

**CONNECTION: Towards A Collaborative Model of Documentary
Practice**

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NOTES

I have used the Harvard reference system throughout this thesis, however to make it easier to view links to films and websites I have attached these as bottom of the page footnotes

This link will take you to the Faith website which features the connection film, but importantly all the extra practice

Website - <https://irisleeds.wixsite.com/faith>

The link will take you directly to both of the documentary films:

Connection – <https://youtu.be/g9V-OdaqLTY>

Activist - <https://youtu.be/meDs7aiU7y8>

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Introduction

This PhD thesis aims to examine the relationship between the filmmaker and participant, focussing on the power structures created between the two, as well as the ethical repercussions of various choices during the production of a documentary, whilst offering a critique of current and past production practices. This research will consider the relationship between the filmmaker, and the participant with clear focus on ethical considerations and practical awareness. This research will be informed by my first-hand knowledge of professional film production and by a study of two documentary films I created, and the strategies I used to combat the ethical issues often present in documentary film production. This practice-based research uses a comparative practical approach to analyse two different collaborative documentaries featuring two different groups.

The research I am undertaking is intrinsically allied to the personal enthusiasm for learning that I have been cultivating since entering education. During my education, this fascination manifested itself through filmmaking, and more specifically documentary filmmaking. Studying filmmaking and documentary filmmaking at undergraduate level cultivated and enhanced my passion to interact with unique and interesting stories, people and groups. It was during this time though that I began to understand the dangers that this relationship could have.

This research is anchored firmly in my passion for filmmaking. For the last 10 years I have worked professionally as a freelance camera man and editor, as well as

working full time at Leeds Trinity University. During this time, I have created music videos, short fiction films, documentaries, wedding videos, live event films, adverts, tv programmes, corporate films and more. I have been lucky to work during this time with companies such as Asda, Wilkinson's, Yorkshire Building Society, and HSBC, among others. Although content with improving my practical skills in regard to the above, quickly it became apparent that the hierarchical framework associated with filmmaking often failed to consider the human element of the production, both in terms of the participants of the films but also the filmmakers themselves. I will examine intensively how production methodology can be adapted to improve the experience of the documentary participant, rather than solely focus on the visual quality and elements of filmmaking.

This thesis will offer a critique of the idea of truth in documentary, and how easily truth can be massaged by the filmmaker, both consciously and subconsciously, often misrepresenting the views of the participant of the documentary. I will also examine closely the power dynamic that exists between the filmmaker and the participant. On first viewing of a recent hit documentary *Seaspiracy* (2021) I was shocked to find that the first portion of the film did not focus on the vital message of the film but instead establishing the filmmaker as the host of the documentary. The same can be said of Jeremy Corbell, whose films regarding Bob Lazar gained traction around 2018, with *bob lazar area 51 & flying saucers* (2018) once more opening with the voice and then the visual of Jeremy Corbell, who himself went on to become a minor celebrity appearing on many different podcasts and YouTube shows. This idea of the documentary filmmaker being the focus of the documentary itself is something this thesis will argue against, both ethically and in practice. To do so, this thesis will have a strong focus on what went wrong in my research and my films, talking candidly

about the mistakes in the films, a cancelled original film project, as well as the toll taken on me as a filmmaker, both physically and mentally.

Inspired by *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991) which chronicles the production process of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) I will offer a reflection of the documentary production process, focussing not on the sparkling final product, but the blood sweat and tears present on the path to get there. *Hearts of Darkness* focusses on the problems surrounding the production of the film. The technical issues of the production are showcased, such as the overspend of the budget or the problems with the script. But where this inspires my research is in the depiction of the process the director undertakes. Many of the private conversations between Francis Ford Coppola and his wife Eleanor Coppola were recorded by the latter without the knowledge of Francis, this allowed an extremely personal look at the man behind one of the most famous films ever made, a methodology I will emulate in this thesis.

My methodological approach to my research aims to explore the uncomfortable state that documentary participants can feel whilst they are on screen, or when interacting with the filmmaker. Conversely though this research aims to take a much-needed focus on the actual participant, it attempted to place the participant and the filmmaker on an even level. Inspired as mentioned by *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991) it is my notion that the creation of any artform that takes place over a long period of time and involves many different people will take an almost catastrophic toll on the creator. It is my hypothesis that my own human weaknesses created by this process became overtime a powerful conduit to build a bridge between filmmaker and participant. Subsequently I use this as evidence that I am the only person who could partake in this particular research. To test this

hypothesis however I must identify these failures and weaknesses and demonstrate how these were vital to the creation of my two films. To reflect on this process, I have chosen to use personal video pieces to camera, as well as adding in the appendix much of the raw footage, which when combined offer extreme honesty in recounting the production process behind each of my two films. To be honest about the negative side of film production for a researcher and filmmaker who suffers from a number of different medical sophistications, is a useful way of demolishing any advantages of hierarchy that traditionally forms between a filmmaker and a participant.

It is my hope that this research can be utilised to begin a contemporary approach to thinking in regard to documentary production. Or at least offer the basis of an answer to the following questions:

- What power structures are created both consciously and subconsciously between filmmaker and participant
- To what extent can advancements of production technology, alongside a participant first methodology be used to establish a stronger relationship between filmmaker and participant?
- How important is a relationship between filmmaker and participant?
- How useful are interactive and collaborative documentaries in relation to engagement documentary participants.?
- Is it important to offer documentary participants editorial options in regards to the filming and/or editing of a film?

This thesis aims to offer a resolution to some of the issues mentioned above by positing an approach towards a more collaborative mindset, both in terms of

production structure, and more importantly in terms of hierarchical relationships, with a participant focused approach. This approach demands a consideration of many filmmaking priorities that are less orientated on what is best for the film but instead what is best for both filmmaker and participant. This approach is not an entirely new one however, Jonathan Dovey and Mandy Rose point out “There has always been the potential for collaboration and participation within social documentary. After all the documentary project is based on a relationship between the documentary maker and the human subject (or perhaps, object)” (2013, p.13). This thesis will expand on this notion and make a case that focussing on the participant and not on what is traditionally best for our films ironically can allow a relationship to grow between filmmaker and participant which can lead to personalised content that is in fact best for the film.

Thesis Structure

Chapter one will provide a contextual background to my research, focussing on key academics and filmmakers that have informed my views and arguments. A significant amount of time will be given to understanding the history of early ethical concerns within the documentary field. Specifically focussing on early examples of ethical concern, and the early impact of relationships between filmmakers and participants. This review of the early history of documentary ethics will offer the idea that two styles of documentary filmmaking were established as the foundation of the documentary field and that the following 100 years of documentary were built upon these two conflicting ideas. The first of these philosophies is the idea that you can stage your documentary film. Notoriously Robert Flaherty, in his seminal work *Nanook of the North* (1922) has been accused of diverting the truth of the Inuit's

situation and reality, often asking them to hunt in ways they would not naturally do, and wear clothing they would not naturally wear. Roger Ebert (2005) ¹ spoke of the film and the participants noting their “realities were admittedly assisted”. Although no real ethical framework had been established yet this idea of making the film better for the filmmaker, and focusing on staging a certain visual, or conceptual image offered one of the earliest ethical aesthetics, and one which is still often implemented today.

Opposite to this is the film *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929) by Dziga Vertov, which shows images that are creatively conceived but are literal. This literal approach is counter to the production process of *Nanook of the North*, and lends itself more to a notion of truth in documentary. Chapter one will contrast these two approaches, and also explore how they influenced my filmmaking methodology and ideology.

Later in chapter one is a review of literature focusing on the relationship between filmmaker and participant, with a strong focus on documentary ethics. This section will explore the different types of ethics and ethical approaches, whilst offering a critique of their shortcomings. It will show how certain ethical approaches have been used, but also how they cannot adequately protect the documentary participant.

Chapter two will focus on the methodology used in my research, mapping the field of practice as research, this methodological approach uses the approach of hands on participation by both filmmaker and participant, in an effort to combat the problem that “most scholars are hampered by the fact that they do not/have not got their hands dirty in the world of production itself” (Roberts, p.1, 2011). This chapter will aim to highlight my solutions to the problems raised in the contextual review as well

¹ [Nanook of the North movie review \(1922\) | Roger Ebert](#)

as offer a process to answer my research questions. Chapter two will feature a discussion of my methods as I attempt to present and communicate the ideas and strategies implemented into my practice. I will explore both the filmmaking process, and how this was adapted to favour the participant, but also how vital communication and a trusted relationship and connection between filmmaker and participant was to my production methodology. This section will help to illuminate how my approach grew and expanded, but also changed over the years of conducting this research, and will focus on mistakes that were made in the initial project and how these mistakes became a part of my methodology and my research by practice.

Chapter three will focus entirely on failure, in terms of both filmmaking methodology and communication with my participants. The structure used to demonstrate this clearly will be a review of my initial failed film, the original film that formed my research and was intended to be my practice element. This section will document how that film and that approach did not work, highlighting the positive intentions, but being very honest on the application, and the effect that the film had on me as a filmmaker and the negative effect it had on the participants. This chapter will put into a spotlight every mistake that I made as a researcher and filmmaker, however it will also formulate the foundation of my approach to the final two films, which was built out of lessons learned from the failure of the first project.

The first of my two films will be analysed in chapter four. This chapter will demonstrate what strategies were used in both the production of the film but also in the interactions with participants in the film. This acts as a contrast to the approach in the previous chapter which proved ineffective. The methodology behind the production will be examined astutely, as a critique is made on how effective each strategy was. These strategies can be something as precise as which camera was

used, and how that choice affected the film and the participant, to the choice as to when the camera was rolling, to the tone and style of interaction with the participants. This section will act as an assessment of the model that was used to answer the issues raised historically in regard to ethical issues and power structures within documentary filmmaking, as well as to answer effectively the research questions presented.

Chapter five will document a similar process with my second film. The majority of this section will compare and contrast the methods used in both films, which started as an identical approach, but led to different results. A spotlight will be put on the timeline of the two films, as they were being produced simultaneously, in order to see where they diverted, and what lessons were learnt from the production of both. This section will review how the theoretical methods behind my production approach impacted the participants in my films, noting that some techniques that were effective in one film were not in the other. Both chapters four and five will use the same critical and honest self-assessment that is a fundamental foundation of my research, there will be no attempt to glorify the production process but instead offer a firm critique of every decision made, and how those decisions impacted both participant and filmmaker, regardless of it impacted positively or negative.

The main principle of this research is to offer a guide to potential documentary filmmakers and academics in relation to the ethical, and hierarchical issues that we face in the production of documentary films. Chapter six will therefore offer a candid review of lessons learnt from my research, ultimately offering a template demonstrating my production methodology that can hopefully be used and improved on by others. This template will clearly describe every aspect of my research that was a success, but more importantly every aspect that was a failure, this template

should exist to be improved upon and adapted but will exist as a truly honest account of a documentary process that focused on the ethical approach of a participant first method.

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review aims to address the issues that arise out of the complex relationship that develops between a documentary filmmaker and a documentary participant, focusing on the difficult ethical concerns and power structures this creates. Furthermore, this section will also highlight the relationship and contrast between the filmmaker and the self. By reviewing the literature around documentary ethics, production processes and practice as research, I will outline the foundation of my own research project.

Section two will focus on the literature surrounding documentary ethics. This section will highlight different types of ethics and how they can be applied to documentary and the documentary participant, with a critique of the power dynamic between participant and filmmaker and its use in documentary. I will argue in this section that the ethical approach to documentary production is unclear to the documentary participant and is often misleading and at the mercy of the filmmaker. Finally, this section will question the correct terminology to refer to a person featuring in a documentary production, focusing on the impact of refraining from using words such as 'subject'.

Practice as Research

It is important to define the notion that practice, a form of doing, equates to academic research. I have opted to base my research on this notion of practice, to make and compare two documentary films and form a methodological approach from the comparison of the two. It is my hope to explain here the ideas that have informed this decision and highlight the literature needed to inform me decisions and process.

I turn to Stephen Scrivener immediately to give an insight into the need for practice “Artists make things, this is what they do and value. Consequently, some artists and designers would like to place making and the products of making at the centre of their research, i.e., practice-based research” (Scrivener, p.2 2002). On a fundamental level, the first three words from Scrivener epitomize the validation for practice as research. An “artist”, someone who creates something, needs an arena to present their concepts using the same principles as were used in the creation of said project. Simply, a filmmaker will best present their ideas in the form of a film, it is vital that this is considered, to allow practitioners and filmmakers to participate in research.

The idea that complex critical evaluation might be conducted through practice has been criticised, even by those who support its usefulness. Scrivener himself shows concern, “a shift to research in the arts could be extremely damaging as it has implications for academic competence, through its graduates the non-academic world, and through them the general health of the arts” (Scrivener, 2002, p.4). There is a paradox to study here, if artists and content creators opt to live in the research world should then the artist or content creator change to that world, or should that

world change to them? Or should the worlds be together at all. Scrivener goes on the ponder this topic:

There is much anecdotal evidence of a steer toward research in academe, perhaps at the expense of art making (i.e., practice). If so, who is holding the harness? Is this the artworld driving forward in response to internal needs, or is the artworld being pulled along by largely external forces? There is a clear danger if the latter is the case: driven by external rather than internal imperatives it may lose sight of its own purposes. (Scrivener, 2002, p.4)

It is significant to note the publication date of Scrivener's writing. Included in my research is the hypothesis that practice as research is more achievable now through technology and a wider cultural acceptance of art in research. I would use the words of Robin Nelson (2013), some 11 years later to argue "The term 'Practice as Research' would probably not have been coined had artists not got involved with modern higher education institutions in respect of programmes of learning, particularly at PhD level" (2013, p.3). The higher percentage of 'creative' content produced at the highest level of academic learning is an important point in establishing a trend. A basic trajectorial argument can be put forth that if the attitudes towards practice as research have evolved in the last 11 years, then how many years will it take to evolves further.

It is important to distinguish between terms such as practice as research/practice led research and practice-based research. David Gauntlett (2021)² described practice-based research as "Practice-based research is work where, in order to explore their research question, the researcher needs to make something as part of the process.

² [David Gauntlett | What is practice-based research?](#)

The research is exploratory and is embedded in a creative practice” This contrasts with a definition of practice led research “Practice-led Research is concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice. In a doctoral thesis, the results of practice led research may be fully described in text form without the inclusion of a creative work” (Candy, 2006, p.1). Note the key difference between the two definitions, most prominently the act of creating something. My research is practice based research, key outcomes, methods and ultimately answers to research questions come directly from the films that I have made, and the act of making them. To derive answers from purely text would be inappropriate for my research, fundamentally due to the practice being the source of where any answers would arise.

Whereas in the past practice has not been understood or necessarily valued in research Nelson suggests that there is now an understanding that practice can indeed be more challenging and require a greater range of skills when compared to more standard research practices,

In contrast to those sceptical scholars who dismiss, or look down upon, PaR as insubstantial and lacking in rigour, I recognize that PaR projects require more labour and a broader range of skills to engage in a multi- mode research inquiry than more traditional research processes and, when done well, demonstrate an equivalent rigour (Nelson, 2013, p.9)

This change in attitude should act as an inspiration to researchers whos skillset lie mainly in the practice aspect of their research, and we can see that it already has.

It is important to look at other examples from the field of filmmaking of practice as research. I would like to highlight examples of the artist/creative using practice as a

key framework for their research. Initially I would like to focus on Alistair Gall and his “imperfect cinema” project. As defined earlier the imperfect cinema project is a framework that allows participants the means and opportunity to produce and showcase film projects. There is a heavy focus on the DIY culture which is used to challenge “issues of sustainability & inequality existent within the mainstreams of contemporary film culture”³

In a 2011 paper Gall clarified this notion of DIY culture and exclusivity, “this research aims to mobilise a film community by valourising and celebrating non-virtuosity and contextualizing amateurism as the enthusiastic pursuit of an objective”. (2011, p.2) Gall positions his interest in the “pursuit” of the objective not the object itself. In this mindset, he aims to engage people in the process of his research, through all the problems and issues that may arise. Gall’s success is creating a platform in the ‘imperfect cinema’ project in which he can test his practice as research by scrutinising the production process of the many films under his label whilst sticking to the fundamental principles of the DIY aesthetic.

A notable inspiration for Gall is Julio Garcia Espinosa’s (1969) ‘For an Imperfect Cinema’ paper. Gall quotes Espinosa attitude to the DIY nature of filmmaking

“a future imperfect cinema is ‘the opposite of a cinema principally dedicated to celebrating results

‘Imperfect Cinema’ is no longer interested in quality of technique. It can be created equally well with a Mitchell or with an 8mm camera, in a studio or in a guerrilla camp in the middle of the jungle” (Gall, 2016, p.161)

³ http://imperfectcinema.com/?page_id=131

The positive outcome of this DIY culture inspires me to reflect on Erik Knudsen's (2010) notion of poverty in filmmaking, which was his first use of the term

"Poverty is not here thought of primarily as material poverty. However, a lack of material resources is a good place to start exploring the notion of poverty; for the poverty of resources can lead to a number of revealing and beneficial consequences. These consequences might include: enhanced creativity, the discovery of simplicity, the power of humility and exercising courage" (Knudsen, 2010, p.4)

I appropriate both Galls 'DIY culture' and Knudsen's 'poverty' as a return to the notion of 'doing', or the "hands-on" (Roberts, 2011, p.6) approach as Roberts deemed it. A shift in the structure of importance from the finished product to the production process and production methodology. Through this line of thought I refer back to Gauntlett's (2011) 'making is connecting' principles

"Making is connecting because you have to connect things together (materials, ideas, or both) to make something new;

Making is connecting because acts of creativity usually involve, at some point, a social dimension and connect us with other people;

And making is connecting because through making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments." (p.6)

David Gauntlett is not a filmmaker, instead his area of interest is that of sociology and media theory, however his views allow us to understand clearly the link between practice and research, but more importantly positions the actual people involved in a project at the centre of the process, not at the periphery. His idea of connection

although not intended to apply to the field of documentary production, offers us a key insight into a model of participant focused production.

A key drive for my documentary films is the concept of a single anchoring character that links us directly to the story being told. Although each of my films have a subject (faith and animal rights activism) the actual focus of the films is the character, the story is born out of the participant. I wish to provide two examples of this type of documentary film as inspiration for my choices. First, 'Joe Strummer Slept Here'⁴ (2015) written and produced by Graham Roberts and directed by Stephen Hay. The story of the night Gillian Farmer accidentally and spontaneously ran into a world-famous band The Clash. The story of this documentary is told first hand by the participant who spent time with the band. This choice to focus on the single character adds a feeling of warmth to the film but also entices the viewer to see the film in a more personal mindset. Importantly, although the film has the subject matter of a very famous band, the actual story and connection to the audience is a much more character led process. The view into the main character's excitement and adrenaline has an impact on the viewer that diverts attention from narrative to the people. You feel an emotional connection to the character, instantly you reminisce of a time you have felt the same feelings. As a researcher and filmmaker this film inspired me to focus on what is true, and to hone in on where the value of a story lies, which is with the participants within them.

