MEMORY, PLACE AND SUBJECTIVITY: EXPERIMENTS IN INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

GILLIAN (JILL) DANIELS[1]

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of East London for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014

---

[1] Jill Daniels is my professional name as a filmmaker and academic.

Abstract

The research in this doctoral thesis focuses on the mediation of place, memory and identity in experimental western documentary films and contains film theory and film practice components. The thesis is comprised of the production of two experimental documentary films — *Not Reconciled* (41 minutes) (2009) and *The Border Crossing* (47 minutes) (2011) — and a 50,000 word written exegesis that analyses those films and films made by others. The key analytic approaches I deploy are located within the framework of film studies, trauma and memory studies and theories of space, landscape and spectatorship.

My aim is to advance a critical understanding of the opportunities and limitations in the cinematic strategies that are available to experimental documentary filmmakers in the mediation of place and memory, including trauma and autobiography. The goal of the experimental film is to offer alternative and different ways of thinking to mainstream films about methods deployed in the mediation of the historical event. The notion of experimental begins and ends with uncertainty rather than verisimilitude. The experimental documentary film aims to open the window of uncertainty a little wider to offer an expanded discussion of the subject of the exploration. My thesis contextualises my discussion of experimental documentary filmmaking by outlining the history and development of independent filmmaking in Britain, with a specific focus on my own development as an independent experimental filmmaker.

I argue that where subjects live and where their identities are formed, are central to memory and experience. Place may be represented in experimental documentary films, therefore, not as an adjunct to space or as a support to subjectivities but as a character that is foregrounded and interacts with memory and subjects.

Subjectivities, including autobiography through the filmmaker's voice as subject and filmmaker, are central in my cinematic mediation of memory and traumatic experiences and I devote specific focus to spectatorial engagement with films. I argue that there are difficulties in the mediation of traumatic experiences and that therefore strategies of evocation are needed. I argue that there are similar difficulties in relying on classical linear narrative in articulating memory and narratives of association may be more effective. Finally, I argue in this thesis that an experimental documentary film may deploy disparate filmic strategies such as realism, metaphor, allegory and fiction, yet still remain identifiably a documentary film.

Contents

List of Illustrations

Dedication

This doctoral research is dedicated to my mother, Barbara.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

This doctoral research has several specific aims in mind. I analyse and define the notion of experimental documentary films as a genre that is appropriate to my explorations of place, memory, trauma, and subjectivity. The research, I hope, will contribute to my continuing development as a filmmaker. My research is intended to explore theory in order to provide insight into the notion of independent filmmaking practice. I aim to gain a greater sense of community with other researchers and filmmakers and to contribute in some small way to the development of film theory and practice, by exploring and contributing to theoretical debates. I am also seeking to enrich my pedagogical practice as a lecturer in Higher Education.

Key analytic approaches I deploy in the thesis are located within the framework of film studies, trauma and memory studies and theories of place, space and spectatorship. David MacDougall convincingly argues that images have great value as knowledge:

> As writers, we articulate thoughts and experiences, but as photographers and filmmakers we articulate images of looking and being. What is thought is only implied, unless it is appended in writing or speech. Some would say that images, then, are not in any sense knowledge. They simply make knowledge possible, as data from observations. But in another sense they *are* what we know, or have known, prior to any comparison, judgement or explanation (MacDougall 2006: 5).

I explore this proposition through my practice-led research and the thesis is a work of film theory and practice. It is composed of two distinct parts, a 50,000 word written exegesis and two medium length experimental documentary films. I refer to the traditional terms, 'films' and 'filmmaker' as generic expressions to describe my creative research and the works that I produced. These terms, through common usage cover practice research without resorting to a discussion of the specific

technical means of their production.[2] I have chosen to use the term mediation to discuss the general way in which place, memory and subjectivities are re-formed through a filmic discourse to a spectator. I have chosen to use the term representation when I am discussing the mode by which stylistic signifiers of aspects of the historical world, such as objects, people, locations and events are deployed and received by spectators with differentially marked identities. In my discussion I keep in mind that my choices of representation may never be culturally neutral.[3] I use the term 'portrayal' with reference to the strategies used to depict people in films. In my discussion of place in films I note that many theorists that I draw on to support my discussion refer to place as landscape. However, I choose to use the term 'place' since 'place' may reference more than a rural landscape or a cityscape; for example, place may also refer to a village, a street, a border crossing or a house.

To support my analysis I draw on the work of Judith Butler, Joshua Hirsch, Annette Kuhn, David MacDougall, Doreen Massey, Catherine Russell and Janet Walker. I carry out qualitative analyses of my own films and films made by other experimental filmmakers, including Carol Morley, Alain Resnais, Rea Tajiri and Sarah Turner, that resonate with my own practice. The research methodology emerged from my earlier filmmaking practice and was developed and explored with the production of an experimental documentary film, *Not Reconciled* (41 minutes) in 2009. I analyse this film in the written exegesis. This was followed by a similar process in the production of a further film, *The Border Crossing* (47 minutes) in 2011 and its analysis in the exegesis. I also reflect on the process and methodology of my overall filmmaking practice in films made by others in the written exegesis.

---

[2] See Barrett, E., & Bolt, B. (eds.) (2009) [2007] *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry. S*ee also Allegue, L., Jones, S., Kershaw, B. & Piccini, A. (eds.) (2009) *Practice-as-Research in performance and screen* & Nelson, R. (2006) 'Practice-as-Research and the Problem of Knowledge', in '*Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* Vol. 11. No. 4.
[3] See Hall, S. (1997) *Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.*

Experimental documentary films

The two films I made and analyse in this research are conceived as experimental documentary films. I focus on experimental films because they may bypass the demands for certainty, evidence and veracity (Landy 2001: 58). The demand for 'evidence' is generally found in the conventions of documentary filmmaking whose aim is primarily to provide authentication of the mediation of historical events. Experimental films, on the other hand, most often question the notion of evidence or authenticity, avoiding perceived constraints of certainty and reliability. The cinematic strategies deployed in experimental documentary films are varied and this offers a flexibility that may open a window onto distinctive and original ways of mediating historical events. Experimental documentary films do not generally intend to provide the last word on a particular subject but make a contribution to its exploration. Experimental films are usually not immediately popular because they are often considered difficult to 'read' in their use of unconventional strategies. Their breakthroughs however, in terms of uniqueness of technique and form, are often incorporated into the vocabulary of the mainstream film (Landy 2001: 59).

Autobiography

Autobiography is at the heart of *The Border Crossing* as it is in other films explored in this thesis*.* As an established independent filmmaker I am used to delving into my own experience of the world ─ drawing on memories and feelings as well as thoughts ─ to inform my films. As Annette Kuhn observes '...a part of me also "knows" that my experience - my memories, my feelings - are important because these things make me what I am, make me different from everyone else' (Kuhn 2002: 33). Since *The Border Crossing* is an autobiographical film I question what led me to my current preoccupation with memory and autobiography. This is not an easy question to answer. My preoccupation may be due to my age. Or it may be due to the fact that past events that had significant effects on my life are erupting into my present

consciousness, demanding to be explored through a cinematic discourse for presentation to the wider world. It is also necessary to ask then, as I do in my films, what is it that is 'going on' in the current climate of the world today — culturally, socially and politically — and what has been 'going on', (for we are all formed by history) to create the fertile ground for an exploration of the self. There has been a growth in autobiographical documentary filmmaking over the last decade and there is a significant history of autobiography in feminist filmmaking, particularly during the 1970s. I discuss some of the reasons for this recent growth and briefly survey that history in order to draw comparisons and differences, culturally and politically, with current autobiographical film work including my own.

Practice created for the thesis

Not Reconciled and *The Border Crossing* explore my preoccupation with filmic reflexivity, autobiography, narrative and cinematic forms, as well as an engagement with subjectivities, memory and place. The films build on the strategies and creative methods of some of my earlier films and also films made by others. I deploy the cinematic strategies of a critical realist practice and fictional enactment. Both films include filmed observation of daily lives and locations, witness 'interviews' and 'conversations' with subjects and archive material.[4] Enactment in *Not Reconciled* consists of fictional characters of ghosts evoked from the period of the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s; in *The Border Crossing* enactments are performed by a non-professional actor who plays the role of my younger self. Both films are *reflexive* in that attention is drawn to the assumptions and conventions that govern documentary filmmaking (Nichols 2010: 31). *The Border Crossing* is also *self-reflexive* in that the film articulates a representation of my 'self'. The use of self-reflexivity enables me to analyse more deeply the complex relationship created between the filmmaker as subject and producer, and the spectator.

---

[4] I discuss realist and fictional strategies at length in Chapters 3 and 4.

The films are located respectively in Spain and the Basque region (northwest Spain and southwest France), where small communities were disrupted by traumatic events as a result of war or other types of violence. My impetus for making *Not Reconciled* (2009), set in the ruined town of Belchite in northern Spain, evolved from my interest in the history of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and my earlier observation of privations and extreme inequalities in Spain in the late 1960s. I have a particularly vivid memory of a train journey I took through Spain during that period. As the train neared Madrid, I saw a shanty-town of improvised open shelters and shabbily dressed inhabitants.[5] It was the first time that I had seen evidence of desperate poverty and so many people living outside 'normal' society. I did not forget my sense of anger and distress.

At the start of the 21st century, I became aware, through the British press, of the existence of unmarked mass graves in Spain. In recent excavations, bodies have been discovered of people who were murdered or executed during the Civil War and its violent aftermath. I had previously carried out research on the history of the Spanish Civil War and was drawn to the idea of making a film about the mass graves. A Spanish friend told me about Belchite, a town in northern Spain that was destroyed during the Civil War and has lain in ruins for 70 years. In my imagination Belchite was full of ghosts of the dead and I thought there was a real possibility that there were mass graves in or near the town. I visited Belchite where a local inhabitant told me about the alleged existence of bodies under the town's ruined buildings. Jaime Cinca, a local historian, also showed me a mound of earth in close

---

[5] This may have been Cañada Real, a shanty town that still exists on the outskirts of Madrid. See Giles Tremlett: [Online] Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/16/drug-clans-shanty-town-madrid [Accessed: 13 January 2014]

proximity to the town that he claimed was a mass grave.[6] In wanting to make a film that would articulate the history of Belchite, I aimed to represent the ruins as a site where the voices of characters ― ordinary people who had died in the fighting ― could be heard.

My intention in the cinematic strategies deployed in the mediation of place and identity in *Not Reconciled* was partly to provide a voice for the outsider ― 'the marginalised, disenfranchised and disenchanted' (Gready 2003: 2) ― and partly to comment on the period of Spanish history that was dominated by the dictator, General Franco, who ruled Spain from 1939 until his death in 1975. I made several further research visits to Belchite where I met and talked with some of the local people about their memories of life there. I concluded that an effective methodology in making the film would be to conduct filmed conversations with former inhabitants of the ruined town and neighbouring eponymous village, and also to create fictional characters, ghosts evoked from the Civil War period. The ghosts would tell stories of the published history of Belchite including the 3-week conflict that took place there in August 1937, and explore the imagined circumstances of the deaths of the characters portrayed and their consignment to a mass grave. This method allowed me control over the narrative outlined in the ghosts' dialogue and voiced descriptions.

In *Not Reconciled,* Rosa, the central character, is portrayed as a heroine fighting for the liberation of women and for a socialist revolution. I chose the name Rosa after Rosa Luxemburg, the Jewish Polish Marxist revolutionary who was assassinated in Berlin in 1919, when she was 47. The notion of cowardice and bravery as contested and complex conditions in the face of imminent death is articulated in the film when

---

[6] Cinca's documentary, *Spaces of War/Espacios de la Guerra* (2007), provided me with information for Rosa's dialogue in *Not Reconciled*. A clip is available online at: http://www.documentalesetnograficos.es/documentales/historia/espacios_de_la_guerra__bel chite.php [Accessed: 20 August 2012]

Rosa describes her own murder: "I wanted to be brave, but who in the end can die bravely?" [7] Rosa is portrayed as conflicted and weak, yet strong in her acknowledgement of her own weakness. The notion that total bravery is an unattainable ideal is also articulated through filmed conversations with local inhabitants who are portrayed as evasive and forgetful in their discussion of the Civil War.

My second film, *The Border Crossing*, was created from my desire to explore the period when the Franco dictatorship ruled the Basque region in Spain, and to engage with my experience of a sexual attack in that location years ago. At the centre of *The Border Crossing* is the mediation of 'unreliable' memories of traumatic experience. The cinematic strategy I chose was to evoke the experience through an *absence* of its representation. My memories consist of a series of vivid, disjointed fragments of images, sounds and sensations. There are substantial gaps in my memories but I am uncertain where they lie in the chronology of events. I have no expectations that more memories will emerge. I also experience feelings of great unease centred on particular memories, for example the inexplicable loss of my bracelet after I reached the Basque region in France. I chose to explore some of these 'unreliable' memories in the film in order to convey a sense of this unease and to evoke memories associated with events leading up to and after my traumatic experience. Certain locations I visited during the pre-production period felt intensely familiar to me. I had the strong sensation that I had been there before. However, they did not 'fit' visually with my memories and I could not logically place myself there. The vivid sense of location and dislocation led me to the decision to foreground place in both films. Finally, the choice of locating the films in Spain and the Basque region in Spain and France provided me with a useful continuity of place from one film to the next.

---

[7] For the script of *Not Reconciled* see Appendix 3.

Analysis of experimental documentary films by other filmmakers

In addition to my experimental documentary films, I analyse films made by others. They were selected because they resonate in various ways with the subject matter of my films and they engage with similar themes of memory, place, identity and autobiography. Some of them also deploy experimental cinematic strategies in the mediation of place and memory that aim to provoke uncertainty about authenticity and the evidential sequencing of events. They include: Amos Gitai's *House* (1980), a film about the rebuilding of an Israeli-owned house in Jerusalem, that was formerly owned by Palestinians; Elizabeth Stopford's *We Need to Talk About Dad* (2011), that explores traumatic experiences through a direct representational enunciation of the historical world; Carol Morley's *The Alcohol Years* (2000), an autobiographical evaluation of her former life in Manchester; and her later film, *Dreams of a Life* (2011), a reconstruction of the life of Joyce, whose body was found in a London flat three years after she died; Rea Tajiri's *History and Memory* (1991), an exploration of the filmmaker's Japanese American mother's internment in a camp during WWII and Sarah Turner's *Perestroika* (2009), an autobiographical film that focuses on place, memory and identity.

The written exegesis

The written exegesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter, 'Becoming an Independent Filmmaker', charts the development of my filmmaking practice, set within the historical trajectory of the British independent filmmaking movement and explores significant events in my personal and professional life. In my political activism during the 1970s and 1980s I deliberately positioned myself in opposition to mainstream society and filmmaking and have continued an oppositional stance, placing myself more or less permanently at the borders of mainstream filmmaking.

My desire to explore the cinematic mediation of my identity evolved from my feelings of 'difference', or the sensation of being an 'outsider', that began during my childhood. In my films I have dedicated myself to a process of questioning myself. A persistent sense of 'difference' and the feeling of being 'outside' the mainstream, occupies a significant part of the film practice and theory research contained in the thesis.

In the second chapter, 'Experiments in Place', I consider how the articulation of place may be deployed, not in order to provide an easy context for exploration or for aesthetic qualities, but to fully interact with memory and identity. I analyse spectatorial engagement with place and discuss how cinematic tropes of metaphor and metonymy are important tools in enriching cinematic language. I focus on how certain signifying objects ─ such as the image of the house ─ play prominent roles in films. I discuss the articulation of the notion of the 'border' as both a physical divide and as a metaphor of contestation. I also discuss how one may articulate a fractured sense of identity in a location such as a war site.

The third chapter, 'Memory and the Documentary Film', addresses the cinematic mediation of memory and particular memories that are associated with traumatic events and experiences. I explore how the mimetic approach in many conventional documentaries may not always be feasible in recalling the past, and memory may instead be evoked through varied cinematic strategies. I discuss how classical linear narrative conventions may be insufficient as a mode to represent memory due to the difficulty of fixing memory to specific moments in time and I consider the alternative narrative conventions used in my own films and in films made by other filmmakers. I also devote a substantial part of the chapter to the exploration of my approach to autobiography in both *The Border Crossing* and films made by others.

The fourth chapter, 'Realism and the Imagined', evaluates my choices of filmmaking strategies and techniques deployed in the films I created for the thesis. The films are hybrid forms of cinematic tropes of realism and fictional enactment. I explore the distinctions between the notion of documentary realism as the provision of evidential material — including observational filming and the participatory interview — and the imagined — through the creation of fictional characters and enactment. I analyse how both may be deployed as hybrid forms in order to expand the exploration in experimental documentary films. I also analyse films made by other filmmakers that are created using these types of hybrid strategies.

My ambition for the practice-based research has been to provide a synthesis of conceptual and perceptual exploration. The theory and the practice research may stand alone but my aim is that they should complement and inform each other. I hope that the films are not seen as illustrative of the theory or vice versa, but that the films and my exegesis merge as fully complementary to one another. The Soviet filmmaker Lev Kuleshov valued film theory as essential to enable the filmmaker to raise their work above the narrow framework of craft. He observed that: 'We must not build our work solely on individual experience and on "artistic inspiration." Tested methods, the experience of colleagues must be recognized and studied' (Kuleshov 1974: 42). Taking into account the argument posited by Kuleshov I developed and constructed my films by drawing upon film theory to inform the practice of the films' making; exploring ideas embodied in my previous films and those of others; and a reliance on intuition and artistic inspiration. This pragmatic approach has been invaluable both in my development as an experimental filmmaker and my evaluation

of film. I hope my methodology and my conclusions may be useful for other experimental filmmakers and film theorists.[8]

---

[8] For discussion of film practice as research see Bell, D. (2006) 'Creative film and media practice as research: In pursuit of that obscure object of knowledge', in *Journal of Media Practice* Vol. 7. No. 2.

Chapter 1

Becoming an Independent Filmmaker

*When the "I" seeks to give an account of itself, it can start with itself, but it will find that this self is already implicated in a social temporality that exceeds its own capacities for narration: indeed, when the "I" seeks to give an account of itself, an account that must include the conditions of its own emergence, it must, as a matter of necessity, become a social theorist (*Butler 2005: 7-8).

Introduction

In this chapter I seek to give an account of myself in order to trace my development as a British woman independent filmmaker. To this end I explore some of my significant life experiences in the recognition that, as Butler argues; in seeking to give an account of myself I must also become a social theorist, since my personal history is one that is 'implicated in larger social formations and historical processes' (Russell 1999: 276).[9] In calling myself an independent filmmaker, this begs the question independent from what? Therefore, I also chart the development of the independent filmmaking movement in Britain that helped to form my filmmaking practice. Independent filmmakers first emerged in Britain in the 1930s and grew in cultural and social influence to become an organised movement of independent film activists during the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1970s I joined this movement and still consider myself to be an independent filmmaker. However, from the 1990s onwards the movement fell into decline and today no longer exists as an organised movement. Nevertheless groupings of independent filmmakers and individual independent filmmakers do still exist and continue to make films. New groups and networks have been formed in recent years, such as the left-wing Radical Film Network, established in September 2013. The Network's stated aim is 'to help raise the profile of radical film culture and facilitate communication and collaboration among those involved'

---

[9] For further discussion of my autobiographical approach to my filmmaking practice, see the section on autobiography in Chapter 3.

(Radical Film Network, (n. d.).[10] I analyse the circumstances of the organised independent filmmakers' movement's rise and decline and my role within it, and discuss where independent filmmakers like me find themselves today.[11]

My journey to become an independent filmmaker involves memories of my childhood and teenage years. In order to explore the journey I give brief accounts of significant events and memories of my early years. They have been influential in forming an identity that I draw on for my filmmaking practice. Some of these memories have already been reworked as material for my films. As a child, in common with all children, I thought my family's circumstances were completely natural, but as I grew older I perceived that my family's situation was different to those of most of my peers. David Vincent observes that:

> When a child first becomes conscious of himself, the way of life of his parents and companions will appear both natural and inevitable, but as he grows older and gains some knowledge, however incomplete, of other forms of existence, so he will begin to comprehend the peculiarity of his situation (Vincent 1981: 90).

I too gradually comprehended my own peculiar situation, but instead of being reconciled to its peculiarities, or proud of the differences, I found myself increasingly uncomfortable. Through some unwritten law in my family, or perhaps by a form of osmosis, I was conscious that my parents' private life and considerable personal difficulties should not be made known to the wider world. I had the feeling ─ along with millions of others who undoubtedly feel the same ─ that I was living two separate lives; on the one hand a secret and hidden life and on the other, a public one. This led to feelings of great discomfort and frustration.

---

[10] For further discussion see Conclusions of this thesis. See Presence, S. (2013) *Oppositional Documentary in Britain Since 1990.* PhD thesis. The University of the West of England.
[11] For more on the independent filmmaking movement today see Conclusions of this thesis.

My early years

I had an itinerant childhood, moving home and location on a regular basis. I was a secular Jewish middle-class child, with every material comfort (until I was fourteen), although often in trouble at school. From an early age I felt as though I was a member of the 'wrong' family because my Jewish parents led bohemian lifestyles in London, at a time — during the 1950s and early 1960s — when Jewish society and the conservative political ruling class frowned upon bohemian behaviour. My superstitious Romanian grandmother made valiant efforts to impress upon me that being Jewish was 'special' and anyone non-Jewish was not altogether human. Being 'special' gave me a sense of my own importance. My grandmother was an imposing figure who intimidated my mother. I vividly remember an incident that occurred when I was around nine years old. My grandmother arrived at our house unexpectedly and my mother, taken by surprise flung a packet of bacon into the washing machine. She then greeted my grandmother warmly, as though nothing untoward had occurred. The incident remains a persistent memory and formed the basis for a scene in my black comedy film script, *Flux*, (unproduced). I drew on my sense of contested Jewish identity for my early films and my first venture into an autobiographical film, *Skin Deep* (1996), a documentary about my grandmother's life in Romania and Britain. It also refers to my father's sexuality which is referred to again in my autobiographical documentary, *My Private Life* (2014).[12]

I gradually became aware that my mother liked to keep up certain appearances — to my father's family for example — and did not always say what she really thought. My parents had married young — my mother met my father when she was seventeen and he was twenty one. Two years later they married and at first led a conventional suburban lifestyle in Manchester and later in Cheshire. But they became restless and bored with the constraints of Jewish suburban life. My mother opened the first coffee

---

[12] See Conclusions for discussion of *My Private Life.*

bar in Manchester around 1960 and a few months later my father sold his share of his father's raincoat manufacturing business to run it with her. But, barely a year later, they left the restaurant in the hands of a manager, abandoned their provincial Jewish social circle and moved to London where they led a 'glamorous' bohemian lifestyle, mixing with the celebrities they had met in Manchester, such as Alma Cogan, Lena Horne and Nat King Cole. (see fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Unknown. (c. 1955) *My parents.* [Photograph]

In London, wrenched away from my home, school, cousins and friends and everything familiar, I felt isolated. My father made elaborate plans that were intended to make our fortune but the majority of these plans came to nothing. Many of my parents' new friends were gay men who made no secret of their sexual orientation inside the walls of our flat. At that time I knew no one outside my parents' circle who openly admitted to being gay, and homophobic language was common currency. I did not discuss my family's lifestyle at school and did not invite my school friends to my house.

As a middle class pupil at a working-class school, I 'downgraded' my posh accent and attended School Assembly. My attempts to fit in did not immediately succeed. One morning I was hauled out of Assembly by the headmistress. With the whole school watching I was marched out and taken to Jewish prayers where for the next four years I chanted in Hebrew 'Blessed are you Lord' [13] and mimed the rest of the prayer because I did not know the words. I hated school.

Gradually I perceived there might be difficulties in my parents' marriage. Since I never saw my parents argue I attempted to put these thoughts out of my mind. Nevertheless, it was becoming harder to avoid the fact that there were secrets in my family. All families have their secrets, but as Annette Kuhn observes:

> Sometimes family secrets are so deeply buried that they elude the conscious awareness even of those most closely involved. From the involuntary amnesia of repression to the wilful forgetting of matters it might be less than convenient to recall, secrets inhabit the borderlands of memory (Kuhn 2002: 2).

I knew that, as Kuhn puts it: 'something in the family was not right, conflicts were afoot: conflicts a little girl could not really understand, but at some level knew about and wanted to resolve' (Kuhn 2002: 22).

Since my parents were preoccupied with their own lives and were rarely at home I was thrown onto my own resources. My strongest influence during adolescence was my school friend R. (see fig. 2). Her parents were Holocaust survivors. Her father, a Czech, was taciturn to the point of total silence and her mother, a gentle, sad German woman, did not speak much English. R and I were experienced groupies, tramping up and down the Kings Road in London and gate-crashing parties. We truanted from school, stayed out late at night, stole money and took recreational drugs.

---

[13] Baruch atah Adonoi in Hebrew.

The possibility that my father might be homosexual lurked insistently in the corner of my mind and I was terrified of the imagined parental wrath I would bring down on my head if I inadvertently talked about it with R. As Carolyn Steedman observes: 'All family secrets isolate those who share them' (Steedman 1989: 65). I did not know if my father's homosexuality was a reality or if it was my fantasy. It became a secret that was always present. Since homophobic language was commonplace amongst my peers I was defensive of my father, but also guilty and ashamed, and felt tainted by the fact that my family 'set-up' was not 'normal'.

Fig. 2: Daniels, J. (1965). *Me (on the right) and R.* [Photograph]

When I was fourteen or fifteen most of my father's restaurants (he had expanded) were put into liquidation. My parents did a lot of crying and shouting. I retain a single memory from that period: I walk into the living room and my parents and grandmother abruptly stop talking. My mother is crying. I say hello but nobody replies. I leave the

room. As I walk down the corridor I hear whispers rise and fade. Shortly after this event we left our flat in London and moved to Hove, a small seaside town. After a few weeks we moved back to London. A year after that we returned to Manchester.

My father introduced me to foreign films. One afternoon in Manchester he took me to see Francois Truffaut's *La Peau Douce* (1964)*.* I was entranced by the sound of the French language and the film's representation of an 'exotic' world, although the film's narrative of adultery and revenge made little impression. From that moment on however, I was hooked on the pleasurable sensations of French films with their long takes, jump cuts and expressive hand-held camerawork. Alain Resnais' *Je t'aime, je t'aime* (1968) made a particularly strong impression — I closely identified with the character of a severely depressed woman — and it influenced my first fiction film *I'm In Heaven* (1989), about a Jewish woman who lives alone in a high-rise flat and never goes out.

Two years after we moved back to Manchester my parents split up and my father left without saying goodbye. I have one lasting memory from that time: I am seventeen. My father has left home and I am searching the house for anything that might tell me where he is living. I find a letter addressed to my mother and open it. The letter is from a doctor. With a shock I realise the letter is about me: 'I know you're worried about Jill and her intense emotions. It would be a good idea at this difficult time for you to send her away'. I put the letter back. Intense emotions, I think to myself. I am surprised my mother noticed.

A few months after my parents separated I left school and was jobless. My mother arranged for me to go to France to work as an au pair for the ex-wife of a family friend. After a month I was sacked. I set off for Spain where I worked in bars and nightclubs, but after a few months I returned penniless to London where my mother

had settled. Hitchhiking through the Basque region I was raped at gunpoint by a stranger. I was too frightened to report the attack to the police. In London, anxious my attacker would track me down to the address he had extracted from me, I moved in with my mother. She had a new partner, a policeman. I discovered he was physically abusing her. I remember hearing the sounds of the abuse through my bedroom wall. I have another vivid memory from that period: It is morning and I am still in bed when I suddenly notice that my stepfather ─ wearing nothing but white underpants ─ is watching me from behind the open door of the wardrobe opposite my bed. I get up and leave the room. I did not discuss my stepfather's behaviour with my mother and soon moved out of her house to share a flat with four other girls. (My memories of my stepfather's abuse and voyeuristic behaviour are evoked in *My Private Life.*)

By the time I reached adulthood I had a cursory knowledge of Jewish culture and identity and some knowledge of the range of differences in sexual orientation. I had suffered trauma, known what it was to be rich and experienced hardship. I had slept with many different men, abused drugs and alcohol and knew when to lie and how to keep a secret. I trusted hardly anyone. I really loved films.

Art school and filmmaking

In the late 1960s, after a series of dead-end jobs I embarked on a serious relationship with Roy, a student of fine art. Like many young women I was preoccupied with my personal problems and spent my spare time writing poems, and reading novels of all types. Roy and I were devotees of London art house cinemas, such as the National Film Theatre (NFT), Paris Pullman, Academy Cinemas and Everyman. I had a vague ambition to be a novelist or a journalist, although I never read a newspaper. My voice-over in *The Border Crossing* (2011) refers to my lack of political awareness at the time:

[19]

"I am […] demonstrating. Against the Vietnam War. And for years after I carry around like a talisman the fact that I had been at Grosvenor Square with my then boyfriend, fighting the police, chanting Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Min, without the slightest idea what any of it meant."

Roy introduced me to Derek Hirst, head of the art foundation course at Ealing Technical College. He read my poems and accepted me on to the course despite my lack of formal qualifications. I proved to be better at drawing and painting than either Hirst or I had anticipated, and in 1968 I moved on to a fine art course at Wimbledon School of Art.

At Wimbledon, influenced by American art, particularly the work of Frank Stella, I made very large abstract paintings. I explored the history of their production through the application of almost-transparent layers of coloured PVA paint and line drawing that was created on each layer of paint using narrow tape. The resulting geometric abstract paintings emphasised the edges of the frame. I also discovered a passion for filmmaking and made several short experimental black and white 16mm films. With no formulated theoretical basis I experimented with filmic techniques, deploying a similar methodology to the abstract paintings. I explored cinematic space through a preoccupation with the edge of the frame, the use of split screen, slow motion and the repetition of images. I considered narrative concerns to be secondary to formal and aesthetic problems and my film 'scripts' consisted of a brief list of shots and a few written notes. In 1973, I left Wimbledon School of Art and was accepted on to a Masters' degree in filmmaking in the Film and Television School at the Royal College of Art (RCA).

The three years I spent at the RCA film school changed my outlook on life. Students at the film school were encouraged from the start to work as independent film artists and I gradually developed a theoretical grounding for my filmmaking practice that

was experimental and in opposition to mainstream films. In seminars led by Noel Burch, we studied all genres of films in order to understand the operation of their cinematic 'codes'. We discussed original ways of working with film and explored the ideas of structuralism, semiotics and formal experimentation. We pushed for pedagogical changes to the course. The RCA was primarily oriented towards filmic techniques that were common in the mainstream film industry, but we pushed for experimentation. Students created informal alliances and helped each other on film productions. Under Burch's influence I discovered Marxism and soon became a political activist in the socialist feminist movement and joined a Trotskyist group, International Socialists.

At film school we vigorously debated the definition of the term filmmaking independence and listened to the discussions of older filmmakers. Some of these filmmakers preferred to use the term oppositional, which they felt demonstrated a more political standpoint, but it was used rarely.[14] In this context, the term 'independence' may be defined as the occupation of a space that is in political, cultural and economic opposition to the dominant mode of film production and distribution. Michael Renov notes that: 'dominant cinema's heavily capitalized mode of production […] bears with it a conservatism whose economic and political motivations are deeply fused' (Renov 2004: 29). Dominant cinema's innate conservatism also has a bearing on the production output of mainstream Hollywood films and broadcast television.

---

[14] See Dickinson, M. (ed.) (1999) *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90;* Blanchard, S. & Harvey S. (1983) 'Post-war Independent Cinema – Structure and Organisation', in *British Cinema History,* Curran, J. & Porter, V. (eds.) and Street, S. (2009 [1997]) 'Borderlines II: counter-cinema and independence', in *British National Cinema.* See also Knight, J. & Thomas P. (2011) *Reaching Audiences: Distribution and Promotion of Alternative Moving Image.*

In November 1974 around 50 independent filmmakers met at the RCA film school in the wake of a programme on independent cinema that was hosted by the presenter, Melvyn Bragg.[15] According to the Independent Film-makers Association (IFA) Organising Committee's discussion paper — presented at the IFA conference in 1976 and adopted unanimously — the programme consisted of a 'series of "spots" lasting between 30 seconds and 5 minutes' (IFA discussion paper, 1976). The filmmakers wanted their films screened in their entirety on BBC2 television and they had written a joint letter to the BBC to this effect. The response of Aubrey Singer, the head of BBC2, was dismissive: "I'm not having that kind of film on my television" (IFA discussion paper, 1976). The rebuff galvanised and unified independent filmmakers and film theorists and led directly to the establishment of the IFA in 1975. In May 1976 the IFA held its first Annual General Meeting and IFA groups quickly sprang up all over Britain. According to Colin Perry:

> [T]he IFA had big ambitions: it wanted to infiltrate and explode the cloistered environment of British broadcasting, which was at the time restricted to just three channels controlled by patriarchal (BBC1, BBC2) and commercial interests (ITV) (Perry, 2014).

However, the IFA did not restrict its campaigning focus to broadcast television. It aimed to gain access to statutory production funding and theatrical distribution as well as grass-roots distribution via community groups and labour organisations. Another important aspect of the IFA was the development of working relationships between independent filmmakers in the production of their films. This enabled filmmakers to pool their resources in equipment and post-production as well as collaborate on the development of ideas for their films.

According to IFA policy, IFA members generally regarded their films as aesthetically and politically innovatory and independence was defined as 'meaningful

---

[15] Melvyn Bragg presented '2nd House' from 1973-1976 which may have been the slot for the independent cinema programme. This is not referenced in the BBC and BFI listings of the time.

independence', not 'strident sectarianism' or 'subsuming its critical awareness in liberal inertia' (IFA paper, 1976). The IFA saw itself as an umbrella to shelter all types of independent filmmakers regardless of their style of filmmaking practice:

> We are absent because what we have made *present* in our work has been systematically censored by the established, productive and critical forces. Because our opposition to these forces stems from a sense of absence, it is an opposition which embraces many styles of filmmaking (IFA paper presented to IFA conference, 1976). (see fig. 3.)

Fig. 3: *Independent Film-makers Association Newsletter* (1977). London.

In its founding statement the IFA included as members filmmakers, film theorists, distributors and film technicians. From the outset there was lively debate around the aims of the IFA and the nature of independence. Some argued that an independence which relied on the patronage of funding by state institutions was not real

independence. Many of the debates took place in the pages of *Screen*, the theoretical journal of The Society for Education in Film and Television.[16] Paul Willemen notes that: '*Screen* dominated the critical scene throughout the seventies, providing a welcome haven for intellectuals who could not pursue their theoretical interests within the literary departments of established academies' (Willemen, n.d.). *Screen's* approach to film theory was argued primarily through a structuralist approach to narrative. Another influential magazine, *Framework*, was established in 1974 and continued until 1992.[17] Willemen notes that: 'The main thrust of *Framework*, from the outset, had been to broaden the scope of British film culture's engagement with all aspects of cinema […] seeking to combine them into one single platform' (Willemen, n.d.).

Jonathan Curling and Fran McLean observed that the period from 1970 to 1974 had been a positive period of struggle and expansion of independent filmmaking through organisations such as the BFI Members Action Committee. Curling and McLean were opposed to a focus on state institutions and favoured an expanding film culture. There was also debate around the relationship between theory and practice. Many filmmakers complained that film theory was overly rigid, academic and irrelevant to their practice. Others argued that theorists should be involved in practice and filmmakers should produce theory. By the end of the 1980s the IFA had gained most of its pragmatic goals in funding and distribution, including representation on the production board of the BFI. However, the tensions between theory and practice, funding and distribution and aesthetic concerns were never entirely resolved.[18]

---

[16] See Wollen, P. & Clarke, J. (1977) 'Letter (on behalf of the IFA)', in *Screen.* Vol. 18. No. 1. For the history of Framework and Screen see Willemen (n.d.) [Online] http://www.frameworkonline.com/frameworkhistory.html [Accessed: 4 July 2014]
[17] For the histories of *Framework* and *Screen* see Willemen (n.d.) [Online] http://www.frameworkonline.com/frameworkhistory.html [Accessed: 4 July 2014]
[18] See Clayton, S. & Curling J. (1979) 'Authorship: On Authorship', in *Screen* (1979) Vol. 20 No. 1., & Karlin, M., Johnston, C., Nash, M., & Willemen, P. (1980) 'Problems of Independent Cinema', in *Screen* Vol. 21 No. 4 & Sitney, P. A, Bergstrom, J., Penley, C. (1979) Letters from

The independent film movement also acted as a campaigning and supportive umbrella for marginalised groups. Some women formed women's film groups to make films for and about women. Alexandra Juhasz notes that: 'The women's movement of the early 1970s was enmeshed in a politics of representation. It inspired an unprecedented deluge of feminist films, the majority of which were documentaries' (Juhãsz 1999: 191). Examples of feminist films from this period include: Vera Neubauer's animation films, *Pip and Bessie* (1973-5) and *Fate* (1976); Lis Rhodes *Dresden Dynamo* (1971/2), *Amensuensis* (1973) and *Light Reading* (1978); London Women's Film Group's *Women of the Rhondda* (1972), a film about women in a Welsh mining community,[19] *Miss/Mrs* (1972) and *Whose Choice?* (1976), a film about abortion rights; Leeds Animation Workshop's *Who Needs Nurseries? We Do!* (1978); and Sally Potter's *Thriller* (1979), a film that explores the role of women through the opera *La Bohème*.

Some contemporary feminist film theorists felt documentaries had serious limitations in confronting ideology. Claire Johnston argued that since film is an ideological product and ideology is a reality it would be impossible to eliminate ideology simply through an effort of will (Johnston 1973: 28). She opposed the non-reflexive observational techniques of cinema verité on the grounds that the 'natural world' would always reproduce dominant ideology. A counter-cinema in support of women's struggle had to be explored through the construction and manufacture of films that aimed to confront and oppose dominant ideology. At the time I considered myself a socialist-feminist and joined the trade-union sponsored Working Women's Charter Campaign (WWCC), eventually becoming the editor of its newspaper *Women's Fight.*

---

the Film Work Group, P Adams Sitney, Janet Bergstrom and Constance Penley', in *Screen* (1979) Vol. 20 No. 3-4.
[19] See Power N. (2013) 'Work, Politics and Feminism: *Women of the Rhondda* and the London Women's Film Group's *The Amazing Equal Pay Show*', in Bauer, P. & Kidner, D. *Working Together: Notes on British Film Collectives in the 1970s*.

Black film groups were also established. In August 1986 June Givani, Jim Pines and Paul Willemen co-organised a three-day conference on 'Third Cinema' at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Pines notes that due to the lack of opportunities within the film industry a route into it was not open to ethnic minority filmmakers: 'Clearly there's a desperate need for black film making and obviously it will have to function outside the system […] therefore the black film-maker is by definition an independent film-maker' (Pines 1999: 116).[20]

I was attracted to the IFA's ideals of independence and resistance to the mainstream film industry. Experimental filmmakers Stephen Dwoskin and Peter Gidal — prominent members of the IFA — lectured at the RCA and I immediately became a member. I looked forward to working with like-minded filmmakers, to support them and to be supported by them. The IFA offered an opportunity to meet independent filmmakers and see their films. I was elected secretary of the London region IFA group and to the IFA National Executive. The campaign to gain access to the BBC for independent filmmakers was eventually successful and a few independent films were broadcast on BBC2. Marc Karlin's *For Memory* (1982), an exploration of television and culture was a co-production between the BBC and the British Film Institute (BFI). However, the BBC did not broadcast the film until March 1986. Liberation Films' *Open Door: Starting to Happen* (1974) was broadcast on BBC2 in its 'Open Door' community engagement slot. Liberation Films emerged from Angry Arts, a film society run by the Vietnam Solidarity Committee. They taught a group of residents in Balham, South London how to use video equipment to record local protests for social change.[21] This access was augmented when Channel 4 Television (C4) was established in 1982. That same year eleven independent films were

---

[20] The 'system' was a common term used by independent filmmakers in the 1970s to refer to the mainstream film and television industry.
[21] For more on Liberation Films see
https://m.facebook.com/events/1452747764957151?acontext=%7B%22ref%22%3A22%7D&aref=22 [Accessed: 26 June 2014]

broadcast on C4, including Lezli-An Barrett's *An Epic Poem* (1982)*;* Roger Buck's *Industrial Britain* (1980); Noel Burch's *The Year of the Bodyguard* (1982)*;* Richard Woolley's *Telling Tales* (1978) and Sue Clayton and Jonathan Curling's *The Song of the Shirt* (1979).

The IFA followed in the footsteps of other pioneering groups of independent filmmakers. In the 1930s, the first seeds of independent filmmaking as an oppositional form of film practice to the mainstream film industry were established in Britain. They were activist filmmakers whose documentary films were aimed at effecting political and social change and they were generally aligned with the political left, including the Communist Party. Johnston observes that: 'An important component of the term "independence" rested on the rejection of Hollywood both as an economic system and as the dominant mode of representation' (Johnston 1980: 16). The short-lived Independent Film-Makers Association (IFMA), founded in 1933, was based in Edinburgh. It aimed to demystify the technical aspects of film production and organised film discussions and practical workshops. The Workers Film & Photo League, an amateur socialist film group, produced short campaigning films in support of workers. *March Against Starvation* (1936), for example, was produced to help in the fight against the Means Test that placed severe restrictions on unemployment benefits.[22]

The impetus to establish independent forms of distribution and production of films came initially from a need to circumvent the 1909 Cinematographic Act that established censorship. Films turned down by the British Board of Film Censors (BFCC) could be shown in private clubs on 16mm safety film. (35mm nitrate film was

---

[22] See The Socialist Party of Great Britain, *Can the Means Test be Abolished*? http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/socialist-standard/1930s/1936/no-377-january-1936/can-means-test-be-abolished [Accessed: 24 June 2014]

highly flammable.) The film distributor Kino was established in 1934 to bring Soviet films to British audiences and it also distributed some of the films made by The Workers Film & Photo League. The Progressive Film Institute (PFI) under Ivor Montague distributed political films. PFI and Kino then turned to political film production. They envisioned an independent cinema embedded in socialist struggle and debates around aesthetics. Willemen notes: 'the only time […] film makers had presented an organised challenge to the dominant prejudices of the industry in directly political and ideological terms as well as economic ones was in the 1930s' (Willemen 1980: 2). In 1936 the PFI demanded the nationalisation of film distribution. However, as Britain entered World War II the organisations crumbled because many filmmakers were called up or recruited into making propaganda films for the war effort. The anonymous authors of a paper to an IFA conference in 1976, gave credit to the IFA's predecessors of the 1930s: '[T]he political film of the thirties offered the only real challenges to the assumption of dominant cinema and the encroachment of American finance' (IFA discussion paper, 1976).

The group of independent filmmakers that was to exert an enduring influence on the notion of an independent filmmaker ─ for me and others ─ was The Free Cinema Group, that was formed in early 1956 in London. Filmmakers Lorenza Mazzetti, Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson had been struggling to get their films screened and Reisz was a programmer at the National Film Theatre (NFT). He decided to programme the films together at the NFT. In the process of organising the first screening of their films, the filmmakers discovered that they had attitudes in common and subsequently produced a film manifesto. This underlined their 'belief in freedom, the importance of people and in the significance of the everyday' (Free Cinema manifesto, 1957). Christophe Dupin notes that: 'Anderson coined the term 'Free Cinema' (a reference to the films having been made free from the pressures of the box-office or the demands of propaganda)' (Dupin, 2012).

The Free Cinema Group made no distinction between documentary and drama films and the films varied in length. (In the mainstream film industry and broadcast television today, films are strictly delineated by running time. A film intended for theatrical release has a minimum running time of 70 minutes.) Most of the films portrayed working-class lives and were supported with small funding grants from the BFI's Experimental Film Fund that was established in 1952. However, the authors of the discussion paper for the IFA Conference in 1976 roundly condemned the Free Cinema Group's notion of independence as one that was solely based on the recognition of the film industry's over-reliance on American finance:

> Ultimately anti-theoretical and unable to articulate any class position and concerned with conventional notions of the artist, reworked in terms of a liberal-humanist commitment, the "free-cinema" film-makers' attacks on the film industry were necessarily short lived and easily assimilated into the industry's political and aesthetic assumptions (IFA discussion paper, 1976).

