

**Cell/ular Cinema: Individuated Production, Public Sharing
and Mobile Phone Film Exhibition**

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the articulation between filmmaking using the cameras of personal mobile phones, and the distribution and exhibition of filmmaking at film festivals devised to support and promote its development. Covering a research period between 2010 and 2013, I analyse an emergent phenomenon using a mixed methodology over five major chapters.

Following a discussion of the ontology of phone filmmaking and its historical situatedness, I establish terminology for each major element of *cell cinema*. Bridging features of contemporary digital filmmaking with the entertainment spectacles of early cinema history, the phone film privileges visual immediacy, urging *genred* and experimental presentations of limited narrative complexity.

Notably, the thesis indicates that phone films incorporate technologically innovative aspects of autobiography by filmmakers. What are characterised as the *ambulatory* and *movie selfie* categories evidence contemporary representations of movement within *phone filmmaking*. By updating Walter Benjamin's (1936) ideas of the *flâneur*, and Michel de Certeau's (1984) writing about the physicality of walking, the thesis draws on the socio-cultural use of mobile technologies and physical, participatory engagement with the filmmaking process.

Incorporating an ethnographic study of international cell cinema film festivals, the thesis interrogates phenomenological aspects of interrelated phenomena. I discuss how phone filmmakers, spectators and others experience their participation in the construction and dissemination of intercultural, shared discourse. Cell cinema's cultural signifiers cross or subvert perceived geographical and economic boundaries, urging a reassessment of Western or Euro-centric philosophical traditions. The thesis investigates how cell cinema enables expressions of the self, delineates notions of identity, and communicates various aspects of socially determined meaning.

Therefore, cell cinema engagement incorporates the sharing of *gifts* of phone films that foreground bodily movement and the 'everyday aesthetic' of the cell

cinema gaze, involving the engagement with 'knowledge communities', and 'culturalising events' within festival environments.

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Introduction

Making films, let alone watching them, using the video cameras built into mobile phones has been, until recently, an unusual thing to do. After seeing a film on the screen of a mobile phone for the first time, Thomas Elsaesser wrote to ask where in the 'culture shock or tragicomic incongruity is the point at which something new that is already a practice becomes visible before theory catches up with it' (Elsaesser, 2003, p. 122). When Elsaesser wrote these words, technology had not yet caught up with our feelings of pervasive culture shock, as another spectacle is presented for us to grapple with. This thesis is, in major part, an attempt to catch up with this discrepancy between theory and the practice of making short films using the cameras built into mobile phones, which I call *phone filmmaking*. I aim to make a contribution to the scholarly enquiry that is, inevitably in Elsaesser's view, continually about to catch up with phenomena and events.

The thesis investigates the emergent phenomenon of using the mobile phone as a platform for both the making and showing of creative moving images, which I abbreviate to *cell cinema*. This notionally cellular aspect describes novel or unusual qualities of film production on mobile phones, almost uniformly undertaken by individuals, but who nonetheless, attend film festivals to engage with films made with the cameras of mobile phones. Therefore, a major theme and purpose of the project as a whole has been to investigate, with a view to eventually understand, the various perceptual and experiential events that go to make up the *cell/ular cinema* phenomenon. The thesis establishes various terms and compound phrases as a terminology and taxonomy, which are adapted from existing academic practice or common parlance, and applied with consistency throughout the thesis.

Over the course of my research I have investigated the sometimes transient, and occasionally significant nature of individual filmmakers' work. I have observed and gathered data as the various attendees congregate as participants to experience what appears to be, in one sense, ephemeral film exhibition, but which may also indicate a form of legitimization of phone filmmaking and cell cinema festival events. My research began with, and has continued by way of refining, a number of hypotheses that this thesis addresses:

Cell cinema introduces new media dialectic with traditional forms and associated aesthetics. Its scopic dynamic incorporates socio-cultural and commercial factors of participant engagement with mobile phone technologies. The thesis addresses the nature of cell cinema's audio-visual characteristics across several countries and cultures, and traces its linkage to technological developments of mobile phone equipment. This means that it expresses and reflects both contemporary visual culture and the symbolic use of domesticated apparatus. Cell cinema's visual characteristics, although often creative in a formal sense, are far from homogenous and its channels of dissemination are rapidly evolving. However, society's engagement with this innovative mode of contemporary cultural discourse is, I believe, not presently understood in detail and therefore fully justifies my research and this thesis.

My research project has investigated recent technological innovations in contemporary screen media practice, which have only reached widespread awareness during the latter half of the current decade. To a large extent, cell cinema's discursive aspects have been made possible by developments in mobile telephone technology. This has been aided by improved consumer access to video editing and post-production facilities for the distribution, exhibition and sharing of films allowed by film festivals, that have emerged to support cell cinema's discursive practices.

The thesis addresses what lies beneath the phenomenon of phone filmmakers convening at cell cinema festivals, and what this practice says about aspects of a taste for both *auteur*, or *cinephilic* filmmaking, and the pleasurable activities of cinema's shared spectatorship. Therefore, the thesis interrogates the nature of individual engagements with phone films as media texts, and examines the participatory experience of seemingly ephemeral film exhibition in geographically located spaces. Within the following five major chapters, I seek to find explanations for how or why innovative technologies behind the creation of moving images on mobile phones is taken up as an exhibit form. It is my intention to reveal whether, and in what ways this creates a new socio-aesthetic practice, or that this thesis describes a novel development within a longer history of screen media.

The practice of individuals making films using mobile phone cameras may appear, superficially at least, a relatively isolating undertaking. The difficulties experienced by amateur and non-professional filmmakers, making aesthetic, creative and critical judgements with a view to submission to festivals, may be tempered by the possibility of competing with and learning from contemporaries within the hybrid atmosphere of a quasi film school and relaxed festival competition. The thesis reveals that cell cinema filmmakers appear to be attracted to the working methods and aesthetic sensibility associated with low budget, *guerrilla* filmmaking, unfettered by the conventions and expense incurred in using traditional film production apparatus. These and other presumptions and hypotheses are challenged for their validity throughout the thesis.

Such an apparently innovative mode of cultural discourse requires a synoptic method to properly engage with contemporary visual media. Therefore, the thesis interrogates a number of interrelated topics and is framed by the following main questions:

- What are the dual natures of the phone film as media text, and of cell cinema as aesthetic and socio-cultural phenomena?
- Why and in what ways do individual filmmakers and spectators gather at spatially, temporarily, and geographically specific film festival sites, and what is lost or gained through experiencing phone films in this environment rather than others such as online film sharing sites, television, home computing and so on?
- How is cell cinema constructed and promoted by corporate/commercial producer/organisers, in participatory communities and at film festivals located as real world events?
- What is cell cinema's relevance to contemporary society's increasing adoption of mobile, screen media products?

As a participant observer at selected festivals in 2010-13, I engaged with participants and organisers, using empirical observation and recording their interactions at transient or annual festivals and venues. My research was conducted prior to, during and after a number of festival events in the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, South Korea, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. Interviews with filmmakers, spectators, festival organisers and programmers were subjected to discourse analysis, and have been triangulated

with findings from social semiotic analyses of film texts. Both open-ended interview questions, and structured questionnaires were used to reveal aesthetic, cultural and socio-political factors in responses. My intention was to discover the main motivations underlying participation, and other 'quasi-corporate' drivers where they significantly exist.

Thus, my mixed methodology was calculated to interrogate (in combination and not separately) the aesthetics of cell cinema's visual dynamic which and use of exhibitive spaces. Such a methodology does not ignore the contribution technological developments are making to cell cinema as a mode of film production. Moreover, it does not restrict itself to providing a survey of novel visual phenomena, that a textual analysis of mobile phone films alone would constitute. Importantly, the thesis documents a staging post analysis of an emerging mode of cultural discourse, not yet incorporated into powerful institutional structures of both a commercial and public culture nature, but one growing in prominence and increasing take-up of participation (Office for National Statistics, 2003; Kharif, 2005).

The thesis is divided into five main chapters, providing a structure within which the connected nature of the phone film and cell cinema festivals can be effectively explained, drawing on the three aspects of *production*, *sharing* and *mobile film exhibition*. This structure is designed to allow each chapter to build on the material preceding it, developing arguments and providing additional perspectives on topics and subjects under scrutiny.

Chapter 1, Phone Film Production: Filmmaking Post-3G, introduces the phone film as a media artefact, describing in epistemological terms its existence as a post-digital phenomenon. The chapter's first section historicises the phone film, drawing on the film historical scholarship of Tom Gunning (1994) and others. Regarding the technologies that underpin the phone film, I seek to interrogate the phone film's aesthetic antecedence to various cinematic devices and exhibitive practices. Questions of the mobile phone's function within the image-making process introduce notions of amateurism, intentionality and spontaneity, which the phone film mediates.

Chapter 2, *A Social Semiotics of Phone Films*, undertakes a social semiotic analysis of a series of phone films, their narratives and structures, aiming to identify how and what they signify and, therefore, mean to their spectators. Breaking phone films down into a number of more or less hybridized categories, the chapter introduces ideas of how phone films fall loosely into *signifying modes*, which tell us something of their relationships between the mobile phone and its use as a filmmaking apparatus. Equally significantly, arriving immediately before chapter 3's philosophical turn, this chapter introduces the subject of the body's relation to the mobile phone screen, and its centrality for understanding both it and several aspects of cell cinema to follow later in the thesis.

Chapter 3, *Towards an Intercultural Philosophy of Cell Cinema Discourse*, undertakes a philosophically based discussion of phenomenological aspects of cell cinema. Fundamentally, the chapter explores notions of transnationality that cell cinema promotes as a socio-cultural impulse to sharing and intercultural narrativity. Drawing on the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze, Paul Ricoeur and others, and the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the chapter explores the nature of the phone film screen and how the sensual body in relationship with it constitutes narrative perception as an experience shared across nations and cultures.

Chapter 4, *Showing, Sharing, Exhibiting*, comprises material of an ethnographic nature, drawn from fieldtrips, interviews, observations and questionnaires conducted during the research project. In each of four sections, the chapter interrogates the experiential, participatory nature of cell cinema engagement in locations and at events happening in those locations. Through the voices of participants I identify as filmmakers, spectators and organiser/professionals, the chapter explores their wide-ranging concerns about a number of aspects of cell cinema. Their responses reveal motivations, opinions and decisions revolving around the importance of cell cinema locations and events that nurture burgeoning amateur skills, and the sense of physical place that cell cinema has for its participants. Debates around the question of cell cinema and *cinophilia* surface from participants from all three groups. Screen size and qualities of

spectacle are addressed in relationship with creativity, experimentation and a developing aesthetic.

Chapter 5, Cell Cinema Play Becomes Enunciative Productivity, interrogates the experiential aspects of how films are made on mobile phones, how they are watched, and the circumstances under which they are shared and distributed between various groups and individuals attending film festivals; all factors that have grown in importance for scholars and practitioners alike. Elsaesser talks of the cinema as 'an immersive, perceptual event' within which '[b]ody, sound, and kinetic affective sensation have become its default values, and not the eye, the look, and ocular verification' (Elsaesser, 2003, p. 120). The project charts a growing realisation that the experience of making and watching films on mobile phones is evermore interlinked. Filmmaking is being made possible for increasing numbers of hitherto disenfranchised people. The almost ubiquitous, even omni-present mobile phone (*cellphone* in the USA, *hyudaepon* in South Korea, or *keitai* in Japan) force new considerations of public and private space and use of the device in it. The normalisation of mobile phone use for purposes other than basic telecommunications is still not settled a social practice, because it continually changes. Pointing a device that appears not to be a camera in a direction of a person who may have limited understanding of its eventual purpose, sets up series of strange new relationships of intimacy, spectacle and voyeurism that challenge established or localised social mores (Jerram, 2011). In ways that are sometimes subtle and often startling, films made using mobile phones stimulate new practices of watching and sharing between friends, acquaintances and strangers. While online video sharing sites, such as *YouTube* and *Vimeo*, support the posting of films on the Internet, a reappraisal and reconstitution of geographically located film festivals has emerged to provide another mode of engaging with filmmaking that cannot easily be accommodated elsewhere. In doing so, what I refer to as *cell cinema festivals*, support and stimulate filmmaking that finds difficulty in being screened in traditional film festivals. These festivals reach beyond the boundaries of local enthusiast groups, while retaining important aspects of individualism that the thesis discusses in detail.

Cell cinema festivals create a space where it may then be possible to break down the otherwise impermeable barriers between the closed or *autopoietic black box* of an audience's experience of screen-based materiality and the otherwise external environment of the festival space. Such a situation, so the logic goes, might allow for an open network for what Marijke de Valck calls 'external influences' or 'Latourian controversies and irregularities' to be negotiated by those participating in cell cinema discourse. (de Valck, 2007 p. 36). In using these terms within the context of film festivals, de Valck addresses a lack in the geo-political, commercial/industrial, and urban social environments we see manifested in contemporary film festival engagement.

Cell cinema festivals, in common with film festivals in general, make themselves available to people with varying levels of prior knowledge and expertise of the films and festival experience. We can envisage that the motivations of those attending are equally varied and, therefore, it may not be possible to identify an average cell cinema festivalgoer. As de Valck has found, 'festivals are attended for various reasons by a variety of cinephiles, and for some, the experience of being part of the "festival," its unique setting, the spectacle, the hypes and the premieres are just as important as (and sometimes more important than) the films themselves' (de Valck, 2007 p. 192).

However, film festivals function at the interstices of social formations and cinephilic practices. In a general sense, therefore, film festivals can be described as occupying an 'interstitial' position in the range of transnational media because, like most of the films they feature, they are also 'created astride and in the interstices of social formations and cinematic practices' (Naficy, 2001, cited in Iordanova and Cheung, 2010, p. 15). In such ways, film festivals shape identities.

It is conceivable that, in the years after my research project, cell cinema may emerge as an established socio-aesthetic practice. Society's perception of it will change as its take-up and participation become more commonplace. Cell cinema and phone film practices are transcultural mediators that serve to shape a community's perceptions of how moving images affect those involved in their creation and discursive practices. How participants engage with notions of

community, individuality and personal creativity are important themes that this thesis addresses.

Literature Review

The nature of this research project has necessitated reading across a number of disciplines and specialist areas of knowledge and expertise. In 2010, when I was about to begin this project, making films using the cameras built into the small number of mobile phones capable of recording moving images was a rare and unusual practice. It had begun to attract interest from news media and online searches revealed a small number of videos being posted on YouTube. My initial thoughts were that limited research then existed that was seriously looking into this apparently nascent, emerging field. Critical and theoretical scholarship that showed possibilities of being fruitful areas to explore, apparently inhabited a space where three approaches to critical analysis intersect:

The first approach involved art practice, such as that found in Fujihata's (2007) analysis of image aesthetics. While Fujihata's writing was indicative of an academic and artist filmmaker's approach to experimentation with mobile phones as media objects and camera apparatus, it appeared insufficiently rigorous and poorly supported by substantiating evidence, or corroborating documents. News reports (Hart, 2009) indicated potentially interesting events may be occurring in Japan that hinted at an aesthetic approach to making films using the cameras built into mobile phones, which was at odds with comparable activities in France. I calculated that, on their own, such online, journalistic news items would be an insufficiently rigorous tool for studying the various creative outpourings of this particular visual phenomenon.

The second approach to research involved ideas of 'digital visual media creation and consumption' in Darley (2000), 'digitextual aesthetics' in Everett and Caldwell (2003) and 'collaborative remix zones' in Hudson and Zimmermann (2009). These books, although not published very recently, suggest possible theoretical models for a critique of digital visual products.

The third approach rested on writing from a more recognisable critical and theoretical film studies standpoint, such as Aumont (1992) and Aitken (2006). Whilst broadly relevant, these authors and their contemporaries said little about society's use of digital screen media. The film studies canon appeared to be quite

sparse with specific regard to the distribution and reception of digital filmmaking involving digital mobile phones of any sort.

Anchoring my research schema at that time was an ambition to provide a context within which to situate this form of digital filmmaking. Hence, my decision to investigate the modern film festival as a venue and vehicle for films made on mobile phones. With these two components established, I had a both an early basis for deciding the main topics for research, and the beginnings of usable working terms to describe my subject and related phenomena: the phone film and cell or cellular cinema.

Existing, apparently important scholarly work in this area included such notions as the 'discursive formation that constitutes the film festival' (Harbord, 2002), and ideas of how global and transnational film festivals operate as 'efficient systems of flow' and mediate the creation of 'imagined communities' (Iordanova, 2009; 2010).

From an early stage in the gestation of my research, I have aimed to show how discursive and narrative meaning in cell cinema is built up as a series of functional units – typically as phases, sub-phases, genres and mini-genres. It was my intention to identify 'typical interplays' (Baldry and Thibault, 2001) occurring in cell cinema. This was designed to prove more revealing of cell cinema's discursive aspects when supplemented by some form of semiotic analysis of various divergent or non-traditional film texts

In the early stages, the project was intended to investigate the articulation between film production on individual mobile phones and audiences at both traditional and dedicated online 'cell' film festivals. This was soon found to be too all encompassing, and lacked the necessary focus.

Bringing this literature review up to the present time, it has been advantageous for me to engage with cell cinema both as media text and to make a thorough investigation of its functionality as a form of socio-cultural discourse. I aim to employ a method in keeping with the systemic-functional tradition of multimodal discourse analysis (Baldry, 2000; Kress and Leeuwen, 1996; O'Toole, 1994), to analyse the product of cell cinema as a particularly contemporary kind of

mediated interaction (Thompson, 1995). Thus, I have endeavoured to understand how an established exhibitive form takes up innovative technology, to challenge existing forms of visual media exchange. In its cellular, individualising mode of engagement, cell cinema foregrounds aspects of mobile phone use and shares some familial traits with traditional film and television viewing, and the playing of computer games.

The gathering and coming together with other cellular filmmakers exhibits features of 'technophilia' that implicates the thinking of Lev Manovich (2001) in this area, or of a predilection for personal control over technological apparatus – especially for interacting with peers via the use of a multi-function 'pda' or personal digital assistant. In this way, cell cinema appears to play an active role in encouraging a shared love of technology. It contributes to the satisfaction of a desire within some users to create narrative meaning through a collaborative use of these multi-functional devices. There is currently also anecdotal evidence indicating some of these same filmmakers also derive value from the support and camaraderie gained through being active participants within a community, even though that community may be spatially and temporally undetermined. Similarly, cell cinema appeals to a sense of 'cinophilia', as an expression of a love for both 'auteur' filmmaking and the activity of cinema going (Bazin, 1967; 1972) and (Astruc, 1968). These film theorists stimulated a search for material to provide a solid theoretical ground for my coming critical analysis.

Another early influence was Allen's (1995) ideas about 'projecting illusion' rather than 'reproductive illusion'. Here Allen argues that 'art tends to indulge sensation at the expense of reason by undermining the self-control of the viewer' (Allen, 1995, p. 81). In slightly similar ways, cell cinema describes the tension between the desire for sensation and the autonomy of the viewer to reach an understanding of art.

I found that Allen appeared to agree with Deleuze when he says 'it is mistaken to conclude that a medium-aware perception of a standard photograph entails that we view the profilmic event as something in the past' (Allen, 1995, p. 87). Notions of the profilmic event being lived through again are particularly

pertinent for my considerations of *ambulatory* phone films such as *Fear Thy Not* (2010) where actions and dialogue are repeated with almost mesmeric frequency. My link through these ideas to Deleuze and Guattari led me to read *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) as a somewhat bold introduction to a potential philosophy of the phone film. Finding Deleuze a little impenetrable at first, I searched backwards from him to the eminently more straightforward Bergson (1912; 2004) and on to several works of phenomenology, such as that of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1964). Here, I found the kernel of a philosophical argument for the body in cell cinema, which came to activate chapter 3 of the thesis.

Literature in the relatively young field of film festival studies is, understandably, fairly sparse at the current time. Formative influences have been Bill Nichols' (1994) early foray into this area. The aforementioned Janet Harbord (2002) is important for those researchers like me who are interested in studying film festivals in great depth, but who can only follow. de Valk and Loist's continuing scholarship (2009) to support and develop film festival studies as a field is a continuing aid and valuable source of information. de Valk's comprehensive research (2007) of major international film festivals, has alerted me to stimulating passages such as the following:

Nowadays, the average festivalgoer is no longer a classic cinephile, whose main interest concerns the "films" being shown. The festivals are attended for various reasons by a variety of cinephiles, and for some, the experience of being part of the "festival," its unique setting, the spectacle, the hypes and the premieres are just as important as (and sometimes more important than) the films themselves. (de Valck, 2007 p. 192)

These remarks, and others, have helped form my thinking about the film festivals that support and contribute to the development of cell cinema as a mode of engaging with the very particular filmmaking apparatus and situation of the mobile phone and film festival.

At points in my research and writing for this thesis, several blind alleys and ultimately fruitless diversions have occurred: As has been extensively critiqued, Christian Metz wanted to discover a linguistic metaphor in film theory, or 'the conceptual role played by *langue* in the Saussurean schema' (Stam et al, 1992, p.33). Yet this search for a Saussurean language system, or the 'combinatory rules' of a notional 'cine-semiology' is not applicable to an analysis of how phone films, situated as they are within cell cinema discourse, create and communicate meaning between the various participants (Stam et al, 1992, p.33). This is so because Metz' privileging of the 'filmic fact' as a two-way communicative act over the cell cinematic *fact* (which I use to designate a socio-cultural complex of several interrelated phenomena occurring at a film festival) seems to acknowledge only a dialogical possibility for film as a system of coding and decoding, rather than any other form of meaning construction (Stam et al, 1992, p.34).

Such an overemphasis on the value of the coding/decoding concept of filmic signification is itself problematic in my view. In other words, the search for reliable combinatory rules for the moving image shot, conceived as structurally analogous to the linguistic first articulation of the *morpheme*, or *moneme* as favoured by André Martinet (1964), may ultimately be a futile exercise. My favoured mode of semiotic analysis, appropriate to the study of the phone film and cell cinema, necessarily incorporates a social dimension to incorporate aspects of cell cinema's participatory dynamic in shared public spaces, where the sharing of media artefacts also happens. Therefore, I have found the work of Christian Metz to be of only limited value to the concerns of this thesis.

Coming forward in time from when I worked through the literature above, I have found the work of Francesco Casetti (2005; 2009; 2011) to be important in clarifying my thoughts about filmic enunciation and cell cinema's enunciative gaze. Allied to these issues, and constituting some kind of destination for the thesis, has been Robert Luke's (2005) apparently slight term '*phoneur*', which has eventually proved to be an important idea within the thesis.

Chapter 1. Phone Film Production: Filmmaking Post-2G

This first major chapter will address the emergence and current status of filmmaking using the cameras built into mobile phones. Initially, therefore, I will historicise the mobile phone film, establishing ways to describe films made using the cameras built into mobile phones and the ways in which they appear to viewers and audiences up to and including the years 2010 to 2014, during which my research was conducted. In using the term *historicise*, I wish to indicate that the social and cultural phenomena that the thesis concerns itself with are largely determined by history or are consequent on contemporary and historical events. Therefore, to historicise the phone film (and cell cinema) is to regard them as events determined by the histories they form part of, and are to some degree determined by. In addressing phone film production in this way, this first major chapter will carry out a foundational role, establishing terminology to better identify practices, processes and phenomena discussed here and in the chapters that follow.

The contemporary nature, and short history, of filmmaking using the cameras of mobile phones mean that established film and cultural studies terminology is somewhat inadequate to fully describe its filmic and screen appearance. I want to move beyond an unquestioning adoption of generalized terms to encompass varying notions of how films made using mobile phones are experienced in specific circumstances. Films made using mobile phones require a scheme of classification or taxonomy of terms to describe their variance from, or similarity to, other forms of media production. Therefore, it is first necessary to establish an appropriate nomenclature to effectively name and describe the ontology of filmmaking using mobile phones. Secondly, I will adopt a consistent terminology when elaborating upon the contemporary phenomenon of film festivals that provide the exhibitive venues for the films themselves. I will maintain this restricted set of terms when interrogating and discussing the social, philosophical and cultural manifestations of these two major factors, which the thesis deals with as interlocking entities.

Gerard Goggin uses the term *mobile movies* in a quite general way (Goggin, 2011, pp. 95-97), incorporating a range of films made for viewing on mobile phones, films made on mobile phones to be viewed on other platforms such as a computer, and films both made and viewed on mobile phones. Karl Bardosh emphasises the cellphone's potential as an instrument for commercial *cellphone cinema*, but his use of the term privileges an America-centric perspective that ignores practices that do not use other phrases, and renders it incapable of fully describing the intrinsic quality of mobility the mobile phone device has as a filmmaking tool (Bardosh, 2008). Therefore, both of the terms *mobile movies* and *cellphone cinema* lack sufficient descriptive power and fail to encompass the complexity and socially disruptive nature of films made using mobile phone cameras. They indicate little of how such films are made, the ways they are seen, and how they can be historicised as a contemporary form of digital moving image making.

With regard for films made using the cameras of mobile phones, an Internet search of the term *mobile movies* reveals that those adopting it appear to recognise the mobile nature of the moving image, but privilege the use of the mobile phone as primarily a medium for viewing pre-existing, industrially produced movies.¹ Goggin touches on the problem of adopting 'mobile movies' as an umbrella term for contemporary media artefacts, hinting at a messy historical antecedence: 'It is a reassembling of media cultures in which mobile movies are neither recognizably a relative of earlier archetypes of the cell phone, nor recapitulations of antecedent short or long film forms' (Goggin, 2011, p. 97). While recognising that some features of contemporary filmmaking and film viewing using mobile phones express novel and even innovative additions to the cultural landscape, I will question Goggin's general assumption that making and viewing

¹ An Internet search for the term *mobile movies* generates links to the following top five websites: www.mobilesmovie/in/; 3gpmobilemovies.com/; mp4mobilemovies.net/; mycinemas.co/; mobilemovies.cc/. All of these sites heavily featured the availability of Bollywood and Hollywood films for download and suggested viewing on mobile devices. (Accessed 5 August 2014)

moving images on mobile devices cannot be historicised and has no recognisable antecedents.

Therefore, for reasons of clarity, consistency and accuracy of description, I will adopt the terms *phone film* when describing the ontological existence of the film texts themselves, and *phone filmmaking* when discussing the idiosyncratically technologised practice of making films with mobile film cameras. My use of the term *phone films* further distinguishes them from earlier forms of cinema and moving image production such as commercial Hollywood cinema, domestic television, and web-enabled IPTV.

In addressing the film festivals where phone films are screened and shared, the term *cellphone cinema* remains slightly problematic. It indicates the possibility of viewing films on the screens of mobile phones (often online), but lacks universality by foregrounding the common American usage of *cellphone* for a practice that has an international reach. It similarly also emits the *mobility* aspect that is central to mobile phone use inside and outside the cinema theatre. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, there is theoretical and philosophical value to be gained from retaining ideas of the *cell* and *cellular*. This leads me to adopt the term *cell cinema* to describe the exhibitive and spectatorial practice of engaging with phone films at film festivals devised for this purpose.

That phone films incorporate and, therefore, evidence aspects of their digital origination, is perhaps to make an obvious and simplistic observation. Their digital characteristics force considerations of the phone film, beyond making observations of technologised production. For instance, Trinh T. Minh-ha (2005), in conversations about the 'digital film event', foregrounds technology's affects on screen appearance, but Dan Streibel (2013) believes that using the term *digital film* may in fact be oxymoronic. Terms such as *mobile movies* or *cellphone cinema* give a similarly confused picture of the phenomena under investigation. I argue that films made on mobile phones could more accurately be described as *post-digital moving images*. My usage here of the term *post-digital* requires some clarification. In September 2011, the programme for the first *Alphaville Symposium* addressed what it saw as the transition from a digital to a post-digital culture. The

symposium's website claimed to 'look beyond technology at how human behaviours such as collaboration, participation and interaction have redefined the creative practice and society itself, and at how the physical boundaries between reality and online are being blurred', bringing together 'post-digital creativity and experimentation' (Alphaville, 2014). These ideas respond to several pronouncements made by Nicholas Negroponte, in which he describes a technologised society beyond the point where the digital has become commonplace, even banal, invoking a 'post-information age' (Negroponte, 1996, p. 163). What emerges is an environment where 'being digital will be noticed only by its absence, not its presence' (Negroponte, 1998).

Therefore, to avoid homogenously conflating all contemporary media simply as digital, it is important to consider the nature of individual contemporary media entities (such as the phone film and cell cinema) to illuminate the distinctiveness of their current manifestations. Notions of collaboration, participation and interaction mentioned above, will re-emerge at several points in the thesis. It is with regard for precisely these factors, that I invoke the term *post-digital culture* in relation to cell cinema festivals, of which it is a particularly good example.

In their editorial for a recent issue of *PRJA Journal*, Andersen, Cox and Papadopoulos discuss the formulation of a working definition of post-digital media, which neatly encapsulates my usage of post-digital throughout the chapters of that follow:

Post-digital, once understood as a critical reflection of "digital" aesthetic immaterialism, now describes the messy and paradoxical condition of art and media after digital technology revolutions. "Post-digital" neither recognizes the distinction between "old" and "new" media, nor ideological affirmation of the one or the other. It merges "old" and "new", often applying network cultural experimentation to analog technologies which it re-investigates and re-uses. It tends to focus on the experiential rather than the conceptual. It looks for DIY agency outside totalitarian innovation ideology (Andersen, Cox and Papadopoulos, 2014).

The albeit longwinded term, *post-digital moving image*, may be preferable over looser, more general terms such as 'movies' or 'videos', in three distinct ways:

Firstly, it locates these films as occurring, particularly in an art practice sense in the 'post-digital era' (Cascone, 2000; Pepperell and Punt, 2000; Alexenberg, 2011). Secondly, this more clearly indicates the representation or expression of movement in a visual way, and contain sounds that support or comment on those perceptions of movement. Thirdly, again in common with other media such as film and television, by retaining the word *images*, acknowledging that phone films are also post-digital moving images points to their ability to encompass series of images of a thing or things. In other words, phone films are also representations of objects existing beyond their representation on the screen of the post-digital mobile phone.

I will refer to those people who watch phone films on various screens, including those of mobile phones and in the cinema theatres of film festivals, as *spectators* (Crespi-Valbona and Richards, 2007). My use of this term in particular indicates that 'the mode of spectating the screen', comprises notions of 'screen creative practice', where the screen's 'viewing environment' adds its own significance (Oddey and White, 2013, p. 13). I aim to differentiate the activity of spectating from *viewing*, to avoid potentially negative connotations of a passive reception of moving images or televisual productions.

Subsequent subsections in this chapter develop related notions of placing phone filmmaking in a position that reflects a number of social aspects of historicised film production. I scrutinise the influence that amateur filmmaking practices have had on the development of contemporary phone filmmaking. In this way, practical or notional connections to the activities of the members of film clubs, societies and art filmmaking practices are explored to reveal their relationship to the activities of recent phone filmmakers. In the subsection titled 'Object, Image, Artefact', these factors introduce taxonomy of the phone film as a media process wherein the filmmaker, mobile phone and film viewer actively contribute meaning during the transformative process of filmmaking.

In a functionalist, technology-led sense, the form of filmmaking that my research revolves around is predicated on the utilization of the video recording capabilities of some current *smartphones* (recent 2G, 3G and 4G-enabled mobile

phone handsets). I use the term 'utilization' here to draw attention to the mobile phone as filmmaking apparatus with two potentialities: Use of the mobile phone to shape the nature of the filmmaking process due to the technologized, or technologically determining, mobile phone as a camera and viewing device. The chapter discusses the mobile phone's selection as a device at the service of degrees of intentionality in the creation of film texts, and questions notions of artist-led conceptions of the phone filmmaking process.

In section 1.3 of this chapter I pay particular regard for what I identify as the *haptic* rather than *optical* quality of the phone film image. In referring to *haptic* and *haptic perception* in relation to the phone film, I aim to make a connection with the dual processes of recognising objects through touch, which invokes a combination of *somatosensory* perception (of patterns on the skin's surface) and proprioception (self-sensitivity of one's own body). James Gibson believes that, while obtaining 'information about objects in the world without the intervention of an intellectual process' the senses can 'operate as perceptual systems' (Gibson, 1966, p. 2). Gibson and others (e.g. Grunwall, 2008) emphasise the close link between haptic perception and body movement. Therefore, haptic perception is active exploration, related to *extended psychological proprioception*, which reverberates with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty discussed in chapter three: when using a tool (such as a walking stick or a mobile phone camera) perception experience is transparently transferred to the tool's extended reach, apparently expanding or broadening perception.

Notions of haptic qualities of holding, touching, feeling and so on also extend the sensory experience gained from the merely optical, and assist in understanding the ways in which the phone film spectator's sensory experience of phone films is often privileged over an otherwise intellectual form of engagement. This material leads on to a discussion later in the chapter of a notional anti-professionalism in phone filmmaking that has grown up alongside its evolution, and the inclusion of mistakes and accidents in filmmaking that are to some degree identifiable and significant features of phone filmmaking as an intrinsically amateur practice.

The kinds of phone films that I am primarily concerned with addressing cover many disparate subjects, styles of filmmaking and treatment, and are all filmed (and sometimes edited) using mobile phones. Although my research points to phone films existing as non-fiction, documentary, and even animated films, for reasons of space I restrict my attention to nominally live-action (with the inclusion of animated effects in some instances), narrative films of approximately 1 to 10 minutes' duration. Specific aesthetic and narratological aspects of individual films are analysed in greater detail in later chapters.

1.1 Historicizing the Phone Film

Filmmaking utilizing the mobile apparatus of the nearly ubiquitous, camera-enabled mobile phone locates phone filmmaking squarely in the post-digital era outlined above. A possible interpretation of this situation is that this form of filmmaking has only become possible during a period that Steven Shaviro typifies as 'post-cinema' (Shaviro, 2010), and 'in a time that is no longer cinematic or cinemacentric' (Shaviro, 2011). Shaviro's analysis of this situation is only partly correct. Where screen size is no longer instrumental in determining intensity of experience, box-office success or viewing figures, what constitutes the cinema and cinematic can no longer be considered dominant as a means of encountering moving images as an aesthetic experience. Yet this recent disruption of established notions of cultural dominance has itself a rich history of continued flux, as cinema attendance is surpassed by television viewing figures, which is similarly overtaken by the revenue generation of computer games. As Shaviro points out, the post-cinematic now includes audio-visual material 'accessible in a wider range of contexts than ever before, in multiple locations and on screens ranging in size from the tiny (mobile phones) to the gigantic (IMAX)' (Shaviro, 2011).

I argue that phone films are situated within a broader history of cinema, in the way that Berys Gaut (2010) understands it: that cinema can encompass moving image media of widely differing forms, while retaining a sense of the cinematic for an individual spectator or audience. As later chapters will demonstrate, I will absorb a number of nation-specific and culturally indicative terms such as

cellphone, which is widely used in the USA, when the use of such terms becomes relevant and meaningful. More importantly, the act of encompassing, and not simply restating notions of the cellphone, will signpost my discussion and analysis in later chapters: the ways in which phone films are integral to the broader subject of *cell cinema* that is a central concern of this thesis.

Therefore, a number of initial questions arise: How has the phone film come to be? What are the historical touchstones that have influenced its development and contributed to its present form? As it can be currently observed, what kinds of technological developments explain its ontology? Searching for answers to these questions reveals two major interconnected movements in the history of cinema and moving image making which serve to explain how the phone film comes to be: Firstly, the individualised pre-cinema and early cinema technologies and visual entertainments introduced (and in some senses invented) by Thomas Edison, Auguste and Louis Lumière, Georges Méliès and their associates.

Through a process of technological refinement of equipment and methods, and an increasingly sophisticated commercial exploitation of the entertainment possibilities offered by public exposure to technological curios, these entertainments led to the development of mainstream commercial cinema industries, initially in America and Europe. Secondly, and more relevantly with regard to the future take-up of the phone film, the emergence of amateur film clubs and societies has flourished and faded alongside commercial cinema during much of the last century. These factors occupy spaces within a well documented but messy history of cinema, some of which has a strong bearing on the development of the phone film (Gunning, 1994, 2012; Robinson, 1996; Maltby, 2003), and which will be discussed in more detail below. I argue that particular characteristics of contemporary phone filmmaking are echoed in the technologically enabled practices popularised during the earliest years in the history of moving image making. I show that the ways in which individuals engaged with a number of early image-making devices prefigures a certain kind of individualised engagement with phone films - on the screens of mobile phones. Beyond this chapter, I will go on to demonstrate how amateur, non-professional

making, and the experiencing and sharing of phone films influence the audio-visual texts that feed into the cell cinema experience as situated in film festivals.

Each new development in the history of mechanical image making builds on those it follows. It should be possible to discern how phone filmmaking has come about by interrogating some of its historicised antecedences, thereby placing it within a broader history of filmmaking and better understanding it within the present context. In a clear reference to a quote by the 17th century French Cardinal de Retz (b.1613 – d.1679) and used by Henri Cartier-Bresson as the title of his seminal work of photography in 1952, Andre Bazin suggests that the ‘decisive moment’ in the pre-history of the ‘mechanical system of reproduction’ came with the discovery, or application, of two-dimensional graphic perspective: ‘the camera obscura of Da Vinci foreshadowed the camera of Niepce’ (Bazin, 1967, p. 11). In such interconnecting ways, each novel mode of representation fits its contemporary situation while retaining a residue of its historical antecedence. Therefore, we can see that once the problem of rendering perspective on a two-dimensional surface had been mastered, and the reproduction of convincing optical realism had been enabled by photography, filmmakers could move on to tackle other concerns, i.e. the representation of movement.

Robert C. Allen believes that ‘the cinema has as a precursor the projected moving image of the magic lantern, to which the lifelikeness of photography was also added’ (Allen, 1995, p. 90). To this we might counter that other individualised visual entertainments from the period immediately preceding mass cinema-going, such as the Zoetrope,² similarly lacked the visually and psychologically transformative power of the photographic image, but could at least recreate the appearance of a moving subject. Their significance for the phone film lies in the

² Invented by William George Horner in 1834, the Zoetrope consisted of a rotating drum lined with a strip of pictures or still photographic images. The spinning motion induced an illusion of movement in the images.

nature of their individual form of engagement, and of how people physically used the devices.

Although often credited to the American inventor Thomas Edison, but largely developed by an employee of Edison Laboratories, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, the Kinetoscope featured a continuous loop of 35mm wide, perforated celluloid film bearing sequential photographic images. It created the illusion of movement as the film passed over a light source, between which was a revolving disc with slits cut into it to provide a primitive, a high-speed shutter. Thus, the Kinetoscope was an example of a pre-cinematic device for the presentation of moving visual spectacles, and was clearly intended to enable the viewing of films by one individual at a time. As David Robinson relates of a demonstration in 1893, 'The audience was then invited to file past the Kinetoscope [...] and take turns to view a film, Blacksmith Scene' (Robinson, 1996, p. 40). This anecdote illustrates the individualised form of engagement with moving film images that was being introduced and promoted during the earliest days of cinematic entertainment.

Following on from the Kinetoscope, a later device developed and patented by former employees of Edison, called the Mutoscope, 'was an elaboration of the principle of a flick-book, using series of photographs mounted on cards' (Robinson, 1996, p. 56). With the accompanying device of an image taking camera, subsequently called the Biograph and designed specifically to photograph views for the Mutoscope, these inventions neatly comprised the apparatus necessary for the production and exhibition of moving images. The individualized nature of engagement with the visual spectacles provide by the Mutoscope was established because, as Robinson says, 'the viewer could control and vary the speed as wished, simply by turning a handle' (Robinson, 1996, p.56). Indeed, the necessity to peer into a 'viewing aperture' at either a standing height, or through a smaller and more personal tabletop version, meant the Mutoscope avoided infringement of Edison's patents whilst achieving commercial success as a device with which to view photographic image-based visual spectacles. Therefore, technologies of one form or other have long played a role in influencing the appearance and make-up of both pre-cinema and early-cinematic moving image media. In the intervening one hundred and twenty years or so, the twin imperatives to miniaturise the apparatus,

and to contain the means of production and exhibition in a single, hand-held device of personal use have been pursued.

The use of the prefix *kine* in Kinetoscope is important to our consideration of moving image spectacles. As an abbreviation of *kinetic*, it refers to movement and the action of forces in causing motion, but also the appearance of motion before the body of a spectator. The viewers of phone films are not merely members of an audience made up of individual spectators, but viewers of a particular kind of visual spectacle that involves engaging with audio-visual narratives, and which diverges in certain ways from traditional cinematic engagement. The Kinetoscope and the mobile phone camera similarly describe an individualized experience of the appearance of moving images. Their manipulation by users allows individual, intimate interaction with moving images in isolation from other people and public space. Beyond this, the phone film conforms to the simplified definition of post-digital moving image outlined earlier because it functions simultaneously as a mode of traditional cinematic address involving the projection of the digital image to audiences in cinematic spaces at film festivals (witness the iPhone Pop-Up Film Festival), the digital projection of DVD copies of phone films (referred to in detail in chapter 4), and as individualised moving image spectacles viewed directly on the screens of mobile phones. This chapter is not concerned with posing questions such as whether phone films are in some sense components of a wholly new medium, or whether they function as the mediating elements of some larger artistic or cultural phenomenon. These questions, and others, will be examined in detail in chapter 5.

What has come to be thought of as classical or Hollywood cinema, evolved from the early pioneering cinema of curiosities, attractions, spectacular effects and visual entertainments. By incorporating the staging and *mise en scene* conventions of Vaudeville and theatrical variety shows, cinema as a medium of escapist entertainment quickly established its mass appeal during the late 1890s and early twentieth Century. Lev Manovich provides a condensed but clear account of this evolution:

The origins of the cinema's screen are well known. We can trace its emergence to the popular spectacles and entertainment of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: magic lantern shows, phantasmagoria, eidophysikon, panorama, diorama, zoopraxiscope shows, and so on. (Manovich, 1998, pp. 29-30)

It is important to note that the kinds of entertainments Manovich outlines above share at least one important characteristic with the phone film viewed on the screen of a mobile phone: they both describe visual entertainments available primarily to individuals and small groups of people, and not the forms of engagement with moving images we associate with mass, or large audience events. As Noel Carroll points out, 'The earliest films produced by the Edison Corporation were not projected onto screens but were viewed as kinoscopes – that is, not screened but viewed in boxes into which customers peered one at a time' (Carroll, 2008, p. 76). Therefore, in terms of how phone films involve the viewer in engagement with moving images on the small screens of mobile phones, the phone film can trace its antecedence to a number of visual entertainments that pre-date even the development of cinema as mass or commercial entertainment.

As with during the 1890s and throughout the history of cinema, contemporary technology has a defining role to play in governing viewing circumstances. In the case of the phone film, however, the viewer has the option of phone films being screened on a cinema screen within a film festival, or to download a film to a mobile phone for individual viewing. As would be the case with any other media text, regardless of the originating media, the resultant sense of spectacle of the filmed image may be affected by screen size. Once more, a historical precedent emerges for the personal, leisured engagement with transient moving images through technology. This form of viewing moving images is extremely common in many parts of South Korea, where commuters can often be seen catching up with their favourite television shows and films on trains, buses and in other public places. In the film festival context, the inclusion of films exhibited directly on mobile phones as a feature of the festival's programming (see

references to the Pocket Films Festival in chapter 4) is a form of exhibitiv e experiment that recurs at a number of festivals covered in my research.

Charting the development of a meaningful amateur filmmaking practice during the twentieth century, Heather Norris Nicholson writes of an ‘attempt to examine people’s fascination with sharing visual stories about themselves and others [that] sets amateur film history alongside the diverse histories of cinema, media, social change and modernity’ (Norris Nicholson, 2012, p. 3). Developments in film and camera technology included *Pathe’s* introduction of 9.5mm Safety Film in 1922, Eastman Kodak’s 16mm Safety film in 1923³, and the portable cameras and projectors accompanying them⁴. Such innovations led to amateur filmmakers - of an admittedly restricted kind in terms of being able to afford equipment, film stock

³ In January 1923, the Eastman-Kodak Company announced to the public, ‘that a new system of amateur film making based on a new 16 mm film size will soon be available to buy’. After eight years of research by J.G. Capstaff of the Eastman Kodak Laboratories, Kodak introduced 16 mm reversal film on acetate (safety) base and the first 16 mm projector. In May the 16 mm film, the Kodascope 16 mm projector and the Cine-Kodak 16mm motion picture camera were shown to the photographic trade. By 5 July the 16 mm equipment was being advertised in the New York newspapers with the headline ‘The Cine-Kodak Makes Motion Pictures’.

Source: 1920’s The Beginnings. [Online], Available at <http://www.robberiesreels.com/1920.htm> (Accessed 6 August 2014).

⁴ The precursor to the 16mm Bolex camera, the BOL-Cinégraphe, was patented in 1924. Like the Bolex, the Eyemo, made by Bell & Howell in 1926, was intended for amateur use. Driven by a clockwork mechanism powered by a hand-wound spring motor, it was created with hand-held ergonomics in mind.

Source: Classic Motion Picture Cameras. [Online], Available at <http://www.cinematographers.nl/CAMERAS1.html> (Accessed 6 August 2014).

and processing, and leisure time in which to complete projects – indulging their growing interest in a creative hobby that ran alongside the growing cinema entertainment industry. Norris Nicholson suggests other significant motivating factors during the early years of amateur filmmaking were what she calls ‘less tangible cultural and psychological links between visual memory-making and societal change’ (Norris Nicholson, 2012, p. 5). In this way, amateur filmmaking offered a privileged few a way of harnessing then new technologies, not merely to represent aspects of their leisure pastimes, but in order to provide the means to express their creative preoccupations. In doing so, such democratising visibility marked societal changes in the visibility of hitherto hidden lives, extending the possibilities of what amateur filmmaking could regard as possible or its function in society.

Many early amateur and professional filmmakers shared interests in exploring cine technologies’ capabilities and, regardless of their occupational status, home movies permitted opportunities for personal filmmaking untrammelled by worries about censorship or box office success (Norris Nicholson, 2012, p. 5).

Even during the 1920s and 1930s, it appears the relationship between amateur and professional filmmaking was in certain respects mutually supportive. Norris Nicholson draws a link between encouraging, and even training a knowledgeable film audience: ‘A film-watching audience, more critically informed about film interpretation [... and with] practical first-hand experience of making and showing their own material could [...] help to sustain and enhance a British cinema industry’ (Norris Nicholson, 2012, p. 3, see also Marcus, 2007). Gradually, the amateur use of formerly professional filmmaking technologies took on a somewhat politically libertarian impulse to make ‘films for pleasure’ that were ‘separate from economically based professional enterprise’, which nonetheless expressed ‘clear indications of shared aesthetic influences and overlapping interests’ (Norris Nicholson, 2012, p. 6). What the foregoing highlights is how the resourcefulness of amateur filmmakers of earlier generations is not so very

different from the phone filmmakers of our own. Whilst making the sweeping claim that cinema was at one and the same time a means of expression, had become a language, and 'will gradually break free from the tyranny of the visual,' Alexander Astruc, writing in 1948, presciently identified the potential for a cinema of 'the age of camera-stylo (camera-pen) [as] the vehicle of thought' (Astruc, 1948; 2009, pp. 18-20). This notional *writing* images with a camera resonates with a particular way in which contemporary phone filmmakers use the mobile phone: as an intimate, personal tool to help them express their preoccupations and observations in audio-visual form.

Increasingly, in recent years, when fewer people keep a written diary or make journal entries or hand-written notes of any kind (BBC News Magazine, 2009), handwriting's potential to improve cognitive ability, memory and the nuances of personality in communication is also lost (Wolf, 2013). Phone films such as *Rain* (Ruscio, 2013) and *Improvisation* (Galbrun, 2008) function as a kind of audio-visual journal note making, presenting sketches and impressions of experiences. In *Rain*, Ruscio makes a quite literal record of the appearance of rain in city streets. His film depicts the dampness, uncomfortable wetness and manifest appearance of rain, unaccompanied by complicating dialogue to shape the visual aesthetic. In his film *Improvisation*, Galbrun presents a brief travelogue of his local surroundings. What passes for a narrative remains sensory, impressionistic and an improvised assemblage and presentation of brief glimpses of urban life in what appears to be chronological order. Each of these films exemplify the use of the mobile phone camera as a contemporary form of Astruc's *camera stylo*, further historicising the mobile phone as an image making apparatus and device for personal expression.

1.2 The Cinema of Instants, Reprised

Early examples of phone films present contemporary manifestations of a particular kind of 'cinema of instants', that Tom Gunning gathers under the general rubric of a 'cinema of attractions', which is characterised by the early cinema attractions cited above (Gunning, 1995, p.123). In reappraising the term *cinema of instants*, my aim is to historicise the way in which phone filmmakers engage with

moving images. Notions of individual engagement with moving image spectacles and entertainments are brought out in Gunning's thinking, which reverberate forward to establish a connection with phone film production and aspects of their spectatorship. Gunning's notional *instant* also infers a lack of complicated pre-production concerns, and an absence of production paraphernalia. Phone films made with the relatively simple cameras of mobile phones involve limited production planning and spontaneity in execution, certainly in comparison with much commercial film production. A lone filmmaker need not refer to colleagues or a client for permission or instructions about what and how to film. Hybrid film competitions-festivals such as Cinemasports⁵ require entries to be conceived and made over a period of ten hours, and screened during a final eleventh hour as a form of online film festival. This combination of competition and film festival promotes rapidly made films that deal with uncomplicated or simple stories and narratives, which respond to a changing list of three essential elements or ingredients that must feature in the film. Thus, the development and production of complex or extensive narratives in the resultant films are actively prevented, privileging instead the imaginative construction of more immediate, instantly engaging narratives.

Many contemporary phone films are records of events with limited narrative complexity, often played out in front of a static camera. Films such as *Twins* directed by Peter Vadocz (2009, Italy, Spain, Hungary) and *Parade Box*, directed by Shitij (2009, India), are examples of films made by filmmakers who were quick to take up the mobile phone as a filmmaking tool that could easily and cheaply record events happening in front of it, and which foreground spectatorial effects at the expense of complex narrative construction. As Gunning puts it, such films

⁵ In the Cinemasports competition, teams have 10 hours to make movies with three essential ingredients that will be released on the morning of the competition. Screening is conducted during the 11th hour. Available at <http://www.cinemasports.com/#1> (Accessed 6 August 2014).

'demonstrate the solicitation of viewer curiosity and its fulfilment by the brief moment of revelation' (Gunning, 1995, p.123). In *Twins*, Vadocz uses the relatively simple device of double-exposure to visually present twin sisters simultaneously inhabiting the same screen. In doing so, Vadocz appears to reference the early cinematic spectacles of Georges Méliès, of characters and their limbs uncannily appearing and disappearing. The visual merging and separating of the twin sisters provides a comment on the sometimes complex relationships that twins negotiate in an effort to preserve individuality and identity, whilst also demonstrating the potential of the mobile phone camera to present simple narrative messages directly to the gaze of a static camera. In *Parade Box*, Shitij employs the similarly 'magical' camera technique of suturing a series of shots together, showing a series of men apparently climbing into the same cardboard box, thus presenting an illogical but comprehensible visual joke to the spectator. Additionally, Gunning's qualification of the *cinema of instants'* duration within a brief moment is reflected in the rules for submission of phone films to several film festivals: The International Film Festival of Cell Phone Cinema⁶ is open to films lasting no longer than three minutes, and Iberminuto⁷ styles itself as 'The One Minute Film Festival of Spain & The Americas'.

⁶ The International Film Festival of Cell Phone Cinema. <<http://ifcpc.com/>> (Accessed 6 August 2014). This annual festival, organised by the Asian Academy of Film & Television at Marwah Studios Complex in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, held its 7th edition on 27 and 28 January 2014. The festival competition is open to films, music videos, news and still pictures shot on a mobile phone, with a duration of no more than 3 minutes.

⁷ Iberminuto: One Minute Film Festival. <<http://www.iberminuto.com/>> (Accessed 6 August 2014), which describes itself on their website as 'The One Minute Film Festival of Spain & The Americas'.

Building on Gunning's theorizing of historical cinematic effects, Bolter and Grusin note how this kind of 'logic of transparent immediacy worked in a subtle way for filmgoers of these earliest films' (Bolter and Grusin, 2000, pp.114-33). It is perhaps debatable whether adding the qualifying 'subtle' is justified in characterising the directness of engagement with the surprising and shocking representations of moving images of the time. Nevertheless, phone films that intentionally or accidentally reference historical visual tropes and mildly distracting affects, also tend to assume the spectatorial immediacy of earlier forms. Such films as *Twins*, *Parade Box* and *Improvisation* (2008, France) are not primarily concerned with the presentation of complex narrative plots, or with providing discursive or expository dialogue. They each present an assemblage of messages of limited complexity.

