Film as Cultural Performance

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how Victor Turner's concept of 'cultural performance' can be used to explore and analyse the experience of film. Drawing on performance theory, hermeneutics, phenomenology and Bakhtin's dialogism, Sections One and Two develop this investigation through a theoretic discussion which relates and yet distinguishes between three levels of 'performance' in film: filmmaking performance, performances as text and cultural performances. The theory is grounded within four films which were researched for this thesis: *Once Were Warriors* (Lee Tamahori, 1994), *Rats in the Ranks* (Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson,1996), *beDevil* (Tracey Moffatt, 1993) and *Link-Up Diary* (David MacDougall, 1987). Section Three undertakes the close analyses of the latter two films. These analyses address specific cultural performances that are performed 'across' cultures and which are concerned particularly with Australian society's relationship with indigenous Australians.

Section One locates Turner's concept of 'cultural performance' within his wider theory of 'social drama' and introduces the three-tiered mode of analysis which is developed throughout this thesis. His concept of 'liminality' is also investigated in order to consider specific relationships between performances which take place in film and theatre. Performances which take place in film are located in this Section within the theatrical understanding of performance as 'for an audience'. I describe this relationship between performances in film and theatre through Kristeva's interpretation of Bakhtin's concept of *heteroglossia* as intertextuality, especially through her distinction of a 'transformative' intertextuality. Three specific concepts from theatre and performance theory are interrogated for their relevance to film theory:

1. Brecht's theory of '*gest*',
2. 'direct address to the audience' in relation to the 'gaze' in film and
3. Rebecca Schneider's conceptualisation of 'the performance artist'.

Using these three tropes of performance, Section Two develops a theory of performance in film. Besides Turner's concept of 'cultural performance', this theory draws on aspects of several other substantial bodies of work. These works include Richard Schechner's performance theory, Michael Taussig's understanding of 'mimesis', Vivian Sobchack's phenomenology of film, Paul Ricoeur's theory of text 'as meaningful

action', Gadamer's concept of 'meaningful play', Bakhtin's conceptualisation of a 'dialogic' text and Catherine Bell's theory of 'ritualised behaviour'. The two analyses in Section Three do not rigidly follow the three-tiered process of analysis which is developed in the previous two Sections. They rather focus on the films as sites for particular cultural performances which are specific for each film and which need for their description, different aspects of the theory that is offered through this thesis. These analyses especially draw on my interpretation of David MacDougall's 'transcultural cinema' and Jodi Brook's conceptualisation of a 'gestural practice' in film, which she positions both in terms of Brecht's theatrical concept of '*gest*' and Walter Benjamin's concept of the 'shock' of modernity.

The film analyses are of one fiction film, *beDevil*, and one non-fiction film, *Link-Up Diary*. Both films use audiovisual images of Aboriginal Australians as content. According the terms of this thesis, these people must also be considered as filmmakers. Although this role may constitute varying degrees of authority and power, a film analysis which considers the filmmaking roles of people whose images are present in the filmic text also allows a particular consideration of the social relationships which exist between people who 'film' and people who 'are filmed'. My focus on the cultural performances of these two films allowed an even closer description of this relationship for two reasons. Firstly, both Moffatt and MacDougall respectively present their own images in the films. Secondly, my analyses of these films as cultural performance draw out and describe the different ways in which the two films address the same 'social drama': the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. My analyses expose how a description of these differences in address can extend beyond the distinction between one film as 'fiction' and the other as 'non-fiction' towards a description of the different ways in which people relate to each other, at both the individual level and at the level of society, through the production and reception of a particular film. While locating these films as cultural performances within in particular sets of social relationships, my consideration of film in this thesis in terms of theatrical performance also enables a description of the experience of film which draws on the social experience of live theatre. The theory developed in this thesis and its application in the analyses of these two films suggest further areas of research which might look more closely at whether or not, or how much people draw from the social practices of live theatre as they live their lives with film – a signifying practice which has existed just over one hundred years.

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*our ideas, however limited they may be at a given moment —
since they always express our contact with being and with
culture — are capable of being true provided we keep them open
to the field of nature and culture which they must express.*[1]

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[1] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'The Primacy of Perception and Its Philosophical Consequences' (1947) in *The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty* Ed. Alden L Fisher, Trans. James M. Edie (1964), New York, Chicago, San Fransisco, Atlanta:Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1969, 56

INTRODUCTION

This thesis undertakes a broad investigation of film as a genre[2] of 'cultural performance', a concept developed by Victor Turner within his broader idea of 'social drama'; other genres include literature, theatre and ritual. My current interest in researching film as cultural performance can be described in the context of two specific questions. The first relates to the degree in which all the performances that are involved in film are in turn related to concepts and practices of theatrical performance. An exploration of this question has led me to consider performances in film — a comparatively new vehicle of communication and artistic practice — in terms of theatre, a social practice used by humans for thousands of years. The following discussion of performances that occur in film is broadly inclusive. It distinguishes between and discusses performances of people who make films, the performance of film as text and the ways in which these two kinds of performances can be understood to come together as part of a range of social activities involved in a particular social drama.

The second question is concerned more closely with how a description of film in terms of theatrical performance can be used in turn to describe the many ways in which film has become integral to the ways in which people live their lives. In other words, I am interested in how particular relationships between theatre and film can be used to describe film as a particular kind of signifying practice. While developing a concept of performance in film primarily from Turner's concepts of liminality and cultural performance, this thesis also draws on a wide range of disciplines in order to theorise an analytic process that can investigate such an inclusive idea of performance in film. This range includes theories of film, theatre, anthropology, sociology and theories of interpretation of the literary text. Although such a range threatens an unwieldy framework of inquiry, I have proceeded nevertheless because, as this thesis proposes, I consider that such a range of theoretic inquiry is useful if not necessary in order to address the many ways in which film can be considered part of human social practice. Following on from Lesley Stern and George Kouvaros, I propose to explore the concept and practice of performance in the

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[2] I am understanding Turner as using the word 'genre' in the sense of the following definition: '1.a. Kind; sort; style.' *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001 (Second Edition, 1989), http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/000, from the Australian National University Library's Electronic Database.

context of film 'as a means of broadening the point of discussion across a range of different sorts of filmic objects and texts'.[3] This thesis extends the area of their enquiry, however, as it looks across cultures and disciplines, in order to explore what Rey Chow has termed 'a theory of film as a transcription between media, between cultures, and between disciplines'.[4]

My investigation specifically focuses on developing a three-tiered definition of performance constitutive of film in order to investigate a framework for the tiered analysis of film. My thesis develops three Levels of performance specific to and constitutive of film:

Level 1 — performance *toward* film (filmmaking),

Level 2 — film *as* performance and

Level 3 — the performance of film as cultural performance.

Chapter 1 describes the kinds of performances that are involved with each Level. My discussions of film through these Levels will come together at Level 3, where the performances in Levels 1 and 2 are re-described in terms of an overall description of film as 'cultural performance'.

This three-tiered analytic framework is developed with particular reference to four films which were researched for this thesis:

Once Were Warriors (Director, Lee Tamahori, 1994) — fiction;

beDevil (Tracey Moffatt, 1993) — fiction;

Rats in the Ranks (Bob Connolly and Robyn Anderson, 1996) — non-fiction; and

Link-Up Diary (David MacDougall, 1986) — non-fiction.

In Section Three, Chapters 7 and 8 present close analyses of two of these films: *beDevil* and *Link-Up Diary*. I focus on these two films because they both refer to a specific social issue in Australian society — the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. They also enable a comparison between a fictional text and a non-fictional text, where both can be described as part of the same social drama.

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[3] Lesley Stern and George Kouvaros, 'Descriptive Acts' in *Falling for You*, Eds. Stern and Kouvaros, Sydney:Power Publications, 1999, 3

[4] Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: visuality, sexuality, ethnography and contemporary chinese cinema,* New York:Colombia University Press, 1995, x

Thesis Structure

Section One is concerned with presenting my three-tiered analytic process in terms of Turner's concepts. Chapter 1 describes my three Levels of performance in film, while Chapter 2 focuses on a discussion of performance in both film and theatre in terms of liminality. This discussion also introduces my positioning of performance in this thesis in the context of Judith Butler's concept of performativity. Section Two is concerned with more detailed discussions of each Level of performance. Chapter 3 deals with filmmaking as performance *towards* film, and Chapters 4 and 5 explore how film can be understood to perform *as* text. Chapter 6 draws on these three previous chapters in order to describe more closely how film can be located as cultural performance. Section Three, as stated earlier, presents the analyses of two films, based on the analytic theory developed in the previous two Sections.

The three Levels of enquiry are not hermetically sealed conceptual structures, but analytic descriptions of the processes and performances of film as they slide backwards and forwards through an overall understanding of film as cultural performance. I define the performance behaviour that underlies all three Levels as performance 'for' and/or 'toward' an audience. Performance 'for' an audience implies that the performer and audience are in the same spatio/temporal space. I use the phrase 'toward' an audience to imply a relationship with an audience which is mediated spatially and temporally by visual, audio and audiovisual technologies. Rebecca Schneider, in her discussion of feminist performance artists, also describes performance in terms of a necessary relationship between performer and audience, and considers the concept of performance as a way into understanding the reciprocity of this relationship:

> The notion of 'performance', when attentive to the reality effects of performativity, bears well the complexities of complicity. Performance implies always an audience/performer or ritual/participant relationship — a reciprocity, a practice in the constructions of cultural reality relative to its effects.[5]

The concept of audience is employed in this thesis both as a 'lived experience' and as a conceptual condition of performance which is not based on the physical presence of performers and audience in the one place and time. This concept of

audience does not translate into an 'idealised' audience, it rather refers to a process of reception by many particular audiences, a process which is reflexive in the sense that it is necessary in the very definition of film as artistic practice.

The practice of film relies on modes of performance and reception which proceed 'through' time rather than 'at the same time', recalling Gadamer's description of time as supporting the process of understanding:

> Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged, because it separates, but is actually the supportive ground of process in which the present is rooted. Hence temporal distance is not something that must be overcome.[6]

Stern borrows from physics' 'chaos theory' to describe the reflexivity of performance in film in terms of a 'loopy system', where the energy produced by a process (performance) is fed back into the process itself (via an audience). She describes performances in film as 'entailing a notion of reception and thus incorporating the audience ...'.[7] In this thesis, my underlying definition of performance in film draws on this 'incorporation' of the audience in order to describe an active process of production and reception, where the audience is understood as an active component in the production as well as the reception of film.

With relation to live theatre, Richard Schechner suggests the existence of a 'great big gap between what a performance is to people inside from what it is to people outside...'.[8] In film, this gap can be described as the gap in experience between filmmakers and the general viewing public. Yet in film, as in theatrical performance, both sides of the gap need some understanding of each other's role in order to understand the two cultural events which are film and live theatrical performance. In film, however, the gap is wider on the one hand, in the sense that an audience need never meet a filmmaker in order to experience film while live theatre crucially

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[5] Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, London and New York:Routledge, 1997, 22

[6] Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'The Historicity of Understanding as Hermeneutic Principle', in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy* Ed. Michael Murray, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1978, 181

[7] Lesley Stern, 'Acting out of Character. *The King of Comedy* as a Histrionic Test' in *Falling for You,* 292

[8] Richard Schechner, 'Magnitudes of performance' 19–49 in *By Means of Performance* Ed. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney:Cambridge University Press, 1990, 27

depends on an audience being in the same time and place as some of the people who are theatre 'makers', for example actors. On the other hand, with regard to film, Schechner's gap is narrowed in the sense that both filmmakers and audience are usually only in relation with each other through the filmic text itself. The experiences of filmmaking and film reception can only come about in relation to this text — a human artefact which in turn cannot exist without the performative acts which create its content and the performative acts of reception which create it as an event in the world, a living experience.

This tiered analysis of performance in film includes two further discussions about film that continue throughout this thesis. These discussions correlate with the two questions that I earlier described as the reasons for this research. The first question and ongoing discussion involves an exploration into the relationship between theatre and film. My second question addresses film as social practice in the context of theatrical performance. My second continuing discussion explores film as social practice[9] through a consideration of fiction and non-fiction in film**.**

Theatre and Film

Although commenting on several points of contact between the development of film and theatre, my exploration does not take the form of a detailed historiography of the relationship between these two forms. I rather consider specific practices and theories of film, theatre and performance and how they can be discussed in terms of each other. Whilst my comparison of film and theatre permeates the whole of this thesis, it is more closely conceptually defined and explored in Chapter 2, where I focus on two particular concepts from contemporary theatre and performance theory, and explore how their practice in live theatre can be related to film. I discuss how the theatrical mode of 'direct address' can be considered in terms of the cinematic 'gaze', and secondly, the particular kind of 'direct address' which is manipulated by the 'performance artist' in both theatre and film. This second discussion draws on Schneider's previously mentioned theory of feminist performance artists.

Brecht's theory of theatre underlies both my discussions of the practice of 'direct address' and the practice of the 'performance artist'. In particular, his concepts of

'social *gest*' and audience 'alienation' (A-effect) contribute to an overall understanding of how film and contemporary theatre practice use the performer's body as a focused site of engagement between audience and the overall performance text. My exploration of the relationship between theatre and film investigates how the theatrical practice of direct address, and the concept and practice implied by the term 'performance artist', can be related to film. My discussion is concerned with the ways in which both these forms of artistic practice involve the manipulation of aesthetic distance between performers, performance and audience, and how this manipulation can be described in terms of Brechtian 'social *gest*'.

In the processes of its production and reception and in the conventions of its narrative form, film contains a continuing inter-relationship with all the performing arts, including theatre, dance, music and contemporary performance art. This inter-relationship is now feeding into art defined by digital media, for example, multi-media dance and stage productions, CD-ROM, computer games and interactive websites. There is an added urgency to examine such inter-relationships between film and the performing arts in order to understand more fully how conventions of film can be seen as currently influencing the production and reception of new digital, interactive art forms. My discussion of performance and performativity in film, for example, could (if space allowed) be developed further through re-considering performance in the context of 'streamed art events' that occur on the web and are constructed from digitalised images and sounds. The latter undertaking is not an undertaking of my present work. In this thesis, however, I do explore the relationship between film and theatre as one of the foundational relationships in understanding all audiovisual media. This is done primarily through my investigation of concepts of 'performance' with regard to film, the earliest, continuing, and already significantly theorised form of totally mediated audiovisual signification. The tracing of theatrical forms in the filmic experience allows a re-consideration of film, and especially documentary film, in terms of what Schneider calls the practice of performance art. In other words, my thesis is directly concerned with how film can be considered in terms of 'the explicit body in performance'.[10] Such a consideration describes film as a primary site for society's discourse about

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[9] This thesis' discussion of film as social practice draws its frame of reference from the discourses of theatre and Turner's anthropology of experience rather than the more sociological approach of Graeme Turner's monograph *Film As Social Practice*, London:Routledge, 1988

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representing 'the real' through the bodies of performers, and provokes my second area of inquiry as mentioned above: the relationship between fiction and non-fiction in film.

Fiction and Non-fiction in Film

Throughout my theoretic discussions in Section Two, I address the confusion surrounding the relationship of both fiction and non-fiction film with the historically real world. This confusion occurs among the broad viewing public and within discourse on documentary filmmaking by documentary filmmakers and theorists. Bill Nichols, for example, identifies a blurring of the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction in documentary film practice as 'not simply logical confusions but the arena within which major political, or ideological, contestation occurs ...'.[11] Public confusion over filmic form through an assertive use of fiction film as a statement about the socially real is exemplified in the following passage from the *Sun Herald* quoting Aboriginal Australian athlete Cathy Freeman:

> Ms Freeman says Australia needs to make a film like the award-winning New Zealand movie, 'Once were Warriors', which depicts the rape and later suicide of a young Maori girl. 'We need Aboriginal films like that because it's more like a documentary,' she said. 'It's a cultural education for everyone to see'.[12]

Why is the film *Once Were Warriors* 'more like a documentary' for Cathy Freeman? In Chapters 3 and 4, I explore possible approaches to this question in the context of my Levels 1 and 2 of performance in film. These two Levels locate my discussion about the performances involved in the production of a film and the filmic text that is produced in consequence.

My consideration of the 'performance artist' in Chapter 2 introduces my discussion of non-fiction in fiction film. In Chapter 3, I explore the concept of acting in both film and theatre, distinguishing between what James Naremore describes as theatrical 'mimetic' performance and 'aleatory' performance'. He defines the former as 'clever professional mimesis, staged for the camera' and the latter as 'an everyday

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[10] Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance,* 6–7
[11] Bill Nichols *Blurred Boundaries: questions of meaning in contemporary culture.* Indiana Press, Bloomington, 1994, x

response, provoked by the camera or caught unawares'.[13] I explore how these two kinds of performance are used in the making of fiction and non-fiction film, while also drawing on Nichols' definition of the 'social actor' in documentary film.

Chapter 4 considers film as text, drawing on Vivian Sobchack's phenomenological hermeneutics of film. In this chapter, I also use Walter Benjamin's literary theory of 'aura' and 'shock', as well as Bakhtin's translinguistic theory, in order to describe and discuss how film performs *as* a specific audiovisual text. In Chapter 5, I extend my discussion of the filmic text as I describe the ways in which film can also be understood in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of 'heteroglossia'. This discussion develops a consideration of film as a specific signifying practice that can be described through three forms of intertextuality. The third, 'transpositional' form, is discussed as another possible way into understanding the relationship between the signifying practices of theatre and film.

In Chapter 6, I discuss in more detail my Level 3 of performance: film as cultural performance, and look more closely at Turner's original concept and its relationship with 'ritual' as defined in anthropological terms. This chapter also focuses more closely on the generic status of documentary film as non-fiction film and describes it in terms of Catherine Bell's conceptualisation of 'ritualised behaviour'. In this chapter, my comparison of performances in fiction and non-fiction film is not limited to categorising and naming acting styles and other performances captured by the filmic text. I also consider the processes by which performances occur in film, both textually and as acts of production and reception, in order to understand how the performances in a filmic text may pass through many performative receptions through time — receptions which also can blur the distinction between fiction and non-fiction film.

My discussions in Chapters 7 and 8 also refer to Rey Chow's examination of 'film as ethnography' where she looks at the anthropological practice of ethnography 'as it is practised by those who were previously ethnographised and who have, in the

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12 Quoted from article by Andrew West, 'Cathy ran from child sex abuse', *Sun Herald*, October 11,1998, 12

13 James Naremore *Acting in the Cinema*, Berkeley Los Angeles London:University of California Press, 1990, 14

postcolonial age, taken up the active task of ethnographising their own cultures.'[14] Her discussion of the relationship between film and this new kind of ethnography describes 'looking' in terms of how people have been 'looked at' in the past. My discussion of Chow's 'new ethnography' is used in order to analyse two films that both contain filmic images of Aboriginal people and have Aboriginal people in dominant filmmaking roles. In an analogous sense to Chow's, my analyses of these films address how people from previously and currently 'studied' societies present these societies on film. Both films pose the following question: how can the ways in which people present themselves for 'looking', through the practice of film, be described in terms of performance? In Chapter 7, I explore possible answers to this question through describing the filmmaker Tracey Moffatt as a 'performance artist' who uses both film and photography in the practice of her art. This chapter also examines the way in which this film can be understood as a site of intertextual 'transpositions' between the signifying practices of photography and film, drawing on my previous discussion of intertextuality in film in Chapter 5.

MacDougall's *Link-Up Diary* is formulated in the style of the participant/observational cinema and my discussion of this film in Chapter 8 looks at the problems of bringing analysis to bear on cross-cultural situations. In my consideration of this film, and in my discussion of documentary in general, I re-examine this much worked area of representation in film with particular reference to MacDougall's own discussion of cultural translation.[15] This discussion also draws on Chow's notion of 'translation' in the process of cross-cultural communication[16] which she develops using Benjamin's essay 'The Task of the Translator'.[17] The question of cross-cultural communication is posed by both the films I am analysing, but most directly by MacDougall's: this film presents the activities of a white Australian historian and a white American/Australian filmmaker working with two Aboriginal women.

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[14] Rey Chow *Primitive Passions: visuality, sexuality, ethnography and contemporary Chinese cinema*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, 180

[15] David MacDougall, 'The Subjective Voice in Ethnographic Film', Chapter 3, *Transcultural Cinema*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998 93–122

[16] Chow, *Primitive Passions*, 182–189

[17] Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator,' *Illuminations* Ed. Hannah Arendt, Trans. Harry Zohn, Schocken Books, New York 1969, 69–82

These three people work as a team, known as 'Link-Up', which in turn offered their services to the several specific Aboriginal people shown in the film who are part of what is now called the 'Stolen Generations'. This term refers to the generations of Aboriginal children who were removed from their families under the Australian government's assimilation policy for Aboriginal people, particularly in the period 1916–1969.[18] Aboriginal people were taken as children, sometimes as infants, from their parents and families and were adopted out to 'white' families or brought up in Government institutions. The fourteen years that have passed between the release of this film and the writing of this thesis present a span of time that exposes an historical shift in the reception of *Link-Up Diary*. These shifts in reception and conceptualisation of the film are examined as part of the overall cultural performance constituted by the film. These shifts are also indicative of how the cultural performance of film can occur as a continuing and changing process through time. Both my close analyses of Moffatt's fiction film *beDevil* and MacDougall's non-fiction film *Link-Up Diary* address the confusion and ethical dilemmas arising from the use of fictive and non-fictive conventions of filmmaking and film reception. My discussion of fiction and non-fiction in both these films also contributes significantly to the way in which I analyse the cultural performances of these films.

Research

My research for this thesis was focused on four low-budget films (the largest budget is for *Once Were Warriors* at NZ$2.3 million). All four films were made and released within a period of eight years in Australia or New Zealand, two countries with close geopolitical links and common social structures. With the exception of *Rats in the Ranks,* the films identify in their content the sociopolitical concerns of indigenous people. The two fiction films were directed by indigenous artists and *Link-Up Diary* directly concerns indigenous people through its content. While *Rats in the Ranks* seems at first to be the odd film out in this selection, it was made by white Australian ethnographic filmmakers whose previous reputation drew primarily on their work filming communities of people in Papua New Guinea. In *Rats in the*

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[18] A comprehensive reference on this disastrous scheme is *In the Best Interest of the Child? Stolen children: Aboriginal pain/White shame* authored by Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal corporation and Tikka Jan Wilson, Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation and Aboriginal History Inc. 1997, Aboriginal History Monograph 4

Ranks, they filmed events taking place in the Sydney suburb next to where they themselves lived, that is, in their own home community; Bob Connolly, one of the two primary filmmakers, himself describes this film as 'ethnographic'. In other words, Connolly and Anderson knowingly brought to the making of this film their previous experience of filmmaking as an ethnographic practice.

I have researched this particular group of films for two reasons. Firstly, they can be distinguished as two fiction and two non-fiction films. Secondly, with the exception of *Rats in the Ranks*, the content of three of these films involves social issues that suggest one particular major social drama. Including many and various smaller dramas, this major social drama is the 'life business' of how indigenous people live in 'settler societies'. In other words, three of these films show how people who identify themselves as indigenous manage their own representation and use this representation to identify, re-signify and so negotiate the societies in which they live. The performances of reception which have informed both my theory and analyses were drawn from my own receptive performances of the films and also from other people's receptive experiences when they have been published as reviews, interviews and academic articles.

The following listed interviews constitute my fieldwork for this thesis. They were conducted over a seven month period. Three took place in Sydney, three in New Zealand and three in Canberra. Written accounts of the following interviews are presented in Appendix 1. The interviewees include people who worked in production and pre-production phases of the four films examined in this thesis, as well as the novelist whose book was adapted into one of the films. They also include an individual member of one film's audience who has a specific political interest in the overall cultural performance of the film. These interviews especially inform my analyses of the four films in Section Three of this thesis. Excerpts from the interviews also provide 'grounding' for my more theoretic discussion of performances in film in Chapters 3, 4 and 6.

The interviews were based on a set of questions drawn up beforehand. This set of questions was different for each interview, and in turn was based on particular thoughts and queries of mine about specific aspects of the films which I thought could be usefully addressed by the person being interviewed due to their particular

roles as filmmakers and/or audience. These questions were followed in no particular order throughout the interview, but constituted foci for discussion as well as actual questions. Other questions arose during the interviews. My written accounts are based around these previously designed sets of questions, not the chronological sequences of the interviews. I used a style of interview described as 'unstructured': 'The unstructured interview takes on the appearance of a normal everyday conversation. However, it is always a controlled conversation that is geared to the interviewer's research interests.'[19] I based this unstructured style of interviewing on what Minichiello describes as 'the recursive model':

> The *recursive model of interviewing* refers to a form of questioning which is consistently associated with most forms of in-depth interviewing. It enables the researcher to do two things — to follow a more conversational model and, by doing this, to treat people and situations as unique. The interaction in each interview directs the research process. Recursive questioning relies on the process of conversational interaction itself, that is, the relationship between a current remark and the next one.[20]

These are the people whom I interviewed and their primary role with regards to the specific film they are associated with:

1. Robin Scholes   producer   *Once Were Warriors*

2. Riwia Brown   scriptwriter   *Once Were Warriors*

3. Leonie Pihama   Maori commentator/ critic   *Once Were Warriors*

4. Alan Duff   novelist   *Once Were Warriors*

5. Lex Marinos   actor   *beDevil*

6. Anthony Buckley   production manager   *beDevil*

7. Bob Connolly and Robyn Anderson   filmmakers   *Rats in the Ranks*

8. David MacDougall   filmmaker   *Link-up Diary*

9. Peter Read   social actor   *Link-up Diary*

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[19] Victor Minichiello, Rosalie Aroni, Eric Timewell, Loris Alexander, *In-Depth Interviewing. Principles, Techniques, Analysis* Second Edition, South Melbourne:Longman, 1995, 65

[20] Minichiello, *In-depth Interviewing*, 80–1

Chapter One. Three Levels of Performance in Film

Definitions from Victor Turner

Richard Schechner is both a theatre practitioner and theorist[21]. His seminal work in developing the area of theory described by 'performance studies'[22] both acknowledges and makes strong use of the work of anthropologist Victor Turner on performance in ritual and theatre. My thesis draws specifically on the concepts and ideas of both Turner and Schechner in order to develop a three-tiered definition of performance in film. I draw particularly on Turner's description of film as a genre of cultural performance, [23] and the following discussion presents my interpretation and use of his conceptual terms.

Turner describes 'cultural performance' as part of that social dynamic which he names 'social drama' — a concept of conflict, narrativity and process in social life which he began to develop in his early anthropological work on Ndembu ritual. He describes genres of cultural performance as not merely expressions and reflections of 'mundane, everyday sociocultural processes', but as reciprocal and reflexive with these processes

> in the sense that the performance is often a critique, direct or veiled, of the social life it grows out of, an evaluation (with lively possibilities of rejection) of the way society handles history.[24]

Turner describes social drama in terms of four 'successive phases of public action'. The first phase is a disruption of the current way in which life is lived by a community. Turner names this disruption a **breach**:

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[21] Schechner is best known in theatre practice as director and creator of The Performance Group, New York. His productions include *Dionysus in 69, Mother Courage and Her Children, The Tooth of Crime, Oedipus,* and *The Balcony.* He has also directed 'cross-culturally' in India and China. His work in theory and practice has examined the nexus between 'ritual' and theatre, drawing on the works of Bertold Brecht, Jerzy Grotowski as well as his in-depth examinations of the work of Victor Turner.

[22] I discuss the apparent schism between more traditionally oriented theatre studies and performance theory in my discussion of the relationship between film and theatre in Chapter 2 p. 36.

[23] Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York:PAJ Publications, 1986, 21–35. This work is referred to hereafter as *The Anthropology of Performance*. Turner attributes the term 'cultural performance' originally to Milton Singer; see Milton Singer, *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization.* New York: Praeger, 1972, 70–72, quoted in Turner, *The Anthropology*, 21–24.

[24] Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, 22

> [a] *breach* of regular norm-governed social relations made publicly visible by the infraction of a rule ordinarily held to be binding, and which is itself a symbol of the maintenance of some major relationship between persons, statuses, or subgroups held to be a key link in the integrality of the widest community recognised to be a cultural envelope of solidarity sentiments ... [25]

This phase of disruption can be seen in terms of a power challenge within a particular group, but a challenge which often is precipitated by forces beyond the control of the group, for example, an invasion, sickness, or natural disaster. A specific example drawn from the experiences of Maori and Aboriginal people is the dispersal of family groups as a result of the invasion and settlements of their lands by Europeans, together with subsequent government assimilation policies.

The second phase is the **crisis**, which arises from the first phase, and in Turner's words again:

> ... *crisis* , [occurs] when people take sides, or rather, are in the process of being induced, seduced, cajoled, nudged, or threatened to take sides by those who confront one another...[26]

This phase is also when a community or society is obviously in disarray, when people individually and collectively can feel disempowered and self-destructive, and when 'antagonisms become overt ancient rancours, rivalries, and unresolved vendettas are revived.'[27] He maintains there is a momentum in the phase of crisis which instigates the third **redressive** phase of social drama: 'the application of *redressive or remedial procedures...*'[28] He describes genres of 'cultural performance' as functions of the redressive stage of social drama, and names film, theatre, ritual and narration as major genres of cultural performance. I question the clarity of Turner's distinction between crisis and redressive behaviour. It is often easier to describe redressive 'gestures' within a state of on-going crisis than to see a natural progression from one stage to the other. In other words, societies are still in crisis when they look for redressive measures.

The fourth phase of social drama is an **outcome** agreed upon by the protagonists:

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[25] Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, 34
[26] ibid.
[27] ibid.
[28] ibid.

either of the *reintegration* of the disturbed social group, or of the *recognition and legitimisation of irreparable schism between* the contending parties.[29]

Turner goes on to say:

> social dramas, especially under conditions of major social change, may not complete the course indicated here. Where consensus over key values no longer exists, the redressive machinery premised on such a consensus loses its legitimacy, with the result that there is a reversion to crisis ...[30]

In Section Three of this thesis I consider how the cultural performances constituted by two specific films might be located at a returning stage of crisis in a social drama that simultaneously resists and yet relentlessly moves towards resolution.

Levels of Performance

Level 1. Performances 'Toward' Film

Performances at Level 1 are those which are involved with all phases of filmmaking. They include all the performances involved with making a film — the roles and people assigned to various terms: producer, director, writer, source material writer, musicians, composer, sound designer, set designer, costume designer, casting director, actors, special effects personnel. These are the people included in that long list of credits which most people fast forward, or rewind, or walk out on in the movie theatre or talk through. In terms of Turner's concept of cultural performance, anyone that contributes to the production of a film, including the catering staff, are performers of the particular cultural performance, which is a particular film, where the cultural performance also includes the filmic text and its reception. Many of these contributing performances belong in what Peggy Phelan calls 'the banal and normative theatre of the everyday',[31] and can be understood in terms of Erving Goffman's sense of role playing and presentation of self in everyday behaviour.[32] At this Level, I am only considering, however, performances which appear as part of (or which directly influence) the filmic performance text itself: those which are 'not

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[29] Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, 35

[30] Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, 34

[31] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance* London, New York:Routledge, 1993, 32

[32] See Erving Goffman *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Allen Lane London:The Penguin Press, 1969

everyday' presentations of self and which break free of Goffman's dramaturgical 'scaffolds'[33] into the actual arenas of theatrical and filmic practice. These are performances 'for' or 'toward' an audience.

In terms of live theatre, performance is commonly understood as that performed by actors alone, although again in terms of cultural performance, everyone who contributes to or attends a theatrical event is performing also. In film, the filmic performance text is produced by many such theatrical performances that are edited together with little regard to the chronology of actual acting performances. The actions and decisions of editor, scriptwriter, shot designer and director are as intrinsic to the filmic performance text itself as are the performances by actors. In this sense, the 'non-acting' production processes in film are perhaps more crucial to film than to theatre. Sophie Wise goes so far as to call such performances 'mimetic', with 'each repeating and exchanging certain rhetorical moves, gestures and strategies.'[34] In theatre, however, the performance of 'acting' by actors is commonly understood as that which constitutes the 'performance text', while a literary version of dialogue, stage design and stage directions is attributed frequently to the author of a performance's 'dramatic text'. The production of a filmic text, however, is usually attributed primarily to a film's director and/or a major production company. In keeping with the way in which an audience's access to filmic actors' performance is only available through other filmmaking performances, actors are conventionally considered as subsidiary producers of the filmic text, except for those films made within the 'star system'. Those performances which create set and lighting design are usually considered subsidiary in both film and theatre.

In film, however, as in live theatre (and setting aside for the moment the notion of film and theatrical performance as 'text'), the most immediately accessible performances *are* those of the people who 'act' in a film. These actors enact the drama of the film and can be people who are professionally trained to perform 'for an audience' and/or those actors who may not have professional training but whose images are presented as part of the filmic text. In non-fiction films, 'actors' may be

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[33] Goffman, *The presentation of self*, 224
[34]Sophie Wise, 'What I Like About Hal Hartley, or rather, What Hal Hartley Likes About Me: The Performance of the (Spect)actor.' in Stern and Kouvaros *Falling for You*, 247

people who knowingly or unknowingly are included in the filmic text as they are performing everyday behaviour and/or behaviour which is directed towards an audience. This audience may be the same as the film's audience as, for example, an actor knows that her performance is for a cinematic audience. On the other hand, an actor's performance may be towards an audience that is also part of a particular profilmic event, for example, when a live theatrical performance is filmed in the context of its audience.

At this Level of performance in film, then, I begin to approach the blurring and confusion in reception which results from the fiction involved in the making of non-fiction films and the non-fictional content of fiction films. I examine particular choices made in the pre-production and production processes of a film concerning aleatory and mimetic performance and audio-visual design. Aspects of audio-visual design include music and sound tracks, editing style, camera style, lighting, film stock, costume and set design. For example, a design decision may be made to construct some sets so that their status as constructed sets is obvious, or their construction may be hidden or combined with the real-life setting from which their design was taken. In *beDevil*, for example, the obviously constructed set of the house by the railway siding in the memory sequences of 'Choo Choo Choo Choo' is juxtaposed against its 'template' — the ruined house outside of Charleville. In Chapter 7, I discuss further how these choices about editing and other aspects of audio-visual design contribute to an intended unsettled reception concerning the status of various sequences as fiction or non-fiction, memory or present-time.

Individual interpretations of fiction and non-fiction films, as well as individual and community-based receptions of a film as cultural performance, often hinge on interpretive decisions about performance choices made during the production of a film. Such interpretive decisions may be in the form of questions. For example, in *Rats in the Ranks,* when do Larry Hand's musings about which people will vote for him, just before he rings his journalist friend, move into performance for an audience? In other words, when does Hand move into mimetic behaviour 'toward' an audience? Can any of Hand's behaviour in this film be regarded as aleatory performance? And who is the audience for Hand — the filmmakers or the viewing public? Was he so engrossed with his problems that he was simply using the filmmakers as people to talk to? These questions are visited in more detail as they

are applied in my analysis of filmmaking performances in *Link-Up Diary* in Chapter 8.

I also include in this Level 1 of performance towards film those various acts of reception that are involved with the production of a film, for example, the viewing of 'rushes' and various 'cuts', and the constant reflexive act of imaginary viewing which is involved with the job of directing, writing, designing, lighting, acting in, and editing a film. To use an analogy from the practice of live theatre, the performances in film at this Level are similar to those of rehearsal and workshopping: the overall pre-production of the 'performance text' before its release to the arena of its public audience before 'opening night'. To continue the analogy, the playing of the play itself, for an audience, is the next Level of performance, and in filmic terms, this next Level of performance is constituted by the projected film itself — the filmic text.

Level 2. Film 'As' Performance

Performances in film at this Level are those that are seen and heard as filmic text. This text is the artefact projected onto a screen via analogue or digital tape, and which is the outcome of all the performances of Level 1. No matter what conflicting and/or cohesive levels of authorial intention are present in performances at Level 1, the filmic text performs its own existence most definitely 'for an audience', and these audiences can be many and varied and widely (and wildly) at odds with those intended by the filmmakers of Level 1. One example of this discrepancy can be found when a film develops 'cult' status that involves its viewing in very different contexts to those predicted by the filmmakers. Timothy Corrigan writes of how audiences no longer 'read' filmic texts so much as 'adopt movies, create cults around them, tour through them.'[35] He does not believe that it is possible to create cult movies by intention and describes them as

> those films that become the property of any audience's private space, and in this assumption of public images into private space, they become furnishings or acquisitions within which any modern viewer temporarily inhabits and acts out different subjectivities.[36]

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[35] Timothy Corrigan, *A Cinema Without Walls. Movies and Culture after Vietnam.* London: Routledge, 1991, 81. This work is referred to hereafter as *A Cinema Without Walls*.

[36] Corrigan, *A Cinema Without Walls*, 81

These performances of the filmic text by a cinematic audience take place necessarily in time after the performances in Level 1. In order to focus further on this active relationship between a filmic text and its cinematic audience, I draw on Vivian Sobchack's phenomenology of film and her description of film's 'lived body'. [37] Sobchack draws on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception[38] in order to describe the paradox of film as commodified communication that occurs for example in literature, film and recorded music. This is the paradox of how the performance of the unchanging 'static' text is understood nevertheless as part of a transformative process that moves the reception of that text towards as many performances as there are individuals and communities who receive it. She well describes the powerful way in which film as text is implicated with filmmakers and audience to create an overall understanding of film as a unifying experience:

> In a search for rules and principles governing cinematic expression, most of the descriptions and reflections of classical and contemporary film theory have not fully addressed the cinema as life expressing life, as *experience expressing experience*. Nor have they explored the mutual possession of this experience of perception and its expression by filmmaker, film, and spectator — all *viewers viewing,* engaged as participants in dynamically and directionally reversible acts that reflexively and reflectively constitute the *perception of expression* and the *expression of perception.* [39] [my emphasis in italics]

In this thesis, I am taking Sobchack's phrase 'experience expressing experience' (which she in turn has taken from Merleau-Ponty[40]) to be synonymous with my underlying definition of all performances involved with film, where 'performance for an audience' is dependent on many performances occurring through time. Performance in this sense needs to be described as more than an act of representation; it is also a process of reflexive communication.

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[37] Vivian Sobchack *The address of the eye: a phenomenology of film experience.* Princeton, New Jersey:Princeton University Press, 1992. This work is referred to hereafter as *The address of the eye*.

[38] Sobchack's two major original sources of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology are *The Visible and the Invisible* Ed. Claude Lefort, Trans. Alphonso Lingus, Evanston, IL:Northwestern University Press, 1968 and *Phenomenology of Perception,* Trans. Colin Smith, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.

[39] Sobchack, *The address of the eye*, 5

[40] Maurice Merleau-Ponty quoted in Sobchack, *The address of the eye*, 3

Sobchack succinctly describes such an approach to the filmic experience when she describes the three-way relationship between people performing as filmmakers and audience and the filmic text itself:

> The film experience not only *represents* and reflects upon the prior direct perceptual experience of the filmmaker *by means of* the modes and structures of direct and reflective perceptual experience, but also *presents* the direct and reflective experience of a perceptual and expressive existence *as* the film. In its presence and activity of perception and expression, the film transcends the filmmaker to constitute and locate its own address, its own perceptual and expressive experience of being and becoming. As well, the film experience includes the perceptive and expressive viewer who must *interpret* and *signify* the film *as* experience, doing so through the very same structures and relations of perception and expression that inform the indirect representational address of the filmmaker and the direct presentational address of the film ... direct experience and existential presence in the cinema belong to both the film and the viewer.[41]

The active performative experience of film, as described by Sobchack, needs also to be understood in relation to time. Gadamer's description of time, as 'the supportive ground of process'[42] in the task of understanding, is a useful reminder that performances in film include those receptions and projections of film that can continue through many different times and places.

History in Film — Film in Time and Space

There is a close nexus then between the filmic experience and the consideration of the past which informs history. One particular manifestation of this nexus in fiction film is known as the 'historical film'.[43] Such films take for their narrative content events and situations which are already located within the discursive parameters of history, both in the sense of this term as an academic area of research and in the broader discursive sense in which society locates 'the past'.

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[41] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 9
[42] Gadamer, 'The Historicity of Understanding as Hermeneutic Principle', 181
[43] See particularly Robert A. Rosenstone *Visions of the Past. The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History*, Cambridge, Massacusetts, London, England:Harvard University Press, 1995, 45–79, essays in *Revisioning History, Film and the Construction of a New Past*, Ed. Robert A. Rosenstone, Princeton, New Jersey:Princeton University Press, 1995, and Leger Grindon, *Shadows on the Past: Studies in the historical fiction film*, Philadelphia:Temple University Press, 1994, 1–26.

Although they do not belong to the categories of fiction and non-fiction film whose narratives allow the additional classification of 'historical film', *Link-Up Diary* and *Rats in the Ranks* both address these two senses of history in two distinct ways. Firstly, as I discuss further in Chapter 6, the documentary format itself lays claim, to a certain extent, to an ability to directly represent past events in the present. Secondly, the narratives of these two films relate specifically to events which are part of already established bodies of history, that is, to the histories of the Stolen Generations and of the NSW Labor Party respectively.

Drawing again on Sobchack's application of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of film, there is, however, another way in which to look at how history is implicated in the practice of film. *beDevil* is a filmic text which is drenched in the historical contexts of Moffatt's own personal self and the larger history of her Aboriginal heritage. *Once Were Warriors* in its very title also pulls the history of Maori people into a consideration of a filmic text which deals with current issues of domestic violence. Merleau-Ponty describes history in terms of the interactions between people based on his concept of perception and experience:

> History is other people; it is the interrelationships we establish with them, outside of which the realm of the ideal appears as an alibi.[44]

In my understanding, Merleau-Ponty proposes in this quotation that human relationships 'make concrete' or 'ground' those considerations of the past which constitute history. Such a focus on human relationships does not gainsay the concerns of materialist history, but offers a path into such concerns as they appear in a filmic text. This experiential necessity for historical understanding also lies behind Iain Wright's exhortations to new historicists, as they work on various literary texts, to use their 'own historical situatedness, to engage with the past but without falling into mere self-projection and subjectivism...'[45] His considerations on history and textual interpretation refer to Gadamer's work on hermeneutics where, to quote Gadamer's words again: 'Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged, because it separates, but is actually the supportive ground of process in which the present is

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[44] Merleau-Ponty, *Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty,* 61
[45] Iain Wright, 'Historicising textuality or textualising history?: the turn to history in literary studies' in *Proceedings of the Australasian Association for Phenomenology and Social Philosophy*, 1993, 22

rooted.'[46] In other words, and with respect to film, it takes 'time' to allow the reflexive, intersubjective relationships which can be used to explore the different contexts of and ways into understanding the performances which constitute film as cultural performance.

My discussions of how time and place can be described in terms of the filmic text also include a consideration of Bakhtin's dialogic theory. At this Level 2 of performance in film, I explore, with relation to film, that textual nexus of time and place that Bakhtin calls the 'chronotope'. I draw particularly on his concept of the 'creative chronotope' as I discuss how Bakhtin's theory can be used to draw together performances in film which occur at the textual Level (Level 2) and those which are performed by filmmakers (Level 1).

I include among the experiences of film that are discussed at Level 2, those which rely on film's manipulation of actual bodies of people whose images are heard and seen on film as part of a film's content. At this Level then, I examine the representation of relationships, both between people and between people and their physical settings, which are textualised as film through the processes and performances found in Level 1. In this way, I explore at this Level the gender and power relationships which are seen and heard as film. My tiered analysis thereby enables an investigation of the filmic text as a site of potential re-negotiation of cultural convention and understanding.

This Level of performance also includes and describes the responses of individual reviewers and authors of academically based journal articles and books, where these authors offer their interpretation and responses to filmic texts. I include published responses to specific films in this Level of performance because I think these responses can be understood as performative behaviour linked specifically to filmic text, *sui generis*, and because this literature often includes descriptions of creative, performative behaviours at Level 1 as if they are knowable through the filmic text. This literature also includes interviews with people involved in the production of a film. If these interviews are post-production, then they are examples of film 'as' performance, and belong at Level 2. If they are made during or before production,

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[46]Gadamer, 'The Historicity of Understanding as Hermeneutic Principle', 181

then they belong in Level 1, where, although they influence reception, their content belongs in time to the process of filmmaking. Such literary responses are part of a particular filmic text's audience, but because of the extent of the reach of such responses as widely published discourse, these reviews, books and articles also belong in Level 3 of performance in film where, as particular acts of reception, they contribute to a sense 'of' film as cultural performance. Whether or not a particular performance in film, for example film criticism or a film website, belongs in Level 1 or 2 is not crucial to my examination of film as cultural performance. Such distinctions, however, do help in articulating the processes that go towards an overall consideration of film as cultural performance.

In reply to Sobchack's assertions which I have quoted earlier, film theorists *have* taken on a conceptualisation of film which implies a mutual relationship between text and audience. An early example of this discussion can be found in Stephen Heath's description of film as a performance performed on the (not quite passive) spectator via memory: 'To see a film again you need to forget it, but you always need the film again ... the process, exactly the time of its performance of you — subject — in time.'[47] This thesis draws on the ways in which several Australian theorists more recently also have taken on an explicit examination of film production and reception in the context of performance.

To re-state the aims of this thesis in Sobchack's terms, this work traces the unity of filmmaker, film and spectator, a unity named by Sobchack, through the process of performance, as 'experience expressing experience', in order to develop a comprehensive description of film as a genre of cultural performance.

In summary, at this Level 2 which considers film 'as' performance, I will examine the sounds and images of people, events, stories and places which have been achieved through Level 1 and *are* the filmic text, the film we see and hear. We ourselves can all enter and perform the film in this Level of performance. This is also the Level where the many 'matters of style' can be examined and related back to the performances of the people who produced the film as well as forward to the people who receive the film. David Bordwell in his book *On the History of Film*

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[47] Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* Bloomington:Indiana University Press, 1981, 122

Style[48] claims there is a need to look beyond cultural explanation as a device to trace the history and effective power of film style. In this thesis I am looking more at how the history and effective power of style can inform an explanation of film as a social dynamic which is not constrained by place and time for the extent of its reach and influence. In order to investigate film 'as' performance, it is necessary to enter the narrative world of the film's text. In describing the experience of film as cultural performance (Level 3 of performance in film) however, it is also necessary to relate this exercise with the purposeful performances of Level 1.

Level 3. The Performance 'Of' Film As Cultural Performance

This Level of performance is the most inclusive. In Turner's terms, it describes film as a cultural means whereby a society attempts to redress a schism arising from a particular social drama. It draws from and accumulates the two previously described Levels of performance and, in Turner's terms again, enables an exploration of how with regard to film, 'Each performance becomes a record, a means of explanation.'[49] In terms of Schechner's 'magnitudes' of performance, my consideration of the performance of film at this Level coincides with his seventh, final magnitude[50] which he names the 'macro-drama', drawing directly from Turner's concept of 'social drama' :

> Macrodrama: large-scale social actions viewed performatively — what Turner calls 'social drama' where whole communities act through their collective crises.[51]

At this Level 3 of cultural performance, film is performed by those societies whose members are involved in performances of production and reception. In this sense of analysing film in terms of whole societies, my intention in analysing film as cultural performance coincides with Timothy Corrigan's interest in discussing contemporary American cinema: 'a common groping for understanding about not so much the

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[48] David Bordwell, *On the History of Film Style* Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1997, 149

[49] Victor Turner, 'Are there universals of performance in myth, ritual, and drama?' in *By Means of Performance,* Ed. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney:Cambridge University Press, 1990, 17

[50] Schechner's other categories of magnitude are 1) brain event, 2) microbit, 3) bit, 4) sign, 5) scene, and 6) drama. His discussion and description of these categories are in his article "Magnitudes of Performance" 19–49 in *By Means of Performance*

[51] Schechner, 'Magnitudes of Performance', 44

films themselves but the contemporary cultural dynamics that inform them.'[52] Similarly, at this Level 3, I focus on the wider social dynamics involved in performances in film at Levels 1 and 2. Level 3 describes the result of a cumulative overview of performances in Levels 1 and 2 and locates this overview within a sociopolitical consideration of the society or societies within which the particular films are embedded at Levels one and two. This Level of performance describes how a society, or group in a society, uses film to address particular social issues and problems. At this Level of performance, I am explicitly, and in Turner's terminology, examining film as 'cultural performance', as part of society's redressive actions towards specific social conflicts.

The 'Subjunctive' Mood of Performance

I intend also to explore at this Level film's links with ritual and theatre because they also use in their processes performative behaviour which both Schechner and Turner describe as liminal and reflexive — to quote one of Turner's descriptions of liminal behaviour:

> I sometimes talk about the liminal phase being dominantly in the 'subjunctive mood' of culture, the mood of maybe, might-be, as-if, hypothesis, fantasy, conjecture, desire...[53]

The analysis of film at this Level explicitly explores such ideas about the redressive stage of social drama as 'a generative source of cultural performance'[54] and the reflexivity of cultural performance on social life:

> the major genres of cultural performance (from ritual to theatre and film) and narration (from myth to the novel) not only originate in the social drama but also continue to draw meaning and force from the social drama. I use 'force' here in the Diltheyan sense ... the influence which any experience has in determining what other experiences shall succeed it.[55]

In Section 3 of this thesis I examine how, at this Level, *beDevil* explores issues of representation via several sets of binaries, for example photography/film, realism/fantasy, indigenous/non-indigenous. It is also the Level at which it is

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[52]Corrigan, *A Cinema*, 7
[53]Turner, *By Means of Performance,* 11
[54]Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance,* 93
[55]Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance,* 94

possible to examine an artist's use of 'play' in order to communicate conflicts so painful that their realistic expression may move audiences to turn away rather than face the horrors put before them.

Analysis at this Level of performance in film poses the following questions of *Link-Up Diary*: if this film is dealing with the trauma and social crisis represented by Australia's Stolen Generations, does this film go towards resolving the crisis or does it expose new dilemmas? Can the film be understood in terms of a new crisis stage evolving from an unresolved social drama? This last question applies also to *beDevil*, and yet another question can be posed towards both films. Although Turner locates 'redressive' performances within a state of crisis, is it possible, nevertheless, to comment on whether or not particular cultural performances of film can be understood in terms of a movement towards 'redress' in a particular social drama, or whether they can be better understood as performances of a continuing state of crisis?

Investigation at this Level of performance in film also enables a particular way into the relationship between fiction and non-fiction films, based on Turner's description of film as cultural performance. As described earlier, Turner links cultural performance to the liminal subjunctive 'as if' mood of play.[56] How do we understand documentary film in terms of 'liminality', when the subjunctive mood falters towards the indicative, and when the 'as if' of fictional narrativity is used in the service of a statement or discussion about society in the indicative mood?

The 'Indicative' Mood of Documentary

I raised this question earlier in passing as I described how documentary film engages with history as documentary filmmaking lays claims to be able to transparently represent the historically real world. As also mentioned earlier, I take up this discussion in more detail in Chapter 6. For the purposes of the present discussion of Level 3 of performance in film as cultural performance, however, it is interesting to note Gary MacLennan's description of documentary film as a site for the discussion of 'alethic truth'. He draws on Roy Bhaskar's critical realist definition of this term as the fourth component of 'truth':

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[56]Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance,* 92–93

> Truth as 'alethic', as the truth of or reason for 'things' and phenomena, 'not propositions', as genuinely ontological, and in this sense as objective in the intransitive dimension.[57]

Bhaskar describes the 'intransitive dimension' as: 'real things and structures, mechanisms and processes, events and possibilities of the world and for the most part they are quite independent of us.'[58] This concept of alethic truth can be applied to film in the following. If, in the construction of its commentary on social reality, documentary film uses the subjunctive 'as if' via the same narrative devices and technology that are used in fiction film, is it possible then to describe documentary filmmaking in terms of an overt claim in the 'indicative mood' towards an investigation of 'alethic truth'? MacLennan does make this claim for the consideration of documentary as a discussion of 'alethic truth', at least in the form of a critical standard.[59]

A consideration of film in terms of Bhaskar's two definitions does provide another way into describing the non-fiction aspects of fiction film — for example, the underlying social dynamics which gave rise to the narrative content in the film *Once Were Warriors*. Such a consideration, however, could prove to be an even more tortuous way to unwind the non-fiction from the fiction in documentary film, because the conventions of this form of filmmaking are also 'real' in these terms and not always well understood by the general film-going or television watching public. Instead of considering the confusions about fiction and non-fiction in terms of 'alethic truth', my thesis rather undertakes a discussion of documentary filmmaking in terms of ritual, specifically because I am drawing my terms of reference from Turner who also includes ritual as another genre of cultural performance. He defines ritual as a process that takes shape in symbolic terms — 'the performance of a complex sequence of symbolic acts.'[60] Certainly such a description of ritual behaviour resonates with a description of documentary filmmaking as a mode of filmmaking that transforms units of the 'everyday' behaviour into sites for the

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[57]Roy Bhaskar (1994), cited in Gary MacLennan, in his review of 'Carl R. Plantinga *Rhetoric and Representation in Nonfiction Film,* Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1997' *Metro* No.116, 1998, 43. This work is hereafter referred to as 'Review of Carl. R. Plantinga'.
[58]ibid.
[59]ibid.
[60]Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, 75

discussion of cause and effect, or in other words, into symbolic images of particular social relationships.

Stereotypes

Drawing on Turner's concept of ritual, I explore, at this Level 3 of performance in film, the issue of film and re-presentation through Bell's re-interpretation of ritual as 'ritualised behaviour'. I study re-presentation specifically in the context of the political usefulness of 'visibility' versus its problems. Such problems include the threat of a static stereotyping of minority groups by dominant sections of a community or society, as discussed by Karen Jennings in relation to Aboriginal people.[61] In her detailed work also on the presentation of Aboriginal people in film and video, Marcia Langton describes the concept 'Aboriginality' as 'a field of intersubjectivity in that it is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation.'[62] Langton examines the multiple stereotyping that takes place in films by and about Aboriginal people. She concludes that such representations are based on relationships 'not between actual people, but between white Australians and the symbols created by their predecessors ...'[63] and that these textual stereotypes are the basis of racism rather than actual cross-cultural interactions between people. Peggy Phelan goes further in describing the political risks involved in representation, claiming that

> the binary between the power of visibility and the impotency of invisibility is falsifying. There is real power in remaining unmarked; and there are serious limitations to visual representation as a political goal.[64]

Her reservations are reinforced by Bell Hooks' descriptions of black people in Hollywood films. Hooks describes, for example, the danger implied by the particular image of inter-racial murder in *Paris Trout* (Steven Gyllenhaal, 1991):

> Audiences are so accustomed to representations that depict the brutal death of black folks in Hollywood films that no one is outraged when our bodies are violently slaughtered...[65]

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[61] Karen Jennings, *Sites of Difference. Cinematic representations of Aboriginality and gender.* Melbourne:Australian Film Institute Research and Information Centre, 1993 (*The Moving Image*, No.1) 9–23

[62] Marcia Langton, *'Well, I heard it on the radio and I saw it on the television...' An essay for the Australian Film commission of the politics and aesthetics of filmmaking by and about Aboriginal people and things.* North Sydney:Australian Film Commission, 1993, 32. This work is hereafter referred to as '*Well, I heard ...*'

[63] Marcia Langton, *'Well, I heard ...',* 33

[64] Phelan, *Unmarked*, 6

Hook's concern about explicit depictions of inter-racial violence against 'black' people ignores, however, related concerns that many people have about explicit depictions of violence in film where both victim and aggressor are from the same race. Both these sets of concerns are of issue in my later analysis of *beDevil*.

A consideration of film as cultural performance is also, then, one which locates film as a site for the discussion of power relations within other discourses such as race and gender. This consideration includes all the discourses that inform the performative behaviours which are part of performances 'towards' an audience as well as those performances in the reception of film. These performances at Levels 1 and 2, include, in Jennings' terms, the 'modes of address and spectator positioning implicit in filmic *discourses* on race and gender'[66] and which she further describes as 'necessary' in order

> to take into account that films are part of broader cultural discourses that are formed by, and contribute to, the power relationships within which they are embedded.[67]

Jennings' words can clearly be linked to Foucault's conceptualisation of how power relations can be understood as the integral dynamics of discourse.[68] Drawing explicitly on Foucault's theory, Butler defines a concept of 'performativity' in discourse in terms of repetition[69]; this concept is investigated further in this thesis both through its relationship to theatrical performance in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 6's discussion of her application of this concept to film.

These possibilities for performative resignification in relation to film, however, can also be seen in what Tom O'Regan names 'multicultural cinema'. Within the larger discourse which is 'national cinema', he understands Australian cinema to include a cinema which addresses multiculturalism as it exists in Australia, describing this particular multiculturalism as

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[65] Bell Hooks, *Reel to Real. race, sex, and class at the movies.* New York:Routledge, 1996, 35
[66] Jennings, *Sites of Difference,* 11
[67] ibid.
[68] Michel Foucault *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, first published as *Histoire de la sexuality. La Volonté de Savoir* (1976) Trans. Robert Hurley, New York:Pantheon Books, 1987, 92–98.
[69] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'.* London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 188

> ...simultaneously a critical ethic, a civic comportment, an aesthetic project propelling Australian cultural production forward, as well as a national project remaking Australia and the Australian into something more culturally open. It acknowledges the integrity of society's social margins, it promotes the action in and on Australian culture and society by its culturally diverse peoples ...[70]

In these terms, the whole subject of discourse defined as 'national cinema' becomes a cultural performance itself derived from sources that are constantly becoming more various. Such sources include film, television ('art' shows and 'movie' shows, broadcasts, debates, news items), print media, academic literature, conferences, forums, and many private conversations. Moffatt's films are discussed by O'Regan under the banner of multicultural cinema. It is interesting to consider her work in *beDevil* in the context of both O'Regan's category of multicultural cinema and Bell Hooks' warnings about film as always about 'virtual experience':

> Movies remain the perfect vehicle for ... the quintessential experience of border crossing for everyone who wants to take a look at difference and the different without having to experientially engage 'the other'.[71]

My analysis of this film as cultural performance does not ignore Hooks' warning, but considers the link between such 'virtual experience' and the individual's engagement with larger society to constitute an actual performative act of cultural performance.[72] Paul Willemen addresses both the positive aspects of multiculturalism and its pitfalls in his writing on the possibilities of 'comparative cinema' theory.[73] The pitfalls include funding ghettos under multiculturalism based government policies. In terms of film theory, the positive aspects include a social, artistic movement away from the homogenisation of 'national' projects. He applies Bakhtin's descriptions of three different approaches in cross-cultural understanding to the cross-cultural understanding of film.[74] These three ways of encountering another culture can be described after Willemen as follows:

1)   'projective identification' where one simply brings all one's own beliefs and pre-conceptions to a text,

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[70]Tom O'Regan, *Australian National Cinema,* London and New York:Routledge, 1996, 324
[71]Bell Hooks, *Reel to Real,* 2
[72]I do in fact challenge Hooks' term 'virtual experience' to the extent that I define the reception of film at Level 2, in terms of a reflexive and performative interaction based on the receiver's sensual experience.
[73]Paul Willemen *Looks and Frictions. essays in cultural studies and film theory.* London:BFI Publishing and Bloomington, Indianapolis:Indiana University Press, 1994, 207
[74]Willemen, *Looks and Frictions,* 212–216

2) 'ventriloquist identification' which is the same as the first but ethically reversed, where the interpreter of a text tries to become a 'mouthpiece' for the other culture, and

3) an engagement with 'the dynamics of a particular cultural practice within its own social formation' where the social formation is a 'historical construct'.[75]

Willemen goes on to insist that such an engagement must be also involved with a transformation of the analyst's 'own cultural situation', calling to mind again Benjamin's essay 'The Task of the Translator',

> The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue.[76]

beDevil provides a powerful example of how a bi-cultural Australian filmmaker can bring knowledge derived from several cultures together in a text which is itself, in Willemen's terms, a cross-cultural 'encounter'. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, Moffatt uses her own experience of Irish Australian and Aboriginal Australian culture to make a film which can be understood as a work of historical transformation.

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My three tiered discussion, in this chapter, of performances in film 'converges', as described earlier, on a consideration of the cultural performance of film. This sense of convergence, however, does not indicate a 'closing down' of arguments about what constitutes performance in film at Level 1's discussion of filmmaking and at Level 2's discussion of film as text. My distinction between these three Levels of performance in film is intended to enable a framework for describing how people use film. My use of the word 'performance' in this chapter has drawn strongly from Turner's definition of performance as reflexive behaviour,[77] where the relationship between film and social drama, like the relationship between theatre and social drama, allows for change, re-description and accommodation. This relationship, in Turner's terms once again, patterns a social process which can be described better as a spiral than as a forever reinscribed circle, an unchanging cycle of repetitive

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[75]Willemen, *Looks and Frictions,* 216
[76]Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', *Illuminations,* 81
[77] Turner, 'Are there universals of performance in myth, ritual, and drama?', 17

<center>31</center>

behaviour. With each following chapter, I explore in more detail how the concept of 'performance' can be used to describe the experience of film. My framework of analysis is developed as a method of approaching the ways in which performance, a concept drawn from the practice of live theatre, can be related to the practice of film. In this sense, the above mentioned sense of 'convergence' between my three Levels of analysis can better be described as the processual way in which this thesis describes all performances in film in terms of their location as potential sites for social action, including resistance to previously established relationships of power.

Chapter Two. Performance — Film and Theatre

> *Cinema is a kind of pan-art. It can use, incorporate, engulf virtually any other art: the novel, poetry, theater, painting, sculpture, dance, music, architecture.*[1]

This chapter does not present a historiography of the technical and social relationships between theatre and film, which, as mentioned earlier, is beyond the scope of this thesis. This chapter rather explores how film can be considered as a distinct signifying practice that nevertheless uses performance practices which can also be recognised in terms used to describe 'live' theatre. I focus on particular examples of theatrical theory and practice that can also be recognised as occurring in film.

As discussed in Chapter One (p. 13), Turner describes both theatre and film as genres of cultural performance, where cultural performance is defined in terms of the combined dynamics of production and reception of a particular set of ritually-based and/or theatrically-based performances. In this chapter, I explore the way in which performances in film can be considered in terms of performances in 'live' theatre. Firstly, I discuss the concept of 'performance' itself, using Richard Schechner's idea of performance as 'restored behaviour', and the ways in which he bases this concept on Turner's idea of performance as 'liminal', 'as if' behaviour'. Drawing on both Turner and Schechner, my discussion focuses on the ways in which performances in film also can be described 'in the subjunctive mood'.

As also referred to in Chapter 1, my discussion draws on Brecht's concepts of theatrical '*gest*' and 'alienation'. I use these two concepts in order to discuss the similar ways in which both theatre practitioners and filmmakers explicitly use specific devices to draw attention to the technologies involved in producing and presenting performances 'for an audience'. In other words, I am investigating in this chapter the social relationships that can be understood to exist between the 'makers' and the 'receivers' of performances in film and theatre. In order to develop my argument, I consider two particular theatrical practices in relation to film. The first is 'direct address' and my discussion focuses here on how this practice can be related

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[1] Susan Sontag, 'A note on novels and films' in *Against Interpretation and other essays*. New York:Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966, 245

to the various 'looks' experienced in film. The second practice is that of the 'performance artist': a performer who 'directly addresses' an audience with her own historically real body as a 'non-fictional' performance text. My discussion of these two practices in terms of film in turn also begins this thesis' broad consideration of the relationship between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' in film.

Performance as Restored Behaviour

In Chapter 1, I described performance in film as performance 'for' or 'towards' an audience. This definition enables a discussion of the performances which, in conjunction with audio, visual or audiovisual technologies, produce a reproducible artefact that is also a performing text such as film — a text which in turn performs for and with a live audience. This definition can also be used to describe all those performances of production and rehearsal which culminate in live theatrical performance for an audience. In both theatre and film, these performances include the design of visual sets and costume, lighting, casting, music composition, sound design, scriptwriting or adaptation, staging of actors' movements, directing and acting. In Chapter 3, I discuss the differences between these performances as they occur in theatre and film in terms of the cinematic apparatus. In film, of course (and in some live theatre productions), camera work, the staging of actor's movements as part of shot design, sound recording and editing are also performances 'towards' film. I want to consider at this stage of my discussion, however, a specific definition of 'performance' and how it is important to my three-tiered description of film as cultural performance.

Schechner defines performance as 'restored behaviour', a concept that is basic to his overall theory of performance in relation to theatre, ritual, and the dramatic text:

> the use of restored behaviour is the main characteristic of performance... Restored behaviour is symbolic and reflexive. These difficult terms are reducible to the same principle of self-in-other: the social or transindividual self. Symbolic and reflexive behaviour is the hardening into theatre of social, religious, medical, educational, and aesthetic process. Performance means never for the first time; it means: for the second to the nth time; reflexive means to see the self in the self and other.[2]

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[2] Schechner, 'Collective Reflexivity: Restoration of Behaviour', 39–81 in *A Crack in the Mirror. Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology.* Ed. Jay Ruby, Philadelphia:University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982, 40

He goes on to describe how 'restored events are placed in the future because rehearsals are a means of collecting behaviour and keeping it for the performance-to-be...'[3] . Schechner also calls restored behaviour 'twice behaved behaviour' that '...can be repeated, that is, rehearsed.'[4] This last description of Schechner's is confusing unless such 'rehearsal' behaviour is understood as part of a 'template' of ideas. This template is never the public performance itself but is part of the production processes of a film or live performance event. This definition of performance as both reflexive and 'never for the first time' is important for my argument about performance in film, in that it can be applied to film as well as to live theatre. It conceptualises both the specific physicality of theatrical performance as an aesthetic, representational process (of moving audiovisual images) and the ideational processes that are a part of its production.

In defining theatrical performance both as rehearsal and as performances for a public audience, Schechner's description of 'restored behaviour' actually opens up a conceptual arena that can accommodate film's reliance on discontinuous performances of production and reception. It makes possible the following sequence of conceptual relationships. The first is between performances that manifest as interactions between audiences and performers in live theatre and those that occur in the production process of live theatre. This relationship between a performance and a performer's thought processes about what she/he is performing does not reduce to matters of authorial intention; neither is it about idealised performances that happen in an author's imagination. It has to do rather with ideational processes that are part of performance itself, both in rehearsal and for a public audience. The second conceptual relationship lies in applying this sense of ideational process to the practice of film, where these processes can also be understood as occurring through the practices of editing, shot design and storyboarding as well as through acting. If performance in film is understood as 'restored behaviour' it becomes possible to describe the sense in which the projected film can never be considered to perform of itself 'for the first time'. As with all commodifiable textual performances, the film constitutes a performance that never occurs for the first time, and that never ends — as its reception continues through time.

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[3] Schechner, *Performative Circumstance from the avant garde to Ramila*, Calcutta:Seagull Books, 1983, 167

Herbert Blau also describes that same sense of ideational process which Schechner calls 'restored behaviour':

> I am not sure, all nuances considered, that there is any kind of performance that is non-mimetic, since what is being performed is ... an image of perfection in the head.[5]

His concept involves a 'consciousness of performance' that is based on creative process: a 'never performed for the first time', 'blue-print' of performance. [6] This 'consciousness of performance' also can be implied in my definition of performance in film as performances of production that are not only 'for' an audience, but 'toward' an audience that may or may not be temporally or spatially present.