In March 1959 the Free Cinema Group was wound up and the filmmakers went on to make industry-produced feature films. Nevertheless, the Free Cinema Group's independence from the mainstream film industry; orientation towards a portrayal of the everyday and the working class; experimentation with film techniques and blurring of the boundaries between documentary and fiction films created an important precedent for the later independent film movement of the 1970s. After the Group's demise there was no organised movement of independent filmmakers until the latter part of the 1960s when things began to change under the impetus of more liberal cultural mores. In October 1966 the London Filmmakers Cooperative (Coop) was founded for independent filmmakers and artists. The Coop had no selection criteria to merit inclusion in its film library. Films were discussed rather than rated, and this set an important precedent for the IFA. Later, the Coop set up film-processing and editing facilities and that brought in filmmakers. The Coop's open

access to all filmmakers was welcomed by us RCA film students, particularly in film

distribution.[23]

Peter Wollen observes that avant-garde filmmaking in Europe had developed into

two distinct strands:

> The first can be identified loosely with the Co-op movement […]. The second would include film-makers such as Godard, Straub and Huillet, Hanoun and Jancso. Naturally there are points of contact between these two groups and common characteristics, but they also differ quite sharply in many respects: aesthetic assumptions, institutional framework, type of financial support, type of critical backing, historical and cultural origin (Wollen 1975: 171).[24]

In Britain the IFA was an umbrella organisation for predominantly left-wing

independent filmmakers, while the Coop was the home of film artists. The IFA gave

impetus to new ways of working collectively and achieved funding and distribution

opportunities. It did not see its only aim as cultural debate and there was a crossover

of the two organisations. Many IFA members made and distributed their films through

the Coop and Coop film artists were also members of the IFA.

In 1968 a number of film collectives were formed. The number of collectives

increased in the early 1970s. Cinema Action (1968-1993) was one of the most

significant groups. It was founded by socialist filmmakers to produce left-wing

'campaign films (political films determined as either propagandist or agitational)'

(Daniels 2006: 219).[25] *Fighting the Bill (*1970*)* is a campaigning film that calls for

strike action against the Industrial Relations Bill, which sought to curtail the power of

the trades unions. By the early 1980s the collective had moved to a more reflexive

---

[23] The Lux, the present incarnation of the Coop, has the largest archive of independently produced films in the UK. [Online] Available from: http://lux.org.uk/ [Accessed: 8 October 2013]

[24] See also LeGrice, M. (1972) 'Thoughts on Recent "Underground" Film', in *Afterimage* No. 4. London: Afterimage Publishing, and Burch, N. (1976) 'Avant-Garde or Vanguard', in *Afterimage.* No. 6, London: Afterimage Publishing.

[25] For extensive examples of film collectives see Dickinson, M. (ed.) (1999) *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain 1945-90*.

style of filmmaking, producing films such as *So That You Can Live* (1981) (Daniels 2006: 220).[26] The London Women's Film Group produced *The Amazing Equal Pay Show* in 1974, swapping the technical roles between members of the collective. Amber Film Collective, founded in 1969, aims to document the lives of working class people in the North of England. Productions include *Launch* (1973), a poetic documentary about the working conditions of ship building; and *Seacoal* (1985)*, a drama about people who survive by collecting waste coal. According to Dickinson there were advantages in collective working even though it was time-consuming, as all decisions had to be thoroughly debated and often voted on before they could be implemented: 'it provides a base of strength from which those agendas (political and social as well as critical ones) can be questioned and challenged (Dickinson 1999: 209). The disadvantage of a non-hierarchical structure in film collectives was that certain personalities were able to dominate discussions. There was also a lack of funding and many of the groups were short-lived.

It was an energizing period for young independent filmmakers like me. The Filmmakers Coop was doing well, the IFA was established and production grants were available through the Arts Council, Regional Arts Associations and the BFI. Independent film festivals in the UK and elsewhere screened the films. The Knokke Experimental Film Festival was regarded at the time as the foremost experimental film festival in the world. In 1974 I attended the festival with fellow film students from the RCA. Anna Ambrose, a final year student at the RCA won 1st prize for her film *Noodle Spinner* (1974).[27] In 1970, The Other Cinema (TOC) was established to distribute independent films. Its stated aim was:

---

[26] For further discussion of Cinema Action, see Chanan, M. (2000) 'So That You can Live (For Shirley)', in Dickinson, M. (ed.) (1999) *Rogue Reels, Oppositional Film in Britain 1945-90* and Delmar, R. (1975) 'The Miners Film', in *Monthly Film Bulletin.*.
[27] See http://www.luxonline.org.uk/history/1960-1969/knokke_experimental_film_festival.html [accessed on 5th March 2013) and http://www.filmfestivalrotterdam.com/en/films/exprmntl-the-ghosts-of-knokke-le-zoute/ [accessed 5th March 2013].

> [T]o provide a system of film distribution and exhibition which will function as an alternative to the existing methods of distribution which repeatedly prove themselves unable to handle the numerous independently made films for which there is clearly an audience (Dwoskin 1975: 68).[28]

Developing film aesthetics and techniques

The years I spent at the RCA were important in my development as an independent filmmaker. Students organised weekly seminars to discuss each other's films. Prominent film theorists such as Stephen Heath and Tony Rayns were invited to give lectures. We were eager to see new and innovative work by other filmmakers. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen screened their film *Penthesilea* (1974) at the film school.[29] The film is based on Kleist's 'Penthesilea', a 19th century German tragedy in which the Amazon queen Penthesilea kills Achilles. It is structured in five continuous unedited takes and was considered by many to be experimental and radical at the time.[30]

The Berwick Street Collective screened *Nightcleaners* (1975) at the RCA.[31] This black and white 16mm documentary records a strike by women night cleaners in the city of London. It contains images that are strikingly different in style to the majority of the film. They consist of re-filmed, extreme close-up frontal static shots of the women strikers' faces. The image is degraded through re-filming which accentuates the grain of the 16mm film. These shots and brief shots of black leader are interpolated at intervals throughout the film. The grain of the image and the slight movements and expressions of the faces achieve a brief temporal dislocation in the film's diegesis

---

[28] For more on the history of independent film distribution see Knight, J. & Thomas, P. (2011) *Reaching Audiences: Distribution and Promotion of Alternative Moving Image.*
[29] For further discussion of *Penthesilea*, see Johnston, C. & Willemen, P. (1974) 'Penthesilea Queen of the Amazons', in *Screen* Vol. 15 No. 3.
[30] See Kelly, M. (1999) 'Penthesilea' in *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90.* Dickinson, M. (ed.) The article was originally published in *Spare Rib* (1974) No. 30. See also Karlin, M., Johnston, C., Nash, M., & Willemen, P. (1980) 'Problems of Independent Cinema', in *Screen* Vol. 21 No. 4.
[31] See Aitken, I. 'Documentary: Britain's Greatest Contribution to Cinema', in Screenonline *http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/446186/* [Accessed: 25 June 2014]

that allows an opportunity for spectatorial reflection on the events enunciated in the film and the film's construction. *Nightcleaners* was considered by some as an exercise in deconstruction that was then being prominently explored by *Screen*. Humphrey Trevelyn, a member of the collective, disagrees with this view: 'the *Screen* incorporation of *Nightcleaners* into their argument ignored that rather intuitive and organic process that we had to go through' (Trevelyn 1999: 53). However, Trevelyn believes that the process *was* systematic and deliberately constructed in order to allow people time to reflect on the film's discourse: 'Each bit of black spacing was very carefully timed. The process was about questions such as how long you might hold an image without sound or how long you might hold sound without the image, before things become too disassociated' (Trevelyn 2013: 49).

Johnston defended *Nightcleaners* in the feminist magazine, *Spare Rib*. She and Willemen noted that political cinema at the time was seen primarily in agit-prop terms: They observed that this removed contradiction and struggle from the effect of reality and argued that it denied the reality of contradiction (Johnston & Willemen 1975/1976: 103). Their support for *Nightcleaners* was based on its radical challenge to those assumptions of cinema. They argued that the film was an important contribution to a re-definition of the meaning of class struggle with respect to sexual oppression. *Nightcleaners* gave me pause for thought about the way documentary films may deploy fiction or allegorical strategies, but I had no particular interest in making films that were intended to support political activism.

I made several short experimental fiction films at the RCA and experimented with narrative structures in order to explore memory. I incorporated texts by writers such as Heinrich Böll, Michel Butor and Jean-Paul Sartre in the dialogue and voice-over. My interest was to explore the relationship between sound and image and I was influenced by theories of filmic deconstruction. I discovered the work of Walter

Benjamin, Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser and studied semiotics and structuralist theory. Chantal Akerman's films were highly significant for me and having seen her first feature film again, *Je, tu, il, elle* (1968) I observed that Akerman's voice-over, describing events that are later represented on the screen, or not at all, is similar to the technique of voice-over I deployed in my student films and later in *The Border Crossing.*

My first film at the RCA, *Description* (1975), is a double screen film. The 'characters', a young man and woman, occupy a small, sparsely furnished room with white walls, lined with black and white photographs, including some that portray the characters themselves. The characters do not speak but their voice-overs describe places and events occurring elsewhere that serve to create thematic links with the images in the photographs. In *Description* I aimed to create imaginary locations, an aim reprised in some of my later films, including those made for the thesis. Two 16mm projectors run each film simultaneously and because the speed of the projectors is not synchronised, new thematic relationships are created between images and voice-overs at every screening. The film achieves a more precise relationship between aesthetic considerations of space and an exploration of narrative and signification. *Description* was screened at the Independent Film Festival in Bristol in 1975 and in the Expanded Cinema Film Festival at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London in 1976.[32] (see fig. 4.)

My second film at the RCA, *Rooms and Figures* (1974), represents three unidentified young men. The camera is static throughout. In a series of long takes the men walk in different directions, in and out of frame and in and out of different furnished living

---

[32] *Description (1975)* and another of my student films, *Debacle* (1976) are in the archive collection of the Lux, the present incarnation of the Coop.
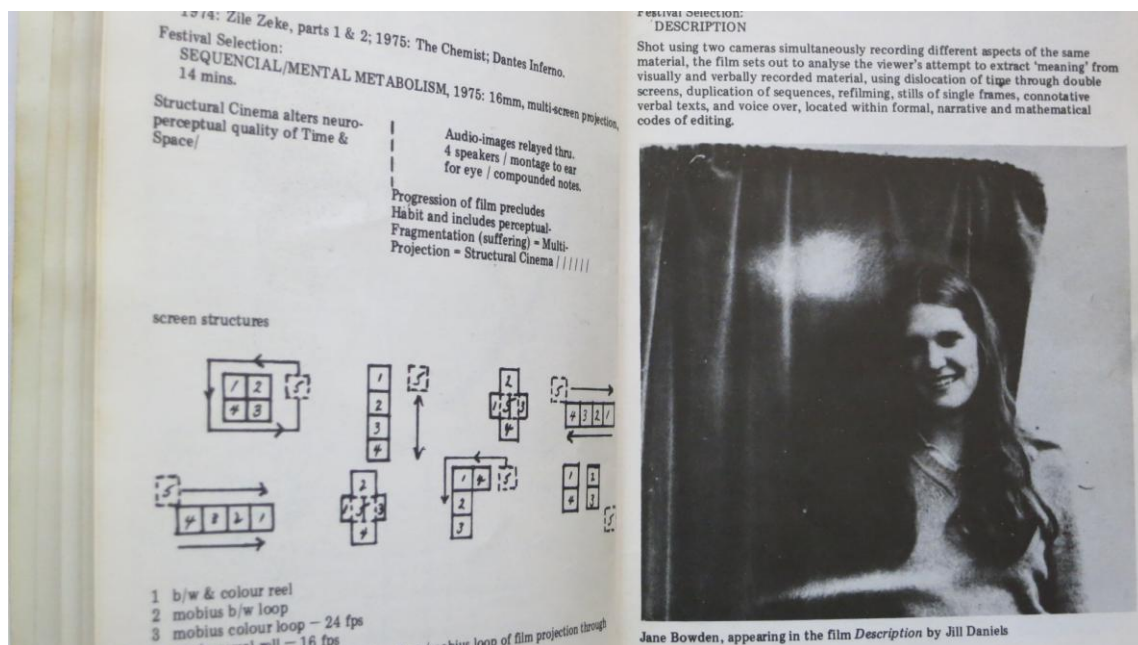
Fig. 4: *Catalogue, Festival of Expanded Cinema* (1976).
London: Institute of Contemporary Arts

rooms; in other shots they are seated, looking directly at the camera, while they describe in almost inaudible monotone voices events that are apparently taking place elsewhere. The film was primarily aimed at an exploration of cinematic space and I was heavily influenced by structuralist notions of anti-narrative. However, I was also influenced by French *nouveau roman* writers such as Nathalie Sarraute and Michel Butor, whose novels explore non-linear narratives with long and extremely precise descriptions of objects and locations. I resisted a spectatorial 'interpretation' of motivation and subjectivities. *Description* and *Rooms and Figures* do not have rounded characters or an exploration of subjectivities. The characters are played by non-professional actors — often fellow students — and my focus was on the deconstruction of narrative and an exploration of cinematic space.

Rooms and Figures was screened at the NFT in 1975 and at a meeting of the International Association of Film and Television Schools (Cilect) at the Lodz film

school in Poland in 1976. The experimental nature of the RCA student work at Cilect created lively discussion, with some members of the audience walking out of the screenings. We felt we had created a positive delineation between the RCA's 'innovative' experimentation with filmic techniques and the 'conservative' conventional techniques deployed by students from film schools whose syllabuses were delineated along film industry craft lines. Of course, we *expected* our views to prevail and that eventually the opposition would come over to our point of view in opposing mainstream cinema.

My early film influences

An early influence on my student work that drew me towards experimentation was Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967), a 45-minute film that consists of an apparently continuous slow static zoom towards a white wall in a very large room. (The shot does change but it is hard to see precisely where the cuts take place except for a very slight change of focus.) The shots end on a close-up shot of a black and white photograph of the sea pinned to the wall, and the film bleaches to white. During the progress of the film, characters, including a woman in a fur coat, wander into the frame, bring in pieces of furniture, drink something and leave. A man enters the frame and collapses on the ground. The woman in the fur coat re-enters, discovers him and calls the police. Off-screen the faint sounds of police sirens are heard. The minimal and fragmented narrative created for me a sensation of anxiety and claustrophobia and a frisson of excitement in the tension created by the camera movement; the duration of the shot which feels interminable at times, and the relationship between on-screen and off-screen space. I was keen to build into my own work a similar sense of suppressed tension and excitement. My aim was to afford the spectator a pleasurable sensation through images and sounds in cinematic on and off-screen space, linked to a fragmented narrative text. The overall effect, I

believed, could be as emotionally satisfying to the spectator as the sensual pleasure of character identification.

The French novelist, scriptwriter and filmmaker Marguerite Duras was another major influence, particularly on my third student film, *Debacle* (1976). Duras' *India Song* (1975) consists of extremely long takes, has a non-linear narrative and there is extensive use of off-screen space; the central character speaks only in voice-over.[33] In *Debacle* a group of young non-professional actors improvise scenes from Jean-Paul Sartre's thriller *Crime Passionel* and read from Len Deighton's *The Ipcress File*, a thriller novel. The 'group' has a vague political identity and its violent actions take place elsewhere. The film questions the conventions of narrative by breaking narrative codes: identification with the characters, emotional empathy, climaxes and resolution. There is little explicit violence and no creation of tension in the editing. There are multiple voice-overs and very long takes, including a 5-minute tracking shot along a wall, with a single opening in the wall that shows the deep space of a river while one of the characters runs through the frame, and a 360-degree wide panning shot around the characters who are standing in a room facing the camera.

Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's *Nicht Versöhnt* (*Not Reconciled*) (1965), a film based on the German writer Heinrich Böll's novel, *Billiards at Half-Past Nine* (1959), was an influence on my fourth and final student film, *The Player* (1977). In Straub/Huillet's *Nicht Versöhnt*, time is fragmented in a dense layering of flashbacks where the delineation between past and present is barely signified. *The Player* is loosely based on another Böll novel, *The Clown*, which is an exploration of memory. The central character, Schnier, a comedian, seeks consolation through alcohol and looks back on his life after his girlfriend, Marie, leaves him because he will not join

---

[33] See Duras, M. (1987) *Duras by Duras.*

the Catholic Church. Schnier is portrayed as an innocent, an artist who perceives the reactionary political nature of Germany and refuses to compromise his ideas, yet suffers from guilt that causes him to do nothing to try to change things. *The Clown* held resonance for me at a time that I was taking up political action.

The Player consists of disconnected key elements of the original narrative, has non-professional actors and does not recreate German locations appropriate to the period. There is no clear delineation between past and present and much of Schnier's thoughts are articulated through voice-over while he silently looks directly at the camera. At times it is unclear if the events he is 'remembering' are real or imagined. The film involved many actors and locations and although I judged it an ambitious experimental exploration of memory and time, it was poorly executed, and would have benefited from professional actors and a better script. *The Player* was not shown publicly.

An English-language film I found interesting at this time was Roman Polanski's, *Repulsion* (1965), which I saw in a small cinema in Madrid. The film is set in London, but Polanski is Polish, Catherine Deneuve who plays the central character is French and the surreal quality of the imagery, such as the hallucinatory images of hands coming through walls, was quite different from British films of the period. I was drawn to the narrative fragmentation and sensation of poetic mystery of European experimental films. They conveyed a strong sense of personal anxiety that chimed with my own dark feelings at the time. I was stimulated emotionally and intellectually by their experimentation with filmic techniques and attention to aesthetic considerations such as long takes and jump cuts, and I identified with many of the young characters who were grappling with the effects of the momentous political and economic changes that began after WWII.

Political and personal challenges

In 1975 a group of former RCA students formed a cooperative film group called Film Work Group.[34] A year later they produced a feature film, *Justine by the Marquis de Sade* (1976), funded by the BFI Production Board. However, the Production Board did not offer assistance with script-writing before filming began, or consultation during the production period, despite the group's total lack of experience of feature film production. John Ellis noted the difficulties in working cooperatively:

> It is very difficult to work cooperatively, sharing the burden of script development, research, and shooting decisions […] But the main cause is the division of labour enshrined in the equipment and difficulties with technicians whose aesthetics in their defined fields are inevitably formed by the demands of the dominant industry for which they usually work (Ellis 1976: 12).

Ellis observed that *Justine by the Marquis de Sade* resembled two distinct films: 'the one it clearly ought to be (a film in the manner of Straub), and the film of the problems of making such a film cooperatively with a low budget' (Ellis 1976: 12). I assisted on the shoot and witnessed many disagreements during the production. By the time the film was finished most of the members had left the film and the group. Nevertheless, I was keen to form a similar group when I left the RCA. I did not seriously envisage working in the British film industry. The film union, the Association of Cinematographic Technicians (ACT), in agreement with the employers maintained a protectionist stance against new workers joining the industry, called the closed shop.[35] It meant no one could be employed in the film industry unless they were a member of the ACT.[36] To become a member the applicant had to have a job offer in the film industry or broadcast television and the sponsorship of an existing ACT member. A central aim of the IFA was to gain access to the ACT.

---

[34] Founding members of *Film Work Group* were Anna Ambrose; Edward Bennett; John Hardy; Michael Leedham; Stewart McKinnon, Clive Myer; and Nigel Perkins.
[35] In 1955 the ACT added Television to its name to become the Association of Cinematographic Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT).
[36] See Chanan, M. (1976) *Labour Power in the British Film Industry*.

There was a rigid demarcation of roles in the film industry along craft lines and discrimination against women and ethnic minorities. It was virtually unheard of for women to work in the film industry except as an editor, production assistant or 'continuity girl'. In 1975, the union belatedly recognised that there was enormous discrimination against the employment of women in the film industry. It produced a pamphlet, *Patterns of Discrimination Against Women in the Film & Television Industries,* which stated that: 'progress to equality of rights for women and men involves […] wide-reaching changes in both the film and television industry itself, and in the structure of the society in which the industry exists' (ACTT 1975: 2*). This situation did not improve quickly enough to benefit me and for ten years after leaving the RCA I did not make a film. I continued my political and socialist-feminist activities and kept in close contact with independent filmmakers. I supported myself by working in voluntary organisations that designed and provided housing for single homeless people. Around 1980, I applied to the BBC for a trainee director programme and was short-listed and interviewed. In my group of interviewees I was the only woman. I did not get through to the second round of interviews.

In 1979 a Conservative Government was elected, with Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister. At first the independent filmmaking movement did not falter but went from strength to strength with the establishment of C4 television in November 1982. The Conservative government aimed to open up broadcast television to market competition through independent film production companies. However, these companies did not yet exist and therefore the government's policy had the unintended effect of opening C4 up to access by independent and often experimental and politically engaged filmmakers.[37] The C4 Film and Video Department was headed by a former independent filmmaker, Alan Fountain, who made revenue

---

[37] For more on C4's history see Hobson, D. (2008) *Channel4: The Early Years and the Jeremy Isaacs Legacy.*

funding available to Workshop groups that were located in areas of economic and cultural deprivation or minority populations. The number of groups was small.[38] They were given a brief to produce films and provide film training. The films were mainly broadcast late at night on C4 and audience numbers were low. In 1982, the IFA reached an agreement with the ACTT through the Workshop Declaration that gave formal recognition to the principles of collective working with a flat rate wage structure and cross-grade structure. Amber Film & Photography Collective still operates under these principles.[39]

The difficulties of maintaining unity between independent filmmakers within the IFA grew as the IFA expanded exponentially. For example, the East Midlands IFA group grew rapidly from a small campaigning group into a much larger group with its own cinema, production facilities and a grant aided production budget. In 1983, Frank Abbott, a member of the group, questioned whether newer IFA filmmakers wanted to take on a campaigning role since many of the IFA's demands had been won. For newer filmmakers the most important consideration was their own practice and cultural debate. Abbott raised the possibility of building a new more politically focused organisation separate from the IFA in order to campaign on issues around production, distribution and the role of the state that would be addressed to a wider arena. They would include: '[T]he Labour Party and the left, the trade unions, the newly emergent socialist society of the left publications, community and ethnic groups and other cultural workers in theatre, television, writing, music etc. (Abbott 1999: 168). In the event, a split of the IFA into two organisations did not take place.

---

[38] Ceddo, Black Audio and Sankofa were black film groups and Retake was an Asian group.
[39] See Amber Online http://www.amber-online.com/sections/about-us/pages/the-workshop-agreement [Accessed: 8 June 2014] & the 1984 revised Workshop Declaration http://www.mikeybee.com/downloads/Workshop_Declaration.pdf [Accessed: 8 June 2014] & Lovell, A. (1990) 'That was the Workshops that was', in *Screen* Vol. 31 No. 1.

During the 1980s the government phased out financial assistance to the film industry. It became harder to sustain the type of mobile cinema activity that Cinema Action and the Berwick Street Collective had pioneered.[40] The IFA concentrated its efforts on influencing the BFI and the Independent Film and Video Department at C4. The department was now a major source of income and distribution for IFA members and those outside it were left with very few funding opportunities. The dependence on state funding began to weaken the independent filmmaking sector as a whole. The ACTT created a branch of the union for independent filmmakers in London, which was welcomed by the IFA but further weakened its influence. In 1989 I made my first film *I'm In Heaven* and joined the ACTT independent filmmakers' branch. I was sponsored by the cinematographer Johnathan Bloom (then Collinson). In 1991 ACTT became the Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU) and the independent filmmakers' branch was dissolved. When the BFI withdrew its funding to the IFA[41] in 1990, the IFA wound itself up.

Al Rees's view of the cultural strength of the IFA is that it was never really the home of *experimental* filmmakers and he expresses surprise that its effect has lingered:

> With the exception of such films as *Nightcleaners* and *Shirley* and a clutch of experimental films by Gidal and others, the results were often disappointingly weighed down rather than liberated by the role-models of Godard, Straub and Duras (Rees 1999: 91).

Colin Perry however, contradicts this view:

> [T]he 1970s and '80s produced a number of highly innovative works […] that are increasingly regarded as canonical – these include *Nightcleaners*, *The Song of the Shirt*, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, *So that You Can Live!* and *Handsworth Songs* (Perry, 2014).

---

[40] Platform Films inherited Cinema Action's archive of films. Educational and Television Films (ETV) had an extensive archive of Eastern European and Chinese material. This archive is now at the BFI.
[41] The IFA had changed its name twice to include video makers and then photographers.

In 2013 Berwick Street Collective's *Nightcleaners* was screened at Tate Modern. In 2014 Clayton and Curling's *The Song of the Shirt* was screened at Iniva Gallery as part of its *Keywords* Exhibition and then travelled to Tate Liverpool.[42] The demise of the IFA in 1990 led to the end of independent filmmaking as a movement of activist filmmakers although the Coop continued (it is now called the Lux). When attacks on the gains in distribution, training and production funding arrived in the 1990s there was no organisation in place to fight them apart from the ACTT. Perry observes that the term 'independent' has had until recently very few champions among film historians. He considers this to be an oversight:

> [T]he independent 'sector', as it emerged in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, represented one of the most vital currents of Left culture. Independent films were shown at film festivals and discussed in journals such as Screen, Afterimage and Jump Cut (to name a few), and it had a forceful representative organisation in the Independent Film-makers Association (IFA) (Perry, 2014).

To newer generations of filmmakers the IFA was a largely forgotten organisation. However, in recent years there has been renewed interest in its legacy and the films produced by its members during the 1970s and 1980s. This interest has coincided with the development of new independent film groupings such as the Radical Film Network. I discuss these recent developments more fully in the Conclusions to the thesis.

My first independent films

> Each of us carries a backpack on our shoulders; this bag cannot be removed. One carries it one's whole life. In this bag one carries a lot of important things. For example: the memory of your mother; your birthplace, the first day at high school, your first love, your first lovesickness. All this is never forgotten (Guzman, 2012).[43]

---

[42] For more on *Song of the Shirt* see Hedditch, E. 'Song of the Shirt, The (1979)', in *Screenonline* (n.d.). Available at: http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/496441/ [Accessed: 5 July 2014].

[43] An interview with Patricio Guzmán by Sukhedev Sandhu in the UK *The Guardian* newspaper about his film *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010), which was screened at the BFI South Bank in London in July 2012.

When I began my filmmaking practice after a long career break, a significant change was my desire to portray subjects whose experiences or identities resonated with my preoccupations with the historical world. The films I made as an independent filmmaker of documentary and fiction in the late 1980s primarily articulate an exploration of exile and identity in Jewish culture and heritage from the position of my Jewish identity. I wanted to explore subjects that were familiar to me and chose to focus on Jewish identity. My first professional film, *I'm in Heaven* (1989), was made with the support of my friends. Despite the number of grant-giving bodies still in place at the time, the number of aspiring filmmakers far outstripped their ability to find institutional support. In 1988 I applied for funding for *I'm In Heaven* from South East Arts and Greater London Arts (GLA), but was unsuccessful. However, South East Arts intimated they would offer me completion funding if I shot the film myself. In an early incarnation of present-day internet crowd funding I threw a party at the film's location, a flat that belonged to a friend, in a high-rise block of flats in South East London. I invited participants to contribute financially towards the film in exchange for a credit on the film. I made enough money to shoot it and then received funding from South East Arts to complete it.

I'm In Heaven is a 35-minute fiction film that tells the story of a Jewish woman who is alienated from her family. She has confined herself to a small flat at the top of a tower block in a near-derelict council estate. The film documents her daily life as she carries out pastiched rituals of Jewish mores. She prepares plates of Jewish food, roasts a chicken, lays out matzo and lights candles. Later she throws the food away and the ritual begins again. When she receives a letter informing her of her mother's death she lights a Jewish mourning candle and covers the mirror with a scarf. Finally she makes her escape to the drab world outside. The film consists mainly of static shots and the narrative is non-linear with no eye-line matches. My decision to deploy long takes in order to articulate a detailed observation of a woman's domestic life

was influenced by Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman 23 Quai de Commerce 1080 Bruxelles* (1975).

I'm In Heaven was shown at film festivals and received an award,[44] but my drama scripts failed to obtain funding. In 1991 I made my first documentary, *Exiles*. The film documents the lives of three Jewish women born in Poland and Germany who live in a Jewish old people's home in London. My sense of the women's marginalisation in society resonated with my feelings of displacement from my own family. *Exiles* and my next film, *Secret Heart* (1994), about young women with learning disabilities who play music together, are explorations of memory and identity obtained through interviews and observational sequences of daily lives. However, I was dissatisfied with what I perceived as limitations in conventional documentary filmic techniques and decided to be more experimental.

My next documentary film, *Skin Deep* (1996), was the first documentary I funded and shot myself and my first use of hi8 video. It is a portrait of my Romanian Jewish grandmother who was forced into a loveless marriage in Manchester. It is an autobiographical film in which I am portrayed as the filmmaker whose voice-over describes and comments on the events of the film, and as a subject, in the role of the 'granddaughter', whose voice-over interacts with her grandmother's. The film consists of observational material of daily life in an old people's home, interviews and sequences, stills and shots that aim to create a strong sensation of contestation. The first part of the film is a long flashback of events leading up to my grandmother's death.

A sequence in *Skin Deep*, for example, is a train journey at night during the winter. My image — partially obscured by the camera I am holding to my eye — is reflected in

---

[44] Best Fiction Film award at the Huesca Short Film Festival in Spain in 1990.

a train window, while the landscape punctuated by lights and blurred by the window creates a sensation of lonely dislocation from place. In the following shot, a wide shot, I sit silently on a bed alone in the far corner of a dark anonymous hotel room, my only companion the flickering light from a television programme which is accompanied by distorted sound, reinforcing the sensation of a character who is alone. As my train journey continues through a snowy landscape and I arrive at my destination, it turns out to be a bleak cemetery and my grandmother's funeral. The production of *Skin Deep*, which was shot over two years, was a turning point. It allowed me to think of the possibilities for experimentation in documentary filmmaking and provided the basis for my future work. The use of a small video camera also enabled me to interact more intimately with the characters in the film without the anxiety I felt in introducing a film crew of strangers into the filming process.

In the 1990s, when I began my first films as an independent filmmaker, 'Thatcherism' was entrenched and I had great difficulty finding funding. Funding to all public organisations had been cut. In 1991, a few London-based independent filmmakers, including me, established Screen Forum to lobby for changes in the broadcast television and film industry. Screen Forum established the film magazine *Vertigo* and then dissolved itself. In 1997, the Lux organised a conference to debate 'The State of Independence'. The mood was dark. An anonymous spectator suggested that the only true independence for filmmakers was to be on state benefits. In 2000, the BFI Production Board was abolished and its function absorbed into the UK Film Council where there was little space for independent filmmakers or experimental work.

Many independent filmmakers of my generation, particularly artist and experimental filmmakers, continue to describe themselves as independent filmmakers, although the formal *organisations* that existed around those independent film movements no longer exist in Britain. Younger filmmakers working in Britain today do create work

[46]

that is independent of the mainstream film industry and broadcast television, partly as a result of the opportunities that are offered by digital technologies.[45] They work in a myriad of different ways, but generally as individuals or small groupings of people. Few younger filmmakers describe themselves as 'independent filmmakers', either because they are not aware of the particular historic implications of the term, or because they regard such a definition as irrelevant to their own practice. I describe myself as an independent filmmaker rather than as an artist or simply a 'filmmaker', because it provides me with a sense of my own context and history. The constraints of the mainstream industry and broadcast television over the control of film production and distribution are still in place — albeit in different forms to the past — despite the opening up of broadcast television to independent production companies and the proliferation of television channels and social media. There are signs however, with the opportunities provided by digital technologies, of a renewed interest in the development of organised groups and networks of independent filmmakers.[46]

Conclusion

This chapter has explored my life experiences and the cultural and social context that led to my development as an independent filmmaker. The rise of the independent filmmaking 'movement' gave me an invaluable insight and became a rich base from which to build my own career. However, its demise has made it increasingly difficult to obtain funding and to find routes towards collaboration with other independent filmmakers. Nevertheless, I have found the means, but none of my films would have been made without the support of collaborators. My career route has afforded me life experience that has provided rich material in making

---

[45] For further information see Daniels, J., McLaughlin, C. & Pearce, G. (eds.) (2013) *Truth, Dare or Promise: Art and Documentary Revisited*, which refers to some of the younger filmmakers working independently today.
[46] See Conclusions.

documentary films and establishing a truly independent status whose roots I can trace back to my formative years. Although my filmmaking practice has moved away from the specific exploration of Jewish identity, most of my films have autobiographical elements and I continue to delve into my memories of past experiences and history.

My current films engage with self-reflexivity, autobiography, place and memory, drawing on significant events of the past that formed my identity. I note that my preoccupations with self-reflexivity, modes of voice, narrative codes and cinematic space are more prominent in my current work than they were when I began to make documentary films. I am less interested now in focusing on subverting the cinematic 'codes' of mainstream cinema and more concerned to experiment with different forms of cinematic language. In the 1970s and 1980s many independent filmmakers and theorists were ambivalent to the documentary form as ideologically complicit and rooted in reactionary forms of realism. Nevertheless, many filmmakers were drawn to the documentary form. Perry notes that the situation has changed: 'There is a robust return to the documentary-as-art today, with numerous younger artists taking up the mantle producing works in a range of deconstructive, performative and observational modes' (Perry, 2014). I have introduced the cinematic techniques of fiction, allegory and enactment into my documentary films. These themes and types of strategies and techniques will form the basis for the remainder of this thesis.

Chapter 2

Experiments in Place

Introduction

In my filmmaking practice I aim to portray subjects as embedded within and informed by place. Place of course exists in space and both terms have long histories. Space may be seen as the infinite beyond, encompassing the heavens; it may be defined by walls or by the frame around the moving image or in the cinematic space defined by that image. Space may also be the interior of a car; a cinema; a shopping mall; a house; an office. In this chapter I discuss place as a 'space to which meaning has been ascribed' (Carter, Donald & Squires 1993: xii). I explore place as: 'relational, historical and concerned with identity' (Augé 1995: 77). I do not consider place as entirely fixed or uncontested, but as dynamic and rich in the possibilities of change, a simultaneity of stories up to that point (Massey 1996: 5). A view of place at a given moment of time will always be a particular articulation of social relations and identities, that will change from one moment to the next and, although constantly in change in its social relations and identity, will also be defined by its counter-position to the 'beyond' and the 'out there'.

My aim is to articulate place as a lived environment for its human subjects and to analyse the varied ways it relates to the subjects in my films. Cowie remarks that:

> Documentary, in its imaging of space and its remembering in people's recorded stories, can also give image and voice to the experience of place as home, as *heimlich*. The walls and borders that separate and define place and home may, however, become a containment that, if breached, might signify freedom for those "within," but also a threat from, or to, those "outside" (Cowie 1999: 2).

Not Reconciled and *The Border Crossing* are located in places that have suffered fragmentation and disruption of social cohesion through war, repression and trauma where history and memory resonate with the present. I engage with place and how it

interacts with my subjects as a central component of my filmmaking practice, partly because of my personal experiences during the late 1960s when I lived in southern Spain.[47] When I observed the fragmentation of communities and evidence of extreme poverty in small Spanish towns and villages due to the effects of the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship, feelings of loss resonated with me. (These feelings revived vivid memories from my childhood when my parents abruptly moved our family from a rural area to London.) Many rural towns and villages in Spain were subject to contestation due to sharp inequalities of land ownership long before the outbreak of the Civil War in the 1930s, and these inequalities, particularly in Southern Spain, led to prolonged periods of starvation for landless peasants. The resulting bitter struggle over land ownership in rural areas of Spain was an important factor in the intensification of violent outbreaks in the period leading up to the nationalist rebellion in 1936 against the elected government of the Spanish Republic.[48]

My interest in the events of the Spanish Civil War led me to locate *Not Reconciled* in Belchite in Northern Spain and the 'new' town of the same name built next to it. The original town is large and retains its central street and town squares with many old churches and ruined houses. It offered extensive opportunities for filming. I located *The Border Crossing* in the Basque region of Spain because it was associated with the traumatic memories that I explore in the film. During the film's pre-production period I learned that the Basque region in Spain suffered from extreme violence carried out by Nationalist forces against the Basque population during the Spanish Civil War. It included the complete destruction of the small Basque town of Guernica on 26 April, 1937.[49] In the aftermath of the Civil War the Basque population continued

---

[47] For further information see Chapter 1.

[48] See Morrow, F. (1974) *Revolution & Counter-Revolution in Spain* for a detailed account of the events leading up to, and during the Spanish Civil War. For an account of the struggle for land ownership and the establishment of collectives during the Civil War, see Leval, G. (1975) *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*.

[49] See Webster, J. (2006) *!Guerra!* for an account of the destruction of Guernica.

to suffer repression and discrimination at the hands of the Spanish state. At the end of the Franco dictatorship and the return to democracy in 1975, there was continuing violence between the Spanish state and armed Basque separatist groups who fought for an independent Basque state.

In this chapter I refer to the films of Boris Barnet, Ursula Biemann, Luis Buñuel, Amos Gitai and Jose Maria de Orbe. I also refer to my earlier films *Fool's Gold* (2002) and *Small Town Girl* (2007), precursors to my engagement with place in *Not Reconciled* and *The Border Crossing.* As Wimal Dissanayake notes place may provide multiple significations in films:

> Most often, we tend to think of landscape in films as a provider of the requisite background for the unfolding of the narrative and a giver of greater visual density and cogency. This is indeed true as far as it goes; however landscapes in cinema perform numerous other functions that are more subtle and more complex which invest the filmic experience with greater meaning and significance (Dissanayake 2010: 191).

My discussion explores experimental documentaries that foreground the subtleties and complexities of place, achieved in my choices of representational strategies. My experimental documentary films and those I have mentioned above, aim to articulate the particular social and political relations of a community and the wider world, in order to reflect on the ways in which place may provide a support for the mutual imbrication of place and identity.

Place and the familiar

I begin with a brief outline of the way in which filmmakers in the early 20th century mediated place. The lack of complexity in early films in comparison with films of the 21st century may assist in the discussion of spectatorial reception of place. Just after the birth of cinema, many black and white silent films, known as actualités, were simply short documentations of daily lives or ethnoscopes. Their subjects often

included workers coming out of factories or social events.[50] There was a continuing demand for actualités and their exhibition. This was due partly to the extreme novelty of this new medium, when individuals for the first time were able to see their moving image on a screen, but also I would argue, because people generally imbue certain places, a room, a house or a street, with a particular value that informs their sense of identity. As MacDougall notes: 'Places and objects possess a familiarity that is integral to a person's sense of self' (MacDougall 2006: 257). Naficy observes that this may extend beyond an individual's particular house or street to a country, a region, a town, a village (Naficy 2001: 152).

Many filmed ethnoscapes in their observation of community lives (there was little or no editing of the filmed footage and no sync sound) afforded a sense of spectatorial identification that at the time reiterated a sense of pleasure or nostalgia, but very few actualités observed any form of social conflict and thus they tended to reinforce the prevailing unequal economic relations of many small towns and villages. From the start of World War I a defining sense of identity through place — an identity that was often already contested through class inequalities and poverty — became increasingly fragmented in villages and many rural areas in Western Europe. The effects of World War I and II and the industrialisation of agriculture forced new generations of inhabitants in small villages and towns to migrate to cities and towns to find work, leading to many de-populated villages.

Historians and film theorists note that spectators viewing early films responded in enthralled delight on seeing familiar places suddenly rendered unfamiliar through their mediation. Actualités were enjoyed for their spectacle rather than for narrative. Cowie observes that: 'spectacle, a sheer pleasure in looking, is typically cited as the

---

[50] For examples see: *Workers Leaving the Factory/ La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon* (1895), The Lumière brothers. France; and *Edwardian Folkestone at Work* (1904), (date unknown). Anon. UK.

key and initial element in cinema's popularity and fascination for audiences' (Cowie 1999: 26). The pleasure in viewing spectacle applied to both rural and urban places and their inhabitants. For example, around the end of the 20th century, the filmmakers Mitchell and Kenyon filmed British workers outside their factories in their work clothes.[51] The resulting films were shown in tents, fairgrounds or community halls to the same workers, who were generally delighted to pay small sums in order to see moving images of themselves in familiar locations. It reinforced their sense of identity with place. Marvin D'Lugo discusses the mediation of rural places in early Spanish film ethnoscapes and notes their importance to a spectator's sense of identity:

> From as early as Eduardo Jimeno's actuality footage of parishioners leaving the Cathedral of Zaragoza after a midday mass in 1897, said to be the first Spanish film, background locale and mise-en-scène have carried an implicit charge of cultural meanings and values. Depictions of folkloric traditions […] costumed dramas set in rural spaces, became stabilized in Spanish popular imagination as "ethnoscapes" (D'Lugo 2010: 119).

A sense of identity with place also offered filmmakers, even in the early stages of filmmaking, the possibility of using films for implicit or explicit propaganda purposes. According to D'Lugo, rural landscape in early films in Spain was deliberately intended to evoke the security of traditionalism in the senses and mind of the spectator: 'the evocation of rural landscapes were juxtaposed in audiences' minds against an opposing imagery, that of urban space and, consequently, [dangerous] modernity' (D'Lugo 2010: 119). Place may therefore play a powerful role in documentary films as a support for spectatorial identity and it may also be used for propaganda purposes.

---

[51] A Mitchell & Kenyon film that documents workers is *Pendlebury Colliery* (c. 1900). See Toulmin, V., Popple, S. & Russell, P. (2004) *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film.*

Place, as significant to spectatorial engagement and identification is complicated by the fact that spectators are by no means homogeneous in their engagement with films. Vivian Sobchack observes that when we watch a film 'our consciousness is neither disembodied nor impersonal nor "empty"' (Sobchack 1999: 242). We have life experience and knowledge and these provide us with an *attitude* towards what we see on the screen. Sobchack discusses the difference between the spectator's receptivity to familiar and unfamiliar places in home-movies, documentaries and fiction films. She argues that the spectator's receptivity to the *familiar* in a documentary or fiction film is close to their receptivity to a home movie. In the home movie (or to use the French term *film-souvenir* preferred by Sobchack), images of the familiar allows the spectator's imagination to wander from the events on the screen towards a known past event or an absent person (Sobchack 1999: 247). Sobchack argues that for a *film-souvenir* to engage the imagination of the spectator in evoking pleasurable nostalgia it must contain images familiar to the spectator's own life-world. Without this sense of familiarity, other people's home-movies may appear to the spectator as an unsatisfying documentary (Sobchack 1999: 249).[52] The experience of watching familiar images generally provides a sensation of nostalgic pleasure that is not dependent on narrative.

Sobchack argues that the more *unfamiliar* the images on the screen, the more closely the spectator must scrutinise what appears on the screen, in order to gain knowledge of the film experience: 'the more dependent we are on the screen for *specific* knowledge of what we see in the film experience, the less likely we are to see beyond the screen's boundaries and back into our own life-world' (Sobchack 1999: 244). In this context the bodily sensations created by the images and sounds

---

[52] For an extensive discussion of this subject see Sobchack, V. (1999) 'Toward a Phenomenology of Nonfictional Film Experience', in Gaines, J. & Renov, M. (eds.) *Collecting Visible Evidence.*

may be very different to the sense of nostalgic identification and pleasure afforded by the familiar place or the *film-souvenir* (Sobchack 1999: 244).

In the late 20th and 21st centuries, spectators have increasingly encountered film images of *unfamiliar* places rather than the familiar. In some countries, such as Spain in the early 20th century, the majority of the population, particularly in rural areas, had never seen a film. Spain in the early 1930s suffered from great political turbulence and inequalities. The Republican government aimed to fight these inequalities and the Pedagogical Missions (Misiones Pedagogicas) were set up to bring education and culture to the rural masses.[53] However, when the Missions showed their films to rural populations people were often more delighted to see the representation of a cat than they were to see the depiction of a 'heroic' event in a city they had not seen before (Pingree 2005: 301). From the 1920s and 1930s onwards, the types of short actualités discussed earlier, rapidly gave way to more technically sophisticated fiction films through the rise of the industrialised form of Hollywood feature films and the advent of sound and colour. In the 21st century spectators may encounter film images of unfamiliar places as well as familiar ones. With access to global travel they may have encountered places that have become, through a tourist's eyes, 'familiar', even if that familiarity is a superficial one that is restricted to the confines of hotels, museums, beaches and bus tours, rather than to local inhabitants' places of work and living. The sense of 'familiarity' has also been made possible because of the extraordinary rise of new technologies such as YouTube. Place mediated globally via these myriad forms of digital technology may now be as likely to be unfamiliar to a spectator as familiar.

