some stitching, and one side of the face is done.” The film then cuts to a long shot, signaling the end of the sequence. “I don’t suppose you need to stay for the other side.”

On the night before Daisy’s surgery, she and her daughter, who has flown in from Boston, enjoy some laughs talking about men. Her daughter says she has given up trying to change men; she will let them stay screwed up. Daisy confesses laughingly that she herself has still not learned that. The next day, we see Daisy briefly being prepped for the surgery, then again afterwards. Her face is swollen and bruised. Two weeks later, she still has some bruises. A few weeks more, she is smartly

dressed and packing her bags. “It was six weeks before I saw her again,” Rubbo says. “She was going away.” Where are you going? he asks. To Vienna, she says, and to Salzburg, Zurich, and maybe London. She puts on a hat. She wants to go somewhere, she says, where people don’t know her.

She’s traveling alone. Rubbo asks if she hopes to meet someone at the airport. “I never like to be sure about these things,” she laughs. “Let’s see.” Daisy goes to the airport in a hired car. In voice-over, Rubbo says, “I would have driven her to Mirabel, but she wanted to go in style. I was there anyway, watching from a distance. Daisy had withdrawn somewhat ... starting not a new life ... but a new chapter.” Daisy herself says in voice-over, “I really don’t think of it as a break with the past or a new beginning. It’s just an incident in the continuation of life.” Darkness has fallen when her plane taxis along the runway and takes off. “Later,” Rubbo says, “I would get a card ... from Salzburg, I think it was. ‘Having a wonderful time.’” Apparently, Daisy’s future has proved interesting.

Over credits, we hear Willie Nelson, whose voice has been heard periodically during the film, sing several lines of “September Song”:

Oh the days dwindle down,  
To a precious few ...  
September ... November  
And these precious days,  
I’ll spend with you.  
These precious days,  
I’ll spend with you.

Different as they are, *Yes or No* Jean-Guy Moreau and *Daisy: The Story of a Facelift* share a fascination with appearances, especially the face. A visual “suture” even links the films: the pair of very similar shots of stretched skin. In *Yes or No*, it is the latex skin that Moreau pulls over his own face on the way to transforming himself into René Lévesque. For *Daisy*, it is the shot of Peter’s facial skin being stretched several inches off its original surface to allow for the removal of fat before being itself trimmed for a tighter look. Both films involve choices: the impending referendum that lurks in the background of Moreau’s

impersonations, Daisy's decision to undergo plastic surgery. Both films are about imagining an alternative way of being: for Moreau, inhabiting, for fun, the personae of others; for Daisy, a future for herself more interesting than her present.

Not surprisingly, *Daisy* provoked more complicated responses from women viewers. In "The Documentary of Displaced Persona: Michael Rubbo's *Daisy: The Story of a Facelift*," Joan Nicks writes that Rubbo "takes up the behaviors of patriarchal privilege to enter a feminine space afforded by Daisy and her facelift." He creates "a parody of male voyeurism in [his] obsession with what drives Daisy's pursuit of a more youthful face to recapture a romantic past."<sup>1</sup> Daisy, for Nicks, is a victim of an ideology that places too much value on a woman's appearance. Rubbo's film gives Daisy the kind of closure she desires—a new adventure full of romantic hope—but it is one "befitting a femininity defined by patriarchy and fantasy."<sup>2</sup> Nicks's feminist analysis is a rewarding read, but it misses the film's humor and downplays its empathy. Maybe the film is all that she says it is, but it is also warm and funny. It is honest and moving. Perhaps only a male could have made it. Occam's razor permits an interpretation that takes Daisy and Rubbo on their own terms. The film suggests—both Daisy and Rubbo voice it—that the ordeal and expense of a facelift is probably not worth the money or discomfort, but there is a self-awareness and a hopefulness in the venture that, for viewers like me, trump the critique.

While Nicks's analysis is solid and dispassionate, the dominant feminist reaction was disdainful. When a planned catalogue of NFB films on women's issues omitted the film, Daisy, with characteristic insouciance, wrote a memo (29 February 1984) to someone involved in the project:

I understand that Studio D [a unit at the Film Board devoted to making films by and for women] has excluded "Daisy" as an entry.

I consider this to be sexual discrimination. (I have NEVER suffered from male chauvinism ... and now I am confronted by female discrimination. An entirely new concept, don't you agree?)

I would like to point out that, even though this film might not be about the kind of woman decreed to fall into the perception of role model as they see it ... it is none the less a very popular film with a great many women across the continent. In fact, it has communicated with the majority of the female race. (Perhaps there are more women who feel like I do, as opposed to the other way.) It would be a great pity if it didn't appear in the catalogue.

... I thought you might find this twist amusing.

I wasn't able to find out what catalogue Daisy was referring to or whether the film was ultimately included in it or not. But the film was popular with Canadians. Although the CBC rejected it, the American Public Broadcasting Service aired it nationally on 28 March 1983, under the banner of *Frontline*, a major documentary series produced by WGBH-TV. Because most Canadians live in the southern band of Canada stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, they could receive PBS broadcasts. *Daisy* garnered almost uniformly rave reviews from critics in both countries. On 13 April 1983, Rubbo wrote a two-page letter to CBC's head of news and current affairs urging the broadcaster to reconsider its rejection:

It is a bizarre situation. We have a film which, on the strength of one PBS screening, has garnered at least 12 reviews across Canada and the U.S. Not a single one finds the film soft or un compelling, as [a CBC executive] describes it. In fact, they are full of praise, as the enclosures show.

Coupled with this, we have been inundated with calls congratulating us on the film and asking when it will be aired again.