Schechner uses this concept of 'restored behaviour' in order to consider many different kinds of performances which do not rely on the Western convention of the dramatic text, within which the dramatic text is the source of authorial authority. His description of performance as 'twice behaved', restored behaviour offers an alternative way of understanding the processes which can guide a performance, processes that can operate as guidelines instead of or as well the written dramatic text. His ideas have contributed in a seminal way to an area of critique and analysis generally known as 'performance studies'. Worthen describes this area as follows:

> Performance studies has developed a vivid account of nondramatic, non-theatrical, nonscripted, ceremonial, and everyday-life performances, performances that appear to depart from the authority of texts.[7]

His discussion of performance relates work on 'performativity' within the discipline of literary studies based on J.L. Austin's theory of speech acts to 'the tribulations of textuality and textualised models of performance in performance studies.'[8] He cites Shakespearian studies as 'one corner of literary study where performance has had an

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[4] Schechner, 'Magnitudes of performance', 43

[5] Herbert Blau, 'Universals of performance; or amortizing play', in *By Means of Performance,* 264–265. This work is referred to hereafter as 'Universals of performance'

[6] Blau, 'Universals of performance', 259

[7] W.B. Worthen, 'Drama, Performativity, and Performance' *PMLA* Vol.113, No.5, October 1998, 1093

[8] Worthen, 'Drama, Performativity, and Performance', 1095

effect — the analysis of stage performance is motivated by a disciplinary interest in the dramatic text...'[9] Otherwise, Worthen describes how

> Literary engagements with performativity tend to focus on the performative function of language as represented in literary texts, and much performance-oriented criticism of drama, for all its invocation of the theater, similarly betrays a desire to locate the meanings of the stage in the contours of the dramatic text.[10]

This literary movement away from the theatrical contextualisation of performance has allowed the discussion of film in terms of an idealised performativity based on psychoanalytic theories of identity formation and literary-based theories of text. In Chapter 4, I argue that film can also be understood as a specific kind of text. On the basis of the theatrically derived performances that occur in the production of film, film clearly has its own special relationship with embodied performance. Just as a dramatic text can be thought of in terms of literary performativity as well as a guide for embodied performance, film also manifests performativity and embodied performance. In order to make a connection between performances of production that are 'towards' an audience (Level 1) and those that the film performs 'as' text for an audience (Level 2), I am interested particularly in how (and if) it is possible to discuss theatrical performance in the context of textual performativity. While it seems that considerations of performance and performativity belong on different conceptual levels, I suggest that in the context of signifying practices that use moving and sounding images (theatre and film) it is useful if not necessary to investigate how these two concepts can be discussed in terms of each other.

Performativity and Performance

Judith Butler describes 'performativity'[11] as follows:

> Performativity is … not a singular 'act', for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition.[12]

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[9] Worthen, 'Drama, Performativity, and Performance', 1094
[10] Worthen, 'Drama, Performativity, and Performance', 1093
[11] Butler's seminal work on performativity in relation to race and gender draws on Derrida's concept of citation, J.L. Austin's concept of 'performative utterance' and Foucault's discourse theory.
[12] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 12

Performativity, then, can be used to describe the ways in which certain ideas can be reinforced through their repetitive representation in textual practices. Her following quotation from Derrida's essay "Signature, Event, Context"[13] includes a description of how his concept of 'citationality' describes a specifically constrained form of agency:

> in such a typology, the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance [*l'énonciation*].[14]

Butler uses 'citation' as a way of describing how utterances are always made in the context of other utterances and also as a way of describing agency — how people can nevertheless choose particular ways of uttering that can make change possible. In relation to my discussion of performance in film and theatre, Derrida's 'category of intention' brings to mind Schechner's description of performance as a 'hardening into theatre' (p 34) of 'everyday' social practice by individual theatre practitioners. Yet it is this very 'hardening' which seems to disturb Butler.

In Elin Diamond's words, Butler's problem with theatrical performance as a site of performativity is simply that 'performance "shows" too much …'[15] For Butler, the physicality and historically discrete nature of individual theatrically based performance events recalls agency and intentionality to such a powerful degree that the social, discursive context of such events must always be masked. She therefore discounts theatrically based performance events as inadequate sites for the discussion of social 'performativity': 'The reduction of performativity to performance would be a mistake.'[16] Yet this divorcing of the concept of performativity from that of performance denies the possibility of a discussion which could address the ways in which the very 'bodies that matter' in the representational practice of theatre can be located, both physically and discursively, as sites of societies' wider 'cultural performances' in the context of various social dramas. Butler's argument also draws on Freudian psychoanalysis which she uses in order to describe the theatrical performances of gender by 'drag queens' as the 'acting out'

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[13] Jacques Derrida, 'Signature, Event, Context', as quoted in Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 13
[14] ibid.
[15] Elin Diamond, 'Re: Blau, Butler, Beckett, and the Politics of Seeming', *TDR*, 44. No.4, Winter 2000, 31–43, [Online] Available Humanities Full Text, accessed 14/3/2001
[16] Butler *Bodies That Matter*, 234

of 'grief' and 'loss'.[17] While it is important to distinguish between performativity and performance in the sense that the former is discursive and the latter is concerned with theatrically based events which are 'for an audience', it is also important not to elide these concepts in discussions of performativity in the context of embodied performance. Butler's use of drag queens' theatrical performances to illustrate the performativity of gender risks such an elision. This use of theatrical performance to illustrate performativity obscures the way in which theatrical performance can be understood as not only as a site of agency but also as a 'hardening into theatre' of the discursive limits of performativity. These limits are what is at stake when moving images of human bodies are used in the creation of text.

Drawing on psychoanalysis again, Butler states 'that what is exteriorised or performed can only be understood through reference to what is barred from the signifier and from the domain of corporeal legibility.'[18] This understanding, however, relies on the binary conceptualisation of 'presence' and 'absence'. Through its refusal of historical contextualisation, it obscures the relationships, between people, which occur in the production and reception of performances that are 'for an audience'. On the other hand, an understanding of performance that includes the consideration of such particular relationships also opens up the 'performative' discursive domains of citationality wherein a specific performance might be located. In other words, it is not enough to consider performance as an 'exteriorisation' of social discourse. Such a consideration ignores the critical potential involved in the analysis of performance in terms of performativity. It also excludes from the discursive realm of performativity a conceptualisation of that relationship between theory and practice which is evident in performances involved in film and theatre.

Butler interestingly describes how 'speech is always in some ways out of our control'[19] and considers how 'the speech act says more, or says differently, than it means to say.'[20] Her later considerations of particular speech events draw closer to a conceptualisation of the relationship between the discursive theory of performativity

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[17] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 233–236
[18] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 234
[19] Butler, *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative.* New York and London:Routledge, 1997, 15
[20] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 10

and the analysis of performance practice. Her discussion of 'speaking bodies' recalls Schneider's description of the ways in which 'performance acknowledges the present moment of exchange between embodied participants, embedded in cultural codes.'[21] In Chapter 5, I take up my discussion of Butler's work again as I address the ways in which she uses filmic performances in her analysis of specific speech events. My discussion here, however, aligns Butler's concept of performativity with Worthen's description of theory which is concerned with the 'literary engagements' of a dramatic text rather than the contours of performance itself.

In its consideration of performance as including ideational rather than textual guidelines for performance, Schechner's performance theory also problematises literary theories of dramatic texts or performative texts in that it moves towards a theatrical contextualisation for all discussions of performativity. In Diamond's words again, as she compares Butler's performativity with Blau's concept of theatrical performance, 'This "thing" (the real?) that precipitates theatre, that which is not theatre, may turn out, we fear, to be theatre too ...'[22] Schechner's definition of performance insists on the contextualisation of all performance as theatrical and/or ritual behaviour. This also allows a consideration of performances that occur outside of live theatre practice still in terms of such practice. Performances in film occur outside of live theatre practice, and yet in terms of Schechner's performance theory it is possible to investigate performances involved in the experience of film in terms of their relationship to performances produced and received in the practice of live theatre. An example of how even the mediation of film technology can be described in the context of performance theory can be found in Blau's description of illusion as the technology of mediation in live theatre practice:

> There is nothing more illusory in performance than the illusion of the unmediated. It can be a very powerful illusion in the theatre, but it *is* theatre, and it is *theatre,* the truth of illusion, which haunts *all* performance whether or not it occurs in the theatre...[23]

Performance theory then opens up another way of exploring the conventions of production and reception in performance which are shared to some extent by both

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[21] Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, 178
[22] Diamond, 'Re: Blau, Butler, Beckett, and the Politics of Seeming', 2
[23] Blau, 'Universals of performance', 253

film and live theatre practice. Goffman describes performance within a staged setting as 'that arrangement which transforms an individual into a stage performer.[24] It is this 'arrangement', or what Blau names the 'ado'[25] of performance, which can be understood as functioning in the same way in film, although film's technology describes a very complex and transformed 'arrangement'.

Film — The Performance of 'Presence' Through Absence

This transformation, via the technologies of theatre and film, of people and places into performers and sites of performance respectively, can also be described as the process which conjures up 'presence' — a particular quality of performance associated with live performance in theatre and with live profilmic performances in film. The degree of 'presence' in a performance qualifies the particular way in which a performer or a performance addresses an audience. 'Presence' can be all too easily reduced to a description of how an individual performer is able to communicate with an audience. In order to present a comprehensive argument about the degree of relationship between performances in film and theatre, it is important then to establish, even if briefly, how this concept has been developed in theatre and film theory.

Sobchack interrogates the concept of 'presence' as she investigates the different ways in which various audiovisual technologies can affect peoples' experience of what it means to be 'present' in the world. She considers that experiences of everyday 'presence' are based on perceptions that are critically concerned with technologies of representation which use the 'moving image':

> during the last century, historical changes in our contemporary 'sense' of temporality, spatiality, and existential and embodied presence cannot be considered less than a consequence of correspondent changes in our technologies of representation.[26]

[24]Goffman, *Frame Analysis. An Essay on the Organization of Experience.* Harmondsworth, Ringwood, Auckland:Penguin Books, 1975, 124
[25] Blau, 'Universals of performance', 250
[26]Vivian Sobchack, 'The Scene of the Screen: Envisioning Cinematic and Electronic "Presence"', (1994) in Robert Stam and Toby Miller, *Film and Theory. An Anthology*, Oxford:Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 68

While representational practices such as film have become part of people's way of understanding their lives,[27] it is nevertheless interesting to note the theatrical sense of performance which is involved in such perceptual experiences of how it is to be 'present' in the world. Film is not a 'performing art', in the sense of 'live performance' where an actor's 'presence' can be described in terms of the literal presence of the actor's body in the same time and place as her/his audience. Bazin discusses Henri Gouhier's distinction between film and live theatre as based on 'the physical presence of the actor' in theatre'.[28] At the same time he argues, however, that the very term 'presence' must be re-negotiated with relation to photography and particularly, film: 'It is false to say that the screen is incapable of putting us "in the presence of" the actor.'[29] Taking up Bazin's unfinished argument, Stern and Kouvaros have also taken up this issue of 'presence' again in relation to film. Their concern is not so much to draw comparisons between film and theatre, as to closely investigate the particular quality of experience involved in filmic performances:

> Now while we are not about to argue that film renders human figures and the quality of humanness even more present than the theatre, we are suggesting that film has a particular way of conjuring up presence, of touching us in the dark theatre, of magnetising a range of senses.[30]

This issue of 'presence' can so be described through the particular social contract of engagement which exists between performer and audience. It is not surprising that audience reception continues to be discussed in terms of 'presence' in film as well as theatre, when the process of 'making' film draws so explicitly on the processes of the 'making' of all the 'performing arts', particularly theatre. In his description of contemporary theories of performance and theatre, Marvin Colson traces the various theories of theatrical 'presence' through what he calls a more recent 'conflict between a theory of presence like that of Artaud and theories of absence like those of Derrida and Jean Baudrillard.'[31]

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[27] Timothy Murray explores at length the ways in which experiences of film are used by people in order to understand and describe other life experiences, in his monograph *Just Like a Film. Ideological fantasy on screen, camera and canvas*, London and New York:Routledge, 1993
[28] Andre Bazin, *What is Cinema?* , Volume One, Trans. Hugh Gray, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London:University of California Press, 1967, 95
[29] Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, Volume One, 97
[30] Stern and Kouvaros, 'Descriptive Acts', 14
[31] Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre*. Expanded edition, Ithaca and London:Cornell University Press, 1993, 516. Carlson describes this conflict with particular reference to the following two articles: Elinor Fuchs 'Presence and the Revenge of Writing: Rethinking Theatre

Discussions about 'presence' in performance involve descriptions of the bodies of the performers through which 'presence' is derived. This association of 'presence' with live human bodies creates a significant problem for my comparison between performances in film and theatre if such an association remains grounded in the context of theatre only: such a concept of 'presence' unnecessarily becomes dependent on images drawn from the live, temporal and spatial existence of human bodies. It also places beyond discussion those aspects of performances in film which Stern and Kouvaros find so enticing — the ways in which filmic performances sensually communicate with an audience: 'What is of interest, what is intriguing, is how movement, voice, gesture can bring about effects, how they can generate affect.'[32]

If the concept of affective 'presence' is confused with the actual presence of the actor's body in the same time and place as an audience, then the concept of performance is limited to a discussion of what happens between an audience and a live staged event. This limited sense of performance ignores those reflective states of audience engagement that occur after the time of the original performance, for example, those engagements derived through associative memory. Such a limitation of the idea and practice of performance also ignores the sensual engagement, as described by Stern and Kouvaros, that is achieved through the manipulation of contemporary audiovisual technology.

Conceptualisations of performance which ontologically refuse the use of audiovisual technology also refuse the challenge of defining any active, sensual audience engagement through this technology. Such conceptualisations do not take up the challenge presented by audiovisual technology. They do not take into account those various acts of production and reception that are crucial to any definition of performance in the context of contemporary information and communication technology. Peggy Phelan's discussion of performance provides an example of such a limited sense of performance. For example, her definition (below) not only refuses to negotiate performance as possible via audiovisual technology, but also implies further a definition of audiovisual technology as merely a means of reproduction:

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after Derrida' *Performing Arts Journal* 26/27, 1985, and Roger Copeland 'The Presence of Mediation' in *The Drama Review, "Simulations",* 1990

[32] Stern and Kouvaros, 'Descriptive Acts'*,* 20

> Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being ... becomes itself through disappearance...[33]

In this passage, Phelan vigorously describes performance as the ephemeral art of disappearance which, by implication, can be only polluted or betrayed by association with the technologies of 'reproduction'. My description of performances in film at Levels 1 and 2 depends, as stated in Chapter One, on a distinction between performances which go to make up a filmic text and the filmic text itself, and on a distinction between the receiver of a film and the filmic text, and a further distinction between the receiver of a film and the people who produce the filmic text. Such distinctions are conceptual and should not be reduced to a reified chronological description of the overall experience that is film. In other words, my distinctions do not assume the following temporal sequence: people (filmmakers) produce a product (film) which is received by many people (spectators, audience, consumers), because the product is 'reproducible'. Phelan's description of performance implies such a chronological reification of the filmic experience in terms of the market economy. Yet to reduce the distinctions between production, text and reception in the filmic experience to a process of commodification (in Phelan's words 'the circulation of representations *of* representations') ignores two significant, if contradictory, ways of understanding both live and mediated performances.

The first is the way in which performance for an audience involves an assumption that there is a state of 'being in performance' which, although a part of daily life, also stands apart from 'everyday' life. The second is the way in which performance nevertheless relies on the same sensual apparatus that is used by people as they live their everyday lives. People use both their abstract knowledge and sensual experience of how it is to behave in 'everyday' situations in order to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction in all representational practice. My discussion of

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[33] Phelan, *Unmarked,* 146

mimesis in the next chapter (Chapter 3) suggests that, in both film and theatre, this distinction relies on a pan-sensual, mimetic sense of experience that is specific to both these forms. In my following discussion in this chapter however, I want to trace further how performance can be understood, in the context of the above distinction, as occurring in the same way in both film and theatre. I focus on Turner's concepts of liminality and 'liminal behaviour' in order to discuss the former aspect of performance: the setting apart of formalised performance situations from everyday life. I make use of Brecht's concepts of *gest* and 'alienation' in order to explore the way in which aspects of everyday life are used in the creation of performance events.

Performance, 'As If' Behaviour

Turner describes liminality, drawing on Arnold van Gennep's[34] work on ritual transformation, as a state of transformation and play ,[35] 'the mood of maybe, might-be, as-if'.[36] This sense of liminality as 'as-if' behaviour is especially significant for the comparison of performances in film and theatre because it is can be used to describe performance as it manifests in both. Turner uses it in order to signal ritual, symbolic behaviours that mark an individual's transition from one social status to another.[37] It is Colin Turnbull's development of this concept, however, that moves

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[34] See Arnold van Gennep *The Rites of Passage*, London:Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960. First published 1909.

[35] Turner develops his concept of liminality and its relationship to the 'liminoid' in industrialised societies in detail in 'Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology', 20–60 in Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York:PAJ Publications, 1982.

[36] Turner, *By Means of Performance,* 11

[37] It is interesting to note briefly how Turner's concept has been used in contemporary discussions of transition as a mode of social existence. These discussions have contributed to rather than detracted from Turner's original concept in the sense that they articulate even more clearly how 'liminality' can be used to describe performance as a perceptual experience. Turner uses liminality to describe how ritual derives from states of being where social status is ambiguous or transitional; Donald Weber, however, describes how Turner's concept of liminality has been eclipsed by Renato Rosaldo's concept of social 'borders'. See Donald Weber, 'From Limen to Border: a meditation on the legacy of Victor Turner for American cultural studies', *American Quarterly*, Vol.47, September 1995, 525–536.

If the concepts of liminality and borders are elided, however, there is a risk of losing two significant areas of description of social relationships that are enabled by Turner's development of van Gennep's concept of liminality. Mulvey refers to these two aspects in her essay 'Changes: Thoughts on Myth, Narrative and Historical Experience', in *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Bloomington and Indianapolis:Indiana University Press, 1989, 159-176. She describes how a focus on the liminality of historical narratives, as a state of transition within these narratives, allows a concept of social change to move beyond considerations of binary, polarised social statuses which are, in my interpretation, on one side of a 'border' or the other. Drawing on Propp's analysis of narrative, as well as van Gennep's liminality, she also calls

liminality from an exclusively transitionary mode of behaviour into behaviour which manifests as a particular state of mind.

This state of mind is not dependent on chronological temporality for its description; in fact Turnbull says it can operate along side more mundane activities and states of mind which are structured around chronologically ordered time:

> But as long as we insist on taking liminality to imply a transitory in-between state of being, we are far from the truth. In our own terms it would be better seen as a timeless state of being, of 'holiness', that lies parallel to our 'normal' state of being ...[38]

Both Turner and Turnbull's descriptions of liminality aptly describe the 'as-if' behaviour of performance for or toward an audience, where the performer works from Blau's 'image of perfection in the head'[39] and performs a performance text, in Schechner's terms, 'never for the first time'.[40] Performance as liminal, 'as-if' behaviour does not so much depend on a state of temporality described by Phelan's 'present', as on a suspension of the chronological process of time. This suspension of the chronological passage of time occurs in any textual narrative but can also be applied to the production processes of film and theatre. In these processes, the distortions of narrative practice are compounded by the practice of shooting scenes out of narrative sequence in film and rehearsing out of narrative sequence in theatre. These processes in film and theatre are examples, physical manifestations, of an underpinning conceptual framework for both performance and its reception. This suspension of time's chronological process (in the production, narrative and reception of performance in film and theatre) allows an understanding which focuses on the relationship between performer and audience as the defining trope of

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attention to how this concept can be used to describe the transformational aspect of social behaviour and social events which are often located in the middle section of narrative.

Homi Bhabha's conceptualisation of how people live at the border land of 'in between cultures' can also be described in terms of liminality, if Turner's concept of 'as if' behaviour is used to describe the strategic behaviours which people use to negotiate life situations that fall 'between' cultures — 'the disjunctive, "borderline" temporalities of partial, minority cultures.' Homi K. Bhabha 'Culture's In-Between', in Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (Eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi:Sage Publications, 1996, 56. It is this quality of transformational, 'as if' behaviour that is associated with liminality which interests me in regard to performance in film and theatre, rather than the social status of 'transition'.

[38] Colin Turnbull, 'Liminality: a synthesis of subjective and objective experience', in *By Means of Performance*, 80

[39] Blau, 'Universals of performance', 265

[40] Schechner, 'Collective Reflexivity: Restoration of Behaviour', 40

performance, rather than an understanding that is dependent on the fleeting 'presence' of a particular performance event.

In film, as in all artistic practice, acts of reception can also be understood to be part of the creative act, where the creator's[41] conceptual template of performance continually acts upon the creator as Blau's 'image of perfection in the head'. Such a template is not usually available to public receptions of performance, unless the creator shares her/his/their ideas about processes of production. But of course there are other templates that operate for every person who receives a film or a theatrical performance. These are people's individual and shared assumptions about how a particular performance is part of their personal/private life, as well as the ways in which they make sense of a particular performance in the broader social context of how they make sense of the world around them. Audiences interpellate[42] the 'as if' states of mind that are involved with performance into their everyday lives using all the senses of perception available to them. This interpellation happens also in the reading of literature, yet the stimuli that theatre and film apply to the senses of their audiences are very different from the printed word. Sontag's 'pan-sensual' sense of film as a 'pan-art' (p33) distinguishes film from most other forms of artistic practice and aligns film with theatre, that other 'pan-sensual' signifying practice of the moving image. This sensual, representational use of the moving human body in film and theatre is importantly addressed through Brecht's concepts of 'alienation' (the A-effect) and '*gest*' in the practice of theatre.

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[41] I am using the word 'creator' here to mean the person or group of people directly responsible for the processes of production.

[42] My thesis uses term 'interpellation' in the Althusserian sense: a process whereby an individual subject is drawn into ideological discourse. See Louis Althusser, 'Ideological State Apparatuses' in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London:New Left Books, 1971. I also draw on Nichols' claim that representational practice is an important way in which interpellation can occur. See Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 280.

Brecht and Film

Brecht defines his concept of '*gest* ' as follows: '*Gest*' is not supposed to mean gesticulation ... but [a presentation] of overall attitudes.'[43] In other words, Brecht uses the term '*gest*' as a way of describing an 'overall attitude' that he wants an actor to have towards a particular characterisation or dramatic role. Such an attitude is shown in many ways, including tone of voice, body gestures and the way in which the actor moves and places her body in time and space. In this sense, '*gest*' is the actor's (and the director's) comment on what sort of person is being represented through a particular drama. He further describes a 'social *gest*' as 'the *gest* relevant to society, the *gest* that allows conclusions to be drawn about the social circumstances.'[44] He also describes a 'social *gest*' as that which belongs to particular societies at specific times: 'By social *gest* is meant the mimetic and gestural expression of the social relationships prevailing between people of a given period'.[45]

I suggest that Brecht's concept of 'social *gest*' can also be understood as an elaboration on '*gest*' through which it becomes possible to describe how an actor's use of a particular individual '*gest*' can be contextualised within a broader comment on what kind of society, or social situation is being represented through a particular drama. It can also be used to describe how a dramatic performance can take up an 'overall attitude' towards a particular social issue. 'Social *gest*' then is a term that can be used to link dramatic, 'fictional' representations of theatrical performance with the mundane 'non-fictional' performances of everyday life in a particular society.[46]

Brecht's theory of '*gest*' has informed several discussions of film,[47] including Gilles Deleuze's use of the term itself in his consideration of the films of John Cassavetes:

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[43] Bertold Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic.* Ed. and Trans. John Willett, London:Eyre Methuen, 1978, 104

[44] Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre,* 104–105

[45] Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, 139

[46] Brecht's idea of a 'social gest' strongly brings to mind Raymond William's 'structure of feeling', a concept that he created to discuss literary works. He described it as 'the area of interaction between the official consciousness of an epoch — codified in its doctrines and legislation — and the whole process of actually living its consequences.' Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters. Interviews with New Left Review*, London:New Left Books, 1979, 159

[47] For example, Roland Barthes' relates Diderot's aesthetic theory to Brecht's theory of 'social gest' and Eisenstein's montage theory in his discussion of artistic representation in his essay 'Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein' (1973) in *Image, Music, Text*, 69–78

> What we call gest in general is the link or knot of attitudes between themselves, their co-ordination with each other...the gest is the development of attitudes themselves, and, as such, carries out a direct theatricalization of bodies, often very discreet, because it takes place independently of any role.[48]

Jodi Brooks also describes the films of John Cassavetes through a conceptualisation of *gest*, but draws more on the way in which Walter Benjamin used Brecht's concept in the context of literary criticism. In her analysis of *Love Streams* (1984), for example, she describes how the actor Gena Rowlands portrays a 'gestus of a gendered experience of crisis'.[49] In Chapter 6, I develop further Brooks' conceptualisation of *gest* in film, where I argue that a sense of filmic *gest* is an important way of describing film as cultural performance.

Brecht's concept of 'alienation' is another useful way of describing those devices through which both theatre and film can address an audience as both fiction and non-fiction simultaneously. Such devices of alienation 'unsettle' an audience in a specific way that he calls the 'A-effect':

> The object of the A-effect is to alienate the social *gest* underlying every incident.[50]

In other words, Brecht's 'alienation' involves an unsettling of the trance-like state often accompanying 'the suspension of disbelief' in following narrative fiction. The A-effect involves devices that create a sense of distance between an audience and theatrical performance. They are frequently reflexive: they call attention to the theatre as a staged event and in film they call attention to film's technology as the means through which a story is being told. In Brecht's 'epic theatre', reflexive devices included the use of song, poetry, film, photographs and direct address to the audience. In film, the 'A-effect' can be produced through camera angles, extreme and graphic representations of violence, the inclusion of photographic and written text, the use of 'documentary' styled footage in fiction film, and explicitly 'staged' performances in documentary film. Such reflexive, alienating devices can provoke,

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[48] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2 The Time-Image*, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, London: The Athlone Press, 1989, 192

[49] Jodi Brooks, 'Crisis and the Everyday: Some thoughts on gesture and crisis in Cassavetes and Benjamin' in *Falling for You,* 98

in acts of reception, a sense of estrangement from everyday experience, including the experience of attending a play or watching a film:

> The A-effect consists in turning the object of which one is to be made aware, to which one's attention is to be drawn, from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected. What is obvious is in a certain sense made incomprehensible ...[51]

Brecht relates the A-effect with a strong sense of 'showing' the ways in which 'normal' everyday life might not be comfortable and normal at all:

> The first condition for the achievement of the A-effect is that the actor must invest what he has to show with a definite gest of showing.[52]

This disturbing 'showing' of society as 'strange' builds directly on Russian Formalism's idea of 'making strange': 'Shklovsky's famous definition of art as a defamilarisation, a making strange (*ostranenie)* of objects, a renewal of perception...'[53]. I am quoting here from Fredric Jameson, who describes this concept as a mode of reception that involves moments of simultaneous recognition of the 'realities' both of the (fictional) textual world and the (non-fictional) everyday world. Brecht's concepts of *gest* and alienation can be understood then to be concerned with representations of society that draw attention to the ways in which a particular society uses and conventionally represents specific social processes as 'normal' and 'natural' ways of living life.

In company with '*gest*', Brecht's concept of 'alienation' has also been the subject of several discussions by major film theorists.[54] Colin MacCabe's seminal essay 'Theory and Film: Principles of Realism and Pleasure' (written in 1975) is particularly relevant to my discussion about how performances in film can be understood to take place both within the world of the text and in the 'real' world. He

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[50] Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, 139
[51] Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre,* 143
[52] Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre,* 136
[53] Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language. A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*, Princeton, New Jersey:Princeton University Press, 1972, 50–51
[54] See, for example, Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema. The Imaginary Signifier*, Trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brester and Alfred Guzzetti, Houndsmills, Basingstoke, London:The Macmillan Press, 1982, 66. See also Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality. Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington and Indianapolis:Indiana University Press, 1991, 143, 242, 257, and Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, 3.

draws on Brecht's concept of 'alienation' in order to describe 'realism' in film as a three-way relationship between the social contexts of filmic production and reception and the filmic text itself.[55] This understanding of 'realism' in film also makes possible a focus on filmic devices of production that can 'alienate' receptive performances from a coherent suspension of disbelief. As referred to above, the graphic depiction of the effects of violence can be understood in this sense, as a way of inviting an audience to consider a filmic representation in terms of a description of 'real life'. Such a depiction is in direct contrast to the way in which Hollywood heroes, undeterred by the effects of horrific violence, can 'bounce back' into the drama of a fictional narrative. Such a defictionalisation of the filmic spectacle explicitly informs the motivations of filmmakers such as Robyn Scholes, producer of *Once Were Warriors*. She describes some of the reasons behind the making of this film in the style of 'social realism' as 'wanting to really show', for example, how the violence of a beating marks a woman's face:

> I really really wanted to show what it looks like ... so instead of having a bruise ... a little smudge ... a Hollywood version of ... violence ... I really wanted to show the consequences of violence.[56]

Another manifestation of Brecht's 'alienation' in film occurs every time an actor moves out of the conventional narrative space of film in order to look into the camera, or to address the camera operator. The use of 'direct address' in a film constitutes a particular '*gest*' of 'showing' that in turn produces a filmic text which can invite, especially in documentary, many questions about the 'social circumstances' involved with the production and reception of that particular film. This gestic sense of showing recalls Tom Gunning's discussion of direct address to camera in his essay 'The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde'.[57] Drawing on vaudeville theatre's use of 'direct address', he describes in this essay how such addresses make the audience complicit in a film's performance of excessive visual display. I suggest, however, that when direct

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[55] See Colin MacCabe, ' Theory and Film: Principles of Realism and Pleasure' (1976) in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader*, Ed. Philip Rosen, New York:Columbia University Press, 1986, 179–197. First published in *Screen,* Vol.17, No.3, Autumn 1976. See also his earlier article 'Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses', *Screen*, Vol.15, No.2, 1974, 7–27, republished in Joanne Hollows, Peter Hutchings, Mark Jancovich (eds) *The Film Studies Reader*, London:Arnold, and New York:Oxford University Press Inc, 2000, 201–206.

[56] Scholes, Appendix B1, p. 290.

address is used in film, a much more complex set of interactions is occurring between audience, filmic text and filmmakers. This complexity can be described through a broader consideration of 'direct address' in theatrical practice.

Direct Address

Direct address is an 'old' artistic device which is used in film and theatre in order to provoke both the older traditional audience responses of complicity in the construction of the performance's narrative and/or an engagement with various theatrical characterisations. It can also be used in order to call attention to the fact that a performance event is occurring, thereby creating a space for reflection in acts of reception. This understanding of direct address as both a device of complicity and reflexive alienation recalls Brecht's pragmatic approach to artistic form:

> The question of choice of artistic means can only be that of how we playwrights give a social stimulus to our audience. To this end, we should try out every conceivable artistic method that assists that end, whether it is old or new.[58]

I want to address now how an 'old' theatrical device can be understood in terms of a relatively 'new' artistic form: film.

In his discussion of 'direct address' in Shakespearian drama, Geoffrey Borny points out that this device, far from being a primitive throwback from medieval theatre, allows a fine-tuning of the 'aesthetic distance' between a performance and an audience:

> The important point to note is that there is no mystic gulf between the world of the stage and the world of the audience. The fusion of these two worlds in the theatrical event through the use of direct address was one of the major means that Shakespeare employed to control the degree of aesthetic distance he wished his audiences to have at any given moment of the performance.[59]

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[57]Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde' in *Film and Theory. An Anthology,* Massachusetts and Oxford:Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 230–231

[58]Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre,* 229, also in Willemen, *Looks and Frictions,* 144

[59]Geoffrey Borny, 'Direct Address and the Fourth Wall: the Then and Now of Shakespearean performance' in *Touch of the Real*, Ed. Phillipa Kelly, Perth:University of Western Australia Press, 2002 forthcoming

The gap between 'worlds' is not to be confused with the experiential gap described by Schechner as that which exists between people who professionally make performance texts and those who perform as audience.[60] This gap is the one that happens only during performance and is prosaically marked by the distinction between audience space and performance space. Borny goes on to quote Neil Carson's description of at least two different ways in which direct address can manipulate audience response:

> It can be used to interfere with illusion by drawing attention to the artificialities of performance and encouraging the spectators to look at the stage world objectively. Or it can be employed to increase illusion. In the latter case a stage character appeals for sympathy, or exchanges confidences with an audience in such a way that they are drawn into the action of the play and might also be said to become participants in the action.[61]

In terms of the distinctions made by Carson, direct address can be used to create the illusion of persuasive conversation between individuals (thereby positioning an audience as complicit with the working out of a particular narrative), or it can be considered as a device towards Brecht's 'alienation effect'. As stated earlier, I consider, however, that both uses of direct address can be linked with Brecht's concepts of 'alienation' and '*gest*'. Recalling again Deleuze's description of *gest* as the 'link or knot of attitudes',[62] direct address can be considered as part of a '*gest*' through which actors (together with directors and scriptwriters) can encourage an audience towards particular considerations of character and social situation.

Direct address in theatre brings the everyday gesture of somebody conversationally or rhetorically addressing somebody else into the realm of heightened behaviour that is the theatre. In terms of direct address to camera in film, there is a transgressive move across performance spaces, between the watcher and the watched. These transgressive moves in theatre and film 'alienate' perceptions of reception, in the sense that the process of performance has to undergo a re-affirmation that performance is still taking place. The audience has once again to consider and accept

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[60] Schechner, 'Magnitudes of Performance', 27–28

[61] Neil Carson, 'The Elizabethan Soliloquy — Direct Address or Monologue?', *Theatre Notebook*, Vol.30, No.1, 1976, 13, quoted in Borny, 'Direct Address and the Fourth Wall: the Then and Now of Shakespearean Performance'

[62] Deleuze, *Cinema 2,* 192

the camera, and/or the concept of a performance space. In other words, direct address challenges assumptions about the spaces wherein performance can take place. It is a reflexive device that calls attention to the 'ado' (p. 41) of performance, even though it invites an actual (non-fictional) audience into the world of the fictional performance text.

Speaking about Elizabethan theatre John Russell Brown describes how the audience could be drawn into the action on the stage so that there was no gap between the audience and the stage '... and the actors did not address the audience as if it were in another world.'[63] What was possible in Elizabethan times is probably still possible now in the theatre, but there is a difference. This difference is the existence of film and the technology which makes film possible. Theatre goers are also film goers and it possibly requires much more 'playing to the house' in contemporary theatre in order to overcome the receptive 'baggage' of film: a mode of receptive performance which 'expects' to cope with ambiguities set up by the variety of cinematic 'looks' that occur in film. For example, Robert Stam describes the ambiguities which arise from the 'direct address' of 'news commentators' in television news programs.[64] In Chapter 6, I discuss in detail the similar authority with which documentary film addresses, through 'direct address' or otherwise, can make an audience complicit in the argument represented through a 'non-fictional' narrative. In this present stage of my discussion of film in terms of theatre, however, I want to investigate more closely the ways in which the 'looks' of cinema can be described in relation to theatre's practice of 'direct address.'

'Looking' in Film

Cinema problematises the fine tuning of 'aesthetic distance' through direct address (via visual and vocal address to camera) because there is no unmediated physical engagement possible, in space or time, between 'live' performers and 'live' audience. Film theory has developed the cinematic 'look' as one way to investigate how film mediates various acts of direct address. In her seminal essay 'Visual

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[63] John Russell Brown, 'On Acting of Shakespeare's Plays', *The Seventeenth Century Stage,* Ed. G.E. Bentley, Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 1968,44 quoted in Borny 'Direct Address and the Fourth Wall: the Then and Now of Shakespearean Performance'

Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975) Laura Mulvey names three different ways of looking in cinema:

> There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion.[65]

These various 'looks' culminate in an overall cinematic 'gaze'. A consideration of such a 'gaze' is another way in which to describe those relationships that are set up between people as they experience film both through production and reception.[66] This 'gaze' is also a continually shifting relationship which allocates power in various ways as people change their assumptions about what is possible within film as a specific signifying practice. Jane Gaines has called this combination of the cinematic 'gaze' and resulting relationships between people, the 'looking relations' that can be set up through film:'… how some groups have historically had the licence to "look" openly while other groups have "looked" illicitly.'[67]

The consideration of aesthetic distance and its manipulation through direct address invites a further discussion about a particular permutation of direct address as it occurs in theatre as well as in film. This permutation evolves from Mulvey's second look, the look of the audience at the stage or screen. An example of this look can be found in Hooks' discussion of black people's 'oppositional gaze' towards 'white' cinema: 'Subordinates in relations of power learn experientially that there is a critical gaze, one that "looks" to document, one that is oppositional.'[68] Such a critical second look in cinema clearly invokes a set of critical 'looking relations' which addresses other representational markings besides race. Mulvey's own

[64]Robert Stam, 'Television News and Its Spectator', *Film and Theory. An Anthology*, Eds. Robert Stam and Toby Miller, Massachusetts:Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 374–375. This article was first published in 1983, and is referred to hereafter as 'Television News and Its Spectator'.
[65]Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in *Visual and Other Pleasures,* Bloomington and Indianapolis:Indiana University Press, 1989, 25. Originally published in *Screen*, Vol.16, No.3, Autumn 1975.
[66]See E. Ann Kaplan's distinction between the 'look' and the 'gaze' in cinema in her monograph *Looking For the Other. Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze*, New York and London: Routledge, 1997, xviii.
[66]Jane Gaines, 'White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory' (1988) in *The Film Studies Reader*, Eds. Joanne Hollows, Peter Hutchings, Mark Jancovich, London, New York:Arnold, Oxford University Press Inc., 2000, 326
[68]Hooks, Bell, *Black Looks. Race and Representation*, Boston, MA:South End Press, 1992, 116

discussion and description of such looks in cinema, for example, are embedded in her critique of gender distinctions as markers of particular power relationships.

Her second look can also operate through and be manipulated by means such as theatre's practice of 'direct address'. In other words, when a film uses 'direct address', Mulvey's second look becomes also the third: the viewer of the film is drawn into participating in those looks that occur between filmic characters. In film, as in theatre, the dual operations of complicity and reflexivity are manifest in the use of direct address. The use of direct address in cinema as a 'look to the viewer' is conceptualised further by Paul Willemen. He extends Mulvey's work to describe a 'fourth look', using the films of Stephen Dwoskin as examples of at least one filmmaker who addresses Mulvey's 'complex interaction of looks ... specific to film'.[69] Willemen's fourth look is 'the look at the viewer'[70], derived from Jacques Lacan's conceptualisation of 'not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other'.[71] This fourth look focuses not so much on the way the spectator is drawn into the film's narrative, as the way in which, through direct address (to camera), a film offers itself as part of social practice.

For the purposes of analysing examples of direct address as they occur in the two films I analyse in Section Three, it is significant to note how Elizabeth Klaver examines viewer-positioning explicitly in terms of 'the returned gaze' and Paul Willemen's fourth look: 'The returned gaze ...opposes the viability of the spectatorial gaze by uncovering the relations of performance.'[72] She names 'film, theatre, and television, the media popularly associated with visual performance'[73] and investigates 'the development of the spectatorial gaze in film and its traversal of theatre and television'.[74] She asks the same question which I am exploring in my discussion of 'direct address' in theatre and film: 'Can one medium and its viewer-positioning become the radical alterity of another?'[75] In addressing this question, she describes how individuals performing the spectatorial gaze in theatre, television and

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[69]Laura Mulvey, in Willemen, *Looks and Frictions,* 105
[70]Willemen, *Looks and Frictions,* 107
[71]Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis.* London:Hogarth Press, 1977, 84, quoted in Willemen, *Looks and Frictions,* 107
[72]Elizabeth Klaver, 'Spectatorial Theory in the Age of Media Culture', *New Theatre Quarterly* Vol.XI No.44 November, 1995, 312
[73]Klaver, 'Spectatorial Theory in the Age of Media Culture', 310
[74]ibid.

film simultaneously watch and deconstruct the act of viewing in relation to how this gaze is both different and yet referential in each viewing situation.

In Klaver's sense, the returned gaze can be *suggested* by a filmic text, when the 'mastery' of the spectatorial gaze is called into question — when a film for whatever stylistic reasons, 'reminds' the viewer of television or documentary or a stage performance, or a rock video, or a television advertisement. The act of watching becomes explicitly political when the viewer is living and responding to a world which includes reviews of theatre, film, video and television in television programs, magazines and newspapers, and by all the talking heads and bodies of television 'movie shows' and other 'variety' programs. This politically active sense of film reception recalls Stam's description of realism in film, where 'realism and reflexivity are not strictly opposed polarities but rather interpenetrating tendencies quite capable of coexisting within the same text.'[76] MacCabe similarly describes realism as 'no longer a question of an exterior reality nor of the relation of reader to text, but one of the ways in which these two interact.'[77] It is this interaction, described by both Stam and MacCabe in relation to realism in film, that is at stake in Willemen's conceptualisation of a fourth look — a 'look at the viewer' — in cinema. I suggest that this sense in which a film addresses the viewer can be described in terms of a film's 'social *gest*'. In this way, it is possible to describe how a film, through the use of various devices of alienation, can comment on particular social issues.

In her discussion of the politics of identity and representation, Peggy Phelan describes this ' "politics" of the imagined and actual exchange of gaze'[78]. She suggests that there is a risk involved when an individual allows images of personal self to become 'visible' in the many media of visual representation: visibility can politically disempower. An example of such a risk can be found in the case of the almost disembodied 'direct address' that takes place in many music videos. In these brief clips, images of the singer's body are certainly subsumed into a morass of voyeurism and its binary, the desire to be watched. The drama in which this example

[75] ibid.
[76] Robert Stam, 'The Question of Realism' in *Film and Theory. An Anthology*, 227
[77] Colin MacCabe, 'Theory and Film: Principles of Realism and Pleasure', 194
[78] Phelan, *Unmarked*, 4

of direct address is situated is not a (fictive or non- fictive) narrative so much as an invitation into the political drama of the contemporary music industry, where musicians and music need very good agents to protect their identity and agency from the sheer power of a corporate industry based on mass consumerism. A small degree of this same risk exists for Hollywood stars such as Nicole Kidman as she acts 'with eyes wide shut' with her (then) real life husband Tom Cruise in Stanley Kubric's sexually explicit *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). In fiction film, however, the powers of narrative, characterisation and the other contextualisations of style and content work towards shielding the real-life actor's body from the blatant visual consumptions involved in the music industry.

Another significant way of considering the power relations involved in 'looking' in cinema can be found in Phelan's discussion of an 'exchange of gazes' as a Lacanian need to be seen:

> The potential for a responding eye, like the hunger for a responsive voice, informs the desire to see the self *through* the image of the other which all Western representation exploits.[79]

Rey Chow further refines this notion of the desire to be seen when she describes and discusses how 'in the age of film' people look at others through film with the background knowledge that they also have been, and can be again, 'looked at' on screen:

> If individuals are, to use Althusser's term, 'interpellated', they are interpellated not simply as watchers of film but also as film itself. They 'know' themselves not only as the subject, the audience, but also as the object, the spectacle, the movie.[80]

This idea of how people can understand themselves in society through film as *part* of film is also important for my descriptions, in Chapter 3, of the ways in which people perform *towards* film, that is, in ways that are not necessarily explicit in the filmic text. My above discussion of Willemen's fourth 'look' in cinema suggests then that this concept can be used in order to expose the politics of looking as well as the very processes of looking involved in the filmic experience. It exists on a

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[79] Phelan, *Unmarked*, 16
[80] Chow, *Ethics After Idealism. Theory-Culture-Ethnicity-Reading.* Bloomington and Indianapolis:Indiana University Press, 1998, 20

different conceptual level to the acts of looking described through Mulvey's three looks, but nevertheless draws on these acts in order to describe a mode of textual address. The description of a film's mode of textual address can then be used to describe more closely the quality of looking involved in Mulvey's looks. This fourth look also offers a way of considering the sound component of a film in terms of direct address.

The voice-over, both in film, television and in live theatre, can be used as a narrative device that simply provides more information than is otherwise available from looking at and listening to a performance. It occurs as a disembodied voice and is heard over visual images. This voice may have been visually embodied previously or later in a narrative: for example, the voice of the white woman in *beDevil*'s 'Mr Chuck' is sometimes synchronised with her image, and sometimes, not. This sense of a floating voice, which is at times embodied in visual images of a film's narrative, achieves both aspects of theatrical direct address as described earlier. It contributes to a drawing in of the spectator into the world of the narrative, and also makes the point that what is taking place is in fact, a performance. Films that use the trope of *film noir* often use it as much to mystify a narrative as to provide narrative information. Moffatt's use of this 'floating' voice-over, throughout all her three stories in *beDevil*, reinforces the film's reflexive address to an audience as a story told in film, but it also evokes a sense of haunting, and bedevilment. Another example occurs with Coral Edward's voice-over at the end of *Link-Up Diary*: it also contributes to a sense of haunting — we can no longer see her image but we hear her talking about the trauma of the Stolen Generations.

When the voice that is heard in a voice-over is never synchronised with a visual image, however, then the effect is different: this voice belongs to a narrative character that assumes a particular kind of authority. Such a character in a film's narrative also possesses and makes available more information than may be otherwise available. This giving of information via a visually 'never embodied' voice, however, primarily draws attention to film as a performance event that has the authority to give information (I explore this authority further in my examination of documentary film Chapter 6). For example, in *Link-Up Diary*, MacDougall's voice-overs are never synchronised with his visual image. They contribute more information for the film's content, but they also explicitly draw attention to how he

himself produced the film. These voice-overs are sometimes linked to his performance as camera and sound operator; I suggest that this reinforces their sense of authority and reflexivity.

In a return to cinematic acts of actual looking, Barbara Creed describes a fifth 'look' as 'the act of looking away'[81]: the 'look' of the individual in the audience who cannot cope with images presented on the screen, and who looks away. Yet similarly to Willemen's fourth look, this fifth look also draws on an understanding of 'looking' as an act of imagination as much as a sensory process. An example of this 'look' can be found in Stern's description of her own response to Stan Brakhage's film *The Act of Seeing With One's Own Eyes* (1971) with its bloody images from an autopsy room:

> Then there is redness, flesh, butchered corpses. Or so it seems. I try, every time, to watch. Part of me indeed is fascinated and attracted by these images, but also — they repel. I have to look away, close my eyes, sometimes I have to leave the room.[82]

She discusses this impulse to look away as not only dependent on what is shown on screen, but also on how on-screen images can stimulate the spectator's imagination so that such images are transformed into even more unbearable ones than those shown on screen. For Stern, the bloody cadavers in Brakhage's film are too close to her own private images of what bleeding bodies must look like. The cadavers come alive in her imagination. She performs this film as if it contains more content than it actually does. In her description of the film, she says that it is

> about the way the cinema engages the imagination, about a dynamic of repulsion and attraction, about the imbrication of images and imagination.[83]

Her discussion of the imagination in terms of spectatorial performances in film in turn brings to mind Benjamin's use of the Proustian concept of 'involuntary memory' as he conceptualises the 'aura' of a work of art:

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[81] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine. Film, feminism, psychoanalysis.* London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 29

[82] Stern, 'Meditation on Violence' in *Kiss me deadly: feminism and cinema for the moment* Ed. Laleen Jayamanne, Sydney:Power Publications, 1995, 253

[83] ibid.

> [If] we designate as aura the associations which, at home in the *mémoire involontaire,* tend to cluster around the object of a perception ...[84]

Whilst I extend my discussion of 'aura' in Chapter 4's consideration of textual reception in film, it is useful here to note, in relation to my present consideration of the cinematic gaze, Benjamin's following description of 'aura':

> To perceive the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return.[85]

This aspect of aura needs to be considered in relation to the element of 'distance' or deferral in time or space. In her description of filmic spectatorship, Brooks describes Benjamin's auratic 'return of gaze' as 'less to do with any literal return of the gaze than with a process of activating/animating the field of correspondences.'[86] These correspondences can be described then as idealisations about how the 'real' world can be used to make sense of a text. So the concept of 'aura' impacts not only on Willemen's concept of a 'returned look' in cinema, but also on those processes of imagination and spectatorial performance in film which can lead to Creed's fifth look, the 'look away'.

This fifth look can also be explored in terms of what Stanton B. Garner Jr describes as post-Brechtian theatre. This contemporary form of theatre draws on Brecht's exhortation to apply 'social stimulus' to audiences, but largely ignores his other direction that this be done through 'entertainment': 'Let us treat the theatre as a place of entertainment ... and try to discover which type of entertainment suits us best.'[87] Garner describes how post-Brechtian theatre

> explores the political and theatrical implications of the essential fact that of all the elements that comprise semiotic fields, the human figure is the only one that is itself a source of semiotic and other forms of meaning-constitution ... the body represents an object of observation that actually looks back.[88]

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[84]Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', *Illuminations*, 186
[85]Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', *Illuminations,* 188
[86]Brooks, 'Between Contemplation and Distraction. Cinema, Obsession and Involuntary Memory' in *Kiss Me Deadly: feminism and cinema for the moment*, Ed. Laleen Jayamanne, Sydney: Power Publications, 1995, 83
[87]Brecht, 'A Short Organum For The Theatre' in *Brecht on Theatre*, 180
[88]Stanton B.Garner, Jr. *Bodied Spaces. Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama.* Ithaca and London:Cornell University Press, 1994, 165

Post-Brechtian theatre commonly explores the 'politics of the body' by seeking to engage the look of the audience towards images and sounds of extreme violence towards the human body.[89] Such theatre risks an audience being alienated not in the Brechtian sense of reflective distanciation, but in the literal sense where members of an audience may actually leave the theatre. It risks a reduction of Brecht's 'social stimulus' to a spectacle which may simply be rejected by an audience, rather than engaged.

In film, this post-Brechtian audience response can be even more carefully and closely manipulated by the filmmaker than by the makers of a live theatrical performance. The technologies of editing and varying camera focus combine with and often exceed theatrical special effects in order to confront the gaze of the audience with much more than most people would seek to see or hear outside of the filmic experience. Rather than the direct address of locked gaze, post-Brechtian theatre and film both 'directly' address the gaze of the audience with excesses which push the audience past its engagement with whatever narrative is being presented, and towards Creed's 'fifth look'. This style of theatre or film can also push audiences towards an experience which reciprocally engages with the bodily experience (or assumed bodily experience) of the performer, bringing into play the sensual engagement of Willemen's 'fourth look'. In this sense, it is not, or not only, the address of eyes and body position which signal direct address, but the presentation of the performer's entire body in a state of extreme pain. Such a presentation signals a direct, experiential address and engagement with an audience.

Cinematic Sounds and Looks

In spite of my earlier incorporation of the voice-over as part of direct address in film, all the cinematic 'looks' overlook a reciprocity of experience. The word 'gaze' in discussions of the cinema and theatre implies more of a pan-perceptual apprehension than simply an act of vision. But nowhere is this inadequacy of 'looking' more pronounced than in the 'look' which turns away. It is interesting to

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[89] Garner draws on and acknowledges Elaine Scarry's term 'the body in pain' for his discussion of violence towards the body in post-Brechtian theatre: 'the body in its deepest extremity, the suffering, violated entity that Elaine Scarry has termed "the body in pain.", *Bodied Spaces,* 160–161. See also Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World.* New York:Oxford University Press, 1985.

note that this fifth look also engages a consideration of 'sound' in film. People can also block their ears to shut out filmic sound and block associated images which appear in the imagination, although this blocking of sound may not be as possible as is the blocking of vision through looking away (unless people simply walk out of a cinema or turn the television off, thereby blocking out sound and vision altogether). Kristeva mentions the effect of sound in relation to looking, as she describes how sound can work with image in order to create a break in the power of the specular and so enable a critical distanciation, recalling again Brecht's theory of alienation.[90]

As I explore further in my analysis of *beDevil* in Chapter 7, Moffatt's sound track of yelling and clanking chains pulls, in such a way, against the tourism-styled images of Bribie Island in the first story, 'Mr Chuck'. The scene where Beth is beaten in the film *Once Were Warriors*, however, provides another example of how both sounds and visual images combine to 'lock' the gaze of the viewer into a simultaneous performance of the third and fifth 'looks' in film. It is this 'locking' effect which constitutes Willemen's fourth look in this film, as the strength of sensual engagement involved in the first viewing of this scene pushes receptive performances towards various levels of social awareness. These levels include an appraisal of the sensual effects of looking at and hearing this scene — revulsion, nausea, emotional distress — and a broader, 'as if' level of comparison of these effects against a consideration of how it might feel to confront these fictive events in everyday life.

A Sixth Look?

But here I want to draw attention to another 'look' which presents a specific problem when considering direct address in relation to film. As in the fourth look, this look occurs when the person whose image is on the screen looks 'at' the camera. This sixth look in fact does not address the audience directly, eye to eye, but rather addresses directly the camera operator and/or the director. Such a look directly addresses a different audience to that audience watching the film. While obviously clearly related to the fourth look 'to camera', this particular 'look' refers and happens explicitly in non-fiction film. It often occurs in documentary film, in the

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[90]Julia Kristeva, 'Ellipsis on Dread and the Specular Seduction' in *Narrative, Apparatus,*

form of the 'talking heads' of interview subjects, and more ambiguously, in the casual conversations shown on film between people and the filmmaker-cum-camera-operator. This ambiguity develops from the following questions which arise from watching such footage. How aware is the individual who is presented as talking to an unshown person near the camera, that there is another audience to the film — an audience which is being addressed by the filmmaker in the making of her/his film? Does the talking person care if another audience 'over hears' or 'over looks' his gazes at and conversations with the camera-operator? These are the questions which are raised by the mode of filmic performance which Nichols describes as the 'masked interview':

> Rather than making the interview structure evident, the masked interview slides toward the oblique stylistics of the fiction film, and the work of a *metteur en scène*. The sense of fissure or discrepancy between the performance we observe and the codes we expect to govern it opens up.[91]

These questions in turn provoke a new and troublesome set of questions for the reception of both fiction and non-fiction film. They are concerned not just with filmic categories but also with whether or not the audiovisual image which presents as 'direct address' in film is improvised — emerging from a profilmic 'real' situation — and to what degree the person speaking to the camera is breaking out of their previous role, fictionalised or not, in order to speak to the camera. Instead of Borny's question 'Who am I talking to?', where the perplexity is the actor's, in film, the audience often has to ask 'Are they talking to me?' and then 'Why are they talking to me?' In terms of Goffman's theory of 'frame analysis'[92], the technology of film invites so many 'breakings of frame' that it is perhaps more accurate to describe film as a constant process of 'frame' alteration. After Goffman, I am understanding 'frame' as a device that

> organizes more than meaning; it also organizes involvement ... All frames involve expectations of a normative kind as to how deeply and

Ideology, 242

[91] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 52

[92] Goffman defines his use of the term 'frame' as follows: 'I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organisation which govern events — at least social ones — and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify.', *Frame Analysis*, 10–11

fully the individual is to be carried into the activity organized by the frames.[93]

Such constant alterations of framing, together with the resulting questions about meaning and context asked by audiences as they 'watch' a film, constitute part of the 'baggage' which theatre goers now carry with them because of film. These questions to do with different ways of 'looking' in film are also raised, although in another way, by a particular kind of performance which contemporary performance theory has conceptualised through descriptions of the 'performance artist'. This particular theatrical practice is highly significant for my discussion of performance in film because it focuses on the human body as the originating site of all performances for or towards an audience. Drawing again on my earlier quotation from Garner, 'the body represents an object of observation that actually looks back',[94] thereby becoming a site of simultaneous acts of reception and performance.

The Performance Artist

The work of the performance artist combines the locking together of gazes associated in theatrical direct address with the indirect yet similarly confronting address of the performer's body performing an aspect of the performer's own historical self. In his description of 'the theatrical frame', Goffman distinguishes between three aspects of performance:

> I shall use the term 'role' as an equivalent to specialised capacity or function, understanding this to occur both in offstage, real life and in its staged version; the term 'person' will refer to the subject of a biography, the term 'part' or 'character' to a staged version thereof.[95]

The performance of the 'performance artist' can therefore be seen as already moving towards post-Brechtian practice in Garner's terms, where Goffman's concepts of role and character collapse onto the dominant image of the biographical 'person' within a setting of staged performance.

In her investigation into 'the explicit body in performance', Schneider describes performance artists as performers who work to close the gap between what their

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[93] Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 345
[94] Garner, *Bodied Spaces. Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama,* 165

female or male bodies symbolise in society and a mimetic expression of how it is to live in their particular bodies. She discusses several feminist performance artists who elide this relationship between an audience and the symbolic use that society (including of course the performer and her audience) makes of a performer's body in performance. In Schneider's terms, this relationship is made 'literal', where 'to render literal is to collapse symbolic space'.[96] She is concerned particularly with describing performance in terms of specific, historically situated complicities between performer and audience. Using the work of feminist performance artists, she explores the possibilities for using this style of performance to provoke a critique of society's patriarchal hegemony. Her work is useful to my discussion in the way in which it offers insights and detailed ways of describing how human bodies are always simultaneously the sites of two kinds of performance in society: idealised or symbolic performances as well as those that can only be described through actual bodily sensation (for example, pain, cold, fear, pleasure).

Garner's theory of post-Brechtian theatre again is useful in order to describe how a performance artist's historically real body can be considered in terms of a narrative site. Although Garner does not discuss the work of performance artists as such, his description of post-Brechtian theatre can also be applied to their work. Borrowing from Garner, it is possible then to describe the theatre that is produced by performance artists, particularly when this theatre is disturbing or violent, as still aspiring to the Brechtian project of political awareness through art, although now narrowing the site of performance to the human body and its immediate surrounding environment. Such a narrowing of the site of performance is described by Garner as

> almost obsessive interest in the body as a political unit, as a crucial element in the contest of subjectivity and subjection. By exploiting the body's centrality in the theatrical medium, contemporary political dramatists have refigured the actor's body as the principal site of theatrical and political intervention, thereby reconfiguring the political field in corporeal terms and establishing a contemporary 'body politic' rooted in the individual's sentient presence. [97]

I am interested particularly in how performance artists manipulate their own historically real 'presence' in order to address an audience, and how this address can

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[95] Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 129
[96] Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, 6

be described in terms of the theatrical convention of direct address. The 'performance artist' may not directly address the audience in either film or live theatre via the 'looks' conventionally associated with 'direct address', yet I propose that such performers use a permutation of 'direct address'. The audience may not always be engaged in a locking of gazes, from eye to eye, but can nevertheless be directly addressed by the body of the performer, as described above, when the performer has previously contextualised her/his performance as a performing of her or his own self as a 'character' within a narrative.

This contextualisation can occur through narration which situates the performer as performing her own historical self, as in the theatrical work of Robbie McCauley. Schneider describes how in *Sally's Rape*, McCauley places her naked African-American body on a bench and a white performer, Jeannie Hutchins

> tells McCauley's audience that the bench is an auction block and she instructs spectators to join together in the chant 'Bid em in, bid em in...' .... McCauley becomes her great-great-grandmother in the process of being exchanged among slave holders as a piece of property.[98]

Such contextualisation can also occur through the use of violence against the body of the performer, by the performer herself (for example, Annie Sprinkle's invitation to the audience to inspect her vagina, or performers who pierce and otherwise violate themselves during performance). These excesses also resonate with Garner's concept of post-Brechtian use of violence, and the subsequent risk of terminally alienating an audience.

The concepts of direct address and the performance artist are also useful for describing performances that shift their position of address between different characters, and between the world of a performance and society. As Borny has pointed out, in Shakespearian drama, performers who directly address the audience remain 'in character'. There are, however, several forms of direct address to an audience where the boundary between 'in' and 'out' of character is blurred, and characters slip in and out of role. These include performances of direct address in cabaret and its quotation in 'epic theatre'. They also include filmic performances

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[97] Garner, *Bodied Spaces. Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, 160
[98] Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, 174

that use voice-overs, as referred to earlier, and similarly, those performances that draw on information about a particular performer which is only available from sources outside of the film's narrative.

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My discussion in this chapter of the relationship between film and theatre has focused on three concepts from theatre as ways in which to discuss film: Brecht's theory of 'alienation', 'direct address' and the 'performance artist'. 'Alienation' underpins the use of all filmic devices which pull an audience into a realisation of the technology of film as the medium through which a particular story is being told, or through which a particular discussion is being held. These devices include the juxtaposition of different film speeds, camera styles, optical effects such as the extreme coloration of filmic stock in *beDevil*, as well as the various confusing combinations of sound and image which are also part of this film. In this film, a social *gest* of 'questioning' is created through many stylistic crossings. Song, visual art, the written word, and narration through both direct address and mimetically styled acting performances are all used as communicative vehicles in this film. In Chapter 7, I extend Schneider's description of the 'performance artist' in my consideration of Moffatt as a filmmaker who 'performs' her own historical self explicitly and implicitly in the film *beDevil*. When a filmmaker is also a 'performance artist' in the context of a particular film, then the resulting filmic text is open to receptive performances that acknowledge another powerful site of crossing between performance 'for an audience' and the historically real world. Distinctions between fiction and non-fiction in film are exposed as fragile and as either 'empty' of meaning or excessively 'full' of meaning when filmmakers offer moving audiovisual images of their own bodies as part of the fiction of their filmic text.

Direct address allows another way into describing what happens in the act of reception when the person on the screen looks into the camera or interacts with the camera operator. The implications for film theory include yet another way to consider how the 'unstaged' events filmed by documentary filmmakers become 'staged' through these direct looks to camera. An examination of direct address in documentary film offers another way of considering how non-fiction film draws

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from the world of fictional storytelling in order to discuss non-fictional events. In theatre, direct address is a particular style of performance; in film, the transpositions of direct address that are seen in all the 'looks' of cinema can also imply particular styles of performance which contextualise a particular film within different film categories.

Address to camera or filmmaker, for example, is strongly associated with documentary film (as I discuss further in Chapter 6). An example of how this association of a particular set of looking relations with film as a specific social practice occurs in *beDevil*. When we see in this fiction film a woman cleaning the camera lens and talking to camera, what are we to think? Without seeing the credits, how do we know whether or not that person is an actress in character, or a person who was speaking as her own historical self? Is this a segment of documentary footage or is it a staged segment of a fiction film? The crossing of such categorical boundaries introduces many questions into the filmic text, as I will be later discussing in more detail in my chapters on *beDevil*. These questions show how the Brechtian ramifications of direct address in theatre are broadened in film from issues of aesthetic distance and modes of reception towards distinctions between fiction and non-fiction in film.

By linking the concept of a 'performance artist' to the filmic experience, it becomes possible to re-examine the role of the filmmaker, particularly when this role is taken by a person who not only has significant control over the production of a film, but also who performs her/his own self for, or 'towards', a film's audience. Such a consideration of a director or producer as a performance artist requires information not only from the filmic text, but other public presentations of that person's self, including acting performances, interviews and published critical discussions about the role of such a person within their artistic practice.

This chapter's discussion of performance in theatre and film converges on the notion of 'presence' in film. The description of 'presence' in film as an aspect of a sensual engagement between performers at all my three levels of performance in film allows yet another way into considering the way people make and receive films within the historical context of their own lives. My discussion about how people communicate with each other via various kinds of theatrical performance invites a further

investigation into how an audience relates a particular performance event to an overall perception of the historically real world. Film, theatre and literature all allow an audience access to various associations with the historically real world via the way their narratives can depict space and time and how these depictions can be understood to relate with the space and time of an audience's reception. In receptions of film and theatre, however, both reception and narrative are situated in time and place in a different way to that which occurs in literature. In a generic sense, film and theatre manifest as depictions of moving, sounding, visual images of the human body. They situate these images in the same time and space as an audience through their performance of 'showing'. Although this 'showing' varies according to the degrees of mediation used in both film and theatre, as argued in this chapter, it nevertheless constitutes a theatrical performance for reception by a live audience. In both theatre and film, this situatedness of performance in time and place can be addressed via the concept of 'presence'. As described in this chapter, the concept conjures up the many discussions which surround the apprehension of 'the real' through artistic practice.

The perception of 'presence' may be described in terms of the manipulation of aesthetic distance by actors and other theatre and filmmakers, and also in terms of the contextualisation of narrative and/or performers in the 'real' world that exists beyond the staged boundaries of a particular theatrical performance or film. In contemporary cinema, film's relationship with the 'real' is still a major cultural concern, as illustrated by the following newspaper headline, dated 12 March 2000:

> The TRUTH might not be out there. Three of the year's biggest movies
> are based on true stories, but how 'true' are they?[99]

This headline in a popular Sydney newspaper demonstrates how people are concerned with film as a signifying practice that sets limits for their knowledge about the historically real world. This quotation marks an awareness that distinctions between fiction and non-fiction in film and related technologies are dependent on a cultural knowledge that is based largely on a historical understanding of earlier technologies of film (together with a continuing discourse on documentary film) and on a growing understanding by more people that whatever the technology involved,

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[99] Eric Harrison, 'The Truth might not be out there' *Sun-Herald — Timeout*, March 12, 2000, 10

cinema is produced by the performances of many 'real' people who have jobs in the making of cinema. These people and the films that they produce together constitute the cultural performance of film — a performance that distinguishes between and yet simultaneously uses the binary concept of 'fiction/non-fiction'. In the following Section (Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6), I discuss three conceptually different and yet related levels of performance in film through which people can be understood to use this binary as they use film in their lives.

Chapter Three. Level 1: Performances 'Towards' Film — Filmmakers and the 'Ado' of Film

Introduction

This chapter investigates both generic and actual examples of performances 'towards' film. These include those performances that transform, via film's technology, 'profilmic' events into film (where the word 'profilmic' refers to situations and events that occur in the real world and whose images are incorporated into film). These performances are performed by the group of people described by the term 'filmmakers'. This term is commonly attributed to people whom I call 'primary filmmakers': the person(s) who have the most control over the creation of the filmic text. For example, in a small documentary production such as *Link-Up Diary*, the 'filmmaker' is usually understood to be only MacDougall himself. In larger productions, the term is attributed to either or both the producer and the director (those people with, or in control of distributing, the money needed for filmmaking); for example in *Once Were Warriors*, the director (Lee Tamahori) and the producer (Robin Scholes) are considered as filmmakers. My discussion of performances 'towards' film, however, goes beyond a consideration of performances by primary filmmakers. I use the term 'filmmaker' in order to describe all those people who significantly contribute to the audiovisual material included in the filmic text. My arguments in this chapter draw extensively on the interviews that I conducted with several filmmakers who were involved in the making of the four films researched for this thesis.

My discussion of filmmaking draws on two areas of discourse within film theory, which are closely related to theories of theatre. These are, firstly the concept of *mise en scène* as it has been transposed from theatre into film theory, and secondly the business of 'acting for film'. My discussion of acting and actors as filmmakers draws on the authorial performances implied in the concept of *mise en scène*, defined by Susan Hayward in relation to two related aspects of a filmic text. The first of these is what appears visually within a filmic text, as 'framed' by the camera (filmic content). Hayward describes the second aspect of *mise en scène* as style: the expressive tool at the film-maker's disposal which a critic can read to determine the

specificity of the cinematographic work.'[1] This chapter presents the argument that filmic content and style, as denoted by the term *mise en scène*, is the product of several people who can be described as filmmakers, of whom the director (although a primary filmmaker) is only one.