Secondly, I wish to mention the Stephen Hay directed film 'Megan Parks 'LUCY' - screen role for girl with Rett Syndrome'⁵ (2012). As the title suggests the film focuses on the challenges of making a film with a girl who suffers from Rett Syndrome,

⁴ <https://joestrummersleptthere.wordpress.com/about-the-documentary/>

⁵ <https://vimeo.com/42606640>

focusing on the issue from both a filmmaking and human position. The inspiration the film delivered, was to me, born out of the style of the documentary. Although you see the girl in the film, and subsequently form a relationship with her, a large part of the film (and story) is focused on the other characters and their interaction with the girl. You see a number of people talking about the girl and describing their experiences of being around her, including fellow cast members, family, the film crew and the director.

Hay's film further inspired my passion for the filmmaker to be part of the film (and part of my research). The courageous decision to show how the film crew and director acted around the girl in question gave the viewer and myself the notion of the challenges of film production, outside of the usual scope. This style also links back to early traditions established in documentary by film makers such as Dziga Vertov, who would later inspire the Cinema Verite style of documentary filmmaking. This style had a strong focus on truth and showing reality even if that meant showing people unaware of the cameras presence, "filmmakers should take pictures of actuality – the everyday events of ordinary people. This raw stuff of life could then be transformed into meaningful statements." (Ruby, p.39, 2005) In Hay's film the film the director can be seen on screen saying "I'll be facing away from Meagan so she won't be distracted at all". If Hay was not on screen in the film, difficult micro decisions such as this would be missed by the viewer, whereas the Cinema Verite approach of seeing both crew and equipment in the final film, was used in order to show the full truth of the situation, not one crafted by the director or editor. My research is imperatively focused on this type of production method, highlighting instead of hiding these small troubleshooting production decisions.

The area where I wish to position my research is on the foundation created by the writers and filmmakers referenced above, as well as those I will discuss in the next section. I wanted to use Gall's proposition that anyone can make a film if a platform and filmmaking language is created for them to do so. I wanted to use Knudsen's back to basics approach to creativity in his idea of filmmaking poverty. And I wanted to use Robert's and Hay's focus on single character driven documentaries focusing on personal relationships and using their differing techniques to extract the emotion from the story whilst ensuring that the participants wellbeing is put firmly at the centre of the films methodology.

Introduction to Documentary

The early history of documentary offers a number of challenges when identifying the origins of what is now known as documentary, primarily what one would consider the 'start' of documentary. There is an argument to be made that there are three options for the genesis of documentary, however the key point I want to make with this chapter is the implication of the birth of documentary and documentary styles in relation to the participants in the films.

It is useful when considering the early days of documentary to first explore the first use of the actual word documentary. It is widely accepted that the first use of the word 'documentary' was coined by John Grierson whilst reviewing the Robert Flaherty film *Moana* (1926) for the New York Sun. Grierson, under the guise of his pen name "The Moviegoer", stated that the film had "documentary value". Later Grierson would go on to create the seminal *First Principles of Documentary*, in which he would describe documentary as "the living scene and the living story". Reflecting on this period of documentary filmmaking at a later stage Grierson would posit that "Looking down the history of the actuality in films, of what seemed on the surface most natural and real, there was, until the late thirties, a lack of fibre. (Grierson, 1946). John Grierson is intrinsically linked to the infant years of documentary filmmaking, but it is important to highlight that even though he recognised the value of actuality, he had already begun to critique and question the truth and reality of early documentary films.

Although the word documentary had not yet been coined, when we look back and analyse the early films of the 20th century, we can notice films that have the

hallmarks of what we now know as documentary. *Nanook of the North* (1922) by Robert Flaherty is often considered the first documentary. Despite later being critical of the truths established in this film Grierson would describe the film at the time as the “creative treatment of actuality”, a definition of documentary that serves as the premiere definition even now. This definition is important, not only to the history of documentary filmmaking but specifically to my research. The reason this is so vital in this research is it introduces the concept of the ‘creative’ treatment. This ‘creative’ treatment offers our earliest divergence from the notion of actuality and truth, this definition suggests that ‘creative’ means can be applied to documentary films, the truth was still there “Nanook of the North took the theme of hunger and the fight for food and built its drama from the actual event, and, as it turned out, from actual hunger.” (Grierson, p.203, 1971). This film asked many question of the audience and of the documentary filmmaker questions such as how far can you creatively enhance a documentary film, story or participant reaction. But also asked questions of ethics, if a person is legitimately hungry and in need of food, should you be documenting this. In a later section I will highlight how theses creative approaches have been used and how they impact the participants in documentary films.

The third impact origin point in documentary history to consider focuses on the word Grierson used ‘actuality’. Before *Nanook of the North* (1922) there were a number of films created that represented actuality, and could be considered the first example of documentary film, at least in a literal sense. Auguste and Louis Lumière were French inventors who pioneered the concept of the motion-picture camera and projector called the Cinématographe – (the origin of the word cinema). Upon the creation of this camera the Lumière brothers would in 1895 create one of the first motion videos called *La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon* (*Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory*).

“The Lumiere brothers were, arguably, the first to create what could be considered a film” (Knudsen, p.64, 2018) This video would be shown at a public unveiling of their new invention and feature alongside nine other films. Each of the ten Lumière brothers films documented a real life event occurring with minimal editorial influence, although camera position is an editorial decision. This would lead to the ten films being described as ‘actualities’. The use of this term would occur 27 years before Grierson would call for the creative treatment of “actualities”. As a result 1895 is an early example of filmmaking what would go on to be called Documentary. Importantly though these films were pure actuality, they were almost voyeuristic in nature and displayed events literally as they happened. This documentary philosophy focused on the actuality part of Griersons definition, filmmaker such as Dziga Vertov would further solidify the importance of actuality in his films. *Kino-Pravda* (1920-25) featured a set of 23 newsreels by Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Pravda* translates to ‘Film Truth’. These films would be defined by their focus on real people, participating in actuality, filmed in some cases without knowledge of the cameras presence. Each film would show people participating in everyday events, however an overall meaning could be gathered when the sequences are organised together. Although heavily influenced by politics, *Pravda* being a tribute to the newspaper *Pravda* founded by Vladimir Lenin, this style of filmmaking is an example of an early attempt to offer a participant first approach, when compared to Flaherty and *Nanook of the North*. Participants in Dziga Vertov’s films were not directed, they sometimes didn’t know they were being filmed, or at what point the camera was active. Whereas participants in *Nanook of the North* (1922) were told what to wear, what equipment to hold, where to sit.

This difference in approach between those who favoured the *creative* side of Griersons definition and the *actuality* side created a divergence in documentary ethics, both created in the 1920s these two philosophies would create a dichotomy that still exists in the production of a documentary in the present day. The creative vs the truth was a notion that acted as a fundamental pillar of my practice, with my focus being on the idea that this divergence in philosophy has led to a confusion within documentary ethics, and ultimately a worse experience for documentary participants.

In a final example of documentary during its formative years we must step away from the cinema and film industry. In 1874 French astronomer Pierre Jules Cesar Janssen concluded that he desired a way to document Venus passing across the sun. To do this the astronomer “developed what he called a revolver photographique—a. cylinder-shaped camera in which a photographic plate revolved. The camera automatically took pictures at short intervals, each on a different segment of the plate. The result—photographed by Janssen in Japan—was not yet a motion picture, but it was a step in that direction, and it gave ideas to others. For Janssen the important thing was: it documented the event. Barnouw (1974) Of course this example could not be classed as pure documentary but instead acts as an indicator that the spirit of “creative treatment of actuality” was in effect at least half a decade before the word documentary would be uttered.

Early Ethical Concerns

Grierson's definition of documentary in regards to *the creative treatment of actuality* is a principle that documentary has abided by since the 1920s, but even Grierson understood the potential for documentary to be misused. "the presence of the actual does not make a documentary film because what one does with the actual can be as meretricious and synthetic and phony as Hollywood at its worst" (Grierson, 1946).

There is no natural 'truth' in documentary, the documentary filmmaker always has some level of editorial control, even if that is as simple as choosing when the camera is recording. Participants place trust in the documentary filmmaker, not even just from a safety and ethics point of view but moreso in regard to guarding their opinion. From the angle of the camera to the timing of an edit, each choice the filmmaker makes has the ability to distort the message of the participant. (Nichols, 2010) echoes this as he states "Elements of style such as choice of camera angle, composition, and editing give the filmmaker the tools with which to speak to his or her audience, not in a purely factual, didactic way, but in an expressive, rhetorically, or poetically powerful way." As a result of such small choices having such large impacts, documentary ethics have to be paramount to our production process, but this often isn't the case.

It is worth mentioning that from the very start of the Documentary landscape there were issues pertaining to documentary ethics, and the establishment of power dynamics between filmmaker and participants. The afore mentioned early films by the Lumiere brothers didn't ask permission of the participants to be filmed, in fact many of the people represented in the films worked for the Lumiere brothers,

meaning clearly that in the first documentary made, there was a huge disparity in power between the filmmaker and participants.

Grierson's definition of documentary presented a paradox in regards to documentary ethics that has existed from 1926, and has acted as a centre piece for future ethical debates since. Mainly that the idea of how 'actuality' and 'treatment' can be used as an approach to filmmaking. Winston (1995) argues "One does not have to be too much of a sceptic to spot the obvious contradiction in this formulation. The supposition that any 'actuality' is left after 'creative treatment' can now be seen as being at best naïve and at worst a mark of duplicity. Though highly critical Winston's view does shine a light on one of the primary struggles of documentary filmmakers in regards to how far can you push the creative treatment and still validate the actuality. An understanding I will discuss in chapters three, four and five is that a creative process and actuality/truth can never be separated, rather than concentrate on how they can be separated my research will argue that they should be considered as one, but the consequences analysed with an honest and critical eye.

The struggle to document the truth in a creative yet honest way is a problem for documentary filmmakers, as referenced earlier this struggle can be traced back to Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922). Despite *Nanook of the North* being considered one of the foundations of the documentary movement it has been criticised numerous times for its lack of accuracy and honesty regarding the people in the film. Charlie Noyoumealuk stated in an interview for *Nanook Revisited* (1990) that the wives of Nanook (Allakariallak) in the film were in fact common-law wives of filmmaker Flaherty. Furthermore, Flaherty was accused of changing certain aspects of the lives of the Inuit's to fit in with what a western audience expected. This included changing the hunting apparatus of the Inuit's from guns to spears. Film critic

Roger Ebert (2005) would later call Flaherty's film a "masterpiece" but "whose realities were admittedly assisted". Erik Knudsen would discuss irony on the topic of *Nanook of the North*, "Ironically, Flaherty is often considered the father of documentary film. Ironical, because the later codes that would shape our understanding of what makes a documentary – such as raw camera composition, crude movement and lighting, whole scene editing, talking to camera, interviews and so on – are not conventions Flaherty established and are ones he completely ignored" (Knudsen, p.68, 2018).

It would be unfair to criticize Flaherty excessively given that documentary ethics had not at that point been thoroughly set out, both Winston (2000) and Sanders (2010) point to the 1970's as the foundation of many ethical approaches and considerations some fifty-eight years later. Even Ebert goes on to point out "He shot his footage in 1920, when there were no rules for documentaries and precious few documentaries, certainly none shot so far north that nothing grows except a little moss, and 300 Inuit could inhabit a space the size of England". Despite the ethical structure of documentary filmmaking being in its infancy this can still be seen as an important moment to highlight the need for documentary ethics given the potential harm that could have been done to the participant.

In a period where documentary was initially developing, the lack of a substantial ethical process led to an era in which documentary film diverged from the founding principles of truth and actuality. The first half of the 20th century was a problematic time for much of the world. In Europe between 1900-1950 there were two world wars, at the same time America was going through the 'great depression'. It would not be long before documentary would be adopted by propaganda. During this time there were a number of prominent propaganda based documentaries. Most notably

in the 1930s and 40s which were considered a golden age for propaganda films. Examples from this time include *Triumph of the Will* (1935), *Olympia* (1938) and *The Eternal Jew* (1940).

Ethical considerations and concern for the participants of documentaries are of little importance in regard to propaganda films. Although documentary as propaganda was not something that occurred out of the blue. Barnouw (1987) noted that Grierson at the EMB Film Unit (1933) "importuned his staff to avoid the "aestheticky." He told them they were propagandists first, film makers second." Even early in 1927 Grierson had stated "I look on cinema as a pulpit and use it as a propagandist" (1946. P.11). Grierson (1966) argued that during this time period propaganda-based films were a primary source of making money. "There is money for films which will make box-office profits, and there is money for films which will create propaganda results". It is apparent that the during the formative years of documentary ethics were not a primary concern. Winston (1995) argues that for two most of the most prominent documentary filmmakers Robert Flaherty and John Grierson "Ethics in general were not on the agenda". I don't think this is a fair point, instead the more accurate assertion would be that ethics were not at the forefront of their production process, especially not ethics as we know them now. This isn't to say that there was no ethical consideration at all. Just that they had different ethical considerations, while we have had a 100 years of documentary to formulate different types of ethical approaches, documentary was a new medium to Grierson, Flaherty, Vertov and others.

Documentary Ethics

In this section the focus will be on the attempt to implement documentary ethics and the increased focus on the documentary participant. In the previous section an argument was presented that the early years of documentary did not focus on ethical considerations, but as the prominence of documentary from its 1920's origins to the *Direct Cinema* movement in America and the *Cinema Verite* movement in France, so did the consideration for the people in the films. During this time the advancement in camera technology to the lighter 16mm film stock meant that film cameras were becoming smaller. This meant that moments could be captured more spontaneously and the filmmaker could film in new locations with a more personal feel. This advancement meant that filmmakers such as Albert and David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin could follow The Rolling Stones on their 1969 US tour culminating in the production of *Gimmie Shelter* (1970). As documentary filmmakers could film in more intimate locations for longer periods of time, coupled with the resurgence of documentary films it was more important than ever to understand documentary ethics. Overtime ethics became intrinsically linked to documentary, being highlighted as a concern by Nichols, (2010) Sanders, (2010) Aufderheide, (2009) Butchart, (2006) and much earlier by Pryluck. (1972) One example of literature highlighting the prevalence of documentary comes from Alan Rosenthal who highlights that "the ethical dimension of documentary work raises fundamental concerns about practices of representation which would go beyond those matters of 'staging' and 'faking' which are the most frequently raised points of anxiety and dispute." (Rosenthal, p.6, 2005) this is to suggest that many of the early ethical concerns of documentary were

themselves not enough to consider and solve, as documentary and its ethical concerns had already evolved passed that point.

The question it is important to answer at the start of this section is 'what are ethics'.

Ethics are defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity.". Aristotle wrote of the notion of 'virtue ethics' suggesting that we understand morality and virtue through practice.

The BBC offer their understanding of ethics and morality as "At its simplest, ethics is a system of moral principles. They affect how people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy"⁶. Both definitions both mention the concept of morals. Although often overlapping it is important to differentiate the two terms.

There are two key issues to highlight in this regard. Morals tend to be obtained through society, whether that be from laws, government, religion, family etc. They are also obtained both consciously and subconsciously. They are thought to be acts which are accepted by the majority of people. Kettner (2002) defines morals as "Morals are the accepted norms and values of people, of a community. Morals demand an understanding of how our behaviour affects relevant others as well as ourselves". This differs from ethics, ethics tend to be set out by one person or one body. As an example, a filmmaker will act on a set of ethics that they have agreed before the start of production and these will not changed or modified. Any deviation from the agreed process would require a new set of ethical approvals. Morals as a set of principles, deemed by a society, will change as that society changes. What is acceptable will change, often year on year, but also country by country. In this sense

⁶ http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/intro_1.shtml

it is important to differentiate between the two terms as ethics are a lot more open to interpretation, especially in the filmmaking context.

Different ethical theories are well defined in different fields. Below are examples of existing ethical theories:

Supernaturalism (God-based ethics)

- This theory makes ethics depend on God. It teaches that:
- The only source of moral rules is God
- Something is good because God says it is
- The way to lead a good life is to do what God wants

Subjectivism (relativism)

- Subjectivism teaches that there are no objective moral truths out there.
- There are no objective moral facts. Therefore 'murder is wrong' can't be objectively true
- Many forms of subjectivism go a bit further and teach that moral statements describe how the speaker feels about a particular ethical issue.

Consequentialism: results-based ethics

- Of all the things a person might do at any given moment, the morally right action is the one with the best overall consequences.
- Whether an act is right or wrong depends only on the results of that act
- The more good consequences an act produces, the better or more right that act

Situation ethics (contextualism)

- In situation ethics, right and wrong depend upon the situation.

- There are no universal moral rules or rights - each case is unique and deserves a unique solution.
- Moral judgments are decisions, not conclusions
- Decisions ought to be made situationally, not prescriptively
- We should seek the well-being of people, rather than love principles.

Social Responsibility ethics

- Society at large should benefit and be the focal point of decision making

The challenge of adapting these ethics to the relationship between filmmaker and participant in documentary is considerable. To briefly outline some of the issues you may face it would be useful to start with consequentialism. Consequentialism is defined by the Centre for Leadership and Ethics as “Consequentialism is an ethical theory that judges whether or not something is right by what its consequences are. For instance, most people would agree that lying is wrong. But if telling a lie would help save a person’s life, consequentialism says it’s the right thing to do.”. Applying this to documentary filmmaking would be to say that if the subject matter of a documentary film is in some way a benefit to society, any negative parts of the production process would be negated by the overall benefit. Naturally an ethical approach such as this would be detrimental to documentary participants. Winston (2000) argues that filmmakers must minimize any harm participants may face. Consequentialism ethics then would act as an antithesis to this logic, the best overall consequence to the documentary, in this case, would almost certainly not equal the optimal way to keep a participant from “harm”. This kind of approach is not

uncommon, two documentaries that have attracted a lot of attention this year due to their platform on Netflix, and the media coverage given to them are *Seaspiracy* (2021) and *Naomi Osaka* (2021). The former is a documentary about the environmental impact of fishing and the human impact on marine life. This film includes certain scenes that would be troubling to receive ethical approval, scenes that take place on private or restricted land for example. However the subject matter is deemed too important as an overall cultural positive that these scenes are excepted, which links very closely to consequentialism. The second example features an inside look into a successful sportsperson who has notoriously struggled with self doubt, media pressure and mental health. Such a close look into someone's personal struggles again impacts the experience of the participant, but the overall benefit of such a successful person struggling in their career is deemed an overall positive.