Therefore, even if historically formative notions of immediacy and (un)believability are not directly transposable from early cinema to the phone films of today, phone films such as those discussed above appear to reference, or affectionately hark back to, established cinematic tropes or stylistic elements in their narrative and aesthetic concerns. Couched in Bolter and Grusin's terms, '[t]his "naïve" view of immediacy is the expression of a historical desire' (Bolter and Grusin 2000, p. 30-31). In these ways, the phone filmic equivalent of the *cinema of instants* privileges a short preparation and production time with a similarly short running time for the films, and an avoidance of the strictures of film industry production methods with its accompanying editorial oversight. Just as Gunning cautions against assumptions of naïve believability in 'film's illusionistic capabilities', so too must we consider the degree to which the contemporary phone film spectator is absorbed 'into empathetic narrative' (Gunning, 1995, p. 129).

Filmmaking that presents straightforward, easily understood narratives with limited complexity is, of course, not the preserve of phone filmmaking or any other style or way of making moving images. Notions of all film being predicated on concerns of *movement* and the presentation of a series of *instances* persist from the days of analogue filmmaking, retaining a critical usefulness with regard to digital filmmaking including the phone film. Gilles Deleuze describes it thus:

the cinema is a system which reproduces movement as a function of my instant – whatever that is, as a function of equidistant instants, selected so as to create an impression of continuity. (Deleuze, 1986, p. 5)

In the phone filmmaker's recording of instances of uncomplicated appearance, they help perpetuate Gunning's 'cinema of attractions' in post-digital clothing. If not quite constituting *instant cinema*, the phone film expresses qualities of historicised immediacy of both the practice of filmmaking and its appearance to viewers.

1.3 Object, Image, Artefact

This section will move from historicising the phone film as a post-digital media entity, to examine the nature of its ontology. The films under discussion do not adhere to the political, journalistic and campaigning exigencies of *citizen journalism* or news reporting. Phone films straddle the borders of dramatic fiction, non-fiction and documents of events, feelings and sensations. A common thread that links them is they all express a sense of personal creativity on behalf of the filmmaker, which is subsequently communicated and shared within a particular kind of film festival. To examine the ontology of the phone film, I will dismantle the practice of phone filmmaking into a series of processes. The phone film necessarily undergoes a transformative process from an encounter with a subject (physical and conceptual), to a point where the phone film spectator is able to experience the digital artefact in some material sense. To better illustrate this process of transformation, I will break it down into three transitional stages of object, image and artefact.

Paul Leonardi poses the question 'Can digital artifacts have materiality?' (Leonardi, 2010) To answer this, I will first turn my attention to consider the transformation of a notional materiality that phone films contain and express. In this context, what might be regarded as the materiality/immaterialities dichotomy

is contained in what Fred Myers calls ‘the materiality of artifacts’ (Myers, 2005, pp. 109 – 11). The phone film’s image remains an immaterial entity, insofar as a digital artefact’s apparent materiality resides in its intimate connection to the mobile phone screen. The images of the phone film, therefore, only have the potential to be exploited for their economic value through some form of exchange or sharing of the plurality of their material/immaterial qualities.

Leonardi argues that ‘when materiality is understood to represent the practical instantiation and the significance of an artifact, digital artifacts can clearly be seen to have materiality’ (Leonardi, 2010). Yet the problem arises that if *materiality* is equated to *matter*, then digital artifacts such as phone films cannot have *materiality*. Therefore, what is it that the film viewer witnesses when confronted by a phone film either on the screen of a mobile phone, or projected on a large screen in a film festival? By ‘practical instantiation’ Leonardi refers to the sense of physical substances consisting of matter in their practical as opposed to theoretical aspects. It is in the ‘significance of an artifact’ that, in Leonardi’s terms, the artefact achieves relevance or consequence for those who encounter it.

In other words, the subject of a phone film such as *Rain* (2013) may originate in the practical instantiation of objects such as wet streets and cars travelling through puddles, but that the images of those objects possess, not a practical objectivity, but a different kind of post-digital significance. They are immaterial images removed from, but retaining a relationship to the objects that form part of the film’s subject *matter*. The images of *Rain* become the appearance of *wetness*, *dampness* and the associated sensory experiences that the images suggest. In becoming images of dripping water, wet streets and so on, the physical subjects of *Rain* transition from objects of *practical instantiation* (that the filmmaker was able to experience and touch at the moment of filming) to become images whose significance for the viewer lies in their materiality as digital artefacts. As ever, the profilmic is present, but seemingly out of reach or, as Leonardi says, ‘you can touch the screen (an object) upon which data is displayed; but you can’t touch the data itself’ (Leonardi, 2010). In other words, the real-world referent for the image on the mobile phone screen remains *beyond the screen*, but becomes a *touchable* screen-world artefact for the viewer holding the mobile phone.

As was introduced on page 6, Laura Marks draws a distinction between haptic visuality and optical visuality, deriving the term 'haptic' from its German usage in physiology (*haptein*, to fasten) suggesting manipulation by the hand, which is of great relevance for mobile phone usage. It likewise speaks of subjectivity, intentionality, and the physiologically informed philosophy of Henri Bergson - aspects of which are echoed in recent experimental research in social neuroscience by Patrick Haggard (2002) and Clare Press *et al* (2006). As for how aspects of both haptic and optical visuality inform the screen-enabled image potential for signification, I agree with Marks when she says that '[w]hile optical perception privileges the representational power of the image, haptic perception privileges the material presence of the image' (Marks, 2000, p. 163). I believe that, intentionally or otherwise, touch-screen filmmakers use both optical and haptic images, alternating perception cues between one and the other. As Marks puts it, '[h]aptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze' (Marks, 2000, p. 162). Here Marks appears to reinforce the ideas of somatosensory perception, and Gibson's view of the senses operating as perceptual systems that temper what might otherwise be regarded as intellectual processes, which were introduced on page 6. Non-professional filmmaking such as *Rain*, typically using mobile phones (and tablet PCs) as cameras, often deals with movement over image detail. This capitalises on the technology's potential for mobility. It is filmmaking that grazes the surface of things (wet surfaces in this case) rather than explores depth – in image terms if not also in narrative terms.

Because a haptic composition appeals to tactile connections on the surface of the image, it retains an objective character; but an optical composition gives up its nature as physical object in order to invite a distant view that allows the viewer to organize him/herself as an all-perceiving subject. (Marks, 2000, p. 162)

This latter remark distinguishes the tactile relationship between the touch screen-enabled filmmaker and the image, differentiating it qualitatively and psychologically from the relationship a camera operator has with the image via a camera viewfinder, or of a director viewing the scene on a video monitor, or even a spectator in a cinema. Filmmakers using touch screens are at once connected bodily and visually with the object that, to use Marks' privileged term, they graze over, and its representation as image that they capture.

The distinctive situation of a filmmaker looking at a screen whilst they are filming equates to what Marks calls 'attentive recognition of the images onscreen', which she suggests is 'a participatory notion of spectatorship' (Marks, 2000, p. 146). This notion of participation clearly implicates the filmmaker and spectator as co-creators in the construction of meaning. I find it most useful here to interpret Marks' ideas do not involve the conflating of the two separate moments of image capture (for want of a better term) and image viewing, that relies on the imposition of memory for perception to exist: 'We move between seeing the object, recalling virtual images that it brings to mind, and comparing the virtual object thus created with the one before us' (Marks, 2000, p. 147). Therefore, perception activates a complex of memory images of the object drawn from multisensory stimuli, that the cell cinema filmmaker alternates between (or, recalling the jog wheel of some VCRs, jogs between) and the screen image which is both part of the subject and a representation standing in for the subject.

Might it be possible then to draw some kind of parallel between the film body and the viewer's body? Barker certainly believes that 'the film's body and the viewer's body are irrevocably related to one another' (Barker, 2009, p. 77). Through a shared investment in the moving image that binds them together, this seems to be self-evident. We can also take this line of argument by analogy in a slightly different direction, drawing on notions of the expressive qualities of the human body's physicality and potential for signification. In Barker's terms, this emerges as the 'likenesses in behavior and comportment and in the way we use the muscular body as a means of expression' (Barker, 2009, p. 77). Therefore, returning to engagement with the phone film, such an empathetic relationship, as can be argued to exist between the film body and the viewer's body, can by

extension encompass the viewer of a film on a touch screen and the expressive body of the filmmaker. The filmmaker's behaviour and comportment experienced during filming is observed and experienced a second time when the film is viewed. In this way, empathetic perception of a screened event elicits the memory of experience. Therefore, it is in the realm of expressivity that the body of the film and the body of the filmmaker emerge as entities for spectatorial empathy and experience.

Significantly, Barker describes the empathy we feel for film as a kind of reaching out with the hand to make contact with a familiar other:

Our empathy with the film's body can be considered a kind of handshake. We extend our bodies to the film, and it extends its body to us simultaneously, and in doing so, we agree on certain terms. We commit ourselves to the film's world without ever abandoning our own world, for the limits of our bodies are never forgotten or confused in the handshake. We know where "we" end and the other begins (Barker, 2009, p. 94).

Barker's notion of bodies being extended to the film is salient when considering the nature of the physical engagement that a phone film spectator has with the screen image of a hand-held mobile phone. Her phrase suggests a kind of touching through looking, and a drawing closer to the image to engage more intimately with whatever it holds or reveals. Thus, touching the image on the screen of a mobile phone or tablet computer is also to be touched by it, and to be in some way in touch with things in the world represented by images the screen holds. Recalling the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, we as people are also things in the world that can both touch and be touched - including ourselves with our own hands - so that touching an inanimate object is also to be touched by it. However, as Dillon says:

Reversibility is present in both cases, but I cannot experience the table touching me in the same way the hand touched can take up the role of touching. The plain fact of the matter is that the table is neither part of my body nor sentient in the way that my body is. (Dillon, 1988, p. 159)

Therefore, we can describe touching the mobile phone camera and image as the moment and location where the border between sensation and sentience becomes apparent. Perceptions of remembered, actual sensations might be recalled by memory experience. Such perception that emanates from outside of direct memory experience relies on the introduction of imagination to construct what still might only account for an incomplete hermeneutic. A notional co-presence is required to complete the hermeneutic picture, or understanding, of what the image means. The transposition of identity involved in (an attempt to) perceptually merge the body and image is not the kind of psychoanalytical identification that Robert Sinnerbrink critiques as 'a kind of numerical identity relation' or what Carroll denounces as a 'Vulcan mindmeld' (quoted in Sinnerbrink, 2011, p. 69). Whilst not specific to phone films, the perceptual apparatus involved in creating meaning from moving images is primarily located in embodied sensation, only later implicating the mind and intellect for understanding to emerge. There is a palpable eroticism in this kind of tactility; in the exposing one's body to being touched, of caressing of tactile surfaces, and of what Barker suggests of the cinematic experience as being 'a more mutual experience of engagement' (Barker, 2009, p. 34). Presented on a convenient surface within touching distance, the phone film invites contact with it.

The erotic touch is not about ownership or complete knowledge of the other, but is truly intersubjective. Just as, in the exchange of glances with another's, we can feel ourselves feeling. (Barker, 2009, p. 35)

Complete knowledge of another person, especially when mediated by an apparatus such as a mobile phone, is an illusory idea and can only be guessed at.

For this reason, I am careful to avoid anthropomorphising the film body as, say; Daniel Frampton appears to do in his conception of the 'filmind' (Frampton, 2006). The screen-enabled film brings the body of the filmmaker into close contact with the image, presenting a consciousness of its moment of creation and, as it does so, foregrounding the filmmaker's active, physical, contribution to the process of meaning making. However, the two are not equal or interchangeable.

Thus, a few questions arise: does one body end and another begin, and where? Do they each have clear perimeters or barriers between them, preserving their distinctive characters? I would have to admit that it is difficult to say a categorical 'yes' to all of these questions. We usually feel we are not confused about our sense of personal identity or, as Barker says, '[w]e know where "we" end and the other begins' (Barker, 2009, p. 94). Watching a phone film on the screen of a mobile phone involves what Marks terms '[t]he switch between [...] haptic and optical vision [describing] the movement between a relationship of touch and a visual one' (Marks, 2000, p. 129). In this way, Marks uses the notion of haptic visuality to help us describe an amalgam of tactile sensation, our learned perceptions of touching the surfaces of objects, and our inner-felt bodily apprehension of things, including moving images (Marks, 2000, p. 162). Therefore, the touch screen-enabled film's use of haptic visuality evokes the sense of touch (outlined by Barker above and on the previous page) and of what objects feel like to our bodies (building on Marks on pages 6 and 20) and our perceptions of screen-based moving images that result from sensual experience. We could say that haptic visuality might initially prepare the perceptual ground for our apprehension of things, including images.

Inviting the viewer to form a sensual connection is what Marks calls 'a haptic look', resulting in 'a dynamic subjectivity between looker and image' (Marks, 2000, p. 164). Marks' notion of the haptic look, therefore, incorporates her distinction between *grazing* over the surface and *gazing* at moving images (mentioned on page 21) and ideas of a collaborative form of interacting with post-digital moving image making that were introduced on page 4. However, such collaborative participation can only occur if the spectator and object are in some sense co-present at the moment of the image's genesis. In summary, therefore,

where optical and haptic visibility are brought to bear in combination on the mobile phone screen, and where spectator, object and filmmaker are in some sense co-present, is where the perceptual ground for the post-digital phone film image is most powerful.

Thus, my argument is that we must get away from a Cartesian privileging of thinking about vision in isolation, to break from the cycle of examining the visual appeal of the subject within the camera operator's viewfinder, and thereby inculcate the tactile manipulation of the enclosed, *enframed* screen. However, caution is needed to avoid making sweeping generalisations of widely varying phenomena. Tactile manipulation of an image on a screen surface only suggests a direct sensory connection. What I describe is more a virtual tactility, an *ersatz* tactility. The glass surface of the screen remains unaffected following touch. No trace of manipulation is left behind, except perhaps for finger smudges, which are both a diffusing of image detail, and the reminders or tangible indications of physical presence.

By way of responding to the arguments above, regarding ideas of the intangibility of engagement with images, Laura Marks, building on the scholarship of Walter Benjamin in *Some Motifs in Baudelaire* (1968), reframes Benjamin's idea 'that aura entails a relationship of contact, or a tactile relationship' (Marks, 2000, p. 140). When utilised to record moving images, the touch screen of the mobile phone functions auratically, as a tactile relationship between filmmaker and screen image. An image on such a touch screen encourages perception based on the hybrid form of haptic and optic visibility, introduced on the previous page. In this way, visibility is augmented by sensory input from tactile manipulation of the image surface and its inferred connectivity through touch, whereas I believe the traditional viewfinder employs an instance of a voyeuristically distanced conception of *gaze*.

My use of the term *gaze* is at variance with the Jacques Lacan's conception of the gaze, which, generally encapsulated, introduces an anxious state that arrives out of awareness that to be viewed is also to realize that he or she is a visible object or the subject of that gaze. In the phone film, this form of anxiousness does

not appear to be a common feature. Or as Todd McGowan reformulates the Lacanian conception of the gaze, 'it is not the spectator's external view of the filmic image, but the mode in which the spectator is accounted for within the film itself' (McGowan, 2007, pp. 7–8). Particularly in the case of the movie selfie (discussed in chapter two) both the enunciator of the gaze and its subject voluntarily engage in an exchange of the gaze.

Furthermore, Daniel Chandler has written about the camera's gaze that 'camera treatment is called "subjective" when the viewer is treated as a participant,' such as when 'the camera imitates the viewpoint or movement of a character,' or 'when the arms or legs of an off-frame participant are shown in the lower part of the frame as if they were those of the viewer' (Chandler, 1998). Therefore, the kind of gaze introduced between the mobile phone filmmaker and spectator appears to reflect Chandler's conception of subjective camera treatment in both of the scenarios above.

The following two phone films exemplify these aspects very well: In the case of *Memory 22* (2013) the visual images form a bridge between the filmmaker's viewings of his surroundings, and his own shadow and selfie image. In *Fear Thy Not* (2010) the filmmaker's limbs are featured prominently as a character within the frame. These two films exemplify two aspects of a particular kind of interpersonal communication that Chandler describes as a form of 'mutual gaze,' suggesting that the phone film gaze can, in certain circumstances, be shared or collaborated in (Chandler, 1998). Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996) draw on similar ideas to theorize the gaze as a relationship between a spectator's indirect offer, and the subject's direct demand to be viewed. Where these ideas share similar ground, is in regarding the gaze as a collaborative relationship. It is within the overlapping theories above that I regard the gaze of the mobile phone film can most accurately be thought of. The mobile phone film incorporates the collaborative gaze to enable interpersonal communication between filmmaker and spectator.

Therefore, the viewfinder-enabled image is closer to a symbolic representation of the cinema screen, always erring toward a Baudrillardian simulacrum of what its gaze falls on.

Aura enjoys a temporal immediacy, a co-presence, between viewer and object. To be in the presence of an auratic object is more like being in physical contact than like facing a representation. (Marks, 2000, p. 140)

It is difficult imagine a situation where the body and senses are not involved together in lived experience, in a kind of conversation announcing their significance to one-another. As Vivian Sobchack puts it, 'Thrown into a meaningful lifeworld, the lived body is always already engaged in a communication and transubstantiation of the cooperative meaning-making capacity of its senses' (Sobchack, 2004, pp. 60-61). Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that filmmakers quickly become adaptable to the moving screens that typify mobile filmmaking. Such screens function as objects that simultaneously carry images, within hybrid life-worlds where relationships between moving images and their referents are continually negotiated: One moment the screen can be thought of as an object, the next an image, or a combination of the two, which may force us to ask if what we are then observing is the subject.

The apparently fluid movement of identity creeping into the equation carries with it a problematic. From the thorough dismembering of *Grand Theory* during the 1980s by, amongst others, David Bordwell and Noel Carroll, notions of identification in film have had to be redrafted without its psychoanalytic presumption but with all of its complexity still present. This is a situation noted by Robert Sinnerbrink where he talks of 'the problem of "identification" and our (cognitive) understanding of film, the problem of 'identification or our affective engagement' (Sinnerbrink, 2011, p. 67). In other words, thoughts of identification may be genuinely held, if only partially understood on a cognitive level, but perceptions of sensations and the feelings of empathy that they generate are what form our affective engagement with screen images.

Sobchack neatly evades what anxieties she might have in this regard by choosing to focus, not within the subject/character/spectator locus, but on identification between the spectator and the *filmness* of the film itself. From this I would extrapolate further to include our identification with the filmmaker. In this case, the process of identification continues, not restricted to matching pairs of corresponding factors, but expands to implicate the four functionaries of subject, filmmaker, image and spectator. As phone film spectators, we are encouraged to identify with the apparent proximity of the body on-screen, the filmmaker, and ourselves watching, and in some phone films the boundaries between each become more difficult to differentiate. In phone films such as *Chiaroscuro* (2012), the directness with which objects and people (including a self-portrait in shadow form) are presented to the camera, and in *Fear Thy Not* (2010) by Sophie Sherman, in which the filmmaker's own hand features throughout the film, identification becomes an intrinsic part of each film's narrative.

It is within this notion of carnality being at the root of embodied identification that a kind of desire for a sensual connectivity emerges. The on-screen body and its off-screen conspirator begin to function as equivalents or, as Sobchack puts it, 'meaning, and where it is made, does not have a concrete origin in either spectator's bodies or cinematic representation but emerges in their conjunction' (Sobchack, 2004, p. 67). The sensual collaboration of hand, body and screen adds to a sensual enhancement of film experience by filmmaker and spectator alike; of what Sobchack calls 'mimetic sympathy' (Sobchack, 2004, p. 76). This leads us to interpret the body as itself an instrument of mediation, and by extending this line of reasoning, to the formulation of what Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylińska more recently refer to as the 'mediated self' with, as I have indicated above, its attendant problematic of identity fragmentation and sustainability (Kember and Zylińska, 2012, p. 131). Therefore, the mediating apparatus of the phone film incorporates the mediated self of the body or, in other words, identification with that of another.

Elevated beyond the status of simulacra, or even representation, the screen object becomes simultaneously co-present with its subject (though subjective perception may lead us to believe different things at different times). In the

shooting of a film such as *Fear Thy Not* (2010) with a mobile phone, the body is not merely implied but in a heightened sense is present with, as Barker puts it, 'surface, middle and depth' (Barker, 2009, p. 146). More than is the case with many films, as the hand and arm of the filmmaker, Sherman, progress through the film to the sound of her own voice, the screen image exists in a continuous flow of states of embodiment. Therefore, to be 'in touch' with the skin of this particular film, to use Barker's term, means several things:

The film's skin is a complex amalgam of perceptive and expressive parts - including technical, stylistic, and thematic elements - coming together to present a specific and tactile mode of being in the world. (Barker, 2009, p. 29)

The screen's surface is the smooth, glassy ground on which they meet and coalesce, and where manipulation becomes control and leads to a notional expressivity that was hitherto absent. In post-digital (see pages 3 and 4) touch screen-enabled filmmaking (elaborated upon on pages 22 and 23) it is more than ever unclear whether anyone can own the image. Indeterminately, a diffuse, collaborative mode of engagement emerges with the touch screen as its mediating apparatus. As Barker defiantly pronounces; 'The very act of perception moves us into the space between others and the world', which describes a kind of hermeneutic space into which can flow the film's expression, to be met by the viewer's perception, wherein understanding about what the film might mean can emerge (Barker, 2009, p.155). The phone film screen not merely inhabits but becomes that space; the ground on which the filmmaker, subject and viewer can join each other in mutual recognition of their shared existence.

Distinct from filmmakers using other kinds of apparatus to gather post-digital moving images, the phone filmmaker has a distinctive relationship with the screen of the digital phone camera. Even before filmmaking begins, the mobile phone is already a device for the communication of telephonic sounds, photographs and images from online sources. Its common, everyday use as a device for connecting people in virtual space is pre-established, habituated as an

apparatus for exchanging short messages of limited complexity. Phone filmmakers take this facility, what we might call basic digital telephony, and overlay this with added possibilities for filmic creativity. A major form this takes is expressed through the sharing of narrative films between individuals, and to a potential mass audience either online or, in the case of cell cinema, in film festivals. Other post-digital filmmakers, perhaps using video-enabled Digital SLRs, professional or amateur specification video cameras, Go-Pro cameras and so on, maintain a particular form of engagement with a screen. In common with all technologies, such devices mediate possibilities for dissemination, necessitating connection to other devices to reach an audience. What is common to them all, therefore, is the *extra-digital* or, as I frame it on pages 3 and 4, the post-digital nature of their means of recording images. In other words, the *post-digitality* of the phone film image is also the use to which it is put: The mobile phone's potential as a device for disseminating moving images constitutes its technological mediation. Without recourse to additional mediating apparatus, it can function as both a recording and viewing apparatus, and device for online sharing.

In the case of the analogue filmmaker using either film or videotape, other layers of mediation come into play. Reliant on the chemical manipulation of light sensitive silver halides on physical celluloid, and the re-structuring of magnetic particles on tape, the immediacy with which a viewer can experience audio-visual images is postponed. Viewing involves a time delay between image capture and projection or viewing via a separate device. In quite general ways, we use words such as *image capture* to describe the recording of things and events in the world, to hold and control them as objects, or of grasping what is meant by filmic signification. Alternatively, in the contemporary era of data handling during film production, recording and storage of sound and image data for later retrieval connotes a sense of *collection* or *archiving*, with its Foucaultian inference of power and control over knowledge (Foucault, 1979).

All of the italicised terms above infer kinds of tactile control without explicitly acknowledging how we physically engage with the objects we turn into images. Actual touching of the screen's surface is required to initiate image capture - which may involve simply pressing 'record', touching areas of the image

and, by extension, images of subjects – and, therefore, affects a particular sense of perceptual engagement with the world. In using fingers to focus, zoom and frame the image, perceptions of tactile connection between filmmaker and subject are implicated in the space the image provides on the screen's smooth, glassy surface. In the case of the phone film, the tactile connection to the analogue filmmaking medium is replaced with a different kind of tactile, physical connection to the means of the phone film's recording and dissemination - the screen of the mobile phone.

Thus far, I have referred to the person viewing the moving image at the first moment of a film's creation as the filmmaker. However, in professional filmmaking this person would more often be accurately identified as the camera operator. Any individual craftsman engaged on a professional film production necessarily contributes to, and draws on the contributions of a team of creative people, each with their individual sensibilities, tastes and judgements that they exercise during the making of a film. The actions and decisions of whoever operates the camera are vitally important in framing and composing the shot, dealing with how actors and other subjects are dynamically arranged during a shot, take, scene and so on. Therefore, when the team of creative individuals working on a film using a mobile phone numbers as few as one, as is common with much semi-professional or non-professional filmmaking and some documentary production, the individuated circumstances under which they initially engage with the image assumes a heightened importance. This is important because, at the moment the image appears on the phone screen, an individual may be both the filmmaker and the film's only audience. Such an individual is the first person, functionally and authentically (if not also authorially), to witness the moving image as it is being recorded and beginning to engage with the sensual world. In this sense, the image has a personal significance for the phone filmmaker.

Therefore, what is seen to be ontological of the phone-filmic significantly revolves around the phone film's privileging of the immediacy of two kinds of individual engagement: The filmmaker's personal engagement with the subject during filming, and the spectator's personal identification, through the transposition of subject-object, with the filmmaker's experience. These factors

indicate the level of mediated connection between phone filmmaker and spectator, and thereby the transposition of the object into an artefact that can be shared.

To take this line of thinking a stage further, I will briefly discuss two differing functional approaches to image gathering or recording: What I will refer to as viewfinder-enabled moving image production (typical of much professional filmmaking) and touch screen-enabled moving images (filmmaking using mobile phones, tablets and similar devices). In making comparisons between them I aim to reveal how each draws differently on notions of visuality and sensations of tactility – and they draw our attention to tactile engagement with touch-screens in the image and of the touch-screen. From this admittedly binary critique, I will move on to unpick the particular dynamic at work around and within the four *functionaries* of subject, filmmaker, image and viewer that touch screen-enabled filmmaking begins to reveal in a new way. In doing so, I hope to avoid conflating two bodies as one; the body of the film and that of the filmmaker/camera operator.

For several scholars of the moving image, such as Jennifer M. Barker whose work I will be once again drawing on at various points, the body of the viewer is invited into an intimate engagement with the film, but which seems to remain an object separated temporally and spatially from the body of the filmmaker. Yet, I argue, through the mobilisation of memories of sense experience felt during a film's making, and the democratising effects of visual memory-making invoked by Norris Nicholson earlier, the screen-enabled film implicates the filmmaker's body to a greater degree than before and, therefore, their contribution to meaning making and powers of identification is all the more greater. Often, the professional, viewfinder-enabled film is unable to do this, as though it consciously avoids conjuring up the memory of its moment of realisation and the filmmaker's presence. I refer here to a specific use of the convention of film *continuity*: placing items in different positions from take to take, and arranging them within the frame, because it looks more believable or compositionally pleasing down the viewfinder to have them placed in a new, objectively discordant position. This intentional adoption of a particular aspect of continuity puts the stress on the medium's use of objects, privileging aesthetic appearance over objective representation. It is a non-

accidental use of objects in constructing *mise en scene*, which, the next chapter shows, rarely occurs in phone films.

1.4 Mistakes, Accidents or Amateurism?

The final section of this first chapter discusses a number of formal qualities arising out of the use of mobile phone camera apparatus. The inclusion in phone filmmaking of what would normally be considered production mistakes in a commercial, professionally made film will be discussed below. The phone film's formal qualities are shaped by its production as an amateur, non-professional practice, and the ways in which the viewer recognises and engages with the resultant screen images. By further interrogating the appearance of phone films in this way, I aim to provide a more complete picture of the significant audio-visual aspects that distinguish them from other cinematic, post-digital moving image media.

Accidental or chance events occur in the production of many media forms, and mistakes are made in the most polished of professionally made films. However, I consider the (intentional) inclusion of mistakes and accidents in phone filmmaking to be a significant feature of its aesthetic. Therefore, I will discuss how phone films incorporate notions of adhering or rejecting traditional production craft skills, professionalism and non-professionalism, spontaneity and immediacy in what is intrinsically an amateur practice conducted by enthusiasts.

Writing about the dangers of attributing stylistic and aesthetic intentionality to films and filmmakers, Noel Carroll reminds us; 'Of course, authorial intentions may not always provide conclusive reasons for a specific categorization. Sometimes we may suspect the authors of dissembling [...] or possibly of being confused' (Carroll, 2008, p. 211). Such confusion can sometimes be interpreted as a mistake in filmmaking due to a lack of skill or attention to detail, or as an accident occurring at some point in the production of the film. Whatever their cause, such events are often assumed to be unintentional and, therefore, explained as falling short of a vaguely defined level of professional execution. As Gaut has shown, ascribing intentionalism to works of art, especially in the case of collaborative artworks, is

inherently problematic and often fails. 'An artist may, for instance, not intend to produce a particular pattern of alliteration in her poem, even though that pattern is present and determines the meaning of her work. So there are sometimes happy accidents in respect of artistically meaningful properties' (Gaut, 2010, p. 156). With respect to phone films, such happy accidents would include Tim Copsey's (2010) observation of an event during the shooting of Lily and The Crew's film *7/4 Random News at Holmfirth* (2010):

I particularly like where one of the girls is splashed by water from the car, and they focus on the puddle, then they focus on the car, they focus back at the puddle. And it's this [...] there's an incrimination about it. There's a double take. They called it 'Random News' but in actual fact there's something [...] there's a real convention there. It's a double take. It's a comedy standard and they cover it there. It's something I'm sure they've seen somewhere, and taken it on. (Interview, 25 May 2010)

Writing of how cinematography necessarily uses the real world that passes before the camera lens as its subject matter, Maya Deren asserts that the authority of reality contributes to:

[A]n art of the "controlled accident" [...] the maintenance of a delicate balance between what is there spontaneously and naturally as evidence of the independent life of actuality, and the persons and activities which are deliberately introduced into a scene. (Deren, 2004, p. 194)

What links the two examples above is the idea of using accidents that happen during filmmaking, events that might otherwise present themselves as problems, spontaneously integrated into the film's structure and narrative. Almost regardless of whether such *accidents* can be described as artistically intended, profound discernment, or simplistically accepted as valued recordings of real events, the quality of amateurism in phone films seems to be of questionable significance in terms of their aesthetic. As Ryan Shand has found, the 'inter-related network

between production and exhibition provides a useful framework for fresh consideration of amateur cinema' (Shand, 2007), in which amateurism retains a connection to motivations other than for economic profit, and with an etymological link to the love of a pursuit in and of itself. Therefore, phone film production, which is reliant on aspects of both amateur film production processes and distributive mechanisms that shun professional mass media routes to audiences, begins to hint at a notional anti-professionalism predicated in the cell cinema film festivals that has developed alongside it.

Of direct relevance to the audio-visual aesthetic that is typical of the phone film is the idea of 'mistakism', which Nicholas Rombes borrows from Harmony Korine (2001). Rombes describes *mistakist* cinema's attributes as more than homemade imperfection, but expressing the rather more positive qualities of 'intimacy and spontaneity' (Rombes, 2009, p. 97). As a reaction to what might then be seen as the slick and polished *expertism* in professional filmmaking, a number of aesthetic characteristics (if not stylistic tropes) of phone filmmaking emerge.

These features indicate what sets phone films apart from other modes of moving image making: The prevalent lack of a working screenplay or shooting plan, non-professional actors and crew, ad-hoc scheduling and pre-production arrangements, and a willingness to accept the effects of environmental factors, all invite a general *mistakism* and what Rombes describes as 'the complete appearance of complete amateurism' (Rombes, 2009, p.105). My research identifies instances of unintentional or accidental meaning creation. The various messages and inferences the moving image generates are not wholly pre-determined. This is true of most filmmaking, yet is particularly so in the case of amateur-made phone films. I argue that the making of phone films emerges largely out of the technological possibilities opened up to non-professional, and even anti-professional, filmmakers; disparate but globally connected groups and individuals, increasingly connected by technologies available to them at a given time.

Concluding Remarks

It has been my intention in this first chapter to describe the epistemological limits of how people currently conceive and make phone films so that, armed with an effective terminology for those making and watching phone films, we can effectively assess what is characteristic, typical, homogenous, universal or 'differential' about the phone film as a media artefact (Gaut, 2010, p. 246).

I argue that phone films are post-digital phenomena (incorporating digital and analogue characteristics, see page 4) but are not post-cinematic. Phone films encompass features of the cinematic in their mode of screen engagement, which has an historical antecedence. Early cinema devices, pre-eminently the combination of the kinoscope and mutoscope, pre-figure some aspects of the presentational dynamic of the mobile phone camera. Building on Gunning's (1994) concept of the 'cinema of instants', a persistent stylistic strain of phone film production was found to reproduce a cinematic tendency that referred back to the entertainment spectacles of such early film pioneers as Georges Méliès. Herein, a primarily visual immediacy, mirroring the experience of audiences seeing early film entertainments, was privileged over narrative complexity in phone films.

The chapter has outlined the transformative and transpositional processes by which objects, capable of practical instantiation by the filmmaker, describe how objects are rendered as phone film images. I discussed how, continuing their transformation, phone film images draw on notions of haptic as well as optical qualities (see pages 6 and 26) to shape perceptions of mobile phone screen images as post-digital artefacts capable of expressing and communicating senses of tactility and bodily sensation.

Finally, the chapter turned to a discussion of the topics of amateurism and non-professionalism in relation to phone films. Ideas of what constitute 'mistakes' and 'accidental or unintentional meaning creation' were questioned and found to be common aspects of contemporary phone filmmaking. Seeking evidence for intentionality in phone film production, being difficult to identify by observation and analysis of the filmmaking process alone, will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter.

Comprising qualities of amateurism, accidental meaning making and intentionalism, the phone film can be thought of as embracing Rombes' (2009) ideas of 'mistakist cinema', as part of an emerging aesthetic that in some way shapes the formal characteristics of phone films. By interrogating the appearance of phone films in this present research project, I have found indications that aspects of the phone film's appearance and process of creation emerging during the last decade, distinguish phone films from other cinematic, post-digital moving image media in sometimes significant ways.

As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3, it should be recognised that phone films are not a function of engagement with a form of mass media. The phone film does not necessarily rely on an audience of more than a single individual to retain its integrity as a media text. Having indicated a number of ways by which we can recognise phone films, and the processes behind their creation and engagement by spectators, I will broaden my analysis to provide a more scopic view of contemporary phone films and how individuals and audiences engage with them. Adopting the techniques of social semiotic analysis, an in-depth interrogation of the social and cultural aspects of phone films and phone filmmaking follows in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. A Social Semiotics of Phone Films

Building on the previous chapter's investigation of the ontological characteristics of the phone film as a contemporary mode of moving image production, this chapter undertakes a concentrated analysis of how phone films signify meanings for, and between, the filmmaker and film viewer. I do this by employing a social semiotics of a range of phone films, which have been screened at film festivals between 2009 and 2013 over the course of this particular research project. In having a semiotic basis, my analyses will necessarily draw on the theory of Roland Barthes (1977; 1994), Umberto Eco (1989; 1976) and Christian Metz (1974). Moreover, I will apply this basic theoretical and critical structure to the analyses within this chapter through the filter of John Deely's (1990) questioning of semiotics and the semiotic method, and Theo van Leeuwen's (2005) updating of a number of key dimensions of social semiotic analysis.

Just as importantly, I also draw on Nick Couldry's work to agitate against what he sees as the 'internecine disputes of the past', which destructively pit antagonistic theories of media against each other (Couldry, 2004, p. 116). Couldry's theorising of media as a form of practice emerges as a productive touchstone in the present context. My analysis of the practice of phone film production and viewing - with its inherent possibility of sharing media texts provided by the combined exhibitivite and distributive regime of film festivals - leads to a transitional point in the thesis as a whole. In this way, I will move from making analyses of what phone films mean as aesthetic artefacts, to explore how phone films achieve additional layers of social and cultural meaning in their incorporation into phone film festivals.

The resulting multi-faceted analysis will introduce the concept of *cell cinema*. I purposely use this term to differentiate it from the media object of the phone film. Cell cinema continues a connection with the purely *cellular*, that I discussed in the last chapter to partly describe the phone film. It retains a notional link to the biological cell and, through that, communicates ideas of cellular connectivity, and the infectious or viral spreading of information and messages from cell to cell. To maintain descriptive and conceptual clarity, I intend a distinction between the phone film as media text, and cell cinema as socio-cultural phenomenon. The

screening of phone films at the film festivals discussed below contributes a significant part of the cell cinema event. Therefore, the two terms are not interchangeable, but linked in practice. Refracted by the social context of the film festival environment, this chapter will demonstrate how cell cinema supports and influences meaning making in phone film engagement.

By calling for a 'multi-faceted analysis' of phone filmic meaning, I mean that the social nature of the cell cinema phenomenon encapsulates and promotes a number of things: Phone films constitute the most obvious media products that participants in cell cinema festivals are exposed to. They are the texts that are shown and shared, and upon which the cell cinema festivals that enable their distribution and sharing are predicated. Therefore, it is logical to first undertake a series of analyses of phone films and their meanings for spectators exposed to them, prior to undertaking an in depth examination of cell cinema festivals in chapter 4.

Even after restricting the range of phone films I have selected for analysis, the broad scope of subject matter, stylistic and narrative treatment found in many phone films offers a large and growing canon from which to select a representative few for close scrutiny. All of the phone films discussed are live action films, although limited use of animation effects may be incorporated into their production in some instances. As I have already established, they are all made using mobile phone cameras, which present those people operating the mobile phones with the ability to express a form of personal observation and experience, through their interaction with moving images and sound on a mobile phone screen. Therefore, the 'transitional point' in the thesis referred to above will herald a shift in focus from considering the phone film solely as media text, to a consideration of the phone film's incorporation into the mediating environment of the cell cinema festival. In so doing, I will build a base of evidence to show that cell cinema festivals, comprising mediated and mediated phone films and other social phenomena, become sites of cultural production that require ethnographic differentiation, cross-culturally, trans-culturally and inter-culturally. Although introduced here, these and other matters will be addressed in greater detail in chapter 3.

Firstly, the kind of social-analytical ambition I will introduce here urges a consideration of what kind of critical method is appropriate to the study of how phone films serve to create and communicate meaning for spectators and participants. Therefore, I also question whether (or what kind of) semiotics provides a suitable methodological tool for this particular form of moving image analysis. As John Deely asks, '[t]he question is whether [...] semiotics [...] will establish its theoretical framework with sufficient richness and flexibility to accommodate itself to the full range of signifying phenomena' (Deely, 1990, p. 9). In answer to his own question, Deely says he believes semiotics provides, not merely a philosophical method, but 'a perspective or a point of view' of the activity of signs in the natural world (Deely, 1990, p. 10). This post-structuralist, perspectival rationale reintroduces a personal and interpretive point of view, and would seem to be a constructive way of introducing notions of *method* when dealing with phenomena, such as the discursive practices involved in screening phone films at cell cinema festivals. It is, therefore, one that this chapter will utilize.

I concur with Deely's observation of a relationship between a method and a *point of view*; where a method attempts 'the systematic implementation of something suggested by a point of view', but where a single method would presuppose a circumscribing or narrowing of viewpoint (Deely, 1990, p. 9). Deely's own viewpoint that 'the richer a point of view, the more diverse are the methods needed to exploit the possibilities for understanding latent within it', has influenced my decision to incorporate considerations of the social and cultural in the semiotic analyses of phone films I make here (Deely, 1990, p. 9). In coming together at cell cinema festivals, phone filmmakers, individual film viewers and festival *professionals* of various kinds, aspects of subjectivity, expressivity and personal creativity are present from the start. These factors are related temporally and geographically with regard to the festival site, contributing to meaning creation in some way or ways which require analysis, and will be addressed within the context of each film's screening at a given cell cinema festival or screening event. The interrelated form of cell cinema engagement that I hypothesize ensures a social character of some kind adheres to how phone films are experienced and shared, and will be likewise addressed throughout this chapter. Therefore, the

brand of semiotics I present here is rooted in a series of points of view; mine. I build on features of film semiotics emerging out of the work of Christian Metz (1974), Roland Barthes (1977; 1991), and Umberto Eco (1976; 1994). Their formative applications of linguistic and structuralist semiotics to the study of traditional film and cinema will be refracted by other critical aspects that I will draw on at points, will be reflexively applied to the analysis of phone films in the cell cinema setting.

Note that my use here of Charles Sanders Peirce's term *semiotics* is not meant to infer a break from the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's *semiology*, which describes 'a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life', but that it encapsulates Peirce's logic of a formal philosophical doctrine which determines that 'a sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity' (Peirce, 1931-58, 2.227-8). It has become common practice to use the term *semiotics* as an umbrella term to embrace the whole field. In this way, I intend to retain, most cogently in respect of my developing analysis of cell cinema, a link to the signs of social life that can be observed in phone films.

The contemporary study of semiotics that has evolved from the work of Barthes and Eco in particular, and which forms the backbone of my present analytical method, has become the study of signs not in isolation, but as part of a system of semiosis that takes in other modes of signification. The codifying structure or system within which phone films function and create meaning for their viewers is primarily the medium of film, from which it borrows various tropes and codifying practices, such as cinematographic framing/composition, other aspects of *mise en scene*, editing/montage and aspects of the filmmaker-audience relationship. In the present context, phone films can be said to be messages in the form of audio-visual recordings that have been recorded using a mobile phone as apparatus, so that they exist independently of both sender and receiver. Phone films also have recourse to a further codifying structure; that of the cell cinema festival. The socially and culturally influential environment of the cell cinema festival adds another layer of signification: the denotation and connotation of additional social and cultural meanings. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four, where my analyses of online and specifically festival-located publicity,

and promotional materials from cell cinema festivals, combines with findings from my ethnographic field trips to provide a more holistic analysis of the cell cinema phenomenon.

My initial analysis will therefore form a two-part process of setting out my *point of view* of the codified meanings underlying phone film texts that construct and maintain their relation to events in the world, and how selected phone films and others communicate their social and cultural signification within cell cinema festivals. To again use Deely's phraseology, 'semiotics is a perspective or a point of view that arises from an explicit recognition of what every method of thought or every research method presupposes' (Deely, 1990, p. 10). Warren Buckland frames it slightly differently: 'Semiotics is premised on the hypothesis that all types of phenomena have a corresponding underlining system that constitutes both the specificity and intelligibility of those phenomena' (Buckland, 2000, p.7). Therefore, the semiotic points of view I adopt hypothesize a kind of unifying codified intentionality on behalf of the phone filmmaker as social collaborator with the viewer. Alternatively put, reliance on an unalloyed version of semiotic analysis, that presumes the existence of a coded structure underlying phone films, would seem to court only a partial understanding of them as texts, remaining hypothesized, over-theoretical and, therefore, ineffective as a final method of analysis. Therefore, I believe a socially inflected semiotic method of analysis is required to reveal the social and cultural character of phone films, as they feed into cell cinema's mode of discursive engagement in social space.

In arriving at a usable social semiotics of phone films, more is required than a general structural analysis of films inhabiting such a diverse field of discourse as we find in cell cinema. Films made on phones do not constitute a genre in any formal or stylistic way, or communicate a sense of a common or shared aesthetic. As will be evidenced in the selection of films for analysis below, their dissimilarities of narrative treatment, whether directorially intended or independently perceived by a viewer, actively reject homogeneity. Therefore, semiotically interrogating films in isolation from the discursive environment of the cell film festival is likely to reveal aspects of an individual film's concerns, but not the semiosis taking place within cell cinema engagement. In addressing rhetorical questions of the necessity for

semiotics to counter the behaviourist subject positioning of trans-linguistic film theory, Buckland responds, 'My immediate answer is that we need to consider the specificity of the human mind and culture' (Buckland, 2000, p. 13). Buckland's project to assimilate cognitive theory with semiotics is an interesting and important contribution. However, consideration of the human mind, specific or otherwise, returns us inevitably to the semiotic point of view. Perceptually, phone films are disrupted by the discursive activities of the cell cinema environment, marking a transformation from media text to social media product.

Recalling the haptic engagement with the phone film image, described on page 44, cell cinema could conceivably be viewed in the strictly Saussurian sense of a message existing within a closed circuit between speaker and receiver. Even allowing for the possible influence of early experiments by Saussure's contemporary experimenters in telephony and telegraphy, the metaphor seems strained and contrived in retrospect. Cell cinema's contemporary incorporation of mobile telecommunications is of a different order. It does not rely on a closed circuit of message transmission and reception. The nature of communication within cell cinema is fostered on the legacy of over a hundred years of film viewing, and growing *cine-literacy*, and characteristically involves an audience that is active in a bi-directional process of message construction. As will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4, the atmosphere in cell cinema festivals is of an increased collegiality over larger, industry-driven film festivals. Filmmakers tend to merge easily with spectators as the audience becomes a gathering of participants searching for meaning during Q. and A sessions and extemporized screenings with filmmakers on-hand to provide comments, clarifications and explanations of alternative motivations for narrative and aesthetic decisions. Basing his remarks on the concept of *inference* (A conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning), Buckland helpfully provides a more nuanced pragmatics of this phenomenon:

For pragmatists, no failsafe semantic algorithm exists between sender and receiver. The message the sender wishes to communicate cannot be automatically encoded into a message and then automatically decoded by the receiver. Instead, the

sender's utterance merely modifies the cognitive environment of the receiver, and it is on the basis of this modification that the receiver infers or constructs the message the sender purportedly wishes to communicate. (Buckland, 2000, p. 82)

Buckland's position, that the comprehension of a message by a receiver is contingent on the *cognitive environment* the receiver inhabits at a given time, leads back to Deely's notion of the point of view outlined earlier. In other words, in the participatory environment of the cell cinema festival, where the identities of the various participants can shift between audience member, filmmaker and festival professional, the various messages expressed in phone films are similarly fluid in their potential meanings to the various participants. This is a common feature of film festival interaction where festival attendees take advantage of Q. and A. sessions, workshops and so on. Therefore, the receiver's or cell cinema participant's cognitive point of view is shaped by the social and cultural cues they are exposed to, and become aware of.

The cell cinema festival environment similarly exhorts multimodal readings of phone films, which are made within the context of more than one structuring influence, i.e. genre, style, fictional or documentary narrative tradition etc. Therefore, the series of notional *points of view* that I present in the analyses that follow become ever more salient when setting out to identify what the meanings within a given phone film text might be. Before considering the ways in which the social and cultural environment of the cell cinema festival affects how phone films are variously received, used and understood, their initial reception by the film viewer must be investigated and explained.

2.1 Phone Filmic Discourse

Phone films made over the course of my research, approximately between the middle of 2009 and late 2013, constitute a disparate and idiosyncratic sub-genre of moving image production. Close analysis reveals many phone films conform to (or at least can be described as falling within) one or more categories or signifying modes of post-digital moving image making. These describe a number of

characteristics that position films made on mobile phones as the carriers of filmic codes and other kinds of signifiers, which communicate signifieds that are either general or particular in the kinds of meaning they have for phone film spectators.

Phone films must, at least in part, be susceptible to some form of semiotic analysis because their intelligibility, as films of however specialized a kind, is reliant to a great degree on what Warren Buckland describes as 'the invariant traits that define film's specificity' (Buckland, 2000, p. 13). In common with other forms of moving image production, phone films are subject to systems of codification that allow a process of communicated understanding to come about.

In the following I introduce taxonomy of phone films that contain denotative elements that reveal something of the specific in the general. I aim for an analytical method that is appropriate to discovering the syntactical status of the phone film as a social semiotic mode of post-digital moving image making. To underpin this method, I will utilise the commutation test from structural linguistics (Jakobson and Malle, 1971; Chandler, 2007), to test the effectiveness of elements in my taxonomy that have significance in the various phone films under scrutiny. At various points within the taxonomy, I do this by determining whether changes in the level or character of the signifiers leads to changes in what is signified by them. In this way, my analyses will be based on a system of classification that is reduced from a general film semiotics to one more tightly relational to the signifying potential of the phone film. The taxonomy of phone films that emerges can be split into two main groups: Group A comprises phone film categories that I refer to as *Dialogical*, *Music Phone Video* and *Professionalist*. These are to some extent hybrid categories in which phone films in one category share one or more characteristics with those in another, and with forms of filmmaking that do not originate on the mobile phone camera. Therefore, Group A includes phone films of a somewhat general kind wherein aspects such as subject matter, narrative treatment and shooting style are not specifically intrinsic to phone films, but broadly reflect existing film production norms. In this regard, films within group A do not demonstrate singular effects that can be identified as particular to the phone film. Often their mode of address and audio-visual aesthetic expresses hybridity of style and treatment, and straddle more than one category as a result. Group B includes the categories of

Ambulatory, the *Movie Selfie* and *Autobiographical*. This group incorporates phone films that evidence at least an apparent ambition to move beyond representing aspects of familiar genres, stylistic tropes, and so on. Therefore, Group B encompasses phone films that exist in tension with a quality of hybridity of signifying modes, to speak of a potential intrinsicity as mobile phone films.

2.2 Group A Phone Films

2.2.1 Dialogical

In the *Dialogical* phone film, the film's narrative creates a dialogue or story to be told and shared between the filmmaker - through the characters on-screen - and the viewer. The form of address this dialogue takes may be direct and conversational, such as an on-screen character speaking directly to camera, or indirect, for example through a voice-over narration. However, dialogical phone films tend to avoid the extensive use of extra-linguistic codification in their construction. They more readily invoke dialogue-based exchanges to communicate messages and information. Semiosis often happens as a second order of signification, as a result of dialogue being the film's primary function. In a film such as *Kreuzberg* (2010) by Aaron Rose, haptic imagery is interspersed with periods of dialogue, so that the primarily dialogical nature of the film's narrative is only completely evident towards the end of the film.

The film opens on an interior/exterior shot of the tops of monochrome clouds seen through the rain-spotted window of an aeroplane. Electronic music throbs on the soundtrack. The camera tilts up to allow the title 'Kreuzberg' to fade up in white text against the monochromatic grey sky. A sudden cut takes us to a shot at ground level, looking up at high-rise housing blocks, which the camera pans across, right to left and down to street level. Graffiti-covered walls, cyclists, pigeons, and the affluent-looking period and modernist buildings indicate we are in a European city. So far, the film has been illustrative, contemplative. The images have offered few signifying codes or opportunities to derive complex meaning, barring the starkly monochromatic depiction of mundane, slightly care-worn urban housing.

The film cuts to an interior room, an apartment, where a woman reads from a text she is holding. Her dialogue speaks of 'modernity, the time of projects and plans [...] taught us to tremble with life luggage, with life to unpack.'

The image of the woman reading is accompanied by a music track; an acoustic piano playing a slightly neutral, repetitive few notes under the sound of her voice. Throughout her reading, the camera cuts back and forth from her to various details of the city, buildings, an art gallery installation, trees and canals. The woman's reading continues with the words, 'Modern reductionism is the strategy of surviving the difficult journey from the present. Art, literature, music and philosophy have survived the twentieth century because they threw out our unnecessary baggage'.

In a change of shot, a man faces camera, holding one hand up in front of his left eye, and turning his other hand to show his palm to the camera. This apparently significant but puzzling image, placed within the film without supporting dialogue, punctuates the more conventionally declamatory reading by the woman. The man's gestures appear to comment on the preceding statement, yet their meaning remains ambiguous. With a cut, the camera returns to the woman as she completes her reading, and lowers her book.

Changing the tone, the film shifts at this point from being a dialogue between the characters or presenters on-screen to present a more illustrative, gestural and inferential aesthetic. The camera swirls around modern art paintings, moving over monochromatic tones and shapes, until the picture eventually fades to black. What both sound and vision within the film appear to communicate thus far is the hopeful prospect for art and philosophy etc. in the twentieth century. However, the somewhat downbeat tone to the woman's readings, and the observational or dispassionately documentary style of cinematography lend an air of solemn resolution to the film's message.

With a jarring change in the music track to an electronic whine, the picture cuts to more aggressive camera movement depicting images graffitied on walls. This quickening pace to the cutting injects a sense of energy, signifying the vitality

of the graffiti, allying it to the film's stated message of 'modern reductionism', and of art being a necessary response to the twentieth century.

