University of Sunderland

Usage guidelines

Elaine Drainville

Articulating the Liminal: Enabling Access to Voice

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of University of Sunderland for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by existing published or creative work.

March 2018

Elaine Drainville

Articulating the Liminal: Enabling Access to Voice

Contents

Page

Commentary:

Articulating the Liminal: Enabling Access to Voice

Acknowledgements:

ABSTRACT

Articulating the Liminal: Enabling Access to Voice

This PhD project consists of 8 outputs from my 40-year career as a filmmaker both inside and outside the UK Film and TV industry, along with a 30,000 word written commentary that reflects on this selection of work and my experiences as practice-based researcher at the University of Sunderland. This provides an exploration and examination of methodologies that I have developed to enable contributors that occupy a liminal space to find their voice in my participatory film and video practice, providing the means for the marginalised to more authentically represent themselves. Crucially, I shall explain how the involvement of my various contributors in the act of production has allowed them ownership, so that they are not simply subsumed either by the demands of the industry or the desires and intentions of the filmmaker.

The key line of enquiry here is how film and filmmakers can enable access to voice for those groups of people in impoverished communities (such as women, children and refugees), the portrayal of whose lives are typically marginalised in mainstream film, media and society. The work encompasses, for example, the politics of my own communities, including working-class women and children, as well as the labour movement's ideological struggle (most notably exemplified by the miners' strike of the 1980's). It demonstrates how film can enable voice for women, children and refugees both in Palestine and here in the UK, even as their everyday lives are blighted by conflict and violence. It also illustrates the value of ground breaking work by film-makers through landmark productions such as *Veronica 4 Rose* (1983), the UK's first lesbian made-for-television film, which gave voice to the lesbian community through collaborative approaches to production.

The portfolio of work documents an original and significant contribution to knowledge about the history, praxis and methods of how liminal communities have been enabled to express their voice through participation both at structural and symbolic levels. It charts the impact of alternative in-roads into mainstream practice and production forged under the auspices of the Workshop Declaration (1984).

The submission is situated in the context of its intervention in current and recent debates, and builds on the work of Anne O'Brien, to demonstrate that women filmmakers can take a critical, feminist position, producing positive outputs from within a 'liminal space', even as they acknowledge the potential for women to be victims when viewed from such a position.[1]

My aim in writing the thesis and compiling this body of work is to contribute to an understanding of how those who work with the medium of film can privilege the politics of the community and empower its poorest and most marginalised groups (i.e., those whose lives are necessarily lived at the 'edge' of society) and, in so doing, to offer new directions for media practice, education and training.

---

[1] O'Brien, A. (2017) '(Not) getting the credit: women, liminal subjectivity and resisting neoliberalism in documentary production', *Media, Culture & Society* (https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717734405).

The motivation for the thesis mirrors the motivation for my work as a filmmaker throughout my career. As a working-class, dyslexic lesbian, I understood from the outset that I was only ever going to work at the edge of mainstream media. Thus, the motivation for producing this thesis is to leave an accessible yet scholarly record of my experience, while also illustrating how filmmaking at the edge can provide a positive contribution to community. In short, I believe the thesis will assist future students and others involved in filmmaking and, as such, make a significant contribution to knowledge regarding radical and alternative cultural film production.

INTRODUCTION

Articulating the Liminal: Enabling Access to Voice

0.1 <u>My journey as artist-film-maker</u>

This commentary relates a journey, not that of a therapist, even though my practice has used film and animation in therapeutic settings, but rather my journey as an artist-filmmaker with the skills to work with moving image and sound, and the capacity to use these skills to the benefit of my own community and those of others. It does so by reflecting on a selection of outputs from my career of some 40 years as a filmmaker both inside and outside the UK film and television (TV) industry, as well as my experiences as a practice-based researcher at the University of Sunderland.

A key point to recognise from the outset is that it has been important for me not to just point a camera and microphone at someone, take their story, benefit personally from their contribution and not give anything back.

When I started out on my Fine Art degree course at Newcastle Polytechnic there were no schools or courses in media. Mainstream media representations of women served as 2-dimensional plot props to masculine narratives. The authoritative spoken word was in Received Pronunciation (aka Standard English). This, combined with my dyslexia, has made it a challenge for me to express my thoughts, feelings and beliefs in words, hence the fact that I have consistently worked with sounds and images as an artist and filmmaker. At the time that I was studying Fine Art, lesbians were more or less invisible, except for predatory, sad or depressed characterisations in *The Killing of Sister George* (Aldrich 1968) and *Mädchen in Uniform* (Sagan and Froelich 1931). The working class had many stereotypes, with the most offensive parody being the racist Alf Garnet in '*Til Death Us Do Part* (Speight, BBC TV 1965-1975). Comedians relied on racist, sexist and homophobic humour. Children were catered for by adults making entertainment programmes and were certainly at the bottom of the pecking order in terms of speaking about their lives. It was within this context that I began the process of forging my own career as a filmmaker.

Throughout my journey, I have been fully engaged in community and activism, learning as I went from socialist thinkers, active feminists, human and children's rights activists as well as ground-breaking work in neuroscience, psychotherapy and coaching. My practice has involved various contributors and participants in the act of production, allowing them ownership, so that they are not simply subsumed either by the demands of the industry or the desires and intentions of the filmmaker.

I have learned to tread carefully, conscious of my place in a participant's experience and to actively listen, to be taught and to offer or teach my skills. Indeed, the need to develop my intellectual, research and listening skills has been even more important than developing my technical skills, even as the digital world impacts on film production.

In the re-telling of people's stories to an audience, they – the viewers – engage in the act of bearing witness, it becomes a dynamic process, particularly when they feedback to the participants. Informing a wider community is a way of empowering the participants as well as those in the audience that want to further their understanding of people and issues. I have sought audiences who want to experience acts of resistance, who want to address and change the imbalances, resisting neo-liberal and patriarchal oppression.

0.2   <u>Motivation for the work</u>

The motivation for the thesis mirrors the motivation for my work as a filmmaker throughout my career. As a working-class, dyslexic lesbian, I understood from the outset that I was only ever going to work at the edge of mainstream media. Thus, the motivation for producing this thesis is to leave an accessible yet scholarly record of my experience, while also illustrating how filmmaking at the edge can provide a positive contribution to community. In short, I believe the thesis will assist future students and others involved in filmmaking to find their own ways to develop alternative means of enabling their subjects to authentically voice their own situations,

beliefs and life stories. As such, it aims to make a significant contribution to knowledge regarding radical and alternative cultural film production. Furthermore, in reflecting on my own outputs and contribution to alternative film-making practice, I seek to acknowledge and build on the seminal work of revolutionary filmmakers including Vertov, Kaufmann and Svilova (1929), Solanas and Gentino (1969), Sara Gomez (1974), Alain Resnais (1955), Perincioli (1973), John Pilger (2003) and Ghobadi (2005)[2], all of whom have inspired my own engagement with praxis[3].

Key line of enquiry

The key line of enquiry here is how film and film-makers can enable access to voice for those groups of people in impoverished communities such as women, children and refugees, in order to portray those lives that are typically marginalised in mainstream film, media and society. Enabling access to voice in this sense is not just a literal act, but also an inherently political project. It is driven by the politics of my own communities, including working-class women and children, as well as the labour movement's ideological struggle (as exemplified by the miners' strike of the 1980s). While 'giving voice' is sometimes (literally) interpreted as sticking a microphone in front of, or pointing a camera towards, 'representatives' of neglected groups, my focus has been on working out, with these communities, how best to enable them to bear witness to their own lives, in their own terms. This necessitates reflexivity and the humility of sensitive listening, and has required me to look for innovative and imaginative ways of using my technological expertise to allow this to happen with optimum effect.

A process that can enable voice for women, children and refugees both in Palestine and here in the UK, even as the everyday lives of these groups are blighted by conflict

---

[2] See filmography, p103.

[3] I use the word Praxis as it more aptly describes the process of and inter-connectedness of practice and theory. My praxis could best be described as a forward moving, expanding spiral of thinking, testing, and creating not just with the processes of time based media, but also in the development of my interactive and communication skills with collaborators and participants. This is also expanded in Chapter 2.

and violence. It also illustrates the value of ground-breaking work by film-makers through landmark productions such as *Veronica 4 Rose* (Chait 1983), the UK's first lesbian made-for-television film, which gave voice to the lesbian community through collaborative approaches to production. The commentary contextualises the work by providing an exploration and examination of methodologies that I have developed to enable contributors who occupy a liminal space to find their voice in my participatory film and video practice, providing the means for the marginalised to more authentically represent themselves.

0.3   The context of this research

This PhD submission is situated in the context of its intervention in current and recent debates drawing on my own experiences of working with the support and protection of the Workshop Declaration (1984) and the setting up of the Current Affairs Unit at Amber Films Collective (1983-87). The thesis illustrates the radical potential of 'liminal competencies' through which women filmmakers move beyond their negative experience of liminal space and 'shared, existential vulnerability' to define and occupy 'an alternative, creative and connected space' (O'Brien 2017:10). I demonstrate, for instance, the need for women to value core production skills even as they seek to generate their own commissions and work on ideologically motivated film projects. Building specifically on the work of Anne O'Brien, I demonstrate that women filmmakers can take a critical, feminist position. This includes developing liminal competencies and producing positive outputs from within a 'liminal space' (2017: 10).

Anne O'Brien, in her essay '(Not) getting the credit: women, liminal subjectivity and resisting neoliberalism in documentary production', argues for women filmmakers to refuse the gendered Neo-Liberalisation of creative work (2017: 11). She acknowledges that women filmmakers operate from a 'liminal space', one that is 'not in the periphery, but also not quite in the core' but rather 'some in-between state of presence and absence within the genre' (2017:15). She further argues for the radical potential of occupying such a position. My thesis builds on O'Brien's essay and calls

for further research into women filmmakers' resistance to the Neo-Liberal order. In fact, the thesis is motivated by O'Brien's foreshadowing of the radical potential of liminal status, particularly through my rejection of individualistic hierarchy and auteur models of filmmaking. Indeed, through an in-depth analysis of my own outputs produced in a liminal space over some 40 years, I argue that the development of liminal competencies is key to driving a radical film agenda.

Consequently, the portfolio of work documents an original and significant contribution to knowledge about the history, praxis and methods of how liminal communities have been helped to express their voice through participation both at structural and symbolic levels.

0.4   Structure

This 30,000-word commentary accompanying my submission of practical and published work is divided into three chapters, followed by a Conclusion. While Chapter 1 sets out the historical context and background to the submitted outputs, Chapter 2 outlines the philosophy underpinning the evolution of my working practices, demonstrating how this builds on a wider movement within radical film-making. Chapter 3 discusses how and why each of the eight submitted works was made, while the Conclusion provides a summation of the themes, practices and impact of my work.

CHAPTER ONE
Contexts

This chapter provides the context for the submitted outputs. It explains how I first identified as a filmmaker and establishes the critical position from which my work subsequently developed. It highlights my concern regarding how the most marginalised groups in society are rendered invisible in mainstream media and how I developed the means to enable voice and to empower my community as a woman filmmaker in the community arts, video and independent film workshop movements, beginning in the 1980s and continuing to the present.

1.1 Student Filmmaking

My own narrative is underpinned by my involvement in campaigns, activism and the development of an independent filmmaking practice. This began when I was a Fine Art student at Newcastle Polytechnic in the late Seventies (1976-1979). As part of my degree, I collaborated with four other students to produce the film *Yasir Arafat* (1979), which analysed why the Western media represented Palestinians as terrorists. For this we applied a Marxist, neo-colonial analysis to produce an hour-long documentary, being informed by the work of the Glasgow Media Group's *Bad News* (1976), as well as post-colonial writers like Franz Fanon (1961) and the revolutionary manifesto *Toward a Third Cinema* by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gentino (1969). In this documentary, we fused theory and practice, experimenting with form whilst identifying the economic ties between Israeli and Western governments which underpinned the West's need to uphold Israel's position over that of the Palestinians, in order to secure a foothold in the Middle East.

Graham Denman and Murray Martin of Amber, and Stewart MacKinnon of Trade Films, supported our student production *Yasir Arafat* (1979). This also led to a special dispensation for us as students to sit in on the regional ACTT and IFA meetings, which enabled our input as young filmmakers in the emerging debates of an alternative way of working in the film and television industry. This embryonic discourse later became formalised as The Workshop Declaration.

As my political consciousness developed, I began to understand my experience of 'otherness' and, as a consequence, I looked for alternative filmmaking processes, along with narratives that spoke to me and my community in a language we understood, particularly ones that challenged the establishment discourses of biased mainstream production. As Solanas and Gentino put it:

> [f]ilms only dealt with effect, never with cause; it was cinema of mystification or anti-historicism. It was surplus value cinema. Caught up in these conditions, films, the most valuable tool of communication of our times, were destined to satisfy only the ideological and economic interests of the owners of the film industry…the great majority of whom were from the United States. (1969:108)

At the time, I sought out alternatives to Hollywood and European auteur cinema and was profoundly affected by the work of Cuban filmmaker Sara Gomez, who understood that the Cuban Revolution had been initiated by the middle-classes and intellectuals. In her film *De Cierta Manera/One Way or Another* (1974), she mixed dramatic and documentary themes, crucially drawing on the experiences of the workers and ordinary people to convey their lived experience of the revolution. She created this blended practice in order to raise consciousness and augment discourse amongst the workers, so that Cubans were kept on track with the aims of the revolution at a grass roots level.[4]

As a result of my research into alternative approaches to filmmaking, I was especially affected by the radical, agit-prop work of Santiago Alvarez, and his ability to get a message across without using the spoken word which had a profound impact on my praxis (see *Kite:* Appendix 6b). The experimental use of animation, stills photography and dramatic soundtrack with no guiding Voice Over, as typified by his film L.B.J. (1968), were precursors to the short-lived Scratch video genre, which I later drew on in current affairs unit productions. Both these revolutionary filmmakers were hugely influential on my developing practice and I was emboldened

---

[4] Afro-Cuban filmmaker Sara Gómez used a narrative/documentary production method in her last film *De Cierta Manera/One Way or Another*. Noted Cuban film scholar Michael Chanan observed that the film was "an aesthetically radical film...mix[ing]...fiction and documentary, in the most original way...by using real people to play themselves alongside professional actors" (Chanan, 1985) pp. 284–85).

by the possibility of alternative cinema (or Third Cinema) to enable voice in communities that are marginalised or mis-represented by mainstream media.

My student experience was set against the background of profound political change that led to the election of a Conservative Government in 1979. The consequent neoliberal agenda of the early 1980s saw individual entrepreneurship promoted at the expense of collective practice, with a rebranding of the citizen as a consumer engaged in materialist transactions. In 1987, Margaret Thatcher famously proclaimed '[t]here is no such thing as society,'[5] after which her government went on to cynically appropriate the positive associations of the word 'community' for such things as the 'community charge', 'community policing' and 'care in the community'.[6] Nevertheless, my work remained deeply embedded in a wide range of social, cultural, political and sexual communities.

1.2 The LGBT landscape

The Conservative Government's response to the AIDs crisis of the 1980s was to return to 'traditional' family values, which supported the heterosexual nuclear family model, whilst demonising same sex or alternative family models. This also served to endorse institutional homophobia, creating endemic discrimination within public bodies, such as the police force and social services, which filtered through the tabloid press to the general public.[3] The government went on to ratify Section 28 of Local Government Act in 1988, which made it illegal for local authorities to act in any way that might be perceived to promote or support homosexuality or for schools to teach anything that seemingly endorsed what was referred to as 'pretend families', including children parented by same sex couples. In 1990, the Government's Adoption Guidance espoused the need to take equal rights away from adoption so that same sex couples could not jointly adopt a child. The following year, the

---

[5] See https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689.

[3] For further details on the AIDs Crisis see the following websites: http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/love-sex/aids-crisis-1980-eighties-remember-gay-man-hiv-positive-funerals-partners-disease-michael-penn-a7511671.html; https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/history/hiv-and-aids-timeline; http://www.baas.ac.uk/usso/podcastingaidscrisis/ and https://actuplondon.wordpress.com.

introduction of the Child Support Act (1991) enforced fathers' traditional role as the family breadwinners, making it difficult for mothers to achieve financial autonomy. This act also legislated against self-insemination-by-donor at a time when lesbians were achieving pregnancy via artificial insemination with supportive male friends to create alternative family models with or without partners. This meant that known sperm donors could be pursued by the Child Support Agency to financially support any resulting offspring. Also in 1991, The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act introduced a 'welfare clause' which stated that the fertility clinics should assess the need of the child for a father. Lesbian parented families were thereby stigmatised, problematised and pathologised, this being a direct result of living outside the heterosexual norm and of not being regarded as full citizens. This contributed vastly to the oppression and negation of the LGBT community by denying the right of its members to make the same life choices as their heterosexual counterparts. Previous gains made by gay rights activists and organisations in the late Seventies and early Eighties were apparently lost and directly undermined during this period.[7]

1.3 The North East of England

At the same time, the North East of England (then and still my home) was experiencing fundamental change in its industries and workforce. The decline of the mining and shipbuilding was eroding the traditional identity of the workforce in working-class communities, and there still remained a perceptible sexism embedded within the culture of the North East based on historically accepted gender-specific working roles. The arrival of women and diverse ethnic cultures into the workplace was impacting on the identity of the male-dominated workforce much slower than in equivalent working-class communities in the Midlands. As Kelly and Jeffery (2015) have observed, the shift towards a knowledge and services economy was also

---

[7] Gay rights activism had earlier resulted in a greater tolerance of gays and lesbians in the media, notably when Verity Lambert produced a 77-minute TV movie version of Quentin Crisp's memoir *The Naked Civil Servant* (1968) for Thames Television in 1975, which was screened on ITV and subsequently won a BAFTA for John Hurt's performance as Crisp. Such gains were mostly lost in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a direct result of the Government's homophobic policies, although it should be noted that Channel 4's ground-breaking television series *Out on Tuesday/Out* (1989-94) was launched during this period and catered specifically (and unashamedly) for a gay audience.

forcing adaptation and change onto ill-prepared, working-class communities poorly equipped to cope with the consequences.[8] The North East community experienced the frustration of poverty and endemic sense of 'non-value' that typically accompanies mass unemployment. This included, among other things, the related sense of constriction from not being able to progress in life, personally or professionally, and the disenfranchisement of youth faced with a limited, potentially long-term unemployed future. Formal education, training systems and community infrastructure were not only unaffordable but also slow to respond to the change, and the lived experience of this painful transition was negated in official narratives and mainstream media, which preferred to focus on aspects of regeneration and neighbourhood renewal (Jeffery, 2005: 25).

Changes in the labour movement were also impacting negatively upon the North East working-class community's traditional identity. New Labour's shift towards a middle political ground inevitably impacted upon working-class Labour supporters in the North East, undermining confidence in potent political representation in the late 1990s and early 2000s. North East working-class identity, traditionally seen in a proud and positive light, along with the collective voice of working-class culture, was in a state of disintegration. The working classes were frequently portrayed by government and mainstream media as 'unemployed by choice', work-shy, militant and dependent on the tax-paying employed. The problem of unemployment was individualized. In other words, unemployed people had to accept personal responsibility for their situation.

Trade union institutions were also under threat with government sequestering funds in order to radically undermine the unions' traditional power to mobilise the workforce in leveraging for better pay and conditions. The landmark national

---

[8] Hugh Kelly, a fellow group member of the student production 'Yasir Arafat', has spent the past 40 years using video inclusively in North East England. His film 'Remaking Society: Communities on the Edge' (Swingbridge Media 2013), presented at MeCCSA conference 2015, depicts the persistent problems of poverty, exclusion and long-term unemployment. His joint paper with Graham Jeffery interrogates claims that narratives of individual and social transformation are being inflated, and explore the role of participatory film-making and community media as research methods. www.swingbridgemedia.co.uk

miners' strike (1984 – 85) polarised communities across Britain, including the North East, and changed the face of policing from the stereotypical 'Bobby on the beat' to a quasi-militia to be deployed at the disposal of government. This corollary was the radicalisation of parts of the community not traditionally used to being politically motivated, notably women in the mining community, whose way of life was under attack. However, this also included the LGBT community, who perceived the establishment's repression of the miners as having parallels with their own disenfranchisement. In particular, an alliance between striking miners and the LGBT community was formed.

After a year-long bitter fight, the striking miners were forced to capitulate and consequently returned to work depleted. At this time, I identified with the community in experiencing an undeniable vacuum and anti–climax related to the end of a period of resistance. However, at the same time, there was also a strong sense that things were about to change.   The miners' wives who had become politicised were unwilling to simply 'go back into the kitchen' and an appetite for change had been whetted both among the women of the mining communities and the gay community. These were the things that I wanted to make films about at this time, driven by a desire to aid resistive discourse as well as to support groups and individuals in defining their issues for themselves. In other words, I was determined to provide a vehicle by which they could do this. Despite a general concern to support the miners throughout this turbulent period, it was the women of the mining communities of the North East that I identified with the most and sought to develop ways of enabling them to articulate their own unique voices.

1.4 Feminism

At this time, sexism was rife, with women of all ages and classes being exposed to sexist language, attitudes and behaviour on a daily basis, with such instances being generally considered to be 'harmless fun' by the wider society (MacKinnon, 1979. Bates, 2015). Universally, women's experience was that they were standard targets for verbal and sometimes physical abuse, such as suggestive sexual taunts from men on buildings sites, on crowded public transport, in the office, pubs, clubs and

workplace. The condition of 'female invisibility' permeated every strand of society: right through government, commerce, media, education and domestic life at this time in Britain. It was so endemic that frequent attempts to challenge the status quo were ridiculed and demonised, even by other women. The language and mind-set were embedded in both genders since women absorbed the accepted part of 'less than' and were relegated to a subservient position. Yet Feminism played a fundamental role in raising awareness of women's and lesbian issues, encouraging women to define themselves and stand up for themselves in a patriarchal society. The strapline 'the personal is political' in part addressed the issue of women being defined as the 'other' sex, asserting that every individual woman is innately repressed. First Wave Feminism had, of course, supported women to define themselves as existing in their own right, as vital, viable, valuable, as equal human beings and not merely a support act in a male-dominated world. This forged a direct connection between personal experience and the larger social and political structures.

Yet by the 1970s, Second Wave Feminism exposed a rift between working-class and educated middle-class women. At this time, there was a tendency for middle-class, educated feminists to assume that working-class women were not able to understand or participate in the feminist debate. Many supported the patronising assumption that working-class women were not living their daily lives in a way that challenged sexism.[9] During the 1980s it became clear that enabling 'access to voice' via alternative media was vital if working-class women were not only to be heard but also able to 'self-define'. It was from this premise that my skills as a filmmaker could be best utilised, to facilitate and enable under or mis-represented groups to express themselves. For this to happen effectively, I needed to work specifically within the area of the Community Arts Movement, something that I identified and connected with as an emerging filmmaker.