One key issue in regard to ethics in documentary is the power structure that exists between filmmaker and participant. One makes the decisions, whereas one is directed. "Morals in documentary filmmaking concern those norms and values on which filmmakers decide about right and wrong." (Sanders, p.532, 2010) If one party has the final say on every choice, from filming location, camera position, mic set up, questions asked etc, then a clear fracture in the relationship of power between participant and filmmaker forms. Efforts to challenge this type of ethical approach to filmmaking can be demonstrated by Steve Thomas and his account of the production of his documentary *Hope* (2008). From the outset Thomas attempted to demonstrate that the power was not all with the filmmaker but instead a more cooperative approach, "My aim was to foster genuine collaboration with the main participant, Amal, as opposed to merely securing her cooperation or participation. I hoped that

this would help generate the trust” he conceded that this meant “giving Amal the space to put forward her own ideas about the filming process and to feel empowered to help shape the film, rather than relying on me to do so necessary for us to work together”. (Thomas, p.334, 2012) Offering Amal the chance to make decisions in regard to the overall film is an example of a step taken to readdress the power dynamics between participant and filmmaker, by focussing more on a collaborative approach.

Thomas (2012) confesses that this approach is not easy or straightforward “Collaboration assumes input from all sides. However, paying more than lip service to this principle threw up plenty of challenges. Being open to the possibility that the process of collaboration might change the direction of one’s film means taking risks – but such risks can also reap rewards”, speaking of those rewards Thomas pointed out “Amal’s confidence in helping to shape the film grew and she would often ring me with ideas and requests. *‘Please meet me on the pier at St Kilda tomorrow’ she requested on one occasion, ‘I want to talk about some of the children who died in our accident.’ When I arrived, cameraman in tow, there was Amal, waiting for us at the end of the pier, clad in black and ready to tell the story of a child who lost her parents and all four siblings in the disaster and whom Amal cared for after their rescue.*”

(Thomas, p.335, 2012). There is some evidence then to suggest that straying from traditional production processes can lead to a more empowered position and positive feeling for the documentary participant. In referencing the idea of ‘lip service’

Thomas (2012) makes the point that any attempt to change the dynamic between filmmaker and participant must be genuine, acknowledging that this can lead to more challenges for the filmmaker, however dismisses any kind of effort that would fall into the category of token gestures. I will address in a later chapter errors I made when

trying to create a collaborative approach, which I later understood were not collaborative at all. Gaudenzi makes the argument that the vital points to be considered in a collaborative documentary are “who is participating, what can be done, and when is this intervention possible.” (Gaudenzi, 2014). The issue with Thomas’s approach in *Hope* (2008) and with Gaudenzi’s view of collaboration, is that they both rely on parameters that are both set by the filmmaker, and finally judged upon by the filmmaker. This means that although the process has changed and has elements of collaboration the power dynamic has remained the same.

A big fear that arises for filmmakers and directors when handing an element of control to a documentary participant is that the film is no longer the filmmakers vision, as the filmmaker is theoretically no longer the one making the crucial decisions, although it could be argued this can never truly happen. “If we accept that the filmmaker is an artist who uses cinematography as a means, then a collaborative approach will endanger artistic freedom” Fomina (2014). There is an assumption that the decision making of the participant can be erratic as they undoubtedly do not have the same experience as the filmmaker. There is a suggestion that this shift in power can lead to a lack of progress in the production and artistic quality of the documentary. This is an issue that Thomas (2012) both addresses and retorts “Some might see this as unacceptably providing a right of veto to a documentary participant but such was our relationship of trust that I doubt if I would have left anything in the film that Amal did not want included once we had thoroughly discussed the matter.”. The key point here is that you are not handing over control to the participant, you are handing some control to a person you have a relationship with and who has some level of trust in you. This in turn points to the importance of

the relationship between filmmaker and participant, a concept fundamental to my research

Thus far much of the literature regarding documentary ethics has conflated ethics with morals, with a good or bad ethical approach being in line with what we consider good and bad morals. In order to complete my research it is useful to highlight a different definition of ethics, one that prioritises truth and the key signifier of ethics, “Ethics, on the other hand is determined not by judgments made on the basis of a set of known values. Rather, ethics is a matter of deciding for or against what is not known or cannot as yet be recognized from the point of view of currently available knowledge systems (moral, religious, ideological, etc.). What is not yet known is a truth, and it is with this conception of truth that ethics is properly concerned” (Butchart, p.430, 2006). In fact Butchart clarifies further this unintended connection between ethics and morality, “One of the major consequences of combining a discourse about truth with a discourse about rights, however, is that when the question of ethics is posed, responses begin to sound a lot like moral judgment. In later chapter the production process used in the creation of my two films will use moral based ethics as a signifier of a positive outcome, thus a criticism of this conflation is extremely useful and a vital piece of literature.

With the notion of the person in a documentary being more than just a participant it begs the question do terms such as ‘subject’ ‘star’ ‘participant’ have a detrimental effect on your documentary ethics? I have opted throughout my thesis to use the word participant, however this still isn’t a perfect term. Participant suggests a process of attending and adhering to a set of rules, which can be problematic in the context of documentary filmmaking. However I believe this is less problematic than some other words used to describe the people in documentary films. Subject is

defined as “a person or thing that is being discussed, described, or dealt with.”, each of which seem to describe with more accuracy an object, rather than a person. There have been other definitions for the people who are the subject of a documentary, Grierson in the 1920-30s described these people as *actors*, Nichols (2001) would continue this with the term *social actors*, Sanders (2010) in turn often uses the term *participants* to describe the people in the documentaries. Each arguably problematic, and certainly not weighted in the favour of the person in the film. *Actor* has clear issues resulting from the link to fiction film, actor implies a person who is paid, a person who has to learn the narrative, and a person who is told what to do and what to say. Dispensation has to be paid to the years in which Grierson used the term actors though, as documented in section one this was during the formative years of documentary when there were no established frameworks to fall on. Actor also has connotations of dishonesty, philosophically an actor is someone pretending, in the context of actuality this is a problem.

Participant seems more genuine in nature than subject but still has a number of issues. Participant conjures up images of an experiment, people take part but then their involvement is very much complete. An example of this may be if you are walking through a town you may find a journalist doing a vox pop, you become a participant but when finished you walk away and continue with your life. The process of documentary filmmaking is time consuming, documentaries often take years to complete and even then relationships are built that last for a potential lifetime. There is no clear answer to this debate, logistically people in documentary have to be called something, in my experience of making my films I have referred to my ‘subjects’ mostly as collaborators or participants, but there are issue with these terms also.

Ethics in documentary are important. But there is a need to further understand how they can be overlooked. Rosenthal notes “The relationship of ethical considerations to film practice is one of the most important yet at the same time one of the most neglected topics in the documentary field” (Rosenthal, 1998). Furthermore Nichols (2001) argues ““The absence of a substantial body of work on [ethical issues of film] strikes [me] as remarkable”. This does not mean that there has been no attempts at creating an ethical framework for ethics in documentary, Emmanuel Levinas (2011) and his approach to face-to-face relation has offered a foundation that many documentary scholars have built on. Furthermore, many documentary scholars, that will be the focus of this section, have their own view on documentary ethics and how they impact the documentary subject.

One of the key arguments of my research is that the majority of power within documentary filmmaking is retained by the filmmaker even when taking a collaborative approach. It would be useful to explore Pryluck (1976) to find an example of this,

Consider the following. You are an old man, a clinic patient in a municipal hospital, terrified that you may have cancer. While you are being examined there are strangers in the room with strange looking equipment. Another stranger a women, a physician is questioning you about the sores on your genitals and the condition of your urine. How valid would your consent be, even if one of the strangers tells you, as Wiseman does, “we just took your picture and its going to be for a movie, its going to be shown on television and maybe in theatres.

Although undoubtably an extreme example, the concerns regarding the treatment of people in documentary films throughout the years can be summarised by this example. As documentary filmmakers we often find ourselves in the prolonged company of our participants in very challenging times, often for both us and them. We often interact with people when they are at their most vulnerable, emotional, and at their most reckless. It is during these times that documentary filmmakers must act with compassion with a focus on what is best for the human element and not what is best for the film.

Once again using Prylucks example above note the use of the word “stranger”. A powerful word in this context, but more so an important one. Each documentary is different, set in different countries, with different tones, subjects and objectives. It is challenging to set out a series of ethical codes that can be applied to all documentaries, what instead I have attempted is to set as part of my methodology a code of behaviour for my practice and my production process. The notion of the documentary participant seeing the filmmaker as a stranger is problematic, especially given the emotive tone of many documentaries. A documentary participant should not feel isolated when with the filmmaker, if you analyse documentaries throughout history many have had the filmmaker spend time with the documentary participant both prior and post the filming process. Famously Robert Flaherty spent years living with Inuits whilst producing *Nanook of the North*, more recently filmmakers Aaron Wickenden and Dan Rybicky spent eight years filming with their participant for *Almost There* (2014) and remained friends with the main character after the end of production. I would argue that although each documentary production is different, time spent garnering a relationship with the documentary participant is a vital part of a positive ethical code of documentary.

One thing to highlight is the importance of building a positive relationship with the person(s) in a documentary, a prominent debate to spring from this argument is that if this relationship is so beneficial then why is it not at the forefront of the filmmakers mind and why don't they consider these issues as more important. A simple answer to this is that they don't have to. Whereas journalists have the Society of Professional Journalist (SPJ) code of ethics⁷ that are generally abided by, ethics in documentary are often considered "gimmicks that can be called upon to accept ethical questions and split forth answers" (Lambeth, 1986). Ethics are often treated more as tick boxes in order to start filming rather than a useful set of ideas to protect the documentary participant. Rosenthal (1988) posited "the essence of the question is how filmmakers should treat people in films so as to avoid exploiting them and causing them unnecessary suffering" which in a paradoxical manner seems to suggest *necessary* suffering would be acceptable in whichever form that would take. Wording aside we can see once again the lack of empathy and emotion in documentary ethics.

Scholars often describe documentary ethics with a non-personal, matter of fact approach. A reason for this is that the relationship between a filmmaker and a participant is steeped in confusion and paradox. Aufderheide (2012) interviewed 45 documentary filmmakers with the focus being on the relationship between the filmmakers and the participants, the result of these interviews were often contradictory. Filmmaker Gordon Quinn stated "We want to have a human relationship with our subjects," (Aufderheide, p.6, 2009) whilst Sam Pollard admitted he had shot an emotional scene a second time to get a better aesthetic reaction "he was crying, I was crying, we were all crying. It was so powerful. After I wrapped, I felt

⁷ <https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

like a real shit for the rest of the day, felt like I manipulated him for my personal gain. It is a powerful moment in the film but I felt bad to push him to that point when he broke down.” (Aufderheide, p.7, 2009). Although ethically disagreeable there is clear remorse shown by Pollard, remorse that could only be born out of emotive feelings generated from his relationship to the man in the film. Another ethical question raised by this scene is the question of truth. The scene was shot twice, the first shot was the ‘actuality’, the second was staged. The reaction may have carried onto the second scene and still been genuine, but ethically there is a struggle to say the scene was ‘true’

These contradictions are to be expected, after all as another filmmaker interviewed pointed out “I am in their life for a whole year. So there is a more profound relationship, not a journalistic two or three hours”. It is in this relationship where complex issues start to be produced, Aufderheide (2012) points to boundaries set by filmmakers to control this relationship “They usually treated this relationship as less than friendship and more than a professional relationship”. This remains problematic though as the more time you spend with a person the harder these boundaries are to enforce, especially as documentary filmmakers “usually enter people’s lives at a time of crisis” (Aufderheide, 2009, p.7). Gordon Quinn noted that “there are boundaries that should not be crossed. For example, any kind of romantic relationship would be unacceptable” (Aufderheide, 2009, p.6) but this fails to realise that many of the situations a filmmaker finds themselves in mirror what would traditionally be the foundation of a romantic relationship. By no means am I suggesting that a filmmaker entering into a romantic relationship with a person in their documentary would not be an ethical violation, but it is worth pointing out that this is a concern that filmmakers must face. You spend a lot of time with the people in your documentary, often years,

you talk to them at their most vulnerable about the subjects that means to most to them, it would not be human to suggest that a unique kind of relationship doesn't develop.

Methodology

The notion of practice is key to my methodological approach. The entirety of my project is firmly situated with the belief that the people in my films be the focal point of the documentary. This belief originated from the works of Prof. Graham Roberts and the *International Research Centre for Interactive Storytelling* (IRIS), with key influences being drawn from *Opening Pandora's (Black) Box: Towards A Methodology of Production Studies* (Roberts, 2011). This seminal piece on practice as researched inspired a full open access approach to the decision making and focus in my production process. Through allowing my participants to make choices on filming dates, locations, interview styles, editing choices I aim to empower, engage and stimulate people already passionate about their chosen subject. Erik Knudsen would follow the principles of this methodology of production as research, and employ many of the same aesthetics in his productions, pondering on the drive and desire to create "For some people that urge to create has led to painful journeys involving difficult decisions around family, commitments, allegiances, the challenging of social and cultural norms, and the overcoming of psychological fears and barriers." (Knudsen, 2018, p.18). It is the combination of Roberts view of production as a methodology involving a "hands-on" (Roberts, 2011, p.6) approach by the filmmaker, with Knudsen's proclamation of the painful journey and difficult decision making that has formed the basis of my methodological approach to making my two films.

It is my goal to create a process that will result, by the end of the research, in a project led by the participants and furthermore content added by the participants. In an effort to analyse this process I will endeavour to create a platform where I can

collect data and gather results based on the process of the practice. The importance of analysing this process is not to be underestimated, Francis Ford Coppola in an interview with Huffington Post (2011) when asked why he does not teach a filmmaking masterclass stated “For me in cinema there are few masters. I have met some masters - Kurosawa, Polanski - but I am a student.” It is this approach I intend to build my methodological framework around, I will not claim to have all, or indeed any, firm concrete answers but will instead concede that the process and the participation in the research by the documentary participants will be the vital area to study.

Practice is a key methodology in my research, my entire project is based around allowing my group to be a focal point of the production, to interact with the filmmaking process in a way that empowers and interests them. In many ways, it is my hope that towards the end of my project all practice based activities will be decided by the group not by me. The data I wish to collect will be born out of this process but will still concern itself with the physical practice.

A key framework of the research has been to create a platform of ease and accessibility. I intend to build a relationship with my documentary participant built on trust, honesty and an openness to ideas. A place to share information and ideas without a possibility of a negative retort. This methodology has been underpinned by the advancement of social technological platforms. It is now possible to reach anybody in the world at any time in any location. Boyd (2014) states “Over the past decade, social media has evolved from being an esoteric jumble of technologies to a set of sites and services that are at the heart of contemporary culture”. The part technology plays in the interaction and engagement that people have each day is not

to be underestimated. In 2014 popular newspaper and website The Independent⁸ cited that for the first time in human history there was more mobile electronic devices than people

The number of active mobile devices and human beings crossed over somewhere around the 7.19 billion mark. As of today, GSMA's real-time tracker puts the number of mobile devices at 7.22 billion whilst the US Census Bureau says the number of people is still somewhere between 7.19 and 7.2 billion

It is through the advancing popularity and accessibility that I aim to build a framework for transition of communication, data and ideas. Using popular social media applications such as WhatsApp⁹ and Facebook to create open but personal platforms for communication between myself the filmmaker and the people in the film. WhatsApp alone claim to have over 1 billion users¹⁰ whereas Facebook has a reported 2 billion monthly users¹¹. A large part of the failures of my first film, which will be analysed in a later chapter, was hampered by my inability to effectively communicate with my participants. One of the causes for this is never establishing the means of communication that suited both filmmaker and participant. During the production of my two films I focused on the best way to communicate with my participants, favouring what was most accessible and effective for them, rather than forcing them to use the method I chose. In my film *Connection* much of the communication was done face to face, born out of the regular access I had to my

⁸ <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/there-are-officially-more-mobile-devices-than-people-in-the-world-9780518.html>

⁹ <https://www.whatsapp.com/>

¹⁰ <https://www.whatsapp.com/join/>

¹¹ <https://techcrunch.com/2017/06/27/facebook-2-billion-users/>

participant. In my film *Activist* however nearly all of the communication outside of filming days was done on social media, such as the afore mentioned Whatsapp and Facebook. These platforms were familiar to my participant, they were comfortable using this method, in a way that my original project participants were not.

This technology is a vital tool in my research and a key step towards a more personal human relationship with the people in my films. A key part of my methodology is to create a space for both myself and my documentary participants to exist in without the pressures of a traditional 'filmmaker, participant' relationship. Rather than a formal in person meeting, or online video call instead intend to update and contact my participants as mentioned, using popular online technologies in an informal language.

A vital part of my methodological approach is the use of observational techniques and methods. My aim is to understand how to engage people in the filmmaking process, but it is impossible to do that without spending time and observing their reactions to it. Roberts (2011) argues that "most scholars are hampered by the fact that they do not/have not got their hands dirty in the world of production itself" My goal is to engage fully in regards to getting my hands dirty. Whether this manifest itself in ongoing conversations online, or by simply spending time with my documentary participants.

To enhance the usefulness of the observational methodological approach further it is important to distinguish between the types of observation. Controlled observation in which the researcher formulates a strict guideline, including specific references to where something will take place, when it will take place and what time does not prove useful to my approach. My research aims to give control to the participants, to

make the film not mine but ours. As a result of this it proves more useful to consider naturalistic and Participant observation. Naturalistic observation supports the idea of viewing people in their natural habitat. During the production of my Catholic pilgrimage documentary there were many examples of this technique. I was not in control of locations, times, topics I was instead just an observer. An observer living in the world that they constructed but surrendering any idea of control.

Participant observation although deeply linked to naturalistic observation differs in a key way for my research. Participant observations states that rather than being an outside viewer the researcher instead becomes part of the group. Leon Festinger famously adopted this approach in a study of a religious cult who believed the world was going to end. In *When Prophecy Fails*¹² Festinger joined the cult and studied the reactions and believes in the group. Similarly, my vegan film borrows from this technique. I have been part of their activities since the start of the project. This approach was chosen in an effort to link back to the aim of the research to build a strategy in order to form a relationship with the documentary participants. This strategy does cause concern to me as a researcher, I have not shied away from any aspect of the vegan's life, subsequently putting myself in the same dangers that they face.

One example of this danger exists in my participation in an 'Animal Save'¹³. These animal saves can be dangerous for animal rights group to attend, on the 7th of August 2014 'Liverpool Pig Save' posted a video which showed peaceful protesters being assaulted by members of staff at C S Morphet & Sons slaughterhouse in Liverpool¹⁴.

¹² <http://www.pinterandmartin.com/when-prophecy-fails.html>

¹³ <http://thesavemovement.org/>

¹⁴ Link to Video -

https://www.facebook.com/LiverpoolPigSave/videos/687609704764526/?hc_ref=ARRNsAyQyjt2BDvLxxkgnKMG EaPBOJgenRbGr5xVIfT412bY0r_3dKritv43ImNrTE&pnref=story

Although inducing risk this is the sort of 'getting your hands dirty' approach Roberts (2011) criticised some scholars for avoiding the use of participant observation in this regard is key to my research.