---

[53] For further discussion of the Pedagogical Missions see de Leiva, A. (2013) *Musings on Culture* http://www.aledeleiva.com/2013/04/the-pedagogical-missions-in-the-second-spanish-republic-a-far-reaching-attempt-at-social-regeneration/ [Accessed: 8 June 2014]

Another complication in spectatorial familiarity with place is that through mass media, particular images may be iconic to many western spectators. Most will be familiar with the skyline of Manhattan in New York, for example, even if they have only seen it through images in films. In my filmmaking practice I generally aim to avoid such iconic images that are over-determined in their familiarity through their extensive representation in modern mainstream feature films. However, certain images specific to rural locations that I choose to include in my films are iconic and, rather than avoid them, I deploy filmmaking strategies to take this factor into account. For example, the modern wind turbine that generates electricity is an iconic signifier of modernity. In Spain wind turbines are now ubiquitous throughout the landscape. Even if some spectators have not encountered a modern wind turbine in its physical form the image will be familiar to them through their viewing of media such as the cinema, television or the internet. In *Not Reconciled* images of wind turbines located on a hill just above the ruined town loom over the ruins, signifying the forces of modernity and 'progress' in jarring contrast to the desolation conveyed by the images of buildings ruined by the effects of war. Andrew Schenkel in his discussion of Spanish filmmaker Mercedes Alvarez's *The Sky Turns* (2005), which charts a declining population in the small Spanish village of La Aldea, notes that it too contains similar images of iconic modern-day wind turbines:

> Nothing speaks more elegantly to the bewilderment of the locals than a long shot of newly built windmills lining a distant hilltop while a villager, made tiny by Álvarez's framing, looks on in the foreground, swallowed up by the forces of history (Schenkel, 2011).

Early films were often made in order to show audiences images of familiar places, with the aim of producing pleasurable sensations and a reinforcing of a sense of identity. However, place and landscape in cinema have not been invariably mediated as ennobling, nostalgic, or pleasurable. Luis Buñuel's *Las Hurdes: Tierra sin Pan* (1936), is set in small villages in rural Spain immediately before the start of the

Spanish Civil War. Its extensive shots of starving individuals evoke, in contrast to the myth of the ennobling rustic world the wretched social reality of a starving population without hope (D'Lugo 2010: 121). Buñuel's aim in making *Las Hurdes* was to create in spectators sensations of empathy as well as discomfort and anxiety, in order to bring attention to the degradation of life in villages in Spain during that period. At the premiere of *Las Hurdes* in Madrid it was shown without a soundtrack and Buñuel provided a polemical live voice-over, accompanied by a recording of the Brahms 4th symphony played on a gramophone.

Fig. 5: Daniels, J. (2009). *Belchite, Northern Spain.* [Photograph]

In *Not Reconciled* I deployed strategies that aimed to afford a sensation of discomfort and anxiety as well as reflection. The images of buildings destroyed by the Civil War that have lain untouched since 1937 act as a continuing reminder of Belchite's violent past and uneasy present. (see fig. 5). The film articulates Belchite as a place that embodies history where stories in the present are not yet completed.[54]

---

[54] In August 1937 Belchite was held by Nationalist forces. Republican forces besieged the town. After three weeks of fighting they captured it. It had been reduced to rubble. On 10th

In my filmmaking practice I generally confine my representational strategy of place to the way subjects interact with it. The choice of cinematography, editing style and mise-en-scène are important in providing the means to do this. I also make use of the long take. As Massey notes: 'Long takes give us, in the midst of the rush and flow of [the present] a certain stillness. But they are not stills. They are about duration. They tell us of becoming, in place' (Massey 2011). Long takes may also be a way of redefining the way in which the film addresses its audience or to reveal the relations between simultaneous actions (MacDougall 1998: 217). The long take does not necessarily imply an aesthetic that is antithetical to the use of montage as an 'abstract creator of meaning' as discussed by André Bazin (Bazin 1967: 45). However Bazin suggests that where it is necessary to reveal the actual duration of a historical event it may be important to use a long take. He gives the example of a long take in Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) where 'Nanook' is hunting a seal. Bazin stresses the importance of the length of the waiting period between hunter and animal: 'Montage could suggest the time involved. Flaherty however confines himself to showing the actual waiting period; the length of the hunt is the very substance of the images, its true object. Thus in the film this episode requires one set-up' (Bazin 1968: 27).

The long takes in *Not Reconciled* give spectators who are unfamiliar with the areas represented on the screen sufficient time to gain a sensation of familiarity. Spectators who *are* familiar with the location are given time to reflect anew on the social relations of history and its continuing effects on the present. Willemen refers to this type of strategy as: 'a way of making sense, but [the film] simultaneously invites

March 1938 it was recaptured by the Nationalists. For descriptions of the 3-week battle see: Diaz, M. (1973) '13 Dias de combate: Belchite 1937', in *Historia y Vida*; Beevor, A. (2006) *The Battle for Spain*; and Fraser, R. (1986) *Blood of Spain An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War*. The character of the American in *Not Reconciled* is based on Robert Hale Merriman, the first combat commander of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. See Merriman M. & Lerude, W. (1986) *An American Commander in Spain.*

critical attention to the way this is done, regularly pausing to allow the reader/viewer to check the proceedings' (Willemen 1994: 166). The long takes of images of place allow the spectator to define the geographical context; to distinguish the difference between foreground and background; to check how long it takes for characters and vehicles to move across and within the frame — something that is usually masked through editing. In this way the shot respects the spatial unity of the event (Bazin 1967: 50).

Place as metaphor and allegory

In my filmmaking practice my aim is to evoke or enact, rather than re-enact, physical events and memories of the past in the sites where I film. My intention is to create a resistance to definitive prescriptive values or analysis in order to offer a multi-layered subjective experience to expand the dialogue between filmmaker and spectator. Film material and still images that are contemporaneous to an event may afford a mediation of the historic event through the technology deployed and the patina of age, if they were produced in the period in question. However, these materials may not always be available and may be insufficient to engage effectively with the uncertainty of subjective memory in place.

In my films I use film material and still images of the past and present in order to provide evidence, but I also construct a range of allegorical and metaphorical techniques to engage with subjectivities, since their designation in audio-visual language is never entirely fixed or determined. These techniques multiply the range of significations which remain open to interpretation. They offer greater thematic freedom to create poetic evocations of the past that is useful in expanding the discourse of experimental documentary films. Allegory is particularly useful in this respect. Catherine Russell observes that: 'the allegorical discourse […] marks the

point of a vanishing and transitory subjectivity that is at once similar and different, remembered and imagined' (Russell 1999: 5). According to Jonathan Kahana:

> To call documentary allegorical is to highlight its capacity to mediate. Documentary mediation is not only […] between the documentary subject and the observer with the camera, or the screen and the audience, but also between the realms of theory and practice (Kahana 2008: 7).

Bill Nichols however, observes that documentary films refer directly to the historical world and are distinguished from fiction films by the fact that they do *not* speak allegorically about it. He notes that: 'An allegory has a second meaning, the surface meanings may constitute a disguised commentary on actual people, situations and events' (Nichols 2010: 7). In documentary films where the primary endeavour is to provide evidence in a direct representation of the historical event, allegory often creates an uncertainty that he considers may be inappropriate to the film's overall discourse. This may be the case in mainstream documentary that aims to provide evidence rather than engage in subjectivities. However, in experimental documentaries such as *Not Reconciled* and *The Border Crossing* where evidence is not the primary focus, I aimed to offer an engagement with subjectivities and the provision of evidence. I consider that the 'second meaning' associated with allegory may be very valuable in obtaining multiple significations through poetic evocation.[55] In this way the fictional creation of ghosts of Civil War fighters in *Not Reconciled* allegorizes the history of Belchite and the events of the Civil War. In *The Border Crossing* the modern city of San Sebastian in the Basque Country is allegorized in the voice-over accounts of memories of the city as it was 40 years ago. In both films the voice-overs are generally poetic rather than expositional.

Manthia Diawara emphasises the important role of allegory in first person Black Diaspora documentaries by filmmakers such as Raoul Peck and John Akomfrah. In

---

[55] The cinematic strategies of allegory in my films and those of others are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

Peck's *Lumumba: The Death of a Prophet* (1990), Peck poses as the ghost of Lumumba to haunt the streets of Brussels (Diawara 2003: 194). The character played by the filmmaker is given equal weight to the character of Lumumba and Brussels is allegorized as Kinshasha, the capital of Congo. The voice-over is poetic and does not give an impression of objectivity. The allegorical strategy provides a layer of uncertainty that affords multiple layers of signification and expands the filmic discourse beyond the provision of 'evidence'.

Nichols distinguishes metaphor and metonymy from allegory and observes that these are useful devices in documentary films in providing a rhetorical function:

> Metaphor or metonymy are rhetorical or figurative devices rather than logical forms of proof. They are usually not literally true…the value of figures of speech like metaphor and metonymy is precisely that they offer a more vivid and compelling image of something, whether this image corresponds to any larger truth or not (Nichols 2010: 84).

In their work on landscape and place, Harper and Rayner discuss the way in which metonymic designations may also add meaning:

> [I]n a cinematic landscape in which a skyscraper is depicted, we have transference of the idea of a city, of the ideas of business and commerce, of the ideas of capitalism and wealth, and of the ideas of ambition and aspiration. Alternately, in the framing of a ramshackle farmer's hut, perhaps of the 19th century, we have the transference of the idea of labour, of pastoralism, of the pre-industrial or agrarian existence (Harper and Rayner 2010: 20).

For the experimental filmmaker, metaphors and metonymy offer a useful rhetorical function that are effective in evoking a sensation or thought beyond the image or sound's direct indexical link to the historical world. They may also provide additional meaning to the film's discourse.

In *Not Reconciled*, place serves as a metaphor for its absent subjects through extensive shots of ruined buildings and the visual traces of human habitation. Sequences that consist of long static takes of ruins combined with voice-overs of the

[61]

fictional characters of ghosts create an impression that the buildings themselves, hollowed out by the effects of war and time, have become the physical embodiment of ghosts. Some images, blurred through the slowing of the normal camera shutter speed, deepen the sensation of a place that is possessed by restless and unhappy ghosts. Shots of tourists, similarly blurred, evoke ghostly images. An evocative sound-track that consists of banging doors, whistling wind and the hammering of metal runs over the sequences of ruined buildings, rising and falling in order to evoke contestation. 'A wind quietly howling across a plain, whistling its warnings of events past or yet to come' (McLaughlin 2011: 96). During the filming of *Not Reconciled* I chanced upon a huge pile of tyres that had been set alight. The fire was located next to farm buildings that I had filmed previously (see fig. 6).[56] It was so large it dwarfed

Fig. 6: Daniels, L*. (2009). *A fire near Belchite.* [Photograph]

the buildings and roared with deep red flames and billowing plumes of black smoke. I

---

[56] The buildings, located near the town, are known locally as *Las Rusas*. Jaime Cinca, a local historian, told me that at the end of the war in 1939, they were used to house the relatives of political prisoners, many of whom were Russian. He said the Republican concentration camp was located at the site where they built the new town.

filmed extensive shots of the fire and the buildings nearby and then edited the resulting shots into the film. The shots function as effective metaphors for the violence of war.

In a further sequence I positioned the camera in a large square in the modern town of Belchite and filmed several very low angle static wide shots. The frame restricts the view to the subjects' lower bodies. Centre-frame, motionless, is a small girl in an old-fashioned red frilly party dress, standing inside a circle of people, their faces unseen, her back square to the camera. She appears to be imprisoned by hostile old people. The immobility of the scene and the impression created by the girl's old-fashioned long dress is rather unnerving. It is not clear whether she is in fact a young girl, since the awkward stance of her body suggests that she could easily be an old woman in a child's dress. Her vivid red dress serves as a metaphor of left-wing

Fig. 7: Daniels, J. *Not Reconciled* (2009). [Screen shot]

political liberty that contrasts with the conservative repressive past and death, evoked by the encircling legs. The tableau creates a strong sensation of temporal dislocation and a sense of anxiety. Then, in a sudden evocation of modernity, a boy wearing a bright yellow football shirt rides a bicycle through the frame and

disappears into the distance. This creates a rupture in the tableau's immobility. As the cyclist leaves the frame, the girl suddenly moves. (see fig. 7). She hops on to the pavement in an awkward twisting movement that reveals her face; but by now she has moved too far from the camera for the features of her face to be distinguished. Her movements are accompanied by non-diegetic music, the Spanish Republican song *Ay Carmela*, which serves as a metaphor of revolutionary fervour and freedom.[57] The 'girl' then leaves the frame. The film cuts to a wide static shot located in the ruined town, and a bent old woman, Pilar, slowly enters the frame as the music fades away. These two shots create an evocation of revolutionary fervour that was destroyed by the effects of war, whose traces still remain in the hollowed out ruined buildings and the bodies of a very old woman and a 'girl'.

There are many static shots of ruined churches in *Not Reconciled* while Rosa's voice-over describes the period before the Civil War when churches conferred status and power on affluent members of the population. Power and status, she says, also led to contestation:

"First they threw out the Jews and the moors and turned the mosque into a church. Anyone who was anyone built a church. Everywhere you looked there was another church. They argued over […] those damned churches."

In an almost silent sequence, set in the opulent interior of a church in the modern town, a young man points at the static camera, looks around the church and back at the camera, nodding his head. His intended meaning is uncertain. However, the intercutting of shots of ruined churches combined with Rosa's voice-over and shots of the church's opulent interior metaphorically highlights the way the image of a building such as a church, which occupies a powerful status in many societies, may obtain multiple designations of power, status and loss.

---

[57] *Ay Carmela* is said to have originally appeared as a folk tune that was taken up and sung by Partisans fighting Napoleon's army in Spain in 1808. It was apparently popularised by the Republican forces during the Spanish Civil War.

In *The Border Crossing* there are extensive static shots of the signifiers of violence; nationalist posters, slogans and political prisoners and flags are intercut throughout the film, embedding them into the film's diegesis. (see fig. 8). In a sequence located in Irun, a Spanish town on the border of France and Spain, the streets are packed with a large crowd of men in military uniforms who wind their way through the streets, beating drums, to the cheers of onlookers, mainly women and children. High angle

Fig. 8: Daniels, J. (2009). *Political prisoner*. [Photograph]

static shots reveal the vast crowd of men, while a woman wearing a white dress and high-heeled shoes holds an open Spanish fan as she walks at the head of the procession. (see fig. 9). The annual procession in Irun celebrates the Spanish defeat of France 400 years ago. There have been violent demonstrations against the procession in past years because of its lack of inclusion of women. Images of the procession were edited into the film in order to provide a sharp contrast with two Basque nationalist demonstrations where protestors hold placards bearing images of faces with their mouths eliminated, to signify their lack of voice in the political process. The contrast between these two events creates opposing evocations of contested place. The images of the procession may evoke a patriarchal and violent

Fig. 9: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot].

society where women are virginal and powerless, thus creating a metonymy of entrenched violence that continues to pervade the Basque Country in Spain in the present.[58] In contrast, images of Basque demonstration evoke a lack of political power.

In my filmmaking practice I afford single or multiple significations to the image of a house. It may signify the personal and the intimate; a site of contestation; individual identity and social status; security or loss, or the embodiment of memory and history. I draw upon Gaston Bachelard's analysis of the symbolic and nostalgic role of the house in referencing the past. He argues that even the simplest of images can evoke different spectatorial states of mind. A central image in these types of evocations is the image of the house:

> We inhabit our vital space, in accord with all the dialectics of life, how we take root, day after day, in a corner of the world. For our house is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word (Bachelard 1994: xxxvi).

---

[58] For further discussion on the representation of this military procession held annually in Irun, a small town on the border of Spain and France, see Chapter 3.

According to Bachelard, homes with 'secret rooms, rooms that have disappeared become abodes for an unforgettable past' (Bachelard 1994: xxxvi). He laments: 'how much better we should live in the old house today! How suddenly our memories assume a living possibility of being!' (Bachelard 1994: 56).

In *Not Reconciled* the images of houses in the ruined town and the voices of ghosts evoke a sense of loss and act as a poignant recognition that these houses once represented their own corner of the world for their inhabitants. It is a 'cosmos' that is irretrievably lost. The image of the house primarily signifies contestation from the effects of war rather than reassurance. For Irma Klein the image of an empty ruined house 'is merely a frame, a spine, showing traces of its former orientation. The movement […] of people going in and out of the house turn its spaces "inside out"' (Klein 1993: 30-31). The ruined houses in *Not Reconciled* evoke perpetual disintegration. They act as empty vessels for the bodies of tourists who trace their way in and around the buildings. The tourists' physical movements evoke the way the houses' former inhabitants may have moved in and out of the same space, but now the space is empty, its inhabitants absent. Interior and exterior space merge, defined only by cracks in continually disintegrating walls.

Comparable images of the house are found in other films, such as Boris Barnet's film, *Outskirts* (1933), an early Russian fiction film. *Outskirts* is an interesting example of the way the image of a lamp in the window of a family home may evoke contrasting sensations. The film is set in a small Russian town at the outbreak of World War I. It is dusk and lamps come on one by one in the windows of a small clapboard house while a non-diegetic poetic love song is heard off screen. The image evokes the house as a place of security, calm and happiness. Later, as violence breaks out through war and political turbulence, the lights in the window of

the house are dimmed and the image of the house now creates an evocation of loss and loneliness.

In Amos Gitai's documentary, *House* (1980), the image of the house simultaneously signifies contested space and a container of the flow of time. Serge Daney observes that:

> Gitai wants this house to be both a symbol and something very concrete; he wants it to become a character in a film. He achieves one of the most beautiful things a camera can record 'live', as it were; people who look at the same thing and see different things - and who are moved by that vision. In this crumbling shell of a house real hallucinations begin to take shape *(*Daney, 1982*)*.

The film articulates the rebuilding of a large house whose Palestinian owner has been dispossessed by an Israeli. Since then, the house has been sold to a succession of Israelis and in its most recent incarnation Palestinian labourers dispossessed from their own land work on its reconstruction. The film documents the house being rebuilt, but throughout the film it remains a ruin. Alberto Farassino observes that the image of the house in *House* 'strikes us as an open, fluid construction in perpetual transformation, apparently rooted to the ground but lacking any rock upon which to stand' (Farassino 1993: 17).

In *House* the echoing sound and rhythmic movements of Palestinian workers smashing limestone with lump hammers in the opening sequence give voice to the extent of the Palestinian defeat. The house signifies a straightforward designation of loss. However, this designation is contested through interviews conducted by Gitai with the very first Jewish occupants of the house, who justify their occupation. They were refugees and they describe in detail their flight from Morocco. In their narrative, the house in Jerusalem was allocated to them by the Israeli State and they had to share it with another Jewish family. The narrative of exile adds another layer to the multiple layers of continuing contestation that the house signifies.

Jose Maria de Orbe's *Aita* (*Father)* (2010)*,* set in the Basque Country in Spain, also explores the signification of a house, in this case a large mansion that is being renovated. Here it is *lovingly* renovated, by an elderly man who might be the owner of the house or its caretaker. At a screening of *Aita* in the London Film Festival in London in October 2010, de Orbe said he created the fictional character of the caretaker to further complicate an understanding of the signification of the house and its owners. This is similar to my use of the fictional ghosts in *Not Reconciled.* As the film progresses it is evident he is not the owner but nevertheless he appears to care deeply for the house. He sleeps in a small bed in a tiny sparsely furnished room, his identity only known through the space of the house as it is being renovated. Fragments of a silent film are projected at night on to a wall inside the house; flickering sepia images of lively communal scenes of the town's former inhabitants evoke the past in place as though the house itself is haunted by its own past. The house in *Aita* signifies the embodiment of nostalgic memory.

An image that is similar to the image of a house is the border crossing. It is a significant image in my memory and plays a central role in *The Border Crossing.* The border crossing in Spain where I waited for a lift to take me to France is a central feature in the memories of my experience of trauma. The anxiety the image creates when I recall it endows it with a particular potency which I aimed to evoke in *The Border Crossing.* The border has a long history as a metaphorical device in fiction and documentary films and may have multiple designations, operating as a divide between oppositions, distinctions and limits. Avtar Brah argues that images of borders are always metaphors: 'simultaneously social, cultural and psychic; […] places where claims to ownership – claims to "mine", "yours" and "theirs" – are staked out, contested, defended and fought over' (Brah 2000: 23).

[69]

Ursula Biemann's film, *Performing the Border* (1999) is an exploration of the potent image of the border crossing. The film is set in Mexico and located at the contested border between Mexico and the USA, a border designed and enforced to prevent Latinos from entering the USA as illegal immigrants. A character in *Performing the Border* comments in voice-over:

"You need the crossing of bodies for the border to become real, otherwise you just have this discursive construction. There is nothing natural about the border; it's a highly constructed place that gets reproduced through the crossing of people."

When I filmed *The Border Crossing,* the border between Spain and France was a fierce site of contestation in the struggle by Basque nationalists for a Basque independent state. However, since the border was part of the European Union, it was also 'open' for the free exchange of goods and the crossing of people and there were few signs or official markers to signify its presence. Several sequences in the film contain images of different border crossings. The border is also referenced in the narrative given by Maria, an interviewee, when she recalls her memories of the past. One sequence represents the border as a site of modernity, a commercial centre dedicated to the sale of cheap Spanish goods, with a large supermarket, fast food restaurants and a petrol station. Another references the past; the crossing is marked only by a single large piece of broken stone bearing the traces of a number in blue paint and a red painted arrow. (see fig. 10). Other sequences evoke the border's continuing contestation through shots of political demonstrations in support of Basque political prisoners, posters and political slogans.

In the border sequences my voice-over and Siân's reference the border as a metaphor for contested place. In one sequence my voice-over states: "I am at a border crossing. I see a road, a few huts and border guards." In another, Siân's voice-over describes a similar location: "There are huts, on each side of the border

[70]

crossing there are small yellow huts and men in blue uniforms, laughing and joking. I sit on a chair in the doorway of a small hut. The men play cards."

However, the descriptions in the voice-overs are not conjoined with the filmed images. The images reveal crumbling walls of former customs buildings; a heap of builders' sand on the ground; a road over a bridge that is open only to pedestrians and at one end of the bridge, a small faded sign that says 'France'. In a sequence towards the end of the film Siân is alone at a border crossing. She enacts an approximate version of the events 'her' voice-over describes above. She sits on a

Fig. 10: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

stone border marker; she smokes cigarettes and she waits. However, there are no uniformed guards or small yellow huts. (see fig. 11). The border sequences create an unnerving dislocation between events described in voice-over and those actually shown on the screen. This uncertainty is extended through the sensation of pervading violence in the shots of the unknown man driving a car, whose face is unseen. The dramatic tension and foreboding culminates in the sequence above, where Siân sits alone at a border crossing in a remote location. Dusk has turned to night and in extreme close-up a car slowly moves across the frame ─ the driver again

Fig. 11: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011)*.* [Screen shot]

unseen. Siân does not move but after a short pause she follows the car out of the frame. The sound of her footsteps continues then stops. After a brief interval, the car, moving quickly now, re-enters the frame and, gathering speed, drives across the border into no-man's land. In the narrative of Siân's journey (and mine) the border signifies a physical and psychological dividing line between the past and present and between the before and after, a traumatic experience that is not directly represented in the film. It is designated as a metaphor of contested place, one that gives no support for identity and no resolution of the memory of a traumatic experience, and affords no support to the Basque struggle for an independent state.

Place as a site of contestation

In *Not Reconciled* my filmmaking strategy was to evoke place as contested. The ruined town of Belchite and its eponymous sister town are shown as two halves, places in contestation that link the past and present. The ruined buildings appear immobile at the point of their representation, as in stasis, but they are not. Antonio,

[72]

the character of a ghost, describes the passing of time in his voice that runs over images of shuttered windows: "You learnt to listen for the sounds of falling walls, the faint whispers of the living and the dead, and to watch as the cracks widen and the walls crumble".

Extensive static shots of place reference lives once lived: ruined buildings; streets and roads overgrown with weeds and earth; rusted wrought iron balconies; faded painted shop signs and falling walls. (see fig. 12). Nevertheless the shots do contain movement: tourists walk in and out of the buildings; birds fly through the frame and grass sways in the breeze. Punctuating and interrupting the shots are brief stills of a wall painted blue; fragments of painted letters of a shop sign; a church wall with religious images of saints in red and blue paint that reference traces of the dead inhabitants.

Fig. 12: Daniels, J. (2009). *Wall in Belchite*. [Photograph]

Yet in the continuing existence of the ruined buildings there remain extraordinary signs of survival. According to David MacDougall:

> Films of memory draw upon a distinctive repertoire of signs. Perhaps most common, and what might be termed, "*signs of survival*", are images of objects that have a physical link with the remembered past. These memorabilia serve half as symbols of experiences, half as physical proof that they occurred (MacDougall 1998: 233).

MacDougall argues that these memorabilia are '"astonishing" and precious not so much for their visual resemblance to remembered objects as for the fact that they are perceived […] as the "very same" objects' (MacDougall 1998: 233). The ruined buildings of Belchite declare their connection to the traumatic past only through the damage they sustained in the Civil War but they have not yet crumbled into dust. Through the use of the filmic tropes of distanciation — long static takes of people who walk with their back to the camera, or who silently stare into the space outside the frame; the digitally enhanced effect of wind; slowed shutter speed and superimposition — I aimed to evoke for the spectator the sensation of a self-contained, hermetically sealed place that is not, however, in stasis or outside time. It images 'a specific tone of a past […] as a continuing present' (Cowie, 2011), where the untouched ruins of former houses do not allow the descendants of the inhabitants living next to the ruins to imagine themselves as outside this continuing reminder of the violent past.

Not Reconciled builds on my earlier film *Small Town Girl* (2007), which charts the lives of young girls growing up in two small post-industrial towns at either end of England, Frome in the South West and Nelson and Colne in the North West. In *Small Town Girl* I intercut black and white still images of streets, houses and derelict shops that signify economic depression. They punctuate and interrupt the diegesis. A sense of continuing desolation is echoed in the extensive conversations between the girls and me. The technological manipulation of place thus offers an indexical association with alienation in contested place that draws a parallel with the views expressed by the characters. The stills act as signifiers of a social world whose effect is oppressive.

Place is conveyed as 'out there', as though the subjects are excluded from the social world they inhabit rather than affected by it.

Place as a site of contestation is also explored in Sergei Dvortsevoy's *Bread Day* (1998), a documentary centred on a Russian village that is inhabited solely by old people, mainly women, and dogs. A weekly train brings bread to a location near the village. In the opening tracking shot, a very long take, old people push a railway wagon up a single rail track through deep snow to the village. This is the 'new' Russia where place is embodied by old people who struggle to survive and squabble amongst themselves, their plight witnessed only by a few dogs. The portrayal of the village is not of a once thriving community steeped in nostalgia, but a microcosm of the desperate plight of Russia, where the inhabitants are presented as having nothing to look forward to, the present bounded by hardship and contestation. Here, place *is* fully integrated into the diegesis of the film as the characters are portrayed solely in relation to the hardships of a village that is on the point of disintegration. Place no longer supports their very existence. In each of the films I have explored in this section place is articulated as contested. Yet despite the effects of economic depression, war and dereliction there remain signs of survival and place is evoked through sites that continue to embody memory.

In my cinematic exploration of the Belchite ruins in *Not Reconciled,* I approached the ruined buildings as a site where memories of the period before the Civil War have been largely eradicated by violence and trauma, leaving in their place subterranean memories, absence and silence.[59] Rosa's voice runs over black and white stills that signify the communal lives of the town's inhabitants before the Civil War. The stills

---

[59] For a description of the battle and life before the war in Belchite, see Haslam, C. (2007) 'Band of Brothers' in *The Sunday Times.*

are cut into the film alongside shots of the ruins. Rosa's voice-over outlines a fictional rendition to evoke absent memories:

"This is the story of the town. […] In a good year it rained. And water ran in the irrigation channels. And there were rules for when the water could be used, and a price to pay for its use, and fines if the rules were broken, and when there was a drought there would be no water and no harvest and people died."

Stephen Marsh observes that:

> In Spain there was no purge of the police or of the armed forces. Neither has there ever been assessment of the crimes of the dictatorship. At no point has there been anything resembling a 'Truth Commission' and those police officers notorious for abuses and the use of torture remained in the force during the democratic period (Marsh 2003: 208).

The film articulates an imagined past before the Civil War when the town had a collective but contested identity. In the film's diegesis the images of the buildings and the accompanying voices are linked and contextualised in place, thus providing the sensation that collective memories have not been eradicated altogether by the effects of war. The ruins are not quite abandoned; there are signs of survival and there is a link to the past through the body of the old woman, Pilar. In a static shot towards the end of the film Pilar walks in slow motion away from the camera and into the distance, evoking the sensation that she is walking back into the past.

In 1939, after his victory in the Spanish Civil War, General Franco declared the entire village of Belchite a memorial to his defeat of the Republicans. In a discussion of commemorative monuments erected in public spaces after the American Civil War Kirk Savage observes that: 'the increasing tendency […] to construct memory in physical monuments — to inscribe it on the landscape itself — seems symptomatic of an increasing anxiety about memory left to its own unseen devices (Savage 1994: 130). Peter Carrier supports this view, arguing that ritualistic commemorations at sites of memory are organised because there is a sense that a homogeneous

collective memory does not occur naturally at sites of trauma such as war. Therefore, collective memories are created and organised deliberately to act as a symbol of a homogenous collective memory (Carrier, 2000).

Not Reconciled creates a link between the present and memories of the past in its revelation of the site's designation as a memorial. It explores this symbolic memory in a series of shots. In the first shot Pilar faces the camera in what was once the main street of the town. It cuts to a black and white still showing the street as it was when the war ended ─ ravaged by war but the houses are almost intact. It cuts back to Pilar surrounded by the houses, now ruined. She gestures towards the camera then points to her left, towards something out of shot ─ a gesture reprised in a different sequence by the young man in the church in the modern town. The film cuts to a shot of steps leading up to a small, almost hidden, graffiti-covered square off the main street, then to a close-up shot of an inscription on a small plaque that is dedicated to the memory of the Falange soldiers killed in the Civil War.[60] It then cuts to a black and white still of a small group of people gathered at the same memorial, arms outstretched in a fascist salute.

The neglected memorial, located in a town ruined by war, emptied of its original inhabitants and deserted for the last 70 years, articulates the memorialization of Belchite to the Francoist victory as an empty symbol. In a later sequence an interviewee encountered in the street says emphatically to the camera: *"Have you seen Belchite? Have you seen, that was the war?"* His implication is that the ruined town symbolizes the rubble of a traumatic past rather than a potent symbol of a

---

[60] It is claimed by some historians that during the Spanish Civil War and in the period afterwards, thousands of Republicans, trade unionists and others, were tortured, murdered and thrown into mass graves by the right-wing forces. For detailed accounts of the terror during and after the Spanish Civil War and the existence of mass graves see Montse, A. & Ricard, B. (2006) *Las Fosas del Silencio¿hay un Holocausto español?* and Preston, P. (2012) *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain.*

victorious one that might have provided support for a homogeneous collective identity.

The lack of a homogenous collective memory in Belchite is further explored in several distinct sequences; old men wander through a cemetery located outside the town and close-up shots reveal inscriptions on several different graves. Each grave memorializes someone killed by 'Los Rojos', (the 'Reds'), the inference being that they were killed by Republican fighters. (see fig. 13). In the modern town a close-up shot of a street name reveals that it is called, 'Los Heroes de Belchite', (the Heroes of Belchite). Marsh observes that:

> Street names have a populist function, insofar as they help to fix occasions in the popular imagination. Throughout Spain there are streets and public buildings, (schools, hospitals) that commemorate events and personalities in recent history (Marsh 2003: 204).[61]
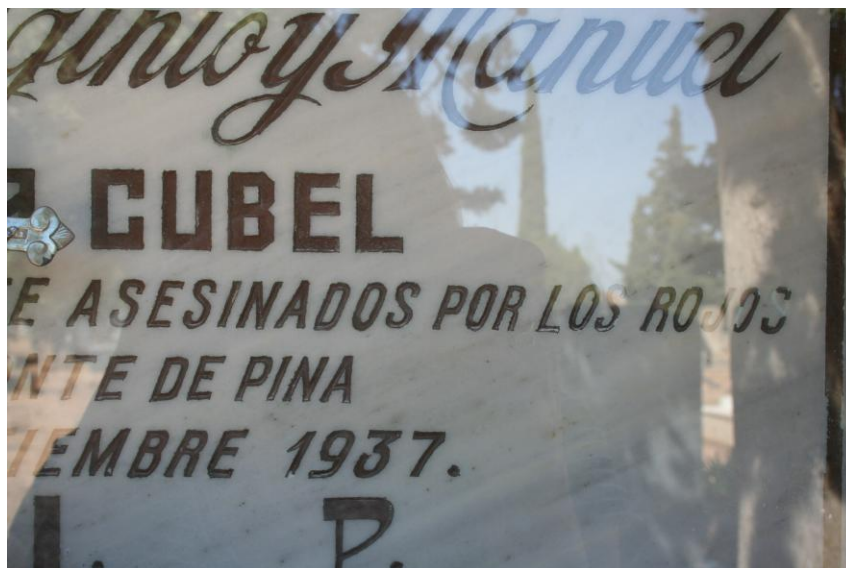
Fig. 13: Daniels, J. *Not Reconciled* (2011). [Screen shot]

The street signs are reminders that the symbols of history in Belchite have been

---

[61] In 2008, when I was filming in Lecera, the nearest village to Belchite, the central street was still called 'Calle de Franco'.

claimed by the victors, the Nationalists, but they are empty symbols; the final sequence in *Not Reconciled* begins with a wide static shot of a large empty field of bare brown earth, surrounded by high hills. There are no visible signs of human traces but there is a small bright splash of colour in the centre of the field. A superimposed title describes the location as Aranda. Two further static shots, a medium shot and a close-up, reveal a line of plastic flowers in glass jars, set into a mound of newly-disturbed earth. Rosa's voice runs over the shots: "You ventured alone, in the middle of a black night, surrounded by names, hearing the whispers of the earth, or a murmur of voices, for those who have ears to hear." Claudia Koonz in a discussion of German concentration camps in German memory observes that:

> "Organized oblivion" in totalitarian states imposes a single narrative that vindicates the leaders and vilifies their enemies, but it leaves average citizens cynical and alienated. A kind of historical weightlessness renders words, values, actions, and ideas meaningless (Koonz 1994: 258).

In these sequences and in the interviews in *Not Reconciled* my aim was to effect a spectatorial consideration of the view that history and memories of the past in Spain may be rescued from 'organized oblivion' and restored to the nation's memory.

The Border Crossing and the iconography of dislocation

The Border Crossing is located in the Basque Country in Spain and France, chosen, my voice-over says, because of my experience of a violent attack in the area many years before, in a place I barely remember. The landscape comprises disparate towns and cities linked by a border between France and Spain, with many different open border crossings. An iconography of violence and the nationalist striving for an independent Basque state is thematic in the film. Sequences set in Basque towns portray populations with opposing cultural identities. These exemplify local-level struggles for hegemony (Massey 2005: 11). Place is constructed as fragmented, labyrinthine, claustrophobic and threatening. The filming is observational, without technical manipulation of the images or sound, but voice-overs, as I have discussed,

frequently describe events that are not conjoined to the images, and there are elisions in narrative continuity. The narrative elisions and separation of voice-over from image disrupt the sense of geographic place. For example, Siân is filmed in a series of static shots as she walks through different but architecturally identical, pedestrian tunnels. The film cuts to a static medium close-up shot of her standing motionless in front of a white wall. Several further static shots of unrelated walls, buildings, streets and moving cars follow, as Siân continues to walk, always away from the camera. The geography of the city stretches out ahead of her, in a seemingly endless and fruitless walk.

Another sequence that continues this sense of labyrinthine place begins with several exterior static wide shots of a small unidentified Pyrenees village whose walls are covered with Basque Nationalist posters. It is a place that has no apparent connection with the earlier sequences of city streets. Children play in the streets; a bar appears deserted. The sequence continues inside the bar, deserted apart from a man who stands in the shadows near a pillar, as though sheltering from the camera's gaze. Siân's voice-over accompanying the image says she is sitting next to two men but neither she nor the two men appear in the frame. Her voice describes the men and what she is drinking. Off-screen is the sound of ice clinking in a glass but there is no image of a glass. Siân's voice-over continues its detailed description of the 'scene': "One of the men is young…badly dressed…skinny. His neck is long and narrow. Hollows under his cheekbones. The other man is older. 60? 50? 40? I sit next to the older man. I sip Pernod." My voice-over interjects to question the veracity of her story: "I don't like Pernod the smell reminds me of anise and a ruined dress." The film cuts to the solitary man as he leaves the bar, the door closes behind him and he walks away.

[80]

The film cuts to the interior of a moving car at night driving through the rain, the unseen man's hand on the wheel and my voice-over continues:

"For a moment I remember another journey, hitching with the American boy, a draft dodger he says, who lies, either about his age, or the forged passport that says he's 15, not 20, and the bottle of anise wrapped in the white dress with a yellow bull's eye on the front." The shot creates a narrative link to my earlier description of a bottle of anise and a ruined dress. The film cuts to a black and white still of a girl (maybe me), in a night club in a very short dress, her face unseen, one leg raised off the ground almost touching the dark-suited leg of a man. (see fig. 14). My voice continues: "It showed off my tan so well. The photo is in black and white but I can still see the tan."

Fig. 14: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

The film cuts to a static shot of an empty corridor. My voice-over says "I dropped the bag on the ground as I hopped in and out of cars…until to my surprise and shock…" The shot cuts to the interior of a small room containing a small bed without a cover. On the bed is a large black canvas bag and my voice continues: "when I opened the bag on the dirty cover of the bed in some cheap pension I saw the smashed bottle of clear anise had turned the white and yellow dress pink. It was ruined."

[81]

The film cuts to a brief interval of blank screen, then cuts to a static shot of a car driving through the Pyrenees village. Siân's voice accompanies the image: "I walk to the car with the oldish man and get in. The young one runs from the bar and throws himself into the back." The film cuts to a very long static take in the interior of a car driving along a winding mountain road bordered by lush green vegetation. My voice-over says: "He leans forward and touches my neck. I say nothing." Siân's voice continues:

"There are no more trains tonight says the boy. I say in my bad Spanish I don't need a train. Out of the corner of my eye I see the boy with the ridiculous pleading grin on his face. The boy climbs over the seat and sits down beside me. Very close. The car smells of wine, garlic and old leather. I feel sick." My voice interrupts: "I remember the car when I was a child the smell of the leather, expensive and luxurious. I always felt sick." Throughout this extensive sequence of shots Siân does not appear.

Within the geography of shots of unconnected places and references to other unseen places and journeys, Siân and I are articulated as lost in a place that retains a direct indexical link to a labyrinthine location. There are similarities in the descriptions of the locations but there is temporal discontinuity between most of the sequences. The shots in the car, the interior of the small room and the corridor have no obvious narrative connection. The long takes offer the spectator the opportunity to grow familiar with each location before the film cuts to the next location. However, the descriptions are in general imprecise in their temporal signification as though the voices are witnesses to events that are happening elsewhere in time and place. This creates a sensation of temporal dislocation but it does not create complete distanciation with the events as they are happening on the screen. As Walter McIntosh observes, it creates the impression that:

> […] in re-tracing the past Daniels is entering a surreal labyrinth of provincial landmarks that are juxtaposed out of their natural geographic order. This

[82]

serves to further use physical space as a metaphor for the filmmaker finding her way through emotional space.**62**

In many of my earlier films I explored place as a metaphor for individual identity by utilising varied filmmaking strategies. *Fool's Gold* (2002) is set in Dahlonega, a small town in Georgia, in southern USA. Gold was discovered by white settlers in the early 19th century and led to a gold rush. A heritage museum in the Dahlonega town square is dedicated to Dahlonega's connection to gold. Myra, the central character, is part Cherokee and works as a maid in a hotel. She lives in a trailer park with her husband and sick adult son. Dahlonega is set in a rural landscape of trees, hills and rivers. Dissanayake notes that:

> [L]andscape can operate at a number of different levels of representational significance and enunciatory competence. Landscapes establish a sense of time, place and mood; they serve to punctuate the narrative and invest it with a more varied rhythm; they can intensify the pictoriality of films; they can enforce a sense of disjunction, an ironic juxtaposition; they can play on and manipulate our spatial consciousness; they open up new and interesting epistemological pathways to the meaning of a film; they can externalise inner dramas of characters; they act as visual analogies for complex psychologies of characters (Dissanayake 2010: 191).

In *Fool's Gold* the landscape is mediated as aesthetically beautiful yet neither peaceful nor idyllic, embodying rather a history of violent contestation. The sense of violent contestation is conveyed through voice-overs that refer to the period when Cherokees were forced off the land and marched to the West to be resettled. Slow panning shots cut throughout the film move across the aesthetically beautiful images of landscape and earth, combining with voice-overs of letters written by Cherokees and their oppressors, the white settlers and gold seekers: "When we entered into treaties with our brothers the whites, their whole cry is more land. By what law […] he makes this exorbitant demand of nearly all the lands we hold."[63]

---

[62] See McIntosh, W., forthcoming doctoral thesis *The Poetic Evocation of Memory and Loss in Autobiographical Documentaries.*

[63] Part of a letter written by a Cherokee chief, Oitositaii, known as Old Tassel, to American soldiers after the Cherokee's defeat in war in the 18th century. See Ehle, J. (1988) *Trail of*

In *Fool's Gold* the extensive panning shots of rural landscape, combined with the narratives of oppression recounted in the voice-over texts, signify contestation of ownership and forced exile. For example a man's voice-over, reading a letter by Calhoun, the Secretary of State for War makes it clear that ownership of land creates power for the possessor:

"Your great objective ought to be to hold your land separate among yourselves, as your white neighbours. Without this you will find that you have to emigrate or become extinct as a people. You see that the Great Spirit has made our form of society stronger than yours and you must submit to adopt ours."[64]

Fool's Gold concludes with a shot through the back window of a car that moves slowly out of the town down a deserted street as a male Cherokee's voice-over says: "Long time we travelled on way to new land. People feel bad when they leave old nation. Womens [sic] cry and make sad wails. Children cry and many men cry and all look sad when friends die. But they say nothing and just put heads down and keep on go towards west. Many days pass and people die very much."[65]

Thus, in the extensive panning shots of landscape, the indexical trace in place meshes the past with the present, articulating a sense of continuing contestation.

Conclusion

In the exploration of place in this chapter I discussed how experimental documentary films may evoke the notion of place differently to mainstream films. I argue that in experimental films, where the narrative is not always the sole imperative for aesthetic decisions, place may be foregrounded and articulated as a strong support for

---

Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation.
[64] Part of a message from the United State Secretary of War, Calhoun, to the Cherokees in 1819, telling them to enclose their land in private ownership.
[65] An undated letter from an anonymous Cherokee. See Ehle, J. (1988) *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*.

characters and communities' sense of individual and collective identity. Through this method of foregrounding place, it may be portrayed as a 'character', one whose identity is not fixed, but is in perpetual motion due to the forces of history. Place therefore, has been given a prominent role in the diegesis of the experimental films that I made and those of others analysed in this chapter.

The locations referred to in this research are sites that were settings for violence and traumatic events. Thus, in my filmic approach, I construct an engagement with place that has focused on the way place is the repository of history and of its continuing existence in the present as a 'ruin'. Through discussion of my filmmaking strategies I explored how place may interact with history, memory and subjectivities in experimental documentary films. The next chapter considers how memory may be mediated in experimental documentary films and how some of the filmic techniques outlined in my discussion of place may also be deployed in the construction of memory.

Chapter 3

Memory and the Documentary Film

I was always especially entranced by the moment when the shadows of reality, so to speak, emerge out of nothing on the exposed paper, as memories do in the middle of the night, darkening again if you try to cling to them (Sebald 2001:109).

Introduction

In this chapter my aim is to explore the mediation of memories of the past, including trauma and violence, in post-war western experimental documentary films. The cinematic engagement with subjective memory is invariably a complex task. In my discussion of the ways in which experimental documentary films may mediate memory I first analyse the difficulties in its representation and discuss the varied ways filmmakers have attempted to solve its problems. I note that many documentary films rely on documentary's mimetic qualities to explore historical events, primarily through evidence that may be provided by the use of contemporaneous archive material or physical artefacts. This approach may not be feasible in the mediation of memory since subjective memory, as experienced by an individual, cannot be physically brought to the camera and filmed in order to signify evidence. The mimetic approach may be particularly limited with reference to memories of traumatic events and experiences where witness testimony or archive material is largely unavailable. In focusing on the mediation of traumatic events in films that explore memory, Francis Guerin and Roger Hallas find the mimetic approach insufficient. They note that:

> Images have been repeatedly deemed inadequate in the face of events understood to be too heinous to be represented. This is because, hitherto, images have been embraced for their mimetic promise, for the perceived ability to produce a representation which addresses the demand for evidence (Guerin & Hallas 2007: 2).