---

[9] This tendency was exposed by Evelyn Tension in her 1979 pamphlet *You don't need a degree to read the writing on the wall*.

1.5 Community Arts

The philosophy and practice of community arts is best understood as a strategy to enable community development, which is, in turn, "[a] movement to promote better living for the whole community with active participation, and, if possible, on the initiative of the community…." (United Nations, 1953, cited in Craig, 2011: 3). In the 1960s and '70s, for example, community development workers were active in generating and supporting tenants associations, women's groups and similar community-led organisations in Britain's poorest areas. This frequently involved supporting the community's own definition of what constituted improvement and how it could be instigated.

In the 1970s, the Wilson Government provided grants that enabled the working classes to go into further and higher education in the new polytechnics, which meant that by the 1980s there was an influx of educated working-class individuals into the community, many of them arts graduates. This new blood empathised with the issues faced by their working-class communities, whilst the left-wing middle-class also sympathised because labour and the way in which people earned money was changing in an increasingly entrepreneurial meritocracy. The term 'community arts' was applied to methods developed by these newly graduated young artists and theatre practitioners "seeking to reinvigorate an art world they saw as bourgeois at best and repressive at worst" (Braden and McGrath, in Matarasso, 2011:1). Based on a philosophy of 'Arts for All', they set up community arts and theatre groups concerned not only with inclusion of the community but also contributing to discussion and cultural change. As the community arts advisory panel of the Greater London Arts Association described it, community arts "involves people on a collective basis, encourages the use of a collective statement but does not neglect individual development or the need for individual expression…." (Kelly, 1984: 2).

As a new graduate, I identified with a cohort of unemployed young arts graduates with little prospect of employment, who had the choice of either going on the dole or raising money from the Arts Council to invest their energy in collective arts practice

that supported anti-hegemonic discourse and change. Within the field of community arts, communication media was employed as a catalyst to effect change at grass roots level, empowering the community through participation. Posters, photography, pamphlets, newspapers, theatre and video were all practices involved in contributing to the discourse and disseminating information to a wider audience. The punk movement with its DIY ethos (e.g., 'Anarchy in the UK' and later 'Rock Against Racism') also contributed to developing a political consciousness that was essentially both collective and agitational. I saw the community arts movement as key to enabling the voice of working-class communities, particularly as voice, for me, is synonymous with potential for a better life.

I also identified with the core political philosophy of the community arts movement of the 1980s. Community arts organisations were strongly influenced by the Latin revolutionary politics of Paulo Friere[10], whose philosophy in the early 1970s rejected a traditional educational model in favour of a more progressive approach that allowed everyone to participate and contribute in interchangeable roles both as teacher and student. Many of those who contributed to the community art movement had a clear left-wing political agenda (Kelly, 1984: 36). The community arts movement was grounded in the belief that capitalism and patriarchy were repressive systems, preferring instead strategies where the whole community relied on self-determination and mutual support. The anti-authoritarian core of community arts philosophy also led many groups to reject conventional party politics and hierarchical leadership.

Community arts groups, however, tended to be a somewhat informal, uncoordinated arrangement of organisations that did not have the impact that a larger body would have had in arenas requiring negotiation. Community arts groups relied on public funding, predominantly via regional arts boards, such as Northern Arts, and, as such,

---

[10] Paulo Friere popularised the term 'conscientization', also known as critical consciousness; the process of developing, through one's perception of and exposure to social and political contradictions, a critical awareness of the world. Fundamental to this process is taking action to change the oppressive conditions of one's social reality.

their existence was tenuous to say the least.   Within the Arts Council, there were serious doubts about the field of community arts, as Roy Shaw, Director-General of the Arts Council, noted in the *Guardian* on September 30, 1978:

> Carried to an extreme, a passion for democracy in the arts does lead to the rejection (sic) of quality……….I cannot believe that all community artists share this really vulgar Marxist approach, but if many of them do, then in sponsoring community arts the Arts Council have brought a Trojan horse into the citadel of the arts – one which seeks to subvert the whole of society and with it all traditional values in the arts… (Wade, 1980: 87).

Such attitudes, which permeated the Arts Council at both national and regional level, were arguably responsible for the paucity of funds directed towards community projects, especially those deemed to be political in their approach.

1.6 Community Video

Changes in technology played a pivotal role in the democratisation of video production in the 1980's. As with Latin American cinema in the 1960's, advances in technology (in the form of simplified cameras, tape recorders and rapid film that could be shot in normal light with improved audio/visual synchronisation) supported low-budget filmmaking. This was key to Solanas and Getino's argument that 'an alternative cinema is finally possible' (Solanas & Getino, 1969: 122). The developments in video technology in the 1980s also supported the expansion of television broadcasting, so that the means for Third Cinema, video and television could be expedited to a wider audience. Almost every home was equipped with a VHS recorder by the end of the 1980s, which made the viewing, copying and sharing of video tapes accessible to all.

In the early 1980s, I identified and connected with the politics of the community video movement, which was located within community arts. This was not only based at 'street level' but, more importantly, tended towards radical activism. The new wave of emerging filmmakers and art students were initially involved in training

participants to record community theatre, bands and events etc., using video technology but soon went on to apply community video as a tool for activism. This included assisting shooting community agendas and narratives, such as social security, housing and anti-poverty campaigns using a documentary style of filming.

Video production in the early 1980s was mostly in black and white rather than colour. This also tended to lose quality with each successive edited copy, often resulting in grey and grainy material. Thus, the technical quality of the video production could not compete with broadcast television. Indeed, if viewed out of context, the work was all too easily dismissed as being of inferior quality, as some critics noted. Instead, the message, rather than the quality, was the main concern. The abiding ethos of community video was to bring "the complex and intimate drama of citizenship" to a wider audience (Grierson, in Wade, 1980: 85). The content was comprehensible, engaging and invested with power and meaning, particularly for an audience for whom the issues were live and potent. As such, community video was all about cultural empowerment and citizenship, not only in terms of ideology and content but also in terms of working methods (Van Vuuren, 2002: 57).

Most community video groups adopted an egalitarian structure and a co-operative, anti-authoritarian approach to working, which meant that people were multi-skilled and able to undertake a wide variety of tasks when needed (Solanas & Getino, 1969: 127). This was in marked contrast to the conventional, hierarchical model with the director at the top, supervising lower-ranking skill-specific individuals, who were required to conform to the director or producer's agenda. Community video groups led a precarious existence, as funding was haphazard or ill conceived. They suffered from similar funding problems to the community arts in general. In addition, groups were frequently caught up in schisms that emerged between regional and local arts funding bodies. While local councils were largely concerned with a vocational agenda of training large numbers of people in the use of video equipment, the arts boards wanted to see work being produced that "seriously engages with the problems and practices of film and video in their own right" (Wade, 1980: 87). The British Film

Institute, moreover, had a deliberate policy of ignoring the existence of community video, which was further weakened by lack of cross-group discussion and support. It was a poor cousin to the independent film production groups who were meeting to discuss a way forward and define the Workshop Declaration (discussed in section 1.7 below), which would ultimately lead to the development of sustainable funding. Additionally, video workers often found themselves managing the unrealistic expectations of both the funding bodies and the communities involved, as they could not possibly match the quality of broadcast TV on the budgets available to them.

Consequently, production became dependant largely on the ingenuity and determination of the film and video workers themselves rather than the ill devised strategies of funding agencies.

This situation left collectives adopting a variety of approaches to generate the resources needed to create work.[11] For example, it involved production staff getting paid in videotape stock for their teaching work, living cheaply and pooling resources. Where they experienced a shortage of money and resources, community video makers made up for it with a wealth of both skilled individuals willing to staff workshops and an abundance of people wishing to learn and utilise video in creative ways. It seemed to me that what community video groups were able to do better than anyone else was to represent and give voice to a vibrant, active community around the specific issues that concerned them. One clear advantage of the economic independence of the community video movement was to liberate the collective from the peculiarly divided activity of having to appeal to the diverse, often contrary, expectations of funding bodies, whilst still maintaining integrity of intention.

---

[11] In 1979, the London Community Video Workers Collective published the 'Directory of Video Tapes', which was a first step in making tapes more widely available.

1.7 The Film Industry of the 1980s and the Creation of the 'Workshop Declaration'

In the 1980s, the film industry in the North East of England comprised a small group of commercial and independent film and television production units: notably, Turners, Trade Films, Amber, Swingbridge Video and North East Films, which operated alongside the regional broadcasting companies Tyne Tees and BBC Newcastle. Further afield there were the mainstream film companies based around Pinewood and Elstree studios, as well as three television channels (BBC1, BBC2 and ITV) and the recently formed, predominantly left-wing, London-based independent film companies, such as Faction, 4 Corners and Lucia, not to mention other regional independent filmmakers.

The Independent Film Association (IFA), which was founded in 1974, was composed of alternative and independent filmmakers, as well as individual fine artists experimenting with the new technology of video. One of the key roles of the IFA was to connect filmmakers working outside the mainstream industry. Within the organisation there were different factions at play. For instance, in London there was a tendency towards the French view of filmmakers being regarded as individual artistic auteurs. This ran counter to the North East vision of community, collaboration, collectives, co-operative working and community participation. However, there was enough unity within the IFA to bring about the formal adoption of the Workshop Declaration in 1982, with further amendments made in 1984.

On the cusp of the launch of Britain's fourth national TV network Channel 4 (C4), UK independent film-makers were seeking an avenue for screening work to mainstream audiences, not only to get the work aired but also as a means of economic survival and growth. Following the economic recession of the late 1970s/early 1980s, the subsequent Neo-Liberal economic agenda (see section 1.1) and the paucity of public funding for community arts (section 1.6), many filmmakers and collectives were either unwaged or reliant on contract work, which made them ineligible for union representation. Crucially, therefore, groups such as Amber were dependant on a system of being commissioned as freelancers by the commercial channel ITV as the

BBC at the time employed an exclusively in-house workforce. This meant that only the most 'popular' projects were likely to be able to attract funding, and these were not the kind of subjects that Amber and other more politically-driven film collectives wished to create work about. The funding bodies' criteria for support seemed at times ill defined, as illustrated in the apparently arbitrary way that films were classified, praised, dismissed or ignored by arts administrators and critics.

The advantage of workshop methods – collective or co-operative working and direct contact with audiences – is that these provide a base of strength from which such agendas can be questioned and challenged (Dickinson, 1999: 209). Accordingly, Amber played a vital role in the development of the workshop movement of the early 1980s, one that brought together several independent production companies to provide a united and strong body with a clearly defined strategy to negotiate the way forward towards realistic, sustainable funding and an egalitarian way of working. This was formally recognised and defined by the inception of The Workshop Declaration in 1982, an agreement between the IFA, Regional Arts Associations, the ACTT (in order to make exceptions to their closed-shop union rules) and C4, the latter agreeing to provide both capital and revenue funding for selected workshops. This was a significant development as it provided financial security for the independent sector and regular full-time salaried employment for the individuals within each workshop.

The Workshop Declaration also set out principles and structures for small independent groups involved in filmmaking. These included the following: cross-grade equality, collective management, non-hierarchical working relations, equal pay, flexible division of labour, continuity of employment, educational activities, the provision of film and video equipment and control over the production, distribution and exhibition of the resulting work produced. This was a radical departure from the status quo, representing an egalitarian, halcyon vision, which enabled individual members of the Declaration to engage with the film product, and have influence and control over narrative, production and distribution.

The franchised workshops, which subsequently formed the 'National Organisation of Workshops' (NOW), were to be located outside of the mainstream of film and television culture, which in part enabled them to place an emphasis on local concerns and ethnic diversity. Thus, the financial security created by the formation of the Declaration assisted many groups whose focus was squarely on political, activist and socially engaged filmmaking as they no longer had to obtain funds on a project-by-project basis. This also meant that they no longer had to sanitise or dilute their content in order to obtain funds.

The Workshop Agreement allowed Amber and other collectives to maintain a slate of work with several on-going projects at any one time, which was in marked contrast to the previous practice of sourcing funding to make a single production. As part of the agreement, C4 provided capital funding for equipment and revenue funding for production, including regularly paid salaries and, crucially, they did not maintain control over the material created. This new style of independent, participatory filmmaking practice was instrumental in providing a platform for local, community-based groups to collaborate in, contribute to and be represented in mainstream media.

The emergence of Channel 4 in 1982 was lauded as a vehicle for expression and inclusion for underrepresented groups, and it created new paths for independent production. In so doing, as Michael Chanan has noted, it effectively created a form of Third Cinema in the UK:

> The collective practices of these workshops correspond in great measure to the production strategies proposed by Solanas and Getino for third cinema. Importantly, they included Black and Asian film and video collectives, who were thus able to present for the first time on British television programmes authored by British third world minorities. (1997: 9)

At a personal level, the start of C4 presented an opportunity for my own active involvement in raising lesbian visibility in mainstream media. This occurred when I was working as a member of one of the first all-female crews to produce *Veronica 4 Rose* (Melanie Chait,1983), a film made for Channel 4's *11th Hour*. In this film, I also featured on screen as a participant/performer in the Lesbian band the Friggin Little

Bits (for more details see section 2.1). Indeed, in many ways this was a key event in my career, especially when involved in dialogue with the film's director Melanie Chait, with whom I discussed a number of the issues that were subsequently developed in the film. These included representation of northern, working class lesbians, anonymity for lesbians not out to their family and ways to represent individual as well as group diverse opinions and experiences.

1.8 Amber's Creative Practice and the Current Affairs Unit

Amber was one of a small number of independent film and video groups (alongside London Filmmakers Co-op, Cinema Action, Liberation Films and Sheffield Film Co-op) to emerge during the 1970s with a commitment to changing attitudes and practice within British mainstream media. As Margaret Dickinson argues in her book *Rogue Reels*, this oppositional sector revolutionised British media, especially during the formation of Channel 4 at the start of the 1980s, at the very moment when the political landscape at large was shifting dramatically to the right (Dickinson, 1999: 74). Yet Amber had begun to make an impact much earlier than this, after being set up in 1968 by three arts graduates of Regent St Polytechnic; Sirkka Liisa Kontinnen, Murray Martin and Graham Denham. Together, they shared a passion for the industrial landscape of the north-east.

An early Amber 'Manifesto' declared the intentions of the group as being to "[i]ntegrate life and work and friendship. Don't tie yourself to institutions. Live cheaply and you'll remain free. And, then, do whatever it is that gets you up in the morning" (Amber Film and Photography Collective, 2015: 5). These principles underpinned the egalitarian structure of the collective. The group's expressed intention was to document working-class culture in the North East, which was largely unrepresented in both photography and mainstream film and television, and was consequently at risk of being left out of the country's documented history. To address this issue, the group made observational, poetic documentaries, including *Maybe* [1969] and *Launch* [1974], as well as others that were built on personal relationships, such as *High Row* [1973].

Murray Martin certainly perceived that the working classes of the North East had no tangible sense of their own culture. He defined this as Amber's 'raison d'etre' and saw it as the collective's underpinning philosophy, one that both initially created and subsequently sustained the collective[12]. Working-class communities had a tacit knowledge that they were absent from or, at best, stereotyped in mainstream media. Amber sought to give them the means by which to redress this, creating a visible culture through which they could define and recognise themselves. The work produced contributed to a change in culture in media production. This was a strategy borne not from an ideology based on romanticism or nostalgia but stemmed instead from an intention to openly value, celebrate and promote working-class identity.   Amber built on relationships and valued being present and involved in communities. The difference in Amber's approach to that of other similar video groups was that there was no training element or loaning of equipment to people within the community. Instead, Amber worked alongside people who were not especially interested in learning the skills of film making but nonetheless wished to be heard, represented and recorded in a way that they had ownership of, as well as being recognised as true to their perception of themselves. Amber's 'enquiry and curiosity' approach to filmmaking was born out of the personal interest of the producers in the North East, but it was also driven by a fascination with people and story more generally.

Amber's practice as a collective could be aptly defined as being a 'creative democracy', a term attributed to the American philosopher and social critic John Dewey. Dewey argued that the word democracy was not only applicable to political governance and procedure but could also be applied to the embedding of a *way of life* or a *moral ideal* into our ordinary daily routine (Dewey in Vail and Hollands, 2013: 353). Amber developed a philosophy of consensual, democratic process within

---

[12] The Amber Collective is still active in filmmaking and photography—producing over forty films and hundreds of photographic exhibitions, the vast majority documenting changes in working class life and work in the region. For further details see the collective's website http://www.amber-online.com. Its facilities, which includes the Side Gallery and cinema were originally developed in the mid-1970s and have acted as a focal point for independent filmmaking and documentary photography ever since, both nationally and regionally (Newbury, 2002; O'Reilly, 2009). For more information, see Vail and Hollands (2012, 2013) and Harvey (1978).

the collective in order to establish a dynamic and sustainable, oppositional cultural practice. This included the choice of artistic project by democratically agreed criteria; the subjecting of all of their creative outputs to collective-wide critical scrutiny, and the empowerment of the community through both contribution and decision making.

Amber's collective, collaborative, co-operative ethos and overarching philosophy of giving voice to marginalised communities created the perfect professional arena for me to work within. It was a natural fit in terms of my own history, class, values and political ideals and, consequently, I became a fully active member of the collective in 1983. Within Amber, my primary concern was to be engaged in all parts of the film-making process in order to be a full contributor and, secondly, to practically apply egalitarian ways of working within the collective and with the communities we lived and worked alongside, making programmes in partnership with them.

However, I also felt isolated within the Amber group on occasions, by both my gender and my homosexuality. The four key members, for instance, were in fact two heterosexual couples and, besides me, there were no other homosexual members. When I arrived at Amber, all the projects were posed from a male, hetero-normative perspective, and I felt frustrated that female-centric or LGBT issues were rarely considered as central. In spite of being, on the one hand, empowered as a member of a democratic collective, I was also disempowered in the sense that my worldview was not from a heterosexual perspective and, therefore, it was often difficult for me to garner support for ideas and establish my voice over the unconscious bias that underpinned the collective viewpoint. In other words, if Amber could be regarded as operating from within a liminal space, my position within was doubly marginalised.

Yet, by working as a member of Amber, I gained many benefits. For instance, with Amber's support I gained special dispensation from the ACTT (Association of Film and Television Technicians) union, which practiced a 'closed shop' policy at the time. This opened up further opportunities for me to develop a career in the mainstream media and work on issues that mattered to me, effectively shifted my career to a new level.

This was a time of relative affluence, as we (Amber) began to benefit from significant funding from Channel 4, including capital monies that enabled the joint purchase with Trade Films, of our first broadcast-standard video equipment. This enabled Rich Grassick and myself to set up the Current Affairs Unit at Amber in 1983 in order to bring our political agenda into a more prominent position within Amber. This marked an intense period of documentary activism; the impending miners' strike brought focus to the newly established CA unit and created the opportunity for us to develop new working practices in order to concentrate on current political issues that were negatively impacting on our local communities. The CA Unit was a focus for our own political activism; indeed, we saw ourselves as cultural workers using film and video as tools within and for the community to voice their struggles. Essentially, we were supporting the labour, peace, anti-nuclear and environmental movements at a local level.

1.9 Amber's Audiences and the Current Affairs Unit (CAU)

It is an obvious statement but once a tape or film is made, it needs to be screened, the act of viewing by an audience being the essential culmination of filmed material. Amber understood the importance of a location for audience and that being in control of their means of distribution and exhibition to the public, hence the creation of both its facilities, namely The Side Gallery and Cinema, were vital to the work of the collective. However, in contrast, many of the tapes made by community video groups were typically shown to small numbers of people since distribution fell low in the priority of arts and community funding bodies. It seemed that the funder's assumption was that as long as people were trained and the equipment was funded to make the films, the rest (i.e., distribution and publicity) would sort itself out.

In the case of the Current Affairs Unit (CAU), most tapes were made with a targeted audience in mind. In this instance, a strategy for distribution allowed for issues raised in the documentaries to be disseminated and discussed, and tactics developed and acted on. The CAU saw itself as part of a movement that was broadly left-wing,

labour-supporting and environmentalist, and we played our part as filmmakers, writers and photographers in raising such issues among working-class audiences in the North East. Crucially, we had a clear idea of our audience *prior* to embarking on production, being guided by the community that was informing the content and involved in the filmmaking. Our general strategy was to make short 'trigger tapes' by the Current Affairs Unit that could be followed by more detailed tapes and for these to be shown in places where the community gathered and could discuss the film, such as miners' lodges and working-men's clubs. A scene in the film *Scar* (1997), although dramatised, illustrates this practice. It depicts an audience watching documentary footage in a pub, including the women from Easington, (a mining community in the County Durham coalfield).

Heather Wood, a key figurehead of the women's campaign to fight pit closures, during the miners' strike, was both part of the audience in the film and the role model in developing the lead character for *The Scar*. The significance of this scene for me, lies in the fact that this Amber production of the mid to late Nineties, acknowledges the critical role played by the women of the North East of England in one of the region's most important events in its history, placing the voices of working-class women at the heart of the struggle to preserve a way of life threatened by Neo-Liberal economics and right-wing politics.

1.10 Summary

This section has described the social and economic milieu into which I emerged as a young arts graduate and aspiring filmmaker. It has explained the community arts and video movements with which I identified and worked within but also established how and why I took up a critical position from which I could make community affairs documentaries in resistance to the Neo-Liberal order. From this account, my social and political motivations should be clear, along with the ways in which these have informed and been informed by my working roles in Amber Films and the Current Affairs Unit, as well as the wider Workshop Movement through which I, as part of

Amber, established myself as a filmmaker operating within a liminal space (O'Brien, 2017). Just as clear, hopefully, is my consistent determination (derived from the collective) to exploit the radical potential of this outsider position, even as it has led me to gain access to mainstream media (an account of which is provided elsewhere, in Chapter 2).

CHAPTER TWO

Praxis

The aspiration underpinning the development of my specific and unique practice is to create an effective working process that both enables and represents, as authentically as possible, the voices of marginalized communities. I have been consistent in my purpose to evolve a mode of production that enables access to voice, in a fluid, expanding praxis, generating unique, impactful and authentic work, working *alongside*, and from *within*, varied groups of mis-, or under-represented people. What has emerged is a potent creative process built on both my positive and negative experiences within the liminal spaces I existed in: the film industry, a heteropatriarchal society, and academia. Throughout the many challenges in my working career, my aims have been unwavering, and this has, in turn, galvanised my own resilience and determination.

The core principles that are consistent throughout and central to my praxis can be defined as: non-hierarchical modes of production, co-operative and interactive engagement with others in the production process and, crucially, *with* the communities I work in partnership with. What may have seemed initially a relatively straightforward project of 'enabling people to tell their own stories' through the textuality of filmmaking, is actually multi-layered and complex if the intricate balance that enables voice (rather than 'voice on behalf of') is to be achieved.

