A PILGRIMAGE INTO THE LIMINAL: AN EXPERIENTIAL ENQUIRY INTO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMBODIED SPACE OF GRIEF AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN FILM

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Abstract

The lived experience of grief is a universal phenomenon that is both a psychological and embodied experience; it finds expression in varying art forms and is considered in multiple discourses, including psychoanalysis. This project identifies a range of responses to loss and grief and critically reflects on their value and efficacy. Through the use of a phenomenological research process, that results in the production of filmworks, the value of using film as a way of managing and processing loss is considered. The notion of a self-reflexive pilgrimage is adopted as a mode of engagement with the liminal experience of grief.

The effects of grief have the potential to develop into a pathological condition, identified in the discipline of psychoanalysis as melancholia, however, the value of using artmaking as a way of processing loss has been given little consideration. Drawing on autobiographical experiences of loss, and working with those who have experienced loss similarly, means that this project is rooted in actual lived experience. The adoption of the self-reflexive location of liminality as mode of engagement enables the production of truthful responses to the experience of grief.

The main research question considers how the liminal experience can be re-presented in and through experiential filmmaking, resulting in the production of a collection of film works: *A Work of Memorial: Southend Pier, The Work of Mourning: The Perfect Pirouette, A Performance of Mourning, Parts 1 and 2* and *The End of Mourning: Osea Island.* The value of a specific aesthetic approach to filmmaking is critically analysed through these filmworks and the application of elements of this approach considered, identifying specific grammatical features that effectively re-present the lived experience of grief.

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Preface

It is useful to preface this thesis with a consideration of the motivations that have led me to conduct this enquiry. Within my practice as an artist and filmmaker, I have been concerned to re-present experience; the mediums that I use include still photography, performance, and video. Recently, I have found myself drawn to cultural expressions of grief and have become intrigued by how these expressions function. As individuals, we seem to deal with grief in our own unique ways yet we are often swept along with and follow the societal modes of expression as they currently stand, regardless of their efficacy. We are aware of the notion of "moving on" from the affects of a significant loss, yet this seems to be a difficult task with few support mechanisms in place to enable us to transit this experience. Within my own experience of grief, I have found that existing models of behaviour and mourning rituals have been frustrating and ineffectual in terms of actually processing and dealing with grief. The limited range of these expressions is concerning, as their apparent failure to reflect my own experience and to illuminate and inform implies that within western society we appear to have no appropriate form for our expressions. Moreover, as I have observed death and its resulting affects on those left behind, I have multiple questions and a desire to explore and unfold the experience of grief, and to consider how and in what ways we might begin to address and deal with the experience. Working with others to find an expression of their grief led me to consider that using visual forms, such as photography and video, are effective tools that can enable the processing and re-presentation of the experience of grief.

This research project seeks to address the lack of discourse within the creative arts regarding responses to grief and to consider an approach, a way of processing loss, that is fundamentally creative and expressive. The value of this approach is that it is rooted in the phenomenological notion of lived-experience and whilst this type of research methodology may be more commonly used in the social sciences, it has validity here, as it is a way of considering actual lived and embodied experience as empirical and evidential, thus enabling conclusions to be drawn from the range of phenomena under consideration.

There have been several critical incidents in my own lived experience that have led me to undertake this enquiry; it is useful to consider these and to reflect on what I have been able to learn from these experiences. Most significantly, I spent a year working in a hospice as an artist in residence: I worked with those who were bereaved, as well as those with terminal illnesses that were facing their death, imminently.[1] From this experience, I was able to observe that for some people there was an impossibility with regard to coming to terms with their own demise. However, others were able to take some comfort from the production of photographs or videos that they authored. I observed that there were similar features within the work made

[1] 2006/7 at St. Catherine's Hospice, Crawley

and became curious as to why this was occurring: symbols were frequently used that seemed to have a representational function, and almost all of those making work somehow inserted themselves within the work, either through the use of old photographs that told the stories of their lives, or actual video footage that recorded things happening in their present lives. Often, it was the family that was left behind that benefitted from these artworks, as they were able to make some sense of their loved one's experience through them. The most important element of this work for me was being able to bear witness to the experience of grief and to see that there was a significant value in this witnessing, whether it was through listening or observing, or through supporting them with the re-presenting of their lives and lived experience in photographs and videos. However, the questions raised by the production of artworks in this context have contributed to this enquiry.