This chapter considers the craft of acting 'towards' film as an act of transformation. In film, the actor transforms his or her body, in conjunction with audiovisual technology and its manipulation by other filmmakers, from an 'everyday body' into a 'fictional body'. I draw on Michael Taussig's and Elin Diamond's theories of mimesis in order to explore the relationship between filmmaking and the communicative power of film. I also draw on Eugenio Barba's concept of the 'fictional body' and suggest how it can be used to describe acting in both fiction and non-fiction film. I use my discussion of 'acting' for film, and its derivation from live theatrical practice into film, in order to investigate three ways in which an 'actor' can be considered a filmmaker: firstly, through the quality of acting ability; secondly, as a performance artist; and thirdly, through the quality of an actor's physical, historical body. The chapter concludes with a discussion on how all performances of filmmaking can be considered in the context of these three qualities, and in the context of the concept and practice of mimesis.

Filmmaking and the 'Cinematic Apparatus'

In both this chapter and the next, I explore some of the relationships that exist between filmmakers and film audiences. These relationships are mediated by the technology that makes film possible; they can be considered through film theory's important conceptualisation of the 'cinematic apparatus'.[2] Stephen Heath describes this concept as the relationship between people, history and technology:

> Cinema does not exist in the technological and then become this or that practice in the social; its history is a history of the technological and social together, a history in which the determinations are not simple but multiple ...[3]

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[1] Susan Hayward, *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies*, London, New York:Routledge,1996, 220–1
[2] This term and concept is attributed originally to Jean-Louis Baudry, as in his article translated as 'Ideological effects of the basic cinematographic apparatus', *Film Quarterly* Vol.XXVIII, No.2 (Winter 1974/75).
[3] Stephen Heath, "The Cinematic Apparatus: Technology as Historical and Cultural Form', in *The Cinematic Apparatus,* Ed. Teresa De Lauretis and Stephen Heath, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1980, 6

Heath's important description coincides in several ways with my three-tiered discussion of the individual and collective performances defined in this thesis as the overall cultural performance of film: at Level 1 of performance in film, where I consider how people use the technologies available to them in order to produce a filmic text, and at Level 2, where I consider how the filmic text performs in conjunction with an audience. At Level 3, I discuss how film can be understood as a continuing social process. In this chapter's inquiry into performances 'towards' film at Level 1, I describe how various individual people work with film's technology in order to produce a filmic text. These descriptions can be considered as part of film theory's continuing discussion of 'the cinematic apparatus', particularly in the sense described by Teresa De Lauretis and Heath in their definition of this concept as 'a particular institution of relations and meanings (a whole machinery of effects and affects)'.[4] Decisions about style and content, however, depend on available technologies. I therefore consider filmmaking performances in terms of a 'cinematic apparatus' that contains not only the available technology, but also all those relationships that exist between filmmakers and that are involved with decision making and creative motivation. These relationships can also be described in the context of those 'diverse sites of performance' distinguished by Sophie Wise in her discussion on the performativity of script, actor, audience, critic and theorist in the films of Hal Hartley.[5]

From Theatre to Film: The Performance of Filmmakers Through *Mise En Scène*

The relationship between film and theatre appears explicitly in film theory's conceptualisation of the theatrical concept of *mise en scène*. V.F. Perkins, for example, describes the role of the film director as follows:

> …the film director assumes many of the functions of his theatrical counterpart. He organizes the space in front of the camera much as the stage director controls the space beyond the proscenium.[6]

My consideration of this concept as it moves from theatre into film theory is necessary in order to develop my discussion of filmmaking in terms of what it is that

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[4] Teresa De Lauretis and Stephen Heath, 'Preface' to *The Cinematic Apparatus,* ix.
[5] Wise, 'What I like about Hal Hartley', 247
[6] V.F. Perkins, *Film as Film. Understanding and Judging Movies* Harmondsworth, Baltimore, Ringwood:Penguin Books, Pelican Edition, 1972, 25

filmmakers do. In other words, *mise en scène* is a concept which allows a particular way of describing filmmaking performances.

The appropriation or transposition of this concept from theatre into film occurred primarily in articles published in *Cahiers du Cinema* directly after World War II. These discussions were developed, particularly by Andrew Sarris, into the *auteur* theory in film. In accordance with Hayward's first definition, quoted in my introduction to this chapter, Barrett Hodsdon describes a 'working definition' of *mise en scène* as 'the precise placement of actors and objects before the camera in various spatial, pictorial and rhythmic combinations.'[7] Hayward's second level of definition of this concept as filmic style is developed in Adrian Martin's claim that there are two aspects to this concept: Hodsdon's 'working definition' and *mise en scene* as a 'critical idea'[8]. This latter interpretation of the term leaves explicit references to theatre far behind. Implicit references occur, however, in the form of the ambiguities which surround this term *mise en scène* when it is used, as by Martin, to trace the three-way relationship which exists between the director as *auteur,* the technology of film, and the filmic text. Martin extends his usage of the term *mise en scène* beyond a description of 'content and style', in order to discuss how this term can illuminate 'the broader struggle over the significance (or insignificance) of film style, in its technical, textual and artistic materiality.'[9]

The concept of *mise en scène* can be used then in order to discuss a film in the two following ways: a theatrical sense — that which is put on stage or in front of the camera (for example, the direction of actors, visual design) and in a filmic sense of style which is based on particular manipulations of film's technology (for example, camera angles, editing, special effects). In relation to this concept, filmmakers are those 'decision-makers' who make critical choices about filmic content and style. This concept can be understood then, as a way to understand the relationship between filmmakers and the filmic text which they produce.

While the technology of film militates strongly against one person having sole responsibility for the *mise en scène* of a large-scale film production, small-scale

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[7] Barrett Hodsdon, 'The Mystique of *Mise En Scene* Revisited', in *Film — Matters of Style*, Ed. Adrian Martin, *Continuum, The Australian Journal of Media and Culture*, Vol.5, No.2, 1992, 74

[8] Adrian Martin, '*Mise En Scene* is Dead, or The Expressive, The Excessive, The Technical and The Stylish', 87–140, in *Film — Matters of Style*, 89

[9] Martin, '*Mise En Scene* is Dead', 91

productions are more likely to allow the many technical and artistic roles of production to be undertaken by one person who then is considered a film's author. In the case of extremely wealthy director/producers such as Stephen Speilberg and George Lucas, however, these roles can also be undertaken by one person in large-scale productions. The film *Link-Up Diary* provides an example of how analyses of film that focus on primary filmmakers might obscure other crucial filmmaking performances. The decision to use one person as film crew was not only based on MacDougall's wish to experiment with using a particular audiovisual technology, but also on Coral Edwards' condition for allowing the film to be made at all.[10] Resulting from this production decision by Edwards, MacDougall made technological choices that had critical implications for the content and style of the film, including the overall ability of the film to constitute a significant discussion on the Stolen Generations (Chapter 1, p. 10).

MacDougall operated camera and sound equipment, edited, narrated, scripted and participated as interviewer in 'his' film *Link-Up Diary.* Notwithstanding this level of control, MacDougall had, at times, a tenuous authority over what was placed in front of his camera, as noted above. This uncertainty about what is going to happen next in the filming of documentaries shot in the 'observational' style of documentary filmmaking, provides an extreme example of how *mise en scène* differs in film and theatre. In films such as *Link-Up Diary* and *Rats in the Ranks*, the filmmaker(s) makes no pretence to control or prescribe the profilmic action. This lack of control over the events which are filmed is one of the particular markers of 'observational' documentary, as I discuss further in the investigation of documentary film theory and practice in Chapter 6.

In the context of my present discussion, however, it is important to consider how such a 'lack of control' can also be understood to relate to my description of actors as filmmakers. In theatre, the director conventionally controls what is placed on stage. In film, this control is also, or sometimes only, exerted in the editing room. In terms of a comparison between *mise en scène* in theatre and in film, it is the screen that has become a transposed theatrical 'stage', where performances become manifest. The shooting set is not the site of performance 'for' an audience, so much as 'towards' an audience. In contrast to theatre, commercially released films are

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[10] See Appendix B9, p.334

usually a large-scale enterprises whose production involves many people and several technological processes. It is interesting to note that when contemporary Western theatre enterprises also reach this scale, it is also most likely that authorial control cannot be attributed to one person, the director, but to many people and several technologies (including, for example, production houses for special effects). It is worth noting, however, that small-scale filmmaking, under the primary control of one or two people, has become more easily accessible with the advent of computer-based editing suites and digital camrecorders.

Stories and Screenplays

Another example of how filmmaking performances can be understood as collective processes occurs in Victor Turner's distinction between the dramatic text in a stage production and a film's screenplay. He refers to how the 'dramatic text' can exist as a performative text in itself, and how in contrast, the 'screenplay' does not become such a text until

> it has been absorbed into a multigenred and multicoded and collectively orchestrated finished product, the concentrated essence of all the processes that have acted upon the original unidimensional script.'[11]

His description of the screenplay can be situated within a wider discussion about drama and performance, yet it nevertheless includes the places where film and theatre can be understood in terms of each other. His discussion of the screenplay also can usefully be considered in terms of Derrida's essay, 'The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation', particularly in the sense that he describes Artaud's movement towards a rejection of the written dramatic text as the authoritative source for theatrical practice. Derrida quotes Artaud's reorientation of theatrical practice towards the *mise en scène* in theatre as follows:

> In my view no one has the right to call himself author, that is to say creator, except the person who controls the direct handling of the stage.[12]

If the space entailed by the filmic text is considered a filmic transposition of 'the stage', then film can be considered an obvious site for the triumph of the theatrical *mise en scène* over the written dramatic text.

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[11]Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, 31

[12]Antoin Artaud, 'The Theatre and Its Double', quoted in Jacques Derrida, 'The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation', 232–250 in Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Trans. Alan Bass, London and Henley:Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, 239

One example of this triumph is as follows. Alan Duff, author of the book *Once Were Warriors*,[13] had his screenplay for the film rejected by producer Scholes. Duff wrote the screenplay for *What Becomes of the Broken Hearted* (Ian Mune, 1999), the sequel to *Once Were Warriors*. In spite of disagreements he has over filmic interpretations of his books, Duff concedes that a film is a group project, rather than a writer's project.[14] At the time of my interview with him, Duff was setting up his own production company and intended to write more for film than for the literary world. Duff thus can be seen as attempting to take more control over the filmic interpretation of his narratives than that control which is available through the writing of screenplays. He appears to locate a large degree of this control in the role of producer. This wresting of authority over the screenplay, from the person(s) who originally wrote it into the hands of many other people parallels my earlier discussion about the ways in which people whose performances are filmed in non-fiction film can be considered filmmakers. These people frequently have more control over the profilmic events from which narratives are constructed than the producer, director and camera-operator. Some filmmakers, like MacDougall, even invite them into the editing process.

Storyboarding

The filmic pre-production process named 'storyboarding' provides another way of describing how people in a variety of production roles can be understood as filmmakers. I suggest that a consideration of storyboarding might be an appropriate response to Artaud's claim that his theatre required new forms of notation:

> … in the spectacles I produce there will be a preponderant physical share which could not be captured and written down in the customary language of words, and [that] even the spoken and written portions will be spoken and written in a new sense.[15]

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[13]Alan Duff, *Once Were Warriors*, New Zealand:Tandem Press, 1990
[14]Alan Duff, Appendix B4, p.308
[15] Artaud, quoted in Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 240

Although he does not refer to film, Derrida's discussion of Artaud's 'new sense' brings to mind the creative process of 'storyboarding' as it exists in both filmic practice as well as in the practice of Western contemporary 'visual theatre'[16]:

> What of this new sense? And first, what of this new theatrical writing? This latter will no longer occupy the limited position of simply being the notation of words, but will cover the entire range of this new language: not only phonetic writing and the transcription of speech, but also hieroglyphic writing, the writing of which phonetic elements are coordinated to visual, pictorial, and plastic elements.[17]

A consideration of storyboarding in relation to this esoteric conceptualisation of hieroglyphs does not reduce these concepts to one simple process. The term 'storyboarding' rather refers, both in its theory and practice, to those many production processes that involve logistics of time and money, collective aesthetic discussions and choices, and the 'workshopping' of ideas through many stages of rehearsal. [18]

Anthony Buckley describes Moffatt's storyboarding of *beDevil* as extremely detailed and disciplined. He describes how she used this process in order to show the 'shooting' crew not only how a day's work was to proceed, but also how she was prepared to sacrifice some of her ideas in order not to run over budget. She made cuts at the beginning of the day's shooting in order to complete shooting at 6.30pm.[19] There was no money for overtime. In Moffatt's hands, this process became a collaborative process of compromise with her producers and film crew, as well as an artistic plan of action. Through the processes of storyboarding and rehearsal in fiction film, it is possible then to describe performances 'towards' film as not only those which appear as part of the filmic text, but also as those preparatory works of performance which enable the former. Workshopping and rehearsal periods in both film and in theatre, together with the development of a storyboard which directs the flow of a whole performance text, all contribute to a cumulative interpretive approach towards narrative roles and overall design. My notion of 'overall design' here includes the production of computer graphics and

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[16] Examples of this form of theatre include puppet theatre which includes little dialogue, and the 'black theatre' work of companies such as 'The Theatre of Prague'.

[17] Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 240

[18] Eisenstein describes some of these processes in his discussion of the 'shooting-script' in *The Film Sense*, Trans. and Ed. Jay Leyda, San Diego, New York, London: A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace and Company, first copyrighted by this company in 1942, 24–36.

[19] Anthony Buckley, Appendix B6, p. 318

digital morphing effects. The reception of a performance text in both film and theatre, however, primarily depends on how all these preparatory processes manifest in the performances of actors.

Actors and Acting

> *The actor is a man who works in public with his body, offering it publicly.*[20]

In an interview with Eugenio Barba, Jerzy Grotowski offers the above definition of an 'actor'. In its simplicity, this definition nevertheless includes the fundamental framework for understanding performance as a dynamic, lived process. Drawing on his subsequent discussion of 'how' an actor may work with his or her body, this definition can be opened up to describe 'acting' as the many ways a person may work with his or her body in public (assuming that Grotowski believes a woman can also be an actor). His use of the words 'public' and 'publicly' invites the many discussions of 'reception' which are part of film, theatre, literary and aesthetic theories. This basic description of the work of an actor as someone 'who works in public with his body', constitutes a widely inclusive definition of an 'actor'; it includes, for example, Bill Nichols' definition of the 'social actor':

> This term stands for 'individuals' or 'People' ...I use social actor to stress the degree to which individuals represent themselves to others; this can be construed as a performance. The term is also meant to remind us that social actors, as people, retain the capacity to act within the historical arena where they perform.[21]

Nichols uses this definition in order to refer to people who are filmed in documentary filmmaking, and who know they are being filmed. The performances of these 'social actors' can contribute to the filmic texts of both non-fiction and fiction films. In his definition of the 'social actor', however, Nichols specifically grapples with the paradox whereby documentary film eschews the formal ontological 'frame' of fiction film, and yet depends epistemologically on the same communicative processes as fiction film. Grotowski's definition, pertaining as it does to live theatre, can be used not only to describe acting in live theatre, but also to describe Nichols' sense of 'social acting' as it occurs both in fiction and non-fiction film.

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[20]Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, London:Methuen, 1969, 33

When people perform theatrical fiction, and/or some of their own historically situated lives in front of a camera, they are performing not only for the film crew, but for the 'public' that is implied by the camera's technological ability to construct a filmic text. And this filmic text has many audiences, many of them unknown at the time of filming. The continually evolving audiovisual technology of the 'cinematic apparatus' is an extremely powerful device for the framing of human behaviour as performance. In Herbert Blau's terms, the application of audiovisual technology to theatrical and 'everyday' behaviour, is an overwhelming device of 'ado' which transforms all 'just doing' into the theatrical frame of performance.[22] Peter Krämer and Alan Lovell describe as follows how acting performances in film can be difficult to describe because of the 'ado' created by film's technology and production processes:

> Many analyses of film acting are in fact discussions of a fictional character (whose creation is the work of a writer) rather than analyses of how that character is embodied (the work of an actor) ... The effect of camerawork and picture editing, sound recording and editing have to be taken into account in the discussion of film acting. In such a context, it is all too easy for the work of the individual actor to be discounted.[23]

Their edited collection of essays on film acting draws extensively on interviews with Hollywood actors and discussions on acting technique and teaching methods. My discussion on acting as performance 'towards' film is more concerned, however, with the ways in which actors, in both film and theatre, relate not only with the fictional world of the 'performance text', but also with their audiences — their 'public'. In this sense, I am interested in the degree to which an actor, who performs 'towards' film, is 'aware' of her/his audience during that performance.

Naremore distinguishes between 'mimetic' performances that are theatrically constructed performances for the camera and the 'aleatory' (see Chapter 1, p.8) performances of people who are caught 'unawares' by the camera.[24] Aleatory behaviour by social actors therefore can be understood to include behaviour by people who do not know they are being filmed, but whose behaviour becomes

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[21] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 42

[22] I have previously described Blau's theory of theatrical 'ado' and Goffman's description of this theatrical frame previously, in Chapter 2, p 41.

[23] Alan Lovell and Peter Krämer, 'Introduction', *Screen Acting*, Eds. Alan Lovell and Peter Krämer, London and New York:Routledge, 1999, 5

framed as 'performance' in a general social sense, due to the implication of 'audience' which is integral to audiovisual technology. Grotowski's definition, as he uses the phrase 'offering it publicly', also brings to mind Goffman's dramaturgical model of social encounters in 'everyday life'. He describes the risks to personal identity that are involved when people interact with each other:

> Those who conduct face-to-face interaction on a theatre's stage must meet the key requirement of real situations: they must expressively sustain a definition of the situation; but this they do in circumstances that have facilitated their developing an apt terminology for the interactional tasks that all of us share.[25]

It is the work of sustaining 'a definition of the situation' which constitutes one of the major risks faced in any social interaction between people. The professional actor in theatre and film, however, has an added and emotionally intense task of sustaining a definition of a theatrical situation in front of many people whom he or she may or may not know personally. Goffman's description of theatrical performance as an 'apt' source for a vocabulary with which to describe social encounters between people, is reinforced by Grotowski's description of an actor 'offering' his/her body 'publicly' towards a specifically framed encounter.

Grotowski claims that 'the core of the theatre is an encounter',[26] and goes on to describe several of those encounters that are experienced by an actor in relation to theatre. These do not include one with the audience, but do include the encounters of self-revelation derived from acting techniques, those with other creative people and encounters with dramatic texts.[27] This understanding of theatre as a set of encounters between creative people is similarly expressed by Barba, as he defines performance as 'the result of a collision which occurs in a situation of acceptance and of reciprocal confidence.'[28] The encounter between performers in a performance situation and their 'general public' audience, however, also needs to be acknowledged in any comprehensive discussion of performance and acting.

I want to focus now on how professional theatrical acting can be understood in terms of performing 'for an audience' in both live theatre and film. I draw again on

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[24]Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema,* 14
[25]Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 225
[26]Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre,* 56
[27]Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre,* 57
[28]Eugenio Barba, *Beyond the Floating Islands*, New York:PAJ Publications, 1986, 111

Grotowski's descriptions of acting and acting techniques, as he discusses the pitfalls of 'acting' explicitly 'for an audience':

> One must not think of the spectator while acting. Naturally this is a delicate question. Firstly the actor structures his role; secondly, the score... Then he thinks: 'Is what I am doing comprehensible?' This question implies the presence of the spectator.[29]

This idea of 'the presence of the spectator' can also be used to describe how a film actor needs to acknowledge an audience which is not present at the time of the acting performance. The actor Lex Marinos describes how this involves acting towards 'a black box ... not a mirror'[30]: the consciousness of a need for comprehensibility in terms of audiovisual technology. This need for comprehensibility, which is integral to acting for both the stage and for film, in turn implies that some actors are better than others at combining the two levels of the acting process as described by Grotowski — the artistic process of understanding how to take on a particular role, and how to combine that understanding and taking up of a role in such a way that they can be communicated in performance. In film, this artistic understanding of and ability to communicate a role in performance also involve an understanding of what is required for a particular film by other elements of the 'cinematic apparatus': the director, the editor, the audiovisual technology and the people operating it, the producers, as well as the specific audiences for whom the film is being made.

There are two crucial differences between acting for film and stage, from which other differences flow. Firstly, the technology is different, and secondly, the audience of film is not present in the same time and space as the actors. Other filmmakers however, such as the producer, the director, the editor and camera operator, can perform as audience for the actor and become the deciders of 'comprehensibility'. In stage productions, this role is primarily taken up by the director, both in rehearsal and public performance situations. In film, however, the 'public' audience is not present at any time during the actor's performance; the film actor relies much more than the stage actor on the production crew for the eventual comprehensibility of performance. It is in this sense that film acting is always

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[29] Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, 181. Grotowski's definition of an actor's 'score' occurs at p.180.
[30] Lex Marinos, Appendix B5, p.316

'ensemble' acting, where besides other actors, the 'ensemble' includes the other filmmakers on whom the actor depends for the eventual manifestation of performance. The production crew in stage productions are rather 'facilitators' of an actor's performance; 'ensemble' acting can only be understood in terms of other actors. In film, this sense of acting and interacting with other actors can be understood to carry over into the relationship between actors and other filmmakers. For example, Marinos makes a sweeping comment that many film directors have ' no idea how to direct' actors[31] and therefore wasted many performance opportunities.

A more positive example of this relationship occurs in Michael Caine's account of acting with Sir Laurence Olivier on the film *Sleuth* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1972). Caine describes how Olivier previously had worked

> in an atmosphere of autonomy and extraordinary power, where the job of everyone around him had always been — other actors included — to get the great man's performance on the stage.[32]

He describes how in the making of the film, if any of his lines got in the way of a particular move of Olivier's then Olivier would tell the director to cut them, and how the director would reply that he would cut them in the editing. Caine relates the following conversation with the director, describing further how he was 'upstaged' by Olivier and how the director handled the situation:

> 'Did you see the two shot this morning, which was supposed to be a fifty-fifty? He went upstage and pulled me round until you could only see the side of my face.'
>
> 'I saw that,' Joe said sympathetically. 'The next time he does it, turn right around until your back is to the camera and I will come in over his shoulder from the other side for a close-up on you. He'll soon stop it.' He smiled. 'Don't worry, Michael. This isn't the theatre — we do have editing and close-ups.'[33]

The co-operation between Caine and his director made it possible for him to relax into his 'ensemble' acting with Olivier. While the director and camera operator were not 'acting', their performance of their filmmaking roles were all the same both

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[31] ibid.
[32] Michael Caine, *What's It All About?,* Milsons Point, N.S.W.:Random House Australia, 1992, 300
[33] ibid.

crucial and integral to the more theatrically based 'ensemble' acting performed for this film.

In contrast, Moffatt's direction of actors in the third segment of *beDevil*, 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In', did not promote this sense of skilled ensemble. Marinos describes how in the rehearsal period, Moffatt allowed improvisation around her meticulously written script. At the time of filming, however, she directed actors back to the script, thus disallowing the possibility of some of the actors' insights being included as part of the filmic text.[34] This close form of direction and Moffatt's particular instruction contrasts strongly with the relative lack of control experienced by directors of non-fiction films who rely on social actors and their often improvised acts of everyday life. This contrast between professional acting in fictional narratives and the behaviour of social actors in non-fiction film poses questions about those behavioural processes that are assumed to be involved in the business of 'acting'. I suggest that these questions can be addressed through the concept of 'mimesis'. My discussion below explores how this concept can be used to describe the ways in which professional actors transform 'everyday' behaviour into 'acting', and also the ways in which audiovisual technology can be used in order to transform performances by untrained or social actors into performances *towards* film.

Filmmaking and the Sensual Art of Mimesis

I am using the term 'mimesis' in order to describe behaviour which is common to 'acting' in both film and theatre. I am using it as a way into understanding the pan-sensual bodily experience of 'acting out' a character within a fictionalised situation.[35] This 'acting out' occurs in the context of professional acting within the liminal mode of Turner's 'as if' behaviour (previously discussed in Chapter 2, p.45) and in the context of Bateson's frame of 'play':

> It appears ... that play is a phenomenon in which the actions of 'play' are related to, or denote, other actions of 'not play'. We therefore meet in play with an instance of signals standing for other events, and it appears,

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[34] Marinos, Appendix B5, p.310

[35] This sense of mimesis as pan-sensual 'acting out' could also be discussed, if space allowed, in the context of Butler's concept of 'bodily knowingness', which she derives from Bourdieu's *habitus*. See Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 152–153.

therefore, that the evolution of play may have been an important step in the evolution of communication.[36]

The terms 'play' and 'play-acting' are indeed commonly used to describe children's leisure activities. A conceptualisation of 'play-acting' invites the formulation of an inverse concept which could be named 'serious' acting. Actors in workshop situations can be said to 'play-act', as do children playing role-playing games such as 'Mummies and Daddies' or 'Families'. In both cases, the inverse of 'play-acting' can be understood as the event for which the 'play-acting' is preparatory: in the case of the actor — the 'serious' business of acting in a professional performance situation, and in the case of the child — the 'serious' business of socially acting as an adult in society. Mimesis can be understood as a form of 'play-acting' which occurs in the subjunctive mood of 'as if' behaviour. As such, mimesis can also be understood as communicative behaviour in Bateson's sense.

Mimesis is also preparatory behaviour with regard to understandings and subsequent actions which take place in Turner's 'indicative mood of culture' which 'controls the quotidian arenas of economic activity, much of law and politics, and a good deal of domestic life.'[37] Such an understanding of mimesis runs contrary to Platonic arguments that derogate mimetic acts as falsifying acts of representation.[38] If mimesis is a process which is both communicative and preparatory, then it is possible to consider the professional actor's craft as a mimetically transforming, dynamic process that begins with the actor's first private approach to a role and culminates in the public offering of an interpretation which has drawn in turn from many other mimetic processes.

This understanding of mimesis as a communicative act of interpretation brings to mind the second of the two 'uses' of mimesis which Diamond employs in her 'inquiry into the possibilities of a feminist mimesis'[39]:

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[36] Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind,* New York:Ballantine Books, 1972, 181
[37] Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance,* 101
[38] Elin Diamond briefly but succinctly discusses the major distinctions between Platonic and Aristotlean conceptualisations of mimesis in her monograph *Unmaking Mimesis. Essays on feminism and theater.* London and New York:Routledege, 1997, i–xvi. Diamond's discussion compares these two primary conceptualisations of mimesis with those of Luce Irigaray, Walter Benjamin and Bertold Brecht, and Jacques Derrida.
[39] Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis,* ii

One, mimesis as representation, with its many doublings and unravelings
of model, subject, identity ... Two, mimesis as a mode of reading that
transforms an object into a *gestus* or dialectical image...[40]

Her second use of mimesis draws on Brecht's theory of 'social *gest*' (see chapter 2, p.48) and also on Benjamin's conceptualisation of the 'dialectical image',[41] which she describes as a 'montage construction of forgotten objects or pieces of commodity culture, that are "blasted" out of history's continuum.'[42] Her discussion of mimesis implies a process of re-contextualisation whereby an image can be understood as representing a discourse that uses the history of that image in order to interrogate qualities of time and space within a particular historical period. This interrogation takes place via a sensual, mimetic understanding of that specific image. For example, a discarded hair comb is understood in terms of how it was used to groom a human head of hair. But the questions which arise from a particular comb also include questions about that comb's particular use and how such a use can inform both about the particular historical moment of its use and the later historical moment when that use is contemplated in terms of a wider history. In this sense, Benjamin's 'dialectical image' is a way in which it is possible to consider the actor's body as a particular physicality which can be re-contextualised as a vehicle for narrative in both film and theatre.

The reproducible, commodifiable elements of professional acting are derived from the wealth of training and techniques available to contemporary actors. The actor's body is never itself commodified by film because the actor's body is never physically present in a filmic text. Images and reconstructions of images of the actor's body, however, can be commodified by all the technologies of visual and audio representation. On the other hand, in live theatre, the actor's body can be understood as a commodifiable function of a performance text because the techniques which a stage actor employs rely on her/his physical presence in the same time and space as an audience. In film, an actor offers the audiovisual image of his or her body, not the presence of that body. In film then, it is possible to

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[40] ibid.

[41] Benjamin's conceptualisation of the 'dialectical image' appears in his essay 'One Way Street' in Walter Benjamin and Peter Demetz, *Reflections: essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writing,* NewYork:Shocken Books, 1986. This concept also formed the underpinning for Benjamin's uncompleted work *Passagen-Werk,* on the nineteenth century commercial arcades of Paris, discussed in much detail in Susan Buck-Morss' *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades project*, Cambridge, Mass.:MIT Press, 1989.

[42] Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis*, 146

understand the work of an actor as a filmmaking performance. In the context of my above discussion, this filmmaking performance of acting 'towards' film can also be described as the work of constructing a dialectical image from the body of the actor, which manifests as film.

Acting, Mimesis and 'New' Technologies

In order to more closely describe the ways in which mimesis is involved in performances *towards* film, I want now to discuss Benjamin's reflections on this concept as a more general aspect of human behaviour. In his essay 'On the Mimetic Faculty', he describes the mimetic process in terms of humanity's 'gift of seeing resemblances ... a rudiment of the powerful compulsion in former times to become and behave like something else.'[43] He writes of 'magical correspondences' which were normatively made in earlier cultures, and which appear to have been lost or hidden in twentieth century European culture and poses the question 'whether we are concerned with the decay of this faculty or with its transformation.'[44] If the mimetic faculty can be understood in Benjamin's terms as a need 'to become and behave like something else', then the contemporary processes of digital morphing and other audiovisual alterations of the human image can certainly be considered as 'transformations' of the mimetic faculty. This technology is simply exploring and exploiting to the point of making this urge towards mimesis transparent. The technologies of 'image changing', in their extremity, make transparent the actorly techniques of 'shape changing' and even more urgently pose the following question implicated in all kinds of spectatorship: why or how should I believe what I am seeing? In this thesis, I address this question specifically in the context of film and theatre. Answers to the question of 'how' change as constantly as technologies change and as audiences' understandings about their relationship to these technologies change. Lynne Kirby, in her essay 'Death and the Photographic Image', suggests that

> Perhaps, then, what matters in this fluctuating multimedia landscape is not so much the medium itself as the institutions of mass media. The battle over technology is also a battle over the repression of information ...[45]

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[43] Benjamin, 'On the Mimetic Faculty', *Reflections,* 333
[44] ibid.
[45] Lynne Kirby, 'Death and the Photographic Image' in *Fugitive Images. From Photography to Video*, Ed. Patrice Petro, Bloomington and Indianapolis:Indiana University Press, 1995, 74

She goes on to describe how even though the new digital technologies may alter sound and images so that no trace of the alteration remains, the issue of belief and non-belief depends on a contextualisation of these sounds and images, rather than the finesse of image alteration: 'the crudeness of cut-and-paste methods of tabloid-type photo-fiction has never stopped "official" historians from doing it, or the public from believing it...'[46]

One of the ways in which audiences can be understood to approach their relationship with audiovisual technologies lies in an understanding of how these technologies make available, at close range (in close-up), the performances of actors. Audiences make assumptions about these performances in both theatre and film depending on how they understand them as being derived from all those technologies of illusion that have evolved over time: including 'lime light', magic shows, photography, sound recording and film. The craft of a professional actor, when described in terms of Benjamin's process of 'becoming' as well as 'behaving like', describes one of humanity's basic ways of experiencing the difference between theatrical performance and 'everyday' life. This experience is based on an understanding of an 'imitation' that is better described perhaps as an 'acting out'. Michael Taussig describes this dual function of the mimetic faculty as both 'becoming' as well as 'behaving like', as 'a copying or imitation, and a palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived.'[47] In Chapter 6, I further discuss this mimetic relationship in the context of 'virtual' actors: audiovisual images produced from the technologies of whole-body scanning and digital morphing. In order to develop my present argument, however, that actors who perform *towards* film can be considered as filmmakers, I want to continue to draw on, and to describe even more closely, theatrical concepts of 'acting'.

Acting Techniques and the 'Decided' Body

In Grotowski's sense, the actor 'works' with the human body in order to communicate with a larger audience or 'public' than that implied by intimate conversation. In terms of the professional actor, this process of communication includes a technical craft and its specific application through the actor's specific,

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[46] Kirby, 'Death and the Photographic Image', 75
[47] Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: a particular history of the senses,* New York:Routledge, 1993, 21

historical body. I understand this body to include all those ideational and emotional processes that are involved in professional acting, as well as the physicality of a particular actor's body. Taussig's 'palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived' depends on particular bodies. The most accessible body in terms of the filmic text is the actor's, and the degree of ability with which the actor transforms his everyday body into a 'fictional body'. Barba describes this concept of the 'fictional body' in his discussion of that Western theatrical concept of acting as involving 'the decided body'.

Barba uses the terms 'energy' and 'balance' to describe how the actor's 'decided body' explores and changes the dynamics of everyday actions in order to create new balances, new tensions in the creation of movement. In the same way in which choreographers isolate and then amplify everyday gestures and actions in the creation of dance, actors simplify and then extend emotional and physical movements, and in doing so, play with the act of balancing the various energies which are involved in the execution of each movement. He describes the energy flow of the actor's 'decided body' as

> an operation of reduction and substitution where what is essential in actions emerges and which removes the body from daily techniques, creating a tension, a difference in potential, through which energy passes.[48]

Following Grotowski, Barba emphasises the actor's physically oriented 'work' with the body. This kind of work shares many of the aspects of what Naremore describes as externalised styles of acting[49] which use various repertoires of sounds and gestures in order to communicate with an audience. Although in contrast to the more 'internalised', psychological techniques based on Stanislavski's theory (and further developed by Lee Strasbourg for film) Barba's accounts of acting do not move towards Naremore's 'rhetorical', externalised acting. They move rather towards a holistic description of how an actor works with mind and body to create a mode of behaviour which can communicate through sound and gesture to a public audience. Barba describes the creation of this communicative mode as follows:

> In the western tradition, the actor's work has been oriented around a network of fictions, of 'magic-ifs' which deal with the psychology, the

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[48] Barba, *Beyond the Floating Islands*, 153
[49] Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, 51

> behaviour and the history of his person and that of the character he is
> playing ... What the actor is looking for, in this case, is a fictional body,
> not a fictional personality.[50]

This transformation from an everyday body into a theatrical, 'fictional' body is achieved by many techniques, some of which I have referred to in my above discussion. Others are discussed in detail by Naremore[51] as he traces various acting performances in several 'classic' Hollywood films. In his discussion, he describes the following apparent paradox. Although the advent of the 'close-up' in both sound and image in film called for 'less' rhetorical acting than that which was needed to project to a large 'live' audience, particular rhetorical gestures of the body and voice remain in the craft of film acting. These gestures are most evidently derived from the Western tradition of pantomime. Naremore describes how this continued use of rhetoric is almost obscured by the overwhelming convention towards more internalised, expressive acting. and its aims towards 'naturalism' or 'realism' in 'classic' and most contemporary cinema.[52] He goes on to discuss how this distinction between acting styles developed in the early twentieth century from the different theories and practices of two Russian directors: Stanislavski and Meyerhold.

Meyerhold worked towards a stylised theatre which was overtly based on symbolism. His theatre foregrounded the physical movement and athleticism of the actor; it worked against the naturalism which Stanislavski promoted through his psychological, 'internalised' acting techniques.[53] While Meyerhold's work could not be described sufficiently in terms of Western 'pantomime' theatre, these two forms of theatre shared the concept of a repertoire of expressive physical movements. Naremore describes the difference between more rhetorical 'externally' created acting and the 'internalised' naturalistic acting techniques derived from the writings of Stanislavski[54] as follows:

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[50] Barba, *Beyond the Floating Islands,* 151–152

[51] Throughout his monograph *Acting in the Cinema,* Naremore presents a detailed discussion of film acting and its relationship with stage acting, but addresses acting techniques particularly in his chapter 'Rhetoric and Expressive Technique', 34–67

[52] For a history on the development of 'realism' in Western acting, see Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre,* Chapters 13, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21

[53] See Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre,* 317–325

[54] See Edward Dwight Easty, *On Method Acting,* New York:Ivy Books, 1981

> At one extreme, the actor develops the body as an instrument, learning a kinesics, or movement vocabulary; at the other, he or she is encouraged to behave more or less normally, letting gesture or facial expression rise 'naturally' out of deeply felt emotion. Professional players have always spoken about the value of both skills, but ... modern dramatic literature strongly favors the second.[55]

These distinctions between rhetorical/expressive acting and internalised/externalised acting can be used in order to discuss the different ways in which professional, untrained and social acting performances can affect a filmic text. The filmmaking performances of casting and direction also exploit such distinctions. In the process of describing a particular film as cultural performance, it is useful to consider why specific casting decisions were made. These decisions, of course, can have a powerful effect on the ways in which film can communicate across cultures.

A more detailed discussion of acting techniques in theatre and film is beyond the scope of this thesis. What is crucial, however, in my consideration of film as cultural performance, is how such techniques can be understood as part of the process which transforms the everyday body of the actor into what Barba describes as 'the fictional body' (as discussed earlier on page 90). It is those distinctions that are understood to exist between the everyday body and the 'fictional' body which inform my continuing discussion about how people distinguish between fiction and non-fiction in film, and how this distinction in turn can contribute to the cultural discourse enabled by a filmic text.

Filmmaking as Cultural Performance: Acting and the Body of the Actor

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, an actor can be understood as a filmmaker in three ways. Firstly, an actor can affect other filmmaking decisions through overall performance ability and through the enactment of specific performances. For example, in *Rats in the Ranks,* the filmmakers focused their narrative about a particular social crisis on the performances of one theatrically adept social actor: Larry Hand. Another example of how acting ability can affect film occurs when an actor's ability or lack of ability in the craft of acting impinges on the filmic text: in *Once Were Warriors*, the performances of untrained child actors are placed in conjunction with those of experienced trained adult actors. This

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[55]Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema,* 51.

conjunction produces a sense of increased vulnerability around the child characters in the film's narrative.

Secondly, a primary actor can also be a primary filmmaker. When this dual filmmaking role collapses onto one person, it can result in the manifestation of this person as a 'performance artist'. A filmmaker can only be considered a performance artist, in the sense which I have described in the previous chapter, when there is also a public discussion about how a particular film can be understood to be part of society's discourse about that particular filmmaker's personal history. In the case of a performance artist, the actor's personal history is also involved in the transformation of the actor's body into a 'fictional' one.

Thirdly, both the performance and physical body of an actor, through the mediation of audiovisual technology, constitute part of the actual representational fabric that is manipulated into (appears and sounds as) the filmic text. In a sense that is related to performances by 'performance artists', the actual history of a particular actor, as it is inscribed upon her or his actual body, can contribute towards the narrative of a film. For example, Kouvaros discusses how John Cassavetes' films

> … enact a constant oscillation between character and actor, a sense that what we witness on screen is not just a cinematic performance, but something that touches the life of an actor.[56]

Another example occurs in *beDevil,* as the dark skin of the 'netball team' riding in the back of a 'ute' (utility vehicle) through an Australian outback town is contrasted with the pale skin of the townspeople who line the pavements to wave and sign to the 'team'. This interaction is created via editing, but when considered in terms of the above mentioned contrast between skin colours, this filmically, artificially fabricated interaction interrogates nevertheless the conventions of interaction that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

In order to further define this third way in which an actor can be considered a filmmaker, it is useful to note how Goffman distinguishes three ways of describing an actor within his 'theatrical frame':

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[56]George Kouvaros, 'Where does it happen? The place of performance in the work of John Cassavetes', *Screen* Vol.39 No.3, Autumn 1998, 245

> I shall use the term 'role' as an equivalent to specialized capacity or function, understanding this to occur both in offstage, real life and in its staged version; the term 'person' will refer to the subject of a biography, the term 'part' or 'character' to a staged version thereof.[57]

This third aspect of acting, then, corresponds with the diegetic[58] meaning which can be derived from the actor as a 'person' in Goffman's terms. The attributes which the actor as a person brings to a film or live-staged performance event, also inform both the craft of the actor and the potential for an actor to perform as a performance artist. Casting choices in film can draw as much from the consideration of an actor as a 'person' as from their acting ability; they of course also draw on the already 'public' history of such a 'person'.

When considered in these three ways, 'acting' for film can be seen to contribute to the considerations which I discuss at my three levels of performing in film, with each above mentioned aspect corresponding to Levels 1, 2, and 3 respectively and as follows. The actor can be considered in terms of his or her craft at Level 1, as a filmmaker who performs towards film. At Level 2, when a director is also an actor appearing in the filmic text, a filmmaker's motivation can appear embodied in that filmic text, in the form of the filmmaker's own historical body. Level 3 situates the historical actual body of the actor within the actor's own personal biographical history. It also uses it in the sense of wider cultural performances that address various sociopolitical issues within a particular society: the actor's 'personal' body, with all the stories that could be created from its individual 'inscriptions',[59] can suggest a wider cultural context for a film's particular narrative. It is also possible to describe this sense of an actor's bodily characteristics providing a wider contextualisation for a film's narrative, by drawing on Barthes' concept of cinematic 'excess' in his third, 'obtuse' meaning in film, where 'the obtuse meaning is the epitome of a counter-narrative'.[60] I continue my discussion of Barthes' 'third meaning' in film in Chapter 6, as I explore his concept of filmic 'excess' in the context of another of his concepts: the 'punctum' in photography. In this present

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[57] Erving Goffman *Frame Analysis,* 124.

[58] I am using this term as an adjective drawn from the work *diegesis*: A narrative or history; a recital or relation (Webster Dictionary 1913 [Online on the ARTFL Project, Mark Olsen]. Accessed 6/10/2001. <http://machaut.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/WEBSTER.page.sh?PAGE-409> It is used to denote narrative potential.

[59] I am using this term in the sense used by Elizabeth Grosz in her chapter 'The Body As Inscriptive Surface' 138–159 in her monograph *Volatile Bodies. Toward a Corporeal Feminism,* St.Leonards, NSW:Allen and Unwin, 1994

[60] Barthes, 'The Third Meaning: Research notes on some Eisenstein stills', *Image, Music, Text,* 63

discussion, however, I want to focus more closely on particular ways in which 'excessive' information can be drawn from actors' presentations of their own bodies in the representational practice of film.

Performance Artists Again ...

The transformation of an actor's body from the everyday to the 'fictional' body becomes a complicated issue when a dominant filmmaker such as a director both draws from his or her own personal history for narrative content in a film, and then also 'acts' in that film. As an example of this phenomenon, there are the many cameo performances by Alfred Hitchcock in his own films, together with his published interviews and carefully created television persona. This combination of performances can lead to an interpretation of this director as a performance artist in the terms I have discussed in the previous chapter. Hitchcock created a public version of his own historical self which he then inserted into brief 'sightings' in his films. This 'public version' of himself must be considered of course as part of his personal, biographical history. Naremore interestingly describes such a 'sighting' in *Rear Window* (1954) as follows:

> The effect he creates is ironic and witty — almost Brechtian, except that it has an aesthetic rather than a didactic purpose: it shifts our attention away from the diegesis and toward the apparatus, inviting us to think of the film as an art object crafted by an 'author'.[61]

Hitchcock can thus be described as a performance artist whose dominant performance is the role of 'author'. This dominant performance is liminal, in Turner's terms; Hitchcock's 'as if' performance of his own self as all-powerful 'author' pervades his other performances as director and actor. This collision between a subjunctive 'as if' performance and the more clearly distinguished, purpose-driven indicative performances of everyday life is particularly accessible through the concept of the performance artist. While the performance artist's personal history is revealed, it is never (and never can be) completely revealed, and therein lies the element of 'as if' subjunctive behaviour which communicates through questions and possible answers.

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[61] Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema,* 262

Another example of where a director cannot be considered a performance artist, in spite of his inclusion of his own history within a film's narrative, occurs in Jean-Luc Godard's *Tout Va Bien* (1972). The main male character in this film is a filmmaker who participated in the pro-revolutionary events in Paris in 1968, and makes advertisements now for a living. Godard also participated in the events of May 1968, and is known to have directed commercials. He does not, however, perform as an actor in this film, thus eliminating him from being a performance artist in the terms of this thesis. Kouvaros, however, describes the way in which Cassavetes' acting in a farewell scene towards the end of his film *Love Streams* (1984) is overlaid with a non-fictional farewell to his audiences: this was his last film, and Kouvaros suggests that Cassavetes was aware of this.[62] In this film, it could thus be argued that he performed as a performance artist, bearing in mind the large body of critique about his work that already existed at the time this film was made.

In my analysis of *beDevil* in Chapter 6, however, I discuss in some detail how Moffatt can be considered a performance artist — how she performs as model in her photographic work, as an actor in *beDevil*, and uses autobiographical material as narrative in her films, as well as offering her own history in transcribed and filmed interviews. In the case of 'non-fiction' film, this concept of the performance artist manifests in the degree to which the liminal mode of theatrical performance is embraced by social actors who are offering segments of their professional and private everyday lives for public reception through a filmic text. In my analysis of *Link-Up Diary* in Chapter 8, I explore specific examples of how the concept of performance artist can be extended to include 'social actors' around whose performances a film is structured. *Rats in the Ranks* provides another example of the social actor as performance artist in the 'character' and person of Larry Hand. In my discussion below, however, I want to re-trace my argument and describe more closely the ways in which an actor can be considered a filmmaker in non-fiction as well as fiction film.

Acting as Filmmaking

To summarise the above section, the actor's ability to 'act', the actor's autobiographical motivation for making a particular film, and the actor's own

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[62]Kouvaros, 'Where does this happen? The place of performance in the work of John Cassavetes', 244–5

physical body, constitute the three ways of describing how an actor can contribute to the overall filmmaking process. Untrained actors are used by many directors, sometimes because there is no trained actor available for a particular role, as happened in the casting of both *Once Were Warriors* and *beDevil*. Untrained actors are also used in fiction films for the ways in which their particular physical bodies and everyday bodily gestures can carry the narrative of a film. If the actor is considered one filmmaker amongst many, he or she can nevertheless be distinguished from other filmmakers in that it is the image and sound of his or her body which are transformed via audiovisual technology and other filmmaking performances into the filmic text. As mentioned earlier, these qualities of sound, image and movement are used for their ability to affect a filmic text.

Audiovisual technology and other filmmaking performances, particularly editing, transform the sounds, actions and images of untrained actors and documentary film's 'social actors' into a filmic text which performs such sounds, actions and images as particular narrative constructs. Pudovkin's chapter, 'Work With Non-Actors',[63] provides an example of how this can happen. In making *The Deserter* (1933) and *The Story of a Simple Case* (1932), he constructed the images he wanted by directing the boy 'non-actors' in a specific way. He directed and encouraged the children through particular patterns of behaviour which, in the former film, involved an exaggeration of emotion within a particular scene; in the latter film, they had little relationship with the film's narrative. Pudovkin calculated, however, that these patterns of behaviour would produce the gestural responses he required for the films. Marinos comments similarly on the ease with which non-professional acting performances can be incorporated into a filmic text; he describes how, as an actor, he 'doesn't mind ... in fact enjoys' working with non-professional actors in film, because the ability to repeat a particular performance need not be as crucial to acting performances in film as it is in live theatre.[64]

In contrast to Pudovkin's use of 'non-actors' in fiction film, it is interesting to trace how the conscious motivations towards a filmic text, and the performance skills of 'social actors', can affect a filmic text to the extent that even 'social actors' can be considered filmmakers. The most obvious way, as discussed earlier, is involved with

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[63] V.I. Pudovkin *Film Technique and Film Acting*, Trans. Ivor Montagu, New York:Grove Press Inc., 1970, 336–344
[64] Marinos, Appendix B5, p.310

narrative action and how the documentary filmmaker does not always have control over the events being filmed. Larry Hand's natural performance ability, which stands him in good stead as politician, also provided a powerful character and narrative structure for Connolly and Anderson in *Rats in the Ranks*.

Another significant example of how a social actor can still be considered a filmmaker beyond that actor's aleatory acting performance is provided by the participation of historian Peter Read in *Link-Up Diary*. Read had been trained in filmmaking[65] and was very aware of the audiovisual technology which MacDougall was using, and the problems associated with it, for example, problems in recording sound. The film shows one particular occasion outside the Mitchell Library in Sydney where Read tries to protect the microphone from the wind with his hat. In the film, this sequence therefore reflexively indicates the presence of the audiovisual technology used to make this film. He also wanted there to be interesting interview footage during the week he was shooting the film. One interview was included in the week's Link-Up business at short notice, in order to provide more footage. Read was concerned not to provide false information of any kind, but he seemed also to want to combine his own interest in the process of filmmaking with how, subsequently, the film could contribute to the business of Link-Up. This circular relationship in Read's motivations and actions is manifested in the images contained in the filmic text. Edward's refusal to allow more than one person as film crew in the same film (see p. 334), constitutes another example of how a social actor can affect style and content of a filmic text.

Although the performances by social actors (or untrained actors) can be successfully transformed into a filmic text via editing and careful direction, the motivated acting performance which a professionally trained actor brings to the process of filmmaking is nevertheless different in degree from that of the untrained and social actor. Documentary filmmaker Bob Connolly describes the motivation of the professional actor as an 'articulation and informed intelligence' which is directed towards a 'focused awareness' of the camera, as opposed to the more unconscious awareness of the social actor.[66] He describes the behaviour of the main social actors in *Rats in the Rank* as marked by a 'heightening' of behaviour, rather than the 'focused awareness' of the professional actor. An actor's ability 'to act', then,

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[65] Read, Appendix B9, p.335

becomes a crucial factor in the filmmaking process. In order to describe this ability in terms of how it can contribute to filmmaking, I have focused on the mimetic nature of this craft, rather than the 'comprehensibility' which Grotowski names as of primary importance in acting. As described above, in film, actors are not alone in their task of making performance comprehensible to an audience. It is the way in which professional actors 'work' with their body, in Grotowski's terms, that makes their performance unique among other filmmaking performances. In describing how mimesis informs the craft of a professional actor, it becomes possible to explore the ways in which mimesis informs performances by social actors in non-fiction films. It also becomes possible to describe the ways in which 'performance artists' use mimesis as they present their own historical selves within the fictional frame of theatrically based performance. I want now to focus on filmmaking performances that can 'make comprehensible' the mimetically charged acting performances that occur both in fiction and non-fiction film.

The Performance of 'Non-Acting' Filmmakers

It is possible to describe non-acting filmmaking performances as also mimetically charged if those performances are described in terms of the personal histories of the specific people who perform them. Autobiographical influences in filmmaking performances are evident in several instances in the four films researched for this thesis. Such influences are the specific historical influences which contextualise the craft of specific performances of directing, scriptwriting, acting, editing and production. I am referring here to how particular filmmakers influence a film's narrative through their own personal histories. Just as Godard's experiences in May 1968 provided a wealth of narrative content, so too it is possible to understand some of the narrative processes present in the film *Once Were Warriors*. In this film, the director, producer and scriptwriter made many autobiographically derived decisions about what should or should not be included as content in the filmic text.

In my earlier reference to film's 'defictionalisation' of the filmic spectacle (Chapter 2, p.51), I described one of the reasons Scholes wanted to make this film as her production company's first feature length film. Her performances as a producer, however, included not only her intention to depict domestic violence in a particular

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[66] Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson, Appendix B7, p.321

way. They also included a complex range of performances. Funding issues, for example, were dependent to an extent on the political necessity of including Maori people in the production process because the film's narrative was located in contemporary Maori society:

> All the elements I liked about it as a first feature: it had content... about an issue that an 'art house' or 'festival' audience could identify with ... a woman gets beaten up, a woman escapes ... it also had a cultural element: the reason she left, was that she had the strength of her culture to go back to, so what was at stake, in another way, was her culture ... that was a big issue... The big black mark ... was the fact that it was about domestic violence ... to go out and sell ... a feature about domestic violence, I mean ... that is a hard sell! To make a feature about domestic violence and then Maori people, then it's even more difficult to sell ... In government funded agencies ... there was this incredible fear ... that you might do something anti-Maori.[67]

What is also interesting in the context of this discussion is how particular scenes in this film were influenced by the personal histories of the Pakeha producer Scholes, the Maori director Tamahori, and the Maori scriptwriter, Riwia Brown. Before proceeding, it is worth noting that the book upon which this film was based also included several specific incidents which Duff drew from his own childhood. These included listening at night with other siblings while adults partied, fought and beat each other, and waiting all day in a youth penitentiary for his mother to arrive for a visit, and her never arriving.[68]

In my interview with her, Brown described certain aspects of the filming of three scenes in this film. The first was the 'rape scene' between Beth (Rena Owen) and Jake (Temuera Morrison). This rape is implied in the film as it only shows Jake throwing Beth onto their bed — it then cuts to a scene of dogs scavenging a rubbish dump to a soundtrack of stylised, threatening, low buzzing sounds. Tamahori had insisted, however, on Brown writing an explicit rape scene, and he rehearsed the actors. According to Brown, there were two major reasons why this scene was never filmed, against Tamahori's preference. One issue was the suspicion that the audience would probably leave the theatre if the rape scene was included. It would have followed the shock of the graphically depicted beating of Beth by Jake, within the first 26 minutes of the film. The second reason lay in Brown's articulated reluctance to make the actors act out this scene. This whole film was shot over a

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[67] Scholes, Appendix B1, p.288

period of six weeks, and the level of emotion demanded from the actors was intense for much of the time. Brown said that this scene would have been particularly harrowing for the actors due to the continual level of representational violence which was demanded throughout making the film. In my interview with her, she described the situation as follows:

> The time we came to shoot it, the actors were getting very nervous and Tamahori was pacing up and down' wondering whether to include the scene or not; he said Riwia was 'too soft, too soft'; Riwia thought to have put the actors through that … a huge call...[69]

This scene was never shot because of aesthetic and commercial reasons, but also because of a reluctance to involve actors in such a scene, a reluctance which was based on the personal responses of several filmmakers, including the actors. The resulting effect was a powerful combination of explicit and implied violence.

The second scene, which also never appeared in the film in its entirety, was one in which Beth was searching the streets for Grace. My interview with Brown describes it as follows:

> There was a scene which didn't get into the film, which I knew... that it was a woman's thing, and Lee did not believe it, and even when I wrote it, he didn't believe it, and I fought for it...I got Robin (Scholes) on side. This scene involved what Riwia called 'motherly instinct', when a woman suddenly thinks of her child and thinks ' oh, shit, something's not right'. Riwia based her knowledge of this instinct on her own relationship with a younger sister. In the film, Beth and her friend Mavis go off in a car to search the streets for Grace, who has not come home. So Riwia wrote the scene where they do run out of petrol...and Beth suddenly goes "Grace!", and she tears off down the road...screams down the road...she loses her shoes and everything...I loved it, I thought it worked.
>
> She saw this scene of Beth running down the road as being intercut with Grace and her suicide. Tamahori shot the scene with one wide, long shot, and Riwia says she thought at the time 'you don't want that scene...I knew that that was never going to say what I wanted.' The scene was the last shot of the night, and I don't think he was sold on it... But filmmaking is all about compromise...the rape scene went, but so did my little "run" scene...[70]

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68 Duff, Appendix B4, p.306
69 Riwia Brown Appendix B2, p. 297
70 ibid.

Brown wanted to base the sequence of Beth's search on her own experience of 'knowing' that something dreadful had happened to a beloved relation (a sibling in Brown's case). She thought that Beth should 'know' when Grace had hung herself. She thought this scene made sense in terms of Beth being a woman and a mother, and it would have made another sharp departure from Duff's portrayal of Grace's suicide in his book, where Beth partied on, in ignorance. Tamahori did not want to use this scene — possibly he preferred to downplay the element of suspense in order to increase the shock value of seeing Grace hanging from the tree in the backyard. He prevaricated, and although an attenuated version of Brown's scene was shot, it basically disappeared in the editing process. Brown saw this as a male/female difference of opinion.

The third scene mentioned by Brown includes the 'slave to your fists' speech, where Beth contemptuously invites Jake to do his worst and hit her, as he had so often done before. In this scene, Jake is not able to touch Beth, and it is the visible turning point in their relationship. Brown describes an incident in the filming of this scene as follows:

> On one particular setup, it was amazing, and no-one did it before, particularly Lee, he just broke down...Lee...he sobbed and sobbed and sobbed... The scene was Beth's confrontation with Jake, where she tells him he is 'slave to his fists'. Riwia does not know why Tamahori was so affected by this scene.[71]

As mentioned before, the emotional level was high in the shooting of this film, both because of the narrative itself, but also perhaps because this narrative drew from experiences with which many of the crew must have been able to identify; about 60% of the production crew were Maori. In Leonie Pihama's terms, it was a Maori film: 'Maori films are about Maori content, but they are also about Maori control.'[72] It is possible to infer that Tamahori's response to this particular scene may well have been drawn from his awareness of 'real life' stories that correlated with this part of the film's narrative. This incident also describes the emotional intensity which Tamahori brought to his direction of this film, an intensity which depended not only on his artistic intention, but also on motivations derived from aspects of his own cultural heritage.

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[71] Brown, Appendix B2, p. 294
[72] Leonie Pihama, Appendix B3, p. 304

This chapter's discussion describes how Level 1 of performance in film, of performance *towards* film, differs from the other two levels in one crucial way. At this Level, it is possible to focus on people who make films, and how their filmmaking performances contribute towards the filmic text itself. While the examination of filmic texts invites questions about how the motivations and decision making aspects of filmmaking can affect these texts, it is also possible to examine the motivations that lie within these performances from the substantive position of interviews. For reasons involved with the complex use of fiction and non-fiction in film, however, it is never possible to directly infer from a filmic text alone the motivations behind filmmaking decisions. Nor is it possible even to know the extent of the choices available to filmmakers, unless their performances are directly addressed as such. The 'truth value' behind statements made by filmmakers in interview situations is also debatable and needs to be carefully contextualised. Such interviews are also performances that affect people's reception of a film. As referred to in Chapter 1, they can be considered as performances *towards* film if they are available to other filmmakers during the time of a film's production. In this case, they can become part of the way in which decisions are made about how a filmic text is created. If they take place after a film has been released (as my interviews did) then they are part of performances that take place at Level 2 — they are part of how a filmic text performs for an audience. Interviews which are released to the public before a film is released are also part of the way in which the filmic text performs, in the sense that they affect the reception of a film.

In terms of the 'cinematic apparatus', Level 1 deals with how and why filmmakers both use and describe their manipulation of audiovisual technology. This Level allows a focus on the actual people involved in filmmaking, and how the tasks (or 'roles') which give form to their filmmaking performances can also be defined in terms of creating fiction from non-fiction. In this way, for example, it is possible to trace some of the ways in which the fiction film *Once Were Warriors* draws from the 'everyday' life of Maori people. My discussion of filmmaking in this chapter allows then a particular consideration of how and when transformations from non-fiction to fiction, and from fiction to non-fiction, take place in the filmic experience.

This consideration relies on the actual performances of individual people who are involved in the making of film.

The overall consideration of film as cultural performance, in the terms described by Turner and as used in this thesis, relies on an understanding of both filmmaking and the filmic text as distinct dynamic processes. Yet these processes are closely inter-related. In the case of *Once Were Warriors,* for example, the filmic text can be understood to have emerged in part from the combined, and sometimes conflicting agendas of four particular people: the Pakeha woman Robyn Scholes, the Maori man Lee Tamahori, the Maori man Alan Duff, and the Maori woman Riwia Brown. It is the issue of individually creative and instigational motivations which marks this Level as distinct from the other two. At Level 2, I describe film reception as an active engagement between a filmic performance text and an audience. This degree of engagement is the context of my own and other writers' interactions with film. It also includes a discussion of more generalised interactions with film, when an audience is considered as a societal group. These interactions with a filmic text are not passive, but responsive. Through such responses to a filmic text, it can also be considered that an audience is responding, however appropriately or inappropriately, to the performances of filmmakers. It is the meshing together of all these responsive, motivated performances which constitutes film as cultural performance.

Chapter Four. Level 2 — The Filmic Text: Film 'As' Performance

In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art. — Susan Sontag[1]

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the way in which film itself can be considered 'as' performance — within a description of the overall experience of film as involving filmmakers, film as text and the reception of film's text. Drawing on Sobchack's phenomenology of film for the terms of my discussion of how film manifests as text, this discussion approaches a particular problem in the philosophy and analysis of film: the degree to which the concept of 'text' can be applied comfortably to film in its displayed form. The present chapter explores the similarities and differences between filmic texts and other kinds of texts, and asks whether the concept of 'text' fails or succeeds in comprehensively describing the filmic experience, and where this failure and/or success might be understood to occur. I focus also on a particular paradox of film which I referred to previously in Chapter 2 (pp. 39, 41): how in film, the 'presence' which is evoked through performance is drawn from images marked by an 'absence' — the 'absence' of actors' bodies in the same time and space as their audience.

This chapter is not concerned with the codification of film as a language of itself. Christian Metz's important semiotics of film[2] and David Bordwell's formalist approach to how film 'makes meaning'[3] both significantly represent the vast literature in film theory which draws on the conceptualisation of film in terms of language. Peter Wollen's conceptualisation of film as text also draws on a semiotic sense of encoded meanings.[4] This chapter *is* concerned, however, with how the effects that are generated by film and filmmakers can be described in terms of theatrical and cultural performance, rather than 'how' these effects are generated in a semiotic or cognitive sense.

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[1] Susan Sontag, 'Against Interpretation' in *Against Interpretation and other essays.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966, 14

[2] Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, (1971) Trans. Michael Taylor, New York:Oxford University Press, 1974

[3] David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: inference and rhetoric in the interpretation of cinema*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989

[4] Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, London:Secker and Warburg in association with the British Film Institute, 1969, 107–118

In my description of the filmic text 'as' performance, I draw on two areas of literary textual theory which have been applied to film. The first comprises the ways in which Sobchack draws on phenomenological hermeneutics in order to describe the three-way relationship between filmmakers, filmic text and those who receive a film. The second area of textual analysis is Bakhtin's dialogical theory. I draw on his concepts of dialogic utterance, heteroglossia and chronotope in order to describe the many communicative performances which are embodied in the filmic text. I draw on both areas of theory to investigate how these performances can be described in terms of space and time, both intra-textually and in terms of space and time which exist in the historically real world.

Drawing on my previous discussion of performance as 'restored behaviour' (Chapter 2, p. 34), this chapter considers again how the filmic text can be compared and contrasted with concepts of performance as text in live theatre. This comparison of the filmic text with the performance text of live theatre particularly draws attention to two aspects of both these texts, which differentiate them from others. These aspects comprise the way both these kinds of texts use the images and sounds of actual human bodies, together with the movement of these bodies, and other images as textual matter. This difference, between film as a moving audiovisual text and, for example, literature as a static visual text, implies a related specificity in the reception of filmic and theatre performance texts. My discussion of filmic reception as a part of film's performance 'as' text draws on both Sobchack's description of motivated, intentional filmic reception and Benjamin's concepts of 'distracted' reception and 'aura'. This chapter considers film 'as' text in order to enable in my analysis chapters a closer description of the ways in which people use film as a site for social action.

Sobchack's Phenomenology of Film and the Filmic Text

As discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 20), Sobchack describes the filmic experience as including 'the direct perceptual experience' of filmmakers, viewers and the film itself. As also stated earlier, I am using the term 'filmic text' to denote the projected form of film as the site of access for performances of reception and interpretation. My use of the term 'filmic text' draws on Gadamer's definition of a text as 'that which resists integration in experience and represents the return to the supposed

given that would then provide a better orientation for understanding.'[5] My understanding of film as text emphasises the word 'resists' in the above quote. A filmic text is a reproducible commodity in a physical sense, and therefore can be used as a site of interpretation which can be described as Gadamer's 'supposed given'. It resists integration into direct experience in the sense that it exists as an unchanging set of audiovisual images whose signifying practice can nevertheless change through time and space. In spite of this perceived resistance, therefore, the filmic text is also (and in Sobchack's terms) a performative constituent of the filmic experience.

In Chapter 1, I presented a long quote from Sobchack, describing her conceptualisation of the filmic text as possessing its own existential presence and mode of direct address. I repeat here the first section of my previous quotation (p. 20), in order to recall her concise description of how film exists of itself within the filmic experience:

> The film experience not only *represents* and reflects upon the prior direct perceptual experience of the filmmaker *by means of* the modes and structures of direct and reflective perceptual experience, but also *presents* the direct and reflective experience of a perceptual and expressive existence *as* the film. In its presence and activity of perception and expression, the film transcends the filmmaker to constitute and locate its own address, its own perceptual and expressive experience of being and becoming.[6]

In this phenomenological sense, the filmic text can be understood to constitute a particular performance of perception and expression: it is the primary site for interactions between filmmakers, and audiences.

Film's 'Body' and the Filmic Text

Sobchack develops her definition of film as direct experience and perception from her conceptualisation of the material technology of film as 'film's body'. The relationship between the 'film's body' and film as the actualisation of perception and expression through this body, recalls again film theory's 'cinematic apparatus'.

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[5] Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Text and Interpretation' in *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy,* Ed. Brice R. Wachterhauser, Trans. Dennis J. Schmidt, Albany:State University of New York Press, 1986, 389

[6] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 5

As discussed in Chapter 3, conceptualisations of the cinematic apparatus include both cinematic technology and the interactive social processes concerning the social use of that technology and its continuing development. Sobchack describes in particular 'two primary 'organs' of the film's body: the camera as its perceptive organ and the projector as its expressive organ.'[7] In terms of contemporary cinematic technology, there is a need to expand this definition of these two primary organs of the film's body, to include the 'interactive' ways in which film can be digitally 'projected' within video format. These interactive forms of 'projection' include, for example, CD ROM formats, and the projection of films via the fast forward, reverse and pause buttons on home video and DVD machines.

Her discussion of audiovisual technology as the film's body uses language which describes the processes and inventions involved with film's technology in terms of a human body.[8] For example, she anthropomorphises the process of film editing as follows:

> the film's body learned to expressively organize the perceptual experience of consciousness. This organization was achieved not only in the prereflective activity lived through the camera in its immediate engagement with the world, but also in the reflective activity of association (editing) which expresses the consciousness of experience in a systemic and systematic fashion. [9]

This anthropomorphism is problematic in terms of how Sobchack uses it in order to categorise particular filmmaking processes as related to each other via a simplistic sequence of cause and effect. Her descriptions of the filmic experience suggest that a film can be understood as the result of particular expressive and perceptual movements of the film's body. She separates the 'organisational' processes of editing out from the film's body, implying that film can only be considered as performing *sui generis* if only the camera and projection technology are defined as constituting the film's body. Editing is one of the ways through which this 'body' expresses its perception (optical printing is another form of expression); film's body can be 'sensually' enhanced by means of the continuing development, or 'enhancement' of its material technology.[10]

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[7] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 206
[8] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 251–253
[9] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 252
[10] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 254

Sobchack's phenomenological conceptualisation of the film's body implies then that the performances which I have named as performances 'towards' film in Level 1, would need to be considered in terms of instrumentality. In this sense, a filmmaker manipulating a camera is an instrument working for film's body and an actor plays 'to' a camera.[11] Such a consideration is not problematic for my description of performances 'towards' film, although I do not want to describe the process of editing as simply an 'expressive' movement of the camera. Contrary to Sobchack, I include editing and effects technologies within a definition of the film's body, thus allowing for the radical transformations which can eventuate in such changed perceptions and expressions as manifested in the projected filmic text. In her discussion, the visual and auditory capacities of the camera are handed over in reception to the technologies of projection, defining both camera and projection technologies in terms of film's body. I consider, however, in the sense that the film's body itself provides instruments of perception and expression for both filmmakers and receivers of a film, that the technologies of effects and editing must be included within any definition of film's body in order to account for how the capacities of these technologies are integral to the concept of filmmaking as social practice.