I have also been concerned with audience, and a productive tension has arisen between my commitment to films that are interactive, community-identifying and unconstrained by institutional demands, and my recognition that funding and distribution problems prevent wider circulation and impact. This has resulted in multi-textual outcomes and expanded audience cultures, disseminating the material in a variety of settings and contexts, such as academic papers, conference presentations and ceramic exhibitions in addition to the screening of films.

Throughout this chapter I shall be discussing the evolution of my working methods as a filmmaker, methods that I have developed over time as a result of my experiences of working on films and film-related projects, but also informed by my exposure to a range of influential theorists and practitioners. I am using the term 'Praxis' here to describe a relationship between theory and practice, where strategies are put in place to generate dynamic dialogue between the medium, the contributors and the audience to enable voice.

The growing awareness of the sexist oppression of women in the workplace and the home in the late 1960s and 1970s had led to the foundation of the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain in 1970, including diverse forms of activism and a developing body of academic writing by authors such as Ann Oakley (*The Sociology of Housework*, 1974; *Becoming a Mother* 1979) and Sheila Rowbotham (*Hidden from History: 300 years of women's oppression and the fight against it*, 1973). These, and others, commented on the oppression that women experienced in their everyday lives. Reading this material exerted an early influence on my praxis, most especially the conversations and discussions with women, often held in bars, clubs and Consciousness Raising group meetings, during the mid 1970's. For me, these were exciting times in which I found my experience being affirmed by inspirational feminist thinkers and activists, such as Maya Angelou (1978), Mary Daly (1984), Audre Lorde (1984), Angela Davis (1983), Germaine Greer (1970), Laura Mulvey (1975), Barbara Hammer (1980) and Jan Worth (1982), as well as the work of Leeds Animation Workshop (1981, 1983). Audre Lorde in *Sister Outsider* (1984), for instance, encapsulated my experience of the liminal spaces that I found myself in.

> Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference – those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older – know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support.
> Audre Lorde: p112

In the mid-Seventies, feminist discourse placed emphasis on the presentation of

new images of women, especially those that would counteract with and be critical of the unrealistic representations of European cinema, Hollywood and television, those that reduced women to unrealistic representations, which swung from angel to whore, sex objects to victim, images that I, like may other women, did not identify with. Indeed, there was such a dearth of positive representations for lesbians that it rendered us invisible.

Many key texts (all published in 1987) that comprised a growing body of feminist literature in the 1980s drew attention to the significance of sexist practices and discourses in various forms of representation. These included Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer's edited collection *Boxed In: women and television*, with contributions from feminist theorists and practitioners. Kath Davies, Julienne Dickey and Teresa Stratford's edited collection *Out of Focus: writings on women and the media* was another inspirational publication from this period, one that included contributions from activists alongside those from journalists and academics. Another was Rosemary Betterton's more academic edited collection *Looking On: images of femininity in the visual arts and media*.

Significantly, there was less documentation at this time of the experiences of women from working-class and minority ethnic communities. Amrit Wilson's *Finding a Voice: Asian Women in Britain* (1978) and Jean Stead's *Never the Same Again: women and the miners' strike* (1985) are exceptions. A more recent reflection on this period comes from Anber Raz in *How Growing up in a Racist and Sexist Britain Moved me to Activism* (2016), which echoes many aspects of my own experience.

Within a consistency of purpose, my praxis has evolved over several years in response to historical context, technological advances and cultural, political and media theory. This section tracks its development through eight submitted outputs, but is not confined to these, including discussion of other projects, as summarised in Table 2 in the appendices. Thinking about the 'how' of telling people's stories, in whatever medium, is determined by my intrinsically linked key concerns, which I draw out further in this discussion. What follows then is not a chronological review

of my work but rather a laying out of the thread that connects the work in terms of ideas and processes, that may overlap back and forth across time and at key moments in the development of my working methods. It begins not with my practice as a filmmaker but rather with my longstanding participation as a member of a four-part lesbian feminist acapella band.

2.1 *Ten Little Bits* (Friggin Little Bits, 2013)

Formed for fun in 1980, the Friggin Little Bits (FLBs) (Output 1) was a four-part lesbian acapella band that took the slogan "the personal is political" literally. Riding upon the second wave of feminism, we defined ourselves as existing in our own right, as vital, viable, valuable, equal human beings, contrary to the notion of women as a support act in a male dominated world, inspired in part by the words of Simone de Beauvoir:

> Now, what peculiarly signalises the situation of woman is that she – a free and autonomous being, like all human creatures – nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other (De Beauvoir, 1972: 29).

We were also responding to the increasingly confident gay liberation movement.[13] Yet, at the same time, we were also reacting against an increasingly anti-gay legal system that rendered homosexual acts between two men under the age of 21 illegal until 2001. Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act promoted homophobia in schools, just as the welfare clause in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill (2008) illegitimised lesbian parenting.[14]

As a newly formed band, our response to finding ourselves marginalised, rendered invisible or phenomenalised (the 'only gay in the village' syndrome) was to write and perform songs to women-only audiences[15], first in Amsterdam and then across

---

[13] The first UK Gay Pride march was held in 1972, and the first gay and lesbian trade union conference in 1977.
[14] Gay couples were denied the right to adopt until 2002.
[15] Women only spaces were organised through deliberate political choice. They were places where women could feel safe from male abuse, the male gaze and free to express and be themselves.

the UK, although notably in the North East of England. This consideration around audience was liberating in terms of the content of the songs. For instance, I learnt that the act of defining our audience as 'women only' allowed us to speak more freely about our experiences through the song writing, as we felt able to voice our situation to a similarly marginalized group.

Together, we wrote satirical songs to entertain, engage and voice experiences often common to both women and lesbians. We used humour to describe the impact of the place we found ourselves in (an oppressive hetero-patriarchal and homophobic society) and found that being able to laugh at our culture and not take ourselves too seriously was also a political act. However, the particular uniqueness of our band was our overarching aim to celebrate lesbian sexuality and community. The song 'My folks,' for instance, was about the potentially universal dilemma that lesbians faced when coming out to their families:

> My folks are coming to stay
> My lover's gone away
> I've cleaned the house from top to bottom and it's shining.
> The noticeboard is bare and my friends won't dare
> to call and if they do their habits need refining.
> This time
> This time
> I'll tell them the truth
> I'm sick and tired of lying and concealing the reality.
> I've known since I was 16
> Maybe all of my life
> I'm a dyke
> I'm a dyke
> I'm a dyke

'The Country Song' was a wry response to the way the medical world and psychiatry were used to explain our 'problem' given that we were living in a society that routinely stigmatized and pathologised our 'condition'. Generally, lesbianism was glossed over as being 'just a phase', one caused by either a lack of connection with fathers or a surfeit of chromosomes. On the other hand, 'Ho Pet Hinny Hinny' was a song about sexual harassment and, as such, vocalized an experience common to lesbian and straight women alike. This was our response to rife and

endemic sexism where women found themselves to be the targets for verbal, physical and sexual taunts from men, on the street, within the workplace and in bars[16]. Irritating as this was, doubly so was the fact that it seemed to be considered by wider society to be 'harmless fun' and, even more worryingly, in some quarters accepted as the 'norm'.

To summarise, the FLBs responded to oppression creatively and comedically. We sought to resist and challenge oppression by contributing to the creation of a collective identity and empowering our community. By sharing our experience, we were also giving voice to our community. In terms of the development of praxis, my involvement with FLBs (as explained in more detail in the following chapter) can be seen as instigating a way of working that aims to counter mainstream representation of oppressed groups and to add alternative content and representation, whilst working at the social and industrial margins (i.e., originally performing to women-only audiences).

2.2 *Veronica 4 Rose* (Channel 4, 1983)

In 1983, I attended the first International Feminist Film and Video Conference in Amsterdam and connected there with the director Melanie Chait. Melanie was working on *Veronica 4 Rose* (V4R) at this time, which was the first documentary of its kind, in which young lesbians talk freely about issues that affect them. This was commissioned for and later broadcast on Channel 4's *11 Hour* series. After our meeting in Amsterdam, Melanie enlisted my input both as a contributor and as part of an all-female crew, the first of its kind, to work in the UK Film and TV industry. My roles included those of co-researcher, fixer for the North East women in the film, as well as sound recordist and grip for the whole production. To be able to

---

[16] Academic and activist writers commented on the sexism experienced by women in their everyday lives, notably Sheila Rowbotham in *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World*, (1973), as well as a group at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies who produced an influential edited collection *Women Take Issue: aspects of women's subordination* in 1978, alongside magazines such as *Shrew* (founded 1969), *Red Rag* (founded 1972) and *Spare Rib* (founded 1972). However, there was an absence of personal accounts. For myself and the band members this was a lived experience that we sought to highlight for women audiences.

work on this project, however, I needed to have a union ticket from ACTT, which had a closed shop policy (section 1.8).[17] I sought assistance from Amber, who not only secured a union ticket for me but also asked me to join the collective.

Influenced by the second wave of feminism, the V4R contributors were politicized, vocal and used to working collectively. This is how we had been involved in our working practices in community arts and the community welfare sector, so there was a tacit expectation that we would have an interactive role in the project. My observation of Melanie was that she initiated discussion around representation with the participants and, furthermore, that she listened to and acted on their requests. So, for instance, in certain cases (myself included) contributors who were not 'out' to their family asked to be kept anonymous in the footage. Shots were thus discreetly set up in order to maintain anonymity at the time of capture, rather than in post-production. Contributors felt listened to, considered, valued and represented in a way that we recognized as authentic. I trusted Melanie to use the material in a way that was true to us. At the same time, I realized that she had given us a degree of ownership of the end result. This made a profound impact on my own subsequent film projects. The airing on Channel 4 was also the catalyst for me to come out to my family, after my mother talked of how much she and my father enjoyed this radical new TV station.

It was also whilst working on and performing in V4R that I learned that the filmic culture and practice I was engaging in (and now sought in order to create the kind of work I aspired to) required sustainable funding. Certainly, Channel 4 made it possible for diverse communities to broadcast their work.[18] However, the working practices and structures within the film and television industry typically acted as a bar to this potential. Two things got in the way; firstly, the existing hierarchical and

---

[17] ACTT: The Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians was a trade union in the UK which began in 1933 and 1991. BECTU, the result of a merger between the ACTT and BETA, came into existence on 2 January 1991, as the Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Technicians Union.

[18] Channel 4's role was that of a publisher rather than a producer of content with a remit to cater for 'minority' programming for those traditionally underrepresented by the mainstream, as described in *Channel 4 at 25* on the BFI's Screenonline website: http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1296872/index.html (accessed 08.01.18).

guildist working structures supported by the ACTT union (section 1.6). At this time, myself and many members of independent production companies, particularly in the North East of England, believed that if diverse communities were to authentically represent themselves and have fair access to Channel 4 then the ACTT's working structures needed to be challenged. The second obstacle was that one-off funding for a single production such as V4R did not allow for a sustainable, developing practice as each film was dependent on successfully bidding and winning consecutive one-off production fees. The independent film production groups' response through the IFA and the regional trade union groups was to forge the Workshop Declaration (Appendix 11; and see section 1.6), allowing for cross-grade working, salaried payments and editorial control. A more secure funding process that allowed for a rolling slate of productions.

To summarise, my involvement with V4R demonstrated a very viable way to make a film by actively engaging the contributors in the process. The result was a true collaboration and a powerful, empowering experience for both participants and audience alike. This experience of being a contributor in (as well as being part of the film making team of) V4R provided me with a working model of film production that I actively sought to adopt.

2.3 *Seacoal* (Amber Films, 1985)

Seacoal (Output 2) was Amber's first collaboratively produced feature-length film, a fusion of documentary and fiction about the lives of seacoalers on the Northumberland coast.[19] It had a significant influence on my developing praxis and was unique in how we, as a team, created this critically acclaimed film. Our chosen method of researching this story was to live amongst the seacoalers. For the first time, we pooled the production teams money to buy a caravan, which the seacoalers helped site at the Lynemouth beach camp .[20] This enabled us to visit and live alongside the seacoaling community. My relationships in the life of the camp

---

[19] Seacoal has been sifted from the surf of North East beaches for over a hundred years by a community of men and women who make their living collecting and selling this washed up coal.
[20] This subsequently became our chosen method to develop narrative. For *Dream On* we bought and ran a working pub. For *In Fading Light*, Amber bought a working trawler.

were predominantly with the women, particularly Rosie Laidler and the children on the site. So, for instance, I would travel up to the site and stay over for a weekend to spend time with the women and kids (including cutting their hair), chatting with them and listening to their stories of what was happening at the camp. Along with the lead actress, myself and a couple of women in the Amber production team, we set up women only 'get togethers' in one of the caravans, drinking whisky and playing cards (both of which were taboo within the culture of the camp), and it was on one of these occasions where the ghost story on the beach emerged and how Betty became central to the emerging story. This was a unique way of researching a story, a rich and exciting experience that contributed to a more genuine representation of the seacoaler's lives.

Figure 1 shows a screen-shot of Rocker, aged 6, one of the children I got to know well, particularly after he interrupted the shoot so that I could see a goat giving birth. The shoot resumed once I returned. This indicates the way in which we respected the life of the community at the heart of the documentary to the degree that often the community relations took precedence over filming at certain times.

Figure 1: Rocker, a very skilled bareback rider, as featured in *Seacoal* (Amber Films, 1985)

Although the Workshop Declaration was crucial to supporting *Seacoal* and other collaboratively produced projects, a second vital element was the agreement that we successfully negotiated with the actors Union, Equity, to gain permission for non-professional contributors to be included in the film. There were conditions attached; namely, that the individuals could not be directed or scripted. For filming, this was a tricky strategy, as we had no control over the material we were capturing on film when the members of the community interacted with actors. One outcome was that I learnt to record sound in complex circumstances where I did not know who, when or where the contributors would be speaking. I used radio and line mikes on individuals, plus a boom mic swung over the top of the actors. In such instances, I worked organically, responding to the action as it happened rather than the traditional method of having a storyboarded, planned shoot. On the occasions that we needed to actively direct part of a storyline within the film, we had to use professional actors, as a result of the conditions laid down by Equity.

Significantly, this was the first of Amber's broadcast films to have a female central character, Betty (Amber Styles, her stage name). Amber Styles has been a longstanding member of a consistent pool of local professional working-class actors, who frequently brought their own experiences, stories and histories to the project. Uniquely, this allowed for Betty and Betty's stories to be threaded through and developed in subsequent films, like *Dream On*. This original way of developing a story blurs the edges between fiction and reality and adds to the authenticity of performance.

The other very different methodology applied in *Seacoal* was the open-ended approach to the research and subsequent storyline. Here, instead of the conventional, linear filmmaking method of research-write-shoot, these different elements were much looser and frequently overlapped each other. For instance, after a period of 'lived' research and discussion with the seacoalers, we would begin shooting, then, as life continued on in the camp, new things occurred that were then included. Thus, it became much more of a cyclical process where the research and story development stage had no specific beginning or end but rather was an on-going organic dialogue as events unfolded.

The editing was pivotal in terms of pulling out the thread of narrative, and this stage of the process involved the contributors along with all Amber members. So the seacoalers were able to voice their opinions on *Seacoal*, make choices and steer the footage being used, just like members of the crew. We used the documentary footage to fuse together several different stories with many different voices to create a cohesive, collective, working-class narrative. This was a radical departure from the traditional method of working on film.[21]

The way that I experienced working on *Seacoal* was an acutely important part in the development of my future work. It was here that I first truly engaged with participatory, collaborative research alongside and within a community. I found this to be a very potent and direct model of working that I actively chose to embed in subsequent projects.

Reflecting on this significant point in the development of my praxis, it is clear that the Workshop Declaration and the deal with Equity were key to a sustainable, participatory way of working. Our commitment to living with the community and involving them at every stage of the process also provided a vital context for retaining the integrity inherent in the work and the authenticity of the end product, that made *Seacoal* an original contribution to alternative filmmaking practice that can support authentic voice. Further, as researcher, sound recordist and assistant editor, I was instrumental in putting women's voices at the centre of the production. Looking back, however, it is evident that although the women's stories and voices were well represented, the children's were not. Rather, they were visible in the film but not vocal. This left me questioning how can children's voice be interwoven in adult narratives, a concern to which I would return (see 2.7).

---

[21] For further discussion of collective working practices at Amber, see Vail and Hollands, 2013: 352–367)

In 1983, myself and Rich Grassick set up The Current Affairs (CA) Unit (section 1.8) within Amber and worked with a shorter documentary form, experimenting with programme length to find the optimum duration that would lead an audience to ask questions and become energized and active in the issues in the narrative. The CA video 'trigger tapes' were designed to be short and provocative, as opposed to feature length films where the audience tends to be passively engaged and can be satiated with being entertained and informed.

As programme makers, we were critical of mainstream media bias and positioned ourselves and our camera on the side of protesters: in other words, behind the picket line, as opposed to the mainstream camera position of behind the police line. In so doing, we allied ourselves with workers, campaigners and activists to redress the avalanche of establishment propaganda. As active trade unionists, our aim was to support strategies of the Left as media workers. Most CA productions supported the campaigning work and activism of the labour movement, environmentalists and pacifists, from a grass roots perspective.

Our praxis was informed by the issues that were current in the trade union movement that would fundamentally impact on working-class ways of life. Importantly, our contributors were encouraged to be involved at every stage of the production process. Discussion from grass roots members of trade unions and the community appear within all of the trigger tapes, a sight rarely seen in mainstream TV. We believed that 'ordinary' people were authoritative, not passive, but politically articulate on labour issues, the environment and anti-war, countering the arguments and strategies of government and industry. Crucial to this process was the after screening discussion, which was an integral part of this process. Contrary to mainstream media, which we saw as providing fleeting, isolated and disconnected items of news information with very little analysis, our intention was to incrementally build a body of work where threads and connections became

apparent to support an informed understanding. The recent digital archive covering forty years of Amber/Side productions has to some extent provided this.

In 1983, we became aware of the imminent possibility of a major conflict between the Conservative Government and the miners over pit closures through our connection with members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). We recorded the Miners Weekend School held in Durham in 1984 where the strategies being adopted by government through the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) and National Coal Board (NCB) in preparation for this confrontation were discussed, along with strategies to resist closures and defend mining communities. We created the trigger tape *News From Durham* (Output 3) supported by union activists, to stimulate discussion and debate and to educate young miners new to the industry. We also created a longer and more detailed version of the issues in *Where Are We Going?* It was important to establish a distribution network, which we did by dispatching master VHS copies to activists in miners' lodges. These 'masters' could then be re-copied on home recorders. This system took into account the problems with consecutive copying of videotape, which would downgrade the material to such a point that it eventually became unwatchable.

During the subsequent strike, we became fully engaged in packing food parcels, collecting money, filming in soup kitchens, on picket lines and marches. This involved recording the testimonies of striking miners, their wives and supporters, enabling them to bear witness to the impact of Government tactics and the resolve of the people to defend their way of life and to counter the dominating anti-strike propaganda of mainstream media. The CA tapes became our contribution to the *Miners' Campaign Tapes*, where Amber joined with other independent film and video makers throughout the UK to produce a compilation of work to support the miners' struggle. The tapes were compiled and distributed by Platform Films, London and Trade Films, Gateshead to "[tackle] issues which continue to occupy us today: the right to demonstrate, police tactics, political double-speak and the role of the media" (*The Miners' Campaign Tapes*).[22] These six tapes were successful in raising

---

[22] *The Miners' Campaign Tapes*, see https://vimeo.com/ondemand/theminerscampaigntapes (accessed 10.01.2018).

consciousness of the issues as well as funds from the UK and Europe in support of the miners. Julian Petley, Professor of Screen Media and Journalism Brunel University, as quoted in the Miners' Campaign Tape website, notes "[t]he Miners' Campaign Tapes are key examples of a strand of radical oppositional filmmaking in Britain which stretches from the workers' newsreels of the 1930s to the contemporary video activism of organisations such as Undercurrents and SchMovies"

As a testament to the quality and significance of *The Miners' Campaign Tapes*, they won the Grierson Award for Documentary in 1985.

To summarise, the CA unit experimented with practice, form, duration and distribution to find the optimum programme style to encourage the audience to actively engage in issues that were of concern to them and their community. As the leading members of this group, Rick Grassick and I positioned ourselves and our camera on the side of the campaigners and protesters in solidarity with them but also as activists ourselves. The work was designed as a catalyst for discussion of the issues, how to tackle them and how to initiate a counter response. In terms of our praxis, the introduction of video and the capability of home recording was vitally important as a technology supporting an alternative approach to distribution even though it was still very new at this time. Further, we established a distribution system that took into account the fact that consecutive copying would downgrade the material to such a point it was unwatchable. We gave our material to the community and this became, for example, part of national network of support for the miners through *The Miners Campaign Tapes*.

2.5 *Can't Beat It Alone* (Amber Films Current Affairs Unit, 1985,)

Perhaps from my liminal experience, I have learnt that individual struggles can become so focused that a silo (or isolationist) mentality develops. At the same time, my experience of revolutionary struggle has been that the activities and needs of women were practically invisible. It seemed to me that women's issues were subsumed within the 'more important' collective issues of the revolutionary cause, with the tacit promise that the issues that directly and exclusively affect women will

be tackled once the revolution is over. This thinking provided the context for my response to an invitation to talk at the Miners Weekend School (1984; section 2.4) about my experiences of the women peace campaigners' fight (1981-2000) to keep US nuclear-armed cruise missiles out of Greenham Common. In the talk, I described the similarities in how the miners and the women were depicted in the press and shared some of the protest tactics that the women deployed. I demonstrated linkages between what could otherwise be perceived as individual struggles, while proposing that connecting with the peace campaigners might be beneficial to both groups. *Can't Beat It Alone* (CBIA) (Output 5) is the video version of this argument. Centred on the nuclear industry, the tape is about making connections between a wide range of campaigners to broaden the spectrum and potency of opposition to nuclear armament, power and waste. It was also very important to me to have wide and diverse representation, realised through the contributors to the film, including the women of Greenham peace camp and the newly politicized women in the mining villages of the North East who were fighting the proposed building of a nuclear power station at Druridge Bay, a designated heritage coast and site of special scientific interest.

Through *Can't Beat It Alone*, the CA unit contributed to a network that linked different agitational, grass roots groups. As with the Cuban revolutionaries, our interest was not just with making the film but instigating discussion and political action. Here, video was vitally important as a technology in increasing the speed with which we could respond to a situation, create a programme and distribute the material. *Can't Beat It Alone* thus exposed and involved a wider and more diverse group of people to the material. Furthermore, it was not only a call for a united, popular response to an issue but it also set out to counter the 'divide and rule' political strategies of the establishment. We saw these strategies as an attempt to keep the population in a state of economic struggle and survival, effectively depleting their energy to resist by spreading fear and inflaming prejudice through mainstream media.