The effects of traumatic events generally lead to greater elisions in memory recall. Cathy Caruth draws upon the work of Freud to note that '*trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind' (Caruth 1996: 3). She notes further that traumatic experience 'is an experience that is not fully assimilated as it occurs' (Caruth 1996: 3). It is the fact of the incomprehensibility of the violent experience that haunts the victim and leads to its non-assimilation through direct recall. The mediation of memories of traumatic experiences in experimental documentary films cannot avoid an acknowledgement of the incomprehensibility of the violent experience alongside, and in addition to, an acknowledgement of the unreliability of all subjective memories.

Annette Kuhn usefully argues that films that primarily focus on memory may be called 'memory texts' and have their own characteristics:

> [I]n memory texts, time tends not to be fully continuous, or sequential. Literally, formally, or simply in terms of atmosphere created, the tenses of the memory text do not fix events to specific moments of time or temporal sequences. Events are repetitive or cyclical ("at one time…"), or seem to be set apart from fixed orders of time ("once upon a time…") (Kuhn 2002: 165).[66]

I do not consider that my documentary films may be defined as exercises in memory work since they do not focus on memory alone. However, the characteristics of the memory text as outlined by Kuhn above are applicable to aspects of my films and in many of the films I explore in this chapter. In this chapter I also argue that memory — including memories of traumatic experiences and events — may be represented through a myriad of filmmaking strategies, and I discuss the types of filmmaking strategies that may be available to the experimental documentary filmmaker. To inform my discussion I refer to films by Tony Dowmunt, Carol Morley, Alain Resnais, Elizabeth Stopford and Rea Tajiri.

---

[66] See also Kuhn, A. (2010), 'Memory texts and memory work: performances of memory in and with visual media', in *Memory Studies,* Vol. 3 No. 4.

Representing the unrepresentable

The cinematic mediation of memories poses particular problems for the documentary filmmaker. Individual memories are central components of our inner worlds and provide us with the sense of our individual and communal identity. Memories may be perceived as affected by our visual, aural and sensory inner worlds. Their perception in our interior world is subjective and takes different forms. A memory may sometimes appear to us as fixed, resembling an image of a frozen moment in time. Other memories may appear as fragmented images and sounds, containing significant elisions in time or place and they may change each time they are remembered. They may disappear from our view altogether or reappear, seemingly unbidden, or as a result of the effect of external forces. MacDougall argues that the past in memory is offered to us in flashes and fragments of images and sounds and sometimes as an imagined re-experiencing of physical sensations: 'in what seems a hodge-podge of mental "media"' (MacDougall 2006: 232). Every time we 'remember' an event, an image, sound, or a sensation from the past, we are aware we are remembering past events but we do not always fix the memories to a specific remembered time in the past. In addition, in the act of remembrance, the 'remembering' always takes place in the present.

In seeking to mediate memory the documentary filmmaker cannot film memory itself. She must therefore find a means to solve this problem. She may film memory's referents such as the use of witness testimony and interviews, archive or stills from the past or evoke it through filmic strategies such as fictional enactment.[67] MacDougall notes that: 'We end by filming something far removed from memory as it is experienced, but instead a mixture of dubious testimony, flawed evidence, and invention' (MacDougall 1998: 232). He argues that:

---

[67] I discuss the use of filmic strategies more fully in Chapter 4.

> With the original sources of memory forever beyond reach, filmmakers are tempted to use the surviving photographic record *as if this were memory itself.* Thus documentary films and television programs persistently link interviews with photographs and newsreels, which are presented quite illegitimately as the memories of the speakers (MacDougall 1998: 232).

He gives examples of the filmmaking strategies that are deployed — the extensive use of interviews with people who talk about the past; the filming of contemporaneous physical objects from the past and archival footage and photographs. However, he argues that an object from the past, when filmed in the present is too old to reference the past. It will have a patina of age that renders its appearance and use differently to how it would have been regarded in the past when it was new, and 'tends to exaggerate its status as a sign. This sign is often confused with authenticity' (MacDougall 1998: 232). He concludes that objects from the past, including photographs and newsreels, cannot in themselves fully signify memory as they can only be touchstones for construction.

An additional complication is that memory is already mediated by its recall. Annette Kuhn observes that when engaging with the mediation of memory: 'even in "inner speech", memory is shaped by secondary revision: it is always already a text, a signifying system' (Kuhn 2000: 18). The limitations however, afford the documentary filmmaker rich possibilities for a creative approach to the mediation of memory, with many filmic strategies at her disposal. Since memory is already a 'signifying system' and cannot be filmed directly, the experimental documentary filmmaker can approach its mediation by constructing a narrative text that is uncertain and unreliable. She is free from the constraints of a narrative that is intended to provide 'evidence' through filmed interviews and testimony. This allows the deployment of a range of filmmaking strategies. Kuhn for example, suggests that because the temporal dislocation of memory creates distinctive properties in the recall of subjective memories, time may be more effectively organised in deploying a method akin to the rhythmic structures

and non-linear fragmented narrative of poetry than sequentially organised linear narrative.

The construction of film to signify memory however, requires a clear signposting of temporal changes since the spectatorial reception of events constructed in a filmic narrative through duration, are perceived as taking place in the present. The cinematic tropes that signify memory may include flashbacks and flash-forwards in time that serves to rearrange plot order. Maureen Turim notes that: 'By suddenly presenting the past, flashbacks can abruptly offer new meanings connected to any person, place, or object. Flashbacks then gain a particularly rich dimension in the coding of the psychology of character' (Turim 1989: 12). Further cinematic tropes that signify memory may be achieved through changes in mise-en-scène or alteration of the age of characters. Their technical execution may be obtained through changes in film exposure or colour; film dissolves or fades; the use of titles; and alterations in film speed.

The problems of mediating memory are further complicated in memories of traumatic experiences. Joshua Hirsch (2004), Janet Staiger (1996) and Janet Walker (2003) argue there are inherent difficulties in the cinematic mediation of traumatic experiences. Many cultural theorists have discussed whether it is possible to represent one of the most horrific examples of a traumatic event, the Holocaust of European Jews in the 20th century. An extreme position, according to Hayden White, is held by those who claim: 'that this event is of such a kind as to escape the grasp of *any* language even to *describe* it and of *any* medium – verbal, visual oral, or gestural – to *represent* it' (White 2007: 30). White cites George Steiner's remark that 'the world of Auschwitz lies outside speech as it lies outside reason' (Steiner, quoted in White 2007: 30). Susannah Radstone, referring to Theodor Adorno's 'famous and much-quoted dictum, […] "(A)fter Auschwitz, it is no longer possible to write poems"'

[90]

(Radstone 2000:6), observes that Adorno's argument 'might be taken to imply that such horror meant the end not only of poetry and creativity, but also of memory' (Radstone 2000: 6). She cites Felman to argue, however, that Adorno's position:

> did not imply that poetry could no longer and should no longer be written but that it must write "through" its own impossibility […] the holocaust spelled not the end, but the inauguration of new and even greater difficulties in the field of memory […] yet there was no choice but to remember (Radstone 2000: 6).

White sees the problem as one of the type of representation. He argues that it 'requires the full exploitation of modernist, as well as pre-modernist artistic techniques for its resolution' (White 2007: 31). According to Joshua Hirsch modernist techniques such as photography and film enable the mechanical reproduction of a moment of vision to 'be disseminated endlessly throughout society and history' ([Hirsch 2004: 96).[68] In my filmmaking practice I consider that direct reconstruction of traumatic experiences cannot fully explore its horror. Therefore, I deploy filmmaking strategies that engage the spectator's imagination to evoke the traumatic experience.

The direct representation of trauma in films may contain images of violence that may shock the spectator. In contemporary western society's image-saturated cultures, films and television are part of our own collective and individual histories. We are bombarded with images all the time. Walter Benjamin, writing in the 1930s regarded films as a form of training for the spectator in shock. He argued that films accustom and enable us to live in the environment of speed:

> In a film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle. That which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of the rhythm of reception in the film (Benjamin 1973: 177).

However, in the twenty-first century, with the advent of the Internet and technologies that bring to us a constantly available succession of digital images, spectators may be able to withstand the effects of shock because they have often become inured to

---

[68] In Hirsch, J. (2004) 'Post-traumatic Cinema and the Holocaust Documentary', in Kaplan E.A. & Wang, B. (eds.) *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations.*

its effect. In experimental documentary films we find filmmakers who are searching for filmmaking strategies in order to free spectators from the numbing effects of these images. Examples of these types of strategies may include very long takes; ruptures in editing continuity and disruption of the diegesis; abrupt changes of location; temporal dislocation; the inclusion of fictional elements or written text; archive material wrenched out of its original context or the creation of a highly stylized mise-en-scène.[69]

Memory and narrative

Narrative is a central component of most films, including documentaries. The definition of narratives (or stories), at their most fundamental, according to Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, is that they are a form of discourse: 'that place events in a sequential order with a clear beginning, middle and an end [and] the units so ordered must have an intrinsic, meaningful connection to one another (Hinchman & Hinchman 1997: xv). A significant debate amongst cultural theorists is whether the *sequential* narrative form is suited to the mediation of memory in films in general. Classic linear narrative conventions are generally insufficient as a mode to represent memory due to the difficulty of fixing memory to specific moments in time. Richard Kilbourn argues that narrative films whose central focus is to mediate memory provide the spectator with the content and form of memory and 'directions for use: the required codes and conventions for understanding and using this crucial prosthetic technology' (Kilbourn 2010: 6). Their quest is to 'focus on […] a journey, whether real, metaphorical or virtual, that takes place primarily in spaces and times outside of or other than those of the film's diegetic present tense. Hence the application of the term "memory film"' (Kilbourn 2010: 9). For Kilbourn the sequential narrative form that takes place in the present poses a limitation in the mediation of memories of the past. Colm Ryan broadly agrees with this view but argues that the

---

[69] For further discussion of strategies in the mediation of traumatic memory see Chapter 4.

validity of Kilbourn's argument is constrained by the fact that he restricts his discussion to art-house films and does not draw upon the work of film theorists whose explorations of memory and narrative contrast with his own (Ryan 2011: 3 - 4).

Kilbourn also neglects to debate the status of narrative and memory in the kind of experimental western documentary films that are the focus of my thesis. However, his argument is useful in highlighting the way that experimental documentary filmmakers may choose to approach memory as an aesthetic. For this purpose non-sequential narratives that appear closer to poetry may be more effective in experimental documentary films to evoke memory. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson describe this type of narrative as a non-narrative associational form that juxtaposes loosely connected images 'to suggest an emotion or a concept to the spectator' (Bordwell & Thompson 1993: 103).[70] Maya Deren championed a poetic form of filmmaking rather than a narrative one. She defines the stylistic form of poetry in experimental films as constituting an approach to narrative as a 'horizontal' attack and the approach to poetry as a 'vertical' attack, which together create the poetic form. In my films I do not eschew narrative but create a non-sequential narrative that is closer to poetry. In *The Border Crossing* I constructed a narrative containing gaps and elisions that evoke my memory of a traumatic experience. The traumatic event itself is not represented. (see Fig. 15.) Instead I created an oblique narrative through an enactment of my journey through the Basque Country in Spain and France, using a surrogate, Siân. A sense of uncertainty is obtained through narrative elisions and abrupt changes in location and temporal dislocation.[71]

---

[70] See also Child, A. (2005) *This is Called Moving: A Critical Poetics of Film.*
[71] See Chapter 4 for further discussion of the use of narrative in *The Border Crossing.*

Other filmmakers have taken a different approach. I discuss Alain Resnais' film, *Muriel* (1962), because it demonstrates that an effective cinematic mediation of memory is not restricted to one particular form or filmic technique. *Muriel* is not an

Fig. 15: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

experimental documentary; it is a fiction film. Nevertheless, its use of location and reference to history in its exploration of the effects of the Algerian war in France brings it close to documentary. *Muriel's* narrative of memory is composed around what Croombs describes as 'a missing kernel' (Croombs 2010: 9) ─ the death of the title character ─ and concentrates on the use of filmic techniques rather than non-sequential narrative to evoke memory. In making a highly mediated and subjective fiction film centred on disorientated characters adrift in Boulogne, Resnais circumvented French censorship difficulties in his original intention of making a documentary film about the events of the Algerian war. The character of Bernard is a participant in the murder and possible rape of the title character in Algeria. He is the one character in the film that has devoted himself to remembering the traumatic past, but he does this in order to expiate his guilt. His remembrance takes the form of creating a documentary film. Croombs notes that Bernard's character is self-serving in his attempt to exorcise his own memory of his (possible) participation in the rape.

[94]

His attempt fails because he fetishizes the power of his film to expiate his guilt and relives rather than remembers the sounds heard on the audio tape he accidentally plays, leading him to carry out fresh violence. Croombs argues that:

> What the film makes visible […] is that no documentary image is adequate to what he is trying to expose, and that reproduction, like memory, also bears the potential to *produce* traumatic effects anew […] Bernard relives rather than remembers (Croombs 2010: 9).

In *Muriel* Resnais created a metaphorical parallel to the disorientation of society in post-war France through the use of jump-cut editing of static shots of Boulogne and the interior of a family house; and close-up shots of a hand or a door that are repeated many times. The shots are displaced from the narrative and they create spectatorial uncertainty: 'spatial dispersions and temporal dislocations [that] equate the film's entire diegesis with a *shocked subjectivity'* (Croombs 2010: 2; emphasis mine). In *Muriel* there are many sequences that are dream-like in their evocation of alienation through signifiers such as non-eye line matches, extreme close-ups and temporal displacements that in themselves do not connect directly to the film's diegesis.

Absence and silence

Many of the experimental documentary films discussed in this chapter explore the articulation of absence and silence. In Spain and the Basque Country, where my films are located, absence has a particular resonance in the present. During the Franco regime in Spain and up until Franco's death in 1975, there was a code of silence about the events of the Civil War, underwritten by fear. The ideas and beliefs of vanquished Republicans were repressed and many of their families were dispossessed. Judith Butler, in her discussion of war, notes that war may frame people as already lost and therefore no longer in need of protection:

> When versions of reality are excluded or jettisoned to a domain of unreality, specters are produced that haunt the ratified version of reality, animated and

de-ratifying traces. In this sense frame seeks to institute an interdiction on mourning; there is no destruction, and there is no loss (Butler 2010: xiii).

Begoña Arextaga describes this period as 'the silence of massive violence: silence was a crucial part in the normalization of a state terror' (Arextaga, 2006: 129). In *Not Reconciled* my aim was to show how the defeated in Spain were dispossessed. I created fictional 'ghosts' that are evoked from the Civil War in order to construct a temporal space for spectatorial reflection on the lasting effects of violence. This reflection, I hope, may lead to political resistance and *empathy* with the characters. I aimed to avoid the creation of spectatorial outrage or a *sympathy* that may soon be forgotten. As Jo Labanyi argues there is a danger that spectators may feel morally improved by having momentarily 'shared' the suffering in the text, but this feeling soon passes and the spectator does not go on to make any connection with this feeling of suffering in the present (Labanyi, quoted in Leggott 2009: 29).

I also avoided the use of graphic representations of the effects of war or violence, because, as Butler observes: 'Graphic depictions [of war] can sometimes do no more than sensationalize events. When that happens we respond with outrage periodically, but the outrage is not transformed into a sustained political resistance' (Butler 2010: xvi). In *Not Reconciled*, memory and forgetting are formalised through witness silences, evasions and contradictions and absence of recollection that might serve to provide an impression of 'evidence' of the historical past. My aim through this strategy was to give the spectator time to reflect on the events in the film in order to consider whether they might wish to 'remember' the events of the Civil War and its aftermath.

Bearing witness to events of the past that have been officially silenced is by no means straightforward, even before it is mediated through film. We must first ask who bears witness, and second, how we should *evaluate* the account of an event that is

now past. Witness testimony cannot simply be a recuperation of the past, since the past can never be regained. This is particularly pertinent to societies that have emerged from periods of violence and trauma. Laura Marks remarks that memory is 'not a limpid reflecting pool [but] more like a minefield (or bed of fossils)' (Marks 2000: 64).

The construction of *Not Reconciled* includes an acknowledgement of the inevitable limitations of bearing witness. According to Sarah Leggott, in recent years:

> The Spanish public sphere has been dominated […] by intense debates regarding historical memory and the recuperation of the past, focused on the years of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975) and the transition to democracy in the immediate post-Franco period (Leggott, 2009).

Kear argues that: 'the question of bearing witness to the past cannot be understood as a matter of recuperation, but rather, it must be approached as a constructive process of re-imagining the past […] not time regained, but time re-evoked' (Kear 2007: 135). In *Not Reconciled* fiction renders texts into subjective accounts and actors provide a performance through the dialogue which is an amalgamation of many published witness and history accounts, re-contextualised and often re-worded while maintaining the tone of the original. The narratives provided by the characters of the 'ghosts' are contradictory, impressionistic and unreliable but also offer information and opinion. I am far from alone in the creation of fictional ghosts as surrogate witnesses to events of the traumatic past in order to uncover what may be hidden. As Judith Lewis notes: 'Folk wisdom is filled with ghosts who refuse to rest in their graves until their stories are told' (Lewis 1992: 1). Avery Gordon points out that ghosts tell us that life is far more complicated than it may appear (Gordon 1997: 16). The creation of the haunting image of the ghost as a fictional eyewitness reminds spectators of their own role as witnesses to others' lives. Their creation aims to bring to light what is repressed and hidden in the present.

The exploration of what may not easily be spoken is also explored in *Not Reconciled* through seemingly chance encounters with elderly people, mainly men, who socialise on street corners. I do not attempt to elicit revealing information from these characters. Off-screen, I ask each of them the same brief questions. Their responses are equivocal and evasive. Jason Alley describes these types of evasions as 'spaces of reticence [that] reveal gaps between interview and interviewee, viewer and work that most documentaries are keen to suture over' (Alley, 2011). They lead to a perceived gap between interviewer and interviewee and the spectator and the film. However, *Not Reconciled* draws attention to these gaps — they are present in all the 'interviews'. Alley argues that such gaps can 'shed light on the entire apparatus of knowledge production [and] we do ourselves a disservice in taking documentary dialogue for granted—as always good, as transparent, as intimacy itself' (Alley, 2011). In *Not Reconciled,* the interviews reveal deep equivocation and uncertainty about remembering and discussing the past. (see fig. 16).

Fig. 16: Daniels, L. (2009). *Jill with potential interviewees for Not Reconciled.* [Photograph]

The Japanese-American filmmaker Rea Tajiri, in her film *History and Memory* (1991), also created the characters of ghosts. In the film's diegesis, Tajiri's voice-over

explains her impetus to make the film. Describing her family as full of ghosts, detached from history and memory by its lack of coherent memories and comprehensive narratives, Tajiri's voice-over explains: "*I began searching for a history, my own history.... I began searching because I felt lost, ungrounded, somewhat like a ghost that floats over a terrain, witnessing others living their lives, and yet not having one of its own*". The film engages with cultural memory with reference to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II in the USA, including her own mother. Deploying a non-sequential narrative, the film's live action re-enactment is interwoven with clips from mainstream Hollywood films that explore the bombing of Pearl Harbour, with texts superimposed over the images, sometimes almost obliterating them. Michael Renov argues that Tajiri's method: 'sets out to transform memory into history and thus depose from hegemonic power the false histories of image makers from Hollywood or Washington' (Renov 2004: 65). Tajiri portrays herself as both the filmmaker and the character of her mother, who during the course of the film attempts to transform memory into history.

Tajiri deployed a strategy of unreadability in the film's montage of photos, intended as a parallel to her own fragments of memory, and varied filmmaking strategies that serve to create a narrative of association, rather than linearity. At times written texts run over written film credits rendering both 'unreadable'. Benjamin notes: 'the true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes by at the instant when it can be recognised and is never seen again' (Benjamin 1979: 257). For Tajiri the image flitting by is an unidentified woman, possibly her mother, (played by Tajiri herself), who washes her hands with water poured from a canteen in the desert, her back to the camera. Again and again the image is repeated; drawing closer, until finally the woman silently faces the camera and in effect confronts the spectator. Tajiri's voice-over says she created the enacted image as though it was a memory of what living in the prison camp might have been like for her mother. Her

mother had suppressed her memories and Tajiri, the filmmaker, says in voice-over that the image had appeared to her in her dreams. She re-enacted the image in order to explore this suppressed history and memory through the film.

There is a parallel in Tajiri's strategy with that taken by Tony Dowmunt in *A Whited Sepulchre* (2009), where, in the absence of 'real' images of the past, characters are portrayed by 'surrogates'. Both Dowmunt's film and Tajiri's link the absent characters to themselves. In Dowmunt's film, this is achieved through his voice-over that speaks as himself and also as his great-grandfather, and in Tajiri's film it is achieved through her body. In the films I have discussed the articulation of silence and absence evokes sensations of memories of the past in the present. Their use of enactments and surrogate characters, serve to 'stand in' for what cannot be seen, because it is absent.

The autobiographical documentary

In *The Border Crossing* I inscribed the mediation of my self within an exploration of the use of filmic language.[72] In recent years there has been a growth in autobiographical documentary filmmaking that places the filmmaker at the heart of their work in an analysis of their own identity (Lebow 2012; Renov 2004; Lane 2002). In the late 1960s, autobiographical filmmaking developed in the USA and the UK in tandem with the development of political activism. Over the last twenty years, with the development of small digital video cameras that afford greater accessibility to intimate situations and subjects, many independent filmmakers have turned towards documenting the personal and the autobiographical, including memories of the past. Michael Renov notes that: 'At the beginning of a new century, the return to subjectivity, to the exploration of a seeing, feeling, and even healing self expressed

---

[72] For a discussion of the way autobiography may be articulated in film see Bruss, E. W. (1980) 'Eye for I: Making and Unmaking Autobiography in Film', in Olney, J. (ed.) *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical.*

cinematically, is newly charged' (Renov 2004: xxiv). Many of these autobiographical films deal centrally with the filmmaker's difficult life, often within their family and other intimate personal relationships, in an effort to discover and mediate their contested sense of identity.[73]

In many documentary films that interrogate memory there is a discourse centred on personal identity and self-reflexivity where identity is articulated through the inscription of the filmmaker's self into the film. Jim Lane points to several events that led to the development of autobiographical documentary films in America and elsewhere:

> First, the autobiographical avant-garde film of the sixties paved the way for self-inscription in documentary. Second, autobiographical documentarists rejected the realist conventions of the popular American direct cinema of the same period. Third, the reflexive turn in international cinema strongly influenced experimentation with autobiography in documentary (Lane 2002: 8).

As Lane observes, American documentary filmmakers Richard Leacock, D. A. Pennebaker and the Maysles brothers, and the proponents of Direct Cinema, including Frederick Wiseman, shunned an exploration of subjectivity in their documentary films in an elusive search for 'objectivity'. Direct Cinema was influential in American documentary cinema of the 1960s. According to Lane, this type of documentary 'presents events in an observational, nonreflexive way (Lane 2002: 15) and 'emphasize[s] detachment and nonintervention' (Lane 2002: 200). Dowmunt, however, argues that the films of autobiographical filmmakers in the US, such as those by Ross McElwee and Ed Pincus, remain closely tied to Direct Cinema through their belief in the referential function of film:

> A camera clearly tied to a person offers a kind of subjective "claim on the real", which also connects these filmmakers to their roots in Direct Cinema. They shared a belief in actuality, in the "referential" function of film, which distinguished them from the avant-garde (Dowmunt 2009: 36).

---

[73] A small selection includes: Jonathan Caouette's *Tarnation* (2003); Tony Asimakopoulos' *Fortunate Son* (2011); Chris Waitt's *A Complete History of My Sexual Failures* (2008).

Renov argues that because of documentary's historic links to 'the scientific project, to observational methods and the protocols of journalistic reportage' (Renov 2004: 174) it is not surprising that subjectivity has been frequently 'construed as a kind of contamination, to be expected but minimized' (Renov 2004: 174). He observes:

> The domain of non-fiction was typically fuelled by a concern for objectivity, a belief that what was seen and heard must retain its integrity as a plausible slice of the social world. How else to persuade viewers to invest belief, to produce 'visible evidence' and even induce social action? (Renov 2004: xvii).

Nevertheless, self-reflexive strategies did appear in documentary films in America and elsewhere, partly as an oppositional response to the claimed verisimilitude of documentary and partly through an acknowledgement that, as Alisa Lebow notes, 'disinterested objectivity [is] an impossible ideal' (Lebow 2012: 5) and that, as Waterson argues, many of these filmmakers are 'engaged in a courageous personal quest to break officially imposed silences' (Waterson 2007: 51.) Lane makes a distinction between the autobiographical avant-garde and documentary. He refers to New American Cinema (the north-east American avant-garde movement associated with the film journal *Film Culture*) as influential in this autobiographical filmmaking. Significant filmmakers of this period who inscribed themselves and their everyday lives into their films are Stanley Brakhage and Jonas Mekas.[74] They wanted an independent film practice that was free from the constraints of the Hollywood commercial film industry. Their subject matter is usually highly personal and domestic, and produced using a minimal crew, often with a single person shooting and editing.

In the 1970s an autobiographical filmmaking practice was developed by filmmakers associated with the women's movement in Europe and the USA. Lane observes that

---

[74] See for example, Stan Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving* (1962); *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes* (1971); *Duplicity* (1978) & *Sincerity* (1980) and Jonas Mekas' *Lost, Lost, Lost* (1976).

in the 1970s, 'redirecting of political discussion by the women's movement fundamentally set the stage for autobiographical documentarists, who were also analysing the domestic sphere and their relation to it' (Lane 2002: 19).[75] Renov observes that since 1990 subjectivity in documentary films has become more prominent with the increase of films made by filmmakers from diverse cultural backgrounds whose view of the creation of *political* works are tied to the inscription of their own subjectivity. According to Renov:

> Subjectivity is no longer construed as 'something shameful'; it is the filter through which the real enters discourse, as well as a kind of experiential compass guiding the work towards its goal as embodied knowledge (Renov 2004: 177).

Autobiography brings one a step closer to an acknowledgement that subjectivity and self-reflexivity may provide richer possibilities for the cultural exploration of the social world. Lane argues that the mediation of the self in film complicates how non-fiction films reference the real world, and therefore '[a]utobiographical documentaries use reflexivity not to eradicate the real as much as to complicate referential claims' (Lane 2002: 18). Renov defines the types of films that deal centrally with the filmmaker's difficult personal life as examples of domestic ethnography where the filmmaker documents daily lives within a domestic setting such as a family, sometimes contextualised within a wider social community.

Self-reflexivity is, to a greater or lesser extent, at the heart of all autobiographical documentaries. In the case of *The Border Crossing* I chose to accentuate the mode of filmic self-reflexivity in order to heighten the spectator's awareness that it is a filmic construct and that, as well as being the subject of the film, I am also the filmmaker. There are many examples of autobiographical documentary films produced over the last two decades that use self-reflexivity as a filmmaking strategy, not in order to

---

[75] I have not elaborated in my discussion on the value and importance of feminist autobiographical filmmaking since it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

eradicate the real but to complicate referential claims. Important examples are Tajiri's autobiographical film *History and Memory* which I discussed earlier in this chapter; Carol Morley's film *The Alcohol Years* (2000), that is centred around her early life in Manchester in the 1980s and her participation in a rich period of pop-music history; and Tony Dowmunt's autobiographical film, *A Whited Sepulchre* (2009), which articulates his own position as a white 'Englishman' travelling in Sierra Leone, alongside an investigation of what might have led his great-grandfather to embrace the racism underpinning British colonial rule in that country.

There are implications for identity in these films, including my own, where the filmmaker must split her/his self as both subject and maker. This is further complicated because, as Rosy Martin and Jo Spence note: 'there is no single self but many fragmented selves, each vying for conscious expression, many never acknowledged' (Martin & Spence 1986: 172). I note that the term 'first person film' is also used by some film theorists to encompass autobiographical films. (See Lebow 2012 for further discussion). I do not use the term for my own discussion because my focus is on autobiography. As Lebow points out, it is possible for a film to explore a subject that informs 'the filmmaker's sense of him or herself [but] first person film is not primarily, and certainly not always explicitly, autobiographical' (Lebow 2012: 1-2).

In many of the experimental documentary films I explore, the filmmakers have inscribed their own voice-overs to articulate subjectivities. Through this strategy they create layers of different identities. Catherine Russell argues that three layers of voices, the 'speaker (*in voice over)* seer and seen' (Russell 1999: 277), add richness and diversity to the work of the autobiographical filmmaker, and notes that: 'in addition to the discursive possibilities of these three voices is another form of identity, which is that of the avant-garde filmmaker as collagist and editor' (Russell 1999: 77). *The Border Crossing* explores the fragility of remembering and forgetting and the

non-assimilation of my traumatic experience in a complex layering of voice-overs that constantly make reference to 'my' unexplained desire to locate the exact site of the border crossing where I waited for a lift. In addition, my voice, over shots of Maria taking photographs in a park, introduces her character into the diegesis of the film revealing that: "I've met Maria, she's my age. If I'd stayed all those years ago her story might have been mine." (see fig. 17).

Fig. 17: Daniels, J. (2010). *Maria*. [Photograph]

Later, following several shots of a Basque nationalist demonstration in the street, my voice similarly introduces Aitziber: "I'm drawn to Aitziber, who I've met on the demonstration. She spent 5 years in a Spanish prison. I recognize in her the fragility of someone whose inner world is scarred by violence." (see fig. 18). My voice-over notes my growing fascination with these two women who have suffered from the continuing effects of violence. As the maker and the subject of the film, my voice-over creates a 'bridging' device in the film to enable a crossover between the deployment of distinctly differing filmmaking strategies. With the use of my autobiographical voice

[105]

Fig. 18: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

to introduce the observational and participatory sequences, I bring into the diegetic world of the film characters and events that might not immediately appear to be contiguous with the cinematic world created through the enactment of past events.

In the doctoral research *A Whited Sepulchre*, Dowmunt also explores autobiography through the use of voices. In his voice-over in his role as the filmmaker he discusses his memory of discovering his great-grandfather's diaries when he was a teenage boy. The recognition that his great-grandfather was a willing instrument of British colonial rule in Sierra Leone gave him a great sense of discomfort:

> Since I found them, the diaries have hovered in the background of my consciousness, posing awkward questions: how am I like him (as well as hostile to him)? How are we linked – as well as separated – by our differing masculinities, ethnicities, class origins and orientations? (Dowmunt 2009: 7-8).

This discomfort led Dowmunt many years later to make an autobiographical film, *A Whited Sepulchre*, in order to portray his great-grandfather's embrace of colonial repression and racism. It documents Dowmunt's journey to Sierra Leone and takes the form of a video diary. In the creation of a surrogate character to enact his great-grandfather (voiced by Dowmunt himself) Dowmunt connects his own identity to that

[106]

of his great-grandfather. While the spectator is aware that the voice-over of the great-grandfather is Dowmunt himself, it is sufficiently altered in tone to be perceived as an enactment. However, on some occasions it is hard to tell which 'character' is speaking. Since the voiced descriptions run over images of locations mentioned in the original diaries, the ambiguity creates an interesting tension as the spectator strives to discover through the words which 'character' might be speaking. It creates a questioning of the sympathy, or lack of sympathy, that the spectator may feel towards both characters. If a voice is not readily identifiable it is not possible to easily interpret its supposed motivations based on prior knowledge. Through this methodology the film articulates Dowmunt's own identity as one that is firmly 'connected to the ghost of my great-grandfather' (Dowmunt 2009: 11).

The British filmmaker Sarah Turner's *Perestroika* (2009) also has a complex layering of autobiographical voices to create narrative complexity. The voices are the central focus of the film because the *only* voice heard in the film is Turner's. Despite the film's use of 'I' in the voice-over throughout, it is open to interpretation as to whether the film is autobiographical. In the opening sequences Turner's voice is heard stating that the film reprises a train journey to Siberia that she made 20 years earlier with a group of friends. Turner's voice-over explains that she filmed the journey using a hi8 analogue video camera. At times hi8 footage is cut into shots of landscape in the present film, in order to signify the past. The hi8 shots show the patina of age through an intermittent dropout in the electronic signal. All the shots signify an identical (it is certainly the same *type* of landscape) aesthetically beautiful landscape. In her role of filmmaker Turner comments on events that are happening in the present (most of which are not reproduced on the screen) and events that she says occurred during the earlier train journey.

Alongside her role as the filmmaker Turner also created a fictional version of herself, a character ostensibly suffering from amnesia due to a bicycle accident that has led to 'a loss of understanding of oneself in time' (Turner, 2010). Her voice says she is now a ghost. Her voice describes her close friendship with Sian, a woman who took the first train journey with her and who subsequently died in a bicycle accident. The trauma of Sian's death, her voice says, is her motivation for the making of the film. Turner's voice refers constantly to her selves cut off from her own memory and also the landscape she is attempting to film through the train window. There is a difficulty in telling one character from the other since the voices are identical and the blurring of the characters creates a sensation of displacement. Turner states that her intention was to create spectatorial feeling through the effect of the camera: 'I put the camera in the place of feeling: I don't stage it, or watch people acting something that gives you the sense of feeling. Visceral, experiential, affectual: these are the words I'm interested in for cinema' (Turner, 2010).

The articulation of traumatic memory as unreliable is carried through in the ambiguity of Turner's voiced descriptions. She constantly refers to being very hot and claustrophobic and at one point says she is in hospital. It is not clear whether the heat is from the hospital or the train. Although her voice-over says she is a ghost, the references to heat and claustrophobia draw attention to her corporeal existence as a filmmaker engaged in the creation of a fictional surrogate of her self. At a stop along the route when the train has halted, the camera moves for the first time outside the confines of the train. In a wide static shot of very long duration, an unidentified woman stands at the open door of a railway carriage. She appears preoccupied and anxious. Turner's voice-over describes the fate of another unknown and suffering 'lady' in the hospital. The spectator may wonder whether this refers to Turner herself. There is an uneasy ambiguity in the characters of the two unknown women, coupled with Turner's voice describing suffering. The layering of voices creates a rich and

disturbing narrative centred on multiple identities. This type of enactment through voices, Turner states in the same interview, is a methodology that she created with the explicit intention of drawing attention to the unreliability of traumatic memory.

In the autobiographical films I have discussed, the use of the filmmaker's voice-over offers varied ways of adding narrative complexity and an interrogation of what constitutes identity. By drawing attention to the varied role the filmmaker may play it affords uncertainty rather than evidence. It is apparent in Turner's enacted identity as a highly stressed individual and in Dowmunt's creation of dual identities ─ during the film he appears to have a near breakdown and towards the end says he has had a serious accident and is subsequently shown being stretchered on to a plane to be flown back to Britain. The film has taken its toll. In *History and Memory* Tajiri's dual role as her mother and the filmmaker blurs one with the other. In *The Border Crossing* I created Siân as a character to enact my surrogate self and both our voices are on the sound track, offering sometimes contradictory descriptions of events, both past and present. In all these films the identity of the filmmaker is constructed, not as an omnipotent creator of the narrative whose role is to provide reliable evidence of memories of the past, but as a character whose identity is contested, uncertain and open to question.

Stella Bruzzi points to the usefulness of the inclusion of fiction, enactment and re-enactment, in a documentary film. She argues that:

> The performative documentary uses performance within a non-fiction context to draw attention to the impossibilities of authentic documentary representation. The performative element within the framework of non-fiction is thereby an alienating, distancing device, not one which actively promotes identification and a straightforward response to a film's content (Bruzzi 2000: 153 - 154).[76]

---

[76] I discuss fictional tropes in documentary films in more detail in Chapter 4.

In Turner's film *Perestroika* the spectator has no clear sense which part of the fragmented narrative is an authentic portrayal of Turner's life-world and which part may be fiction. In addition to heat and claustrophobia, her voice-over complains of her problems with alcohol and feelings of physical paralysis in the face of an unknown 'other'. The technique articulates Turner as a performer and an unreliable narrator. The achievement of *Perestroika* is its effective exploration of Turner's fractured self through enactment that may or may not be fiction. The construction of a self which is locked into the tight space of the train carriage with a window sealing off the outside world creates a metaphor of a self that is caught in a claustrophobic nightmare of loss. The shot of the image of the unidentified woman dimly reflected in the train window refers the spectator back to Turner's constructed identity — in the voice-over descriptions — as fragmented and contested. The extensive shots of the landscape, slightly blurred through the glass of the train window, is highly mediated through the subjectivity of Turner's voice-over, as if the landscape itself has brought her to the position of feelings of trauma and loss of memory. However, the deployment of an observational strategy as well as enactment allows the spectator to measure the subjective enactment against the portrayal of the few other travellers and an unidentified woman traveller, not Turner herself, who leans reflectively against the train carriage door outside the train.

In *The Border Crossing* the knowledge and experience of my own subjective memories offered a rich source of direct material I could draw on for my autobiographical creation. Walter Benjamin's writing provides a useful framework concerning a methodology for autobiographical filmmaking:

> He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging […], he must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter; to scatter it as one scatters earth, to turn it over as one turns over soil. For the matter itself is only a deposit, a stratum, which yields only to the most meticulous examination what constitutes the real treasure hidden within the earth: the images […] that stand—like precious fragments or torsos in a

[110]

collector's gallery—in the prosaic rooms of our later understanding (Benjamin 1979: 314).

Inscribing the mediation of my self in *The Border Crossing* enabled me to act freely in developing filmmaking strategies to call upon, with the overall aim of evoking my memories of trauma and violence. Drawing upon my 'cultural ghosts' (Lebow 2008: 141-142) in order to mediate my self, necessitated a measure of personal emotional distanciation. It took many years to achieve, but this long period of time assisted me to reflect on the nature of trauma and the difficulties of evoking my traumatic experience through filmic language. In *The Border Crossing* the use of autobiography created a productive method for discourse around the cinematic engagement with a subjectivity that articulates a metaphorical evocation of the past in the present.

According to Janet Walker, autobiographical works breach the normal standards of objective documentary filmmaking by incorporating fictional and personal elements, but within that breach:

> They discover new truths about the correlation between the objective mode of documentary production and mainstream history and […] the potential of experimental documentary for historical understanding (Walker 2003: 21).

Thus the creation of the character of Siân in *The Border Crossing* to enact my younger self is not in opposition to the filmmaking strategies that are deployed in the observational material and interviews. The voice-overs aim to guide the spectator through the hybrid strategies of enactments and referentiality to the historical world. They are not omniscient voices, they are the voices of evocation and uncertainty that engage with the subjectivity of memory and autobiography, but they retain the reassurance of an authorial voice.

The British filmmaker Carol Morley's experimental film, *The Alcohol Years* (2000), combines enactment with observational and participatory filmmaking strategies in

order to represent her contested identity. The film is an exploration of memory within the context of the Manchester pop-music scene in the 1980s. The proposed rationale for the film is Morley's return to Manchester to find out what her former acquaintances thought of her when she lived there at that time. The use of enactments that 'illustrate' some of the events described by the interviewees offer an intimacy and a sense of subjective experience.

The interviews comprise the largest portion of the film and are performative in the frontal placing and expressive lighting of the subjects and by their body language, facial expressions and style of speech. The interviews gradually build a compelling portrait of Morley's contested identity that is complicated by her many casual sexual encounters with men and women. An interviewee says that Morley had a child-like appearance and often appeared pulling a toy on a string behind her. The film cuts to a close-up shot of a yellow toy duck on wheels as it is pulled along the street at night. The character in each of the enactments is perhaps performed by Morley herself, but her surrogate character is indistinct: images show the back of a blonde woman's head and a woman's tongue in huge close-up. They create an impressionistic portrait of a younger Morley, as though the interviewees have become surrogates for Morley's own memory in order to create new memories and an imaginary identity. These filmmaking strategies are aimed at discomfiting the spectator. By withholding her voiced responses to the interviewees Morley creates an identity of considered detachment, distanciation and a discomfiting absence at the heart of the film.

The film represents 1980s Manchester as an era of sexual permissiveness in its constant references by the interviewees to the number of sexual partners Morley and other people had at the time. One of the male interviewees appears at the door of a house in a towelling robe, casually revealing his penis to the camera. He remarks that he paid Morley for sex. Another interviewee says towards the end of the film that

Morley's father committed suicide. However, there is no further mention of his suicide and it remains open to question. The ambiguity creates the possibility that her father's suicide is an unresolved trauma in Morley's life and the motivation for her otherwise unexplained self-destructive behaviour. Through these filmmaking strategies *The Alcohol Years* creates a rich and self-reflexive articulation of the unreliability of memory in the exploration of identity.

Remembering, misremembering and forgetting

In addition to the exploration of memory, *Not Reconciled* and *The Border Crossing* explore misremembering and forgetting after periods of violence and trauma. In the mediation of memories of traumatic experiences it is important to acknowledge that some elements of the experience may have been forgotten or misremembered. In my exploration of history and memory in *Not Reconciled*, (as well as in *The Border Crossing* and earlier films, such as *Fool's Gold* and *Small Town Girl)*, I approached history and memory through the recording and editing of images and sounds that signify indexical traces of the past and reference the past lives of human beings. In *Not Reconciled* this method references the way the ruined buildings are crumbling, leaving only faint traces of past lives. Anna Rossi-Doria observes that 'the twentieth century has been for the most part a time of cancellation of memory, and that it has prolonged the tendency to remove the past' (Rossi-Doria, quoted in Passerini 2003: 241).

Not Reconciled references the attempts by the Spanish state during the Franco dictatorship and successive governments afterwards, to erase public memory of the Civil War and to implement a state of collective amnesia. The ghosts, Rosa and Carlos, are unable to decide whether to look to the future or to the past, towards memory or towards forgetting. They struggle with the weight of this dilemma, because, as Rosa's voice observes: "There are some ghosts who would not be

welcome here, including the former selves of people who were alive in those years, who are still alive today, but who have made great efforts to unremember." Rosa's personal memories of the war are voiced as ones of independence, valour, heroism and cowardice, but Carlos has a different memory of the war. His voice exclaims: "What rubbish. This is how it happened. Water is scarce equals food is scarce equals hungry." His memory is articulated as one of terror, violence and constant hunger and thirst. Rosa's voice later contradicts her earlier statement, saying, "Fuck, forget the war" after Carlos' voice complains, "They are beautifying the 'innocent' priests now." Rosa is confused, disoriented and angry at her fate but she has not entirely lost her glimpse of a short-lived independence when she flirts with the 'American' ghost, during the ghosts' account of the battle at Belchite. The characters of the ghosts provide the articulation of a 'conscience' towards those 'who have turned their faces', as Benedict Anderson observes: 'towards the obscurity ahead' (Anderson 1995: 162). Anderson argues that we 'must do our slow best to learn the real, imagined experience of the past' (Anderson 1995: 162).

In *The Border Crossing*, remembering and forgetting are articulated in the complex layering of the voice-overs that constantly make reference to the desire to locate the exact spot of the border crossing. Siân's voice does not refer directly to a difficulty in remembering; she recounts events as they are apparently occurring. My voice, however, refers constantly to my difficulty in remembering, to my need to remember. In *The Border Crossing* my character 'remembers' the incorrect border crossing and my younger self is filmed at the 'incorrect' border crossing and my uncertainty is incorporated into the film's dialogue through my voice over: "I am at a border crossing. It seems so familiar […] I feel as if I've been here before but it was dark then and I can't be sure."

In Tajiri's *History and Memory* the daughter/filmmaker says in voice-over that she has a memory of events that happened to her mother when the U.S State interned her in a camp, presumably on the grounds that she represented a 'danger' to America during WWII. These are things Tajiri's voice-over says she knew but does not remember being told. Her voice-over says that her mother claimed to have forgotten the internment camp. Yet, her voice-over says, when she goes to a Cherokee reservation in the desert where the camp was located, she intuitively guesses where her mother had lived. Later, when she looks at a map of the camp she concludes that she was right. The film aims to draw the spectator towards empathy with Tajiri, the daughter who, her voice-over says, has felt excluded, angry and shocked by what happened to her mother and by her own inability to influence events. Tajiri's voice-over says she has "a picture always in my mind". Later her voice-over says that her mother has confirmed that she does in fact remember and the implication of the confirmation is that the mother has already told the child, her daughter, but the daughter forgot.