Returning to the apartment, a young man of similar age to the woman reads from another text, this time in German, that he holds just out of shot below the bottom of frame. On the wall behind him are the posed photographs of nude women. Following this image, in a montage of shots, the picture cuts between a series of images that, in combination appear to encapsulate the film's thesis: A car at night, people on the streets who could be immigrants, a young man who could be a student, ladies shoes in a shop window, scooters parked up, berries on trees, piles of books and, perhaps most semiotically significant, shots of street paving sets – reminiscent of those used as ammunition by anti-communist demonstrators during the Prague Spring uprisings – introducing a subtle message of the possibilities for protest and activism into the dialogue.

In a clear reference to present-day modernity's rushing carelessly from place to place, the shot cuts to the town speeding by beyond a bridge, and the whining electronic music ends. In the street, the man we had seen reading earlier walks away from the camera, whilst his reading continues as a narration over the picture.

With another cut to the apartment, he finishes his reading and looks up to directly face the camera. With this gesture, the man reveals himself to have been giving his reading to the camera throughout. His reading, and that of the woman have been dialogues between them and us as viewers. At the moment he fixes his look to the camera, the man shifts the nature of the film's discourse from that of a lecture or presentation of information, to an invitation to a conversation to be continued after the film ends. The picture fades to black, and the soundtrack returns to the gentle piano melody of earlier.

Applying the commutation test to this short, final sequence, the direct nature of the man's engagement with the spectator is a powerful signifier of connectivity between him, the camera and the spectator (us). Alternatively, if the man had not ended his spoken reading, and then directed his gaze in such a confrontational way, but had perhaps continued looking down at the text and away from the camera, alternative, non-dialogical meanings of would have been invoked. As it stands,

although no words are returned to the man in an exchange of conversation, an exchange of gazes does ensue, placing the film in the *Dialogical Phone Film* category.

As the credits fade up in white upper-case text on a black screen, the film's mode of address changes to one of providing clarifying captions: 'A FILM BY AARON ROSE FOR INCASE' and 'SHOT ON AN IPHONE 4' suggest the film's amateur, non-professional credentials, but also a link to a possible sponsor or client. The film appears to have only partly been the filmic presentation of people reading passages from books supported by images of *Kreuzberg*. With the inclusion of a website address as an end credit or message for the viewer, Rose finally reveals *Kreuzberg* to have been a project carrying an invitation to engage with the novelty of phone filmmaking, and partly linking its production to a commercial organisation, extending the film's discursive concerns and meaning for the viewer. The dialogical nature of *Kreuzberg* is of a two-fold kind: the dialogue between the on-screen characters reading allowed to camera (and us as spectators), and the subtext of an invitation to extend the conversation that the film starts beyond the end caption.

2.2.2 Music Phone Video

The *Music Phone Video* category describes a signifying mode of phone filmmaking that often takes the familiar and established form of a music video, used as a marketing device in the music industry to promote a song through additional publicity channels by giving visual representation to sounds and lyrics. Phone films such as *Sunway: The Boys of Summer, Hawaii* (2010) and *Cascades by Flakjakt* (2010) are two such examples, the latter film claiming to present the first *official* music video created using an iPhone 4. Notwithstanding the unusual but increasingly common practice of using mobile phone cameras to shoot commercial music videos, *Music Phone Videos* also function as media texts that carry meaning in other, quite different ways.

The kinds of *Music Phone Videos* that regularly appear in cell cinema festivals are notable for omitting spoken dialogue throughout the duration of the film,

relying on the adoption of a song or piece of music to take the place of a sound track. In the collision of moving images and music, the film's visual elements are stressed, with a reduced emphasis placed on the song or music that provides a neutral or commentative sound element accompanying the moving images.

The phone film *Mankind Is No Island* (2008) is an early example containing no dialogue or sound other than the music that constitutes the soundtrack. As the film begins, the image cuts in with explanatory text; white on a black screen as music – a lilting, almost melancholy solo acoustic piano piece credited to John Roy - is introduced at the same time. The presence of this music throughout the film achieves near parity with the visuals, commentative on the poignancy of the imagery, but nonetheless supplying a wistful aural canvas onto which the visuals are edited in time with the piano notes. The text reads:

(This film shot entirely on a cell phone, on the streets of NY and Sydney) The text fades to black.

Approximately a second later, the title suddenly appears, reading;

'Mankind Is No Island', in a white sans serif typeface against black.

The title fades to black as the piano notes search for the start of a melody.

With the first proper images – an image of an exterior sign of white text on a black background, accompanied by a slight intensification of the piano notes - the film lifts the viewer into reading a series of words in a rhythmic following of the music.

'This /story/is/about/2/cities'

As images come and go, we quickly realize that each word or phrase is a shot, matching the rhythm and pacing of the cuts in time with the music track.

With a pause in the music, the picture fades to black.

It is evident that we are looking at live action images of text-based signs; footage that picks out words, mostly in upper case, in English – a language common to both New York and Sydney:

'Divided by a great ocean'

All the signs and lettering are picked out from their urban environment, isolated from buildings, walls, shops or blue skies. The images are further isolated or removed from a realist connection to their urban environment by being mute. The only sound is the piano accompaniment. Although the film was made in Sydney, Australia, it could be set in one of many cities.

‘United/by/HOPE/HUNGER’.

The word ‘hope’ hangs on a more sustained piano chord, giving it added weight and significance. The image wobbles slightly, suggesting the camera is being hand-held for the duration of the shot. Therefore, the film links two cities, NY and Sydney. We may (correctly) presume this refers to New York, USA and Sydney, Australia, but an answer for what the ‘hope’ and ‘hunger’ in the message refer to is withheld from the viewer at this point.

‘Through your eyes/our/city/is/famous/happy’

‘You can feel/the’ (red heart symbol/ red heart symbol/ red heart symbol/ red heart symbol/ red heart symbol/) – symbolizing love for the cities and within the cities.

(I ‘heart’ SYDNEY Australia t-shirt)

The film has become a kind of love letter, but to what, exactly?

The next image is one of the few pieces of live action footage that does not pick out a word. It is a red, heart-shaped balloon ascending into the sky, with the Sydney Opera House briefly in the background. This is followed by a shot of a (I ‘heart’ ‘love NY) logo on a shopping bag. Therefore, we receive confirmation that the film is a love letter to the cities of Sydney and New York. The red heart-shaped balloon was acting as a message of love in flight, bridging the many miles between the two cities. This message is then emphasized by another brief shot of two red heart-shaped balloons lifting into the sky between high buildings, like a loving couple joining, escaping, and soaring above the city.

‘But/what/is/it/we/love...

Today’

The single red balloon flies high into the sky between buildings, signifying poignancy, solitude, the possibility of losing love and the sensation of being alone. The ever-present solo piano soundtrack only emphasises the solitary air that is communicated here in particular.

'Do/we/heart/people/or/the/place'

A single red balloon flies high into the sky.

'Do/we/measure/empathy/by/donations'

This textual question is followed by another of the relatively few instances of live action footage, not containing or solely comprised of word signs: From a low angle camera position, a street beggar kneels on the pavement, side-on to the camera. His head is bent downward to face a piece of clothing in front of him with pitifully few coins on it. To the right of camera, lots of people are walking past him, predominantly away from the camera and us as viewers.

The next shot provides the film with a kind of bridging signification, cementing the intended meaning contained in the preceding shots: On a street crossing, people walk past a billowing, floating red heart balloon. They are apparently unconcerned, unaffected by the balloon, simply ignore it and walk past and away to carry on their business or get to somewhere else. The film's message for us continues in its rhythmic following of the piano melody:

'I/walk/by/you/today'

'I/always/look/away'

These brief, spelled out sentences are followed by footage of an elderly man pushing or standing in front of a wheeled shopping trolley. He looks old and is perhaps homeless, carrying his belongings around with him. People file by him, unconcerned, emphasising the filmed text messages.

The next image is from a low camera angle. It is an even more pathetic scene of a day/exterior street with parked cars with, in the back of frame, a figure lying asleep on a park bench.

'Well Worn/boots/with/no standing/no standing/no standing/do/you/reason/with/your/condition'

The picture dissolves to another image of a street beggar, perhaps inside a shopping mall or lobby area. Then the picture cuts to a church exterior and the camera pans up to reveal a white statue of Christ, picked out against the dark stonework of the church. Once more, the picture cuts to a brief shot of an apparently deflated red heart balloon, signifying a symbolically equivalent loss of empathy.

‘Our/city/says/we’ll look after you’

‘Your/very/own/family/turn/blind’

‘When/did/you/last/see/your/Dad/Boys/Mother/Brothers’

We are next presented with a white, stencilled image of a stylized sign/logo showing a little boy holding the hand of a father. This is followed by a brief shot of a homeless man sleeping in a foetal position on a pavement.

‘No/fortune/to/indulge’

‘No/sunflower/no/rainbow/no/successful life’

Once more, the film presents a bridging shot of a busy street going about its business. It seems that, externally to the film’s narrative world, most people within the cities continue their lives, ambivalent to its concerns.

The next shot is a hand-held, three-quarters angle shot of an unkempt elderly man – apparently a *rough sleeper* – kneeling or sitting on the ground. The camera is at his eye level, allowing us to empathize with his abstracted gaze.

The shot dissolves to a tight close-up of the same man – apparently a still photograph of him face-on, passively staring into the lens - as the camera moves out to reveal more of his face, meeting his gaze but ultimately retreating away from him.

‘I/walk/by/you/today’

‘I/did/not/look/away’

The next shot presents another pivotal moment in the film’s narrative. A man we have not seen before (Shane Emmett, the film’s co-producer) is listening, nodding and saying ‘yes’ in agreement with the elderly man who is talking to him as

they stand beside his shopping trolley at the edge of the pavement's edge. The elderly man is facing slightly away from us, three-quarters angled from the camera, so that the camera picks out the two men in a long two-shot. At last, the film comes to present a human to human conversation in moving images, a visually represented sharing of experience, of one person enquiring into the life of another human being.

'A story around every corner'

'The/gentle/art/of/hearing/your/truth/your/thinking/your/inner spirit'

'No/different/to/me'

The next shot is another still image of a man's face in close-up – presumably or apparently another street sleeper – because it is closely followed by live action footage of a fully-clothed figure, lying on the ground, covered in blankets.

A sign asks the question:

'This is Freedom?'

This image is followed by another (still) shot of a man's face (a rough sleeper) in three-quarters angle, looking directly into the camera lens.

'No/Man/Is/An/Island'

The title of the film is finally stated, and is followed by two still photographs of an Aboriginal Australian man (possibly another street sleeper) in a medium close-up of his face.

After a brief pause in the piano soundtrack, the picture cuts to a sign of the word 'End', with the music coming to an appropriately resonant, major chord that lingers as the picture dissolves into the end credits: white text on black background, mirroring the start, which includes a message, 'thank you the homeless of ny/syd', followed by the filmmaking and other technical credits.

In summary, *No Man is an Island* presents a series of visual and aural messages that make quite direct and immediate reference to homelessness and interpersonal dislocation between individuals in two cities. It is a film about communicating semiotic meaning within linguistic and film images. Therefore, it

bridges language use and the symbolic signification of images for and of words. It supplements visual images with sounds, and also fills in the spaces between words – the syntax as it were – with sound images that help to complete the film's message.

No Man is an Island can be subjected to the commutation test in several ways, signifying meaning within several categories in my taxonomy of phone film signifiers. *No Man is an Island* is, therefore, a phone film *Music Phone Video*, omitting dialogue and relying on the use of a music track throughout to accompany the moving images. In passing, *No Man is an Island* is a *Movie Selfie* in the sense that the film's co-producer with Jason van Genderen, Shane Emmett, is featured talking with a homeless elderly man in the film. It is also dialogical in that, whilst presenting its word-images in an apparently declamatory way, the film provides a series of quite tightly presented messages that bridge their denotative quality as objects in the urban environment with their connotative power as signifiers of social dislocation and cultural malaise. *No Man is an Island* invites questions from the viewer of how the images relate to one another, what their combined meaning is, would they (the viewer) think differently about homelessness and rough sleeping in New York and Sydney having had the situation, as it were, 'spelled out' to them in a close observation of the two city's urban details.

As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four, resulting from its transnational existence at more than one film festival, *No Man is an Island* can also be considered, in a tangential sense, a *Dialogical* phone film, sending messages and depicting a conversation between two large cities, Sydney and New York. Significant with regard to the film's trans-national credentials, *No Man is an Island* won film festival awards in Australia before travelling to Tropfest film festival in New York to win a further award there.

At this point I would like to provide an alternative theoretical perspective on interpreting the various meanings in *No Man is an Island*. Bearing heavily on David Bordwell's (1996) proposal of a moderate or weak constructivism, Berys Gaut develops 'a different theory of interpretation', which may be more applicable to a critique of how meaning is made in van Gelderen's film (Gaut, 1995). *Mankind is No*

Island illustrates how four types of meaning in film exist in the more circumscribed form of phone films more generally. Firstly, the *explicit meaning* of *Mankind is No Island* is stated early on in the film with a message that it is about Sydney, Australia and New York, USA, including the moral component of them being separated geographically but unified by central, social concerns such as the on-screen message 'united by hope, hunger'. Secondly, the *referential meaning* of *Mankind is No Island* draws together aspects of the film's story (or fabula) it tells, of the world it represents in spatio-temporal terms (its *diegesis*).

Thus, *Mankind is No Island*, presents a story of two cities where people walk by each other as strangers, but in which we watching the film can feel empathy and even love for the inhabitants. In his latter two types of meaning, Gaut extrapolates from Bordwell's theory to find 'the objects of interpretation proper are *implicit* and *symptomatic meanings*' (Gaut, 1995). In Gaut's terms, the former of these two are meanings that the film implies or suggests, which the viewer must infer or deduce from the information provided and, therefore, require 'explicatory or thematic criticism' of the filmmaker's intentions. Finally, Gaut concludes that 'symptomatic meanings are repressed meanings, which reveal the film's ideology', indicating that ideology is always present when a filmmaker intentionally originates filmic meaning (Gaut, 1995). Such implicit and symptomatic meanings in *Mankind is No Island* include the messages that by 'not looking away' when presented with 'a story around every corner' presented by the film's text, we might realise that *humans are similar to one-another, interconnected by a common humanity* (van Gelderen, 2008).

2.2.3 Professionalist

The third category in Group A, *Professionalist*, describes phone films where a high premium is placed on the appearance of professional-level production values and filmmaking craft skills being used in their execution. Whether or not the filmmakers actually had a large production budget, or access to professional equipment at any point in the production and post-production stages, the

achievement on-screen of a slick, technically polished style of filmmaking appears to have primacy.

On his YouTube channel, Mike Koerbel helpfully provides two versions of his film *Apple of My Eye* (2010): The edited final cut has a duration of 1 minute 27 seconds and a longer version, running to 5 minutes 12 seconds, includes behind the scenes footage of the film's shooting and editing using an iPhone 4. In this way, *Apple of My Eye* provides a level of instruction in semi-professional techniques, or how to achieve professional appearing results while using non-professional equipment.

In *The Fixer* (2011), Conrad Mess (Luis Mieses) convincingly applies production techniques and post-production software to produce a melodramatic, gangster film. In response to how he was able to create apparently professional production values in his film, Mieses says 'there were people who didn't believe that *The Fixer* was shot on an iPhone – I take that as a compliment because it means that I did a good job on the edit' (The Smalls, 2012). By devoting attention to one particular area of the filmmaking process (editing), technical shortcomings or lack of funds in other areas can be mitigated by imagination and increasing access to relatively inexpensive, yet professional standard resources. Mieses sums up his familiarity with industry-specification post-production software by saying 'Now I know a bit about Adobe Premiere and After Effects and Cinema4D by watching video tutorials from the internet' (Myers, 2011).

What these two films and the remarks above reveal is how the makers of *Professionalist* phone films often place an emphasis on the appearance of professionalism, taking satisfaction from their apparent ability to produce a film that bears the superficial signs of filmmaking familiar from the multiplex. In this, *Professionalist* phone films are referential rather than mobile phone-specific forms of filmmaking, taking their aesthetic and stylistic cues from pre-existing, commercial influences for their legitimacy. The *Professionalist* phone films discussed above reproduce stylistic references from professionally produced, mainstream entertainment films involving continuity editing and believable, if not strictly naturalistic, cinematography. In a sense, therefore, the fact of their

production apparatus involving a mobile phone seems to be incidental to the film's narrative ambitions. Instead, what is signified is either a tacit denial of the mobile phone, or an attempt to disguise the limitations that might follow from its use. What this seems to indicate is an apparent disavowal, or glossing over, of their *amateurist* origins by the filmmakers. *Professionalist* phone filmmaking aims for parity with the production values of professional filmmaking, so that what the spectator witnesses on-screen, has the novelty value of amateur or non-professional filmmaking made with consumer devices, which appears to be something other than what it is.

2.3 Group B Phone Films

2.3.1 Ambulatory

When filmmaking is undertaken whilst the person holding and operating the camera is also walking, the *Ambulatory* motion of their walking injects an appearance of motion to the images on-screen. The film's camerawork takes on or infers the rhythmic motion of human ambulation; movement in sync with the filmmaker's walking whilst carrying the phone-camera as the image is being recorded. In this way, a given film's mode of production significantly affects its resulting visual aesthetic, signifying some things over others and communicating codified meanings of forward momentum, progress toward a destination, of time passing, and so on. The appearance of ambulatory motion can control the pacing of action on-screen: the speed of walking dictating the speed at which events are seen and passed by. The frequency of edits in time with footsteps and the moving camera introduce a sense of rhythm and tempo.

Representations of movement on-screen, foregrounded in the visual aesthetic of a phone film, contribute to the viewer's identification with the sensation of perceived movement. The perceived appearance of ambulation stimulates the viewer's identification with the filmmaker as the character apparently experiencing *Ambulatory* movement while the image was recorded. On-screen indications of the filmmaker's walking motion introduces an additional character into the cast for the film: the ideological presence of the filmmaker.

Therefore, such ambulatory motion may connote additional meanings such as agility, infirmity, haste or indecision, and a physical connection between the hand and screen of the mobile phone camera, but is, nonetheless, a representational message of the filmmaker's experience of, for example, moving through a landscape. As Hodge and Kress remind us, 'The message is about something, which supposedly exists outside itself' (Hodge and Kress, 1988, p. 5). Therefore, we can say that a message, in addition to having a goal, is also representational or performs a mimetic function. What Hodge and Kress call the 'mimetic plane' locates the message as always connected to the world (Hodge and Kress, 1988, p. 5). This representational aspect of messages mirrors that of the phone film image. Both perform a communicative function 'between participants in a semiotic act', rendering such processes of communication as resolutely social systems (Hodge and Kress, 1988, p. 5).

The ambulatory image, gently swaying from side to side or rocking back and forth, communicates a sense of what such kinds of motion might have felt like to the filmmaker walking with the camera during filming. The most fundamental relationship in the semiotic situation is of 'the bodies of participants in space' that 'forms the basis for a system of transparent signs that is fundamental to the organisation of social life' (Hodge and Kress, 1988, p. 52). Therefore, borrowing Edward Hall's (1966) term 'proxemic codes' to describe how presence or absence of solidarity generates meaning, and aligning it with the notion of *closeness*, Hodge and Kress identify how together they 'create ideological meanings' (quoted in Hodge and Kress, 1988, p. 53).

A good illustration of proxemic codes in operation is in the phone film *Fear Thy Not* made by Sophie Sherman. In its form published on YouTube, and in the version screened at the Pocket Film Festival, Paris in 2010, the film starts without titles or a lead-in of any sort. Accompanied by ambient sync sound, the image of a left hand moves against branches and undergrowth. It feels a twig between its fingers and breaks it off. A female American voice begins speaking, half singing a repeated incantation:

‘Fear thy not, for I am with thee. Be not afraid, for I am thy god, I will strengthen thee. Ye, I will help thee. Ye, I will uphold thee, with the right hand of my righteousness.’

Sherman’s repeated narration references a slight misquote of Isaiah 41 from the King James Bible. Her spoken/sung version of this passage substitutes the word ‘afraid’ for ‘dismayed’, which is used in the authorised version and others (King James Bible Online, 2014, ch. 41, v. 10). Whether accidental or intentional, this substitution raises the level of seriousness significantly. Sherman presents a message that offers a counter to more than mild dismay, but to a confident solution to an unambiguous fear in the addressee. The first-person narration by the filmmaker draws attention to the film’s dialogical characteristic: She is communicating a message of hope and comfort through her incantation and accompanying visual images.

The film appears to be made in one take, by whomever the left hand belongs to, which is evidently the filmmaker herself. All indications are that the camera is hand-held in Sherman’s right hand, because her left hand is featured throughout the film, on-screen almost continually. It touches leaves, foliage, twigs, and soil, picking up moisture and dirt as it searches the environment around and beneath her. In a return to the discussion in chapter 1, the film exudes a strongly tactile quality, signifying dampness and coldness. The camera and we as viewers are presented with the sensations of what the filmmaker is touching, and images of how it looks and might feel as she shows the surface of things to the camera. An inference to be made from the presentation of these images is that soil, leaves and organic material is the *other* to which her incantation is delivered. Sherman is presenting reassuring words to the viewer, and is involved in a dialogue with the natural world her left hand touches.

The incantation communicates further significance in the repeated last line, “With the right hand of my righteousness”. The filmmaker’s right hand has been holding the camera throughout the single take. In this way the camera becomes the source of the righteousness she speaks of. Its significance is established as that of a talismanic and protective apparatus, mediating between the filmmaker and

her environment. The repeated incantation reinforces the liturgical tone to her filmed walk, rendering it a ritualistic process that she moves through and records.

Unusually perhaps, in both the YouTube and Vimeo versions of the film, Sherman's filmed walk ends quite abruptly. This corresponds to my memory of its screening at The Pocket Film Festival in 2010. The final image on screen is of Sherman's left hand, emerging out of a short journey of survival into a dank, echoing and slightly foreboding canal tunnel, to be triumphantly silhouetted against a grey sky and bare, autumnal trees.

The proxemic codes evident in *Fear Thy Not* signify the notional *closeness* between Sherman and the viewer of her film: Her left hand functions as an empathetic character in the film that the viewer is invited to identify with. Using the device of substitution in the commutation test sense, if Sherman's hand did not feature as the central character in her film, the ambulatory swaying of the hand-held camera could easily have signified other causes for the image's motion. In the final analysis, the narration communicates a message of hopeful resolution, acting as a dialogue between the filmmaker and her environment, and the filmmaker and viewer. The ambulatory motion of the moving images emphasizes Sherman's first-person perspective, bringing the spectator into an intimate, mimetic relationship with, not merely an on-screen character, but with the filmmaker also. In this way, the formal appearance that a given film's mode of production takes significantly affects its resulting visual aesthetic, which in turn signifies some things over others, and communicates codified meanings to be deciphered when the film is watched. Therefore, *Fear Thy Not* (2010) exemplifies the ambulatory phone film's signifying structure that brings the filmmaker and viewer into a relationship of proximal and mimetic closeness.

In conforming to the *Ambulatory* mode of signification, *Fear Thy Not* is also, therefore, predisposed to communicating certain senses of *movement*, mobility, of the camera and subject not being pinned down, and of the image unconfined to a stable state. By virtue of the intrinsic nature of its mobility, the mobile phone camera is usually hand-held meaning the *Ambulatory* camera often indicates which hand the mobile phone is being held in during filming. Therefore, if the filmmaker

brings a hand into shot, to perform an action to camera, it will almost certainly be their *free* hand. The mobile phone's lightness and manoeuvrability is mirrored in how subject matter is treated. Camerawork and visual style indicate qualities of fluidity, imprecision, improvisation of shot construction, and a looseness of composition and framing.

Movement may be intrinsic to the film's narrative concerns, overt in its reference to movement as a subject or character in the film, or extrinsic to the narrative, implying movement as a sub-code of inferred meaning. Movement films communicate these aspects, in both a technological deterministic sense through their use of mobile phone apparatus, and in the dialogical, narrative concerns that foreground movement and mobility as central features of their discourse.

2.3.2 Movie Selfie

The recently coined term *selfie* has entered common usage in Anglophone countries. Oxford Dictionary's naming of *selfie* as their *word of the year* for 2013 is a mark of its acceptance and legitimisation as part of contemporary parlance (Oxford University Press, n.d.). Briefly put, it describes the activity of making self-portraits using the cameras of mobile phones, involving the user in posing, holding the mobile phone at arm's length, and establishes proof of those appearing on the photograph of being in a place, and even at a particular time. When linked to a social networking facility such as Facebook's *Timeline* feature, it becomes a visual diary corresponding to time-determined activity between friends and close acquaintances, or a wider public of interested but semi-engaged strangers.

Reporting for BBC News in 2013, Cordelia Hebblethwaite indicates the range of interpretations for the term *selfie* span the neutrally definitive 'selfies are photos taken by oneself, of oneself', to the self-confirming, self-justifying and decidedly judgemental label 'iterations of me, me, me' (Hebblethwaite, 2013).

Taking *selfie* photographs has been widely adopted as a social practice by various groups in society, including politicians and celebrities, further adding to its legitimisation as a commonly practiced social activity. Widely publicised examples include the selfie taken by Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, posing

with the United State's President Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron at the memorial service for Nelson Mandela in 2013, and the selfie taken by actor Bradley Cooper at the 2014 Oscars ceremony (Addley, 2014).

Movie Selfies recreate some of the recognisable tropes of the *selfie* photograph: posing before the camera-phone, the camera to subject distance is typically governed by the arms' length of the person holding the mobile phone camera to take the photograph, with the inference of a social networking impulse for taking the photograph to share a moment of personal significance with one or more others. *Movie Selfies* extend notions of confirmation of identity, self-promotion and nihilism of *selfie photographs* by the introduction of moving images and sound. Recording a moving image of a head and shoulders portrait, or some other part of his or her body, the filmmaker incorporates aspects of self-portraiture, self-publicity and self-expression, becoming a character or subject within their own film. In this way, aspects of autobiography figure as a facet of the *Movie Selfie*, which I will come onto momentarily.

The film *Memory 22* (2013) made by Bill Newsinger provides an example of the subtle execution of the *Movie Selfie*. It will be useful here to provide an account of the film's narrative, which does not tell a straightforward story so much as communicate sensations of texture, coldness, wetness and the appearances of things, including himself, observed by the filmmaker in his film.

Against a black screen, the film opens with a 'click' sound and the title 'MEMORY 22' appears in grey capitalized letters in the centre of the frame. The use of the 'click' sound effect is another example of phone films using electronic, technological and phone-related sounds within their soundtracks, relating them quite specifically to the technologies they are mediated by. Therefore *Memory 22* incorporates notions of using the device of the mobile phone as a camera, and uses it as a subject in the film's discourse. As the title slides off to screen-left to an accompanying sliding sound effect, the soundtrack introduces jaunty music of rhythmic guitar and drums, as three animated, square panels slide on-screen from off camera-right. They have the appearance of wobbling, glassy tiles whose edges shimmer and move in an indefinitely repeating way. The film's appearance of

movement is achieved by the animation of still images to infer motion, a step removed from the smooth representation of real events, turning the images into a trio of moving photographs. The three-panelled visual motif will be maintained throughout the film. The first images share a similar subject; a tuft of grass below a grey sky but are, left to right, each rendered in a different monochromatic tone of warm sepia, cool or neutral grey, and a slightly purple tone.

My reading of Newsinger's visual aesthetic, of presenting his images in three different monochromatic tones, is that he is referencing the art-photography practice of toning silver-based photographic prints: Sepia toning for the left-hand panel, gold-toning for the right-hand panel, and the centre panel rendered in a more neutrally-balanced image of grey tones. The presence throughout of a music track and no dialogue ensures this film also shares some of the aural characteristics of the *Music Phone Video* films discussed earlier.

The images in the three panels are replaced periodically by similar images, initially of grass and sky, and by them being apparently uncovered/discovered, like photographs placed on top of other photographs or playing cards used to play a game of *Snap*. - A left hand, presumably Newsinger's because it is in such close proximity to the camera, moves across the frame to signal an impending cut, blocking our view of the scenes within the three panels and replacing them with new images. This device will become a recurring visual motif in the film, occasionally signalling a change of scene or narrative sense by the physical intervention of a (usually left) hand. It serves various purposes; clearly establishing the technique as an important element that contributes pace and rhythm to the editing, motivating a change of scene, and reinforcing Newsinger's hand as a recurring phone film character reinforcing his physical presence in the film's making. For the sake of brevity, it will subsequently be referred to as 'Hand across lens for cut' and placed in brackets.

Significantly, the images change to show the image of an elongated person's shadow, stretching down a garden path, picked out by a low sun.

This shadow clearly belongs to the filmmaker, Bill Newsinger. We see the shadow figure give a brief wave with a left hand to the camera, before the three images are covered over once more by the gloved left hand.

At no point is there a suggestion of any connection between the repeated uses of a left hand with the folk reference to satanic or subversive influences. The left hand is quite simply the one most readily available to appear in-frame whilst the right hand is occupied with holding the mobile phone camera. In featuring the filmmaker's own left hand in the film, Newsinger establishes the film as a *Movie Selfie*. Therefore, *Memory 22* is an autobiographical film showing the filmmaker engaged in the act of filmmaking. Subsequent images repeat the three-panelled motif, presenting similar scenes of streams, trees and water across steps.

(Hand across lens for cut.)

With a repeat of the gloved hand gesture, the images widen their point of view to show a river and partly submerged electricity pylons – the aftermath of flooding, to be covered once more by the gloved left hand punctuating images that Newsinger has grouped together as scenes. Another shows a more detailed selection of bricked-up windows, walls, signs of various sorts, as a kind of visual collection of things seen on a walk that have interested the filmmaker, and been selected for capture by his camera.

Newsinger's attention subsequently returns to images of land and sky, clouds, water and bare, winter trees. At this point, human figures are only observed in long shot, as small objects having equal significance to the reflections of plants in streams and the textures of plastic caught in wet branches.

A curious image of a swan swims by, introducing a larger group that comes and goes. In this respect, Newsinger's film selects and records, in a documentary way, objects and small events that he comes across. There is a strong sense that nothing has been staged, or art-directed for the benefit of the camera. Rather, the impression given is one that images have been selected and made to present to the viewer a memory of what it was that the filmmaker came upon and saw on a walk through fields and streams.

Spinning leaves on water are montaged with images of carved circular patterns in stone and leaves on the ground, revolving as the camera photographs them from several angles.

The next three-panelled scene is a *movie selfie* of the filmmaker himself in medium close-up wearing a woollen hat, scarf and overcoat against the winter cold. The images judder between still pictures and a silent film portrait of Newsinger at work.

Once more, the gloved left hand device introduces a cut back to snow-covered earth and woodland. This time, the camera(s) in the three panels moves forward as the filmmaker walks through the woods and out into more fields. More images show the movement of water in canals, sluices and streams. Another scene uses the repositioning of the camera to tilt down to the ground and then back up as a group of boys join him, getting the chance to *mug* the camera for a few moments.

They soon leave and the camera returns to photographing a leafless winter tree, this time getting it to *dance* in the centre of the frame as the camera records images from several positions in a circle around the tree.

As the last frames recede leftwards, the music track is joined by the 'rattling' sound effect of celluloid film moving through a cine-projector. With this last reference to filmmaking technology, Newsinger establishes his film's connection to the history of moving images, invoking the viewer's memories of historical filmmaking and technology. The film ends as the last panel containing a cat (a visual joke in reference to the preponderance of cat videos on YouTube) exits to leave a black screen and the sound of the film projector fading to silence. Therefore, *Memory 22* encapsulates several notions of film memory: collected memories of observed events, personal interactions - *selfie* memories - and observations of textures sensations, which are presented as an experiential process to be shared with the viewer.

The film's use of self-composed music is typical of Newsinger's auteurist approach to his work. It contributes more than an accompaniment to the moving images, but is a central determinant of the audio-visual aesthetic in his films. The

music in *Memory 22* establishes rhythm and pace to the cutting, and communicates an upbeat emotional tone for the viewer to empathise with. *Memory 22* is clearly a representation of brief experiences, passing and even trivial memories collected by the filmmaker. Moreover, Newsinger's manipulation of what were found images, or images of events and objects his camera was able to record, elevate his subject from simple documentary. *Memory 22* involved Newsinger in the digital application of several mobile phone apps (*Hipstamatic Tintype pak*, *Tinto 1884 Lens* and *D-type film*) to record a film of 2 minutes 50 seconds' duration from approximately 4,500 individual images (Newsinger, 2013). While each of these component images (digital frames, as it were) constitutes individual memories of the filmmaker, their presentation in filmic form to the viewer is as a *Movie Selfie*. With its semiotics of observed objects each with their own denotated meanings, sensations of digital (pseudo) tactile engagement with the environment depicted on-screen, *Memory 22* becomes a collection of memories with duration to be shared between Newsinger and the viewer.

A complex film that amply exemplifies several signifying modes of phone filmmaking: *Dialogical*, *Ambulatory*, and *Movie Selfie*, is Julien Hérisson's *18 heures 12* (2009), which won the Prix du Public at the 2010 edition of Pocket Film Festival in Paris. Primarily, it illustrates the *Phone-Related* mode of signifying, whilst signalling a close adherence to other modes to be discussed, the *Movie Selfie* in particular. The film starts with a left hand (Hérisson's) counting in to the start of the action. Interspersing black frames, his hand shows two fingers forming a number two. A portrait of two men, briefly posing for a selfie photograph, quickly follows these intermittent images. With this early juxtaposition of shots, *18 heures 12* initially appears to fall into the *Movie Selfie* category discussed earlier because, with the next screen credit, the men's identities are explained:

'Julien Hérisson & Jérémie Coulaud présentent'.

In this way, a fleeting montage of textually and visually signifying images of self-presence and self-awareness quickly establish the identities of those responsible for making the film, and the central characters in the narrative to come. Significantly, the autobiographical aspect of this particular film, and most of

Hérissou's output as a filmmaker, highlights his avoidance of using actors in his films, instead using himself, a few associates, family, friends and his girlfriend as performers often playing themselves in his films.

In the first image-proper of the film, an interior, morning shot, we hear a voice-over in French of a man (Hérissou) waking up and turning over in bed. In a change of shot we see what he sees, a drawn picture of a globe on a piece of paper.

The picture cuts to black, to fade-in the title, *18 heures 12*, over which we hear an obviously non-diegetic, electronic tone on the soundtrack, followed by the bleeps from an electric alarm clock. The cutting is rapid and the focus is imprecise as shots come and go. At this early point in the film, its visual appearance is of staccato time-lapse images - of the sort obtained from using an intervalometer to intermittently trigger the camera. Thus, time (and whatever conception of time the title of *18 heures 12* refers to) is being presented to the viewer in a compressed period of screen time.

With a cut to another shot, we see the interior of a flat or apartment. Belongings are scattered haphazardly around the floor, showing this is a normal, if untidy, home that is being lived in by a young single man.

The image cuts to a left hand that goes to a window and opens it. We as the viewer look outside with the camera to see a number of similar apartment blocks and hear indistinct sounds of the urban surroundings. At the windows and balconies are neighbours and other residents going about their early morning business. A left hand (Hérissou's) moves across the frame to signal an impending cut, blocking our view of the scene. The camera then cuts to an image showing the bottom half of Hérissou's face, whilst the staccato characteristic of the footage draws our attention to his out-of-sync mouth movement as he delivers his dialogue in the same voice as the voice-over dialogue heard earlier.

Once more, a left hand moves across the lens, signalling a cut and we are inside the apartment again. The camera finds a kitchen littered with rubbish, and an empty fridge. Again, Hérissou left hand moves across the lens, signalling another cut. We see another man speaking to camera (and Hérissou) before a hand again moves in front of the lens for a cut.

In a change of shot, the man, who has now been established as the filmmaker Hérisson, walks out of his apartment block and into the street. He enters a supermarket and we follow the camera as it travels, quickly due to the time-lapse formal quality of the footage, up and down the supermarket aisles. The autobiographical nature of the film is further emphasised when, returning to the apartment lobby, we see Hérisson opening a post box bearing his name to check for mail. He takes out a large brown envelope with his left hand. We see the postmark, indicating it has arrived from Canada, affirmed by the voice-over. On opening the envelope, Hérisson finds a mobile phone inside.

The introduction of this important and significant prop in Hérisson's film establishes a link to the filmmaking apparatus used in its creation, cementing subject, object and narrative. Therefore, what this category of phone films expresses is something more than a narrative reference to the mobile phone as a plot device or character in the film, but a recognition and celebration of an overt connection to new forms of signification that the mobile phone allows. To eliminate communicating any ambiguity to the viewer, the film follows Hérisson's discovery with a visual reference to early, animated films made on mobile phones, featuring archetypal scenes of mobile phones spinning and moving around on tables and objects with odd or interesting characters and behaviours.

Signalling a change of shot and with it a change of tone, Hérisson's hand moves across the lens to signal a cut to a three-quarters angle shot of a woman, his mother, speaking into a mobile phone. We hear her dialogue delivered in the same fashion as Hérisson's was earlier, as sync-sound accompanying staccato images. (Hand across lens for cut.)

The phone is spinning again, and Hérisson picks it up from the table and puts it in his pocket. Apparently, he has finished the conversation, and moves back to the apartment window to look out. (Hand across lens for cut.)

Hérisson's mother is speaking over the phone again, inviting him to come to her house, before another hand gesture signals a change of scene. We see Hérisson travelling on the Metro to visit his parents. On his arrival, they 'clink' bottles of beer, and sits with his father reading newspapers when the phone sent in the post

rings. Significantly, in this film, all phones are mobile phones. The phone's screen says '*appel prive*', which translates as *private call* or *number withheld*). As the text image freezes on the screen, the sound changes in quality as another man's voice is heard being connected on the phone line, saying 'hello'. It is Herisson's cousin Jérémie Coulaud who we saw in the selfie of the two men at the start of the film. The two men proceed to hold a conversation between France and Canada via their mobile phones, which continues as the picture stays on the static phone screen, displaying the call's elapsed seconds. Once more, the phone has become a central character in the film, marking the passage of time and reinforcing notions of its role in personal communication through their visual representation.

In a subtle movement of the mobile phone's screen away from filling the frame, to reveal a moving background in the right half of the picture, we travel with the camera out of the apartment, down stairs, through doors and out into the night to where the two men resume their conversation. At this point, the picture also resumes its static, full-frame appearance of previously. What it also does is combine in a single frame the screen of the mobile phone, and the live action screen beyond it in which the main action takes place. It is almost as if the mobile phone screen enables, or allows, the picture to contain both senses of screen; the phone screen and film screen, in a single composition. Coulaud's voice in Canada asks Herisson to take a photo of himself, which he briefly queries, but complies. On the mobile phone screen, Herisson appears to search through the phone menu to find the still photo function.

With a cut, the picture shows Herisson posing in readiness to take a *selfie*. The camera flash goes off, and Herisson searches through the menu to find the email function to send the photo to Coulaud in Canada. Other shots of the phone screen show them checking that it has been received, and discussing its merits. Herisson takes another one, this time in landscape format. Winding up their conversation, Coulaud asks for a *selfie* photo to be taken every day by Herisson. As their call ends, the mobile phone moves slowly into a horizontal configuration, showing Herisson in the mobile phone screen, rubbing his head in confusion.

White numerals showing the date (31/12/2007) fade in and out, superimposed over the live picture of Herisson and the mobile phone screen. Acting like *inter-titles*, the dates provide yet another structural device within the film, indicating that the narrative's progress is tied to a chronological order. Behind the text, the moving image on the phone's screen shows Herisson putting away the phone for the day. The picture appears to cut out or come to an end, leaving us looking at a blank mobile phone screen, with just the phone's surrounding details signifying that an important sequence of action has ended. On the soundtrack, an electronic keyboard plays a gentle, introspective air, while the picture holds for a comparatively long 13 seconds on the phone's lifeless screen.

The next day, other white numerals show the date (1/01/2008) fade in and out. With the sound of a mobile phone's pseudo camera shutter sound, we see a picture being taken of Herisson and his parents. Another of Herisson alone follows this initial picture, with the superimposed numerals (02.01.2008) indicating that Herisson's task has begun and the sequence of days and *selfies* is underway.

The sequence of photographs continues, gaining in rapid frequency as Herisson takes head and shoulders pictures of himself wearing different clothes, a hat or not and so on. At this point, the frequency of images changes from appearing as a collection of still photographs, to become a stream of moving images, all depicting Herisson's head and shoulders, the phone apparently at arm's length from him as he follows the instructions and the photos build in number. In the latter ones, a young woman joins him. The sequence continues until he receives an alert on his phone's screen, informing him he has a text message. In French it reads, 'C'est qui cette jolie fille?' (Translation: 'Who is this pretty girl?')

Herisson replies: 'Y a cinq jours, j'étais en train de faire la photo, elle est passee devant moi et m'a demande ce que je faisais. Je lui ai propose de venir pendant une semaine prendre la photo avec moi, elle a dis oui. Et toi cousin, toujours au Canada?' (Translation: 'For five days, I was doing the photos, she walked past me and asked me what I was doing. I asked her to come for a week to shoot with me, she said yes. And you cousin, still in Canada?')

Coulaud replies: 'Nouvelle message. Maintenant en Argentine' (Translation: New post. Now Argentina)

Continuing his filmed photo streaming, his mobile phone screen shows Herisson taking *selfies* at all times of day, with a beard and without, with other people and alone. During this section, Herisson compresses time on-screen by an accumulation of mobile phone-related social media tropes. *18 heures 12* confirms its use of a particular device, the mobile phone, in a particularly recognisable social networking practice, so that subject and media become intertwined. Repeatedly, Herisson re-emphasises physical and processual links between his on-screen actions and narrative concerns. Meanwhile, on our screen, the viewer's screen, Herisson's camera turns from landscape to portrait format as another message arrives:

'BIZARRE BIZARRE... PARIS A BEAUCOUP CHANGE...ET ENCORE PLUS BIZARRE... LA JOLIE FILLE EST TOUJOURS SUR LES PHOTOS! (Translation: 'Bizarre, bizarre... Paris is changing... and much more bizarre... The pretty girl is always in the photos!')

Herisson replies: 'Elle s'appelle Marine. Et en effect, on est au Maroc. Premiere fois que je prends l'avion. Et toi toujours en Argentine ou deja ailleurs?' (Translation: 'Her name is Marine. And, actually, this is in Morocco. This is the first time I'm flying. And are you still in Argentina or already elsewhere?')

The superimposed date on the film screen reads '28/05/2008' as a new text message comes straight back to Herisson: (Translation: 'In Hong Kong. For the last 15 days.')

In another chronological stream of *selfies* the images show Herisson's hair getting longer, he goes to parties, meets friends, including Marine, wears sunglasses, is shown at different times of the day and in the city and countryside. Throughout this sequence, the sound is ambient location noises and the electronic clicking of the phone's pseudo-camera shutter effect.

When the superimposed screen date reads '09/11/2008', another text message comes in from +91661707297:

‘JE VOIS PLUS BEAUCOUP LA JOLIE FILLE. JE DOIS M’INQUIETER?’ (Translation: ‘I can see many more pretty girls. Should I worry?’)

Herisson responds with a text message: ‘Elle travaille le soir maintenant. Tout va bien. Ton absence commence a me pesr. Ou est ce que tu bien etre.’ (Translation: ‘She works in the evening now. All is well. Your absence starts to [pesr] me. Or is that you. Be well.’)

At the superimposed screen time, ‘09/11/2008’, another text message comes in from Coulaud:

‘EN INDE JUSQU’A LA FIN DU MOIS’ (Translation: ‘India to the end of the month.’)

The shot changes to Herisson taking more *selfies*, mainly at night now indicating that his total photographic output covers all parts of the day. It has become a task that regulates if not becomes the central aspect of his day. The clicking of the camera phone’s electronic shutter effect is now the only sound in the film.

When the superimposed screen time reads ‘05/01/2009’, the last *selfie* shows Herisson and Marine, dressed in winter clothing. The picture on the phone screen fades to black, accompanied by the sound of an electronic hum rising in volume as the black screen takes over. After a pause, with the superimposed screen time reading ‘06/01/2009’, Herisson sends another text message:

‘Il est bientôt l’heure de la photo. Ca fait un an maintenant. Quand est ce que tu.’ (Translation: ‘It is time for the photo. It’s been a year now. When do you.’ At this point, the message is cut off, incomplete, and a phone call comes through to him instead.)

After a brief exchange of phone dialogue, the phone screen that had taken up the picture, moves to reveal the live action of the camera being carried by Herisson from his apartment, into a lift, down a flight of stairs and out into the night-time street. The call continues and as the elapsed time shows 0.50 minutes, we see the phone screen cover the picture once more so that the conversation can resume. In the phone screen, we see Herisson wearing a woolly hat and jumper, manipulating

the camera in preparation for taking another *selfie*. As he counts down, 1, 2..., he is stopped from taking the photo by the voice of Coulaud on the other end of the line. In the background behind Herisson, a man wearing a hood is also speaking on his mobile phone. He turns around to Herisson and pulls off his hat. It is Coulaud.

Following much laughing and hugging, they share a *selfie* with the screen time reading '06/01/2009 18:13'. The film then cuts to the frozen photo of the two men smiling into the lens of the mobile phone camera, to the sound of them sharing their joy and surprise at being reunited.

This final image of the two men, a still picture, the final *selfie* in the series and of the film, slowly fades to black, allowing the credits to fade up white text against a black screen:

'une creation de Julien Herisson'

'avec la participation de Jeremie Coulaud'

As this message fades to black, the electronic hum returns and the superimposed date trips over to read '07/-1/2009'.

On the soundtrack, the bleeping of keys being pressed is heard again, and a conversation restarts between Herisson and Coulaud. After this brief exchange between the two men off-screen, the camera screen moves to reveal the *live action* footage as Herisson walks with the camera through the interior of a concourse leading to an airport departure hall. Through windows we can see aeroplanes parked before take-off. Apparently, Herisson, Coulaud or both of them together are travelling somewhere else. The sense of perpetual movement is reinforced, not extinguished by the film's coming to an end.

The remaining credit fades in and out against a black screen:

julien_herisson@hotmail.com

http://www.dailymotion.com/julien_herisson

To summarize, *18 heures 12* is a film that encapsulates several features of the phone film's potential to signify. Its semiosis is multi-faceted and, therefore, what kinds of meanings and how it signifies them, conform to more than one mode of signification. Primarily, *18 heures 12* exemplifies the signifying mode *Phone-*

Related, illustrated by the narrative's foregrounding the mobile phone as a PDA device making connectivity between the film's two main protagonists possible. Indeed, without the omnipresence of one or more mobile phones, enabling and driving forward the storyline, the narrative would perhaps be reduced to re-creating the literary device of an exchange of written letters between characters. Moreover, *18 heures 12* is a good example of the phone film as an audio-visual diary, with the mobile phone camera being both the instrument of documentation and a narrative subject. If we apply the commutation test by process of substitution, omitting visual representations of the mobile phone device from the film, *18 heures 12* emerges as a film about a dialogue lasting several months, but about little else.

In *18 heures 12*, the mobile phone is both a character device and a driver of narrative, signifying the medium is partly but inextricably bound up with the message. Primarily through providing a study of the mobile phone as a camera, which also connects individuals, the film achieves its power to signify. In *18 heures 12*, Herisson demonstrates contemporary society's use of the mobile phone as a social media device for communication across great distances, marking the changes of time through a creatively expressed personal narrative.

2.3.3 Autobiographical

Involving a peer-to-peer, author-to-viewer mode of exchange via the mobile phone, the *Movie Selfie* filmmaker seems to announce their presence in a Cartesian confirmation of physical existence, saying, "Hello, allow me to introduce myself." Therefore, except in the case of strictly fictional narrative phone films such as *God in my Pocket* (2011), the makers of such films engender a sense of a strongly autobiographical element in their work that is communicated by the film's structure and narrative. In such a circumstance, the phone film is not just *about* the filmmaker, but is *of* the filmmaker. Where a filmmaker or filmmakers are named and can be identified as responsible for *making* a film, we may take them to be the enunciator of the film that bears their name. It should be noted that those posting

films on *YouTube*, *Vimeo* etc., often adopt a pseudonym or may only be indirectly connected to the filmmaker.

As was established in the previous chapter, filmmakers may have been responsible for devising the film's narrative, plot, shooting plan, cinematography, editing and so on. They may even appear in the film taking on the role of a character or, more importantly, appearing as themselves, as in many of the films made by Julien Hérison (*18 heures 12*, 2009; *Cap Sud*, 2011; *Barbe Rousse*, 2013). Analysis of such films introduces questions of authorship and intentionality, where one set of meanings is privileged over another or assumes prominence in their presentation of stories as part of a filmmaker's personal creative *oeuvre*.

The short history of films being made with the in-built cameras of mobile phones is replete with references to the technology by which it achieves existence. Phone films featuring mobile phones, as subject matter or other kinds of elements within phone film narratives, were relatively common in the early years of moving image capture using mobile phones. Shortly after the development of technologies allowing short video clips to be recorded and sent from mobile phones (3G, 2002), filmmakers began to reference the devices that enabled their films to exist within the films themselves. Although screened online as part of the Zoie Cellular Cinema Festival in January 2005, one of the earliest examples of such an impulse is the film *The Life of A Ringtone* (2005). Using both still images and short video clips in a visual style 'akin to a slide show' (Kharif, 2005) this very early foray into mobile filmmaking, by then art student Louiza Vick, concentrates its narrative on telling the story of a ringtone's creation using the self-referential mobile phone as a camera. Thus, formative phone film narratives paid homage to the devices that enabled their existence, indicating the centrality for early phone filmmakers of exploring the artistic possibilities in emerging technologies.

Filmmakers of all dispositions, including phone filmmakers, often resort to what is familiar and close at hand to use as narrative subject material. That familiarity often involves stories of the *self*, as can be seen in *18 heures 12*, which invoke the qualities of the *Movie Selfie* and an element of 'autobiography' (Rascaroli, 2012, pp. 57-9). When they are subsequently incorporated as discursive

components in cell cinema festivals, phone films transition from being expressions of a sense of self-reference, identity affirmation or 'memory work' to become a curious form of 'home movies' or life narratives told and shared by a single person to others who may, in their turn, share similar stories in the same festival (Gadihoke, 2012, p. 152). This distribution and sharing of life stories brings about a collision and comparison of screen-based and festival-based experiences.

The makers of phone films sometimes appear to adopt the directness of address of documentary film whilst maintaining a subjective treatment of events. Films such as *Fear Thy Not*, *Memory 22* and *18 heures 12* present or document processes that the filmmakers themselves move through. In their directness of address, often involving the filmmaker directing their gaze directly to camera, they become remembered accounts of personal expressions of lives being lived, *movie selfies* that also signify other narrative complexities. In doing so, these and other phone films avoid the use of expensive production paraphernalia and the burdensome psychological complications of what Buckland calls, 'the operation of fictivization – the modal status conferred upon the enunciator and addressee' that we see played out in films in the *Professionalist* category (Buckland, 2000, p.98). The phone film becomes, not a fictional representation of real events to an addressee, but a personalised enunciation or retelling of a human story (or history). Therefore, because the form of autobiography evidenced by films in Group B is directly accessible to non-professional phone filmmakers, the fictivization of an impersonal narrative can be avoided. Conflating the two latter terms, the *Autobiographical* quality of the *Movie Selfie* comprises an inter-personal immediacy in its directness of address, removing a complicating additional layer of mediation.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has concerned itself with making a social semiotic analysis of the phone film as a mode of creative moving image production. In it I have interrogated the ways in which phone films are experienced as media texts by their participatory audiences made up of filmmakers, spectators and cell cinema festival

professionals, and how their production on mobile phones might shape how they signify meaning. These considerations led me to adopt a social semiotic *point of view*, and to apply a version of the *commutation test* to features of phone films at various points. My analyses of a number of phone films found evidence of a continuation of post-digital filmic expression discussed in chapter 1. This chapter identified taxonomy of a number of social semiotic categories, and indicated ways in which they begin to point to particular aesthetic characteristics of phone film reception and discursive application in cell cinema festivals. Therefore, whether meaning was intended, accidental or a mistake, it was often found to be indeterminate, open in an interpretive sense.