Further, it was important that instead of the working class being depicted as passive and having things done *to them* (as in the mainstream media), working-class community audiences could perceive that other people were similarly affected by the issues. Far from being passive, *Can't Beat It Alone* demonstrated that the grass roots working-class community was clear on the issues and had strategies to fight the nuclear industry threatening to destroy its environment, health and community. Those who feel alienated and disenfranchised from political discourse often respond by saying such things as "I'm not political, I don't understand politics, politicians are all the same, they can't be trusted, there's no point." To counter such responses, *Can't Beat It Alone* demonstrated that the issues communities experience in their everyday, domestic and working lives *are* political. It insists that communities are involved *whether they liked it or not*. One of the key aims here was to get across the idea that people (beyond just *their* family and *their* community) were affected by these issues and, as such, needed to join together to lend weight to the opposition. For me, this was a pivotal moment in my career. Afterwards, in 1987, I left Amber to work at the North East Media Training Centre[23] (NEMTC), teaching the next generation of filmmakers much that I had learned by this time. Meanwhile, I also worked as a freelance sound recordist[24] on Channel 4's landmark series *Out on Tuesday.*[25] Working simultaneously as a teacher and independent filmmaker gave me the chance to explore, adopt and advocate for my own unique set of working practices, ones that closely reflected my personal, political and philosophical values and beliefs.

---

[23] In 1986 I was elected Amber's representative on the training sub-committee of the North East Media Development Council. The North East Workshops were successful in raising £3 million of industrial development monies from the EEC to build a facilities house and training centre. In 1987 I took up the post of tutor in Sound, Editing and Industrial Contexts at the North East Media Training Centre, to train the next generation of independent film makers and build the workshop sector. See Julian Petley's article *Declaration of Independence*(1988:25).

[24] I was recently interviewed for *A History of Women in British Film and Television,* an AHRC funded research project. This research project will be published in 2020, *Female Technicians: Women, Work and the British Film Industry, 1933-1989.* Illinois: University of Illinois Press. The complete interviews of women who have contributed to cultural production in British film and television will be available at Learningonscreen.ac.uk/womenswork

[25] *Out on Tuesday/Out* (1989-94) was Channel 4's first attempt to create a series that catered for a LGB audience (The T of LGBT only started to be used in the late 1990's). See http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1296872/index.html for more details). *Rosebud* is one of the programmes I worked on as a freelance sound recordist. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMfymFt0DgI.

Importantly, the airing of CBIA was possible because the CA Unit was quick to react to the window of opportunity that opened when Channel 4 (C4) was launched in 1982. Margaret Thatcher's government saw C4 as a vehicle for breaking the 'restrictive practices' that they saw as characteristic of the independent television industry (ITV), interpreting C4's remit to produce innovative, experimental programming as a freedom-enhancing process. CBIA, however, was perhaps not the kind of programme the Tories had in mind for the new channel. Jeremy Isaacs (founding Chief Executive of C4) recalls an "absolute run-in" with government minister Norman Tebbitt shortly after C4 went live, who told him:

> "You've got it completely wrong. When the Act said 'cater for interests not catered for by ITV…', we didn't mean you put on left-wingers, or put on homosexuals, or put on trade unions, or put on any of those things. What you should be doing are programmes for yachtsmen and golfers." (Keighron, 1990: 14)

The launch of Channel 4, however, had contradictory influences on my work as a filmmaker. The fourth channel heralded the freelance industry the Tories wanted: that is, free of closed shops, a predominance of in-house productions and an advertising monopoly. The profound changes that followed in the industry irreparably damaged the Workshop Movement and led to my move to the NEMTC. For the following 11 years (1989 – 1999), I continued to work as a freelance sound recordist for numerous television programmes and feature-length dramas.

2.6 Palestine – *Collected Stories from Palestine* (2005)

As a student, I produced (along with four other people), an hour-long documentary film *Yasir Arafat* (1979), which analysed why the West represents Palestinians as terrorists. This film was informed by the Glasgow Media Group's work *Bad News* (1976), as well as post-colonial writers like Franz Fanon (1961) and the revolutionary manifesto *Toward a Third Cinema* (Solanas and Gentino, 1969). As such, it used a Marxist, Neo-Colonial perspective to counter the mainstream media practice of reporting the conflict from the Israeli perspective, omitting its historical context (Philo and Berry, 2004 and 2009; Drainville and Saeed, 2013). This film

project marks my longstanding concern for Palestine and its disenfranchised population. However, it wasn't until 1999 that I was able to visit the territory and meet the people there.

In 1999, I obtained funding from the British Council to visit the West Bank, Palestinian Territories with a colleague Ken Scorfield to support college lecturers in teaching media production. Across the road from the college was the Al Aroub refugee camp, established after Al Nakba (1948) to accommodate Palestinian refugees who fled or were expelled by the Israelis during the 1948 Palestine War. This was to be the beginning of an abiding relationship with the people of the area. The children of the camp, like children everywhere, were fascinated by our presence, showing us how to eat prickly pear, impressing us with their English and sadly showing us their wounds. It was a moving experience to be taken into the women's homes and hear of the provocative insurgences of the Israeli army into the camp. The women told us how their children had been incarcerated indefinitely without trial, how their water supply had been cut off by occupying forces during the hottest days of summer, of the dynamiting of Palestinian homes and vineyards by settlers and the humiliating treatment they received at Israeli checkpoints.

Throughout this visit, I took photographs and, on my return to the UK, I included these and other memorabilia the women had given me in a number of multimedia/ceramic exhibitions (Appendix 6a). When I returned to Palestine in 2005, I took with me the same photographs to look for the people who I had met previously, this time with an all-female crew of both westerners and Palestinians. However, it soon became evident that their situation had got much worse than in the late 1990s. On this occasion, I had to adapt my planned shooting schedule to take into account the building of 'The Wall' by the Israelis, which further sequestered Palestinian land and placed even greater restrictions on the Palestinian people.

In my co-written essay (with Amir Saeed) 'A Right to Exist – A Palestinian Speaks' (Output 6), which was published in *Feminist Media Studies* in 2013, I explain the motivation for *Collected Short Stories from Palestine* (Appendix 6) (Drainville and

Saeed, 2013: 830-839). Here, I describe how my collection of short films made in Palestine in 2005 represented the culmination of my longstanding efforts to use film to bear witness to and enable access to voice for the people of Palestine, inspired in part by the work of Vietnamese filmmaker, composer, writer and educator Trinh T. Minh-ha (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1991).

First, I felt compelled to show the story of the people of Al Aroub refugee camp wherever I could and to whoever would listen in order to support international solidarity. Second, the films set out to counter the barrage of pro-Israeli representation in British media, as I have explained in my essay for *Feminist Media Studies*:

> We (The West) see the Palestinians routinely as suicide bombers, angry stone throwing youths, inconsolable mothers crying over the body of their dead child, or chanting crowds carrying a martyr's corpse above the heads of packed, jostling throngs of fervent, crazed Arab men. The majority of these images are hand held, each shot very rarely lasting longer than two seconds. News stories are short, isolated and devoid of historical context. What this method of filming produces is a dramatisation of content that encourages ritualised and unthinking responses from audiences. (Drainville and Saeed, 2013: 833)

Collected Stories from Palestine used a feminist-informed methodology to focus on the lived experience of ordinary everyday lives, under the extraordinary circumstances of the Israeli occupation, such as those of Fatiha. Figure 2, a still from the film, shows an image rarely seen in news footage of Palestine. Here, 'Fatiha's' expressive hands and smiling face reveal her resilience (along with her eagerness to participate in the film and have her say) after all the many hardships and indignities that she had endured.

Figure 2: *Collected Stories from Palestine* (2005): An interview with Fatiha

Such a focus was adopted as a point of connection for western audiences, contrary to mainstream representations of Palestinian people. As I wrote in 'The Right to Exist – A Palestinian Speaks':

> Our footage deliberately attempts to look at daily rituals that communities elsewhere in the world would recognise and understand in a very practical way to encourage empathy and understanding. A study of representations of Palestinian children similarly recommended their portrayal "as children first", engaged in everyday activities, to counteract their routine stereotyping as victims or perpetrators of violence… (Drainville and Saeed, 2013; 832)

Figure 3, another still from one of my Palestinian short films, reveals a group of Palestinian boys hanging out beside 'The Wall' and making this unwelcome obstruction their own by using graffiti to express their thoughts and feelings in ways very similar to youths in the West.[26]

---

[26] The 'Israeli Wall,' 'Apartheid Wall' or 'West Bank Barrier' is an 708 km (440mi) long x 8 metre high (25ft) concrete wall dividing the Palestinian territories from Israel. It has been notionally built along the 'Green Line', otherwise known as the 1949 Armistice Border, which was the demarcation line set out in agreements between the Israeli army and those of its neighbours Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. However, the actual line traced by The Wall is more than double the length of the originally negotiated Green Line, with 15% running along it or in Israel, while the remaining 85% cuts as much as 18 kilometres (11 miles) deep in places into the West Bank, isolating about 9% of it. This leaves an estimated 25,000 Palestinians separated from their homeland.

Figure 3: *Collected Stories from Palestine*: Boys at 'The Wall'

My deliberate choices of how to film the women were based on *respect* for their lives and voices, and my awareness of the *misrepresentations* in the media of the contemporary Palestinian/Israeli conflict. A couple of paragraphs from my published article illustrate the point:

> Wrapped up in the "ordinary and everyday" is the cultural and political history of their lives and being able to continue this way of life becomes even more fundamental and essential. For the western audience it creates a point of reference and connection: through these activities they can witness the similarities and differences to their own daily existence. (Drainville and Saeed, 2013: 837)

> Hence, documenting the ordinary and the everyday over a protracted period of time, with the camera set on a tripod and shots held for a very long time is a key element of the approach... We chose this method of filming to deliberately challenge the drama of conventional news footage." (Drainville and Saeed, 2013: 834)

In the majority of the completed films included in the compilation, the contributors are held in the frame throughout the interview and are not edited. Consequently, they are seen in repose while the Palestinian translator (off camera) explains what

has been said. This is where working within a liminal space works. My assumption here is that there are specific audiences that will want to see this full sequence but the restraints of time and entertainment value ordinarily prevent mainstream TV from showing this. One viewer who witnessed this unconventional technique remarked that never moving away from this frame gave a real, visceral experience of containment and frustration because she was not able to view what was outside the image presented. Although I produced the short trigger tape *Kite* to promote audience questions in post screening discussions, for the majority of the footage the stories were left more or less uncut and were allowed to play out much as they were filmed. My decision to focus attention on the unedited voice when recording the women's daily activities was taken out of high regard for the contributor. Not dubbing the contributor's voice with that of the translator was a purposeful choice, a key developing principle in my praxis, as all too often we can see cases where interviewees in 'other' cultures are being misrepresented by the imposition of a translator's voice. Betraying 'voice' in this way can be seen as an example of colonial appropriation of 'the other'. [27]

Many of the discoveries and alternative methodologies that I have developed in my filmmaking practice over the years retain their distinctiveness and originality when compared to mainstream mass media. This is certainly the case when my footage of Palestinian refugees is compared to contemporary television news footage. There is a current trend for the depiction of refugees to be predicated on their plight and the drama of their escape stories, to elicit empathy from the viewing public for laudable reasons of fund raising. But, while this might portray them as courageous and resilient, that person is so much more than a dramatic story poignantly told, mediated for a western audience. In many cases, the 'voice' and 'quest' of the presenter has become the primary interest of numerous mainstream TV documentaries, so that the voices of those interviewed, although they appear in the frame, are not given the primary space in order to fully command the audience's attention. Cut and paste

---

[27] An example where interviewees in 'other' cultures are being misrepresented by the imposition of an alien translator's voice can be seen in Saira Shah's *Unholy War* (2001) where the teacher of the girls gives what is clearly an inspiring and uplifting, optimistic account of her work against all odds, but where the English translator uses downbeat, mournful tones that completely betray the positivity and determination of the teacher's delivery. Betraying 'voice' in this way is a representative case of colonial appropriation of 'the other'.

journalism and the more conventional method of research of mainstream documentary producers and directors of film and TV content, with restrictive budgets and schedules, increases the chances of the filmmakers arriving with a pre-conceived idea based on second-hand information and potentially coloured by prejudice, which can ultimately result in the voice of the group being eclipsed by that of the film-maker.

This circumstance is aptly described by James Clifford, who notes that when anthropologists write about the cultures and people they are researching, they do so within their own cultural codes and conventions that inherently exist in their discipline, institutions and wider society (1986: 10). Thus 'Cultural Translation' must consider the difference between the white, middle class academic culture and that of their subject, and not just the difference in language.

The media habit of over-focussing on the tragic situation of refugees and asylum seekers serves to fix them in a role where their personality, their desires and their aspirations are negated. Their possibility of moving forward in their lives, to build, grow, and thrive is hampered by their relentless portrayal as victim. This paradox is described by Nawal El Saadawi (an Egyptian feminist activist and writer) on her experience as a visiting academic in the United States. She perceived that her voice was not audible to the media because she spoke from a different place and experience, that of an Arab-African perspective. In spite of the discourse relating to diversity, difference, inter-racial respect and multiculturalism, her identity continues to be misunderstood and distorted by others, and there is no acknowledgement in the media, or even academia, of who she really is (Saadawi, 1997:125-6).

As a result of my awareness of the possibility of warping or undermining the voice of the contributor simply by the choice of filming style, I consciously used techniques that starkly contrasted to that of the classic news bulletin style (i.e., rapid, short, extreme, intense and dramatic). Instead, I set the camera on a tripod and filmed long, slow sequences where not much apparently happened, where the background sounds of everyday life could breathe, and the participants could get on with whatever they were doing, silently, or telling stories about their lives and their lived experiences.

When I made my second visit to Palestine in 2005, I was talking to a man who was the son of one of the woman I had filmed sewing. He was very articulate, and openly critical of me and my position there. During our conversation, it became clear that I had limited knowledge of the Balfour Declaration and Britain's complicity in the decision to create the State of Israel. He told me I was ignorant, implying that I was arrogant to assume I could talk with and film the Palestinian community without fully understanding the context of my own country's historical colonialism of which I was a part[28]. This intervention raised significant questions about anyone's ability to step out of their own historical conditioning and the absences/distortions embedded in that conditioning. Although I was aware of the *recent* history of the conflict and its misrepresentation, I was not fully cognisant of Britain's historical colonial responsibilities for it. Interestingly, Greg Philo and Mike Berry make reference to this in their book *Bad News from Israel,* (2004) when they ask contemporary audiences what they know about the conflict, their responses do not date further back than 1948. Clearly there is an absence, both in the media and historical education, in their failure to inform on/around our colonial responsibilities and arrogances.

This intervention made me reflect on my own context and distance from the experiences of those I was filming, i.e. their position as an oppressed minority and mine as a white, British and, in comparison, being relatively affluent. It is important to stress here that my personal/political approach (i.e., relating to and with the people I film, learning as much as I can about their contemporary positioning, listening as actively and attentively as possible) is a practice that *does* earn respect and cuts across some of these divides, enabling the contributors to share their experiences.

I realised that the women I had been filming and talking with also had this understanding of my context but had generously laid this aside in order to allow me to bear witness to their stories, their plight and their oppression. They accepted me (in all my ignorance) 'to be trusted' with the material and information that they freely gave, in spite of this contextual schism. I felt acutely humbled by this revelation and

---

[28] https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/james-renton/forgotten-lessons-palestine-and-british-empire (assessed 12.02.2018)

recognised that they were empowering me as much as I was empowering them, by bearing witness and taking their stories to a western audience.

I now have a much clearer understanding of my own position of privilege. Even though I very much identify as working class, I acknowledge that I am educated, which contributes to a different perspective. I am also, in comparison to many, safe, solvent, valued and autonomous in my life choices, which is a very privileged place to be. All of these things contribute to my own 'unconscious bias' and understanding both my other-ness, and potentially my un-knowingness of their experience, is vital to be aware of when working with groups. I have to (and, need to) be honest, recognising and accepting that *my* context is tangibly different to that of the groups I am working with, regardless of how empathetic and sensitive I am when working with them.

The alternative approach to recording the lives of Palestinians would be to allow only Palestinian documentary-makers to make their own accounts, which some do indeed argue, but to me this is unduly restrictive and dis-abling of cross-cultural understanding. This may be regarded by some as intervening in territory I know little about but my view is that, provided I acknowledge my 'outsideness' with humility and without arrogance, I can still see problems with the way Palestinians are represented and received in the West, that I should be able to articulate in public.
When I returned to film in Palestine in 2005, I had a very clear idea of the intended audience back in the UK and, consequently, this gave me a distinct framework to work within. I wanted to show the work to an equivalent western female audience similarly made up of daughters, sisters, mothers, aunts and grandmothers, who I hoped would identify with the parallel activities as carried out by their Palestinian counterparts, and thus be able to empathise with their daily struggle involved in simply taking their children to school, getting water, being able to rely on having electricity that day, or being able to get to a hospital to give birth.

In order to continue the dialogue with my Palestinian contributors, I set up a private Vimeo page in 2014 that the participants could access and thus provide feedback on

the material. As a group, we (my contributors, participants and I) use this, plus messenger and emails to discuss the work. I have also organised, through the University of Sunderland, visits to the UK for the participants to continue the research. This enables a continuing and continual participatory reflexive process about the work and the ways it has, and can thus be, disseminated. By enabling the discussion to continue beyond the production and initial exhibition of the films, my intention was to help my participants remain hopeful for their future, bearing in mind Nawal El Saadawi's words:

> we cannot be dissidents without hope. We cannot be dissidents from a distance or if we are not in the struggle. When we struggle we do not lose hope. (1997: 163)

To summarise, my intention in producing and exhibiting *Collected Stories from Palestine* in a variety of mediums, has been to bear witness, enable access to voice and thus promote international solidarity by explaining the Palestinian situation to a UK audience. In terms of praxis, a focus on the 'ordinary and the everyday' aspects of Palestinian life was adopted for three reasons. Firstly, as a point of connection for a western audience. Secondly, to illustrate that the daily lives of Palestinians are not played out only in opposition to the Israeli regime; and, thirdly, to illustrate that the Palestinians still manage to maintain their family, domestic life and cultural existence in spite of living in an extremely restricted environment, controlled by the Israeli authority. Equally important was the format and style chosen for shooting and editing, which worked to counter mainstream methods of depicting Palestinians. Crucially, becoming involved with the people I'm working with, it is important to be mindful of 'what I don't know', which underpins my continual reflexive praxis.

2.7 Woodbine Place (Trade Films/Channel 4, 1987)

Back in the summer of 1987, I worked alongside Wendy McEvoy of Siren Films to produce *Woodbine Place*. This was the first time I had worked on a film that was exclusively about children and their lives. Importantly, *Woodbine Place* is a film in which children are respected and allowed voice. Working on this short documentary

confirmed my understanding that, when left to their own devices, children can articulate their world very effectively. As adults, we seldom have an opportunity (or take the opportunity) to listen to and look at children, doing so without judging or controlling them, and to talk with children rather than *at* them. When the film was reviewed in *Time Out* magazine, the reviewer not only noted the observational qualities of this documentary but also how it portrayed the more complex and troubling aspects of childhood and children's relationships with each other (Figure 3). Yet what this review failed to convey was our aim and the efforts we took to capture unique insights into the world of children, which we were only able to capture by filming over such a long period that the children largely forgot that they were being filmed and were thus enabled to be themselves.

Woodbine place is a quiet cul-de-sac in a north-east town with back to back gardens and a tight little community of free roaming pets and children. Filmed over six weeks of the summer holidays, this is a kind of 'Nature Watch' of children at play- each little participant is equipped with a microphone and the camera never rises above the eye level of a six-year-old. Dogs suddenly loom large and adults are just passing legs. In the course of the film the word 'play' becomes increasingly inappropriate to describe what the children do together. Fights and arguments reveal a child's struggle to construct moral guidelines: how far should they go – the little faces are twisted in confusion. In interviews the children are lucid and perceptive about what their rituals mean: 'We're still friends when we fight', says a three year old about her best friend. "It's just that one of us wants something.' But they behave very differently with each other than they do with their adult interviewer. Above all the film challenges the fondly held ideal that our childhood years are the best of our lives – the world often seems a terrifying and traumatic place through the eyes of these youngsters.

Figure. 4 *Time Out* review of *Woodbine Place* .[29]

---

[29] See https://www.sirenfilms.co.uk/time-out/ (Accessed: 04.12.2017)

Woodbine Place, first aired on Channel 4 in 1987, was made under the auspices of the Workshop Declaration through Trade Films. Working on this film marked a critical moment in the development of my own praxis. Not only did it mark my permanent return to working in the North East of England after time spent in London but, more importantly, it acquainted me with the complexities and joys of enabling the voices of children through film. Something, I had been mulling over since *Seacoal* in terms of the absence of the children's voice in the films narrative: How do you get into a child's world without being adult-ist and condescending?

2.8 RuMAD[2] (Are You Making A Difference Too?) (2013)

In 2013, I worked alongside Helen Walker[30] who was given permission to develop the original RuMAD process by the Australian Youth Foundation for one year. The stages of the process that Helen developed were based on a coaching model, to promote aspiration, resilience and optimism in school pupils. This work is discussed in my conference paper '*RuMAD[2]*: *A Methodology for Participant Led Visual Storytelling in a Therapeutic Environment*, given at the 26th International Society of Animation Studies in Toronto, Canada in 2014, which I have included as Output 7 (and which is further discussed in the next chapter).

During the process of project managing, directing and producing a wide variety of teaching materials (Appendix 7) to be distributed throughout schools in the North East, I became fascinated by this child-led process used to enable engagement in order to make a difference both for themselves and others. With this knowledge, I began to focus my research on developing a model that would work effectively in filmmaking, as a collaborative and creative process to enable children's voice as film-makers with the potential that the process itself would yield benefits for the participants. I perceived that this would be a child-led process that engenders optimism, aspiration and resilience in the children involved.