The film *Once Were Warriors* provides an example of how integral editing decisions can be in the very act of filming. Director Tamahori uses both close-up shots and tight editing in order to portray the film's scenes of violence:

> I wanted you to see Beth hurt...so we didn't use stunt doubles... In contrast with modern cinematic conventions, where a wide lens puts you at sufficient remove to see all danger points, I prefer to go tighter and tighter, into the chaotic, so that you don't know where (the danger) is coming from.[12]

In his depiction of rapid and violent action, Tamahori uses close-up camera focus and edits together sequences of short shots. These sequences communicate how it feels spatially to be in the violent situations which he depicts in this film. In this sense, it is difficult to separate out both the perceptual and 'expressive' capacities of editing technology from the film's body if it is the movement of that body which manifests in a filmic text. The time delays between the shooting and editing of a film

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[11] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 175–203
[12] Kathleen Murphy, 'Totems and Taboos: Civilization and Its Discontents According to Lee Tamahori', *Film Comment*, Vol.33 No.5 September-October 1997, 27

can also contribute to Sobchack's understanding of how editing is an 'add on' organisational and 'expressive' technique of the film body's prime perceptual 'organ': the camera. But as in all considerations of film, the delays in time which fragment the filmic experience into the chronologically distinct processes of filmmaking and reception do not mean that these processes can always be considered as distinct, 'stand alone' practices. As exemplified in the above quote from Tamahori, the processes of editing, filming and reception can be integrated in particular moments of filmmaking, to the extent that such moments can only be described in terms of a filmmaking process which uses all these processes (including reception that occurs in the editing process) at the same time.

The Movement of Film's Body: A Specific Signifying Practice of Moving Image and Sound

This merging of chronologically distinct processes in the experience of film, as described above, brings to mind another way in which to distinguish film as a specific signifying process. This distinction can again be understood as a 'merging', but this time, a textually derived merging of vision, sound and movement.

Sobchack emphasises that it is not the enabling technology of film which constitutes the film as viewed (and heard), but the movements of this enabling technology (the movements of film's body) which manifest as acts of perception and expression, as film itself.[13] These movements of film's body result in acts of expression and perception which engage both filmmakers (since they are also 'viewers') and non-filmmaking viewers. In Sobchack's words,

> The primary function of cinematic technology (what here shall also be called the film's body) is to enable *acts* of introceptive perception and their expression. From the first, the film's body functions to visibly *animate* perception and expression in existence. Thus, its primary function always already entails *movement.* This original movement *of* the film's body invisibly grounds those movements *in* the film which figure as visible (object movement in the viewed-view and subject movement of the viewing-view) ... The film's body, then is radically distinguished by its motility.[14]

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[13] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 169, and 205–206
[14] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 205–206

After Sobchack, I am understanding 'movement' here as both the expressive explicit movement of the filmic text which defines film as constructed of moving audiovisual images, and the human act of perceptual movement involving the conceptualisation of ideas, and memory. This consideration of the filmic text in terms of expressive and perceptual movement distinguishes it from literary and photographic texts. Such a distinction derives from the explicit sense in which the filmic text is constituted from moving, audiovisual images that in turn involve performances of reception that are specific to film; and where reception is understood to occur as part of filmmaking as well as in film's 'public' performance for an audience.

Movements of Sound and Image

Sound, as the 'audio' component of audiovisual images, is crucial in describing film as a specific signifying practice. Sergei Eisenstein comprehensively laid the foundations for any discussion of sound in filmic practice in his two essays: 'Synchronisation of Senses' and 'Form and Content: Practice'.[15] He distinguished between five kinds of filmic synchronisation on the basis of how sound and visual images can be 'matched' in film: 'synchronization can be "natural", metric, rhythmic, melodic and tonal.'[16] Whereas Eisenstein's film theory focuses on the ways in which the latter four kinds of synchronisation can be devices for artistic expression, the possibility of the first category, the 'natural' synchronisation of sound and image, was a crucial stage in film's development as a specific signifying practice. When 'the sound-filming of natural things'[17] became available in 1927, audiences were confronted with a textual practice which had never existed before. 'Silent' movies thereafter (although there was a transition period) became a practice which predominantly belonged to a historical 'era', and consequently, a practice which could be 'quoted' in order to evoke aspects of that era. After the advent of 'sound-filming', a film's blank soundtrack meant either that there was a fault in the projection equipment, or that the filmic text actively included 'silence' as communicative concept rather than simply a technological absence of sound.

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[15] Published in *The Film Sense*
[16] Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, 84
[17] Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, 82

The human experience of 'hearing' sound is physically based on the impact of sound waves upon the delicate inner structures of the ear. In this sense, sound is a series of vibrations that are regulated by varying rhythms of soundwave impacts. Modulations in height, length and frequency determines what kind of 'sound' is produced. In the case of soundwaves with very large wavelengths, sound is not only experienced consciously through the ear but also through the whole body — for example, the sounds which are produced when the 'bass response' of a car radio is turned up very high. This is only one way in which humans perceive the rhythmic aspect of sound as a somatic experience which extends beyond the physiology of the ear. The concept of rhythm is used, of course, not only to describe repetitions of the somatic experience of sound, but also of visual images. For example, visual art can be described as having particular rhythms: repetitions of form and content that exist within a static (in a literal sense) text. When rhythm is understood as a concept that can describe how a textual practice synchronises repetitions in sound and visual images in order to invite a specific range of audience responses, then it becomes easier to comprehend the cumulative pan-sensual communicative power of film.[18]

One example of how a film can use such synchronisation occurs in *Once Were Warriors*. The first party scene in the film shows Beth and Jake singing together. Although it is not regularised, nor the same in exact timing as that of the music, the editing of shots in this scene is patterned to create a visual rhythm which runs parallel to the music. The first shot of Beth and Jake singing is a long shot lasting 35 seconds. In the part scene after the song, there is another long shot lasting 40 seconds and shots also contain changes in focus. This combination of such a lengthening of shots and a 'relaxed' editing rhythm is in sharp contrast to the fast editing of close shots in the scene of Beth's beating. The contrast reinforces the film's address to all the somatic senses of a person watching and listening to these audiovisual images. Although this particular example could be described with reference to all four of Eisenstein's 'expressive' kinds of synchronisation, it is significant for my discussion that this sequence shows how the soundtrack of a film can itself be explored for the way in which it can contribute to a film's cultural

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[18]Eisenstein closely theorises such movement through investigating film with reference to music, in *The Film Sense*, 163–216

performances of specific social issues such as domestic violence.[19] The soundtrack of a film can be understood therefore as a powerful *sonic movement* which must be understood as part of the way in which film can be described as cultural performance.[20]

Another important aspect of a film's sonic movement is the way in which it uses language. Language, both spoken (sounded) and written, forms part of the content of filmic texts. While keeping the distinctions between the different kinds of performance in mind, it is useful to consider how film theory has used and can further use some language-based fields of textual theory in order to describe in more detail the performances which occur in film. My discussion focuses on two language-based areas of textual theory which enable further descriptions of how film performs as filmic text. These are hermeneutics and Bakhtin's translinguistic, dialogic theory.

Film and Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics defines the understanding of texts via their relationship with the historical world; this relationship is understood as dependent on temporal distance. Paul Ricoeur describes hermeneutics as 'the theory of the operation of understanding in its relations to the interpretation of texts'.[21] Gadamer extends Ricoeur's definition to include 'temporal distance and its significance for understanding'.[22] In relation to film, this temporal distance can be understood in two ways. Besides being an enabling technology, audiovisual technology also must be understood as a temporally mediating process between acts of reception and acts of production as the latter are manifested in a filmic text. This concept of temporal distance can also be used to describe the continuing process of ideation and memory which constitutes the continuing reflective acts of filmic reception.

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[19]For an example of such an analysis, see Roger Hillman's analysis of how 'classical music' has been used as a 'cultural marker' in his essay 'The original Ludwig van (and others): classical music as cultural marker', *Cinesonic: Cinema and the sound of music*, Ed. Philip Brophy, Sydney:Australian Film, Television and Radio School, 2000, 131–154.

[20]See Kavouros' comments on Cassavetes' use of opera in his essay 'Improvisation and the Operatic: Cassavetes' *A Woman Under the Influence*,'49–71 in *Falling for You*.

[21]Paul Ricoeur 'The Task of Hermeneutics' (Trans. David Pallauer) in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, Ed. Michael Murray, New Haven and London:Yale University Press, 1978, 141

[22]Gadamer, 'The Historicity of Understanding' in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy. Critical Essays.* Ed. Michael Murray, New Haven and London:Yale University Press, 1978, 180

Drawing on Idhe[23], Sobchack describes the phenomenological experience of film as the following hermeneutic equation:

$$(\text{Filmmaker-camera}) \longrightarrow \text{World}$$

embodiment relation

$$(\text{camera-World}) \longleftarrow (\text{Spectator-projector})$$
embodiment relation

HERMENEUTIC RELATION
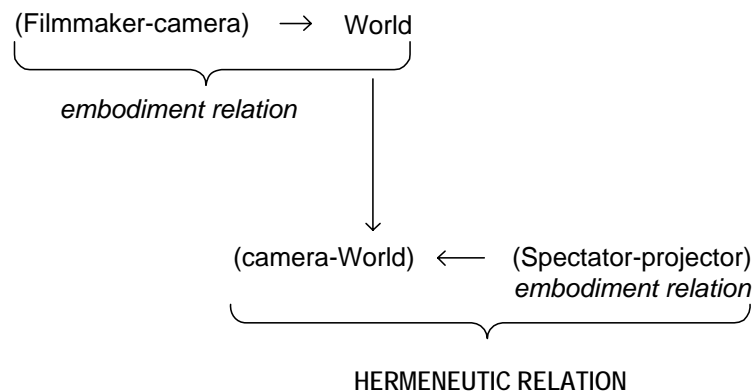
Sobchack's diagram, together with her overall phenomenology of film, emphasises the moment of 'embodiment' which is the direct experience of film through the reception of its text. But this moment of embodiment recurs with every new associational memory, with every new context over the continuing process of reflection through time. This continuing process involves a fairly stable text that can be historicised through descriptions of its reception in particular locations of time and space.

Gadamer links textual interpretation and historicity in the way he describes the need to reconsider texts as histories that must be re-written with every re-contextualisation over time: 'History must be written anew by every new present.'[24] Such a description of history recalls those evolving processes of reception associated with the film *Link-Up Diary* which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 8. It also recalls the processes of receptive re-contextualisation which occur in the phenomenon of 'cult' movies (see p. 18). Sobchack's hermeneutic relation also describes Gadamer's linking of text with history, in its association of terms which denote filmic production and reception in relation to the 'World', and where the latter includes the historical world which is constituted by profilmic and receptive contexts of film. The description of film in terms of historical understanding of social issues and events can also be considered in the context of film as a genre of cultural performance. Such a consideration allows film to be described as a

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[23] See Don Ihde, 'The Experience of Technology', *Cultural Hermeneutics* 2 (1974), 267–279
[24] Gadamer, 'Text and Interpretation', 380

transformative experience of historical understanding via interactive performances which are concerned with the discussion of particular social problems, and their possible resolutions or other outcomes. In Chapter 6, I further explore this nexus in film between the filmic text, social action and historicity as I examine how film constitutes cultural performance through its negotiation of fiction and non-fiction. In this chapter, I want to focus next on how the filmic text can be understood in terms of Bakhtin's dialogic theory of literary texts.

Film and Bakhtin's Dialogic Theory

Bakhtin's theory of language and texts crucially depends upon his conceptualisation of the 'dialogic', where this term describes texts as sets of communicative relations which are grounded in particular linguistic and historical contexts. The concept of the dialogic draws on the practice of spoken dialogue for its conceptual modelling. My film analyses in the third section of this thesis use several concepts of Bakhtin, which he and other authors use in order to describe the broader concept of the dialogic text, and how texts enter social discourse.

In his detailed study of the 'dialogic' in Bakhtin's writings, Holquist uses the term 'dialogism' in order to articulate Bakhtin's overall approach to how language is grounded in the social, i.e. 'dialogism's master assumption is that there is no figure without a ground.'[25] Holquist describes dialogism in the following way:

> Dialogism argues that all meaning is relative in the sense that it comes about only as a result of the relation between two bodies occupying *simultaneous but different* space, where bodies may be thought of as ranging from the immediacy of our physical bodies, to political bodies and to bodies of ideas in general (ideologies).[26]

Todorov further describes Bakhtin's theory of linguistic communication in terms which enable an application of dialogic theory beyond the study of literary texts. He situates his discussion of dialogism within his own understanding of Bakhtin's interest in language as a means by which it is possible to explore how communicative acts are always socially contextualised and therefore socially related to other communicative acts. In this sense, reception of a text is a primary

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[25] Michael Holquist, *Dialogism. Bakhtin and his world,* London and New York:Routledge, 1990, 22
[26] Holquist, *Dialogism,* 20–21

communicative act in the context of acting within society. He translates Bakhtin's Russian term, *metalingvistika* as 'translinguistics',[27] and describes the distinction between linguistics and translinguistics as follows:

> To begin with, the object of linguistics is constituted by *language* and its subdivisions ... whereas that of translinguistics is *discourse*, which is represented in turn by individual *utterances*. [28]

Todorov goes on to argue in relation to Bakhtinian translinguistics that the term 'utterance' can also describe particular examples of those textual areas of communication known as discourses. He quotes three instances where such an equivalence is evident in Bakhtin's writing .[29] Michael Holquist describes Bakhtin's use of the term 'utterance', from the Russian *vyskazyvanie,* as follows:

> Utterance ... is the topic of analysis when language is conceived as a dialogue, the fundamental unit of investigation for anyone studying communication as opposed to language alone ... Bakhtin's idea of the utterance is active, *performed* ... [30]

Robert Stam elaborates on the concept of 'utterance' in order to describe the implications of Bakhtinian translinguistics for film theory as follows:

> A 'translinguistic' view of film as 'utterance' therefore would regard cinematic text as socially informed communication, and therefore as social and historical 'from the outset' ... Film, within a translinguistic perspective, does not only include utterances, it <u>is</u> utterance ...The filmic text, then is incontrovertibly social, first as an utterance, which is social by definition, and second as an utterance that is situated, contexted, historical.[31]

Bakhtin himself describes his conceptualisation of 'utterance' through another concept: 'heteroglossia',[32] which he describes in his essay 'Discourse in the Novel'

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[27]Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin The Dialogical Principle,* Trans. Wlad Godzich, Theory and History of Literature, Volume 13, Manchester:Manchester University Press, 1984, 24

[28]Todorov, *The Dialogical Principle* , 25

[29]ibid.

[30]Holquist *Dialogism*, 59–60. This quote is extracted from Holquist's further distinction between Bakhtin's conceptualisation of utterance as 'performed' and Saussure's concept of 'parole'. Holquist distinguishes between these two concepts on the basis of 'choice' being integral to Saussure's concept, and on the basis of Bakhtin's term involving a sense of individual agency which co-exists with a lack of choice about the social parameters which surround any use of language as a social act.

[31]Robert Stam *Subversive Pleasures. Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film,* Baltimore and London:The John Hopkins University Press, 1989, 44

[32]Todorov translates Bakhtin's Russian term *raznorecie* as 'heterology' — Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin The Dialogical Principle*, 56. I acknowledge that this translation comes to me also through Todorov's own translator into English.

as 'the social diversity of speech types'.[33] 'Heteroglossia' describes a 'multiplicity of social voices'[34] which can be distinguished through language style and/or by point of view, but which occur within the parameters of a single language. In Chapter 5, I discuss in more detail the ways in which Bakhtin's concept of 'heteroglossia' can also be applied to a consideration of film's 'intertextual' relationships with other texts. Here, however, I want to explore, in terms of film, another of his conceptualisations of the literary text — the chronotope.

Chronotopes in Film

Moffatt's complicated shuffling of references to different aspects of space and time in the narrative structure of 'Choo Choo Choo Choo', the second segment in *beDevil*, can be addressed using Bakhtin's concept of the 'chronotope'. Although he does not offer a clearly stated definition, Bakhtin uses this term in order to describe a knitting together of space and time both within historically real situations and within the narrative worlds of fictional and non-fictional literary texts. Holquist says of the chronotope:

> Like the utterance, chronotope is not a term that can be invoked 'in general'. It must be a chronotope *of* someone *for* someone *about* someone. It is ineluctably tied to *someone who is in a situation.*[35]

Bakhtin describes his conceptualisation of the chronotope in his essay 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel'.[36] He specifically limits his discussion of this term '... as a formally constitutive category of literature',[37] but does not exclude the possibility that it could be used in the discussion of discourses constituted by other signifying practices, such as film. In his description of the artistic literary chronotope, Bakhtin uses words that also strongly evoke the filmic text:

> Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history.[38]

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[33]M.M. Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination: four essays*, Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin:University of Texas Press, 1981, 263
[34]Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The dialogic imagination,* 263
[35]Holquist, *Dialogism,* 255
[36]Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', *The dialogic imagination,* 84–258
[37]Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', *The dialogic imagination,* 84
[38]ibid.

In his discussion of the place of the author within the chronotope of a literary text, Bakhtin describes a relationship between the 'world' of the makers and receivers of a text, and the 'world' which is represented within a text:

> ...we sense the chronotope of the represented world as well as the chronotope of the readers and creators of the work. That is, we get a mutual interaction between the world represented in the work and the world outside the work.[39]

This relationship recalls Sobchack's combination of phenomenology and hermeneutics in order to describe the processual relationship between filmmaking performances, the filmic text, and performances of reception. Sobchack also locates this relationship in terms of the 'world', as discussed in the previous section of this present chapter. Bakhtin describes various chronotopes as operating at the same time within and tangential to any one particular text. His use of this concept in the above quoted essay suggests that a chronotope is a conceptual way to articulate the various kinds of relationships between space and time which are depicted within a text, and which exist in relationship to a text (for example, the chronotope of creating or receiving a particular text).

In his essay 'Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel',[40] Bakhtin distinguishes between three kinds of chronotope.[41] Firstly, those intertextual chronotopes ('transcultural' in Holquist's terms) which are '... not cut off from the cultural environments in which they arise.'[42] The chronotope is, in this sense, a device that can be used to describe how a particular textual world and the real world exist in relation to each other. Swenson describes this aspect of the chronotope as that which describes how a text is contextualised in the historically real world, and how a text therefore can be considered as 'useful' to a specific area of discourse. She names this aspect 'The Value-Laden Nature of the Chronotope'.[43] Bakhtin writes about this particular use of the chronotope in his discussion of the 'creative chronotope' in the latter part of his essay (written in 1973). I discuss in more detail this sense of the 'creative chronotope' in Chapter 6, where I focus more closely on

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[39] Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', *The dialogic imagination,* 255

[40] This essay is published in *The dialogic imagination*, 83–258. Pages 83–243 were written 1937–8. The 'Concluding Remarks' (pages 243–258) were written in 1973.

[41] Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', *The dialogic imagination,* 250–258

[42] Holquist, *Dialogism,* 111

how it can be used in order to describe the variety of relationships which need to be understood when considering film as cultural performance.

An example of this first kind of chronotope occurs in *beDevil*. During a conversation about the story of 'Choo Choo Choo Choo' and the concept of the chronotope, Dr. Subhash Jaireth suggested to me that the overall chronotope of this story could be described as a 'provincial' chronotope of 'the Outback'. [44] This description certainly embraces the specific concerns of space and time that constitute the narrative setting for this segment of film. A chronotope of 'the Outback' is perhaps better described as 'colonial', rather than 'provincial', in the way it conjures up social and academic discourses of gender, race and Australian nationhood. It also conjures up the aesthetic discourses of music and visual art, which draw on dry Australian landscapes, and even on the ecological discourses which relate to the management of this land, both in indigenous and non-indigenous terms.

Secondly, the chronotope is a device which can be used to describe the space/time relationship of various *motifs* in a text.[45] An example of this *motif* chronotope would be the memory sequences in *beDevil*'s 'Choo Choo Choo Choo'. These distort the relationship between time and place, with subliminal images, 'imaginary' images of ghosts and the real/imaginary images such as the 'min min lights'. Within the practice of film theory, this *motif* of filmic narrative could well be described as a 'memory' chronotope, with a potentially wide range of application.

The third understanding of this term lies in its use in distinguishing between various 'categories' or genres of narrative within a particular textual signifying practice.[46]. An example of this 'generic' chronotope in *beDevil* occurs with Moffatt's use of 'to camera' monologues. Although such a chronotope would differ in the case of each film, an 'interview' chronotope could prove a powerful one in the description of the

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[43] Sharon Lee Espili Swenson, *The Cinematic Chronotope and Four European Art Films: Untying the Knots of Time and Space.* Ph.D. Thesis. University of Utah, 1993, unpublished, 45

[44] Subhash Jaireth's work on Bakhtin's concepts in relation to film include: 'Anthony Minghella's *The English Patient:* Monoscopic Seeing of Novelistic Heteroglossia', *The UTS Review*, Volume 4, No.2, November 1998, 57–79 and 'To See and be Seen: the heteroscopia of Hindi film posters', *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, Vol.14, No.2, 2000, 201–214

[45] Holquist, *Dialogism* 109

[46] Holquist describes this use of the chronotope in relation to narrative categories of the novel, which depend on the Russian Formalist distinction between how an event is assumed to unfold in time, and how such a chronology is altered in the telling: *Dialogism*, 113–114

oscillations between fiction and non-fiction which occur in fiction and documentary films using interviews in their narrative structure. In 'Choo Choo Choo Choo', the interview sequences are set in the film's 'present' and use the 'documenting' chronotope of documentary film.

Swenson describes as follows how this third chronotope contextualises a particular work within the history of its signifying practice and in the societies in which it is created and received:

> Bakhtin implies the novel is more than the sum of its formal features. By observing the essential qualities of a chronotope, it is possible to identify salient features of the society in which it developed and to understand how the literary work is both similar to and different from earlier genres — and their concomitant societies. Some film genre theorists have dealt with synchronic readings, focusing on the ways in which film genres reflect social values, but Bakhtin's ideas offer an unusual consideration of the interweaving of form, content, and context both in literature and in film.[47]

These many kinds of chronotope all operate simultaneously in 'Choo Choo Choo Choo'. Each describes a particular way in which space and time exists within the film's narrative, as well as describing contextual arrangements of time and space which belong to those particular social discourses located in the 'worlds' of production and reception of the filmic text. To quote Bakhtin,

> Chronotopes are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose once another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex inter-relationships.[49][48]

Through describing the relationship between a variety of chronotopes embodied in a text, it is possible therefore to

> sense the chronotope of the represented world as well as the chronotope of the readers and creators of the work. That is, we get a mutual interaction between the world represented in the work and the world outside the work.[49]

Specific chronotopes describe the spatial and temporal co-ordinates wherein the various performances in specific films occur. By applying the concept of the

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[47] Swenson, *The Cinematic Chronotope and Four European Art Films,* 44
[48] Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', *The dialogic imagination*, 252
[49] Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', *The dialogic imagination*, 255

chronotope to film, it is possible to describe not only the individuals and communities which perform in the context of the filmic experience, but also the relationships between these performances, and some of the processes which form these performances. In this sense, the chronotope could be used to investigate the ways in which performances in film move through the porous (non)boundaries that I have used to distinguish between my three Levels of performance in film. Most importantly for this chapter's discussion of the filmic text 'as' performance, the chronotope is a device through which a text can be described in terms of space and time. I want now to focus again on the specificities of film as text through a further comparison of theatre and film, drawing both on Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope and hermeneutics.

Film as Performance Text

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the filmic text differs from most other texts in the way in which it is constituted by the movement of audiovisual images. As also discussed, Sobchack's understanding of film in terms of 'movement' is useful if not necessary in order to investigate how it is that the filmic text performs of itself. In terms of this investigation, however, it is also useful to consider again live theatre, and how the comparison between film and theatre can elucidate more ways in which film operates as a distinct signifying practice. This comparison can also further explore how textual theory might fail in the conceptualisation of film as text, unless such theory is extended to take into account the distinct signifying practice of film.

Broadly speaking, in both film and theatre[50], the performances which are received by the audience are constituted by 'moving' audiovisual images; these literally moving images perform expressively, and also enable perceptual movements of ideation and memory. The moving audiovisual images of both film and theatre constitute a particular kind of text which is both the site of interaction between audiences and the site of those performances which manifest as film and theatre. Performance texts are constituted by mediated (in film) and unmediated (in live

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[50]My discussion of the 'performance text' of theatre can be applied also to 'dance' and the live performance of music and poetry. In this sense, my use of the term 'theatre' includes such forms of live performance; it refers to all live performance in front of an audience. Puppet theatre is an interesting theatrical permutation which creates a slightly different kind of performance text: one

theatre) moving audiovisual images that are derived from the human body. In this sense, the signifying practices of both film and theatre manifest as performance texts; these distinguish film and theatre from the texts of visual art, still photography and written texts. As in theatre, film is only ever accessible to an audience through its mimetically based performance text, both as itself, and in conjunction with the performances of its reception. If the performances that are involved with film and theatre are considered textual, then it is possible to draw again from hermeneutic theory to describe performance texts as also the site at which the makers of film and theatre lose a large degree of their control over performances of reception.

After the workshopping and production processes which refine those performances that create the performance text, both film and theatre are released to audiences who do not belong to the group of people who can be described as filmmakers, or makers of theatre. Both filmic and theatrical performance texts are defined through that particular moment when, in Ricoeur's words, 'the text's career escapes the finite horizon lived by its author.'[51] This moment belongs, then, to all texts and can be used to describe how a filmic text, like other texts, constitutes various cultural performances over time — through performances of reception which vary in space and time. The following quotation from Bakhtin describes this moment of release in terms of a spatial and temporal relationship between the world of the text and the world of its creators:

> The work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich
> it, and the real world enters the work and its world as part of the process
> of its creation, as well as through the creative perception of listeners and
> readers.[52]

Drawing on Bakhtin's first kind of chronotope, then, the filmic text can be described also in accordance with hermeneutic theory: as a text which is loosed upon the world, adrift from its makers' control and yet anchored in the specific contexts of its production through the times and places that are associated with those makers' historical existence. In the sense that both filmic and live performance texts are sites

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that does not always involve the explicitly visible bodies of human actors. I refer again to puppetry in my discussion of digital audiovisual technology in Chapter 6.

[51] Paul Ricoeur, 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text' in *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics, 11,* Trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson, Evanston, Illinois:Northwestern University Press, 1991, 148

[52] Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', *The dialogic imagination,* 254

of interaction between creators and audience, there is a vast difference between such texts and literary texts. Bakhtin insists that in every literary text (presumably even anonymous texts) and in all acts of interpretation 'we always arrive, in the final analysis, at the human voice, which is to say we come up against the human being.'[53] This insistence is even more necessary in the case of filmic and live performance texts. These texts are never totally anonymous because they inscribe audiovisual images of actual people, not only the signifying practice that is language.

My discussion in the following sections of this chapter addresses the most significant way in which film differs from theatre: through the mediation of film's technology between those actual bodies filmed by a camera and the audiovisual images that appear as filmic text. I also want to consider how this mediation can be described in terms of performances which constitute that text's reception.

The 'Aura' of Film as the Age of Mechanical Reproduction Continues

The mediation of audiovisual technology between live performances by filmmakers and audiences enables the performance of the filmic text. In this sense, the filmic text can be considered as a mediated performance text which unlike theatre, is a performance which is reproducible in terms of its material substance (tape, CD, digital electronic circuits). This difference between the performance texts of live theatre and film recalls my earlier reference to particular debate about the ontology of performance and the reproducibility of the filmic text. In Chapter 2 (p. 44), I quoted Peggy Phelan's passionate description of performance as the ephemeral art of disappearance which can only be tainted by association with the technologies of 'reproduction':

> Performance's being ... becomes itself through disappearance.[54]

This definition of performance recalls Ricoeur's description of 'living speech' in his essay 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text':

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[53] Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', *The dialogic imagination*, 252–3
[54] Phelan, *Unmarked,* 146

> In living speech, the instance of discourse has the character of a fleeting event. The event appears and disappears. This is why there is a problem of fixation. What we want to fix is what disappears.[55]

Ricoeur applies his hermeneutic theory to Austin and Searle's theories of the speech act in order to argue that human action (as opposed to textual practice that relies on specific technologies such as writing) can also be understood as text. He uses his distinction between spoken and written language to describe discourse in terms of both fleeting non-inscribed events, and inscribed events. In view of Ricoeur's definition of discourse, Phelan's definition of performance appears to disregard an important aspect of performance, its power as discourse. Whether or not a performance event is 'live' and fleeting, or mediated and fleeting, it is never ephemeral. By this I mean that any form of theatrical performance, live or filmic, is always embedded in the context of discourse about the societies in which it is created and received; it is also embedded in the context of how societies act both inside and outside of such discourse. My ongoing description of how a film performs as cultural performance in the context of a specific social drama offers another way of describing how the filmic text can be understood as embedded within society.

Phelan's lament about the power of modern reproductive technology to destroy, or at the very least to contaminate, humanity's artistic capability to grasp performatively its relationship with the 'real' world is also reminiscent of the predictions and reflections of Walter Benjamin on film. The way in which Benjamin uses his concept of 'aura' to describe film as an example of the technologies of mass reproduction is especially significant for a critical consideration of Phelan's 'lament'. In Chapter 2 (p. 61), I discussed 'aura' with relation to both conceptualised and actually returned gazes in filmic reception; I drew specifically on Benjamin's 1939 article 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire'.[56] In this essay, he developed his concept beyond the pessimism of his 1936 essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'[57] where he describes, for example, the cultic reception of an actor's performance in film as follows:

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[55] Ricoeur, *From Text to Action,* 146
[56] Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', *Illuminations,* 155–200
[57] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations,* 217–251

> The film responds to the shrivelling of the aura with an artificial build-up of the 'personality' outside the studio. The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the 'spell of the personality', the phony spell of a commodity.[58]

Opposing Benjamin's pessimistic assessment of film as (not) a work of art, Jodi Brooks draws on the work of Miriam Hansen[59] in order to describe how as a concept, the aura of 'a work of art' can by-pass discussions of authenticity and uniqueness and contribute directly to definitive discussions on the reception of film. By drawing on Benjamin's later essay, with its added re-conceptualisation of Baudelaire's *mémoire involontaire* and correspondences, both Brooks and Hansen emphasise Benjamin's use of the term 'aura' in order to name the way in which the performance of reception involves particular experiences of space and time. In her elaboration of Benjamin's conceptualisation of 'aura' as a predominantly temporal concept, Brooks describes a sensual 'complicity' between a film, as a work of art, and the spectator:

> While the gap between spectator and work is crossed, it at the same time produces another sort of distance — a temporal one that takes place between the self and another self — unknown, forgotten, possible (and melancholic).
>
> It is this relation with the work of art which I think offers most to a conception of an intense, obsessional mode of cinema spectatorship — a relation which is charged with a sort of longing, and which, moreover, involves a sort of physicality.[60]

This complicity brings to mind again Sobchack's description of the filmic experience as a mediated relationship between filmmakers, film and spectators. Hansen elaborates further Benjamin's theory of 'the optical unconscious'[61] and links it to his discussion of voluntary and involuntary associations in the performance of reception through the mechanism of memory. In this way, she conceptualises filmic reception through the parameters of time and space (also calling to mind Bakhtin's chronotope):

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[58] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, 231

[59] Miriam Hansen 'Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: "The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology"', in *New German Critique* No.40 Winter 1987, 179–223

[60] Brooks, 'Between Contemplation and Distraction. Cinema, Obsession and Involuntary Memory', 88

[61] Benjamin, 'A Small History of Photography', *One-Way Street and Other Writings,* Trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, London and New York:Verso, 1992, 240–257

With the 'optical unconscious', Benjamin readmits dimensions of temporality and historicity into his vision of the cinema, against his own endorsement of it as the medium of presence and tracelessness. The material fissure between a consciously and an 'unconsciously permeated space' opens up a temporal gap for the viewer, a disjunction which may trigger recollection, and with it promises of reciprocity and intersubjectivity.[62]

In this note, and also in contrast to his denial of film as 'a work of art' Benjamin himself quotes Brecht's 'analogous reflections' on the commodification of performance, presumably through film and radio:

If the concept of 'work of art' can no longer be applied to the thing that emerges once the work is transformed into a commodity, we have to eliminate this concept with cautious care but without fear, lest we liquidate the function of the very thing as well ...what happens here with the work of art will change it fundamentally and erase its past to such an extent that should the old concept be taken up again ... it will no longer stir any memory of the thing it once designated.[63]

In this quote, Benjamin claims to be speaking of the 'work of art' on a 'different level' from Brecht; yet the latter's words describe more succinctly perhaps than Benjamin, the need to continually re-conceptualise the 'work of art' in the context of new technologies. In other words, concepts of the 'work of art' need to address the ways in which artistic practice is transformed through the processes of mass reproduction. My following discussion of filmic reception addresses ways in which to describe some of the processes which constitute this transformation.

The Performance of Film as Reception of the Filmic Text: Contexts of Reception

In her phenomenology of film, Sobchack describes 'the address of the eye' in the filmic experience as a 'visual transcendence in bodily immanence'.[64] Her concept describes a capability for particular performances of perception and expression, which is shared by both a film and its spectators: the 'eye' of film's body is the camera, and human spectators use sight to receive a film. Whilst perhaps unnecessarily privileging the faculty of sight, her conceptualisation of 'the address of the eye' traces an interaction between film and spectator which describes both

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[62] Hansen, 'Benjamin, Cinema and Experience', 217
[63] Brecht in Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations,* 246
[64] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 261

film and spectator as motivated performers within the filmic experience. Their performances reflect back on other performances and reach out towards other potential performances. Filmic reception draws on a sense of reflection back in time and a simultaneous reaching forward towards other performances of reception, both by individuals and by social groups. This sense of moving back and forth through time is one of the ways in which film operates as cultural performance. In Sobchack's words:

> Both spectator and film commute perception to expression by means of their bodies and in the world, and both constitute vision intentionally, each act of perception visually realized as a viewing-view, and visibly expressed in the production of a viewed-view. As well, both spectator and film are capable of reflecting upon their prereflective activity of vision and its visible productions. Both can and do transcend the immanence of their immediate bodily experience, generalizing and using their lived-bodies and concrete situation in the world to imaginatively prospect the horizon for future projects and possible situations and to re-member experience retrospectively.[65]

In these terms, and in the consideration of film as a web of interrelated performances, neither the filmic text, nor its reception, can be considered as passive or static. In considering filmic reception as a performance not only of the performance text but as a performance of self with all the human self's potential for movement and sensual experience, this Level 2 of film 'as' performance enables a discussion of filmic reception as cultural performance by individual people and by social groups.

Collective and individual choices about particular receptive performance of film then can be seen as guided, rather than dictated by the filmic text. This sense of 'guiding' suggests again the way in which film can be considered a performance text that makes possible (as in theatre) many different performances of reception. The perceptual processes involved with being an audience for theatre and film rely on the same processes of what Susan Melrose calls 'that old and notorious experience of identification and transference...'.[66] As referred to before, the live theatrical experience is tempered by the same presence in time and space for performers and

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[65] ibid.

[66] Susan Melrose, 'My Body, Your Body, Her-His Body : Is/Does Some-Body (Live) there?' 119–125, *New Theatre Quarterly,* Vol.54, May 1998, 120

audience; this fact may constitute a distraction, however, in identifying the processes of perception which are at work and which Melrose claims

> may well depend not upon agreement forged over 'the body', but, rather on intersubjective negotiations attempted, and attempted again, between 'my', 'yours' 'his', and 'hers' — off which perceptual and proprietorial membrane other names, images, and identities reverberate differently for each of us. [67]

The many ways in which a film can be interpreted through sensual and reflective experience depend upon specific contexts of reception, including a perceived relationship with the filmmaking performances which produced it. Sobchack's conceptualisation of filmic reception discounts completely any consideration of the spectator as a passive:

> Regarded from the inside, from the perspective of the subject of vision, that body (the spectator's) is not passive or 'empty'. It is a lived-body, informed by its particular sensible experience and charged with its own intentional impetus.[68]

In both theatre and film, receptive performances draw from the biographical context of the spectator, and from the specific, historical context of the performance (film or live performance) which is being received. These specific and unique historical contexts are implicated in Sobchack's 'intentional impetus' in the reception of film. In these terms, filmic reception can be considered an interaction between motivated beings, mediated by the filmic text. This interaction can be further described in terms of particular choices made by filmmakers and people who receive a film.

Choice, Distraction and Context in Film's Reception

The issue of choice in film reception is perhaps more obvious in what Corrigan describes as that kind of choice in reception which existed in pre-classical cinema, when entertainment piers and parks included viewing of film among many other entertainments for the strolling audience (reminiscent of Benjamin's re-description of Baudelaire's *flaneur* [69]). Corrigan draws an analogy between this earlier mode of filmic reception and the reception of American cinema after the Vietnam War: cinema from that time has been available for public viewing in many different

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[67] ibid.
[68] Sobchack, *The address of the eye,* 305

spaces (examples include theatre, the pub and the aeroplane). Video and DVD copies of film have also made possible those private, personalised viewings which can be strongly affected by the use of remote control facilities.[70] He writes about the 'fragmented nature of early movie audiences' as follows: 'For this brief period in film history ... the reception of the movies appears to have been less a reading than a performance by the audience or a distraction for that audience.'[71] He goes on to say that 'film reception was too publicly indiscriminate and various to be the receptacle for any secure hermeneutic secrets';[72] the contexts of viewing film are now varied and casual and, often, distracted.

The distracted viewing of parts of taped films at different times, and the inability to maintain a reasonable viewing position (people standing in aircraft aisles etc), are but some of the situations which necessitate another consideration of performances involved in filmic reception other than that of the passive viewer virtually strapped to her seat by the conventions of a darkened cinematic theatre. In terms of the cinematic apparatus as described in Sobchack's terms, the film's body has evolved throughout the twentieth century in a way which has returned to the receiver of a film the power to explicitly 'edit' that film during the act of reception. This power manifests in choices about how and what parts of a film are viewed in a particular time and place. Currently available home computer software packages also allow the receiver of film to alter, to literally edit, a film for home viewing purposes. Such distracted viewing situations recall Benjamin's conceptualisation of the 'shock' of modernity and subsequent modes of distracted reception of art, as the age of mechanical reproduction continues.

'Shock' and Memory

In his essay 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', Benjamin draws on Freud's theory of trauma in order to describe the 'shock' of modernity: how the individual continually needs to cope with the complexity and overwhelming power of modern technology.[73] The factory worker must cope with the machinery of production, the

[69] Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', *Illuminations*, 171–172
[70] Corrigan, *A Cinema*, 57
[71] ibid.
[72] ibid.
[73] Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', *Illuminations,* 161–2, 174–6

person in the street with the speed and danger of mechanised vehicles. In a similar manner, the individual who attends the cinema must cope with that medium's mechanised distortion of vision and sound through close-ups, edited montage, tracking shots and edited sound tracks. This shock provokes a distracted trope of dealing with all aspects of life, distracted because so many 'shocking' situations must be coped with. The reception of film is distracted in this sense not only because of its apparatus, but also because people need the entertainments provided by film in order to gain distraction from other 'shocking' aspects of life.

In this same essay, Benjamin builds on Baudelaire's 'correspondences' to describe how the *mémoire involontaire* provides another repertoire of remembered and forgotten associations which are part of the performance of reception of art. This repertoire is additional to the intentional performances of memory, *mémoire volontaire*. The combination of these two kinds of memory based performances of reception also can be understood in terms of Sobchack's description of intentional reception, as described earlier.

In her discussion of gestural practice in the films of John Cassavetes, Jodi Brooks draws on Benjamin's concepts of aura and correspondences in order to describe how Cassevetes' films re-present 'crisis' and distress through both narrative and the way in which this director edits his films, visually and aurally. Brooks argues that, in Benjamin's terms, Cassavetes' films perform the crisis and distress of Western life in the latter part of the twentieth century:

> If for Benjamin the crisis of experience that characterises modernity is integrally tied to the inability of traditional modes of memorative communication to grasp contemporary experience and the absence of 'memorative content'.... in new cultural forms, Cassavetes' films make the experience of crisis the basis of their gestural practice.[74]

Similarly, Hansen describes how Benjamin's theory of experience derives from concepts of textual reception involving 'memory, historicity and intersubjectivity'.[75] In theatre also there are as many contexts for performances of reception as there are people in an audience. These theatrical performances are contingent, as in film, on

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[74]Brooks, 'Crisis and the Everyday: Some thoughts on gesture and crisis in Cassavetes and Benjamin', 98
[75]Hansen, 'Benjamin, Cinema and Experience', 223

the differing technologies of theatrical production, for example, Brechtian theatre, theatre in the round and those simultaneous performance sites over and through which an audience can move their eyes and/or bodies. Although the different technologies of theatre and film create different contexts for reception, audiences interact with both forms of performance text in terms of narratives created out of the sounds and moving images of human bodies. The setting of these human bodies within a filmic text's narrative also contributes to the cultural performance of a film.

The Human Body, the Filmic Text and Film's Reception

In film, as in theatre, the human body is the 'stuff' that is used in order to tell a story or 'show' a picture. In other words, unlike other discourse, texts from film and theatre use actual sounds and images of human bodies in their performance of gender and power relations. At this textual Level 2 of performance in film then, I explore these bodies through their relationships with each other and to us, the viewers. This use of human bodies as the textual 'stuff' of film conjures again that enticing sense of 'presence'[76] in film which Stern and Kouvaros describe as follows:

> What is of interest, what is intriguing, is how movement, voice, gesture can bring about effects, how they can generate affect.[77]

This thesis is concerned not so much with 'how' they generate 'affect', which has to do with the rhetorical and semiotic features of a filmic text, but draws attention to the fact that 'affect' *is* generated *by* the filmic text's performance of human bodies: the movements, voices and gestures of actual bodies (or, in digital images which are not pure animation, 'based' on actual bodies). It is via this mediated 'presence' that we experience/perform film; it is through the bodies of the people which are captured by the filmic text that we experience film as cultural performance, and so become part of a society's discussion about particular social issues.[78]

Willemen's description of 'cinephilia' is another way into understanding the 'affect' generated by the human bodies that are imaged in a filmic text, and how

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[76] Stern and Kouvaros, 'Descriptive Acts', 14

[77] Stern and Kouvaros, 'Descriptive Acts', 20

[78] Discursive theory's concept of subjectification and subject positions would indeed be another way in which to describe performances in film at Levels 1 and 2. Subjectification could well describe idealised performances of self that are suggested by a filmic text, as well as those individual performances that are described in reception studies' qualitative analyses of film audiences. This

consideration of such 'affect' involves another way of understanding filmic reception. He describes 'cinephilia' as a 'desire for cinema' that perhaps can be understood in terms of a desire for particular sensual performances through which cinema can engage the receiver. These are not necessarily idealised performances except for those which lie in the memory of past *jouissance* and the anticipation of further pleasures. These performances are sensual and intellectual engagements with image and sound and the ideas within and underlying their presentation. In his article 'Through the Glass Darkly: Cinephilia Reconsidered', Willemen describes and traces the historical reasons for the 'social demand to cover up' this sensual desire for cinema[79] despite the passionate but confusing counter-actions of writers drawing on the theory of *photogenie.*[80] Sophie Wise's work provides a recent example of how film analysis can describe filmic reception in terms of sensual human bodies. She comfortably describes her reaction to Hal Hartley's 'trademark deadpan dialogue and highly affected performance style, woven into very tight, highly organised films'[81] as follows: 'I was interested in how natural and satisfying this artificiality *felt*.'[82] (my emphasis). Wise's writing shows how film theory is currently re-engaging with the processes of film production and reception. This re-engagement is through a passionate acknowledgment of the sensual 'affect' which marks the reception of the filmic text.

I argue that this sensual affect arises from a mimetic acting out in the process of reception, which reciprocates the mimetic acting out which is constructed by the filmic text. This act of reciprocation takes on the form of a mimetic relationship which exists between the human body of the person receiving a film, and the human body as inscribed and constituted by the filmic text. The bodies which are seen and heard in a filmic text are 'inscribed' in the sense used by Ricoeur when he denotes how a text captures 'real events' for the purposes of discourse.[83] Bodies re-presented in a filmic text consequently are also inscribed in terms of narrative content. This inscription of narrative content arises from the markings which are

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thesis, however, has limited space and focuses on describing filmic reception and textual address in film in the context of theatrical enactment rather than in terms of subjective identifications.
[79] Willemen, *Looks and Frictions*, 124–133
[80] See also Barthes, *Image, Music, Text,* 23-24
[81] Wise, 'What I like about Hal Hartley', 246
[82] ibid.
[83] Ricoeur, *From Text to Action,* 146

peculiar and particular to each human body, and in the way that these unique markings are further inscribed by film's technology.

Elizabeth Grosz discusses this sense of 'inscription', drawing on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception. She locates a reflexive subjectivity in corporeal terms in order to challenge the universalisation of the body as the unit of mass representation:

> …the body, or rather, bodies, cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, precultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself. It is not simply that the body is represented in a variety of ways according to historical, social, and cultural exigencies while it remains basically the same; these factors actively produce the body as a body of a determinate type.[84]

As discussed in Chapter 3, it is the audiovisual image of the actor's body in fiction and in non-fiction film that moves through the edited time/space of a film and wears the marks of life. These marks tell the stories of filmmakers' intention, and tell also of the actors' lives outside of the cinematic space. In this sense, 'actors' lives' include information (and misinformation) from the media industry which helps shape their careers. This inclusion of actors' lives within a filmic text may or may not be intended by other filmmakers such as directors, screenwriters and producers. In this sense, the physicality of filmmakers can also be understood to affect both the filmic text and its reception. One interesting example of this emerged in my interview with Connolly and Anderson. At the time of interview, they were filming their recent release *Facing the Music* (2001), a film that describes the conflicts arising from funding cuts to the Music Department at Sydney University; Connolly commented on how they were beginning to suspect that their increasing fame as filmmakers was influencing the material they were filming in ways they had not before experienced. This interview occurred early in their filming and one of the social actors had commented on camera how she did not want a film to depict too much dissension within their university department. They had always considered that their specific physical presence made no difference to the events they were filming.[85]

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[84] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, x
[85] Connolly and Anderson, Appendix B7, p.325

Returning to my consideration of actors' bodies, it is also useful to note how Grosz (drawing on the work of Alphonso Lingis) particularly examines the 'scar' as a mark of inscription.[86] There are several obvious examples of such scarring as bodily inscription in *Once Were Warriors*: the 'designer' tattoos of the gang members and Beth's face marked by her most recent beating. Temuera Morrison's critically acclaimed body-builder's body, built especially for this film's role of Jake Heke, is also an inscribed body in Grosz' terms, in the sense that she discusses body-building in relation to Susan Bordo's work on Anorexia Nervosa.[87] Morrison's life and career provide then a clear example of how interactive the private and public bodies of actors can be: Morrison now has a career with roles based on this 'new' body (see *Barb Wire,* David Hogan, 1996), and five years after the release of the film, Morrison chased and attacked a young vandal to the following newspaper headline: 'NZ actor is fined after movie role brought to life.'[88]

Ann Kaplan also discusses bodily inscription in film. She describes how human bodies can be inscribed cinematically with gender and the 'otherness' of non-Caucasian racial background; she considers of how the very act of looking can be used to create this inscription in a filmic text. For example, she comments on Moffatt's filmmaking in *Nice Coloured Girls* (1986) in the context of a 'reversal' of looking relations between white men and dark Aboriginal women: 'This is not just a resisting look: it puts the project of gazing squarely in the position of the aboriginal protagonists'.[89] The inscription of gender and race[90] on human bodies, as it is shown in particular films, means that these films enter society's discourse about what it is to be male or female and of a particular racially marked group in society. Cinematic markings of gender and race in turn invite discussions about the subsequent power relations involved with these inscriptions.[91] In Chapters 7 and 8, I further cite examples of cinema's inscription of the human body in my consideration of how

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[86]Grosz, *Volatile Bodies,* 138-159. This mark also explored by Rey Chow in her analysis of the film *The Joy Luck Club* (Wayne Wang,1993)) in Chow, *Ethics After Idealism*, 99-112

[87]Grosz, *Volatile Bodies,* 143

[88]NZPA, 'NZ actor is fined after movie role brought to life', *Canberra Times*, 19 July 1999, 4

[89]Kaplan, *Looking For the Other,* 295

[90]See Langton, *'Well I heard it on the radio'* and Jennings, *Sites of difference*, for accounts of how racial stereotyping of indigenous Australians in film have been used to reinforce institutionalised arrangements of power.

[91]See also Tania Modleski's analysis of film in contexts of anorexia, body-building and body decoration in 'The Incredible Shrinking He(r)man. Male Regression, the Male Body, and Film' in *Feminism Without Women*: *culture and criticism in a "postfeminist" age*, New York: Routledge, 1991, 90–111

race and gender constitute part of the cultural performance of *beDevil* and *Link-Up Diary*.

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The performance of film 'as' filmic text, defined in this thesis as Level 2 of performance in film, cannot be understood as a reductive documenting of performances created in one space and time. Even documentary film in its most observational forms seldom pretends to be a chronicle of events as they occur in space and time. Film uses different technologies to those of the theatre to create a 'mediated' filmic performance text, the performance of which is always different at each time of projection, in matters of staging (projection) and performances of reception.

Historically contextualised performances of reception, as discussed in this chapter through the writings of Sobchack, Benjamin and Bakhtin, contribute to a broad consideration of the entire filmic experience as cultural performance, where the embodied performance of the filmic text itself is created by both the performances of filmmakers and those who receive a film. This complex link between filmmakers, filmic text and acts of reception cannot be attributed simply to a mediation described in terms of a binary process of cause and effect. It implicates all the inter-relating spatial and temporal contexts of all the various performances involved in film. My discussion has focused on how a consideration of film as text can contribute to an understanding of how film performs of itself, and also how film operates as the point of access between performances of filmmaking and reception. This dual function of the filmic text, both 'as' performance and as a site of reception, can be used for analysing power relations that are depicted as a film shows the markings of race and gender on images of human bodies. Film's placement in time and space of the human body constitutes the film as a distinct textual site for the discussion of non-fiction social issues. This literal placement of audiovisual images of the human body within the filmic text is one critical aspect of how film negotiates the historically real.

As mentioned in my introduction to this chapter, an understanding of film as text introduces a paradox. This paradox can be described in the context of the ephemeral nature of all performance (see my discussions of performance theory both in this

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chapter and in Chapter 2). Film's paradox is the way in which its performances are ephemeral and yet are not only mediated, but indeed made possible, through the commodifying processes of industrial mass production. In other words, film manifests many ephemeral performances and yet is also a reproducible commodity. As suggested in my discussion of performance in Chapter 2 (p.44), film defies Phelan's premise that performance only exists as 'representation without reproduction'[92]: film is performance *as* reproduction. Film is still usually at the physical level a piece of reproducible tape or a Compact Disc. The projection of this tape (or disc) performs the filmic text. This particular embodiment of film does not need to be seen as a reductive process, but perhaps can be more usefully understood as an elegant transformation of many different kinds of performance into a performance text which embodies the *potential* of many other performances of reception. The tape or disc which is film is simply another part of the 'film's body' in terms of Sobchack's phenomenology; its movement through other pieces of machinery, and subsequently through the bodies of those viewing it, is but another aspect of the 'filmic experience'.

The consideration of the projected form of film 'as' performance is not only an understanding of film derived from the kinds of explanation enabled by textual interpretation;[93] it is also an understanding which draws on explanations which are presented not linguistically but through the pan-sensual translation of theatrical mimesis. As discussed in Chapter 3, p. 85, theatrical mimesis necessarily implies a specific kind of relationship between performances of presentation and reception. If the filmic text is understood as such, as a mediated site of performance, then Sobchack's diagram of the hermeneutic relation in film on p. 118 in this chapter would need to be redrawn. All arrows of relationship would need to be shown as two-way, in order to describe the reciprocal relationship between filmmaking and filmic reception. In this chapter, my examination of the textual being of film *as* performance has explored some of the ways in which film can further be distinguished as a distinct signifying practice. My next chapter explores 'intertextuality' as another particular characteristic of film as a distinct signifying practice.

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[92]Phelan, *Unmarked*, 102
[93] See Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, 167

Chapter 5. Heteroglossia: Three Different Intertextualities in Film

This chapter particularly explores the distinction between film and other kinds of texts through Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia. Drawing on my discussion of film as a dialogic text in Chapter 4 (p. 115), I am using this concept to describe the way in which a film can weave many 'voices' within one text — 'a plurality of relations, not just a cacophony of different voices.'[1] In Bakhtin's particular sense of text as a site of social interaction, 'heteroglossia' describes 'dialogic' relationships between specific 'utterances': the many ways in which a particular text can relate to other texts and the ways in which several 'points of view' can be accommodated within a single text.

In his discussion of Kristeva's interpretation of heteroglossia as intertextuality, Holquist further distinguishes between different kinds of intertextuality. The first exists in terms of quotations, references and more oblique allusions to other texts of the same signifying practice; I call this kind a 'generic' intertextuality. The second kind occurs when one signifying practice refers to another: I name this kind a 'referential' intertextuality. I further distinguish a third kind of intertextuality; pushing past Holquist's description of intertextuality, I discuss a process of signification which Kristeva describes in terms of 'transpositions' between one signifying practice and another. Specifically in the context of film, I call this kind of intertextuality 'transpositional'.

This 'transpositional' form of intertextuality is located not simply when one signifying practice refers somehow, or uses somehow the signifying practice of another. It occurs when one signifying practice not only uses processes which belong to another, but can also only be understood in terms of another practice. This is not to say that one has become the other; transpositional intertextuality is rather a way in which to describe a shift in practice which can be understood to produce another practice, and as a way of describing how such a new practice is subsequently implicated in the historically 'older' one. My discussion in this chapter suggests that film's signifying practice can be understood as transpositionally intertextual with that in theatre.

1.   Generic Intertextuality

An example of how a crossing of 'genres' can work in filmmaking occurs through the style in which director Tamahori filmed *Once Were Warriors*. This style refers both to Ken Loach's 'social realist' films and to the highly condensed narrative forms of the advertising clips that Tamahori previously had made for Satchi and Satchi. In *Once Were Warriors*, he says that what he and his director of photography 'were trying to do with the cinematography was … Loach with a lot of style'.[2] His adept use of narrative with the confrontational style and subject matter of 'social realism' certainly creates a powerful form of audiovisual communication. There is also, however, an ambiguity in this film's text, which derives from Tamahori's intentional use of a filmic style which creates an aesthetically pleasing audiovisual text in order to deliver a 'social realist' narrative. There is an associated 'risk' that this 'serious' narrative may become lost in the reception of Tamahori's celebratory rendition of Maori culture. It is perhaps more useful, however, to consider this confusion of styles as a specifically 'filmic' practice through which this film conveys a sense of the complexity and ambiguity involved in living the social situations depicted by the film.

2.   Referential Intertextuality

The second form of intertextuality occurs where film as a signifying practice can be understood to refer outside of its own practice, towards that of another. Drawing on the work of Tony Bennett, Holquist describes Kristeva's interpretation of 'heteroglossia' in terms of an 'intertextuality' that can describe the complex relations which exist not only between similar texts, but also the discursive relationship which occurs between different signifying practices.[3] Todorov also uses the term 'intertextuality', both in reference to Bakhtin's dialogism and in reference to Kristeva's elaboration of this concept.[4] Todorov's discussion depends on his placement of Bakhtinian theory within the parameters of 'translinguistics'. His broader, more inclusive interpretation of Bakhtin's linguistically oriented theory makes it possible to extend its application to areas of communication which use complex combinations of sounds and visual images.

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[1] Holquist, *Dialogism,* 89
[2] Tamahori in Helen Martin, 'Lee Tamahori', *the big picture*, July 1995, 4
[3] Holquist, *Dialogism,* 88
[4] Todorov, *The Dialogic Principle,* 60–61

If a filmic text is understood as an 'utterance' in Bakhtin's terms, there opens up a whole way of understanding the performative nature of film in terms of dialogic communication. In other words, film's performance of many dialogues across a variety of discourses, between many people and in many contexts, creates different 'utterances' with every re-contextualisation of the performance and reception of film: such re-contextualisation occurs through time and space. Bakhtin describes 'utterance' in terms of 'dialogised heteroglossia' in his discussion of poetic discourse as follows:

> the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity.[5]

and

> The authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance.[6]

In his discussion of film in terms of translinguistics, Stam moves beyond Metz's arguments about whether or not film can be considered a language *per se.* Drawing on Bakhtin's own work and on the interpretations of Todorov, Kristeva and Holquist, it is possible to follow on from Stam's application of Bakhtinian translinguistics to film in order to describe further how the filmic text performs as an act of communication. In this sense, it becomes possible to describe many individual utterances, which are contained within the narrative structure of filmic texts, as part of a wider intertextual discourse about a variety of social issues. Such an understanding of the filmic experience concurs with an understanding of film as a genre of cultural performance (see Chapter 1, p. 13).

Heteroglossia as intertextuality can be used, for example, in order to describe the complex narrative of *Once Were Warriors* which winds its way through the 'points of view' of several major characters — Jake and Beth Heke and their three elder children. Each of these characters summons identifications with many different social identities, including those which are conventionally described through the

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[5] Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination,* 272
[6] ibid.

terms 'youth', 'women', 'men', 'warrior', 'gangs' and 'Maori'. Yet when compared with the film *beDevil*, which includes in its narrative characters from many different cultural backgrounds, the text of *Once Were Warriors* exhibits a sense of 'monoglossia'. It does not show Maori people interacting with any Pakeha other than those involved in law enforcement and the judicial system. In this sense, the concept of heteroglossia, in its absence as well as in its presence, can be used to describe a filmic text. The way in which performances 'towards' film are used to create heteroglossia within a filmic text will be different, of course, in each specific instance.

In the four films researched for this thesis, textual practices other than film are clearly evident in the films' production processes. These films have an intertextual relationship with non-filmic texts. The screenplay of *Once Were Warriors*, for example, is based on Duff's novel of the same name. Intertextuality also can be located in this film in the sense that a large variety of discourses, representing many differing points of view, come together to constitute the film's narrative. This variety includes Pakeha/Maori relations, Maori negotiations of traditional and contemporary ways of living, the sociopolitical concerns of novelist Alan Duff, as well as globalised discourse on social issues concerned with gender distinctions and domestic violence. *beDevil* also displays an intertextuality with this latter discourse, especially in the segment 'Mr Chuck'. *Rats in the Ranks* is concerned with formal and informal histories of the Australian Labor Party. *Link-Up Diary* constantly references historical documents within its filmic text. Current receptive performances of this film also take place in the context of the complex issues that are involved with the Stolen Generations, and the many negotiations and publications that have occurred in relation to this issue over the last fourteen years. I describe these in more detail in Chapter 7.

3.   Transpositional Intertextuality

My discussions of the relationship between theatre and film in Chapters 2 and 4 suggest another form of intertextuality that can be distinguished between these two signifying practices. This distinction concerns a sense of transformation in the mimetically based performances of production and reception which are involved in both these signifying practices. I want now to take up again my previously

mentioned distinction of a third 'transpositional' intertextuality in film in order to describe how these two practices are currently implicated in each other, and also how this quality of film as 'transpositional' practice can be used to further describe film as a specific signifying practice.

In her essay 'Revolution in Poetic Language', Kristeva draws on Bakhtin's concept of 'heteroglossia' in order to describe intertextuality as ' — the *passage from one sign-system to another.* '[7] She defines this 'passage' as a movement between signifying systems:

> The term *intertextuality* denotes [this] transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of 'study of sources', we prefer the term *transposition* because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic — of enunciative and denotative positionality.[8]

She describes the thetic as '*the precondition for both enunciation and denotation*',[9] drawing from her complex discussion of linguistic signification via the theories of Husserl and Frege.[10] She also describes how this transposition can use

> the same signifying material; in language, for example, the passage may be made from narrative to text. Or it may be borrowed from different signifying materials: the transposition from a carnival scene to the written text ...[11]

She goes on to conclude:

> If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (and intertextuality), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated.[12]

This series of quotes from Kristeva's essay describe intertextuality as a concept which is particularly significant for the description of film in three ways. Firstly, she sets out terms which can be used to discuss filmic production and textual form as

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[7] Kristeva, 'Revolution in Poetic Language' in *The Kristeva Reader* Ed. by Toril Moi, Blackwell, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, 1986, 111
[8] ibid.
[9] Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, 106
[10] Kristeva, *The Kristeva* Reader, 105–112
[11] Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, 111
[12] ibid.

transposition from other signifying practices. Secondly, film is easily used and understood by practitioners of journalism, literature, visual art, theatre and music as predominantly a device of extension: a way into the field of mass-communication. Thirdly, Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, when applied to film, demands a consideration of film as a new signifying system with its own presumptions about 'truth/reality' and its own capacity to communicate that 'truth/reality'.

In the context of my description of film as a discrete signifying practice, it is worth noting Heath's quotation from Jean-Louis Comolli: 'a materialist history of the cinema is impossible without the concept of *signifying practice*.'[13] Comolli is drawing here on Kristeva's criticism of writings which confuse the terms 'signifier' and 'ideology':

> The dialectical distinction signifier/ideology is all the more important when the problem is constructing the theory of a concrete signifying practice — for example, the cinema. Substituting ideology for the signifier is in this case not just a theoretical error; it leads to a blockage of the *work* that is properly cinematic, replacing it with discourses on its ideological *function.*[14]

Kristeva and Comolli both emphasise a necessity to describe cinema as a 'concrete' signifying practice with particular technology and process, which is used by people for particular ideological purposes. Heath's following statement about the study of film draws on Kristeva's and Comolli's insights in order to describe film as 'a specific signifying practice':

> Directed in this way the study of film is neither 'contents' nor 'forms' but, breaking the deadlock of that opposition, of operations, of the process of film and the relations of subjectivity in that process.[15]

A study of film as a genre of cultural performance is another way to consider how people use particular stylistic functions of cinema in order to discuss ideological concerns (at both the level of the individual and at the level of society). This

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[13] Jean-Louis Comolli, "Technique et Ideologie" (II), *Cahiers du cinema,* No.230, July 1971, 57 in Heath, "The Cinematic Apparatus: Technology as Historical and Cultural Form', 6. Heath is using this quotation from Comolli in his description of the need to address the history of cinema by a continual re-examination of the interactions between technology and ideology.

[14] Kristeva 'Pratique analytique, pratique revolutionnaire', 72 in *Cinethique* Nos.9-10, quoted in Philip Rosen's note 6. to Jean-Louis Comolli's 'Technique and Ideology: Camera, Perspective, Depth of Field' [Parts 3 and 4] in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology,* Ed. Philip Rosen, New York:Columbia University Press, 1986, 440.

[15] Heath, quoted in Willemen *Looks and Frictions,* 99–100

consideration furthers any description of cinema as a signifying practice by focusing on what Kristeva names the 'dialectical distinction' between signifier and ideology in cinema.

Film contains within its signifying 'practice' many transpositions of other signifying systems. It is this second aspect of transpositional intertextuality which leads to the confusion of film as merely another vehicle of communication for other signifying systems. Film is a signifying system which can be structurally defined as containing many transpositions of other signifying systems. In other words, in the production of a film, there are necessarily many performances transposed from other signifying systems; these performances of filmmaking and reception are by people who are sometimes aware of and sometimes unaware of when and how such transpositions occur. In film, the signifying systems broadly understood as theatre, literature and music are transposed. Visual art is a signifying system which is transposed in the practice of theatre, and again in the lighting, editing and design of film.

The third aspect which is crucially relevant to film involves an understanding of the various forms or genres of film as having conventional codes of practice which interrelate with society's overall understanding of film's 'enunciative and denotative positionality', that is, how film in general structures truth/reality. For example, films which move between the formal conventions of fiction and non-fiction film are not only presenting a consideration of how artistic and/or communicative conventions can be combined to produce something new. Such border crossings only can work if they assume that at least some members of the audience are aware of a large body of knowledge about those transgressed conventions and meanings that these forms contain. I explore another example of film's transpositional intertextuality in my analysis (Chapter 7) of Moffatt's filmic practice in *beDevil* in the context of her photographic practice. My analysis of this film also traces various filmic transpositions of theatre's concepts of 'direct address' and the 'performance artist'.

Before going on to further discuss film's relationship with theatre in the context of 'transpositional' intertextuality, I want to note two other writers' descriptions of intertextuality in film, and the ways in which these relate to my definitions. Susan Hayward defines intertextuality and the 'intertext' as follows:

> Literally this expression means texts referring to texts, or texts citing past texts. Intertextuality is a relation between two or more texts which influences the reading of the intertext. This latter term refers to the present existing text which, in some part, is made up by reference to other texts. Most films are intertextual to some degree — a text referring to other texts, an intertext in whose presence other texts reside. For example, a film may be based on an original text, a novel or play. The shooting style of the film may be painterly, suggesting painted texts to which it might be referring.[16]

In this quotation, there are, I propose, three different ways to understand intertextuality in film. The first is the relationship which film may have with films which have already been made, or with other ways in which filmic practice has been used. This corresponds with 'generic' intertextuality. David Buchbinder describes this sense of intertextuality further, as

> more than simple quotation or allusion ... it also allows us to identify different genres and the expectations — of characterisation, of narrative closure, to name a few — which genre prompts.[17]

Hayward's definition of the way in which film can be considered an 'intertext' can be easily correlated with 'referential' intertextuality; this is the sense in which film can be understood to refer to other signifying practices. My idea of 'transpositional' intertextuality in film also can be discerned in Hayward's definition of the 'intertext', as she describes that part of film 'in whose presence other texts reside'. Although my description of this third sense of intertextuality draws more on the ways in which an entire film can be considered in terms of Hayward's 'intertext', there is also a difference. My consideration of 'transpositional' intertextuality in film emphasises the way film can draw on and transform other signifying practices rather than the way in which another signifying practice can take up 'residence' within film. In understanding film as 'intertextuality', then it is possible to consider film as a unique signifying practice which is composed of several transpositions from other signifying practices as well as containing several sets of conventions within the boundaries of filmic practice itself. Movements through these boundaries of convention, together with varied emphases on particular transpositions, mark the specific signifying practice of individual films.

Transpositions 'Between' Theatre and Film

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[16]Hayward, *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies*, 190

Brecht himself included film in his live theatre practice; he discussed the use of film technology explicitly when he addressed the argument about whether or not film could ever be 'art':

> Anybody who advises us not to make use of such new apparatus just confirms the apparatus's right to do bad work ...At the same time he deprives us in advance of the apparatus which we need in order to produce, since this way of producing is likely more and more to supersede the present one, forcing us to speak through increasingly complex media and to express what we have to say by increasingly inadequate means. For the old forms of communication are not unaffected by the development of new ones, nor do they survive alongside them. The filmgoer develops a different way of reading stories. But the man who writes the stories is a filmgoer too.[18]

In his urging towards a consideration of 'increasingly complex media' in theatre practice, Brecht invites an exploration of the differences and similarities between performances associated in film and those which occur in the practice of live theatre. His recognition that film is involved in the practice of theatre requires a re-negotiation of the concept of performance to include conceptualisations of performance in film. My discussion of film in terms of Kristeva's concepts of 'intertextuality' and 'transposition' enables a broad conceptual consideration of how film and theatre are inter-related.