In addition, my own personal experience of loss has been considered and reflected upon as the autobiographical ground of this enquiry. The earliest loss I experienced was the death of my paternal grandparents, who died within a few days of each other. As a child, I was told that my grandmother had died of a broken heart as a result of losing my grandfather, who had died of lung cancer. This seemingly romantic action stayed with me and lived in my imagination, contributing to my understanding of grief and its affects. However, whilst working on this project, I discovered elements of family history that I had been unaware of: my grandfather had been cared for at St. Christopher's Hospice in Sydenham at the end of his life. He died there under the care of Cicely Saunders, the founder of the hospice movement in this country. This coincidence, considering my own experience of working in a hospice, was significant, however it paled into insignificance when I found out that my grandmother had in fact taken her own life, choosing this action, rather than living with her loss. This profound and final reaction to grief was disturbing to me, as it suggested that grief is traumatic and ultimately unbearable. However, when I reflected on my own experience of losing someone that I loved, I realised that I had also felt traumatised by the experience and that I had struggled to find a way to manage and deal with my grief: in some ways I was still struggling even as years had passed.

On losing a loved one prematurely and unexpectedly in 1999, I found myself plunged into the experience of grief. This was felt before I knew about the actual event: I was in a state of extreme anxiety for no apparent reason at the precise time that I later found out was the time of death. Neuro-psychiatrist Dr. Peter Fenwick, in his study on post-death communication and near death experiences, writes that it is 'remarkably common for a person to have a sudden realisation that someone close to them has died.'[2] In his study, two thirds of respondents said that this realisation came in a dream or 'on a sudden awakening.'[3] As in my own experience, a few respondents

[2] Peter Fenwick and Elizabeth Fenwick, *The Art of Dying* (London/New York: Continuum, 2008), 47.
[3] Ibid.

reported that when suddenly waking they felt 'an intense feeling of unease which they only later discover[ed] occurred at the time of the person's death.'[4] This state of anxiety became my default mode of being: I lived with it as if it was normal, often not even aware that I was in an anxious state until it was pointed out to me. C.S. Lewis, in his exemplary text on grief: *A Grief Observed,* articulates this state: 'grief still feels like fear. Perhaps, more strictly, like suspense.'[5] I consider that life at that point changed its course, its shape, its feeling. From that point on, life was lived as if something was going to happen, but it was not at all clear what: 'It gives life a permanent provisional feeling.'[6] On reflection, this now seems quite clear: the experience of losing someone close means that we cannot help but be aware of our own mortality; we are forced to accept that life is in fact a provisional condition, inevitably coming to an end. Phenomenologist Drew Leder writes: 'Though none of us has ever experienced our own death, it ever seeds our body, waiting to blossom… The body-as-mortal poses a core problematic that cries out for hermeneutic and pragmatic therapies.'[7] It became important for me to identify ways of dealing with this core problem that I was experiencing, and observing in others who had been similarly bereaved. I began to consider how I might use and work with the same visual forms that had benefitted those who were grieving for their lost ones at St. Catherine's Hospice, and if I could determine a specific process that has the potential to be used by others.

When I first started working as an artist in residence in a hospice, I researched into how the hospice movement began and its specific concept: the provision of a safe place where those at the end of their life can be properly supported and cared for. The writings of Kubla-Ross have been a blueprint for those working with death and dying since their seemingly radical introduction to the clinic setting. Kubla-Ross describes five stages of grief: Depression, Denial, Bargaining, Anger and Acceptance, that are applicable to those who are dying, as well as to those who are bereaved and experiencing grief. However, it seems glaringly obvious that dealing with loss is not as simple as Kubla-Ross describes: we can recognise these stages when working with the dying or those bereaved, but it does not follow that one stage leads to another, or that there is even a way to reach the final stage, that of acceptance. I was aware of the limitations of Kubla-Ross's five stages as a framework for understanding and dealing with grief before beginning to work at the hospice, having already been through a process of grieving that I hardly seemed to have dealt with – even as I knew the five stages and recognised myself experiencing them.