---

[30] *The Musician's Grow Book* (Walker 2016)

The principal belief here is that *Making a Difference* for ourselves and others makes us feel valuable and, consequently, increases our sense of self-worth. The model RuMAD[2] (Are You Making A Difference Too?) is based on coaching systems, that use listening and responding to language patterns, while encouraging the participant to find answers from within themselves, and the RuMAD[2] strategies can be employed to assist this. This facilitates the participant to discover answers and new ways of being, based on their values, preferences and unique perspectives. This project drew on neurolinguistic programming (NLP) techniques and other language research[31] to build on the work of David Zyngier, co-founder of *ruMAD (Are You Making A Difference)*, which was used in over 1000 Australian schools (Zyngier & Bruner, 2002; also Zyngier, 2012). The original ruMAD educational model is an inspirational tool that is value-focused, student-led, and initiated by the individual's own identified values and visions. It gives young people the tools to augment their autonomy in their life-choices and act on the things that they define as important for themselves. By doing so, they become empowered to make a difference (to their wider community) by learning and working together. (Westheimer and Kahne, in Zyngier, 2011: 144-145)

I later used the RuMAD[2] process as part of a methodology for animation therapy (see 2.10 MWL[2)]). Benefitting from the anonymity that the animation film affords, the intention in applying the RuMAD[2] process was to create a supportive environment where children are enabled to voice their experience of loss through storytelling. Focusing on building aspiration, optimism, and resilience, the RuMAD[2] tool was used to reach children with complex behavioural patterns and learning difficulties. It enabled the facilitator to use a particular language and behaviour to inspire a positive response from each participant.

Inspired by a practical and successful model for child-led learning, I therefore began to focus my research on developing tools that would work effectively in filmmaking as a collaborative and creative process to enable children's voice as filmmakers with the potential that the process itself would yield benefits for the participants. I undertook practical training courses in coaching, language and

---

[31] See (Charvet, 1997: 13-17).

personal psychotherapy to support my skills as a facilitator. Particular interests have been positive psychology (Seligman, 2000), listening skills and language work of Shelle Rose Charvet (Charvet, 1997), neuroplasticity (Merzenich, 2013; Wax, 2014) and PTSD (Bessel Van Der Kolk, 2014).

A key point from a personal perspective is that this project taught me that filmmaking for children is not just a technical, storytelling device but rather it has the potential to work as a beneficial tool that can enable access to voice. The project thus inspired a shift in my research agenda (section 2. 9).

2.9 Wiki Wonderland

In 2010, I became involved in a series of projects as Associate Producer for Bridge and Tunnel Productions in Newcastle, one of which involved working with a group of young adult asylum seekers on a workshop-based project entitled 'Wiki Wonderland' (2010). For this project, participants used their experiences to create and film a collective script compiling each scene in an online wiki in the form of a comic-book. This material formed an early stage of script development for the feature length drama *I am Nasrine* (Gharavi, 2012).[32] In terms of the development of my own praxis, I observed that the workshops and resulting wiki were other potential devices to enable authentic voice in film.

During this project, finding the means to empower individuals who were not confident to speak because of socially restrictive constructs became much more salient for me. I found myself particularly interested to work with young people who

---

[32] For me, this was a difficult episode in my career. As O'Brien outlines in her paper, women within the Film and TV industry pursuing success in the Neo-Liberal processes of masculinist film culture can adopt hierarchical practices and restrictive behaviour to achieve their goals. Of particular concern, and an illustration of Anne O'Brien's premise, is that women are all too frequently denied credit for work undertaken. I was aware of volunteers who had contributed a considerable amount of their time and creative input to a project were subsequently absented from any acknowledgement, with the film credit being awarded to an incoming volunteer towards the end of the production. For me, this was a return to a competitive hierarchical working practice that was out of step with my collaborative, collective approach, and confirmed my resolve, not only to avoid these at all costs in future, but also to ensure that my own on-going working practice was genuinely participatory, ethical and fair.

had not yet found ways of expressing their experiences, either because they didn't think they had a right to or because they didn't know how to articulate them. I felt that here the use of 'active listening' was key .[33] However, to be effective at all in active listening, one must have a sincere interest in the speaker, as outlined here by Rogers and Farson in 1957:

> Developing an attitude of sincere interest in the speaker is thus no easy task. It can be developed only by being willing to risk seeing the world through the speaker's point of view. If we have a number of such experiences, however, they will shape an attitude which will allow us to be truly genuine in our interest in the speaker. (Rogers and Farson, 1957/2015: 15)

Whilst doing this work, I also became aware that although people have stories within them, they may not find it easy to tell them and, indeed, may well not want to tell them. I learnt that it was painful and exhausting for some refugees to retell their escape stories, a finding confirmed in Van Der Kolk's work on post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):

> It is hard enough for the observers to bear witness to the pain. Is it any wonder, then, that the traumatized individuals themselves cannot tolerate remembering it….(Van der Kolk, 2014:12)

2.10 Made With Love Too (MWL[2]) (HEART, 2013)

In 2013, I joined Melanie Hani, founder of HEART (Healing, Education, Animation, Research, Therapy), on a project entitled 'Made With Love Too' (MWL[2]). I joined the board of HEART in that year and became Director of HEART North East in 2015.

The MWL[2] project utilised the RuMAD[2] model (as discussed above), alongside the 'Good Heart Model' (GHM) devised by Melanie Hani. More specifically, it provided a way of enabling participants (here, children with behavioural and learning differences who had been recently bereaved) to focus on a time-based activity that created the

---

[33] A communication technique used in counselling, training and conflict resolution developed by Carl Rogers and Richard Farson in 1957

space for them to make choices and define for themselves how to move forward from their current place. This was the first time that the RuMAD[2] model had been applied as a coaching strategy in an animation context, one that focused on the moment that the child 'jumps out of the puddle of grief' (Adams, 2016:1) in order to enable them to talk about what was important to them.[34] This involves characterising their own goals and aspirations rather than being predominantly defined by their grief or, alternatively, an adult's notion of how they should grieve. Crucially, it allows the child to capitalise on these moments and provides an opportunity for them to look towards goal-setting and their own future. They gain a sense of their own agency and what they could do to build on that, thus widening the window of tolerance. This, in turn, has the potential to increase their resilience when they find themselves back 'in the puddle of grief'. When they are involved in defining what is important *to them,* this may, for some at least, be a cathartic or transformative experience.

Figure 5: A still from Made With Love Too (MWL[2]) bereavement project

---

[34] This is an expression used to explain how children can experience grief.
http://childbereavementuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/How-Children-and-Young-People-Grieve.pdf

As we are not trained psychotherapists, we are aware of the need for a 'Circle of Support'. In this instance, the circle was made up of parents or guardians of the children, a bereavement counsellor from St Benedict's Hospice and a counsellor from Barnados. These were on hand to provide support and professional expertise if and when it was needed. Crucially, they remained outside of the room where the activities were taking place, so that the children were free to engage and express themselves without referring to, or being mindful of, their support group.

2.11 *Cultural Rivers* (2015):

The title of this pilot project was offered by John Tyrell, a member of HEART North East, the metaphor of cultural rivers successfully captures the cross cultural blending of experiences we witnessed during this project and wish to promote through the findings of the project.

The presentation discussed two techniques applied alongside the GHM. These were Axiom Documentary, (a process devised and employed by myself) and Static Animation (devised and employed by Hani). Currently, accepted definitions of documentary do not fit the process undertaken in CR, primarily because the debates about fact and truth are defined in adult terms with an adult audience in mind and, secondly, the aim here was to develop aspects of documentary production as a diagnostic stage in a therapeutic/coaching process. The type of equipment provided, the way in which the children used it and the lack of interference, interpretation and interruption by the facilitator, enabled the children to record and construct their reality, their truth. For example, an image that may be seen by an adult as a garden shed was in fact eloquently described as a spaceship by the participant documentary film maker, who went on to develop this narrative by drawing on top of the footage in the Static Animation process.

I coined the term and developed 'Axiom Documentary' as a very particular film practice for a generic purpose; that is, to directly address the relativity of truth in order that the child can articulate their own model of the world free from the imposed or

contextual truth of adults. For the child, the footage is axiomatic in the moment, demonstrating their sensitivity and response to the environment and the temporal landscape they are observing and recording (Appendix 9a). Axiom Documentary provided the raw material for the Static Animation process, where the children are able to animate by drawing on top of their shot and edited material, which builds on and reinforces the previous truth as expressed by the participant.

The broad aim was to develop filmmaking techniques to be used as diagnostic tools to 'pay attention' to issues that may be experienced by school children who are first generational immigrants in the UK. This was an area that Melanie and I knew to be relatively neglected in terms of academic research. In our joint paper, we reflected on this process (Output 8). For example, we discussed how facilitating children in shooting and editing created opportunities for them to make their own choices to define and distil what they felt were the most important elements of the footage to them. The school's agenda was for us to use Axiom Documentary filmmaking and Static Animation as a tool to diagnose English language ability and any behavioural issues. My research element was coaching based, opened ended and located very much in the present and empowering through applying the RuMAD[2] model.

When we met with the group of children two things became quickly apparent: they were from a diverse range of countries (including Syria, Oman, Romania, China and Russia) rather than Poland as we had presumed. We were expressly told by one Syrian mother that she did not want her children to be reminded of, or asked about, their experiences in the country they had just fled. We discovered that even the children with very little English vocabulary were able to articulate their world through film, created sound and animation, and the act of reviewing footage and editing also assisted the children in widening their vocabulary. Interestingly, one child who was assumed to have very little spoken English turned out to be vocally very adept with language in our presence, much to the surprise of his parents and teachers.

Rather than being a therapeutic tool, however, filmmaking here is more closely related to coaching to raise aspiration, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy in the individual. Working in this particular context also led me to further focus on developing my role as facilitator of filmmaking, building coaching, language and

active listening skills. The project was characterised by a need for sensitivity towards the participants' emotional well-being, particularly if they displayed signs of PTSD. This led me to research PTSD[35] and apply concepts such as the 'window of tolerance' in adapting process and technique. Whilst Melanie's GHM model is informed by Rogerian therapy and Ignatious spirituality (2014:330). I am focused on working in the present and goal-setting, with the aim being that by the end of this process the children would move towards 'self-actualisation'[36] by employing communication methods depicting the chosen moment of time or feeling.

The exhibition, in the children's library in Loughborough, was purposefully a child-orientated event, with further arts, craft and animation activities on offer, alongside the exhibited films and framed artwork. This publishing of their material instils value and offers it to a wider audience, which, in turn, increases the significance of the material for the individual who created it.

Figure. 6: A still from *Cultural Rivers: Axiom Documentary.*

2.12 Conclusions

The development of praxis presented in this section has been driven by the question of how to change mainstream media's representation (or, as I see it, mis-

---

[35] See Van der Kolk, 2014: 51-53).
[36] See (Maslow, 1948: 433-436).

representation) and non-representation (rendering invisible) of working-class communities, refugees, women and children. The account of my development of praxis presented in this section has demonstrated that these people are frequently prevented from speaking or being heard. Typically, this is due to unconscious bias or a lack of awareness of privilege on the part of the mainstream filmmaker. Filmmakers rarely see the need to coax or support marginal voices or know how to actively listen to them without filtering their words through the producer's own agenda. Unhappily, these people can be invisible even to independent filmmakers, particularly those intent on expressing their own voice.

Yet the discussion has also demonstrated the potential for the filmmaker to become part of a (revolutionary) struggle, seeing themselves as a worker, with particular skills in media, representation and education. For me, it is imperative that filmmakers keep themselves informed of that struggle and have the ability to be self-aware in order to develop a dynamic dialogue between the medium, the contributors and the audience to enable voice.

This section has sought to demonstrate how I have worked over the years to bring about change to the representation of the working class, refugees, women and children. Initially I tried to do this by adding more films and programmes that represent these communities' identities to mainstream TV output. Secondly, I have tried to get more of these people involved in the practice of making film and video production in terms of narrative, storyline, story-telling and coaching, and ensuring I have the technical skills to achieve this. Thirdly, I have worked to challenge industry structures to achieve a sustainable funding process and egalitarian/participatory working practices. I remain committed to the belief that filmmakers should not only develop technical and storytelling skills but that they must also find ways to listen and communicate well. Without this, the contributor's storyline all too readily becomes subsumed into the filmmaker's own interpretation of a situation. Having your say as a contributor to a film can be an empowering experience, if genuinely and sympathetically heard.

CHAPTER THREE
Submitted Works

I have chosen eight outputs to exemplify key stages in the development of my praxis in enabling access to voice, as summarised in Table 1 in the Appendices. Whereas Chapter 2 examined the role of each output in my developing praxis, this chapter highlights my role in producing the outputs and the difference it made, while considering the impact of each output.

3.1 'Ten Little Bits' (Friggin Little Bits, 2013)

My first output is a music CD of ten selected tracks of original acoustic music, written and performed by the four members of Friggin Little Bits (FLBs) a four-part lesbian acapella group; namely: Maggie Thacker (musical director), Lesley Nicholson, Pat Garrett and myself. Our collaboration began at the end of 1980 when, at an informal gathering, we composed the song 'Shirley'. After this spontaneous gathering we started meeting and writing collectively (e.g. 'My Folks'), although others were written individually (e.g., The Small of Your Back). Thereafter, we began to perform across the UK and in Amsterdam for 12 months and produced a much-bootlegged audiotape '*The Friggin Little Bits Come Together*' (1982). During this time, we played to women-only audiences throughout the country and, in 1982, were filmed performing at the *Spare Rib* 10th Birthday celebrations in Battersea, London.

The FLBs did not just write songs and sing them. On the contrary, we were rather more of a comedic cabaret act, which involved planning, rehearsing and performing the original material. For instance, 'Ho Pet Hinny Hinny' was sung in a round, and had a set of actions to describe what we were singing about, the universal women's experience of 'everyday' sexism. One of the distinct elements that I brought to the group was a maverick humour, which included the creation of stage characters and comic situations, such as parodying a psychologist making sense of lesbianism on a flip chart to illustrate verses in 'The Country Song'. I also played specific pieces on instruments that were needed on occasion to give a particular quality or style to a

song, including the flute, violin and kazoo. In addition to co-writing original material and performing in the band, I also co-recorded and mixed the music for the production of the CD with Maggie Thacker.

The FLB's impact is evidenced, first, by the packed audiences we played to across the country, where women often sang along with the lyrics. The 1980s were an argumentative time. As feminists, we were not only raising awareness of women's and lesbian issues but also defining ourselves in terms of class, race and sexuality, and doing it for *ourselves*. As members of the FLBs, we wanted to lighten the discourse by writing and performing humorous, ironic, satirical material to make one another laugh. It was evident that we were not only original but also that our performances and lyrics struck a chord with audiences in terms of our collective lived experience.

The themes of our songs included the following:
- fear of rejection by family/coming 'out of the closet' in 'My Folks';
- labels applied to us by psychologists concerned with the causes of 'deviant (Lesbian) behaviour' in 'The Country Song';
- feeling swamped by heterosexual society, heterosexism, 'assumed heterosexuality'/ the need to be visible, vocal and acknowledged in the world we lived in in 'Right On';
- working class lesbian life in 'Tracey';
- sexual harassment in 'Ho Pet Hinny Hinny';
- explicit celebration of same- sex love in 'To Janet' and 'The Small of Your Back';
- unrequited love in 'Profound Fruit Song'
- female body image in 'What Shall We Do With Our Bodies Girls?'; and
- lesbian parthenogenesis in 'Cilla Blackwoman.'

There was also debate and internecine disagreement within the lesbian scene of the '80s, which was made up of factions. These included, political lesbians (i.e. women who became lesbians for political reasons), bar dykes, feminist lesbians, socialist lesbians, socialist feminist lesbians, radical lesbian feminist separatists, monogamous non-monogamous lesbians, closet lesbians, lesbians identifying as butch/femme, androgynous lesbians and lipstick lesbians. Our response was to write songs that were

comedic and deprecatory of the lesbian scene. So, for instance, 'Right On' was written as a response to the different contexts of lesbian lives. This was *our* truth but, to our surprise, we were also recognised, appreciated and adopted as a voice for the wider lesbian community. It is for this reason that I have included the album *Ten Little Bits* (2013) as an output here. Although the album was released in 2014, it holds a selection of work that was the culmination of many years of writing and performing songs, dating back as far as 1980. Even after all this time, the work remains pertinent and potent, generating discourse and support. Indeed, our website and Facebook page are currently active sites in terms of commentary by fans. Testifying to the historical significance of our songs The Friggin Little Bits are included in the Heritage Lottery funded Women's Liberation Music[37] touring exhibition (2012), archive website and CD.

Impact is also evidenced by invitations to perform at numerous gigs and events, as well as media coverage. The FLBs performed at 'Pride' events and gave interviews and performed on Pride Radio, an online radio station by and for the LGBT community. In the early '80's the FLB's performed in the lesbian pantomime *Snow White and the 7 Dykes* at the Newcastle Children's Warehouse (where I worked as the resources officer). This event was picked up by the national press, in one paper, we were accused of corrupting the morals of minors under the headline 'Prince Charming? Not in the Lesbian Version.' In response to the fear generated by this line of reporting, we moved the show to the Women's Centre in Pink Lane, Newcastle. LGBT pantomimes are still happening today but now at Live Theatre, Newcastle. When the FLBs performed at *Spare Rib*'s 10th Anniversary event, it was filmed for the landmark Channel 4 11th Hour film *Veronica 4 Rose* (V4R) (Section 2.7). At this time, Channel 4 was the vanguard for under-represented communities, and the film was ground-breaking as a voice for the gay scene. Indeed, V4R, which was intended for schools and general audiences, was deemed quite controversial by the mainstream media. The word 'dyke,' which is widely used in the film, was at the time a derisory label applied to lesbians by the heterosexual/homophobic community. In the '80's, we were consciously reclaiming it to disempower its negative interpretation and,

---

conversely, empower the lesbians who applied it freely and widely to themselves and their community.

Lack of funds forced the group to split in 1981 but the FLBs reformed in 2000 and again in 2012, this time playing to mixed gender audiences. We saw our impact on mixed gender audiences in terms of raising consciousness, which enabled us to challenge sexism, unconscious bias and homophobia in a comical way. In 2013, we produced the *Ten Little Bits* CD, which is distributed by Amazon, iTunes, Spotify and CD Baby. Continuing purchases of CDs, downloads from online music sites, reviews and social media comments all indicate that there is a continuing veracity and social significance to the work (see for example Figure 7).

⭐⭐⭐⭐☆ **Finding the Bits Again**
16 May 2015
Format: MP3 Download

Amazing to hear them again - they were a mainstay of many a political woman's tape deck back in the day! 'Ho Pet HInny' is one of the cleverest, funniest looks at 'everyday sexism' - all in their gorgeous Geordie accents. There are some classic songs missing - the one about PMT and periods was hilarious and included a brilliant spoof of Laurie Anderson's 'Superman' … hope they release the original album at some point!

Figure. 7: Amazon reviewer comments on *Ten Little Bits*

3.2 *Seacoal* (Amber Films, 1985)

Seacoal blends documentary and drama to depict the lives of the seacoaling community at Lynemouth beach, Northumberland. It was the first feature length film produced, written and crewed by Amber Films and one of the first UK films made under the ACTT workshop declaration (section 2.X). My roles in making *Seacoal* encompassed sound recordist, researcher, script developer, assistant editor and working on construction of the storyline in the post-production phase. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 2, my particular influence on the film lay in bringing women's stories to the fore, as well as the inclusion of children in the footage. My arrival at Amber, shortly before Elli Hare (editor of *V4R*), marked a significant shift towards witnessing stories and dramatising situations that the crew was experiencing first-

hand because it was living *within* the community. One reviewer referred to this practice as "[w]inning the trust of people".[38] This shift was experienced and supported by the male members of Amber, but it was the strong female presence at both the heart of the story and within Amber that provided a new dynamic.

The central character in *Seacoal* is Betty, who has escaped a violent husband and formed a relationship with Ray, a seacoaler. Whilst Ray ultimately leaves the community, Betty chooses to remain, gaining confidence through the support of the women of the camp to learn the skills of handling a horse and cart to build a new life for her and her daughter, sifting coal from the surf of the North Sea. In the final scene, Rosie (a seacoaler), says to the character Betty, 'Stand on your own two feet and don't rely on men' in response to Ray abandoning her. This statement was entirely unscripted. Although the women of the seacoaling community would not easily identify themselves as feminists Rosie's reaction to Betty's insecurity, in essence, is a feminist response. Their experience mirrored that of the miners' wives who, formerly unpoliticised, became organised during the strike (section 2.4), (which started during the filming of *Seacoal*) and were central to the survival of their mining communities. Such events and experiences helped define the 'Second Wave' of feminism, where women located their own power and strength, and contributed to the unfolding discourse. Betty (played by Amber Styles) went on to become a significant contributor to Amber's catalogue. Betty's life story is woven into several of Amber's films and she became part of 'Womb with a View.' This was an all-women group formed of Amber members and associated women that collectively generated the early stories for the feature film *Dream On* (1991).

Seacoal's impact is reflected in the unconventional working methods Amber used in its production, which have (in turn) been recognised in the academic literature.[39] The merging of documentary and drama called for new ways to research, develop storylines, tackle restrictive union rules, shoot footage and create narrative through collective discussion in the edit suite, shooting additional scenes when necessary to create a comprehensible story without losing veracity. To document working-class life

---

[38] Andy Lipman, *City Limits*, 3-10th April 1986.
[39] Vail, J. and Hollands, R. (2013), Hollands, R and Vail, J. (2012), Hochscherf, T. and Leggott, J. (2007)

in the North East and the stories of an outsider community in an authentic way, we not only bought a caravan and lived with the community (on and off) over a two-year period but developed scripts from events we witnessed and the stories the community told us, using improvised scenes and dramatised reconstructions.[40] Although the filmmaking process was longer than mainstream productions (the film was three years in the making), ethically and personally it felt better to have had a lasting relationship, rather than to stand outside a community observing and phenomenalising other people's lives. The new working agreements gave us the luxury of spending time in the day-to-day lives of the community while shooting documentary footage and giving space for the actors to gain experience and skills amongst the seacoaling community. The result was an innovative, dynamic, organic process of filmmaking. *Seacoal* is identified as an output because, in this sense, it represents an original contribution to knowledge.

Seacoal's impact and importance is also reflected in its airing on mainstream television (Channel 4, 1986, 2008) and elsewhere, as well as rewards and favourable reviews (Figure 8). For example, Sean Cubitt's review in *City Limits*:

> As haunting visually as it is heroic politically... [*Seacoal*] celebrates more than nostalgia for a lost way of life. Despite the poverty, the weather, the uncertainty of the living, the conspiracies of the dole queue, anti-Romany racism and the fear of the caravan fires and ghosts on the beach, this reconstruction of lives lived takes on epic proportions. Amber have escaped their anthropological style to become something new and startling on the British scene (Cubitt, 1986: 24).

---

[40] For example, the film reflects how the seacoalers' economic survival was dependent on knowing where the best tides would wash up coal, as well as the good will of the man who owned the beach and who bought the seacoal from them. During filming, coal stopped being washed up because of the miners' strike, which represented a real hardship for the seacoalers, reflected in the unfolding story. In response, we integrated Arthur Scargill's speech at the Miner's Weekend School (198X, section 2.X), as recorded by the Current Affairs unit, on a TV in a caravan within the body of the film.