In addition to remembering, misremembering and forgetting are two other types of memory, the happened and the imagined memory. Kuhn asks pertinently 'how it is that images and sounds of and from, or referring to, "the past" […] can feel so familiar; and how this sense of recognition might connect with the activity of remembering' (Kuhn 2002: 128). In Freud's essay, 'The Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis' he describes visiting the Acropolis, and because he has seen it hundreds of times in postcards and pictures but has never visited it before, he experiences a sense of *déjà vu*, 'derealisation' and 'depersonalisation', a feeling of a splitting of identity, an acute self-awareness encapsulated in the remark that it really does exist just as we learned at school (Byrne 2009: 68). This for Freud is an uncanny moment. In *The Border Crossing* I explored this type of 'uncanny moment', of realization that the memory may be an imagined memory not a lived one, in a

[115]

Fig. 19: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

Fig. 20: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

sequence set in a mainline railway station. My voice describes the scene, over a shot of a still of the station, where a line of wooden benches sit against a brick wall. (see fig. 19).

My voice says: "the station is more or less deserted, and here are the same wooden benches against the stone wall, and opposite is the big church, and I am curled up on the bench." However, the image does not show a church but a block of new

apartments and small houses. The shot cuts to a further wide still of a shabbily-dressed man at the far end of the station platform. (see fig. 20). It cuts again to

Fig. 21: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

another still shot, and then another, drawing a little closer to the man, although his body and the features of his face remain unclear. (see fig. 21). My voice-over continues: "until that sss, sss, and just inside my vision he stands with that insecure demanding smile." The shots aim to produce tension in order to draw the spectator towards a sense that an action (perhaps violent) may happen, but instead my voice-over draws attention in another direction when I say: "It feels so familiar but it's not the right station." The sequence articulates Freud's concept of an 'uncanny moment' and also moves the diegesis away from an imaginary violent event that seemed about to unfold. It therefore turns the sequence away from a literal representation, towards an evocation of an imagined memory. This knowledge aims to create uncertainty around the verisimilitude of the memories within the film's overall diegesis, thus creating an overall ambiguity of the diegesis itself.

In Turner's *Perestroika* (2009) there is a similar example of what Freud calls an 'uncanny moment'. Turner's character, having arrived at her final destination after the

long train journey through Siberia, turns her camera towards a ruined building, the former hotel where, her voice-over states, she may or may not have stayed 20 years earlier. However, she admits that at the time foreigners were not able to stay there and she cannot account for the contradiction between her memory and the 'facts'. Her voice-over describes it as an experience of the uncanny. The two sequences I have explored in *The Border Crossing* and *Perestroika* aim to create a spectatorial sensation of displacement, a frisson and not-knowingness that may lead towards a spectatorial questioning of memory's reliability and the possibility that what the characters are remembering are not in fact, lived memories but imagined ones.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the limitations shared by all films that aim to mediate memory, including memory of trauma. Individual memories of the past are produced in the present of their remembrance and the spectator views a film as taking place in the present. Thus films that explore memory need to find methods to clearly signpost their signification of the past in order to be perceived by the spectator as an evocation of memory. Memories are not necessarily pinned to a single temporal point and narrative structures may require more than the linear narrative that is common to many mainstream films. In this respect narrative structures that are more akin to poetry, achieved by the use of associational, rather than continuity film editing, are useful. I discussed the specific problems in the mediation of memories of trauma and considered the views of various theorists. I argue that experimental documentary films may mediate traumatic experiences but it necessitates the use of particular filmmaking strategies and techniques so as to evoke experiences rather than directly representing them.

Mainstream documentaries rely on the utilisation of archive material, the filming of artefacts and witness interviews that are aimed at providing 'evidence'. Experimental

documentary films through their deployment of varied filmmaking strategies such as fiction and enactment expand the possibilities that are available to the documentary filmmaker in the evocation of memory. Many of the experimental films I have chosen to analyse in this chapter have found varied ways to circumvent the problems in mediating memory, including autobiography. This approach may allow the filmmaker to act as a guide to the spectator in signalling memories of the past. The next chapter explores in more detail the types of filmmaking strategies that may be deployed by the experimental documentary filmmaker in the mediation of place and memory.

Chapter 4

Realism and the Imagined

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the limitations and possibilities of hybrid filmmaking strategies and techniques that may be deployed in the mediation of place, memory and subjectivity — in my experimental documentary films and those of others. Since my films are experimental documentary films their discourse is not intended to provide 'evidence' but to afford spectatorial reflection on the hypothetical and the uncertain. I have constructed my films through enactments obtained through fictional strategies and realist filmmaking techniques that represent people, events and places from the historical world. My intention is to avoid the creation of a: 'diegetic reality [that] appears to be authorless, natural and mimetic' (Naficy 2001: 34). I aim to create distanciation, to encourage spectatorial reflection and engagement rather than passivity in the construction of meaning; and because films have the potential to affect the senses, I aim to afford emotion.[77]

In my discussion I trace the enduring influence of an approach to realism that aims to create an unproblematic verisimilitude with the historical world, an approach especially evident in documentary films, and explore the value of fictional strategies and reflexivity in experimental documentary practice. To inform my discussion I draw on Bill Nichols (1999 & 2010), Arthur Little (2007) and Catherine Russell (1999). I explore problems in the use of realist interviews in experimental documentary films that articulate memory and subjectivity, and the opportunities that may be provided by performance through body language in witness testimony. To evaluate these opportunities I draw on Roxana Waterson (2007) and I analyse the extensive

---

[77] This type of distanciation resembles the Brechtian notion of V*erfremdungseffekt (alienation effect)* or 'distanciation' and 'pleasure' that Berthold Brecht conceived for political 'epic' theatre. See Walsh, M. (1981) *The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema.* Griffiths, K. M. (ed.)

interviews in my film *Next Year in Lerin* (2010)[78] and Carol Morley's films *The Alcohol Years* (2000) and *Dreams of a Life* (2011). I explore the value of filmic intervals in interview testimony in *The Border Crossing;* intervals that are created in order to effect a spectatorial sensation of intimacy and empathy with interviewees and to inform my discussion I draw on Jason Alley (2011).

I am particularly concerned in exploring types of narrative structures which highlight non-linear narrative and temporal fragmentation that may be useful in the mediation of particular subjectivities. Thus, I analyse the spectatorial reception of films that explore the representation of memory and trauma and I draw on the work of Joshua Hirsch (2004) and Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer (2006), to evaluate whether a wholly realist strategy may be deployed. I discuss this with reference to Claude Lanzmann's epic *Shoah* (1985) and Elizabeth Stopford's realist television documentary, *We Need to Talk about Dad* (2011). I consider the types of filmic strategies that may overcome the sensation of vicarious shock, through an articulation of memory that does not aim to recapture the past, but to evoke it.

I consider the notion that the mediation of place through non-manipulated direct photographic means may not meet my aim in my filmmaking practice to portray it as an object of desire or contestation. I therefore explore the use of allegory and metaphor as important representational devices in a cinematic engagement with place. I explore this with reference to *Not Reconciled, The Border Crossing* where landscape is evoked as a metaphor for contestation, and my earlier film, *Fool's Gold* (2002), where landscape serves as a metaphor for desire and contestation. I also

---

[78] *Next Year in Lerin* was originally released in 2000. I refer here to the revised version released in 2010.

discuss in more detail Sara Turner's use of metaphor in *Perestroika* (2010)[79] where landscape serves as a metaphor for Turner's self-confessed alienated sense of self.

Experimental documentary practice: realism and the imagined

I begin my discussion with an exploration of the limitations and possibilities in the realist techniques that I use to construct my experimental documentary films that mediate memory and subjectivity. I then consider the value and problems in the use of additional strategies, such as fictional narratives and characters; enactment and allegory that may be drawn from the imagination. The term 'realism' or 'naturalism' may be defined as a form of representation where the artist (or filmmaker) aims to create an image that resembles as faithfully as possible the perceived 'real' universe. Christopher Williams notes that 'realism itself tends to have rather little to tell us' (Williams 1980: 80). Williams argues that realism operates within varied constructed systems and it is their constraints and conventions which give realism its significance (Williams 1980: 68). For example, in 'classical' Hollywood films realist conventions are constructed in order to give priority to narrative causation; filmic techniques are naturalised in order to render them invisible as though they are obeying a law of nature rather than following rules and conventions (Caughie 2000: 125). Realist techniques based on this form of practice took a strong hold on documentary filmmakers during the 20th century and into the present.

The notion of the verisimilitude of the photographic image to the object it reproduces and resistance to explorations of the aesthetics of filmmaking or to the inclusion of fictional tropes, led to realism becoming a normative term in the genre of conventional documentary film in terms of an ideological stance; a stance that is primarily aimed to provide 'evidence' or authentication. '[I]ts address typically constitutes an appeal to some kind of empirical conceptualization of the visible as

---

[79] For a discussion of *Perestroika* in relation to memory see Chapter 3.

"evidence": if it's on the screen it must be true' (Kuhn 2013: 269). Kuhn points out that to be credible as realism, the image in a documentary film must appear to be 'natural' and 'transparent'. This led to the attempt to film historical events without *apparent* manipulation of the image or sound, where editing appears continuous and unobtrusive.

Bill Nichols defines the *central* techniques of conventional realist strategies in documentary filmmaking as: 'participatory' ─ where the voice of the filmmaker and/or interviewer is clearly heard; 'expository' ─ where strategies are deployed to provide an overall argument or position, and 'observational' ─ the filming of historical events without *apparent* manipulation of the image or sound and where editing appears continuous and unobtrusive (Nichols, 2010).[80] Films may often mix these strategies but generally one is dominant. Okwui Enwezor notes that:

> The documentary image according to classical definitions is always that product of representation surrounded by a nimbus of facts. Whether in its context, or subject matter, or location, it demands that form of legibility that nothing in the frame is extraneous to the image, nothing added, nothing withdrawn (Enwezor 2010: 10).

Jane Gaines argues against the notion of non-reflexive 'transparency' in documentary films, because claims to verisimilitude in non-reflexive documentary realism erroneously assume that there is in fact a reality in the natural world that can be revealed without recourse to cinematic signifiers (Gaines 1999: 2). She concludes that documentary filmmakers who aim to explore subjectivities may encounter problems in deploying a wholly realist strategy in the construction of their films. Catherine Russell also notes the impossibility of the aim of complete verisimilitude of the image to the object it represents. She offers the pertinent example of the footage captured on a video camera by a resident of Los Angeles, George Holliday, which

---

[80] Some significant examples of the effective use of realism in documentary films are: Albert and David Maysles' *Grey Gardens* (1975); Sergei Dvortsevoy's *Bread Day* (1998), Kim Longinotto's *Divorce Iranian Style* (1998)*;* Frederick Wiseman's *Titicut Follies* (1967)*.*

shows five police officers repeatedly hitting Rodney King, a construction worker. Part of the footage was aired around the world:

> Many commentators trace the popular and political dissolution of the truth-value of visual culture to the Rodney King trials (1992-3), in which the self-evident "proof" captured by a home video camera was interpreted very differently by different "sides" (Russell 1999: 20).

Russell argues that current digital technologies and the extensive possibilities for image manipulation now relegate the 'real' aimed for in classical documentary far outside the domain of representation (Russell 1999: 20). She argues however, that experimental documentary filmmakers should not reject realism, but acknowledge realism's strengths in mediating the historical world, and its limitations in the provision of authenticity. Russell considers that the strengths found in realism provide opportunities for experimental filmmakers because there is a radical possibility to refer to both the referential and the allegorical through the 'development of new forms of audiovisual representation' (Russell 1999: 3). These new forms of representation may afford an engagement with subjectivities of 'experience, desire, memory and fantasy' (Russell 1999: xii). A new type of realist practice in documentary films that also draws on fictional strategies and that is reflexive may afford the possibility of an engagement with the historical world in order to construct a discourse that is hypothetical and subjective, rather than making claims to the evidential. As Hila Peleg argues:

> Rather than by 'capturing' reality, the documentary is then characterised […] by a commitment to actual events, histories and sites. It is such commitment that then becomes the backdrop against which the means of representation are being measured (Peleg 2010: 6).

Experimental documentary films that draw on the realm of the imagined may consist of a fictional narrative and characters, and they may be based on memory and history. In *Not Reconciled* for example, fictional characters are evoked from the Spanish Civil War and a fictional narrative is constructed to evoke history. Enactment, re-enactment and performance may be deployed to achieve their

[124]

construction. In *The Border Crossing* I developed the fictional character of my younger self to enact my autobiographical narrative. There may be poetic evocation through technical manipulation of the image; a non-linear narrative; subjective voice-over and a highly stylised mise-en-scène. In the cinematic mediation of memory, including memories of traumatic experiences and events, a reflexive realist practice may afford rich possibilities by drawing on additional strategies such as allegory, enactment or fiction. These offer the freedom to explore the hypothetical and the uncertain to enrich and expand the realist conventions of documentary.

Nichols notes that the particular type of hybrid documentary that foregrounds performance makes the spectator rather than the historical world the primary reference and blurs the distinctions between documentary and fiction:

> Performative documentary uses referentiality less as a subject of interrogation than as a component of a message directed elsewhere…in prompting us to reconsider the underlying premises of documentary epistemology itself. Performative documentary attempts to reorient us–affectively and subjectively–towards the historical, poetic world it brings into being (Nichols 1994: 99).

Arthur Little also argues that hybrid strategies have value in terms of the effect on the spectator:

> The performative documentary is a very robust means by which the filmmaker may deliver a hybridization of documentary modes in a clearly fabricated way that may retain referentiality. These modes work together to *suggest* and not *argue* a message by drawing a conclusion *from* the viewer – not *for* the viewer (Little 2007: 25).

Nichols warns however, that there is a danger that this type of documentary may collapse all important social questions into spectacle. As my experimental documentary films do not *primarily* deploy performance, but are hybrids of realism and the imagined, I aim to avoid the possibility of their discourse collapsing into spectacle. I aim to ensure that the fictional elements do not overshadow the referent to the historical world and give consideration to spectatorial affect.

[125]

As I have outlined experimental documentary films that explore the imagined may include fictional characters, enactments, a poetic non-linear narrative, allegory and metaphor. A few notable but very different examples of this type of hybrid filmmaking strategy, in addition to my own films, are Ngozi Onwurah's autobiographical *The Body Beautiful* (1990) which explores memory and identity through extensive enactment, flashbacks and voice-over; Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* (1989) which mixes poetry, music and performance with Riggs' autobiographical voice-over and Dziga Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929), a silent documentary that documents the daily life of a city and its workers using extensive tracking shots, split screen and freeze frames to explore the vocabulary of filmic language in the construction of the film. These films all make effective use of the imagined alongside a realist practice that references the historical world that enrich their filmic discourse.

Memory and the documentary 'interview': realism and performance

In my experimental films I deploy interviews as a central technique in my realist strategy. The term 'interview' is somewhat imprecise in covering the differing and complex forms of interrogation, conversation and testimony that may take place between the filmmaker and the subject and they are often used in realist documentaries with the aim of providing 'authenticity' and 'evidence'. The filmed interview that adheres to notions of the 'real' is conceived as making referential claims to the historical world to give an impression of authenticity. There is an avoidance of filmic reflexivity and the camera is often static and there is an unobtrusive continuity editing style. Filming and sound recording are produced with little apparent technical manipulation in production or post-production. Film lighting tends to be dependent on natural daylight or flat artificial lighting. There may also be an overarching voice-over that begins before and continues after the interview to clarify and add to factual information given by the interviewee. A single interview may be intercut in short sections throughout the film. This type of filmed interview will

normally eschew direct address to the camera, since this might draw spectatorial attention to the film's technical construction. Social actors and/or subjects performing for the camera perform as 'themselves'.

However, few filmed interviews are without their subjective aspects that may usefully allow reflection and questioning. Alessandro Portelli in his discussion of the oral history interview argues that where the interviewee gives subjective accounts of events and experiences of the past, if they believe their account to be true it deepens the effect of accessibility to the interviewee's inner emotional state to allow reflection: 'Subjectivity is as much the business of history as the more visible facts' (Portelli 1991: 50). As well as affording reflection this effect may also reinforce the idea of 'authenticity' since the interviewee appears to believe it, but if another interviewee offers a subjective account which contradicts the earlier interviewee, the discourse opens up uncertainty. The spectator may then be able to reflect on this contradiction and draw their own conclusion. In some interview based documentaries, including mine — those that Nichols describes as participatory — there may also be some degree of filmic reflexivity. The voice of the filmmaker may be heard interacting with the subjects. In Werner Herzog's *Grizzly Man* (2005), for example, Herzog's voice-over describes events shown on the screen and his voice interacts with the interviewees. Also present may be expressive qualities such as dramatic lighting, subjective camera or non-diegetic music, but these may also be perceived as confirming the film's overall referentiality to the historical world.

Things become rather more complicated when a documentary filmmaker aims to mediate *subjective* memories of events and experiences that happened in the past. According to Joshua Hirsch, realist techniques may only effectively mediate the past by assuming:

[127]

> An omniscient point of view of one who is outside history […] ― one who is free to enter into history through the image and assume a variety of embedded points of view; to see and feel history vicariously, on the condition of being free to return again unscathed to that exterior position from which one can know and judge the past without being personally implicated in it (Hirsch 2004: 21).

The omniscient view of 'one who is outside history', who knows and judges the past without being personally implicated in it, is problematic in experimental documentary films that aim to explore memory and subjectivities from a position of personal implication. An example might be witness testimony that is reliant on a memory of a personal experience. Memory itself is unreliable, fragmented and often contains elisions, and by remembering an experience of the past one is *always* implicated in it. This makes it impossible to maintain an omniscient point of view that relies on 'evidence' to support an argument. The attempt to maintain an omniscient view becomes even more problematic in an autobiographical film where the filmmaker herself is personally implicated. Alternative filmmaking strategies drawing on the imagined may evoke memory in reflexive experimental documentary films which aim to bear witness. This orients the spectator towards the hypothetical and the uncertain rather than the evidential.

I turn to the methodology used in *Not Reconciled*, a film that explores both history and memory while not relying solely on the inclusion of archive material and witness testimony. In this experimental documentary film my primary concept was to construct a film that effected spectatorial reflection on ways the Spanish Civil War and its immediate aftermath have been remembered or forgotten. I also aimed to frame questions about the nature of the Civil War and its continuing effects on the Spanish population.[81] Brief eyewitness testimonies in *Not Reconciled* are afforded by subjects whose accounts are presented as contradictory or evasive or whose infirmities render them potentially unable to comprehend the significance of the

---

[81] For further discussion of the interviews conducted in *Not Reconciled*, see Chapter 3.

questions. My intention was to articulate the collision of cultures between the subject, a witness with first-hand memories of the Civil War and its aftermath, and a foreign filmmaker. My terse question: *"Do you remember the war?"* elicits the response from an elderly woman: *"He was there, but he's deaf"* as she points to an old man whose words become indistinguishable. An anonymous peer reviewer in *Journal of Media Practice Screenworks* observes of these interviews:

> The film's 'anti-interviews' fail at providing the viewer with information, but the interviewer's inability to elicit responses from her subjects (to her laughable Spanish) creates something far more revealing: a stammering, an uncertainty, a distraction, and an avoidance (Anon., 2011).[82]

These interviews are not 'reliable' witness testimonies conceived as providing evidence, but are deployed in order to reveal evasiveness. My filmmaking strategy in the interviews circumvents the omniscient point of view ─ the subjects appear implicated in events of the past through their body language and expressions, even though their narratives do not provide 'evidence' to 'prove' this.

Filmed interviews in my experimental documentary films offer information, but also intend to convey the subjects' inner emotional states through voice and body language, implicating them in the events they are remembering in their narratives. These types of interviews may create a spectatorial empathic response, which contests the notion that documentary interviews may only be useful in offering empirical 'evidence' through testimony. It underlines the notion that there may be many different viewpoints on memories of events of the past.

In *Not Reconciled* I deployed documentary interviews that are aimed to problematize remembering and forgetting the events of the Spanish Civil War. A similar strategy is deployed in *The Border Crossing* with reference to trauma and violence in the

---

[82] See *Journal of Media Practice Screenworks III* [Online] http://www.jmpscreenworks.com/?pid=daniels [Accessed: 25 July 2014]

Basque Country. Roxana Waterson argues that there is a *need* to clearly articulate subjectivity in narratives of the past because without this interviews run the danger of becoming a type of myth-making, where the memory becomes distorted and solidified through frequent telling. When choosing filmmaking strategies I consider it important to guard against this type of memory myth-making and this was my aim in the extensive interviews conducted in *Next Year in Lerin* (2010).

Next Year in Lerin tells the story of the exile of Macedonian child refugees during the Greek Civil War in 1948.[83] I encouraged the interviewees' to offer subjective narratives including memories of emotions and sensation rather than offering factual information. The sensation of subjectivity is deepened through the tone of voice, facial expression and body language of the interviewees, and further deepened by the body language and facial expressions of those who were filmed listening to them. This sense of intimacy and accounts of personal memories resists giving an impression of the type of myth-making that is often found in the repeated telling of narratives of traumatic experiences. Instead it gives the sensation that by the act of repeated telling their narratives have contributed to the formation of an experiential community of memory centred around the 'child' exiles and their memories of the past (Danforth & van Boeschoten 2012: 214). This is particularly exemplified by the way the subjects refer to their childhood homes, revealing emotion and at times, tears. At the time of filming, in 1998, most of the interviewees had never returned to visit their childhood homes, and yet without exception, they expressed a deep emotional attachment to their birthplaces.

---

[83] In 1948, with the Greek Civil War at its height the Greek Communist Party ordered 28,000 Macedonian and Greek children aged 2 to 14, to be evacuated from Greece to Yugoslavia without their parents. Many school-teachers, sympathetic to the left-wing cause, volunteered to take the children to Yugoslavia. See: Danforth, L. & van Boeschoten, R. *Children of the Greek Civil War* (2012); and *International Committee of the Red Cross, Joint Reports on Repatriation of the Greek Children* (1949-1951).

One of the interviewees, Kisinilovsky, was removed from Greece as a small child and spent the remainder of his childhood in an orphanage in Romania, before eventually settling as an adult in Macedonia. He is an eminent historian with a particular focus on the Greek Civil War. In interviews filmed in his office he discusses his personal experiences and sets out his version of the historical events surrounding them. In the editing I cut into his verbal account black and white archive shots of the children's exodus from Greece; wide static shots of empty corridors and stairways in Kisinilovsky's office building and close-up panning shots of a map of Macedonia and Greece on the wall behind him. This creates ruptures in the diegesis and an effect that suggests Kisinilovsky's identity is strongly connected to his memories of the past. His account includes widely known details of historical events that he did not personally witness or remember, such as the involvement of women fighters in the Greek Civil War. However, he also talks about his personal experiences, including how he burnt his hand trying to retrieve his possessions from a fire — possessions that had been given to him by his mother. Kisinilovsky's narrative of loss is intercut with static shots of the empty office building to create an effect of spectatorial intimacy and empathy.

The use of filmic frontality, where subjects speak direct to the camera, may also offer a sense of authority. Vera, an elderly woman who fought in the Greek Civil War, tells her story loudly and passionately, as though declaiming to an enthusiastic crowd of political supporters. Her account is accompanied by vigorous hand gestures as she moves briskly around a small room. She is filmed on a hand-held camera that follows her movements but sometimes moves away or lags behind her to reveal the empty space of the room. This creates a spatial rendition of the geography of the whole room — both inside and outside the frame — and references Vera's body with the frame as she moves in and out of vision. Her restless body movements and the geography of the room create a spatial relationship with the frame that affords the

spectator a distanciation that gives the opportunity to reflect on the authenticity of Vera's account and her role in the Greek Civil War; where the filming may be taking place, and on what kind of person Vera is.

In another sequence, Stoja, a retired schoolteacher, sits with several elderly child refugees in a warmly lit sitting room. Speaking direct to camera, she gives a long and detailed account of her perilous journey from Northern Greece to Macedonia with a group of young children at the height of the Greek Civil War. It is clear in her fluent and unhesitating account, accompanied by copious tears that this *has* been told many times. (Due to technical problems at the time of filming the interview was conducted twice. On the second occasion, Stoja's account was almost identical.) The spectator may feel momentarily moved by her emotional delivery and sincerity, but her delivery is fluent and verges on the melodramatic, thus distancing the spectator from a sensation of empathy with Stoja's character. However, the absorption of the other interviewees who sit around Stoja in the intimate setting of a warmly lit living room full of family memorabilia undermines spectatorial distanciation. As Stoja's fellow interviewees listen to her account of her journey the camera pans slowly over their faces and bodies which express a range of absorbed responses and emotions at the nuanced details of her account. This validates the sincerity of Stoja's desire to give this account of her memory and may draw the spectator towards a sensation of sympathy and identification with her account.

In another sequence three elderly men are filmed in the empty dining room of a hotel. They sit side by side in a shot that emphasize the edges of the film frame. Very tight close-up shots pan slowly over their faces as each speaks in turn to the camera and the others listen intently. The close-up shots are intercut with an occasional static wide shot or a close-up shot of a photograph of the men's parents, or the men themselves as children. The expressions on the listeners' worn faces reflect deep

emotion as they sit with their eyes fixed on each speaker, listening intently to each account of memories and emotions. As Joshua Hirsch aptly notes: 'Often there are faces, held in long close-ups, speaking or trying to speak, struggling to reconcile language and memory—faces like canvases where the traces of memory and forgetting collide' (Hirsch 2004: xi).[84] When one man describes his mixed feelings about meeting his biological mother again as though for the first time, he does not cry, but in his facial immobility the spectator is afforded the sense of a strongly repressed emotion. As Carl Plantinga observes: 'close-ups of faces, in shots of long duration, play an essential part in the structures of […] films [,] since they serve to elicit empathic responses in the audience' (Plantinga: 1999: 239).

The rhythmic panning and tight framing of the camera in the sequence with the three men bears no obvious relationship to the speakers' accounts of their memories and creates a distanciation which draws attention to the tropes of filmic form. Jason Alley observes that in an interview this strategy may open up a larger argument, rather than a single story about the world. In such distanciation he states:

> Documentary discourse is temporarily halted, forcing the viewer to consider other spaces at work. Where is the artist exactly? Where are we? What arrangements—of furniture, people, schedules—have taken place in order to render this conversation? What distances—social, economic, geographic—remain despite the filmmaker's reasonable rapport? (Alley, 2011).

In *Next Year in Lerin* the interviews offer the spectator a sensation of intimacy and empathy with the characters, but the distanciation achieved through the panning camera movement, away from the speaker and on to the listeners, also enables the spectator to reflect on the overall discourse of the film with reference to exile, identity and the loss of 'homeland'.

---

[84] Hirsch, J. (2004) *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust.*

I took a different approach in my exploration of memories of violence in *The Border Crossing.* I filmed two Basque women, Maria and Aitziber. Aitziber, the younger of the two, is portrayed as an individual who has experienced trauma through torture and sexual violence at the hands of members of the Spanish Guardia Civil (Civil Guard). She focuses on the details of the experience and the way she subsequently dealt with her trauma. She gives no information about her own politics, nor does she say what her alleged crime was. Nor do I question her about it. My voice-over indicates that Aitziber is a character encountered by chance. Aitziber's testimony is not verified by other sources and cannot be considered 'balanced'. She discusses torture directly and to provide a context for this narrative her interview is intercut with several shots of a Basque political demonstration protesting against the imprisonment and torture of Basque nationalists.

In *The Border Crossing* my aim was not to completely discard referentiality to the historical world but to shift it towards a concentration on the spectatorial experience. I included the use of interviews. The interviewees' body language, facial expression, tone and strength of voice, and eye contact with other subjects or the camera, references evocation, or suggestion, in order to: 'communicate a […] partial, often emotionally charged and compelling account of an issue or event' (Little 2007: 24.) I used this type of filmic technique in my construction of filmic intervals in the interviews with Aitziber. The interview is obtained in the main through her direct address to the camera in close-up shots that serve to convey her inner emotions and to create a sense of empathy with the spectator. She is filmed seated very close to the camera in medium and tight close-ups, against a blank wall in a very noisy café.

I created intervals in the interviews by intercutting static close-up shots of her silent face and reducing the sound of the noisy café almost to silence throughout her testimony. She looks at the camera, glances away, smiles and turns back to it, thus

[134]

affording a heightened sense of intimacy with the spectator. (see fig. 22). Edited into her interview, the shots act as interruptions in the diegesis. The spectator is given the opportunity to reflect on where the conversation with Aitziber may be taking place, and on whether, and in what way, her inner world is affected by torture and imprisonment. After each silent interval she continues to speak with great urgency over the noise of the café. In representing Aitziber in such a stylised way I highlighted the fact that her character is a portrayal created through filmic construction, thus allowing the spectator sufficient time to consider the veracity of her testimony of physical and sexual torture and to construct a speculative account of what may have transpired.

Fig. 22: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

Carol Morley's experimental films resonate with the interview strategies deployed in my films. In Morley's *The Alcohol Years* (2000) interviewees are positioned in the centre of the frame in a studio or a living room, but the space is not cinematically explored. The shots are static and each interview is cut into separate sections and intercut throughout the film. Morley herself does not speak, even when directly

[135]

challenged by interviewees, which gives the sensation of a discomforting interrogation. There are no 'cutaway' shots of the interviewees' surroundings edited into the interviews to cover time elisions and provide the impression of narrative continuity. Instead short fictional enactments or other interviews are intercut, while Morley remains unseen and unheard throughout, although occasionally small abrupt sounds are audible, a high-pitched laugh and an incomprehensible word.

Many of the interviewees in *The Alcohol Years* recount their memories of Morley's behaviour in the past and their own experiences of interacting with her. They express verbal hostility and anger towards the unseen Morley and question the validity and concept of her film project. The film's silence and withholding, while provoking the anger and frustration of the interviewees, leads the spectator to conclude that Morley's own memories of the past may have been lost and must be replaced by the surrogate memories of the interviewees. Thus the film creates complex layers of significations, achieved almost entirely through the utilisation of interviews. The achievement of the interviews is that they do not provide any reliable 'evidence' but highlight the limitations of filmed interviews where the filmmaker herself is personally implicated.

In *Dreams of a Life* (2011) Morley continues her filmmaking strategy through interviews, where the filmmaker as the subject of the film is absent and cannot remember or offer a narrative of the past. The film explores the problem of reconstructing the identity of somebody who is dead through the memories of others. It documents the unexplained death of Joyce, whose skeleton was found on a sofa in her bed-sit in London in 2006 surrounded by half-wrapped Christmas presents. Joyce had been dead for approximately 3 years and the television was on. The cause of death was unknown. Nobody reported her missing. In the film the character of Joyce is performed by an actor. The interviewees are positioned against a bare wall, in an

anonymous studio space. The interviewees are very brightly lit and generally positioned mid-frame, although there is variation in shot size, angle and camera position. They look towards the camera but not directly into the lens. The atmosphere created by the lighting and mise-en-scène is warm but bland. There is little information given about the interviewees themselves, only about how they remember interacting with Joyce. Each interview is cut into sections and intercut throughout the film in a thematic order. The interviewees provide voiced accounts of their memories of Joyce which are often evasive. Many of the interviewees' accounts of Joyce's character and personality are contradictory.

Both of Morley's films demonstrate the way interviews may be effective in exploring subjectivities, not in order to provide evidence of past events, but to highlight that in a documentary film there can only ever be an *impression* of authenticity. The films do not depend on interviewees to act as reliable witnesses in remembering the past. They rely on the opposite premise — that interviewees will provide subjective, unreliable and contradictory accounts. In *Dreams of a Life* there is a single shot of the 'real' Joyce. It shows her in a crowded hall listening to Nelson Mandela. A tiny face in the crowd, she turns in slow motion towards the camera and for the first time the photographic image of the 'real' Joyce is revealed, less beautiful than the actor who performs her character, but more shocking in its revelation of an image of the dead woman herself. In the shot of the 'real' Joyce, her 'true' identity remains as opaque as the mystery of the circumstances of her death. The shot reveals the unbridgeable distance between the 'real' Joyce and the constructed character of Joyce portrayed in the interviewees' performed' memories of her. The uncertainty however, enables the spectator to construct a speculative account of the nature and identity of the 'real' Joyce and how she died — in a similar way the spectator may construct a speculate account of Aitziber's testimony in *The Border Crossing* —

[137]

secure in the knowledge that the veracity of the account will be neither verified nor denied.

Enactment and realism

In my own films, the performances of the fictional characters in *Not Reconciled* and the enacted character of Siân as my younger self in *The Border Crossing* signify the past through fragmentation of images, sounds and narrative. However, it does not mean that the films themselves are fiction films. Fictional strategies often necessitate the creation of a mise-en-scène that either *appears* authentic in the recreation of a historical period or is deliberately theatrical and/or modern day. Integral to the film's structure and the narrative of *The Border Crossing* are memories of experiences referential to the historical world. I therefore constructed a non-linear narrative of voiced memories performed by Siân and me, taken from my own text that was written soon after the events took place and added to the text descriptions of the filmmaking process and memories of events that happened to me as a child. This created a poetic layer of observations about memory of the past and the present. A pre-credit sequence consists of a blank screen and my voice-over outlines the film's overall project: "I close my eyes and hold the past in the palm of my hand...watch it grow into the present. I close my fingers and wait to let go. But not yet." My voice-over explains that this is an account of an experience in the past.

In *The Border Crossing* I maintained a participatory strategy ─ one where the voice of the filmmaker is clearly heard ─ through interviews with subjects who discuss their memories of the past, and an observational strategy in footage of their current lives. There are extensive images of signifiers of the Basque nationalist struggle[85] — shots

---

[85] ETA (Euskadi ta Askatasuna or Basque Homeland and Liberty) was established in 1959 to fight for an independent Basque state. See Tremlett, G. (2010) *A Brief History of Eta*. [Online] Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/05/eta-history-in-dates. [Accessed: 14 December 2013]. In October 2011 ETA announced a halt to armed struggle.

of posters showing photographs of Basque political prisoners and graffiti and sequences of demonstrations on both sides of the border in support of the prisoners. This approach references the past as part of an ongoing present. These shots are intercut with extensive enactment sequences that are evocative and poetic, and voice-overs whose descriptions of events are intended to create the impression of an imagined world that is elsewhere, external to the one that is represented in the images. The narrative structure is also poetic and contains many temporal elisions.

The relationship between my character and Siân's as my younger self is one-sided. My character is the filmmaker and the subject of the film. I am recalling events that are sometimes figured in the images and sometimes not. I appear able to hear Siân's voice but Siân does not respond to my remarks. She is 'directed' but my voice is not heard 'directing' her; she describes her situation; she performs her role; she shows little emotion. She is a character in the film whose only role is to play the part of my younger self. Sometimes however, the voices of these two characters blur into ambiguity and it is difficult to tell whose voice belongs to whom, to separate the surrogate from the filmmaker. At these junctures the spectator may speculate as to what extent the characters are authentic and to what extent both are fictionalised performances, but this is not explained in the film. The enactments create an imagined world of the past and present that go far beyond the events shown on the screen and provide an interrogation of the means of its own construction. Nevertheless, there is tension through a growing sense of impending sexual violence as the film progresses, through the images intercut throughout the film of the man driving a car through the night towards an unknown destination. The strategies of enactment and participatory and observational techniques occupy most of the film. The summation is a complex interweaving of subjectivities that underlines the

---

See Tremlett, G. (2011) *Eta declares halt to armed conflict.* [Online] Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/20/eta-spain [Accessed: 14 December 2013]

impression that ultimately my residual trauma remains unresolved. The sensation is discomfiting.

In *Not Reconciled* the fictional characters of the ghosts describe imagined past events; sequences are filmed in the ruined town where these events took place and the images retain their link to the historic world. The ghosts' voice-overs also accompany many of the observational sequences in the modern town. The dialogue between the ghosts, Carlos and Rosa, is playful as well as informative, and as their fictional relationship develops, their playfulness evokes a parallel imagined world that is firmly rooted neither in the past nor in the present. This gives the spectator the space to imagine who Rosa and Carlos may have been before they died in the Civil War and who they may be now, trapped in a mass grave. Observational sequences, archive stills and interviews provide referentiality to the historic world. The combination of styles problematizes the diegesis and gives the spectator at times an emotional sensation and at others the space to reflect on the film's political discourse of the lasting effects of the Spanish Civil War and remembering and forgetting. However, the film does not provide 'evidence'. In my exploration of fictional strategies in *Not Reconciled* and *The Border Crossing* I have shown the rich possibilities that may be achieved through the use of enactment and realism in experimental documentary films that evoke memories of the past.

Memory and narrative fragmentation

The Border Crossing approaches memory through a non-linear narrative. This, as Naomi Greene notes:

> Emphasize[s] not the link between past and present but, instead, the absolute discontinuity. Marked by its 'distance' from history, […] memory seeks less to recapture the past than to re-create it; it wants not to confront the ghosts of history but rather to establish a place where they may flourish forever (Greene 2001: 247)

In discussing the cinematic mediation of the past, MacDougall observes that an imagined distant past implies recognition that the past is defined by 'its irreducible distance from the present' (MacDougall 2006: 236). *The Border Crossing* constantly draws the spectator's attention to just such an imaginary distant past. The narrative is layered in its engagement with accounts of past and present. It contains both linear and non-linear narrative; linear narrative through the story of Siân's journey throughout the film and the accounts given by Aitziber and Maria, and non-linear in its narrative meanderings.

During her journey through the streets of San Sebastian, for example, Siân walks through a subway tunnel crowded with pedestrians. The film cuts to a shot of her sitting on some steps in the street, staring expressionlessly into off-screen space. The film cuts to a still photograph of the letters ETA etched on a pillar in an identical, empty subway tunnel. (see fig. 23). (The letters signify the proscribed Basque nationalist organisation ETA.) The edited juxtaposition of these two shots implies the

Fig. 23: Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

shot is Siân's point of view, but it is ambiguous. The pedestrians are no longer present; it is a static shot but it is a still photograph. The use of a still, the empty space within the frame, the claustrophobic space of identical tunnels and the letters set starkly in the centre of the pillar signify a void and a rupture in the film's diegesis and a temporal dislocation. Since the image has no meaning for the narrative at this point — it does not reference Siân's journey — it evokes neither past nor present, but functions, rather, as a filmic interval. There follows a cut to a shot of Siân walking through another identical, subway tunnel, again full of pedestrians, thus returning the film to its diegetic present. Through a single still image of an empty subterranean tunnel in a complex system of identical subterranean tunnels, the disjointed continuity in the film's diegesis creates a sense of unease. The shot of the pillar with the word ETA emblazoned in blue paint across it gives an impression of mystery; ETA, the organisation is both underground and isolated and metaphorically everywhere.

However, the fragments of non-linear narrative do not disrupt the ability of the spectator to reflect on the film's diegetic world, since the opening of the film clearly sets out its intentions in my voice-over describing the intention to explore the past through memory, using Siân in the role of my surrogate self. It creates a pact between the film and the spectator. Such pacts of intention are important guides for the spectator in films that are structured via a non-linear narrative, but in *The Border Crossing* my exploration of the past is incomplete. For example, my voice-over a blank screen in *The Border Crossing* says: "I lose sight of myself at this point. Not until I reach the docks and the railway do I become visible again to myself in my mind's eye." Here it becomes clear that my memory contains gaps and elisions. The voice-overs describe events in the past through the 'I' of my present self and the 'I' of Siân that on occasion appear to be describing the actions unfolding on the screen and at other times do not.

[142]

Elsewhere in *The Border Crossing*, my voice-over describes memories of past experiences, memories that I say are *prompted* by the images being shown on the screen. For example, over images of a moving car, Siân's voice remarks that: "The car smells of wine, garlic and old leather. I feel sick". My voice responds: "I remember the car when I was a child, the smell of the leather, expensive and luxurious. I always felt sick". Through a diegetic separation between the voiced description of a memory of the past and the image on the screen, a number of different thematic associative relationships are created. In its articulation of past and present the film's overall narrative structure is non-linear. The displacement of readability through a lack of synchrony of voice and image aims to shake the spectator's expectation of verisimilitude and foregrounds the film's construction. This strategy also allows for the possibility of reflection on the nature of both past events and the fragile, fragmented and unreliable construction of memory and identity.

Memory and trauma: documentary strategies

As I have discussed earlier the mediation of memories of trauma is problematic. In my experimental documentary films I give careful consideration to the choice of cinematic strategies to construct their cinematic mediation. Joshua Hirsch argues that: '[d]ocumentary films in particular allow spectators to witness [real] events after a fashion' (Hirsch 2004: 6). But, there remains: 'the broad problem of representing the past, of reckoning with the absent and haunting dimension of the past' (Hirsch 2004: 11).[86] He concludes that the mediation of traumatic memory must surmount 'the paradox of trying to visualise and narrate a trauma that could not be captured in an image; of trying to remember an absence, of trying to represent the unrepresentable' (Hirsch 2014: 184). Hirsch observes how some films may provide the spectator with a sense of vicarious shock, particularly when they are viewed soon after the event.

---

[86] Both quotes are in Hirsch, J. (2004) *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust.*

However, this phase may rapidly be followed by a numbing affect. To combat the numbing affect:

> Documentary images must be submitted to a narrative discourse whose purpose is, if not to literally traumatize the spectator, at least to invoke a posttraumatic historical consciousness — a kind of textual compromise between the senselessness of the initial traumatic encounter and the sense-making apparatus of a fully integrated historical narrative (Hirsch 2014: 185).

Many documentary films attempt to circumvent the problems of representing the unrepresentable by using extensive eyewitness testimony to create subjective memories of traumatic experience, accompanied by archive material — where it exists — to provide a referentiality to the historical world. In memories of traumatic experiences the subject is personally implicated and cannot master the traumatic memory because one of the effects of trauma is that time is experienced as fragmented. This limits the ability of direct witness testimony to offer sufficient 'evidence' alone to provide the film with an impression of authenticity, and therefore realism alone is limited in effectively mediating trauma. Once again other filmmaking strategies become necessary.

A notable example of an effective use of extensive eyewitness testimony to explore traumatic memory is Claude Lanzmann's epic *Shoah* (1985), which interrogates subjects' memories of the Holocaust of Jews through direct interview testimony, without additional material such as archive. Extensive sequences are located in many places where genocide took place. Lanzmann affects an evocation of traumatic memories by filming many interview testimonies at the sites of concentration camps or running pre-recorded survivors' voices over images of the sites. *Shoah* concentrates on the bodies and voices of survivors and witnesses in these locations. Through this strategy an evocative spectatorial sensation of place locates the interviewees in an effective collision of past and present, of subjective memory, rather than history. Some of the sites of empty landscape reveal traces that have

been almost erased by time or through deliberate acts of concealment by the Nazis — the long narrow foundation of a wall, a shallow depression in the grass — that act as signifiers of the violent past, bringing past and present, remembering and forgetting, together in the spectator's imagination. Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer note that: 'As we look at other sites — sunny fields, dark forests, endless train tracks — we project onto them past scenes of destruction that they both reveal and conceal' (Hirsch & Spitzer 2006: 135).

In *Shoah* the troubling sensation of the violence of the past brought into the imagined present is underlined by the mobile camerawork that creates the sensation of spectatorial witnessing — long tracking shots of landscape and houses whose former Jewish owners died in concentration camps; close-ups of faces; a camera that moves away from characters to reveal them as tiny figures located in empty landscape. There are long pauses in the testimony as the original language is translated into French in voice-over. These pauses allow the spectator time to reflect on what has already been said, to check what is in the frame and to speculate on what has just been, before the words are translated. Thus, a direct spectatorial sensation of relationships between the character of the filmmaker, the interviewees and sometimes their families or workmates, is obtained in the film. The absence of an over-arching expository voice-over and a reliance on subjective testimony, combined with the presence of the filmmaker's voice, which questions and sometimes probes the witnesses throughout the film — behind and sometimes in front of the camera along with the presence of the translator — creates a deep sensation of subjectivities that evoke the past through place and witness testimony.[87]

---

[87] I have not discussed the ethical issues many theorists have raised with reference to *Shoah* as this is beyond the scope of this research. For further discussion of *Shoah* see also Saxton, L. (2008) *Haunted images: Film, Ethics, Testimony and the Holocaust;* and Bathrick, D., Prager, B., Richardson, M. D. (eds.) (2008) *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory*.