I hint in the last paragraph an affinity to change and about to my research and the relationships I build with the people involved. This also reflects in the attitude to the actual production of the documentaries. I have attempted to use my own reflection as part of my methodological approach. Much like the inadvertent view we saw of Francis Ford Coppola in *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991) I will actively promote the viewing of myself as a researcher and filmmaker during the most challenging and personally tough moments. This has taken the guise of video blogs/essays that give a unique view into the filmmaker's mindset before during and after a production. This approach was inspired in part by the work of Erik Knudsen on his film 'The Raven on the Jetty'. During the production of this film Knudsen produced a series of video blogs detailing both inspirations behind the story of the film and also an in-depth look into the technical production of the film. Titles of these vlogs ranged from *Colour Grading the Film*, *Art Department Preparations* to *The Casting Process*.

Although inspired by this approach my research instead directed me away from a visual analyses of the film (or documentary) but towards a video analysis of the filmmaker. As such in my video blogs I talk less about the actual film shoots and more about my mental state. Critical to this approach is truth and honesty. Some video blogs I have produced could shock a viewer in terms of how personal the content can be and also how unsettled I appear in them. This though is necessary to

create a framework which can be used by other filmmakers feeling the same emotions and challenges.

Failure And False Starts

History of Old Project

A key moment of my research occurred when the focal point of my project changed. The subject of my films changed from the The University of the Third Age Cambridge and their climate change activism to a personal project about veganism and Catholic pilgrimage.

Before I consider the reasoning behind the change, it is important to highlight who the original group where. The original group I chose to work with The University of the Third Age Cambridge (U3AC). The U3AC are:

an independent self-financing organisation that was founded in 1982. Its aim is to provide educational and social activities to those no longer in full-time employment and as such there are no age restrictions. (<https://u3ac.org.uk/>)

The goal of the U3AC is to ensure that retired people have a place that they can integrate with other people in both a social, and intellectual arena. As such they offer services such as *Trips and Visits, Cycling Club, Wine Tasting, Garden Parties, Travel Club, and Film Screenings*. If any members are unable to visit their building in person they also offer a newsletter every four months, including a an archive of the newsletters dating back to June 2011.

As described a key goal for the U3AC is engagement, bringing groups together who often appear isolated, marginalised and to an extent lonely. It was on this basis that I considered my aims for my project to match that of the U3AC, whereas they use education to bring people together I wanted to use filmmaking. The question remains however, what causes this marginalisation and isolation. After meeting the U3AC I suspected it was a concept known as the *Digital Divide*.

The Introduction of a Digital Divide

The starting point for this chapter concerns itself with a definition of 'Digital Divide'.

The most common definition states the digital divide as the gap between people who have access to, and ability to use, new information and communication tools, such as the internet and the requisite hardware to access the internet¹⁵. This definition is useful yet has its limitation, the definition assumes a starting point that is the same for everyone, not taking into account differences such as country, age, race, housing etc. Benjamin Compaine, a senior research affiliate at the Internet and Telecoms Convergence Consortium at the MIT offers a more useful definition in his book 'The Digital Divide: Facing a Crisis or creating a myth' where he refers to the digital divide as the "perceived gap between those who have access to the latest information technologies and those who do not. He goes on to note that "It has been applied to differences within a society, such as the United States. It may also be applied to differences between developed and developing or under-developed countries."

It is dangerous when analysing the digital divide to solely evaluate the effects it has in your world, the place in society that you are situated. As Compaine referenced, the digital divide has been used to define groups of people internationally, you cannot focus specifically on one area when considering a definition. It is easy when considering anything 'digital' or technology based to associate your thinking in relation to traditionally developed regions, such as the US and Western Europe.

Eliree Bornman, a researcher at the University of South Africa (Commonly known as

¹⁵ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/digital-divide>

UNISA) is in a unique position, her paper *Information Society and Digital Divide in South Africa: results of longitudinal surveys* focuses upon issues similar issues in regards to the digital divide but from within a country that she states is “ the least developed region in the world when income, school enrolment and life expectancy are taken into account” and importantly is a country that “lags behind the rest of the world in terms of key indicators of the information society”.

Although on a base level the digital divide concerns itself with those who have access to technology and information it is vital if we are going to analyse the effect of this upon to society to note “society does not look the same everywhere” (Bornman). Over the course of this article I will details my hypothesis and describe how the digital divide impacts upon the group I am working with, my society.

Rise of the Digital Divide

Above we have attempted a simple understanding of what the digital divide is, but it is important to understand the rise of the digital divide. Although generally applied to person computers and the internet as technology as advanced with time the digital divide as encompassed many different devices. The digital divide effects many platforms, including the afore mentioned internet and personal computers but can also extend to telephones, televisions, smartphones, tablets, cameras. This was not always the case though, in the late 1980s many of the above technologies were not invented, or if they were they were in a very primitive form. The 1990s however saw the advancement of two key pieces of technology, the personal computer and the internet.

The evolution of the digital divide naturally paralleled the rise of the internet into mainstream society, early 1990s saw the development of an information highway that would become what we know as the internet, this development changed the way technology was viewed. Although what we know now as personal computer had a long history before this point. The first digital computer was developed over 40 years earlier, the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer, or ENIAC was used in the military as a tool dedicated to artillery. Although invented, the computer then was nothing like we knew it now, their functionality was not as we view it now, each personal computer was un-connected, more akin to a simple typewriter than a modern-day laptop, albeit admittedly a more streamlined version.

The rise of the internet meant that these personal computers could be linked, for the first time information could be shared, this itself eventually led to the rise of email, an ability to instantly send a personal message or business information to anyone in the world for free. This process meant that everyone from the general public to business to the government were clamouring for this new technology, “Between 1991 and 1996, the number of personal computers in the United States jumped from 300,000 to over ten million” ¹⁶ this quote by Richard Rapaport in his five part series ‘The New Literacy: Scenes from the Digital Divide 2.0 ’emphasises the growth that happened in just a five year period, advancement in areas such as weaponry, national defense, electricity had evolved naturally over hundreds of years whereas this new digital world evolved over night.

Naturally the demand for more PCs, more reliable internet and better software grew. The people who could afford a personal computer, the internet and means to power

¹⁶<http://www.edutopia.org/digital-generation-divide-connectivity>

both, had in just a few years, had their lives completely changed, their fundamental view of information and communication had evolved, they were part of a revolution comparable to the invention of electricity, this evolution would continue to this day. This raised the question though what of those who could not afford a PC or the internet? What of those that lived in areas where these services were not offered? Even at this early stage the rapid advancement of information and communication technology had encouraged segregation in society.

Effects of the Digital Divide

During this time of information and communication growth the first echoes of a digital divide had begun, certain parts of the media were beginning to notice an emerging inequality forming. In 1996 the *New York Times*¹⁷ became one of the first massive media outlets to highlight this issue in an article named “A New Gulf in American Education, the Digital Divide”¹⁸ in which journalist and author Gary Poole wrote about the difference between “private elementary and high schools” in relation to public schools “attended by children of one of the region’s poorest communities”. Gary Poole was a prominent writer at the time in relation to the internet, having written articles on this subject for popular websites Wired, Forbes and of course the New York Times. To demonstrate the perceived difference between the two school Poole uses the example of:

¹⁷ <http://www.nytimes.com/>

¹⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/29/business/a-new-gulf-in-american-education-the-digital-divide.html>

John Dixon, a freckle-faced fifth grader at Anderson Elementary, calls himself a computer buff. But he must make do with the school's six-year-old I.B.M. 386 PC's, which are little more than electric typewriters compared with the multimedia machines he wishes the school could afford, "so we could look up stuff on the encyclopaedia and see pictures."

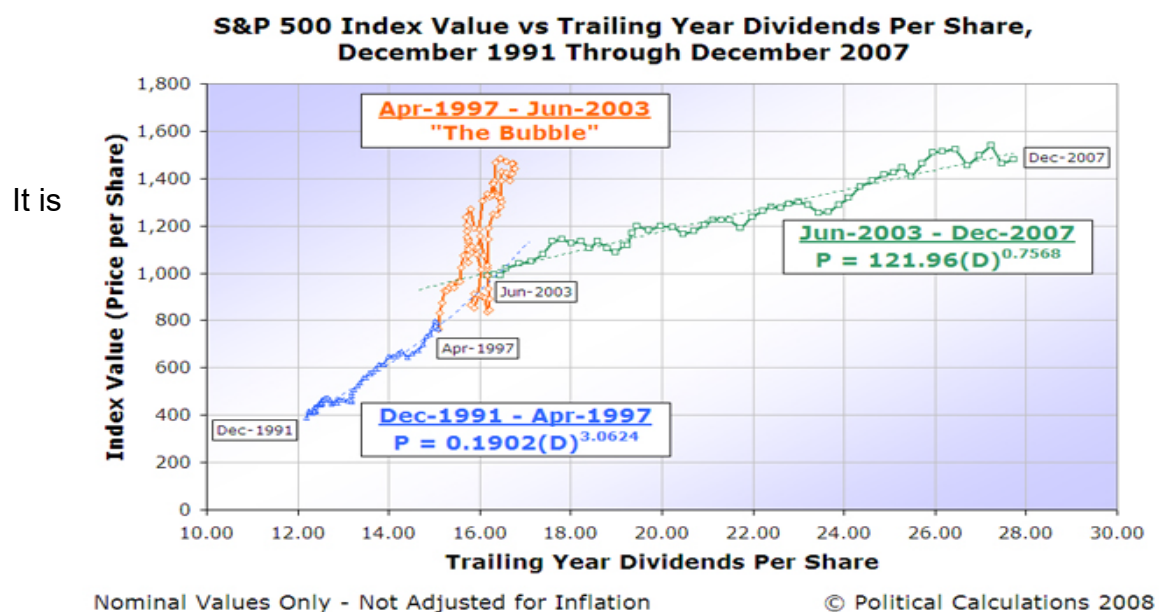
In just one town in America this divide was beginning to present itself, the children from the poorer communities had the same desire to participate in this new way of consuming information but they could not, for reasons out of their control.

It was clear to many outlets that as information communication technology (ICT) advanced, the gap between those with the ability to make use of it and those that did not continued to widen. This process continued throughout the 1990s, the rise of a digital era had begun to negatively affect communities throughout the countries who had access to this new technology.

Although the negative effect the digital divide had on society had started to become clearer it is important to consider that the digital divide influenced not just people but business. With advanced technology came advanced ambitions from corporations and businesses that could, for the first time, invest in a digital world. For the first time in human history businesses could be run 'online', business could be based not just in a physical building but instead lay on an almost celestial plane.

Technology had advanced, and as it did so did the ambitions of local business owners. Mark Warschauer, professor of Education and Informatics at the University of California has made a career out of researching digital media and digital platforms, authoring a number of books as well as being the founding editor of Language Learning & Technology journal. In his 2004 book 'Technology and Social

Inclusion: Rethinking the Digital Divide he makes reference to a “wild surge of dot-com businesses, many of which went bankrupt after failing to earn a single dollar” sensing an opportunity many businesses took advantage of the hysteria around technology and the internet, overeagerly investing their future in a still evolving technological field. This period of time would be tentatively named the dot-com crash, a period of time between 2000-2002 where stock prices would crash to an all-time low and trillions of dollars would be lost. The below diagram provided by *Business Insider* demonstrates the effect the digital boom had on business:



clear that the evolution of the internet and more advanced computing systems introduced in the early nineties and explored in the latter had a big effect on business. Whether it was in relation to the general public and local communities or businesses and corporations what was clear is that the world had changed. The availability of personal computers, and the internet to some groups but not others,

coupled with a digital ambition by many people indicated that this change would be permanent.

A New Digital World

It was clear that people wanted computers and wanted the internet, it was new, it was advanced and had not been available at any point during human history, but as mentioned previously not everyone had access to it, those in poorer communities had been excluded. This though, does not mean efforts were not put in place to combat the inequality created by the digital divide, academics stressed the importance of the inclusion of all parts of society. Pippa Norris in her 2001 piece 'Digital Divide? Civic Engagement, information Poverty and the Internet Worldwide' made the point that "Digital networks have the potential to broaden and enhance access to information and communication for remote rural areas and poorer neighbourhoods". As a political scientist at Harvard University Norris noted the benefit digital enhancements could make for groups who general are isolated by the digital divide, she goes on to cite a notable act by the then US President Bill Clinton in which private companies would be offered a \$2bn tax break to help bridge the digital divide. The aim of this act was to "close the gap so that access to computers eventually becomes as ubiquitous as the availability of the telephone or the television."

The government were concerned about this divide, and actively sought to bridge it, but they were not the only ones. Businesses provided schemes and funded projects in order to include not just individuals but entire towns in the emerging digital world, Warschauer (2004) tells the story of a competition hosted by Ireland's national

telecommunications company to create a “Information Age Town”, communities of over 5000 were eligible to pitch a proposal of what the Information Age Town should be. “The rationale behind the effort was to help overcome the gap between Ireland’s emerging status as a multinational business centre of ICT *production* and the rather limited *use* of ICT among Ireland’s own people and indigenous small businesses.”

The prize would be an investment of 15million Irish pounds into the successful town, which would be the town of Ennis¹⁹. “At the heart of Ennis’s winning proposal was a plan to give an Internet-ready personal computer to every family in the town”

Warschauer subsequently continues the story pointing out that when a university researcher visited the town three years later the effects of the investment had not been a success, pointing out the town had “little to show for its money”. This researcher presented the hypothesis that the reason behind this was that the town had not been prepared for such a contrasting new direction having previously been a struggling working class town, a working class town that was previously prominent for its various worker’s revolutions²⁰. He cited “little preparation” and training schemes that were “not sufficiently accompanied by awareness programs as to why people should use the new technology in the first place.

The national telecommunications company had fallen into the same trap as the dot-com businesses of the time, they had been presented access to a shiny new digital culture and had put their full stock into this without first understanding the need for it, they assumed people would want this, and hindsight tells us maybe they did, but at the time enough was not done to help people understand how this new technology

¹⁹ <http://www.visitennis.com/>

²⁰ <http://www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/11/17/1-1933-ennis-town-background-irelands-two-revolutions>

would be useful, and why it could help them. Instead it had been forced on the town. It is an important lesson to take when presenting a group with something new, whether that 'new' thing will eventually be beneficial to them or not, you must take effort to work in collaboration with the group, whether that be a whole town as mentioned about or a group of four people, whatever the scale the dynamic must be interactive, you must work in tandem with the people not as opposites.

The Digital Divide and the U3AC

Thus far effort in this chapter effort has been put in to highlighting the impact the new digital world had on society and referenced the digital divide, what is vital though is to understand what caused the segregation and exclusion emphasised by the digital divide. Inequality is a term that is well understood, as is the destructive nature of its existence, but it is still a useful term to highlight problems caused by the digital divide. Inequality has always existed, a splinter between social groups, class standings and human differences, but applied to the digital age it is interesting that many of the same outcomes exist. What groups are affected by the digital divide? Teun A. van Dijk a discourse analyst at the Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona suggests "The divides observed are related to age-old demographics of income, education, age, sex and ethnicity" but also goes on to suggest the importance of looking deeper than this pointing out "Most often a historical perspective is lacking". Important to my research is the category of age. The group that were the focus of my research are the University of the Third Age Cambridge²¹ Climate Committee. A group that are above the age of 60. This group campaign to help their local area

²¹ <http://www.u3ac.org.uk/>

become a greener town, and are committed to lowering energy on both the roads and houses of the local area.

How did I solve the Digital Divide in My Original Project

I didn't. My original practice was beset by many problems, even from the very start, both issues born out of the above mentioned digital divide, as well as many more born from my many errors and mistakes. However, fundamental to my methodology is the notion that mistakes are not a bad thing, and are not uncommon in any filmmaking process. In this section I will attempt to highlight where my initial film and project went wrong, but how that failure was fundamental to my final two films and research.

Before any great analysis of what went wrong with the project it is useful to start with the most obvious and therefore fundamental issue that went wrong with my original U3AC project, and that was communication. Communication is a vital part of any project, whether you are trying to organise the weekly shop, or film a 20-30 minute documentary, lack of communication will hamper your efforts. "It is obvious, too, that good people skills, and good communication skills, are essential for a documentary filmmaker. Somehow you must be able to convince people to co-operate, to trust that their ideas, feelings and experiences will reach the screen in a 'truthful' and recognisable way." (De Jong, p.176, (2013)). When making a film almost every decision or interact requires some level of adequate communication. Communication in and out of the filmmaking setting appears so simple, you just talk, or write your information and share it with others. Unfortunately in practice, the application is much more nuanced. In this section I will break down the communication issues into

two main categories, communication issues caused by me, and communication issues that arose passively.

Any project leader has to be able to communicate effectively, otherwise progress will not be made. This is especially important in the filmmaking setting. Within any production lack of communication can effect location, timings, travel, morale, efficacy and much more. Often times this is why film productions will require a separate director and producer, as these tasks and disciplines require very different types of skills and very different types of people. Within a documentary production however these lines are blurred, often you encounter productions that are led primarily by one person, such as in my two research films. This means that the same person is required to direct, produce, operate camera, do sound, edit, location manage etc. Wilma de Jong highlights astutely some of the precise skills required to make a documentary film, "Being multi-skilled implies having creative, social, analytical, negotiating and technical skills." (De Jong, p.176, 2013) Some talented people are good at multiples of these, but it is very hard to be good at all. Foolishly I had envisioned these types of roles and responsibilities to not be a problem, a task that could be easily managed, however it quickly became apparent that this wasn't the case.

When presented with all of the roles and responsibilities of making my initial film I defaulted to my most naturally comfortable areas, primarily the visual aspects of filmmaking, thinking about artistic shots, stimulating locations, and interesting chapters and parts of my film. But as more and more focus was piled selfishly into those areas of the project, other areas, most notably the producer responsibilities began to fall into neglect. I found at this stage the 95% of my planning and research was focused on the areas mentioned above, but hardly any time was spent talking to

the members of my filming group, sharing with them my ideas, and plans. Although in hindsight this is easier to analyse I must confess that even at the time I knew something was wrong, and that something was me. I become more insular, with a tunnel vision focus on my filming, where we would film, what camera we would use, how we would get good sound. I fell so easily into the trap that so many before me had also, focusing more on the film than the people, which resulted in the filmmaker having no connection to the participants. As I began to focus more on the film rather than the participants I began to consider the words of Bill Nichols "In documentaries, we expect social actors to present themselves in this sense, not perform the role of a character of the filmmaker's devising," (Nichols, p.9. 2010), more and more it began to feel as if I was telling the participants what to do and where to be, thus their responses were not natural, instead it felt like I was trying to get them to say what I wanted, not what they wanted. The participants performing a role that I as the filmmaker devise is something my research is distinctively trying to offer solutions against. This hypocrisy fueled my anxiety in the project, which itself propelled me more into the peril of staying in my comfort zone of the technical aspect of filming and not where my attention was needed, the human side of filmmaking.