This consideration also must include the more general sense in which both film and theatre use audiovisual images of moving human bodies in their signifying practices. The combination of text and commodity in the experience of film, however, distinguishes film from theatre in the sense that film 'hardens into tape' the 'disembodiments' involved with performance's embodied exchanges. Film is signifying practice that is distinct, even from theatre, in the ways through which it irrevocably challenges previous concepts of performance and performativity. Schneider's following comment well describes the conceptual contradictions which film offers to theories of theatre and performance:

> Perhaps summoning the body is an effort to make disembodiment take form before us — to struggle with the cloak of the text itself that continues to *assume* disembodiment.[19]

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[17]David Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties. Re-producing masculinity*, St.Leonards, NSW:Allen and Unwin, 1998, 54. This work is hereafter referred to as *Performance Anxieties*.
[18]Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, 47
[19] Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, 183

Some of these contradictions are evident as theatre practitioners use film as both a 'recording device' for their process of production and as part of a 'live' performance's *mise en scène*.

A description of film as a transposition from theatre does not elide film and theatre, but indeed distinguishes between how these two forms use different, if similar, practices of production and reception, whilst showing how each form nevertheless retains its own integrity as a discrete signifying practice. In the context of Kristeva's transpositional intertextuality, film can be understood then as a signifying practice which draws ontologically and epistemologically on transpositions from the signifying practice of live theatre. I have already discussed in some detail the ways in which the theatrical concepts and practices of 'direct address' and the 'performance artist' can be understood to operate also in film (Chapter 2, p. 65). These two aspects of performance can also, in the context of this present chapter's discussion, be considered as examples of film operating as a 'new' 'transpositional' signifying practice that draws on the 'old' signifying practice of theatre. This sense of film as a signifying practice which is marked not only by generic intertextuality and referential intertextuality, but also as a practice which includes the deeper sense of Kristeva's 'transpositional' intertextuality, opens up new ways of describing performances of production and reception that occur in film. For example, this sense of 'transpositional' intertextuality can be used to describe the relationship between film and 'new mass media' — those new and continually changing modes of audiovisual signification that are available globally, across cultural boundaries, to many people. The more that people know about the relationship between film and these newer forms, the more ways in which they can be aware of the cultural significations that are being made through them. Buchbinder well describes how such recognitions of intertextuality can be crucial to cultural awareness:

Texts and the cultural representations they encode rely on the presence of, and the viewer's or reader's ability to make connections among, a variety of other texts ... Such relationships are *intertextual,* and help to knit together into an apparently logical whole the representations and the texts of a culture.[20]

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[20] Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties*, 54

My close analyses of two films in Chapters 7 and 8 draw especially on this third sense of intertextuality, both between theatre and film and between photography and film, in order to describe these films as specific cultural performances.

The Intertextuality of Film: Two Examples of How the Filmic Text Performs in Other Discourses

As noted in Chapter 2, discussions based on literary, linguistic and performance theory that revolve around the concept of performance and performativity often use films in order to exemplify their arguments. They do not, however, include an explicit engagement with the specific ways through which performances in film, theatre and literature are related, both in theory and in practice. Such discussions explicitly ignore film as a signifying practice; they use film to illustrate arguments about performative aspects of language or the ontology of live performance. Nevertheless, these discussions imply film as a discrete signifying practice in the way they hinge their arguments on the particularities of performances of filmmaking and on how such performances manifest in the filmic text.

The following discussion presents two examples of the conceptual confusions and/or the limits of discussion that occur when film is not distinguished as a distinct signifying practice. My first example is drawn from Butler's work on 'hate speech' and the second example discusses some discrepancies in Phelan's concept of performance, as she applies it to film analysis and live theatre.

1)   *Butler's analysis of 'hate speech'*

In order to argue that Butler's discussion of 'hate speech' would benefit from a closer consideration of film as a distinct signifying practice, it is necessary first to consider her own contextualisation of her work with that of other writers, and with the judicial system from which she draws her examples. The following brief summary is necessary because it traces the extent to which Butler draws on theories of live speech and the written word as distinct signifying practices without applying a similar level of conceptual work to her use of film in the same discussion.

In her monograph *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* , Butler discusses the complex issues involved in the performativity of speech, with particular reference to pornography and 'hate speech'. Butler traces her arguments through the linguistic

'speech act' theory of J.L. Austin, Derrida's theory of 'citation' and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. She places against and within these theories the works of Elaine Scarry and Shoshana Felman, and draws the following distinction concerning how each of these writers views the body in relation to speech. Scarry describes the difficulty that language has in expressing the 'body in pain'; and how the body therefore can be understood as 'anterior to language'.[21] Felman, on the other hand, describes how it is difficult for the body to 'control' language, since language has so many potential contextualisations and historical meanings. Butler describes Felman's location of the speech act as an act of a particular body: 'The speech act says more, or says differently, than it means to say.'[22] Butler's comments and interpretations of the above writers are concerned with the following question: 'how do we account for the specific kind of injury that language itself performs?'[23] This question is in turn based on her stated presumption 'that speech is always in some ways out of our control'.[24]

Butler's discussion of this specific application of performative linguistics extends through accounts of various court cases involving racial violence; it focuses on the human body as the originating site of 'speech' performances and also as the site of affect for performative acts that are derived from a particular judicial system. One example of a court case is outstanding in relation to film: it describes how the film *Mississippi Burning* (Alan Parker, 1988) was cited as an important element in the judgment decided in the case *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*, 113S,Ct.2194,14 L.Ed.2d436 (1993). Butler addresses the court's concern that both live and filmic examples of speech could be included as evidence to show that a victim of violence was chosen because of his or her race, and therefore whether or not '… an enhanced penalty for the crime…'[25] was appropriate. The case concerned an act of violence against a 'white boy' by a group of 'black' youths who had just been to see the above film, and who had been discussing a scene in this film where a 'white' man beats up a 'black' boy. The film's narrative depicts an incident involving the murders of civil rights workers by members of the Ku Klux Klan. It cast the judicial system, 'the Court' as sympathetic to the Klansmen as it constrained the investigations of a

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[21] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 6
[22] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 10
[23] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 6
[24] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 15
[25] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 60

Justice Department official who eventually moved outside of the law in order to obtain evidence. Butler comments

> The film thus appeals to a widespread lack of faith in the law and its proceduralism ... In some ways, the film shows that violence is the consequence of the law's failure to protect its citizens, and in this way allegorizes the reception of the judicial decisions.[26]

She goes on to describe the relationship between the film, the court case, and the 'Court':

> The court seeks to decide whether or not the selection of the target of violence is a racially motivated one by quoting Todd Mitchell's speech. This speech is then taken to be the consequence of having watched the film, indeed, to be the very extension of the speech that constitutes the text of the film. But the Court itself is implicated in the extended text of the film.[27]

Here, Butler is using a film as part of her discussion about the performativity of speech and its political and ethical consequences. There are two aspects of the film that are explicitly cited. One is the film's narrative content, including general story line, particular scenes and dialogue. She names this aspect of the film 'the text' of the film. The second involves what she calls the film's power for a particular social allegory: 'only violence can counter racism'.[28] In this way, Butler can be understood to be describing how a fiction film becomes part of non-fictional reality, in this case, a particular court case. She bases this description, however, on an assumption that the social events and the film are part of the same text rather than different textual practices that are related through 'referential intertextuality'.

Butler does not otherwise comment on how else the film may have exerted its purported influence on the behaviour of the defendant. She ignores the stylistic complexities through which film can carry its discussion of the 'real' world within the conventions of fiction. She simply states how the 'real' world used this particular film. Her intention certainly was not to discuss film *per se*, but it is interesting to note how her discussion (which depends on an understanding of what film is) can be described in relation to my three Levels of performance in film. Her use of film in this example elides my Levels 2 and 3 of performance in film, whilst totally ignoring

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[26] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 61
[27] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 61–62
[28] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 61

Level 1. No mention is made of the authorial intentions and performances involved with this film, as perhaps is to be expected in a discussion based on the performativity of speech as 'citation'. Yet at the same time, the filmic text is seen specifically as part of the defendant's 'speech', which described an intention to assault another person. The filmic text is 'cited' in this speech, but Butler does not examine *how* such citation is possible and how it happens in this particular case. Sections of dialogue belonging to characters in the film are attributed to the defendant as 'proof' of his criminal intent. In other words, Butler (and the court) makes an assumption that the textual practice which is a particular film can be used unproblematically as an allegorical 'script' for real life.

The filmic text and its proposed social outcome (as physical violence and a subsequent court case) in this specific instance are discussed by Butler as one concept. Whereas the film is clearly part of a broad cultural performance concerning racism, both the court's and her extraction of sequences of dialogue from a film's text, together with the subsequent description of these sequences as part of the defendant's own speech act, results in the film becoming more than an allegorical context for action. Butler's elision of filmic text with specific social events results in a reductive description of the relationship between the film and these events: they are part of a film's 'outcome'. A closer examination of the film, drawing especially on a description of practices that are specific to film (such as editing, camera angles, colour washes), would allow an understanding of the film as part of a broader cultural performance concerning racism, of which the social events are also a part.

Her discussion of this film relies on her consideration of Austin's 'perlocutionary acts' as 'those utterances that initiate a set of consequences',[29] consequences which can be unintentional and temporally separated from the act itself. In this sense, the filmic text can be considered as a perlocutionary act, adrift from authorial intention: in accordance with concepts of texts as works that also can perform in the world, adrift from authorial intention (as discussed earlier in Chapter 4). Butler's juxtaposition of a fictional filmic text and an actual court case draws attention again, however, to problems in analysing film as a text that can be examined in the same way as other texts. In its profilmic use of human bodies, filmic texts can be distinguished as textual 'utterances' that are different from other texts in the sense

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[29] Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 17

that authorial intention is forever inscribed in particular audiovisual images of human bodies. This is not just a matter of textual style and context, but a visible and acoustic negotiation which is always part of how humans use themselves and other humans, not only as signs or other linguistic conceptual units, but in a process of mimetic translation, a process which performs meaning.[30] She makes a case that the overall address of the film (as critical of the judicial system) accounts for the way in which this film became part of a court case. I suggest that it is also necessary to describe the ways in which this address is manifest. Such a closer description of a film's mode of address could draw, for example, on film theory based on Willemen's 'fourth look in cinema' and on Hansen's work on cinema's 'auratic' gaze (as discussed earlier in Chapters 2 and 4).

I suggest that Butler's use of film in this particular instance indeed draws attention to a question rather than an answer. Instead of explaining a particular occurrence of 'hate speech', her argument poses further questions about *how* any film can produce a model for action in the 'world' outside of its text. This question can only be addressed by considering the specifically filmic production processes and textual devices that might be involved in the creation of specific subject positions. These subject positions can never be fixed points of identification — for example, they will be different in different contexts of reception. Their elision with any kind of speech act is therefore problematic and Butler's argument (and the court's) rests on this elision. Her description of the court case as implicated in an 'extended text of the film', as quoted earlier, confuses several different signifying practices — most importantly, those representational practices involved in presenting evidence in a court case and those involved in making and receiving a film.

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[30]This distinction between filmic texts and other texts draws on Ricoeur's discussion on perceived conflicts between hermeneutics and critical theory. See *From Text to Action,* 270–307. His discussions on 'human action' and motivation are also relevant: See *From Text to Action,* 160.

2)   *Phelan's concept of performance*

Performance theorist Phelan's concept of performance offers another example of an unexplained and largely unexamined conceptual juxtaposition of film against another signifying practice. This time the other practice is theatre. This juxtaposition joins my reference to Butler's work on 'hate speech' in order to demonstrate how the film, as filmic text, performs in discourses outside of film theory. Phelan uses two films, Yvonne Rainer's *The Man Who Envied Women* and Jennie Livingston's documentary *Paris Is Burning* as part of her exploration of performance in terms of '... the relationship between the self and the other as it is represented in photographs, paintings, films, theatre, political protests, and performance art.'[31] She goes on to say:

> Examining the politics of the exchange of gaze across these diverse representational mediums leads to an extended definition of the field of performance.[32]

Yet such an examination appears doomed in the context of her discussion in Chapter 7 of her 1993 monograph, *Unmarked*. Here she describes the ontology of performance as 'representation without reproduction'[33] and refers specifically to performance art in order to describe the nature of performance as ephemeral and incompatible with commodification. As previously quoted in Chapter 2 (p.44), she states:

> Performance's being ... becomes itself through disappearance.[34]

Phelan further defines the ontology of performance as 'representation without reproduction'[35] (as discussed previously in Chapter 2, p. 44, with reference to the issue of 'presence' in theatre and film). In her two chapters on film, she speaks plainly of the confusions concerned with the production of subject positions when dealing with performances of production and reception of the filmic text:

> Underneath the film there is a performance but it is extremely difficult to say what the performance 'means'.[36]

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[31] Peggy Phelan *Unmarked*, 4.
[32] ibid.
[33] Phelan, *Unmarked,* 146
[34] ibid.
[35] ibid.
[36] Phelan, *Unmarked*, 102

She does not however, specify the links between film and theatre which must be assumed in order to make any connection between film and live performance as both being inter-subjective texts. It is not enough to dismiss the possibility of conceptualising performance in film as 'extremely difficult' when at the same time film is seen as a commodity which makes it, in Phelan's terms, impossible ontologically speaking to be considered as a site of performance.

<p align="center">******************</p>

My examination of film in this chapter in terms of performance text, and in terms of intertextuality, describes film as mimetic, translative performance. My discussion of the three intertextualities of film seeks to name and clarify some of the assumed and unexamined links between film and theatre which appear in Phelan's analyses, and previously unexamined links between spoken language and film that are addressed in Butler's work on 'hate speech'. My investigation of intertextuality in film therefore aims to unravel some of the contradictions apparent in discourses outside of film theory, which use films as explanatory or illustrative examples of performance but without an explicit examination of the relationship between film and other practices, particularly those which also draw on concepts of performance for their description. In other words, my above considerations of both Phelan's and Butler's work locates some of the problems involved when analyses of other signifying practices do not take film into account as a specific signifying practice, nor the intertextualities which film can perform, nor the implications which these intertextualities might have for those other signifying practices.

Chapter 6. Level 3: Film 'As' Cultural Performance

> *It was probably necessary that specular fascination arrive at its peak of*
> *perfection in the cinema, so that both its dread and its seduction might*
> *break out in laughter and in distantiation. Without this demystification,*
> *the cinema would be nothing but another Church.—* Kristeva[1]

Introduction

Drawing both on Chapter 3's discussion of filmmakers' performances 'towards' film and Chapter 4's discussion of film as text, this chapter investigates film as a specific genre of cultural performance: as social behaviour in the *redressive* stage of Turner's conceptualisation of social drama (see p. 14). My discussion is divided into two sections.

The first develops further (see pp. 25) my description of film as behaviour in the liminal, subjunctive mood in order to compare film with behaviour which is described by the anthropologically derived concept of ritual. My comparison of film and ritual is concerned with understanding how film can perform and transform power relations in society. My discussion particularly focuses on those power relations that are involved with society's discussion of 'truth': about who has the authority and ability to partake in this discussion. I draw specifically on Catherine Bell's concept of 'ritualised action' in order to discuss how film, despite being behaviour in the subjunctive 'as if' mood, can take an authoritative stance in society's discussion about what is 'true' in the historically real world. I focus on non-fiction film in order to discuss film as ritualised behaviour because the narrative address of non-fiction film more clearly exhibits aspects of ritualised behaviour; these aspects can be obscured by the narrative address of fiction film. My discussion draws on Nichols' categorisation of documentary film, and uses the terms 'non-fiction film' and 'documentary film' interchangeably.

The second section looks at three particular ways in which film can be considered as a genre of cultural performance. In these three discussions I draw on both fiction and non-fiction film. Firstly, I discuss how film negotiates the relationship between fiction and non-fiction through its relationship with its profilmic referent. I also describe how film draws part of its specificity as a signifying practice from this

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[1] Kristeva, 'Ellipsis on Dread and the Specular Seduction', 242

relationship, and how this relationship can be considered with reference to digital audiovisual technologies. The second discussion explores how film, when considered as a textual practice, can be understood as cultural performance in terms of the social discourses into which the filmic text enters.

My third discussion explores one particular example of how film as textual practice can be considered as cultural performance. This example is based on the premise that filmic style can constitute, of itself, a particular cultural performance. In the following two chapters, my film analyses focus on the ways in which individual films can be considered as particular cultural performances within a specific social drama. This chapter addresses how generic performances of filmmaking, filmic textuality and filmic reception can be used to describe film as a genre of cultural performance.

PART ONE

Two Genres of Cultural Performance: Film and Ritual

As stated above, this section focuses on how film can be understood in relation to theories of ritual. Such questions need to be addressed in any discussion of social behaviour as cultural performance, if the latter concept is to be understood in the context of Turner's theory of ritual and liminality. Elizabeth Bell's study of cultural performances of sex provides an example of a failure to address Turner's conceptualisation of ritual as basic to the description of specific social behaviours as cultural performance, and how this failure can diminish the way in which such social behaviours can be discussed. In her article 'Weddings and Pornography: The Cultural Performance of Sex',[2] Bell discusses and compares weddings and pornography in terms of the symbolic framework of contemporary North American Christian weddings, and the various viewing and performing subjectivities involved with pornography. She describes both sets of behaviour as liminoid 'performances of sex' and sites of transformation and change:

> Performance is ultimately about transformation; and cultural performances — even as they maintain the status quo through unerring reflections of cultural values — are always threatened by the potential for radical and reflexive ways of performing anew.[3]

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[2] Elizabeth Bell, 'Weddings and Pornography: The Cultural Performance of Sex' *Text and Performance Quarterly* Vol.19, No.3, July 1999, 173–195
[3] Bell, 'Weddings and Pornography: The Cultural Performance of Sex', 190

Whilst effectively describing Turner's and Schechner's theories of cultural performance as socially transformative process, she elides, however, important aspects of this theory. For example, her discussion does not distinguish explicitly between weddings and pornography as individual genres of cultural performance; she therefore disallows a finer comparison between the two sets of sexual behaviour that she examines.

In contrast, this section draws on Anthropological[4] conceptualisations of ritual practice in order to enable the exploration of how one genre of cultural performance (film) can be compared and contrasted with others; as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, these genres include ritual, literature, photography and live theatrical performance. I specifically address the following questions: how is it possible to describe film using the same terms in which it is possible to describe ritual, and how does such a description of film allow new ways in which to understand film as cultural performance? Since my exploration of the links between film and ritual is founded on Turner's description of cultural performance as liminal behaviour, I will briefly recapitulate how the concept of liminality has informed my thesis so far.

Film as a Liminoid Phenomenon

In Chapter 2 (p. 46), I drew on Turnbull's interpretation of Turner's concept in order to develop my own definition of theatrical performance. I described how liminal behaviour involves a change in the perception of time: time is experienced 'as if' the world created as a text is the historically real world. In Chapter 3, I described the concept of mimesis as a way in which to understand how performance occurs in the subjunctive, 'as if' mood of liminal behaviour in both theatre and film. I proposed that acting for film should be considered as a form of filmmaking that explicitly uses the process of mimesis. I described how non-acting filmmaking performances can also be understood to make use of mimetic processes, as filmmakers use combinations of their own experiences and creative judgements in the production of filmic texts. In Chapter 4, I explored film as a specific signifying practice: one that weaves the theatrically based, liminal, 'as if' performances of filmmaking into a filmic text which in turn makes possible both individual and collective performances of reception.

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[4] My capitalisation of the term Anthropology is used in this thesis to denote the academic discipline rather than the general area of anthropological inquiry.

Turner further refines his concept of liminality as he distinguishes between 'liminal' and 'liminoid' phenomena. He describes the former as associated with the overtly symbolic rituals of pre-industrialised societies, and liminoid phenomena as developments of industrialised, large-scale societies. He defines these as follows:

> the liminal — found in the activities of churches, sects, and movements, in the initiation rites of clubs, fraternities, masonic orders, and other secret societies, etc. — is no longer world-wide ... the *liminoid* is more like a commodity — indeed, often *is* a commodity, which one selects and pays for — than the *liminal*, which elicits loyalty and is bound up with one's membership or desired membership in some highly corporate group. One *works* at the liminal, one *plays* with the liminoid.[5]

and

> Liminoid phenomena ... are often parts of social critiques or even revolutionary manifestos — books, plays, paintings, films, etc., exposing the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations.[6]

When considering film as a signifying practice that involves a three-way relationship between filmmakers, text, and audience, it is interesting to note the kinds of authorship that can be attributed to liminal and liminoid phenomena. From Turner's definitions, liminal phenomena can be understood as those practices which more often claim a 'traditional' or 'naturalised' form of authorship. Liminoid phenomena, on the other hand, include examples of commodified artistic practice in which authorial processes usually can be traced back to specific people. In this way, liminoid behaviour can be understood to be that which is used in order to create commodifiable works of art; it is involved in the reception and production of these works of art; it is understood by society to occur in particular places, for example, in theatres, art galleries and cinemas. These are public places for the viewing of liminioid phenomena, where the subjunctive, playful, 'as if' mood of society is expected to operate.[7]

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[5] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre,* 55
[6] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre,* 54–55
[7] Turner ascribes more 'liminal' behaviour to 'home entertainments' and other free entertainments such as contemporary Mardi Gras. He calls them the 'cultural debris of some forgotten liminal ritual': *From Ritual to Theatre*, 55. It is interesting to speculate how behaviour involved with commodifiable liminoid phenomena (such as home video watching) might be understood to oscillate between Turner's liminal and liminoid forms. Further examination of Turner's concept of liminality could ask the following questions: Does liminoid behaviour become also liminal when the act of reception takes place in private rather than public space, and what does this imply for the study of film reception?

As described in Chapter 4, there is also a wide range of private viewing situations for current forms of liminoid phenomena. Yet Turner's simplistic linking of liminoid phenomena with structured spaces of reception invites another, more metaphorical, way of understanding the reception of these phenomena. In the context of film, this involves a consideration of filmic reception as a communicative event which always takes place at the level of society, as well as at the level of the individual. In other words, although individual people can view films privately or in public groupings, these acts of viewing are always understood by these individuals as part of the way in which society, as a whole, uses film. The experience of film as a liminoid phenomenon in contemporary society can therefore be described as a formalised use of the subjunctive, 'as if' mood of behaviour; this behaviour is performed within the context of specific societies as these societies address particular social issues.

One of the interesting and distinguishing characteristics of liminoid phenomena is how easily accessible they are to a vast number of people. As discussed earlier in this thesis (p. 4), there is a potentially wide separation between the society of the producers of these phenomena and the societies to whom their audiences belong. While this separation can be described in terms of textual practice, Turner's concept nevertheless describes several textual practices (including literature, music and film) as active (not passive) social behaviour which has the potential to take a critical stance towards society. As a commodified, liminoid phenomenon, film can be understood as a site of active communication between an audience and the people who stage the projection of a film, between an audience and filmmakers (whether or not filmmakers are correctly identified), and between the people who make up an audience. In this sense, a film is not only 'embodied' as filmic text, as discussed in Chap 4. It is also 'embodied' through the many people who are implicated in the showing of a film: the people in the audience, the people involved in the showing of film, and the people whose names appear in the film's credits. In other words, and in the context of liminoid behaviour, all textual reception requires a sense of textual production in order for reception to be understood as a social act. A consideration of film as liminoid phenomena focuses not only on the formal characteristics of performances of production and reception, but also on the social relationships between people who make and receive films.

Film's Creative Chronotope

In order more closely to describe these various relationships, I want now to return to Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope. As translated by Emerson and Holquist, he also uses the words 'as if' with regard to the ways in which a 'author' of a literary text negotiates between the historically real world and the world created within a text:

> ... [the author-creator] can represent the temporal-spatial world and its events only *as if* he were an omnipresent witness to them. Even had he created an autobiography or a confession of the most astonishing truthfulness, all the same he, as its creator, remains outside the world he has represented in his work.[8]

He also describes this relationship between the historical world and the world created within a work (text) as chronotopic:

> We might even speak of a special *creative* chronotope inside which this exchange between work and life occurs, and which constitutes the distinctive life of the work.[9]

If Bakhtin's literary-oriented concept of the creative chronotope is extended to film, it becomes possible to describe how filmmakers and filmmaking become part of the way in which a society uses a film as specific cultural performance. Particular creative chronotopes can be used to describe how people operate as part of society when they perform as filmmakers. This concept also allows an understanding of film as a set of relationships (between filmmakers and audiences) which have the potential to occur between *groups* of people: film operates as a form of 'as if' behaviour which enables negotiations between different societies. These negotiations can take place in the context of social groups within one particular culture, or across different cultures.

The cultural performance of a particular film then, can be extended past Turner's conceptual structure of social drama within one particular society, to the consideration of a more inclusive, wide-ranging set of cultural performances that operate between different societies. Film can thus be understood to operate as cultural performance in different ways in different societies. These different ways

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[8] Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination,* 256
[9] Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination,* 254

may depend on how a society understands the creative chronotope of a particular film: how a society understands who filmmakers are, and where, when and how films are made. In this sense, the reception of a film at the level of society depends on how filmmakers and a filmic text are assumed to be in relationship with the historically real world.

Film as Transformative 'Play'

It is possible to examine even more closely those social relationships that are involved in the experience of film, by looking at how film can be described in terms of 'play'. In Chapter 3 (p. 85), I described how acting for film can be understood in terms of Bateson's description of 'play' as foundational to the development of communicative behaviour. Gadamer also examines the concept of 'play' in relation to the ontology of a creative work,[10] but seeks to use it to describe not so much the 'attitude' of players as to describe a mode of behaviour:

> the mode of being of play becomes significant. For play has its own essence, independent of the consciousness of those who play.[11]

Gadamer's concept of play includes Bateson's description of experimental communicative behaviour, but extends to the conceptualisation of a transformative process which exists through the hermeneutic potential of the continuing reception of a work of art. In other words, Gadamer is considering 'play' as text.

He rejects 'subjectivity' as a defining feature of 'play' and focuses more on the transformed mode of behaviour that is involved in the 'playing' of a work of art. He is concerned with how this 'playing' involves the production and reception of a work of art as text. The work of art *is* 'play' in Gadamer's terms, and can be interpreted as a textual manifestation.[12] He goes on to develop his concept of 'play' as a structure which transforms 'players' into people who are existing and behaving in a world with reference points completely different from those which exist in the historically real world. 'Play' therefore has the potential to renew and transform a 'player's' sense of self as a knowing being, through a process of 'recognition':

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[10]Gadamer *Truth and Method,* Second Revised Edition, Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, New York:Crossroad, 1989, 101–129
[11]Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 102
[12]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 102–3

> We have established that the element of knowledge in imitation is recognition. But what is recognition? ... In recognition what we know emerges, from all the chance and variable circumstances that condition it and is grasped in its essence. It is known as something.[13]

With reference to film, this concept of transformative play describes the processes of filmmaking and reception, and how they are related mimetically to the 'as if' world of a film's narrative.[14] An example of this concept of transformative play in film occurs in *beDevil,* where the filmic text gently undermines various racial stereotypes which operate in contemporary Australian society. In this film, the juxtaposition of the world of the filmic text with stereotypes that exist in the historically real world constitutes a kind of 'playing' which provokes a transformation in the understanding of such stereotypes.

Turner's concept of liminoid phenomena, Bakhtin's creative chronotope and Gadamer's conceptualisation of 'play', all conceptually locate a 'work of art' in terms of the historically real world. They describe behaviour which is performed in the real world, but in the subjunctive mood that society uses when performing genres of cultural performance. Such performances are marked by liminality: they involve an understanding and use of time and space which enable activities to occur simultaneously on the edge of what has existed and what will or may yet exist. While Gadamer's concept of transformative 'play' is more concerned with how the relationship between the real world and a 'work' comes about, all three concepts, however, suggest an understanding of how 'meaning' emerges as a result of this relationship which occurs as a transformative negotiation between different ways of understanding the real world. When applied to film, these three concepts can therefore be used to explore how filmmakers use the real world in the construction of filmic texts, and how filmic texts are used by society in order to understand and operate in the real world. In this sense, they can be used in discussions about how societies perform cultural performances such as film in order to understand and transform power relationships which exist in the real world. In other words, these concepts can be used to describe patterns of social behaviour which manipulate the power relations within a society. Anthropology has traditionally used the concept of ritual in order to describe particular patterns of symbolic behaviour that result in the

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[13]Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 113–4
[14]Indeed, Gadamer's focus on 'playing' as text invites a conceptualisation of the entire experience of film as text.

manipulation of power. I now want to situate my exploration of film as cultural performance within the Anthropological context of ritual and ritualised behaviour in order to describe more closely some of the ways in which film can operate within relationships of power.

Film, Ritual and Ritualised Behaviour

Turner names both film and ritual as genres of cultural performance which involve 'non-verbal' media of communication,[15] but distinguishes ritual as the *live* performance of symbolic acts. In describing how his understanding of ritual differs from Schechner's and Goffman's, Turner articulates his own definition:

> By and large they seem to mean by ritual a standardized unit act, which may be secular as well as sacred, while I mean the performance of a complex sequence of symbolic acts. Ritual for me, [as Ronald Grimes puts it], is a 'transformative performance revealing major classifications, categories, and contradictions of cultural processes.'[16]

Within her comprehensive examination of conceptualisations of ritual in Anthropology, Catherine Bell situates Turner's definition of ritual as a development of Durkheim's theory of 'social solidarity'[17] where

> ritual exercises control through its promotion of consensus and the psychological and cognitive ramifications of such consensus.[18]

I suggest, however, that Turner departs from Durkheim's model through his conceptualisation of ritual as a genre of cultural performance which is part of the potentially transformative, *redressive* stage of social drama. As discussed in Chapter 1, Turner describes this third phase of social drama as 'the subjunctive, liminal, reflexive, exploratory heart of the social drama'.[19] In his description of ritual as cultural performance, Turner links this concept to a wide range of social activities, including film and other liminoid phenomena, thus aligning ritual with behaviour which can even be described as 'revolutionary' (as referred to in my earlier definitions of liminoid phenomena). Despite his distinctions between ritual and other

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[15] Turner, *Anthropology of Performance,* 84
[16] Turner, *Anthropology of Performance,* 75
[17] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* New York, Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1992, 172
[18] C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* 171
[19] Turner, 'Are there universals of performance in myth, ritual and drama?', 13.

genres of cultural performance, this conceptual association of ritual with other potentially transformative phenomena moves Turner's concept of ritual away from Durkheimian concepts of ritual as a device of cultural stasis. Although this thesis is not concerned with detailed debates concerning theories of ritual, Turner's location of both ritual and film as genres of cultural performance invites an exploration of the experience of film in the context of ritual behaviour in order to articulate further how it is that society uses film a *redressive* device. For this discussion I draw on C. Bell's concept of 'ritualisation', whilst holding in mind the possibility that film may not fit neatly into any conceptualisation of ritual behaviour.

C. Bell develops the concept of 'ritualisation' through a very broad yet detailed critique of ritual theory, using theories of 'secular ritual'[20] and hegemony[21] and particularly Pierre Bordieu's theory of practice.[22] Felicia Hughes-Freeland and Mary M. Crain locate C. Bell's theory of ritualisation and ritualised behaviour as one of 'three broad approaches to the analysis of ritual ...'[23] where the other two are typified firstly by Turner's ritual event, and secondly by Clifford Geertz's sense which they describe in terms of 'an aspect of all action which is meaningful, in a processual sense'.[24] My discussion of filmmaking and filmic reception in relation to ritualisation draws particularly on their insight into how C. Bell's conceptualisation of ritualisation focuses on ritual behaviour as 'process' rather than based on a static social structure:

> By thinking of ritualisation, rather than ritual, we can engage with the processual aspect of ritual action. This active dimension of ritual as a performance which 'has effects on the world' and 'does things' ...[25]

C. Bell's describes 'ritualisation' as follows:

> ritualization is first and foremost a strategy for the construction of certain types of power relationships effective within particular social organizations.[26]

and

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[20] See Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff, Eds, *Secular Ritual* Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, Assen, 1977
[21] C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* 69–93
[22] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* Trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977
[23] Felicia Hughes-Freeland and Mary M. Crain, Eds. 'Introduction' (1-20) in *Recasting Ritual, Performance, Media, Identity,* London and New York:Routledge, 1998, 2
[24] ibid.
[25] ibid.
[26] C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* 197

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> Viewed as practice, ritualization involves the very drawing, in and through the activity itself, of a privileged distinction between ways of acting, specifically between those acts being performed and those being contrasted, mimed, or implicated somehow. That is, intrinsic to ritualization are strategies for differentiating itself ... from other ways of acting within any particular culture ... ritualization is a way of acting that specifically establishes a privileged contrast, differentiating itself as more important or powerful. Such privileged distinctions may be drawn in a variety of culturally specific ways that render the ritualized acts dominant in status.[27]

and

> Essential to ritualization is the circular production of a ritualized body which in turn produces ritualized practices. Ritualization is embedded within the dynamics of the body defined within a symbolically structured environment. An important corollary to this is the fact that ritualization is a particularly 'mute' form of activity. It is designed to do what it does without bringing what it is doing across the threshold of discourse or systematic thinking.[28]

These three quotations emphasise three aspects of 'ritualisation' which are relevant to

film:

1. Ritualised behaviour differentiates itself from 'everyday' behaviour in ways which mark ritualised behaviour with a dominant status within the power relations of society.

2. Ritualised behaviour involves the use of the human body as both symbol and active component of the ritualised behaviour itself.

3. Ritualised behaviour is so embedded in society's social relations that in the mainstream of society, its causes and effects are seldom the subject of social discussion or discourse.

Although fiction films also can be discussed in terms of ritualised behaviour, I want to focus here on documentary film because these three aspects of ritualised behaviour are especially visible both in terms of the documentary filmic experience *sui generis* and in the discourse which exists around documentary film. Documentary film provides a clear test case for the exploration of film as ritualised behaviour because of documentary's claim to non-fictional narrative content and its

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[27]C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* 90

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consequent use of society's indicative mood as the dominant mode of audience address.

The Cultural Performance of Documentary Film: Creating Fiction from Non-Fiction, and Non-Fiction from Fiction

In his description of what he describes as the 'dialectic tension ... between the efficacious and the entertainment tendencies'[29] of theatre, Schechner allocates ritualised behaviour to the 'efficacious':

> When efficacy dominates, performances are universalistic, allegorical, ritualized, tied to a stable established order ...[30]

Within the wide and often overlapping range of filmic categories, documentary filmmakers explicitly define their filmic project as the bringing of social 'truth' to the rest of society: in the form of witnessed events and/or actual social discourse about social 'truth'. I propose that documentary film's project of bringing non-fictional discourse to extremely large numbers of people is an 'efficacious' project; and that it can be further described in terms of the above three characteristics of ritualisation.

Firstly, documentary film is a form of communication that uses audiovisual technology. It therefore has the potential to reach a very large audience, particularly via its application in television. This potential marks documentary film (and fiction film) as a communicative vehicle of the 'few' to the 'many'. The juxtaposition of documentary film with the powerful elite of broadcasting networks with the filmic project of discussing or presenting 'the facts' from the real world also aligns documentary film with the 'scientific' project of describing and manipulating the 'real' world. Nichols aptly describes as follows society's mainstream view of documentary film:

> 'Documentary' suggests fullness and completion, knowledge and fact, explanations of the social world and its motivating mechanisms.[31]

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[28] C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* 93
[29] Schechner, *Performance Theory,* 123
[30] ibid.
[31] Nichols, ' "Getting to Know You ...": Knowledge, Power, and the Body' in *Theorizing Documentary*, Ed. Michael Renov, New York, London:Routledge, 1993, 174

Secondly, documentary film (and fiction film) often deals with human bodies. Documentary filmmakers 'touch' these bodies, or their representations, with their cameras, thereby transforming them into bodies which have been singled out for special attention; the subsequent audiovisual images of these bodies become filmic texts. In documentary film, such transformed bodies are not only marked with the liminoid theatricalisation of fiction film. They are also marked as 'examples', that is, as specific bodies which are nevertheless *symbolic* of other people. In this sense, specific bodies are used in documentary film as symbols of larger groups of people in order to extend the context of the argument or social discourse into which documentary film enters. In other words, specific bodies are transformed by documentary film into symbols that have the potential to be understood as 'universal'.

Two broad examples of this process can be seen in the two documentary films studied in this thesis. The bodies and stories of the Aboriginal people interviewed in *Link-Up Diary* can be understood as symbolic of the many other Aboriginal people with similar stories and experiences. This is one of the ways in which *Link-Up Diary* enters into the discourse about the Stolen Generations. The Aboriginal people, whose audiovisual images are seen and heard in this film, are transformed through the film into 'universalised' examples of the Stolen Generations.

Similarly, in *Rats in the Ranks,* the political intrigue which surrounds one particular election of Larry Hand as Mayor of Leichardt in Sydney is understood by some people to be a criticism of the Australian Labor Party and Australian politics in general. The bodies of Larry and Kate in this film can therefore be understood (although questionably) to be transformed by this film into 'universal' symbols of Australian politicians. In Gadamer's terms, their bodies, as represented by this film, allow 'a recognition of the essence'[32] of Australian politics, at least at the town council level of activity. Through the use of their bodies as 'imitations' and 'representations' of such politics, *Rats in the Ranks* enables the recognition of the 'essential relation' of this form of political behaviour, 'to everyone for whom the representation exists.'[33]

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[32] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 114
[33] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 115

Thirdly, documentary film is a widely accepted form of mass communication within contemporary society. This acceptance involves a 'mute' presumption that documentary film exists as a contrasting form to fiction film, and that documentary is one of society's major and necessary avenues for the audiovisual dissemination of non-fictional entertainment and information about the historically real world. While this presumption is daily queried to a limited extent in newspaper reviews of film and television, and within academic discourse, it still forms the basis of society's debates over what film can communicate about the historically real world. The presumption that fiction film and non-fiction film are distinct categories is strengthened by the pan-sensual experience of film which I have described in previous chapters. Such theatrically based, pan-sensual experiences of filmic reception require a highly focused degree of self-reflection in order to counter-act their persuasive powers.

Audiences of documentary film accept its distinction from fiction film as based on how documentary film 'guarantees that the profilmic really did exist in the past.'[34] Although I discuss this issue in more detail in Part Two of this chapter, it is worth noting here that even when digital technology is used in the making of documentary film, there remains an understanding that this relationship between the filmic text and the profilmic event can be used to distinguish documentary from fiction film. In Renov's words,

> Every documentary issues a 'truth claim' of a sort, positing a relationship to history which exceeds the analogical status of its fictional counterpart.[35]

The great power of filmic technology to seduce the senses of an audience constitutes not only an exercise of power, but also one of authority. In documentary film, filmmakers look for ways in which to re-present their personal experiences of reality as reality itself; documentary filmmaking creates a 'frame', in Goffman's sense, of 'truth saying', no matter what stylistic conventions are used.

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[34] Philip Rosen, 'Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts' in *Theorizing Documentary*, 85.
[35] Renov, in Brian Winston, 'The Documentary Film as Scientific Inscription' in *Theorising Documentary,* 55.

Gary MacLennan's use of alethic truth in discussing documentary film is another way into understanding documentary film's claim to be an arena for 'truth-saying'. He counts this frame of 'truth-saying' as a 'critical standard' in his consideration of documentary film, and describes this standard in terms of Roy Bhaskar's 'four components to truth'. He draws particularly on Bhaskar's fourth component of 'alethic truth' — that which is not propositional but 'genuinely ontological, and in this sense, 'objective' in the intransitive dimension.'[36] MacLennan's conceptualisation of documentary film depends specifically on documentary filmmakers' concern with presenting the 'truth' about the historically real people and events that make up documentary film's referent — the profilmic past. His conceptualisation is useful in describing the problems and challenges which face documentary filmmakers as they strive to communicate about the real world as they have understood it themselves, and as other people experience it. It is not as useful, however, in discussing how documentary filmic practice uses filmic conventions which apply to fiction as well as non-fiction filmmaking. My discussion below addresses how documentary film practice varies in its use of the subjunctive and indicative moods of communicative behaviour, and how documentary film's status as 'truth-sayer' consequently can be explored through an examination of these variations.

Forms of Documentary Film

For my discussion of documentary film categories I draw on Nichols' differentiation between various forms of documentary filmmaking, rather than Sobchack's more textual based differentiation.[37] Nichols' distinctions are more focused towards what can be described, in Bakhtin's terms, as the 'creative chronotopes' of specific films. These modes can be used to describe how filmmakers negotiate the 'historically real' temporal and spatial context of their filmmaking as they create that temporal and spatial world which is the filmic text. The examination of fiction film in terms of its various genres can also be understood to generate an understanding of fiction film's negotiation and discussion of the real world; documentary film, however, explicitly addresses audiences through the indicative mood of academic and/or social discourse — it *pronounces* on the real world.

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[36] Roy Bhaskar in Gary MacLennan 'Review of Carl R. Plantinga', 43
[37] See T. and V. Sobchack *An Introduction to Film*, Boston:Little, Brown and Co., 1987, 346–373

Nichols differentiates between documentary films as follows:

> In documentary film, four modes of representation stand out as the dominant organizational patterns around which most texts are structured: expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive.[38]

He claims a 'common emphasis on the referent' for these four modes[39] and later added a fifth mode — performative documentary — in his monograph *Blurred Boundaries*.[40]

1.   *Expository documentary* is typified by identified or unidentified 'voice of God' style, didactic narrations, and seeks to 'disclose information about the historical world itself',[41] often using the rhetorical power of music and editing more commonly associated with fiction film. Although *Link-Up Diary* does not belong primarily to this category, MacDougall does draw on this mode when he uses his own voice and reflections as voice-over in the film.

2.   *Observational* documentary largely does away with commentary and seeks to follow people through events as they happen. This form was enabled by 'the availability of more mobile, synchronous recording equipment and a dissatisfaction with the moralizing quality of expository documentary.'[42] This is the documentary form which I attribute to the two documentary films studied in this thesis. Nichols describes this form as follows:

> Observational cinema ... conveys the sense of unmediated and unfettered access to the world...The person behind the camera, and microphone, will not draw the attention of the social actors or engage with them in any direct or extended fashion. Instead we expect to have the ability to take the position of an ideal observer, moving among people and places to find revealing views.[43]

MacDougall describes the desire for 'invisibility and omniscience' involved with this style of filmmaking

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[38] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 32
[39] Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: questions of meaning in contemporary culture.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, 95
[40] ibid.
[41] Nichols, *Representing Reality,* 33
[42] ibid.
[43] Nichols, *Representing Reality,* 43

From this desire it is not a great leap to begin viewing the camera as a secret weapon in the pursuit of knowledge.[44]

His words bring to mind Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, with its attention to the gaps in a cultural text wherein lie the voices not heard — the powerless who cannot enter the conversations of the mass media. He describes how within the filmic text of observational documentary,

> A few images create a world. We ignore the images that could have been, but weren't. In most cases we have no conception of what they might be.[45]

The terms direct cinema and *cinéma vérité* refer to two versions of observational film which are distinguished more by the historical contexts of how they came about, rather than any marked differences in filmic conventions from the observational form of documentary as described by both Nichols and MacDougall. *Direct cinema*[46] was the observational style which developed in the United States, and can be seen in the work of Robert Drew, where filmmakers sought to draw narratives from out of events rather than impose narrative upon filmed events; these filmmakers minimised their explicit presence in their filmic texts. *Cinéma vérité*[47] originated as the observational style of cinema originated by French director Jean Rouch — a style which was more 'participatory'[48] in the sense that the filmic text acknowledged the presence of the filmmaker in the filmed events and also acknowledged the craft of filmmaking itself. This 'participatory' aspect aligns it with Nichol's third and fourth modes of documentary, as they are described below.

3.   *Interactive* documentary includes a variety of filmic conventions:

> Interactive documentarists wanted to engage with individuals more directly while not reverting to classic exposition. Interview styles and interventionist tactics arose, allowing the filmmaker to participate more actively in present events. The filmmaker could also recount past events by means of witnesses and experts whom the viewer could also see.

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[44] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema,* 129

[45] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema,* 132

[46] Paul Arthur presents a comprehensive critique of this form in pages 118–126 of his essay 'Jargons of Authenticity (Three American Moments)' in *Theorizing Documentary*

[47] For descriptions and critiques of this form, see Brian Winston, pages 50–57 in his essay 'The Documentary Film as Scientific Inscription' in *Theorizing Documentary;* Lucien Taylor's introduction to *Transcultural Cinema*, 7; MacDougall also discusses both styles in his essay 'Beyond Observational Cinema' (125–139) in *Transcultural Cinema.*

[48] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema,* 134

Archival footage of past events became appended to these commentaries ...[49]

The *interactive* documentary form therefore can also be used to describe *Link-Up Diary,* with this film's use of direct interaction between social actors and the filmmaker, and the use of archival photographs.

4.   Nichols describes the *reflexive* mode of documentary as

> the most self-aware mode; it uses many of the same devices as other documentaries but sets them on edge so that the viewer's attention is drawn to the device as well as the effect.[50]

Link-Up Diary can be seen also to operate in this mode through this film's explicit references to the filmmaker, implicit references to audiovisual technology through poor quality of sound, and in MacDougall's frequent changes in focus as he follows people and places with a first-generation hand-held camera.

5.   *Performative* documentary developed during the 1980s and 1990s. Nichols describes this mode as being able to 'make use of these other four modes by inflecting them differently.'[51] Performative documentary uses evocation through the devices of collage, re-enactment and other poetics allowed by audiovisual technology in order to 'give greater emphasis to the affective dimensions of experience for the filmmaker'.[52] Filmmakers using this mode include Trinh T. Minh-ha with *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989), and Chris Choy and Renee Tajima with *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* (1988). The fifth mode of documentary explicitly uses filmic conventions usually associated with fiction film in order to reinforce the argumentative project of documentary film. In the same way that 'aleatory' acting (p. 8) is edited into a fiction film in order to make the fiction more 'real', the use of obviously 'as if' behaviour in performative documentary filmmaking calls attention to the possibility that other kinds of 'as if' behaviour are also involved, even in those documentary films which are not so explicit about how the subjunctive mood informs the craft of their making. Documentary film operates nevertheless in the 'indicative mood'. It enters social discourse through narrative and textual content that is self-consciously drawn from the 'real' world.

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[49] Nichols, *Representing Reality,* 33
[50] ibid.
[51] Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries,* 95
[52] Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries,* 96

The relationship which exists between fiction and non-fiction film is complex, and this complexity can be seen in 'performative' documentary's explicit use of conventions which are usually associated with one or the other form. Renov succinctly describes this relationship as follows:

> With regard to the complex relations between fiction and documentary, it might be said that the two domains *inhabit* one another.'[53]

Such 'inhabiting' happens through a common use of film's technology, narrative and the use of human actors in the creation of filmic text. Nichols' fifth mode of documentary calls into question the ability of documentary film to communicate about the historically real world without resorting to 'as if' styles of filmmaking. Trinh T. Minh-ha effectively describes the critical movement which informs documentary filmmakers who use this fifth mode as being a critique of the Western desire for 'totalized meaning and for knowledge-for-knowledge's sake'.[54] Yet even this performative mode of documentary uses a profilmic reality which includes social actors and historically real events to a much greater degree than does fiction film, even when fiction film (for example, social realism and historical dramas) explicitly enquires into historically real social relationships.

Ethnographic Documentary Film

Another category ascribed to particular documentary films is 'ethnographic'. This category is relevant to this thesis because three of the filmmakers whom I interviewed as part of my research have been described as, and have described themselves as, ethnographic filmmakers: MacDougall, Connolly and Anderson. Ethnographic films are generally understood to be filmic texts which explicitly draw on the discourse and methodology of Anthropology, a discourse which ranges widely in its argument about what should and does constitute Anthropological ethnography. [55] A significant body of literature (from both Anthropology and film theory) integrates film into the discipline of Anthropology itself. Through the categorisation of Visual Anthropology, film can be considered not merely (or only)

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[53]Renov, 'Introduction: The Truth About Non-Fiction' in *Theorising Documentary*, 3
[54]Trinh T. Minh-ha, 'The Totalizing Quest of Meaning' in *Theorizing Documentary* ,107

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as complementary fieldwork methodology, but also as a distinctly different way of both apprehending data and conceptualising interpretations of that data.[56] This literature predominantly compares and contrasts film with the written word as textual practice. It also opens up another way of discussing the boundaries of the discipline of Anthropology by dealing questions about who can do Visual Anthropology when not all Anthropologists are trained in critical film theory.

Ethnographic filmmakers can relate their films to Anthropology in two basic ways. Firstly, narrative content can be drawn from issues discussed in Anthropology. For example, ethnographic films can explore behaviour which is defined as 'ritualised' in the terms which I have discussed earlier. Secondly, ethnographic filmmaking can draw on the broader Social Science concept of ethnography as the way in which people can document situations and events as they participate in societies which they do not inhabit in everyday life. These societies can be extravagantly 'different' from those inhabited by the ethnographer. For example, Minichello describes ethnography as follows:

> The direct observation of the activity of members of a particular social group, and the description and evaluation of such activity.[57]

While ethnographic film can be made using any one of Nichols' five documentary modes, the above definition illustrates how observational film (in the style of direct cinema or *cinéma vérité*) best offers the possibility of a filmic textual address which most resembles the form of ethnographic textual address used in Anthropology and sociological literature. This style of address is an oscillation between first (filmmaker as participant) and third person (filmmaker as passive observer), and so can elide personal judgment with the rational ambition of scientific observation. In her description of the film *Paris is Burning* (Jenny Livingstone, 1990) as ethnographic, Caryl Flinn relates the wide range of criticism with which this film has been received to the way in which ethnographic film 'always runs the risk of

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[55] A seminal work for contemporary debates on ethnography in anthropology is: James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Eds), *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography: a School of American Research advanced seminar*, Berkeley:University of California Press, 1986

[56] Important examples of this literature include essays in *Film as Ethnography*, Eds. Peter Ian Crawford and David Turton, Manchester and New York:Manchester University Press, 1992; essays in *Rethinking Visual Anthropology,* Eds. Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy, New Haven:Yale University Press, 1997; and MacDougall's two seminal essays, 'Visual Anthropology and the Ways of Knowing' and 'Beyond Observational Cinema' in *Transcultural Cinema.*

ethnocentrism, of affirming the power of the viewer at the expense of the Other, despite even the most sympathetic intentions.'[58]

MacDougall also acknowledges the risks run by ethnographic film in its association with an Anthropology which 'has continued to rely heavily upon metaphors of understanding that would be perfectly recognizable to scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.'[59] Interestingly, he is concerned that ethnographic film explores the more 'performative' aspects of filmic narrative; he calls for an understanding and development of an ethnographic filmmaking whose concern is 'an anthropology of consciousness' and whose narrative structures may draw from Turner's conceptualisation of 'the transcultural constants of social dramas'.[60] MacDougall goes on to describe how ethnographic filmic texts can thus discuss 'a view of social actors responding creatively to a set of open-ended cultural possibilities, rather than being bound by a rigid framework of cultural constraints.'[61]

Ethnographic filmmakers use several modes of documentary filmmaking, often within one film. As an example, *Link-Up Diary* predominantly uses for its narrative and narrative content, the filmmaker's own journey to Sydney with members of the Link-Up team. In using a 'participatory' mode of observational documentary for this film, MacDougall is clearly signalling *cinéma vérité*. He also uses archival photographs and interviews in the structuring of his film, aligning it with the interactive mode of documentary. His travel- diary form of commentary constitutes a neat stylisation of the expository mode. This stylisation acts as a device which not only connects the narrative, but explicitly directs an audience's reception towards MacDougall's use of the 'first person', where this first person, the filmmaker, is merely 'looking on', in this way reinforcing the observational mode of 'watching events as they really happen'. The juxtaposition of a stylised expository mode and observational cinema in one filmic text can also be understood to constitute a movement towards the reflexive mode, where the audience is always directed to remember that 'this is a film you are watching'. MacDougall's use of then

[57] Minichiello, *In-Depth Interviewing,* 2nd edition, 296
[58] Caryl Flinn, 'Containing Fire. Performance in *Paris Is Burning.*' in *Documenting the documentary: close readings of documentary film and video,* Eds. Barry Keith Grant and Jeanette Sloniowski, Detroit:Wayne State University Press, 1998, 434
[59] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema,* 267
[60] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema,* 271
[61] ibid.

'experimental' audiovisual technology also resulted in a filmic text which contrasts his careful and beautiful cinematography with sequences of poor sound and distorted visuals. Such a contrast also draws 'reflexive' attention to the film's audiovisual technology.

Film as a Frame of 'Truth Saying'

To briefly summarise my above discussion: documentary film's audiovisual 'frame of truth saying' constitutes a particularly powerful manipulation of power relations. This manipulation occurs primarily through the way in which documentary filmmakers are understood in society as people who can communicate to mass audiences, and who, together with the people whom they represent in their films, possess authoritative information about issues represented in these films. It does not follow, however, that documentary film has a greater power than fiction film in this sense. The manipulations of documentary film are simply easier to see because documentary clearly states its ambitions to authority, in the very act of naming itself documentary. Documentary's explicit entering into the arena of public discourse also exposes it to the rigour of public debate. In this sense, the documentary project accounts for itself morally, in a way in which fiction film can commonly avoid. In Turner's terms of social drama, documentary film is a cultural performance whose filmmaking intentions are more easily attributed to a particular 'point of view' about society than is the case for most fiction films. Documentary has a more Brechtian style of audience-address than do most fiction films: in documentary 'fiction' is used expressly to support 'non fiction'.

My above discussion of documentary film is one approach to a broader description of film in terms of ritualised behaviour. The experience of film involves a particular cultural performance which is crucially involved not only in expressing cultural conflict in the *redressive* stage of social conflict, but also in directly manipulating power relations in society. This manipulation can transform or reinforce the *status quo.* This ritualising behaviour in the experience of film is taken as a naturalised part of contemporary society, that is, it is a 'mute activity': it is always there, and, although questioned and discussed by society, is considered an integral part of contemporary society's cultural apparatus. In other words, film (as is particularly visible in documentary film) is a signifying practice that deals with critical questions

about who is capable of telling, and who is allowed to tell, the 'truth' about society, and what that truth is.

PART TWO

The Cultural Performance of Fiction and Non-Fiction in Film

In this section, I describe three ways in which fiction film communicates about non-fiction. Much of what I discuss can be re-applied to a discussion of documentary film, just as my discussion of documentary film as ritualised action in the previous section can be applied to considerations of fiction film. My discussion focuses here, however, on how film addresses the historically real world in ways that are more easily discerned in fiction film, or in discourse about fiction film. In other words, my following discussion is concerned with how film, specifically fiction film, is able to perform as cultural performance.

I have divided this discussion into three topics. The first compares film's referent with that of theatre and photography in order to explore the particular communicative force which film derives from the nature of its referent. This exploration extends my investigation, in Chapters 2 and 3, of film as a transposition of theatrical practice. The second area of discussion draws on Ricoeur's conceptualisation of text as meaningful action in order to describe how film, through the specific nature of its referent, enters social discourse as one text among many. The third draws on Jodi Brooks' use of Benjamin's concept of gestural practice in order to address one particular way in which film, as a specific signifying practice, can perform as cultural performance.

1.   The Non-Fiction in Film's Fiction: The Non-Arbitrary, Embodied Referents of Photography, Film and Theatre

In exploring how film negotiates issues of fiction and non-fiction in its textual practice, it is useful to note how discussions about film's referent have been drawn from discussions about still photography's referent; and consequently it is also useful to compare photography and film as signifying practices. A further comparison with theatre then can be used to discern these similarities and differences even more closely. As discussed in previous chapters, the signifying practices of theatre and film both use *moving* images of human bodies in order to

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create their texts. Photographs are static images mediated through photography's technology. They are also included within contemporary theatre and filmic practice. Photography and film can only produce *mediated* images, never 'live' images. The three signifying practices (theatre, film and photography), however, use in common (although, of course, not always) images of actual human bodies as textual content. Various aspects of an actor's real life body can inform an audience, in all three practices, about that actor's biographical existence (or at least invite speculation about this existence). As discussed earlier in the context of the 'performance artist', this specificity of an actor's body can be used in theatre and film as narrative content. Moffatt's use of her own body for a model in her photographic series *Something More* (1989) illustrates how this can occur also in photography. Such specificity also contributes to what Barthes describes as the 'obtuse', 'third' meaning in cinema — where sounds and images (or certain qualities of sound and image) appear to be in excess of narrative demands and yet conversely open up a filmic text to a much wider range of interpretations.

In his distinction between seven aspects to a theatrical actor's body, David Graver describes the complexity of information which arises in theatre:

> To understand the ontological complexity of the actor's body on stage we need to look not for two forms of existence there but (at least) seven. Actors are (to a greater or lesser extents depending on their activities, appearance, and histories) characters, performers, commentators, personages, members of socio-historical groups, physical flesh, and loci of private sensations.[62]

The ontological complexity involved in using images of real bodies as textual content is increased by the technological mediation which occurs in film and photography. Although in both these forms, the image of the human body is again finally reducible in meaning to the actual human body whose image nevertheless is part of a text that exists (in contrast to live theatre) as a technological artefact. Sculpture, puppetry, robotics, masked theatre, animated film, as well as film which uses computer graphics, all use modelling processes in order to create images which are based on real human bodies. When, however, theatre or film uses people as social actors (Chapter 3, p.80), or when photography's subject is a social actor from 'everyday' life, then such images are understood not as only as narrative vehicles;

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[62]David Graver, 'The Actor's Bodies', *Text and Performance Quarterly,* Vol.17, July 1997, 222

they also operate as powerfully 'truthful' social representations which in turn can be used to model aspects of the real world. Global society's current and widely published obsession with 'reality television' testifies to the way in which images of 'social actors' and their lives can be drawn into society's discussion of many issues. Although beyond the scope of this thesis, it is interesting to reflect how examples of 'reality television' could be analysed for their social practice via their cultural performance of particular social, conflictual issues. Such a discussion would need to address the referential relationships which could be described as existing between the images produced as 'reality television' and the various social actors used by particular shows.

Photography's relationship with its referent has been widely considered. In Sontag's words,

> ...a photograph is not only an image ... it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.[63]

Barthes similarly describes the 'photographic referent' as

> ...not the *optionally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph.[64]

He describes how this '*necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens' crucially affects the way in which photography enters both private and public discourse about the historically real world.[65] Mulvey similarly makes the following distinction between photography and film as follows:

> Cinema is a medium of sequence, event and fiction. Expectations of the still image, on the other hand, have grown from an aesthetic of transparency, autonomy and homogeneity within the single whole.[66]

Rosen, on the other hand, comments on film's referential transparency as he describes how documentary cinema provides 'indexical traces of a real past'.[67] Before proceeding, however, in my discussion of a possibly shared indexicality of

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[63] Sontag, *On Photography*, Ringwood, Victoria:Penguin Books Australia Ltd., 1979, 154
[64] Barthes, *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography,* Milsons Point, Sydney:Random House Australia Ltd., Vintage Books, 1993, 76
[65] See Barthes' essays: 'The Photographic Message' and 'Rhetoric of the Image', *Image, Music, Text,* and *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography.*
[66] Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 137

referent in film, photography and theatre, it is worth noting again the two textual aspects that differentiate these three signifying practices. This differentiation allows a closer definition of the indexical referent that specifically belongs to film as a signifying practice. The first difference in textual practice is sound, as discussed in Chapter 4. Theatre and film involve audiovisual texts, photography does not.

The second differentiating textual aspect is movement of the audiovisual image, as also discussed in Chapter 4. Theatre and film both use the *movement* of audiovisual images in three ways: sounds and visual images are synchronised in various ways (see p. 106), texts show actually moving images (moving bodies, for example), and audiovisual images are juxtaposed against each other in sequences that can suggest movement. Photography can also use this latter kind of movement, both within a photograph and within a photographic series. An interesting example of this occurs in Moffatt's series *Invocations* (2000), where several images, both in their internal design and through their juxtaposition, suggest specific patterns of movement. In Chapter 7, I discuss further how photography and film can be seen to move towards each other in Moffatt's photographic and filmic work, but for the present purpose of differentiating between film, theatre and photography, the latter is generally understood to consist of literally static images. Barthes well sums up this distinction in the context of an indexical referent:

> …in the Photograph, something *has posed* in front of the tiny hole and has remained there forever (that is my feeling); but in cinema, something *has passed* in front of this same tiny hole ...[68]

He conceptualises the 'punctum' in photography as that aspect of photography through which a viewer makes meaning through adding to a photograph's referentiality: '…it is what I add to the photograph and *what is nonetheless already there*'.[69] This addition 'animates' both the viewer and the photograph: meanings are thus extended beyond and are yet inclusive of the substance of the photographic image.[70] Whilst the punctum brings to mind Benjamin's 'aura' and the *mémoire involuntaire*, Barthes seems to be suggesting a more textually based referentiality that is more 'conscious' than 'unconscious'. The punctum derives its conceptual force from the close analysis of particular photographs. This force recalls his

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[67] Rosen, 'Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts'*,* 63
[68] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 78
[69] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 55

conceptualisation of a 'third meaning' in cinema, which derives from notions of 'excess' in cinematic images and from the consequent flights of interpretation that can exist in counter-point to the explicit narrative content of filmic texts (Chapter 3, p.95). With Roger Warren Beebe, I am interested in applying the 'punctum' to cinema. Whereas he uses it as a way of describing 'temporal disruption' within a film's narrative,[71] I am more interested in Barthes' description of how it links the world of a text with the world of the spectator. If the punctum is translated into a discussion of film, however, it would be possible to describe its impetus as potentially also sound-based. Barthes' concept of the 'grain of the voice' (which I discuss in some detail below in my discussion of animated film) could similarly be used to discuss 'punctum like' moments in the reception of film which pull individuals in an audience into a heightened state of receptive awareness. A photograph's punctum would always have to be described in terms of a static visual image. If, however, this concept is used in terms of film, it may be another way of describing how film's moving, audiovisual referentiality can initiate intertextual connections with the historically real world in filmic reception. Filmmakers constantly look for such audio and visual 'hooks' which can make a film attractive to an audience. The attraction may take various forms — for example, a film may be considered more entertaining or more informative, or both at the same time.

Fiction Film in Reflexive Mode

The Brechtian ability to inform and entertain simultaneously can be achieved by fiction film through combining the mimetically powerful and attractive devices of theatrical acting and fictional narrative with some of documentary film's approaches to filmmaking. Nichols' reflexive mode of documentary obviously does not only apply to documentary film; it also is used by fiction filmmakers who seek to draw their audiences into Brechtian attitudes of reception. For example, director Oliver Stone describes as follows how he intends to affect his audiences through filmic style:

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[70]Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 59
[71]Roger Warren Beebe, 'After Arnold: Narratives of the Posthuman Cinema' in *Meta Morphing. Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick-Change*, Ed. Vivian Sobchack, Minneapolis, London:University of Minnesota Press, 2000, 164

> The style of my films is ambivalent and shifting. I make people aware
> that they are watching a movie. I make them aware that reality itself is in
> question.[72]

Some forms of fiction film not only seek to bring the artifice of filmmaking to the attention of an audience by drawing attention to the technology of film. Fiction films can be reflexive by referring (via generic intertextuality) to observational, expository and interactive modes of documentary filmmaking. Fiction film also can be reflexive via statements of authorial intention which lie outside of the filmic text: these statements can refer directly to ambitions towards society's indicative mood of communication. In this sense, reflexive fiction film can adopt some of the filmmaking performances which are associated with the cultural performance of documentary film, in order to achieve the Brechtian aims of directing an audience towards reflection on social issues through the processes of alienation and entertainment. French 'new wave' cinema of the 1960s and 1970s (exemplified by Godard's films) were based stylistically on similar precepts to *cinéma vérité* . Direct cinema and Italian Neorealism (for example Visconti's *La terra trema*: *episodio del mare*, 1948) have much in common stylistically, as well as in the sense that their overall address to an audience is one of social inquiry.[73]

The 'Dogma 95' filmmaking project, instigated in Copenhagen in Spring 1995, is another important and more recent example of reflexive fiction filmmaking as described above. Film directors who belong to 'Dogma 95', claim the following:

> To DOGMA 95 the movie is not illusion!
>
> Today a technological storm is raging of which the result is the elevation
> of cosmetics to God. By using new technology anyone at any time can
> wash the last grains of truth away in the deadly embrace of sensation.
> The illusions are everything the movie can hide behind.
>
> DOGMA 95 counters the film of illusion by the presentation of an
> indisputable set of rules known as THE VOW OF CHASTITY.[74]

The first three tenets of this 'vow of chastity' also describe observational film, as found in the formulations of direct cinema and *cinéma vérité*:

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[72] Oliver Stone, 'Open doors of perception' in *Spectrum*, Sydney Morning Herald, 19 August 2000, 4

[73] MacDougall discusses 'reflexivity' in the context of Godard and Italian Neorealism in his essay 'Visual Anthropology and the Ways of Knowing', 87, in *Transcultural Cinema*

[74] DOGMA 95, Press Release, Copenhagen, Monday 13 March 1995 1

1. Shooting must be done on location. Props and sets must not be brought in (if a particular prop is necessary for the story, a location must be chosen where this prop is to be found).
2. The sound must never be produced apart from the images or vice versa. (Music must not be used unless it occurs where the scene is being shot).
3. The camera must be hand-held. Any movement or immobility attainable in the hand is permitted. (The film must not take place where the camera is standing; shooting must take place where the film takes place).[75]

The filmmakers belonging to DOGMA 95 have produced some very well made and entertaining films, whose narratives directly address such disturbing social issues as incest, suicide and insanity. Their films include *Festen* (1998), *The Idiots* (1997) and *Dancer in the Dark* (1999). These filmmakers explicitly state their intention to use audiovisual technology in order to 'capture' profilmic reality in a way that is similar to documentary filmmaking. Reflexive fiction filmmakers, however, negotiate a profilmic reality which includes professional actors acting out often powerful stories; these actors' actions have to be chased all over the place by the camera-operators and sound recordists. Nichols' definition of documentary (p. 169) clearly acknowledges the similarities between this form of documentary and fiction film. The only remaining distinction between reflexive fiction film and performative documentary appears to be the former's use of fictional narrative, whereas the latter uses non-fiction for narrative content.

Reflexive fiction films acknowledge and subvert documentary film's power to communicate in the indicative mood; they draw explicitly on how both documentary and fiction film share an indexicality of the profilmic image. They subvert documentary by showing how documentary filmmaking techniques do not guarantee a non-fictional narrative. They highlight the fictional aspects of documentary at the same time as they use documentary filmmaking techniques to approach a more indicative mood in relating the fiction contained in their filmic texts to non-fictional social issues in the real world. Reflexive fiction films make the following point again: that the textual practice of using audiovisually mediated images of people is also a usage of historically real individuals (actors in theatre as well as film) in order to 'model' situations which are devised as fiction but can be themselves 'models' of situations in the real world. It is interesting to note how digital technology impacts

on my above arguments about the filmic text as a specific signifying practice. My description of film as a textual practice which uses audiovisual images of the real world in order to create fictional and non-fictional narratives is problematic with regard to completely 'animated' films, those totally constructed from computer imaging, and those that use morphing technology as an editing technique.[76] What kinds of referents to these films have? My following discussion addresses this question.