Screened:

TX 'New Fiction' 11th Hour 21 Apr 1986 Ch4

2 screenings at the Metro, London.

San Francisco International Film Festival, 1987

TX More4 Dec 2008 (see also Ch4 press pack, 'Title', date)

Reviews:

Newcastle Chronicle, 27 Feb 1986

Newcastle Journal, 28 Feb 1986

Northern Echo, 28 Feb 1986

City Limits, 14 – 20 Mar and 3-10 Apr 1986

Monthly Film Bulletin, Vol.53 No.628 May 1986

The Times, 21 Apr 1986

Daily Telegraph, 22 Apr 1986

Time Out, 12-18 March 1986

Film Month, Vol. 1 No. 9 Mar 1987 (US)

Awards:

Marks and Spencer Award, Tyneside Film Festival (1985)

European Film Award, Munich (1986)

Figure. 8: Screenings, Reviews and Awards for *Seacoal*

Finally, as always with Amber's projects, there was an interconnectedness of themes through photography, film and video. *Seacoal* was initiated through the relationship that the Side Gallery had with photographer Mik Critchlow, who gained access to the traveller's site at Lynemouth through his cousin Trevor, who was working as a seacoaler. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Foundation, The Amber/Side collection of over 20,000 photographs, 100 films, 10,000 slides is now an online archive available under a creative commons licence. In addition, Amber's films and the photographs of

collective member Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen are considered to be "of outstanding national value and importance to the United Kingdom," according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Memory of the World Register in 2011.

3.3 *News From Durham* (Amber Current Affairs Unit, 1983)
3.4 *Where Are We Going?* (Amber Current Affairs Unit, 1983)

Outputs 3 and 4 consist of two short films made by Amber's Current Affairs Unit. The first of these, *News form Durham*, provides insights into and documents the mindset of the National Union of Miners (NUM) and the issues that led to strike action in 1984. The film was a forerunner of the Independent Film Sector's *Miners' Campaign Tapes* used to generate discussions at meetings. *News from Durham* was deliberately short (12 minutes) to act as a 'trigger tape,' which was originally designed to be used by activists in the miners' lodges to stimulate debate, to raise awareness of the issues behind the strike and later used at fundraising collection points to engage the public in the current issues affecting the miners'. The second film, *Where Are We Going?* is a fuller, more detailed documentary that similarly explores campaign concerns in the build-up to the miners' strike.

My role in producing these two outputs was as co-producer, co-director, sound recordist and co-editor with Rich Grassick. When I left Amber to work at North East Media Training Centre, the unit folded. As Rich Grassick stated in an email to James Leggott (Northumbria University) that after I left this folded because the CA Unit "as a one person unit just wasn't viable."[41]

---

[41] See (Appendix 5a) for a copy of this email.

A particular difference I made to *News From Durham* (NFD) resulted from my specific interest in scratch video.[42] I created a cut montage sequence to Heaven 17's 'Crushed by the Wheels of Industry', which brought a contemporary style to the video material. This was important as these tapes were aimed at young miners new to the industry. This key element was later featured in the Miner's Campaign Tapes, along with excerpts from the Miners' Weekend School.

Evaluating the impact of the CA and its outputs *on their own terms* requires an assessment of whether the films reached their intended audience and proved valuable in terms of increasing the community's participation in the issues at stake. The fact that *News from Durham* and '*Where Are We Going?*' became Amber's contribution to the *Miners' Campaign Tapes* represented a unique interlinking of production work to actively support the miners' struggle, which was highly unlikely to occur between mainstream, individualistic production companies that ring-fence their work by copyright. As such, this is a strong indication that our films, production and distribution methods were successful in reaching a wide audience and raising awareness. There is also evidence that screenings of the Campaign Tapes were successful in raising funds for the strike.[43] Another indication of the impact of the Campaign Tapes was that they won the Grierson Award for Documentary in 1985, even though they were never aired on television.

A further impact of this work was in building trust and connectedness with political activists, which was central to our aims in the CA Unit. *Beyond the Vote* was a CA production aired on Channel 4's *11ᵗʰ Hour* series, examining the relationship between the Labour Party and its voters during the 1984 by-election at Chesterfield. Tony Benn (who was ultimately elected) and his campaigners offered us unrestricted access to the Labour Party's election campaign based on their knowledge of our previous CA

---

[42] Scratch video was a short-lived video art movement that emerged in the early 1980s. Using found footage and fast cutting, often to contemporary music, Scratch video artists created multi-layered visual and audio rhythms with a radical political message. As 'outsider' artists and activists they used the medium directly to critically challenge Broadcast TV and established power structures. I was particularly impressed by the Gorilla Tapes '*Death Valley Days* (1984), '*Lo Pay, No Way!*' (1985).
[43] http://www.lightindustry.org/miners

work at the Durham miners' gala, at the Miners' Weekend School (Durham, 1984) and during the miners' strike more generally. Arguably, the Labour Party rediscovered what could best be described as 'participatory politics' through Tony Benn's 1984 election campaign. This becomes very apparent when reviewing *Beyond the Vote*, which echoes the participatory practice inherent in Amber's own working philosophy. Several individuals from the Chesterfield by-election Women's Labour Group who went on to form a women's action group to support the mining community appear in the Miners Campaign tapes.

3.5 *Can't Beat it Alone* (Amber Current Affairs Unit, 1985)

Output 5, *Can't Beat It Alone* (CBIA), which follows a young North East working-class lesbian, grew out of my connections with the lesbian community and women activists at Greenham common. At the relatively young age of 27, I was invited to address miners at the NUM Weekend School (Durham, 1984) about the peaceful protest tactics used by the Greenham Common women. This was the origin of the concept for *Can't Beat It Alone*. Part of my contribution, therefore, was in driving the main theme of the video, which explores how the Left can establish stronger links between the different campaign strategies. The context was provided by the miners' strike and plans for a nuclear power station at Druridge Bay in Northumberland and a nuclear waste dump at Billingham in Teeside.

I also contributed a specific visual style of filming to the project by, for example, incorporating footage of the band 'The Ground' and the use of television screens to link one sequence to another. The inclusion of the Whittle Women's Support Group grew out of our relationship developed during numerous visits when we helped pack food parcels for the striking miners' families. I was also instrumental in gaining access to film a significant national action at the Greenham common peace camp (i.e., cutting down the Royal Air Force base perimeter fence), due to a long-standing friendship with Trigger and other North East women featured in the tape.

In an analogous argument to that put forward in 3.3 (above), I believe that CBIA was an important film in the context of the CA Unit's objective of filmmaking to empower the labour, nuclear disarmament and environmental campaigns in our own community. The film was important in bringing together the Easington Miners' Support Group, Whittle Women's Support Group, Tyneside CND groups, the Save Druridge Bay Campaign, Billingham Against Nuclear Dumping and the Greenham Common Women. The quality of CBIA and its impact in terms of reaching a broad audience is evidenced by its screening on national television on the 6th May 1985 on Channel 4's *11th Hour* series.[44]

3.6 'A Right to Exist: A Palestinian Speaks' (Drainville and Saeed, 2013) Feminist Media Studies, Vol. 13 No.5: 830-839.

My sixth submitted output is a published journal article co-authored with Amir Saeed (University of Sunderland) entitled 'A Right to Exist: A Palestinian Speaks.'
In 2001, I was appointed Senior Lecturer in Media Production at the University of Sunderland, which marked a shift from industry into teaching and practice-based research. The submission of 3 academic outputs (sections 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8) reflects this career shift.

The article 'A Right to Exist: A Palestinian Speaks' reflects on my *Collected Stories from Palestine* footage discussed in section 2.6; and it is concerned with the central question in the development of my praxis of how to enable access to voice. This includes a consideration of the question of representation and of how production methods can be employed to represent the film's contributors in the most authentic way for a Western audience. Earlier versions of the paper were presented alongside

---

[44] The Commissioning Editor was Alan Fountain. Original footage including Greenham Common and the miners weekend school are available under a creative commons licence at http://www.amber-online.com/collections/cant-beat-alone-pt2-trigger-interview/ and http://www.amber-online.com/collection/miners-weekend-1984/

the original footage at two research conferences, *Sounding Out 3* (2006) and MeCCSA/AMPE (2006), and a University of Sunderland research seminar (2006).

Initially, I was responsible for raising funds for the *Collected Stories from Palestine* project and subsequently produced, directed, sound recorded, edited and distributed the material on which the journal article is based. The paper was then co-authored with Amir Saeed with 70% of the work attributed to myself.

The guest editor, Nahed Eltantawy, in her introduction to the Feminist Media Studies special issue, 'From Veiling To Blogging: Women and Media in the Middle East,' stated that 'A Right To Exist: A Palestinian Speaks' '[d]emonstrates how the documentary is able to challenge mainstream Orientalist discourses and dramatized stereotypes of Palestinian life' (2013: 767). This indicates that I was successful in challenging Western mainstream representation of Palestinian life in terms of both the content and the textual choices made when recording the material. As evidence of further impact, the work was identified by Martijn Van Gils and Malaka Mohammed Shwaik in 2016 for its role in fostering "intercultural empathy" by using film to connect with an international audience to promote empathy with the Palestinian people and their struggle.[45] This citation would seem to affirm another objective behind my production and exhibition of *Collected Stories from Palestine*; that is, to bear witness and enable access to voice, while fostering a connection with Western audience (section 2.6).[46]

As a practice-based researcher at the University of Sunderland, it was also important to me to embed the paper's themes and related work as research–led teaching material into the documentary and experimental film modules I delivered to the students between 2005 and 2017. In order to widen the scope of the audience and the impact of the work, related visual material was also included in '*Glazed Expression*' an annual ceramic exhibition held in Newcastle and Gateshead, including the Cluny Gallery in 2000 and 2001, St Mary's Heritage Centre in 2003, The Shipley Art Gallery in 2004 and the Gallery at Gateshead Central Library in 2017. The material on which the paper is based is also included in the Bridge and Tunnel website.[47]

---

[45] 'Fighting Without Weapons: Palestinian Documentary Films and Acts of Resistance' (2016: 443-464).
[46] Google Scholar indicates 4 further citations.
[47] http://bridgeandtunnelproductions.com/portfolio/kite/ (accessed 12.11.17)

Finally, material from the footage was screened and audio used for radio broadcast as part of AV08 festival.[48]

3.7 'RuMAD[2]: A Methodology for Participant Led Visual Storytelling in a Therapeutic Environment' (Drainville, 2014). Paper presented at the 26th Society for Animation Studies Annual Conference, Toronto. June 16-19th, 2014.

My seventh and eighth outputs (this section and section 3.8) are presentations at academic conferences and these reflect my current practice-based research agenda. 'RuMAD[2]: A Methodology for Participant Led Visual Storytelling in a Therapeutic Environment' introduces the HEART animation project *Made With Love Too* (MWL2). The paper discusses how the project used the RuMAD[2] process (section 2.8) alongside the Good Heart Model (GHM) (section 2.9) in a workshop setting for children with behavioural, educational or emotional differences who had recently lost a significant family member.

As co-researcher (with Melanie Hani) in the project, I wrote and delivered this conference presentation.[49] My particular role in the MWL2 project involved the application of the RuMAD[2] model alongside the GHM.[50] This was the first time that the RuMAD[2] model had been applied as a coaching strategy in an animation context. The paper documents how the project focused on the moment that the child 'jumps out of the puddle of grief' in order to enable them to characterise their own goals and aspirations, rather than being predominantly defined by their grief. I described this pivotal moment of change as 'from mudpies to butterflies,' to reflect a shift of focus in the individual concerned. The paper additionally documents how I project-managed and directed the filming of the process as it was being applied in a Newcastle school to create a teaching pack to support other teachers across the region.

---

[48] AV08 Festival exhibits included an audio production by Andy Cartwright of Soundscape Productions where he used a selection of audio from a soundscape I produced for AV08 called Al Aroub.
[49] Melanie Hani originated GHM and instigated the MWL2 project.
[50] I also acted as facilitator for one of the participants.

My role was to create a user-friendly, accessible brand, while pulling together several different outsourced elements, such as the animation, graphics, website and product design (See Appendix 7).
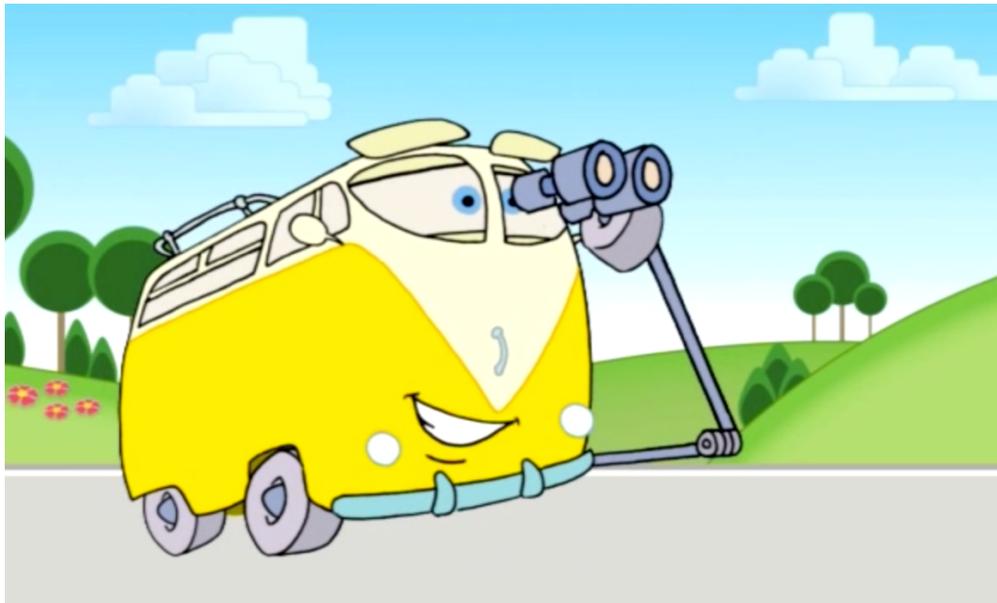

Figure 9: Screen grab from RuMAD[2] Film within the RuMAD[2] teaching pack.

Regarding the impact of the work, the paper evaluates the application of the RuMAD[2] model as part of a novel approach to animation therapy. The results of the project were mixed, and indicated that in this particular context the RuMAD[2] model was not as effective as it had been in other school settings. Positive impacts for the children participating were that the methods developed enabled them to mix with others in similar circumstances. The methodology developed also allowed a safe environment for them to express their thoughts and feelings; for example, providing a vehicle for anonymously expressing messages and reflecting on responses.

This conference paper, my final submitted output, discusses how 'axiom documentary' and 'static animation' techniques were applied for the first time alongside the Good Heart Model (GHM) (section 2.10). The conference presentation evaluates a series of workshops created to define the level of English language ability in children who are first generational migrants in the UK. Melanie Hani and I co-wrote the presentation (as equal contributors) and co-presented the work at the conference. However, the Axiom Documentary element is 100% attributable to myself, while the Static Animation component is 100% attributable to Melanie Hani.

To date, there has been little academic research aimed at the issues surrounding migrant children, as Moskal stated in 2014, 'Existing literature focuses predominantly on young people born to migrant parents in the host country, while the problems of first generation migrant youth have received limited attention' (Moskal, 2014: 279). As a result of this research gap, *Cultural Rivers* was set up as a practical pilot project in a school in Loughborough, where Melanie Hani and myself utilised two new techniques: documentary film-making (Axiom Documentary) and animation (Static Animation) as diagnostic tools uniquely designed to specifically determine language ability. The participating children were aged between 7 and 9 and were attending a mainstream school, coming from a variety of countries including Syria, Oman, Poland, Romania, China and Russia. Our particular approach allowed full participation by them regardless of their mastery of English, as the emphasis was on the visual and the physical, rather than the spoken or written. Here the children found innovative ways of expressing themselves through the activity of filmmaking, without the need for spoken language, which gave them agency and autonomy, rather than it being a passive, received experience.

I was responsible for the 'axiom documentary' element of the project around the theme of territory , which was used to create material that participants could draw on

later in the project to create 'static animation'. I was additionally responsible for sound recording participants' dialogue and assisting them in creating their own sound effects to accompany their filmed material. However, I also supported the children in the editing of their documentary footage, which they went on to use later in the animation part of the process.

The *Cultural Rivers* project was not only successful in defining the children's level of English language but also flagged up emotional and behavioural issues that we were able to relay to the head teacher in order to garner further support for specific individuals. On completion of the workshops, I co-produced the culminating exhibition at Loughborough Children's Library, alongside Melanie Hani, which involved framing, mounting and transporting the participants' work for public display. This exhibition was essentially the celebratory stage of the process, for both the children and parents, who also helped to curate the work on display, a crucial part of their ownership of the project.

The work was further exhibited at Charnwood Museum in Loughborough, where it was attended by a focus group of specialists from social services, the county education department, local police and the Catholic Church. It was also exhibited at Loughborough and Sunderland Universities, specifically to invite wider discourse around not only the benefits of the application of Axiom Documentary and Static Animation in this context but also to generate peer discussion around the possibilities for the models to be applied beneficially in other contexts.

Thinking about the impact of the work, it was evident from the feedback at the celebratory event that the process had been successful both from the perspective of the school, the participants, and their parents, confirming the importance of enabling the children's access to voice, and, reinforcing their sense of place, space and identity. The *Cultural Rivers* paper confirmed the validity of my current research direction to use the activity of documentary filmmaking as participatory active research[51], to beneficially support personal growth and self-efficacy for participants.

---

[51] Participatory action research (PAR) – an approach to research in and by communities that emphasizes participation and action. It seeks to understand the world by trying to change it for the good, particularly those experiencing oppression. PAR emphasizes collective inquiry and

<u>3.9 Conclusion</u>

This chapter has presented a body of work that reflects my personal and professional growth over a period of some 40 years. Committed to collective work practices, I have been concerned with the impact of filmmaking in the context of enabling access to voice, and the possibilities this brings for empowering marginalised groups and communities.   As a young filmmaker, I was involved in pioneering work in campaigning and enabling access to voice via mainstream television for people in the working-class and lesbian communities with which I identify.

Initially, I used film in a traditional way for story-telling purposes, distributing to community-specific audiences (not just broadcast television) to offer a different perspective to support informed debate. Latterly, I have been more concerned with the actual activity and physicality of filmmaking, the production decisions that occur within, on and between the frames, by the individual. I have paid particular attention to how that individual can collaborate with others in the filmmaking process to bring about change in their lives and for the wider community. All of these aspects are empowering and beneficial to enable access to voice. As such, my practice-based research has increasingly become conscious of the potential for filmmaking to be a positive and impactful activity, especially in the lives of refugees, children and, indeed, any individuals who face trauma and life-changing challenges.

experimentation grounded in experience and social history. There are many different traditions of PAR in different cultures and in different languages. (People's Knowledge Editorial Collective 2016:152)

CONCLUSION

Discussion and Conclusion

I have described the 'why' and the 'how' of the particular methods that I have evolved in the earlier sections of this thesis. The critical pathway can be thus followed from the genesis of my research and the impetus behind it, charting the route through to my current (and developing) practice. I have further discussed my specific role in the submitted works, while indicating how they have made a significant and original contribution to knowledge. In this concluding chapter, I draw together the key themes of the thesis, while relating the work that I have carried out in the past to my current (and future) projects.

4.1 From here to uncertainty

I am writing this thesis not at the end of my career but rather as I step into a new liminal space, a space between academia and a community of military veterans from the working-class communities of County Durham. My intention is to work with this group focusing on an activity located very much in the present; in this instance, working with horses, film and animation, as these women and men transition from military to civil life.[52]

The next step in the veterans' project will be to discuss intended audience, which will in turn inform the context of the work. This process has the potential to become 'messy' and may take a 'messy turn' to achieve fruition, a creative journey as described here by Tina Cook:

---

[52] Over 24 hours of footage has been recorded to date on the Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP). A collaborative pilot project with the psychology department at the University of Sunderland (PI: Penny Johnson) The next stage, specifically a HEART NE project, with myself as PI, will focus on the veterans working with this footage, using animation and editing techniques and is at funding application stage.

> [t]he purpose of mess is to facilitate a turn towards new constructions of knowing that lead to transformation in practice (an action turn). Engaging in action research, research that can disturb both individual and communally held notions of knowledge for practice, will be messy. Investigations into the 'messy area', the interface between the known and the nearly known, between knowledge-in-use and tacit knowledge as yet to be useful, reveal the 'messy area' as a vital element for seeing, disrupting, analysing, learning, knowing and changing. It is the place where long-held views shaped by professional knowledge, practical judgement, experience and intuition are seen through other lenses. It is here that reframing takes place and new knowing, that has both theoretical and practical significance, arises: a 'messy turn' takes place (Cook, 2009:1).

As my praxis has developed, many 'messy areas' have occurred, ones that have necessitated courage and openness on my part as a facilitator. At times, for instance, the group I am working with has experienced an underlying feeling of uncertainty and insecurity when not bound by a defined framework and, consequently, the group has denied its own agency and looked to the facilitator to 'tidy the mess'. At this point, there is an onus on the facilitator to enable both the participants and themselves to continue to find the way forward, together. It is important in such instances to recognise that mess and insecurity, although an uncomfortable state, can elicit strength, even as a 'messy turn' takes place. Key stages within the production process can help navigate the 'messy area', where participants are encouraged to build their own success criteria. Looking at what is going well and defining strengths can engender resilience, where the participant draws on their self-defined strengths in order to help make their way forward, for themselves and the group.

The veterans project will ultimately reach a pivotal point in the production cycle with a celebratory exhibition of artwork, along with the screening of their collectively made film, to the audience(s) of their choosing. In so doing, this project (and the framework for the project) relates directly to and builds upon my existing praxis (as discussed in Chapter 2) as informed by my reflexive practice relating to former projects. As such, it has embedded within it three key points that provide a consistent common framework of core principles that has underpinned the production of the submitted outputs. These I would define as follows: Firstly, non-hierarchical ways of working, immersing

myself and sharing experiences with the community I am working alongside and with. Secondly, defining together with the participants (and the 'circle of support' in the case of work with children, see Section 2.10, page 58) the context of the work with the audience in mind from the onset of the project. And, thirdly, adapting and creating filmmaking production processes and models of interaction and communication that enable individuals and groups to have agency to 'voice' their world-view, in their own terms. Ultimately, then, the key components that thread themselves throughout my body of work are essentially collaboration, audience and dialogue (with listening as a major component).