In Joshua Hirsch's view, films that blend realist strategies with modernist techniques, such as Resnais' *Night and Fog* (1955), are effective because:

> They did not abandon realism, but rather staged a collision between realism and modernism. It was from the collision between realism's discourse of omnipotent representation and modernism's discourse of the impossibility of representation that these films derived their formal and thereby their historical shock effects (Hirsch 2004: 105).[88]

Night and Fog was filmed in Auschwitz, a World War II concentration camp in Poland. It combines a poetic voice-over, modernist music, archive material and extensive tracking shots of the camp as it was in 1955 when the film was made. The archive material conveys a strong spectatorial sensation of shock, but as Russell observes: 'what is most shocking is that the atrocities in *Night and Fog* were filmed at all' (Russell 1999: 259). Just as Lanzmann's filmic strategy in *Shoah* was to locate his film at the site of traumatic events, *Night and Fog* draws much of its powerful evocation of trauma from the images of the extensive silent and empty buildings of Auschwitz. The mobile camera evokes the sensation of the past colliding with the present and the accompanying musical score created by Hanns Eisler offers the sensation of the camera and the spectator embarking on a vain search for signifiers to explain the events that took place there.

In *The Border Crossing* I approached the construction of the film as a representation of the incomprehensibility of the violent experience which continues to haunt me and has led to its non-assimilation through direct recall. Caruth cites Freud to support her argument that due to the non-assimilation of the original experience, 'historical memory […] is always a matter of distortion, a filtering of the original event through the fictions of traumatic repression, which makes the event available at best indirectly' (Caruth 1996: 27). In *The Border Crossing* I deployed complex strategies to evoke, rather than reconstruct, memories of a traumatic experience and to engage

---

[88] Hirsch, J. (2004) *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust.*

with trauma as 'a space of embodied witnessing' (Kulbaga 2006: 71). The memory of the experience itself is open to reconstruction and interpretation in the spectator's imagination. *The Border Crossing* is located at the site of my traumatic experience in the Basque country in Spain and France, and I approached the film's exploration of memory through indirect forms of enactment. The film creates a direct indexical link to the site of the trauma, but tells its story indirectly. In a complex layering of voice-overs that constantly make reference to 'my' unexplained desire to locate the exact site of the border crossing; it articulates the fragility of remembering and forgetting and the non-assimilation of traumatic experience. However, the film mediates an actual experience not a fictional one; it is an experimental documentary, not a fiction film.

Elizabeth Stopford's television documentary, *We Need to Talk about Dad* (2011), explores the continuing effects of trauma on a family brought about by the violent attack by a husband, Nick, on his wife, Nicky. The film contains a single brief enactment sequence, and short home-movie sequences that portray the family as happy. The home-movie shots of family holidays and celebrations are intercut repeatedly as the films progresses. The film is not centred on the husband and wife but on the construction of an investigation by their son Henry into Nick's motivation for the attack. Henry says in the film that he did not witness the attack itself, but dealt with its immediate aftermath. In the enactment sequence Henry is filmed at night, from behind, standing at an upper floor window of the family house, looking out, while on the sound-track is the sound of dogs barking. Stopford's introductory voice-over gives a few facts of the assault, including the fact that Nick received a prison sentence of just a few months for smashing Nicky's skull in three places.

As the 'investigator' in *We Need to Talk about Dad*, Henry finds Nicky resistant to giving any account of the attack and Henry himself does not speculate on Nick's

motivations. As Henry describes his frustration at his parents' withholding information, his body is stiff and motionless, his face expressionless. He talks to an unseen interviewer at a 45-degree angle to the camera. The overall impression given is that all the characters are numbed by trauma. Stopford's voice-over explains that Nick and Nicky had troubled childhoods, but no details are given. All the characters repeatedly state that their former lives had been perfect. The withholding of information that might shed light on character development serves to accentuate the resistance of all the subjects to reveal for the camera or each other their memories of the traumatic event itself or of the experience of it. Light non-diegetic music is heard throughout the film, and the brevity of the repeated home movie footage conveys a strong sense of repressed emotions and absence of accessible memories.

The spectator may conclude that the 'real' drama of the family's fraught relationships has already taken place; that a traumatic experience cannot be filmed; indeed the 'real' drama is possibly continuing outside the constructed parameters of the film. In any event, most of the characters, including Henry, are portrayed as traumatised to the extent that they cannot properly acknowledge that trauma has taken place. The home movie images of the past are clichéd pastiches of family holidays, and their repetition without additional technical manipulation does not expand spectatorial insight into the nature of the family's past. Waterson observes:

> There are moments in film when we sense that something transformative is happening, in which we as spectators become caught up ourselves; when we realize that the effort at transmission is changing us, as much as it may be changing things for the participants. The testimony is happening now, is part of the dynamics of the real world, and is not just coming from a "talking head", long detached from the past events it is describing (Waterson 2007: 64).

Throughout *We Need to Talk About Dad* 'something transformative' is hinted at. Henry travels to Germany to confront his father, but the reluctance of all the characters, including Henry himself, to engage directly with the memory of the trauma, concludes the film. In the closing sequence, Henry, in Germany, questions

[148]

Nick directly for the first time in the film but Nick's replies are evasive. They both face the camera, and in a moment of intimacy Nick smiles at Henry but says nothing. They turn and walk away from the camera, Nick's arm slung around Henry's shoulders, implying reconciliation. The father/son relationship appears to be for the moment restored, and perhaps this is a resolution. *We Need to Talk about Dad* effectively represents the emotional repression of characters that cannot assimilate the overwhelming emotional effects of trauma that burst their 'dream'. The film has a traumatic narrative that, as Caruth notes, has at its core: 'an urgent question: Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it?' (Caruth 1996: 7). *We Need to Talk About Dad* creates evasiveness and ambiguity and demonstrates that a realist documentary film may successfully mediate the continuing effects of trauma in the present, but has limitations in negotiating the terrain of traumatic memories of the past, where the aim is to engage meaningfully with memories of the experience itself rather than only its lasting effects.

Imagining place

In *Not Reconciled* and *The Border Crossing* I mediated place as a lived environment and aimed to portray subjects as embedded within and informed by place. To this end I gave careful attention to the strategies I deployed to construct my films and note that Martin Mhando argues that the mediation of landscape through non-manipulated photographic means will not necessarily convey it as an object of desire (Mhando 2010: 206). In *Next Year in Lerin* the characters' voice their unfulfilled longing and desire for their birthplaces in villages in northern Greece. Shots of the landscape are interpolated into the structure of the film through static shots of fields, hills and rivers, filmed on a slow camera shutter speed to blur into tropes of dreamlike space that evokes it primarily as an object of the characters' desire. In my later films, landscape is not articulated as an object of desire but one of contestation.

[149]

In *The Border Crossing* place is constructed as labyrinthine and contested. The film's mise-en-scène does not reference a historically accurate location. The car that apparently picks up Siân (it occurs off screen) is modern and white, not silver, as noted in the voice-over, the driver is not visible and no border guards are seen. The present-day border crossings provide markers that form rhythmic 'intervals' within the montage. They appear at moments of drama in the fictional rendering of the autobiographical element. The transitive space of the border serves as a metaphor for the uncertainty and alienation of Siân, my surrogate character, and myself, while the modern-day mise-en-scène and the events described take place off-screen and can be imagined by the spectator. It creates an expressive quality of physical dislocation of place and time and psychological alienation of the characters.

In Turner's *Perestroika* (2009)[89] place has an allegorical role that informs the diegesis. Landscape is set up as an object of desire through its mediation as hermetically beautiful and unreachable, seen through the window of a train. As the landscape passes across the frame, it assumes the role of passing time, connected to the past through archive images of the landscape, shot twenty years earlier, on low resolution, analogue video. The allegorical role of the landscape is one of a deliberate withholding of objective interpretation, reinforced by the inscription of a method of filming that employs the extensive use of a slow shutter speed to blur and abstract the image, coupled with the urgent build-up of the sounds of hundreds of clicks of a stills camera. The shots of landscape are aesthetically beautiful and, Turner states in voice-over, endangered beauty. Gillian McIver notes that *Perestroika*:

> […] continually offers up images that are simultaneously beautiful and horrible; the beauty of the light on snow, pink dawns and fiery sunsets, massive industrial plants looming like giant preying mantises or other metal

---

[89] For a discussion of *Perestroika* in relation to autobiography, identity and memory see Chapter 3.

insects; the horror of the emptiness, the terrible monumentality of the lake landscape (McIver, 2009).

This abstraction and withholding creates distanciation, and as Rosen remarks: 'the closer the image comes to being reduced to pure presence, the more it threatens to become unreadable and requires explication' (Rosen 1993: 63-64). Turner does not provide explication. The ordering of the landscape as unknowable also serves as a metaphor for Turner's creation of her multiple identities and a self-confessed alienated sense of self. Harper and Rayner argue that: 'Like a map, the cinematic landscape is the imposition of order on the elements of landscape, collapsing the distinction between the found and the constructed' (Harper & Rayner 2010: 16). All the films I have discussed have circumvented the problems of filming landscape through non-manipulated photographic means by successfully using filmic strategies that mediate landscape as contested or as unreachable objects of desire.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the limitations and possibilities in the strategies that may be available in the mediation of memory and place in experimental documentary film practice. My aim in constructing my films is to afford both spectatorial thought and sensation and the creation of a critically engaged discourse that is not 'transparent' or 'natural'. I have argued that conventional documentary realism has limitations in articulating memory, place and subjectivity, where its aim is to create an impression that appears 'natural' or to provide 'evidence' and 'authenticity', rather than formed by the conventions of ethics, ideology, concept and formal concerns. Therefore a realist filmmaking practice that is reflexive may be deployed whose discourse is enlarged through additional strategies of enactment, allegory and metaphor. I suggest that there is a need for revision of the accepted terms of realism's central aim to provide 'evidence' in documentary films and the examples of films that I have explored give promising signs that this may be happening.

I have argued that there are rich possibilities in the construction of meaning in a filmic discourse that foregrounds place in conjunction with witness testimony, particularly in a documentary practice that aims to mediate traumatic experiences. I have explored the value of narrative structures that are akin to poetry in the evocation of memory and subjectivity and conclude that these may afford a strong support for the types of hypothesis and suggestion articulated in the diegesis of an experimental documentary film. Many of the films I have chosen to analyse in this chapter, including my own have deployed hybrid strategies drawn from realism and fiction in their aim to circumvent problems in the mediation of memory and subjectivities. In summation, I would argue that a realist practice may be valuable in mediating memory, place and subjectivities in experimental documentary films but there are useful possibilities in the deployment of fictional cinematic tropes from the realm of the imagined. Looking forward, beyond this thesis, as experimental documentary films move into a new era of production, exhibition and distribution, it is clear that the perceived boundaries delineated by the terms 'realism'; 'enactment'; 'fiction'; 'documentary'; are continuing to blur in new, fruitful and positive ways.

Conclusions

It is that moment in a shot or sequence that gives a sequence its life, without which (to put it conversely) it would be tautological, no more than "itself". It is what we wait for when watching a film a second time […] It may lie in a gesture, a look, in the catch of a voice, a puff of smoke, or a distant sound that animates a landscape. This moment may be regarded as what is quintessentially filmic *in film [...] The "filmic" may in fact be seen as a refutation of film, half-hidden within the envelopment of filmic representation (MacDougall 1998: 49).*

An overview of my research

It is more than five years since I began this practice-led doctoral research project. In carrying out my practice research I drew on film theory, trauma and memory studies and theories of space, landscape and spectatorship to inform my experimental films. I also drew on my prior experience of filmmaking and knowledge of film language; exploration of the work of others in all forms of creative practice and my interaction with the social world; above all I relied on intuition. As Paul Klee argues in his 1905 essay, 'Exact Experiments in the Realm of Art':

> We construct and keep on constructing, yet intuition is still a good thing. You can do a good deal without it, but not everything. Where intuition is combined with exact research, it speeds up the progress of research. Exactitude winged by intuition is at times best (Klee 2012: 159).

Relying on intuition to guide my practice meant that I often took decisions instinctively and evaluated their effects later, which resulted in a lengthy process of making and re-making, particularly in the post-production periods. However, many of my decisions in the filmmaking process were made instinctively during filming itself, in pursuance, in the back of my mind, of a 'filmic' moment, which as MacDougall observes is neither signifier nor signified, but unsignified. For example, in *The Border Crossing* there is a static shot of a sparsely-furnished, empty, brightly-lit corridor (previously discussed in Chapter 2). The image consists of several closed doors and a series of walls divided by vertical door frames. An orange striped carpet divides the wooden floor into sections. The overall effect is one of enclosure. (see fig. 24.)

Fig. 24. Daniels, J. *The Border Crossing* (2011). [Screen shot]

After six seconds of silence there is a momentary buzzing sound and the light on the walls in the foreground of the image darken slightly, creating a sensation of spectatorial disquiet, although — or perhaps because — the sound has no direct signification. I consider the overall effect to be an example of a filmic moment. A similar filmic moment occurs in the church sequence in *Not Reconciled* (previously discussed in chapter 2), when a young man looks at the camera and nods meaningfully while he points around the church. Neither 'moment' was planned beforehand, but I valued them when they occurred during filming.

Moments of creative intuition or artistic inspiration are fundamental to the decisions and choices I make in my practice but the process resists analysis. The scripts in both films were developed over a fairly long period of time as ideas occurred to me, often when I was on a journey or taking a bath. Patricia Townsend points out that in the field of psychoanalysis, from Freud and Klein to Laplanche there have been many attempts to study the process of creativity. She draws on the ideas of Winnicott to reflect on the process of creation where the internal space of the mind, the

[154]

conscious and unconscious, overlap and intermingle with the external space of the outside world. She suggests that ideas and images emerge into an artist's consciousness at the moment when 'there was a loss of differentiation. The distinction between inner and outer did not apply' (Townsend 2013: 180). She considers that in that moment the artist enters:

> a temporary delusional state that envelops the artist at a particular moment in the creative process. As ideas and images emerge, the artist sees them as the perfect answer to an unformulated question. In these moments, she is temporarily blind to potential problems and shortcomings which will be acknowledged only later in the process (Townsend 2013: 180).

I would suggest that after this moment of 'delusion' has passed the filmmaker assesses the value of the ideas and images against the experience gained in making previous films, by reflecting on films made by others and drawing on knowledge gained through research and theory.

Extending my knowledge of theory gave me the feeling that I was not alone in experimenting with filmic strategies and narrative structure in documentary films. My embrace of autobiography and filmic reflexivity and the deployment of enactment and fiction offered greater opportunities to expand my cinematic explorations of place and memory in a 'construction' of the historical world, unconstrained by the necessity to 'record'. I kept in mind throughout my research that a documentary film is a mediation of an historical event and the act of making a documentary film is to engage with and deliver ideology. As Jane Gaines observes:

> The point most often made, drawing on philosophical positions in poststructuralist thought outside film studies, is that the problem with the concept of painting, photographing, or "recording" reality is that this assumes that there is a real "out there" in the natural world that can be shown (or that will reveal itself) without the use of linguistic or cinematic signs. Reality outside of cultural signs, as it is so often said, does not exist…any claim to "reality" is a highly ideological move to begin with (Gaines 1999: 2).

The hybrid strategies of fiction and realism — for example in the use of interviews combined with a highly conceptualised and formal approach to the fictional elements — are stylistically very different in tone and effect. There is a risk with all experimentation that it will end in failure and the danger in these two films was that the discourse would lack coherence. I suggest that when these types of experimental strategies prove successful, the rewards are great in adding to knowledge. As David MacDougall convincingly argues:

> In films the complexity of people and objects implicitly resists the theories and explanations in which the film enlists them, sometimes suggesting other explanations or no explanations at all. In this sense then, film is always a discourse of risk and indeterminacy (MacDougall 2006: 6).

In the films made for the thesis I consider that their discourse is coherent, although I judge neither to be completely successful in my aims; I mourn their technical weaknesses; the sequences and subjects that were not included because they 'did not fit' the structure; and the alternative choices of strategies that could have been deployed.

In the written exegesis my analysis relied heavily on the two films made for the practice element of the thesis; my formation as an independent filmmaker gave my research an overall context. I observed that the organised independent filmmaking movement in the 1970s and 1980s achieved a great deal in assisting my development as a filmmaker. However, there was a contradiction in the aims of the independent filmmaking movement that I argue was never resolved. The IFA was established to gain access to funding and distribution and offer support in the production of films but filmmakers under its umbrella became overly dependent on institutional funding. Many of their representatives were incorporated as members of the institutional funding structure. It is hardly surprising that the IFA was dissolved when all its immediate aims were achieved, and when the attacks on funding arrived

in the 1980s there was no organised movement of independent filmmakers able to fight them.

My discussion of the cinematic mediation of place emphasised its importance in interacting with and informing identity. I analysed spectatorial pleasure on seeing familiar places in early actualité films and observed that with the advent of mass audiences, global film and television production and the changes in film production and distribution that have appeared with digital technologies, place may now often be viewed by many spectators as unfamiliar; and conversely, a spectatorial sensation of familiarity with place may now be obtained solely through its prior representation in films. This, I conclude, leads to the need for care in the images and locations that may be selected, in order to avoid the over-determination of certain iconic images, for example the modern wind turbines that I filmed in *Not Reconciled*. I evaluated the way metaphor, allegory and metonymy are important filmmaking strategies in the mediation of place, particularly in the image of the 'house' and the 'border'. I argue that they are important tropes in experimental documentary films in shifting their discourse from the need to provide 'evidence'.

In my exploration of the cinematic mediation of memory and trauma I would argue that the omniscient position common to many realist documentaries which rely on 'evidence' to support their discourse may not be possible to maintain in films that explore the subjectivities of memory. Classical linear narrative may also be insufficient in the mediation of memory due to the difficulty of fixing memory to specific moments in time and associational non-linear narrative structures may be more effective. In both films made for the thesis I constructed non-linear narratives and multiple significations in order to provide rich layers of discourse. I discussed the view by some film theorists that individual memories of traumatic experiences are not directly representable in films due to the difficulties in their recall. I observed that

[157]

documentary films aimed at creating spectatorial sensations of vicarious shock in order to represent traumatic experiences, often succeed, after the initial shock effect, in inuring the spectator to their effects. I conclude that cinematic strategies such as enactment and fiction that are aimed to evoke traumatic memories may assist in overcoming these problems.

In *The Border Crossing* I took an autobiographical approach which enabled me to act as a guiding 'voice' in order to lead the spectator through the narrative uncertainties that may be created by a multi-layered strategy. I suggest that the use of filmic self-reflexivity may assist in exploring the complex relationship between the filmmaker as subject and producer, and the spectator, as well as in engagement with the social world. I explored in detail the specific techniques available to the experimental documentary filmmaker and I argue that hybrid strategies are effective in exploring memory and place. However, I conclude that these strategies are not selected at random but according to a methodology that is considered by the filmmaker to be appropriate to each film project.

I constructed the two films made for the thesis through hybrid strategies of realism and the imagined. I explored the possibilities of a realism that is critical through a reflexive practice that engages with subjectivities. This type of realist strategy may shift the focus away from the need to provide evidence, in favour of a hypothetical discourse — a discourse that seeks to engage the spectator in closer reflection, for example, through the use of distanciation. I conclude that in the cinematic mediation of memory this is a valuable approach. I consider enactment and fictional strategies to have considerable value in my filmmaking practice when used as hybrid strategies alongside realist strategies.

In summation, I suggest that the opportunities available in a hybrid approach to filmmaking outweigh the problems of ambiguity in the absence of 'evidence', and the difficulties of 'reading' highly fragmented non-linear narratives. The choice of filmic strategies may also depend on the film's overall discourse. For example, in *Not Reconciled* I considered that the fictional creation of the characters of ghosts evoked from the past to be an appropriate strategy in evoking the past in the present through subjectivities; in *The Border Crossing* I took an autobiographical approach to explore memory and considered that the creation of a fictional surrogate character strengthened the complexities of subjectivities.

Carrying out the research has broadened my critical understanding of the opportunities and limitations of cinematic strategies available in my filmmaking practice. It has enabled me to open the window of uncertainty in my experimental films a little wider. It has also extended my knowledge of contemporary theories in film studies, trauma and memory studies and theories of space, landscape and spectatorship. I look forward to extending and developing my filmmaking practice further in this area in the future.

Final thoughts

As an independent filmmaker I am present in the wider world of filmmaking. The landscape of independent filmmaking has changed out all recognition and is continuing to change. Screenings of my films are as likely to be at academic conferences and academic institutions as at film festivals or, very occasionally, a gallery space and I continue to make films that are largely self-funded and free of editorial control by state funders and distributors. The art gallery; the internet; academic conferences and screenings, and film festivals are today the primary places for screening experimental film work. In the 1970s and 1980s to say I was an independent filmmaker was to make a political and cultural statement. Today the

term itself is rarely used in that respect, but through the availability of cheap filmmaking equipment and access to distribution on social networking sites, filmmakers do continue to work independently of the mainstream film industry and broadcast television in large numbers. It is now possible for almost anyone to become an 'independent' filmmaker. It is possible to make a film to fairly high production standards using digital technology and many filmmakers make films without any form of institutional funding. Given the IFA's dependence on institutional funding in the 1970s this may seem to offer a certain advantage.

Self-distribution online, on sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, or in the plethora of cafes and pubs that show films is increasingly normative. No-budget 'underground' film groups have mushroomed.[90] Using the internet has reduced marketing budgets and ensures that ─ providing the technology itself is reliable ─ there is a long-term availability of films. However, as Knight and Thomas observe: 'what the internet does not do of course is ensure that people watch and engage with the work it makes available' (Knight & Thomas 2011: 68). Nevertheless, filmmakers are beginning to get together to curate and set up online distribution outlets in order to guide people through the range of films on the internet. Knight and Thomas note that Onlinefilm, an internet distribution company was set up and is owned by a group of filmmakers:

> Specialising initially in documentary film, the online site is now branching out into other genres and is intended to allow filmmakers to retain control over their work, and how it is distributed, while getting it seen as widely as possible (Knight & Thomas 2011: 269).[91]

On Onlinefilm, filmmakers are able to set their own prices and the royalty split favours the filmmaker. However, the notion of the independent filmmaker as an activist dedicated to an opposition to the mainstream film industry no longer exists.

---

[90] Groups that screen independently produced films include: The Halloween Society; Films That Make You Go Hmmmmm; Kinokulture; Omsk; My Eyes My Eyes; Cinergy; Shaolin; Renegade Arts and Peeping Toms in London; Vision Collision in Manchester; Head Cleaner in Coventry; Junk TV in Brighton and Dazzle! in Plymouth.
[91] http://www.onlinefilm.org [Accessed 11 August 2014]

There is no organised umbrella such as the IFA, to represent our interests in gaining greater access to funding and to distribution or to assist in the creation of a cultural dialogue with other independent filmmakers. There are signs that this may be changing with the activities of a younger generation of filmmakers, and some independent filmmakers, most of whom were activists in the 1970s and 1980s, are still making films.

Sometimes filmmakers produce manifestos. In 2007, Emma Hoppe and Jon Sanders launched *The Belgrade Manifesto* at the Belgrade Festival of Auteur Film, stating that: 'There is a crisis in cinema today, a deep malaise, a feeling of artistic exhaustion, of pointlessness (Hoppe & Sanders 2007)'. Their aim was to establish: 'a committed, interactive community that can share ideas and work together' (Hoppe & Sanders 2007). I signed the manifesto, but at the time of writing six years later, there are just 90 signatories and there has been little evidence of the sharing of ideas.[92] To date, the manifestos produced by independent filmmakers are short-lived in their effects. The Free Cinema Group's manifesto in the 1950s helped them to break into feature film production but *The Belgrade Manifesto* achieved nothing except a short-lived sense of unity in adverse circumstances via its existence on the internet.

Many independent filmmakers who have moved into the Higher Education sector are making films as part of their ongoing academic research activities. The politically left-wing Radical Film Network based in Bristol is supported by the Centre for Moving Image Research at the University of the West of England. In September 2014 a conference will be held under the auspices of The Centre for Moving Image Research (CMIR), Encounters Short Film and Animation Festival, in association with the Radical Film Network and Arnolfini Gallery, to explore what the term radical film

---

[92] *The Belgrade Manifesto*. [Online] Available from: http://belgrademanifesto.com/ [Accessed: 9 May 2013]

means. In 2015 there will be an official launch event for the Network around the theme, 'Political Cinema for the 21st Century'. It remains to be seen whether the connection to the Higher Education sector, itself under direct Government attack on funding and activities, will be a constraint on radical filmmakers, or a support.

Today there are many social networking sites, such as Facebook, where filmmakers can market their films, while for those making films as academic research there is *Screenworks,* the online journal of *Journal of Media Practice.* By the end of the 1990s and into the new millennium, gallery space to exhibit film artists' work has grown exponentially and, in acknowledgement of this growing 'success', the government announced in 2009 that a special fund for the gallery artist would be extended to Film Council Lottery funded feature films, thus allowing artists to extend into the art-house feature film circuit. There has been a trend for documentary filmmakers to move into the gallery. Chantal Akerman reworks her own past films as well as making new work specifically for the gallery setting; *Woman Sitting After A Killing* (2001) is taken from her fiction film, *Jeanne Dielman 23 Quai du Commerce 1080 Bruxelles* (1975). It is an installation piece that reflects on her film production and the filmmaking process. The last ten minutes of the original film is screened on seven separate monitors, each with an interval of time, so the image is different on each monitor; the gallery space allows the spectator to move around the monitors to provide a totally different viewing experience to the original film.

Akerman continued her autobiographical contemplation in *Maniac Shadows* (2013) where she constructed a three-screen installation showing intimate scenes from her own life juxtaposed with noisy uptown street scenes in New York and fuzzy scenes of Obama's election night. Duncan Campbell's *Bernadette* (2008), is a portrait of the Irish politician Bernadette Devlin/McAliskey and was conceived for, and presented in, a gallery; the Turner Prize-winner Elizabeth Price's *The Woolworths Choir of 1979*

[162]

(2012) combines computer-generated images of the interior of a church with a syncopated electronic clicking sound, choral singing and archive footage of a fire in a Woolworths store where ten people died. The Arts Council still plays a role in funding artists' moving image work including documentaries.

Alongside the expansion of the gallery film, mobile-phone filmmaking has become increasingly ubiquitous. According to Max Schleser:

> Mobile devices and social media […] have become part of contemporary everyday lives. These developments will not replace existing media channels, but rather converge with them and more significantly can also provide an alternative to them. Alternative is understood here as positioning filmmaking outside the mass media production environment, either in a web 2.0 commercial enterprise or an alternative political context (Schleser 2013: 97).

Mobile-phone filmmaking has moved on from the novelty of new technology to provide an increasingly sophisticated global network of community-based filmmakers who show their work and communicate with each other at conferences via Skype. This work is largely self-funded.

For spectators, who may also now be film producers themselves through access to digital technology, the myriad of places to watch film means they may now encounter films via the internet on a portable computer or a mobile phone, on television or in a cinema on the other side of the globe to where the film was produced and set. They may also see films in a local film festival or in a film café and they may participate in a film's production through crowd-funding. This type of fund-raising is carried out through websites on the internet established for the purpose.[93] According to Angus Finney, the internet is at the heart of this change: 'mass broadband penetration is driving change throughout the entertainment

---

[93] An example of an established crowd-funding website is the Indigogo website: http://www.indiegogo.com/ [Accessed: 9 August 2013]

sector, video-on-demand, downloading to own, net and cellphone marketing, blogging, video up-loading etc., are all helping drive significant change' (Finney 2010: 104). David Gauntlett argues that alongside this transformation through the development of YouTube and mobile phone filmmaking, the role of the spectator has been transformed from a 'sit back and be told culture which became entrenched in the twentieth century, towards the making and doing culture which could flourish in the twenty first' (Gauntlett 2010: 11).

Despite these changes some independent filmmakers from the 1970s and 1980s are pessimistic about the possibilities of finding sufficient funding to create new work. According to filmmakers Anthea Kennedy and Ian Wiblin:

> Every aspect of film culture in this country has become very diluted - from funding through to exhibition. […] many people, especially young people, cannot have any sense of the diversity that exists within cinema […] the situation here is very conservative and competitive (Kennedy & Wiblin, 2007).

Dickinson argues, with reference to the BFI's tiny production grants to filmmakers in the 1950s, that this turned filmmakers into amateurs: 'The grants were so small that the work initiated by [the fund] was effectively amateur film' (Dickinson 1999: 4). I suggest that these types of filmmakers are not amateurs, even though they may rely on donations, tiny grants, or their own money to fund their films and teach in order to support themselves; in common with most artists they often rely on such means to support their artistic practice. The BFI has moved away from its heritage as a support of British low budget and experimental filmmaking and distribution to become the production and distribution arm of the British film industry, taking on the functions of the former Film Council. Its aim is to develop and support the mainstream British film industry:

> We […] nurture and invest in a diverse mix of first-class filmmakers UK-wide; to discover and develop new talent; and to support the production of a wide range of films that will enrich British film culture and define Britain and its storytellers in the 21st century, for the benefit of audiences at home and abroad[94] (British Film Institute, n.d.)

In the BFI's forty-six page report for the period 2012 to 2017, 'Film Forever', there is no mention of experimentation.[95] This means that funding for independent filmmakers is generally found through self-funding; crowd funding via the internet; small grants from the Arts Council for film artists; research grants within Higher Education institutions; and research grants from the Higher Education Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to practitioners engaged in academic practice research.

My aim in this practice-based research has been to advance a critical understanding of the opportunities and limitations in the cinematic strategies that are available to experimental documentary filmmakers in the mediation of place and memory, including trauma and autobiography. *Not Reconciled* I hope has made a significant contribution to studies about the ways in which memory, place and trauma may be mediated through practice research. In my experimentation with hybrid strategies of realism and the imagined I explored the way fictional construction of characters evoked from the Spanish Civil War and interviews with local inhabitants, may contribute to political discussion about remembering and forgetting violence and trauma in Spain. In *The Border Crossing* I explored the way autobiography and the construction of a surrogate fictional character may evoke memories of traumatic experiences. In both films I explored the way cinematic tropes of the imagined may be combined with realism in a film that remains identifiably a documentary film. My research and analysis of the films made by others is embedded in my continuing

---

[94] [Online] Available from; http://www.bfi.org.uk/film-industry [Accessed: 19 March 2013]
[95] [Online] Available from: http://futureplan.bfi.org.uk/launch.aspx?pbid=62b10d3a-080b-4234-93d6-5fffb70b4509 [Accessed: 19 March 2013]

development as a filmmaker and the importance to my practice cannot be overstated. I hope that my practice and exegesis may usefully contribute to knowledge and I fully intend to draw on this knowledge in my future filmmaking practice.

Postscript

In 2014 I completed a 63-minute experimental autobiographical documentary film, *My Private Life*. The film is centred on long-held secrets in my family. Filmed over two years the film consists of three distinct sections, each centred on one or two central characters. The first half of the film is constructed through a linear narrative, but as the film progresses the narrative becomes non-linear, associative and temporally fragmented. My aim in making this film was to continue and expand my use of filmic hybrid strategies to mediate memory and subjectivity. The film begins with a pre-title sequence aimed to evoke a spectatorial sensation of disquiet. The sequence consists of three shots: a close-up shot of an unidentified naked woman in the bath, her face unseen; a close-up shot of an eye looking through a keyhole; and a black and white shot of a young girl on a swing that is accompanied by a penetrating squeak of metal on metal. The title of the film appears and then the film cuts to sequences that appear to have no immediate connection to the pre-credit sequence.

My Private Life consists of extensive observational footage that documents the domestic routine of my elderly Jewish parents, Barbara and Bertie in their small flat in North London. Intercut are shots and sequences created in varied filmic styles: fictional enactments; hands constructing a model house in a dark studio; static shots of houses and flats located in different towns and countries; and old photographs of Barbara and Bertie. Barbara and Bertie's voice-overs giving accounts of their memories run over the shots of houses and photographs, My voice, over black-and-white photographs of me as a girl, describes my memories of family life. In further

[166]

sequences located in my parents' flat my voice addresses them directly. However, my voice is not conjoined with the image and they do not reply. As the film progresses Barbara and Bertie's descriptions of the same events become increasingly contradictory and evasive. The overall tone of the film suggests the existence of a much larger unspoken narrative; a narrative whose significance lies in its continued inaccessibility to the daughter/filmmaker.

Barbara and Bertie do not openly reveal their secrets and the fictionalised enactments hint at a narrative of physical violence and sexual ambivalence. Their contradictory accounts of events in the past evoke a sensation of disquiet and anxiety that is underlined by the distanciation created through the extensive voice-overs. Later, the film shifts focus away from Barbara and Bertie towards my character. I address the camera directly; an address that may create a deeper spectatorial sensation of intimacy towards the daughter/filmmaker. As the daughter, my identity is mediated as frustrated and powerless in my desire to reveal family secrets (see fig. 25). However, as the filmmaker I am portrayed as maintaining

Fig. 25: Daniels, J. *My Private Life* (2014). [Screen shot]

[167]

control of the proceedings. When Barbara dies I am represented as the dutiful, but resentful daughter. Finally, the model house is complete, but it is an imperfect and fragile construction. The film ends with Bertie settling into a new flat.

The knowledge and experience I gained in this practice-based research assisted me in the planning and execution of *My Private Life*. The research was particularly useful in my consideration of the narrative and stylistic possibilities that may be afforded in the use of fictional enactments to evoke memories. I built on the knowledge I had gained in experimenting with autobiography in *The Border Crossing* to create a more explicitly autobiographic film, composed of several layers of voices; the guiding voice of the filmmaker who asks questions and comments on the proceedings and the voice of the conflicted daughter who is unable to address her parents directly and addresses her 'private' thoughts to the camera and through voice-over. This strategy enabled me to widen the film's discourse into a mediation of my parents' repressed identities in the context of their social world, and my conflicted identity as subject and filmmaker.

The methodology I deployed in *My Private Life* is somewhat different to the one I used in *Not Reconciled* and *The Border Crossing*. In *My Private Life* there are less fictionalised enactments. Poetic evocation of anxiety and disquiet is primarily created through a highly constructed sound-track and manipulation of the image to create memory-scapes. I would conclude that the use of hybrid strategies of enactment and realism are effective tools in expanding a filmic discourse in the mediation of memory, place and subjectivity in experimental documentary films.

[168]

Bibliography (works cited)

Abbott, F. (1999) [1982] 'The IFA: Film Club/Trade Association. *New Cinema Workshop Bulletin*', in Dickinson, M. (ed.) *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90.* London: BFI, pp. 168-170.

Aitken, I. 'Documentary: Britain's Greatest Contribution to Cinema', in *Screenonline* [Online] Available from: *http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/446186/* [Accessed: 25 June 2014]

Allegue, L., Jones, S., Kershaw, B. & Piccini, A. (eds.) (2009) *Practice-as-Research in performance and screen*. London: Palgrave.

Alley, J. (2011) 'Spaces of Reticence', in *Media Fields Journal*. No. 3. [Online] Available from: http://www.mediafieldsjournal.org/spaces-of-reticence/ [Accessed: 1 January 2012]

Anderson, B. (1995) [1983] *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso.

Anon. Peer review. *Journal of Media Practice Screenworks.* Vol. 3. [Online] Available from: http://www.jmpscreenworks.com/?pid=daniels [Accessed: 7 June 2014]

Aretxaga, B. (2006) *States of Terror.* Reno, NV: Centre for Basque Studies.

Armengou, M. & Belis, R. (2006) *Las Fosas del Silencio: Hay un Holocaust Español?* Barcelona: Debolsillo!

Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (1975) *Patterns of Discrimination Against Women in the Film & Television Industries: ACTT 1975 A Special Report.* London: ACTT.

Augé, M. (1995) *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity.* London: Verso.

Bachelard, G. (1994) [1958] *The Poetics of Space.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Barratt, E. & Bolt, B. (2009) [2007] *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry.* London: I.B. Taurus.

Barry, S. (2009) *The Secret Scripture.* London: Faber and Faber.

Bathrick, D., Prager, B., Richardson, M. D. (eds.) (2008) *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory*. Woodbridge: Camden House.

Bazin, A. (1967) *What is Cinema?* Vol. 1. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Beevor, A. (2006) [1982] *The Battle for Spain.* London: Penguin Books.

Bell, D. (2006) 'Creative film and media practice as research: In pursuit of that obscure object of knowledge', in *Journal of Media Practice* Vol. 7. No. 2. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 85-100.

Benjamin, W. (1973) [1955] *Illuminations*. London: Fontana.

_____. (1979) [1932] *One Way Street and other Writings.* London: New Left Books.

Biemann, U. (2000) *Been there and back to nowhere: gender in transnational spaces/Geschlecht in transnationalen Orten*. Berlin: b_books.

Blanchard, S. & Harvey S. (1983) 'Post-war Independent Cinema – Structure and Organisation', in Curran, J. & Porter, V. (eds.) *British Cinema History.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, pp. 226-241.

Böll, H. (1961) [1959] *Billiards at Half Past Nine/Billard um Halb Zehn*. London: Calder & Boyers.

_____. (1974) [1963] *The Clown/Ansichten eines Clown.* London: Calder & Boyers.

Bordwell, D. & Thompson, K. (1993) *Film Art: An Introduction*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin.

Brah, A. (2000) 'Diaspora, Border and Transnational identities', in Biemann, U. (ed.) *Been there and back to nowhere: gender in transnational spaces/Geschlecht in transnationalen Orten*. Berlin: b_books.

Bruss, E. W. (1980) 'Eye for I: Making and Unmaking Autobiography in Film', in Olney, J. (ed.) *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 296-320.

Bruzzi, S. (2000) *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Burch, N. (1976) 'Avant-Garde or Vanguard', in *Afterimage.* No. 6. London: Afterimage Publishing, pp. 52-63.

Butler, J. (2005) *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.

_____. (2010) *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* London: Verso.

Byrne, E. (2009) *Homi K. Bhabha.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Carrier, P. (2000) 'Places, Politics and the Archiving of Contemporary Memory in Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de Mémoire'*, in Radstone, S. (ed.) *Memory and Methodology.* Oxford: Berg, pp. 37-57.

Carter, E., Donald, J. & Squires, J. (1993) *Space and place: theories of identity and location.* London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Caughie, J. (2000) *Television Drama: Realism, Modernism, and British Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chanan, M. (1976) *Labour Power in the British Film Industry*. London: British Film Institute.

_____. (1999) 'So That You Can Live (For Shirley)', in Dickenson, M., (ed*.) Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain 1945-90.* London: BFI Publishing, pp. 171-173.

Child, A. (2005) *This is Called Moving: A Critical Poetics of Film.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

Clayton, S. & Curling J. (1979) 'Authorship: On Authorship' in *Screen* Vol. 20 . No. 1., pp. 35-61.

Cortázar, J. (1998) [1963] *Hopscotch.* London: The Harvill Press.

Cowie, E. (1999) 'The Spectacle of Actuality', in Gaines, J. & Renov, M. (eds.) *Collecting Visible Evidence.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp.19-45.

_____. (2011) 'Documentary, Space, Place and Landscape', in *Media Fields Journal.* [Online] Available from: http://www.mediafieldsjournal.org/documentary-space-place-and-la/#_edn7 [Accessed: 2 September 2011]

Croombs, M. (2010) 'Algeria Deferred: The Logic of Trauma in Muriel and Caché', in *Scope.* Issue 16. [Online] Available from: http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk/article.php?issue=16&id=1169 [Accessed: 1 July 2010]

Curling, J. & McLean, F. (1977) 'The Independent Film-makers Association – Annual General Meeting and Conference', in *Screen* Vol. 18. No. 1., pp. 107-118.

D'Lugo, M. (2010) 'Landscape in Spanish Cinema', in Harper, G. & Rayner, J. (eds.) *Cinema and Landscape.* Bristol: Intellect, pp. 117-130.

Daney, S. (1982) *Liberation.* France. [Online] Available from: www.cinephil.co.il/_Uploads/314Gitai_Filmography.doc [Accessed: 17 February 2011]

Danforth, L. M. & Boeschoten, R. V. (2012) *Children and the Greek Refugees and the Politics of Memory.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Daniels, J., McLaughlin, C. & Pearce, G. (eds.) (2013) *Truth, Dare or Promise: Art and Documentary Revisited.* Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Daniels, J. (2006) 'Cinema Action', in Aitken, I. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film'.* Vol. 1. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 219-220.

Deighton, L. (1963). *The Ipcress File.* London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Delmar, R. (1975) 'The Miners Film', in *Monthly Film Bulletin,* p. 142.

Deren, M. (1946) *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film.* New York: Alicat Bookshop Press.

Diawara, M. (2003) 'The "I" Narrator in Black Diaspora Documentary', in Shohat, E. & Stam, R. (eds.) *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media.* Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, pp. 193-202.

Diaz, M. (1973) '13 Dias de combate: Belchite 1937', in *Historia y Vida.* Año VI. Numero 62. Mayo. Barcelona-Madrid.

Dickinson, M. (ed.) (1999) *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90.* London: BFI.

Dissanayake, W. (2010) 'Landscapes of Meaning in Cinema: Two Indian Examples', in Harper, G. & Rayner, J. (eds.) *Cinema and Landscape.* Bristol: Intellect, pp. 189-202.

Dowmunt. T. (2009) *A Whited Sepulchre: Autobiography and Video Diaries in 'Post-Documentary' Culture.* PhD thesis. Goldsmiths University of London.

Dupin, C. (2012) 'Free Cinema' in *Screenonline.* [Online] Available from: http:www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/444789 [Accessed: 7 April 2013]

Duras, M. (1987) *Duras by Duras.* San Francisco: City Lights.

Dwoskin, S. (1975) *Film Is…* London: Peter Owen.

Ehle, J. (1988) [1925] *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation.* New York: Doubleday.

Ellis, J. (1976) 'Production Board Policies', in *Screen* Vol. 17. No. 4., pp. 9-23 [Online] Available from: http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/content/17/4.toc [Accessed: 5 July 2014]

Enwezor, O. (2010) 'Documentary's Discursive Spaces', in *Berlin Documentary Forum 1.* Berlin: Haus de Kulteren der Welt.

Farassino, A. (1993) 'Gitai: The Nomadic Image', in Willemen, P. (ed.) *The Films of Amos Gitai: a montage.* London: British Film Institute, pp. 16-18.

Finney, A. (2010) *The International Film Business: A Market Guide Beyond Hollywood.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Frazer, R. (1986) *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil* War. London: Penguin Books.

Gaines, J. M & Renov, M. (eds.) (1999) *Collecting Visible Evidence.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gauntlett, D. (2010) *Making is Connecting: The social meaning of creativity, from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0.* London: Polity Press.

Gordon, A. F. (1997) G*hostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gready, P. (2003) *Political Transition: Politics and Cultures.* London: Pluto Press.

Greene, N. (2001) '*Empire as Myth and Memory', in Landy, M. (ed.) *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media.* London: The Athlone Press, pp. 235-248.

Guarini, C. (2003) *Film as Social Memory.* [Online] Available from: NAFA Network: presentations.uib.no:
7778/pls/portal/url/ITEM/E512733D8495A73CE030B1810D1A36FB [Accessed: 3 January 2013]

Guerin. F. & Hallas R. (eds.) (2007) *the image and the witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*. London: Wallflower Press.

Guzmán, P. (2012) 'Chile Through a Telescope'. Interview by Sukhedev Sandhu for *The Guardian.* London.

Hall, S. (1997) *Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.* London: Sage.

Harper, G. & Rayner, J. (2010) 'Introduction – Cinema and Landscape', in Harper, G. & Rayner, J. (eds.) *Cinema and Landscape.* Bristol: Intellect, pp. 13-28.

Haslam, C. (2007) 'Band of Brothers', in *The Sunday Times.* [Online] Available from: http://irelandscw.com/part-CochraneEtc.htm [Accessed: 17 July 2013]

Hedditch, E. 'Song of the Shirt, The (1979)' in *Screenonline* (n.d.). Available at: http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/496441/ [Accessed: 5 July 2014]

Hinchman, L. P. & Hinchman, S. K. (eds.) (1997) *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences.* Albany: State University of New York.

Hirsch, J. (2004) *: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

_____. (2004) 'Post-traumatic Cinema and the Holocaust Documentary', in Kaplan E. A. & Wang, B. (eds.) *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

_____. (2014) '*Night and Fog* and Posttraumatic Cinema', in Pollock, G., Silverman, M. (eds.) *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais Night and Fog 1955*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 183-198.

Hirsch, M. & Spitzer, L. (2006) '"There Never Was a Camp Here": Searching for Vapniarka', in Kuhn, A. & Emiko McAllister, K. (eds.) *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts.* Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 135-154.

Hobson, D. (2008) *Channel4: The Early Years and the Jeremy Isaacs Legacy*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.