Film As Disembodied Text in the Age of Digital Technology

Although an animated film may not represent sounds and images from the real world, the audiovisual technology involved in the making of these films is used by filmmakers nevertheless in order to create mimetically empowered images. In other words, animated film, like other forms of film, uses a combination of *movement* and audiovisual representation in order to evoke the same pan-sensual mimetic, theatrically-based experience which is the reception of film. What Hansen describes as 'the iconic relationship between film and referent'[77] still has its effect in animated films: firstly by association (animated films are still *films*) and secondly, through the ways in which these animated moving images are derived from the movements of real people, objects and places in such a way that it is possible to recognise various aspects of the real world.

Dai Vaughan's lament that perhaps 'from today, cinema is dead'[78] is drawn from his proposition that digital technology in film will destroy (or has already destroyed) 'the assumption of a privileged relation between a photograph and its object'.[79] He extends this privileged relation to cinematography and is particularly concerned about this destruction because documentary film has traditionally and explicitly relied on its relationship with its profilmic referent. He also claims that the reception of fiction film must be similarly affected, via its similar (although more implicit) reliance on the profilmic reality of real actors who perform in front of a camera.

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[75] THE VOW OF CHASTITY, DOGMA 95, Press Release, Copenhagen, Monday 13 March 1995, 2

[76] See Vivian Sobchack, '"At the Still Point of the Turning World" Meta-Morphing and Meta-Stasis' in *Meta Morphing.*

[77] Hansen, 'Benjamin, Cinema and Experience', 185

[78] Dai Vaughan, *For Documentary. Twelve Essays.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London:University of California Press, 1999, 189

[79] Vaughan, *For Documentary,* 188

Vaughan claims that for some time digital film will maintain a mode of reception which draws on this assumption even while it is no longer operating. He says that this is due to the force of a habitual association with analogue film, but that film will finally lose the authoritative power which is dependent on this assumption. He mourns the outcome for documentary film. It is possible, however, that his pessimism is based on two false assumptions.

The first is his claim that an audience's 'trust' in the truth-saying quality of a filmic text is based on an assumption about profilmic reality. Audiences have long attributed truth-saying to fiction films, and yet they also have known enough about wielding a video camera to understand that non-fiction film is a very selective re-presentation of profilmic reality, with the same ability and need as fiction film to use the structuring provided by narrative. Although an audience may be confused about how a particular film can be considered fiction or non-fiction, in societies that are constantly exposed to film and television, people are generally aware of how, to quote Renov again, 'the two domains *inhabit* one another'.[80] In the terms used in this thesis, the majority of filmic audiences are able to distinguish, to some extent, between fiction film's subjunctive mood, and non-fiction film's indicative mood. People negotiate between fiction and non-fiction in both filmic forms: they are aware that both forms 'inhabit' each other, but are only beginning to learn how this happens.

The second false assumption is related to the first. It is a misunderstanding about the ability of people to mimetically understand and receive performances which involve images that are themselves based on facsimiles of human bodies and/or the way human bodies move. Puppetry provides an informative example from theatre that shows how such movement and images can be presented in 'live' time and space in order to produce mimetic performance. Puppetry audiences are always aware of the fact that puppets are manipulated by real people, and in this sense, the 'actor' is understood as the puppeteer and the puppet together, even though the puppeteer need not be taken directly into account within the experience of the play's narrative.[81]

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[80] Renov, 'Introduction' to *Theorising Documentary*, 3
[81] Steve Tillis provides an interesting discussion of how concepts of puppeteering have changed with digital technology in his essay 'The Art of Puppetry in the Age of Media Production', *The Drama Review*, Vol. 43, No.3, 1999.

It is interesting to note how a discussion about animated films can also draw on Barthes' 'obtuse' third meaning in cinema. For example, the feature length animated films from the production houses of Disney and Dreamworks use the voices of famous actors for their main characters. They thereby associate an animated character's motivation and behaviour with those of other various character roles played by that actor. Such animated characters similarly can draw on the 'star' persona of a particular actor. The animated character's repertoire of motivation and narrative capability is vastly extended by the use of famous voices. Such voices can also open up realms of meaning which extend beyond the primary drives of narrative and character motivation.

It is possible to relate Barthes' 'third meaning' to his concept of the 'grain' of the voice through the way in which he describes the relationship between singers and singing. The 'grain' of the voice is that which emanates from a singer beyond the explicit demands of a particular song. It is not the ability to express emotion so much as a performer's ability to express his whole passionate and individual understanding of the world through the vehicle of song. Barthes distinguishes the 'grain' as 'the body in the voice as it sings'[82] and describes how a listener relates in an individualised, 'erotic' way to the body which produces this 'grain' as it sings.

In this sense, when the voice given to a character in an animated film comes from an identified and easily identifiable voice of a famous actor, an audience can be invited to look further than the voice itself for similarities between the animated character and other aspects of the famous actor's personal history. In this way, an audience is invited to speculate about what other gestures which are ascribed to an animated character might have been drawn from the real body of an actor. The 'grain' of the voice therefore can be understood as not only bearing the potential for driving narrative in animated film but also as potentially bearing an obtuse, third meaning which is concerned with how a society uses the sounds and moving images of real people in film in order to address social issues.

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[82]Barthes, 'The Grain of the Voice' in *Image Music Text,* 188. Two other seminal articles on the voice in cinema draw from Barthes' concept of 'the grain of the voice'. These are Pascal Bonitzer 'The Silences of the Voice' (319–334) in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology. A Film Theory Reader* and Mary Ann Doane, 'The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space' (335–348) in the same volume.

An example of this combined sense of a third meaning with the 'grain' of the voice in animated film can be found in the use of Mel Gibson's voice as the character John Smith in the Disney film *Pocohontas* (1995). On the level of the film's dominant narrative, Gibson's actorly capacity to communicate irony and self-parody through his voice is exploited by Disney in order to motivate the animated character. The third meaning is also provided by Gibson's voice. It lies in how Gibson's own personal history is also made available through the use of his voice and the particular 'grain' of that voice — that is, the information which many adults and older children in an audience might have about Gibson and the characters he is best known for playing in 'action' films.

The narrative of *Pocohontas* pivots on how a young American Indian woman saves an Englishman, John Smith, who was to be killed as an act of retribution against the behaviour of his shipmates. This theme of sacrifice and bravery for the cause of goodness also runs through the narratives of Gibson's *Lethal Weapon* series of films, together with an ability to act in a physically reckless way which is at odds with an underlying desire for a 'normal' secure world based on patriarchal concepts of the family. The printed media frequently refers to how Gibson has many children and has remained with one wife over many years; in his youth he was also known for being a hard drinker and a brawler. The elision of all these aspects of the actor who is Mel Gibson into the filmic text of *Poccohontas* is not straightforward. It is an easy elision, however, in the eyes of the film-going public, and can be used by producers in order to increase the complexity of an animated characterisation. Even in animated films then it is possible to see how actors can be filmmakers. Their performances can be used to invite third meanings in film; these meanings do not disrupt narrative in the way described by Kristen Thompson's concept of cinematic excess,[83] but rather invoke extra, intertextual narratives. These meanings can extend a film's capability to perform as cultural performance.

The ramifications of digital technology for the cultural performance of film has much to do with how computer graphics come to be used, acknowledged, and also how they come to be understood to be used. In Creed's words:

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[83] Kristen Thompsen, 'The Concept of Cinematic Excess' in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*

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But how important is the question of 'reality' in relation to representation? The power of technology to alter reality has, after all, always been an integral part of the cinematic process. In the coming era of digitized representation the crucial questions have less to do with reality than with communication.[84]

Digital technology can 'scan' the body (including the voice) of an actor; it can trace the ways in which an actor moves her/his body. The resulting audiovisual images can be manipulated in any way that is not controlled by copyright laws. In this sense, virtual actors are created from the real bodies of actors, and subsequent 'acting' performances perhaps can be better conceptually understood in terms of animated film and the issues discussed above. Such an understanding could draw on Barthes' concepts of third meaning and 'the grain of the voice', or perhaps describe 'the grain' of an actor's whole body, in order to discuss how societies use such films as cultural performance.

The use of digitally generated extrapolations of image and sound to 'iron out' the ratchetting effects in slow motion photography[85] is also of concern to documentary filmmakers who draw their status as cultural commentators from Vaughan's privileged relationship between film and its referent. Audiences, however, simply may come to understand such devices as technologies which makes particular films more easily accessible in particular ways. Another more current concern about digital technology in film derives from the combination of images of real people and images of 'virtual' people within one filmic text. In films such as *Titanic* (James Cameron, 1997), for example, virtual actors were used as film extras. Creed describes how

Studios are already able to purchase whole-body scanners to create synthespians for crowd and group scenes from Cyberware ...[86]

A new mode of film reception is currently evolving from such combinations of virtual (vactors) and 'live' actors; a mode which draws on audiences' potential confusion about what they are seeing. There is, however, not only a confusion which can exist for an audience about what kind of images they are watching in a film created through digital technology. There is also confusion for filmmakers of fiction

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[84]Barbara Creed, 'The cyberstar: digital pleasures and the end of the Unconscious' (79–86) *Screen* 41:1 Spring 2000, 83

[85] See Vaughan, *For Documentary,* 186

[86] Creed, 'The cyberstar: digital pleasures and the end of the Unconscious', 81

films, as well as non-fiction films, about how choices of various kinds of digital 'tools' can affect the overall *effect* of film as a vehicle of communication. As they create and manipulate computer-generated images for film, filmmakers using digital formats are drawing on more forms of mimetic audiovisual representation than they have had access to in the analogic past. Films that use such images derive their mode of address, at least to some extent, from the specific theatrical genre of puppetry and from the visual art forms of drawing, painting and sculpture of the human form. This change in filmmaking techniques could alter the relationship between filmmakers, filmic text and audiences in several ways. For example, the use of virtual actors may come to be identified by audiences as 'animation', and films that rely on vactors could be categorised as animation by association, even if these images are only used in crowd scenes. The concept of animation and the categorisation of films as 'animated' may change to include not only films where virtual actors are explicitly used (for example, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (James Cameron, 1991) and *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* (George Lucas, 1999*)* but also films where virtual actors are meant to 'pass' as images of live human actors. The careful and expensive work that went into creating the vactor, Aki Ross, in the film *Final Fantasy* (2001) is still recognised as animation, despite the animators' intention to create an image that was very close to that of a human actor. This film's producer, Jun Aida, interestingly comments:

> Our goal was not to create photo-real characters. I don't think technically it's possible with animation. In still photos, we can. [87]

Although this thesis does not have the space to explore the implications that Aida's words have for film theory, it is significant to note that they indicate a recent shift in the relationship between photography and film. They also indicate the following: if an audience identifies the use of virtual actors as a device which changes a film's negotiation of fiction and non-fiction, then we can expect new genres of film which draw on society's understanding of animated film. There are potentially, therefore, associated ways in which film can perform as cultural performance: through digital technology, the mechanics of the cultural performance of film is changing. This change can be described in terms of Vaughan's (needlessly) pessimistic

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[87] Jun Aida, quoted in S.A. Mathieson 'Let me be your fantasy', *Guardian*, 26/4/2001, 1. Online version, accessed on 5/9/2001, <http://www.guardian.coi.uk/Print/0,3858,4175596,00.html>

identification of film's referent as the pivot for change in the making and reception of film in the age of digital technology.

2.   The Filmic Text as 'Meaningful Action'

In this thesis, I have consistently distinguished the filmic text from other texts on the basis that film has the potential to depict audiovisual, moving images of historically real people. My discussion, in Chapter 4, on Butler's work on 'hate speech' in relation to film addressed some of the conceptual problems inherent in not taking into account how film performs as a specific textual practice. These problems concern an elision of the relationship between film as text and social action. Such an elision avoids an investigation into *how* filmic texts operate as sites of social action. In the context of my earlier discussion of hermeneutics and film, Ricoeur's concept of the text as 'meaningful action' is a useful way for describing the ways in which texts can be understood as social action. Ricoeur reconciles two vast areas of theory which he names as 'the theory of texts' and 'the theory of action', both of which he also relates to 'the theory of history'.[88] He works towards an understanding of texts in terms of such complex issues as motivation and explanation, and consequently, towards a way of comprehending human behaviour in the historically real world. Ricoeur describes a 'philosophical anthropology' in which 'nothing holds greater interest than the play of references between *text, action,* and *history.*'[89] He goes on to say 'It is indeed through this threefold theoretical articulation of the anthropological field that the flexible dialectic of understanding and explanation unfolds.'[90]

If, as proposed in this thesis, film can be considered as a specific kind of textual practice, then it should be possible to use Ricoeur's formulation of text as a site of meaningful action in order to examine, in terms of its textual practice, how film performs as cultural performance: how film enters the historically real world with relation to society's understanding and re-shaping of itself. In terms of Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic nature of texts, Ricouer's formulation of the text as meaningful action is another way in which to examine *how* texts achieve their

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[88]Ricoeur, 'From Hermeneutics of Texts to the Hermeneutics of Action' in *From Text to Action,* 127
[89]Ricoeur, *From Text to Action,* 128
[90]ibid.

dialogic status. In this present chapter and in Chapter 4, I have developed a comparison between the filmic text and other texts, with particular reference to live theatre and photography. As discussed earlier, these three forms of textual practice share, through their technologies, the way in which society assumes, though to varying extents, an indexical relationship between their representational referents and historical reality. MacDougall describes how this resemblance operates in film as follows:

> Films actually give us extraordinarily little out of which to reconstruct their subjects. Films also provide us with the same sorts of indices that we are used to interpreting in daily life — facial expressions that stand for inner feelings, sounds that tell us of things around us, objects associated with certain ways of life, and so on. That's why film is such a universally accessible medium.[91]

In this sense, film's accessibility can be understood therefore to refer not only to audiovisual technology's ability to take filmic texts to many varied audiences, but also the perceptual ease with which film can be received because of its 'resemblance' to everyday life. This 'easiness' in filmic reception can obscure what Said describes as the 'worldliness' of a text:

> …texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society — in short, they are in the world ...[92]

In other words, although film's accessibility is based on an assumed transparency, this very accessibility can also limit its reception in the following way: an individual audience interprets the narrative world of the filmic text according to the particular confines of her/his everyday world. This very accessibility then can be understood as a 'double-edged sword'. It can potentially limit a wider contextualisation of a filmic text in the real world because it has such assumed relevance for the individual receiver's daily life. At the same time, film's ability to reach a mass audience enables a cultural performance through film by very many people, whose individual receptions of the filmic text nevertheless become part of how society works through those social issues raised by a particular film's textual content. In Brecht's terms, a film can address an audience with a particular 'social *gest*' (see p. 48). One of the

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[91]MacDougall in Lucien Taylor and Ilisa Barbash, 'Reframing Ethnographic Film: A "Conversation" with David MacDougall and Judith MacDougall', *Ameriaca Anthropologist* Vol.98 No.2 June 1996, 378

[92] Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic,* London:Faber, 1984, 35

ways in which a filmmaker may work towards such a Brechtian style of social comment can be understood in terms of Russian Formalism's idea of 'making strange' (see p. 50); an individual's everyday life can be 'made strange' via the assumed transparency of the filmic text. In the context of both Ricoeur's concept of the text as meaningful action and Brecht's theory, a film operates as cultural performance via the way in which its text performs a particular 'social *gest*'. In this sense, a film (through its narrative, characterisation, visual design, camera work, editing, soundtrack, costuming etc) can be considered as political action. Film can address issues of domestic behaviour, as well as areas of authoritative and critical discourse such as history, gender studies and other areas of discourse which study power relations in society. For example, my analyses of two films in the following chapters can be considered an investigation into how their participation in a specific cultural performance constitutes political action.

As noted in Chapter 4 (p. 115), the discussion of the filmic text as cultural performance is not confined to an expression of specific social dynamics that are set in particular historical places and temporalities. Such an understanding of film ignores changing acts of reception over time and is tied to an examination of film as embedded in particular historical modes of production and enunciation. Such an understanding of film is exemplified by the historicist approach to the understanding of film taken by Wimal Dissanayake:

> …it is gradually dawning on more and more people that films need to be appreciated as significant social products and cultural practices ... Films are cultural events; but they are not autonomous in that their meanings and significances are derived in large measure from the cultural matrix in which they operate as well as their relationships to other cultural narratives.[93]

While focusing on how filmic texts need to be understood as active 'cultural events', Dissanayake describes these events as embedded in a particular historically defined context described by a specific time and place. Film, however, will also change the nature of its cultural performance through the changing contexts of time and place which come about through the passage of time. Whilst filmic texts, like other texts, can be altered by filmmakers after their release to the public, the changing cultural

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[93] Wimal Dissanayake, *Colonialism and nationalism in Asian cinema*, Bloomington:Indiana University Press, 1994, 190–1

performance of a film through time is predominantly produced by changing performances of reception. As an example of this point, my discussion on the cultural performances involved in *Link-Up Diary* (Chapter 8) is derived from receptions of this film that have occurred over the fourteen year period from its release in 1987 to the time of my completing this thesis in 2001. The examination of film, then, as a genre of cultural performance allows a consideration of film as a textual practice which is also a *continuing* active component of society's discussion, and constant re-adjustment, of itself. Film's cultural performance can change over time; this change can occur both in the substance of the social issues that are addressed through its textual practice, and in the way a particular social issue is performed differently through time.

3.   Filmic *Gest*

One of the ways in which film can be understood as a genre of changing cultural performances is the way in which filmic style can be used not so much to express social problems, as to confront such problems through their mimetic 'playing out'. My understanding of this sense of confrontation draws on Said's definition of style as

> …from the standpoint of producer and receiver, the recognizable, repeatable, preservable sign of an author who reckons with an audience.[94]

One example of how filmic style can be used to address social problems occurs in the film *Once Were Warriors*. In Chapter 4, I described how Tamahori, the director of this film, repeatedly uses a combination of close-up shots and tight editing in order to communicate his view on how it feels to be involved in a violent situation: to show how people physically experience hurt and how they can be hurt by other people. In the context of Bakhtin's theory, Tamahori produces a motif-styled chronotope which could be named as a 'chronotope of violence': where space is felt as 'tight' or 'close' and time passes very quickly but with devastating results. Tamahori 'personalises' violence in his compression of time and space in the violence segments of *Once Were Warriors* by showing in close-up detail how a person appears as they have violence acted out upon their bodies. This personalisation of violence contributes to the film's cultural performance in the

sense that it provides a way in which this particular filmic text constitutes part of society's discourse on violence.

A similar example of how filmic style can be used in film's cultural performance can be found in Jodi Brooks' work on the films of Cassavetes. As noted in Chapter 2 (p. 49), she draws particularly from the film *Love Streams* in order to discuss how performances of filmmaking, the filmic text and filmic reception can show how individuals in a society *perceive* the historically real world. Drawing on Benjamin's essay on Kafka,[95] particularly where he discusses Kafka's work in relation to Brecht's concept of *gest*, Brooks discusses how Cassavetes' films 'develop a gestural practice written through by crisis.'[96] She investigates the 'affect' produced by the way in which acting performances by Gena Rowlands, as the character Sarah Lawson in *Love Streams*, combine with the film's narrative and particular techniques of editing and special effects. She describes how this combination in turn can be understood to perform those emotional crises and other psychological displacements which accompany the physical displacement of people who find their social roles, particularly within family situations, challenged in late twentieth century industrialised societies.

Brooks also uses Benjamin's concept of 'shock' in order to describe how Cassavetes' filmic presentation of crisis enables an engagement with, if not a resolution of, the effects of mass industrialisation on people:

> Film's modes of representation and reception enable a 'rehearsing' of shock experience and a release of what we could call its side effects (principally anxiety and boredom). Of equal importance here, film provides an ideal means of representing marginal and historically new forms of experience and perception.[97]

It is possible to further describe such gestural practice as an aspect of filmic style that contributes to the way in which a film performs as cultural performance. In the case of Cassavetes, these stylistic gestures of 'crisis', as described by Brooks, position his films as part of society's constantly evolving discussion on how

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[94] Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic,* 33

[95] Benjamin, 'Franz Kafka. On the Tenth Anniversary of His Death,' 111–140 in *Illuminations*

[96] Brooks, 'Crisis and the Everyday: Some thoughts on gesture and crisis in Cassavetes and Benjamin'*,* 77

[97] Brooks, 'Crisis and the Everyday: Some thoughts on gesture and crisis in Cassavetes and Benjamin'*,* 81

individual people perceive both their individuality and how this individuality can exist in relation to society.

In describing the way in which filmic *gest* can be understood as cultural performance, it is useful again to consider film through Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope. In her discussion of gestural practice, Brooks refers to how Deleuze describes *gest* in relation to Cassavetes' films [98], especially as he describes how 'the spectacle can pass through a script ... less to tell a story than to develop and transform bodily attitudes.'[99] This transformation and linking of bodily attitudes in a filmic text can also be described as a filmic chronotope where the confluence of space and time are most visible in the audiovisual image of a human body. It then becomes possible to consider how a film's gestic practice might not only be an 'acting out' of a particular crisis, but also a detailed description of how this 'acting out' also occurs in society. With respect to *Love Streams,* for example, particular '*gests*', bodily attitudes and gestures, are associated closely with specific actors as well as with the characters they play. In filmic texts, these personalised gestures can be used both to define a character and to provide motivation and revelation[100] within a film's narrative.

In films, such as those of Cassavetes, that rely on gestural practice for their narrative force, the chronotope can be used to describe bodily experiences. For example, in *Love Streams* there is a sequence where Robert, played by Cassavetes, leaves his son in a hotel bedroom while he spends a night 'on the town'. This sequence drives the film's narrative in so far as it describes how it is for the child to feel fear, abandonment, bewilderment and eventual grief at a parent's ability to abandon him. It also shows a startling (if predictable, in the context of this film) lack of emotional ability on the part of the father, and provokes questions about how such an inability to look after his child emotionally is associated with ill-will or an unawareness of his son's suffering. This filmic sequence could be described in terms of 'a chronotope of abandonment': a chronotope whose convergence of space and time can only be played out through human bodily attitudes and gestures. In this sense, the cultural performance of a particular film can be understood predominantly through stylistic

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[98] Brooks, 'Crisis and the Everyday: Some thoughts on gesture and crisis in Cassavetes and Benjamin', 76
[99] Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image,* 193

aspects of its various performances of filmmaking, and how these performances are consequently received as a filmic text. In other words, *how* a film moves bodies through time and space can also contribute to the way in which that film can be considered as cultural performance.

The potential for films to constitute particular cultural performance through their gestic practice also can be understood to enable a further consideration of how the experience of film *sui generis* can constitute a specific cultural performance concerning peoples' perception of the historically real world. This aspect of film's cultural performance can be well described through Colson's reference to a 'theatricalization of reality more extreme and comprehensible than that suggested earlier by social theorists like Goffman'.[101] As described in this chapter, film's cultural performance of such 'reality' also changes as audiovisual technologies continue to evolve. This evolution has reached the stage where disasters in the real world are simultaneously viewed both in the context of news footage and of fictional film's special effects industry (for example, the shocking CNN footage of September 11, 2001 in New York).[102]

<p style="text-align:center">****************</p>

When segments of everyday life are 'framed', in Goffman's sense, as textual content via various modes of textual practice (including theatre, film, dance and music), then everyday life can be understood to be 'theatricalised', not in Goffman's analogic sense, but literally. For example, the performances of social actors, as they are represented in segments of filmic text, are theatrically 'heightened' by their very exposure to a wider audience than that implied by their original 'everyday' context. Texts which are constructed from audiovisual images of people actually enacting historically real segments of everyday life can be understood as transpositionally intertextual with theatre, if not theatre *per se*. In this sense, both fictional and non-fictional filmic texts utilise acting performances which are derived explicitly from theatre (or other related forms of live performance), as well as those theatrically

[100] Deleuze discusses Comolli's concept of films of 'revelation' in *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, 192–3. See also Comolli, *Cahiers du cinéma,* No.205, October 1968.

[101] Carlson, *Theories of Theatre*, 517

[102] Tim Murray's monograph *Like a film: ideological fantasy on screen, camera and canvas* London:New York:Routledge, 1993, well addresses the ways in which the gestural aspect of

'heightened' performances which are derived from everyday life. Whilst filmic texts do not use live human bodies as textual content (as does theatre in live performance), the audiovisual technology of film specifies the filmic text as one whose textual content can contain a particular kind of 'imaging' of the sight, sound and movement of the human body. This distinct, technically derived 'imaging' practice affects how film performs as cultural performance.

This chapter has built on my discussion of the filmic text in Chapter 4 in order to describe further how filmic texts are produced and received within specific, if changing, sets of cultural understandings. These understandings are about the ways in which audiovisual technology transforms profilmic reality (in the form of theatrical or 'everyday' performances) into many and various representational forms which in turn become the content of social discourse. I propose that the term *audiovisual imaging* can be used to describe audiovisual technology's ability to transform profilmic reality as discussed in this chapter. This term can also be used to denote film's privileged relationship with its referent. An understanding of the cultural performance of film can be described therefore, as dependent on how specific examples of *audiovisual imaging* participates in social discourse.

My description of film in the context of C. Bell's theory of ritualised action makes possible a closer description of how film constitutes a distinct genre of cultural performance. In other words, specific filmic texts can be understood as socially authorised ways in which society communicates about specific social issues. These issues importantly include society's understanding of how audiovisual technology can be used to present and discuss 'social truth'. My investigation, in Part Two, of film's particular relationship with its profilmic referent reinforces my consideration of film as ritualised action in Part One: where I describe the particular 'truth-saying' authoritative status which film holds in society. This chapter's discussion of film and digital technology also addresses how the same filmic text can change its cultural performance, including its cultural performance of 'truth', through time, as society changes the way in which film operates as a vehicle of information.[103]

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the signifying practice of film and related audiovisual technologies can be understood to have penetrated the way in which people perceive the historically real world.

[103] These changes, of course, also can be applied to how other kinds of texts change in how they enter social discourse over time.

I have also considered the way in which film can be understood as cultural performance through the many extra-filmic discourses into which it enters, and through the ways in which film then becomes part of these discourses. Building on Chapter 5's discussion of intertextuality in film, this present Chapter has examined some of the ways in which such entry is possible. My discussion of gestural practice in film has particularly focused on how, drawing on Brecht's definition of 'social *gest*', the term 'filmic *gest*' could be used to describe the stylistic ways in which film can be considered to be cultural performance.

In Section 3, I continue my exploration of film as cultural performance by applying the concepts developed over the last two Sections to two films and their relationship with one broad area of cultural performance in which they both participate.

SECTION 3

Introduction

This section is concerned with the analyses of two films: Tracey Moffatt's *beDevil* and David MacDougall's *Link-Up Diary.* Both films are investigated in relation to how they constitute the cultural performance of some of the many social issues involved in experiencing how it is to be indigenous in Australia. My analyses focus on the 'transcultural' quality of both these films, drawing on MacDougall's conceptualisation of 'transcultural' discourses (including films) which work between the perceived boundaries of distinct cultures whilst at the same time challenging such boundaries:

> They remind us that cultural difference is at best a fragile concept, often undone by perceptions that create sudden affinities between ourselves and others apparently so different from us.[1]

Such a concept of 'transcultural' film recalls Willemen's interpretation of Bakhtin's third way into 'cross-cultural understanding', which I referred to in Chapter 1: 'an engagement with "the dynamics of a particular cultural practice within its own social formation" where the social formation is a "historical construct." '[2]

In its similarity to Bakhtin's third kind of 'cross-cultural understanding', MacDougall's concept of 'transcultural' film can be understood to enable a discussion of *intra*cultural issues which are made visible in the light of transcultural discourse. In this sense, both these films locate different cultures within narratives in such a way that it is possible to further consider, through Bakhtin's concept of 'heteroglossia': the various 'voices' within these cultures which are seldom 'heard'. This presentation of many voices within one text can manifest in startling and unexpected juxtapositions of opinion and expressions of perception. MacDougall describes as follows how transcultural texts not only address relationships between cultures, but relationships between people within cultures:

> The shock of transculturality makes clear that cultural differences between groups do not always indicate internal cultural homogeneity.

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[1] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema,* 245.
[2] Willemen, *Looks and Frictions*, 216.

Transculturality is also an artefact of regional histories, movements, and communication.[3]

My film analyses use the three Levels of performance discussed in the first section of this thesis. I especially make use of my conceptualisation (as developed in Chapter 3) of actors as filmmakers, as they perform 'towards' both fiction film and non-fiction film. My analyses of these two films makes particular use of my previous consideration of the theatrical concepts of the 'performance artist' and 'direct address'. These three concepts — 'transculturality', 'the performance artist' and 'direct address' — are significant in the following analyses because their application marks how both these filmic texts are 'embodied' in various ways. My discussion of such embodiments in turn enables my consideration of how these films constitute particular gestural practices. My description of these gestural practices is developed through both analyses towards an understanding of how these films constitute specific cultural performances of indigeneity in Australian society.

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[3] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema,* 270.

Chapter 7. *BeDevil:* A Cultural Performance of 'Secrets' in Australian Settler Society

> *Bedevil is a very playful, old-fashioned word that no-one really uses any more. It means 'to haunt and taunt'. The style of the film is teasing. You're following characters who are haunted by something, and I suggest perhaps we're all a little haunted in a way, and we probably don't ever come to terms with it.—* Tracey Moffatt[1]

Introduction

beDevil is Tracey Moffatt's first feature length film (90 minutes). It was released by Southern Star Entertainment in 1993, and released as a video by Ronin Films. Funded for $2.5 million by the Australian Film Finance Corporation Pty. Ltd., *beDevil* was filmed from October 5th to November 13th, 1992,[2] with a pre-production period of only six weeks.[3] Four locations were used: Mentmore Studios at Rosebery in Sydney, Bribie Island in Queensland, Charleville in Queensland (including the house 'Sommariva', a twenty minute long drive outside of Charleville), and sugar-cane fields in Northern New South Wales.

Moffatt's previous filmic experience included her studies (graduating in 1982) at the Queensland College of the Arts in Brisbane, where she studied film and video, a music video clip for the Australian band INXS, videos commissioned by the Aboriginal Medical Service in Redfern, Sydney, and two short fiction films: *Nice Coloured Girls* (1987) and *Night Cries. A Rural Tragedy* (1990). As part of her exhibition for the Dia Centre in New York in 1997, Moffatt released *Heaven*, a 28 minute documentary-style video, constructed primarily from non-fictional footage of male surfers in various stages of removing their wet suits.

BeDevil is a work of fiction, divided into three separate narrative segments, each of which is based on one of three 'ghost stories' which were told to Moffatt as a child by members of her family.[4] The first story is called 'Mr Chuck', the second, 'Choo Choo Choo Choo' and the third, 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In'. Instead of presenting here a summary of each segment, I refer the reader to Moffatt's own descriptions of these

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[1] Moffatt in *Vogue Australia* June 1993, 57
[2] Anthony Buckley, Production Report No.2, October 16,1992, Unpublished, and Production Report No.3, April 1993, Unpublished.
[3] Anthony Buckley, Production Report No.2, October 16,1992, Unpublished.

three stories in the sixth draft of her script for this film. These descriptions are included as Appendix A of this thesis.

My analysis of this film focuses on Moffatt as a 'performance artist' (Chapter 2, p. 65) who, as script writer, director and actor, presents narratives which are drawn from her own personal history, and who also uses her own female Aboriginal body as she plays the character Ruby in the second story, 'Choo Choo Choo Choo'. Moffatt's use of her own body and history also occurs in her photographic art, and Part One of my analysis makes strong reference to Moffatt's artistic practice as an internationally acclaimed photographer. My investigation into performances in film at Levels 1 (filmmaking) and 2 (the filmic text) in *beDevil* particularly explores how this film needs to be understood in terms of Moffatt's textual practice as a photographer. In *beDevil*, as in her photoseries, she investigates how the practices of film and photography can be understood to merge into each other while manifesting as completely different texts. My discussion of this aspect of her work draws on Barthes' brief yet important observations on filmic 'stills' which follow from his conceptualisation of film's 'third meaning' (Chapter 6, p. 180).

Part Two of my analysis describes the cultural performance of *beDevil* as being concerned with a particular set of socially constructed 'secrets' which have existed for over two hundred years. In this film, Moffatt examines secrets involved with the many and varied experiences of being an indigenous person in Australian settler society. My discussion draws on Foucault's argument that matters which are named 'secret' or 'repressed stories' are often not so much repressed as carefully controlled discourses where

> …silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions;
> but they also loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of
> tolerance.[5]

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[4] Moffatt in John Conomos' and Raffaele Caputo's interview/article '*BEDEVIL* Tracey Moffatt', *Cinema Papers* No.93, May 1993, 28. This work is hereafter cited as '*BEDEVIL*'

[5] Michel Foucault *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction,* Trans. Robert Hurley, New York:Pantheon Books, 1987 (Eng. Trans. © Random House, 1978. First published 1976) 101. See also pp 34–35.

Moffatt addresses such repressed stories in her two earlier films.[6] Through her depiction of 'secrets' in the filmic text of *beDevil*, Moffatt continues to break through the discourse about indigenous people in Australia which has been carefully controlled by the institutions of academia, religion, the State and the art industry. In Foucault's terms, Moffatt disturbs this discourse beyond the parameters of the past through her acute understanding of how she can use her own body and history in order to translate various social 'secrets' across the cultural boundaries which exist within multicultural Australian society. Her approach is not ethnocentric: 'I am not interested in making monocultural films.'[7] In this film, she presents audiovisual images of Australians from Aboriginal, Anglo/Celtic, Greek, Chinese, and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds interacting with each other. The filmic text is laced with inter-racial relationships, and draws as much on Moffatt's Irish Australian heritage as on her Aboriginality. As one example of how she presents such interactions in her filmic text, the third story, 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In' pivots around a love affair between a Torres Strait Islander from a traditional background and a white 'hippy chick'.[8]

As principal filmmaker (director, writer, actor), she explores not only the boundaries which can exist between Australian people of different cultural backgrounds, but also the boundaries which exist between the two media which she uses in her artistic practice — photography and film. Moffatt also explores the boundaries that are conceptualised in the categorisation of film as fiction and non-fiction. My analysis of *beDevil* describes how through her exploration of such boundaries, she creates a filmic text whose gestural practice (Chapter 6, p. 193) is concerned with an experience of 'secrets', in the sense of information which is only accessible as 'hidden' or otherwise obscured. My discussion converges on a description of

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[6] For comprehensive discussions of Moffatt's earlier films, see in particular the following articles: Patricia Mellencamp, 'Haunted History: Tracey Moffatt and Julie Dash', *Discourse* 16.2, Winter 1993-94, (hereafter cited as 'Haunted History'); Meaghan Morris, 'Beyond Assimilation: Aboriginality, Media History and Public Memory' *aedon* 4.1 November 1996 (hereafter cited as 'Beyond Assimilation'); Laleen Jayamanne, '"Love me tender, love me true, never let me go ..." A Sri Lankan reading of Tracey Moffatt's *Night Cries — A Rural Tragedy*' in. Sneja Gunew and Anna Yeatman Eds, *Feminism and the politics of difference*, St. Leonards, NSW:Allen and Unwin, 1993; E. Ann Kaplan, 'Aborigines, Film, and Moffatt's 'Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy': An Outsider's Perspectives' in *Picturing the 'Primitif'. Images of Race in Daily Life*, Ed. Julie Marcus, Canada Bay, NSW:LhR Press, 2000.

[7] Tracey Moffatt in Claire Corbett, 'Drama Queen', (95–6) *Rolling* Stone, April 1993, 96

[8] Moffatt, '*BEDEVIL*. A sixth draft script by Tracey Moffatt,' Anthony Buckley Productions, Willoughby, NSW, Unpublished, c.1992, 56. This work is referred to as 'A sixth draft script' hereafter.

beDevil's cultural performance in terms of both Chow's conceptualisation of 'new ethnography' and MacDougall's 'transcultural cinema'.

PART ONE

Moving images in the work of Tracey Moffatt: Film, Photography and Intertextuality

In the analysis of *beDevil* as cultural performance, Moffatt's photographic work needs to be discussed for two reasons. Firstly, her various photoseries constitute a significant body of works which has drawn much critique at a national and international level. This means that any film of Moffatt's is located within a context of her acclaim as a photographic artist and how that acclaim affects the criticism and presentation of her filmic work. For example, her exhibition *Free Falling* (1997) at the Dia Centre in New York included one of her short films, *Night Cries — A Rural Tragedy* and the previously mentioned video, *Heaven*. These two audiovisual works were shown along side two major photoseries: *Up in the Sky* (1997), a series of staged photographs using outdoor locations in rural Australia, and *GUAPA-Good-Looking* (1995), featuring staged studio images of models playing 'queens of the Roller Derby'. This exhibition's placement of Moffatt's filmic practice within the context of her photographic art illustrates how the visual arts industry perceives a close relationship between film and photography in her overall textual practice as an artist. Two examples of this perception within the visual art industry and within film theory occur respectively as Robert Marshall describes her photoseries *Scarred for Life* (1994): 'Moffatt is once again creating cinematic tableaux',[9] and as Mellencamp writes with reference to Moffatt's two earlier films: 'Every frame of her films is a composition, a portrait, a still life.'[10]

The second reason why her films need to be considered in the context of her photography lies in the way in which Moffatt herself draws attention to how she uses both forms in relation to each other. When discussing her short film *Night Cries — A Rural Tragedy*, she describes how 'The camera hardly moves in *Night Cries*, it's static. So the film unfolds like a slow moving photograph.'[11] With reference to

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[9] Robert Marshall, 'Chelsea Summer', *PAJ* No.60, September 1998 Vol XX, No.3, 54

[10] Patricia Mellencamp, 'An Empirical Avant-Garde. Laleen Jayamanne and Tracey Moffatt', in *Fugitive Images. From Photography to Video*, Ed. Patrice Petro, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995, 179

[11] Moffatt in Jane Coles' video *Up in the Sky: Tracey Moffatt in New York* (1999). This film is referred to as *Up in the Sky* hereafter.

beDevil, she again compares her use of photography in her filmic practice, 'I am constantly thinking composition in a photographic sense, and framing and photographic textures are very important in my movies.'[12]

Moffatt's explicit exploration of the relationship between film and photography is shown clearly in her self-acknowledged 'quoting' of Pasolini's *Accattone* (1961) in her photoseries *Up In The Sky*.[13] This style of quotation from one artistic form to another is an example of intertextuality, that second kind of intertextuality that exists between different signifying practices (see p. 137). Moffatt also refers frequently in interviews to the (specifically inter-filmic) generic intertextuality of her work as she describes how many and various filmmakers have influenced her own filmic practice. With particular reference to *beDevil*, these filmmakers significantly include: Masaki Kobayashi, Yasujiro Ozu, Fellini,[14] Terrence Davies, Nicolas Roeg,[15] Jim Sharman,[16] William Friedkin,[17] and George Miller.[18]

I suggest that Moffatt's combined practice as photographer and filmmaker also can be understood, however, in the context of Kristeva's conceptualisation of transpositional intertextuality (see p. 140). In this sense, both Moffatt's films and photoseries can be understood as part of transpositional artistic practice which consistently moves between the textual practices of film and photography. In Moffatt's work, this movement between signifying practices means that neither can be considered without reference to the other. With regard to *beDevil*, she also names several visual artists as having a direct influence on her filmic practice, including Geoffrey Smart, Russel Drysdale,[19] and Mark Rothko.[20] In the case of her filmic practice, Moffatt's acknowledgment of how various visual artists influence her work reinforces this sense of transposition between photography and film. Her references to paintings are not simple imitations in style and design. They are also part of her combined artistic practice: a practice that looks for movement in static images, and stasis within the moving images of film.

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[12]Conomos and Caputo, '*BEDEVIL*', 31

[13]In Jane Cole's documentary *Up in the Sky: 'Tracey Moffatt in New York'* (1999), Moffatt describes how she based some of her images in this photoseries on Pasolini's visual images in this film.

[14] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo '*BEDEVIL*', 28

[15] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo '*BEDEVIL*', 30

[16] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo '*BEDEVIL*', 29

[17] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo '*BEDEVIL*', 31

[18] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo '*BEDEVIL*', 32

[19] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo '*BEDEVIL*', 28

Moffatt's filmic/photographic practice seems to search for the places where the formal constraints of photography and film move towards each other and where this movement ends with a startling apprehension of difference. Her films and photoseries explore how these two forms can be used to push at each other's limits until each can no longer be considered except in terms of the other, calling to mind Comolli's description of cinematic practice as a constant negotiation of its artistic and communicative limits: 'It is what resists cinematic representation, limiting it on all sides and from within, which constitutes equally its force; what makes it falter makes it go.'[21] The filmic text of *beDevil* 'falters' conspicuously in two particular ways through which it addresses its audiences.

Firstly, this film is constructed from a complex layering of carefully framed audiovisual images which is frequently achieved through editing into the text various 'fleeting' images. These images (discussed in more detail later in this chapter) appear so briefly that it is very difficult to isolate them from the filmic text even via the 'pause' button on a VCR when the film is played at normal speed. Secondly, *beDevil* constantly changes its modes of narrative style. I discuss this second 'faltering' in my later discussion on Moffatt's reference to documentary film in this film. Here, however, I want to discuss further how Moffatt's filmic text of carefully 'framed', and sometimes 'fleeting', audiovisual images provokes modes of reception which are more often associated with the viewing of photography.

Several of Moffatt's photoseries invite a comparison with filmic 'stills', but from a film which has never been made. For example, there is no film called *Something More* (1989): this is the name of a photoseries in which the last 'frame' shows the wondering young woman in the red dress of the first photograph 'dead' on the road to Brisbane. The viewer cannot be sure of the precise narrative content in any image from this photoseries, and needs to ask even of this last 'closing' photograph — 'is she really dead?' Similarly, in her series, *Laudanum* (1999), the viewer can 'almost' decipher a story of slavery.[22] In Mellencamp's words, 'For Moffatt ... still photographs lead to sound, to story, and comprise an affective logic.'[23]

[20] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo '*BEDEVIL*', 32
[21] Comolli, 'Machine of the Visible' in *Cinematic Apparatus,* 141
[22] Gael Newton, 'Is there an Aboriginal Photography?' 1999, unpublished, 3
[23] Mellencamp, 'Haunted History', 132

In her recent series *Invocations* (2000), Images 5 and 6 invite a comparison with 'freeze framed' images from a film, rather than filmic 'stills' (although currently, digital 'freeze frames' frequently appear in the same marketing role as that of filmic stills). This suggestion of 'freeze frames' is an obvious reference to film: it calls attention to how photography can 'use' digital filmic technology to 'capture' moving images. It is also, then, a photographically reflexive gesture that reinforces the way in which all the images in this series are substantially photographic. The intertextuality slips more towards a referencing between the distinct signifying practices of film and photography; the quality of transposition is still present, but lessened. In her photoseries, Moffatt directs performances of reception towards questions about secret information that might be hidden in her complex collages of colour and images of landscape (both 'found' and artificial), objects, people and parts of people. In *beDevil*, she similarly loads the frames of her filmic text with complex collages of audiovisual images. This complexity can only be appreciated after several viewings since many sights and sounds are so difficult to hear and see. This need for repeated performances of reception in order to apprehend the content of a filmic text brings to mind the kind of reception that is possible in viewing an exhibition of visual art, where the viewer can return again and again to various images.

When a filmic text demands such 'returning' performances of reception it becomes interesting to note what it is that the viewer is being drawn back to, and what other kinds of textual reception are suggested by this mode of 'return'. Apart from the kinds of repetitive viewing generated by a film which has achieved 'cult' status (see p. 18), it is possible to distinguish, with specific reference to *beDevil*, the following two reasons why it might be necessary to view a film more than once. Firstly, there can be a need to view a film more than once in order to understand a film's narrative plot (suggestive of repetitive acts of literary reception). There is also a sometimes associated need, however, to 'dwell' often on filmic images, if such images are difficult to distinguish from each other as they are presented in a particular filmic text. In both these senses, Moffatt's filmic and photographic texts require several 'returning' performances of reception. This 'need to return' to Moffatt's images in order to understand them can be described as a need for 'pauses' in the momentum of filmic reception. This sense of 'pausing' can also be considered via the concept of the 'filmic still': a concept that can therefore be used to describe further the

relationship between film and photography, beyond a consideration of their 'shared referent' (Chapter 6, p. 183).

Filmic Stills

As referred to earlier in this thesis (Chapters 3, p. 95, and 6, p. 185), Barthes describes the 'third meaning' in film as the 'obtuse' meaning where the act of signification is impossible to describe except as 'filmic' — that which belongs to the filmic form alone. The significance of a sequence or shot in terms of this third meaning in film is that which works against the chronology of narrative, by suggesting other 'counter' or parallel stories. In his conceptualisation of the 'third meaning' in film, Barthes also considers how those photographs which are described as filmic stills can be considered in relation to film. He argues that an exploration of this relationship is crucial in the understanding of film as a specific signifying practice:

> If, however, the specific filmic (the filmic of the future) lies not in movement, but in an inarticulable third meaning that neither the simple photograph nor figurative painting can assume since they lack the digetic horizon, the possibility of configuration mentioned earlier, then the 'movement' regarded as the essence of film is not animation, flux, mobility, 'life', copy, but simply the framework of a permutational unfolding and a theory of the still becomes necessary ...[24]

Drawing on Eisenstein's theory of montage,[25] he claims that the 'still' needs to be read 'vertically' in order to be understood in relationship to the filmic text from which it was derived: 'The still offers us the *inside* of the fragment [of film].'[26] He goes on to further describe the 'still' as follows:

> Moreover, the still is not a sample (an idea that supposes a sort of homogeneous, statistical nature of the film elements) but a quotation ... at once parodic and disseminatory. It is not a specimen chemically extracted from the substance of the film, but rather the trace of a superior *distribution* of traits of which the film as experienced in its animated flow would give no more than one text among others. The still, then, is the fragment of a second text *whose existence never exceeds the*

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[24] Barthes, 'The Third Meaning', *Image Music Text,* 66-7
[25] See Sergei M. Eisenstein, 'Vertical Montage' in *S.M. Eisenstein. Selected Works. Volume 2. Towards a Theory of Montage*, Eds. Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, Trans. Michael Glenny, London:BFI Publishing, 1991, 327–399; see also *The Film Sense*, 74; See also 'The Fourth Dimension in Cinema' (1929) in *S.M .Eisenstein. Selected Works, Volume 1. Writings, 1922-34*, Trans. and Ed. Richard Taylor, London:BFI Publishing; Bloomington and Indianapolis:Indiana University Press, 1988, 181–194.
[26] Barthes, 'The Third Meaning' in *Image Music Text,* 6

> *fragment*; film and still find themselves in a palimpsest relationship without it being possible to say that one is *on top of* the other or that one is *extracted* from the other.[27]

Barthes' conceptualisation of the filmic 'still' is interesting in relation to Deleuze's later insights concerning the liberation of the 'time image' from the 'movement image' in modern film.[28] Whereas the 'movement image' draws on a constructed continuity based on a montage of shots edited together, the 'time image' in cinema is found in an exploration of the montage which exists within one image, or one shot:

> There is no longer an alternative between montage and shot ... Sometimes montage occurs in the depth of the image, sometimes it becomes flat: it no longer asks how images are linked, but 'What does the image *show*?'[29]

Barthes' discussion of the filmic still is relevant not only to the stills taken by Elise Lockwood for *beDevil*, but also to the sensual urging towards movement and sound which is encoded in Moffatt's 'still' photography. I suggest that Barthes' conceptualisation of the filmic still is relevant to how she investigates the ways in which film, like photography, might also be able to capture and 'show' the passing of time and narrative movement within a single shot, or sequence of shots which focus in different ways on the same 'framed' composition of audiovisual images. Moffatt's reference to movement and narrative in her photography is particularly evident as she uses blurred images in the photoseries *Something More*. In the photograph named 'Mother's Day, 1975' from *Scarred for Life* (1994) and in the images in *GUAPA (Good Looking)* Moffatt's use of 'blurring' is more directed towards movement alone, and narrative depends more completely on her serial juxtaposition of photographs.

The first narrative segment of *beDevil* presents a clear example of how Moffatt uses a sequence of shots in order to frame in different ways a particular audiovisual image. In the last 'interview' with the older Rick (Jack Charles), she marks his body with a bandaged cut over the left eye in order to narrate the violence which is inflicted on this character, but which is not shown explicitly in the filmic text. This image of the older Rick is juxtaposed against images of the younger Rick in the closing sequences of this ghost story. The younger Rick's (Ben Kennedy) body also

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[27]Barthes, 'The Third Meaning' in *Image Music Text,* 67
[28]Deleuze, *Cinema 2 The Time Image*, 30–43
[29]Deleuze, *Cinema 2 The Time Image*, 42

has a cut over the left eye as the result of his step-uncle's (Ric MacClure) beating him (a beating which is not described with explicit detail in the filmic text). With relation to the full filmic text of 'Mr Chuck', these visual images of the older and younger unmarked and then marked bodies can be considered in relation to how Barthes describes the filmic still, as 'at once parodic and disseminatory'. In Deleuze's terms, these images 'show' narrative as the movement of time and how this movement affects human bodies. Drawing also on Deleuze in order to describe how Moffatt inscribes human bodies and other objects with the passing of time (for example, ruined houses) Mellencamp notes that 'Her time images transform history, giving us new forms of coexistence.'[30] These 'time images' also can be understood, drawing again on Barthes' as described above, as a 'second text' which tells the following story: violence has happened to Rick as a child, and that violence is still happening to the older Rick. When considered as a second text, such images can be understood further as suggesting that the larger filmic text might also perform a story about how violence visited upon people in childhood can continue to 'bedevil' their lives as adults.

Moffatt blurs the conventional boundaries which exist between different forms of textual practice through both her transpositional intertextuality and also through her more localised referencing towards other specific filmmakers and artists. As described above, this 'blurring' invites not only a consideration of her photographs in terms of Barthes' discussion of 'filmic stills', but also a further speculation on the usefulness of considering Moffatt's photographs as 'still films'. While such a speculation has been already approached (although not in these terms) in Eisenstein's and then Barthes' theories of montage and 'vertical readings' in film, Moffatt's 'speculative' artistic practice in both film and photography provokes a sense of 'estrangement' in receptive performances of her work. She 'makes strange' particular relationships between different forms of textual practice, not only across the borders of photography and film, but also across the borders which exist between different forms of filmic practice. I further address this intra-filmic 'making strange' in my discussion of documentary in relation to *beDevil* later in the present chapter.

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[30] Mellencamp, *A Fine Romance: five ages of film feminism.* (Culture and the Moving Image Series) Philadelphia:Temple University Press, 1995, 270. This work is referred to hereafter as *A Fine Romance*.

Moffatt stretches the constraints of filmic form not only towards photography, but towards a gestural practice which is concerned with 'secrets' which cannot easily be revealed, because of both the social magnitude of such secrets and because their meaning can only be understood in terms of individual experience. In this sense, *beDevil* has a filmic *gest* that can be understood not only as a 'making strange' of 'everyday relationships', but also in the context of Brechtian alienation, performances of reception are directed towards an active 'finding out' of the 'secret' power relationships which exist in society. Such direction towards performances of reception occur in the filmic text of *beDevil* as Moffatt uses various combinations of different artistic forms – music, photography, documentary, fantasy, direct address. Her filmmaking strongly recalls Brecht's descriptions of epic theatre (Chapter 2, p. 49), where a sense of bewilderment about narrative form can provoke receptive performances which can maintain a constant active awareness of the act of reception. In this way, Moffatt's filmic text 'bewilders' also in the way in which it to promotes a sensual mimetic reception whilst at the same time it confronts its audience with a complex, and often obscure, collage of audiovisual style and narrative form. 'In this film', to quote Mellencamp, 'the "unsaid and unseen" can be *experienced*, felt.'[31]

Embodiments of Bewilderment

Naturalism and Artificiality

One significant way in which the entire filmic text of *beDevil* 'bewilders' an audience lies in its juxtaposition of stylised sets against natural, 'found' sets. For example, the 'found' main street in Charleville and the 'found' rubbish dump and old house by the railway siding in 'Mr Chuck'. Similarly, the 'found' sugarcane fields in 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In' are set against the highly stylised sets which were built inside Mentmore Studios in Sydney. This provocation towards such sense of bewilderment through the setting of shorter naturalistic styled sequences against longer obviously artificial ones is not unique to Moffatt's filmmaking. In fact, some of the bewilderment which can be experienced in the reception of *beDevil* is countered by information contained in her introduction to the sixth draft of her script for this film: she attributes her primary stylistic inspiration to the Japanese

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[31] Mellencamp, 'Five Ages of Film Feminism' (18–76) in *Kiss Me Deadly. Feminism and cinema for the Moment.* Ed. Laleen Jayamanne, Sydney:Power Publications, 1995, 60. This work is referred to hereafter as 'Five Ages of Film Feminism.'

filmmaker, Kabayoshi and his film *Kwaidon* (1964). [32] This film uses four ghost stories in order to create four discrete narrative segments within the one filmic text. Moffatt's acknowledgment, however, does signal another significant way in which this filmic text can be understood as an embodiment of 'bewilderment'. This is the way in which Moffatt extends Kabayoshi's form of separate ghost stories in order to present a sometimes confusing array of sub-plots, narrative voices and narrative styles.

Unfinished Stories

The filmic text of *beDevil* does not move through classical narrative processes of exposition, crisis and resolution. In contrast, it invites performances of reception which involve 'guessing' at how individual textual segments can be linked temporally and spatially, both within the three separate filmic segments, and with regard to how the three segments can be linked in relation to each other. In 'Choo Choo Choo Choo', for example, Moffatt uses two primary locations for filming: the town of Charleville in central Queensland and the indoor studio in Sydney in which a huge replica of the old Charleville house was built. The filmic space which is created in this story is further divided into three other subsidiary locations around Charleville, only two of which are narratively linked by the older Ruby's netball team riding in the back of a 'ute' between the town and the 'midden/old house' location at the railway siding at Sommariva. The third location is Chinese Australian Bob Mallee's (Cecil Parkee) 'local' museum. The narrative in this story shifts explicitly, and confusingly, between the voices of Bob Mallee and the older Ruby, across these three filmic 'places', and between a filmically constructed opposition between present and remembered time.

One result of this constant shifting of people through different places and time is a sense, for an audience, that it is nearly always the 'middle' of the story which is being told by the filmic text. In one sense, it is possible to understand Moffatt to be taking the 'endings' of *beDevil*'s three ghost stories out of the world of the filmic text and offering them, instead, to the various imaginations of an audience. Even the order in which these stories are presented directs an audience towards perceiving a lack of narrative closure. Production manager Anthony Buckley commented on how

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[32]Moffatt, 'A sixth draft script', ii

he thought the order was 'wrong'[33], and that 'Choo Choo Choo Choo' should have been the closing story. This story certainly presents the highest degree of narrative closure, as we finally are 'allowed' to see the ghost of the little blind girl tapping her way down the railway track. Moffatt, however, leaves us with several mysteries at the ending of her last story, 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In', including questions about what has happened to Spiros in the warehouse, how the lovers died (and what do the arrows on the road in the closing sequence mean?).

She also uses parallel narratives within her wider plot. These stories are secondary in the telling of her ghost stories, but frequently dominate the emotional reception of this film. The ghost story in 'Mr Chuck' is about an American soldier who drowned in an Australian swamp in World War Two — but this story is told by using another story about the neglect and abuse of children and also the neglect and abuse of Aboriginal people within the penal system. 'Choo Choo Choo Choo' tells the story of a little white girl (played by blond Aboriginal Karen Saunders) who haunts an Aboriginal family maintaining an isolated reach of desert railway track. Yet this story is told, in part, through a 'cooking segment' at an old rubbish dump where the older Ruby's netball team prepares bush food in the style of *haute cuisine*.[34]

Chronotope and Time Images in beDevil

Moffatt shifts her narrative combinations of space and time through quotations from her own life (as discussed earlier), from other people's lives, and in showing how places (landscapes), objects (buildings) and people (younger and older versions of Rick and Ruby) change over time. In Chapter 4, p. 119, I described this film as possessing a chronotope of the Australian Outback, drawing attention to the way in which Moffatt uses the Australian landscape as an active and 'romantic' protagonist in her ghost stories (although only the second story is actually set in inland Australia). There needs, however, to be a way of describing how Moffatt also uses time in film as a way through which to *show* the effects of history. She manipulates the device of filmic 'memory' sequences not only in order to drive (or way-lay) a narrative plot, but also as a way of exploring how 'memory' is an active force in

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[33]Buckley, Appendix B6, p. 316: Buckley thought the story order should have been 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In', 'Mr Chuck', 'Choo Choo Choo Choo'.

[34]For a discussion of this 'cooking segment' which addresses issues of identity, see Mary Zournazi, '"The Queen Victoria of Bush Cuisine": Foreign Incorporation and Oral Consumption within the Nation' (79-89) in *Communal/Plural*, Vol.4, 1994.

'every-day life', recalling Deleuze's discussion of recollection, after Bergson, as a 'virtual image' contained in a contemporaneous present.[35]

With regard to Moffatt's audiovisual imaging of 'memory', I suggest that all three of Moffatt's ghost stories can be usefully described as possessing a motif chronotope of 'childhood memories', thus drawing attention to how perceptions of space and time can be altered through accessing past perceptions. In this sense, Moffatt explores through film the ways in which memories, and thereby 'every-day life', can be reassessed as they are returned to and closely inspected. Her 'memory sequences' can be similarly described using John Frow's words with regard to Holocaust stories: '...memory is here understood as a reconstructive process which works against the irreversibility of time.'[36] In this way, she again invites performances of reception which need to linger over her images in order to understand their 'hidden' secrets.

Narrative Voices in beDevil

In ways exemplified in the above mentioned 'cooking segment', Moffatt uses both on-screen and off-screen voices to carry the often tenuous thread of the ghost stories. These voices also speak more than one language: for example, the voices of Maudie (Mawuyul Yanthalawuy) and the women who catch the snake in the 'cooking segment'. Moffatt allows another story to unfold, however, through this use of different languages, as well as through her placing together of filmic sequences which seem unnecessary to, or not to logically follow the thread of, the ghost stories. This story also unfolds via her juxtapositions of images through deep and changing focus within single shots — for example, when the snake is caught in the 'cooking segment'. This use of many voices which perform outside the main narrative draws attention to how there are many other, perhaps more interesting, stories available within the context of the main story.

In this way, the three ghost stories can be understood to trail their narratives through the telling of several other stories which are in turn told by several different people. One example of this particular narrative style occurs in the third story, when the story of the 'doomed couple', Beba (Pinau Ghee) and Minnie (Patricia Handy), is

[35] Deleuze, *Cinema 2 The Time-Image,* 78–80
[36] Frow, *Time and Commodity Culture*, 10

told by Voula (Dina Panozzo)) and Dimitri (Lex Marinos) within the same sequence of shots, but to entirely different audiences. Voula addresses her son, while Dimitri addresses his business associates. The sequence ends as Voula tells her son that Emelda (Debai Baira), Beba's mother, knows why they were so unhappy. It is not clear at all, however, from this 'explanatory' sequence, nor from the entire filmic segment which is 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In', just why the couple were so unhappy and violent towards each other. This telling of parts of the same story by different people does not so much offer different 'versions' of the same story, as insist that the whole of a story cannot be told without the contributions of several people. The narrative voices that tell this ghost story are either inadequate (Voula and Dimitri) or silent (Emelda and The Artist, Luke Roberts). The final ghost story in *beDevil* can in this way be understood as an 'unfinished story'- a 'secret' which is never told.

The dominant narrative which winds its way through all the stories of *beDevil* suggests a 'meta' narrative about how different ways of 'looking' and different ways of remembering events and situations can constitute crucial components of any story. Moffatt's investigation into how film can interrogate the ways people 'look' at each other is compounded by the fact that she is focusing on the 'looks' which occur between people who need to negotiate several binary, socially constructed distinctions in order to communicate with each other at all. These distinctions include those between children/ adults, men/women, Anglo/Celtic, AngloSaxon Australians/the rest of multicultural Australia, and most significantly with regard to *beDevil* — the stereotypical distinctions which society perceives between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Moffatt's exploration of how 'looks' can be exchanged between people suggests a set of 'looking relations' (Chapter 2, p. 55) which involves an inter-*active* process between 'looker' and 'looked-at'. E. Ann Kaplan similarly describes an active component in 'new ways of looking', in contrast to more passive conceptualisations of the 'gaze'. [37] Later in this present chapter I explore 'looking relations' that are depicted in *beDevil* through discussing Moffatt's use of 'direct address' and 'documentary' filmic forms. Here, however, I want to further discuss some examples of how boundaries between the binary distinctions which constitute racial stereotypes are challenged in this filmic text.

Against the Stereotype — The Exaggeration of Binary Difference

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[37] Kaplan, *Looking for the Other*, xviii.

In her photoseries and in her films, Moffatt accesses and re-assesses past perceptions by working through what Martin calls 'a variety of excessive economies' where the very excesses themselves are necessary in order to understand what he describes as 'the *communicative* function of style'.[38] In *beDevil* one of the dominant stylistic excesses is Moffatt's plentiful use of binary distinctions. Such distinctions are presented in the filmic text of *beDevil* both with subtlety and explicitly through the repetition of visual motifs. One example of such subtle repetition occurs in 'Mr Chuck', as Moffatt explores the binary of imprisoned/not imprisoned through the repeated image of glass as an imprisoning substance in the showing of Shelley (Diana Davidson) behind the glass windows of her home on Bribie Island, and in showing the older Rick leaning on the glass wall in the interview area of a gaol. This repetition of glass as an imprisoning substance draws attention to the binary distinction between imprisonment and social liberty. It also shows how this binary manifests as experience; through showing how 'transparent' glass can be used to create misery through imprisonment, the film offers a resistance to thinking about imprisonment as a simple binary issue (imprisonment versus liberty); it also offers a 'voice' to those who are incarcerated as a result of the judicial system and/or as a result of social convention. An example of the latter can be seen again in 'Mr Chuck' when Shelley knocks on her glass windows to catch the attention of the 'documentary' camera that rises to show us a view of suburbia on Bribie Island.

Acting

Another understated way in which Moffatt explores such differences occurs through her direction of actors, as, for example, when she directs professional actors Lex Marinos and Diana Davidson towards distinct performances of both 'internalised' acting and 'rhetorical' acting (see p. 91). In a more rhetorically styled acting performance, Davidson uses 'nervous' hands and anxious gripping of the viewer via eye-camera contact in order to portray the concerned guilt of non-indigenous Australians who have observed over several years the past and present indignities inflicted upon Aboriginal people. Davidson also uses her voice, in a performance of more internalised acting, in order to depict an illusory serenity together with the very real status of authority which many non-indigenous Australians perceive themselves as possessing over indigenous Australians.

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[38] Martin, *Film — Matters of Style,* 117–118

With reference to more rhetorical acting performances, Marinos comments on how Moffatt knew exactly what kind of acting styles she wanted: she 'asked for a broad approach ... and knew how far to push it.'[39] She juxtaposes both these professional styles against both 'aleatory' acting (see p. 81) and the almost 'aleatory' acting performances of untrained actors. An example of the latter is Banula (David) Marika's performance as Stompie Morphet. An example of aleatory performance occurs as the actual townspeople of Charleville come out to greet the 'netball team' in 'Choo Choo Choo Choo'. Another example of how Moffatt uses acting styles to interrogate various racial stereotypes in Australian society occurs in Cecil Parkee's performance of the smiling, almost ingratiating, Australian Chinese with a 'heavy' Chinese accent in 'Choo Choo Choo Choo'.

Characterisation

In *beDevil*, Moffatt directs performances of reception towards questions about the narrative meaning of the filmic text; she also directs them towards questions about the particular historical situation which exists in the real world as context to the filmmaking performances which create that filmic text. This particular sense of questioning in the reception of this film is also achieved through her approach to characterisation; she does not present easily accessible motivations to her narrative characters. She obscures the identity of characters when they first appear and presents them throughout the filmic text as people who are in the middle of a larger story which is the story of their own lives; they just happen to be some of the people who know of these ghost stories. Moffatt's own words clearly describe this sense that character motivation is not a primary issue in the construction of her filmic narrative:

> Clever plots with twists and turns are never what I go for. *Bedevil* [sic] is like this: we are with these characters, we are going to hang out with them for a while and we see what they get up to.[40]

These characters (if they existed outside the film) might want to show us something quite different from the telling of a ghost story.

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[39] Marinos, Appendix B5, p.310
[40] Moffatt quoted in Conomos and Caputo, '*BEDEVIL*', 30

One example of how the characters in this film constitute much more than vehicles for narrative content occurs in the opening minutes of *beDevil*'s second story, as the audience is introduced to the ghost story by both a Chinese Australian and a group of dark Aboriginal women riding in the back of a pick-up truck. These first few minutes of 'Choo Choo Choo Choo' present two separate challenges to racial stereotyping: a Chinese Australian who runs a local museum which exhibits artefacts from 'white' Australian settlement, and a group of dark, North Australian indigenous women whom Moffatt firmly locates as active participants in late twentieth century Australian society — one of these women (Maudie) wears wrap-around, 'mirror' sunglasses and waves a bottle of Evian mineral water around, while another holds up a 'ghetto-blaster' which is playing the song 'Ghan to Alice'.[41] Moffatt challenges racial stereotypes in this latter sequence in the following way.

Firstly, the people in this filmic segment are women (ethnographic film and Anthropology, previous to the 1980s, had focused on Aboriginal men). These women form a netball team and are shown in the back of a vehicle driven by one of them – they do not 'need' men for either of these activities. Secondly, they were drinking mineral water rather than alcohol (alcoholism has been a major problem for rural communities — both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal). Thirdly, they wear sunglasses (rather than squinting pathetically or nobly into a sun-drenched landscape); these sunglasses make the women's eyes even more impenetrable as their mirror effect reflects the camera's gaze back at the viewer: this complex gaze becomes part of the women's faces. These women are depicted as using artefacts in ways that clearly undermine the stereotypes more usually associated with indigenous Australians; such a sense of subversion recalls *The Movie Star* (1985), Moffatt's photographic portrait of Aboriginal actor David Gulpilil relaxing with ghetto blaster on the bonnet of a car at Bondi Beach.

In the telling of this second ghost story, Moffatt continues to locate Aboriginal women in social settings that transgress stereotypes. For example, in the 'cooking segment', we are shown the reclining woman who waits for the picnic food to be prepared. She is sipping a wineglass full of cool white wine (a $30 bottle of Petumla Chardonnay according to Moffatt's script[42]), rather than the can of beer — a

[41] 'Ghan to Alice', written by Herbie Laughton and performed by Auriel Andrews.
[42] Moffatt, 'A sixth draft script', 43

beverage that is more usually associated with the socioeconomic status of Aboriginal people. Another example occurs in the film's transformation of the picnic into a television-styled 'cooking segment'. The Aboriginal women are depicted as making a form of television that is based on the preparation of *haute cuisine* — a form which, with few exceptions until the 1990s, was the exclusive domain of European male 'expert' chefs.

Moffatt's subtle exploration of cultural difference and cultural convergence addresses Marcia Langton's conceptualisation of those political problems that can result from acts of cross-cultural communication that rely on stereotypical descriptions of 'difference':

> Some say there is among Aboriginal people an almost deliberate unwillingness to be understood. Talking to 'them' is confusing, disorienting. The overwhelming temptation for many non-Aboriginal people is to delegate their responsibilities to an Aboriginal person or committee, or label the nature of the dealing under another rubric such as welfare, multiculturalism, or even criminality. Some ignore, suppress or censor the problem altogether in an effort to avoid the issues, in particular the one of *difference*.[43]

beDevil's assault on racial and gender-based stereotypical differences can be understood as a continuation of a filmic investigation which began with Moffatt's first film, *Nice Coloured Girls*. This film mocks specific binaries which Karen Jennings describes as: 'nice girls/nasty girls; white culture/black culture; the past/the present; predator/prey; exploiter/exploited.'[44] In her second film, *Night Cries — A Rural Tragedy*, she again overturned the stereotypical images. She depicted an Aboriginal woman caring for her very old 'white' adoptive mother, challenging the assumption that 'white' Australians must always 'care' for 'helpless' Aboriginal people.