So how did this lack of confidence show itself in regard to communicating with my group. A primary example of this can be documented from my first few meetings with both the group leader and the general group members. At the start of my research I had suggested that a key mistake documentary makers made was that they had no genuine connection to the people in their films. Often leading to a very performative style of documentary, or bingo card style of documentary. Wide pan of flowers, tracking shot following the participant, shallow focus pull, close up of tears etc. My methodology offered an alternative to this, a method that involved creating a real

connection with the people in the film, and the only way to create a connection with people is to spend time with them. At an early stage of my U3AC project it was arranged that I would stay with one of the prominent members of the U3AC Brian Wallis, will be filmed and attended sessions he ran with the U3AC. The idea was that while a traditional filmmaker would arrive, film, and then leave, I would instead stay with the person in my film for a longer period of time. The hypothesis being that this would create a connection, that would enhance the film in a positive way, both for me as a filmmaker but moreso for the group as participants.

Upon first meeting and chatting with Brian something became clear, I couldn't communicate my project idea. Talking with him about other subjects was fantastic, this was a very interesting, extremely intelligent individual with opinions on many topics. Discussion would be had about many things, sometimes funny chats, sometimes informative, sometimes random. But anytime I discussed my project I couldn't find the words to make it seem interesting, or engaging. It was clear that the time spent thinking about the filming should have been spent thinking about the impact and efficacy of my project. I would discuss in detail my plans, and how they could be useful for U3AC causes, I would highlight sessions we would film, interviews I would do and shots I would take. But it all lacked heart, the connection I tried to make was missing, I felt like I was doing the film that any other filmmaker would do, there was nothing unique about me creating it. And most importantly, the experience for the participants was not good, certainly not the production process I had promised. I had set out to identify the issues in the documentary production process that caused the participants to have a negative experience and create a improved process, however I was instead making the same mistakes everyone else had made. Ultimately and inevitable this process led to an insurmountable level of

doubt. Something common to filmmakers, Erik Knudsen discusses doubt in filmmaking as “Doubt about our ability. Doubt about the validity of what we are doing. Doubt about why we are creating in the first place.” (Knudsen, p.55, 2018), this definition of doubt is something that consumed me entirely during the production of my first film, and like Knudsen that doubt would progress further into “ Fears about the quality of what we are producing”.

A key moment in my research happened after the first few filming sessions, my supervisor sensing my unease and anxiety asked me how my project was helping and enhancing my groups experience. This targeted the very core of my project aims, and highlighted the biggest issue with my initial failed project. My lack of connection with my group and my inability to effectively communicate my ideas and philosophies was creating a mutated version of my process, in which my connection and relationship with my group wasn't informing the project, instead I was dictating to them.

Certainly my own communicative skills where an issue in my original project, however there were also other factors in regard to communication I had not considered beforehand. The largest example of this is the differences in communication methods between different generations. Following on from the issues raised above around the digital divide it became clear that the way the group communicated was different to how I communicated.

It must not go unhighlighted that one of the biggest failings of the initial project was attributable to the arrogance or even ignorance of the filmmaker. In later chapters I will point out how my focus and priorities changed dramatically regarding my documentary production method, but at this early stage I was guilty of falling into a

trap that many have before me. "Documentary filmmakers tend to believe strongly in their film projects. There is an urge or a strong belief that the film needs to be made." (De Jong, p.176, 2013) This belief led to a level of arrogance that the film would work, or that I could make it work, however I lacked the skills and determination to actualize my beliefs, as Erik Knudsen states, "You will put your neck on the line and risk humiliation. And when faced with problems, you will not shy away from making difficult decisions." (Knudsen, p.202, 2013), unfortunately I could not make those decisions.

The Process

Film One: Connection

In order to prove that my methods could be effective, and that changes had been made from the original project, I created two documentary films. One about a person reconnecting with their faith, and one about an animal rights activist. The process born out of my research was implemented as a methodology for both films, with the key principles of 'connection, technology, and control' being applied to each. To further validate the results of the production process each film was designed to be different from the other, even taking place in different countries for the most part. In this section I will highlight the process used in the first film, with the ambition of pointing toward a blueprint, or at least a key set of principles, useful for future filmmakers.

This chapter will prioritise my first film, and establish the key principles of my production process as 'connection, technology, and control'. Firstly, we must start with connection, and define what that means to me as a filmmaker and how it proved useful in both creating my first film, but also was a beneficial principle for the participants in the film. Before this definition however it is valuable to understand why this concept is so critical in this context. Chapter three established how lack of connection led ultimately to the end of my initial film project, it was highlighted that a genuine connection between filmmaker and participant is vital to create the nature of personal film that documentary filmmakers often try to make.

To answer the question of why connection is ultimately vital and foundational to my method of documentary filmmaking we must understand briefly what filmmaking actually is. Of course, at its core filmmaking is the act of recording a given action on a camera, but this part is only a very small part of filmmaking when compared to the time spent on the film. Erik Knudsen highlights the desire to film and create by stating, "Despite the many risks of potential humiliation, failure or disappointment, people venture onto difficult and sometimes dangerous journeys to create. These journeys can be intimate or epic, or everything in between." (Knudsen, p.18, 2018). The use of emotive language is useful to embolden the notion that filmmaking is much more than regular perception, this humiliation, failure, disappointment is a very real and distinct possibility for both filmmaker and participant.

Furthermore lets consider briefly the "journey" mentioned by Knudsen. Filmmaking is as much recording on a camera as it is travelling in a car, having dinner with your participants and crew, messaging on social media, practicing and organising equipment, visiting and surveying locations. This is all the say and emphasise that the part of filmmaking where you record your film is 5%, if that, of the time you spend on the film. Why then is this the dominant priority for many filmmakers? Nichols offers this answer "Given that most filmmakers act as representatives of those they film or of the institution sponsoring them rather than as community members, tensions often arise between the filmmaker's desire to make a compelling film and the individual's desire to have his or her social rights and personal dignity respected." (Nichols, p.56, 2010) . It is suggested that often within a regular documentary film production pressure is applied on the filmmaker to assure the film is a success. However, I strongly argue that 95% of the time making a film is used

doing the things mentioned previous, along with ample more cases. Filmmakers naturally and organically focus on that 5%, but the 95% is where you are interacting with the participants in your film, creating a lasting impression, positive or negative, even when you are not actively intending too. You are on the journey together, “all documentaries are a joint exploration between filmmaker and subject, especially as digital technologies have broken down many of the more formal traditional divisions between subject and maker, those in front of the camera and those behind it.

Contemporary documentary will often use footage shot by the contributor themselves, either diary or archive, and, at times, work with them as joint author of the film.” (Rothwell, p.60, 2013) The argument can be made that filmmaking is as much about understanding and developing connections as it is any other fundamental aspect, and certainly with a time bias it is if anything the most important principle.

With this key principle understanding, alongside a first hand example of a project which neglected this principle, the first part of my production process was to incorporate connection as an indispensable pillar of my film. If we understand what connection represents in this context, naturally a further step must be taken to define and understand what connection is. At this core a connection is an understanding between two people, a certain positive link that can be shared. However in a filmmaking context the term has multiple meanings. Yes, it does also represent a link or understanding between people, but I would argue that in the filmmaking context connection is much more closely linked to trust, and therefor power dynamics. As referenced in the introduction to this research the power dynamic between a documentary filmmaker and participant is unique in its ethics and responsibilities. I

have argued that this dynamic is skewed massively in favor of the filmmaker, as they make all the choices. However the connection, or trust between a filmmaker and their participant is vital in creating that first step towards evening out that power dynamic.

Initially it is useful to consider the relationship between a filmmaker and a participant, and how this relationship is understood. This relationship has been described as “less than friendship and more than a professional relationship” (Aufderheide, p.6, 2009), this definition is useful to understand the perception of the dynamic between filmmaker and participant, a dynamic in which my production method will suggest should be closer to friendship than a professional relationship. Aufderheide goes on to quote artistic director Gordon Quinn in an effort to establish the risks and boundaries that this relationship should follow, ““We want to have a human relationship with our subjects, but there are boundaries that should not be crossed. For example, any kind of romantic relationship would be unacceptable. You always have to be aware of the power that you as a filmmaker have in relationship to your subject”. The latter part of Quinn’s statement offers us an admission that the power afforded to the filmmaker is always a key consideration to any production, with the example prior used to demonstrate an obvious abuse of this power.

A romantic relationship is a very clear example of how the power afforded to the filmmaker can be abused to devastating effect, but a less obvious problematic area demonstrated in Quinns answer is the use of the word “subject”. Throughout this thesis any person represented in either of my films has been referred to only as participants. Participant is not a perfect word, I would argue we have no perfect word

to describe someone appearing in a documentary film, however it is clear even on the basic interpretation of connotations that subject is highly problematic. Subject so directly links to a negative power dynamic, a king would have subjects, a science experiment would have subjects, a documentary should not.

Identifying trust and responsibility as a primary signifier in our key principle of connection can be seen as instantly useful when combined with our proclamation of what the filmmaking process actually entails in the previous chapters. Starting at the most simplest of interactions when driving together in the car to a location. Having that connection, trust, and therefor bond will ordinarily make that process a more positive experience for the participant and filmmaker. Although a simple example I must continue with it and focus on it as a microcosm of the entire process, in which its simplicity helps us understand its importance. Previously I mentioned that this car journey would fall into the 95% of filmmaking not prioritised by the standard filmmaker, but let's highlight how simple the change in dynamic can be. Taking time to build your connection with your participant is not a waste of time, it is the opposite, it is more important than the 5% you may focus on. What's more, this process of placing connection at the base of your filmmaking priorities is a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts, lets once more analyse our car journey example. Focusing on connection from the very start of the filmmaking process allowed a simple car journey to be a positive experience for both filmmaker and participant, which is important, however this approach allows us to take this principle one step further. As a result of the relationship being established before the car journey, the car journey becomes a passive, almost subliminal, opportunity to build and strengthen this connection. And this revolving cycle applies to all your interaction with your

participants, when filming, when getting lunch, when chatting, when messaging on socials, every interaction becomes an opportunity to further your connection. And this infinite loop, represents the first key principle of the production process I have created as part of this research.

Having established our definition of connection and enshrined it as a core principle of our production process it is useful to highlight how this connection was established in my first film. It would be impressive to consider some abstract, unique, unconventional method used to establish our connection but instead the truth is significantly more simple. The crucial and decisive methods that allowed me to create a genuine and strong connection with my film participants was almost entirely spawned from a strong focus on both time and cooperation. Let's break down these two terms to fully understand how they proved both fundamental but almost effective at creating the connection featured in my first film.

What is time? A continued process of events spread infinitely over the past, the present and the future. What is time in relation to documentary filmmaking? Time is a resource. Breaking down time into the category of a resource is useful to our production process. However before we understand why and how this is the case, let's first outline what I mean when I state that time is a resource. During the filmmaking process you have many resources, commonly examples of these will include money, equipment, vehicles, fuel etc. And due to their nature as a resource the aesthetic they occupy in your mind as a filmmaker is something to be 'spent' as it were. My argument here is that time is not any different to these, and should occupy the same space in your mind and your process as these other resources.

Let's consider first what a resource is, although simplistic in nature the most useful understanding of a resource for us is simply .. something that can be spent, or used. For example let's use the most common and easy to understand resource, currency. Let's create an hypothetical example in which you have a budget to spend £100 on your film. This is a number that is not infinite, and therefore you must allocate to areas based on your understanding of priority. Let's say £20 on location. £10 on fuel. £40 on equipment hire, £10 on food and £20 on drinks. You have allocated your resources based on your priority, the variables within the £100 can change, you could spend £30 on location and £10 on drinks, however the £100 must remain. In the context of filmmaking this is no different for time. If you have 20 hours with your participant, then you have £20 to spend based on your priorities.

These priorities are what must be highlighted as the vital part of my claim that 'time' is what I used to create the connection in my films. As mentioned in the 95% to 5% example of filmmaking above, the priorities are set by the filmmaker. In our 20 hours with the participant example, the 20 hours cannot be changed or controlled by the filmmaker, but how that 20 hours is 'spent' can be. As above let's break that 20 hours down into an hypothetical situation where the 20 hours of time can be spent. 10 hours filming, 4 hours travelling, 2 hours eating, 1 hour drinking, 1 hour interacting with your participant, 2 hours setting up equipment. This hypothetical example was used to show that the core concern of the filmmaker is the actual filming of the project. But let's say we rebalanced that spend, but this time we had 10, 12, 14 hours in the category of interaction with the participant, what would this mean for the film?

It was that question which made me understand how effective time could be when defined to mean the time spent with my participant. Did this time allocated in this way effect other aspects of the film? We will answer this shortly in this chapter when we discuss control, but for now we will focus on time as another key principle in regards to building our connection. In grave contrast to my first failed project I organised my production process to spend the majority of any time I had directly on the participants in my film. And this filmmaking ideology started before any of the filmmaking had begun. I had a relationship with the main participant of my reconnecting with faith film for many years prior to filming. But even so in the months and weeks before we would be due to film I spent added time with them, staying at their house multiple times, even on the night before we would travel to film. The time spent prior to the filming process was useful, no doubt, but I don't want to focus on that heavily, as the production process I hope to demonstrate in this thesis should act as a guide, or set of principles for any future filmmaker, and the benefit of years of prior relationship isn't not something guaranteed for everyone. So instead I will focus on how time was used during the filmmaking process.

Spending time with my participant of my documentary film was a priority or principle that I applied at every single stage of the production process. Although this sounds simple, it is worth remembering that making films is extremely stressful. Hours and hours go into planning, but ultimately you are at the mercy of fate on any given day, and in these moments often filmmakers will prioritise what they most need for their films, the footage. " Maintaining a participant led approach and using time with them as a resource is significantly harder than it may seem. Especially in documentary film, where often documentaries are made either by an individual or very small

teams, in my case an individual. This is important to consider because whilst you are spending time with your participant, there isn't a second person setting up cameras, checking locations, managing health and safety, testing sound etc. You are still the person responsible for those things, and many more things. This means that even using my process and principles, you still have to consider and be responsible for the traditional parts of filmmaking, which begs the question how do we manage this balance.

The answer to this falls back into the question of priority. What is more of a priority, The quality of film, or the experience and ethical considerations of the participant? I suspect not many people will disagree that the more time you spend with your participant the more positive their experience, but some may disagree or suggest that this is to the detriment of the film, and thus is why the traditional filmmaking process is what it is. I hope to prove in my two films that one doesn't have to be sacrificed for the other. Steps to focus on the participants experience to the detriment of the films content is not an entirely new concept, "The keenly felt power differential between filmmaker and subject led some filmmakers to make unilateral storytelling decisions, usually to omit material, with empathy for the subjects" (Aufderheide, p.8, 2009), there is an understanding among documentary filmmakers that the priority of the film shouldn't be entirely the film, I would argue that the balance is still skewed, however there have been instances in which the film has taken a back seat, Aufderheide subsequently uses these examples "One subject when drunk revealed something he had never revealed when sober, and in the filmmaker's opinion probably would not. The filmmaker decided to exclude this information from the film. In still another case, an HIV-positive mother addicted to

drugs asked filmmakers not to reveal where she lives. This filmmaker decided to take the story out altogether". In each example the priority was the filmmakers view of the wellbeing of the participant, although note the use of the word subject, over the content of their film.

I hope to have established time as an important aspect of how I built my connection to my participant in my first film, now we should move on to the second method I mentioned previously which was the notion of cooperation. To define cooperation in the context of my filmmaking principles I would use as a springboard to previous discussion of time. If time was the resource you spent with your participants, cooperation would be the framework of which you used that time. In this sense cooperation is more closely linked to a mindset of both openness and collaboration. If time allowed you a window of interaction with your participants, the cooperative mindset is the tool that allowed efficacy and efficient application of that time. Although this sounds on the surface quite complicated, it is in practice anything but. One rule I followed one days where we would film on my first film was that there must be a period of time spent with the participants before filming. This could be as simple as having breakfast together, or more esoteric given the nature of the film and be a group prayer or song. Cooperation in this context simply means a mindset in which you are active in the interactions, you are positive and understanding of the feelings and needs of your participants.

Understanding cooperation in this way significantly helped build my connection with my participants, in part due to the relationship between expectation and reality. We must understand as filmmakers that our presence brings with it a certain set of

stigmas. If you walked down the street and saw a film crew pointing a camera at you what would you do, naturally you may feel defensive, suspicious, on edge. These are the same category of feelings and emotions your participants will have when they first film with you. And these feelings must be addressed in order for the participants to have a truly positive experience. These stigmas form the first stages of the imbalance in power dynamic between filmmaker and participant, without breaking down these stigmas it is difficult to rebalance that dynamic. Identifying a cooperative and collaborative mindset was the first step I took to attempt to tear down these stigmas, and create a connection of equality, without the dynamics that usually exists between a filmmaker and participant.

We have discussed the key principle of connection, why it is important, how to define it and how it was established. Finally it is time to analyse the impact of this approach, in essence, what results did this approach have on the film. With a key eye being locked on what impact this approach had on the participant themselves. To identify what effect the principle of connection had on the film and the participants I will focus primarily on three key topics, that of 'Access, Openness and Positivity. Access is vital for any documentary film, without it you have no film by definition. But access is also very important for an often overlooked consideration of your documentary film, mainly why are you the one making it. Discussed earlier in chapter 3, a large reason why the first project proved unsuccessful was that there was nothing unique about me making that film, you could have switched me out with another filmmaker and made the same film. This is in stark contract to the two films I have made as part of this research. I believe, and will discuss, that I am the only one who could have made these two films. Granted other filmmakers could have used the same

equipment, and spoke to the same people, in the same location, but none could get the essence and story that my films did. In large part this is due to access.

Linking of course directly to our key principle of connection the relationship I had with my participants led to a massive amount of access being granted to me as a filmmaker that otherwise would not have been granted. Access can be viewed in many different lights, access could mean physical access, such as to a location. Or it could mean access to someones story, would they talk to you about something they wouldn't to anyone else. It could also mean emotional access, do they trust you enough to speak genuinely. One of the successes of my process and therefore films was the level of access across all the definitions mentioned. I will take time to point to examples from my first film that highlight one of each definition.

Beginning with physical access to location. My connection with my participant allowed me access to unique filming locations and opportunities that only I would have access to, meaning if you swapped me with another documentary filmmaker the lack of connection would have lost access to these places. These locations were not always grand, one example would be the ferry to Ireland. Without the connection, and the fundamental use of time as a resource, I would not have been with my participant before filming, and therefore wouldn't be travelling with them. This would mean that the opportunity to film and speak to them on camera about their feelings and expectations on the way to our location wouldn't not otherwise have been possible.

A second example can be seen in the film with the shots of various songs and masses. These moments are extremely important to the participants, with intense meaning and brevity placed upon them. Without the connection to the participants I would not have been afforded access to these intensively private, spiritual occasions. Instead I was granted access, but also encouraged to film. This is a large step for such a private spiritual moment, and something I don't believe would be extended to anyone else.

An intrinsic part of the narrative of the film was the unique access I was afforded to the life story of my participant. Through the nature of the film showcasing a person reconnecting with faith the natural question arises of how one disconnected from faith originally, and thus what led to the genesis of the reconnection. These topics are intensively private, and personal. It is my hypothesis that these topics would be impossible to showcase in our film if it was not for the access granted to me due to the connection established. Often this discussion of disconnecting and reconnecting to faith was uncomfortable for the participant, due to its private and personal nature, but trust was afforded to me to bear witness to this story.