Under the heading of *Phone Filmic Discourse*, I analysed phone films in two broad categories, Groups A and B. Phone films in Group A revealed a high degree of hybridity, sharing certain signifying characteristics across more than one category. *Dialogical* phone films set up a kind of dialogue or conversation between filmmaker and spectator, which is far from unique to phone films, even where their hybrid character incorporates references to mobile phones. *Mobile Phone Videos* were shown to be examples of supplanting the music video format onto the mobile phone platform. However, *Mankind is no Island* extended its range of communicative possibilities, beyond simple music and commentative visuals, to incorporate narrative possibilities for meaning making. The *Professionalist* mode of signification, exemplified by *The Fixer* (2012), more or less ignores the mobile phone camera apparatus, with the filmmaker instead concentrating production efforts on creating professional looking visuals with apparently high production values, employing acting, art direction and an emphasis towards dramatic story structure with in genre themes.

What I term the signifying modes of phone filmmaking were found to be more specifically self-referential (in more than one sense) with respect to *Ambulatory*, *Movie Selfie* and *Autobiographical* phone films. Films in these categories demonstrated a level of intentionality with regard to the mobile phone as a filmmaking apparatus, with increasingly idiosyncratic results that hint at the possibility of medium specificity of the phone film (which I go into in more detail in chapter 5). The *Ambulatory* category included films that exemplify two central

signifying characteristics: physical movement enabled and encouraged by the mobile phone camera, and the filmmaker's walking motion during filmmaking. Drawing particularly on the film *Fear Thy Not* (2010) this signifying mode of phone films most forcefully resonated with Walter Benjamin's (1936) notion of the *flâneur* and with Michel de Certeau's (1984) ideas of walking as a primal yet everyday activity (both of which I will also return to in chapter 5). The *Movie Selfie* category introduces a link between the contemporary popular use of the mobile phone as a social networking device for sharing photographic images of the self and connecting locations and events, and a more interesting expression of the self in moving images. The chapter revealed that the *Movie Selfie*, as in the case of *Memory 22* (2013) communicates, not so much the appearance of a moment captured at arm's length, frozen in time and sent out to the world, but more a sense of lived experience re-fashioned as personal expression.

Postponing a more detailed discussion of the status of the phone film/cell cinema aesthetic until chapter 5, the chapter found that its amateur, non-professional origins merely indicate a divergence from some, but not all, tropes of commercial or professional filmmaking. Accidents in conception and exhibition build on mistakes of non-professional filmmaking, increasing indeterminacy of meaning making in the negotiated personal spaces of the film festival setting.

In order to constructively build on the social semiotic analyses already undertaken, the next chapter will move from placing an emphasis on phone film analysis to consider the philosophical constitution of cell cinema as a discursive and cultural practice. How the human body is manifest and re-presented in phone film engagement describes an enhanced encounter with the sensory and sensual, challenging the physical distancing of traditional, theatrical cinema projection. Merleau-Ponty locates such encounters within phenomenological experience, which I extrapolate to reveal the act of seeing the body's screened representation as being contingent on objective thought about the body's movement within the world. To look into the phone film image is indeed to enter into it, to empathise with the subject represented, to move closer perceptually to their body, psychologically aligned with their point of view and to become, if not a mirror, then more like them.

Chapter 3. Towards an Intercultural Philosophy of Cell Cinema Discourse

Cell cinema is not an act of broadcasting to many recipients and cannot be thought of as a mode of mass media engagement. Instead, it embodies the potential for a particularly direct form of cell-to-cell narrowcasting, of a bi-directional transmission of narrative meaning. It thereby embodies the potential for connecting individuals within the oft-quoted *global digital village*. Introduced below in section 3.1, the phone film tends to encourage narratives to morph and move freely across national and cultural barriers. The post-digital phone film does not prescriptively include or exclude narrative possibilities, but moves out into a space where multiple or indeterminate meanings can emerge between the authorial voice and the *Other*.

Questions of identity and identification inevitably raise their head at this point. As Sutton and Martin-Jones correctly identify, 'Identity itself is always in motion' (Sutton and Martin-Jones, 2008, p. 45). In many of the phone films discussed so far, questions of identity and identification of the filmmaker and subject are often disrupted, disoriented and shifting from the stability of the horizontal with the ambulatory movement of the mobile phone. The mobile phone screen's un-steadiness and anxiety-inducing frame edges frantically try to secure what is included and what is excluded from the camera's gaze. The mobile phone camera's gaze falls on what is known and what is to be decided about the shifting identity of the subject and its image.

However persuasive such a line of argument might be, the superimposing of a metaphorical construct such as the rhizome over any kind of moving image analysis takes us only so far. This is especially so of a philosophy intended to aid our understanding of the complexities of human interactions via mediating technologies. In terms of an application of philosophical logic, it is likely that a full appreciation of cell cinema's discursive ontology will not come from pursuing such abstraction in isolation. The reason for this is that cell cinema is primarily comprised of phenomena located in human experience. Therefore, cell cinema requires a different mode of thought for our knowledge of it to be transformed

from raw awareness of its existence to a fuller understanding of its philosophical intrinsicality and socio-cultural import. Moreover, reflecting the notion of 'spreadable media' (Jenkins et al, 2013) the phone film's social aspect collapses the binary between filmmaker and audience, individual spectator and community of spectators, blurring the demarcations of spectatorial, exhibitivite and performative space.

What I will carve out in this chapter is a philosophy of cell cinema, over and above an analysis of the ontology of the phone film. This will partly account for the ways in which cell cinema assimilates the filmmaker and spectator as co-creators of phone filmic meaning through a shared engagement with moving images. It must, additionally, interrogate physical and sensual participation in cell cinema as an experiential phenomenon occurring in film festivals. Although temporally and spatially distanced from each other during filming, when filmmakers and spectators gather to be co-present for their cellular sharing of narrative fiction film within cell cinema festivals, the ways in which cell cinema discourse creates meaning for its participants achieves a philosophical resonance that is extensive of traditional film festival experience. What is both noteworthy and unusual in how individuals and groups engage in cell cinema participation will be interrogated below. In this chapter I will investigate what phone filmic meaning and cell cinema experience entails for its participants of cell cinema. In looking at phone films as phenomena incorporated within a schema that reveals the sharing of narrative to be central to how cell cinema is experienced socially, I draw on findings in the last chapter, to take a look forward to how cell cinema narratives emerge as innovative vehicles for social interaction between people from apparently disparate cultural backgrounds. In this way, cell cinema's discursive function will be defined and interrogated trans-nationally, trans-culturally and inter-culturally.

In his short essay *Screened Out* written in May 1996, Jean Baudrillard hints darkly at the inherent dissatisfaction we court when we gaze upon the screen image without looking beyond its surface:

There is no 'through' the screen the way there is a 'through' the looking glass or mirror. The dimensions of time itself merge there in 'real time'. And, the characteristic of any virtual surface being first of all to be there, to be empty and thus capable of being filled with anything, it is left to you to enter in real time into interactivity with the void. (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 178)

What Baudrillard's proposition opens up to the cell cinema spectator is the tantalising possibility of joining ever closer with the world beyond the mediating screen. Notwithstanding the screen being in an objective sense an empty void, to be filled by the filmmaker with images of possibility, the empty screen constitutes an invitation to reach through the image of anything, to attempt to *cheat* Baudrillard's barrier of 'real time' stopping at the screen's surface. The mobile phone screen is indeed open to the spectator to interact with its void, and to fill it with something – an empathetic engagement with objects, characters and events on-screen. One such invitation to identification is with the filmmaker's sensation and experience, evident in their intimate and immediate manipulation of screen movement and their own body, which often appears on-screen. It is an invitation that this chapter seeks to take up as part of a larger philosophical exploration of cell cinema discourse.

Within the broad area of film and moving image studies, film philosophy now seems firmly established as an important area for serious study. An increasing flow of books and journals has appeared in recent years: *Filmosophy* (Frampton, 2006); *The Philosophy of Motion Pictures* (Carroll, 2008); *Cinematic Thinking: Philosophical Approaches to the New Cinema* (Phillips, 2008); *Refractions of Reality: Philosophy and the Moving Image* (Mullarkey, 2009); and *Film Philosophy Journal* (Open Humanities Press). Each of these authors and publications, in their differing ways, apply philosophy to film and indicate how we could read films to see what film-philosophical ideas they might contain. Drawing on the work of Stanley Cavell and Gilles Deleuze in particular, Robert Sinnerbrink (2011, pp. 90–116) provides a thought-provoking introduction to the developing new discipline of film-philosophy. In hyphenating the two terms, Sinnerbrink urges us to consider their combinatory power rather than either philosophy's utilitarian potential as a method of film analysis, or of film's ability or otherwise to function philosophically.

Echoing Andre Bazin and Walter Benjamin, Cavell has been influential in positing a philosophy of the image, which, in claiming the photographic image and the cinematographic moving image to be a derivative of it, overcomes subjectivity by removing the human agent from the task of reproduction. Such an attempt to extricate the bothersome influence of the filmmaker from the image making process is an elegant analytical device that finds resonance in the work of other scholars, such as Daniel Frampton (2006) and Vivian Sobchack (2004). Yet this line of reasoning is not a wholly convincing argument with respect to all image production, but particularly so in relation to the phone film and cell cinema. Who is it that guides the camera, interacts with it as a personally held digital device and provides the various motivations for human intentionality and perception, if not the twin agents of filmmaker and spectator? Whereas Frampton would privilege the automaticity of the film image, of its coming into being in isolation from human intervention, there remains intentionality in the filmmaker's production of the phone film image, its *reading* and interpretation as a form of non-linguistic language by the spectator, and its subsequent participatory experience in the cell cinema festival.

Cavell urges us to ask of the traditional cinema screen as barrier; 'What does the silver screen screen?' answering his own rhetorical question with, 'It screens me from the world it holds – that is, [...] screens its existence from me' (Cavell, 1979, p. 24). Yet, if the cinema screen or mobile phone screen indeed has a peculiarly distancing effect, does this not immediately conjure up the possibility of the obverse? What might be the circumstances under which the world could be brought closer through the disruption of the signifying power of the cinema screen? If not an ideological impossibility, what might be revealed if we ask whether the mobile phone screen becomes, not a barrier between the filmmaker and spectator, but a screen-frame to be filled by the filmmaker with a shifting field of experienced, captured moving image representations of real events? Does this not place the phone filmmaker (or, momentarily, the Camera Operator working on a professional film, looking at a screen within a camera viewfinder) in the position of simultaneous *experiencer* and re-presenter of phenomena within and outside the frame? In other words, in the context of the phone film, is it not the case that

the phone filmmaker is both present with the subject and its image as it initially appears on the mobile phone's screen? For the moment, I hypothesize that it must be so because the same screen is routinely utilised both for film origination and cellular exhibition, inside and outside of cell cinema festivals. Particularly with regard to *movie selfies* discussed in the last chapter, the phone film image is to varying degrees concomitant on the filmmaker's physical and screen presence.

Whilst making a claim for what he terms 'the image of perfect attention' of the frame's gaze, Cavell reiterates cinematic selectivity, of using the camera to draw attention or not to objects and persons in the world and to reproduce lived experience (Cavell, 1979, p. 25). This is again the case with many forms of moving image production as it is with the phone film. The historicised phone film is no more or less complicit in its selectivity of representation than other forms of moving image production from which it is descended. In this, we see that all moving images signify aspects of the world within their disjunctive representations. Notwithstanding this preliminary observation, a more pertinent argument emerges: As Cavell says, 'the camera has been praised for extending the senses; it may, as the world goes, deserve more praise for confining them, leaving room for thought' (Cavell, 1979, p. 24). Therefore, the camera as thought apparatus functions, not like a mind, but in combination with the mind, as scaffolding for the work of the mind in its task to derive meaning from images presented to the senses. Depending on context and narrative treatment, the phone film also disturbs or disintegrates sense making. As a central component of the apparatus of meaning communication in phone films, the hand-held phone camera functions as a pointing device at the end of the filmmaker's arm. In its guided attention it documents structures and systems of representation appearing before the filmmaker, capturing them on-screen, asking us to contemplate in more detail the connection of the body to film thought. Cavell's brand of analysis, a philosophy based on image aesthetics, may ultimately be too broad in its sweep to be specifically applied to the current project to philosophically interrogate cell cinema. For this reason, I will give further attention to questions of the specific aesthetic of the phone film image in chapter 5.

In this chapter I aim to balance the somewhat technologically informed discussion of formal aspects of the phone film in the previous two chapters, by introducing an alternative means of critically appraising the phone film as it becomes embedded in the social context of the cell cinema festival. Philosophically based considerations of a number of other factors are set out in the subsections within this chapter: explorations of the *trans-national* and *inter-cultural* aspects of cell cinema, what I characterise as the *rhizomatic screen* that follows on from the notion of *rhizomatic* cell-to-cell engagement with cell cinema introduced in the previous chapter, how these factors encourage us to think about cell cinema narratives, and how the foregoing leads to phenomenal considerations of the body in cell cinema. My main reason for doing so is to avoid a kind of technological determinist argument of the broad phenomenon of cell cinema that might otherwise occur. This would ignore a number of social and cultural factors of cell cinema (particularly outlined in the next chapter) that my research reveals as important, such as its social engagement and community forming potential, which mediate between cell cinema participants and the world represented on the screens of the mobile phone camera and cell cinema festival.

3.1 Cell Cinema: Transnational and/or Intercultural?

At this point I want to refine the problem of how to arrive at a philosophical perspective appropriate to the project in hand; to look at aspects of cell cinema's facility (potential or realised) to disseminate moving image discourse amongst and between globally dispersed communities of participants. It is becoming clear to me that resorting only to the Western or Euro-centric philosophical tradition is problematic in relation to global, transcultural modes of media discourse such as cell cinema. Filmmakers and audiences in disparate, widely spaced, non-nation specific and language-agnostic communities around the world, each function within a found culture and localised philosophical tradition. By language-agnosticism, I refer to how multiple languages are incorporated and embraced (with or without subtitles) in cell cinema festivals. This has the major effect of denuding the importance that national languages have for the discursive dynamic at play, to the extent that the absence of dialogue is often employed as part of the *narrative*

scaffolding, to which the mobile phone apparatus contributes its own influence, and that participants experience and engage with.

To attempt to rely solely on a European philosophical critique of the manifestly trans-national and inter-cultural phenomenon, that cell cinema constitutes, would seem foolhardy and to actively court misunderstanding. I must broaden the scope of philosophical resources I draw on to identify and understand the national or transnational aspects (if they exist) of cell cinema, and to philosophically critique these features in relation to cell cinema's potential role in cultural dissemination. Cell cinema does not have recourse to an Ecclesia, a general assembly or governing institution handing down an organising ethos by which its adherents behave and interact. Simply put, the phenomenon has only emerged in recent years, and such a philosophy will inevitably take time to gain widespread adherence, or be superseded by other thinking as cell cinema evolves or disappears. Nevertheless, I feel a nuanced yet more inclusive line of philosophical enquiry must be adopted that incorporates ideas of the national, transnational, trans-cultural, and so on, and what the use of the prefix *inter*, might contribute to my argument.

My search toward a philosophy of cell cinema is a search for those significant forms, regularly occurring causal sequences, generalizations and ideal potentialities which reveal the character of cell cinema and of human actions contained within its discursive formations. These foundational aspects of the Platonic doctrine of *Ideas* force out into the light what count for truths of cell cinema discourse and the concrete world-reality of its experience by participants. Whilst a more in-depth account of how cell cinema is historically situated was provided earlier, it is within its experiential and social aspects that cell cinema's character announces itself to the world. I aim to form a philosophy of the metaphysics of cell cinema, rather than give an account of its mere existence as a development of preceding media products.

Being a phenomenon that exists both within and outside national, cultural and language barriers, any requirement of cell cinema to fit into a pre-existing philosophical frame of reference would seem to be ambitious if not speculative.

The kind of philosophy of film theory proposed by figures such as Daniel Frampton (2006) points towards notions of the cinematic as primarily a theorized ethos. In the case of phone films within cell cinema, this strand of theoretical-philosophical critique begins to break down. Their thinking foregrounds the need for a radicalized, contemporarily relevant philosophy of non-professional digital moving image discourse. Rather than constituting a complete alternative to ruminations on the moving image dynamic, or an appraisal of the creation of hermeneutic meaning between maker and spectator, the philosophy of cell cinema I propose should specifically observe those idiosyncratic features that set it apart from pre-existing modes of cinematic discourse. Whilst recognising its antecedence to and shared characteristics with pre-digital, traditional cinema, cell cinema incorporates (is predicated on) aspects of social networking and new modes of digital and film festival distribution, which draw on and challenge existing conceptions of authorship and creation where the author is physically present during the film's dissemination to an audience. Its potentiality for an individuated relationship - of spectator to filmmaker engagement across a mobile phone screen - signals another radical departure from the analogue shared dynamic of theatrical cinema, experienced across the world during the last century.

Cell cinema as a social movement or sub-cultural phenomenon is made out of the human natures of participants within it. It is formed by the social groupings that coalesce within its discursive practices. Therefore, in the same way as any form of national, discursive and communal cinema would, cell cinema describes both human actions and the products of interactions arising out of its sharing, exhibitivistic dynamic. Let me therefore examine those products we see evidenced in the human interactions of cell cinema:

Incorporating for a moment a decidedly Platonic taxonomy of human behaviour that may be observable in cell cinema discourse, I identify its three main drivers of *desire*, *emotion* and *knowledge*. Each of these can be considered as thirds making up the whole process of cell cinema discourse, each present but always in varying proportions in the behaviour of its participants. Equally, this triumvirate describes the communication flow we see in cell cinema: *Desire*, such as the man's nostalgic longing for the old-fashioned model train in Michael Koerbel's phone film

Apple of my Eye (2010) can be seen as the originating impulse of the filmmaker to create and express an idea or message through film. *Emotion* can be regarded as residing in the locus of connection of maker to spectator/audience, the organic experience of desire. This is exemplified at the end of Alberto Corral's phone film *Sync* (2012) when the two perfectly matched protagonists finally, inevitably we hope, bump into each other following their walks through a world apparently moving in the opposite direction to them both. *Knowledge*, situated in the head rather than the heart, implicates the intellect and arrives out of the experience of desire and emotion. A good example of this kind of phone film would be *World's Best Mum* (2010) by Camille Hédouin & Jérôme Genevray. This film relies for its narrative impact on the spectator's growing realisation that the child's voice-over dialogue and painting depicts, not a picture of her smiling mother, but a message about domestic violence. In their totality, these three behaviours drive sensory perception and the notional, subjective naming of phenomena, but also the sensory perception of phenomena. Far from being specific to cell cinema participants, this schema pertains generally to many forms of moving image engagement, and reveals a similar hybridity to the social signifying categories described in chapter 2.

In the Aristotelian philosophical tradition we define an object or term first by assigning it to a class or group sharing general characteristics, and secondly how it differs from all others in its class. Thus cell cinema is a mode of visual communication that has resonance for the filmmakers, spectators and festival professionals engaged in its discourse. Through positing the shared viewing of films made using mobile phones it draws on commonalities of experience. It likewise self-selects audiences and participants from within a relatively small, marginalised community of committed enthusiasts, or from individuals attracted to minority or peripheral digital moving images. Examples of this tendency are seen in the preponderance of friends and family members making up the audience at The Holmfirth Film Festival (Copsey, 2010), and the close similarity with one another in the participants at The Disposable Film Festival:

The crowd on this first, opening night of the festival are mostly around 18 to 35, possibly university educated, 'trendy', urbanite, liberal arts/culture vultures, not obviously part of the local gay scene, but apparently very much part of the liberal San Francisco arts scene. Several people appear to be bumping into friends, hooking up in pre-arranged groups. (Field notes, 21 March 2013)

For another example of the 'family and friends' audience make-up that is common feature of cell cinema festivals, the following extract from later in my research field notes is revealing:

The man on my left sees me writing notes and asks if I am a journalist. I explain what I am doing, and we chat a little whilst the show is yet to start and people look for the last seats. The man explains he's an extra in one of the films to be screened. (Field notes, 21 March 2013)

3.1.1 National/Transnational Distinctions

Far from a being a peculiarity of British and American cell cinema festivals, my observation of the 2011 Jeonju International Film Festival was that the Festival Volunteers, and the majority of the mobile phone filmmakers participating in the festival, were from a broadly similar socio-demographic of students and recent university graduates. While this was true of the three South Korean film festivals I attended during my research, chapter 4 will give an account of how I witnessed a similar breakdown of participants in other festivals, in different countries.

However, I need to first define and distinguish between the some of the terms I am using to differentiate nationality, trans-nationality and inter-culturality with respect to cell cinema. Andrew Higson, Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim recognise a growing schism between the 'national/transnational binary, which sees the national model as limiting, while the transnational becomes a subtler means of understanding cinema's relationship to the cultural and economic formations that are rarely contained within national boundaries' (Higson, 2000; Higbee and Lim, 2010, p. 9). Whilst using this cinema model of the transnational indeed helps in understanding its role in cultural production, it requires modification to make it

applicable to a critique of digital moving image production across a similarly global reach. Such modification and re-thinking of critical positions is being undertaken by numerous scholars in various parts of the world outside Europe such as Raminder Kaur and Ajay Sinha (2005), and Gary G. Xu (2008). In noting what they refer to as the 'dissatisfaction expressed by scholars working across the humanities [...] with the paradigm of the national as a means of understanding production, consumption and representation of cultural identity', Higbee and Lim highlight an emerging landscape of transnational cultural production within which 'borderlines between nations have been blurred by new telecommunications technologies as a means of explaining the shifting debates away from national to transnational cinema' (Higbee and Lim, 2010, p. 8).

Therefore, it seems appropriate to note that transnational cell cinema, at various times, overlaps or diverges from the implicit concerns of its historical precursors predicated on indicators of *nation* or *nationality* (Vitali and Willemen, 2006). Operating as an international, global (though not universal) media phenomenon, cell cinema crosses national and cultural borders with apparent ease of commercial film that absorbs international co-productions, cross-cultural remakes, and the *repackaging* of genres. This can be seen as a general globalising of film content and moving image culture that cell cinema is also subject to. Being representative less of a national sensibility than a personal one (the filmmaker and, to a lesser extent, the festival programmer) the immediacy of cell cinema as a transnational phenomenon implicates the transmission of cultural products within its social and discursive regimes. Its participatory, sharing dynamic is particularly well placed to advance a more or less fluid trans-cultural flow of ideas and messages.

Cell cinema, having the character of an often transient, marginal or minor cinema, faces difficulties in appropriating the industrial and economic/commercial benefits that are often enjoyed by mainstream cinema. It is similarly unlikely to transfer to the first tier of the international film festival circuit. In both cases, cell cinema professionals and filmmaker, who would be expected to be in positions to affect such transformations in the distributive and exhibitive infrastructure for phone films, show no signs of making such changes. I cannot completely agree with

Higbee and Lim when they argue that 'transnational cinema is consistently located on the margins of dominant film cultures or on the peripheries of industrial practices' (Higbee and Lim, 2010, p. 10). The evidence I have gathered at cell cinema festivals across four continents does not support this opinion. Cell cinema appears to be able to circumvent such a presumed marginality, or limitation of penetration, by recourse to its intercultural formation, or a kind of cultural promiscuity and integration into practices of social networking. International co-funding or co-production arrangements are of little practical use within cell cinema production. Such transnational commercial factors are not used because they are not useful. Cell cinema's media *product* cannot, strictly speaking, be easily commoditized, but moves among and between its participants in the form of sharing and exchange of narrative filmic discourse. Additional to the incidence of phone films being posted on YouTube and Vimeo etc., phone films travel across platforms and national boundaries with ease. *Worlds Best Mum* mentioned above, followed its YouTube posting in January of 2010 by being screened at Pocket Films Festival in Paris in June of that year. This film and others were subsequently screened in competition at the Hong Kong Mobile Film Festival Awards in 2012. Apart from the reimbursement of travel and hotel expenses, I am not aware of any payments being made to filmmakers at any of these events. The reward of cell cinema's effective interculturality evidently trumps any perceived or calculated benefits that may potentially accrue from its commercial exploitation.

The kind of transnationalism that cell cinema has co-opted from mainstream international cinema is both a symptom of, and response to, the problems of film traversing national borders. A central feature of cell cinema's media aesthetic is what I term its *language agnosticism*; the lack of, or absence of dialogue that contributes to cell cinema's global character or *cultural hybridity*. The mobile phone film *Money Bag* (Kim, 2010) playfully uses music to support and comment on a dialogue-free narrative that the South Korean director describes as a 'Thriller, Black Comedy'. An avoidance of dialogue in any language supports an ambiguous sound track. Its transposition of narrative elements of a cross-genre kind, most often seen emanating from Hollywood, does not detract from the spectator's comprehension of a plot with multiple twists.

Chiaroscuro (Vitùc, 2012) is an animated phone film, which omits dialogue or speech in any language. Its monochrome images depicting mainly domestic objects observed in natural situations, and a lilting piano on the soundtrack are its only signifying elements. Although originating in Italy, the film could have been made in many other countries. *Memory 22* (Newsinger, 2013) shares aesthetic similarities with *Chiaroscuro*, animating events and a *movie selfie* in shadow filmed in the United Kingdom. Though geographically separate, both films address aspects of time and movement, the beauty of found objects, and the human body in space where location appears unimportant.

Rain (Ruscio, 2013) similarly evades specifying location, instead concentrating the camera's gaze on physical details of city architecture and the unifying sensual qualities of rain, water and moisture. Ruscio's film captures the feeling of dampness – the filmmaker's experience of inescapable rain, which he presents as neither a markedly positive or negative moral condition but a commonly experienced natural event. In *Sync* (Corral, 2012), the exact location is incidental except that it locates the two central characters (she, Black and he, Hispanic, indicating a subtext of diasporic interculturality) as they move backwards through an urban landscape filled with forward-moving strangers somewhere in an American city, where they eventually meet. These phone films are neither silent movies (as each features music on the soundtrack), nor films with (excepting *Sync*) little or no message to communicate about culturality or nationality. They speak of an ambition toward universality, presenting experiences and observations unencumbered by the prescriptive structure of linguistic semiotics.

If cell cinema is indeed positioned to transcend national borders, finding purchase amidst globalised media entities and disrupted senses of nationhood and identity, it comes mainly through its aforementioned feature of *language agnosticism*. Central to the cell cinema aesthetic is its repeated recourse to a music sound track in place of dialogue. This serves the purpose of avoiding expensive subtitles, surtitles, over-dubbing of actor's voices, and the decision of whether to screen a film in an original language, which may be understood by relatively few people. What often results is a re-framing of the silent movie theatrical technique of suturing music to visuals for public exhibition (in the form of *music phone videos*

discussed in the previous chapter, for example) and which appears to be making an unexpected resurgence in popularity amongst phone filmmakers from various countries. A common, perhaps default position, is a resorting to English as a kind of globally accepted film language that indeed cuts across nationally bounded cultures, whilst also homogenising aspects of cultural difference. This speaks of a universalising impulse in cell cinema, embodied in the globally integrating international festival.

Emerging towards the end of the last century, a line of critical-philosophical thinking began to identify a growing instability in the production of modern subjectivities. Writing in 1996, Arjun Appadurai argues there has been 'a general rupture in the tenor of intersocial relations in the last few decades [...] that takes media and migration as its two major, and interconnected, diacritics and explores their joint effect on the *work of the imagination* as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 3, italics in original). What I take Appadurai to mean is that it is *the imagination* that trumps preoccupations with notions of *national* or *transnational moving images* as a dominant feature of digital media discourse. *Imagination* here can have two meanings: the creative imagination capable of making, sharing and appreciating phone films with artistic intention, and the *imagination* that allows someone to empathize and imagine the life of another person.

Appadurai notes that 'electronic mediation and mass migration mark the world of the present not as technically new forces but as ones that seem to impel (and sometimes compel) the work of the imagination' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 4). This remark needs to be considered in the context of the mobile phone's current feature of recording video not being technically possible at the time Appadurai was writing. The facility to take still photographs with a mobile phone camera was yet to arrive the following year, when Philippe Kahn shared the first pictures of his daughter Sophie's birth with more than 2,000 family, friends and associates in his email contacts (Zhang, 2011). With this defining coming together of mobile telephony and computer-enabled social networking, image sharing finally passed from the analogue to the digital age. Appadurai suggests that 'there has been a shift, building on technological changes over the past century or so, in which the

imagination has become a collective, social fact' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 5). The shift may have been gradual but it now appears irreversible and has a global influence. The discursive practices foregrounded in cell cinema embody a cross-cultural collision of creative engagement.

All these expressions, further, have been the basis of a complex dialogue between the imagination and ritual in many human societies, through which the force of ordinary social norms was somehow deepened, through inversion, irony, or the performative intensity and the collaborative work demanded by many kinds of ritual. (Appadurai, 1996, p. 5)

It would seem that the work of imaginations, not constrained by language or cultural habit, has helped to fuel the adoption of novel uses of digital technologies. As Appadurai puts it, 'The imagination has broken out of the special expressive space of art, myth, and ritual and has now become a part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people in many societies' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 5). In other words, this impetus to intercultural dialogue challenges the democratising potential of cell cinema, wherever it occurs or whoever instigates it. If and when cell cinema evolves and develops as a mode of post digital media practice, a later researcher must account for whether cell cinema has contributed to a truly democratic engagement with post-digital moving images, or that it had merely promised a 'false revolution' of trivially technologised novelty where trans-nationally experienced culturality could have been (Belton, 2002). For the present, my research project outlined here indicates people, from widely different national and cultural backgrounds, make, show and share creative expressions of their daily experiences. 'It is no longer only a matter of specially endowed (charismatic) individuals, 'injecting the imagination where it does not belong,' explains Appadurai. 'Ordinary people have begun to deploy their imaginations in the practice of their everyday lives' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 5).

A philosophy of cell cinema must therefore consider the work of the human imagination and its role in motivating personal expression, creativity, even knowledge. 'The imagination, on the other hand,' says Appadurai, 'has a projective

sense about it, the sense of being a prelude to some sort of expression, whether expressive or otherwise' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 7). In this, cell cinema foreshadows a possible democratising of artistic expression; one open to more people utilising media perceived as more personal. If it can be thought of as *designed*, cell cinema has not been designed as a means to broadcast moving images, yet when it arrives before an audience at a film festival theatre, it has already escaped from the confines of *narrowcasting* phone film images from an individual filmmaker to an individual spectator. Cell cinema fosters a different sense of *community*, but does not constitute a kind of mass communication, in the way that phone films distributed over *YouTube*, *Vimeo*, *Dailymotion*, even *Twitter* does.

However, the foregoing begins to stray away from the logic of stating what cell cinema is and is not. In its phenomenological and social manifestations, it also reaches for a higher goal than providing entertaining or escapist diversions for possibly distant and disinterested acquaintances. Cell cinema potentially stakes its claim to philosophical difference that not merely cuts across national or transnational cultures, but which prefigures an innovative kind of digital culture. Yet there is tension in each succeeding extrapolation of *culture* as it is worked through. The defining terms we use begin to collapse under the weight of scrutiny. Its fitness for describing cell cinema's shift from a trans-national phenomenon to an inter-cultural one must be challenged.

Thus, phone filmmakers attempt to present aspects of personal experience to both a global audience and a delineated cell cinema audience of likeminded spectators. The tension at the heart of this discursive exchange of personally held cultural expression, is balancing its twin values of identity and cultural universality.

Culture is not usefully regarded as a substance but is better regarded as a dimension of phenomena, a dimension that attends to situated and embodied difference. Stressing the dimensionality of culture rather than its substantiality permits our thinking of culture less as a property of individuals and groups and more as a heuristic device that we can use to talk about difference (Appadurai, 1996, p. 13)

It seems to me to be entirely correct that Appadurai suggests 'we regard as cultural only those differences that either express, or set the groundwork for, the mobilization of group identities' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 13). Thus, we return to cell cinema's embodiment of shared expressivity, or the performativity of difference, as intrinsic to its discourse.

Though the danger may exist, my research has not found that the mobilisation of group identities inevitably leads towards ethnicity at the expense of the cultural. An illustration of this was when a group of competition winners from cell cinema festivals in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Greece, Hong Kong, Singapore, Spain, South Korea and Taiwan met in Hong Kong in 2012 for the 2nd Hong Kong International Mobile Film Awards (HKIMFA). Most of the festival professionals, if not the filmmakers, from each country were known to each other. The HKIMFA functioned as both a competition for *regional* (yet international) competition winners, and as a networking/information-sharing symposium for attendees who were described as 'festival representatives' (Field notes, 22 March 2012). In Hong Kong I witnessed the juxtaposition of winning phone films from several international competitions, with filmmakers of various nationalities of and 'festival representatives', whose own national and cultural backgrounds were sometimes at variance with the films and filmmakers they were nominally aligned with. What connected all of these individuals, encouraging them to travel from five continents to gather together in Hong Kong, was their group identity shaped and determined by their engagement with cell cinema. Their presence together in the location of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre pointed, at that particular moment in time, to a feature of their shared culture and not their nationality.

Difference of creative intention, originating cultural background and so on, all seem to mitigate the subsuming of personal identity beneath what might otherwise be an homogenising or communitarian cell cinema impulse. Interculturalism speaks of a form of culture that travels across and between temporally and spatially separated communities, whilst remaining intact as culture identifiable as emanating from within cell cinema. In this it propels and sustains difference between participants from diverse cultures. This conception stands in distinction to

a spuriously global trans-culture, which posits a pervasive dimension of human discourse that appears to generate diverse conceptions of group identification, but which disseminates cultural homogeneity over what it reaches.

A consideration here, of what might be regarded as a strain of philosophical thought emanating from the African continent, might contribute to an understanding of others and ourselves in a post-digital world, Richard Bell forwards the view that '[u]nderstanding anything is always tied to its surroundings, which include language, geography, iconic traditions, and especially ordinary practices of its people' (Bell, 2002, p. 1). I will return to the notion of 'ordinary', in terms of people and everyday media practices in chapter 5. Bell recognises that for cross-cultural understanding to have a chance to flourish, credence must be given to how cultures and sub-cultures may themselves be multicultural. 'Whether understanding is between cultures or within a given culture' he says 'the difficulties are many, but there are fewer mysteries in this process than philosophers often assume' (Bell, 2002, p. 2). This line of argument points to a residual problematic of how notions of identity and difference are challenged and disrupted within post-digital media – in this instance in countries outside the Euro-centric philosophical tradition.

When assessing what contribution cultural beliefs from parts of the world other than Europe and North America make to an intercultural philosophy of cell cinema, consideration must be given to established popular philosophical discourse. The kind of *unanimism* that describes how 'Africans do not think of themselves as 'discrete individuals, but rather understand themselves as part of a community', would seem to make a useful contribution to how we might view various intercultural aspects of a globalised media phenomenon (Bell, 2002, p. 60). The individualising impetus within cell cinema discourse, feeding into the creation of communities of shared affiliation; narrative fiction, documentary, autobiography, animation, art film and so on, mirrors a similar tension in what Bell defines as 'part of an African's self-understanding even if the concept of "community" remains ontologically prior, or to show the distinctive character of African "community" against the Western conception of "individuality"' (Bell, 2002, p. 61, emphases in original). Bell notes how African philosophers such as Kwasi

Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye recognise how ‘the acquired status of personhood is understood not simply as a matter of gradual socialization, but as attaining and practicing a particular moral life that contributes to the well-being of one’s community’ (Bell, 2002, p. 62).

Writing about what he considers ‘the specifically moral and metaphysical concerns of African people as expressed through their “fictitious narratives”’, Bell sets out something approaching a contemporary African philosophy of narrativity when he in turn quotes Wole Soyinka as saying that an African philosophy should ‘translate the inherent or stated variable values of a social situation into a contemporary or future outlook’ (Soyinka, in Bell, 2002, p. 119). Thus, rather than perpetuating a restrictive ethnicisation of modern African through digital culture, the interculturality of this philosophy presents an alternative scenario. Given access to the means of expression and exchange of personal experience through moving image discourse, cell cinema enables values of particularity to be shared in situations of physical co-presence. What might otherwise occur as the disembodied, voyeuristic accessing of images of distant neighbours, their co-presence speaks of a parity of voice, unmediated by the digital. In an attempt to rationalise the possible or apparent opposition of West and East, the Advaita thinker Aurabindo offered the following manifesto:

[T]he hope of the world lies in the re-arousing in the East of the old spiritual practicality and large and profound vision and power of organisation under the insistent contact of the West and in the flooding out of the light of Asia on the Occident, no longer in forms that are now static, effete, unadaptive, but in new forms stirred, dynamic and effective. (Aurabindo, 1987, pp. 188-9, quoted in Leeman, 2000, p. 237)

Regarding the contribution an Indian-orientated philosophical perspective might make to intercultural philosophy, Ram Adhar Mall offers a persuasive reconsideration of Euro-centric thinking. He begins by stating; ‘Philosophy – that is, the activity in which we engage when we do philosophy – is first a cross-cultural universal’ (Mall, 2000, p. 2). Globally occurring phenomena are nevertheless

increasingly hard to generalise as euro-centric in their use of technology and cultural adaptations. However, Mall identifies a residual inertia in recognising trans-cultural realities. 'The universalistic bent of the European mind seems to be disillusioned in part because it is now forced to realize that the days when Europe alone was destined to make and influence history are gone' (Mall, 2000, p. 2).

As we have already seen, there may be social and cultural differences across world cultures, although '[p]hilosophy is undoubtedly born in particular cultures and thus is local in character, but it is not exhausted in any one of its manifold local manifestations' (Mall, 2000, p. 4). This handily points our attention again to the growing network of, sometimes interconnected, cell cinema festivals that exist as 'local manifestations' yet speak of global phenomena. Mall's definition of the intercultural philosophical attitude takes in what he regards as the 'theory and practice of a pluralistic norm of live and let live, read and let read, and believe and let believe' (Mall, 2000, p. 4). In this regard, intercultural philosophy reaches toward a conceptual inclusivity, a programme to broaden frames of reference rather than a rulebook to be followed. For the language-agnostic participant in cell cinema discourse, interculturality is a multifaceted phenomenon functioning, as Mall says, '[i]n a metalinguistic discussion [...] as a construct [...] in the field of formal disciplines, it stands for the internationalism of scientific and formal categories' (Mall, 2000, p. 5). Cell cinema's metalinguistic potential lies in its lack of reliance on linguistic determinants for narrative comprehension. Indeed some examples of phone films that eradicate language, even dialogue from their narratives, move visual images forward as carriers of social semiosis. In its conversation without words, cell cinema functions as a metalinguistic anchor, stabilising otherwise dissonant cultural meaning.

Mall makes a plea for a particular kind of intercultural philosophy describing '[a] non-reductive, open, creative and tolerant hermeneutics' (Mall, 2000, p. 6). Regarding the emerging wisdom in accepting that no culture can rightly claim a hegemonic position of cultural superiority over another - particularly in rejecting Eurocentricism - he expressly points toward an interculturality which spans nations and includes non-European cultures: 'The term interculturality stands for an attitude, for the conviction that no culture is the culture for the whole of

humankind' (Mall, 2000, p. 9). Thus, the concept of interculturality is a philosophical line of enquiry fitted to a critique of cell cinema as a trans-national mode of cultural expression. Cell cinema's sharing dynamic, distanced by degree from the exigencies of commercial film production and distribution, sets up an alternative economic model of participation and engagement, which the next two chapters will explore in more detail.

The form of interculturality foregrounded by cell cinema centrally involves participation in mobile phone film production, reception and sharing in international film festivals that are open to participants across diverse cultures and nations. In this, aspects of cultural background and stylistic influences drawn from local media environments are secondary or incidental to those of aesthetic affect. Although the nationality of filmmaker-participants (as with many film festivals) is often identified, that of spectator-participants is rarely done so. Phone film content and its sensual power to create meaning for participants are accorded primacy and judged by international peers as such. Therefore, the interculturality of cell cinema exists in tension with the mobile phone film's potential to infiltrate a technological deterministic shadow over all its manifestations.

As chapter 2 demonstrated, in some phone films where the apparatus is both subject and mode of expression, the medium has a tendency to form the message, or at least to inform it. An intercultural philosophy can more readily assimilate convergent phenomena into the contemporary transcultural landscape. To do so, it requires a different kind of socio-cultural groundwork be prepared. What Mall and others seem to propound is the adoption of a new philosophical rationale for digital media that encompasses intercultural difference.

The science of hermeneutics as an art of interpretation and understanding undergoes a fundamental change in today's global context of interculturality, and it experiences an unprecedented widening of its horizons that does not necessarily go hand in hand with the real fusing of the horizons (Gadamer's *Horizontverschmetzung*). Every hermeneutics, therefore, has its own culturally sedimented roots and cannot claim universal and unconditional acceptance. (Mall, 2000, p. 15)

Cell cinema, therefore, requires the application of its own hermeneutics, leading to the situation whereby, as Mall cautions us, 'interculturality and postmodernity share a common framework approving the value of plurality in culture [...] They do, however, recognize the tension lying at the back of the simultaneity of contradictory processes, namely of globalization and fragmentation' (Mall, 2000, p. 35). For its part, cell cinema's plurality of cultural references implicate tensions and re-negotiations of hegemonic cultural determinants: economic signifiers of success, art establishment pronouncements of value and artistic validity, local and regional measures of socio-cultural development, as the next chapter will evidence. My research has found little substantive evidence for a 'universal and unconditional acceptance' of overarching cultural signifiers. Rather, encouraged by the pronouncements of festival programmers and organisers⁶, cell cinema participants resist a passive positioning of their attendance and participation festivals, which might be the case in other environments.

What then emerges, as cell cinema festivals increase in the range of phone film subjects they include, and their frequency internationally (Stevens, 2007) is a kind of self-defining philosophy of interculturality constituting a culturally likeminded attitude within its participants. The cell cinema festivals covered in my research evidence this tendency rather than an adherence to a single philosophical dogma, yet with a transnational aspect with regard to its utilization of digital phenomena.

What the development of cell cinema begins to describe is a form of interculturality which circumvents (or transcends) the need to resort to an artificially constructed 'trans-culturality' for, as Mall tells us, 'all our points of view are bound up in a single culture and do not exist in vacuo. The prefix inter-, in comparison to trans-, points to an experiential core of existence' (Mall, 2000, p. 36). Isn't it precisely within the experiential, phenomenological aspects of cell cinema discourse that, to invoke the British Broadcasting Corporation motto, 'Nation shall speak unto Nation'? The cultural conduit of cell cinema seems well suited to re-balancing the asymmetry between East and West. Whether it will be used to perpetuate received dogma, to present inconvenient or uncomfortable

information, or to communicate creative expression of fragmentary or indeterminate ethnicity, remains to be discovered. Mall calls for the 'deconstruction of an exclusive relation, not only among cultures but, most important, between truth and tradition' (Mall, 2000, p. 36), which might emerge from within the radicalised discursive reality presented in cell cinema.

Within the cell cinema dynamic of sharing, it is both the hardware of globalized technology and the software of intercultural discourse that is expressed and exchanged. Mall puts the stress elsewhere when he says, 'It is mainly the hardware of Europeanization, not the software that has become global [...], an ideology, a dream, whereas Westernization is a fact' (Mall, 2000, p. 37). The danger inherent in this form of Westernisation is of a concomitant homogenisation of intercultural discourse, implicating the hegemonic standardisation of yet another dominant ethos, which ignores the multiplicity of human experience it supersedes. What I characterise as the *software of sharing* is only beginning to have a global reach. It exists in a relationship of push and pull, negotiating or resisting the various cultural expressions that shape it.

The urge to engage with cell cinema at film festivals is the urge of participant – filmmakers, spectators, festival professionals – to share an experience of culture as temporally and historically common to people from widely different socio-cultural backgrounds. However, this may be qualitatively unrealisable in the ideologically determined space of the cell cinema festival. The forces of conflicting commercial, developmental, cultural, creative, if not to say artistic imperatives all impose their influence within a festival that is planned to continue year on year. Cell cinema festivals provide a framework for extending communities and communal activity beyond geographical boundaries or, as Mall puts it:

Temporality and historicity, which are just the two sides of the coin, are experiential realities providing us with an existential framework within which all human moves occur and originate. It is this primordial framework that is the intersubjective and intercultural bedrock, with its virtual plasticity allowing for cultural differences. An intercultural perspective shows the cross-cultural overlapping in our understanding of time, giving due consideration to cultural differences that allow for the preference

a particular culture possesses for the time metaphor as an arrow or as a cycle. (Mall, 2000, p. 67)

In the twelve years since Mall protested at what he describes as appearing 'universalistic, imperialistic, and missionary', the spread of digital media and cell cinema in particular has taken on a pervasively influential character (Mall, 2000, p. 109). It is currently a movement that follows a trajectory from transnational to intercultural, yet also Eastern to intercultural in its cultural borrowings. There has likewise been an extra-Eastern discovery of Eastern modes of engaging with digital media to match the non-European discovery of a particularly European modernity. Similarly, Mall's thesis of Western culture presenting itself as expressing 'a true, trans-cultural universality' lacking 'willingness for self-questioning and self-discovery' begins to break down (Mall, 2000, p. 110). The inherent tensions at the heart of this kind of Euro-centric, post-justificatory thinking have already fissured along fault lines extending over national boundaries, challenging its credibility within contemporary global society. When Masaki Fujihata recreated Paris' Pocket Films Festival in Yokohama, he adapted the festival format to reflect a point of view that he and some of his festival's competition winners had about the way phone films could or should be screened:

French people focused on showing their pocket films on the big screen, but my interest was slightly different," he says. "I was more concerned with showing films on a small screen, on the mobile phone's small display panel. (Fujihata, quoted in Hart, 2009)

Global media operates within an environment of continual flux, of cinematic remakes, cross-media adaptations and co-productions etc. Mall's preferences for the cultural products of Western-centric or Euro-centric global media may be little more than an observation of on-going commercial battles for dominance in Global markets. Court cases such as the recent one reported by Reuters between Apple Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co. (Levine, 2012) are matters of commerce first and

cultural concern perhaps much later. Mall's observations combine a waning of European cultural hegemony, with a diminution of its own technological and moral pre-eminence as source of globalising media culture.

Reference to the court case above links cell cinema to the manufacturing industries of its technological origins, with the mobile phone camera apparatus emerging as, not a tool for creative filmmaking, but a commoditized device for Global business expansion. It axiomatically locates cell cinema as comprising technicist (recording, editing, distributing) features, in addition to its potential creative or artistic dimensions. Cell cinema may rest in uneasy relationship with economic, ideological, political and cultural forces that play on it, but neither can it escape their influence.

What I refer to as the dynamic of sharing in cell cinema discourse is a crucial defining principle in terms of its cultural influence. That mobile phone technology and usage affect how films are made with such non-professional apparatus is also salient. Other intrinsic features include its use of narrative fiction and those governed by its audio-visual aesthetic, such as image definition and the control of screen size. However, these speak of what is produced, of pre-visualized, pre-determined or accidental personal expression, creativity, its reception and sharing that all coalesce around a locus of potentially artistic expression. Concerns of commercial, profit-oriented film and media industry become sidelined or postponed as distractions external to the festival. The pivotal role the concept and event of the film festival plays in cell cinema's social-cultural discursive engagement cannot be ignored. It provides the location and temporal space in which phenomena occur, are perceived, and from which it extends its cultural influence. Cell cinema provides a discourse within which global and globalising cultural products emanate from film festivals to reach wider audiences, manifesting its interculturality across and within a globally connected media diaspora.

3.2 The Rhizomatic Screen

This section introduces a number of related ideas about the mobile phone screen's potential to engender particular kinds of inter-personal communication,

further establishing the underlying veracity of phone films as a contemporarily social form of media text. The ways in which such texts function, as composite structures of many layers, foregrounds their qualities of intertextuality as phone films become digital objects for exhibition, and the sharing and dissemination of narratives between cell cinema participants.

The phone film's cellular, inter-personal and, in some sense a digital (if not biological) viral characteristic, communicates a form of narrative meaning to one or many people. My analyses of several phone films above, and some of those to come in this subsection, invoke a Deleuzian/Guattarian conception of the rhizome to describe a filmic-biological (almost) determinism of cell-to-cell communication. This identification of individuals connecting with other individuals and groups of spectators, placed here in the thesis, builds on the earlier discussion of the phone film's formal character. In doing so, I introduce the *cellular* as a central feature of cell cinema's discursive regime, which appears to the various groups of festival participants (filmmakers, spectators, festival organisers/professionals). This presages a more comprehensive and searching philosophical investigation of the broader subject of cell cinema to come in the next chapter.

This use of the term *rhizome*, derived from biology, needs some explanation of its usage by Deleuze and Guattari and my adoption of it here. In doing so, I establish a basic conceptual framework upon which to use the rhizome as a metaphor for the structural and psychological interrelationships of participants and technologies in cell cinema, and the character of the cellular narrative. In their conception of the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari seek an alternative for what they call the 'binary logic [...] of the root-tree' to better describe new kinds of connection and heterogeneity (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 5). In the rhizome's characteristic of movement, breaking out from multiple points of entry and egress, 'any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be' (Deleuze, and Guattari, 1987, p. 7). This image and metaphor of biological connectivity and dissemination is apposite of how phone film texts carry meaning, and communicate it through cell cinema engagement with phone film images.

A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. (Deleuze, and Guattari, 1987, p. 8)

The narratological expression of identity within cell cinema, as with identity generally, is subject to continual change: Who or what is the subject, who and in what circumstances is the spectator are temporary things, in flux and continually moving onward. A crucial way of conceptualising what the phone film implicates, has been, and is becoming is to consider it rhizomatically. The motion of identity – in cell cinema as in any other discourse involving questions of *being* and what it is *to be* – is continual, open-ended and rhizomatic. ‘It is the simple fact of becoming that is behind the creation of the rhizome’, (Sutton and Martin-Jones, 2008, p. 46). The insistent restlessness of rhizomatic ‘deterritorialisation’ of identity applies a temporal disruption to the phone film’s narrative discourse (Sutton and Martin-Jones, 2008, p. 6). It brings with it the impetus to open-endedness of narrative structure and, through its indeterminacy; the film’s potential to communicate meaning.

An increasing multiplicity of film meaning, taking up signifying space between a filmmaker and the multiple spectators of a festival audience, demands multiple hermeneutics that overlay the shared viewing experience of cell cinema, which ‘increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections’ (Deleuze, and Guattari, 1987, p. 9). In other words, multiple possible viewpoints from which to access potential understanding can emanate from the same source. The cell cinema festival is but one example of this tendency. It is a discursive space that is particularly rhizomatic in practice. Multiple independent spectators meet and network in the discursive spaces of the cell cinema locations. This is true of other modes of cinema spectatorship, but reaches a particular level of *rhizomatic* interaction in cell cinema where participant identities are indeterminate and in flux, as would-be or actual filmmakers mix with students, who come along with festival organisers and volunteers on the verge of professional status. It is, of course, similarly true that film festivals of many kinds bring filmmakers, audiences, film bureaucrats, festival professionals, journalists,

critics and academics together more or less voluntarily, increasing the potential for multiple meanings with multiple participant perceptions of content and events. What Deleuze and Guattari refer to as lines of 'territorialities, deterritorializations, or reterritorializations' (1987, p. 224) between all of these actors is encouraged and animated by cell cinema. 'Both forms of content and forms of expression are inseparable from a movement of deterritorialization that carries them away' as Deleuze and Guattari say (1987, p. 97).

Particularly in the case of phone filmmakers and spectators, their gathering together and participation at film festivals encourages a deeper connection with the film text and with each other. My observations of cell cinema festivals have been that it is more usually the case than not for phone filmmakers to be present at the screenings of their films. They evidently make the decision to physically travel to the festival, often engaging in question and answer sessions with fellow participants. Central to the festival schedule and one of its intrinsic purposes, in taking up these opportunities they extend the possibilities for engagement with the film narrative and its maker, acquiring knowledge about the details of its production, and the meanings it contains or meant to express.

Tetsu Kono, a participant spectator at the Seoul international Extreme-Short Image & Film Festival (SESIFF) in 2011, talked about the quality of attention that was required of him to take part in the festival:

I have to focus on the movie because I knew after watching the movie there will be time, I can ask some questions, so I focus on the detail. But normally, when I watch a professional movie I just wanna enjoy. I don't think a lot, but today I thought a lot, about everything. (Interview, 2 October 2011)

Cell cinema participation, in common with other festival engagement, involves a level of involvement that denudes the traditional territorialities that separate filmmaker from audience. As Kono related of his original motivation for attending SESIFF:

I'm thinking about starting a career. Film is something I'm thinking of. [...] So I wanna get something from this kind of festival. (Interview, 2 October 2011)

Cognisant of the essential quality of SESIFF as a phone film festival, Kono views his participation as an active one that is not limited by his personal identity as an amateur or potential filmmaker. He sees the nature of his participation in SESIFF to be linked to a shifting sense of his own status and relationship with the filmmakers he is a co-participant with. How he derives meaning from his festival participation colours his relationship with the films he views and the other cell cinema participants he is surrounded by. He is in the process of negotiating how he interacts with the phone films he is viewing, and the ways in which he participates in the cell cinema event. His relationship with other participants, filmmakers and festival professionals shifts from that of a more or less hierarchically fixed receiver of messages from a distant sender, to that of a participatory, rhizomatic relationship with more equal responsibility for co-creation of meaning.