Moffatt's challenging of racial stereotype does not deny cultural differences between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, but rather explores such differences by referring also to cultural similarities which can be obscured by the more obvious differences. One such reference occurs in Ruby's description of her companions as 'my netball team'. This single description draws many women into a receptive performance that is based on their participatory understanding of how it feels to be

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[43] Marcia Langton, '*Well, I heard it on the radio*', 38.

part of a netball team. In this sense, Moffatt uses a team sport in order to filmically conjure how people from different cultural backgrounds can experience life in similar, if not identical, ways. In this sense, Mellencamp describes Moffatt's depiction of indigenous people in *beDevil* as follows: 'Blacks have depth, but they are not idealized. They also steal, get drunk, beat their children, and quarrel.'[45]

'Documentary' in *beDevil*

Moffatt also challenges the binary distinction between fiction film and the stereotypical status of documentary film as non-fictional, 'truth-saying' (as discussed in Chapter 6, p. 165). In interviews, she describes her reason for including documentary style sequences in *beDevil* as follows:

> I've interspersed fake documentary sequences with very stylised drama segments as a way of allowing the audience to breathe. I interview actors playing documentary characters about their ghostly experiences ... The style of the film is teasing.[46]

and

> With the fake documentary segments, I was freer. There is something very enjoyable about cinema verité [sic], that style, that looseness. I felt I needed something like that as a relief, to get out of the formal quality of what I shot in the studio ... It's like giving the audience a breather.[47]

Moffatt's use of the various 'looks' in cinema, as she constructs her filmic text, suggests, however, an oblique critique of the style of documentary which Nichols names 'interactive' (see p. 170). This form of documentary is based on filmmakers' interactions and interviews with the people whom they are filming. Moffatt makes two significant critiques of documentary film. Firstly, she alludes to participant/observer documentary in the footage of the older Ruby's direct address to the camera, both in the back of the ute and at the picnic site. Secondly, there is the more formal interview style of Shelley's and Rick's interviews to camera in 'Mr Chuck'. Her explicit use of direct address and 'fake interviews' calls attention to both the quantity and quality of discourses from Anthropology and ethnographic filmmaking which have addressed previously this question of cultural 'difference'

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[44] Jennings, *Sites of Difference*, 70
[45] Mellencamp, *A Fine Romance*, 271
[46] Moffatt, in 'Scare Tactics', *Vogue Australia*, June 1993, 57
[47] Moffatt in Claire Corbett, 'Drama Queen', *Rolling Stone*, April 1993, 95

with regard to indigenous Australians. Up until 1990, there were at least 6000[48] films made about Aboriginal people, and most of these are documentaries. In this sense, Moffatt's 'quotation' of documentary film needs also to be contextualised against this immensity, as well as in terms of her critique of *how* documentary filmmakers obtain their footage.

Direct Address

The first critique occurs with the 'fake documentary' segments in 'Choo Choo Choo Choo' which present the older Ruby in direct address to the camera. This address is straight into the lens of the camera. It 'plays' with the camera (wiping the lens, peering into it closely) in such a way that it is possible for a viewer to speculate that no-one is operating the camera — that the camera is set to automatically record 'home movie' style footage. Besides introducing humour, this form of direct address also can be understood to interrogate the way in which documentary film has been used as an 'objective' instrument of observation and 'truth saying' within Anthropology. Christos Tsolkias similarly describes the 'cooking segment' as follows:

> Familiar from years of ethnographic documentary which has contextualised Aboriginal cultural practice as exotic and primitive, as 'other' to the assumed white viewer, this section is joyously subversive.[49]

If this sequence is understood as 'fake homemovie', however, new questions arise about who the intended viewer for this sequence might be, both in the world of the film's narrative, and in the historically real world where this film is publicly released. Deb Verhoeven comments on the confusion which can accompany Moffatt's use of direct address in her 'fake documentary' sequences in *beDevil* and how this confusion can be understood in terms of an invitation to the audience to 'fill in the gaps' which lie within her narratives with information gleaned from the audience's own personal individual histories:

> Although it is not always clear who (rather than what) the camera represents, or even what distance we are expected to take from the action, the invitation to participate is certainly there.[50]

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[48] Langton, '*Well, I heard it on the radio*', 24

[49] Christos Tsolkias, 'Upside down You're Turnin' Me. Tracey Moffatt's *Bedevil*', *In the Picture*, Winter 1994, 22

[50] Deb Verhoeven, 'A film possessed', *Film News* October 1993, 9

This particular confusion about narrative voice, 'who' we are to imagine behind the camera in Moffatt's films, is compounded in the short film which she made subsequent to *beDevil*, *Heaven*, with its anonymous camera-work, documentary style and aleatory acting performances does not cite one of the social actors in its credits. With this later film, Moffatt not only refers to the way in which Aboriginal people were usually not cited as individual people in the many documentaries in which they featured, but also to the way in which mass media (especially television) constantly uses anonymous performances for both 'news' and entertainment. Her use of 'direct address' to camera clearly can be described in terms of Willemen's 'fourth look' in cinema, the 'look to camera'. It also recalls again Hooks' concept of a black, female 'oppositional' gaze:

> Spaces of agency exist for black people, wherein we can both interrogate the gaze of the Other but also look back, and at one another, naming what we see.[51]

In Hooks', Chow's and Willemen's sense of the 'returned gaze' as a site of resistance, Moffatt's use of direct address in *beDevil* draws attention to how the 'cinematic gaze' can be used to unsettle power relations implicit in any social practice that involves 'looking at other people'.

Fake 'Interviews'

While Moffatt uses a humorous, although critical, gesture towards documentary in the second ghost story of *beDevil*, the more formal 'fake interviews' which occur in the first story 'Mr Chuck' are much more ominous with regard to her critique of Anthropology and ethnographic filmmaking. In her discussion of Laleen Jayamanne's critique of Anthropology, Patricia Mellencamp also notes Moffatt's critique of previous 'realist' approaches in representing indigenous Australians:

> Like Jayamanne's critique of anthropology, Moffatt reacts against ethnography, the realist tradition of representing black Australia: 'It's black, we can't experiment with form ... it was always a gritty, realist approach representing black lives'.[52]

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[51] Hooks, *Black Looks*, 116

[52] Patricia Mellencamp, 'Haunted History: Tracey Moffatt and Julie Dash' (127–163), *Discourse* 16.2, Winter 1993–94, 136. Moffatt is quoted in this reference from Shane McNeil, 'Relativity, Roeg, and Radical Forms: An Interview with Tracey Moffatt', *Lip Sync* August./Sept. 1991 1–3, 2

Yet in this first story, Moffatt clearly is using the 'interactive' form of documentary which implicates the filmmaker, and the audience as 'witnesses' to historically real people and their stories about themselves in the real world. The white woman, Shelley, directly addresses the camera, as she appears to answer questions that have been edited out of the filmic text. She looks away from the camera, and into it. There is little doubt about our viewing position — the audience for these sequences is intended to be looking at an interview situation; the tenuous responses and tears also suggest a reference to *cinéma vérité*, and the developments of this form which have become familiar in television news programs. Moffatt herself refers to how she used 8mm film 'for shock value'[53], or in other words, in order to evoke the sense of immediacy which is associated with these news programs.

In the sequences where the older Rick (Jack Charles) speaks to the camera, however, Moffatt throws the vulnerability of her characters back at the viewer, using cinema's 'fourth look' in a particularly powerful way. When the older Rick is talking about his childhood, the actor looks sometimes just to the right of the camera and sometimes directly into the camera. This direct address to the camera (and so to the viewer) suggests a style of documentary filmmaking which uses a crew of only one or two people. Such small crews are commonly associated with the styles of 'interactive' or 'observational' documentary often used by ethnographic filmmakers. In using this 'looking past the camera' towards the 'supposed' person actually asking the questions rather than into the camera itself, the filmic text suggests an interview situation which is fraught with unequal power relations. Nichols also draws attention to how power relations can be biased within an interview situation, in his discussion of interactive documentary:

> The interview is an overdetermined structure. It arises in relation to more than oral history and it serves far more than one function. Most basically, the interview testifies to a power relation in which institutional hierarchy and regulation pertain to speech itself.[54]

His concept of the 'masked' interview (see p. 64) particularly describes those apparent monologues to camera that have been 'set up' by asking questions that are not included in a film's text.[55] Both Shelley's and the older Rick's monologues suggest such a 'masking' of the questioner and of questions asked.

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[53] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo, '*BEDEVIL*', 31
[54] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 50
[55] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 52

As he leans his hands against his clear glass prison wall, the older Rick appears to be in institutional custody somewhere. His 'looking past the camera' can be understood to depict a person who is accustomed to institutionalised authority, custody and interview situations. The documentary filmmaker of such sequences which depict people in these situations can be considered as running an ethical risk in the sense that the resulting filmic text can depict people who are in social situations which can be experienced, and perceived by others, as 'humiliating'. I further take up this issue of documentary film and 'exposure' in my following analysis of *Link-Up Diary* in Chapter 8. For this present discussion, however, it is useful to note how this filmic gesture of addressing an interviewer who is beside the camera-operator can be understood to suggest a particular form of documentary filmmaking which can be perceived as 'intruding' into a person's private space, without the 'informed' consent of that person, and where the interviewer is in a position of authority over the interviewee.

Rather than use the 'gritty realist' conventions usually associated with audiovisual representations of indigenous Australians, Moffatt 'makes strange' the conventions of both non-fiction and fiction. Her use of 'fake documentary' recalls again both Schklovsky's concept of *ostranenie* and Brechtian alienation, as she uses a bewildering collage of cinematic 'looks' and styles in her movement towards a communication of perception rather than narrative. *Ostranenie* is also useful in order to describe how Moffatt works with concepts and the process of conceptualisation rather than strive to communicate 'realist' depictions of people and events. She deals with the 'concept' of documentary rather than documentary itself, in the same way in which Robert Marshall describes how she can be understood to discuss 'the *concept* of childhood suffering'[56] in her photoseries *Scarred for Life* (1994).

In the 'fake documentary' interview sequences of *beDevil*, Moffatt 'makes strange' the conventions of filmmaking by the 'baring of the device' of 'direct address'. In this way, she provokes a reassessment of both how people 'look' at each other, and how such 'looks', when depicted through film, can inform about how people communicate with each other. In its use of 'fake documentary, *beDevil* explicitly and concisely critiques one specific communication that occurs between people via

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[56] Robert Marshall, 'Chelsea Summer', *PAJ* No.60, September 1998 Vol XX, No.3, 60

'looks' associated with the cinematic gaze. This communication is that which occurs between documentary filmmakers and the social actors whom they film, and is most clearly accessible when the woman sipping the glass of Chardonnay in the 'cooking segment' looks directly to the camera lens as the camera focuses on her and says 'Get! Don't do that!'

Moffatt 'makes strange' the conventions by which society distinguishes between fiction and non-fiction film not only as she uses 'fake documentary' as part of her fictional text, but also as she blurs the distinction between creating a fictionalised character within a filmic text and presenting a historically real person as part of a film's narrative. She extends this blurring of fiction and non-fiction within a fictional filmic text beyond the cameo performances of Hitchcock and other historically real characters playing themselves as brief, unimportant contributions to a fictional narrative. Moffatt's use of herself rather recalls the performances of Cassavetes in his own films (see p. 96), and the extravagantly ambiguous use of the actor John Malkovich in the film *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze, 1999). This device of using her own body and history in creating the filmic text of *beDevil* also recalls her use of herself as model in several photoseries: *Something More* (1989), *Pet Thang* (1991), *Scarred for Life* (1994).

PART TWO

Tracey Moffatt as Performance Artist: An Embodiment of Self in the filmic text of *beDevil*

An image of Moffatt's body also appears on a billboard advertising her previously mentioned exhibition at the Dia Center. This billboard features her depicted as a war-correspondent, and appears in Cole's documentary together with her accompanying description:

> And it's all about life being a battle. There is a swamp, and I'm carrying everything, and I'm dodging bullets. Life's a battle. Don't you think?[57]

In the filmic text of *beDevil*, as in the content of this billboard, Moffatt is not simply offering a 'presentation of self'. This use of her own image and history over and over again throughout her filmic and photographic work suggests a comparison with the work of Cindy Sherman, and with the work of Mexican painter Frida Kahlo. The

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[57]Moffatt in Cole, *Up in the Sky*

latter's persistent painting of her own image is described by Harjit Kaur Khaira as constituting 'a nexus of diverse currents and multiple identities'[58] Moffatt's use of actor Luke Robert's body as inscribed with the image of Kahlo in the filmic text of *beDevil* also calls attention to the way in which an artist can use her own actual body as a 'time image' in order to mark the existence and history of a particular colonialism.

In offering her own body as photographic model and filmic actor, Moffatt explicitly claims the 'socially inscribed fraught space' of the performance artist as described by Schneider.[59] She claims this space not only through the use of her own body but also in the sense that she also uses other peoples' bodies as she uses her own, in her own words, as 'props' and 'faces'.[60] I suggest that Moffatt's description of using her own body as a 'prop' recalls Schneider's discussion of the problems which occur when performance artists use their own bodies in order to create dialectical images in their textual practice. Schneider's concept of human bodies as dialectical images in performance art well describes the confusions that can result in the reception of such performance texts. It is useful to consider her words in the context of Moffatt's artistic practice:

> It is somehow in the flickering undecidability between the viewing subject's reading and the object's cracks (exposing masquerade) that dialectical images threaten to work. The challenge in engaging dialectical images seems to lie somewhere between — a space at once exceedingly private, full of located and personal particulars of reading, and radically public, full of socially inscribed dreamscapes, pretexts for reading.[61]

In order to further investigate Moffatt's use of such public/private space, it becomes necessary to make some biographical comment in order to discuss further the stories and images of 'self' which Moffatt uses as she creates the dialectical images which form her art.

A Public, Personal History

Moffatt's mother was Aboriginal and, with three of her siblings, she was fostered by a 'white', Irish-Australian woman who already had a large family. This fostering

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[58]Harjit Kaur Khaira, 'Post-colonial Theory: A discussion of Directions and Tensions with Special Reference to the Work of Frida Kahlo', *Kunapipi* Vol.20 No.2, 1998, 49

[59] Schnieder, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, 53

[60]Moffatt in Vyvyan Stranieri, '*beDevil* in the Classroom' *Metro*, 96, Summer 1993/94, 57

was an amicable arrangement, according to Moffatt, who is quoted by Sebastian Smee as saying: 'My real Mum lived in town and would come and visit occasionally. But she wasn't one for looking after kids, for raising her own kids at all.'[62] To quote Smee: 'She has described both her mothers, however, as strong role models who grounded her in Aboriginal and white culture.'[63] Moffatt's own words describe best how she places herself and her art within the traffic of cross-cultural exchange between indigenous Australians and the rest of society (both Australian and global):

> I was always very — I still am, kind of — political. But I wanted to make my own images, and not work on political documents. I always had my own stories to tell. I remember a few radical Aboriginal leader-types in the early days saying to me, 'Do what you want.' And I just needed to hear that.[64]

John McDonald, who reviewed her photoseries series *Up in the Sky*, remarks on her explicit ambition to seek acceptance 'as a contemporary artist, not as an exponent of Aboriginality.'[65] He comments: 'Yet all her work seems to have a strong autobiographical component, no matter how fictionalised the final product.'[66]

Beyond the truism that all art is informed by the autobiography of the artist, I think McDonald is commenting on the explicit content of Moffatt's work, and in particular the strong use of narrative which threads through all her work, and the returning content of her own history within all her narratives. Moffatt not only uses her own body to make images but explicitly uses her own history to make her narratives.

In *Nice Coloured Girls* (1987), two young Aboriginal women get an older white man drunk and take his money, and Moffatt says 'I used to do it, I used to do it with my sisters ... we're not little angels.'[67] In this sense of undertaking a radical description of Aboriginal women, she can also be understood to be saying — 'We're

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[61] Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, 52–3

[62] Moffatt in Sebastian Smee, 'Multiple Exposure. Tracey Moffatt/Visual Artist', *Sydney Morning Herald* 9/5/1998, 3s

[63] Moffatt in Smee, 'Multiple Exposure. Tracey Moffatt/Visual Artist' *Sydney Morning Herald* 9/5/1998, 3s

[64] ibid.

[65] John McDonald, 'Contemporary Daze', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20/6/1998, 14s

[66] ibid.

not always victims either.' Moffatt describes her personal involvement in the story of *Night Cries — A Rural Tragedy* (1990) as follows:

> I was raised by an older white woman and the script became quite a personal story. The little girl who appears in some of the flashback sequences looks a lot like me. That was quite intentional.[68]

With regard to the three ghost stories of *beDevil* (1993), Moffatt says:

> The stories are inspired by family ghost stories I heard as a child, stories which come from both sides of my background — my white relatives as well as my black relatives.'[69]

and

> I appear in the film as a character called Young Ruby. I didn't want to give the role to anyone else. I play my mother in a way. She died in pre-production, so she'll never get to see it, but I remember telling her what I was going to do and she was really happy with it.[70]

Anthony Buckley described to me his pre-production trip with Moffatt to Charleville with particular reference to how Moffatt wanted to include aspects of her own personal history in *beDevil* [71] where her mother had lived with her family beside a railway siding. He said that although this was the most expensive location for the film, it was clear to him that this setting was crucial to her conceptualisation of the story 'Choo Choo Choo Choo' — so the money was found.

Moffatt's interviews and diaries,[72] published in print and on film, refer to the many influences that she claims have marked her artistic practice. Rather than looking at the intricate detail of Moffatt's many artistic references to other artists and other works, it is interesting to see this referential dialogue as another way in which Moffatt describes herself and her work. When reading Moffatt's interviews and diaries or when listening to her and watching her on documentary footage, I do not

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[67]Moffatt in Mellencamp, 'Haunted History: Tracey Moffatt and Julie Dash' *Discourse* 16.2, Winter 1993–94, 135; as quoted from Anna Rutherford, 'Changing Images: An Interview with Tracey Moffatt' *Aboriginal Culture Today*, Dangaroo, 1988, 152

[68]Moffatt in Scott Murray, 'Tracey Moffatt. Night Cries — A Rural Tragedy.' *Cinema Papers* 79, May 1990, 22

[69]Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo, '*BEDEVIL*', 28

[70]Moffatt in K.L. 'Scare Tactics', *Vogue Australia*, June 1993, 57.

[71]Buckley, Appendix B6, pp.314–5

[72]Excerpts from Moffatt's diaries are include in Tracey Moffatt and Gael Newton, *Tracey Moffatt: fever pitch*, Annandale, N.S.W.:Piper Press, 1995 and Deb Vanhoeven, '"Just Trust the Text, Don't Colour It" Tracey Moffatt offers her personal insights on the making of *Bedevil*', *Artlink*, Vol.13, No.1, March–May 1993.

get any feeling that Moffatt presents this dialogue as 'clues' to understanding her work. Perhaps we can understand the dialogues simply as a form of self-description (this is certainly how Moffatt presents them), as a description of her 'times' and of how she works (recalling Bakhtin's creative chronotope). I find it difficult to separate these texts of diaries and interviews from not only the content of Moffatt's work, but also from her overall artistic style: eclectic yet focused, playful yet full of purpose. In this sense, Moffatt can be understood as an artist who enters society's discourses on identity, gender, and cross-cultural communication by performing herself as an individual who negotiates society in a focused yet playful way. She uses 'playful' humour, but her work can also be understood through Gadamer's concept of more serious transformative play (p. 160). In this latter sense, Moffatt's work devises a complicated interplay of public and private spaces, the experience of which can motivate the 'receptive' player towards a reassessment of the power relations which are inherent in such an interplay.

In this sense of including her own historical self in her films and photoseries, Moffatt can be understood to be devising a performative position of 'truth sayer' in a way similar to that assumed by documentary film (as discussed in Chapter 6, p. 196). Whereas she definitely does not claim this status through her use of 'fake documentary', Moffatt does claim a similar authority of 'truth sayer' as she uses audiovisual images of her own body together with her own personal history as a cumulative 'dialectical image'. By including images and stories of her own self in her artistic practice, she also can be understood to be 'ritualising' (see Chapter 6, p. 162) her own body. In terms of my discussion in Chapter 6, she transforms her own individual body into a 'universalised' one that can be used in order to comment on specific social issues.

One example of how she uses herself as one person, and yet one among many, occurs in 'Choo Choo Choo Choo', where Moffatt plays the young Ruby. This character is a fictionalised portrait of her own mother, while using another actor, Auriel Andrews, to play the older Ruby. The older character is one of a team, a netball team. Juxtaposed against Moffatt's own body, then, are several fictionalised versions of another woman who is her own mother; the images of this woman are only ever shown in the context of other people, specifically, her family or netball team. In this way, Moffatt can be understood to use the 'truth saying' authority of

her own specific history and image in order to authoritatively comment on how Australians relate with each other across the boundaries of gender and race.

In another example of this universalising process, the film *Night Cries — A Rural Tragedy* explores the complexity of relationship between adopted children and their adoptive parents. This exploration can be understood to occur in the context of Moffatt's own experience as an Aboriginal child fostered by an Anglo/Celtic Australian woman. Meaghan Morris notes how this film draws from women's lives in order to inform society about the violent, often 'speechless',[73] anguish which is experienced in rural Australia, particularly by rural women:

> With its more muted representation of the daughter's bodily hysteria ... Moffatt's film tells us that this is how the burden of history actually feels, and where it falls, most of the time.[74]

Recalling Jodi Brooks' description of the 'physicality' of the relationship between a filmic text and its audience (see p. 193), it is possible also to describe the filmic text of *beDevil* as one which communicates 'how the burden of history actually feels' for indigenous people in multicultural Australia. Tom O'Regan's comments on Moffatt's first two films can be applied also to a consideration of the female characters in *beDevil* (including Shelley — the white woman who remembers how Rick's mother 'just gave up'):

> In remembering and foregrounding Aboriginal, white, sexual and familial relations in *Nice Coloured Girls* and *Night Cries* she [Moffatt] claims a positive heritage, an identity and Aboriginal women's agency snatched from this awful history.[75]

In *beDevil,* Moffatt uses her own private body in the public sphere of her art. She exposes her use of the camera as a device through which she can publicly address very private issues. In the sense that she is a filmmaker who allows the public access to images of and stories about her own self, Moffatt can be described in theatrical terms as a performance artist. More specifically, she is a performance artist who employs her own body, in 'direct address' to an audience, in order to describe the way in which individual bodies experience 'the burden of history' in particular

[73]Meaghan Morris, 'Beyond Assimilation: Aboriginality, Media History and Public Memory', *aedon* 4.1 November 1996, 12
[74]Morris, 'Beyond Assimilation: Aboriginality, Media History and Public Memory', 19
[75] Tom O'Regan, *Australian National Cinema*, London and New York:Routledge, 1996, 328

ways. In this way, it becomes possible to consider how Moffatt's filmic and photographic audiences are invited into a performance of reception which involves both an intimate, bodily exchange between artist and audience, a well as a mode of reflection on how the perception of everyday life can be affected by such an exchange.

Her setting of the private against the public sphere also calls to mind Corrigan's concept of political 'terrorism' in film: he claims, after Goffman, that 'embarrassment' is a device which can be used to unsettle viewing situations via a misappropriation of the categories 'private' and 'public':

> Unlike public shame or social shock (especially of the avant-garde kind), embarrassments, for oneself or for others, suggest the emotional pain or awkwardness of not knowing about a socially hidden part of oneself or about some unknown public truth or mores[76]

Moffatt is a fairly gentle terrorist, allowing one to smile (and cringe) at one's own embarrassment. In *beDevil*, she explores how, when allied with humour, distress experienced during performances of filmic reception can be directed towards 'different ways of looking' rather than a 'turning away' — Creed's 'fifth look' in film (p. 60). In this sense, Moffatt uses humour, derived from irony and parody, in order to allow a close inspection of difficult social problems. Her use of humour recalls Maurizio Viano's discussion of Roberto Benigni's film *Life Is Beautiful* (1999). He describes as 'schizoid', the reception of a filmic text in which comedy and tragedy are 'symmetrically' opposed to each other,[77] and quotes from T. Des Pres' article 'Holocaust Laughter' in order to note how this film calls not so much for 'fear and sorrow' rather than an 'undaunted vision'.[78] Moffatt has a similar 'joking' relationship with tragedy, based on irony, parody and mockery and the unholy glee which often accompanies these former strategies within the parameters of Australian humour. This joking relationship does not undercut the dignity of the characters she creates through her art, nor does it subvert the distress that is communicated through her narratives. The filmic text of *beDevil* provides a specific example of Moffatt as a performance artist whose use of images of her own body becomes part of a filmic gestural practice that contributes to Australian society's

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[76] Corrigan, *A Cinema Without Walls,* 207

[77] Maurizio Viano, '*Life Is Beautiful* Reception, Allegory, and Holocaust Laughter', *Film Quarterly*, 1999, 31

reassessment of its behaviour towards Aboriginal people. This gestural practice, together with other continuing acts of reassessment, involves the telling and making of secrets.

A Gestural Practice of 'Secrets'

From the Stolen Generations — Embodiments of Violence

Moffatt's filmic and photographic work enters the discourse of power by exploring 'different ways of looking' at subject matter which draws on the various documented social histories of indigenous Australians. These 'different ways' allude to examining the process of documentation itself (as previously discussed), and to the 'unspoken' quality of this documentation together with the continuing domestic tragedies which ensued. These histories and stories of cataclysmic social disruption only entered the broader public arena of debate and political action during the 1990s. In 1993, the Office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Social Justice Commissioner was formed through an amendment to the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*. In May 1995, two years after the filming of *beDevil*, this Office instigated a National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. In June 2000, the Office tabled in Parliament a Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Reference Committee's Inquiry into the Stolen Generation, which was called 'Bring them home: The "Stolen Children" Report'.[79]

The Report investigated individual histories and the continuing plight of generations of Aboriginal children who were removed from their families under the Australian Government's assimilation policy (at both Federal and State levels), particularly between the years 1916–1969.[80] Due to the span of time over which children were removed from Aboriginal families, and to the persistent debate (continuing after the release of the Report) about whether or not the children were 'stolen', the term 'Stolen Generations' gained common usage in 1999. Langton comments as follows on how the very concept of being an Aboriginal person has been made problematic

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[78]T.Des Pres, 'Holocaust Laughter', in *Writing into the World*, New York:Viking, 1991, 286, cited in Viano, '*Life Is Beautiful* Reception, Allegory, and Holocaust Laughter'.

[79]Information concerning this report is available on the web-site <http:www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice>

[80]A comprehensive reference on this disastrous scheme is *In the Best Interest of the Child? Stolen children: Aboriginal pain/White shame*, authored by the Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation and Tikka Jan Wilson, published by Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation and Aboriginal History Inc., 1997.

by such persistent intrusion by the Australian Government into the domestic space of their family relationships:

> For Aboriginal people, resolving who is Aboriginal and who is not is an uneasy issue, located somewhere between the individual and the State. They find white perceptions of 'Aboriginality' are disturbing because of the history of forced removal of children, denial of civil rights and dispossession of land.[81]

Many individual stories from the Stolen Generations have been exposed through media coverage resulting from the Parliamentary Report and subsequent court cases. Histories have been written using these stories, including Peter Read's *Belonging* (2000) and Henry Reynold's *Indelible Stain?: The Question of Genocide in Australia's History* (2001). Moffatt works through these 'secrets', however, by creating a filmic gestural practice which describes the processes of remembering, forgetting and re-remembering 'secret' stories and events that are suppressed by society. In all her audiovisual work, she exposes the experience of violence that can accompany such histories, without exposing individual 'real life' stories of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. In this way she both describes and protects the privacy of the people from whom she derives the characters in her filmic and photographic texts.

An example of this finely drawn restraint occurs in her depiction of violence in the story of 'Mr Chuck'. Both the younger and older Ricks are shown after physical abuse, both with a cut over their left eyes. Yet the sobbing of the young Rick and the red water washing from the bathroom after his beating is just as confronting as any explicit depiction of the violence which must be presumed to have happened just before. The young Rick's body is not exposed to our gaze at the moment of his humiliation and hurt; yet we are left in no doubt that these things happened because we have seen and heard how this violent passage of time has marked him. In this sequence, Moffatt's filmic text moves towards an expression of what Taussig describes as 'the virtual wordlessness of pain'.[82]

Within the filmic text of *beDevil*, the story 'Mr Chuck' is clearly the most explicit exploration of how violence manifests in the lives of Aboriginal people. In this story, there is also a visual reference to tattooing, as we watch glimpses of the young

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[81]Langton, *'Well, I heard it on the radio'*, 28
[82] Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, 26

Rick tattoo his forehead and the older Rick probe his foot. In this last sequence, the viewer's vision is obscured as the camera changes focus in a way which suggests that such things are not only difficult to see because they are often 'secret', private activities, but also because such things are difficult to watch, in Creed's sense of the fifth look in cinema as the 'look away'. This fifth look in *beDevil* suggests a meta-text which discusses how Australian society continues to 'look away' from the difficult stories of indigenous Australians. This specific presentation of tattooing, in the context of abused individuals, is not simply one of tattoos as self-decoration, but also one of tattoos as self-mutilation. This consideration again suggests a meta-text: one that represents domestic violence, alcoholism, as well as this style of self-inflicted tattooing, as forms of a self-mutilation which, to use Taussig's words again, describe 'the virtual wordlessness of pain.'[83]

Embodiments of Intrusion in the Filmic Text — 'Secret' Sights

In her analysis of *beDevil*, Carol Laseur describes various cognitive 'viewing positions' that are necessary in order to comprehensively understand the film's 'Aboriginal meta-text'.[84] She claims that performances of reception of this film should include an awareness of 'the changing historical and social dynamics that are occurring in Australia to-day.'[85] Beyond its social context, she also claims that *beDevil*'s complex narrative style is due to Aboriginal oral traditions.[86] It needs also to be remembered, however, that Irish culture, which Moffatt acknowledges as influencing her work through her foster mother, also contains a strong continuing tradition of oral narrative. I suggest that the complexity of narrative and audiovisual image in this film relates as well, and perhaps more directly, to her photographic practice. The rather more mundane viewing position for *beDevil*, which must be considered in the context of Moffatt's photographic work, is that of the viewer who returns again and again to 'static' works of art in order to find pieces or aspects of image which are not easily accessible on first viewing.

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[83] ibid.

[84] Carol Laseur, 'BeDevil: Colonial Images, Aboriginal Memories', *OZ film: Australian Film in the Reading Room,* Murdoch University. URL <http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/film/laseur/Bedevil.html> 1994, 3. This article is known hereafter as 'Bedevil: Colonial Images'.

[85] Laseur, 'BeDevil: Colonial Images', 2

[86] Laseur, 'BeDevil: Colonial Images', 5

Subliminal Images

It is interesting to note that Moffatt refers to several visual images in her script as 'subliminal'.[87] In the sixth draft of her script, she even explicitly directs how long one specific image should remain in view.[88] Several such fleeting images occur in 'Choo Choo Choo Choo', including the little ghost's foot which kicks out from behind a wall on the verandah of the old Charleville house. Another example, which both startles the viewer and can only really be appreciated via the 'pause button' on the VCR, occurs when the smiling Anglo-Saxon blond father in 'Mr Chuck' transforms briefly into a threatening phallic image as he momentarily snarls and sticks out a curling sexual tongue.

An example of obscured vision occurs again in 'Choo Choo Choo Choo', when halfway through the 'cooking' segment, the camera pans widely to the left and shakily focuses on women in the distance who are calling out (initially 'off-camera') in an Aboriginal language. The women are holding something up on a stick, but what are they saying? We are offered a 'translation' by Ruby shortly after, but what are they holding? I only saw the 'live' snake with the help of the pause button again on the VCR (once again), and finally it made sense that Ruby's translation remarked on a 'terrine' made of snake.

Although they confuse knowledge with the act of seeing, Mellencamp's words concerning Moffatt's depiction of indigenous people in *beDevil* well capture the meta-text in this film's rich, yet 'hard to see' text of visual images: 'Blacks have depth and possess knowledge, which is not visible to everyone. The audience either gets it or doesn't. What we get depends on cultural knowledge.'[89] In *beDevil*, Moffatt 'requires' an audience to return again and again to her text in order to comprehend the visual 'secrets' which lie hidden as fleeting images within a bewildering array of filmic devices (including photographs, natural and artificial landscapes, multiple narrative voices and plots, together with high volumes of sound and music).

'Secret' Sounds

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[87] Moffatt makes 5 references to such images in 'A sixth draft script', pp23, 28, 33, 43, 52.
[88] Moffatt, 'A sixth draft script', 25
[89] Mellencamp, 'Five Ages of Film Feminism', 60

Carl Vine's soundtrack weaves *beDevil*'s highly stylised narrative sequences together with a 'seamlessly' styled stream of music through which Moffatt intersperses other sounds, dialogue and silence. She uses these latter forms of sound more in the way in which Hollywood filmmakers use music: as devices of incidental emphasis that can enhance and elaborate the musical component of her audiovisual images. She uses both sound and music as equal partners with visual images for 'setting the mood' of her film's narrative. This 'setting of mood' is as important as the stories which are depicted. Moffatt herself comments on how her use of sound in *beDevil* was influenced by the Japanese directors Yasujiro Ozu and Masaki Kobayashi: 'The sound is really half the movie in their case, and it's half the movie in *Bedevil* [sic].'[90] In this sense, the 'everyday' and/or 'theatrical' tones (or grains) of voices are as important, if not more so, than the dialogue which these voices speak. Contrasting examples of how Moffatt uses different vocal tones are presented in the 'calm' reflections of Shelley in 'Mr Chuck' and the theatrical, paranoid musings of The Artist (Frida Kahlo as played by Luke Roberts) in 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In'. Her confident use of high volume levels of sound under montages of closely edited short shots drives the narrative pace of the film. This pace invites performances of reception that accept a sense of bewilderment as inherent in the film's text.

Recalling the work of Nicholas Roeg in *Castaway* (1987), Moffatt overlays sounds that reveal their sources only on closer listening: for example, the roaring of animals and the sounds of fighting and metal objects being dropped or overturned in 'Mr Chuck'. Another example of a 'hidden' sound in this story occurs with the entrance of the young Rick's step-uncle as the three children sit on the bed sharing out stolen lollies. The sound which this character makes seems to be constructed from a dog bark laid over the growl of an animal or a slowed down, human cry of anger. In *beDevil*, such forceful linking of musical themes with almost subliminal sounds invites a particular understanding of the sound track: it is a textual 'voice' that is in dialogic discourse with the visual text of this film. In other words, the soundtrack constitutes a self-contained communicative text which combines with the visual text in performances in order to contradict, resonate with, or emphasise various aspects of Moffatt's filmic narratives. Both the filmic text and the following quotation from

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[90] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo, '*BEDEVIL*', 28

Moffatt suggest that Vine composed the score 'of a piece', with little 'interference' from his director during the time of composition:

> One summer's day in 1993, after having created the entire score for beDevil [sic] in less than three weeks, Carl played me the electrifying opening credit piece for the first time. I think I stuttered, 't.t.that's great', and then began to shake — yes — from excitement; but it was really from the shock of having experienced something entirely new![91]

She allowed the composer to create a cohesive soundtrack which she was then able to work into her filmic text. Her ability to allow her composer (as well as her soundscape designer) such a degree of creative freedom reflects her respect for Vine as a major Australian composer. Sound editor Frank Lipson commented on how Moffatt allowed him to work creatively as he designed the film's soundscape: 'It will probably be a long time before I get to work with that much creative room again.'[92]

Her ability to collaborate to this extent on the soundtrack also reflects both director's and composer's willingness and ability to explore how sound and visual image can be 'woven' into a cumulative text. The complexity of sounds and images in this text contributes substantially towards a filmic gestural practice that addresses 'secrets': the hidden, suppressed stories which can be located only by using a careful, prolonged inspection of both visual and auditory images. My above discussion of *beDevil*'s filmic *gest* of 'secrets' suggests one way in which this film operates as cultural performance. This particular cultural performance is concerned with negotiations between members of a society who keep 'secrets' from other members of society, and with negotiations between people who 'make secrets' and those from whom they are kept.

The Cultural Performance of Secrets: *beDevil* as Transcultural Film

The cultural performance of *beDevil* concerns simultaneous and dialogic acts of communication about two specific experiences:

1.   the experience of being indigenous in Australian society and

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[91] Moffatt, 'About the Music' in *beDevil*'s Press Release, copyright P. Powers, 1993.
[92] Lipson in 'Sound and Soundtrack' page of *beDevil* Production Notes for Ronin's release of the film on video, n.d.

2. the experience of non-indigenous Australians who live in communities which include indigenous people.

The cultural performance of this filmic text addresses this communication between indigenous and non-indigenous people through a gestural practice which suggests that there are and have been 'secret' stories embedded in this communication. These stories are not simply the social context of such acts of communication, but form a 'repressed' aspect of the communication itself. My discussion draws on MacDougall's concept of 'transculturality', as described in the introduction to this Section. I use this concept in order to describe how the cultural performance of *beDevil* is concerned with secret, repressed information, and is also part of a wider cultural performance across the different and shared cultures of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

While MacDougall rejects a link between his concept of transculturality and concepts and practices of linguistic translation,[93] Benjamin's idea of 'translatability' nevertheless has direct relevance for transcultural cinema in the following way. 'Translatability' describes how a literary text can possess an aptitude for being translated in ways that result in a text having a 'continued life' of social significance.[94] In Benjamin's words,

> Translation ... ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages. It cannot possibly reveal or establish this hidden relationship itself; but it can represent it by realizing it in embryonic or intensive form.[95]

He goes on to describe how this expression of reciprocality can rarely be achieved in non-verbal media; similarly, MacDougall refuses to associate film and literature through the conceptualisation of translation. Rey Chow, however, develops an inclusive theory of film as 'transcription' (as referred to in Chapter 1, p. 2).[96] She uses Anthropology's concept of ethnography, together with Benjamin's concept of translation, in order to describe how particular fiction films can be understood as forms of 'new ethnography'. Chow asks: 'How are the "subjective" origins of the previously ethnographized communicated in *visual* terms?'[97] She develops her

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[93] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*, 265
[94] Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', *Illuminations,* 71
[95] Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', *Illuminations,* 72
[96] Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: visuality, sexuality, ethnography and contemporary Chinese cinema,* New York:Colombia University Press, 1995, x–xi
[97] Chow, *Primitive Passions*, 180

argument further using Mulvey's concept of feminine 'to-be-looked-at-ness' in order to describe how a culture which has been 'ethnographised' by another culture can come to talk about itself in the very terms in which it has been previously described/ ethnographised.

In Chow's terms, filmmakers can use the way they have been previously 'looked at' in order to give an account of their own culture and to describe further their own culture's encounters with other societies and cultures. As discussed earlier, Australian indigenous cultures have been ethnographised by very many anthropologists and filmmakers from all over the world. While Moffatt's use of 'fake documentary' segments in the fictional text of *beDevil* directly alludes to this 'ethnographising' of Aboriginal people, she also explores how film can be used in order to discuss various social relationships. These relationships are between people who come from different cultural backgrounds. They are also between people who come from the same cultural background but who experience the world in the context of their culture's relationship with a larger culture that has controlled, and still largely controls, most aspects of their life, including how such people are represented in audiovisual media.

In *beDevil*, Moffatt persistently challenges stereotypes, the boundaries between different areas of textual practice, and how film can be used to explore specifically the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction. These challenges can be understood as part of a cultural performance which is concerned, in terms of both Chow's 'new ethnography' and Kaplan's sense of new ways of looking in film,[98] with finding new ways in which to enter Australian society's discourse about the experience of being an indigenous person. Moffatt draws on this sense of 'looking' as a site of resistance, a sense which is succinctly described by Hooks: 'The "gaze" has been and is a site of resistance for colonized black people globally.'[99] Her film interrogates racial and gender stereotypes through challenging 'looking relationships' in ways which break down the processes of identification[100] that are assumed and represented in the large budget-driven productions of various national and transnational mainstream cinemas.

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[98] Kaplan, *Looking for the Other*, 6
[99] Hooks, *Black Looks*, 116

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In her films, as in her photoseries, Moffatt seems to seize on Comolli's (and Brecht's) concept of an 'active' audience, in order to ask again and again throughout the filmic text that the spectator play what Comolli describes as 'the game' of the spectacle,[101] a game which relies on 'the capturing power of fiction.'[102] As she presents texts which are so rich in audiovisual spectacle, Moffatt draws the viewer eventually past these spectacles in order to ask the broader question: why this particular spectacle? As described above with reference to *beDevil*, the very acts of viewing and hearing are called into question, and this questioning becomes part of Moffatt's artistic text. Gael Newton describes 'the allure of her rich and generous surfaces and scenarios'[103] and the danger which this very richness can herald in the discourse of visual art criticism, where such use of 'surface' can jeopardise the 'content' of a work of art.

Moffatt's filmic texts are 'rich and generous', but their complexity of sound and image provokes a curiosity in their reception, which is directed past the 'spectacle' of the actual filmic text and towards questions concerning the social contexts of the film's filmmaking performances. In her persistent juxtaposition of the easily visible against the 'difficult to see' and the easily heard against the 'difficult to hear', Moffatt's filmmaking, together with the filmic text which she creates, can be understood as a gestural practice which is concerned with the exposure of 'secrets'. This exposure does not, however, necessarily provide resolution with reference to information provided, nor does it offer a resolution which provides a sense of social 'healing' as described in Kaplan's discussion on how film can be used in order to reverse the 'imperial gaze'.[104]

Moffatt's highly stylised textual filmic practice investigates how it is possible to create a filmic reality which addresses how people experience the real world, but in a way which determinedly departs from other documentary practice in film, photography and the written word. Her filmic exploration of what it means for

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[100] I am drawing here specifically on Stuart Hall's discussion of 'identity' in terms of processes of 'identification': 'Who Needs Identity?' in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi:Sage Publications, 1996

[101] Comolli in *Cinematic Apparatus,* 140

[102] Comolli describes 'the capturing power of a fiction 'as relying on the fact that its fictive character is known and recognised from the start, that it is above all an apparatus of deception and thus that it postulates a spectator who is not easily but *difficultly* deceivable ... one who is complicit, willing to 'go along': 'Machines of the Visible', 140.

[103] Gael Newton, *Tracey Moffatt. Fever Pitch*, 22

[104] Kaplan, *Looking for the Other*, xix

individuals and wider society to possess 'shameful' secrets of violence and victimisation vividly recalls Chow's claims for film as a 'new ethnography'. Moffatt, also, is interested in describing social processes and hegemonies through the parameters of fiction: 'I'm not concerned with capturing reality, I'm concerned with creating it myself'.[105] Her filmic reality draws on her own specific creative chronotope in order to describe not only the social experience of indigenous Australians, but also the way film can become part of society's cultural performance of this experience: 'It's not enough to just be black and a film-maker and right on, you have to be responsible for exploring film form at the same time.'[106]

To conclude this analysis, I present here Moffatt's own comments on how she understands this film in terms of its social context. Her words describe both the social parameters of the film's cultural performance and the way in which she perceives her visualisation of space; a visualisation which the above discussion describes as also derived from her photographic practice. When asked 'Do you compare the different domestic spaces of your Koori[107] background and your white background?',[108] Moffatt answers,

> Yes, I look at spaces differently because I have a background in both cultures. But I don't think you can call the stories particularly white or Aboriginal ... I merely reflect what I see in Australian society. For me, Australian society is now a very mixed society, very multicultural — a hybrid society.[109]

Moffatt looks across and into the social boundaries that mark the 'differences' between cultures and other groupings of people which are distinguished by society. She is not so much saying that these differences do not exist, as that they may not exist in the ways in which they have conventionally been understood. Her 'inclusive' approach to investigating Australian society must also be considered in the context of her decision to include trainee Aboriginal filmmakers in her production team for *beDevil*. Moffatt's inclusion of these young people[110] clearly signals an understanding that while inter-racial relations need to be examined by

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[105] Moffatt in Mellencamp, 'Haunted History', 136

[106] Moffatt as quoted from Mellencamp's personal correspondence in 'Five Ages of Film Feminism', 54

[107] 'Koori' is a term which Aboriginal people in New South Wales (and sometimes Victoria) use to refer to themselves. The interviewers should have used the term 'Murri' in relation to Moffatt, whose people are Queensland based. Moffatt herself uses the term 'Murri', as the character Ruby refers to the stories told by her mother's people, in the second story 'Choo Choo Choo Choo'.

[108] Conomos and Caputo, '*BEDEVIL*', 28

[109] Moffatt in Conomos and Caputo '*BEDEVIL*', 28

[110] Anthony Buckley, 'BEDEVIL Production Report No.3', April 1993, Unpublished. In this report, and in his interview with me (Appendix B6, p. 314) Buckley describes how Donna Ives, Kathy Fisher, Janina Harding and Maryanne Sam were included in the film's production team.

Australian society for both the good and bad will which exists within them, there is nevertheless a strong need for 'affirmative action' from people who hold positions of power in relation to indigenous Australians. This need, upon which Moffatt acts, in turn signals clearly a judgement that indigenous Australians are in the more unfortunate position of such power relations in Australian society.

<p style="text-align:center">**********************</p>

As described in this analysis, Moffatt's 'created reality' in *beDevil* constitutes a complex, sometimes inaccessible, text which can be understood as a particular cultural performance which, in turn, is concerned primarily with Australian society's continuing negotiation with indigenous Australians. In addressing such a negotiation, rather than simply presenting the resulting stories of its victims, the filmic text of *beDevil* presents not so much an internally-directed examination of indigenous people's experiences in Australian society, as a 'cross-cultural', dialogic, cultural performance. This performance is based on how such experiences are located within the social context of Australian multicultural society as it developed throughout the twentieth century. Through *beDevil*, Moffatt not only inspects some of the 'repressed stories' of indigenous Australians. She also looks at the ways in which both non-indigenous and indigenous Australians live with each other; she looks at how people use social situations created by such 'secrets' in order to live through relationships that are marked by tolerance and good-will as well as by stupidity and malice.

Chapter 8 *Link-Up Diary:* Cultural Performances of 'Exposure'

Imagine there'd been a battle, on a battlefield. The battle's finished, and everyone's starting to move away, but there's all these wounded still lying back there. Well, someone's got to go back for those wounded. What we're doing is going back to pick up those wounded and bring them with us. Because they can't be left back there.— Coral Edwards[1]

Introduction

The following analysis investigates *Link-Up Diary* as a cultural performance of 'exposure'. I discuss how, in contrast to the 'secrets' which are embodied in the filmic text of *beDevil*, this documentary film deals primarily 'exposing' hidden, suppressed or simply difficult to access information in two important areas of discourse:

1. The exposure of stories about the Stolen Generations, and
2. An exposure of documentary filmmaking, as practised and understood by the primary filmmaker, David MacDougall.

These two 'exposures' draw again on Foucault's theory on the role that 'secrecy' can have in the play of power relations within discourses, as already described in my analysis of *beDevil* (7, p. 201).

Beginning with a synopsis of the film, this chapter briefly describes how the Link-Up organisation began in the 1980s. It then discusses how the filmmaking performances which created the film also can be understood as part of this beginning. My discussion draws both on Nichols' categorisations of documentary film (Chapter 6, p. 169) and on his critique of ethnographic film, with particular reference to 'testimonial' filmmaking practice. I investigate how performances of filmmaking and reception associated with this film constitute a filmic *gest* of 'exposure'. This 'exposure' is achieved through two forms of direct address: not only to the camera and to the camera operator but also through a form of direct address which occurs between the members of the Link-Up team and the clients whom they visited during the time of filming. In this sense, my analysis explores how a filmic text can be considered as a particular cultural performance which involves a public exposure of the private concerns of individual people whom we see and hear in this film.

This analysis also addresses how *Link-Up Diary* can be understood as a cultural performance involving 'ritualised action' (see p. 162): 'private' concerns are 'universalised' and made 'public' through MacDougall's specific filmic practice. My discussion considers this cultural performance by investigating several 'embodiments of self' which occur through this filmic text. I also consider how MacDougall's documentary filmic practice explores a particular kind of intertextuality: between the non-fiction of people's actual lives and the documentary practice of making a filmic text which uses as content edited excerpts from these lives. With specific reference to this film, my analysis considers the subsequent ethical dilemmas which confront documentary filmmakers using 'interview' formats and the observational style of filmmaking.

In this chapter I refer to MacDougall's substantial body of written theory, not only for his conceptualisation of documentary film, but also as a way of understanding how his concept of 'transcultural cinema' can be used to describe those filmmaking performances that crucially contribute to a consideration of *Link-Up Diary* as cultural performance. My discussion describes this film as part of Australian society's continuing 'cultural performance' of relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous people: specifically, those relationships that are involved in the social conflict and distress which continues to be experienced by the Stolen Generations.[2] I argue in this chapter that both the textual content of *Link-Up Diary* and the filmmaking performances which produced this film need to be considered together in order to understand its cultural performance as a documentation of the early days of Australian society's movement towards reconciliation with its indigenous peoples.

Synopsis

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[1] Coral Edwards, in *Link-Up Diary*

[2] There have been many public discussions concerning the political implications involved with the using the term 'Stolen Generations' itself. The most recent (February — March 2001) has involved Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue's (Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council 1990-1995) questioning of her own use of the term to describe her experience of being given by her father into Government 'care'. Both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians subsequently have interrogated the ways in which this term can be used to describe the many ways in which Aboriginal children came to be separated from their parents during the twentieth century.

Link-Up Diary begins with a set of photographs selected by MacDougall from the archives of the (NSW State) Aboriginal Protection and Welfare Board. They show Aboriginal men, women and children sitting outside small, simple shelters made from bark, timber and other found materials. In a voice-over, MacDougall presents a summarised history of how the Stolen Generations came to exist in Australia during the twentieth century. Heard also over these photographs, are the sounds of a locomotive, a typewriter and car traffic. In these opening moments, the filmic text performs, through a disturbing juxtaposition of audiovisual images, a story of the horrific displacement and distress caused by the separation of children from their parents. MacDougall's relaxed and yet deeply concerned voice is heard over images of Aboriginal people in family groups, and in conjunction with sounds of some of the technologies that have been used to take their children away: motor vehicles, trains and the typewriter — a sound which was still associated with large bureaucracies during the mid 1980s. These sounds are finally embodied in the Link-Up office, but MacDougall's keen sense of timing keeps these photographs in place just long enough to provoke a sense of disturbance and interruption; they are replaced by two photographs of the Link-Up team as it was constituted in the week in 1983 when the film was recorded: Coral Edwards, Peter Read and Robyn Vincent. The first photograph of the team also includes MacDougall and his cine-camera.

This expository first segment is followed by thirteen distinct narrative segments which are all contained within the trope of a car 'journey'. MacDougall introduces this journey into the content of the filmic text as he speaks the following words over the image of a frosted glass door panel:

> The journey began for me in front of this door of the Link-Up Office, one morning in Canberra. A year earlier I had been invited by the Link-Up people to spend a week on the road with them, with the idea of some day making a film together. Now, a year later, we had decided upon an experiment. We would see if it was possible in the space of another week on the road to make a film which would represent the work they had been doing for the past five years. But I didn't know where we were going this week, and I hadn't asked.

MacDougall's filmic diary does not include all of the Link-Up team's activities that week, but it does describe much of the business undertaken by the team during that time. Peter Read and his car ferry people to and from meetings which take place in private houses: in a hostel, a car park, a motel room and, finally, on Cronulla Beach

in Sydney. The film also presents two segments that show the Link-Up team as they undertake the research which underpins their work—firstly in their office in Canberra (when the glass-panelled door is opened) and secondly, in the NSW State Archives. There are several scenes which are shot from inside the Link-Up car. These scenes usually present Edwards or Read talking to each other or to MacDougall in order to contextualise the various meetings towards which they are all *en route*.

Once in Sydney, the team meets Willie who has been looking for his daughter Susan. They tell him that they have found her, and would he like to meet her that day since she lives quite close-by? Then they meet with Susan who has been looking for her birth parents. They tell her about Willie and bring her back with them to meet him. This particular meeting is dramatically crucial to the film's narrative. It is a 'reunion' scene, and, as such, is highly charged with emotion. There are other meetings with Aboriginal women (and some of their children) whose stories are also presented in the film – Carol, Joy and Sharon. There is also a return meeting with Susan and her husband Robin who was not present at the previous one. At this particular meeting, the audience learns that they are both unhappy about the authenticity of her relationship to Willie. Interspersed with these are several more meetings which take place between members of the Link-Up team themselves. The final meeting is one of these, and occurs in the form of a valedictory walk along Cronulla Beach. The closing sequence is shot from within Read's car as it travels again through the streets of Sydney. Rain falls on the windscreen as Edwards movingly speaks the words quoted at the beginning of this chapter, explaining why she and Read started Link Up and how it feels to mediate between the Stolen Generations.

'Going Back for the Wounded': Link-Up and The Stolen Generations

Link-Up is an organisation, currently existing in all Australian states, which enables Aboriginal people to locate and re-unite with their families after the dislocation created by various Australian Government policies (see p. 10). Although significant government funding was not provided until several years later, Read dates the beginning of Link-Up to 1980 when Edwards invited him to come back with her to Tingha, where she met some of her relations for the first time. At that time, Edwards was a trainee filmmaker at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in

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Canberra,[3] where MacDougall and his wife Judith were employed as filmmakers for the Institute. Under MacDougall's mentorship, Edwards made a short film about her reunion with her family which she called *It's A Long Road Back* (circa 1981).

As described in Chapter 7, the histories and stories of this cataclysmic separation of indigenous families only entered the wider public arena of debate and political action during the 1990s, although Read himself had written of the Stolen Generations as such in 1981.[4] As the issue began to gain publicity in the early 1980s, several filmmakers approached the Link-Up team. Read described to me[5] how Edwards, as coordinator of Link-Up, chose MacDougall from several other filmmakers who wanted to make a film on the organisation's work, on two conditions. The first was that he be his own sound-recordist as well as camera-operator. The second was that he accompany them on another trip before he shot any footage. The second is a usual research condition in MacDougall's own practice. The first meant a high degree of experimentation for him as a filmmaker, creating a 'double edged sword' of opportunity. As a result of this condition, he released to the public a film which has a much poorer quality of synchronised sound than he would prefer to 'own', and yet the radio microphones which he used enabled a highly significant scene in the film as I discuss later on.

In Read's words, Edwards chose MacDougall 'because he was an ethnographic filmmaker who didn't get in the way, and [he] said "Well, I'll just follow you around, and you do whatever you want to do" rather than staging it. He was the only ethnographic [filmmaker] who approached us, and of course, Coral knew him personally ... she trusted him'.[6] MacDougall himself describes his film as 'more to do with social documentary'[7] than with ethnography; yet the filmmaking techniques that he used in making his previous ethnographic films provided some of the credentials which enabled his making of this film. These include a filmmaking career that spans 34 years; his locations have included Sardinia, Africa and India as well as Aboriginal societies in Australia. His film *To Live With Herds* (1972) won

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[3] This institution is currently named the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, hereafter referred to as AIATSIS.

[4] Peter Read, *The Stolen Generations: the removal of Aboriginal children in New South Wales, 1883 to 1969*, Occasional Paper No.1, NSW Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Sydney, 1981

[5] Appendix B9, p.334

[6] Read, Appendix B9, p. 340

[7] MacDougall, Appendix B8, p.331

the Grand Prix 'Venezia Genti' at the Venice Film Festival in 1972; and in 1995, *Tempus de Baristas* (1992-3) won the Earthwatch Film Award.

Film as Testimony—The Filmmaker as Witness

Apart from one 'interview' scene in the Link-Up car, which was shot some weeks later,[8] MacDougall's filmic style in *Link-Up Diary* draws explicitly on Rouch's *cinéma vérité*. While slipping easily into Nichols' category of 'observational documentary'[9] (p. 169), this film is also 'reflexive'[10] in Nichols' sense of 'reflexive' filmmaking where reflexivity can be understood as 'pointedly political'.[11] MacDougall manipulates such reflexivity in two ways. Firstly, he presents auditory images of himself, both as voice-over commentary and as he participates in the meetings and conversations which he films. The second and most powerful reflexive device, however, lies in his use of a 'diary' format; he particularly acknowledges Chris Marker's films as an influence.[12] Through the reflexive device of a filmic diary, not only does he filmically refer to his presence as a 'witness' to the events which he films, but he also exposes his own involvement and opinions as part of the film's content. This inclusion in the filmic text of MacDougall's own opinions and curiosity, recalls Lucien Taylor's description of how this filmmaker uses reflexive devices in the form of an ethical 'deep reflexivity': 'not simply an aesthetic strategy; it is also an ethical position.'[13]

In the film's commentary, MacDougall presents himself as a witness who is also an 'outsider' to Link-Up. His participation, however, in the social processes of the journey and the meetings which he filmed, together with his explicit social identity as a member of the same society (Australian) to which the other people depicted in the film belonged, mitigate his own view that the film predominantly presents an 'outsider's' view. He was not a member of Link-Up, so strictly speaking, he was an 'outsider' with regard to this organisation. He was not, however, an 'outsider' in Australian society's negotiations with the Stolen Generations. His voice-over commentary, his filmic treatment of people and the context in which he decided (and

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[8] Read in Appendix B9, p. 338: Read said that this interview was 'staged' in order to contextualise Link Up, so that the film did not present the organisation as just 'a bunch of do-gooders running around the country'.

[9] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 38–44

[10] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 56–75

[11] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 64

[12] MacDougall, personal communication

[13] Lucien Taylor, 'Introduction' in David MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*, 18

was chosen) to make the film all constitute reasons which suggest MacDougall as a passionately committed witness to the distress experienced by people directly affected by this complex social issue. In Nichols' terms again, *Link-Up Diary* specifically uses a 'testimonial' form, where 'testimonial' is understood as 'a form of representation that explores the personal as political at the level of textual organisation as well as at the level of lived experience.'[14] This film is MacDougall's filmic 'testimonial' to the Stolen Generations.

Link-Up Diary as Ritualised Action

In terms of my discussion of documentary film as ritualised action, the filmic text of *Link-Up Diary* communicates with a particular socially ascribed authority that is derived from its status as non-fiction film. Through locating himself as both social actor and filmmaker, MacDougall draws attention to and exposes aspects of his own sociopolitical status. He represents himself as an authoritative, powerful, white male filmmaker from a patriarchal 'Western' society. His audiovisual image is frequently associated with that of Read, who is another powerful white male—an academic-based historian with access to State Archives. The two Aboriginal women are shown more 'feminine' roles—as the first and primary people involved in 'linking' and in counselling people. Vincent and Edwards are depicted in the film frequently as offering bodily contact as a form of support and comfort. In what can be viewed as a reinforcement of such gender based stereotypes, Edwards also leaves to Read many of the explanations about the history of Link-Up and the Stolen Generations.

My observations about how this film juxtaposes situations and audiovisual images of people whose bodies mark them as Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people, male or female, provoke the following question. How does MacDougall negotiate the ritualised 'authority' of documentary film where such authority can obscure power relations or reinforce previously established unequal ones? This question can be answered in part by the very way in which he offers his own representation of self as vulnerable to the actions and words of the people whom he films. In other words, his act of filmic witnessing involves a high level of exposure of self, which in turn argues against the egocentric connotations associated with his status in Australian society. MacDougall's particular act of filmic 'exposure' is not simply a matter of

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[14] Nichols, '"Getting to Know You...": Knowledge, Power, and the Body.' in *Theorizing Documentary*, 183

filmic reflexivity, it is also constituted both by *how* it is done, and by *what* is exposed.

My previous description of *Link-Up Diary* as 'deeply reflexive' and 'testimonial' addresses one aspect of how such exposure takes place in this film. In order to address *what* is exposed, it is necessary, however, to observe more closely *how* MacDougall achieves testimony in this film. My observations of this filmic text in terms of racial and gender markings can be developed further by discussing how his use of observational/participatory cinema can also be understood to mitigate any sense of simple stereotyping in this film. At the level of a textual analysis which focuses primarily on a formal juxtaposition of audiovisual images, his location of his own and other people's bodies in this film does expose his film to a criticism based on racial and gender-based stereotypes. Yet he also locates these images within the context of verbal explanation.

For example, through various conversations between Read and Edwards, which are filmed inside the Link-Up car, Edwards is located as the person whose personal experience as 'a stolen child' provided the motivational impetus for Link-Up, and also as the person who, because of this experience, has the most authority with which to engage with other people who have had similar experiences. On the other hand, MacDougall's depiction of Read throughout the film invites a cumulative understanding of Read as a very articulate man who is willing to be 'used' by Aboriginal people in order to enable them in turn to use the labyrinthine Government bureaucracies to which he has easier access as a recognised academic historian.

Audiovisual images, which are vulnerable to stereotypical interpretation, are contextualised by MacDougall as he uses observational cinema in order to show the situations from which such verbal explanations are derived. He shows how people talk with each other, and how conversation can invite personal confidences. This situational form of contextualisation also 'exposes' how such confidences can be conveyed through film in ways which empower individuals at the same time as communicating their social vulnerability. In this sense, it is possible to trace MacDougall's negotiation of the ethical problems involved with documentary film's ability to manipulate power relations by exploring how this film presents other people's filmic testimonial embodiments of self. Both those stories which are exposed through these embodiments and the interpretations which can be made about

how and why people tell these stories, can be understood as *what* is exposed in *Link-Up Diary*. These testimonial embodiments of particular people also can be understood in terms of individuals' voluntary 'universalisation' of their own bodies as they permit MacDougall to use their audiovisual images in his film.

Universalised Bodies

As discussed in Chapter 6, Bell's concept of ritualised behaviour can be seen at work in the way film uses images of people's bodies and lives in order to create an argument or discussion about social issues which are not only particular to those people, but also to issues that are of 'universal' interest to society. For example, in this sense, the filmed reunion between Susan and her father Willie is not only important as a pivotal drama in the film's narrative. It can also be understood as a filmic sequence which has a powerful ability to communicate about other 'meetings' between the Stolen Generations—where such meetings might also be performed with an assumed diffidence in order to cope with embarrassment and, sometimes, a desperate longing. Willie's and Susan's private lives have not only been made public through film. Through giving MacDougall permission to film their reunion, they achieved a form of 'witnessing' which allows certain audiovisual images of their bodies to become sites of communication not only about their own reunion, but also about many other such reunions. In other words, this film 'universalises' their bodies as it depicts the way in which Susan and Willie were reunited.

In Bell's sense of 'universalised' bodies, then, this process of 'witnessing' in *Link-Up Diary* is not undertaken only by MacDougall. It is also undertaken by all the social actors who allowed their images to be seen and heard in this film. MacDougall's *cinéma vérité* footage[15] reveals the specificities of these people's particular bodies and lives. His careful editing of this footage uses the rhythms of their personal interactions in order to further show how the stories of the Stolen Generations impact on people as part of their ongoing lives—even as they meet, greet, talk and drink coffee with other people. In Nichols' sense of filmic 'witnessing', all these social actors can be considered as 'filmmakers'. As filmmakers, they share MacDougall's authoritative status as people who can communicate 'social truth' through the powerfully persuasive medium of non-fiction

film. My discussion below engages further with the ways in which MacDougall's documentary filmmaking practice empowers his filmic subjects through creating a filmic text which enables particular embodiments of self.

Embodiments of Self in the Filmic Text of *Link-Up Diary*: Interviews, Conversation and Direct Address

In my analysis of *beDevil*, I discussed a particular set of institutionalised power relations that can be associated with sequences in 'Mr Chuck': where the older Rick directly addresses the camera as he reminisces about his childhood. I particularly drew a connection between this style of 'address to the camera' and 'interviews' which are conducted by people who have power, through specific circumstances, over the people whom they are interviewing. In relation to Moffatt's allusion to the 'interview' format in *beDevil*, and in discussing the ethical problems which derive from MacDougall's use of *cinéma vérité* in *Link-Up Diary*, it is important to note Nichols' discussion of the various manipulations of power which are made possible by using the 'interview' format in documentary film:

> The interview is an overdetermined structure. It arises in relation to more than oral history and it serves far more than one function. Most basically, the interview testifies to a power relation in which institutional hierarchy and regulation pertain to speech itself.[16]

and

> Like the ethical issues concerting the space between filmmaker and subject and how it is negotiated, a parallel set of political issues of hierarchy and control, power and knowledge surround the interview.[17]

He goes on to describe filmed 'conversations' which can better be understood as 'masked interviews' where 'the filmmaker is both off screen and unheard'[18] and where 'the interviewee no longer addresses the filmmaker off screen but engages in conversation with another social actor.'[19] Nichols discusses this technique as a 'suturing'[20] device that can be used in order to reinforce documentary film's status

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[15]It is interesting to note that his shooting ratio was quite low for this kind of filmmaking, reflecting the limited time frame. He says it was roughly 10:1, Appendix B8, p. 320.

[16]Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 50

[17]Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 51

[18]ibid.

[19]Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 51-2

[20]Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 54. The concept of 'suture' has a long history in film theory, based primarily on Lacan's concept of how the individual desires a unification between representative practice, the 'Symbolic', and a sense of personal identity and/or identification,

as an authoritative vehicle of communication. In *Link-Up Diary*, there are several examples of 'masked interviews' as MacDougall films particular conversations between Read and Edwards, and also between the Link-Up team and the people they meet. These are the conversations which impart information about Link-Up and how it came about, and also those in which individuals describe their searches and meetings with lost relatives. While the interview situation must be contextualised in Foucault's discussion of institutional power as it exists in 'confessional' discourses[21], it is also important to note Foucault's description of how discourse brings into effect both power and resistance to that power: 'Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.'[22] Willie's description of his search for his family is one example of how Nichols' 'masked interview' has been used by MacDougall to subvert power relations: Willie's testimony assumes the authoritative status of documentary film, and so the filmic text confers the status of 'truth saying' upon his (and the film's) exposure of private griefs.

Testimony Through Direct Address in a 'Masked Interview'

One of the most moving examples of *Link-Up Diary*'s inclusive form of testimony, however, occurs in the sequences where the Link-Up team first meet Carol. Using the form of direct address which is constituted by the 'masked interview' situation, MacDougall shows how Edwards and Read work with people in crisis. Through his careful framing and editing of how they placed their bodies in relation to Carol's during this meeting, he enables his filmic text to perform actual aspects of this particular crisis. Whereas the 'staged' interview format of 'talking head' documentaries allows individuals a formal transition from being a private person to a public, if not consciously 'universalised', individual, MacDougall shows in this sequence how Carol was able, nevertheless, to present herself with dignity in the company of the Link-Up team.

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the 'Imaginary'. The way in which I understand Nichols to be using this term, however, draws more on Heath's sense of 'suture' as part of an ideological process of 'interpellation'. See Stephen Heath, 'Narrative Space' (first published in *Screen*, Vol 17, Autumn 1976) in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, 403 and note 41 in Chapter 2, p. 47.