Hoppe, E. & Sanders, J. (2007) *The Belgrade Manifesto.* [Online] Available from: http://belgrademanifesto.com/ [Accessed: 9 May 2013]

Huigen, P. P. P. & Meijering, L. (2005) 'Making Places: A Story of De Venen', in Ashworth, G.J. & Graham, B. (eds.) *Senses of Place*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 19-30.

Independent Film-makers Association (1976) *Independent Film-Making in the 70s: An introduction discussion paper from the Organising Committee of the IFA.* London.

Izquierdo, A. (1976) *Belchite: a Sangre y Fuego.* Barcelona: Ediciones Acervo.

Johnston, C. & Willemen P. (1974) 'Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons', in *Screen* Vol. 15. No. 3., pp. 120-134.

_____. (1975/1976) 'Brecht in Britain: The Independent Political Film (On The Nightcleaners)', in *Screen* Vol. 16., pp. 101-118.

Johnston, C. (1973) *Notes on Women's Cinema.* London: Society for Education in Film and Television, pp.24-31.

_____. (1980) '"Independence" and the Thirties: Ideologies in History: An Introduction', in Macpherson, D. (ed.) *Traditions of Independence: British Cinema in the Thirties.* London: BFI Publishing, pp. 9-23.

Juhasz, A. (1999) 'They Said We Were Trying to Show Reality-All I want to Show is My Video: the Politics of the Realist Feminist Documentary', in Gaines, J. & Renov, M. (eds.) *Collecting Visible Evidence.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 190-215.

Kahana, J. (2008) *Intelligence Work: The Politics of American Documentary*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Karlin, M., Johnston, C., Nash, M., & Willemen, P. (1980) 'Problems of Independent Cinema', in *Screen* Vol. 21. No. 4., pp. 19-45.

Kear, J. (2007) 'A Game That Must be Lost: Chris Marker Replays Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour'* in Guerin, F. and Hallas, R. (eds.) *the image and the witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture.* London: Wallflower Press, pp. 129-142.

Kelly, M. (1999) [1974] 'Penthesilea' in Dickinson, M. (ed.) *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90.* London: BFI, pp. 146-148.

Kennedy, A. & Wiblin I. 'Interview with Anthea Kennedy and Ian Wiblin'. Interview by Antonio Pasolini for *Kamera.co.uk. Film Salon.* [Online] Available from: http://www.kamera.co.uk.php/898 [Accessed: 9 March 2013]

Kilbourn, R. J. A. (2010) *Cinema, Memory, Modernity: The Representation of Memory from the Art Film to Transnational Cinema.* New York: Routledge.

Klee, P. (2012) [1905] *Paul Klee.* New York: Parkstone Press International.

Klein, I. (1993) 'An Architectonics of Responsibility', in Willemen, P. (ed.) *The Films of Amos Gitai: a montage.* London: British Film Institute, pp. 24-36.

Knight, J. & Thomas, P. (2011) *Reaching Audiences: Distribution and Promotion of Alternative Moving Image.* Bristol: Intellect.

Koonz, C. (1994) 'Concentration Camps in German Memory', in Gillis, J. R. (ed.) *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 258-280.

Kuhn, A. (2000) 'A Journey Through Memory', in Radstone, S. (ed.) *Memory and Methodology.* Oxford: Berg, pp. 179-196

_____. (2002) *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory & Imagination.* London: Verso.

_____. (2010) 'Memory texts and memory work: performances of memory in and with visual media', in *Memory Studies,* Vol. 3. No. 4., pp. 298-313.

_____. (2013) [1985] 'Real Women' in Rosenfelt, D. & Newton, J. (eds.) *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class and Race in Literature and Culture*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.268–286.

Kulbaga, T. A. (2006) *Trans/national Subjects: Genre, Gender, and Geopolitics in Contemporary American Autobiography.* [Online] Available from: http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Kulbaga%20Theresa%20A.pdf?osu1150386546 [Accessed: 21 September 2010]

Kuleshov, L. (1974) *Kuleshov on Film: Writings of Lev Kuleshov.* Levaco, R. (ed.) Berkeley: University of California Press.

Landy, M. (2001). *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media*. London: The Athlone Press.

Lane, J. (2002). *Autobiographical Documentary in America*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Lebow, A. (2008) *First Person Jewish.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

_____. (ed.) (2012) *The Cinema of Me: The Self and Subjectivity in First Person Documentary.* London: Wallflower Press.

Leggott, S. (2009) 'Memory, Postmemory, Trauma: The Spanish Civil War in Recent Novels by Women', in *Flinders University Languages Group Online Review*. Vol. 4. Issue 1. [Online] Available from: http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/deptlang/fulgor/back_issues.htm [Accessed: 21 January 2014]

LeGrice, M. (1972) 'Thoughts on Recent "Underground" Film', in *Afterimage.* No. 4. London: Afterimage Publishing, pp. 78-95.

de Leiva, A. (2013) *Musings on Culture* [Online] Available from: http://www.aledeleiva.com/2013/04/the-pedagogical-missions-in-the-second-spanish-republic-a-far-reaching-attempt-at-social-regeneration/ [Accessed: 8 June 2014]

Leval, G. (1975) *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution.* London: Freedom Press.

Lewis, J. H. (1992) *Trauma and Recovery*. London: Harper Collins.

Little, J. A. (2007) *The Power and Potential of Performative Documentary Film.* [Online] Available from: http://scholarworks.montana.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/1741/LittleJ0507.pdf?sequence=1 [Accessed: 1 August 2013]

Lovell, A. (1990) 'That was the Workshops that was', in *Screen* Vol. 31. No. 1., pp. 102-108.

MacDougall, D. (1998) 'Films of Memory', in *Transcultural Cinema.* Taylor, L. (ed.) Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 231-244.

_____. (2006) *The Corporeal Image.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Macpherson, D. (ed.) *Traditions of Independence: British Cinema in the Thirties.* London: BFI Publishing

Marks, L. (2000) *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Marsh, S. (2003) 'Insinuating Spaces: Memories of a Madrid Neighbourhood During the Spanish Transition', in Gready, P. (ed). *Political Transitions: Politics and Cultures.* London: Pluto Press, pp. 198-211.

Martin, R. & Spence, J. (1986) 'Photo Therapy: New Portraits for Old', in *Putting Myself in the Picture: a political, personal and photographic autobiography.* London: Camden Press, pp. 172-193.

Massey, D. (1996) [1994] *Space, Place: Gender* (1996) [1994] Cambridge: Polity Press.

_____. (2005) *For Space.* London: Sage.

_____. (2011) *Landscape/Space/Politics: an essay*. [Online] Available from: http://thefutureoflandscape.wordpress.com/landscapespacepolitics-an-essay/ [Accessed: 26 March 2013]

McIver, G. (2009) 'Sarah Turner/Rosalind Nashashibi', in *Interface.* [Online] Available from: http://www.a-n.co.uk/interface/reviews/single/576320 [Accessed: 6 August 2010]

McLaughlin, C. (2011) ''Not Reconciled', a film by Jill Daniels, High Ground Films (40 mins., 2009)' in *Journal of Media Practice* Vol. 2. No.1. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 95-96.

Merriman, M. & Lerude, W. (1986) *An American Commander in Spain.* Reno: University of Nevada Press.

Mhando, M. (2010) 'The Geography of Cinema – Zimbabwe', in Harper, G., & Rayner, J. (eds.) *Cinema and Landscape.* Bristol: Intellect, pp. 202-218.

Montse, A. & Ricard, B. (2006) *Las Fosas del Silencio: ¿*hay un Holocausto español?/*Silent Graves: was there a Spanish Holocaust?* Barcelona: Delbolsillo.
.
Morrow, F. (1974) *Revolution & Counter-Revolution in Spain.* New York: Pathfinder Press.

Naficy, H. (2001) *An Accented Cinema Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Nelson, R. (2006) 'Practice-as-research and the Problem of Knowledge', in *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts.* Vol. 11., No. 4.

Nichols, B. (1994) *Representing Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

_____. (2010) *Introduction to Documentar*y. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Passerini, L. (2003) 'Memories Between Silence and Oblivion', in Radstone, S. & Hodgkin, K. (eds.) *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory.* London: Routledge, pp. 238-254.

Peleg, H. (2010) 'Documentary Practices Across Disciplines', in *Berlin Documentary Forum 1*. Berlin: Haus de Kulteren der Welt.

Perry, C. (2014) *What Was British Independent Film? Part 3: For and Against Television*. London: Lux. [Online] Available from: http://www.lux.org.uk/blog/what-was-british-independent-film-part-3-and-against-television [Accessed: 23 June 2014]

_____. (2014) *What Was British Independent Film? Part 2: Documentary Taboos*. London: Lux. [Online] Available from: http://www.lux.org.uk/blog/what-was-british-independent-film-part-2-documentary-taboos [Accessed: 5 July 2014]

Pines, J. (1999) [1971] 'Black Films in White Britain', in Dickinson, M. (ed.) *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90.*) London: BFI, pp. 116-118.

Pingree, G. B. (2005) 'Modern Anxiety and Documentary Cinema in Republican Spain', in Larson, S. & Woods, E. (eds.) *Visualizing Spanish Modernity.* Oxford: Berg. pp. 301-309.

Piotrowska, A. (2013) *Psychoanalysis and Ethics in Documentary Film.* [Unpublished Manuscript].

Plantinga, C. '(199) The Scene of Empathy and the Human Face in Film', in Plantinga, C. R. & Smith, G. M. (eds.) *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition and Emotion.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, pp. 239-256.

Portelli, A. (1991) *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Power, N. (2013) 'Work, Politics and Feminism: *Women of the Rhondda* and the London Women's Film Group's *The Amazing Equal Pay Show*', in Bauer, P. & Kidner, D. (eds.) *Working Together: Notes on British Film Collectives in the 1970s.* Southend-on-Sea: Focal Point Gallery, pp. 33-36.

Presence, S. (2013) *Oppositional Documentary in Britain Since 1990.* PhD thesis. The University of the West of England.

Preston, P. (1996) *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War.* London: Fontana Press.

_____. (2012) *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain.* London: Harper Press.

Radical Film Network [Online] Available at: http://www.radicalfilmnetwork.com/about.html [Accessed: 4 July 2014]

Radstone, S. (2000) 'Working with Memory: an Introduction', in Radstone, S. (ed.) *Memory and Methodology*. Oxford: Berg, pp.1-24.

Rees, A. L. (1999) *A History of Experimental Film and Video: From Canonical Avant-Garde to Contemporary British Practice.* London: BFI Publishing.

Renov, M. (2004) *The Subject of Documentary*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rosen, P. (1993) 'Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts', in Renov, M. (ed.) *Theorizing Documentary.* New York: Routledge, pp. 58-89.

Russell, C. (1999) *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Ryan, C. (2011) 'Cinema, Memory, Modernity: The Representations of Memory from the Art Film to Transnational Cinema, Russel J.A. Kilbourn. New York: Routledge, 2010 (313 pages). ISBN: 9780415801188', in *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media 1*. [Online] Available from: http://cora.ucc.ie/bitstream/10468/653/1/ReviewRyan.pdf [Accessed: 28 October 2012]

Sartre, J-P. *Crime Passionnel* (1973) [1949] London: Eyre Methuen.
Saxton, L. (2008) *Haunted images: Film, Ethics, Testimony and the Holocaust.* London: Wallflower Press.

Savage, K. (1994) 'The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument', in Gillis, J. R. (ed.) *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 127-149.

Schenkel, A. (2011) *Historical Recovery in a Spanish Village in The Sky Turns.* [Online] Available from: http://www.villagevoice.com/2011-02-09/film/historical-recovery-in-a-spanish-village-in-the-sky-turns/ [Accessed: 8 February 2012]

Schleser, M. (2013) 'From "Script to Screen" to "sh%t n share"', in Daniels, J., McLaughlin, C. & Pearce, G. (eds.) *Truth, Dare or Promise: Art and Documentary Revisited*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 93-111.

Sebald, W. G. (2001) *Austerlitz.* London: Penguin Group.

_____. (2001) [1990] *Vertigo.* London: Vintage.

Sitney, P. A, Bergstrom, J., Penley, C. (1979) 'Letters from the Film Work Group, P Adams Sitney, Janet Bergstrom and Constance Penley', in *Screen* Vol. 20. No. 3-4., pp. 149-156.

Sobchack, V. (1999) 'Toward a Phenomenology of Nonfiction Film Experience', in Gaines, J. & Renov, M. (eds.) *Collecting Visible Evidence.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 241-254.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain (1936) *Can the Means Test be Abolished*? [Online] Available at: http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/socialist-standard/1930s/1936/no-377-january-1936/can-means-test-be-abolished [Accessed: 24 June 2014]

Staiger, J. (1996) 'Cinematic Shots: the Narration of Violence', in Sobchack, V. (ed.) *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television and the Modern Event.* New York: Routledge, pp. 39-54.

Steedman, S. (1989) [1986] *Landscape For a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives.* London: Virago.

Street, S. (2009) [1997] *British National Cinema*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Sutton, D. (2009) *Photography Cinema Memory.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Toulmin, V., Popple, S. & Russell, P. (2004) *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on film.* London: BFI.

Townsend, P. (2013) 'Cultural Experience and Creativity: An Introduction', in Kuhn, A. (ed.) *Little Madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena and Cultural Experience.* London: I.B. Taurus, pp. 151-158.

_____. (2013) 'Making Space', in Kuhn, A. (ed.) *Little Madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena and Cultural Experience.* London. I.B. Taurus, pp, 173-186.

Tremlett, G. (2010) *A Brief History of Eta.* [Online] Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/05/eta-history-in-dates. [Accessed: 14 December 2013]

_____. (2011) *Eta declares halt to armed conflict.* [Online] Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/20/eta-spain [Accessed: 14 December 2013]

Trevelyn, H. (1999) Interviewed by Margaret Dickinson for Dickinson, M. (ed.) *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90.* London: BFI, p. 53.

_____. (2013) 'Humphrey Trevelyn in conversation with Petra Bauer and Dan Kidner'. Interviewed by Petra Bayer and Dan Kidner for *Working Together: Notes on British Film Collectives in the 1970s.* Southend-on-Sea: Focal Point Gallery, pp. 47-56.

Turim, M (1989) *Flashbacks in Film: Memory & History.* New York: Routledge.

Turner, S. (2010), 'The tracks of time: Sarah Turner's "Perestroika"'. Interview by Sophie Mayer for *Sight and Sound* [Online] Available from: http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/interviews/sarah-turner-perestroika [Accessed: 11 August 2013]

Vincent, D. (1981) *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography.* London: Europa Publications.

Walker, J. (2003) *Trauma Cinema.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Walsh, M. (1981) *The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema.* Griffiths, K. M. (ed.) London: BFI Publishing, pp.10-11 & 71.

Waterson, R. (2007) 'Trajectories of Memory: Documentary Film and the Transmission of Testimony', in *History & Anthropology.* Vol. 18. No. 1. New York: Routledge. p. 53.

Webster, J. (2006) *!Guerra!* London: Black Swan.

Whitaker, S. (1981) 'Traditions of Independence', in *Screen.* Vol. 22., No. 2. Pp. 87-93.

White, H. (2007) 'The Modernist Event', in Sobchack, V. (ed.) *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television and the Modern Event.* New York: Routledge, pp. 17-38.

Willemen, P. (1980) 'Presentation', in Macpherson, D. (ed.) *Traditions of Independence: British Cinema in the Thirties.* London: BFI Publishing, pp.1-4.

_____. (ed.) (1994) 'Bangkok-Bahrain-Berlin-Jerusalem: Amos Gitai's Editing', in *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory*. London: BFI, pp. 162-174.

_____. *Willemen on Framework* [Online] Available at: http://www.frameworkonline.com/frameworkhistory.html [Accessed: 4 July 2014]

Williams, C. (ed.) (1980) *Realism and the Cinema* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Winston, B. (1995) *Claiming the Real: The Griersonian Documentary and its Legitimations.* London: BFI.

Wollen, P. (1975) 'The Two Avant Gardes', in *Studio International* vol.190, No. 978., pp. 171-175.

_____. & Clarke, J. (1977) 'Letter (on behalf of the IFA)', in *Screen* Vol. 18. No. 1., pp. 119.

Filmography

(Film title, date, director, production company and/or distributor; country of production)

The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes (1971) Stan Brakhage. USA.

Aita/Father (2010) José María de Orbe. Eddie Saeta S.A. Spain.

The Alcohol Years (2000) Carol Morley. C. Cannon & Morley Productions. UK.

The Amazing Equal Pay Show (1974) London Women's Film Group. Britain. BFI.

Amensuensis (1973) Lis Rhodes. UK.

Battle of Orgreave (2001) Mike Figgis. C4. UK.

Bernadette (2008) Duncan Campbell. UK.

The Body Beautiful (1990) Ngosi Onwurah. BFI. UK.

Bread Day/Chlebbny den (1998) Sergei Dvortsevoy. Watchmaker Films. Russia.

The Canterbury Tour 1920. (date not known) Director not known. Screen Archive South East. UK. [Online] Available from: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/focuson/film/film-archive/player.asp?catID=2&subCatID=1&filmID=3 [Accessed: 16 July 2013]

Chile, Obstinate Memory/Chile, Memoria Obstinada (1997) Patricio Guzman. Les Films d'Ici. Icarus Films. Chile.

A Complete History of My Sexual Failures (2008) Chris Waitt. UK.

Debacle (1976) Jill Daniels. Lux. UK.

Description (1975) Jill Daniels. Lux. UK.

Divorce Iranian Style (1998) Kim Longinotto. Twentieth Century Vixen. UK.

Dreams of a Life (2011) Carol Morley. C. Cannon & Morley Productions. UK.

Dresden Dynamo (1971/2) Lis Rhodes. UK.

Duplicity (1978) Stan Brakhage. USA.

Edwardian Folkestone at Work 1904 (Date unknown). Anon. Screen Archive South East. UK. [Online] Available from: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/focuson/film/film-archive/player.asp?catID=2&subCatID=1&filmID=1 [Accessed: 16 July 2013]

An Epic Poem (1982) Lezli-An Barrett. Eastern Arts Association. UK.

Exiles (1991) Jill Daniels. High Ground Films. Cinenova. UK.

Fate (1976) Vera Neubauer. UK

*Fighting the Bill (*1970*)* Cinema Action. UK.

Fool's Gold (2002) Jill Daniels. High Ground Films & National Film Network. UK.

For Memory (1982) Marc Karlin. BBC Television & BFI. UK.

Fortunate Son (2011) Tony Asimakopoulos. Canada.

Grey Gardens (1975) Ellen Hovde, Albert Maysles, David Maysles & Muffie Meyer. Criterion Collection. US.

Grizzly Man (2005) Werner Herzog. Discovery Channel. US.

Handsworth Songs (1986) Black Audio Film Collective. UK.

Hiroshima Mon Amour (1959) Alain Resnais. Argos Films. France.

History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige (1991) Rea Tajiri. Akiko Productions & Women Make Movies. USA.

House (1980) Amos Gitai. Israel.

I'm In Heaven (1989) Jill Daniels. Cinenova. UK.

India Song (1975) Marguerite Duras. Les Films Armorial. France.

Industrial Britain (1980) Roger Buck. Trade Films. UK.

Je t'aime, je t'aime (1968). Alain Resnais. Les Productions Fox Europa & Parc Film. France.

Je, tu, il, elle (1968) Chantal Akerman. Paradise Films. Belgium.

Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce,1080, Bruxelles (1975) Chantal Akerman. Paradise Films & Criterion Collection. Belgium/France.

Justine by the Marquis de Sade (1976) Stewart McKinnon. Film Work Group & BFI. U.K.

Katalin Varga (2009) Peter Strickland. Libra Film. Hungary.

Land Without Bread/Las Hurdes: Tierra Sin Pan (1932) Luis Buñuel. Spain.

Launch (1973) Amber Films. UK.

Light Reading (1978) Lis Rhodes. UK.

Lost, Lost, Lost (1976) Jonas Mekas. J. Revoir. USA/France.

Lumumba: the Death of a Prophet/Lumumba: La mort du prophète (1990) Raoul Peck. Velvet Film. France.

Man With a Movie Camera/Cheloveks kinoapparatom (1929) Dziga Vertov. USSR.

Maniac Shadows (2013) Chantal Akerman. USA.

March Against Starvation (1936) Workers Film & Photo League. Great Britain.

March to Aldermaston (1959) Director unknown. Film & TV Committee for Nuclear Disarmament. UK.

Miss/Mrs (1972) London Women's Film Group. UK.

Muriel (1962) Alain Renais. Alpha. France.

My Private Life (2014) Jill Daniels. UK.

Nanook of the North (1922) Robert Flaherty. The Criterion Collection USA.

Next Year in Lerin (2010) [2000] Jill Daniels. High Ground Films. Sodium Productions. UK. [Online] Available at https://vimeo.com/95109420 [Accessed: 30 May 2014]

Night and Fog/Nuit et Brouillard (1955) Alain Resnais. Criterion Collection. UK.

Nightcleaners (1975) Berwick Street Film Collective. UK.

Noodle Spinner (1974) Anna Ambrose. Royal College of Art. UK.

Nostalgia for the Light/Nostalgia por la Luz (2010) Patricio Guzmán. Atacama Production. Icarus Films. Chile/France/Germany/Spain.

Not Reconciled/Nicht Versöhnt (1965) Jean-Marie Straub & Danièle Huillet. Switzerland/Germany.

On The Border (2012) Lizzie Thynne. UK.

Open Door: Starting to Happen (1974) Liberation Films/BBC. UK.

L'Opéra-Mouffe (1958) Agnes Varda. Ciné Tamaris. France.

Outskirts/ Okraina (1933) Boris Barnet. Mezhrabpomfilm. USSR.

Pendlebury Colliery (c. 1900) Mitchell & Kenyon. BFI. UK.

Penthesilea (1974) Laura Mulvey & Peter Wollen. UK.

Perestroika (2009) Sarah Turner. University of Kent. UK.

Performing the Border (1999) Ursula Biemann. Switzerland/Mexico.

Pip and Bessie (1973-5) Vera Neubauer. UK.

Repulsion (1965) Roman Polanski. Compton Films. UK.

Riddles of the Sphinx (1977) Laura Mulvey & Peter Wollen. BFI. UK

Rooms and Figures (1975) Jill Daniels. Royal College of Art. UK.

Rustic Chivalry/Nobleza Baturra (1925) Joaquín Dicenta. Compañia Industrial Film Español S.A. (CIFESA). Spain.

Seacoal (1985) Amber Films. UK.
http://www.amber-online.com/archives/seacoal [Accessed: 22 June 2014]

Shoah (1985) Claude Lanzmann. Historia/Les Films Aleph/Ministère de la Culture de la Republique Française. France.

Sincerity (1980) Stan Brakhage. USA.

Skin Deep (1996) Jill Daniels. Prometheus Productions. UK.

The Sky Turns/El Cielo Gira (2004) Mercedes Alvarez. Alokatu S.L. Spain.

Small Town Girl (2007) Jill Daniels. High Ground Films. UK. [Online] Available at: https://vimeo.com/92532574 [Accessed: 30 May 2014]

So That You Can Live (1982) Cinema Action. BFI. UK.

Soft Skin/La Peau Douce (1964) François Truffaut. Les Films du Carrosse, SEDIF, Simar Films & Producões Cunha Telles. France/Portugal.

Song of the Shirt (1979) Sue Clayton & Jonathan Curling. Greater London Arts Association, Arts Council of Great Britain & British Film Institute. UK.

Spaces of War/Espacios de la Guerra (2007) Jaime Cinco. Spain. [Online] Available from:
http://www.documentalesetnograficos.es/documentales/historia/espacios_de_la_guerra__belchite.php [Accessed: 30 March 2013]

Tarnation (2003) Jonathan Caouette. BBC Storyville. UK.

Telling Tales (1978) Richard Woolley. Yorkshire Arts Association. UK.

Three Monkeys/ Üç Maymun (2008) Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Zeyno Film. Turkey.

Thriller (1979) Sally Potter. Arts Council of Great Britain. UK.

Titicut Follies (1967) Frederick Wiseman. USA.

*Tokyo Story/ Tōkyō Monogatari (*1953) Yasujirô Ozu. BFI. Japan.

Tongues Untied (1989) Marlon Riggs. Frameline. USA.

Various (undated) Mitchell & Kenyon. UK.

Wavelength (1967) Michael Snow. Canada.

We Need to Talk About Dad (2011) Elizabeth Stopford. Rare Day. UK.

Who Needs Nurseries? We Do! (1978) Leeds Animation Workshop. UK

[184]

Whose Choice? (1976) London Women's Film Group. UK

Window Water Baby Moving (1962) Stan Brakhage. USA.

Woman Sitting After A Killing (2001) Chantal Akerman. USA.

Women of the Rhondda (1972) London Women's Film Group. UK.

The Woolworths Choir of 1979 (2012) Elizabeth Price. UK.

Workers Leaving the Factory/La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon (1895) Louis Lumière. France.

The Year of the Bodyguard (1982) Noel Burch. Arbor International Films & Television. UK/Germany.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The Practice.

1. *Not Reconciled* (2009) (41 minutes) [DVD & Online] An experimental documentary film located in Spain.

2. *The Border Crossing* (2011) (47 minutes) [DVD & Online] An experimental autobiographical documentary film located in the Basque region.

These films are both available with the exegesis on ROAR, the University of East London repository, at http://hdl.handle.net/10552/3905.

Appendix 2.
DVD Cover of *Not Reconciled*
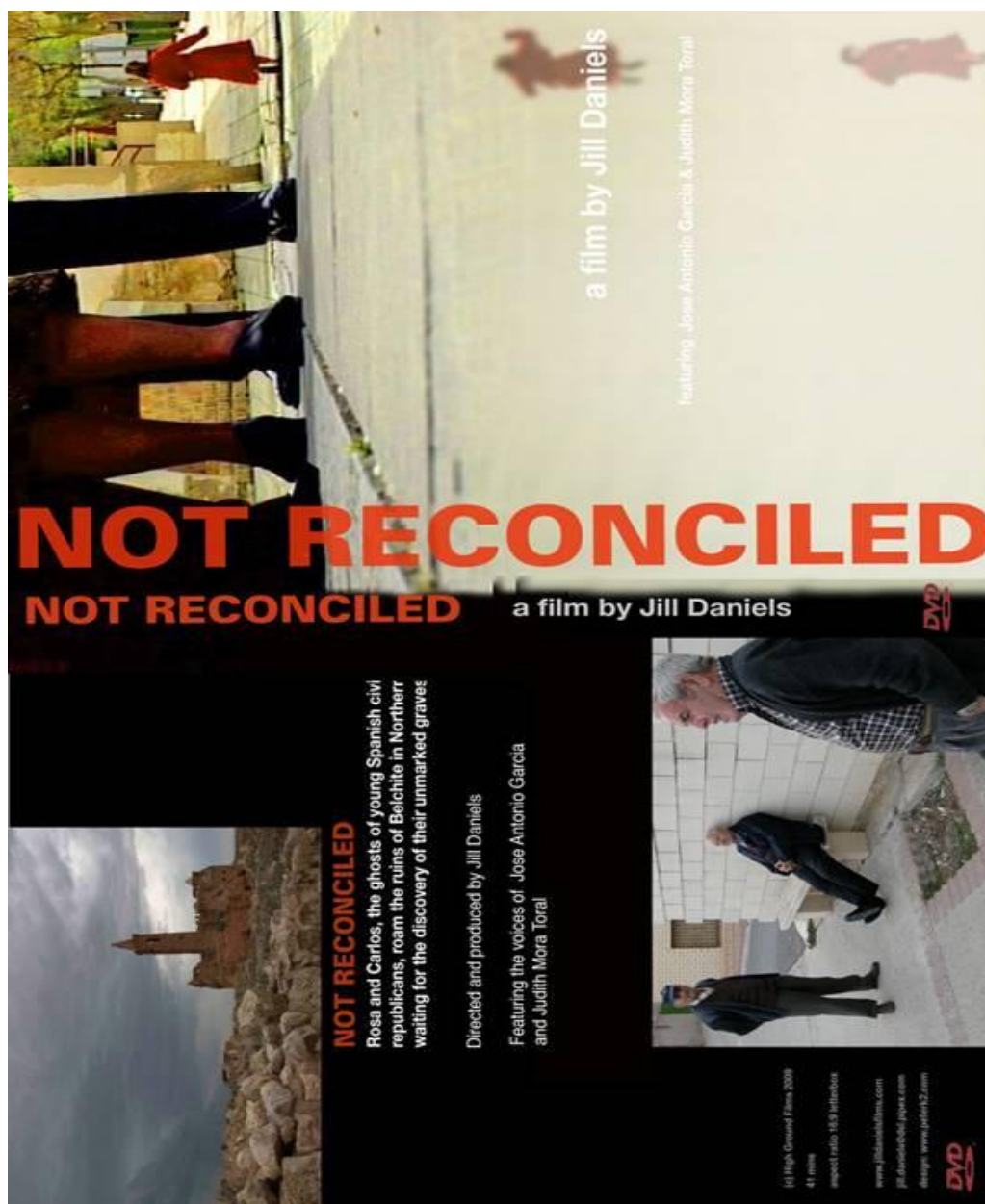
Appendix 3.
DVD cover of *The Border Crossing*
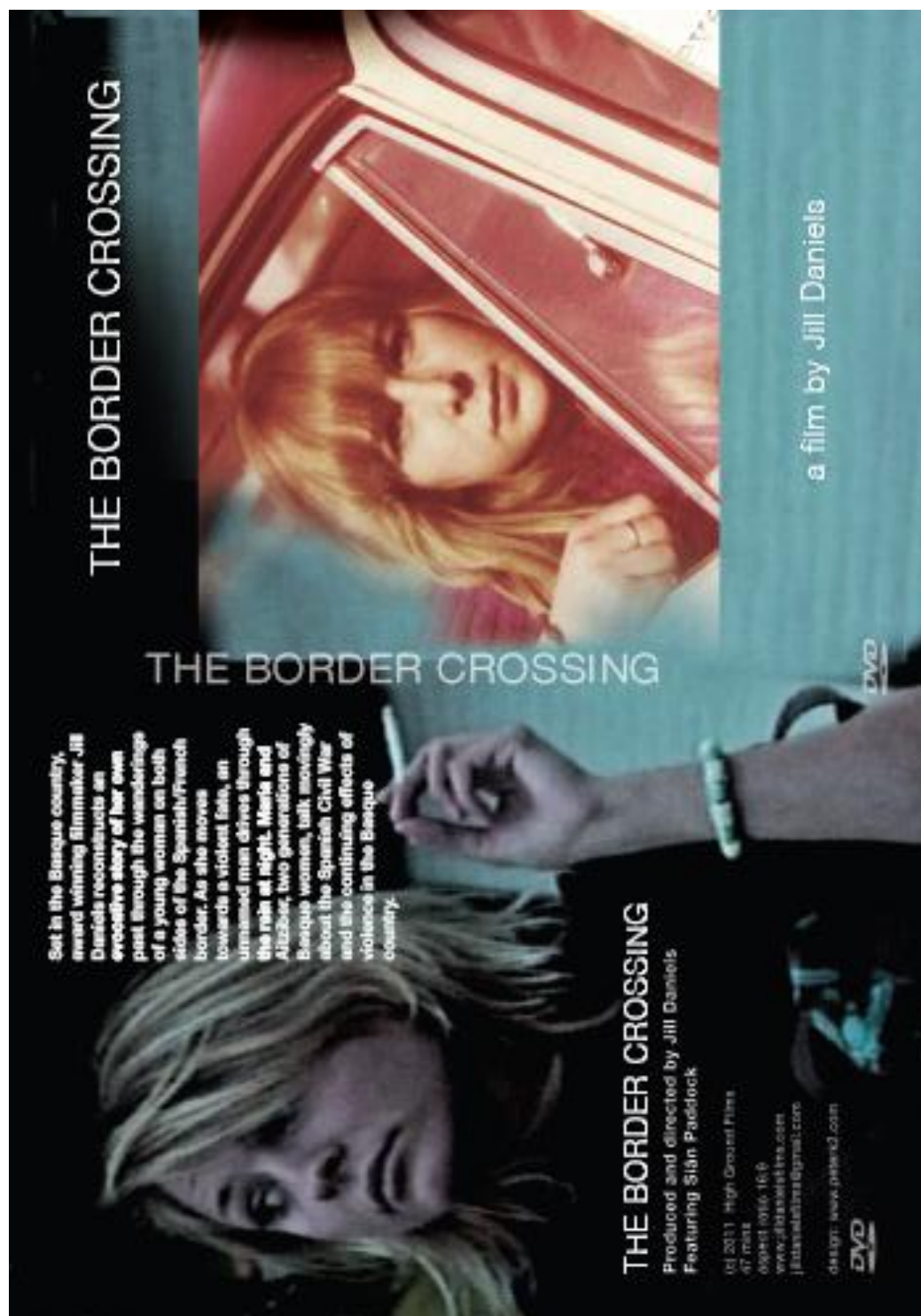
Appendix 4.

Not Reconciled: **shooting script; editing script, 2009, (original format).**

<u>**Shooting script**</u>

People to look for:
Pilar Paris Minga
Eloisa Salvena – daughter of the republican mayor. The wife of the republican pilot.
Conxa Pereixa – a republican
Manuel Diestre
Josefina Cubel
Aurelio Salavera talks about how they shot 370 villagers one day
Including his father, 11 uncles and aunts, 3 pregnant women, the village idiot and Mariano Castillo the socialist mayor. Find his descendants?
Julio Diaz had a father who served 18 years in the Russian camp building the new Belchite. He knows about the bars, who drinks in which bar.
Valeriano Gascon-Garcia 94 years old.
Domingo Serrano Cubel born in old belchite after the war.
The Mayor – Mountain Domingo Cubel

Ruined Belchite - shots

Underground shots at night, light moving, shadows. Tripod and hand held;
General night shots of ruins.
Shot from car front and back moving from new town along road till the ruins appear.
Shots of remains of writing and tiles in the earth, anything that looks like the remains of humans.
Balconies
Doors
The well
The locked up place
Slow shutter shots of people moving through the ruins – on a tripod
Danger signs

New Belchite - shots

More shots in the old bar. Try to get different times, with different people, particularly old guys playing cards.
Guy opening up the bar. Or closing but that might be very late!
Olive oil cooperative.
Anyone working.
Find if there's a school. Film children going in and out.
Film the ethnographic museum (it used to be a model school under Franco).
Hospital.
Doctor's surgery.
Inside the library.
Bus coming and going. Leave Belchite to go to Zaragoza at 3 and 3.15 on Saturdays. 2.30 and 8.15 on Sundays. Weekdays leave Zaragoza at 8.45; Saturdays 8.15; Sundays 8/8.30 (not sure how long the journey is)
Prison or nearest police station. Albasa autobuses 976 229 886
The town at night.

The garage. Film them working on the cars.
Any social occasion.
Where was the prison camp? Everyone but Jaime says it's the Casas Rusas. Why doesn't he agree?
The swimming pool.
Everyday life what we can.
Social life in the square.
Film from the top of the church.
30th March fiesta Virgen del Pueyo.
Look for the factory Cableados Integrados 670 people work there, 45% of the population. See if we can film in it.
Film as many old people as possible.

General

Agriculture. Find the guy with the sheep. Film him working and maybe home life.
In the town hall see if they have a census of births and deaths of villagers. If they don't where will that be so I can make the list?

Interviews

People about the past and present.
What kind of people supported the nationalists. Rich, poor or wasn't it like that?
Guy who owns the bar about which is a left bar, which is a right bar.
Where was the prison camp. What is it like living with the past? Do people want to forget the past? Raze the ruins? Why? Did their grandparents fight in the war? How many people were in the camp and what nationalities were they? Did anyone try to speak to them. Did the people watch when they were working? Was there an order in the camp? A pecking order. Where were people buried when they died? Water. Was it true that the water was the reason they wouldn't rebuild the town. Who owned the land before and who owns it now?

Sounds (some from there, some from audio)
Wheels – carts – water flowing – agricultural sounds – not mechanised – horses – sound of ploughing – digging -Possible music – Ay Carmela; the singing in the Figaro – the maid?
Sound of clicking on computer…..
Some war sounds – not too obvious
A broom on the steps – sweeping sound – do it at the hotel
Watering the garden
Rocks knocking together –
Earth dropping down
Masonry falling
Squeaking door, door blowing open and closed.

Not Reconciled: editing script/plan
(original format; dialogue translated from Spanish;
titles and credits in English in the original)

Title: Ghosts are the victims of history, whose stories, those of the losers, have been excluded from the dominant narratives of the victors. **Jo Labanyi**

Main credit

Angel statue.

>   CARLOS
>   This is the story and it tells something about a few
>   people; some young; some old. And it tells something
>   of death and violence. As usual.
>
>   My name is Carlos; her name is Rosa.
>   When we meet it'll be after one; then the other dies.

General shots of ruins. Underground shot – sky.

>   CARLOS
>   Let's imagine the treasure we're hunting is there for the taking.
>   It's somewhere close by, but too far to be seen.
>
>   ROSA (calling faintly at first as though
>   waking up)
>   Here I am.

Pile of earth.

>   I'm buried under a pile of earth somewhere, maybe
>   this one. If you look out of the corner of your eye you might
>   see me. I'm always here under the ground.
>
>   ROSA
>   It's strange to hear my voice. But they say nobody likes
>   the sound of their own voice.
>
>   CARLOS (a bit cross to have been
>   Interrupted)
>   Even stranger given how long we've been here.
>
>   ROSA (a little defensive)
>   Of course.

A pause.

>   CARLOS
>   Am I an actor outside the character playing a ghost? Or
>   am I a ghost playing the actor who is playing a character?
>
>   ROSA
>   Death's addled your brain.

[192]

Ruins. Horse. Dead animal. Pilar in the ruins beckoning. The memorial to the fascist army.

Title: Rosa talks about the past.

Old church shots in the ruins.

> ROSA
> Here's the story of the town.
>
> The town was very old, enclosed by high strong walls to resist invaders.
> Around the walls ran the irrigation channels giving
> water to the town and the crops.
>
> You could hear the sound of Ladino, Arabic and Spanish, whose voices rose
> and fell as the town grew.
>
> First they threw out the Jews and the moors. They turned the mosque into a
> church.
> Anyone who was anyone built a church. Everywhere you looked there was
> another church.
>
> They argued over the water and those damned churches.

Windmills. Landscape and tractor. Olive trees. Derelict pipes, dry earth.

> ROSA (when she mentions the war
>   she gets a bit teary!)
> In a good year it rained. And water ran in the
> Irrigation channels.
>
> There were rules for when the water could be used. There
> was a price for its use, fines if the rules were broken.
>
> When there was a drought there would be no water and
> no harvest and people died.

Carlos yawns loudly but Rosa continues, speeding up a bit as she hears Carlos grunting to stop him interrupting.

> The channels were destroyed in the war when they
> nearly died of thirst and hunger, if they weren't killed by
> the bombs or the guns or the falling walls, in that
> burning summer when the fighting started, really started.
>
> It seemed like it would never stop and the town was
> ruined.

Children play with water. Sound of water slopping against a wall.

Title: Carlos wants to talk about the war.

Fire. Smoke; photo of figure.

[193]

CARLOS
            Let's talk about the Civil War; the fucking bastards on all sides;
            Their side and our side; and Russians who were on their own
            treacherous side; and the ruins; the vain attempt of the
            Mayoress to silence the ruins.

People in black on steps. A cyclist in a yellow shirt rides through the frame.

                              ROSA (sighs then perks up as she talks)
            OK. Then, the war.

            When it began, you have no idea how liberated I felt, drilling
            secretly In the fields with the others.

            Feeling like I was in a real army.

             Even my mother didn't know.

            No one's eyes on me, walking alone to the fields,
            feeling the sun on my bare arms.

             It was the best time of my very short life.

Little girl in red.

Cross. Old woman sits down. Horses.

                              ROSA
            The fascists occupied our town almost straight away.
            We couldn't take it back until the Americans came
            and the Republican army.

            Our lot came from the villages nearby to fight. They fought
            for a while then went home for lunch.

            That was how they thought a war was fought.

Rosa giggles.

Old man working in his garden. He and his wife say how long they've been married
and how old they are and where they were in the war. Old people posing for the
camera, smiling, saying how old they are, leaving.

Church and girl walking in.

Title: Rosa takes over the story.

                              ROSA
            We were drilling in the fields practising firing when
            more fascists came.

            This time they had the Moors with them.

            They chucked people out of their houses and moved

                              [194]

themselves in all over town.

I had to throw the gun down the well.

They put up notices saying sin is woman's because
she tempts men and we had to cover our arms
and legs.

We lived in the day hoping for salvation.

                    CARLOS
Liberation.

                    ROSA
Excuse me?

                    CARLOS
That's OK.

                    ROSA
They ambushed a bus carrying republican fighters.

They pulled the bodies out, took them in a lorry and
threw them somewhere. Nobody knew where.

The bus was in the square full of holes.

They found the place where we burnt the pictures from
the church.

It made them furious.

People rushed to give them food. Though they took what
 they wanted anyway.

The carpenters were told to make coffins, lots of them.

If you tried to leave you were shot.

                    REBECCA
The fascists warned my father they would come for him,
but he didn't really believe it. He told my mother not
to worry because he hadn't done anything wrong.
He was just a farmer. But they shot 370 people;
my father, 11 uncles and aunts, 3 pregnant women,
the socialist mayor and me.

                    ROSA
Some of the fascists were from the village and
they knew people who had killed their fathers or
their brothers.

They took their revenge by taking them away and
 killing them.

CARLOS
Can I speak now?

                    ROSA
No

Sound of breaking glass.

Wall with anarchist slogan.

                    ROSA
Before the militias came the fascists shot the
'loose' women.

I didn't go in that lot.

They lined them up against the wall in the traditional
manner and shot them.

They called that 'cleansing'.

Smoke. Fire

Tunnel.

                    MARTA
We were in the cellar, for days. The wall
next to us collapsed and you could hear the birds
in the granary. We couldn't get to them to feed them.
There was a shell there, if we moved it, it would explode.
There was no water or food, we had to drink wine.
Finally the birds died.

Men play boules

Title: Rosa is a heroine.

Men playing boules.

                    ROSA
They came from all over the world to be heroes. And
they were heroes. Even if they didn't really understand
 the meaning of it all.

When they realised at the end it was a lost cause and
some wanted to go home they didn't realise they would be
shot.

You too were a heroine, one of the few women.

 You travelled a long way to join.

You got yourself into the thick of it. But you couldn't stand

                    [196]

it for long. You made your escape, accidentally on purpose,
 when you managed somehow to throw the boiling cooking
oil over yourself.

You must have been clumsy.

Or was it the first time you'd done any real work living the
soft life in France. So you were a kind of a heroine. I'm a heroine.

Are you there?
                         CARLOS
Where am I?

Still here!

I dreamed I was lying on a soft bed of grass. I could
feel the wind blowing on my skin. Then my mother
bending over me.

I could smell something like lemon and soap.

Then I was always exhausted. Now I'm a ruin myself.

Old church long shot intercut with balconies and graffiti and fire.

                    THE AMERICAN
I always tried to keep one pair of reserve socks.

If I found a place where there was water then I'd take
off my boots and socks and wash my feet.

I wondered if my cigarettes would last till tomorrow and
 if my laces would hold out;

or when my body split where exactly it would be.

                    ROSA   (annoyed)
Who is this? Oy you, you're interrupting our story.
And no one understands you.

                    CARLOS
He's speaking English.

                    AMERICAN
Sorry.

ROSA sighs.

                    CARLOS
We hid my grandmother in the cellar. Everyone else had run away
or was hiding.

The fascists went into the church. There
were only stray dogs out in the streets and a mad woman.

[197]

She was living in one of the empty houses.

She screamed terribly one night.

You could hear those screams echoing through those dead streets all lit up by the moonlight.

Then all hell broke loose.

                    AMERICAN
The republicans thought if they took the city they
could defeat the fascists in the north.

The fascists occupied the cathedral and built an amazing
defence system. pill boxes, trenches, iron stakes, steel
prongs and machine guns, perfectly placed to cover every
approach.

Then came the bullets. That ssch ssch sound they
make.

                    ROSA
What does he mean ssch, ssch? (laughs) ssch, ssch,
ssch, ssch.

                    FASCIST
23rd August. Tomorrow at noon, with the sun overhead
 we begin the battle for Belchite, for the glory of Spain.

                    CARLOS
The Russian commander gave us orders in Russian, nobody
understood a thing.

                    FASCIST
24th August. They trapped us in the town. We are
completely surrounded without a single shot fired.