I researched further and found a book by Michael Kearney, a palliative care doctor writing about his experiences of working with the dying, called *Mortally Wounded*.

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[4] Ibid.
[5] C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 29.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 141.

Kearney begins his book with a quote by Francis Bacon: 'Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark.'[8] Kearney describes how there are:

> deeper layers to our fear of dying and death. We all share that primal, instinctive fear of the dark which Bacon speaks of and I believe that it is the existential and primal fear of the unknown that can generate that particular form of suffering I call 'soul pain'.[9]

Kearney considers how we share a cultural fear of death that he claims stems from the 'deep split that has occurred in the West between the rational and intuitive aspects of the mind.'[10] This fear is identified by Kearney as problematic and his response is to consider how images enable us to access our intuition in order to process and deal with our fears. Kearney describes how he used images drawn by patients to discuss with them their very real fears about their terminal illnesses and how in some instances, those patients reached a place where they did not feel, or experience, any 'soul pain', accepting their demise and dying in peace. Kearney considers our anxieties regarding death to be a natural response to the lack of awareness we have regarding our bodies, considering them to be a separate entity, removed from our sensory and embodied perception. This notion is similarly reflected in Drew Leder's text: *The Absent Body*. Leder argues that: 'In Cartesianism, the human mind is viewed as an island of awareness afloat in a vast sea of insensate matter.'[11] Leder presents a notion of the body as absent: without any awareness of itself, unless threatened by disease or dysfunction. Whilst Kearney encouraged his patients to express their feelings regarding their mortality through the production of imagery, the use of symbols that I observed in the photographic images produced by those I was working with seemed almost accidental. For example, an image of an empty bench in shadow was understood to represent a feeling about absence without this being explicitly stated. As I was not an art therapist, I was not comfortable exploring the meaning of images with hospice users, however it was clear to me that their production and the sharing of them had a profound effect. I wanted to further consider the value and function of image production, and this motivation, in addition to the autobiographical ground stated above, led me to conduct this enquiry.

[8] Michael Kearney, *Mortally Wounded* (Dublin: Marino Books, 1996),13.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.,14.
[11] Leder, op. cit., 8.

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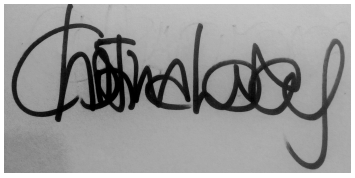
Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:



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Introduction

The experience under consideration in this research project, and the Epoche identified for the purposes of this phenomenological study,[12] is the psychological and embodied state of grief: the liminal experience. The assumption that such a state exists means that the project will focus on this state and its re-presentation, rather than its cause or origin; however, the discussion within this thesis will inevitably draw on a range of discourses that consider death and the affect of this on our conscious and unconscious awareness. The term liminal, which is a trope with a fluid and fluctuating meaning, has been identified as a purposeful term within this research project. It is used to describe the phenomenon of grief and allows for the inclusion of ethnographic and performative discourses within this thesis, whilst enabling the psychological and embodied to be considered summatively.

The research intentions are to unfold and explore, through the production of visual imagery, the way in which the liminal experience can be re-presented in film[13] and to identify the value and function of this quite specific way of dealing with loss and processing grief. The liminal, a subjective, meditative trope, will be identified as containing particular features that mirror the lived experience of grief, and that have the potential to enable its re-presentation. The project will identify key elements of filmic language that support this re-presentation through the process of experiential filmmaking.