Finally access to the genuine emotion and feelings of the participant is only available through a strong and genuine connection. Naturally the more emotional a person in any given moment, the more trust is needed in a filmmaker to continue that connection. Without that connection the participant would either not continue, or would instead feel extremely uncomfortable and in many ways ethically exploited. In this instance we see more evidence that my connection with my participant made me the only person who could make this film, as I was the only person the participant

would trust in these moments. An example from the film of this was the discussion with the participant after a grueling hill climb as part of the pilgrimage, in which the participant was in physical pain, in mental pain, exhausted and thus relatively emotional. Normally a typical example of when a participant would ask for a break, or a few minutes of privacy from filming, instead the participant trusted our connection enough to allow me to live that moment with them. Something that would have been impossible of any other filmmaker.

A further impact on the film due to the connection established was the aura and atmosphere of openness. One of my personal success of my films was this notion of openness. The definition of openness in this context does incorporate elements typical with an initial understanding such as honesty, however more interesting in the definition is the notion of equality in openness. Previously mentioned was an aspect of filmmaking that creates a negative power dynamic between the filmmaker and participant in which the filmmaker has all the power, and decision making capabilities. However with the aura of equality and openness featured on the film there was a strong sentiment that both filmmaker and participant were together, that the connection had allowed us to feel the moments in the film simultaneously and genuinely. In the scenes in which the group would sing, and reflect on their pilgrimage and their appreciation and connection to their faith, I would feel their emotion at the same time, we would laugh, cry, and feel together. The connection and trust we had allowed something special to happen, and this openness was in effect from the start of the production to the end.

Rather than filmmaker and participant, we were just people together. I had my camera, but other than that we were living each moment as a unit. The importance of establishing a connection with your participant is evidenced clearly in this notion of openness, to create this environment where people feel trust and equality in each other is simply not possible without it. The integrity of the film depends on this openness, with it and without the connection there is no sentiment to the film and the character.

The final result that occurred out of establishing connection as a key principle and priority of the film was the level of enjoyment everybody felt whilst filming. During my life I have been part of hundreds of films, of many different lengths and genres. During which I have experienced the full gamut of emotions and atmospheres possible during the filming and production process. In part this research was born out of the negative experiences I had during previous filmmaking, both for myself but more important the participants. The most striking difference in this film was the positive atmosphere present throughout, which can only have been born of the connection we made, and the production process we used.

At no stage of the production did the participants appear to be feeling any negative emotions or sentiment toward the film, in contrast they were happy, and offering many different options for the film, talking about it in length about the locations, the characters and the process. In contrast to any other film I have been a part of, this production felt like we weren't making a film, but documenting something real, something important to the participant, and something enjoyable.

Connection has been established as our first core principle of this filmmaking methodology, but as referenced before, the actual filmmaking still had to be done, the camera had to record, the sound had to be recorded, but this had to fit seamlessly with the philosophy listed above. A philosophy that put the participant first. The filmmaking process from a technical perspective had to be inclusive of the connection we had, not to ruin or lessen it. In this section I will highlighted the filmmaking process from a technical level, highlighting the technology used, and how these choices further enhanced the experience of the participants and didn't hinder it in any way.

Firstly it is useful to briefly highlight the ways in which the technology could be an hinderance to the documentary filmmaking process, especially with a priority on how this effects the participant. "The ethical problem raised by such approaches is that they give the potential subject no real choice: the initiative and momentum of the situation favor the filmmaker. The presence of the film crew with official sanction is subtly coercive." (Pryluck, p.22, 1976) If you have ever been on camera, whether that be in a film, on YouTube, even a job interview, you my have heard the camera person say "act natural", which is the least natural thing to say in the least natural environment. This is to say that the second you incorporate filmmaking equipment, you don't have natural, you have something artificial. Moreso the physical presence of large unfamiliar equipment, a long with a film crew, starts to shape the coercive presence Pryluck mentioned. This is something that the filmmaker must understand, yes there are steps you can take to lessen this effect, and we will discuss them, however the effect will always exist, what you're doing isn't natural. An intense concentrated version of this occurs when it comes to the documentary participant, as

not only are they in the unnatural position of being on camera, but they are doing so while talking about something personal, often something important or sentimental to them. This doubles the effect of the unnaturalness, and is something we must consider and lay out a process to ease these concerns.

It must be pointed out that many documentarians already use and have appreciated a much lighter filming setup, it has been pointed out that the ability over time for film production to become smaller and lighter, is in one way responsible for the continued interest and success of Documentary filmmaker, “with the shift to 16mm cameras in the early 1960s representing a key stage in the increased mobility of shooting and the greater accessibility of social and private spaces to filming. Shifts in the quality and technology of sound, including the use of smaller equipment for synchronized recordings.” (Rosenthal, p.4, 2005). The shift mentioned by Rosenthal highlights the 1960s as a key turning point in the move towards smaller equipment, since then that trend has naturally continued, to the modern day in which a full documentary film can be captured on a 6 inch mobile phone. It has been argued that Jean Rouch was a key pioneer of this new process “Rouch’s films signaled the beginning of a technological revolution that caused some documentarians to face several fundamental issues. Prior to the mid-1960s, film technology was obtrusive, and it limited the type of filming possible. The advent of lightweight, portable sync sound equipment made it feasible for filmmakers to follow people around and film virtually anywhere,” (Ruby, p.40, 2005) It is this shift that I aimed to embrace when deciding what equipment should be used as part of the production process of my films.

A starting point to begin to ease some of these effects is by choosing what camera you will use for your film. On the most simplest of plains, the larger the form factor of your camera the more unnerved and unnatural your participant will feel. You may ask yourself, especially if you are a potentially documentary filmmaker reading this, why don't we just use small cameras, even mobile phones to film if this is the case. On the surface this is a valid question, the problem occurs however when you put a magnifying glass over the technical aspects of filmmaking. The reason people use larger form factor cameras is multiple. Oftentimes bigger cameras have more options in terms of shooting modes, 2k, 4k, 8k, slow motion, different aspect ratios, different codecs. Often they have the ability to have more accessories or filmmaking aids, such as shoulder rigs, steady cams, gimbals, ND (neutral density) filters, polarising filters, UV filters, monitors, wireless video transmitters and receivers, and many more. In short, they give you more options.

Which leads to the question we've asked ourselves many times so far in this section, what is the priority? Do you go with the ease and low effect on the participant of a mobile phone set up, or do you put the visuals of the film first and go with something such as a Blackmagic Ursa Mini, or a Sony FS7. Through my experience as a filmmaker, camera operator and editor, the priority is always what is best for the film, not the people in the film. This is something I had previously made a mistake with when filming my first failed project, I had only considered how to best make the film look and sound good. When planning what equipment would be used for this film I instead focused on our core philosophy of what is best for the participants, and what would aid our connection and trust that has been established.

The camera used in both films was the Sony A7s. In this section I will highlight the key reasons this camera was chosen. For our initial reason we start at the simplest, but possibly the most powerful reason, the form factor. The form factor had two advantages. The first advantage was its size and weight, measuring 5.0 x 3.7 x 1.9 in and weighing only 507g the A7s represented a tiny form factor. This was useful as it was not intimidating to the participants, as the camera did not look that much bigger than a mobile phone. The second advantage this camera had is its shape. To a person not familiar with filmmaking this may not make complete sense but certain camera look like video cameras, and certain cameras look like stills cameras. If you were presented with a random image of a camera and asked is it for video or stills, even with no prior knowledge your bias would be informed by its shape. The A7s looks like a photography camera. Why is this useful? Your participants don't recognise that the camera is shooting video, often I would point my camera towards someone in my film and they would pause, and pose for a picture. The stigma of a camera is heightened, and more negative, when the person believes they are being videoed, at least in our society. The A7s looking like a photography camera brings down the wall and stigma that a camera such as the JVC LS300 would immediately and passively put up, even before you start filming.

One of the largest reasons that the camera was chosen to be the primary camera in my two films was the sensor of the camera. Camera sensors are not all the same size. They are often split into different sizes. Example of this include: medium format, full frame, APS-C, MFT (Micro Four Thirds) 1inch, and 1/2inch sensors. Each sensor offers different characters for the footage recorded. The Sony A7s has a full frame sensor. The reason this was useful for my films, as well as for our participant first

production process is that a full frame sensor offers significantly better low light performance. If you imagine the stigma attached a large video camera it goes without saying the setting up a key light, back light, fill light, or motivated light would cause a disconnect and unease for your participant. The ability for your camera to pick up the available light, even if its only dim, is vital. This means you don't have to add artificial light, and can use the light generated naturally by the sun if you're outside, or by the lights already placed inside.

An often over looked aspect of filmmaking is sound. We as filmmakers often get lost in our visual, artistic ambitions for our projects but neglect what the audience is going to hear. There are many ways to record sound for your film. You can use separate audio recorders, you can use boom mics, radio mics, pin mics, clip mics, hand held mics and more. The issue they cause for our process however is that they hinder our connection to the participants and the moments we are filming. If you need to mic up your participant you are invading their personal space, however if you chose to boom from a distance you have a large intimidating bit of equipment hanging above their heads. Either option begins to form once more a disconnect and stigma.

For the two films I chose to use a Rode VideoMic Pro. This microphone is, much like the camera body, small and light. It connects to your camera using a standard 3.5mm jack, and sits atop your camera. The benefit of this is that it moves where your camera moves, it doesn't need to be moved separately, the added benefit to this is that it is then forgotten about by your participant. The audio quality of this device is very good, admittedly not as good as an XLR lavalier mic, but as my films hopefully show, good enough for the audience. The primary reason this was chosen

was the impact it had on the participants, or lack-thereof. There was nothing attached to them, and not big boom microphone aimed at them, they were recorded by a small device plugged into a small, what they thought was a photography camera.

The film focused on a person reconnecting with their faith whilst participating in a pilgrimage across Ireland. This meant that many of our filming locations would be outside. A large reason that I chose to not film this project on a mobile phone was that the ability to add to a mobile either a neutral density or polariser filter is very limited. To explain these two filters we must first inspect a technical aspect of your camera for filmmaking. The lens you use has an iris that can be contracted or relaxed based on how much light is needed, much like our eyes do. If you walk into a dark room your pupils expand to let in more light, and if you walk into the sunlight they narrow to restrict light. A camera lens is no different, at $f/1.4$ the iris is very wide open, meaning a lot of light can enter, at $f/22$ it is almost closed, meaning only a small amount of light can enter. If you film outside there is a lot of powerful bright light coming from the sun. Which means to expose your shot correctly your iris would be almost closed at around $f/18$ - $f/22$. On the surface this sounds fine, however lenses have different ranges at which they are most effective, in terms of both sharpness and depth of field. Most filmmakers try to use primarily $f/2$ - $f/8$, with some exceptions. If you open your lens iris to $f/2$ outside, your screen will be exposed massively above 100, meaning your highlights will be severely clipped. To film at $f/2$ outside you need to add an ND filter. I used the Tiffen 77mm Variable ND Filter. This neutral density filter screwed onto the end of my camera lens. This means it was not

visible or intrusive for the participant, they would not have noticed it whether it was on or off due to its extremely small size.

The final reason this camera was chosen in relation to how the choice would aid my production process and benefit the participant was its inclusion of in-body stabilisation. The best way to keep your shot stable and level is to use a tripod, most filmmakers would agree to this. However, in our effort to keep the technology as unintrusive and least intimidating to our participant the tripod doesn't help us. The tripod is big, and looks very unnatural, it is clear you are setting up a shot when you set a tripod up, your participant will notice this, and subliminally they will react. A solution to this problem is to shoot handheld, especially since we have a small form factor camera. The problem this creates though is that the footage is very shaky, which is noticeable and off putting to the audience. Some lenses offer stabilisation, however this is relatively minor, although does help slightly. The magic however is to pair a stabilised lens, with a camera with in-body stabilisation. In-body stabilisation is native stabilisation added by your camera, which then couple with the stabilisation of the lens. Leading to an ability to shoot handheld footage that looks very smooth and pleasing to the audience.

Shooting handheld was a vital part of my production process to continue the connection with my participant and enhance and make positive their experience during the filming process. As a result of not having to move a large tripod, or a heavy camera I was able to move swiftly, and take footage effortlessly with little attention been drawn to me as a filmmaker. This meant that the participant telling

their story or participating in their pilgrimage could be one with themselves, and not focused or distracted by the filmmaker.

The two principles of my filmmaking approach and methodology so far have been highlighted as the 'Connection' established between filmmaker and participant, and the 'Technology' used to create the film. The final core principle to introduce is 'Control'. We have discussed and highlighted many times there has been mention of the power dynamic between filmmaker and participant. With my argument focusing on negative aspects of this dynamic for the participant. Even when measures have been taken by filmmakers to examine this issue there is one aspect often overlooked and that is who makes the decisions. These decisions can be big or small, what time are we filming? Where are we filming? What angle should we get for the interview? Should this shot be included in the edit? Should we film now or not? Any question or decision that arises is answered by the filmmaker. When discussing any dynamic between two individuals you must consider who makes the decisions. This doesn't mean by default they have the power, however it must be considered and an influencer of that statement. Any time you are afforded power you are in possession of the responsibility, this becomes prominent when analysing some of the questions above. If one has the power to choose a camera angle, an interview location, or even which parts of an interview to cut then you begin to distort the natural representation of your participant. "Issues of the representation of people are fundamental to documentary filmmaking and filmmakers should be aware of how they represent their subjects." (De Jong, p.22, 2013) . If the role of a documentary is to tell the truth, as scholars such as Garnet Butchart have stated, "we typically believe that it is the job of the documentary to deliver on its truth claims" (Butchart,

p.429, 2006), then representation of your participant becomes fundamental, and a genuine connection is more integral than first apparent.

It is useful at this stage to highlight why it is the case that the power lies with the filmmaker, why don't the participants answer these questions. Naturally during this research there have been considerations of why the filmmaker makes the decisions, or at least why this seems to be the neutral or default position. An initial reason I would like to present links back to chapter three and the section on the digital divide. Simply, you are operating in a language your participant doesn't understand. Often we can get frustrated when trying to collaborate with non filmmakers that they don't engage with us, or what we are asking. But what are we asking really? If we ask *Can you do a 30 second piece to camera and send it to me*. What does that sentence mean to someone not speaking your digital and filmmaking language. This is something that was recognized as an issue by filmmakers over a century ago "One of Vertov's major goals was to aid the audience in their understanding of the process of construction in films so that they could develop a sophisticated and critical attitude." (Ruby, p.40, 2005) It is imperative that the filmmaker takes the time to teach the framework around any filmmaking question or decision, the participant must have an understanding of the process in order to be critical of the filmmakers decisions. Using that example ask yourself how do you send video? This questions sounds sarcastic and in jest, however it is deadly serious and literal, sending video is difficult, it can't be done over email, many institutions don't allow external hard drives, cloud services are both not understood by many and also expensive. My point here is that even something as seemingly straight forward as how you send video is nuanced and complicated, now ask yourself how would your participant

answer the question *where should we film our interview*, we understand that the participant doesn't have the framework or language to answer such a question.

There is a further ethical concern to discuss when we talk about the language of filmmaking, if the participant does not have the tools to understand the process they are a part of, how do they then influence how they are represented. Every choice made in the production of a documentary has an effect on the representation of the participant, "There is an approach to consider for almost every aspect of your filmmaking. Will you interview people alone, together, inside, outside, or informally? Will the interviewer be on camera or off screen? If off screen, will the questions be heard at all by the viewers" (Bernard, 2013), the key distinction here is that the filmmaker knows and understands the implications of the answers to those questions, however the participant does not.

As a result the principle of control is arguably the most interesting and most debatable principle, as it is a principle that requires influence from the filmmaker and cannot be entirely driven by the participant. Anytime a situation is led entirely by the filmmaker the participant has the potential to be at risk, due to the fact that if a participant does not understand the process they therefore cannot fully consent to the process. "the problem of participant consent involves the idea that there is some kind of truth behind the negotiations that lead up to a documentary production, and that participants, save from being victimized in the process, need to be protected from the possible concealment of a producer's intentions and the persuasive strategies of savvy negotiators, as well as from manipulation in the process of production" (Butchart, p.429, 2006). If we understand that we cannot ask our participant to make

decisions they are not able to make, the question is how do we allow them to make decisions. The approach taken in my films and as part of my production process was to split control into two parts. Control in regard to filmmaking decisions and control in regard to person decisions.

In this section we will discuss control in regard to the filmmaking process. Where possible in this film I extended filmmaking decisions to the participants. However understanding the issues discussed previously about the participants lack of framework or filmmaking language I would offer them options. An example of this would be a scene from the film in which we spoke to two of the leaders of the pilgrimage. I asked them where they would like to be interviewed, when they would like to be interviewed and what they would like to talk about, but alongside the questions I offered context as to how the choices would effect the film. For example if we film outside the tone of the interview will be different, but if we film outside we are vulnerable to car noise, if we film inside we can feature the stunning architecture of the church, but then we may run into issues with permissions. The intent with this method of changing and equaling the element of control in the film was to create a language that both filmmaker and participant could understand and be a part of.

Admittedly this aspect of filmmaking control is not a perfect part of my production process, as it still relies on the information I give to the participant, which ultimately still leaves the final decision with me. This is a fair criticism of this aspect of my framework, however I am yet to improve on this method, and while the method proved effective on the film, it is open to be investigated and critiqued in the hope of being perfected.

Where control proved to be a vital and successful part of my production process in relation to improvement the dynamic between filmmaker and participant was when control was linked to personal choice. To differentiate between definitions of filmmaking control and person control the key signifier is who leads the conversation. Above I admitted that the choices and control in regard to filmmaking were not purely participant led due to the explanation and framework of the cause and effect of choices on the film ultimately needing to be led by the filmmaker, however person control I define as choices led by the participant. And these choices are the most important to the filmmaking process.

It is useful to define this notion of person control, as the scope to which a choice can fall into this category is vast, and the choices can be very simple but also quite nuanced. Examples from this film of choices made by the participant include to choice of location for the master interview, the choice on multiple days of what time to film and where to film, when to film in personal and emotional moments and when not to. To focus on one example as a outlier of person control that can be useful to filmmakers but could also bring trepidation is the choice of what to say when talking to camera. Traditionally the documentary filmmaker would interview a participant on a subject having clear questions and a clear steer on the conversation. Often the documentary interviewer will know what they want to be said before they speak to their participant, and work on ways to make sure the correct statements are said in the correct way. But if this is the case what autonomy does the participant have, and how real and true are their words if they words are manufactured by the filmmaker. A decision that was made as soon as my initial project with the U3AC failed was that

my documentary production process would not include any predetermined ideas for the participants to say. Any thing said by the participants would be natural and genuine.