As introduced in the previous chapter, cell cinema's predisposition to participatory *copresence*, of individuals gathering in space and time to experience phone films, highlights the notionally cellular character of this mode of engagement. Therefore, in a proto-organic, interrelational way the following is an adaptation of the Deleuzian metaphor of the *rhizome*. In presenting a rhizomatic conception of cell cinema, I hope to map out what is characteristic of the shared engagement with narrative-driven phone films that feed into cell cinema discourse.

I take Brian Massumi at his word when he suggests to readers of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'the reader is invited to lift a dynamism out of the book entirely, and incarnate it in a foreign medium' (Massumi, in Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. xv; and Massumi, 1992, p. 8). Thus, if we take for a moment cell cinema to stand in for the medium, that medium does not conclusively destroy how rhizomatic thinking is brought to bear in an analysis of digital film narratology. Rather, the rhizome invites the foreign medium. Our attention to the inherent rhizomatic possibilities for narrative filmmaking, post the digital break, is concentrated in the knowledge that Deleuze and Guattari were, in effect, future-

proofing their concept of the rhizome during the 1980s; and this at a time when technologically advanced societies worldwide were opening up new possibilities in the ways people told stories to one another at the cinema and via digital devices. In other words, without overtly signalling their intention, Deleuze and Guattari were already conceptualizing what we might now regard as the *becoming-digital* of rhizomatic narrative possibilities inherent in cell cinema filmmaking.

Definitions of the cell cinema narrative appropriate to its narratology reveal a methodological justification for a rhizomatic conception of its ontology. The binomial impulse from the Russian Formalists onward has been to present opposing pairings such as fabula and sjuzet, story/plot, thematic and modal as necessary components of a study of narratology. Such binary thinking about narrative construction becomes ineffectual in a post-digital context where multi-valent meanings are able to adhere to a core discursive framework. While conducting research at several film festivals over the course of this research project, I have witnessed the cell cinema story being continually told and re-told within the democratising discourse of the cell cinema festival, highlighting rhizomatic connectivity between participants.

Brian Massumi notes that the aim at La Borde, the experimental psychiatric clinic where Guattari practiced as a psychoanalyst from the mid-1950s until his death in 1992, 'was to abolish the hierarchy between doctor and patient in favour of an interactive group dynamic that would bring the experiences of both to full expression in such a way as to produce a collective critique of the power relations in society as a whole' (Massumi, 1992, p. 2). Thus, the genesis of a philosophical analysis of the porous boundaries around and within giver and taker, writer and reader, sender and receiver, filmmaker and audience was even then being provisioned through its practical application in a human setting. Some modes of narrative storytelling in cell cinema filmmaking follow this same logic of a non-hierarchical relationship between filmmaker and film spectator. Others retain a sense of a privileged authorial voice expressing personal creativity to receptive viewers and larger audiences. Cell cinema participation predicates film narratives with an authorial source, but the discourse emanating from their screening is not owned solely by one party rather the other and is to some extent a *shared*

experience. As discussed in chapter one, the phone film text does not constitute a commodity to be sold, bartered or exchanged within the cell cinema festival. With exceptions that will be drawn on in chapter 4 cell cinema is, in essence, a form of media that relegates commercial concerns to positions of lesser importance. Its social dynamic of distributing phone films, sharing knowledge and skills effectively subverts most commercial and economic production practices. Therefore, cell cinema achieves its power to communicate meaning between its various participants within a socially and culturally discursive regime.

The shared narrative discourse at the heart of the cell-to-cell relationship derives its communicative power from the alternating current of its reciprocal dynamic. It is imbued with a democratising impulse through its function of sharing. The domestic home viewer of a DVD with added director's commentary is still only permitted to receive information that a director or filmmaker intends. 'Like the author,' says Nicholas Rombes, 'the auteur will not die. In fact, rather than discrediting the auteur theory by demonstrating that, in fact, movies are made by many people, DVDs and other forms of cinematic deconstruction only further strengthen the auteur theory' (Rombes, 2005). In such a case, the home viewer is ostensibly placed in the position of receiver of pre-ordained ontological *truth* from an extraneous authorial entity. The author-viewer dynamic of cell cinema provides a site for the re-emergence of *auteurism*. As Rombes puts it, 'the elevation of the personal and private to the public level has only compounded the cult of the author. We are all authors today. We are all auteurs. We are all writers. We are all filmmakers' (Rombes, 2005).

A specifically rhizomatic form of conceptual analysis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) finds validity within a line of reasoning that elevates us all onto the same plane. The cellular characteristic of the discursive engagement within cell cinema reflects the rhizomatic absence of a position of origin, of a hierarchical relationship with a source. Cell cinema narratives are continually negotiated and re-negotiated at points across their discursive formation. Narrative meaning moves in and out of focus as the story is told, retold and shared. Therefore, a non-hierarchical engagement with narrative itself is characteristic of cell cinema, where stories are

told, shared, retold, and accessed from many points, both in the real world of the cell cinema festival, and virtually across a mobile phone screen.

Within the film festival environment, the cell cinema filmmaker becomes part of the audience, who individually or severally collaborate in the process of making, and so continues the process of becoming. This is one of the defining discursive elements of film festivals, and the cell cinema festival in particular. Identity is fixed for neither filmmaker nor audience. Repeatedly, during fieldtrips to cell cinema festivals from 2010 to 2014, I observed screenings of phone films to audiences from a hand-full of spectators to over a hundred. At all of them, it was almost impossible to discern who was a spectator and who a filmmaker, student, actor, friend or family member. This was especially so in the case of SESSIFF in 2011 and 2012 where, following the majority of screenings, participant's identities became unfixed and mutable as they rose from seats in auditoriums to ask questions of filmmakers and panel members, or to move from the audience to occupy other seats on stages to answer questions. The phone film, as distinct from its pre-digital antecedent, incorporates the possibility of never reaching a state of finality or completeness. In its rhizomatic ease of access and egress of narrative, an inferred sharing of narrative creation is encouraged in the phone film, blurring the boundaries of filmmaker and spectator. As was outlined in the previous chapter, it is significant that 'any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be' (Deleuze, and Guattari, 1987, p. 7). The possibility of (or even tendency) for the narrative of a given phone film having a non-linear structure reflects a digital break with the indexical. Likewise, the narrative is no longer shackled to a linear, Aristotelian progression. Instead it carries with it a latent possibility of a rhizomatic dramaturgy, characterised by diverse meanings and poetic representations entering and exiting through porous boundaries. Cell cinema discourse becomes the leaky system of conduits down which meaning can travel and leach out to join with the receptive minds of participants in its discourse.

Accepting that phone films can be considered to fall into the rather ill defined category of *new media* having a digital or computer-mediated origin, certain models announce themselves as more or less capable of narratological analysis. Sean Cubitt suggests that 'narrative is only one among several modes of

organisation characteristic of new media (and) that this has an impact on certain universalist claims for narrative analysis' (Cubitt, 2002, p. 3). Whilst Cubitt correctly recognises the limitations in Universalist claims for narrative analysis, noting that it 'restricts itself to a more or less strictly chronological model of temporal experience', his critique omits a consideration of phone film's typically porous temporal boundaries, requiring a re-thinking of its relationship with narrative, linear or otherwise. (Cubitt, 2002, p. 4). Therefore, an inherent irrationality emerges in considering phone film narratives as experiential phenomena locked into a fixed temporal order. Phone films, and the narratives they carry, are accessible from multifarious points of temporal entry, with narrative meaning created and exiting in similar ways.

As with other forms of narrative fiction, such as the novel, where the process of narrative meaning construction is not completed until understanding exists in the reader, so the spectator of a narrative phone film completes the hermeneutic circuit in the action of watching the film. When such spectatorship is subsequently shared with others in temporally and spatially separate locations, the cell cinema dynamic creates a smooth space of connected points that extend the possibilities for a collaborative construction of narrative meaning or, to invoke a more directly Deleuzian phraseology, *becoming meaning*. The phone film's and, through it, cell cinema's process of immanent meaning creation is consummately rhizomatic. More effectively than might have been the case prior to the digital turn, the *becoming-narrative* of cell cinema can potential express shifting meanings to many audiences in temporally and spatially separate locations.

A phone film such as *Fear Thy Not* (2010), although shot in one continuous take, presents a narrative that lacks (or shuns) a linear story in terms of an Aristotelian beginning, middle and end, but can be accessed at multiple points in its duration. A somewhat similar film, such as *Improvisation* (2010) gathers together and presents images of events that could easily be placed in a different order, without destroying the overall coherence of the film's basic narrative. Their narratives are rhizomatic in the ways in which the spectator is able to engage with them as experiential audio-visual artefacts. In these films, story is not determined by speech, let alone dialogue. *Improvisation* contains no dialogue except operatic

singing voices on the music track, whereas *Fear Thy Not* intones the same few lines repeatedly. Neither film has a recognisable *story arc*, or classical narrative structure, because that isn't their point. They are both examples of phone films that enable their filmmakers and spectators to interact, in a cell-to-cell mode of engagement, through sharing an anti or non-narrative, offering multiple points of entry and egress of multiple meanings.

I argue that convergent new media, such as phone films, insists on the transience of texts. The vast majority of phone films appearing at film festivals during the course of this project have a running time of only a few minutes. They appear, make a brief point or communicate a relatively simple idea, then vanish from the mobile phone or festival screen to be replaced by others. Therefore, phone films, as the texts upon which cell cinema is predicated, are inherently impermanent, relatively unstable media. Through the stories they tell, they speak of transient sensations and fleeting glimpses of experience or, as Jensen puts it, 'Texts are momentary manifestations of a general textuality; texts selectively articulate a cultural heritage' (Jensen, 2010, p. 89). As I have shown, a film such as *Fear Thy Not* communicates, not so much discursive complexity as sensual expressivity, an experience the filmmaker had during a short walk, which can be engaged with through the meanings it has for the senses rather than through a narrative to be understood and followed.

A question to ask about narrative within phone films is, therefore, not the *how* of its technological existence, but the *why* of its philosophical authenticity for an audience. With the possibility of rhizomatic exiting of multifarious meaning comes the possibility of cell-specific, and perhaps even relativised, notions of veracity. While appearances that can be identified in phone films may interact reflexively with a number of genre conventions, those phone films cannot circumscribe a discrete genre. Disparate narrative concerns and an embracing of heightened realism mitigate an unmediated adherence to genre. In acknowledging his use of Leo Tolstoy's concept of *infectiousness*, Daniel Shaw notes that, 'unlike everyday events, occurrences in narrative films are selectively arranged to "infect" us with the requisite emotions; the conventions of the genre codify the most effective arrangements' (Shaw, 2008, p. 53). In their rhizomatic infectiousness,

phone films extend and go beyond the boundaries of genre whilst retaining traces of its organising structure.

What often results is creative expression through the communicating of an apprehension (and not final comprehension) of the phone film narrative as itself a creative act. Since this is not an equation to be calculated and balanced, we can only philosophically question the characteristically creative disruption at its heart. Therefore, the becoming-narrative of cell cinema is concomitant on accommodating, even diffusing, *otherness*: The filmmaker becoming the spectator and the spectator becoming central within the process of narrative meaning construction. Therefore, I must return to a pragmatic reasoning of the spectator's physical experience of cell cinema narrative.

As Massumi asks us to consider: '[T]he question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think? What new emotions does it make it possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body?' (Massumi, 1992). This idea foregrounds an important sensorial aspect of our engagement with phone films: It links us, bodily as spectators, to the body of the filmmaker and the shifting frame of the hand-held phone-camera.

3.3 - Thinking the Narrative

In perceptual-phenomenological terms that find a resonance in the philosophies of Merleau-Ponty and Bergson, we perceive our experience of screen time within a single temporal field, yet within this there are 'imaginative variations applied to this constitution' that phenomenology alone is unable to uncover (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 139). Distinct from the duration of on-screen events, the apparent elasticity of time, constituted by narrative time, remains unexplained. This reveals an apparent weakness in pursuing a solely phenomenological appraisal of what the phone film spectator *understands* when confronted by the narrative in a predominantly story-led form of filmic engagement such as cell cinema.

Two main conceptions of time run parallel to one another within cell cinema: the present time of the phenomenological event, and the narrative time of the fictive film. Drawn into proximity with one-another, they involve the screen event

and the shared world time of the film festival as moving image production and participatory event, yet separately they do not summarize the experience of cell cinema as either moving image production or participatory event.

Paul Ricoeur's work on narrated time serves as a particularly useful aid in bridging the apparent gap between providing an explanation for how the cell cinema audience *perceives* the phone film as sensed phenomenon, and what they *understand* is being communicated to them through the film's narrative (Ricoeur, 1988). In combining the two approaches: of a phenomenology of the object and understanding narratives in time, I seek to establish a linkage of the phone film as sensory media object with what subsequently becomes the story of cell cinema experience.

From the moment a filmmaker apprehends an object in the world before them and on the screen of a mobile phone, this moment describes an encounter with the real, which locates the filmmaker's objectified response to the encounter as happening at the same moment in lived time. We say that one occurs contemporaneously with the other. What this encounter initiates is the filmmaker's human response of *either* perceived objective reality, *or* its on-screen representation. Although both events may have occurred (effectively) simultaneously, in perceptual terms, attention cannot be split between the two and so perception must follow apprehension in the temporal flow.

Already, apprehension and then perception of the object (what might in the context of the phone film be regarded as *production*) has shifted to something of a different order. The object is thus propelled on a kind of forward trajectory of transmutation: re-produced as a moving image, involving a second order perception, giving way to recollection of it as an event in time, which itself pre-figures its re-screening on another mobile phone, cinema or other screen at some time later in historical time. And yet, enigmatically, we might say that the object remains fundamentally unchanged despite its repeated re-configurations. As Ricoeur says, 'This "re-" is thus described as a phenomenon of term by term "correspondence" in which, by hypothesis, difference lies not in the content – it is

the same melody produced and then reproduced – but in the mode of accomplishment’ (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 32, emphases in original).

On the subject of difference, can we say that the filmmaker’s experience (of seeing an image on-screen of the moving reality before the lens) is an equivalent of the spectator’s experience of seeing a reproduction of that image? If we cannot, this must be due to the passage of time affecting a different perception of an ostensibly similar image: The same event appears different for different people, or for the same person at a different time. This is what I mean by *second order perception*. As Ricoeur puts it: ‘The quasi character of re-presentation can only reproduce its sense but cannot produce it in an original manner’ (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 32).

The process of representation in so-called *real time* of an observed event does not simultaneously reproduce the *now*, but always involves the reproduction of an event experienced in the past. Just as two objects cannot be thought of simultaneously, attention shifts momentarily from the memory of a real event in time to the present image observed on the screen for perception to occur (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 33). One must always follow the other; never existing together in the same temporal space. Objectivity gives way to the subjectivity of representation, which ushers in the second order subjectivity of reproduction. Ricoeur’s question, ‘How does the reproduced now come to represent the past?’ is well put because it asks us to look at how notions of value is positioned within this relationship of temporal order (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 35). The object in the world may be perceived to be more *real* to the filmmaker viewing it on the mobile phone screen. However, does that power to signify *the real* change, when cell cinema spectators of different screens at film festivals view moving image representations of the object? In such circumstances, where participants share lived time, more seems to change than merely time and location. ‘In other words, the present is both what we are living and what realizes the expectations of a remembered past’ (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 35).

The problem to be solved then is that phenomenology is productive mainly as a philosophical method for observing the perception of present events. A philosophy appropriate to cell cinema discourse must expand upon considerations

of the phone film object, perceived as phenomena in the present, to encompass what Ricoeur contributes to our understanding of 'expectation'; of anticipated future events that will come to be perceived as present experience (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 37). 'The notion of a temporal position (*Zeitstelle*)' says Ricoeur, 'is the key concept in this passing from the subjective to the objective or, to put it a better way, from the "material" of lived experience to its temporal "form"' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 38. emphases in original). Thus, the temporal position that a phone film takes up is key to our understanding of the spectator's relationship to lived events. As Ricoeur continues; 'This "temporal position" is what permits us to apply the characteristic of present, past, or future to materially different "lived experiences" [...] It is in fact a question here of a contrasted individuation, by the identity of the object and by the identity of temporal position' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 38). The spectator observes the phone film object and identifies it as an event with a temporal position in the present. As Ricoeur observes, 'It is by modifying its distance with respect to the present that an event takes its place in time' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 39). The narrative depicting an event reproduces events occurring at some point earlier. Therefore, the narrative undertakes a function much more fundamental than carrying story and plot: It identifies the object, its temporal position, and the object's relationship to lived events or the version of reality that the film sets up. The narrative carries time, but also exists in time, which could be linear in the case of a film like *Fear Thy Not* (2010) is fragmentary in a film such as *The Fixer* (2012) or contain an apparent (but impossible) reversal of linear time in the case of *Sync* (2012).

The aporia (or perplexing problems) that mask our understanding of how phenomena intersect with time require the interjection of another way of thinking. Narrative tells a story in time and, so, telling the story of time, carries time with it. As Ricoeur puts it, 'temporality cannot be spoken of in the direct discourse of phenomenology, but rather requires the mediation of the indirect discourse of narration' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 241). Therefore, a consideration of 'the extra-temporal identity of the contents' of narrative time moves us closer to its possible commixture with phenomena to form a philosophy of cell cinema time.

What this line of reasoning then forces us to consider are questions of a particular kind of perception: of recollected, historical events. What might generally be regarded as memories could more accurately be described in the present context as perceptions of a filmmaker's pre-knowledge or intentions for filmic representation. Final certainty in the form of a transfer of thoughts from one individual to another (let alone a large audience) is probably impossible in the complex environment a film festival. I have tried to approach an understanding of typicalities or a general consensus of views in my use of ethnographic research methods, most obviously evidenced in the material in chapter 4. The phone film spectator may or may not experience a cell cinema screening with pre-knowledge or understanding of a film narrative, but the filmmaker repositioning their self as a spectator in a cell cinema festival certainly will. This scenario is far from unusual in many cell cinema festivals. Yet how can this kind of pre-knowledge be identified, or even be said to exist? Ricoeur says the answer lies 'in a split in intentionality at the very heart of the phenomenon of retention. An initial intentionality is turned toward the tempo object, which, although immanent, is already a constituted unity; the second is turned toward the modes of originarity, retention, and recollection' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 41). In other words, perception of pre-constituted historical phenomena always exists alongside, but never within, narrative time. This is so, regardless of whether we are considering a fictional narrative or one predicated on a representation of some form of factualness. The flashback (or flash-forward) disrupts narrative flow because it forces perception out of its current temporal field, into one of yet-to-be-perceived immanence.

However, what is all fictional narrative if not what Ricoeur calls 'this detour by way of representation in a determined time?' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 49). Could this straying into fictional narrative also indicate a movement away from fact or, in some sense at least, the narrativized veracity of recollected and represented events? The phone filmmaking of figures such as Jean-Claude Taki (2010a) and Max Schleser (2011) exemplifies just such a blurring of the boundaries between fiction, document and narration. Fiction incorporates the notion of something standing-in for something else designated *real*. However, questions of the concept of a *real* past are inherently problematic. 'Between the "real" past and "unreal" fiction, the

abyss seems unbridgeable' protests Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 101). Yet this suggested gap in our understanding is routinely bridged and worked through in phone films as in other forms of fiction film, without qualities of negativity being attributed to ideas of *unreality* in fictional representations.

Phone films, being both present phenomena and representations of historical time function, in Ricoeur's terms, as 'connections between lived time and universal time' and, as such, they are the carriers of narrative structures that 'contribute to the refiguration of historical time' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 104). In this way, the narrative adds another layer of meaning to the film's signification. Film reflects back to the world significant traces of the body in historical time. As Ricoeur puts it, the trace signifies 'something without making it appear' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 125). And so we return, if only in recognition of subjective traces of its original presence, to the body's power of signification.

I am careful to avoid drawing a qualitative distinction between lived time and the kind of fictive time we perceive played out in the phone film narrative. 'Unreal characters, we might say, have an unreal experience of time. Unreal, in the sense that the temporal marks of this experience do not have to be connected to the single spatial-temporal network constitutive of chronological time [...] Each fictive temporal experience unfolds its world, and each of these worlds is singular, incomparable, unique' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 128). Therefore, the fictive world of the phone film is free of historical time, unfettered in its ability to depict a mixture of temporalities, to represent a number of realities. In an effort to understand the importance of overcoming the apparent aporia of how perception and narrative is unable to encompass the other, to offer a more *joined-up* philosophical understanding of cell cinema, '[w]e must, therefore, connect these two expressions' says Ricoeur: 'the representation of a necessary connectivity of perception, and their relation in one time' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 50). Or, put simply, we must be cognisant of the ways in which narrative affects how we perceive cell cinema discourse. Thus, a phenomenology of cell cinema must be enlarged to include a consideration of how it also constructs and uses narrative time.

Directly relevant to working towards a growing understanding of cell cinema discourse, another question to ask would be how screen experience is in some way identical or similar for a filmmaker-as-spectator, and a spectator-as-spectator observing a shared moving image whose duration takes place in shared, lived time. Alternatively, the specialised case of a filmmaker and spectator watching a phone film together as it is recorded on the screen of a mobile phone can be examined with the help of Ricoeur's extrapolation of Husserl's notion of *coincidence*, meaning a synthesis or 'unifying the temporal flow' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 132). In this instance, fiction exerts its potential to 're-mytheciz[e] time' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 132). The unreality of the fiction film is thus mythologized one step further by being removed from an individuated temporal flow, and by throwing up questions of what constitutes real experience. These are equally questions of empathetic identification with the filmmaker by the spectator, as they are of identification with fictional narrative. Whilst recognising the problems encountered in representing time in all its conditions on screen, Ricoeur maintains that, 'the supreme test of our ambition [is] to reply adequately to the aporetics of time with a poetics of narrative' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 243). A mobile phone film provides such an example of non-linear narrative disruption with an apparently poetic intent is *18 heures 12* (Herisson, 2009). The way in which this film shatters and re-forms temporal flows can be described as 'the moment when internal time, freed from chronological constraints, collides with cosmic time, exalted by the contrast' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 137). Herisson deconstructs linear time, inserting moving images that alternately stretch and compress temporal representations of duration, in the service of his larger narrative project depicting events that happen over several weeks.

As Bergson and Merleau-Ponty, in their differing ways, have shown, because perception resides in the body as an individualised response to stimuli, the filmmaker and spectator can never live in each other's experience. Their shared experience of cell cinema phenomena is of the event of its happening and not its sensation. This can only be inferred, hinted at, or perhaps indicated within other discursive exchanges in cell cinema festivals - such as question and answer sessions following the screening of films.

There are clearly difficulties with relying on phenomenology alone to identify cell cinema's complete discursive regime. Its defining feature of human interaction is effectively sidelined. When a phone film spectator asks the question, 'Who made this film?' they are asking about the story of a person's life; a portion of historical time encapsulated in the narrative of a film's duration. This can be said to be the first level of narrative enquiry. Questions of who or what such a film is about, form secondary questions of filmic narrativity. Both reach towards notions of identity of the filmmaker, the subject and identification with time-based events. 'Without the recourse to narration' Ricoeur reminds us, 'the problem of personal identity would in fact be condemned to antimony with no solution' (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 246). The puzzle of what phone film phenomena mean to spectators would remain an incomplete mystery, existing without reaching understanding. The impulse for identification is implicit in fictional representation, and is further complicated when an audience that includes the filmmaker views phone films. Just as '[s]ubjects recognize themselves in the stories they tell about themselves', so too phone film spectators recognise themselves in the films that filmmakers tell about themselves (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 247).

3.4 A phenomenology of the Cell Cinema Body

Consideration of the human body drags thought back into the objective world, locating thought as being linked through the hand/body to the mobile phone. A useful analogy can be drawn here with the hand-eye coordination of the artist draughtsman, where marks on paper achieve the quality of visible thought rather than mechanistic expression: The unhindered flow of perception followed by decision-making achieves an almost unconscious fluidity or, as Deleuze puts it, 'The body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself, that which it has to overcome to reach thinking' (Deleuze, 1985, p. 182). The centrality of the body for cell cinema participants is similarly significant. The directness of connection of the hand-held mobile phone, digitally linking in a heightened manner one user to another, becomes an extension of the hand and the imagination behind it. The posture, attitude, movement of the body does not express thought differently, but

forces thinking about the nature of differ(a)nance in novel ways. Deleuze encapsulates the primacy of the body/camera relationship thus: 'It is through the body (and no longer through the intermediary of the body) that cinema forms its alliance with the spirit, with thought' (Deleuze, 1985, p. 182). In its preeminent incorporation of the body in its mediation of a thoughtful perception of phenomena, cell cinema embraces the potential for a cinema of the mind and body, of the concretized and the abstracted.

The intellectual cinema of the brain and the physical cinema of the body will find the source of their distinction elsewhere, a very variable source, whether with authors who are attracted by one of the two poles, or those who compose with both of them. (Deleuze, 1985, p. 197)

Notwithstanding the elitist project underlying Deleuze's critique, such a variable source as outlined above alternatively and simultaneously describes the narrative possibilities inherent in cell cinema. Deleuze admits his analysis of cinema does not extend to new media's relation to the cinematographic image but that it remains for others to complete or is still coming into being. Clearly, what Deleuze characterises as the electronic image has failed to bring about the death of cinema, so the two must continue to co-exist in some sort of uneasy equilibrium, each describing different realities, or similar realities in different ways.

The electronic image, that is, the televisual and video image, the numerical image coming into being, had either to transform cinema or replace it, to mark its death' [...] 'The new images no longer have any outside (out-of-field), any more than they are internationalized in a whole; rather, they have a right side and a reverse, reversible and non-superimposable, like a power to turn back on themselves (Deleuze, 1985, p. 254).

Here I must narrow my focus still further from a functional analysis of the phone film within cell cinema, to interrogate how various individuals and groups perceive cell cinema as a discursive regime in the world. Therefore, I concern myself with an exploration of what cell cinema means to its various participants,

what are their motivations for involvement in its various events from their positions of direct and indirect involvement. In response to an email questionnaire sent to several filmmakers, Sophie Jerram, a filmmaker participating in Mobile Innovation Network Aoteroa (MINA) in 2011, gave the following answers to a series of questions about her filmmaking experience and background:

Q: What has been your experience of film festivals as a filmmaker or audience member prior to the MINA festival?

A: My experience prior has been a) one of attending film festivals and enjoying the refined aspects of selection; b) having video 'films' being shown in small underground festivals in Europe (where I can only imagine the scene) and in New Zealand where the screening is usually to a very select audience of 10-100.

Q: How did you hear about MINA?

A: In person through Max at MINA in Wellington

Q: What was your opinion of the festival atmosphere at MINA, and how do you think it changes or adds to yours or the audience's experience of watching films?

A: MINA was quite small in Wellington but it was a nice opportunity to meet other filmmakers. The festival allows for critical reception and a more open reading of the films. (Questionnaire, 4 December 2011)

A second filmmaker, Donata Napoli offered the following replies, which provide opportunities for comparison, and indicate differences in prior experience, intentions and motivations for making films using the cameras of mobile phones, and for their participation as both filmmakers and spectators in cell cinema festivals:

Q: What's been your experience of film festivals as a filmmaker or audience member prior to the MINA festival?

A: I was at various film festivals both as filmmaker and audience member, and I always love them. I think it's great to see what others do and discover other filmmakers' work.

Q: How did you hear about MINA?

A: I heard it from other artists. (Questionnaire, 6 December 2011)

As I have already noted, participants in cell cinema festivals can be identified as primarily comprising (and sometimes overlapping) three broad categories of

filmmakers, spectators and those others that can be grouped together as *administrators*. In order to effectively undertake a meaningful appraisal of the existentialist nature of cell cinema, what follows is a philosophical model to discover and describe cell cinema as a contemporary phenomenon of moving image culture. (As such, it exists as one form of moving image culture among many; most obviously in relation to analogue and digital cinema.) Only through applying philosophical scrutiny in this way, do I believe we can access the fundamental characteristics of what cell cinema is, what it means to those intimately involved in its various manifestations, and to those others witnessing it from positions of exteriority, such as academics and uninvolved observers.

Cell cinema is first and foremost a phenomenon that exists to communicate meaning between and about those who take part in its discourse. The Disposable Film Festival (DFF) in 2013 used the slogan 'Film is too important to be left to the experts!' (Disposable Film Festival, 2013). What this message communicates to prospective attendees and participants in DFF is a sense of its inclusivity of those who are not expert, or who do not come from a position of professional filmmaking where *expertise* is given primacy. In my interview with him in 2011, Kwang-soo Son said that one of the mottos of the Seoul international Extreme-Short Image & Film Festival (SESIFF) was '[p]articipants can be audiences, or audiences can be participants' (Son, 2011). In this way, SESIFF sends out an invitation to anyone attending the festival that their participation will be encouraged and valued whether they are filmmakers or spectators, because, crucially, the form their participation takes can and does change.

Therefore, a study of the phone film and then cell cinema in that order has been foundational in developing a philosophy of cell cinema as, firstly, comprising phenomena and, secondly, as contemporary discursive practice. As I demonstrated in chapter 2, the ontological validity of the spectator's engagement with phone films, in their generality, rests on shifting foundations. The intrinsicality of a phone film's audio-visual aesthetic, and its linkage to technological developments of mobile phone equipment, mean that it expresses and reflects both contemporary visual culture and the symbolic use of domesticated apparatus. The phone film privileges the particularities of its technological form, foregrounding certain

relations, experiences and spectatorial effects over, say, the deconstruction of complex meaning within its various mediations. The phone film's technological apparatus both enables and limits the film's aesthetic characteristics. One such recurring aesthetic characteristic occurs in what can be described as the *ambulatory film*, involving the hand-held camera in describing the physical movement of the filmmaker whilst recording the image. It is an aesthetic of forward progression, but always one that communicates the sensation of physical experience at the moment of image capture, represented in moving images.

The perception of physical, bodily-sensed experience may lie at its metaphorical heart yet, as existential phenomena, the event of watching films made on a mobile phone (and on the screen of a mobile phone) speaks of a different kind of cinematic experience to that of traditional cinema, television or even computer screen. Maurice Merleau-Ponty employs the image of the blind man's walking stick to describe how the extension of the man's reach compensates or his otherwise physical limitations. His ambit of personal (bodily) space is, therefore, extended into what Merleau-Ponty calls 'an area of sensitivity', expanding his immediate sensory universe, which Merleau-Ponty likens to 'providing a parallel to sight' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 165) Thus, Merleau-Ponty phenomenologically locates such extending of bodily space firmly in the realm of the senses. This notion of going beyond physical boundaries serves as an important analogy of how, in the dual and complimentary circumstances of filming and viewing, a camera phone becomes an extension of the body holding it. Whilst a film is being shot, the mobile phone screen functions as a kind of bodily-connected, personal exhibitiv device. When viewed during image capture or as screened spectacle, the image equates to a bodily appendage. The screen adds to and extends sight as though visually reproduced memory were another sense.

To return to matters of basic functionality, in addition to its more prosaic uses as a mobile telephone and device for exchanging text messages, the camera of a mobile phone is a screen-based apparatus for exchanging audio-visual meaning. In this way, the mobile phone's screen becomes a hand-held proxy for both the camera and projector of the cinema theatre. The cerebral experience of cinema

viewing is, therefore, augmented by the sense of touch, of hand on screen, controlling viewing conditions and even when and where viewing takes place.

So, to reiterate points made in chapter 2, the hand-held mobile phone acts in parallel with the senses, connecting spectator to filmmaker not merely through the aural and visual senses, but through the sensation of touch. It becomes a personalized object of empathic participation in the physical experience of filmmaking, encouraging in the spectator a sense of capture, ownership and identity with the image. In the transformative process, from the capture of real events to the reception of representational moving images of the human body by the spectator, the phone film transitions from existing as a particularised kind of audio-visual artefact recording a filmmaker's personal experience, to become the material component of a potentially innovative discourse.

While perhaps possessing no knowledge of the narrative content of a given phone film prior to seeing it and, therefore, having little or no opportunity to identify with either character or plot, an individual phone film spectator can nonetheless exercise a level of control over the circumstances of their own spectatorship and how they will apprehend the narrative presented on the mobile phone screen. As an individuated spectator, they can be a passive or active agent, influencing such factors as temporal and spatial viewing conditions, duration of the screening, aspects of picture and sound quality, and even frame size as they move their hand-held phone closer or further away from their eyes. The major difference that engagement with a mobile phone screen has over, say, viewing films on a television or home computer, is that mobility of time and place that the engagement with the film takes place in is to a much greater degree controlled by the spectator.

The body's actions on these factors influences how film narrative is received and cognitive meaning created. Detailed narrative content is typically suppressed at the expense of personal control, which in turn supplies its own narrative. It typically becomes an engagement with a location-unspecific social process in addition to a reception of artistic expression. Simultaneously, it shares the formal

tracery of cinematic form, whilst foregrounding auxiliary characteristics that signal a latent medium specificity.

Phone films have the potential to simultaneously quote the realist cinema of the past, and to re-situate it within a different cultural idiom or digital expression of narrative discourse. The films themselves may share a naïve realist aesthetic with commercially available cinema, but the digital technologies by which they are apprehended and experienced mitigate the creation of meaning in the same way. The immediacy of inter-personal discourse within the phone film renders the more impersonal relating of a universalised narrative by an external creator superfluous. It is as if this kind of digital media has, not an anti-narrative tendency, but effects a re-coding of cinematic realism.

Phone films thereby function both as a mode of cinematic address, involving the projection of the image to audiences in cinematic spaces such as film festivals, and as a circumscribed yet individualised moving image spectacle when viewed on mobile phones. As Nicholas Rombes puts it: 'Hand-held screens have liberated not only the spectator from the theatre, but the screen as well' (Rombes, 2009, p. 65). Watching phone films on a mobile phone screen carries with it the promise of an enhanced encounter with the sensual, divorced from the physical distancing of theatrical projection. The screen of the taking camera phone, being in a sense inseparable from that of the viewing camera phone recreates (or procreates in a Benjamin-like reproducibility) the moving images it gathers.

Tracing back a philosophical line of reasoning from Deleuze to the earlier writing of Henri Bergson, reveals a physiological conception of the body's function in human perception: The body as central to image construction, its experience on the mobile phone screen, and the connection of maker with spectator. Bergson looks inside himself (as we all must) to offer the following: 'The truth is that my nervous system, interposed between the objects which affect my body and those which I can influence, is a mere conductor, transmitting, sending back, or inhibiting movement' (Bergson, 2004, p. 40). So, for Bergson, perception cannot be sited within the body's nervous system. It is affect by, but cannot itself affect, objects in the world outside the body. Therefore, the true characteristic of perception lies

elsewhere, in some other body-centred process or, as Bergson says, 'while the detail of perception is moulded exactly upon that of the nerves termed sensory, perception as a whole has its true and final explanation in the tendency of the body to movement' (Bergson, 2004, p. 41).

The process we then move through, which might therefore constitute a kind of coming to understand the world of cell cinema through its images, follows a trajectory from peripheral to body-centred experience. As Bergson goes on to explain, 'There is, first of all, the aggregate of images; and then, in this aggregate, there are "centres of action," from which the interesting images appear to be reflected: thus perceptions are born and actions made ready' (Bergson, 2004, p. 44). Thus, perception external to the body stimulates affective states within the body, such as the sensation of pleasure at seeing an image. Yet this sensation can only exist as an affective state in our own body or, as Bergson puts it, 'we cannot annihilate our body without destroying our sensations' (Bergson, 2004, p. 59). Without recognising the primacy of our own bodies in perceiving images, we cannot fully appreciate sensation as a personal experience. Sensation of film images is therefore merely theorised rather than lived, describing the intellectual concept and not the experience.

Bergson also reminds us that remembered sensation can often be more powerful than immediate experience, and that the more we dwell on the memory of a sensation, the closer we feel we come to, not a representation of sensation, but to a re-playing of that experience. However, he cautions us against making hasty conclusions, saying that 'because the memory of a sensation prolongs itself into that very sensation, the memory was a nascent sensation' (Bergson, 2004, p. 174). Repeated experience of watching a variety of films affirms our general perception of how screen images affect us sensually. Sensation comes to be regarded as more intense through bodily habit as well as memory. Repeated experience of watching films reinforces the notion in us that at times, as Bergson puts it, 'it is impossible for me to say whether what I feel is a slight sensation which I experience or a slight sensation which I imagine' (Bergson, 2004, p. 175). We should not wonder then that questions persist over film's potential for illusion. 'This is natural', Bergson continues, 'because the memory-image is already partly

sensation' (Bergson, 2004, p. 175). As with traditional cinema, the image on the mobile phone's screen is clearly there, conjuring up recollections of associated memory-images. Yet this is not merely the memory of phenomena. It is also another kind of phenomenon: of the body's sensation of remembered experience and, through that, perception of filmic events unfolding on the screen.

In a more direct consideration of phenomenological experience, Merleau-Ponty brings us securely back to show how the physical act of seeing is contingent on objective thought about the world. He stresses that to see is 'a certain manner of approaching the object, the "gaze" in short, which is as indubitable as my own thought, as directly known by me' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, pp. 77 – 78). With still more relevance for our perceptions of the moving image he says, 'My visual body is certainly an object as far as its parts far removed from my head are concerned, but as we come nearer to the eyes, it becomes divorced from objects' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 105). So we might infer from this that the converse will be true; that the closer the screen is to the eyes, the more the peripheral vision is filled with the moving image which also becomes divorced from external objects outside our body. In this way, the phone filmmaker, through the hand-held phone screen, establishes a channel of reference more directly aligned with that of the spectator: a virtual yet sensory conduit for bodily-felt experience across which knowledge of the Other can travel.

Thus the permanence of one's own body, if only the classical psychology had analysed it, might have led to the body no longer conceived as an object of the world, but as our means of communication with it, to the world no longer conceived of as a collection of determinate objects, but as the horizon latent in all our experience and itself ever-present and anterior to every determining thought. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 106)

What this Bergsonian conception of the human body's role in the perception and communication and of experience shows is as follows: The body constitutes a mediating influence, as does the mobile phone screen and the cell cinema festival. Moreover, the intimate physical connection of the body with the mobile phone of

the filmmaker, and the similar linkage of the phone film spectator with the moving image on the mobile phone screen, connects perceptually the filmmaker with spectator. Thus, together with the mobile phone screen, the body is utilised as a component within an apparatus to communicate filmed narrative. In cell cinema, it becomes a conduit for filmic expression of empathic experience.

By way of example, the mobile phone film *Colors: We The People* (Laurent, 2010) foregoes a realistic representation of linear time to concentrate the spectator's gaze on the movement of bodies through urban space. Similarly, in *Fear Thy Not* (Sherman, 2010) takes the spectator with her on a walk along a path beside a canal, as she continually repeats an incantatory, biblical phrase, all the while examining her own hand placed prominently in the frame. In these films, the body is not merely implicated but centrally featured as a crucial element of *mise en scene* and psychological connectivity.

A general audience observation of visual digital genres, such as games, would reveal them as foregrounding a decorative appearance. However important, they are potentially different rather than lesser forms of art and culture, playing up form, style, surface, artifice and spectacle and, most importantly in the present context, of sensation. Is it not possible, therefore, to mount a positive case for such an aesthetic? Should we not skate over the possibility that phone films might indeed be *decorative* and *superficial*, rather than media of sagacious communication or complex meaning, but does this mean this aesthetic characteristic makes them a lesser or greater form of artistic expression within moving image culture? Could the phone film's technological reproducibility even suggest the heralding of a new poetics of contemporary media? The digital reproducibility of identical copies of a virtual original, distinguishable only in the moment of their spectatorship as life event, certainly asks new questions of filmmakers and audiences. Whilst avoiding making a commitment, here at least, to a crude value judgement of phone films as statements of artistic intent, I contend that the particular spectatorial conditions of phone film's spectatorship indeed point toward the possibility of a new poetics of filmic expression - as the representation of perceived sensations on a mobile phone screen. The moving image is the representation of someone's felt, sensory experience in the world,

empathetically experienced in a particularly direct manner by another human being, via the screen of a mobile phone.

The flow of moving images and sounds across the hand-held mobile phone lends their screens an appearance of elasticity, variability and transience. Images arrive, occupy a portion of the spectator's sensory field with sound and vision, and then leave. In this way mobile phone screens designate circuits of transient production and exhibition as much as they constitute display formats. Even before we consider their choice of formal subject matter, their spectatorial characteristics are often transient and fleeting, leaving only a residue of remembered sensations. Phone films represent a link between temporarily and spatially dispersed spectatorial conditions, and can perhaps also be seen as an informal network built to move film texts around. In part, they contribute to an unannounced political project.

The mobile phone and the human gaze forge a bridging link between people, connecting through vision, appealing to an immediate if mediated sensory experience. As Merleau-Ponty says, 'to look at the object is to plunge oneself into it' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 78). The mobile phone and the human gaze forge a link between people, a bridge to the *Other* inferred by a bodily connection through vision, appealing to an immediate if mediated sensory experience.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter, placed centrally in the thesis, examines the nature, appearance and, to whatever degree it might be possible, the experience of participation in cell cinema. It does so by questioning the phenomenological basis for a number of interrelated factors below. In my introductory remarks, I indicated that cell cinema consists primarily of phenomena located in human experience, but that this observation revealed only a partial picture. This realisation now introduces a discussion of phenomenology's applicability as a philosophical method, appropriate to uncover the essential qualities of cell cinema participation with technologised yet experiential phenomena.

My discussion of the transnational, socio-cultural impulse of cell cinema exhibition and shared narrativity, led me to reassess the arguments around the Western or Euro-centric philosophical traditions. These were not found to pertain to cell cinema. Overtly determining aspects of nationality do not appear to be intrinsic to cell cinema. Equally important, many of cell cinema's cultural signifiers were shown to subvert or cross boundaries of geography and economic territorialisation with post-digital ease.

Within a discussion of cell cinema visuality and the moving image, the relationship of filmmaker and spectator led to what I termed the rhizomatic screen. Aspects of a Deleuzeian *deterritorialization* of the mobile phone screen and participant nexus revealed a blurring of the boundaries of identity, replacing linear connectivity with multiple opportunities for empathy. My discussion of the *rhizomatic screen* and *cellular narratives* introduced the idea of regarding participants in phone film festivals as *cells* with fluid or changing identities, and of the narratives they engage with having a rhizomatic rather than linear structure. This introduced a consideration of the broader subject of cell cinema as a process of contemporary socio-cultural production, which communicates meaning between its participants in cellular, rhizomatic ways. By these means, the chapter has presented a social semiotics of how cell cinema provides a vehicle for expressions of the self, notions of identity, and the communication of various aspects of socially determined meaning through the making and participation in the sharing of phone films.

In the section *Thinking The Narrative*, I drew primarily on the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur's philosophy of time, narrative and temporal order. These ideas provided the platform from which to argue how cell cinema participants perceive, engage with and experience phone film narrativity. It was found that cell cinema narrativity, existing within the relationship of filmmaker-spectator and spectator-spectator, affects a temporal flow that disrupts or overlays narrative with an additional sub-narrative of empathetic identification.

Recognising the need to provide a more scopic philosophy of cell cinema that illuminates its complex manifestations, the last section of this chapter has provided

a phenomenological account of the human body in cell cinema. It found that the physicality of cell cinema participation itself engenders sensual involvement with moving images. Phone film examples showed that the human body of the filmmaker to be, not incidental to cell cinema's directing of the spectatorial gaze, but central to shaping identity and empathy. The mobile phone camera becomes a personal device that extends perception of the body and objects extensive of its surface. In other words, the body, joined by the mobile phone camera, constitutes cell cinema's apparatus of mediation, bridging the perceptual gap between the bodies of the filmmaker and spectator.

Chapter 4. Showing, Sharing, Exhibiting

The primary purpose of this chapter is to respond to a number of features that emerged with regard to how phone films are exhibited and engaged with at cell cinema festivals held between 2010 and 2014. During this period, I conducted ethnographic research, gathered data and other findings while a participant observer at a number of festivals over this period. Extensive reference will be made to responses to interviews I conducted at festivals in Paris, France; Holmfirth, United Kingdom; Seoul and Jeonju, Republic of Korea; Geneva, Switzerland; Sydney, Australia; Wellington, New Zealand and San Francisco, USA. Materials referenced include transcripts of interviews, responses to standardised questionnaires, and written journal notes made during my attendance at the festivals.⁸

Introducing the chapter are accounts given by several organisers of cell cinema festivals. Their responses during interviews indicate their motivations and intentions for devising and programming festivals for phone filmmaking. They have each established their respective festivals at an early stage in the development of filmmaking using the cameras of mobile phones and associated technologies. What

⁸ During field trips gathering research, I was often a foreigner in another country, trying to make myself understood in a second language. In the resulting interviews with cell cinema festival professionals, filmmakers and spectators, for whom English was a second or other language, I was necessarily asking my respondents to make a similar shift in translating their thoughts and speech during the interviews with them. My transcripts of interviewee's verbal responses should therefore be similarly translated from the broken or halting English given here. Transcripts of interviews have had the 'disfluencies', such verbalised non-words such as 'er' and 'um', removed to aid the clarity with which they communicate the original sense of the responses (Bortfeld et al, 2001). I should stress that I regard my transcripts to be entirely representative of replies given and, therefore, easily comprehensible without losing any sense of the meanings contained in the original question and answer exchanges.

is also important to note is how their responses indicate a range of purposes and functions, which are intended or hoped for when planning and setting up cell cinema festivals in different parts of the world. In addition to providing a brief history of how cell cinema festivals have come into being during their very short history, these introductory accounts provide an overview of the current stage in cell cinema's global development.

Therefore, within four sections, the chapter uses the responses from interviewees, each attending cell cinema festivals as organisers, filmmakers and spectator-participants, to extract themes and recurring topics. These are grouped together to indicate a number of major factors that emerge as central to the cell cinema phenomenon of showing, sharing and exhibiting phone films between participants at international film festival events.

Section 4.1 draws on a number of interview responses to explore notions of cell cinema's *locatedness*, its reliance on and utilisation of physical spaces and locations for festivals to happen and be participated in. Interview questions are chosen to challenge preconceptions of the importance of tourism to film festivals generally, and for cell cinema festivals in particular. Ideas of the importance and enjoyment of the pleasurable aspects of *places* and *spaces* are investigated within the interviewee's responses.

Section 4.2 gathers observations and reflections on the place of festival competitions, and the subject of *cinophilia* (the love of cinema) and the interviewee's understanding of it in relation to cell cinema. The accounts given by interviewees are analysed for evidence of a range of philosophies about the value of engagement with moving images on screens of various kinds and sizes.

Section 4.3 draws on both findings from my participant observations of cell cinema festivals, and the responses given by spectator-participants, filmmaker-participants and other festival professionals to a range of related interview questions, which reveals important social and cultural impulses at the heart of their engagement with cell cinema. In this way, the section explores the ways in which participants contribute to the establishment of *knowledge communities*: centres of expertise and developing proficiency in the practice of phone filmmaking and cell

cinema participation. These *participatory knowledge communities* emerge as by-products of engagement with cell cinema, which encourages and shapes the forms participation takes in the kinds of workshops and informal education/training environments addressed on page 182. Finally, in section 4.4 I hypothesise that cell cinema becomes a *culturalising event*, wherein the cultural artefacts and events that comprise its existence mould its mode of participatory experience in certain ways that are specific to it.

In preparation for embarking on a discussion in section 4.1 of *Place, Space, Location*, it will be valuable to first sketch a brief historical background that shows how cell cinema festivals have come into being. Relying on interviews conducted with a number of festival organisers and programmers in influential decision-making positions, this first section will explain the genesis and making, sharing and exhibiting mobile phone films in festivals with physical locations, and their personal motivations and impulses for being involved.

One of the first cell cinema festivals I attended during the research-gathering period of this project was the 2010 Pocket Films Festival in Paris, France (PFF). The following are extracts from a long interview I conducted with Benoit Labourdette, the *Coordination generale* of PFF:

So, five years ago, I wanted to be partner with cultural institutions and the *Forum des Images* said ok, let's do something together and said they had a lot of money and were supporting it etcetera. So the *Forum des Images* contacted me to imagine what to do and to do it. So I imagined this concept. And the principle was to lend mobile phones to artists. (Labourdette, 2010)

The *Forum des Images* is a *cinemateque* located within a shopping centre (*Forum des Halles*) in central Paris. Therefore, PFF is situated The Pocket Films Festival's location, within the *cinemateque* of the *Forum des Images*, is itself sited within one of Paris' largest shopping centres, the *Forum des Halles*. This feature foregrounds a seeming disparity between the socialised inclusivity of cell cinema discourse and the commercial, retail environment of the urban shopping centre. It places PFF in a very public space where the public pass by, shop and conduct business other than

film viewing, but with the attendant opportunity to engage with cinema should they wish to do so. The *Forum des Images* offers (almost) free exchange of cultural or intellectual property, while the *Forum des Halles* promises the more prosaic satisfactions of commodification and artificially stimulated desire.

Labourdette's remarks show that a major motivation for his involvement in PFF was, more immediately than involving the general public, to explore artists' possible uses of mobile technologies for filmmaking. My own preparation for attending 6th Pocket Films Festival from 18 to 20 June 2010 had been mainly online by consulting information on the PFF website (Available at <http://www.festivalpocketfilms.fr/spip.php?rubrique91>). Therefore, in common with many or most prospective attendees at that time, PFF was little more than the idea for me, or the promise of a festival-type event with gala screenings, awards and special film-related activities.

Mobile Screenfest in Sydney, Australia, was organised and programmed by Avnesh Ratnanesan, the managing director of *Araya Pictures*. Again online via the website and by email, I had followed developments leading up to the competitions deadline for submissions and the Awards Ceremony on 26 October 2011. Activity on the Mobile Screenfest website was almost continuous; maintaining a steady flow of information, encouragement to participate in networking and workshop-type activities, and updates on the progress of events. Leading up to what was promoted on these various platforms as the culminating event of the festival, the Awards Ceremony, I followed activities on their *Facebook* page, which had served to build anticipation of the screenings and awarding of prizes. The general tone communicated by the publicity machine behind Mobile Screenfest, therefore, was of an enthusiast-led series of events, where elements of competition, collaborative engagement, reaching out to a wider public, education in a broad sense, excitement, fun and competitive spirit were communicated as some of the benefits of participation. The Araya Pictures office was located in Bondi Junction, Sydney. The office base indicates that the festival happens in various temporary venues in the city, while the hub of the festival organisation is located in a commercial/residential building within a mixed use block, just a ten minute train journey east of central Sydney. In our first meeting I asked Ratnanesan about the

form Araya Picture's operations take, and the international, social and commercial environment Mobile Screenfest in particular exists in:

Yeah, so now we're kind've in a space where we're evolving. Now we've done two years. [...] In year one we had the first, Australia's first, mobile film festival of its kind, where all the films were shown on mobile phones. In year two, we had the first time where these films were brought to the cinema screen, an actual, real cinema screen. So we had Event Cinemas in George Street, which is the premier cinema in Australia, in Sydney y'know. These mobile films screened on the big cinema screen, people love this. And audiences couldn't tell they were shot on mobiles for some of the films. (Ratnanesan, 2011)

Therefore, Mobile Screenfest is something of a hybrid cell cinema festival with many preparatory, promotional elements conducted online. The online presence was initially manifested through a website and a number of *Facebook* activities. In combination, this served to develop a level of enthusiasm and engagement with the festival through invitations to filmmakers to enter their films for competitions and attend a series of workshops. This 'pre-event' publicity and 'invitations to become involved' moves towards a focal point at a showcase screening of winning films and Awards Ceremony located at the prestigious Event Cinema on George Street in central Sydney. In my two days of discussions with Ratnanesan, some themes or recurring topics cropped up more than once: the problems of securing the right amount and kinds of sponsorship for the festival, making the festival self-sustaining in order for it to continue in future years, and achieving a USP for the festival to make it stand out from the over 400 other film festivals in Australia currently being held during the course of a year.