4.2 Collaboration, Audience and Dialogue

The way in which we, the Amber collective, produced *Seacoal* became the blueprint for a methodology that I applied in subsequent projects. The thorough and absolute engagement with the community I work in partnership with has remained crucial to the integrity and authenticity of the resulting work. To this day, it remains important to me that my praxis is not bound by externally dictated requirements for research outcomes (e.g., the Research Excellence Framework as set by the Higher Education Funding Council for England). Rather, my praxis implies an intentionally organic, flexible process, where the outcomes are open-ended and not fixed at the start of the process. As such, it changes with (and accommodates) the needs and desires that are expressed through working together with my collaborators and participants. Being willing and able to alter course in response to (often apparently informal) discussions, remains an essential part of the process. It is also important to me that any research element is done openly with the knowledge and agreement of the participants, rather than existing as an unspoken agenda, and that the activity that the participants are engaged in are driven by curiosity and creativity. The power of the moving image, the affecting qualities of sound, and the collaborative nature of the filmmaking process therefore provide a unique and appropriate vehicle for the further development of my flexible, participant-led and collaborative model of practice.

Anne O'Brien, in her study of female practitioners in the documentary film industry in Ireland, outlines women's experience as both positive and negative engagement in the Neo-Liberal freelance film and TV production world, which promotes masculinist practices as normative. She highlights, for example, the difficulties of achieving funding, where women's approach to narrative, budgets and directing are questioned by the person holding the purse strings. She notes, in addition, the need for women filmmakers to be relentlessly 'likeable' and also that, irrespective of woman's contribution, more often than not the credits for their work are withheld (O'Brien, 2017: 1). Whilst I have experienced all three of these occurrences in my filmmaking career, I have found the negative experiences as constructive as the positive ones in helping to find pathways that fit my values and intentions. In discussing the outputs submitted, my intention has been to demonstrate that it is possible to create a practice that is potent, relevant, ethical and effective, even as women filmmakers are forced to work 'at the edge'. As I have made this journey, taking key elements from one project to the next, I have gained in confidence, expertise and knowledge. Working from a liminal position, I have consistently sought funding from a variety of sources, while living cheaply and pooling my resources with like-minded people. Being optimistic, honest and actively listening and applying techniques to support others to have agency to voice their world with all due credit given, has, for me, established more positive environments to work within.

Contrary to practitioners who might choose to present filmmaking as a technically and intellectually elite process far beyond the understanding of the wider group, I have endeavoured to share skills and knowledge to make the filmmaking process as accessible as possible. This diminishes the power wrought by leadership and instead democratises the process, giving the participants authority. This means that even young children can shoot unaided, freely applying their own choices to be effective agents in their own storytelling. The corollary is a dynamic discourse with all parties engaged in a developing dialogue throughout all of the stages of production. When working with children especially, I reduce my presence and visibility as the facilitator to minimise the child-adult power balance. In this way, they can create their own story confidently and autonomously. This is made possible to considerable extent by

active listening, but also by showing unconditional positive regard and inviting children to define and express what is important to them.[53].

Anne O'Brien found that women adapt and develop skills in dealing with liminality, including co-opting their liminal position to the benefit of their working lives by undoing industry hierarchy and by putting value on care and connection in their working lives (O'Brien, 2017: 11). She notes, in particular, the fundamental role of collaboration for women in documentary production, which both resists the logic of individualism and, more specifically, the masculinist genius/director/auteur tradition that still prevails within the genre as a whole. This offers a different response to the structural inequalities and the Neo-Liberal logics of threat, insecurity or precariousness that are so prevalent in creative industries.

Considering the development of my own skills in collaborative working in light of O'Brien's findings, I am conscious that, when becoming connected with the people I'm working with, I need to remain mindful of what I don't know. Indeed, this approach underpins my continually reflexive practice. It is for this reason that I openly discuss the potential gaps in my knowledge or experience with the participants I'm working with, along with their circle of support and my co-researchers (see Section 2.10, page 58). As facilitator, I actively seek to inform myself of the ethical and moral implications surrounding the specific circumstances relating to the group in question. Reading the work of practitioners and philosophers in the field (such as Friere, El Saadawi and Van der Kolk), my developing praxis continues to be influenced and shaped by the new knowledge (and new technologies) that I encounter and, through this, I go on to other projects with a better understanding.

---

[53] Unconditional positive regard, the acceptance and support of a person regardless of how that person behaves within a therapeutic setting, was developed by the humanist psychologist Carl Rogers. The core hypothesis is that unconditional positive regard facilitates an individual to tap into their own resources for self-understanding, potentially enabling them to alter their behaviour, self-concept and attitudes. Rogers believed that unconditional positive regard is essential for healthy development. (Rogers, 1979: pp. 98-108).

4.3 Rethinking 'audience'

Very early in my music performance and filmmaking practice, I began to understand that defining a specific audience for the self was key in the context of liberating 'voice.' Consequently, the works submitted in this thesis demonstrate an evolution of my engagement with audience. All of my work was made with a given community and with their intended audience in mind. And in many respects, these are their films, not mine. It is crucial for me that the participants' voices are articulated through these films, giving them meaning and significance, whilst moreover, speaking to their wider, chosen community. The resulting films contribute to an archive of richer and more accurate representations of what was once invisible, manipulated, misinterpreted or misrepresented. In each project I undertake, I therefore work backwards from two key questions: 'Who is this film for?' and 'What do we, the participants and myself, want the audience to take away from this?' Establishing the audience from the outset is fundamental to informing all the other decisions made around the 'why' and the 'how' of the production processes.

Yet, my journey as a filmmaker and practice-based researcher has not been one of incrementally acquiring tacit knowledge but rather it has proceeded in fits and starts via a series of successes and failures through which I have made pro-active choices to test, analyse, review and re-work my working practices. Moreover, my particular combination of primary, experiential research, reflective practice and theoretical learning has been at the heart of my developing methodology. Inevitably, then, there is a productive tension between my commitment to films that are interactive with (and speak to) communities and the need to gain funding, along with access to distribution networks from bodies that are not necessarily operating from a similar political perspective (see Section 3.3 and outputs 3 and 4). Indeed, the funding and distribution problems within community arts and video (Section 1.6) prevented wider circulation of some films and, therefore, diminished their impact. Consequently, I have not limited material to mainstream documentary and drama production but rather I have created many different textual forms as demonstrated in the submitted outputs. In this way, the material has been liberated from a particular point in time; one dictated, in other words, by a transmission slot. This has served to extend the life of these films, enabling them to continue to provoke debate across a wider cultural

audience. In other instances these films have promoted discussion and the cross fertilisation of ideas across different interest groups as a means of raising consciousness (e.g., *Can't Beat it Alone* and *Collected Stories from Palestine*).

4.4 The really key point here is voice

I discovered early in my career as a filmmaker that not everyone can tell their own story, at least not easily. Even with space, time and interactive support, storytelling may still prove challenging. Moreover, filmmakers cannot necessarily provide the level of input needed to understand the world from someone else's position, however co-operatively motivated they might be. A pivotal learning point occurred when I recognised that children's voices were absent from *Seacoal* (1985). Thereafter, when I worked on *Woodbine Place* (1987), where the children voices were absolutely central, I developed processes of filmmaking (especially sound recording) informed by research and involvement with psychotherapy, coaching and listening techniques. This, in turn, contributed to further development through a model of practice using different mediums to enable voice working with asylum seekers and children, especially those with specific educational and behavioural differences. Since my experiences with the HEART project, I have become increasingly committed to the idea that the filmmaking process is about more than the filmmaker's (intellectually and emotionally driven) need to make aesthetic decisions in order to create a story. On the contrary, filmmaking can be about the physicality of the activity, the engagement with an environment or event, as well as experimenting with different ways to frame and capture footage.

Similarly, since filming in Palestine, I have become increasingly aware of contact with traumatised individuals. Consequently, when researching deeper the subject of trauma, I have found myself particularly drawn to the work of Bessel van der Kolk (2014), who argues that trauma is not necessarily housed in the thinking/talking part of the brain but, rather, exists as a halted, unresolved physical reaction in the body.[54]

---

[54] If the individual is returned to the difficult experience, they relive it and this can cause either hyper- or hypo- arousal. See Van Der Kolk, 2014.

Although I am not actively seeking to work with people who have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, I am aware that there *may* well be individuals who are potential sufferers within some of the groups I engage with. This is factored into my working methods to accommodate their condition. I believe, for instance, that physical activity is potentially beneficial when working with individuals who have experienced trauma, grief or unresolved difficulties. Certainly, the *Cultural Rivers* (CR) project (2015) confirmed for me the value of working with RuMAD[2] and other coaching models to build on aspiration, optimism and resilience from the present moment in time, rather than relating to historical or past events. Through the CR project, I was alerted to the value of the physical; most notably, the group construction of painted pictures, film and sound as vehicles for non-verbal storytelling, which use tangibly kineasthetic processes to create a new level and quality of interactivity. Although not yet fully defined, I understand that this is where I intend to direct attention in future.

It should be clear by now that I am not a filmmaker who captures a moment or event, or thought, or story for it to be replayed to an audience to entertain or educate. Rather, I have always considered it my responsibility to facilitate a platform that is safe and encouraging, and which enables the contributor's voice as authentically as possible. Being fallible, it seems that I inevitably create 'messy areas', as Tina Cook defines them, where participant and facilitator roles become interchangeable (2009: 1). Yet I regard myself as a conduit for individuals within a group to express their own voice, have their own revelations, make their own discoveries and be able to self-actualise (Maslow, 1943). In addition, the individuals involved in my projects benefit from coming together to mutually create solutions and opportunities for the whole group or community and, thereby, to make a difference within a much wider society.

Working in and from a liminal space places the filmmaker in an unpredictable yet potent position. Existing in the 'space between' may be regarded by some as a negative, nebulous position that is somehow 'less than' or 'outside of' mainstream practice, thus lacking viability and authority. Yet this liminal zone can offer a quiet power to those who can recognise that occupying this position also affords opportunity, free-thinking and the liberty to question and challenge limiting

constructs, thus creating the potential for positive solutions. I would certainly define the compensations of working within a liminal space as being inherently positive in that this space can foster greater empathy between filmmaker and participants, along with a free-thinking approach that can result in agitational films. These may be risky projects but if the filmmaker is allowed to 'fail' (for instance, in aesthetic terms), such work can enable filmmakers to satisfy his or her own values and define their own codes of practice. This is, in essence, a highly reflexive form of film practice that requires the filmmaker to continually reflect upon, evaluate and articulate her or his own praxis, as I have sought to do here.

4.4 Some final thoughts

Throughout my four-decade career, I have been unwavering in my commitment to develop new ways of enabling access to voice for marginalised and under- or mis-represented communities. This has been driven by the desire to challenge mainstream media representations, which all too frequently serve to alienate, ostracise and emphasise the 'other-ness' of marginalised people. Accordingly, this thesis has demonstrated how I have worked within mainstream TV and other forms of distribution and exhibition to contribute to change in wider cultural perception and in the representation of the working class, refugees, women and children. Latterly my work has increasingly involved working with participants to define and articulate their own narrative through a variety of strategies across coaching, filmmaking (including animation) and editing processes.

In addition, I have worked to challenge industry structures and conventions to achieve a sustainable funding model to support the development of egalitarian and participatory working practices. My approach thus exemplifies how women, as Anne O'Brien indicates, adapt and develop strategies to co-opt their liminal position to the benefit of their working lives (2017:10-11). The principles underpinning and uniting all of my work are as follows: (i) non-hierarchical modes of production in my engagement with others in the production process; (ii) full interaction with the

communities I am involved in working alongside as an equal partner; and (iii) the application of complex and multi-layered strategies through the textuality of filmmaking to enable voice to be accurately and authentically articulated rather than for the filmmaker to provide the 'voice on behalf of' the other. Moreover, all of my working practices have been underpinned by an optimism borne out of the energy generated by working with communities that I feel a fundamental affinity with.

In addition, my abiding concern with audience has led me to embrace other forms of publishing and dissemination, so that my work has formed the basis of academic journal articles, conference papers, presentations and exhibitions, in addition to the conventional screening route. All of this has enabled me to bring my work and praxis to a wider range of audiences. As a practice-based researcher, my work has increasingly considered how filmmaking can be utilised as a positive and impactful tool for refugees and children who have experienced life-changing challenges.

I remain committed to the belief that filmmakers whose primary concerns are fairness and equality should not only develop their technical and storytelling abilities but that they must also find ways of listening to their participants, while also creating pertinent, group-appropriate frameworks to enable others to tell their stories and articulate their truths. To this end, I have striven to create methods that I believe are not only vital, purposeful, empowering and meaningful in their own right to the communities I work in partnership with but also have the potential to be built-on, adapted and transferred to other contexts, disciplines and settings. These methods are not only valuable and effective, I would argue, but also dynamic and flexible, as one would expect from anything that has arisen from an essentially liminal space.

In writing an account of my 'lived' experience as a film maker and practice-based researcher, I have become aware of the lack of written experiences of feminist activist/practitioners and, as a consequence, believe I have made a valuable contribution to knowledge by adding to this limited body of work in a number of ways. My contribution speaks to three central aspects of Participant Action Research and takes it further.

1. The first exposes a tension between subject and object, which is expressed in the phenomenalizing of a 'presumed outsider' group, such as the working class, and by that I mean the way that working-class people and/or lesbians or any 'bothered' group are only made aware of their difference by the outsider label, by the actual process of labelling. Yet our world can also be defined by our own narratives. This subject-subject relationship, on the other hand, involves a consciousness of our own voice and the power of the collective, which can bring about change for the individual and also institute policy change for the wider community but, at the same time, we need to remain conscious that we may silence those that have not found their voice yet. Participatory action research offers the opportunity to find methods that effectively support authentic voice to bring about change for participants. Thus, in developing new practices like Axiom Documentary (a term I have coined and defined within this thesis) the participants' world (the world in which they live) was accepted as truth, as they make, edit and draw on the images; in other words, constructing their own truths. It is important for the facilitator to be aware that interference, interpretation and interruption have the potential to close rather than to open doors in this dialogue. The Axiom Documentary process, as an original contribution to knowledge and practice, offers support to practitioners/facilitators who wish to enable access to voice through film making.

2. Secondly, there is also a clear relationship between theory and practice. For me, it is first of all about activism and the visceral experience of being with people, in dialogue, as in the Palestinian project. What theory has done for me is to affirm and confirm my living everyday experience. My practice is mostly to create in the films I make access to that voice and for that voice to be received as authentically as possible. So, in the Collected Stories from Palestine project, the dignity of women expressed through gesture on film whilst in repose, and conversations with family members who are off camera, add authenticity to their experience of living under Israeli occupation.

3. Thirdly, there is the critical recovery of history. Every single film I have made has not only challenged dominant media constructions but also told hidden stories, while enabling a space for people to produce their own narratives.

I believe I have achieved my original objective with the writing of this thesis: that my ongoing commitment to enabling access to voice and original contribution to knowledge, is of educational use to offer strategies and hope to future generations of creative practitioners who seek to be true to the voice of others, outside of mainstream (and limiting) institutional structures.

Bibliography and References

Adams, J. (2016) *How Children and Young People Grieve.* Child Bereavement UK. Version 03 http://childbereavementuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/.pdf (accessed 12/01/2018).

Abdo, N and Lentin, R (2004) *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation.* New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. ISBN 1-57181-459-0.

Amber Film and Photography Collective (2015) *for ever Amber.* Leeds: Pressision.

Amber/Side. (1987) *Amber/Side Catalogue & History Of Work Since 1968*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Amber/Side.

Angelou, M. (1978) *And still I rise.* New York: Random House

Aqtash, Nashat A., Seif,Anna and Seif Ahmed (2004) '*Media Coverage of Palestinian Children and the Intifada'*, Gazette: the International Journal for Communication Studies*, vol. 66, no. 5, pp. 383—409.

Archibald, D. and Miller, M.(2012) Full-spectacle dominance? An analysis of the Israeli state's attempt to control media images of the 2010 Gaza flotilla.
Journal of War & Culture Studies. Vol 5: (2) pp. 189-201 Intellect Ltd.
Doi: 10.1386/jwcs.5.2.189_1 (accessed 30.6.2015).

Armstrong, T. (2011) *The Power of Neurodiversity: Unleashing the Advantages Of Your Differently Wired Brain.* Cambridge MA: Da Capo Press.

Atton, C. (2002) *Alternative Media.* London: Sage.

Atton, C. (2015) *The Routledge companion to Alternative and Community media.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Baehr, H. and Dyer, G. (eds) (1987) *Boxed In: women and television*. London, Pandora.

Ball, V. and Bell, M. (2013) Working Women, Women's Work: Production, History, Gender. *Journal of British Cinema and Television.* 10.3:pp547-562. Edinburgh University Press DOI: 10.3366/jbctv.2013.0157

Bates, L. (2015) *everyday sexism…* London: Simon and Schuster UK.

Beauvoir, S. De (1972): *The second sex.* Harmondsworth: Penguin. (First published in French, 1949, and translated in this form by H. Parshley, for Jonathan Cape, 1953).

Bell, M.(2017) Learning to listen: histories of women's soundwork in the British film industry, *Screen*, Volume 58, Issue 4, 1 December 2017, Pages 437–457 ISSN 1747-5074 0nline.

Betterton, R. (ed) (1987) *Looking On: images of femininity in the visual arts and media*. London, Pandora.

Brydon-Miller, M and Maguire, P. (2009) Participatory action research: contributions to the development of practitioner inquiry in education. *Education Action Research, 17(1)*. Taylor and Francis. pp79-9 (accessed 4/12/18).

Chanan, M. (1985) *The Cuban Image.* London: BFI Publishing.

Chanan, M. (1997) The Changing Geography Of Third Cinema, *Screen Special Latin American Issue Volume 38 number 4 Winter 1997* http://www.mchanan.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/third-cinema.pdf (accessed13.02.2015).

Charvet, S. R. (1997) *Words That Change Minds.* Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Clifford, J. (1986) 'Introduction: Partial Truths' in *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (eds. James Clifford and George Marcus), Berkeley, University of California Press. p.10 ISBN: 9780520266025.

Collingwood, R. G. (1938): *The Principles of Art*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Comolli, J. and Narboni, P. (1971) *'Cinema/Ideology/Criticism'*, Screen, 12(1), pp. 27-38.

Cope, N. (2012) *Northern Industrial Scratch: The History and Contexts of a Visual Music Practice.* University of Sunderland. http://sure.sunderland.ac.uk/id/eprint/3287 (Accessed 17.5.14).

Cook, T.(2009) The Purpose of Mess in Action Research: building rigour through a messy turn. *Education Action Research, 17(2)*. Taylor and Francis pp.227-291.ISSN 0965-0792. This version was downloaded from Northumbria Research Link: http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/3746/ (accessed 03.02.18).

Coyer, K., Dowmunt, T. and Fountain A. (2008) *The Alternative Media Handbook*. London and New York: Routledge.

Craig, G. et al, (2011) *The Community Development Reader: History, Themes and Issues*, Bristol: The Policy Press. University of Bristol.

Cubitt, S. (1986) 'Sea Coal'. Review of *Seacoal*, directed by Amber Films. *City Limits*, 14-20th March, p.24.

Daly, M. (1984) *Gyn/ecology, Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. London: Women's Press

Davies, K., Dickey, J and Stratford, T (eds) (1987) *Out of Focus: writings on women and the media* London, Women's Press.

Davis, A. (1983) *Women, Race, & Class*. New York: Vintage Books.

Dickinson, M. (1999) *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90.* British Film Institute. Suffolk: St Edmundsbury Press.

Dorling, D. (2011) *INJUSTICE: Why social inequality persists.* Bristol: The Policy Press ISBN 978-1-84742-720-5.

Dormant, T. (2007) On the occasion of channel 4's 25th anniversary: An interview with Alan Fountain, former Channnel 4 Senior Commissioning Editor. *Journal of Media Practice.* Vol8 (3) Intellect ltd doi:10.1386/jmpr.8.3.247/1 (accessed 9.10.2014).

Drainville, E. Saeed, A (2013) 'A Right to Exist: A Palestinian speaks', *Feminist Media Studies*, Vol. 13 No.5, 830-839.

Fanon, F. (1977) *The Wretched of the Earth.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Gils, M. van and Shwaikh M.M. (2016) Fighting Without Weapons: Palestinian Documentary Films and Acts of Resistance. *Asian Affairs,* Vol.47, Issue 3, p 443-464. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2016.1225903.

Glaessner, V. (1986) 'Seacoal'. Review of *Seacoal*, directed by Amber Films. *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Vol.53, No.628, p.152-3.

Glasgow Media Group. (1976) *Bad News: Vol. 1.* Abingdon: Routledge & K. Paul.

Greer, G. (1970) *The female eunuch.* London, MacGibbon and Kee.

Gunnarsson Payne, J. (2012) Feminist Media as Alternative Media?: Theorising Feminist Media from the Perspective of Alternative Media Studies. In: E. Zobl and R. Drüeke (eds), *Feminist Media: Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship.* Transcript Verlag, 55-72.

Hall, S and Hopkins, J (1978) Video Distribution Handbook. *Supplement to Journal of the Centre for Advanced TV Studies.* London: Fantasy Factory Video ISSN 0308-6801.

Hani, Melanie. (2014). Gender Renaissance: Employing the Animation Process to Tackle Issues Relating to having a Parent who is Transgender. *The Contested and the Poetic: Gender and the Body* (ebook) ISBN 978-1-84888-329-1.

Harland, P. (2012) *Trust me, I'm The Patient.* London, Wayfinder Press.

Harvey, S. (1978) *May '68 and Film Culture.* London: British Film Institute.

Hochscherf, T. and Leggott, J. (2007) *From Launch to Shooting Magpies: Locating the Amber Film Collective* in Fawcett, H. (ed.) Made in Newcastle: Visual Culture Newcastle upon Tyne: Northumbria University Press.

Hollands, R and Vail, J. (2012) The art of social movement: Cultural opportunity, mobilization, and framing in the early formation of the Amber Collective. *Poetics 40.* Elsevier pp22-34 available www.sciencedirect.com
(19.09.2014).

Howley,K. (2005) *Community Media: People, Places and Communication Technologies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

James, D.E. (1996) *Power Misses: Essays Across (un)popular Culture.* London: Verso.

Jeffery, G. (ed.) (2005) The Creative College: Building a Successful Learning Culture in the Arts, Trentham Books, Stoke on Trent.

Karpf, A. (2016) *The persistence of the oral: on the enduring importance of the human voice.* London Metropolitan University.
http://repository.londonmet.ac.uk/894/1/KarpfAnne_ThePersistenceOfTheOral.pdf
(accessed 12.02.18)

Keighron, P.(1990) Questions of Independence, *Independent Media*, Issue 99
p. 14-15.

Kelly, H and Jeffrey, G. (2015) Community Media and Cultural Politics on Tyneside. *People's Knowledge and Participatory Action Research: Escaping the White-Walled Labyrinth.* The Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship Series. The People's Knowledge Editorial Collective. Rugby,UK. Co-published by Practical Action Publishing and the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR), Coventry University. ISBN 978-1-78044-932-6 Ebook (accessed 28.01.18).