[21] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 18–25

[22] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 101

Early on in this sequence, Carol shows her anger and frustration at her treatment by various Government agencies; Edwards and Read are shown to be seated separately from each other and from Carol, listening intently and affirming what she is saying. As the sequence progresses, Carol is overwhelmed with sadness and is framed as she sits on a sofa with Edwards and Read on either side of her. MacDougall finally frames her sitting alone on the sofa—exposing her bewilderment and sense of aloneness at the end of her story. Using filmic technology, MacDougall enables Carol to be a witness, to a wider audience than her immediate social circle, of the emotional and physical abuse which was inflicted upon her as a result of racially discriminatory Government policy.

MacDougall's use of the form of the interview situation in *Link-Up Diary* can be considered as a filmic necessity: he had to impart information somehow which contextualised the work of Link-Up and he chose not to use 'staged' interviews whenever he could possibly avoid it. It is possible to understand his use of this interview form, however, as not only a device which can impart contextual information on Link-Up, but also as one which, when embedded in *cinéma vérité*, allowed his subjects to impart more than the verbal information which is the dominant kind of information available from 'talking heads'.

'Living' Bodies and 'Talking' Heads

As documentary filmic practice turns more and more often to the 'talking heads' of staged interview situations for its 'revelatory' content, it becomes even more interesting to watch in *Link-Up Diary* how an experienced filmmaker deals with the opportunity both to record and present ethically sensitive footage. This film reveals the private affairs of a group of people who are frequently considered 'victims' of society. In other words, the filming of Aboriginal people, who have already been abused by Australian Government policies, is ethically problematic for filmmakers who are aware of how easily filmic technology can be used to intrude upon people's lives in ways these people may not understand, even when they give permission for filming to take place. MacDougall's use of observational documentary, with its emphasis on long-shots, allows individuals' actions to contextualise their verbal testimony in ways which might allow other interpretations than those directed by expressive, montage editing. His use of shots that remain on screen for up to 80

seconds (for example, the shot that ends with Coral and Susan going to make coffee) recalls issues of cinematic excess and Barthes' 'third meaning' in film, as discussed in Chapter 4.

MacDougall describes as follows how he wanted to make a film on the Stolen Generations which was different from the interview-based documentary *Lousy Little Sixpence* (Alec Morgan, 1983):

> I made *Link-Up Diary* as an alternative way of engaging with this history, which [*Lousy Little*] *Sixpence* had treated largely retrospectively through interviews. I wanted to see the effects of that history in the present.[23]

His last sentence recalls Linda Williams' discussion on the potential for documentary film to 'show' how the past can impact on the present: 'there can be historical depth to the notion of truth—not the depth of unearthing a coherent and unitary past, but the depth of the past's reverberation with the present.'[24] Although such a 'reverberation' can be shown through presenting *how* people describe the past in a formal interview situation, Williams points out that such confrontations between the past and the present can more significantly be depicted through a particular kind of 'repetition'. She describes how *cinéma vérité* can be used in order to work against the trap of equating with 'truth' that information which is given through film by interview subjects: 'In place of a truth that is "guaranteed", the vérité of catching events as they happen is here embedded in a history placed in relation to the past, given a new power, not of absolute truth but of repetition.'[25] Her discussion of *cinéma vérité* in the television documentary *Shoah* (Claude Lanzmann, 1985) is particularly apt to my discussion of *Link-Up Diary* and the Stolen Generations in that *cinéma vérité*, as used in both this film and in this television documentary, is able to portray the impact on people by 'this repetition in the present of the crime of the past'.[26]

In direct contrast to MacDougall's film-making practice, Darlene Johnson's television documentary *The Stolen Generations* (2000) is an example of a more

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[23]MacDougall, personal communication, 8/1/01
[24]Linda Williams, 'Truth, History, and the New Documentary', *Film Quarterly*, Vol.46, No.3, Spring 1993, 20
[25]Williams, 'Truth, History, and the New Documentary', 18
[26]ibid.

contemporary documentary made on the same subject by a female Aboriginal film-maker. This documentary was shown on national television (SBS) in late 2000, and was funded by both the Australian Film Commission and SBS. Johnson uses formally set up 'interviews' in order to present emotionally charged information and actual meetings between people and places in this film are explicitly staged for the film. Although her film succinctly, elegantly and movingly offers information about many issues concerning the Stolen Generations, it is as if Johnson uses a 'poor relation' of *cinéma vérité* in her filmmaking as she explicitly 'frames' her subjects' behaviour 'for the film'. Johnson's images of people meeting with each other and going places provide 'atmosphere' and relief for the viewer from repetitive shots of 'talking heads'; they support rather than drive the film's narrative about the Stolen Generations.

Denis O'Rourke's *Cunnamulla* (2000) is another more recent example of a film dealing with Australian society's negotiation with its indigenous people. Although this film does not focus explicitly in any way on the Stolen Generations, it does deal with how particular indigenous and non-indigenous people interact with each other on a daily basis. O'Rourke's filmmaking is observational and draws heavily on the 'masked interview'. He locates his filmic subjects firmly within the passage of their daily lives as he films them talking to each other and to him. His film is an interesting contrast to *Link-Up Diary* in that it also relies heavily on the 'direct address' to camera of the masked interview and yet combines this interview format with a wider filmic commentary which draws as much on *cinéma vérité* as it does on information imparted during interviews. O'Rourke, however, unlike MacDougall, does not contextualise his material with a voice-over commentary, relying on often cryptic written captions in order to introduce the people whose images are presented in the film.

While MacDougall's verbal contextualisation is not comprehensive, his filmmaking does provide information which allows some level of informed interpretation of the social issues which are addressed through his filmic text. O'Rourke's complete lack of contextualisation, outside of the edited information (often indecipherable) offered by the people he films, makes his film vulnerable to the interpretation that it degrades these people. He also is filmically dealing with social issues that are of crucial sociopolitical importance in Australian society's interaction with its

indigenous people. Without knowing the background of various Federal and State Governments' legislative treatment of Aboriginal people (for example, issues concerning 'deaths in custody', 'Stolen Generations' and 'mandatory sentencing laws'), the young Aboriginal man who is shown in the film as on probation and facing gaol could be considered in a much more negative way than is possible if such information is known. In this sense, MacDougall's and O'Rourke's films are contrasting examples of observational filmmaking which occurred 14–15 years apart. While both films are part of the cultural performance of Australian society's reconciliation with its indigenous people, MacDougall's film includes a level of history as he watches 'this repetition in the present of the crime of the past';[27] O'Rourke's film relies on performances of reception by people who already know this particular history in order to move his filmic text beyond the realm of spectacle.

Link-Up Diary and Ethnographic Film

As noted earlier in this chapter, MacDougall used an observational mode of documentary filmmaking that is often associated with ethnographic film. I also have referred to how he considers *Link-Up Diary* to be a 'social documentary' rather than ethnographic film and I have argued that MacDougall needs to be considered as part of the society which he filmed rather than the 'outsider' which he himself described himself to be. However, his description of himself as an 'outsider' to the situations towards which he directs his filmic practice does in turn constitute one way in which *Link-Up Diary* can be described in terms of ethnographic film practice. It also looks at 'cross cultural' interactions, and to quote MacDougall 'The cross cultural aspect is what makes ethnographic film really distinctive because it provides a point of reference for reflection back on your own society.'[28] Another way in which this film can be considered 'ethnographic' is in its anthropologically relevant subject matter: it addresses a particular cultural performance in Australian society—the performance of socially negotiating the issue of Australia's Stolen Generations.

When he made this film, however, observational documentary and ethnographic film had not yet suffered the savage critique which was delivered through the reception

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[27]ibid.
[28] MacDougall, Appendix B8, p. 331

of Jennie Livingstone's film *Paris Is Burning* (1990).[29] In her discussion of this film and its reception, Caryl Flinn notes that ethnographic film is frequently concerned with communications between film-makers and audiences who are drawn from the same community and where both these sets of people are communicating *about* that society which has been filmed: 'Ethnographic cinema always runs the risk of ethnocentrism, of affirming the power of the viewer at the expense of the Other, despite even the most sympathetic intentions.'[30] Although dealing in nuance, such a description of ethnographic film ethically condemns it by definition. MacDougall is a respected ethnographic documentary filmmaker, and yet, in contrast to Flinn's description of the communication paths involved in ethnographic film, he describes film as an 'irrevocable' inscription of acts of communication between filmmakers and the people they film. He claims that 'in the end, each stands exposed to the other in a new way'.[31] MacDougall's description of all his films as personal acts of communication between himself and the people he films argues against his filmic practice belonging to such an 'ethnocentric' discourse as that which is described by Flinn.

His filmic 'dialogue' with his subjects continues into the editing stage. He has always invited the people whom he films to view a late-stage 'cut' of his films and does not include material which is considered unacceptable by these people. As a result of his following this procedure for *Link-Up Diary*, there was one piece of dialogue which was excluded from the final cut. This excluded footage, however, was not concerned with Susan and Willie. MacDougall's concept of film as inscribed communication between himself and his subjects recalls Bakhtin's dialogic conceptualisations of utterance (see p. 117). This concept emphasises the historical specificity of particular films and literary works as unique communicative events which depend on unique combinations of time and place. MacDougall's filmmaking in *Link-Up Diary* makes concrete the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia as his filmic text enables many different people to bear witness to their own stories and opinions. In terms of documentary film's use of the interview situation as discussed above and also in this sense of film as dialogue it is interesting

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[29]For a discussion of the critical reception of this film, see Caryl Flinn, 'Containing fire. Performance in *Paris Is Burning*' in Barry Keith Grant and Jeannette Sloniowski (Eds.) *Documenting Documentary: close readings of documentary film and* video, Detroit:Wayne State University Press, 1998, 429–445. This work is referred to hereafter as 'Containing Fire'.

[30]Flinn, 'Containing Fire', 434.

[31]MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*, 56

to note again the differences between the filmmaking practices of MacDougall, Johnson and O'Rourke. All three films enable people other than the dominant filmmaker to bear witness to their own stories. It is possible, however, to distinguish between these films, not so much in terms of 'direct address' to camera, but rather in terms of how much each film contextualises such 'direct address' within the daily lives of the people who are filmed. MacDougall's film can be located between O'Rourke's and Johnson's in the way in which he combines both expository and observational modes of documentary film. The film *MABO Life of an Island Man* (Trevor Graham, 1997) also provides an interesting example of how expository and observational modes of documentary filmmaking come together. Towards the end of this film, Graham uses footage that was shot during the day when Mabo's memorial stone was celebrated at his grave in Townsville cemetery and during the day after this celebration. Graham's footage moves towards 'observational' as he films the family's distress the following day when they had to cope with the desecration of Mabo's grave which occurred overnight. MacDougall, however, consistently uses social action in order to create the circumstances of his interviews. In this sense, he uses *cinéma vérité* much more than even O'Rourke, who relies on people stopping their everyday lives long enough to talk to him.

Link-Up Diary as a Journey of Exposure

As noted earlier, MacDougall's exposure of his own self as a participant/observer is not merely reflexive in the sense of 'laying bare the device'. He locates himself both as the principal filmmaker and as an active member of a group of people who are making a journey. Indeed this film perhaps can be understood better as a journey than a diary since MacDougall's understated style of reflexive, observational cinema focuses not so much on his own reactions but draws attention rather to the people who travel with him on this journey and towards the people they meet. Whereas the diary format gives a chronological structure to the film's contents, this film can perhaps better be understood as a week long journey which began in Canberra and took place predominantly in Sydney. This journey also involved the many comings and goings which took place using the Link-Up car, inside which MacDougall situates many of the film's recorded conversations and voice-overs.

Drawing on Brooks' conceptualisation of 'gestural practice in film', *Link-Up Diary* can also be understood, then, as a specific 'journey' in film. Interestingly, in his

discussion of 'travel' with regard to Anthropological ethnography, James Clifford describes Jean Rouch's film *Jaguar* (1967) as follows: 'the cultural "performance" of the film is an encounter among travelers, Rouch included.'[32] MacDougall's travels, as documented in this film however, are not simply 'encounters'. There is a planned itinerary to this journey, which is directed towards various specific outcomes of which the making of a film is only one. Clifford's punctuated use of the term 'cultural performance' recalls not only the theoretic legacy of Turner's concept, but also a recognition of how film can be used to communicate cultural concepts that are involved with the physical movement of human bodies in various modes of 'travel'.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Jodi Brooks describes a gestural practice of 'crisis' in Cassavetes' films: 'a gestural practice which does not simply document or imitate the structuring of experience in modernity, but rather mimetically embraces it as the basis for a new form of transmissibility and narrativity.'[33] I suggest that such a mimetic embracing of experience also occurs in *Link-Up Diary* as a filmic *gest* (p. 192) which provokes two sensual experiences of reception, where these experiences are intrinsic to the film's narrative content. One of these sensual experiences involves the senses of 'vulnerability' and 'exposure' as described throughout my discussion of this film; the other involves a further vulnerability which is involved with the adventure of going on a journey whose destination is unknown. In terms of filmic *gest*, *Link-Up Diary* can be considered a 'journey of exposure'. This sense of 'journey' is similar to Mulvey's discussion on how narratives can use journeys as vehicles to describe behaviour which is marked by an assumption that 'the rules and expectations of ordinary existence are left in suspense'.[34] Mulvey's sense of 'journey' is relevant to the narrative of *Link-Up Diary* with respect to the 'extraordinary' degree of trauma and distress which are revealed through MacDougall's journey to Sydney with the Link-Up team.

The quest behind this specific filmic 'journey of exposure' was to find out how a particular group of people, including the film-maker, coped with the task of finding information about the Stolen Generations and also how they coped with this

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[32] James Clifford, 'Travelling Cultures' in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural Studies*, New York and London:Routledge, 1992, 102
[33] Brooks, 'Crisis and the Everyday', 83
[34] Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 171

information itself. As described earlier, MacDougall was interested in departing from his previous filmic practice in order to depict on film his own personal experience of a particular social process:

> By having that experience, to learn something about what it meant to the people involved, **…** not only the people who had lost their parents, or who had lost their children, but also the Link Up people, Coral and Peter—that was, I think, the objective. It was a kind of experiment to see what one could learn in the space of a week. What could one then put into a form that would be accessible to an audience, that would make sense, that would communicate something to them?[35]

Through MacDougall's careful exposure of how this particular group interacted with each other and with other people, *Link-Up Diary* achieves a gestural practice which is not only one of exposure and journeying, it is also one which suggests an attitude of careful respect towards both people and the complex relationships which are described through this film.

Gestures of Respect

There is a specific gestural practice which particularly marks such an attitude of respect towards the people shown and heard in the film's text. This practice can be described in terms of the number of 'greetings' and 'farewells' which are included in the film. Every meeting between the Link-Up team and their clients is introduced filmically by images of people hugging, kissing, shaking hands or verbally greeting each other. Edwards in particular is depicted in this film as someone who gives not only of her emotions but also the touch of her actual body to these people as comfort and support. Whereas these segments can be understood in terms of MacDougall's intention to portray the emotional burden which was borne by this early Link-Up team, the persistent, recurring imaging of such formal respectful behaviour between people also can be considered to mark a gestural 'showing of respect' towards the people whose lives are presented through the film's text. Through the film-maker participating in these introductions, the audience of the film is not only 'introduced' filmically to these people, but is also shown the appropriate behaviour which enabled such meetings as the film-maker witnessed.

Chronotopes of 'Meeting' and 'The Open Road'

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[35] MacDougall, Appendix B8, pp. 326–7

Such a combined sense of 'actual' and filmic or 'virtual' journeying can also be described through Bakhtin's generic chronotope (Chapter 4, p. 120) of 'meeting' and his closely related chronotope of 'the open road'. The advantages of structuring a film around meetings which take place during a specific 'road' journey are primarily ones of narrative coherence: in Bakhtin's words, 'in the chronotope of the road, the unity of time and space markers is exhibited with exceptional precision and clarity.'[36] Such a chronotope of the 'open road' can also be used, however, in order to describe the sensual experience of being 'exposed'—vulnerable to the possibility of finding out information based on 'meeting' people and where such information may or may not cause distress. While films which are based around 'the open road' chronotope are often categorised and discussed as 'road movies',[37] Bakhtin's chronotopes of 'meeting' and the 'open road' are more useful in describing how the filmic text of *Link-Up Diary* describes a historically real journey. These two chronotopes enable a description of how, in this film, the historically real world is crafted into a textual practice which is not fiction, but which moves beyond fiction while using fictional forms. They describe how performances of reception can be drawn from an understanding of how stories can be told in terms of 'real life' experiences. MacDougall's 'creative chronotope' involves his particular transformation of a 'real life' journey into a filmic text.

Intertextual Relationships Between Fiction and Non-Fiction in Documentary Film

MacDougall's manipulation of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction in film can also be understood to draw on several forms of intertextuality. Through his testimonial filmmaking, MacDougall displays a referential intertextuality (p. 138), for example, which draws on this concept of 'different voices' within one text. As noted earlier, in this sense of heteroglossia, *Link-Up Diary* performs acts of communication between people from different cultures and between people of the same culture. In terms of generic intertextuality (p. 138), *Link-Up Diary* is an Australian documentary film. As such, it needs to be considered part of Australia's body of 'national cinema' in Tom O'Regan's sense that such films 'are sustained

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[36] Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination*, 98

[37] See Corrigan on the combination of the male 'buddy' movie and the road movie in *A Cinema Without Walls*, 136-160

and shaped by local purposes of a social, economic, cultural and national nature',[38] even if these aims are not consciously held by the film-makers.

Referential intertextuality also can be perceived in this film: between MacDougall's textual practice in film and in film theory. Although this film was made before he developed his concept of 'transcultural cinema' (see p. 198), it does provide a retrospective example of 'transculturality' and calls attention to the intertextual relationship which exists between MacDougall's film theory and his filmic practice. There is no 'transpositional' movement (in Kristeva's sense), however, between his two forms of textual practice—writing and film. In other words, he does not write 'filmically', nor can his filmic practice necessarily be considered as 'illustrative' of his written conceptualisations. This intertextuality is not 'transpositional'(p. 140) in the sense that this term can be used to describe Moffatt's movement between film and photography. It can be understood, however, in terms of a particular filmmaking and theoretical problem which is addressed both by his theoretic discussions on observational and transcultural cinema and by his documentary filmic practice in *Link-Up Diary*. This problem is related to problems associated with considering film as text, which I discussed at length in Chapter 4; similarly, MacDougall asks: 'If embodied experience can be turned into text, what sort of text?'[39]

The issues which are addressed by this question can also be considered as another kind of referential intertextuality which can be seen in action as the Link-Up team are depicted entering and leaving the lives of the people whom they are helping to trace their families. This question also suggests an intertextuality between a person's 'private', 'ephemeral' performances of everyday life and the textualising performances of producing and receiving a film whose content is constituted by audiovisual images of excerpts from such a person's everyday life. This is also, perhaps, to extend the concept of intertextuality again, as Kristeva does, towards a transpositional movement between textual practices in order to describe not merely a referencing system between different signifying practices but rather the way in which a particular textual practice can work towards another kind of text.

My consideration of transpositional intertextuality in this instance depends on my previous consideration of how performances of 'everyday' behaviour can also be

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[38] Tom O'Regan, *Australian National Cinema*, 65
[39] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*, 265

understood in terms of Turner's 'liminoid behaviour' and Gadamer's concept of 'transformative play' (Chapter 6, pp. 156, 160). In this sense, documentary film shifts the indicative mood of people's everyday 'this is how it is' behaviour into the ritualised authoritative 'as if' subjunctive mood of the filmic text. The 'as if' performances which are seen as the filmic texts of documentary film differ from the subjunctive performances which constitute fiction film in the way in which the former constantly move towards the indicative mood of behaviour and back again towards the subjunctive. In other words, the indicative mood of 'everyday life' is transformed in documentary film into performances which interrogate 'everyday life' about whether or nor such particular performances can be understood 'as if' they represent wider cultural performances by the societies to which the filmic subjects belong. This movement between indicative and subjunctive moods of behaviour is especially evident in documentary films which use observational filmmaking methods. In *Link-Up Diary*, for example, individual bodies and lives can be understood to be 'universalised': the film is part of a wider cultural performance involved with the many and various stories of the Stolen Generations. The paradox of documentary film lies in how it does not so much 'fictionalise' people and their lives as transposes them into the symbolic, ritualised discourse of social and/or academic discourse.

In this sense, all Levels of performance in documentary film (filmmaking, textual and receptive) draw on an assumption that people's performances of their 'everyday' lives are simultaneously 'ephemeral' and 'textual', that is, open to interpretation. Such an intertextuality between the ephemeral performances of 'everyday life' and the signifying practice of film can be used then to describe the way in which documentary film as a textual practice 'transposes' the 'performance texts' of historically real people's 'everyday life'. This intertextuality can be understood as a way of describing again how documentary film transposes non-fiction into a textual practice which uses the narrative devices of fiction (including chronotopic devices of 'meetings' on 'the open road') in order to structure narrative content which is constituted from audiovisual images of people's actual 'everyday' lives.

My emphasis on performativity in relation to filmic and theatrical textual practice focuses on how such texts can be defined not only through their ability to be interpreted but also on how their interpretation involves a particularly intense pan-

sensual engagement. In this sense, 'performance' texts which are derived from particular instances of 'everyday' life, and which are subsequently transposed into filmic texts, can also perform as communicative behavioural vehicles in an ongoing development of a particular cultural practice. Through this behavioural sense of a transpositional intertextual practice which draws directly on audiovisual images of people's lives, it may be possible to address MacDougall's concern that film be considered 'beyond text'.[40] Although he describes the physicality of film as making necessary a consideration of film as 'beyond text', it is specifically the physicality of the 'aleatory' acting performances of social actors in non-fiction film which provokes a consideration of film as both text and 'beyond text'.

This relationship between the performance texts of people's lives and the performance of film as text also engages with the conceptual issues which Schneider addresses as she describes the work of performance artists in terms of dialectical images, as discussed (see p. 225). Although the social actors in *Link-Up Diary* cannot be described in terms of my discussion of 'performance artists' (with the possible exception of Read), my previous discussion about how documentary film's textual practice universalises individuals' bodies and this present consideration of people's lives as 'performance texts' together suggest a further description of how non-fiction is constituted in documentary film. In documentary film, people's lives and bodies are transformed into dialectical images which are dependent on all the various acts of contextualisation which are accessible through the filmic text. It needs to be noted that different performances of reception can enact contextualisations of these dialectical images, which could in turn produce a fictional filmic text. Documentary film, however, can be distinguished from fictional film in how it derives these dialectical images from the 'non-fictional' bodies of actual people as they are understood to be contextualised within their 'everyday' lives. In other words, this distinction depends on how such a contextualisation draws on the particular relationships which exist between these images and the historically real world from which they are derived. In *Link-Up Diary*, this contextual relationship is clearly marked in the form of a filmic diary as an act of witnessing of historically real events by the primary filmmaker and the people whom he filmed.

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[40] MacDougall, Appendix B8, p. 329

Film's Technology and Intimate Exposures of 'Self': Listening to and Watching People 'Exposed' through Film

As discussed earlier, MacDougall's reflexive enabling of other people's acts of testimony also exposes his own vulnerability as a certain kind of witness. His filmmaking practice locates him as a white male filmmaker who has the power to reveal through film many things about other people. This 'exposed' position was not necessarily taken up consciously by MacDougall, although it is one of the many ways in which a text can implicate the 'moral integrity' of its author(s). Filmmakers inevitably expose the ethics of their relationship to the subject matter of their films to some degree of social critique, as do all people who take up the role of 'author' in any signifying practice.

MacDougall's filmmaking in *Link-Up Diary*, however, also exposes the ways in which he experiments with filmic technology in order to make revelations about people in society. It is interesting to contextualise through his own words the way in which this film challenged his filmmaking practice:

> … virtually all the films we've made (with his wife Judith MacDougall) have been [made] over a long period of time, so this was a film that was to be made in a week. That was something I had never done. And then, to make a film all by myself ... doing the sound, the camera, the editing, everything. That was something I wanted to see if I could do ... the whole aim of the film was to follow through a process.[41]

MacDougall's use of sound also significantly contributed towards a filmic *gest* of 'exposure' and 'journey': for example, the use of a soundtrack of voice-over and 'found' sounds such as that used at the beginning of the film. His use of radio microphones in order to record synchronised sound constitutes another way in which sound in *Link-Up Diary* contributes towards a gestural practice of 'exposure'. MacDougall's difficulties with these microphones[42] often resulted in obscured dialogue and excessive traffic noise during scenes which were crucial to the film's narrative. This distracting and obscuring function of sound in the filmic text, however, can also be considered as part of a gestural practice which is concerned with a wider process of exposure and journeying—the soundtrack of this film emphasises or accentuates the frustration and bewilderment so often accompanying

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[41] MacDougall, Appendix B8, p. 326
[42] Appendix B8, p. 332

such searches for lost parents and family. Although MacDougall did not set out to make such a gestural practice, as a master of observational documentary filmmaking, he made a virtue of this particular necessity. His use of radio microphones attached to Read and Edwards also enabled him to record sound in places where he could not be present with a camera, and in this way he was able to create a startling piece of documentary cinema.

This particular piece of cinema involves four sequences. The first focuses on the Link-Up team meeting with an Aboriginal man, Willie, who is looking for his daughter. Edwards and Read tell him that they think they have found her and explain why. They tell him that she lives near by and would he like them to bring her to meet him that day? Susan is the woman whom they have identified as Willie's daughter, and the film follows the team as they travel on to meet her. She is heavily pregnant and overwhelmed with the news they bring her. This meeting is depicted in the second sequence. It contains perhaps the most disturbing footage in the film: visual images of Read and Robyn Vincent sitting in Susan's lounge room are over-laid with the audio images of Edwards and Susan who have gone into the kitchen to make coffee. Susan is weeping and telling Edwards how hard it was to hear that her mother was dead. Read says that although he could not hear what they were saying to each other, 'We were aware of them having a cuddle, I'm sure ... a little cry.'[43] He described to me what he was thinking at that time as he sat in silence on the floor in Susan's flat: 'I was thinking of what it was going to look like on film, and I was hoping David wouldn't follow them round, it would have been totally inappropriate, and it would make much more powerful cinema by remaining where he was ... which of course being [a good film-maker] is what he did.'[44]

The third sequence follows straight on as the team take Susan by car to meet with Willie, and includes the first moment of their reunion. The fourth sequence occurs later in the film as the team meets with Susan and her husband Robin. This meeting is tense as Susan describes her doubts about the documentation linking her to Willie, and Edwards tells her how they need to go about obtaining extra information and how to negotiate her relationship with Willie while she waits for this information. These four sequences present audiovisual images of elation and social

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[43] Read, Appendix B9, p. 337
[44] ibid.

embarrassment; they expose the private hopes and fears not only of Susan and Willie, but also of the members of Link-Up. Read described to me how these events occurred in the very early days of Link-Up and how they would never happen now because people have learnt much more about how such meetings between people need to proceed. He regrets the way in which Susan's husband was excluded from the reunion between his wife and her father. He also regrets the way the meetings followed on to each other so quickly—'people need time to think about it, assimilate it'. He describes this sequence of four meetings as 'a bloody stuff up ... through inexperience'.[45]

While all sequences involving Susan are startling because of the intimate way in which the film reveals Susan's personal trauma, the second sequence is perhaps the most startling in a cinematic sense because it uses a soundtrack which was recorded without the filmic subject realising at the time that her voice was being recorded. This particular segment of film depends therefore on a style of filmmaking which is increasingly considered as unacceptably intrusive (unless it is given the 'vulgarised' mantle of 'reality TV'). In Read's words, to make an observational film of Link-Up's work 'would scarcely be possible now because everyone is so terrified of invading someone's privacy now ... not because of that film [*Link-Up Diary*], they just got that way anyway, and I feel it's difficult enough doing re-unions on your own, without cameras.'[46]

There are various reasons why it is useful to watch in *Link-Up Diary* how MacDougall carefully presents filmic material which in other filmmaking hands could easily be used to threaten an individual's personal integrity. MacDougall's skilful filmic contextualisation of sensitive biographical material is itself worthy of detailed further investigation. This skill is also worth noting, however, in relation to his written work on film. In company with Godard, Pasolini and Wenders, MacDougall writes about filmmaking. He also is a major theorist on cross-cultural documentary film and on the ethics involved with making this kind of film. Whereas Renov has described documentary film in terms of 'an encounter of the creative imagination with the historical world',[47] MacDougall notes also how documentary film irrevocably inscribes this encounter in terms of the acts of communication that

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[45] Read, Appendix B9, p. 341
[46] ibid.

take place between filmmakers and the people they film, and how this communication involves a mutual exposure of self. He describes the problems of documentary as a result of such exposure as follows:

> I think it actually goes to the core problem of documentary. It's often the things which are most revealing about a situation that are the things which people are most sensitive about ... that they would be most worried about having filmed. So you have a paradox. In a sense, documentary is built on a premise of getting closer and closer to those levels of what matters to people, and yet, those are precisely the areas that are most private.[48]

Although he acknowledges that his presence as a film-maker in such traumatic situations 'remains ethically problematic'[49] with *Link-Up Diary*, he well establishes his claim that 'to show individuals coping with problems is one way of affirming their dignity and the rationality of their choices.'[50] In terms of my earlier discussion of this film as ritualised behaviour, MacDougall's careful use of voice-over and observational filmmaking provides a contextualisation of people and their stories which not only resists the authoritative ethnocentrism of Flinn's ethnographic film, but also moves towards turning authority over to the filmic subjects themselves.

MacDougall's filmmaking, with his use of 'deep reflexivity' and *cinéma vérité*, involves a higher degree of ethical and cinematic risk-taking than that of Johnson's, Morgan's and O'Rourke's. In taking such risks, he allows society a wide range of sympathetic insights into other people's experiences of coping with the past which would be difficult to comprehend as possible without MacDougall's particular 'observational' use of film's technology. His filmic practice brings to mind Benjamin's hope that film could become society's weapon against the 'shocks' administered by the massive bureaucracies and mechanisations of modernity:

> The film is the art form that is in keeping with the increased threat to his life which modern man has to face. Man's need to expose himself to shock effects is his adjustment to the dangers threatening him.[51]

The information about the Stolen Generations which is sensually exposed and compassionately communicated in this film is both shocking and deceptively

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[47] Renov, Note 15 to 'Introduction: The Truth about Non-Fiction', *Theorizing Documentary*, 196
[48] MacDougall, Appendix B8, p. 328
[49] ibid.
[50] MacDougall, 'Ethnographic Film: Failure and Promise', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1978, 415
[51] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, 250

contained within the mesmerising rhythm of a journey by car. In *Link-Up Diary*, MacDougall creates a gestural practice which 'shocks' with a seemingly casual elegance.

The Cultural Performance of Exposure: *Link-Up Diary* as Transcultural Film

My above description of *Link-Up Diary*'s gestural practice as a 'journey of exposure' can also be understood to describe the way in which this film continues to be part of Australian society's wider cultural performance of reconciliation with indigenous Australians. The film was made before Australian society's reconciliation with its indigenous people became a 10 year plan culminating in a social movement which has provoked large numbers of Australians to publicly show their support through petitions to Government, the declaration of 'Sorry Days' and marches (most memorably the march over the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 2000 involving 100,000 people).

The filmmaking performances of *Link-Up Diary* occurred during a period of time when the Stolen Generations were still coming to conceptualise themselves as such. Read's laconic conversational style nevertheless powerfully describes how Link-Up contributed to the turning point when Aboriginal people realised that they had been accepting Government derived lies about themselves and their families:

> Think back in the early eighties, no-one knew bugger-all about this. It's really such an incredible transformation to think, to historicise, to see it in terms of Government policy rather than just 'slack mothers', which many of our clients thought at the time. Even mothers themselves who had lost their children, still blamed themselves. But the community knew nothing about it. We had just as much trouble persuading black fellas that Link- Up needs to run, as white fellas! And it was really the emotiveness of Coral on a few well documented occasions that won them over, just saying to members of the NACC [National Aboriginal Consultative Committee]: 'Look it's not an accident that you haven't seen your sister for fifty years, this was meant to happen'. And you could hear a pin drop ... and pens stopped mid-flight and people stopped looking up their airline tickets ... and you could feel the questions dashing around the room, people saying 'You mean, my mother didn't put me away after all?'[52]

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[52] Read, Appendix B9, p. 339

Read's words recall Langton's comments on how the very concept of being an Aboriginal person has been made problematic for people by such persistent intrusion by the Australian Government into the domestic space of their family relationships:

> For Aboriginal people, resolving who is Aboriginal and who is not is an uneasy issue, located somewhere between the individual and the State. They find white perceptions of 'Aboriginality' are disturbing because of the history of forced removal of children, denial of civil rights and dispossession of land.[53]

Since the release of *Link-Up Diary* in 1987, many individual stories from the Stolen Generations have been exposed through media coverage of the Parliamentary report, subsequent court cases, and in the publication of several books and websites, as referred to in the previous chapter. The political movement that is concerned with the Stolen Generations has produced several other notable and more recent cultural performances through film, including the Australian television channel SBS's *Unfinished Business* series[54] and Graham's previously mentioned *MABO Life of an Island Man.*

In this sense of a continuing social movement, MacDougall's film can be understood to be one of the first public acts of communication that addressed this conflict-embedded issue. Its audience has not been large to date. Its first showing was to a 'packed'[55] house in the old Playhouse Theatre in the ACT. It was released by AIATSIS on video in 1999. The audience of this film over the last 15 years has been largely composed by people already 'converted' to supporting the Stolen Generations. It can therefore be understood to constitute an act of communication which has reinforced a particular social movement. In a confronting yet intimate way, *Link-Up Diary* reveals the way in which people are affected by this issue. It is also a communicative act between people from different cultural backgrounds. Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians are depicted in this film as they work through a conflict that has been going on for 200 years. In this sense, the film explores Aboriginal identity through both Langton's first and third categories of intersubjective experience of Aboriginality:

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[53] Langton, *'Well, I heard it on the radio'*, 28
[54] For a comprehensive review of three documentaries included in this series, see Belinda Smaill's 'SBS Documentary and *Unfinished Business: Reconciling the Nation*', in *Metro*, No. 126, Summer 2001, 34–40
[55] Read, Appendix B9, p. 342

> The first is the experience of the Aboriginal person interacting with other Aboriginal people in social situations located largely within aboriginal culture. The second is the stereotyping, iconising and mythologising of Aboriginal people by white people who have never had any substantial first-hand contact with Aboriginal people. The third is the construction generated when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people engage in actual dialogue, where the individuals test and adapt imagined models of each other to find satisfactory forms of mutual comprehension.[56]

As described earlier, my discussion of this film locates its social actors also as filmmakers. Using Langton's third description of Aboriginality, *Link-Up Diary* can be understood in terms of Rey Chow's 'new ethnography'(p. 238). Chow claims that film can be described as such 'when we turn our attention to the subjective origins of ethnography as it is practiced by those who were previously ethnographised and who have, in the postcolonial age, taken up the active task of ethnographizing their own cultures.'[57] MacDougall's film can be considered in terms of 'new ethnography' in the way in which his filmic practice empowers people who had seldom been considered before as capable of contributing to Australians' discourse about their society.

As discussed in my introduction to Section 3, MacDougall conceptualises transcultural cinema as a discourse which works between perceived boundaries of distinct cultures whilst at the same time challenging such boundaries. *Link-Up Diary* is an 'inclusive' act of communication which reminds us, to use his own words again, 'that cultural difference is at best a fragile concept'.[58] As a particular instance of 'transcultural cinema', this film not only imparts information about people and situations; through its filmic *gest* of 'respectful' exposure it is also a film which performs these acts of communication in a way which empowers both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians to consider themselves part of the same society.

My analysis of *Link-Up Diary* locates this film, at all three Levels of performance in film, within a wide set of cultural performances which have been and are being performed in many different ways. As referred to previously, these performances of filmmaking and reception, together with the performances of the filmic text itself,

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[56] Langton*, 'Well, I heard it on the radio'*, 81
[57] Chow, *Primitive passions*, 180
[58] MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*, 245

are all concerned with a particular social issue: Australian society's consideration of the Stolen Generations. While Read maintains that the film was more about 'ethnographic film' than 'an explication of the work of Link-Up'[59], *Link-Up Diary* is nevertheless both an exploration of documentary filmmaking practice and a cultural performance in film which uses non-fictional textual content order to look through and past previous cultural stereotypes about race and gender. This film uses audiovisual images of bodies which are inscribed with colours which range from white (Read and MacDougall) through the pale brown of the 'stolen generation' of indigenous children who were meant to 'pass' as white (Edwards, Vincent, Carol) and on to the darker colour of the people whose children were stolen (Willie). Kath Schilling relates how one old Aboriginal woman described the linking up of her family over four States and their subsequent meeting as a celebration 'of all the different colours'.[60] As it uses all the personally generous filmmaking performances which contributed to its filmic text, this film irrevocably and crucially captures and performs some of those social interactions between people which underlie Australian society's continuing movement towards reconciliation with Australian indigenous people.

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[59] Read, Appendix B9, p. 341
[60] Kath Schilling speaking at a seminar on Link-Up at AIATIS, 9/10/00

Chapter 9. Performance and Film — Analysis in the Subjunctive Mood

But the camera now precisely allows television or film to do what theatre in the 19th century could not. It permits the resumption of public actions in fully realized locations of history, moving drama out from the enclosed room or the abstract plain space to work-places, streets and public forums. It is in the combinations of three directions, the more mobile dramatic forms of the camera, direct relationship with more popular audiences, and development of subjunctive actions, that I think the future of a new realism lies.[1] — Raymond Williams

Introduction

In this thesis, I have explored ways in which film can be considered as cultural performance: how the experience of film is one of the ways in which society both addresses and seeks resolution to social dramas. I have drawn particularly on Turner's conceptualisation of cultural performances as 'liminal' behaviour and of film as 'liminoid' behaviour. In order to investigate the processes through which film can be understood as cultural performance, I have argued that it is useful to consider film in two specific ways. The first involves film's relationship with the historically older signifying practices of theatre and ritual; the second involves using the first to understand some of the ways in which people use film as a communicative vehicle for fiction and non-fiction and for making distinctions between fiction and non-fiction. These considerations, as introduced at the beginning of my thesis, have constituted ongoing sites of reference for my description of three Levels of performance in film. The following chapter briefly recalls the discussions which I used in order to develop this description and also identifies particular features of each Level of performance, which became significant for my analyses in Section 3. It considers the ways in which these same features are crucial to my description of film both as cultural performance and as a specific signifying practice.

Theatre in Film

In Chapter 2, I addressed three specific areas of discussion in order to establish a definition of theatrical performance that could be used also for the description of film. The first explored performance in both theatre and film as behaviour in the

subjunctive mood, and also as behaviour that depended on concepts of 'presence' and 'absence' for its definition. This discussion also made possible a further one on how this concept of theatrical performance could be related to a consideration of textual performativity. This conceptual relationship had to be explored to some extent because my description of three Levels of performance in film drew both on concepts of theatrical performance and on the experience of film as text. The second area of discussion described Brecht's theories of theatrical *gest* and alienation in the context of film. The third drew on the theatrical practice of 'direct address' in order to explore not only the ways in which film can address an audience as text, but also the ways in which a specific kind of filmmaking performance can contribute to that text; my discussion of the 'performance artist' in theatre provided a way of discussing particular filmmaking performances throughout the thesis.

Three Levels of Performance in Film

In Chapter 1 (p. 3), I referred to how my three Levels of performance in film do not constitute a 'hermetically sealed' theoretic structure. My subsequent discussions of performances 'towards' film in Chapter 3, of film 'as' performance in Chapter 4 and the cultural performance 'of' film in Chapter 5, all confirm these Levels as aspects of the whole experience of film rather than separate experiences that 'add up' to film. They are descriptive and analytic tools; and they can be used in order to describe one another. Two significant examples of this can be understood as follows: firstly, the way in which at each Level, I examine performances that are involved with both filmmaking and filmic reception. Secondly, although I did not specifically describe film's quality of intertextuality until Chapter 5, it is clear that this aspect of film's textual practice is relevant to my discussions of filmmaking and the cultural performance of film, as well as to my consideration of film's performance as text. My two film analyses used my descriptions of film at all three Levels both in order to extend by example my generic discussion of film as a genre of cultural performance, and to examine how each film could be understood as part of Australian society's cultural performance of a specific social drama: the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

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[1] Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters*, 224

Level 1 — Acting as Filmmaking

My description of acting as performance *towards* film focused on the way in which actors can be described therefore as filmmakers. I discussed acting in the context of 'mimesis' distinguished between the 'aleatory' acting of 'everyday life' by social actors and the professional 'mimetic' performances of theatrically trained actors. I related the concept of mimesis to that of the 'performance artist' in order to discuss the way in which film's technology (the cinematic apparatus) mediates filmmakers' profilmic performances and transforms them into filmic text. My discussion concluded that this concept was useful for discussing film because it could be used to describe performance as an embodiment of self which is inscribed by an actor's own personal body, both in theatre and film. The 'performance artist' in film also became particularly important in my discussion in Chapter 7 of Tracey Moffatt as a filmmaker, actor and media personality.

My discussion on acting in the context of 'the actor's body' suggested that if film is to be considered as cultural performance then acting performances *towards* film need to be contextualised in terms of time, place *and* individual identity. I also described performances of filmmaking and reception as 'ephemeral' because conjunctions of person, time and place disappear as soon as they come to be, recalling Phelan's definition of theatrical performance as a process which disappears as it becomes. I argued that the experience of film be considered a signifying practice which does not so much 'capture' such performances as become their transformation into a particular kind of text.

The contextualisation of an acting performance *towards* film in terms of the specificity of a particular actor's body in the historically real world invites a comparison between acting performances by professional actors and by 'social actors'. In making the film *beDevil*, for example, Moffatt used audiovisual images of her own body and personal history. The cultural communication which can operate through this use of her own body and self enables another way of considering the acting performances of social actors in *Link-Up Diary*. Moffatt's filmic presentation of how 'secrets' can be both kept and discussed at the same time provided a strong contrast with the 'exposure' of such secrets by the people whom MacDougall filmed. While Moffatt's film shows how an individual may keep the power to have secrets and make new secrets, MacDougall's film shows how the revelation of

personal secrets can become a political gesture. In other words, *Link-Up Diary* offers a site of discussion on how people can experience distress in ways which empower them rather victimise them. Moffatt's approach to 'secret' information is more ambivalent about whether or not such public revelations of self are politically useful.

Level 2 — The Filmic Text as a specifically 'Intertextual' Signifying Practice

My discussion of performance *as* film in Chapters 4 and 5 drew on Sobchack's phenomenology of film in order to describe performances that manifest as projected film. Drawing on philosophical hermeneutics and Bakhtin's concept of 'dialogic' textual practice, my discussion described how film performs as text; it also located some of the problems which occur when considering film in terms of previous understandings of what constitutes textual practice. These problems were more closely addressed in Chapter 5 where I examined two examples of discussions that confuse the signifying practice of film with that of other texts. My particular examination of film as text drew significantly on both Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia and Kristeva's development of this concept into 'intertextuality'.

I distinguished between three kinds of intertextuality in film: firstly, a generic intertextuality that occurs when a film refers to other films or other generic kinds of filmic practice. Secondly, there is that referential intertextuality that exists between film and other kinds of signifying practices, and between film and 'everyday' life. My analysis of *Link-Up Diary*, for example, referred to the intertextuality between this film and other kinds of signifying practices, including social processes from the 'everyday' world outside the film's text: for example — Government policies and archival photographs. Thirdly, I have used Kristeva's sense of 'transpositional' intertextuality in order to describe ways in which film can use and be used by other practices to such an extent that the resulting signifying practice can only be described through an examination of both seminal practices. The two transpositional filmic practices that have been suggested in this thesis occur between film and photography, and between film and theatre.

My analysis of *beDevil* particularly made use of transpositional intertextuality in order to describe how Moffatt manipulates the relationship between photography and film in both her photographic and filmic work. I also described how her

filmmaking performances can be described via the theatrical concept of a 'performance artist'. Moffatt's blending of theatre and photography in her filmic practice not only makes it possible to describe her artistic practice as transpositional from photography and theatre; it also suggests a considered crossing of boundaries, where such boundaries can be understood as those rules which are involved in the practice of Gadamer's 'transformative play' (described in Chapter 6). Intertextuality between the historically real world and the world of the filmic text can also be described through Bakhtin's concept of the creative chronotope, as also discussed in Chapter 6. My analysis of *Link-Up Diary* used the creative chronotope in order to describe the dialogic relationship which exists between creative filmmaking performances (which take place in the real world) and the fictional, 'as if' world of the textual performances into which they are transformed via film's technology.

My explorations of performance in film through the concept of intertextuality suggest that film is a 'new' signifying practice that not only refers to but also is capable of transposing other forms of practice, including the practice of 'everyday' life, into itself. Film's intertextuality with, and transpositional practice of, other textual practices can produce a coherent, distinct art form as well as a broad mode of communication which was not possible before the introduction of audiovisual technology. By describing film in terms of a distinct signifying practice as well as a genre of cultural performance in Turner's sense, this thesis describes film as 'new' in terms of what has gone before, in spite of and because of its intertextual movements and transpositions.

Level 3 — Filmic Gest and the Cultural Performance of Film

In my discussion in Chapter 6 of the cultural performance of film, I drew again on my earlier discussions of performance as liminal behaviour in order to look more closely at how Turner extended his concept in his description of film as a 'liminoid' phenomenon. I in turn extended this description as I investigated ways in which film could be considered as 'ritualised' behaviour. Drawing on these discussions in Part 1 of this chapter, I went on to discuss three ways in which film can operate as cultural performance. I discussed the ways in which film can be considered a social practice that has a specific relationship with society's concern with 'truth saying'. I also considered the filmic text in Ricoeur's hermeneutic sense of texts as sites of 'meaningful action'. My third discussion, however, was particularly useful in my

film analyses: I extended Jodi Brooks' concept of a 'gestural practice' of 'shock' in the films of John Cassavetes in order to describe more general sense of filmic *gest*. This proved a significant device in my analyses of both *beDevil* and *Link-Up Diary*, but particularly with regards to Moffatt's film.

My analysis of this film was able to locate and describe many textual and filmmaking performances with reference to a pervasive sense of 'secret' information and 'secret' behaviour. This performative sense of 'secrecy' was analysed through the film's narrative content, its complex sound track and its use of 'difficult to see' visual imagery. It was also explored by describing Moffatt's juxtaposition of a fictional story with a story from her own personal history. As described in Chapter 7, this juxtaposition is openly acknowledged by Moffatt in published interviews: it could be described as an 'open secret' that is contained within the experience of this film and which is only partly accessible through the filmic text. This intertextuality between Moffatt's public fiction and her personal 'private' life contributes to my wider description of the cultural performance of this film as significantly achieved through a filmic 'acting out' of how it feels to know about a secret without necessarily knowing all the details of that secret. My analysis considered the filmic *gest* of Moffatt's film as a performance of the experience of 'secrecy'. In *beDevil*, this experience of secrecy presents a 'social *gest*' which was concerned with expressing how it *feels* for individual people in Australian society to know about the Stolen Generations without necessarily knowing specific individual histories.

Drawing on my description of *beDevil* as having a filmic *gest* of 'secrets', my analysis of *Link-Up Diary* located another, related set of gestic performances. My description of this film focused again on 'secret information', but this time in terms of 'exposure'. In contrast to *beDevil*, the filmic *gest* of 'exposure' in the text of *Link-Up Diary* is linked explicitly with the social issues concerned with the Stolen Generations through its narrative content. However, this film's acting out of the experience of 'exposure' can be understood to be concerned not only with information about the Stolen Generations but also with an exposure of the private 'everyday' selves of individual people through the technology of film. In this sense, my analyses of both these films reinforce my suggestion, at the end of Chapter 6, that Brooks' conceptualisation of filmic 'gestural practice' can be extended past filmmaking and textual performances involved in expressing the 'shock' of

'modernity' and 'postmodernity'. My more general description of filmic *gest* in film locates aspects of style as part of specific cultural performances. These can in turn be located within specific social conflicts and negotiations. My discussions extend both Brecht's sense of actorly '*gest*' and Brooks' related concept of 'gestural practice' towards a way of describing in detail how film can address a complex social situation through individual experiences of filmmaking and reception which are brought together through the filmic text.

A theory of filmic *gest* draws attention not only to 'matters of style' but also to how a film can generate a particular communication about how it *feels* to exist in the world in particular ways. Such communication draws on a perceptional address to film which this thesis has described in terms of live theatre, that is, in terms of a performative mode of communication which, although it uses spoken and written language, is not limited to language. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, such communication can be understood in the context of ritualised behaviour and live theatre. The relevance of ritualised behaviour and live theatre to film becomes particularly clear when these two related forms of human behaviour are considered as 'liminoid behaviour'. The practice of both film and live theatre continue to involve many similar modes of production and reception; I suggest that theories of new digital media also could usefully draw on linked theories of film and theatre, where such a link is the consideration of both film and theatre as ritualised and liminoid behaviour. The concept of a filmic *gest* can be used to locate the specific relationships which exist between production, filmic text and reception.

While Bakhtin's chronotope can be used to describe particular relationships between space and time within a filmic text, filmic *gest*, however, as considered in the analyses presented in this thesis, not only uses the relationship between space and time in order to describe 'virtual' and 'real' worlds. It also can be used to describe processes and perceptions of experience which are involved with performances towards, by and through film, as these performances occur in always changing configurations of space and time. In both *beDevil* and *Link-Up Diary*, filmic *gest* can be used in this sense to describe the ways in which these films perform as part of the *redressive* stage of the social drama of the Stolen Generations. In Chapter 1 (p. 14), I asked whether these two films could be considered as remedial performances or as expressive performances of continuing conflict. My analyses suggest that they

perform as both. The cultural performances of both films redress specific wrongs inflicted on Australian indigenous people (for example, racial stereotyping and an inability to communicate in first person). This social drama, however, is one that continues even as it changes. So such cultural performances are also a part of the way in which these conflicts are lived by Australian society. In the context of these films, Turner's third stage of social drama is not simply redressive; it is also the stage that can re-signify conflict and thereby transform its processes.

The Experience of Film as Performance

My comparison of live performance and performance in film, together with my exploration of this comparison in terms of performativity and concepts of presence and absence, has been concerned with finding a way in which to describe how film has its own specific form of presence. This filmic form of presence can only be described comprehensively by considering all the different kinds of performance that are involved in film. This thesis has drawn on conceptual tools from literature and theatre in order to describe these performances. It suggests that it is also, and importantly, possible to describe the ways in which these performances are different from and also similar to those that happen in other signifying practices such as theatre and literature.

Although my above discussion singles out three particular concepts from Sections 1 and 2 for their particular usefulness in analysing *beDevil* and *Link-Up Diary*, I am not suggesting that my tiered discussion of performances in film can be reduced to these. My grounding of the theory in Part 1 and 2 in the analyses of Part 3 rather invites further investigations into how film can be understood in terms of Turner's description of film as 'liminoid behaviour' and as a genre of cultural performance. The consideration of film in the context of other social dramas or other societies would need different emphases in order to describe these Levels of performance in film.

My emphasis in this thesis on performance as both 'towards' an audience and 'as if', liminoid behaviour, focuses on film as a theatrical mode of experience. This mode engages all human sensual experience: it uses historically real, 'performing' human bodies as both 'performance texts' and as the dialogic partners in discourses which are at once intimately personal and very public. My exploration of how someone's

'private', non-fictional, world can become part of many people's fictional and non-fictional experiences does not reduce to a formally 'ritualised' filmic transition from private to public self. In my analysis of *Link-Up Diary*, I have suggested that this transition is a complex transformation of one person's experience into an experience than can be shared by many other people. This sharing occurs through film as the filmed individual's experience becomes understood as a 'universal' point of reference for wider discussion (see Chapter 6, 165–6). Since it occurs through film, however, this sharing is also a particularly powerful pan-sensual experience that is always marked with the image of another person's body; the filmed person can be described therefore, both in fiction and non-fiction film, as someone who bears testimony to a particular narrative, some of which is fictional and some of which is non-fictional. This testimony is always non-fictional in the sense that filmic images draw on profilmic events that occur in the 'real' world, and always fictional in the sense that film is a textual practice. Film 'represents' profilmic events that occur, although in a variety of ways, in the 'real' world. These events may include animated drawings or computer graphics drawn from the image banks of companies such as Cyberware. Such images have value for film as a signifying practice because they have a relationship with the 'real' world. This relationship may be tactile, derived through shape or movement, but it is always such that it draws both conscious and unconscious responses from people; and these in turn create, not simply new memories for people, but new experiences of the world. In this thesis, my discussion of such conscious responses has included Bakhtin's dialogic theory, Brecht's concepts of theatrical *gest* and alienation, and the concept of the 'performance artist' in order to investigate the ways in which film transforms audiovisually recorded images of people into cultural performance. I have used Benjamin's theory of *mémoire involontaire* and 'aura' in order to discuss unconscious responses. I have also drawn from theatre's practice of 'direct address' as a point of access from which to consider various modes of textual address in film.

Through the human performances of filmmaking and filmic reception there clearly exists a capacity for both discursive comment and for complex relationships with other discursive vehicles of cultural performance. My two film analyses investigate the complex relationships between people which film can make possible. After Bakhtin and Holquist, I have described these complexities through the term 'intertextuality'. I have stretched this term and concept beyond the level of textual

analysis in order to discuss the ways in which people use film as individuals and as social groups who are understood to be living 'together'.

The way in which several specific concepts from performance theory have been useful in my examination of film as cultural performance also suggests another avenue for future investigation. This would be a closer look at how 'live' theatre practices and theories can be used to discuss film. It would involve an exploration into the relationship between film and theatre which particularly focuses on how the experience of film can be understood as a dialectical development of an ancient form of human behaviour: theatrical (or ritual) performance for an audience, whether this audience is co-present or 'virtual'.

My interdisciplinary discussion of the ways in which the experience of film can be understood both in the context of textual performativity and in the context of theatrical performance not only suggests how film can participate in cultural performance, it also suggests that a consideration of film as cultural performance requires a description of film as a specific signifying practice which is distinct in several ways. Film's capacity for movement and excess in visual and audio images means it has a specific quality of intertextuality; it also has specific modes of production and address to an audience. It differs from other texts because it pan-sensually communicates through moving audiovisual images that have the capacity to be forever inscribed with images of some of the people who made it. In the context of Turner's idea of cultural performance, this inscription occurs however in the subjunctive 'as if' mood. It is a mood of speculation and play, but it operates in the sense of Gadamer's 'serious play: it does not equate with a relinquishment of the ability to communicate with authority. This authority indeed is derived from conventions that have a long history: the conventions of performance that have evolved through situations of theatre and ritual. The consideration of film as cultural performance invites a mode of cultural analysis which works also in the subjunctive mood of 'as if' behaviour. In this mood, analysis is drawn from an understanding of performance as an 'acting out' of social relationships which exist both among humans and between humans and the 'rest of the world'. Analyses, such as those presented in this thesis of the ways in which particular films perform as cultural performance, need also to be understood as part of that same cultural performance,

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although the degree to which they operate as such depends, of course, on the ways in which they are used by other people.

Appendix A — Synopsis of *beDevil*

Three excerpts from 'BEDEVIL. A Sixth Draft Script by Tracey Moffatt' ('Mr Chuck', pp iii–iv; 'Choo Choo Choo Choo', p 26; 'Lovin' the spin I'm In', pp 56–7)

THE FIRST STORY — 'Mr Chuck'

The Characters

Rick	Late thirties, Aboriginal sinewy, once handsome. A jail bird, lots of attitude and lots of tattoos.
Young Rick 7	Skinny, unscarred, only appears in one scene covered in mud.
Young Rick 11	Beautiful, some tattoos on face.
Shelly	Early seventies, like a sophisticated Shelley Winters. Speaks with authority, but kindly.
Rick's Sister	Appears as a four and nine year old. Cheeky.
Rick's Sister Two	Appears as a five and ten year old. Cheeky.
Blonde Boy	Nine year old white kid, angelic face.
Blonde Girl	Ten year old white kid, angelic face.
Blonde Childrens' Father	Fortyish, Vic Morrow looking. Butch, white.
Rockabilly	Late twenties, greasy hair, lots of tattoos, very cool.
Rockabilly's Girl	Mid twenties, tight clothes, a bit trashy looking.
Mask Face & Swamp Ghost	Played by anyone male and willing to spit mud.

The story is set on a small scrubby island off the coast of Queensland in the present day. Two documentary characters — Shelley, an elderly local woman and Rick, a gaol bird, recount a story: Mr Chuck, a mad American GI during World War II accidentally drove his army duck ashore and into a swamp. He sank without a trace. It was said his ghost haunted the swamp. In flash backs we see a small cinema being built across the swamp and Rick as an eleven year old breaking into it to steal chocolates and ice creams. Despite being flogged by his Uncle for doing so, Rick returns again to the cinema for one last raid but gets a nasty shock. There is a presence lurking beneath the floor boards.

THE SECOND STORY — 'Choo Choo Choo Choo'

The characters

Ruby Morphett	Twenty five, Aboriginal, beautiful, tough.
Stompie Morphett	Twenty eight, Aboriginal. Responsible no nonsense railway ganger.
Ronnie Morphett	Seven, skinny energetic.
Darlo Morphett	One year old plump baby.
Jack *(Sister in law)*	Twenty six, chubby, lovable, gets things wrong. Dresses like a man.
Podge	Ten, brother of Jack. Chubby, naughty .
Older Ruby	Mid fifties, groovy looking, lots of energy, likes to blab and eat.
Maudie	Mid fifties, a very bossy chef, speaks only Aboriginal language.
Bob Mally	Seventy five, white, town gossip, funny.
Old Mally	Late seventies, white alcoholic, very spacey, comical.
Ghost Girl	Seven year old, white, sweet, looks good in lipstick.

Is set in present day Charleville, a western town in Queensland. Documentary characters recount the tale of the ghost train and girl who haunt a local railway siding. We meet older Ruby and her rowdy gang of women friends as they return to the old railway siding for a picnic of designer bush food. We see Ruby in flashback living with her young family at the siding. We follow the family's spooky experiences with the mysterious locomotive and the unfortunate ghost girl.

THE THIRD STORY — 'Lovin The Spin I'm In'

The characters

Dimitri	Greek Australian. 40ish, designer suits, a very likeable con artist. Owner of the Deli Cafe.
Voula	Greek Australian, mid 30s, gorgeous, plump, no nonsense air. Wife of Dimitri.
Spiro (14)	Greek Australian, thin, gawky, comical. Attempts to be cool but never pulls it off. Son of Dimitri and Voula.

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Spiro (2)	Chubby, lots of dark hair.
Beba	Islander, early 20s, dancer's body, made mean and crazy by the spells cast on him.
Minnie	White North Queensland hippy looking. Waif like, wears thin see through clothes. Disturbed girl friend of Beba's.
Emelda	Islander, 50ish, statuesque, wears sarongs, shell combs in hair. Always in mourning. Beba's mother
Conos	Greek Australian, 40ish, big, tough, impatient. Businessman.
Fong	Chinese Australian, 40ish, smart, sharp, low tolerance for anything different. Businessman.
The Artist	White Australian male, 30s. Dead ringer for Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Lots of beads and swishing skirts. Squatter.
Roxy	Islander, late 20s. Tall, rough and beautiful looking. Party girl.
Bob	Islander, early 50s. Elegant, charmer.
Rollerblade Boy 1	Italian, 11 , spoilt, bratty looking.
Rollerblade Boy 2	White Australian, 11, silent.
Islander Extras	Two adult males, a six year old boy and a baby.

The setting is a desolate docklands area in a tropical northern Australian city. The action revolves around a rundown warehouse flat which is restlessly haunted by the ghosts of young lovers Beba and his crazy hippy girl friend Minnie who died there.

Across the street in the trendy Deli Cafe Spiro, a gawky teenager grows more and more intrigued with the haunting. Meanwhile his father Dimitri, a charming but ruthless businessman is desperate to sell off the old family warehouse and tries to appease his new would be buyers Mr Conos and Mr Fong.

At night strange noises, smoke fields and dark shapes emanate from within the warehouse, they 'bedevil' those who dare to tamper with their old stomping ground.

Appendix B

The following interviews were recorded, but the text cannot be made available online due to confidentiality constraints. For details please contact the author, Dr Catherine Summerhayes, Film Studies, School of Humanities, ANU.

Appendix B1

Interview with Robin Scholes, producer of *Once Were Warriors*, 17 March 1999, Auckland, New Zealand

Appendix B2

Interview with Riwia Brown, scriptwriter, *Once Were Warriors*, 19 March 1999, Paekakariki, New Zealand

Appendix B3

Interview with Leonie Pihama, Maori academic commentator on *Once Were Warriors*, 17 March 1999, Auckland, New Zealand

Appendix B4

Interview with Alan Duff, author of the novel *Once Were Warriors*, 17 May 1999, Canberra

Appendix B5

Interview with Lex Marinos, actor in 'Lovin' the Spin I'm In', *beDevil*, 13 January 1999, Sydney

Appendix B6

Interview with Anthony Buckley, producer of *beDevil,* 30 November 1999, Sydney

Appendix B7

Interview with Bob Connolly and Robyn Anderson, directors, *Rats in the Ranks*, 14 January 1999, Glebe, Sydney

Appendix B8

Interview with David MacDougall, filmmaker, *Link-Up Diary*, Australian National University, 2 November 1999

Appendix B9

Interview with Dr Peter Read, social actor in *Link-Up Diary*, Australian National University, 4 May 1999

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                                                S.r.L.(Italy), Cino del Ducca (Italy), 115 mins.

Act of Seeing with One's Own   1971. Stan Brakhage, 32 mins.
Eyes

Barb Wire   1996. David Hogan, Dark Horse Entertainment,
                                                Polygram Entertainment (US) 109 mins.

BeDevil   1993. Tracey Moffatt, Prod. Anthony Buckley
                                                and Carol Hughes, 90 mins.

Being John Malkovich   1999. Spike Jonze, Gramercy Pictures,
                                                Propaganda Films U.S. Single Cell Pictures, 109
                                                mins.

Black Harvest   1992. Bob Connolly and Robyn Anderson,
                                                Arundel Productions, 90 mins.

Castaway   1987. Nicolas Roeg, Cannon group, United
                                                Artists (US), United British artists (UBA), 117
                                                mins.

Cunnamulla   2000. Dennis O'Rourke, ABC-TV (Australia),
                                                Camerawork Ltd. (Australia), Film Australia
                                                (Australia) 82 mins.

Dancer in the Dark   2000. Lars von Trier, 140 mins.

Eyes Wide Shut   1999. Stanley Kubrick, Hobby Films, Pole Star,
                                                Warner Bros.(US),159 mins.

Facing the Music   2001. Bob Connolly and Robyn Anderson, 90
                                                mins.

Festen   1998. Thomas Vinterberg, Danmarks Radio (DR)
                                                (Denmark), Nimbus Film A/S, SVT Drama, 105
                                                mins.

Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within   2001. Hironobu Sakaguchi and Motonori
                                                Sakakibara, Chris Lee Productions, Square Co.
                                                Ltd.(Japan), 106 mins.

Heaven   1997. Matt Jacobson and Tracey Moffatt,
                                                videotape, Prod. Alan Bloom Michael Divic, Matt
                                                Jacobson, Robert Vianello, 28 mins.

It's a Long Road Back   Circa 1981. Coral Edwards, Australian Institute
                                                of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Jaguar	1967. Jean Rouch, Les Films de la Pleiade (France), 110 mins.
The Joy Luck Club	1993. Wayne Wang, Hollywood Pictures (US) 139 mins.
La terra trema: *episodio del mare*.	1948. Luchino Visconti, Universalia (Italy). 160 mins.
Lethal Weapon	1987. Richard Donner, Silver Pictures (US), warner Bros. (US), 110 mins.
Life is Beautiful	1997. Roberto Benigni, Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica (Italy), Melampo cinematografica (Italy), 122 mins.
Link-Up Diary	1987. David MacDougall, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 87mins.
Lousy Little Sixpence	1982. Alec Morgan and Gerry Bostock, Sixpence Films (Australia) 54 mins.
Love Streams	1984. John Cassavetes, Canon Films, 141 mins.
MABO: Life of an Island Man	1997. Trevor Graham
Mauri	1988. Merata Mita, Awatea Films, New Zealand Film Commission, 101 mins.
Mississippi Burning	1988. Alan Parker, Prod. Robert F.Colesberry and Frederick Zollo, 128 mins.
Nice Coloured Girls	1987. Tracey Moffatt, 17 mins.
Night Cries. A Rural Tragedy	1989. Tracey Moffatt, Prod. Penny MacDonald, 19 mins.
Once Were Warriors	1994. Lee Tamahori, Prod. Robin Scholes, Avalon Studios, Communicado Productions, Fine Line Features (US), New Zealand Film Commission (NZ), New Zealand On Air (NZ), 99 mins.
Paris is Burning	1990. Jennie Livingstone, Prod. Off white Productions Inc. US, 71 mins.
Paris Trout	1991. Stephen Gyllenhaal, Palace Pictures, 93 mins.

Pocahontas	1995. Mike Gabriel, Walt Disney Productions, 81 mins.
Rats in the Ranks	1996. Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson, Arundel Productions (Australia), Film Australia (Australia), 100 mins.
Rear Window	1954. Alfred Hitchcock, Paramount Pictures (US), Patron Inc., 112 mins.
Shoah	1985. Claude Lanzmann, French Ministry of Culture and Communication (France), Historia, Les Film Aleph (France) 566 mins.
Sleuth	1972. Joseph L. Mankiewiez, Palomar Pictures,138 mins.
Star Wars: Phantom Menace	1999, George Lucas, Lucasfilm Ltd.,136 mins.
Stolen Generations	2000. Darlene Johnson, SBS Television, 52 mins
Surname Viet, Given Name Nam	1989. Trinh, T. Minha, 108 mins.
Terminator II: Judgement Day	1991. James Cameron, Carolco Pictures, Le Studio Canal+(France), Lightstorm Entertainment, Pacific Westeren, 137 mins.
The Chair	1993. Robert Drew.
The Deserter	1933. Ysevolod Pudovkin, Mozhrabpomfilm, 105 mins.
The Idiots	1998. Lars von Trier, 117 mins.
The Man Who Envied Women	1985. Yvonne Rainer
The Story of a Simple Case	1932. Ysevolod Pudovkin, Mozhrabpomfilm, 96 mins.
Tempus de Baristas	1993. David MacDougall, Istituto Superiore Regionale Etnografico/Fieldwork Films/BBC Television (Italy, Australia, G.B.) 100 mins.
Titanic	1997. James Cameron, 20th Century Fox (US), Lightstorm Entertainment, Paramount Pictures (US)195 mins.
To Live With Herds	1972. David MacDougall, University of California (Los Angeles, US), 70 mins.

Tout Va Bien	1972. Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, Anouchka Films, Empire Films, Vicco Films, 95 mins.
UTU	1983. Geoff Murphy, Glitteron,118 mins.
What Becomes of the Broken Hearted?	1999. Ian Mune, New Zealand Film Commission (NZ), Polygram Filmed Entertainment (US), South Pacific Films, 103 mins
Who Killed Vincent Chin?	1988. Renee Tajima and Christine Choy, 87mins.

Up in the Sky: Tracey Moffatt Dir. Jane Cole, 26 minutes, videotape , available
in New York   from Women Make Movies 1999