The following week I interviewed Max Schleser in Wellington, New Zealand prior to the start of the *Mobile Innovation Network Aotearoa* (MINA) series of screenings and events co-founded by Schleser and Laurent Antonczak. The MINA events consisted of two components: The International Mobile Innovation Screening 2011 from 23 – 26 November, at The Film Archive, Wellington, and the MINA Mobile Creativity and Innovation Symposium on 26 November 2011 at Massey University in Wellington. Unsurprisingly, the largest audience for any of the screenings was on

the opening night. I managed to interview three audience members, one of whom had heard a local radio interview with Schleser promoting the screenings and was encouraged to attend. As Schleser related to me during the interview below, the size of the audience for the screenings was not an important issue for him. The screenings had received financial and other support from Wellington's *Film Archive*, and the symposium directly from Massey University. Therefore, a clear comparison can be made between the cultural and educational character of the sponsorship for the MINA events, and *Mobile Screenfest*, where the latter required corporate/commercial sponsorship and other financial backing to cover wages, prizes, venue hire, running costs etc. I asked Schleser, why he had chosen to organise festivals for films made on mobile phones, rather than simply screening those films online. During a series of meetings, Schleser explained the background to MINA's activities in New Zealand:

For MINA [...] we're very much opening up a sort of new area of film in New Zealand. That's been around and people might be upset about it, and I think that's a very good character. There's a very good arts scene, so [...] I think it's the right place to do those things, but also at the same time, we were working with different colleagues in Auckland to, [...] get a more New Zealand sort of project, so to say. So that screenings for filmmakers for New Zealand film. (Schleser, 2011)

Clearly, for Schleser, MINA's location in New Zealand was of central importance, linking MINA to aspects of national identity and the arts scene in Wellington. Speaking about his own introduction to mobile filmmaking, Schleser related one of his early experimental films that provided a stimulus for his later work:

It was an interesting project called *Max With A Keitai*. It was very much about a very bare assessment to *The Man With a Movie Camera*. [...] For me [...] when I started making films with mobile phones, in 2006. [...] When the first Nokia came out, I'd finished a film already on Super 8. And it was a short film. It was looking into how there was one half of the film was done on Super 8, another other one was digital. It was very interesting to see how the city can be looked, to see it portrayed in different ways through the aesthetics of film; of mobile documentary image like this. And after finishing the film [...] I was in a phone shop, and getting a new phone [...] I

said 'Great. There's a camera on that phone, y'know'. So I was like, 'Sure. You can make a movie with that'. He said 'No, it's only like for photos and that'. There I was still like, It makes video, right? [...] Like a kid, let's see if it works, y'know, The very first film was like very different, cos there was no technical advice that even existed, or you could transfer MP3 files from your phone to your computer and, of course, that was, y'know, a simple thing to sort in a way, just a technical thing. But then the more creative challenge was to [...] find out how we could work with such low-resolution images, and [um]. So when I went to Japan, I filmed, I'd recently come to Japan, so I decided to, y'know, make a film about Japanese cities, and I arranged, got my theme and it was filming cities. So it was very interesting. And that was my work, y'know, All my previous films were, y'know, were more like expanding on filming with the mobile phone in new areas, and, so, yeah, that was lucky, and I was thinking about filmmaking theory and working [...] with a lot of mobile phone footage. Cos I think when I'd filmed everything I think I ended up, like, filming about eighty hours of footage. Which was quite crazy, but the good thing was that I had a weblog for every day when I was in Japan. [...] Every second day, I was looking through my footage, upload the footage, because that was a way for me to think about, to find out what works with the mobile, because I'd never filmed with a mobile phone before. (Schleser, 2011)

Schleser's experiments in mobile filmmaking place him as a filmmaker operating at a time very near to the beginning of the short history of film festivals for mobile phone filmmaking (see Mulholland, 2005; Lytle, 2007):

That was in [...] 2007. [...] You couldn't find many references in 2006, because [...] a few people had started thinking about making films with mobile phones, but [...] none of the films came out yet. So you worked in an area where you didn't have any references, didn't have any resources, to look into, like, y'know, what about that body of work in existence. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

Schleser went on to connect his introduction to documentary, mobile filmmaking and stylistic approach to the work of Dziga Vertov, Jan Ivens, the Surrealists, Dadaists and the Russian Constructionists, saying:

There was little European image and representing movement to tell the story. And that worked very successful for me with mobile phone filmmaking. So [...] I don't know about reinventing the wheel [...] given that tradition and pushing that further – the mobile wheel, and which I think works quite well. To see it now, the editing process works, pushing mobile phone filmmaking in a very nice way. So it's not

necessarily starting from a story [...] but building, filming lots of footage when you're out and about. And then you have to assemble all [...] in the editing. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

Schleser's remarks reveal a motivation for his filmmaking that stems from a position of art practice. His references and experimental approach are linked to a period of filmmaking and cinema history, and his own early filmmaking efforts are conducted at a time when few filmmakers are knowledgeable about mobile phone technology and its potential as a part of filmmaking apparatus. In such a contextualised filmmaking environment, experiment and exploration are found to be a logical approach to take in the face of few alternative options for aesthetic references or technological solutions to the limited capabilities of mobile phone cameras.

The first Holmfirth Film Festival took place from 22 to 29 May 2010. My decision to attend the festival as an observer was motivated by its inclusion of a section in the Beyond The Summer Wine short film competition, that promised to feature films made on mobile phones. Runners up in this category were a group of young girls, Lily and The Crew, for their film *7/4 Random News at Holmfirth*. I asked them the following questions about how they prepared for the festival, and their motivation for entering their film into the short film competition, to which Lily gave the following replies:

Q: How did you get to know about the competition for mobile phone films?

A: At School, there were some posters around, and in the [...] school bulletin."

Q: Did you look at it on the website?

A: Yeah, I had a look at it on the website.

Q: Did any of your friends get involved, or was it just you; you were just the ones who had the initiative to go and do it?

A: One of my friends was going to get involved, but she forgot about it.

Q: Why did you want to make a film for a competition?

A: We'd been doing videos on the Internet, and thought this would be a good opportunity to show some of our skills as well. (Lily and The Crew, 2010)

The following exchange, conducted with Jean-Claude Taki, a more experienced filmmaker participating in PFF in 2010, provides a different perspective on similar issues. Their responses will be discussed, along with those from other filmmakers, a little later:

Q: How did you get to know about the competition for mobile phone films?

A: Five years ago, the Forum des Images contacted me as a cineaste, musician and filmmaker for my point of view.

Q: What was your experience of filmmaking before the Pocket Film Festival?

A: I was mainly fiction and some documentaries, but not docufiction. I believe there is no documentary, only fiction. When we pick up a camera it's interpretation. (Taki, 2010b)

What the foregoing indicates is a range of filmmakers' motivations for participating in cell cinema festivals. The responses given by the young and inexperienced Lily and The Crew reveal that their introduction to the possibility of making a film using their mobile phone cameras, and entering it into a festival competition, originated from their online activity. They had some limited experience of making and posting videos online in the past, and had the vague intention of testing themselves, possibly improving their filmmaking skills and finding out what was possible with limited resources in a slightly speculative, unfocussed way. In this way, Lily and The Crew made the transition from inhabiting an online, virtual cyberspace to a physical space located in the Holmfirth Film Festival. Chayko believes that 'cyberspace is the cognitive analogue to physical space. It is a kind of mental habitat where portable communities "gather" and where portable communities can be said to be situated' (Chayko, 2008, p 22). Therefore, cell cinema space is extensive of a merely mental environment, not analogous to cyberspace but more accurately another kind of space: the physical, participatory space of the cell cinema festival.

Taki's responses illustrate the firm opinions and clear intentions of a more experienced filmmaker than Lily and The Crew, a 'cineaste', as he calls himself. In this, we are perhaps given the two extremes in the range of phone filmmaker's

experience, prior to entering their films in a cell cinema festival. It is significant that Taki describes his contribution to the Pocket Films Festival as one of providing his 'point of view'. This remark reflects Deely's 'perspective or a point of view', on which I based my social semiotics of the phone film in chapter 2 (Deely, 1990, p. 10). Although entirely clear about his use of the mobile phone camera as a device of interpretation, Taki remains equally clear that, in being invited to participate as a filmmaker in a cell cinema festival, he is only able to provide a personal perspective in his filmmaking.

This introduction to the pre-history that the three main groups of participants have before attending cell cinema festivals is not yet complete. For the perspective of the phone film spectator, the following exchanges indicate a range of explanations of their prior knowledge of cell cinema festivals and motivation to participate. I began my interview with Tetsu Kono, a spectator at the 2011 Seoul Extreme Short Image and Film Festival (SESIFF), by asking him what had been his general experience of watching films before his attendance at SESIFF:

This is my first time experience of a film festival. But one time I have a friend whose major is in the film business, who wants to be in the film business, so he's faced some problems, trying to get students. But that was quite a long business you know. Fifteen minutes. (Kono, 2011)

Kono's response identifies him as someone new to film festivals generally, therefore, I wanted to get a better impression of why this kind of first-time participant would make the long journey from Japan to South Korea to participate in a film festival for filmmaking on mobile phone cameras, as their first experience of attending any kind of film festival. Therefore, I went on to ask him a second general question about what it is that attracts him to watching films on mobile phones, or other types of screens:

I'm thinking about starting a career. Film is something I'm thinking of. Maybe I will have plans to be a talented filmmaker. In order to do that, you need to prepare some short film, to submit to get some investment. So I wanna get something from this kind of festival. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

For another example, Joo-yeon Yoo, a female spectator-participant at the 2011 Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF), spoke about what she considered special about coming to a film festival:

We can see many types of movies, not released in movie theatres. Also, the atmosphere is better at festivals where people are quiet, not like in the regular movie theatre. (Yoo, 2011)

In an effort to reveal further aspects of the level of pre-knowledge of JIFF that spectator-participants had before attending JIFF I asked a young, male Sean Jung, what his awareness of the competition for mobile phone films at JIFF had been before coming to Jeonju: 'Yes, I knew about the festival and the section for mobile phones' (Interview, 2 May 2011). I followed this question by asking Jung if he had any experience of filmmaking before JIFF: 'I hadn't made films, but I watch films on my iPhone and laptop. I also like films made on the iPhone. I've seen the films of Chan wook Park' (*Ibid.*, 2 May 2011). This last response by Jung apparently refers to the South Korean film *Paranmanjang (Night Fishing)* (2011), directed by Chan-kyong Park and Chan-wook Park. One of the longest phone films, at 33.18 minutes running time, *Night Fishing* is a primary example of the *Professionalist* phone film discussed in chapter 2.

To obtain the cell cinema festival professional's view on what is important in the first place about the festival having a physical location, I interviewed Kwang-soo Son, the Festival Programmer of SESIFF. His responses were given partly through his translator, Oh-eun Hye (English adopted name, 'Grace') and partly in his own voice, indicated below as 'K-s'. I began by asking him why organise a festival to incorporate films made on mobile phones, rather than simply screening these films online:

Grace: The motto of the festival is that 'Anyone can make a movie', so mobile is a kind of new tool: It is easy. So that is why [I] want to show that using mobile phone in order to make movies.

K-s: And the way you see the movie is most important. (Son, 2011)

I continued by asking Son if the SESIFF section for mobile phone films was aimed at a particular kind of filmmaker, or audience or social group: 'Yes. It's very important to be a new film festival, I think (*Ibid.*, 2011). This led me to ask a supplementary question about whether he considered SESIFF to be intended for a special filmmaker, or a special audience:

The making of our motto is that participants can be audiences, or audiences can be participants. [...] I think, mobile is (...) neutral, and it is very easy to make a movie. [...] A mobile is, like, you can enjoy a cell phone everyday. It's very comfortable. And if you want to make a movie, you can just pick it up and just shoot it, right? (*Ibid.*, 2011)

Son's comments through his translator Grace are revealing of a political, and even moral, subtext to his role as Programmer for SESIFF. In common with other festival Programmers and Organisers I will refer to in this chapter, Son's responses communicate an ambition for his festival to be inclusive of participants who may normally perceive of themselves as occupying discrete groups, such as filmmakers or spectators. When I directed similar questions to Max Schleser, less than two months after SESIFF, at MINA in Wellington, New Zealand, his responses were much more expansive:

For me, the great thing that was truly reflected in the MINA programme was that we go from [...] some films that we'd produced in community groups, by people who have never made a film before, all the way to some people that have been invited to show their films between others. So this is the spectrum I'd say there can be. And I think we have to also be respectful of the audience where there are some people, y'know [...] who [...] heard about MINA on the radio and came to the screening, and we had some people we invited cos they might be interested and we want to work with them in the future [...] Needless to say [...] they should know about MINA, cos

that's [...] very much the area that they work in. [...] So [...] I feel [...] that's a race for the future. You start with the mobile phone filmmaking workshop that we do at the moment. That's [...] *Modernscreen*. Which is a digital media workshop, but it's more for professionals. Like [...] filmmakers, photographers, people from advertising who want to go and explore new ideas about mobiles. And then you've got on the other side [...] more community-based projects. So we work with, y'know, [...] young people. So maybe, for in the future, it will be more a feature of arts programming for the year. (Schleser, 2011)

In my interviews with Avnesh Ratnanesan regarding Mobile Screenfest, his responses to similar questions revealed a noticeable preoccupation with considerations of the needs, opinions and reactions of his festival's sponsors.

I think some of the sponsors [...] really like the festival and the event and stuff like that. And we're still getting good positive signs from other sponsors. [...] Certainly those that were there have really enjoyed the event: enjoyed the networking, the other VIPs and filmmakers. [...] But by and large, part of the reason [...] why they do this is it's something new and unique for them to get involved in. [...] I think we're still waiting for some more feedback. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

There is an anxiety in Ratnanesan's responses that suggests he is somewhat preoccupied with a desire to please his sponsors, by providing a programme of films and festival attendees who they can network with in a relaxed environment. Therefore, I questioned him further regarding his sponsor's exposure to regular filmmaking, traditional filmmaking, or whether they'd had previous experience of the kind of underground, *guerrilla* filmmaking that his festival was more concerned enabling and attracting:

Yeah, I think, I think [er], y'know, for our sponsors, some of the sponsors we had last year, they [er] they already had a sense or feel for what it is about. And [er] I think you're right when you say there's this underground, guerrilla thing [uh] because, last year I think our venue was a bit more underground/guerrilla and I think this year, it was a bit more cool and funky. This year was a bit more upmarket and trendy. (*Ibid.*, 2011b)

In the case of Mobile Screenfest at least, but also in common with other contemporary film festivals, what Ratnanesan's responses reveal is that cell cinema festivals can sometimes be 'professional institutions run by entrepreneurial managers and lobbyists as much as by passionate cinephiles' (de Valck and Loist, 2009). For relatively small cell cinema festivals, such as Mobile Screenfest, with ambitions to grow and continue in further years, the imperative to adjust programming in alignment with the needs of sponsors can be more than pragmatic decision-making. Thus, for many cell cinema festivals, the stability of sponsorship and support in the shape of venues, prizes and links to opportunities for promotion can be an important influence on the festival's location, structure, programming and, therefore, its planning.

4.1 Space, Place, Location

Notions of what kind of place or city the cell cinema festival is located appears to have great importance for bodies and organisations associated in peripheral or secondary ways with the festival's economic health and cultural success. As Crespi-Valbona and Richards (2007) put it, festivals function 'as a catalyst for urban renewal, attracting tourists and capital investments, enhancing a city's image and creating new jobs'. As introduced on page 136, interview questions have been designed to reveal important issues of locatedness and the specific place chosen as venues for cell cinema festivals. My interviews with Ratnanesan highlight the importance these factors had for Mobile Screenfest's organisation, and his plans and calculations of likely economic success for his festival. I asked Ratnanesan for his views on the importance of the location in Sydney in drawing visitors to the festival, and Mobile Screenfest's relationship with aspects of tourism:

The situation in Australia is [...] we have four hundred film festivals. [...] Sydney Film Festival attracts tourists [...] and that's a massive, massive festival. Hundred and ten thousand people, and they sort of [...] Even the body that supports events in New South Wales, *Destination New South Wales*, the government body that supports tourism, puts money into Sydney Film Festival. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

Eliciting another kind of response, I addressed the same question to Son regarding SESIFF, regard its possible or actual links with Seoul and/or South Korean tourism. Son expressed considerations more for the spectator-participants visiting his festival than other groups:

Grace: SESIFF is, like, you can see movies, and just make movies, so participants comes into SESIFF, and he's like, they can have opportunity to travel. So it is like the power of SESIFF is like, brings people to Korea, so they can have opportunity to go around Korea, go all around Korea. So, it is like, it is not the intention, it's a kind of way.

K-s: Now what I have is dream, of my dream. (Son, 2011)

Reflecting the frequent incidence of cell cinema festivals being located in well-known cities, The Pocket Film Festival's (PFF) location in Paris suggested that I address similar questions to Benoit Labourdette. Noting that Paris, like London, is a location for tourism, I asked him whether, or to what extent, the festival is important for Paris:

You know, Paris, it's important to be in Paris because this is the capital and [...] it gives some importance too. [...] You know, the problem of Paris is that when you make an event in Paris, there are so many events. In Cannes, there are not so many events. [...] In Paris, it's good for abroad, you know. There are lots of other festivals of the same kind, or [...] other cultural situations [...] ask us to show movies etcetera. And in this relationship, Paris is quite important because it is the capital. [...] This is an event from France. It's from Paris too, but it should be in other places. For example, we work with [...] a very important cinema school. Its name is Le Fresnoy. It's in the north of France. And this cinema school is famous around the world. And it's in France, it's not in Paris. That's not a problem. [...] So next year, the event will be in a different town in France, [...] but you know the most important is the dynamic [...]. And this is not related to a place. (Labourdette, 2010)

For Labourdette, PFF's location in Paris was not incidental, but was not a wholly positive situation. The cultural currency afforded by his festival being located in the capital city of France, is balanced for him by the possibility for PFF to be lost in a sea of competing cultural attractions. However, as Labourdette attests, on the subject of making decisions about festival themes, matters of programming and general planning, Festival Organisers and Programmers have a certain amount of control over location. Therefore, filmmakers and spectators are somewhat left to react to this situation, accept or disregard it, submit films or not, and attend the festival or not make the journey.

I asked Tim Copsey what were his ambitions for programming the 'Beyond Summer Wine' portion of the programme for Holmfirth Film Festival (HFF). This particular part of the HFF programme involved a competition for short films addressing the town's links as the main location for the BBC television programme *The Last of The Summer Wine*.

It's pure and simply that here was a very good, monolithic part of Holmfirth's identity, and which was monopolised upon by some, hated by others, and loved by a great many of the population of the country and the world. And to give, to allow your local population to have a crack at taking that theme - three men in a bath in Holmfirth – is kinda fun 'cos it's in their consciousness. So let it just kinda bubble out and how many different variations there can be on that theme. (Copsey, 2010)

Clearly, for some festival Programmers, the notion of bringing participants together to respond in some way to locally significant ideas and themes was an important stimulus to engagement with cell cinema. Max Schleser offered another perspective on the importance and role of location for cell cinema festivals. I asked him first about how the general idea of a film festival, a gathering of people at a particular location in Wellington, is important:

Here, we're honoured and very lucky to work with The Film Archive. We get to work with an institution that has such a huge, national reputation, known internationally. And some of the films [...] from the MINA screenings are now deposited with The

Film Archive. Also, I think this is like sharing the cultural contribution that MINA makes to New Zealand. And [...] it was it was for us very important to choose this location. Auckland obviously has its network of people. And for MINA, yes, it was a good idea to bring people together, y'know, start from exchanges of ideas. It was a nice mixture, but what we tried to achieve was bring together practitioners, [...] theorists, general public as well as some industry experts. And [...] for the size of Wellington it was an achievement to hold the opening night, and then the symposium Saturday. (Schleser, 2011)

Schleser's remarks indicate several things: Clearly, he felt it was valuable that MINA brought various types of participant together, and that the organisation and location should be mutually supportive of his partnerships with sponsoring organisations. To provide another perspective on the same idea, and to provide additional evidence of other festival Programmer's thinking on these points, I asked Avnesh Ratnanesan how the idea of a film festival, situated in a particular location in Sydney, was important to him:

We're in the city, in Sydney, and, y'know. Sydney's the kind've hub for the arts and generally where a lot of the big ideas stem from [...] wealth as well. So the city location's good, particularly when you're trying to work with partners and sponsors, and other arts organisations. A lot of them have Sydney bases, and they can really form some ties there. So we really decided to base here early on [...] so I think that's why we chose Sydney. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

Evidently, for Ratnanesan, location was important but forces considerations of its likely benefits in an economic sense. During the interview, we discussed the fact that the Sydney suburb of Bondi, and certainly Bondi Beach, is world famous: a magnet for backpackers, travellers or someone who just loves sunshine and surf. This factor clearly reflects notions of the pleasurable aspects of attending film festivals, which I introduced on page 136 of my introductory remarks. I wanted to find out whether the location chosen for *Mobile Screenfest* might speak to that:

Yeah, well, Bondi also has a well-known film festival, a short film festival, which is coming up too in a few months, so, to say like, most locations are already taken, [...] the cinema location is a good one, and went really well. Like, some festivals are

outdoor film festivals that pull massive audiences, so there's a big risk when you do an outdoor event. So [...] it's a question of whether we should do an event at all. Whether we should be completely digital, so I think we need to explore some of these options and move forward, to see what's the best way to get mobile filmmaking out to the audiences [...] whether an event is the right format, and look at other things. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

What is particularly interesting in Ratnanesan's remarks above, and perhaps revealing of his position as a commercial festival promoter with economic sustainability in mind for his festival, is that the idea that located film festivals could only be a transient, contemporary phenomenon and, in his opinion, not the way forward future festivals.

In terms of the particular place chosen as the location for cell cinema festivals, the following extracts from an interview with Kwang-soo Son (again partly translated by Grace) indicate a number of influences are in play regarding the choice of any festival location, including smaller, cell cinema festivals such as SESIFF in 2011:

Q: How is the general idea of a film festival, at this particular location in Seoul, important to you?

K-s: I suppose, yes, place is very important to my festival. We think [trails off].

Q: So it's important that it's in the capital city in South Korea?

K-s: In the city and Guro, this district.

Q: Is it that the local government is a partner with the sponsors; or has an interest?

K-s: Yes. It is very interesting because this area is industry, have many company.

Guro is a kind of industrial city. There are many electronic things, such as mobile phones or computers, something like that, that are there. (Son, 2011)

Additionally, the following remarks by Ratnanesan, to similar questions regarding local development of a location, indicate something of the range of considerations that are imposed on cell cinema and general film festival organisers:

On the other side of things, you also have the Buninyong Film Festival, which is in this mining town where no one goes to. But now it's managed to get ten thousand people to their film festival in three years because there's nothing else in that town bar the festival. They've managed to make that town very attractive because of the festival, y'know. Ah, so, it has got nothing to do with the town. So no-one really wanted to go there at all, but for a few days in the year, the whole town is a-buzz with filmmakers talking about various films.

[...]

Buninyong's been one of the big successes in Australia. In fact, it's getting so big now [...]. They're having a spin-off festival [...] in a location in Sydney. That's because they've outgrown the town. They're still going to have it in the town. They're going to have another one in Sydney as well.

[...]

An overspill, which is a very good problem for them to have. I wish we had that problem. But they're also very strongly support[ed] by New South Wales Mining. So mining associations put two hundred and fifty grand behind them to be a major sponsor, which is plenty of money to get something going and, y'know, stuff like that. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

Throughout my series of interviews with each of the three main groups of cell cinema participants: festival organisers/professionals, filmmaker-participants and spectator-participants, I was keen to also explore the subject of film festivals being national, international or trans-national events. Therefore (not presented here in chronological order) I asked a number of questions aimed at identifying what they thought about this subject. I directed my enquiries to the festival programmers, firstly to Kwang-soo Son of SESIFF through Grace, his translator:

It is like organisation, it is organic, [...] it is a kind of evolution [...] which makes festivals, all festivals, all together. It's going to, [...] evolve and develop, develop, develop. It is like history; one clan, another clan, one tribal, another tribal together, and they marry [and become] richer, and they breed a new generation. (Son, 2011)

This notion of the cell cinema festival being, in some sense, like a biological organism, growing and spreading between those who participate or be otherwise come into contact with it, is particularly significant. It reaches back to my observations of Deleuze & Guattari's ideas of rhizomatic deterritorialisation and

connectivity, which I introduced and critiqued with regard to the cell cinema screen and narrativity in chapters 2 and 3. Whether Son's ideas of cell cinema connecting its participants organically, effecting a sense of enrichment is a conscious and intentional plan for SESIFF, or an aspirational but evidently passionately held belief, is somewhat unclear. I directed the same question to Benoit Labourdette in my interview with him at PFF in Paris in 2010:

For me it's an international event and we work a lot with other events in Brazil, in China, in Japan and so you know when we make a programme here we are in France, but when we make programmes for other people around the world we work on movies without dialogue etcetera, so we work on international events. This is our little process. You know, we have some influence, but also some partnerships with other people that make their work and we share problems you know. For example, in Japan it was an influence. Mazaki Fujihata asked us to make a similar festival so it is an influence. [...] There is a Pocket Film Festival in China too. So there is an influence sometimes, but what's interesting is people do something different and we can share and exchange and be richer. (Labourdette, 2010)

Tetsu Kono, a Spectator–Participant at JIFF in Seoul, had this to say on the relative importance of the festival's location for him:

It depends on how good the festival is. If it is good: There is one big festival next week in another city named Pusan. I think it's the biggest one in South Korea. But this one is quite small. (Kono, 2011)

Evidently, part of the *festival attraction* for some cell cinema participants lay in the festival being partly about its size as a draw for visitors. Ju-yeon Yoo, a Spectator–Participant at JIFF in 2011, made the following observation in support of her rationale for attendance at JIFF and film festivals in general:

We can see many types of movies, not released in movie theatres. Also, the atmosphere is better at festivals where people are quiet, not like in the regular movie theatre. (Yoo, 2011)

Another Spectator-Participant at JIFF in 2011, Sean Jung, said this of the film festival's attraction for him:

I think it depends on the people. I like to go to a festival to see the atmosphere with other people, and maybe hear the director and people talking about the films. I can think that sometimes when the film is a big blockbuster, science fiction, the big screen is better, but if it's something like a romantic comedy, the phone is okay. (Jung, 2011)

Jung's remarks introduce further questions of interactions with moving images on mobile phone screens. While Jung's opinions indicate a nuanced and sophisticated awareness of his differing experiences of screens of different sizes and types. To get the views of the festival professionals, I turned first to Tim Copsy at The Holmfirth Film Festival in 2010, to ask him what his intentions were when programming a festival for films made on mobile phones and small cameras:

Well [...] the answer is, because everyone's got a mobile phone. It's a totally democratic medium. Well it wasn't just phones, but it was kind've hand-made and kind've amateur stuff. (Copsy, 2010)

I asked similar questions of Kono, regarding what he thought was the attraction in watching films on a phone screen. I enquired as to whether he considered this to be a new way to watch films, better, different or an alternative to how he usually watched cinema, television, DVDs and films on a computer:

I cannot say it's better but I can say it's more comfortable, convenient. You can watch it, even in bed. You cannot watch it, like, on the normal TV in the living room. It's a very convenient. And one thing is, you can, once you finish your film, everyone has a mobile phone so you can spread your movie, maybe on YouTube. Many people can watch at once. (Kono, 2011)

Hoping to press Kono a little further, I went on to ask him how he felt when part of the festival audience, whether he considered it different when watching alone or at a traditional cinema:

A: I have to focus on the movie because I knew after watching the movie there will be time, I can ask some questions, so I focus on the detail. But normally, when I watch a professional movie I just wanna enjoy. I don't think a lot, but today I thought a lot, about everything. (Kono, 2011)

To get the perspective of someone involved in organising and programming a cell cinema festival, I asked Schleser about his motivations for organising a festival that incorporated films made on mobile phones:

For MINA, we're very much opening up a sort of new area of film in New Zealand [...] and I think that's a very good character. There's a very good arts scene, so I think [...] it's the right place to do those things. But also at the same time, we were working with different colleagues in Auckland to, [...] get a more New Zealand sort of project, so to say. (Schleser, 2011)

I pressed Schleser further, to expand on the above and offer his views about the merits or otherwise of film festivals as location-specific or online events:

As online events? Yeah, I think definitely. I think this is very interesting. It's like [...] people having their Broadband these days. There's people [...] I think, especially young people, they don't mind where they watch films. If they start watching it on TV and they end up [...] watching it on their computer. [...] I think, definitely for short films. I think there's probably great potential for screening things online, because there's really not that much great content, especially now, with the likes of tablets as well. [...] I could see this is as, yeah, definitely [...] [a] very interesting [...] form to provide some exciting content. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

In addition to his views on the platforms spectators use to watch moving images, I wanted to find out whether he thought this would alter the way that people make films, or watch films, or whether these changed forms of spectatorial engagement with screens would just duplicate what happens across all platforms:

I think there's definitely a different experience. [...] If you [...] differentiate between making films with mobile devices and making films for mobile devices. So, of course, if you wanna make something for an iPad, so like an iPhone would be very different format [...]. So, I think there's probably something that's very interesting, that could be explored further in the future [...] And then there's quite a few examples of people who use content for mobile device that is done with HD cameras and [...] big-budgets, so [...] we've done it in one workshop [...] with a local community group in East London where we produced some [...] short films, and these short films we then compress, to be shared by Bluetooth. They were just, like, one minute long clips about teenagers. And they liked it a lot cos they could show, send them to their friends. They [...] worked almost like a visual text message. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

Finally in this section, I wanted to find out from a number of festival programmers, what their opinions were regarding the incorporation of cell cinema festivals into the broader international festival schedule. Just as location was found to be of great importance to them personally in creative terms, and to professional festival organisers in commercial, economic and developmental terms, the timing of the festival in the annual calendar amidst much larger and high profile festivals might be of similar concern for them. In my interview with Son through his translator Grace, I enquired about his opinions regarding the incorporation of SESIFF into the broader Korean and international film festivals schedule:

I think SESIFF is a very special festival. It has big differences from other festivals. For example, we show films with many differences, and try different kinds of things. And the flowing of the festivals, I think SESIFF is a very important part of this flow. So that is why [I] decided to open the festival before Pusan International Festival opens. (Son, 2011)

My observations of the MINA event in Wellington in November 2011 were that the films screened communicated an impression of a decidedly international sense of creative expression. On the opening night, a multi-national group of filmmakers exhibited films set in New York, Paris, Auckland, Riyadh, Colombia, Tanzania and Japan. This established a tone of liberal inclusivity throughout the event, with several films drawing on the work of multiple filmmakers of various nationalities. Films screened on 24 November at MINA were gathered from four other festivals: Ohrenblick, Germany; Mobilefest, Brazil; HeArtBeat Festival, Russia; Mobile Screenfest, Australia, and concluded with a feature-length phone film called *Why didn't anybody tell me it would be this bad in Afghanistan* by Cyrus Frish. In summation, therefore, the screening of these films together at MINA gave them a clearly multi-national and trans-national quality, which they may or may not have had on their earlier screenings in the countries of origin. The broader significance of this will be discussed later in this chapter. Seeking clarification or corroboration of my observations at MINA, I asked Schleser for his opinions on the incorporation of MINA into the broader New Zealand and international festival schedule:

In MINA, we definitely work with [...] international partners. And so, for MINA this year, we had Oldenblick in Germany, the national Mobile Screen Festival in Australia, [...] Mobilefest in Sao Paolo, [...] so most of these festivals have previous projects for mobiles. We have established a working relationship with them, but then [...] there is a festival in Germany, as well as the festival in Australia. [...] They were [...] new partners that I think we'll definitely be very keen to work [...] with. We needed on this level to share some international films [...]. They would [...] select some of their key films [...] and we agreed to screen some on special days. And [...] hopefully, in the future, I can think about some more collaborations. Cos I think it will be interesting to see [...] what was happening in other countries like ours, checking out [how] mobile phones are used there. [...] I think film can really bring people together. So hopefully, that will be something that we can try to achieve on a more international level in the future. (Schleser, 2011)

A key theme running through the text above is Schleser's mention of 'collaboration' and 'partners', which he uses to stress that MINA functions in national and international contexts. Evidently, MINA and each of the festivals Schleser has established working relationships with had selected films to transfer

between festivals in various countries. This mode of extended distribution indicates that a certain amount of selection, of what Schleser calls 'their key films' and 'some international films' for transnational exposure. This process of selectivity would seem to introduce an element of bi-directional judgement of which films in which festivals were deemed appropriate for transnational or intercultural distribution.

4.2 Cell Cinema Festivals and Cinephilia

In this section, I continue my examination of how each participant group: the festival professionals (organisers, programmers and so on) filmmakers, and spectators, all address what they believe is or is not cinematic in the cell cinema festival, and what constitutes cinephilia in the context of cell cinema. As I indicate in my introductory remarks on page 136, the term *cinephilia* can succinctly be described as a love of cinema, or affection for the experience of being part of a cinema audience in a film theatre. Recent scholarship argues that digital technologies are capable of facilitating an expansion, rather than a replacement of the enjoyable aspects of cinema (see Balcerzak and Sperb, 2009). Therefore, my questions to individuals from each group of cell cinema participants are chosen to reveal how their responses might point to significant themes of cinephilia within their participation.

Furthermore, it should be recognised that the festival organisers in particular make a large number of pre-festival decisions, from planning what to publicise on their websites, promotional materials, festival competition categories, prizes, to which films to include or reject. I asked Ratnesan what are some of the judgements he has to make when programming the festival critically, aesthetically, and even intellectually. In particular, I was interested to have his opinions of, when assessing a film originated on a particular platform or format (the mobile phone camera), when should it be seen on a small screen and when on a cinema screen:

I think [...] a lot of this sort of comes down to our judging process for these films and [...] the three main criteria we look at are [...] the originality of the story [...] that's

one. There's creativity [...] behind [...] the content they're presenting. Also there's the skilful use of the form. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

From a similar position of decision-making, Schleser explained that the film programming for MINA in 2011 was determined by a small number of themes: the human body, the travel film (as in his personal work), and ideas of movement or a personal journey:

What, what we did [...] most times we, we focussed on [...] innovation and creativity. So really looking at the films that have [...] a creative aspect [...] something original about them. Whether there's some clear idea of the mobile or whatever in the kind of filmmaking. And then, in a way, innovative in how that they've tried to push the boundaries a bit [...] think about different working methods and styles. [...] And the programming: [...] From what we could see, was there's [...] three or four very strong themes that seem to be [...] accruing in mobile phone filmmaking. So we used these four themes as an access to guide experimental. [...] So on the last day [...] you could see there was a mobile body, [...] one area for film related to [...] body in space, or [...] people making films direct with the body or even the mobile as [...] as an extension of the body. [...] Then there's very much the notion of [...] travel film. Films that are like a category, journey or like it's in an airport, like a process of the journey, of the personal journey through time and space. And the very strong theme was experimental, [...] even experimental approaches in all different types of films for the mobile. (Schleser, 2011)

Several interesting things spring from Schleser's remarks above: Apparently, his planned incorporation into MINA of themes dealing with aspects of the body mirrors the philosophical and phenomenological ruminations of Merleau-Ponty (1964) and Marks (2010) and indicates that, if not actually post-justifying his film programming, he intentionally incorporated each theme into the film programming structure for MINA. His thoughts on movement and travelling in phone films, and mobile phone use in general are reflections of work by Matsuda (2005) and in my own observations of *movement* and the notion of *ambulation* in phone films contained in chapter 2. However, Schleser's remarks about recognising separate themes of the mobile body in space, and another addressing the mobile phone's potential as an extension of the body, is important to note. A nuanced taxonomy emerges in his reflections on the role of the body and movement in the

construction of phone films. Yet an underlying theme of experimentation across these related themes seems to be paramount for Schleser, in terms of his personal critical judgement of phone films, and of what kinds of subjects are appropriate to be filmed using the cameras of mobile phones. Therefore, I quizzed him further with the following, rhetorical but searching, questions: So the only thing that ties them together is the fact that a mobile phone was used in their creation? It could be still images? They could be installation, performance pieces?

Yes, I think there's some [...] very specific mobile aesthetics emerging out of these works, because most of these works are produced [...] out and about. I think that's [...] a scene that will become stronger, possibly in the future that you see people producing work in, in locations, so the people [are] not sitting in a studio and producing work but, y'know, like we are in a café, and you're influenced by what's around you. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

On a slightly different subject, I wanted to find out from my interviewees and questionnaire respondents if they considered cell cinema festivals are aimed at attracting a particular kind of filmmaker, audience or social group to participate. Taking first the responses from a number of festival programmers and organisers, I asked Ratnanesan what kind of background the filmmakers at Mobile Screenfest came from:

Yeah, I think we definitely aim for those sort of, part users of the smartphone or cameras so, so it's more difficult to pinpoint [...] most of our efforts are around that sort of emerging filmmaker, or budding photographer. Y'know, people who are just starting out and deciding to be creative. Not that it's from a career perspective but they're trying to express their creativity with these tools. (Ratnanesan, 2011a)

Delving a little deeper, I wondered if their participation was in some way a first step to a career, or perhaps just that these would-be filmmakers were taking an early step on the way to being creative with a familiar device:

Yeah, it's a step on the way to being creative, and potentially for some to a career as well. [...] It can be the first step before everyone else's first step. Because if you think [...] ten, fifteen years ago, people would be working in teams [...] and you hire some equipment, [...] the full expense of a [...] digital camera. But now, the kids as young as four, five, six years old can use their phones, and that's going to be a benefit to filmmaking, is the phone. [...] So things have changed. [...] Earlier on, people can start making films and mobile film festivals could potentially be the best way for them to do that. (*Ibid.*, 2011a)

Asked about the importance of using a mobile phone rather than another type of camera, Taki responded in a disarmingly direct manner:

Because it is not a camera. The mobile phone is the first machine to use for cinema, which is not its first function. It is important to me because I began with pictures as a documentary filmmaker in a spontaneous way, to keep traces of my reality. (Taki, 2010)

On the subject of a possible mobile phone aesthetic, Labourdette has similarly firm views on the mobile phone as filmmaking apparatus:

For example, the private space is completely different with the mobile phone, it changes our relationship with time, it's completely different. And the question was for us: the video camera [...], will it change something between people [...] We asked the artist to work on that because the function of an artist is to sort of make us think about what happens to us. [...] We shoot our children, family, events, accidents but it's not making a movie. [...] What is the difference between what we make each day with our little camera in the pocket and a movie? [...] The difference is that when you shoot everyday time, this is a movie for you to share with friends. (Labourdette, 2010)

In an increasingly unambiguous way throughout our interview, Labourdette clearly communicated his views on the form cinephilia takes in relation to the mobile phone camera aesthetic. For him, the mobile phone offers creative possibilities for filmmaking to individuals who either do not have or do not want access to professional filmmaking equipment. He sees their use of the mobile phone camera

as an excellent tool for artists to shoot familiar things and notable, accidental things, elevating images of the everyday to the status of, not cinema, but important items to be shared.

The following pairs of comments are taken from the questionnaires completed by mobile phone filmmakers Donata Napoli (D.N.) and Sophie Jerram (S.J.). Presented in an extended juxtaposition of responses, they continue on from Labourdette's observations, addressing those same points, and comment on other aspects of their engagement with phone filmmaking and cell cinema. I will follow their paired responses with a critical analysis of the important topics arising out of their comments:

Q: Why did you decide to make your film on a mobile phone, and not on another type of camera?

D.N.: It's a matter of convenience. I paint, draw, film or photograph (analog or digital) according to the moment, the idea or the mood.

S.J.: I made my film on mobile in an attempt to be discreet with my camera. But I am also interested in the pure democratic type of filmmaking possible with a mobile phone.

Q: Why should the audience travel to a festival like MINA to watch mobile phone films, when they can see similar films online, at a time and place of their choosing?

D.N.: It's very different to watch any kind of audiovisual works online or have the chance to watch them together with other people who share the same interests and passion for art and video.

S.J.: The larger screen and high quality audio improve the viewer experience. Screening the films in a public forum both moderates and intensifies the audience reactions. The programming also allows for contextual understanding of the narrative or technical themes for each film, and highlights different readings of each of the films' qualities.

Q: What came first for you; the possibilities opened up by mobile phone technology or the practice of filmmaking?

D.N.: Mmmmm... hard to choose. If I have to say one, I'd pick the first.

S.J.: The practice of filmmaking or narrative making has been first and I have been interested in art-film and video art for some time. (D.N.: Napoli, 2011; S.J.: Jerram, 2011)

Within the responses from Napoli and Jerram above, several factors emerge as salient to an appraisal of what is important to filmmakers about phone

filmmaking at cell cinema festivals. Clearly, aspects of convenience, spontaneity and democracy in their use are important to both these respondents. These factors emerge as strong motivations for using the mobile phone in preference to other image making apparatus. The pleasure of watching films together with other people, and the quality of sound and image during the screening of even phone films, is important to both Jerram and Napoli. Jerram, in particular, chose to highlight some of the ways in which the film festival environment elevates film spectatorship to a level of seriousness that, her reply suggests, watching on a mobile phone does not have. The cell cinema festival's role in facilitating and aiding a contextualised understanding of each of several films in a public forum was highlighted as valuable, even to the extent of allowing different *readings* of the films to be brought out.

Regarding the planning for filmmaking that phone filmmakers go through, and which reflects the discussions begun in chapter 1, I asked Napoli and Jerram to explain how their decisions to use mobile phones affected the scripts (if any were used) for their films, and how they went about pre-production in terms of casting actors, directing performances, planning for image and sound:

D.N.: I never directed actors while using a mobile phone, by now, at least. (Napoli, 2011)

S.J.: This was a documentary, which was much more on the fly than I would usually have been. We shot the whole thing in half a day (we could have taken longer). Sound was most affected by the decision to use a mobile phone: the range was heavily reduced even though I used a portable sound recorder attached to the mobile. This meant we did sound pick-ups (interviews) after we had filmed. (Jerram, 2011)

The film Jerram refers to in the interview above, and which she submitted to MINA, is called *Istanbul Gaze* (2011). It is a documentary film, with a voice-over commentary about the problems that arise from filming people in public places around Istanbul. Two women walk through streets, rest at cafes or idly walk around groups of mainly men sitting on benches and walls while, all the while, a third woman (Jerram) films the reactions of people who the camera passes over. Jerram

notes on the soundtrack that, although all the filming was done with a mobile phone (an iPhone 3s) people react in different ways to noticing a mobile phone camera pointing at or near them. The *gaze* in the title is a significant aspect of the film's subject matter. The whole film is a study in the nature and duration of people's gaze before this particular type of camera, and their willingness or comfortableness in maintaining their gaze with a mobile phone held in the hand by a young woman in Istanbul. Therefore, Jerram's film is a commentary on both the mobile phone device as a camera, and the social and political problematic of three females using the personal mobile phone as a camera within public spaces in Istanbul. In her film, Jerram demonstrates that the mobile phone is a device for mediating the gaze in the context of local society at the time and place of filming, and a device of national and cultural mediation in the MINA festival.

In an effort to discern Napoli and Jerram's thoughts regarding the notions of empathy between cell cinema participants, particularly the filmmaker and spectator, and of the broader subject of sharing in cell cinema discourse, I asked them how they consider the audience when shooting a film on a mobile phone rather than on other kind of camera, and how this affected how they are able to connect with their audience:

D.N.: Inevitably when using a phone, I think to the possibility to share immediately... I'd always love to try an "inner editing", editing as I shoot. Maybe next time. (Napoli, 2011)

S.J.: Perhaps the audience is more forgiving with the wobble in a mobile phone filming -as they can relate to this. Other than that I feel the audience on my shoulder - with a big camera or small. (Jerram, 2011)

Napoli's response is particularly telling. Her choice of the words 'inevitably' and 'immediately' indicates sureness in her reply. The use of the definitive 'always' reveals how she considers the possibility of sharing her filmmaking with others to be an urgent and immediate action following filming. With specific regard to the social activity of sharing in the context of cell cinema, of making and watching films on mobile phones as a creative and social activity, they went on to give the following responses:

D.N.: Sharing is the word. Sharing is stronger and powerful than the highest definition. (Napoli, 2011)

S.J.: As long as we don't disturb or harm people with our phones/cameras, making films can be an exciting re-weaving of our daily experiences.

I don't know about watching films on mobile phones. I think life is interesting enough without needing to watch my phone. I still gather primarily with friends or family to watch films. (Jerram, 2011)

What their replies above show is that Jerram's opinion of the activity of film viewing is that it is a social one, to be done with friends, and not a solitary, individualised mode of engaging with moving images and films. It also, importantly for her, constitutes a potentially exciting form of everyday experience. The juxtaposed responses of Napoli and Jerram indicate subtle differences in each filmmakers' level of intentionality in several respects: for making the decision of whether or not to be involved in the MINA event, their views on the creative and artistic uses of mobile phone cameras, and of film festivals set up for the purpose of distributing and showcasing films made with such devices.

To explore ideas of creative and even artistic uses of mobile phone cameras in the hands of sensitive filmmakers a little further, I asked Taki whether and in what ways does the public and personal screening of phone camera films make possible new cinematic experiences for the filmmaker. He replied, '[i]t's ok for me as I was a cineaste before. So it's natural for me to make films for the cinema. I've made films for festivals and in galleries' (Taki, 2010). When asked about how being the cinematographer, director, producer, exhibitor and audience member might affect his experience of each, Taki had this to say about such a potentially *auteurist* control of the process:

I'm not sure. First, there is more liberty to create. Maybe it's not very different for me. I worked before with small crews, in an artisan way. Now it's easy to work alone. Maybe it's like music production twenty years ago. (*Ibid.*, 2010)

Taki's notion of being able to have the 'liberty to create' with a mobile phone connects with ideas of spontaneity that occur in responses from other cell cinema participants such as Jerram and Labourdette. On the mobile phone's potential to influence the ways his theoretical and practical knowledge of the 'traditional' cinema image affected how he utilised the mobile phone camera in his filmmaking, Taki had this to say:

For example, when I walk around and see a crew making a film in the street, I have a bad feeling. It's strange but I think it's not adequate to just concentrate. I must do more with the tiny camera. (*Ibid.*, 2010)

My interpretation of Taki's last answer is that the mobile phone allows him to get more involved in the physical situation of filming. This reflects ideas of intimacy and bodily engagement that the personal device engenders. (Marks, 2000; Barker, 2009) I pressed Taki further, asking him if what we are witnessing in mobile phone filmmaking is a pictorial or artistic aesthetic, unique to the particular optical qualities of the phone camera: 'I have a small camera and don't use it. When I use the phone, I liked it. Video is too static. It's not what I see, it's what the camera sees' (*Ibid.*, 2010).

When asked why he had organised a festival for mobile phone films, screened on a cinema screen rather than online or another kind of screen, and what he saw as the benefits or advantages, Ratnanesan had the following to say:

I think [...] there's still a big appeal for filmmakers to want to see their things projected onto a big screen, and there's a big challenge in doing that. And I think the appeal for me personally is to overcome that challenge: The challenges of getting a mobile phone film onto a cinema screen, which are, y'know, huge. So it's not just the technical side, but it's partly convincing people in the cinema to come on board to allow that to happen. It's a good challenge, and this is a major cinema chain, Australia's biggest cinema chain [...] which is part of the *Great Union Group*. [...] So [...] definitely, the filmmakers, the big appeal for them is to [...] get on a big screen [...] and the prizes and stuff like that. So [...] that sort of live, social event brings it all together [...] But yeah, I've seen people do festivals online, and show them online

and still have a big following. [...] So I think this is a trade-off that you need to think about in the future. What's the right thing for us to do? And [...] what would a sponsor support moving forward. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

Once more the tension re-surfaces between the commercial exigencies of organising and sustaining a, relatively small, cell cinema festival, and the creative or artistic ambitions it might support are clearly evident. Ratnanesan's anxiety about his sponsors' reactions to the kind of films and filmmaking his festival is predicated upon is an omnipresent consideration for him. I asked him how he thought they (the Mobile Screenfest sponsors) felt about making that trade-off, or whether they regarded it as a controversial or different thing:

I think they accepted it. They fully accepted it, and rightly because there was a sort of variety. Some [...] you couldn't tell, but some you can tell, because there's still a lot of shakiness and all that sort of stuff. (*Ibid.*, 2011b)

Obviously perceiving a possible anxiety by the sponsors in accepting the on-screen appearance of non-professionally made films, I asked Ratnanesan whether he thought that shakiness was part of a new aesthetic, which Rombes (2009) calls 'mistakism', a different way of making films, or that people just work around those limitations:

I think that filmmakers who have used traditional filmmaking techniques to create traditional looking films with mobile phones, and then I think there's another mix that have gone and just used the sort of uniqueness of the phone, its instability and some of the poorer sound quality, but used all of that to still tell a good story, and so we've got a mixture of both. (*Ibid.*, 2011b)

Evidently seeing a qualitative distinction between people watching phone films on a large cinema screen and other kinds of smaller screens – the idea of a big screen/small screen distinction - I asked Ratnanesan what he thought was going on

in the heads of the spectators at these different times, and whether cell cinema was a different way of being a spectator, of being an audience:

These mobile films screened on the big cinema screen, people love this. And audiences couldn't tell they were shot on mobiles for some of the films.

[...]

I think for some people [...] in particular in year one, it was a *wow* sort of scenario, and 'Wow. I can't believe you can do this on a phone.' [...] Particularly when you saw a sports video, then a horror and a comedy. Comedy and drama and all that were probably the most filmmakers want to do comedy and drama. [...] But audiences are more wowed by the things like the horror and the sports video and the music video, and all these kind of things. [...] And, to think you can do it on a phone. That was really unusual. So I think, that kind of wowed people. [...] So I think as years go on, the following will be bigger, but it might still be a [...] cultish following maybe. (*Ibid.*, 2011b)

Ratnanesan's remarks reveal there appeared to be a certain amount of genre crossing in the phone films at Mobile Screenfest in 2011, but that he places a strong emphasis on the possibilities for spectacle in the festival's screenings. Genre crossing might perhaps be viewed as an unusual occurrence at a festival setting, where films are usually grouped together by theme or competition category, during a morning, afternoon or evening screening. However, the major Mobile Screenfest screening event was staged as the culminating gala evening show for prize-winners in various categories, and so necessarily drew on several competition themes and subjects. I asked Ratnanesan if he thought the filmmakers appreciated the change in tone from a *guerrilla* or *underground* filmmaking (that their filmmaking might have previously been levelled towards) to a more established, credible filmmaking, and did the audiences appreciate it more or less:

Yeah, I dunno, I think [...]we need to, sort of, ask our audiences more. I think [...] No-one really had a problem with the venue. Y'know, people were excited at the venue. [...] I think certainly the VIPs all were very excited with the venue. [...] A couple of the filmmakers, [...] they loved the fact that they could do it at *Event Cinemas*. [...] But whether this is the right thing for the masses, or if it's the right thing to grow [...] I don't know because, at the end of the day, we still need to be different from other film festivals. (*Ibid.*, 2011b)

In contrast to Ratnanesan's preoccupations with ensuring his festival continues to attract visitors in growing numbers, Tetsu Kono's remarks at SESIFF in 2011 indicate that he is more interested in the possibility of watching moving images on mobile phones with greater technological facility. When I asked him how would you like to watch mobile phone films in the future, technologically, aesthetically and socially, he offered the following as a vision for the future:

The size of screen is getting bigger and bigger. Before it was, say 2.5 inches, now in general is 4 inches [...], but it is getting bigger and bigger. Maybe, I don't know, [...] I think six inches is the maximum for mobile, so you can put that one in your pocket. And then the quality will be better. (Kono, 2011)

Kono's 2011 reflections on the rapidly changing world of mobile screen size and picture quality seem slightly quaint at the time of writing in 2014. His preoccupation with dimensions may simply be him demonstrating his ability and willingness to discuss international mobile technologies to an English researcher. However, such attention to technicalities at the expense of the creative and cultural possibilities allowed by mobile phone camera developments is not unusual (Shim, 2011; Bah, 2011). To provide the filmmaker participant's perspective on the big screen versus small screen debate, Napoli and Jerram offered the following responses to being asked what they consider the optimum screening platform for films made on a mobile phone camera:

D.N.: Online platforms as well as "regular" ones. (Napoli, 2011)

S.J.: Cinema format is great - but a television screen could also suffice. I think there is something important in the transformation from small to bigger which elevates the cohesion of the edited film. (Jerram, 2011)

Jerram's answer in particular corresponds with Labourdette's views on the question of how important it is that watching phone films happens in a cinema; that we all sit together in the dark and look at a big screen:

For me it's very, very important because you give a new status for those movies. You know, when I make workshops with young people, even when you ask them to have a project to make a movie, they make a movie, they pay attention to that etcetera, but the movie doesn't exist. It's only the little mobile phone, as the other things they do. But when we look, when we make black in the room, when we are concentrated and when we look at a movie, with several people, the movie exists at this moment. You know the movie doesn't exist after you film it. It exists after you show it to the people. So it's very important. So young people realize that making a film is a very important act. (Labourdette, 2010)

Speaking both personally, and through his translator Grace, Son had this to say about filmmaker-participants at SESIFF using mobile phones as cameras, and the judgements he had to make, critically, aesthetically and intellectually, when assessing films made on small formats, but meant to be seen on different screens:

Grace: The most important thing is [...] the characteristic of mobile film. [...] I'm sorry. The most important thing to [...] know, [...] mobile phone is the very important thing, so [...] that mobile phone itself; it's very crucial, not the idea. When you see the films by mobile phone, you can see the difference of angles or difference of picture.