Kelly, O. (1984) Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels. *Comedia Series 23.*https://www.academia.edu/470872/Community_art_and_the_state_Storming_the_citadels First digital edition published in 2016 (Accessed 07.08.17).

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

Kolk, B. van der (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in Transformation of Trauma.* Great Britain: Allen Lane.

Lacey, K. and Hilmes, M. (2015) Editor's Introduction, Women and Soundwork. *Feminist Media Histories Journal,* Vol. 1, Number 4. University of California Press.

Lewis, P.M. (2008) Finding and funding voices: the London experience. *Information, society and justice. Vol 2.1 dec 2008. 5-20.*

Lipman, A. (1986) *City Limits*, 3-10th April.

Lorde, A. (1984, 2007) *Sister Outsider: essays and speeches*. New York: Random House Inc.

Macdonald, M. (1995) *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media.* London: Arnold.

Macdonald, M. (2006) 'Muslim Women and the Veil: problems of image and voice in media representations', *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 7—23.

MacKinnon, C.A. (1979) *Sexual Harrassment of Working Women: A case of sex discrimination.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1964) *The German Ideology.* Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Maslow, A. H, *A Theory of Human Motivation*. Psychological Review 50 (1943): 370-96.

Maslow, A.H. (1948) *'Higher' and 'Lower' Needs,'* The Journal of Psychology 25, no. 2 (1948): 433-436.

Matarasso, F. (2011) 'All in this together': The depoliticisation of community art in Britain, 1970-2011. http://mailout.co/articles/all-in-this-together-the-depoliticisation-of-community-art-in-britain-1970-2011-by-francois-matarasso/
Community Art Power - essays from ICAF 2011 plus DVD. ICAF festival director Eugène van Erven presents a series of essays commissioned especially for an ICAF anthology on the theme "The Power of Community Art".

Merzenich, M. (2013) *Soft-wired:how the new science of brain plasticity can change your life.* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Parnassus Publishing. ISBN 0989432823.

Mitchell, C.A. (2016) *Women and radio – airing differences: On the importance of community radio as a space for women's representation, participation and resistance.* University of Sunderland.
http://sure.sunderland.ac.uk/6858/1/Commentary%20Mitchell%20PhD%20FINAL%20bound%2030.10.2016.pdf (Accessed 30.11.17).

Moskal, M. (2014) Polish migrant youth in Scottish schools: conflicted identity and family capital. *Journal of Youth Studies.* Vol 17, (2) pp279-291. Routledge, Taylor

Francis Group. doi: 10.1080/13676261.2013.815705 (accessed 20.03.2015).

Mulvey, L. (1975) Visual pleasure and the narrative cinema. *Screen.* 16(3)pp6-18. Doi:10.1093/screen/16.3.6.

Newbury, D. (2002) *Documentary practices and working-class culture: an interview with Murray Martin (Amber Films and Side Photographic Gallery).* Visual Studies, Vol. 17, No. 2, Routledge, Taylor Francis Group.

Nichols, B. (2010) *Introduction to Documentary, Second Edition.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

O'Brien, A. (2014) "Men *own* television': why women leave media work', *Media, Culture & Society,* Vol.36(8) p1207-1218. doi:10.1177/016344371454868.

O'Brien, A. (2017) '(Not) getting the credit: women, liminal subjectivity and resisiting neoliberalism in documentary production', *Media, Culture & Society,* p1-16. doi:10.1177/0163443717734405.

O'Neill, M. (2002) in association with Giddens, Sara; Breatnach, Patricia; Bagley, Carl; Bourne, Darren & Judge, Tony (2002). Renewed methodologies for social research: Ethno-mimesis as performative praxis. *Sociological Review*, *50*(1), 69-88.

O'Neill, M. (2007). Feminist knowledge and socio-cultural research: Ethno-mimesis, feminist praxis and the visual turn. In Tim Edwards (Ed.), *Cultural theory: Classical and contemporary positions* (pp.211-230). London: Sage.

O'Neill, M. (2008). "Transnational Refugees: The Transformative Role of Art." Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research 9(2): Art. 59.

O'Neill, M. and Harindranath, R. (2006). "Theorising narratives of exile and belonging: the importance of Biography and Ethno-mimesis in "understanding" asylum." Qualitative Sociology Review II(1): 39-53.

O'Neill, M. and Harindranath, R. (2006).Theorising narratives of exile and belonging: The importance of biography and ethno-mimesis in "understanding" asylum. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, *II* (1), 39-53.

O'Neill, M. and Hubbard, P. (2007). *Asylum, destitution and the social role of arts and culture*. Paper submitted to the Journal of Refugee Studies, November 2007.

O'Neill, M. and Tobolewska, B. (2002). *Towards a cultural strategy for working with refugees and asylum seekers in the east midlands*. Stoke: Staffordshire University and Nottingham City Arts.

O'Neill, M., Woods, P. and Webster, M. (2004). New arrivals, participatory action research, imagined communities and social justice. *Journal of Social Justice*. *32*(1), 75-89.

O'Reilly, P. (2009) 'I Willl Survive': Forty Years of Amber Films and the Evolution of Regional Film Policy. *Networking Knowledge: Journal of the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network,* Vol 1, No 2 (2009) (accessed 20.09.2014).

Oakley, A. (1974) *The Sociology of Housework* Oxford, Martin Robertson.

Oakley, A. (1979) *Becoming a Mother* Oxford, Martin Robertson.

Petley, J. (1988) Declarations of Independence. *Monthly Film Bulletin,* vol. 55 No. 648, pp. 24-27.

People's Knowledge Editorial Collective (2016) *People's Knowledge and Participatory Action Research: Escaping the white-walled labyrinth,* Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3362/9781780449395.

Philo, G. and Berry, M. (2004) *Bad News From Israel,* Pluto Press, London.

Philo, G. and Berry, M. (2009) *More Bad News From Israel,* Pluto Press, London.

Pilger, J. (2002) *The New Rulers of the World*, London, Verso.

Raz, A. (2016) *How Growing Up in a Racist and Sexist Britain Moved Me to Activism*, Refinery 29, 20 December, available online at https://www.refinery29uk/british-asian-woman-racism-sexism (accessed 21.5.2017).

Reason, P. (1994) Three approaches to participative enquiry. In: Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 324-339.

Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. (2001) Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice, Sage Publications, London. Available from: <http://bookzz.org/book/1102577/186764> [accessed 5 July 2016).

Reeves, C. (2015) *The Miners' Campaign Tapes.* 9 November, available online at https://vimeo.com/ondemand/theminerscampaigntapes. (accessed 10.01.2018)

Rennie, E. (2006) *Community media: a global introduction.* Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Riano, P. (ed) (1994) *Women in grassroots communication, furthering social change.* London: Sage.

Rogers, C. R. and Farson, R. E. (1957 republished 2015) *Active Listening.* Connecticut: Martino Publishing.

Rogers, C. (1979) The foundations of the person centred approach. *Education.* Winter 1979, Vol. 100. Issue 2, pp. 98-108.

Rogers, C. R, 'The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change' *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 44 (2007): pp. 240-8.

Rowbotham, S. (1973) *Hidden from History: 300 years of women's oppression and the fight against it*. London, Pluto.

Rowbotham, S. (1973) *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World.* Harmonsworth, Penguin.

Rowbotham, S and Beynon, H. (2001) *Looking at Class: Film, Television and the Working Class of Britain.* London: Rivers Osram Press. ISBN 1 85489 121 9

Saadawi, N. El. (1997) *The Nawal El Saadawi Reader*, London: Zed Books, 1997 pp. 125-6.

Saeed, Amir (2009) 'Israel's Propaganda and its War on Gaza', *The Canadian Charger* November 11, 2009, [Online] Available at: http://www.thecanadiancharger.com/page.php?id=5&a=218(accessed 13/02/2018)

Sakr, N. (2004) *Women and media in the Middle East.* London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 109-119.

Seligman, M. (2011) *Flourish: A New Understanding of Happiness and Wellbeing – and How to Achieve Them.* London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Stead, J. (1985) *Never the Same Again: women and the miners' strike.* London, Women's Press.

Solanas, F and Gentino, O. *Hacia un tercer cine*, Tricontinental No. 13, October 1969, translated in Michael Chanan ed., *Twenty-five Years of the New Latin American Cinema,* BFI/Channel4, 1983.

Spence, J. and Stephenson, C. (2009) ' Side by side with our men? Women's activism, community and gender in the 1984-5 British Miners' strike.', *International labour and working-class history*. 75 (1). pp. 68-84. doi:10.1017/S0147547909000064.

Tension, E. (1978) *You don't need a degree to read the writing on the wall.* No Press. (pamphlet accessed 2017 London School of Economics).

Tolman, D.L. and Brydon-Miller, M. (eds) (2001) *From Subjects to Subjectivities: a handbook of Interpretive and Participatory Methods.* New York and London: New York University Press.

Trinh, Minh-Ha (1991) *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. London: Routledge.

Thuma, A. (2011) *Hannah Arendt, Agency, and the public Space,* online at http://www.iwm.at/publications/5-junior-visiting-fellows-conferences/vol-xxix/andrea-thuma-2/ Accessed 17/01/2018.

Tuchman, G. (1978) Introduction: The symbolic annihilation of women by the mass media. In: Tuchman, G., Daniels, A. K. and Benet, J. needs accent over the 2nd e (eds), *Hearth and home: Images of women in the mass media.* New York: Oxford University Press, 3-38.

Vail, J. and Hollands, R. (2013) 'Creative Democracy and the Arts: The Participatory Democracy of the Amber Collective', *Cultural Sociology,* 7(3) p352-367. doi:10.1177/1749975513480958.

Van Vuuren, K. (2006) Community broadcasting and the enclosure of the public sphere. *Media, Culture and Society,* Vol. 28, No.3: p379-392.

Wade, G. (1980) *Street Video.* Leicester: Blackthorn Press.

Walker, H. (2016) *The Musician's Grow Book.* Unknown. Bounce Back Be Happy ISBN-13:9780995484603.

Waltz, M. (2005) *Alternative and Activist Media.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Wax, R. (2014) *Sane New World: Taming the Mind.* London: Hodder.

Wilson, A. (1978) *Finding a Voice: Asian women in Britain*. London, Virago.

Women's Studies Group, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1978) *Women Take Issue: aspects of women's subordination*. London, Hutchinson.

Wylie, M.S. (2004) The Limits of Talk: Bessel van der Kolk wants to transform the treatment of trauma. *Psychotherapy Networker.* http://www.traumacenter.org/products/pdf_files/networker.pdf (accessed 10/02/2018).

Zyngier, D., and Brunner, C. (2002). *The r.u.MAD? Program. Kids making a difference in the community with MAD projects* (Vol. 1). Melbourne: Education Foundation.

Zyngier, D. (2012) Transformative student engagement. An empowering pedagogy. An Australian experience in the classroom, in McMahon, B.J. and Portelli, J.P. (eds.) *Student Engagement in Urban Schools: Beyond Neoliberal Discourses*. Charlotte NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.

Zyngier, D. (2011) Education, Critical Service-Learning and Social Justice: The Australian Experience of Doing Thick Democracy in the Classroom, in Porfilio, B.J. and Hickman, H. (eds.) *Critical Service-Learning as a Revolutionary Pedagogy A Project of Student Agency in Action.* pp.144-145. [ebook] ISBN 978-1-61735-434-2 at:https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=iQAoDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=Critical+Service-Learning+as+a+Revolutionary+Pedagogy%C2%A0A+Project+of+Student+Agency+in+Action%C2%A0+Bradley+J+Porfilio,%C2%A0Heather+Hickman+eBook+&ots=yGGptT7RyX&sig=gtEOlIW_YviXcgyAvW8b7Th7tSE#v=onepage&q&f=false [Accessed 9 Feb. 2018].

Filmography

The Killing of Sister George (Aldrich 1968)

Mädchen in Uniform (Sagan and Froelich 1931)

'Til Death Us Do Part (Speight, BBC TV 1965-1975)

Man with a Movie Camera (Vertov, Kaufmann and Svilova 1929)

La hora de los hornos (The Hour of the Furnaces) (Gentino and Solanas 1968)

De Cierta Manera (One Way or Another) (Gomez 1974)

*LBJ (*Santiago Alvarez, 1968) in *He Who Hits First, Hits Twice* compilation DVD

Nuit et Brouillard (Night and Fog) (Resnais 1955)

The Power of Men is the Patience of Women (Perincioli 1973)

Palestine is Still the Issue (Pilger, ITV 2002)

Turtles Can Fly (Ghobadi, 2005)

Natura Erotica (Hammer, 1980)

Doll's Eye (Worth, 1982)

Pretend You'll Survive (Leeds Animation Workshop, 1981)

Give Us A Smile (Leeds Animation Workshop, 1983)

Veronica 4 Rose (Chait, Ch4 1983)

Seacoal (Amber Films, 1985)

News from Durham (Amber Films, 1984)

Where are we going? (Amber Films, 1984)

Beyond the Vote (Amber Films, 1984)

Maybe (Amber Films, 1969)

Launch (Amber Films, 1974)

High Row (Amber Films, 1973)

'Death Valley Days' (Gorilla Tapes, 1984)

`*Lo Pay, No Way!'* (Gorilla Tapes,1985).

Pursuit of Happiness (Amber Films, 2008)

The Scar (Amber Films, 1997)

Dream On (Amber Films, 1991)

Table 1 Submitted Outputs discussed in Section 3

Outputs	Format	Notes	Refer to commentary section/ submitted work folder/ Appendix folder
1. Ten Little Bits (2013, Friggin Little Bits)	CD	10 tracks of music by Friggin Little Bits (1980- present)	3.1/Output 1/ App 1
2. Seacoal (1985, Amber Films)	82 mins, feature-length drama aired on Ch4		3.2/ Op2/ App 2
3. 'News From Durham' (1984, Amber Films Current Affairs Unit)	Video 'trigger-tape'	Became part of the Miners Campaign Tapes.	3.3/ Op3/ App 3
4.'Where Are We Going?' (1984, Amber Films Current Affairs Unit)	Approx. 30mins film		3.4/ Op4/ App 4
5. 'Can't Beat It Alone' (1985, Amber Films Current Affairs Unit)	Documentary 45mins aired on Channel 4		3.5/ Op5/ App 5
6. 'A Right To Exist – A Palestinian Speaks', Drainville, E (2013)	Journal article	Feminist Media Studies Journal, complete reference needed).	3.6/ Op6/ App 6
7. 'RuMAD[2]: A Methodology for Participant Led Visual Storytelling in a Therapeutic Environment.'(2014)	Conference Presentation	Paper presented at the 26th International Society of Animation Studies, Toronto. 2014 *Process applied during Bereavement project. Made With Love Too (MWL[2]) HEART*	3.7/ Op7/ App 7
8. 'Cultural Rivers: The use of 'Static Animation' and 'Axiom Documentary' film making processes to identify issues relating to children who are first generational immigrants in the UK.'(Drainville, E. and Hani, M.)(2015)	Conference Presentation	Paper presented at the 27th International Society of Animation Studies, Canterbury, 2015.	3.8/ Op8/ App 8

FIGURE INDEX

Fig 1: Rocker, a very skilled bareback rider, as featured in *Seacoal* (Amber Films, 1985). Screengrab, (Output 2).

Fig 2: *Collected Stories from Palestine* (2005): An interview with Fatiha
Screengrab from one of the films screened at Sounding Out 3 conference (2006) University of Sunderland. (Appendix 6b).

Fig 3: *Collected Stories from Palestine*: Boys at 'The Wall'(2005)
Screengrab from a film presented at MeCCSA/AMPE conference (2006).
(Appendix 6b).

Fig 4: *Time Out* review of *Woodbine Place*
https://www.sirenfilms.co.uk/about-siren-films/
Complete film can be viewed at
https://www.sirenfilms.co.uk/woodbine-place-30/
(Accessed 4.3.18).

Fig 5: A still from Made With Love Too (MWL[2]) bereavement project
(Output 8a).

Fig 6: A still from *Cultural Rivers: Axiom Documentary.*

Fig 7: Amazon reviewer comments on *Ten Little Bits.*

Fig 8: Screenings, Reviews and Awards for *Seacoal*
(See Table 2 for all Submitted Outputs: Transmissions, Awards and Reviews).

Fig 9: Screengrab of 'Getting Started' Stage 1 of the RuMAD[2] process taken from the RuMAD[2] film, part of a teacher's resources pack.
Alex Collier, animator, was commissioned to create the animations for this film.
(Appendix 7a).

Table 2 Transmission dates (Tx), Awards and Recognition discussed in Section 2 and 4

Outputs (numbered, bold type) and other works by title/date	Screened/Exhibited	Awards	Reviews	Refer to section/ Appendix
1. Ten Little Bits (2013, Friggin Little Bits)	Currently distributed by Amazon, iTunes, Spotify and CD Baby Numerous performances throughout the UK Veronica 4 Rose Ch4 11th Hour (1983)		App 1b App 1a App 1c	**2.1** **3.1** **App 1** **2.2**
2. Seacoal (1985, Amber Films)	Tx Ch4 'New Fiction' 11th Hour Apr 1986 2 screenings at the Metro, London San Francisco International Film Festival, 1987 Tx More4 Dec 2008	Marks and Spencer Award, Tyneside Film Festival (1985) European Film Award, Munich (1986)	App 2a	**2.3** **3.2** **App 2**
3. 'News From Durham' (1984, Amber Films Current Affairs Unit)		(incorporated into Miners campaign tapes) Grierson award for documentary (1985) https://vimeo.com/ondemand/theminerscampaigntapes/109270071		**2.4** **3.3** **App 3**
4.'Where Are We Going?' (1984, Amber Films Current Affairs Unit)		(incorporated into Miners campaign tapes) Grierson award for documentary (1985)		**2.4** **3.3** **App 3**
5. 'Can't Beat It Alone' (1985, Amber Films Current Affairs Unit)	TX Ch4 11th Hour series (1985)			**2.5** **3.5** **App 5**
Amber/Side Collective http://www.amber-online.com/collections/		B.F.I. Award Contribution to Independent Film Making (1989) Inscribed into the UK UNESCO Memory of the World Register (2011) Ambers Films and the photography of Sirkka-Liisa Konttinens from 1969-2009 https://www.unesco.org.uk/news/for-ever-amber-an-exhibition-of-still-and-moving-image-documenting-the-everyday-lives-of-people-in-englands-north-east/		
Woodbine Place (1987) https://www.sirenfilms.co.uk/woodbine-place-30/	Tx Ch4 1987			**2.7**
6. Collected Stories from Palestine	***Filming Palestinian "Banality".*** Drainville, E. and Saeed, A. (2011) Nebula: A Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship, 8 (1). pp. 106-115. ISSN 1449-7751 *'Collected Stories from Palestine'.* Drainville, E.(2008) In: Sounding Out 3, 7-9 Sep 2006, University of Sunderland. **'Al Aroub'** Drainville, E. (2008) *Soundscape Radio Broadcast, AV08*		Cited in 5 articles see Google Scholar	**2.6** **3.6** **App 6**

	Festival North East. [Audio] **'Kite'** Drainville, E. (2008) Tyneside Cinema, Digital Suite. *AV08 Festival North East.* **'A Right To Exist – A Palestinian Speaks',** **Drainville, E and Saeed, A (2013)** Feminist Media Studies. Vol. 13 No.5, 830-839 (2000-2017) **'Glazed Expression'** ceramic exhibition held in various galleries in Newcastle and Gateshead: The Cluny Gallery St Mary's Heritage Centre The Shipley Art Gallery Gateshead Central Library.			
'Kite'(Drainville 2006)	Screening of **'Kite'.** Drainville, E.(2008) In: Sounding Out 3, 7-9 Sep 2006, University of Sunderland. Drainville, E.(2007) *Invited presentation and screening of* **'Kite'.** In: Sound design and visual storytelling, May 2007, Chongqing Meishi Film Academy, China.			
RuMAD² Film(Drainville 2013)	Teaching Resources presented at the Regional Wellbeing Conference at Newcastle University (2013) Drainville, E.and Walker, H. *'Developing Aspiration, Resilience and Optimism'.* In: TDA, CPD Regional Conference, Durham, (2013).		App 7b	**2.8** **App 7**
Wiki Wonderland	*Launch of WIKI: Ali in Wonderland.* In: Launch of WIKI: Ali in			**2.9** **App 8b**

	Wonderland, 2008, The Sage, Gateshead. Drainville, E and Gharavi, T. (2008) *'WIKI: Ali's Adventures in a digital Wonderland'*. In: Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies Research Seminar, 13 Oct 2008, University of Sunderland. Drainville, E. and Gharavi, T. (2008) *Screening of 'WIKI: Ali in Wonderland' and paper.* In: Making the Connections: Arts, Migration and Diaspora, 3 - 4 July 2008, Loughborough University.			
7. 'RuMAD²: A Methodology for Participant Led Visual Storytelling in a Therapeutic Environment.' **Made With Love Too (MWL²)**	(2014) 26th International Society of Animation Studies, (SAS) Conference 'The Animator' Toronto, Canada. (2014) Animation and Public Engagement. In *Bradford Animation Festival*, Bradford. (2013) *Made With Love Too: Analysing the effectiveness of animation (Good Hearts Model 2011) in tackling issues surrounding and relating to loss and bereavement in mainstream children and children with special needs*, The Minster Church of St Michael and All Angels and St Benedict Biscop, Sunderland, 23 piece Exhibition and Screening, 12-02-2013 to 10-03-2013.			**3.7 App 7**
8. 'Cultural Rivers: The use of 'Static Animation' and 'Axiom Documentary' film making processes to identify issues relating to children who are first generational immigrants in the UK.' (Drainville, E. and Hani, M.)	(2017) *Cultural Rivers* Student Union Conference, University of Sunderland (2015) *Cultural Rivers*, In *27th Society of Animation Studies (SAS) Conference Beyond the Frame*, Canterbury Christ Church University.			**2.11 3.8 App 8**

	(2015) *Cultural Rivers: A Sea Change*, United Kingdom, 32 pieces , 16-03-2015 to 16-03-2015. (2015) *Cultural Rivers*, Charnwood Opening Museum, 32 piece exhibition and screening, 16-03-2015 to 05-05-2015. *(2015)Cultural Rivers*, Loughborough Town Library, 32 piece exhibition, screening and presentation , 16-03-2015 to 05-05-2015. (2014) Cultural Rivers. In *Cultural Rivers: A sea change*, Presentation. Charnwood Museum. (2014) Animation Therapy; The Work of HEART (Healing Education Animation Research Therapy). *Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies*, University of Sunderland.			
H.E.A.R.T. Healing Education Animation Research Therapy		Loughborough University Enterprise Award (2015)		**2.10 App**