After citing evidence of the film's popularity, Rubbo then addressed what was probably the major objection—his personal style. He first relates that he has often been invited to give workshops at universities in Canada, Australia, and the United States; he had spent a year teaching at Harvard as a visiting filmmaker; he had taught at the Australian



Film and Television School and had been invited back to bolster the school's documentary side:

I mention this because, in showing the classics in my courses, it was quite clear that none of them would be accepted by the CBC. The great documentaries that stand the test of time are often not, as I'm sure you're aware, journalism in the sense [i.e., objective and balanced] that [the CBC] means it. *Nanook* and *Man of Aran* are certainly not. Nor are *Drifters*, *Song of Ceylon*, *Night Mail*, *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia*. There'd be no place for *Listen to Britain* ... nor for the free cinema films of Anderson and Richardson, films like *Momma Don't Allow*, *Oh Dreamland* and *Nice Time*. Even *Everyday Except Xmas* would be doubtful.

Then from the contemporary classics *Grey Gardens*, *Gimme Shelter*, *Salesman*, *Harlan County* and *Hearts and Minds* would be excluded on the grounds of not being balanced journalism. I am simply trying to point out that the personal vision is an honourable tradition in the documentary and that many of the classics are just that.

During the period in which he made *Yes or No* and *Daisy*, Rubbo, along with Barrie Howells, codirected and narrated a remarkable documentary sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency, *Not Far from Bolgatanga* (1982). The film's subject is a Canadian government project in Ghana. The people in hundreds of villages spread thinly across a large area around the town of Bolgatanga, in the north of Ghana, are suffering numerous health problems as a result of consuming, washing with, and swimming in water contaminated with various parasites. Their water supply is mainly puddles in the rainy season and mud holes in the dry season. CIDA's project entailed building about twenty-five hundred small, hand-pumped wells in the area. The film documents first the need for a solution to the problem of the contaminated water, and then the project's implementation.

For a sponsored film, *Not Far from Bolgatanga* is a remarkable work. It engages the viewer from the very beginning, panning from face to face of the Ghanaian villagers as they stare at the camera in

tight close-up, with sound emanating from a flock of birds swarming in a tree above. Rubbo, who wrote and speaks the commentary, explains (and shows on a map) where we are, and over images of village life he announces that the film is about water, “which means it’s about life ... [and] about ... sickness and death.” Then he returns to close-ups of the men. As in *Daisy*, Rubbo’s narration draws in the viewer: “Did you notice,” he asks as we scrutinize the faces, “that they’re all ... blind?” The cause is a fly attracted to the water. We quickly learn of other dangers lurking in the contaminated water. One menace is a snail that carries bilharzia (also known as schistosomiasis), which eats away the liver and whose presence in the body is indicated by blood passing in the urine. Another is a worm that enters the body and can grow several inches long. And there’s dysentery. A woman carrying a large jug of water on her head is limping, because her foot is infected. A group of boys swim in a water hole. Afterwards, when Rubbo asks them how many are passing blood, most raise their hands.

The main body of the film is about installing the wells and persuading people to use them. The film doesn’t gloss over difficulties. Some wells, for example, are overworked. “We asked,” Rubbo says at one point, “a dozen people at random, and found three of [the wells had] broken down.” Parts are hard to come by. There is no expertise in the village to maintain the pumps. People don’t realize that the clean water will soon be contaminated if it is carried in dirty containers or if waste is dumped nearby. Some fear that the well water is itself contaminated by corpses buried in the ground. There was, initially, too much reliance on foreigners, so now villagers are trained in maintenance and repair of the wells, and they are taught how contaminated water causes their various sicknesses. The only boosterish note in the commentary is Rubbo’s characterization of the building of twenty-five hundred wells: “an incredible feat.” The film ends on a hopeful note. The film crew, Rubbo reports, tracked down the woman with the infected foot. She had followed the crew’s suggestion that she wash the foot each day in clean water from the well with some salt added, and she said that her foot “was ‘almost better.’ Could there be,” Rubbo asks, “a better recommendation for the well?”

Although Rubbo does not appear on screen, and is heard asking a question only once, his commentary is delivered in his usual personal,

informal tone. He is understanding and affectionate, not patronizing. He respects his subjects' dignity yet conveys tidbits of information on even minor characters, giving us a sense of their personality and humanity. And just before the end, in a disarming flourish of reflexivity, Rubbo says, "Before we go, perhaps it would be nice for you to meet the film crew." Over a candid shot of each at work, Rubbo names them: "That's Fred Coleman, who photographed the film. That's Sam Boafo, who recorded sound. That's Matthew Adoteye, assistant cameraman. ... That's John Garatchi, assistant director. And that's Barrie Howells, who is the executive producer and directed the dry-season material."

The film bears Rubbo's personal stamp in spite of objections from CIDA. While praising the film overall, the agency conveyed a number of complaints in a letter to the Film Board on 27 February 1981. Most of the complaints had to do with matters that would typically come up in NFB collaborations with other government agencies: the film should be more positive; more information should be conveyed; some footage is inappropriate. But the strongest objection had to do, unsurprisingly, with Rubbo's style. CIDA's impression was "that to too great an extent, Mike Rubel [*sic*] was allowed to 'do his own thing.'" The complaint is elaborated, and emphasized with repetition, by another official in an attachment to the letter:

The film is patronizing from the Ghanian point of view. The commentary is quite offensive in some parts. ... I personally would not approve of a narrative that was in the first person and represents a personal statement. The filmmaker is too prominent in the whole production. His enthusiasm and involvement are very positive factors but they should not be so evident as to detract from the film. ... The script must be more objective, less a personal statement. ... The narrative should not be done in the first person

The Film Board stood its ground, won over CIDA, and released a most engaging and provocative film.