K-s: If I don't, I haven't watched the image. I think such a [...] interactive film festival, using mobile phone is becoming new interactive pursuit. (Son, 2011)

Labourdette provided another perspective on this topic, when he remarked about what he saw as the qualitative and aesthetic distinction between the small screen and big screen:

The difference between film and non-film is that what we make each day is only for us to share with people etcetera, etcetera. And you can't understand those little movies if we don't know the people who sent it for example. These are very contextualised movies. And when you make a film, you make a film for another

people that you don't know. So you think about the structure. You think about the informations you need or you don't need etcetera, etcetera. So it's a completely different role, you know. That's the difference. (Labourdette, 2010)

Labourdette evidently believes that phone films are contextualised by a personal connection, a kind of understanding or empathy between the filmmaker and the viewer. His remarks indicate that, for him, cinema film seems to be something that happens most readily between strangers:

But it's important [...] to see what we do. And what we do is, with this tool of everyday, making other things [...] every day. And it's important for me, for the artist, because it's a new material to work with. (*Ibid.*, 2010)

However, for Schleser, overcoming technical limitations, by searching for the creative application of what the technology presents, was a stage on the experimental road to a different kind of visual aesthetic:

I think for me, the driving factor for me was creativity [...]. And [...] it wasn't just a technical, problem. [...] The RGB, when you blow it up and put it into Final Cut, compress it and stretch it [...]. The pixels break very much, but you leave an identity. [...] And so they're very process-driven, and they're very much into the exploration of the cinematographic, or moving image aesthetic. (Schleser, 2011)

For Schleser, his early experiments using the phone film image seemed primarily looking into the visual aesthetics of the image (Schleser, 2014). I wanted to discover what his thoughts were at that time about sound, and how his films might be edited or constructed in a different way:

I was very much in a way, the very beginning, I was very much concerned with the visual aesthetics, of the visuals of the film was very distinctive. So the whole film is very colourful. [...] For me, the way to work with [...] low-resolution image was [...] to work with movement, and to recognise video film is movement. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

Once again, the subject of movement in phone films comes to the fore, wherein the lack or diminution of one aesthetic component - image definition - can be compensated for by giving more attention to another - movement. Schleser's ideas about movement in phone films are rooted more in considerations of the aesthetic, than categorising phone films in some other functionalist way, in preparation for competition for instance. MINA in 2011 was not a competitive event but consisted of a symposium preceded by three days of screenings titled International Mobile Innovation Screening 2011. Films were separated into groups such as *mobile bodies* (five films) and *mobile movement* (eight films), only to provide a coherent theme or aesthetic jumping-off point for each screening day. With specific regard for filmmakers hoping to participate in cell cinema festivals in the prospect of entering a competition. I asked Ratnanesan what he thought the element of competition adds to the festival in terms of how to structure it, how to draw people in and get enthused about taking part:

Yeah [...] I think [...] definitely for our festival, it's a big part of it. I think if we didn't have prizes, we wouldn't get as many entries [...]. You have to remember this is a very new art form [...]. It's still very early days. You have to spark and instigate that interest in people [...], which is still not there yet. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

Labourdette had a different opinion of the value in organising a competition within a film festival, and what it might add to the event: 'Why a competition? It's [...] to tell to people that these are pieces of art and it is worth something etcetera. Here is the cinema of the new and so we tell that this cinema [...] is important, it is a real movie etcetera. It's to give a status to that' (Interview, 1st June 2010). Schleser, on the other hand, had a different set of considerations in mind when answering the same question:

This was more for a creative screening, an introduction to a mobile phone filmmaking medium. Cos at the moment there isn't another way of mobile phone filmmaking reception in New Zealand. [...] So I think slowly for next year, we'll be

thinking about having some kind of [uh] competition, or having some kind of [...] a creative screening of small, local filmmakers. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

When asked if he had anticipated how that would change things, or whether having a competition would add something or detract in some way, he replied:

Well, against it is it's quite difficult to launch a competition idea in the first place, because of [lack of] awareness that mobile filmmaking is existing. [...] So I [...] want to experience some more mobile stories, then work together with some partners [...] have a competition around some screens. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

The structure involving several competition categories at Mobile Screenfest forced a different set of problems on Ratnanesan and his plans for future events. I observed that many of the phone filmmakers in the festival did not get stuck into a genre and stay there, even though their films take a great deal of effort to produce:

That's actually a good point [...] I think it's the fact that we've created many categories, which a lot of other mobile films [festivals do not]. I don't see that they have a lot of categories or awards. We've really gone crazy with the awards. And I think one thing we should possibly do is actually have less awards, and just more, twice as many [films].

[...]

One filmmaker in year one entered six categories. Another one this year entered seven. So, there are some love doing it. [...] They make a drama, they make a comedy, they make a [...] something for every category. (Ratnanesan, 2011a)

For the filmmaker-participant's perspective, the following responses from Napoli and Jerram illustrates their views on entering their films for competitions at festivals:

D.N.: I love sharing. I think today we would better go far beyond the copyright issues. (Napoli, 2011)

S.J.: To encourage this form of film making it's a great idea to run competitions, but ultimately it shouldn't be regarded as too much like high art - we want to keep it fresh! (Jerram, 2011)

Napoli's remark about transgressing copyright laws is an interesting reflection of the widespread misuse and abuse of copyright material. For Napoli, it is more important to share media than to protect post-digital intellectual property. For Jerram, spontaneity and the competition element in film festivals militate against the preciousness of art ambitions. Introducing another important subject in the context of film festival competitions, Ratnanesan had the following to say about the place of stories in the phone films entered into Mobile Screenfest in 2011:

Quite apart from this judging criteria [...] stories are so fundamental: stories, good stories behind that, [...] and so those things are [...] valued and also how they've used the form in doing that. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

Asked how he thought phone films and the form of cinema it makes might be contributing to new storytelling or narrative forms, Taki had the following to say:

Maybe a bit different. I'm not sure, maybe. Before, I'd write a script then shoot the script. But now I take a camera and shoot, and the story comes like a sculpture. This might take five hours. For one of my films I had thirty-five hours of rushes. Then the story comes and I work to that. I have done films like this for five years. (Taki, 2010)

Napoli gave a somewhat enigmatic answer to the question of whether she considered making films using a mobile phone camera could affect how she might tell stories or deal with narrative: 'Mmmmm, I think so,' she said. 'The same easiness affects the neutrality of the "view"' (Napoli, 2011). It is significant that Napoli refers to the ease and spontaneity of using the mobile phone as a camera, whereas Jerram concentrates on addressing the ways in which the mobile phone's technical shortcomings affect the actual capture of narrative dialogue on the sound

track: 'Of course, it allows for a much shorter distance and range, especially with sound' she says (Jerram, 2011).

I will conclude this section by addressing a range of cell cinema participant's views on a final aspect of cell cinema and cinephilia. The following responses from many of the figures already mentioned are indicative of their views about cinephilia and cell cinema's social and cultural potential. I first asked Ratnanesan if he thought that cell cinema was always going to be an emerging, transitional thing that we will move through and on to something else:

Well I think that, yes, but all film festivals are like that. If you talk to other film festivals and the filmmakers, they usually come, they try it, they enter the festival for one year, maybe two, and then they go on and their careers progress and then new films are made as new filmmakers come through. (Ratnanesan, 2011a)

This observation by Ratnanesan supports his earlier one supporting the idea that some cell cinema participants view the practice of making phone films and entering them in film festivals to be 'a step on the way to being creative' (Ratnanesan, 2011). Replying through his translator, I also asked Son in what way does SESIFF contribute to the social and cultural wellbeing of people in Seoul and South Korea? He replied, 'this objective is very profound. I think [...] SESIFF is like, you know, to escape people from [...] the limits they have [...] from the power of visual things' (Son, 2011). This last notion of the possibility of escaping the overwhelming power of contemporary visuality is pertinent for several of the cell cinema participants I interviewed over the course of this project. Jerram offered the filmmaker's perspective in her answer to the two questions: What are your personal hopes and ambitions for your filmmaking in the future, and how do you plan or anticipate your filmmaking will change or evolve? She responded by saying, '[h]aving made this mobile film I am more confident about reducing aspects of film making in HD video or even film to get the look and feel I want. It's a great way to sketch an idea (Jerram, 2011).

4.3 Participatory Knowledge Community

Here I would like to draw on the responses from the three groups of cell cinema participants to reveal how cell cinema functions as a means of training and educating those who engage with it. In common with other kinds of film festival, cell cinema festivals provide opportunities for participants to either physically attend workshops, talks and question and answer sessions within cell cinema festivals, or to take part in online versions of some of these events prior to attending and participating in the festival. This section will, therefore, explore how cell cinema offers participants possibilities to gain skills, knowledge and improving their level of competence or specialist expertise in phone filmmaking and distribution. Equally importantly, this section reveals the ways in which communities of participants are encouraged to grow from taking advantage of those opportunities, in preparation for participating in festivals and during the festival proper.

On the subject of how the cell cinema festival audience is made up, and where potential and future phone filmmakers might come from, Ratnanesan had this to say about the various micro communities making up the audience at Mobile Screenfest in 2011:

It's a lot of friends and family of filmmakers. [...] But then it's also [...] all the partners that we have and that sort of stuff in the arts community [...] in the mobile community. I think [the] good thing about Mobile Screen Fest is it brings together people from these communities: The film and art industry, and the mobile industry, so they're part of potentially an audience to the festival. (Ratnanesan, 2011a)

When asked if the competition for mobile phone films, *Beyond The Summer Wine*, at *The Holmfirth Film Festival* in 2010 was aimed at a particular kind of filmmaker or social group, Tim Copsey said:

Yeah, it is. It's aimed at those people who are probably already making holiday snaps with their cameras, with their phones. But here was a chance for them to structure

their work and, again, [...] it's the democratic leveller of the idea of being able to use a tool that everyone has in their pocket. (Copsey, 2010)

Benoit Labourdette made the following observations with respect of *Pocket Films Festival's* initiatives to hold workshops in film schools:

What we do is all year work with artists, with cinema school. I teach several cinema schools in France and abroad and with workshops etcetera, etcetera. [...] We made partnerships with cinema schools, with art schools etcetera. And the dynamic was launched this way, to ask people to explore this new device and what is possible with it in terms of creation.

[...]

And the moment of the festival where we show some movies that people send us [...] it's perhaps half what we show. The other half is showings of projects we ask for or projects we support or partnerships with other people etcetera [...]. So it's a real two-year work and the festival is a moment for people to meet [...]. It's not only a festival you know; it's not only an audience. So, it costs much because this is audio work, production work, co-production etcetera, etcetera. As I said, not many people make movies with the mobile phone but I always propose to people to try this, and even today it's not obvious for people to choose it.

[...]

And our work is also to say to them, hey, make a little movie with us. I guess that the movies they make here, our little studios, will be completely different than what they make every day. And this is [...] educational, you know. (Labourdette, 2010)

However, Labourdette adds a cautionary note about what he sees as the potential problems caused by the everyday practice of making films on mobile phone cameras:

Since four years we work a lot with schools, with places for young people etcetera. In fact every young people has a mobile phone camera, so this is an everyday practice for them. But [...] it gives some problems you know. Ethical problems, happy snapping etcetera. [...] People are quite unconscious of what they do because nobody teaches them how to make a picture [...]. And you know we learn at school to write. We talk, but we learn to write. And a society where people are able to write and read is a society with equality. I think now we all make pictures, share pictures, look at pictures but nobody told us the rules of the pictures. [...] And when you [...] propose to young people to make a movie with a mobile phone, this is the

same tool but they will use it completely differently. They will have the desire to do it. It's great for people to make a movie, show to other people and with the same tool it's completely different. So this is a creative process. [...] This is creativity and society, not problems. (*Ibid.*, 2010)

Ratnanesan sees a direct link between using his sponsors to leverage and extend participation, luring sponsors who lure audiences, to increase attendance numbers:

Thankfully we managed to [...] get *Event Cinemas* onboard as a sponsor and they [...] gave us the cinema [...] for free, so [...] that was a big coup, because for the first time George Street Cinema had a full night of international mobile films onto a cinema screen.

[...]

The central issue for us is once we get that major sponsor or major partner or major funder or whatever it is you call it. Then we can actually tap into that broader community of smartphone users and [...] now there's an avenue for them to do that. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

More specifically regarding the subject of educating cell cinema participants through tutorials and skills workshops, Ratnanesan had this to say:

So things like the *Mobile Academy* tutorials [help] people use the form well and [...] shoot well on a phone. (*Ibid.*, 2011b)

Tim Copsey gave this perspective of how Holmfirth Film Festival was approaching the subject of educating the filmmaker-participants in one category (*Beyond The Summer Wine*, or 'the Holmfirth stuff', as he refers to it below) by exposing them to the technical competence of filmmakers from other categories:

Altogether, there were 305 films that I've been through. Most of them you would categorise as 'international films', 'professional films'. From the Holmfirth stuff [...] we picked the best out of fifteen. [...] What we're trying to do here is start a yearly

fest, where we get our local people making [film]. Some of them were extremely complex. Some of the comedy was fantastic. Technically though there were major issues [...]. But all in all, we picked the best nine from about 50 to 20 films. I can only imagine next year is going to be better. This is the first year. (Copsey, 2010)

The following extracts are taken from a long question and answer session, conducted partly through a Korean to English translator, at SESIFF in 2011. It involved Phil Wang (P.W.) and Wesley Chang (W.C.) of Wong Fu Productions, a Chinese-American film production company with a successful channel on YouTube. In a fluid moving between speakers, with one supporting the other or contributing occasional clarifications and embellishments, Wang and Chang explained a little of their education as arts majors at University of California, San Diego, and as Asian Americans attempting to establish their personal and creative identities. They explained to the audience and a small panel of other speakers that, when they were starting out as filmmakers, their rationale was first to reach an audience, which later became a requirement to maintain their audience online. Therefore, they said, YouTube was very important to them from the start:

W.C.: It was organic, not planned. We got lucky. You could say we were in the right place at the right time. YouTube was an accident. Nobody else seemed to be doing it, so we did.

Question from a filmmaker-panel member (translated): As things are the way they are now [...] whether it's online videos or, or professional. If you wanna be a professional video maker, what do you think people should think of when they're making videos, and what should they apply to their work?

P.W.: That's [...] a good question, because I think that's the most applicable to right now. [...] Let's say really that we don't have a secret. [...] People want our long videos because they already trust us, [...] and they know that they're going to get something out of it. [...] But if someone doesn't know your videos, then you have to put them [at ease] within the first few seconds. [...] So the [...] thing [...] we haven't really done before, though a lot of people do this [...] making videos regarding what's going on in pop culture. So people are already talking about it [...] the topic is already popular, so you just make something related to that and therefore your video can [...] kinda piggy-back, or ride along with that popularity, and get seen as other people are talking about it. But that gets very tying too because you always have to keep up with what's trendy or what's popular. (Wong Fu Productions, 2011)

The extract above is one of several workshop type events, made available for the festival participants at SESIFF in 2011 to take part in and learn from. It is indicative of the kind of Q. and A. knowledge exchange, informative sessions that feature as supporting events in several cell cinema festivals. I argue that such exchanges between spectator-participants, filmmaker-participants and other festival professionals, who are all co-present during the sessions, introduces opportunities, not only for an exchange of knowledge and experience between participants, but for the forming of communities based on a commonality of experience.

Talking about what she calls 'the portability of social connectedness', Mary Chayko favours the term 'sociomental' over 'virtual' to describe how people engage with one another and their environment, socially and epistemologically, but requiring technological mediation to be able to engage with it (Chayko, 2008, p 5). With regard to physical participation in cell cinema festivals, this is an important distinction to make, because the term *virtual* carries the inference of it not quite existing in a corporeal, physical sense. It therefore tells us little about the very real qualities of its phenomenology as sociomental, participatory engagement in, for example, cell cinema festivals.

Where the notion of *sociomental* begins to fall short, however, is in its inadequacy as a descriptor of the particularly expressive modes of communication we see in cell cinema discourse, which favours the physical copresence of participants with other participants and filmmakers. Cell cinema is then a form of expressivity that is cognisant of, yet not exclusively predicated on, the paradigmatic experience of its reception, the dynamic relationship of audience/ spectator with filmmaker. It is a discourse, which encompasses degrees of spectatorial apprehension, relying on wide-ranging sensory information about a circumscribed ontology. In this regard, what Chayko regards as the 'purely sociomental', where members of a community never meet in a physical space, more accurately describes the types of online film viewing sites such as Vimeo, which is used by cell cinema enthusiasts to share mobile phone films. This may be in addition to their other online activities that may include watching commercial, mainstream films on other platforms such as *Dailymotion* (Chayko, 2008, p 11).

Schleser has the following to say on the subject of coaching, training and educating festival participants, broadening out his remarks to address questions of the ways MINA contributes to the social and cultural well being of people in Wellington and New Zealand:

Some of the films have been [...] deposited in the Film Archive. So there was, like, a contribution to New Zealand film culture on the way. Maybe giving it some new direction [...]. And we've done these sort of workshops [...] but [...] they [...] teach not only some skills to, like some people who have never worked with film before, but also give some, I think, inspiration.

[...]

I think it's probably a contribution to, yeah, [...] also the film industry. And then, of course, it's providing, like, a great way to train the next generation of filmmakers. (Schleser, 2011)

Son responded to the same question, but in respect of how SESIFF is contributing to the intellectual health of cinema in South Korea and beyond, in the following way:

First of all, education and [...] participation. Many people can take part [...]. The development of movie itself is to make people, you know, watch movies and participate in, [...] any kind of festivals [...] or film conferences. A person who already made a movie can understand more about the movie. In the film industry, having good audiences, makes a good film. (Son, 2011)

Therefore, in Son's view, cell cinema is no different to the commercial film festival industry, in that exposure of participants to explanations and training of how moving images are made increases understanding of how they could be made by the participants themselves. Chayko argues that some people become so closely connected to one another in sociomental space that they start to behave similarly and 'think in tandem' achieving what she terms 'cognitive resonance' (Chayko, 2008, p 25). Schleser is also of the opinion that participation in some form of educative, knowledge dissemination spreads culture. In response to the question of

whether MINA, as a film culture event, is contributing to the intellectual health of cinema in New Zealand, and maybe beyond to global film culture, he said the following:

Yes, I think definitely there's a contribution. [...] There are some things I was mentioning before, like [...] introducing [...] mobile phone filmmaking to New Zealand. Then we also have run some workshops last year, and there'll be one workshop in December, [...] so it kind've trains people in mobile phone filmmaking and [...] inspiring [...] the next generation, and so some new talent. [...] So [...] also [...] MINA becomes a platform project for [...] giving the possibility to these sort of new filmmakers, to show their work, because it probably wouldn't fit into other film festivals. (Schleser, 2011)

In the ways outlined above, participants in cell cinema festivals are encouraged to come together to exchange knowledge, and more or less informally learn from each other how to behave in the communities that cell cinema helps create in the festival environment. John Fiske draws on Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) concept of the 'habitus' to show how the participants in film festivals interact as inhabitants of a shared social space for cultural production and exchange. The idea of shared cultural production encompasses and partly rationalises cell cinema's habituated ways of interaction and of what Bourdieu calls 'the associated dispositions of mind, cultural tastes and ways of thinking and feeling' (Bourdieu, quoted in Fiske, 1992 p. 32). Gravitating between being producers and audience members, individuals acquire or lose either class or cultural capital, changing as they do their relationship with other members of the cell cinema community.

In an effort to identify the particular significance a location might have for the way cell cinema festivals support culture, I asked Schleser whether Wellington, a smaller city than the capital city Auckland, was the right place for the MINA festival:

Yes. [...], I think what we'd be very keen to work on is, because MINA's a very international project, [...] is taking a role where it's providing a bit of leadership for the Asian-Pacific area, [...] where it can become, y'know, a leader for that sort of area. And I think that's where mobiles become even, even more important. If you

think with places, like [the] Pacific or in Asia, where access to certain media forms in rural areas are still quite difficult. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

To follow up these remarks, I asked Schleser whether he regarded film festivals to be national, international or trans-national events:

Yeah, I like the sort of idea of them being very international or transnational so, [...] of course, there are of course, certain regions that [...] give a local flavour to the films, so [...] they can teach something about the context, which they're produced in. And [...] I think especially the opening night of MINA was very much created that way to show that there is very much an international aspect to it, so the [...] opening night had films from [...] Europe. There were films from Africa. There were films from South America. And [...] there was a Brazilian film. There was a Columbian film. There was a film from Saudi Arabia. There was a film from [...] Tanzania. [...] Yeah, lots of international places. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

4.4 The Culturalising Event

In the last part of this chapter I want to explore a little further how the action of connecting with fellow participants brings individuals together to share media artefacts (phone films) in a dynamic environment of *sharing*. In answer to why he felt it was important to organise a festival incorporating films made on mobile phones, Schleser had the following to say:

The nice thing about being an event is you can bring people together; people that have interests and introduce [...] notions of sharing, discussing. Y'know [...] you can define or re-define, or you can add to festival innovation. [...] It seems like you can push yourself [to] new areas of production filming [...]. And I think [...] the really important thing at the end is the networking aspect [...], bringing people together, and sharing the fascination about it. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

During the Q. and A. session with Wong Fu Productions' Phil Wang (P.W.) and Wesley Chang (W.C.) answered a number of enquiries linked to how to make a living out of personal filmmaking:

Question from audience member: The reason why I think lots of people enjoy your videos is because, [...] people can associate [with them] personally. [...] But, as your production grows, do you think it's harder to keep that personal feeling that will always be video tied to [...] your personal life, and do you think that'll limit your look?

Question from second audience member: Do you think that's a personal feeling that you make in your video?

P.W.: It's a great question. It's funny [...] cos [...] I mean this is just, y'know, how people generally see them. [...] But maybe they make people feel something. They look the way we wanted. It's very difficult to [...] think about [...] how can we pull that audience as it grows. And, um, I guess, to be honest I want to not care about numbers and not care about the girls and things like that. [...] It's that we're making stuff, and then all of a sudden now we care about, oh we have some more views or personal subscribers and that stuff. [...] I just use friends and our house cos I have the numbers. It's like I feel I'm doing [...] what I really wanna take away, really care about.

(Question from third audience member): Have you ever experienced [...] animosity or negativity, like because they see you as representative of all of us even though, like all Asia is represented in you. [...] And how has that fed in to you, your films, or how you approach making films?

P.W.: We got, we got used to it, sure, [audience laughter] in terms of [...] it's this huge pressure knowing that there're so many different opinions. [...] So we've definitely met it before. One thing we've learned is you can't please everyone. And if you do try to please everyone, it's gonna, it's gonna come at the cost of the fun. (Wong Fu Productions, 2011)

What the question and answer exchanges above show is the way in which their audience identifies to some extent with the lives and experiences of the filmmakers on stage in the festival. The questions from the spectator-participants are not about character or plot, but primarily enquiries for knowledge of the experience of being a filmmaker (in this case, increasingly online) whose films attract audiences, allow them to make a career from it, and have their work featured in a cell cinema festival.

Gravitating between being producers and audience members, individual participants in cell cinema festivals acquire or lose either social class or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984), changing as they do their relationship with other members of the cell cinema community. Refining the definition still further of what happens when participants in cell cinema festivals share experience and

knowledge, Fiske notes 'its dividends lie in the pleasures and esteem of ones peers in a community of taste rather than those of ones social betters' (Fiske, 1992, p. 35). Son had similar views on the way SESIFF contributes to the social and cultural wellbeing of people in Seoul and South Korea:

This objective is very profound. I think [...] SESIFF is like, you know, to [help] people escape from [...] the limits they have [...] from the power of visual things. (Son, 2011)

The sense of the cell cinema festival having an ambitious, almost visionary potential objective encouraged me to ask Son (through his translator) what might be his personal hopes and ambitions for similar events in the future:

(Grace): He says that in the end, audiences can be participants. Audiences can be directors, filmmakers, or screenwriters. So that festival doesn't isolate people. But people think that festivals are ours. (Son, 2011)

It seemed to me that Son had programmed SESIFF as a kind of vehicle for helping people negotiate the transition from watching films, to thinking about making films, to actually making films.

Immediately following my interview with Son, to obtain another perspective on the participatory experience that SESIFF provided, I interviewed his translator Oh-eun Hye (Grace), one of the SESIFF Volunteers assisting with the organisational matters of the festival. I asked her first why she had wanted to volunteer at SESIFF:

After my university I stayed in New Zealand, Auckland for about ten months as an exchange student, a creative writing major. My grades were not very good but my friends said they were good. So I'm not really sure if I want to make films [...] to follow my dream. I'm not sure if I want to work in the Korean film industry. The pay rate is not so good. So when I returned to Korea I wasn't able to work on films. To study at the Korean universities is very expensive and my parents don't have the money to pay. So I'm not sure if I want to make films for a job or a hobby. Maybe a hobby, but with creative writing I can maybe become a writer. (Hye, 2011)

Hye's response provides another example of the way cell cinema participants of different kinds take on, negotiate and transition between levels of participation and identity in often fluid ways. Hye, and other participants like her, recognise the indeterminacy of their participatory status and the cultural capital it bestows on them. However, in sharing in participation, they remain engaged with a community of likeminded individuals.

Schleser gave the following response to the possibility of a national cinema developing in each country, which reflects what the mobile phone does, or whether mobile phones are providing links between cultures:

Yes, I think that the interesting thing is that when you look into the mobile phone films that are made [...] on some community projects, there are some filmmakers [...] that reflect culture, the times in a way. [...] We've got quite a few films from France. And in the programme it was very academic and features the way they're working, and it's in their tradition of course, [...] the French New Wave. [...] I'm beginning to compare for every country cos there are some filmmakers and they're very international [...], but [...] for New Zealand, [...] I think in the future, we could [have] a few workshops here, and they're very keen on working in Holland next year [on] some more Summer projects for instance. At the next workshop at the Expanded Documentary conference; we'll be working with [...] a group of [...] Maori filmmakers. That's something I'm very keen on in the future to [...] look into further. [...] That's where mobile filmmaking can make a great contribution. (Schleser, 2011)

Moving on from considerations of how cell cinema festivals function presently, to post-festival promotion and what cell cinema might promise in the future, Ratnanesan had he following to say:

We're putting together the showreel now with all the feedback, and that's looking pretty good. [...] And we expect that to be done in a week [...] and really now, really just wrapping up, [...] handing out the prizes to all the winners [...], getting all their content out there, [...] helping them promote their work where possible. [...] And [...] most important, we've just finished the festival report, which we're sending to the sponsors, so that's another big piece that we are looking at on our website statistics, y'know, if our audience grows, looking at our media coverage.

[...]

So our next step really is to look at, again, what format do we follow. Cos the other format people haven't really explored is the video game; is to actually take the festival into a video game format. And that's a real, sort of, innovative, way of looking at it. (Ratnanesan, 2011b)

Clearly, Ratnanesan's focus remains firmly on addressing two things: satisfying his sponsors' concerns for a growing, sustainable festival audience for future years, and integrating his festival effectively into what he sees as the crowded film festival market in Australia and international festival schedule more broadly:

I think for us [...] we plan the schedule, based around what [...] are the short film festivals happening in Australia. I think there are two or three biggest ones: Two short film festivals happen in January, so we didn't wanna be around them. And then [...] the two other big festivals; Sydney Film Festival and Dungog happen in May and June, so we didn't wanna be around them either. So that's why our event is in October, it also happens just before Summer, [...] where a lot of festivals start around [...] November, December period. We have a lot of festivals here, so [...] October's kind've like pre-all these other events. There's nothing major competing in that time for the attention span of film audiences [...]. So I think that's one of the main things. [...] I think timing-wise, [...] we're probably at the right place. So we don't really [...] compete with other awards. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

Expanding on how he thought Mobile Screenfest might develop, possibly online in the future; Ratnanesan had some interesting hopes and dreams for enabling phone films from his festival to reach an audience beyond Sydney:

Our website can only play a few. You can view all the videos on the website, which is good. So I've kinda created a website which has that basic capability.

[...]

That's where you actually use the mobile and the ability of the camera to become a video game, because games are now a very big part of the [...] digital ecosystem, much bigger than film. They're actually commercially viable in the first place. They can reach thousands of people, and we're talking about [...] hundreds of millions of people. Now I don't know exactly what that's going to look like, but it's definitely an idea that, y'know, we want to explore. (*Ibid.*, 2011)

Schleser expressed a different vision for what he hope the future of phone filmmaking and exhibition might look like from a Wellington, New Zealand perspective:

I think [...] for next year [...] we'll start [...] finalising the plan for 2012. But, possibly the way I see it at the moment is we've been trying to see if there's some other film festivals [...] like [...] New Zealand Film Festival, [...] y'know attract people to come and visit from [...] all kinds of different places: nationally and internationally. So, maybe work with them, to offer [...] a special screening or [...] a mobile day [...]. Something that [...] I think might be of interest to them. [...] And then I think we'll be expanding our [...] international partners. [...] And [...] then [...] our colleagues and friends in Australia, Sao Paulo, Germany and Russia and you of course, [...] do more work with them. [...] [Y]es, different countries alter different realities [...] funding changes and then [...] things happen and so you have to be very flexible with these things. [...] I think the plan for next year is [...] to organise an exhibition. So showcasing works [...] with new forms of mobile distribution [...] and really like mobile creativity opening this up to some other areas as well. [...] So that some of these things [...] could also be in a cinematic projection, but could also be installation-type, gallery-type experience. (Schleser, 2011)

Clearly, both Ratnanesan and Schleser envisage some form of digital, perhaps online, spin-off of their festival activities, expanding the physically located cell cinema festival using its characteristic of *movement* in other strands of mobile media. In this way, they appear to be cognisant of the need to *future-proof* their events, while capitalising on the intrinsic value that the located cell cinema experience offers its participants.

Concluding Remarks

What the various answers to interview questions, responses to questionnaires and other remarks to points raised within the four preceding sections of this chapter have shown, is that, firstly in a general sense, film festivals are significant commercial and cultural events happening in many parts of the world. Taken as a global entity, they accommodate myriad subjects, genres and movements in what Janet Harbord describes as 'mixed spaces crossed by

commercial interest, specialized film knowledge and tourist trajectories' (Harbord, 2002, p. 60). Cell cinema festivals, more specifically, ask questions of how the post-digital moving images of phone films connect their makers, spectators and other participants with social, national and global affiliations that find their nexus in the cell cinema location.

Section 4.1 explored the importance that tourism has for several of the festival organisers, film programmers, filmmaker-participants and spectator-participants who responded with their views about the physical and experiential factors of *place*, *space* and *location*. Section 4.2 related the varied views of each of the three participant groups for what I characterised as the *small screen/big screen* question: whether or to what degree the size of the screen, on which phone films were seen and experienced, affected the cinematic form of engagement with the film. This led to addressing questions of *cinophilia* and the *cinephilic* experience, introduced on page 136 and discussed at length within the section, which cell cinema produces or emulates.

Several interviewees were responsible for organising, setting up, or otherwise engaging in various activities of workshop instruction, skills development and training, and educational forms of activity running alongside or within cell cinema festivals. The resultant communities of *copresent* participants contributed to what I characterised as the *culturalising event*, whereby participation enabled and encouraged a culture of shared discourse and experience. These are topics that the next chapter will also take up and expand upon.

Armed with the various responses from the participants above to interview questions and questionnaires, I will build on the supporting structure provided by this and the preceding chapters. One of several tasks for chapter 5 to complete is to undertake an in-depth exploration of the cell cinema aesthetic.

Chapter 5. Cell Cinema Play Becomes Enunciative Productivity

The previous chapter's ethnographic investigation, of the various media discourses that make up cell cinema, showed that its communities of participants play a central role in the creation of cell cinema events. This chapter will extend that line of argument, exploring the collision of commercial and artistic factors that meet and coalesce in the cell cinema festival. In doing so, I start from the premise that cell cinema is a socio-cultural phenomenon, which has its beginnings in a hybrid form of expressive/cultural process, wherein aspects of commerce, pleasure and play, political and creative impulses all have a part in its construction and engagement by participants.

To partly summarize the evidence in chapter 4, phone filmmakers, festival programmers and spectators gather together in cell cinema spaces for various reasons of mutual benefit, including a number of social and cultural factors that I will come onto momentarily. What links these three groups together as cell cinema participants, is that their attendance at a cell cinema festival involves participating in an activity that is in essence pleasurable or gratifying to them in some way. This can be characterised as a kind of *festival effect* or *festival thrill*, but which I will describe by using the more useful term *pleasure*, which participants derive from their engagement with cell cinema in a festival setting.

Tim Copsey expresses the film festival programmer's anxiety to avoid a passive form of engagement by the audiences for the films at HFF. Conscious of providing multiple opportunities for people new to filmmaking and film festivals, he nonetheless admits, 'it's also true to say that a film festival can be quite a passive affair. You sit and you're entertained' (Copsey, 2010). The previous chapter provides evidence to discredit oppositional notions of the passive versus active audience (see also Heath and Bryant, 2000). In its most extreme, binary manifestation, this can briefly be restated as a situation where a passive audience accepts the messages that media send it, and an active audience, on the other hand, is fully aware of messages presented to them by media, and makes informed decisions about how to interact with media, and to process and understand the messages they contain. This simplistic and un-messy oppositional arrangement of

theoretical arguments begins to break down in the context of the cell cinema festival. For the phone filmmaker who is often also a member of the audience, the festival experience is an active, experiential one wherein engagement is of a participatory nature, as Copsey attests:

To actually engage as a filmmaker is a very, very exciting deal altogether, particularly if you're young or disenfranchised. And by that I just mean, not in the industry. (Interview, Copsey 2010)

Copsey's mention of industry is revealing of his distinction between the amateur, enthusiast filmmakers his festival attracts and promotes, and a single apparent alternative of making films as a job. In cell cinema there may be industry involved, in the form of work by filmmakers and others, but little opportunity outside of relatively small cash prizes in competitions to be gained from its participation. The phone film spectator is also actively engaged in participation with phone films, their makers, other participants and festival professionals through workshops, question and answer sessions and so on. Therefore, the character of each participant's engagement becomes politicised, as they negotiate their shifting identities and relationships with their fellow participants from different groupings.

The last chapter indicated that, in their responses to interview questions, representatives from each of the three major groups of participants (filmmakers, spectators and festival professionals) acknowledge that the social practice they are involved in also contains elements of a moderately political nature: They reveal an awareness of the enjoyment and pleasure they gain from seeing phone films, and being part of a cell cinema festival in an extended group of like-minded individuals. To participate in a cell cinema event is a subtly different experience from traditional film festival viewing in a commercial cinema theatre, or watching on television, online by computer or (as I have shown, on mobile phone screen. In this sense, cell cinema becomes more than just seeing a film, different to normal cinema attendance, and a peculiar and distinctive mode of film festival engagement.

It is important, however, to question whether the participant in any form of cultural pursuit, in this case cell cinema, is always engaging with such an element of play in an actively participatory way, or whether the phone film spectator is merely a witness rather than a cell cinema participant? Play takes many forms; even at film festivals associated with the commercial and cultural development aspects of tourism. Andrew Darley remarks that 'certain principles of play [...] denote a particular register of experience: one that is associated more precisely with the pleasures that are ephemeral, sensuous and physical' (Darley, 2000, p. 170). Cell cinema comprises a discourse that embodies all three aspects of this register: Cell cinema is ephemeral to the extent that, just like the films it comprises, it has a finite time span of often only a few days duration related to considerations of the programming of films of with a short running time of a few minutes, and the cost issues associated with venue hire and other logistical issues. In other words, the touristic sensation of short-lived experience of novelty and passing pleasures is repeatedly replaced by other similar but different experiences. Its sensuous and physical aspects of cell cinema are discussed in chapter one particularly, and born out in the phone film's haptic character and foregrounding of embodiment in its mode of production and spectatorial experience. Therefore, the kinds of pleasures that are experienced in cell cinema support Darley's characterisation of play and playful experience.

Barthes proposes that pleasure constitutes a final approach to the text itself: 'I do not know whether there has ever been a hedonistic aesthetics. Certainly there exists a pleasure of the work (of certain works)' (Barthes, 1977 p. 163). For Barthes, pleasure takes subtle forms: The *jouissance* or radically violent pleasure that equates to the Benjaminian *shock* that we can associate with seeing a phone film image for the first time. Barthes regards the alternate *plaisir* to be a pleasure linked to enjoyment and identity with a cultural object. Therefore, what this line of reasoning shows is that phone films express or illustrate aspects of pleasure, best characterised as a Barthesian *jouissance*, and that the spectator's cultural identity is re-affirmed during participation in the cell cinema festival. The pleasure of engaging with cell cinema as tourist and participant is experienced as a Barthesian *plaisir*.

With such emphatic demonstrations of pleasure (most immediately of the spectator's apprehension of the phone film image) come their obverse, negative connotations of a possibly unfocussed, image-centric *desire*. Baudrillard argues that such desire may be manifested in the following ways:

In the confusion of desire and its equivalent materialized in the image [...] in the desire for knowledge and its equivalent materialized in "information" [...] the desire for fantasy and its equivalent materialized in the Disneylands of the world, the desire for space and its equivalent programmed into vacation itineraries, the desire for play and its equivalent programmed into private telematics. (Baudrillard, 1987, p.35)

Film festivals are locations for the construction and realisation of desire, for aesthetic pleasure, for competition success, for commercial and professional advancement. Perhaps too late for Baudrillard, the 2010 Pocket Film Festival, situated in the *cinemateque* Forum des Images, itself occupying a public space in Paris' Forum *des Halles*, went some way to redeem what he saw as previously unredeemable. Notwithstanding Labourdette's slight ambivalence over its situatedness within this part of Paris, PFF did introduce moving image culture into a place largely given over to the commoditisation of information, perhaps again, replacing it with an alternative *cultural consumption* (see Featherstone, 1991; Fiske, 1994; Morley, 1996). Thus, retaining for the moment Baudrillard's negativity, the omnipresent, unmediated exchange of information masquerading as communication of meaning is exemplified in the erosion of dialectical possibilities between sender and receiver, cell cinema filmmaker and spectator. The potentially serious matter of playing with meaning possibilities is all too easily turned into an un-serious game of sending and receiving objects of triviality. Where once resided a space for meaning creation, there is a new fascination with play as an end in itself. Pleasure assumes a higher ranking than knowledge, while diversion from reality is conflated with artistic creation and the building of a territory of somatic socialization. In protesting 'there is no longer a staging of the commodity: there is only its obscene and empty form', I can only empathise with Baudrillard's anxiety over the apparent vacuity of urban commercialisation, but not with his conclusions:

That is why advertising no longer has a territory. Its recoverable forms no longer have any meaning. The Forum des Halles, for example, is a gigantic advertising unit – an operation of publicitude. It is not the advertising of a particular person, of any firm, the Forum also does not have the status of a veritable mall or architectural whole [...] And it is something like the Forum that best illustrates what advertising has become, what the *public domain* has become. (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 93)

Phone films exhibited on the screens of the Forum des Images are thus implicated in the spread of screen culture at the centre of Paris' daily life. Media products effect the merging of shopping and screen cultures within 'the whole town as a total functional screen of activities' (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 76). As a *personal digital device* used for on-screen commerce, leisure and social networking, the mobile phone comprises and signifies fragmentary and heterogeneous uses. The Pocket Films Festival's situatedness foregrounds a conflict between the democratising process of cell cinema discourse and the commercial, retail environment of the urban shopping centre. The former offers (almost) free exchange of intellectual property, whilst the latter promises a more prosaic satisfaction of artificially stimulated desire. Consequently, chapter four outlined my major reflections on the various appearances that these seemingly antithetical relationships are formed in, and the conflictual desires it brings forth. What is salient to the present discussion of the touristic pleasures to be enjoyed in cell cinema participation, is how this foregrounds the cultural *milieu* it inhabits.

5.1 The Politics of Cell Cinema Disruption

Cell cinema festivals appear to exist as adjuncts to the wider cinema and festival industry, whilst remaining philosophically and politically in resistance to it. Part of that resistance is against the commoditisation of moving images as objects to be traded. Sharing an image has the appearance of a gift (that a later part of this chapter deals with), which may or may not involve reciprocity. However, something else is exchanged between filmmaker and audience during the cell cinema *transaction*: the satisfying of an additional unspecified technophilic desire. There is

a sharing of a collegiate love of the technological devices used in cell cinema's realisation. As chapter one demonstrated, the phone film is subjected to, and the subject of, an unusual form of technological determinism. The phone film text is inextricable from the mobile phone device on which it has been created – and often shown. Feelings of desire for the mobile phone object are mirrored in desire for the image it contains. Repeatedly, the responses of interviewees asked to reflect on this technological *taint* are carried forward in the phone film's mediating production process (Kono, 2011; Jerram, 2011) emerging in the socially and politically nuanced discourse of the cell cinema festival.

Cell cinema's democratising ethos can only be secured if there also exists widespread public access to mobile phone cameras and associated technologies. Therefore, as Gerard Goggin has noted, 'a pressing question regarding the future of cell phones as they metamorphise irrevocably into mobile media revolves around openness' (Goggin, 1996, p. 25). Such openness necessitates users of mobile phones exercise their cultural agency, their desire to be connected, to share culture and participate in it. The underlying, if not default, character of cell cinema is to embrace the kind of anti-professional filmmaking that avoids the production practices of the commercial film industry. This nexus of largely unregulated creativity emerging in cell cinema is emphasised and becomes self-fulfilling. The pleasures experienced by somewhat marginalised or subordinated groups make the creation and spectatorship of phone films pleasurable, partly through the fact of their difference (Taki, 2010; Labourdette, 2010; Jerram, 2011).

Unsurprisingly therefore, cell cinema festivals wrestle continually with the requirements of sponsors and official backers to maintain viability of the festival as an undertaking in successive years. As their pre-festival and intra-festival promotional materials show, cell cinema festivals typically (but not universally) address a more or less stated ethos of promoting, exhibiting, and distributing films that deal with other topics of more immediate human interest (see *7/4 Random News at Holmfirth*, 2010; *La Ligne brune/The Brown Line*, 2010). The kind of pleasure that such film experience encourages is of popular culture, participatory rather than the reception of hegemonic media products, sharing stories of common experience through moving images. As John Fiske says of the tendency of

allegiances to social groups with aspects of shared identity, forces of exclusion and inclusion come into play:

Popular pleasures arise from the social allegiances formed by subordinated people, they are bottom-up and must thus exist in some relationship of opposition to power (social, moral, textual, aesthetic and so on) that attempts to discipline and control them. (Fiske, 1996, p. 49)

Simply put, cell cinema is popularised and continued through experiencing and sharing the pleasure of phone films. These aspects of its engagement are pleasurable because the accumulated meanings within phone film texts are typically relevant, and have functional value for participants. They are not hegemonic meanings in that they do not exist at one remove from everyday experience. As chapter two showed, cell cinema engagement supports the thesis of the active spectator, where meaning is produced within the experience of the film text by a process of co-creation (Chayko, 2008). Therefore, if it should need one at all, a primary purpose of cell cinema discourse can be said to be in facilitating the pleasurable activity of sharing creative expression by a participatory audience. In other words, the cell cinema audience derives satisfaction, pleasure, and fulfilment from its participation in the hermeneutic of co-created meaning. Therefore, the audience is an active one, centrally involved in the creation of meaning and its dissemination. Interviewed at the Tokyo equivalent of the Paris' Pocket Film Festival, Toru Oyama summarises what he feels to be the filmmaker's particular contribution to the cell cinema process:

It often feels like we're at the beginning of a revolution here, where everyone is their own publisher. These are revolutionary times when we can showcase our work to many people. Now you've got amateurs alongside professionals as equals. A phone [...] is not only the eye on the world, it is the messenger too. Movies are now truly mobile. (Oyama, in Hart, 2009)

Invoking once more my researcher's *point of view* that I introduced in chapter 2, my participant observations outlined in chapter 4 indicate that mobile phone filmmakers recognise they are more than merely complicit in cell cinema's political discourse. As Gerard Goggin attests, 'Far less well discussed, in relation to mobile media, are their concrete implications for social, political and cultural participation' (Goggin, 2011, p. 50). Therefore, we must ask what new forms participation takes when it is in the form of intangible, would-be commodities that appear as information to be consumed rather than valued?

With creative consumption, rhetorics of Web 2.0 and user-generated content, the problematic, as we have seen, becomes one in which participation is greatly expanded to take on a new sense. Rather than being termed *the information society* [...] we speak of *participatory cultures*, the *participatory web*, or supporting a *participative information society*. (Goggin, 2011, p. 48, emphases in original; see also Le Borgne-Bachs Schmidt, Girieud, and Leiba, 2008, pp. 174 and 282)

My interviews and observations of phone filmmakers, spectators and festival professional indicate they all are conscious of cell cinema's potential as a political act, as well as some kind of social and cultural expression. Whether cell cinema can correctly be said to constitute a *mode* or *medium* will be addressed later in this chapter. For the present, the term *cell cinema* must suffice to describe the social, cultural and creative process from the moment an image is made on the screen of a mobile phone camera, and carried through the various stages of its production, exhibition and sharing.

Online video posting sites such as YouTube and Vimeo exist in a sympathetic interrelationship with other (offline) forms of non-professional moving image culture, such as film festivals. As the list of films in appendix A attests, many phone films have an online *life* running in parallel with frequent festival appearances, extending their social and transnational reach. Burgess and Green note that mainstream media accounts of amateur, everyday media creation fail to fully consider their social network function: that it has as much to do with 'social network formation or collective play as it does self-promotion' (Burgess and Green,

2009, p.29). This notion of *collective play* is a recurring one, describing an everyday, and not necessarily exceptional, social practice.

To see these only as acts of publishing or distribution is to impose broadcast-era understandings on how the media operates onto a service at the forefront of defining post-broadcast media logics. (Burgess and Green, 2009, p. 35)

It should be re-emphasised that YouTube, Vimeo etc. exist in visible and very significant ways as online, exhibitivite entities for non-professional filmmaking, including phone films, but alongside and distinct from the social phenomenon of cell cinema. Nevertheless, with regard to the digital production of participatory culture, Burgess and Green sensibly urge us to consider how 'the everyday experience of audiencehood might need to be rethought to include new forms of cultural production that occur as part of ordinary media use' (Burgess and Green, 2009, p. 47). It is my contention that cell cinema is a good example of a new form of media production, because it normalizes participatory audiencehood as a feature of everyday experience. Therefore, I will return to the subject of everyday experience of media later in this chapter.

In *Writing and Difference* (2001), Derrida offers a useful comparative position from which to discuss the reflexivity and abstract analyses of structuralism, but argues that these discourses have still not gone far enough in treating structures as free-floating or 'playing' sets of relationships, accusing structuralist discourses of holding on to a 'center' (Derrida, 1980; original spelling in translation): a favoured term that anchors the structure and does not accommodate play. Whether this centre is a euphemism for *God, being, presence, or man*, its function is the same: of attempting to provide a structuring organism around which order can coalesce. The history of structures is a history of substitutions, one centre after another for this constant position, and the structures that cell cinema organisers and programmers put in place in their festivals are substitutions for the absence of order that phone filmmakers continually shy away from in their subversive or anti-professional filmmaking. Derrida's thinking suggests that this structural model of

centralising or controlling discourse from positions of exteriority would end (is ending) and that a newer and freer (though still unknown) thinking about structures would emerge as a result. The responses of a number of cell cinema festival organisers, such as Labourdette and Schleser indicate that they, consciously or not, believe the post-structuralist discourses of phone films find their central hub of influence in the discursive and social environments of cell cinema festivals. Their freedom to incorporate elements of play and *playful* sets of relationships legitimises their incorporation into film festival production, whilst maintaining their perceived element of social and cultural subversion.

As chapter 4 indicated, phone filmmakers, festival programmers and spectators gather together in cell cinema spaces for various reasons of mutual benefit, including a number of social and cultural factors that I will come onto momentarily. What links these three groups together as cell cinema participants, is that their attendance at a cell cinema festival involves participating in an activity that is in essence pleasurable or gratifying to them in some way (the idea of self-interest that I introduced this chapter with). This can be characterised as a kind of *festival effect* or *festival thrill*, but which I will describe by using the more useful term *pleasure*, which participants derive from their engagement with cell cinema in a festival setting.

Notwithstanding notions of cell cinema's increasing popularity as a mode of filmic discourse, its democratising ethos that threatens to conflict with the economic priorities of commercial, or sustainable festival management, can only be achieved if there also exists widespread public access to mobile phone cameras and associated technologies. As chapter 3 found, in addition to issues of cost and distance, there are problems of bridging culture and language associated with cell cinema participation. Therefore, as Gerard Goggin has noted, 'a pressing question regarding the future of cell phones as they metamorphise irrevocably into mobile media revolves around openness' (Goggin, 1996, p. 25). Such notions of openness from Goggin, if shared, requires users of mobile phones to exercise their cultural agency, their desire to be connected, to share culture and participate in it.

The phone films discussed in chapter 2 indicate that the underlying, if not default, character of cell cinema is that it embraces radical, anti-professional and anti-establishment media practices. This nexus of largely unregulated creativity is emphasised and becomes self-fulfilling, because the pleasures derived from relaxed and playful engagement with somewhat marginalised or subordinated groups make the creation and spectatorship of phone films so partly through the fact of their enjoyment.

5.2 New Medium or Mode of Engagement

In getting ever closer to making final conclusions of cell cinema's ontological status, the addition of the question mark in the heading above is significant. In reaching for clear definitions about cell cinema as mode of engagement with phone films by festival spectators, this section will necessarily question notions of medium/mediate and mode/modality in relation to cell cinema as socio-cultural discourse.

Drawn too loosely, *media*, as a term can be almost meaningless in its all-pervasive presence. As Baudrillard (1981, p. 82) notes, 'everywhere socialization is measured by the exposure to media messages'. Thought of too definitively, *media* can also invoke the media ecologies of Marshall McLuhan (1964) and Neil Postman (1993). In such a schema, the spectre of technological determinism might delineate cell cinema as just another manifestation of the fifth technological epoch (after McLuhan's tribal, language, print and electronic eras): the post-digital epoch. However, this would be to ignore cell cinema's socio-cultural aspects, its participatory form of engagement and sharing of creative media products. Stephen Graham rightly adds the corrective to what he describes as 'the myth of technological determinism' in relation to the urban use of mobile technologies, 'that society and technology shape each other in complex ways [...] caught up in complex and recursive interactions, rather than in separate realms' (Graham, 2001, p. 158). Therefore, whenever I use the term *mediate*, it is in the sense of something (a person or thing) indirectly connecting two or more people. From this basis, we can say that things, people and media all mediate.

Phone films are mediated, not only by the technologies used in their creation (the mobile phone camera, the computer and associated software), but also by the film festivals in which they reach a cell cinema audience. In this social and socialising process, phone films are inter-personally disseminated (as distinct from being *spread* through online sharing sites), and beyond the individuated production (and personal viewing) by their makers. Therefore, the nature of that mediation is important to consider.

Recalling a Baudrillardian anxiety over recent trends in consumer culture and society, Melanie Swalwell notes that during the mid-1990s 'a discourse emerged in advertising about the intensification of sensory experiences of technology [...] with hyper-stimulation often presented as desirable [...] up to date, fully experiencing the present' (Swalwell, 2012). Such omnipresent images of gratification and pleasure are seen to inevitably feed the desire for further stimulation. What this indicates, so her argument goes, are the kinds of feelings of intense (hyper) sensory gratification that interview respondents and phone filmmakers say they experience when using mobile phones to make their films (Lily and The Crew, 2010; Shim, 2011; Jung, 2011).