From my position I can see a huge cloud of dust, dust
which obscures the sun and the clouds and which in
our ignorance, seems to be inside our minds.

How could we deny that these men are the evidence
of our inferiority? Goodbye to dreams of glory!

                    CARLOS
Now we've got the fascist too. It's really too much all
this crap about glory.

                    ROSA
He doesn't exist. He's just an echo inside your head.

                    CARLOS
I was stuck in a shallow trench. I had to lie there all day with
no food or water.

[198]

They fired as soon as you stuck your head up.
                    ROSA (whispers insinuatingly)
Here comes the little fellow.

                    AMERICAN
Bodies were piled up almost a storey high.

The engineers came and poured on the gas, then we
lit it until they sank down.

                    CARLOS (irritable)
You've changed your tune about the American.
You seem too fond of him.

                    ROSA
     No one asked your opinion.

                    FASCIST
25th August. The enemy are running towards us, in their
jackets they look like devils.

The houses are collapsing as though they're made of paper.

                    AMERICAN
The whole town stank of burning flesh. And you couldn't
get rid of the flies.

God help us.

                    CARLOS
No point in asking him for help, he was born stone
deaf.

                    AMERICAN
Sorry.

                    FASCIST
27th August. There are fires everywhere and dense smoke.

The sound of explosions and grenades are constant.

They are fighting house by house, in gardens, in
rooms.

                    AMERICAN
Of course the grenades couldn't hit the enemy. First
they went too far, then not far enough.

                    FASCIST
3rd September. The enemy have what they want.

                    [199]

At 4 in the morning I went out into the street. The place felt deserted, the silence palpable, the town dead, the living like ghosts.

                    AMERICAN
In my lot I was the only one left. The smell was disgusting.

I'm wearing my gas mask.
                    CARLOS (expressive)
What a sight.

                    AMERICAN
Sorry.

                    AMERICAN
After days of fighting suddenly there was a white flag
 flying from the fascist trenches.

I said, "They're giving up you can stop now."

All the fascists came down the hill coming straight
my way and stood in formation.

The officers looked real fancy in their uniforms.

In the middle of that stink the fascist officers smelt of perfume.

Then we heard shooting. They were executing the officers.

The Spanish shot the lot.

                    ROSA
I'm sick of these interruptions.

                    AMERICAN
Sorry.

                    ROSA
Stop repeating that!

                    AMERICAN
Sorry..(faintly) So sorry…(fades out on) So sorry.

                    CARLOS
Of course they shot the officers.. What do you expect?

The battle was won and we retook the town but the war
was lost.

They all left, the soldiers, the people, everybody.

Later at the end of the war, the fascists retook the town.

The people came back but by then the houses had fallen
down over the bodies.

Old lady leaves the ruins.

                    CARLOS
When the end of the war came, I was down here.

My grandmother was living in the ruins, starving.

She pretended not to see what was happening, not to hear the
 firing squads, not to notice the prisoners, the beatings, the
systematic destruction of their identities.

Looking for me and the others.

Then she died.

It was 26 years before the last one left the ruins.

New town. Empty streets and signs.

                    CARLOS ,
The poor wanted the town rebuilt, the water channels
repaired, but the rich bastards wanted a new town,
 on 'modern' lines like Mussolini.

They lived in the city stuffing their faces, while the poor
lived in the ruins starving to death.

When they built the new town the ones who
supported the fascists got their houses cheap.

It's always like that.

Title: Rosa wants to be seen.

Casas Rusas

                    ANTONIO
They brought me to this concentration camp to build a
new village next to the ruins.

You learn to listen for the sounds of falling walls, the
faint whispers of the living and the dead.

Watch as the cracks widen and the walls crumble..

                    ROSA
I can't shut them up, they're still wandering around
reminiscing.

                    CARLOS
They can't help it.

The seminary and the workshops.

ANTONIO
We work all day, every day, from sunrise
to sunset. The camp guards beat us all the time.

ROSA
What's this one saying?

CARLOS
He says he was beaten in the camp.

ROSA
I can't see blood anywhere.

CARLOS
Why would you see blood?

ROSA
From the beatings.

CARLOS
What do you expect? It was some time ago.

ROSA
At least a stain.

CARLOS
The light's bad.

ROSA
You would need some light.

ANTONIO
When the guards kill an animal, sometimes they
give us the bones.

Once I had coffee.

It tasted of leather and rust.

(faintly) One by one we are dying of starvation and
the beatings.

Silence then…

ROSA
Never mind. It's over now. You're dead.

If you want to see me I told you just look out of the corner of
your eye. I'm just as I was.

A bit thinner perhaps but that was as much to do with
having no food during the fighting and all that time before.

[202]

And all that time after.

Except I was dead by then.

And before they shot me they chopped off my hair.
Beautiful hair.

But at least I saw that bonfire in front of the church.
I hear the sound of the flames if I concentrate.

Shots of the new town.

<div style="text-align:center">CARLOS</div>
<div style="text-align:center">(putting on a Franco voice)</div>

Only those capable of loving the fatherland, of working and
struggling for it, of adding their grain of sand to the common
effort will be tolerated.

<div style="text-align:center">ROSA (giggles)</div>

Let me do it.
<div style="text-align:center">(putting on a Franco voice)</div>
The rest will not be allowed back into social circulation.

Wicked, deviant, politically and morally poisoned elements;

Those without possible redemption in the human order;
those of inferior national and human quality;

Salvation for those can only come through labour.

Both laugh but ROSA stops suddenly.

Old bar. Pink bucket. Church in new town.

<div style="text-align:center">ROSA (breathless)</div>

I'm suffocating. All those bodies crushing me.
No one will find me here.

Some people say ghosts last just 9 months
after you die, as long as it takes to grow in the womb,
but that's not true.

You can go on for ever waiting if no one listens to what
you've got to say.

<div style="text-align:center">CARLOS</div>

Shit. There must be 10 people on top of me,
they'll never find me down here.

<div style="text-align:center">ROSA (faintly)</div>

No point in dwelling on it.

<div style="text-align:center">CARLOS</div>

No dwelling is good. Apportioning blame is good.

<div style="text-align:center">[203]</div>

ROSA
They took us down the road in a truck.

                    CARLOS
Forget all that. Pissing ourselves. Where's the dignity in that?

                    ROSA
Not much dignity now I would say.

                    CARLOS
At least you're nearer the top.

Title: Rosa and Carlos philosophise.

                    ROSA
There are some ghosts who would not be welcome here,
Including the former selves of people who were alive in
those years, who are still alive today, but who have
made great efforts to unremember.

                    CARLOS
What rubbish. This is how it happened.

The blocked off wall. The Belchite sign ruined. The danger sign on the ground. The
conference.
                    CARLOS
The mayoress can't stop thinking about the ruins.

                    CARLOS (more cheerful)
Philosophy then.

Water is scarce equals food is scarce equals hungry.

                    ROSA
You can't be hungry now.

                    CARLOS
Even dead I'm still hungry.

                    ROSA (faint now)
Shut up.

                    CARLOS
I can't hear you.

                    CARLOS
                 (doing FRANCO'S voice)
                 (his own voice)
Yeah yeah. I see they're beautifying the 'innocent'
priests now.

Stills of tourists and man playing at action man.

                    ROSA

                      [204]

Over the bodies of the dead you walk to and fro.
Looking for signs.

Title: Rosa dies.

          ROSA
My mother supported the fascists.

Maybe I thought that would protect me.

I heard my mother screaming so I knew then they'd come
for me.

They chopped off my hair and pushed me into a lorry
with the others and drove up the road to the place where
we knew they had killed others before.

We were roped together.

I wanted to be brave but in the end who can die bravely?

Just one shot, falling over the edge on top of others.

A bit of earth to cover us up.

That was when I met you.

Title: Carlos wants to forget.

Old men playing cards

     In the new village they play cards, never talk
     of the past, drink in different bars.

     You can't be too careful.

     When you ask what happened in the war they put
     a finger to their lips and look from side to side.

They will not tell.

          CARLOS
    It's better to forget everything that happened.

          ROSA
    No it's better to remember everything..

Old men walking out of the building. Walking off in different directions.

The plastic flowers on the graves.

          ROSA
You ventured alone, in the middle of a black night,
surrounded by names, hearing the whispers of the earth,

[205]

or a murmur of voices, for those who have ears to hear.

End Title: History doesn't always belong to the victors.

Appendix 5.

The Border Crossing – Script and research materials (original format);

Shot list for the character of Siân; sound recording shot list; notes for shoots; script, 2009-2011 (original format).

Research notes 2009 – 2010

In Ceylan's 3 Monkeys two characters are in a car not speaking just looking at each other and then straight out through the windscreen. Over them we hear their conversation. It is very displacing. This is an interesting way to deal with voice and communication. For my film voice is really important, both to convey information and feelings but also to create a sense of characters influenced and located by the space they inhabit. They must also be aware of the camera, so the Girl can look at the camera and away, it is after all an enactment. It is a documentary as much about playing a role, a role that once existed in the past.

Role playing is part of the content of the film, the subject of the film. When Maria reads her book, it will also be interesting to film her not speaking but looking at the camera while she says the words. Which would be the more authentic, the sync version of the reading or the looking, while she says the words. We could play back the words to her perhaps to record her face while listening to her own words…is this too much like putting her in a cage?

What is the structure for the film? How to incorporate the idea of the girl who never speaks and the journey she makes with the other material?

Structure:

The girl's journey – is it chronological, does it start with her in a car, to stand in for the VW Beatle, it can be a small hire car, but we need to have some people in the car….what do we see, how will it be filmed? They just have to be older than her and not talking to her. What about the German…if we are hearing her story as a voice over then it could be glimpses of the people…she is in the back so it is her pov…silence…they can speak, laugh, but we don't hear anything…rather than having an incomprehensible language we just don't hear them…traffic through the window…the back of the seat…the hands holding a biscuit packet…offering a sandwich…shoes on the floor of the car…somebody's neck…hair…the main thing they are different to her…she gets out in SS, watches it drive off. This can be scripted in terms of shots as a sequence, even her hitching and the car stopping for her and picking her up.

31st July 2009
Everything in the news at the moment is about the latest ETA bombings, to mark the 50th anniversary of ETA's foundation, but most significant is that it is women in the leadership. In Giles Tremlett's article in the Observer last Sunday, one of the women in ETA was a teacher of Basque in a school in Irun. Wonder if the man living in the hostel in Irun who came from Bilbao and taught Basque at the school, was part of ETA or knew this woman. Perhaps he was her replacement. Apparently a quarter of the leadership are women. Every Friday women march apparently in a park in Bilbao calling for an amnesty for ETA prisoners. Interesting to film this as a contrast to the way men and women are behaving in Irun. There everything is militaristic and women

are mimicking what was a male thing. Do women want to be macho, their dressing the same as the men, is in distinct contradiction to the woman who marches at the head of the ranks of soldiers, flashing her fan and giving everyone the eye tottering on her high heels.

The young man David Pena talking about the past, he knows about the past, he is working on the ancient boat, a direct connection to the Civil War, but as he says for him, he is young, newer boats are better, he wants a Basque country or maybe he is simply happy with the way autonomy is now, but politics doesn't interest him. What would he think about ETA and the fact that women are in the leadership?

3rd August 2009

In relating everything back to me and that moment in time, like a spiders web radiating outwards from the central point, the past meeting the present…the port and its decay and the 'museum' and the wreckage of the Civil War exemplified by the rusting hulk of the boat contrasted to the fine vibrant young man of today is the girl's journey beside it. The girl in her journey took particular notice of the docks and the railway line, all working, and the little line of shops she walked by, now derelict. This line of radiation is how the structure works….

Need to have specific questions to ask of Maria and Andone, about their lives at that point in time and then we can move after that on to the present. These interviews will be filmed, but not necessarily to be used as interviews in the film, more observations. What are the questions?? How should they be filmed?

In 1968 how old were you?

Tell me about your family at that time. Describe daily life in your family. Your house, how big was it, who worked, what your mother did. What your father did. What did your family do in the Civil War, were they affected by it? What did it mean in daily life to live under Franco. Did you notice? Did you go to church? Were your family catholic?

This could lead on to other questions, Maria was the same age as the girl, Andone a child.

To Maria:

Did you feel you were pretty, attractive. Describe how you looked at that time.

What clothes did you wear? Describe an outfit you might have at the time. A photograph.

What did you do work, describe it from getting up, through the day, meals, coming home etc etc. the evenings. television? Radio?

then social life, friends, parties, fiestas, promenading, etc.

Did you see boys?

Where did you see them?

Did you have a boyfriend?

[208]

What was your parents attitude to you seeing boys. Were your friends allowed to meet up with boys, alone?

At that point what was Basque nationalism like? Know anyone involved in it? Could women be involved in politics, or anyone for that matter?

Did you ever see or hear about girls coming from Sweden or England to Spain. What did people say about them? If you saw a girl coming down the road, obviously foreign with a mini skirt, what would you think of them. What would other people think about them? Then, in those days.

Were you happy? Could you talk about your feelings and if so who to?

12th August 2009

Grizzly Man by Herzog was an interesting film to look at for its structure. Utilising footage almost as archive, debating about the author of the film, Timothy Treadwell who both appears in it and made the footage. This is something I think will be of use in the older woman's role i.e. myself or the person playing myself, who will comment on what the younger self is saying and also the footage that has been filmed. This will be partly where I film where I am staying, the trips out to the border, which was the route I took? Etc.

As well as that, Grizzly Man was interesting because the event, the catastrophe of the deaths alluded to from the start, it is never withheld but throughout the film, we learn a little more of what happened. People like the coroner are introduced at strategic points, then appear again. In other words once they have appeared they are allowed to continue to exist/appear but not before that point. So if say I introduce Maria as a woman who would have been 20 when the girl was, and is my age now, then I can reintroduce her after that point. Rather than bringing her in right from the start. The same with Andone and anyone else I film later. E.g people in the photography club or the ship wreck which is gradually restored. If I can get that to the point where it actually is restored that would be useful to have from the start as a symbol, perhaps too literal, of the past. But not too literal and quite crucial really because it fought in the Civil War, as it were…what was its history after that I wonder?

All this has to be kept within the boundaries of memory, past and present and gender identity, both female and male. Male attitudes are just as important.

So the idea of the traumatic event only on sound on black screen with the title even, starting the film…a reference to the film Trilogy where in the first part of the 3 part film, the prison escape is done entirely by sound alone.

Meanwhile the material from the first shoot can be downloaded to the computer, and logged. We are trying for permission to shoot in the Tabacalera. This is the email I wrote to Marisol who is helping me with setting things up.

Thanks for enquiring about the Tabakalera I would think yes that Andone would be too shy to approach them herself. Still as long as she's not too shy to be filmed. I like that quality about her actually, it shows in the photo I took of her. I have put the details below but if you feel we should give less information in order not to put them off, please feel free to edit what I have put. The main thing is to get permission!! Also you will have to translate it I suppose, so please feel free to cut it down or give me your opinion about changing things.

[209]

These are the details:

I am an independent British filmmaker. My website is www.jilldanielsfilms.com. The video is about the past, around 35 years ago, and the present, in San Sebastian and around the area, focusing on women and their social situation including work. It is in very early stages of filming and research and so far has no funding.

It has an element of autobiography, I spent time in Spain 35 years ago so includes the attitude to foreign girls coming to Spain as tourists and contrasting to women's lives in that period. The Tabakalera footage would be a small but very important part of the film and I am happy to give the gallery a copy of the finished video and a copy of the unedited video of the Tabakalera for their archives.

The Tabakalera was a large working factory 35 years ago giving employment to a lot of people. I will evoke a sense of the past when it was a factory.
I will film the reactions of Andone a woman who worked there for 25 years on a production line, on a visit back for the first time since she left there, to bring back her memories. It would like to film in most the building as Andone points out what happened where and to film her reactions to its new life as an art gallery.   I would prefer therefore to film when it is open if possible but this is not essential

Any date from 13th to 17th September (not afternoon/evening 15th September) for about half a day. The equipment is a video camera, tripod and mic and an onboard camera light for places where it is really dark but otherwise using natural light.

The work for the moment is on the storyboard of Siân's journey to begin on writing the script, including incorporating the girl's story into it.

24th August 2009
Marisol has translated the message to the Tabakalera and sent it to them.
Cage is a provisional title even though I am using Wanderer at the moment.
Dialogue of the narrator:
"I don't know how to speak frankly. I select and censor what I might murmur, as too vague, too poetic, too obvious. I wrap the truth in a tissue of fictions"
"Why did I know so little? Why do I know so little now? If my own self calls out to you but would you hear me? And if you could hear me would you listen?" (Barry, Secret Scripture misquoted)
"Is this what I remember happening? Or was I remember what I had told before?
"there was the station, 8 in the evening, maybe not even that, more or less deserted and there were the same benches, not the same ones of course, against that stone wall, and opposite the big church, and it was the same as before, just that one frozen moment, curled up on the bench, the same loneliness and deserted feeling as though no one would ever pass that way again."
All these comments are made by the Narrator, who interrupts what the Girl is saying and discusses what we are seeing.
The Girl is mute, she looks, she smokes a cigarette, eats her grapes, throws them away, lies down on the bench in the station, watches the docks, the railway lines, peers in at the shops, adjusts her clothes, walks, walks and walks, then hitches but never speaks.
"There was nothing I could do, not even scream, because I knew he would kill me, anything would have been better than that, to die would have been the worst offence, the most complete stupidity. Why are you looking at me like that?" Hopscotch Julio Cortozar

31st August
Considering Wraith as a title…or Falling Backwards or Falling Halfway or Falling..but Wanderer still a possibility. Or using the name of the boat, which is also the name of the mountain. Jaizkibel sounds like Jezebel. Or The Lost Bracelet. Border crossing. The girl is a wraith, a phantom in my memory therefore don't show her except almost by accident or superimposition…but prefer that the place is the character and she is laid over it by accident. E.g. a car door is slammed, a foot goes in and out of frame, blonde hair on the edge of frame. Standing, cigarette smoke, a car draws up, lights her cigarette, the sounds of her going into a shop, coming out again. Throws the grapes down to the ground, see the packet and her walking off.

It starts with the girl arriving in San Sebastian, she talks about the journey, the incidents along the way, she is remembering as she is moving along, it is already past for her, so she is talking in the present about the past. What she has seen. Why she must get home…maybe refer to that diary full of references to men/boys while she was in the cage…show the picture of her in the newspaper…

Andone/Maria etc., talk about their lives, anything they remember about the same period, rather than specific questions, relationships between men and women and society. Work. Daily lives. Why are women joining ETA?

 7 September 2009
In Vertigo by Sebald
Instead of drifting into sleep I slide into my memories. Or rather, the memories rise higher and higher in some space outside myself, until having reached a certain level, they overflow from that space into me, *like water flowing into a weir.* (changed tense to match below)

I lose sight of myself at this point. Not until I reach the docks and the railway do I become visible again to myself in my mind's eye. (this is not a direct quotation but a rephrasing)

Piecing together my memories in fragments, piece by piece…then watch them dissolve piece by piece.

In *Lost* by Jonas Mekas the narrator's voice is used as poetic language. "He remembered another day. Ten years ago he sat on this beach, ten years ago, with other friends. The memories, the memories, the memories…again I have memories…I have a memory of this place. I have been here before. I have really been here before. I have seen these waters before, yes, I've walked upon this beach, these pebbles" *useful for The Border Crossing, refer to it. Comes from Renov's Subject of Documentary.*

Have to do some work on the tenses of the subject and the use of whispers.

"Why do I remember so little and why is what I remember from just before the memories I do have, so indistinct. Around the bright shining image I know is a memory that belongs to me, are dark shadows and try as I might to penetrate the shadows they remain dark."

28th September 2009
Have filmed the girl hitchhiking and going into a car, walking through the town, going into a shop, stopping at a railway station but then continuing her journey, sitting waiting at the frontier and a car headlights pass her by and she walks out of shot after it then coming into the hotel room, looking for the bracelet, leaving. Have filmed Andone inside the Tabakalera seeing it for the first time since she left with the art installations and talking to people working inside the building and talking about her

[211]

work there. Have filmed also Maria presenting her photography to the photography club and working photographing a girl and reading from the father's diary (this needs to be redone it is too 'set up' too awkward.

Ideas for how this can work together…the conversation between the girl and the woman, both in the present, but the girl does not know about the woman, her older self, while the woman, the older self, is familiar with the girl. But how familiar? How much does she really know about the girl. In retracing her steps she remembers the journey and then re-remembers the journey (this is where the different takes can be used if necessary). There were several takes of the girl walking e.g. on one occasion a runner looking very modern goes by, the woman now would say, no that is not how it was or could have been. (is this too self conscious?)

But the woman is looking for traces of the past in the present. So she asks questions of Maria about her past and present; comes across the Tabakalera as the girl passes it and finds Andone who worked there to talk about the past; comes across the ship that defended the Basque country, talks about it and the Civil War. Begins to discover the history of the Basque country, the girl thought of it as Spain, but the woman finds it isn't Spain. Finds the railway station in Irun (still needs to be filmed) and in finding that where she thought the girl had stopped, but it is the wrong station, yet she remembered the bench and the sound of the man hissing, (film the bench, the empty station) and what is going on in the present, in this once deserted town, is the fiesta. But what would be good to film in Irun is when it is deserted and empty in January in complete opposition to the scenes of festivity, where did all those people come from?

13 October 2009
Night
shots of headlights coming along the dark road, no other cars, a silent blackness with just the lights, and very quiet.
The lights of the car on the road up the black mountain road, no other cars, seen from the inside of the car looking out.
In and out of focus, the lights, the trees etc.
The opening of the film, black with sounds on black…

Next stage of these associations are to find out about St Jean de Luz, the place where the Basque smugglers were headquartered, where the man took the girl. Going to the border crossing/s from the French side of the crossing…now where the French come to buy their cheap booze in Spain…one way traffic.

Now we are moving towards the journey in the present, like the journey taken by the girl, passing through, but now stopping, trying to make sense of what kind of place this was/is.

Katalin Varga by Peter Strickfield – a similar story – a hitchhiker picked up by this time two men in a car who takes her to a remote field and rapes her by physical force, not at gunpoint.

Shot list

Shot list for Siân – NB she should be carrying a small holdall bag, lightweight but definitely not on wheels!

In a car with a family!

Arriving in a car in San Sebastian, getting out. Shutting the door.

Action: Siân walks along looking at the buildings, etc., hesitates, lights a cigarette, goes to the river, looks along, back to the buildings, up to the sign then walks down the road. Late afternoon but not night. A few shops have lights on.

1. handheld facing the shops and Irun/Francia sign – wide – Siân comes into shot from behind the camera, stops looking up at the hotel, walks out of shot to the river, hesitates then walks back to the road saying Irun/Francia and walks away up the road.
2. Handheld same angle as above but close-ups on her head, shot near to her so can keep the shot wide; several shots; dividing it up into her coming into the shot; her face frowning, turning round etc., walking out of shot then in again; then walking away.
3. Handheld wide facing Siân from the buildings, we see her come into shot looking above and past us.
4. Handheld close-ups as 3 but close-ups.
5. Handheld shot close on her face as she lights a cigarette.
6. Do 1 to 4 on a tripod.
7. handheld shots as above at the bridge – facing the bridge, facing Siân, wide and close shots.
8. same as 6 but on tripod.

Action: Walking up the hill – cars roaring by, buses etc – dusk – stops to go in a shop – comes out again with packet of grapes and the cheese triangles. Smokes a cigarette. Eats a grape then spits it out and throws away the bag of grapes. Unravels a cheese without stopping walking, eats it.

Walking along by the railway line, the little shops etc. dusk

1. Comes directly into shot walking briskly but instead of walking past the camera, turns to the right and goes towards the shops.
2. The railway station in Irun – early evening walks about, lies down on the bench.

Stands at the big roundabout at the top past the docks, hitches, maybe someone stops, can film it see what happens. Don't let her get in. Or if we can find someone to drive up that would be good. She can get in and drive away.

List of sounds to be recorded; shot list and notes for shoots

Exterior (but not noisy – spot sounds)
Car door slam
Car moving off
Opening packet of cigarettes
Lighting cigarette
Stubbing out cigarette
Digging – borrow trowel or spade – could do it on the beach at night
Walking – click click of shoes on pavement and down stairs to the underpass near the station.
Hissing – man
Jingling of bracelet
Sucking lollipop
Opening and closing shop door
Bead curtains rustle together.
Motor of a car running like a soft purr

[213]

Interior sounds
Foley sounds in the 'hotel room'
Rustle of the sheets
Burning on the sheet
Lighting the cigarette
Footsteps when she leaves the room.

Things to be shot in January
Bilbao, the women's marching in the park. Will it be there?
Maria, following her around, her daily life, what is it like? What was her life like in the past…talk about it, her sisters, their lives etc etc
Film the children being photographed.
Reshoot Maria reading from the book – how should that be done?
Andone again, sitting on the bench in front of the Tabakalera while the works are carried out. Assume it will be open, but maybe not. If not film her in front of the building, then talk to her again in the bar opposite. Work out what you want to ask. Perhaps about her life as a girl.
Go back to the boat, see what is happening with the museum.
Film station in Irun and the darkish, gloomy streets.
Another time with a car:
Film the border crossing. The one we went to, particularly all the French coming to the supermarket. Comparisons between the smuggling and the grand scale buying of wine and cigarettes nowadays.
Find some archive of the Tabakalera and San Sebastian and Irun in the late 60s.

Shoot 2010 (original format)

1. Maria
a) Conversation between Maria and myself about how we are going to proceed. Film this.
b) Maria generally but concentrate on the diary.
Her face, close-ups..lots not just her face. What makes her tick…the thing about her father, any souvenirs..photos…with her brothers?
About her father wanting her to be a boy. Talk to me informally, conversations between us while she is doing something.
The hiding place for the book…but most of all why is it so important? A little bit about herself as a woman, growing up, boyfriends, freedom etc.
What was it like for her and her friends 40 years ago. Did they ever see foreign girls? At the sea? What were the local boys like towards them? Was she a feminist?
c) Her philosophy: what does she think about relations between men and women. Violence towards women now and in the past?
d) Memories of the past:
What does she think of when she thinks about the diary and what it contains?
Describe what she sees after we have come up with some topics of discussion, one certainly is how she felt when her father dressed her as a boy. How far did that go?
To talk about the images she sees when she considers memories without being too specific, to take photographs perhaps that encapsulate her memories.
e) **Maria walking outside her flat – goes in up the stairs to the door and going inside.**
1 shot of her coming down the road from the other side e.g. from the bar. She arrives at the door and looks round as though Siân is there then goes inside the door shuts.
1 shot from the door, same thing but she comes into shot.
1 shot coming round the corner.

[214]

1 shot comes the other way up the street from the other side of the road
1 shot from further up from the door so we see her come up and then go in, again with the head turning.
Shots of her going in from just inside the door and reverse angle.
Couple of shots of her going up the stairs.
Same with arriving at the door, going in shutting door.
Film from inside the flat (tripod) – doing whatever she does normally. But tripod shots.
This is important to provide a connection with Siân. Must do it even if nothing else gets done.
f) In Hernani. Where she grew up. places.
g) Maria's photo studio interior and exterior. Maria going in, doing her work, talking, informal.
h) taking photographs for her own work, just the activity of it, the doing, not talking.
i) with her friends. Marisol; the photo club. Informal. Handheld?
2) **The iconography of women**, film ads/billboards of women's images in the region. Ads from the late 60s how do they use women's bodies.   Where would that be? Consideration of the body and its violation – this is where the violence against women comes in but has not yet been tackled.
3. The border at Irun since the building work so we see it in its entirety not just the bridge, in the day and into the evening and night.
4. The exterior of Pension Anne at night or early evening and the courtyard from outside it.
5. The room where I sleep at Maria's, need to have more of a sense of my own journey now. Wearing the shoes? Looking at the map and the passport there. And if Maria isn't staying there or is out film the shoes at the bottom of the bed to cut in with Sian's stuff.
6. Richard and Nati
a) Richard and Nati from behind driving so we can't see Richard properly (without the red ring).
From Siân's pov. traffic through the window…
the back of the seat…
hands holding a biscuit packet…
offering a sandwich but not seeing anything but the sandwich
the brown shoes on the floor of the car and the brown bag
somebody's neck…
hair.
a) Richard in the old car dusk almost night wearing the red ring Very close pov shots, fragmented from passenger side and then from the floor of the car at the front drivers side. Car lights on the road at night in the forest.
b) trees waving in the wind at dusk. Shots of the sky at night, or at dusk, this can be anywhere and the sea.
c) The main road. Not a motorway. Filmed from inside a car in the day. The journey. If none of this is possible and there is time, have a look at the boat museum, see how it is going. And film outside the little station of the trains.
7) The bar opposite the Tabakalera. Use the bag and the shoes etc., outside the bar.
8) The exterior of the Tabacalera…?
9) Political graffiti; the small memorial cards and the photos of separatists.
Kutxa Fototeca for old photos of the Tabakalera. Might not manage this, Marisol is busy.

The Border Crossing draft script

EXT. THE BORDER CROSSING. IRUN. DAY.

It is raining.

SUPERIMPOSITION OF TITLE.

INT. CAR. NIGHT
It is raining. A man's hand is on the wheel. A ring. The rain is loud and the windscreen wipers make a rhythmic relentless sound as the car drives through the city.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHS OF A GIRL - AGED ABOUT 18.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
Here she is. Or rather it is I. No.. it was I. Me.

INT. CAR. NIGHT
The man driving the car through the rain.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
This absence, this sense of incompleteness.. the missing dark areas..their presence nag at the edges of my memory..

INT. THE OLD BLUE PASSPORT.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I know the passport was stamped.. not because I remember..but because she.. or I.. me..tells me. Here is the story written so long ago...

INT. AN OLD TYPEWRITTEN PAGE.

INT. CAR. NIGHT

The man, barely seen, driving the car through the rain.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
..but in this morning's dream..for the countless time..it happens again..I still remember..I can't stop myself remembering..because not enough time has gone by. What else did I dream?

The lights of the city begin to fade away to black.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I want there to be more..but now as I'm remembering I'm already forgetting. It's moving away... again.

EXT. DAY. A QUIET ROAD.
The girl is hitchhiking. A car stops and she gets in and it drives away.

INT. DAY. CAR.
The car is going fast. Through the window is the road.

THE GIRL (V.O.)

[216]

They reach a narrow strip of road glued to the wall of the cliff.
It twists in a semi-circle to the left..then coils to the right for a long way.

They are moving nearer to the last city before the border crossing.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
Is this what I remember happening? Or am I remembering now only what I said I
remembered then?

INT. COACH. DAY.
A Spanish girl sleeps in the coach. Outside the hills are moving by.

EXT. DAY. STREET.
The GIRL is in the back of a parked car looking out of the window.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
She waits before leaving the car.

The GIRL gets out of the car, looks round the street.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I remember.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
She stands for a moment watching as they go into the hotel.

She hesitates looking round. MARIA is going into her house. She turns to look at the
GIRL. The GIRL walks on. Maria goes into her house

THE GIRL (V.O.)
She wants to change her mind and join them..but she can't. She has never been
able to choose.

INT. HALLWAY. DAY.
MARIA opens her letterbox, takes out some letters and walks out of view.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
She walks. A bus passes. She glances at it then continues to walk. Another bus
passes. She walks. The next bus will stop exactly by her..she will get on.. she will
pay..she will sit down. It will take her to the edge of town.

INT. MARIA'S FLAT. DAY.
MARIA makes some food.

GIRL (V.0)
The bus stops just beside her. The door opens. She looks at the steps going up into
the bus. She stands on the pavement looking into the bus.
The door closes.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
Why don't you say something about why you are there? Running away from a life
you hated to another life you hated more?

[217]

EXT. TABAKALERA. DAY
The GIRL stands outside the tobacco booth hesitating. She leaves frame and then appears outside the Tabakalera.

INT. TABAKALERA. DAY
ANDONE, MARIA, MARISOL in the Tabakalera. MARIA takes photographs.
THE GIRL (V.O.)

GIRL:
In the tiny shop a woman with a pallid face dressed in a pale pink nylon overall enclosed by a huge mound of goods towering to the ceiling peers through the small vertical space in the centre and stares at her.

She gestures..

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
A gesture meant to compensate for your loss of memory or your inability to speak the language?

THE GIRL (V.O.)(CONT)
..sweeping her hand through the air around her head and nods.

The shopkeeper disappears.. reappearing almost instantly holding a small black cushion in both hands and nestling on the black imitation velvet like precious jewels are three identical transparent brown flecked with a yellowy beige tiny plastic combs.

The shopkeeper thrusts them forward.

She pretends to choose and points at one of them.

EXT. DAY. STREET.

The GIRL walks along the street. She goes into a shop.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
She walks fast. Buses go by. She doesn't stop. To the left.. parallel to the road is the railway.

She is in another of these tiny holes in the wall. She points at black grapes and a round box of cheese. She knows this box. It has a colorful smiling cow on the front.

A woman with black curly hair weighs the grapes and puts them in a brown paper bag. She pays.

EXT. DAY. STREET.

The GIRL walks along the street.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
At every door, encased in shapeless black garments..arms folded..a woman stands staring. As she passes each stare turns into a glare. Each head turns slowly..one after the other. Head turns. Head turns. Head turns. On and on.

In this town, which is but a continuation of the last town, there is no prospect of a lift.

[218]

A small boy runs past, touches her lightly on the thigh, mumbles something, carries on running.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I lose sight of myself at this point. Not until I reach the docks and the railway do I become visible again to myself.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
She is walking. The road..
the docks.. the sea.. the railway line.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
She looks..she smokes a cigarette..eats the grapes and throws them away in disgust.

She goes into a café..but instead of having a drink she goes into the toilet..takes off the bra with the broken strap..stuffs it into her bag and leaves. She ignores the watching eyes.

She walks. She looks at the docks..the railway lines..moving along her gaze..peers in at the shops..adjusts her clothes again. She walks..walks and walks.. hitches.

EXT. IRUN RAILWAY STATION. EARLY EVENING.

THE WOMAN (V.0.)
This is the station, it is eight in the evening..maybe not even that..but dark..night. I know I won't find a lift tonight.

..the station is more or less deserted..and here are the same wooden benches, against the stone wall..and opposite is the big church..and I am curled up on the bench..a silence..as though no one will ever pass this way again.

Until the sss.sss..and just outside my vision,he stands with that insecure demanding smile..and then the running..or is it contempt..nose in the air, which? I can't remember.

The heat melts the air.. No. It's cold. And I have never been here before.

IRUN.
The hotel sign and in the background the sound of people marching. The fiesta with the woman coquettish at the front of the marchers.

INT. BAR. DAY.

On the table is a coffee cup and a book. Men stand drinking at the bar.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
One of the men is young..badly dressed..skinny. His neck is long and narrow. Hollows under his cheekbones. The other man is older. 60? 50? 40?

She sits next to the older man.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
Why?

[219]

THE GIRL (V.O.)
She sips pernod.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I don't like pernod.

Another journey, hitchhiking with the American boy, a draft dodger he says.. who lies..either about his age.. or the forged passport that says he's 15.. not 20.. and the bottle of anise wrapped in the white dress with a yellow bulls eye on the front..

A BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO OF THE GIRL IN A DISCO HER FEET STRETCHED OUT ON THE TABLE GRINNING. SHE SITS BETWEEN TWO MEN AND ANOTHER GIRL.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
It shows off my tan so well. It is in black and white but you can still see the tan.

I drop the bag on the ground as we hop in and out of cars..until to my surprise and shock..when I open the bag on the dirty cover of the bed in some cheap pension..I see the smashed bottle of clear anise has turned the white and yellow dress pink. It is ruined.
THE GIRL (V.O.)
She walks to the car with the oldish man and gets in. The young one runs from the bar and throws himself into the back.

He leans forward and touches her neck. She says nothing. She stares out of the window looking at the trees.

It is getting dark.

She moves closer to the window.
The hand follows..rests on air and withdraws.

The trains have gone..you can't sleep at the border..says the boy.

She says..

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
..in her bad Spanish?

THE GIRL (V.O.)
..I don't need a train.

She can see out of the corner of her eye the boy with a ridiculous pleading grin on his face.

It is quiet inside the car.

The boy climbs over the seat and sits down beside her.. very close. She can smell his breath. Wine.

The car smells of wine, garlic and old leather. She feels sick.

[220]

She remembers the car when she was a child, the smell of the leather, expensive, luxurious, she always felt sick.

She holds her bag on her knee, stares through the window, her face is blank.

She sees a sign pointing in the direction of the border and lifts her hand. The man swings the wheel violently towards this new direction.

He stops the car.

The boy suddenly speaks rapidly, angrily, brings his face very close to hers, shouts something. She jumps.

He pulls open the door, jumps out and slams it shut. Walks away.

The man starts the car, they move off. He is smiling. She has not exchanged a single word with this man. There was nothing distinguishable about this man… nothing.

The car stops in a narrow street. The man turns towards her and asks for a kiss. She leans forward, plants a kiss on his cheek and as his arms move towards her..she opens the door and is out. She slams it shut.

She has not stopped running for a long time, the houses solidifying and dissolving..the mist transforming into dewdrops of rain, a faint light shines around her hands and feet.

THE WOMAN V.O.)

If I call out to you will you hear me? And if you hear me will you listen?

THE GIRL (V.O.)
The man wears a dark uniform.
He looks at her passport and smiles at her and says, you've been here a long time.

She asks him to put a stamp in her passport.

There are huts..on each side of the border crossing there are small yellow huts and men in blue uniforms..laughing and joking.

EXT. DAY. A BORDER CROSSING.
The border crossing. At the top of the slight hill is a large supermarket and people are piling cartons of drink into their cars.

 THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I arrive at the border crossing.

It's near the top of the mountain, surrounded by trees. There's an old house where the huts were. In the distance people are piling drink into cars.

It feels familiar.

I am suddenly certain. I have been here before.

THE GIRL (V.O.)

[221]

The road across the border disappears into the dark.

The men play cards.

She sits on a chair in the doorway of a small hut, smoking.

A uniformed man, unsmiling asks for her passport and takes it into a hut.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I see a small patch of road in front of me and to the right are shadowy huts and uniformed men moving slightly around. I don't see the color of the uniforms or the color of the huts. There are no huts only shadows.

In front of me I see a bright circular space big enough to hold a few cars and beyond this darkness.

I am told reliably by the stamp in my passport there is a river. Puente, the bridge. I don't see a bridge or a river.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
A silver car..flashy..stops opposite her. Inside there are two men...one carrying a huge bottle.

The driver puts his head out of the window and offers her a lift but he is going back the way she had come.

She shakes her head, not speaking.

He laughs. The car jerks and drives away with a roar the bottle waving above the car.

A uniformed man wanders over and says contemptuously, that man is only good for love.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
What does he mean?

THE GIRL (V.O.)
Cars come and go. None of them stop for her.

In the hut opposite she can see the men, their mouths moving.
Cars appear and leave. She sees everything but she hears nothing.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
The space around is extensive.

The crossing has no river, no bridge.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
She smokes a cigarette and another. Sits with her legs stretched out in front of her.

Leaning back she can see just the huts with the posturing men in their uniforms and a slight bulge at their hip.

She tries to remember the strange incident earlier but finds it impossible, as soon as

[222]

her mind grasps something it slips away leaving her uncertain. She thinks how little she knows about herself.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I don't remember what I think…

THE GIRL (V.O.)
A car draws up. Two young girls inside, it is piled with suitcases.

She watches the girls laugh and joke with the men in uniform.

The car drives away. They didn't offer her a lift.

The silver car stops in front of her. She recognizes the man. Now he is alone. He thrusts his head through the window his mouth stretched in a wide smile. On his head is a black and white checked cap with a peak. It is set at a peculiar angle, pulled down over his eyes almost concealing his nose.

All the men in uniform come out of the huts and stand in a row, watching.

Again she refuses the lift and again the car drives away.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
A van full of Arab men in robes stops. They make no protest as the uniformed men scramble happily through every inch of their van.

After a long while they stand back and watch as the Arab men put all their possessions back into the van and leave.

The silver car reappears.

The driver gets out of the car and comes over to her. On the finger of the right hand is a large red and gold ring, glittering.

He invites the girl for a drink in town. She shakes her head. The border will be closing he insists.

The men at the border will vouch for him.

She picks up her bag walks towards a uniformed man who waves his hand vaguely as she approaches. Taking this as some kind of sign she gets in the car.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I see the uniformed man, or maybe two, I'm not sure.

I see them reassuring me, yes the border will be closing for the night, this man will take me into the next town.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
He drives very fast into the dark. It is raining. He asks her if she's frightened. She says no.

After a while the car stops. They are alone in a dark forest. In the rain.

The man leans forward puts his mouth over hers but she pulls away, twists her body

[223]

away from him.

Suddenly she's lying full length as the seat unfolds with a crash back, back into the car.

She tries to lift herself but the man caresses her. She pushes him away, tries to sit up. He talks and talks. He buys fish in one country sells it another. His mother is Hungarian, his father Spanish.

He has a lot of money.

She stares at him, doesn't speak stares out of the window. Waiting for him to grow tired of talking. She won't change her mind.

She turns her head towards him and sees the gun. Her face doesn't change.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
That can't be possible.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
The gun is pointing at her stomach or maybe her heart.

She begins to speak, she doesn't know what she's saying. Her teeth start to chatter as she talks.

He smiles at her.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I am in the passenger seat, watching the trees move, the dark sky.

I can't remember if there's a moon. No it's raining.

I'm sitting slightly in front of him he seems to have put the seat back up as I am leaning forward waiting until he will give up his efforts to kiss me, because when I turn he is holding the gun.

I don't turn my back on him again.

But yes I do because I stare out at the dark trees and imagine my body carried in his arms thrown into a hole.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
Nobody knows she's here.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
I don't take my eyes off the gun.

I negotiate.

He puts the gun down in the little hole in the seats between us.

I look up at him from the floor of the car. I'm on the driver's side of the car. He pushes my face into his flesh. He talks in French, les cuisses, les cuisses. Ouvre les cuisses.

I'm going to die. The gun, which even though he has put it out of sight, is just there

[224]

beside me.

I think of how he will put me in the ground.

My teeth chatter, even buried in his flesh they chatter.

We drive through the dark into France to the hotel. I know exactly where the gun is.

INT. COACH. NIGHT
Driving through the streets.

EXT. CITY STREETS. NIGHT.

Political demonstration against torture of political prisoners.

AITZIBER'S Voice over.

Shots of AITZIBER'S face.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
The gun has a very long barrel. It seems longer as I look at it. It is growing. It is slim and dark and hard, it is in the space between the seats. It is in the hole in the dashboard.

It is near his seat. It is a pistol. Not a revolver. It has a long barrel.

INT. HOTEL. NIGHT
The GIRL is fully dressed lying under the sheet. She sits up suddenly and starts searching her arms.

THE GIRL (V.O.)
It is blue and white enamel, it sparkles, hard, but she no longer remembers clearly what it feels like. She is terrified.

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
Violence is so familiar, institutionalized, terror is the normal state of being.

I search for the border crossing.

INT. PASSPORT STAMP. DAY.

I find the passport. Now I open it. The purple stamp faint now; it.says Irun, La Puente; the bridge. November 10th.

Here it is.

I feel the cold.

I remember the car, the gun, the trees, the teeth chattering, but I don't remember the bridge.

I will never remember the bridge.

SHOTS OF ST JEAN DE LUZ..A BEAUTIFUL TOWN..IDYLLIC SHOTS OF THE BEACH LAUGHING HAPPY PEOPLE.

FADE OUT

Appendix 6.

University of East London – Ethics Approval Letter
to Professor Susannah Radstone.

UEL
University of
East London

Susannah Radstone
Humanities and Social Sciences School, Docklands

ETH/11/97
4ᵗʰ March 2009

Dear Susannah,

Application to the Research Ethics Committee: Memory, place and identity: locating the space between fiction and documentary in cinematic language. (J Daniels)

I advise that Members of the Research Ethics Committee have now approved the above application on the terms previously advised to you. The Research Ethics Committee should be informed of any significant changes that take place after approval has been given. Examples of such changes include any change to the scope, methodology or composition of investigative team. These examples are not exclusive and the person responsible for the programme must exercise proper judgement in determining what should be brought to the attention of the Committee.

In accepting the terms previously advised to you I would be grateful if you could return the declaration form below, duly signed and dated, confirming that you will inform the committee of any changes to your approved programme.

Yours sincerely

Simiso Jubane
Admission and Ethics Officer
s.jubane@uel.ac.uk
02082232976