Any filmmakers reading this may be nervous reading the previous paragraph, what if the participant doesn't say anything interesting, or valuable. What if you don't get the interview you wanted. The participant saying something interesting is something of an oxymoron. If you are interviewing them then you are telling their story, so how can what they say not be of interest. That aside I would strongly suggest that any comment by a participant that they believe in and say passionately, is infinitely more valuable than anything you wanted them to say beforehand. Furthermore giving your participant complete freedom in the interview will empower them, acting to further equalise the power dynamic between participant and filmmaker. Why is this freedom important? Bill Nichols identifies that "self-consciousness and modifications in behavior can document the ways in which the act of filmmaking alters the reality it sets out to represent." (Nichols, p.46, 2010) The principles that form the core of my production process aim to establish and protect the reality of the moment that Nichols suggests is often distorted by filmmakers.

A further example of personal control being solely led by the participant is found in the scene in which I speak to the participant before they start their longest and hardest day of the pilgrimage. The scene is fascinating because you hear me and my participant speaking candidly and casually on camera, not in a traditional interview but just a recorded conversation. The reason that this acts as a compelling example of personal choice was that this was not a planned section of filming, but

occurred naturally and was led by the participant spontaneously. This scene would not have been possible without the perfect combination of our core principles of *Connection, Technology* and *Control*. Connection - Without the trust and relationship the participant would not have felt comfortable talking at such a vulnerable time. Technology - without the carefully considered production equipment in my filmmaking process the audio visual recoding couldn't have been set up instantly. Control - If I had not handed control of the choice to film over the participant they would not have felt comfortable asking to talk on camera in that moment.

Film Two: Activist

The production process used in order to challenge the dynamic between filmmaker and participant as well as enact the three core principles of our process was the same for both films. By that end in this chapter I won't repeat the same definitions of each term, I will however instead focus purely on examples of how these were implemented in my second film, and investigate where these worked successfully, and where they still need to be challenged and improved upon.

My second film follows an animal rights activist, in the months leading up to the annual animal rights march in London, culminating in myself and the participant attended the march. The same production process was applied to the filmmaking of this second film, with a participant focused approach based on the three principals of *Connection*, *Technology* and *Control*. At the outset of discussion about this second film I want to remember the discussion framed in chapter three which highlighted the introduction of doubt and fear into my mindset on the original film. This feeling was present at the beginning of the process of creating this second film. "There are two great obstacles that the creative filmmaker seeking to find their personal voice will encounter: denial and fear" (Knudsen, p.110, 2018). these obstacles became an initial stumbling block that had to be examined. The fear part was something discussed in chapter 3, and the denial was born out of the devastation of a failed project and the launch and a new hopefully successful one. This doubt, fear and denial was not something that was overcome, instead it was something that I examined. Throughout this thesis there have been countless references to the power

dynamic between filmmaker and participant, in preparation and planning for my second film it became clear that the feelings outlined above were actually a tool to equalize the power dynamic. Doubt and fear, I realized, were feelings that documentary participants had been experiencing for years and years, the filmmaker feeling them could actually be useful in building a connection with the participant. Therefore I introduced a method into the production process of both films, but especially evident in the second, of inserting myself as the filmmaker into as many uncomfortable positions as possible. I learned that the failures to communicate, to lead, to organize, to connect that were evident in my first project were actually the fundamental building blocks of the production of my two films.

As with the first film it was important to establish a genuine connection and trust between the filmmaker and participant. This film would offer evidence that the techniques to do so were effective, as the same prior relationship didn't exist with the participant of this film, in contrast to the first film. The result of this was that the connection had to be built from a neutral position, this section will investigate how connection was built, before going on to discuss the results this had for the film in the next section.

The initial contact between myself as the filmmaker and the participant occurred months prior to any filming taking place, and was not in relation to making a film. Instead it was a general introduction, taking place first on social media and subsequently on WhatsApp. The participant of this film had a relatively large presence on social media, both in terms of followers and in terms of provocative content, such as graphic representations of animal abuse. In chapter 4 it was

highlighted that a vital part of establishing a connection was a certain understanding of time as a resource, and how this can be spent with the participant. This film used that same approach, although during the introduction stage the focus was not on making it film, time was still being spent establishing a connection months before any filmmaking would take place.

My first period of contact with the participant focused on a recognition of the content they were putting out, and their very clear passionate beliefs. It was clear that this level of passion, alongside extreme graphic imagery of animal mistreatment, had garnered the participant some negative attention. Many of their posts would be responded to with people disagreeing and disparaging them, which made it clear that they would be open to a genuine positive conversation of what they were doing and what they believed in. Subsequently for the first few weeks of our relationship that is what we did, we discussed their passions, moving firstly from what they believed in and secondly to upcoming plans and events. This period confirmed to me that this story would make a useful test of my production process and would represent a good counter comparison to my first film.

Spending time with my participant at such an early stage that any film hadn't yet been mentioned allowed us to have a strong connection by the time the idea of making a film arose. This was beneficial as the discussion of a potential film was seamless, but moreso it allowed the stigma of making a film to be placated before it was afforded a chance to make a negative impact. This film was a good demonstration of the importance of time in establishing a positive connection with the participant, but also an example of time being used in a different way. In film one we

highlighted several instances of spending time with our participants, in a face to face setting. In this film much of the time with the participant was spent digitally, as both filmmaker and participant lived and worked in separate areas. Surprisingly however this did not seem to lessen the impact or effect of the time spent with the participant, and in fact established a fun and jovial connection, due to the irreverent nature of social media. This had a profound effect on the level of trust between filmmaker and participant, and was a significant factor in balancing the power dynamic between the two.

After a period of time the topic of making a film was discussed. The tone of this discussion was positive, which is often not the case when pitching a film idea to a participant. The natural stigma of making a film, with the participant knowing they will be on camera, leads to trepidation and caution, but not in this instance. Instead the conversation was led by the possibilities for the film, and what could be included in the story. When the topic of being interviewed and being filmed at various places was discussed it wasn't discussed as a negative, there wasn't a need to convince the participant to be involved, they instead volunteered their time and their ideas. This was solely due to the connection we had established in the months previous, and is evidence that the participant was having a positive experience and also that I was being afforded access that a filmmaker who had met the participant a week ago wouldn't have been afforded.

It is important to analyse what effect a positive connection had on the film that was made, to do so I will focus on the same three pillars used in the previous chapter *Access, Openness and Positivity*. Beginning initially with access we see a parallel

with the first film in the effect on access being granted due to the connection having been established. Using the same example categories of access the location, access to story and access to emotion this next section will offer an example to each of these categories from the film. An immediate example from *Activist* is the initial interview seen in the film. The interview was recorded in the home of the participant, in itself an example of the access granted to me as the filmmaker, but more unique than this is the physical composition of the interview. Both the participant and filmmaker were sat on the floor of the living room. Something as subtle as this can have profound effects on the connection between filmmaker and participant. Having both the camera and interviewer sat on the floor with the participant sends a calming feeling to the participant.

The argument that the filmmaking methodology used for this film resulted in an heightened access to different locations can be made even more effectively with this film than the first. The first film featured large sections filmed in public areas, whereas this film featured many scenes in private areas, areas only available to the film due to the permission of the participant. Whereas the first film featured one master interview, this film featured two. Each interview at the home of the participant. To let a filmmaker into your home is a signifier of a positive level of trust that has been established between the filmmaker and participant.

In this second film the access to story that was presented to me was also unique, and a strong sign that the connection established was genuine and beneficial. The account of how the participant became involved in animal rights activities and how they began to adopt a vegan diet was very raw and genuine, often touching on other

peoples reaction to this which was not always positive. The connection we had allowed us to discuss these sensitive elements of the participants story, with the participant feeling comfortable sharing extremely private information, that wouldn't have been shared to another filmmaker if the same trust wasn't established.

The area in which the second film demonstrates to clearest that the connection between filmmaker and participant led to an elevated level of access was the unparalleled access to emotion featured in the film. Throughout the process of making the film, both on and of camera, there was an unprecedented level of emotion on display from the participant. Their passion for the subject of animal rights was immense. On camera this can be demonstrated in the scene which we visit the abattoir. Their reaction to the sounds and the smell was visceral and striking. Off camera this was evident in every conversation, any discussion of animals rights abuse was said with a tone of both anger and sadness. Above I have highlighted one example from the film but in this second film each sequence is filled with emotion and passion, the fact that the participant felt comfortable engaging with me on these topics in this way is testament to the connection and trust we have established, which if didn't exist neither would this film.

Naturally due to the nature and tone of this story the effect the connection we build had on openness was immeasurable. Every conversation, both on camera and off, was striking and impactful, but more than anything genuine and raw. In chapter 4 we discussed our definition and importance of openness, in this film we saw the necessity of such an approach. If you are presented as a filmmaker with someone telling their person story in such an affecting way, you have to be able to match their

energy, and a supreme level of openness, especially our definition of openness linking closely with collaboration. If you do not approach the interaction in this way and remain isolated as just the filmmaker then it is very easy to allow the participant to feel exploited. Instead, like I film one, I chose to experience these moments with the participants, allowing myself too to be vulnerable and genuinely effected by both the story being told and the visceral images being seen. To open yourself up as a filmmaker can be intimidating, but when establishing a connection with your participant in regard to a personal and emotional story such as the one in this film, it is the only way to proceed that allows an equality of the power dynamic between filmmaker and participant.

The final result of the connection established between participant and filmmaker evident in the film uses the pillar of positivity mentioned in chapter 4. In the previous film we highlighted how vital positivity and a positive approach was to the experience of the participant, however much of that story was positive, with the participant reconnected with their faith. In this story there are many scenes in which the story is not positive in the sense of being happy, therefor our use of positivity as a core pillar of our process has to adapt to the nature of the activity being shown. Although the situation may not be positive, that doesn't mean your outlook on the participant should change. It is important to still focus on the participant having a positive experience, even if they are talking about an extremely emotional subject. As a filmmaker you can do this by putting your participant as the focal point of your attention in these moments, if they become overwhelmed stop your recording and talk to them, using the camaraderie developed previously.

The second film used much of the same technology and equipment as the first, however some of the decisions and impact of the equipment was for different reasons and had different effects. In the section I will highlight the justifications behind one of our key principles of our production process technology. A consideration that had to be made in this film that was less present in the previous film was in relation to filming locations. In the previous film many of the locations used were large spaces, ferry, churches, outdoor trails and pathways etc. This film was the opposite, many of the locations featured limited space. Examples of this include in door living rooms, festival halls with many people, the actual animals rights march. It was vital that the equipment used had a small footprint and was light. The biggest concern however was the effect this equipment would have on the participant in these examples.

If you are conducting an interview in someone's house you are in their personal space. Often it feels as if filmmakers forget this aspect, and instead view anywhere they film as their set, but this was not the case in the second film we were filming in the participants actual house. In this environment the participant feels safe and familiar, a feeling which we want to preserve for the duration of our stay there. This feeling however is shattered when a filmmaker begins setting up lights, mounting a large camera on a large tripod and setting up a long boom mic etc. Now the room no longer feels like their familiar and safe living room but rather like you have invaded their space to set up a make shift studio. Clearly a filmmakers ability to terraform a participants living space in order to facility a positive impact on the visual aspect of a film is a clear indicator of where the power lies in the dynamic between the two. Our approach however was to flatten and equalise that power dynamic, and thus the

equipment was chosen not based on the priority of visual fidelity for the film, but instead with the priority and what would not effectively preserve the initial feeling of safety and familiarity the participant had.

The annual animal rights march in London would be an important section of the film, as this was the event the film was building towards. It was vital that the participant felt the most natural and at ease during this section of the film. We discussed in chapter four how the approach to the kit used for the film was chosen to lessen the stigma the participant felt being filmed, but in this film there was another consideration in regard to filming at the animal rights march. How easily could the participant use the camera. The animal rights march was the ultimate finale to our story and our film, it was the moment that most empowered the participant after many scenes of feeling vulnerable. It made sense to complete that empowerment by allowing the participant to participate in getting their own content and visual account of the march. This was only a brief period of the march however felt important to our attempt to change the power dynamic between filmmaker and participant. In order for this to work without adding stress to the participant who didn't know how to use the camera, the camera would need to be able to be operated by someone with no prior knowledge. The Sony A7s features a high quality full auto mode. This shooting mode will expose the camera, focus the camera and white balance the camera for the user automatically, meaning their only required input is to aim the camera. This was useful for the second film, alongside the light weight of the camera the device could be passed effortlessly to the participant in the same way you would pass a mobile phone camera, with a quick point and shoot instruction.

An often overlooked aspect of a filmmaking camera is the weight of the device, especially in documentary filmmaking this can be very important. Documentaries often take place in hard to reach locations, or feature a lot of real time moving action. Having a light weight camera can be beneficial to the documentary filmmaking in many different aspects. In my second film the weight of the equipment we used was extremely important. When filming at some of our locations such as vegan festivals, and the animal rights march there would be long periods of time where the equipment would need to be carried and used without rest. This could only happen with a lightweight equipment set up. The weight of the production setup would have an effect, either positive or negative, on the participant, as anything we were taking with us would need to be carried by the two of us. This included not just filming equipment but food, drinks, medicine, etc. It was vital for the participant to be as connected to locations we visited as possible, and being weighted down by heavy filming equipment would certainly have impacted this.

The second film showcased the final principle of our filmmaking method as a vital aspect of creating the film, one in which if not present the film wouldn't not have been able to be made. Control was fundamental to the approach taken to creating the second film, more specifically how much control was given to the participant. In the previous chapter I referenced a weakness to our principle of control in regard to control of the filmmaking, as the participants didn't always have access to the digital framework or language. However the participant in this film was a similar age to me, meaning although they have no traditional experience filmmaking, they understood many of the core concepts, as even with a mobile phone most people of that age will record or take pictures relatively frequently. To give away control is an important tool

in not only empowering the participant to have a positive experience but to allow them a chance to control their narrative and their truth, if the filmmaker has full control then this truth will always be, at least in some way, a 'created' truth. "Perhaps because so much faith was once placed in the ability of the camera to reflect objective truths of some fundamental social referent – often construed by the socially relevant documentary film as records of injustice or exploitation of powerless common people – the loss of faith in the objectivity of the image seem to point, nihilistically, like the impossible memory of the meeting of the fictional Rambo and the real Roosevelt, to the brute and cynical disregard of ultimate truths." (Williams, p.60, 2005) Understanding the vulnerability and malleability of truth in this manner meant that the second film could act as a better examination of the efficacy of control as a core principle of my methodology than the first film.

As early as the first time we met in person I know that I wanted to give away as much control as possible in this film, both filmmaking control and person control. This began in the most simplest of ways, with decisions such as how should we communicate, or when should we meet up, being placed solely on the participant to decide. As the process developed larger more important decisions were made by the participant, which we will go on to discuss examples of, however first I must address concerns that filmmakers will naturally have with this approach. A filmmaker will gravitate toward making decisions on their film, this is natural as the responsibility is theirs if the film doesn't succeed. However it is this notion of success which we must explore. A filmmaker will often judge success based on how their film looks, or if it's a bigger production where it ends up, in terms of festivals, YouTube etc. But I challenge this notion of success, it is more useful to view success through

the lens of process and impact. In its simplest form a useful question is what did your film achieve. I would argue that an overlooked metric of achievement in documentary film is the impact that the filmmaking process had on the participant. This is the scope in which I aim to judge my films. In practice then giving control to your participant is a positive influence on their experience, and yes they may choose to decide to shoot on a day where the light isn't as good, or at a location where the background isn't as good, but they are empowered by their decision. What is a higher priority to the film, a good location background or a happy participant? In this thesis I have aimed to point toward the latter as the model in which success should be judged.

To point to a useful example of control being given to the participant it is useful to highlight one of the most prominent examples. With this second film we both had a date in the diary that the annual animal rights march would take place, before that we had months where anything could be scheduled. Naturally I had my own ideas of what we could film during that time, but I chose not to share them with the participant, instead asking their opinion of what they would like included in the film. The scene in the film in which we visit as part of the animal save movement a real abattoir was devised by the participant as something they wanted in the film. The mobile footage from a previous animal save was actually filmed by the participant. The only aspect of the film that was planned beforehand was the date for the animal rights march in London, everything else was decided through a collaboration between filmmaker and participant, led crucially by the participant.

This use of control was evident even within the interviews which structure the film. I mentioned previously that the interviews took place at the participants house, this was a decision made entirely by the participant. The location, the date, the time and the length of interview was decided by the participant. Each of the decisions controlled by the participant led to a collaborative cooperative aura throughout out entire relationship, I would argue is the most effective way of lessening and equaling the power dynamic between participant and filmmaker, and a strong piece of evidence that only I could have made this film in this way.

Challenge of The Connection

Throughout this thesis I have aimed to establish the importance of the connection between a filmmaker and a participant within the production process, however it is useful to address some of the issues that this connection naturally creates. This chapter will focus on some of the decisions that were made in establishing this connection and the concerns that were analyzed when making those decisions.

A consideration when constructing the production process of my film *Connection*, was in regard to how my process would be affected when including a participant that had prior knowledge of the traditional filmmaking process. The main participant of *Connection* had previously been involved in filmmaking through their personal and professional experience. A question that had to be addressed was in relation to how much their answers and speech could be influenced by their knowledge of filmmaking. An honest and genuine response is vital to my production process and philosophy. There could be an argument to suggest that somebody with prior knowledge of the filmmaking process could adjust their answers and reactions in line with what they understand is desired for a documentary film.

There were two main steps taken in order to avoid this reality. The primary step taken to avoid this issue as much as possible was to avoid specifically advertising when the camera was rolling and when it was on standby. Instead the entirety of any experience would be captured, even if that meant leaving a camera running for long periods of time. The process of obscuring when we were filming meant that even if a participant felt influenced to perform in a certain way by their past experiences, it would be hard for them to know when to start this performance. As there were no

distinct moments where the camera was announced as recording, in which a participator could adjust their reactions, it was easier to treat each interaction as if we were both part of the moment, and advance our connection past filmmaker and participant.

The second step taken was to simply discuss this issue openly and honestly. This was a discussion that was important to have at the start of production process. Although this may seem simplistic, my approach throughout this research has been to be up front and honest with my participants. Discussing challenges openly with them should not be avoided, but instead encouraged. Furthermore this is another example of the filmmaker being open with the challenges and often nerves they have, which mirrors the feeling of the participant in the film. A final consideration I had to address was that the person in my film not only knew about the production process, but knew about the research process in general as they were my supervisor. This presented a unique risk for the filmmaker-participant connection and relationship, due to the fact that the role of research supervisor elevates my participants power in relationship to mine. On one hand this is very effective to counter the power dynamic between filmmaker and participant, but on the other hand it could also make me as a filmmaker feel uncomfortable and cloud my decision making process.

Although steps were taken to avoid a lack of authenticity in responses and reaction by someone who is aware of the documentary production process, there is no way to entirely rule this possibility out. As much as I think that each moment captured was a genuine moment, there is no way to be certain, as a result this acts as an area of my

production process that can be improved and expanded upon. I would hesitate to call this a fundamental area of concern within documentary filmmaking, but would argue that it is an area which should be at least considered.