Swalwell's ideas about hyper-stimulation's links to the creation of desire through technologised media need to be looked at in more detail. What can be said about the motivations for participants to engage in such hyper-stimulation? Earlier, I drew connections between the cell cinema festival, touristic experience and notions of play, pleasure, and forms of desire that the festival encourages. Swalwell sees the aestheticisation of technology 'in terms of the senses and sensory experience,' adding its own impetus, feeding the increasing desire for objects whose aesthetics become inseparable from the technologies by which they are experienced (Swalwell, 2012). It is this technologically driven desire for ever-more aesthetic experience that Swalwell calls hyper-stimulation. The almost continual release of new mobile phone handsets, apps and other software feeds a similarly insatiable desire and pleasure to be had in the use, touch, feel and ergonomics of personal digital devices. This can easily be construed as techno-philia that is mirrored and facilitated by a kind of *festival-philia*. As Swalwell says, 'technological

change' [and] 'technology has increasingly come to be seen in aesthetic terms, that is, in terms of the senses and sensory experience' (Swalwell, 2012).

We could argue that the annual increase in film festivals of myriad kinds contributes to a general hyper-stimulation, an over-abundance of opportunities to engage with moving images in pleasurable surroundings (see Ratnanesan, 2011). De Valck points out that 'it no longer matters whether they live in remote rural areas, towns, or world cities, because video, DVD, the Internet, and the ubiquitous festival phenomenon have made the specific object of their desire readily available for consumption' (de Valck, 2007 p. 184). It might be similarly argued that the proliferation of screening platforms: television, cinema, tablet computers, mobile phones, could be construed as an argument against the cell cinema festival adding to the already over-abundance.

These dual influences of technologically driven desire and *festival-philía* in turn shape the cell cinema aesthetic that I will come onto a little later. Indeed, as chapter 2 showed, the phone film remains an embodied object, more than implicating the physical presence of the filmmaker at the moment of its creation, but at every subsequent moment of its screening. Cell cinema, likewise, is emphatically an existential, phenomenological and participatory experience that uses phone films as its foundational texts. Therefore, as I argue in chapter three, what is mediated through the phone film is embodied sensation. However, cell cinema relies on the media of film and the film festival for its ability to engage participants in its discourse. The phone film is mediated a second time by the participatory actions that emanate from filmmaker-spectator engagement. Cell cinema is not, therefore, a new medium, but *piggybacks* existing mediating technologies and processes.

Evidence for an obviously hyper-stimulated form of desire does not yet seem to be present in cell cinema. Its participatory form of engagement requires physical travel to the festival's location, and a commitment or expectation of active participation in various festival events for a relatively extended period of time. It appears to negate the kinds of impulsive posting of videos, such as is often seen in the 'vernacular creativity' of online video sharing sites (Burgess and Green, 2009, p.

26). However, cell cinema appears to disrupt rather than destroy the individualism and individuated identity formation to which this thesis' title refers. In this, cell cinema provides the circumstances in which mediation can happen, without creating a new medium from the collision of a social sharing discourse with digital technology.

Through a version of what Barry Wellman calls 'networked individualism,' the individual cell cinema participant plays an active role in how phone films are mediated (Wellman, 2005, pp. 54-55). Wellman uses his concept to argue that the 'computerization of community' fosters changes 'from the place-to-place community of 20th century homes and offices to the person-to-person community of networked individuals' (Wellman, 2005, pp. 54-55). It is here that I believe cell cinema differs significantly from Wellman's central premise. His notion of an emerging trend toward networks of individuals rather than place-dependent social groupings locates this as, not strictly speaking a de-socialising phenomenon, but an adaptive sociality where geographical proximity assumes a lesser importance. While remaining valid in the contemporary setting, such practices are more aligned with online social activity (see Ito et al, 2005). Clearly, due to their geographical and temporal situatedness, current cell cinema practices are at variance with Wellman's ideas of *anti-place*, computerized communities of virtual connectivity. In this regard, cell cinema seems to have moved through (or around) the dystopian extremis of cyber-sociality becoming normalised at the expense of face-to-face human engagement. However, Wellman's further observation, that 'the person has become the portal', has resonance for the particular form of interaction operating between the spectators of phone films and filmmakers (Wellman, 2005, p. 55).

Whatever the individual person's contribution as a mediating influence, 'by its very definition [...] influence is not a unidirectional phenomenon, flowing from source to receiver, but multidirectional' (Alexander and Jacobs, pp. 28 – 29). This is of course true of other systems of communication, so a more important question to ask of cell cinema is how can we identify functions as a process of production, negotiation and adoption by participants within it. In other words, social, participatory engagement with cell cinema shapes identity of groups as well as the individual, and what Daniel Dayan (1998) calls 'particularistic media' maintains or

produces identity for groups participants at cell cinema festivals. As Dayan puts it, 'particularistic media compliment the role of the institution in charge of the custody and transmission of filtration and memory' (Dayan, 1998, p. 105). Therefore, cell cinema identity remains contextualised. It is embraced by the dual potentials of public culture and particularistic media, straddling the public and private spheres wherein the cell cinema participant's individual identity is subjected to 'symbiotic fusion with the surrounding majority' (Dayan, 1998, p.106).

Writing in 1984 in reaction to the monopolising effects of capitalist mass media, John Downing offers a plausibly transferrable manifesto for contemporary, politicised and radical media. With the obvious caveat that, at the time of writing, he could not have foreseen the mobile phone's development as a device for the mediation of creative moving images, the four-part definition Downing gives for radical media is still relevant:

1. The importance of encouraging contributions from as many interested parties as possible, in order to emphasise the 'multiple realities' of social life (oppression, political cultures, economic situations).
2. The radical media, while they may be partisan, should never become a tool of a party or intelligentsia.
3. That radical media at their most creative and socially significant privilege movements over institutions.
4. That within the organisation of radical media there appears an emphasis on prefigurative politics (Downing, 1984, p. 17).

The democratising ethos of cell cinema reflects several aspects of Downing's categorisation of radical media. Downing is particularly persuasive in his identification of radical media as privileging movements over institutions. In a softening of the oppositional arguments of his earlier work, Downing revises the terminology in the 2000 edition of his book to consider alternative media to be the media of social movements. By introducing this analogy, I recognise that cell cinema, and the phone films that find their route to socio-cultural mediatisation within it, form an alternative to much contemporary mass audio-visual media.

Filmmakers and other participants in cell cinema discourse engage in a particular kind of social, but also political, activity: the democratisation of creative media exchange. As chapter 4 demonstrates, it is most clearly evident within the festival context that a prefigurative politics of cell cinema emerges. The sub-corporate influence of the festival business initially provides the formal precursor for the political ambitions cell cinema takes up. However, we have needed to look, as in chapter 2, firstly to the filmmakers themselves for evidence (if not a predetermination) of an intentionality of a politicised phone film culture, and a radical mode of mediation in cell cinema.

Chris Atton takes Downing's arguments a stage further with a more generalized model of alternative media, but one which applies more directly to the cell cinema context: 'I propose a model of the alternative media that is as much concerned with how it is organised within its socio-cultural context as with its subject matter' (Atton, 2002, p. 10). I agree with Atton's underlying theoretical premise that alternative media's value can best be realised by its cultural interrogation by those participating in it 'as a set of communication processes within (sub) cultural formations, alternative media privilege the involved audience over the merely informed' (Atton, 2002, p. 25). Atton's position describes an aspirational model for alternative media, emphasising 'the organization of media to enable wider social participation in their creation, production, and dissemination than is possible in the mass media' (Atton, 2002, p. 15).

Thus, Atton forwards the democratizing effects of exactly the kind of alternative media landscape that cell cinema inhabits. This is especially so when he goes on to assert 'they must be available to ordinary people without the necessity of professional training, without excessive capital outlay and they must take place in settings other than media institutions or similar systems' (Atton, 2002, p. 15; see also Copsey, 2010, Labourdette, 2010 and Ratnanesan, 2011). One such alternative setting involves the production of 'fan culture' (Fiske, 1996) and 'zine culture' (Atton, 2002): modes of media production that share similarities with aspects of cell cinema's subversive social dynamic, but also, as will be discussed later in this chapter, of notions of the exchange of gifts that the phone film comes to inhabit in the sharing context of the cell cinema festival.

At the very heart of zine culture is not the study of the 'other' (celebrity, cultural object or activity) but the study of the self, of personal expression, sociality and the building of community. (Atton, 2002, pp. 54-55)

In drawing this analogy, I am primarily concerned here with foregrounding cell cinema's potential as a medium for sociality and identity (or socialized identity) rather than its promotion of instrumental ends. As a social phenomenon, cell cinema transforms formal aspects of normally professionalized activities, such as scriptwriting, cinematography and editing into processes of a socialized creative exchange of media products within the alternative setting of the festival gathering. Specifically regarding aspects of sociality, Atton attests that 'the zine as a medium here stands in for a social relationship: It is a token to be exchanged in all its forms' (Atton, 2002, p. 59). This theme of the cell cinema festival functioning as a media environment, within which tokens of some sort are exchanged between participants, will be amplified in the last section of this chapter. The externalizing of these kinds of social relationships is reflected in what we observe as the desire to establish relations and feelings of community through the gifting impulse that cell cinema festivals predicate and perpetuate in transnational flows of post-digital media artefacts.

The intrinsicality of cell cinema as a mode of expressive, personal filmmaking encourages self-reflexivity. Participants in cell cinema engage in the creation of an alternative public sphere, within which they can develop a self-awareness of their potential to create and share pleasurable media.

Experimentation and creativity with alternative possibilities of 'being' and 'doing' will form the heart of such activity; autonomy and the absence of unbalanced power relations can develop a reflexive habitus that can connect the self with the lifeworld. (Atton, 2002, p.154)

John Fiske suggests that systems of production and distribution within fan cultures comprise a kind of shadow economy where 'this economic power is both underpinned and exceeded by semiotic power, that is, the power to make meanings' (Fiske, 1989, pp. 9-10). Therefore, cell cinema participant's resistance to the hegemony of the corporate film festival as commercial entity is achieved through a restatement of its semiotic power. It is to some extent circumscribed and controlled by the ways in which phone films are included and programmed in festivals. By their incorporation into a festival schedule, phone films inevitably and necessarily become components of film festival discourse. They both reflect and comment on the medium that gives them their realisation. As Fiske makes plain, 'a text that is to be made into popular culture must, then, contain both the forces of domination and the opportunities to speak against them' and, therefore, in the present discussion of cell cinema it must create 'opportunities to oppose or evade them from subordinated, but not totally disempowered, positions' (Fiske, 1996, p. 25).

In this vein, Judith Nicholson (2007) has coined the term 'flash mobs' to describe groups of like-minded individuals that use mobile technologies to gather together, virtually then later physically, only to disaggregate following the completion of a communal act. Similarly, Michel Maffesoli's postmodern sociality of 'neo-tribes' that evidence 'minor knowledges' (Maffesoli, 1996) has a striking resonance for the thinking of Michel de Certeau in the latter's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Gardiner, 1997). Thus, postmodern social practices of media use, subvert, reconfigure sociality and describe knowledge in new ways.

Creative, or subversive applications of mobile media clearly signal location-dependent, temporary and short-lived events typified by cell cinema festivals. Therefore, it is inevitable (as was shown in chapter two) that mobile phone use by individuals at film festivals incorporates elements of cultural symbolism, regulates identity or indicates relationships of power, and maintains a sense of order appropriate to the cell cinema environment. In other words, as Katz and Aakus (2002) have found, mobile phone use reveals the choreography of interpersonal relations, negotiation and maintenance of the social order, and the regulation of self-presentation.

In a similar observation, Yasmin Ibrahim notes this kind of implicitly politicising impulse that mobile digital media engender when she says ‘the links between mobile and new media technologies such as the internet present new production and political economies where private content can be linked to a wider economy of information production and dissemination’ (Ibrahim, 2007). In this manner, Ibrahim describes mobile technology’s power to effect networks (online or otherwise) among its users, refashioning its potential as a creative tool when allied to the Internet. This is an understandable conclusion to draw from several years’ evidence of the burgeoning possibilities afforded by mobile online media, which, ‘while not completely reconfiguring the power structures of mainstream media, present new avenues to raise counter points’ (Ibrahim, 2007).

Paraphrasing Paulos and Goodman (2007), Ibrahim continues by restating the *straw man* debate as to whether the mobile phone is partly to blame for increasing the divide between people and co-located strangers within shared space: ‘There is a tendency to ignore other people while reaching for the mobile phone. This dramatically decreases the opportunities for interaction beyond our social group’ (Ibrahim, 2007). Ibrahim’s arguments serve as examples of the need to go beyond considerations of hegemonic modes of moving image engagement. They are, for instance, at odds with Mary Chayko’s notion of co-presence, which, in the context of the cell cinema festival, I use to conceptualise the mobile phone’s use as a device for phone film co-production, and to reiterate a sense of co-meaning creation between members of a cell cinema festival community.

5.3 A Hybrid Cultural Form

In this section I will flesh out some of the dualities and dichotomies that cell cinema elaborates. This *dual* prefix will become an important recurring motif. As has been established, post-digital media practices, such as phone filmmaking, reflect analogue antecedences while addressing the realities of their cultural situatedness through the contemporary specificities of the texts they produce. These dualities are such that, as a cultural form, cell cinema imbricates qualities of hybridity, which emerge as a major factor of its aesthetic. Some phone films (see

Dubois, 2010; Fleischer, 2010) duplicate information given in the dialogue, narration and so on through *redundancy* simply by repetition or the addition of explicatory visual images. This layering of information in the text may or may not add new information to the narrative whole, yet it is indicative of an apparent need by the filmmakers to provide some form of compensatory image – either sonic or visual – to reinforce the hermeneutic in and avoid ambiguity. Cell cinema’s hybridity attempts to address the potential redundancy this entails. In other words, it is as if the filmmaker recognises that the phone film is in danger of not being accepted as a contemporary and alive cinematic form, and so must layer its aesthetic with additional information to emphasize its creative ambition.

It may be problematic to invoke the term *modernity* in the context of such an acutely contemporary phenomenon as cell cinema. Recalling a Baudrillardian epistemology, Mike Gane says ‘there are in fact only “traits” of modernity that, at one level, tend to a particular homogeneity in great contrast to the immense diversity of traditional cultures’ (Gane, 1991, p. 92). However, cell cinema’s form of participatory engagement and personal use of acutely modern technologies, to respond to a relatively unrestricted range of narrative concerns, goes some way toward assuring its anti-homogenising tendency. Thus, cell cinema inhabits an insecure territory between modernist textual preoccupations and post-digital, post-modernist modes of media production and dissemination. Part of cell cinema’s hybridity lies in its ability to embrace the realism involved in phenomenal and sensory experience, and the representation of digital subjectivity that it necessarily comprises. In this regard, Gane questions whether ‘the definition of the real in this phase is that which cannot be reproduced, or for which there is no equivalent reproduction, and which must belong therefore to a nostalgic form of simulation or to an order which is not simulation (the symbolic)’ (Gane, 1991, p. 102). I argue that the hybrid character of cell cinema negates this apparent dichotomy. The kinds of simulation that it reproduces involve nostalgia for a kind of *faux* analogue indexicality that we see in a phone film such as *Parade Box* (2010) which is not necessarily symbolic of anything but its own digital existence. This line of argument re-introduces important considerations of what Benjamin called the ‘aura’ of the artwork (which was discussed in relation to the *gaze* in section 1.3) and, with it,

questions of indexicality, representation and the trace of the original in the (analogue) image.

Erika Kerruish effectively presents a transitional critique between a de-humanising hyperaesthetic culture and Benjamin's idea of how some modern images affect a sense of *shock* in their observers. As she points out, 'The individual's perception and recollection of objects and places are strikingly important in Benjamin's writings on memory' in which 'memories are triggered by the sensation of objects, and the "aura" is the sensation of an object unique to a specific time' (Kerruish, 2012). Therefore, the question arises, is the notion of an *aura* of the phone film (a post-digital *object*) either a possibility, or something that is useful to consider?

In the case of ambulatory phone films dealing with movement through urban environments, this appears to be the case according to Kerruish. 'The city is to be read, its concentrated meaning overlapping the past and present and collective history' (Kerruish, 2012). This mode of collective experience privileges 'objects and place' wherein 'individual experience is layered within collective experience', foregrounding a Benjaminian shock within phone films that re-present objects (Kerruish, 2012). More generally, Kerruish believes such contemporary notions of *shock* 'radicalises this process and, in doing so, further exteriorises the inner experience of the subject' (Kerruish, 2012).

Questioning a phenomenological basis for the origins of perception, Kerruish goes further, rejecting what she sees as the overwhelming of sensory experience by the modern environment through exposure to visual images that demand attention rather than contemplation:

The idea of the dialectical image articulates how one mode of perception – vision – enables a certain mode of cognition. This relationship between a mode of perception and cognition ties thought to perceptual modes and the technologies that modify them. (Kerruish, 2012)

Clearly, for Kerruish, contemporary modes of visual perception are not merely disrupted by the mediating actions of technology, but that their visual form affects cognition. In other words, extending her argument to consider the cell cinema film, the shock of its adherence to a technologically mediated mode of perception 'does not avoid the shock of the modern environment, but rather mimics its interruptive and disruptive style' (Kerruish, 2012). Adopting this kind of thinking, Kerruish would characterise phone films such as *Rain* (shot, edited and *made* with an iPhone 4S on 22 January 2012, and uploaded to YouTube on 24 September 2013) as transient, dialectical images akin to music videos in which perception and cognition are held, contained at the point of witnessing their visuality. As Kerruish continues: 'The dialectical image then, is a cognition provoked by an image in which ideas cohere not through their resolution or causality, but through the static structure of the image, that is, through a spatial, pictorial medium' (Kerruish, 2012). The appearance or *shock* of some dialectical phone film images, such as those found in *Rain*, is the most, or all, they have to offer.

In his article of 2006, *The Aura of the Digital*, Michael Betancourt describes some of the fundamental characteristics of digital art works: In the particular case of digital images 'the underlying ideology is based upon the illusion of infinite resources; as such it replicates the underlying ideology of capitalism itself that there is an infinite amount of wealth that can be extracted from a finite resource' (Betancourt, 2006). This is a well-rehearsed argument that opposes perceived value in the face of absence or scarcity, with an illusory infinitude of consumption of digital production that should ultimately prove value-less. In an attempt to counter the logic at the heart of Benjamin's (1936; 1999) claim for the "aura" of the work of art evaporating in the process of mechanical reproduction, Betancourt introduces the notion of the 'aura of information', in which meaning that can be derived from a digital work is considered separately from any physical existence it might have.

Questionable notions of information being in some sense autonomous, introduces the problem of apparently denying an interdependence of meaning in the physical to digital relationship. Yet it does, Betancourt says, in its implied 'transformation of objects to information', provide a useful route in to discussing what he characterises as 'the differences between the scarcity of material

production in physical real-world fabrication versus the scarcity of capital in digital reproduction: the necessity for control over intellectual property in the virtuality of digital reproduction' (Betancourt, 2006). In this way, the digital phone film image subverts normative notions of value being inextricably linked to scarcity of physical existence. On the other hand, intellectual property can only be fully controlled while it remains an idea. Therefore, it has value (or *aura*, as Betancourt would have it) only in the form of meaningful communication when shared between people. In this, the *aura* of digital information describes a wholly social entity, one that we see produced, shared and distributed in the cell cinema festival.

This line of argument leads us circuitously back, away from considerations of the socio-cultural character of cell cinema, to return to the technologically affective regime of phone film spectatorship. In particular, notions of movement and the ambulatory appearance of much phone film production and spectatorial experience invoke Walter Benjamin's concept of the *flâneur* that he borrows from Baudelaire. Conflating the words *flâneur* and *phone*, Robert Luke's (2005) concept of the 'phoneur' provides a useful, hybridised concept to encapsulate important features of the phone film-cell cinema nexus. In Luke's conception, it describes both the way in which users of mobile phones equipped with Global Position System software (GPS) are implicated in the production of commercially valuable objects of exchange through their own consumption of technology (Luke, 2005). Walking through an urban environment whilst using their mobile phones, *phoneurs* continually emit data in the form of personal information of their whereabouts and phone usage, and receive other data as a form of production, consumption and exchange of information. When we borrow the idea of the *phoneur* and apply it to the experientially quite different activity of cell cinema production, what is produced, consumed and exchanged are images representing sensory experience rather than data.

At slight variance from Luke's original conception of the *phoneur*, the idea of *phoneur filmmaking* then describes a media process wherein the phone film-cell cinema relationship is played out. Moreover, *phoneur filmmaking* privileges conscious participation in the various transactions that go on in cell cinema. Therefore, the concept of *phoneur filmmaker* that I introduce here continues as a

noun, moving through and incorporating several related ideas: Benjamin's (1999) *flâneur* as urban mobile spectator, Charles Baudelaire's (1964) metropolitan artist-poet, Susan Sontag's (1978) street photographer *flâneur*, and Luke's (2005) *phoneur*.

The strolling *flâneur* rebounds back to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of taking a walk being in a *haecceity* (a fog or indistinct glare) which has 'neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle. It is a rhizome' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 290). In these ways, terms such as *phoneur filmmaking* and *phoneur filmmaker* suggests adjectival qualities in the kinds of hand-held, walking, ambulatory phone filmmaking that were covered in chapter 2. The use of *phoneur* simultaneously names the process under scrutiny and attributes values to cell cinema filmmaking, rendering it a socio-cultural phenomenon.

Kracauer has said that artists use nature 'as raw material from which to build works which lay claim to autonomy', so that 'nothing remains of the raw material itself' but 'the intentions conveyed through it' (Kracauer, 1960, p. 300). This is an interesting idea in terms of intentionality on behalf of the phone filmmaker, and of the aesthetic possibilities inherent in the phone film image. I showed in chapter two that phone film semiosis introduces its own set of meanings for cell cinema spectators and participants, specific to that mode of discourse. In other words, if phone film intentionality can be said to happen at all, it is in so far as it is determinate upon the operation of social semiotic codes being comprehended and worked with by cell cinema spectators and participants.

5.4 The Enunciating Gift

Photography did not become an art because it employed a device opposing an imprint of bodies to their copy. It became one by exploiting a double poetics of the image, by making its images, simultaneously or separately, two things: legible testimony of a history written on faces or objects and pure blocs of visibility, impervious to any narrativization, any intersection of meaning. (Ranciere, 2009, p. 11)

Ranciere believes that there is a doubly aspectual poetics of the image that precedes any technological mediation by camera apparatus. A fundamental constituent of representative art draws on what can be spoken of and what can be shown. In the final part of this chapter, I want to look at the confluence of these two ideas or, as I will construe them, the phone film as *gift*, the cell cinema *gaze*, and how these figures might figure in cell cinema discourse or suggest the possibility of a poetics of cell cinema

As Bordwell has recognised: 'Certainly, a poetics of cinema should recognize something like pleasure as an effect to be explained, but as it stands the concept is notably broad' (Bordwell, 1991, p. 269). Therefore, a poetics of cell cinema must necessarily encompass key features such as pleasure and the playful subversion of hegemonic modes of cinematic experience. These features were dealt with earlier, but here I want to re-address the *gaze*, to extend my argument of it to include ideas about the *gift*, not simply as effects arising out of cell cinema discourse, but as two of its defining creative impulses.

My utilisation here of the critical-interpretive model I began in chapter 1 has led me to consider a historical poetics in which, as Bordwell attests, 'the poetician will want *explanations* for the processes of comprehension', adding that 'such explanations will not be neat, and it is unlikely that they will draw much support from structuralist and semiotic conceptions of codes' (Bordwell, 1991, p. 272). Instead, the social-semiotic analyses I introduced in chapter 2 have inexorably led to my present adoption of what Bordwell terms 'a poetics of interpretation' (Bordwell, 1991, p. 273). Therefore, I will firstly address the essential qualities or character of the gaze, who gazes at what or whom and how. Secondly, I will look at what is given in that gaze, or exchanged in the gift of having something to hold on a screen and look at. In juxtaposing the two arguments, it is my intention to describe the resulting aesthetic that foregrounds a poetics of cell cinema.

For the purposes of argument, I will consider phone films as (at least occasionally as attempts to produce) works of some artistic value. Arthur Danto's interpretative model for critiquing representative artworks comprises two components: '(i) determine what the content is and (ii) explain how the content is

presented' (Danto, 1998, p. 130). Mirroring, intentionally or not, Hegel's pronouncements on art's means of representation, Danto equates content with 'aboutness', and presentation with 'embodiment' (Danto, 1998, p. 130). In applying this thinking to a critique of cell cinema aesthetics, activity aimed at the sphere of art, its aspirations, pretensions and intentions tells only part of the story. In other words, the content or *aboutness* of the phone film is what I term *the gift*, and how it is (re)presented or embodied within the cell cinema festival involves *the gaze*.

My contention is that the phone film aesthetic, in common with much contemporary cinema, is able to access both of these modes of signifying practice. Art's 'intrusion into film,' to paraphrase Siegfried Kracauer, negates neither film's 'intrinsic possibilities' – to photographically re-present the natural world as an 'aesthetic purity' - nor dilutes the phone film's power to elevate elements its mode of filmic discourse to a position of significant or inherent beauty in the work as a whole (Kracauer, 1960, p. 301). Thus, the phone film aesthetic functions against the backdrop of the recognition, by both the filmmaker and the cell cinema viewer, that phone films reflect certain kinds of real events and bear out a particular kind of vision of it which is determinate on the mode of phone film production and mediated by the cell cinema festival.

Motivated by art or not, the gaze does not act as a fixed entity, with predictable or constant affects. As Casetti says, 'in seeing reality on the screen, and in seeing it from a certain perspective, we adopt a certain attitude and orientation' (Casetti, 2005, p. 28). Thus, the phone film viewer adopts the perspective, not only or simply of a character within the film's narrative but, as was demonstrated in chapter two in the case of the *movie selfie*, of the filmmaker also. We can say there is a return of the gaze, or *counter-gaze*.

To add a cautionary note at this point, a negative perspective on the aestheticisation within cell cinema's mode of networked social exchange of everyday creative production can be found in Gane's extrapolation of Baudrillard's conception of hyperreality. According to Gane, this points to a diminution of real objects and events in contemporary society, and is of, 'a general aestheticisation of life, as everything falls under the sign of art which nevertheless, and paradoxically,

loses all content' (Gane, 1991, p. 103). Were it not for the *gatekeeping* actions of various cell cinema film programmers, festival bureaucrats etc., making selections, categorisations and value judgements, such an uncritical and undifferentiated aestheticisation of all moving image production using mobile phones would surely reflect a kind of hyper-mediated banality. Yet what persists in the films that do arrive on the screens of cell cinema festivals: *18 heures 12* (2009), *(Fear Thy Not* (2010), *(Memory 22* (2013) is an underlying sense of the primacy of representing the personal and the everyday, of diversion from professionalism, homogenisation, even classical Aristotelian narrative construction (of beginning/exposition, middle/climax, end/resolution).

Therefore, part of my interpretative model incorporates Yasmin Ibrahim's notion that the *gaze*, mediated by near-ubiquitous or everyday mobile technologies, 'combine[s] the site of the moving body, the agency of the self and the aesthetics of the banal and the mundane' (Ibrahim, 2007). In view of the fact of phone films are the outcome of an amateur, often un-polished, *disposable* media form, a more accurate or appropriate (certainly less disparaging) description for them would direct critical attention to aspects of the *everyday*, while retaining the important influence of the moving body.

Mobile phone films such as *Rain* (Ruscio, 2012), made with an iPhone 4S on a single, wet winter day, exemplify Andrew Darley's observation that digital visual culture has already made a shift 'towards an aesthetic which foregrounds the dimensions of appearance, form, sensation' (Darley, 2000, p. 6). Ruscio's film is a richly hued audio-visual poem to the oddly pleasing way a city looks under rainfall, couched in a single, clearly denotated message of wetness.

Digging down into the character and context of cell cinema's aesthetic experience helps us critique both cell cinema and the phone film as media text, outside the framework of a solely art-determined aesthetic. In his article of 2013, Dan Eugen Ratiu draws together important recent and historical work on aesthetics, which is not dependent on a referential connection to the philosophy of 'high' or 'fine' arts (Ratiu, 2013, pp. 4-8). Primarily adopting a naturalistic, anthropological approach to the study of aesthetics of Jean-Marie Schaeffer,

married to Bourdieu's critique of *taste*, Ratiu negotiates a path through the Western tradition of aesthetics. His target destination is a contemporary analytic aesthetics that might be exemplified in the work of Arnold Berleant (1991; 2005), Arto Haapala (2005) and Tom Leddy (2005), which points towards a 'participatory and social aesthetics' of everyday life 'to advocate an alternative to the tradition of separation and disinterestedness by connecting art to everyday cultural practices and embracing the social and cultural aspects of the aesthetic' (Ratiu, 2013, p. 5).

In discussing the experience of cell cinema, two forms of aesthetic experience are implicated and should be considered: from within the sphere of art and from the standpoint of 'aesthetics of everyday life' (Ratiu, 2013, p. 3). The production and experience of a phone film brings it into the sphere of art and art objects with their particular aesthetics. Additionally, their dissemination in the social and cultural environment of cell cinema festivals introduces additional affects with differing aesthetic concerns. Similarly, the 'somaesthetics' that Richard Shusterman advocates values aesthetic experience in roles, meanings and marginal areas, the somatic arts of self-improvement, self-stylisation, and so on. In other words, these socially expansive concepts of aesthetics implicate both 'content-oriented' and 'affect-oriented' aesthetic experience, avoiding any required association with art values (Noel Carroll, 1999, pp. 9-11).

Yuriko Saito believes that 'mainstream aesthetics neglects everyday aesthetic experience' (Saito, pp. 4-5). Therefore, it seems both valuable and necessary to widen the scope of my critique of cell cinema and phone film aesthetics to consider it as a representation and reflection of everyday experience, and as a form of special experience aesthetics rooted in a set of anti-elitist cultural practices. At its core, the phone film is capable of capturing and re-presenting objects and events with intense expressiveness, which may be spatially or temporally bound, have relative stability, permanence and communicate various meanings including authorial identity. All of this can be said of much filmmaking that is not made using a mobile phone. Yet, the aesthetic experience of such films in cell cinema festivals comes to be considered by participants in its discourse as a series of special moments; disengaged or distanced from the ordinary flow of general experience.

The cultural-aesthetic of such series of special moments, what Saito calls ‘exposure-based aesthetics,’ which are not reliant on the valorising scrutiny of art criticism, lies at the heart of why art-centred aesthetics is inadequate to illustrate the cell cinema gaze. Something more is required to unearth its contribution to meaning. In *Inside The Gaze*, Francesco Casetti describes how film enunciates a set of possible meanings, presenting choices from multiple possibilities available to filmmakers and viewers as they engage in filmic discourse (Casetti, 1999, p.240):

- 1 “to take form and manifest itself”
- 2 “to present itself as text and to offer this specific text”
- 3 “to offer this specific text in a specific situation”

This taxonomy reflects the process of how phone films are made, and the way spectators engage in a form of collaborative meaning construction and communication of experience with filmmakers. As Casetti says, ‘the primary manifestation of enunciation is in the *énoncé*, or ‘indices internal to the film’, which Casetti characterises as ‘the gaze’ (Casetti, 1998). The *énoncé*, according to Bart Testa, ‘entails a double activity: the subject of enunciation divides into and enunciator and an enunciatee [...] and installs itself in the *énoncé* [...] whether a character or a camera movement’ (Testa, 2012, p. 11; see also Frampton, 2006 and Mullarkey, 2009). Notwithstanding Testa’s criticality of Casetti’s conception of *enunciation* as metaphor, and the linguistic origins of *énoncé*, Casetti remains persuasive in his application of enunciation to general film criticism. Warren Buckland employs a typology that has similarities with that of Casetti’s (Buckland, 2000, p. 63):

Shot (or View)	Addressee
Objective	Witness
Interpellation	Spectator set aside
Subjective	Identification with character
Unreal Object	Identification with camera

It seems reasonable to concur with Testa's view that, 'it is one of the improvements of his [Casetti's] model over suture theory that he regards no whole film to be organized in one modality of enunciation' and can 'shift among these enunciative registers from moment to moment' (Testa, 2012, p.13). Particularly in the case of non-genre films or modes of filmic address such as phone films, this appears to be the case. With regard to many phone films, such as *Twins* (2009), *Splitscreen: A Love Story* (2011), *Chiaroscuro* (2012), their often extremely short duration and relative lack of narrative complexity means that their normative mode of enunciation is 'organized on one modality of enunciation' (Testa, 2012, p. 13). As Testa continues:

Sometimes characters and author diverge, [...] the viewer-enunciatee encounters a unified discursive whole, and the implied authorial figure is "metadiegetic." There is also a kind of figure who acts as a kind of internal origin of events and their representation. This figure is what Casetti terms the enunciator and the *you*, the enunciatee, corresponds to that *he*. (Testa, 2012, p.14)

This is clearly the case with character identification in mainstream film as in the phone film. In my view, this does not render Casetti's theory of enunciation fatally problematic in relation to the phone film and cell cinema, where filmmaker-spectator identification is also predicated. As critics of filmic enunciation theory such as Testa argue, 'when a film is shown [...] we may assume the presence of a viewer but the filmmaker is not there' (Testa, 2012, p.16). This is, of course correct in most standard cases of cinematic spectatorship, but his argument breaks down with regard to many film festivals, and the cell cinema festival in particular. 'The filmmaker and the filmic utterance did have an encounter, in the making of the film; the viewer only has her encounter with the text' (Testa, 2012, p.16).

During film screenings and question and answer sessions in Cell Cinema festivals, both the filmmaker and viewer share the same physical space, share spectatorship at a particular moment in time. In doing so, borders of identity

between filmmaker, spectator and festival professional become blurred. Notions of identification are disrupted, forcing questioning, not only by the film's spectator of narrative and character, but of the filmmaker's motivations, taste, aesthetic choices and artistic decision making. What happens is a blurring by degree of distinct identities. In other words, the audience at cell cinema festivals is actively encouraged to subvert their own identity, to become participants in a co-creative enterprise in which they identify, not merely with on-screen characters, but with the camera and filmmaker.

As to whether the spectator is able, psychologically, to cross the realist barrier to enter the screen world, Casetti's responds that 'the film invites the spectator into its operations' to, by implication, 'complete it as a technical apparatus, but is as well – and crucially – narration' (Testa, 2012, p.13). This explanation indicates an important rationale for the way in which cell cinema participants naturally and un-judgementally utilise technological apparatus to enable their social discourse, in which their narratives are 'never complete but only to be completed' (Testa, 2012 p. 13).

In a more general sense, the enunciative gaze 'organizes a perspective, a place, a point of view, a pivot around which to organize images and sounds and give them coordinates and form', which are invisible yet indexical, indicating what is to be enunciated (Testa, 2012, p.11). From this basic critical standpoint, the spectator's natural impulse is to identify with the enunciator, the phone filmmaker, adopting an enunciative gaze or 'set of textual-visual operations' rather than 'some optical point of view' (Testa, 2012, p.11). In this way, the enunciative gaze reemphasises the phone film's haptic visuality.

It should be noted that there is also a strong element of autobiography contained within cell cinema. In the process of making, phone filmmakers more readily resort to what's familiar and close at hand. What this most often, or inevitably involves, are stories of the self. When films such as *Fear Thy Not* (2010) and *Memory 22* (2013) make their transition to becoming aspects of the cell cinema phenomenon, they become life narratives told by a single person to others, who have similar stories of their own. There is a comparing of life stories involved

in the telling, which implicates identification. Comparative analysis may be the default position when we examine our lives. It is as if the filmmaker as enunciator, and audience as addressee, finds the easiest route for their sharing of the narrative. Like a stream establishing its course down a winding valley, the narrative finds the most natural route to its destination. It becomes a personal, retelling of human history because autobiography is more direct than third-person fiction and avoids narrative mediation.

Phone films often take the documentary form rather than fiction for its directness of address and overt presentation of the film's subject as a gift – either narratively or in the form of an object recorded and represented on-screen. In doing so, their makers avoid the use of expensive production paraphernalia, and the burdensome psychological complication of what Buckland calls, 'the operation of fictivization – the modal status conferred upon the enunciator and addressee' (Buckland, 2000, p.98). Cell cinema, involving peer-to-peer exchange, more readily sets up a relationship between the film, its maker and audience which announces, 'allow me to introduce myself. I am the filmmaker. Would you like to watch me making this film?' The spectator quickly understands that the filmmaker is, *auteur-like*, the enunciator whose presence in the film's on-screen events is inferred. If successfully established, such readings connote not allegorical, fictional meaning, but tell a story about the filmmaker's personal experience. 'Our society has become a recited society, in three senses', says Michel de Certeau, 'it is defined by stories [...] by citations of stories, and by the interminable recitation of stories' (de Certeau, 1984, p.186, emphases in original). Stories for de Certeau are the individualising of universal experience in search of structure within routine activities: 'These narrations have the twofold and strange power transforming seeing into believing, and of fabricating realities out of appearances (de Certeau, 1984, p.186). It is as though, in order to endow their everyday life with significance, give them meaning and be of interest to others, people feel drawn to make narratives out of what they see and do, and to tell stories about they see and experience. An objective record does not carry as much weight (the gravitas of signification) than a fictional account. It is as if the time spent in re-phrasing real

events as stories makes those events more vivid and engaging. 'Fiction defines the field, the status, and the objects of vision' (de Certeau, 1984, p.187).

Writing about the walker and the act of walking as being a primal activity, de Certeau says: 'they are walkers, *Wandersmanner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it' (de Certeau, 1984, p.93). In de Certeau's ruminations on walkers, we are reconnected with the Benjaminian *flâneur* but, more importantly, to Luke's (2005) image of the *phoneur*, combining in the single figure of the human body a walking camera. Wherein Luke expresses the embodiment and intentionality within the phone film aesthetic, de Certeau's walking describes an unconscious expression of the body's (possibly motiveless) forward progression through time and space. Walking becomes an act dislocated from identification:

The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments or trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other. (de Certeau, 1984, p.93)

Therefore, if the recurring characteristic of movement that we witness in several phone films; of a forward trajectory, ambulatory walking hints at an identifying aesthetic trope, what does it signify as the relationship of eye to body? Are the two connected notionally or psychologically via the specialised circumstance of the mediating mobile screen? De Certeau assists us in our understanding by pointing out that it is not seeing the world that gives it significance, but how we qualify our experience of it: 'Escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible (de Certeau, 1984, p.93). Thus, the filmmaker's ordinary, everyday experience of the world, when filmed, is often perceived as strange (other-worldly) when witnessed by the spectator. 'In the framework of enunciation' says de Certeau, 'the walker constitutes, in relation to his position, both a near and far, a *here* and a *there*' (de Certeau, 1984, p.99). This

is how we distinguish between the screen experience of the filmmaker looking at the *originating screen* of the mobile phone camera, and the spectator looking at the *viewing screen* of the subsequent mobile phone camera or cinema screen. To the filmmaker, the *here* is the present moment of recording the camera's gaze and the *there* is its reproduction at some point in the future. To the spectator, the *here* is the gaze - the present moment of experiencing the image - whereas the *there* refers to a pre-existing, indexical image of an original experience.

In rejecting both Casetti's and de Certeau's concepts of the enunciative gaze, Testa leaves unanswered the question of how final understanding of the filmic text is to be achieved; 'whether through some version of deixis, to a viewer's "embodied" response [...] or comprehension of explicit referential meaning' (Testa, 2012, p.16). It is both of the above. However, cell cinema appears reliant for its existence on inculcating various aspects of embodiment. These have been outlined here (and earlier in chapter two with singular regard for the phone film) in terms of technologised embodiment between filmmaker and film spectator, and in the haptic visuality that is central to what might be conflated as cell cinema's enunciative gaze.

At the start of this chapter I said that people attend cell cinema festivals with the expectation of gaining some form of benefit from their participation. Casetti describes such benefits in this way: 'to be present at an event, and to open our eyes to it, both in order to be able to accept it, as with a gift, and to be able to acquire it, as with a conquest' (Casetti, 2011a, p. 6). Therefore, accepting this premise for the moment, I would like to move on to discuss what the cell cinema gift might entail.

Phone films share some aesthetic and mediatising affects of what Ron Burnett calls 'imographs' (Burnett, 2007, p. 130). Conflating the words 'photograph' and 'image', Burnett constructs a metaphor for the elasticity, malleability and ease of digital creation and dissemination of messages via images, whether still or moving. Where phone films align with Burnett's conception is in their fluidity of digital transmission of animated phone-based images [*Memory 22* (2013) for example], but less so in their retention of most aspects of their original

aesthetic. Phone filmmakers do not ordinarily intend their films to be used as the basic material for *mash-ups* and *re-edits* by online fans or cell cinema festival participants. It is usually the intention in cell cinema for phone films to be shown and shared in the festival environment. It is this non-commercial transaction that I interpret, metaphorically and functionally, as a *gift*. The digital intangibility of the phone film image is no barrier to its dissemination, quite the opposite of course. In the participatory environment of the cell cinema festival, the phone film as gift is one that is simultaneously shared among many givers and receivers. This in turn renders the cell cinema experience as itself a kind of a gift - of shared time, co-presence in a given location and a form of social exchange, which presents a commonality of spectatorial experience. I believe these notions of the gift edge us closer to a poetics of cell cinema: a way of characterising how participants engage with the phone film as aesthetic object, and with each other as co-creators of cell cinema discourse.

In positing an alternative means of distribution and exhibition circuit for digital media, Michael Uwemedimo and Joshua Oppenheimer use the term 'shared time' (Uwemedimo and Oppenheimer, 2007, p.189). Their contention is that the layering of imagery afforded by digital processes, in contrast to the analogue process of montage, speaks of 'a digital poetics' (Uwemedimo and Oppenheimer, 2007, p. 188-189). Such digital layering is particularly evident in *18 heures 12* (2009) by Julien Herisson. Here the readout of elapsed time on the mobile phone is repeatedly superimposed on the picture of Herisson taking *selfies* of himself to send (give) to his cousin during the film. In this way, Herisson's film is reflexive of the phone film's technologised aesthetic, while foregrounding the *selfie* gift as a central motif in his narrative. Therefore, phone films such as *18 heures 12* constitute a particular kind of storytelling that incorporates both the enunciative gaze and the gift. They invite us, in turn, to look at what is being gifted and shared - on the screen and in the cell cinema festival - in new and challenging ways.

Noel Carroll provides a different perspective on how we might consider the digital gift: 'Multiple-instance artforms,' of which I consider cell cinema to be an example, 'can be analyzed in terms of the type-token relationship' (Carroll, 2008, p. 65). The comprehensibility of the token (or gift) is vital to consider in relation to the

sharing dynamic of cell cinema. We might ask; does the digital phone film's lack of physical existence alter how we can (or should) perceive and understand the phone film? Perhaps an easier question to answer is whether the phone film is merely a token of a type of film, the gift of a virtual object to be disseminated and shared as moments of transient experience? If it can be felt, sensed or found, a poetics of cell cinema must lie in recognising the difficulties contained in the first question, and the necessity to fully address those raised in the second.

Concluding Remarks

The four sections of this chapter each draw out significant additional features of the cell cinema phenomenon, which build on those preceding it. In this way, the chapter further contributes to a coherent, rounded picture of the ways in which phone films, shown, shared and experienced by participants in cell cinema festivals. This chapter extends the analyses already undertaken of facets of cell cinema as a media practice (Couldry, 2004) and the expression and engagement with intercultural phenomena, to interrogate and reveal the intrinsicality of its most medium-specific features.

Cell cinema was found to encapsulate aspects of play and playfulness at its heart, invoking a sense of gratification of desire. This forced questions of cell cinema's role in spreading a version of screen culture that often aspires to creativity, but makes little pretence to constitute either professional filmmaking or high art. Investigations of cell cinema's political composition revealed a mode of engagement with filmmaking and spectatorship that is participatory in nature, rather than involving the production and reception of hegemonic media. I described how cell cinema's socially and technologically mediated processes affect its participants in disruptive ways, leading to the subversion of professional exhibitive norms, and the breakdown of barriers between the three main participatory groups of filmmakers, spectators and festival professionals. These factors supported the notions of a rhizomatic deterritorialisation of individuals engaging with cell cinema screens (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), discussed in chapter 3.

Ideas of copresence and co-creation informed a discussion of whether cell cinema in some way constitutes a mode or medium. It was found that participants engage as much with its socio-cultural context as with what is on-screen, so that claims for cell cinema to be accorded the status of medium could not be made, and have been avoided.

The chapter's fourth section introduced Benjamin's concept of the *flâneur*, invoking further considerations of walking and ambulation in phone films. This led on to a discussion of contemporising Benjamin's (1999) ideas of the *flâneur* with modifications including Luke's (2005) concept of the *phoneur*, extending the notion of walking to include movement as central motifs of the phone film. Ideas based on the topic of the enunciative gaze led to a discussion of the *aboutness*, or physicality of the gift. In this way, theories of the enunciative gaze, in combination with conceptual ideas of the phone film as a form of gift, implicated finally the moving body, the agency of the self, and the aesthetics of the everyday in coherent juxtaposition.

Conclusions

This thesis has analyzed the juxtaposition of filmmaking using the cameras of mobile phones, and the international and transnational film festivals that have been set up, facilitated or otherwise organised to support it in specific geographic locations. In this way, the thesis itself occupies a space where a number of major concerns within film studies and cultural studies are in collision. The thesis has fulfilled one major purpose, and in doing so has made several supplementary (not minor) discoveries. Its major purpose has been to address the hypotheses outlined in the introduction, and then to answer the supplementary questions that have emerged during a period of detailed argument and analysis as the project has progressed. All of these factors have been incorporated into the final thesis, applying theory where necessary and productive, but basing all major conclusions on evidence gathered over the course of the project.

Underlying my primary hypotheses, outlined in the introduction to the thesis, was a central argument or problem to be solved: Whatever might be revealed by ethnographic observation of cell cinema festival participation at a number of sites across several countries and national cultures, and through textual analysis of phone films, cell cinema must provide those most intimately involved in its discourse – filmmakers, spectators and festival professionals – with new and meaningful ways to engage with and experience moving images in a post-digital environment. Intuitively, the experience of making, showing and sharing films made using the cameras of mobile phones, appears to be different in some way from other forms of film production and consumption. Therefore, this thesis has needed to identify how and in what ways participation in cell cinema festivals constitutes an experiential practice that differs from established film festival engagement.

The following represents my reflections on a research project and thesis which has evolved, grown, changed and been modified over the course of the last four years. Moreover, this section of the thesis draws on material in the preceding five chapters, which together feed into a number of overarching conclusions. The mixed methodology that the thesis employs provides a rigorous analytical

framework from which to derive a better understanding of cell cinema's various interrelated factors. Therefore, the thesis' structure demonstrates the multi-faceted character of cell cinema, as it progresses in a logical flow from one chapter to the next.

Firstly, the thesis addresses the production and spectatorship of films made using the cameras of mobile phones as a historicised mode of experiencing moving, cinematic images. By way of tracing the short history of mobile phone filmmaking, chapter 1 of the thesis provided a fuller picture of the phone film's current manifestations and antecedence to pre-cinema entertainment spectacles. Significantly, however, I found that the phone film conforms to Gaut's (2010) ideas of a contemporary, post-digital media artefact that retains qualities of the cinematic.

More contemporary matters occupied the second chapter of the thesis, wherein a social semiotic analysis of recent phone films revealed the various degrees of semiosis and meaning making that phone films are, by their nature, capable of producing. The chapter found that while it is common for phone films to exhibit qualities of hybridity in their modes of signification, they reach a higher level of semiotic potential when they incorporate aspects of the categories *Ambulatory*, *Movie Selfie* and *Autobiographical*, incorporating considerations of the body in relation the mobile phone screen within their discourse.

Chapter 3 undertook a film-philosophical discussion to interrogate the nature of the human experience of cell cinema phenomena. Its person-to-person, cell-like, form of interaction between, on the one hand, participants in physical proximity to one another was found to be instrumental to the phone film as a vehicle, or conduit, for the deterritorialised self in relation to others. On the other hand, a cellular, rhizomatic form of narrativity, allowed the smooth access and egress of phone film meaning between filmmaker and spectator. In this way, phone films such as *Fear Thy Not* (2010) and *Memory 22* (2013) provide the mediating ground on which experience and phenomena coalesce, bridging perceived transnational and intercultural boundaries through cell cinema discourse.

Within the evidence and analyses of ethnographic material gathered at eleven cell cinema festivals in eight countries, chapter 4 allowed a voice for the various participants grouped under filmmakers, spectators and professionals. The chapter contained both revealing testimony and, following the analysis of short and extended interviews and questionnaires, further empirical evidence was forthcoming from cell cinema participants about their motivations, actions and opinions of a number of aspects of cell cinema engagement.

Factors of a festival's location were repeatedly cited as important for its success in being economically sustainable and culturally relevant in an international festival context. Opinions differed regarding the cinephilic potential of the phone film. Labourdette (2010) was typical in his strongly held view that watching films only gravitates to the status of cinema within a theatre in front of a large screen. For him, the mobile phone served other purposes of device-specific art creation and the encouragement of an aural and visual sensitivity in the young and inexperienced. Schleser (2011) views provided another perspective on the potential for experimentation with notions of the moving body in space, which the mobile phone particularly allows. Across many of the interview subjects and respondents, the intrinsic possibilities for creative forms of cultural interaction, that the phone film and the cell cinema festival allowed, was a common thread running through the chapter.

In four sections, Chapter 5 set out a number of related aspects of cell cinema discourse, which illustrate the ways in which it encompasses the apparent trivialities of playful engagement with moving images on mobile phones, and the touristic pleasures of the cell cinema festival. I showed that, alongside aspects of play, cell cinema promotes a disruptive mode of engagement with moving images that carries on an uneasy relationship with hegemonic media practices.

In an important conjunction of Walter Benjamin's (1999) ideas of the *flâneur* as an observer of urban life and events, and Robert Luke's (2005) updating of this concept to arrive at the *phoneur*, the chapter found a succinct label encapsulating the practice and mode of engagement that cell cinema introduces.

Finally, by way of a critical analysis of the application of Casetti's (1998) theories of the gaze, and de Certeau's (1984) formulations of enunciation, the idea of the enunciative gaze emerged as a fitting theoretical framework to carry the overarching ideas that describe cell cinema in its totality: The chapter drew on all the preceding aspects to define the phone film as constituting a form of gift that is shared in an everyday aesthetic practice of cell cinema discourse.

My efforts to reach the above conclusions have required analyses of a contemporary mode of screen media that is still in a period of rapid change, making it easier to identify what cell cinema is changing from, than what it might be changing into. Whilst suggesting important further cross-disciplinary research to better understand cell cinema's changing social and cultural dynamic, I believe this thesis, and the project it forms part of, potentially engages beyond the academic community to influence media policy for transnational and intercultural modes of post-digital moving image practices.

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Appendix A

Phone Films Referenced

7 Steps (31 May 2009) YouTube video, Directed by Mark Blasco, [Online], Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhNYMcosHL4&feature=related>

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An Extraordinary Journey (7 May 2010) YouTube video, Directed by Fabien Dettori, added by Cinepocket [Online], Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qTmYVA86jo (Accessed 4 August 2013).

Are You There (9 January 2013) YouTube video, added by Vincent Dubois [Online], Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrXqsSA4Z_I (Accessed 5 August 2013).

Apple Of My Eye (30 June 2010) YouTube video, added by Michael Koerbel, Majec Pictures [Online], Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EwCLEd3z9o and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EwCLEd3z9o&feature=related> (Accessed 15 October 2010).

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Domino (28 February 2010) YouTube video, Directed by Sandy Claes and Dean Wampers, added by Cinepocket [Online], Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6ssThsGVq8by (Accessed 4 August 2013).

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World's Best Mum (14 Jan 2010) Directed by Camille Hédouin & Jérôme Genevray, added by Jerome Genevray, [Online], Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxmXyQxfcAk>

Appendix B

Abbreviations

DFF	Disposable Film Festival, San Francisco, USA.
HKMFA	Hong Kong Mobile Film Awards, Hong Kong.
JIFF	Jeonju International Film Festival, Jeonju, South Korea.
MINA	Mobile Innovation Network Aotearoa, Wellington, New Zealand.
PFF	Festival Pocket Films, Paris, France.
SESIFF	Seoul International Extreme-Short Image and Film Festival, Seoul, South Korea.