A vital part of the connection I attempted to establish between myself and my participants was an attempt to balance the power dynamic between the two. This thesis has attempted to demonstrate how the production process of my films was adapted to attempt to address this issue and offer an alternative approach. An area of this production process that I would like to reflect on was the decision to make myself as the filmmaker as uncomfortable and uneasy as possible. When a person who has never been a part of the filmmaking process has a camera or microphone pointed towards them, they tend to react in similar ways. They can be nervous, angry, uneasy, confused, and flustered. Each of which tend to be considered as negative feelings. When initially planning which type of films I would make, I started with the idea that in each film I must be made to feel these same type of feelings, this would act as the first step to equalizing the power dynamics between filmmaker and participant. To assure that I was genuinely uncomfortable and nervous before even meeting my participants I made sure that the two groups of people that would be featured in my films, Catholics on pilgrimage and animal rights activists, were groups that I was not a part of, and had very little knowledge about.

This was done to make me the outsider, the participants would then theoretically know more about everything other than the filmmaking than me. An example of this can be highlighted in *Connection*. This film was filmed mostly in Ireland. This meant that I was filming in a different country, that I had never been to before, but the

participants would be very familiar with not only the country but the local area. This may seem like a small detail, but the small details have a big impact on the trust and dynamic between filmmaker and participant. An example of a small detail that has a large impact during filming was when initially driving with our participants. The fact that we had to ask them obvious details such as how the traffic lights worked in Ireland, although seemingly unimportant ensured that our participants were needed for your project to happen. The fact that they were needed and valued was an important step in assuring that they had power and urgency during the production process.

There was no way to change that I had the power and the knowledge in regard to documentary filmmaking, but there was no reason I had to have that power in any other aspect of our production process. As mentioned above I tried to make myself as uncomfortable as possible, which started with filming in a different country but then continued by making sure I did not have knowledge in areas of which they were experts. In *Connection* that was evident when we engaged in any of the religious activities, from group mass to personal prayer. I had to actively ask them what I should do, I needed to seek their expert advice. Similarly in *Activist* I had no knowledge of animal rights marches, or what an abattoir looked, or smelled like. I knew I couldn't not be the expert in the filming, but I made sure I was not the expert in anything else during the production process.

At the start of my production process I had intended to include an ongoing timeline of my own material, that would show the impact the production process was having on me as a filmmaker and as a person. These would take the form of video diaries in

which I would openly document the impact the process. A number of these were uploaded and submitted as part of this research, however a number weren't. The decision-making process in terms of how many of these autoethnographical elements to include was a tough one. Naturally I wanted to show as many of these elements as possible, to show that although the filmmaker tends to have much of the power in the filmmaking process, they can still be negatively effected and feel a similar trepidation and negative impact as participants often do. However, there were two problems that I had to consider. The first is that in many of the moments in which I was affected negatively, often on a mental level, the natural instinct is not to record these moments. Maybe naively I had assumed that documenting these moments would be easier than what it proved to be. What I began to do was document my experiences in moments after the worst of the feelings. Which meant that although the content was captured, I began to question the authenticity of these diaries that were recorded after negative moments, when the original concept was to highlight the filmmaker at their lowest moment. When reflecting on emotional and traumatic moments it felt as if there was a performative element to this the process. During the times of negative emotion the reaction was raw and genuine, but when reflecting it gave me an opportunity to self edit, sometimes even subconsciously, and not include the very worse moments. Which to me at least, was not the original goal of these reflections.

The second problem was that it became very difficult to submit these video elements knowing that the videos could end up being seen by anybody. In one aspect this shouldn't have been an issue, as the research should be the first consideration, but each of us are human, and knowing that anybody could see you in your barest,

weakest moments is a tough choice to make. When it was just myself and my supervisors I was confident to show a deconstructed version of myself, but sending this image of myself further became a concern. Those videos would have been effective in shattering the image of the filmmaker as someone who is in control at the top of the power hierarchy, but ultimately I made a different choice based on human welfare . I decided to include some of these videos that showed genuine moments of negativity, but not the most extreme examples. I accept that an argument could be made that the most effective decision for my research would have been to include them all, however my thesis is in essence is about moving away from the most effective and efficient decisions and move toward the options that benefit the people involved. In this instance I applied that philosophy not just to my participants but to myself.

An important realization occurred to me during the initial part of my production process, this realization was that the positive connection between filmmaker and participant is often negatively affected by the introduction of filmmaking equipment. A camera or a microphone can easily reinforce the negative dynamic between a participant and filmmaker because it takes you out of the real and genuine moments and introduces a performative expectation. The question then arises why introduce the camera or microphone at all. The process could be documented in written form, or in a reflective video form at a later date. There are other issues that arise when you introduce the camera, on one hand you have the change in dynamic when you introduce filmmaking equipment, but on the other hand you have the notion that the participants know that your conversation is no longer private. An argument can then be made that when a person notices that their words are no longer private, they may

change what they say, and this change can lead to the content not being genuine. This can even happen subliminally without an active choice made by the participant. It is important to be aware of the limitations of making a film, but also consider the strengths, in this instance there was no other medium that would offer us the chance to see and hear the participants at the exact time that they had those experiences. Even little details, like hearing a persons breathing after a long hike up a mountain in *Connection*, have such a large impact that another medium cannot quite match.

I have highlighted ways in which my production process attempted to minimize the negative effects of the production equipment being introduced to people not familiar with the production process. However I have to concede that the fact the participants are still aware that any given conversation or interaction is not private means that you can never guarantee that a response is completely genuine. I think that this is a fundamental consideration within documentary film production, as it is very difficult to identify if anything that is recorded by camera is genuine, as filmmaking itself is a very unnatural medium.

An interesting challenge when establishing the positive connection between filmmaker and participant during the process of making my two films was the relationship between the impact of the participants experiences and the reception of the films. Filmmakers want films to be good, however I have argued in this thesis that this decision to put the quality of the film over the experience of the participant is not only ethically questionable, but paradoxically can lead to a worse film. There are many times during a film's production that a filmmaker is faced with a choice to benefit the film or the participant, "I knew personal information about one of the

[subjects] that I thought would make the film richer, but she was confiding to me in person, not as a filmmaker” (Aufderheide, p.10, 2008). If you are presented with private information that was told to you based on your connection to your participant you then have to decide whether you prioritize the participant and don’t use that information, or the prioritize the film and use it. This is just one example of a choice a filmmaker could face, but these choices are frequent and unfortunately when the priority is to the film at all costs, then the participants’ experience becomes worse. There are many occasions where the participant is not considered in the decision making process, “Some filmmakers acknowledged that they occasionally would resort to bad faith and outright deception” (Aufderheide, p.14, 2008). One of the reasons that it was so important to establish the connection between me and my participant was to ensure that these bad faith decisions and deceptions couldn’t happen, someone acting as a cold observer from afar may find it easier to participate in these practices than someone connected to the participants. Having a genuine and strong positive connection with your participant naturally makes you trepidations to deceive your participant, and less likely to focus on the film quality above the experience of your participant.

Conclusions

In this thesis I have highlighted that the dynamic, power and relationship between documentary filmmakers and the people in their film is truly unique, different to any other type of filmmaking. However through this we see a number of fundamental issues, issues which this PhD has aimed to identify and attempt to address. Some of these issues though still remain as a fundamental issue within documentary filmmaking. To conclude this research it is useful to highlight the challenges that have been attempted to be refined, and which still remain.

The core attempt made in this research to improve upon the documentary production process focused on a three key principles, mainly *connection, technology and control*. Three principles chosen and examined based on the amount of influence the filmmaker has over each. I attempted to demonstrate how the filmmaker could have a direct influence over each of these, and highlight the effect these principles had on my two films. There is not doubt in my mind that without a strong adherence to these three principles, as defined in this thesis, there was zero chance that the two films could have been made. Throughout chapters four and five I identified specific areas in which the films couldn't have been made without attention to the key principles.

In order to conclude the efficacy of this thesis we must analyse the research questions it set out the answer, and highlight how successful or otherwise the research is in answering these questions. To begin lets focus on our first research question:

- What power structures are created both consciously and subconsciously between filmmaker and participant?

Tremendous effort has been afforded to understanding the power structures that occur between filmmaker and participant, starting initially with early examples of this dynamic during the formulative years of documentary. Both the literature review and the discussion of my two films highlight many example of this dynamic being built, and the negative effect this then has on the participant. Combining this with the discussion of documentary ethics, and how documentary ethics grew from the wild west of the early documentary landscape to the later frameworks highlighted by documentary scholars and filmmakers alike. My practice attempts to show my methodology to lessen these dynamics, but the chapter outlining the failure of my original project acts as a warning to fellow scholars and filmmakers that even with the power structures between filmmaker and participant at the forefront of your mind and process, you are only a few bad decisions away from contributing to the issue and not the solution.

Moving on to the question proposed regarding the modernisation and technological advancement of film production equipment, and how this can be beneficial to my process.

- To what extent can advancements of production technology, alongside a participant first methodology be used to establish a stronger relationship between filmmaker and participant?

To analyse the efficacy of this research in answering this key research question we must turn to the practice and the two films produced. One of our key principles of the production process used to make the two films centred on *Technology*, and our

definition of what that means when applied to the documentary production process. One of the problems that beset the original U3AC project was the lack of concern on how the filming equipment would negatively effect the participants, when discussing the two films that were born out of this failure I pointed directly to the equipment used on these films as a reason for their success in regard to the wellbeing of the participant. I believe that without careful consideration, and a fully realised production methodology, the two films would have failed in the same way the original did, the completion of these two films at least somewhat points towards a level of success in answering this research question.

The key consideration in this thesis and in the two films was the dynamic and relationship between the filmmaker and participant, in essence both the theory and practice offer an attempt to analyse, understand and answer the following research question

- How important is a relationship between filmmaker and participant?

This question formed the foundation and baseline of every part of this research, from theory to practice, with both this thesis and the two films attempting to reflect the significance of this question. One of the most important pieces of evidence to the efficacy of my research as an attempt to answer this question is found in the existence of the two films that form my practice. In the discussion of how these films were made and what principles were used as our core methodology I pointed to the unavoidable inevitability that without a strong connection and relationship to the participants, both the films could not have been made. To this end the relationship between filmmaker and participant is not only important, but is fundamental to making films such as *Connection* and *Activist*.

A large component of the negative power dynamic that exists between documentary filmmaker and participant exists in part due to the clear existence of the filmmaker as the decision maker. To answer the research question:

- Is it important to offer documentary participants editorial options in regards to the filming and/or editing of a film

My research and my films aimed to challenge the tradition of the filmmaker making every decision, and instead allowed the participant as much input as they desired. However, A problematic word in the previous sentence exists in the form of 'allowed', this word in itself suggests a power dynamic, simply on the basis that one party has to power to allow something, whereas the other does not. Even so, an effort was made as part of the methodology of both films to precede in a participant first manor, much of the two chapters discussing the films highlights examples of how this was achieved and what positive effects this had. In the discussion of control I explained and attempted to alleviate fears that were born out of giving away control as a filmmaker, to this extent my research suggested that it is a vital tool to attempt to rebalance the power dynamic between filmmaker and participant to allow your grip on the decision making to loosen.

In concluding this thesis it is important to consider what has been learned from the process of producing the practice that forms the basis of this practice-based research. The two films produced and the process of how they were made were born entirely out of failure, as discussed in chapter 3, but this failure offers us our first and potentially most important lesson to learn from this research. Initially chapter 3s discussion of failure was intended to highlight the message that it is ok as a filmmaker and researcher to fail, but in the reality of living this failure it became

apparent that the lesson to learn from this process is not that failure is ok, instead the lesson should be that failure is vital. To expand on this notion I would point to the two films born out of the failure of the original film, without the failure of the original process a new process focusing on connection, technology and control would not have been born. It is important to highlight however that the two films using the production process discussing in this thesis didn't abandon failure, it instead incorporated it as a vital methodology. This is to say that there are many mistakes and failures in the two films, the difference however from the original failed film was that these failures always informed the practice, and became part of the process. If there is no obvious answer or way to succeed in removing the power imbalance between filmmaker and participant that has existed since films have existed, then instead it becomes vital to fail again and fail again until an effective methodology has been found.

An important insight gained from this research, especially for any filmmakers reading this, is to consider carefully your priorities when making your film. Throughout this thesis I highlight examples of how filmmakers often magnify certain parts of the filmmaking process, and become paralysed concerning themselves with such aspects of making their film look nice. I identify this as focusing on the 5% while neglecting the 95%, and argue that it is important for filmmakers to break out of the shackles of the comfortable 5%, and engage instead with the uncomfortable, engage with the participant. I use my two films as an example of the type of deeply personal and effecting film that can be made only through the connection established with your participant. To this end the time filmmakers spend obsessing over cameras, lenses, lights etc are irrelevant if they then don't have authentic content in their films, in many ways I could have filmed everything for my films on a mobile phone, as the

authentic portrayal of the participants far outweighs the visual considerations. I don't expect everybody to agree with this philosophy, however I would argue that a reconsideration, or at least a consideration, of our filmmaking priorities should be an important discussion point arising out of this research.

In this research there has been a combination of theory and practice, I have talked mostly from a joint position of filmmaker and research, however for the next set of lessons to take away from this research I will briefly split the filmmaking and research into two different sections. To analyse first the key lessons I have learned from this process as a filmmaker I will point to a discussion point around our key principle of *technology*. In its simplest form the most vital and useful advice I can give is to travel light. Admittedly this isn't an entirely revolutionary concept in itself, however the rationale behind my claim is different to the traditional reasoning behind traveling light. Usually advice regarding travelling small or light will point to examples which benefit the filmmaker, for example a lighter camera and tripod will be easier to move around on location. My rationale regarding travelling lighter however focuses on the participant not filmmaker. It is important you travel light as a documentarian when using a participant led production process in order to maximise time with your participant, and minimise time spent setting up equipment. As discussed in chapters four and five, my production equipment was always light and portable, this meant that I was ready to capture footage at any time. This is evident when viewing many of the supporting content in the appendixes, much of which is spontaneous and not pre-planned, such as the songs in *Connection* or the end of march speeches in *Activist*.

Alongside consideration and lessons learned as a filmmaker, a tremendous amount of insight has been gained from this process when viewed through the lens of a

researcher. First and foremost is again linked to our discussion of failure. Life as a researcher is a lonely one, even more so when considering the impact of covid over the last two years. It is often unclear to what level you are researching effectively, often this is a day by day consideration, and the weight of this lack of clarity can be catastrophic to the mind of a researcher. In a similar way that the constant failures of my production process led into the foundation of a more effective process, the doubts and failures of your research should do the same. There isn't a clear roadmap to follow, your work is personal to you, as is your methodology, however these are imperfect, and you should be proud of that and use the imperfection as an impact statement and justification that you are the only one who can do what you are doing.

This research inspects closely the relationship and power dynamic between a filmmaker and participant in documentary production, using a practice based approach two films were created to demonstrate a contemporary participant focused production process, with the aim of addressing this power dynamic. While the work done aims to address many of the ethical issues that have been prevalent historically in documentary it does not solve them. One of the admissions made when discussing my method, especially in relation to *Activist*, was the identification of the issue that much of the collaboration from the participant still relied on the filmmaker to effectively teach the language and framework of filmmaking, and then ultimately make many of the decisions. Whilst this is the case the power dynamic will never be equal. The key question that still presents itself to documentary scholars and filmmakers is how do we remove the power dynamic between filmmaker and participant, or at least equalise it? This research aims to address some of the issues that arise out of this dynamic, but admits that the dynamic still exists.

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Apollo 11. 2019. Dir. Todd Douglas Miller. United States

Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat. 1896. Dir. Auguste Lumière. Louis Lumière. France

Before the Flood. 2016 Dir. Fisher Stevens. United States

Blackfish. 2013. Dir. Gabriela Cowperthwaite. United States

Bowling for Columbine. 2002. Dir. Michael Moore. United States. Canada. Germany

Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret. 2014. Dir. Kip Andersen. Keegan Kuhn. United States

Deliver Us from Evil. 2006. Dir. Amy Berg. United States

Don't Look Back. 1967. Dir. D.A. Pennebaker .United States

Fat, Sick and Nearly Dead. 2010. Dir. Joe Cross. Kurt Engfehr. Australia. United States

Gimmie Shelter. 1970. Dir. Albert Maysles. David Maysles. Charlotte Zwerin. United States

Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse. 1991. Dir. Fax Bahr. George Hickenlooper.

Eleanor Coppola. United States

Joe Strummer Slept Here. 2015. Dir. Graham Roberts. Stephen Hay. United Kingdom

Man With a Movie Camera. 1929. Dir. Dziga Vertov. Soviet Union

Megan Parks 'LUCY'. 2012. Dir. Stephen Hay. United Kingdom.

Nanook of the North. 1922. Dir. Robert J. Flaherty. France. United States

Okja. 2017. Dir. Bong Joon Ho. South Korea. United States

Pope Francis: A Man of His Word. 2018. Dir. Wim Wenders. Switzerland Vatican Italy

Germany France

Sans Soleil. 1983. Dir. Chris Marker. France.

Seaspiracy. 2021. Dir. Ali Tabrizi. United States.

The Game Changers. 2018. Dir. Louie Psihoyos. United States

The Raven on the Jetty. 2015. Dir. Erik Knudsen. United Kingdom

What the Health. 2017. Dir. Kip Andersen. Keegan Kuhn. United States

Websites

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Appendix

Film One – Connection

All of the practice produced that is not featured in the main film is available at on this site. The site can be navigated using the drop down selectable words at the top of the webiste.

Website - <https://irisleeds.wixsite.com/faith>

Film Two – Activist

The following three links documentary the end of march speeches that were delivered to ten thousand animal rights activists in central London

https://youtu.be/j9TiWgOK_ko

<https://youtu.be/2-DLMgSIYWU>

<https://youtu.be/ZUuzJtAlnMY>

Although snippets of the interviews I conducted were featured in the main film, they were only small part of the discussion had between me and the participants, below are links to the full length unedited interviews.

https://youtu.be/4vQu_VhhHMI

<https://youtu.be/Cf5rrOiV1To>

<https://youtu.be/a9blrUhu220>

https://youtu.be/XJVxey_ZWo

A very difficult yet important part of my methodology was to document the failures, and the tough times. As discussed in the main body of the thesis I attempted to record my thoughts at some of the toughest stages of the production and research processes. Although at the worst of times I was not in a mental capacity to record myself on video, these do show an extreme raw and honest reflection of the effect my productions and research had on me as a filmmaker, researcher and person.

<https://youtu.be/u3MfEsPTTYo>

<https://youtu.be/7U5i9gUdkMA>

<https://youtu.be/u43CvXfX4ZU>

The framework for the faith website and much of the influence in my methodology was born out of the projects, films and research produced by IRIS, below are links to websites and projects produced by IRIS in which I was involved., both in terms of building the website and recording video and audio material.

<https://irisleeds.wixsite.com/musicwithmoviecamera>

<https://irisleeds.wixsite.com/some7clash>

<https://irisleeds.wixsite.com/joestrummersbuspass>