The main research question asks: what does experiential filmmaking contribute to the re-presentation of the liminal experience? The adoption of experiential filmmaking methodologies allows me to intuitively respond to my actual lived and embodied experience. This approach has been identified as the most efficacious given the nature of the enquiry and the specific subject under consideration; it is commensurate with the reflexive nature of liminality, for as anthropologist Victor Turner writes 'Liminality may be partly described as a stage of reflection.'[14]

Experiential filmmaking is essentially reflexive; an approach commonly used in documentary, for example Dziga Vertov's film, *Man With A Movie Camera* (1929), which is widely considered to be the first example of reflexive filmmaking practice.[15] Film theorist Bill Nichols identifies that this approach is rooted in Brechtian ideology:

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[12] This project has adopted this discipline as its mode of engagement and drawn on the work of Moustakus and the framework for phenomenological research he articulates in his book *Phenomenological Research Methods* (London: Sage, 1994).

[13] The term film will be used throughout this thesis and function as a conflated term to cover video and film.

[14] Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (London: Cornell University Press, 1967), 94.

[15] For a discussion of this and the varying reflexive strategies commonly used in documentary film see Bill Nichols' book *Reflecting Reality* (USA: Indiana University Press, 1991), p-p. 56-75.

the distantiation effect that serves in theatrical performances to break the fourth wall and make the audience aware of the processes involved in the theatrical production, and that it is indeed a constructed reality. Filmmaking adopts such a strategy through the making of films that give an insight into the materiality of the process: an 'ontology addressing the essence of cinema itself'[16]. Nichols tells us that: 'Reflexive texts are self conscious not only about form and style, as poetic ones are, but also about strategy, structure, conventions, expectations, and effects.'[17] This suggests that through the process of making filmworks it is possible to address the materiality of the process and that the film then functions as a form of documentary evidence of the process undertaken. Garret, in his essay: "Videographic Geographies"[18] makes the connection between reflexive or experiential filmmaking practices and the work of anthropologists, who often use film as a form of documentation. This connection has relevance to this research project, as one of the functions of film here is to document and re-present experience: the liminal experience.

The term liminal suggests that the work of the project is ethnographic in that it draws on the discipline of anthropology and the research methods used therein. However, the term auto-ethnographic reflects the main mode of working as through this experiential investigation the considerations of the ethnographer are privileged with the self as the subject. In their discussion of the varying sub-forms of auto-ethnography, Ellis, Adams and Bochner identify that the use of personal narratives is seen as one of 'the most controversial forms of autoethnography for traditional social scientists.'[19] However, its 'value is that it expands and opens up a wider lens on the world, eschewing rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research.'[20] The autoethnographic approach and its subsequent product: the result of the research undertaken, mirrors my own artistic practice in that it constitutes writing as a response to an insight, or an 'epiphany',[21] using thick description. Writing in response to the phenomenon of loss and grief from a personal perspective has been undertaken throughout this project and has been used in addition as a way of documenting the various processes undertaken, in particular the process of filmmaking. The use of photography, which is an element of my artistic practice, is an invaluable tool when researching and is widely used by visual ethnographers.[22] The use of film as a strategy to record the processes undertaken and to function as a product of the research follows in the tradition of ethnographic filmmaking, which

[16] Nichols, op. cit., 66.
[17] Ibid., 57.
[18] In *Visual Methods,* ed. Jason Hughes, (London: Sage, 2012), p-p. 377-404.
[19] Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, & Arthur P. Bochner "Autoethnography: An Overview." *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* [Online], 12.1 (2011): n. pag. Web. (27 Jul. 2015).
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] For an example of this see Ownby, Terry. "Critical Visual Methodology: Photographs and Text as a Visual Autoethnography" *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies* [Online], (2013): n. pag. Web. (27 Jul. 2015)

according to Nichols is concerned to be authentic in its re-presentation.[23] Furthermore, the relevance of auto-ethnography to phenomenology is clearly evident as the autoethnographic research approach privileges lived and embodied experience.

The discipline of phenomenology provides the primary mode of engagement as, with its focus on lived experience as empirical, it parallels the research intentions of the project. The phenomenological methodology used within the project will be clearly expiated; however it is useful to reflect on the various considerations that I undertook in order to arrive at this decision.

In order to determine the nature of the enquiry and its research and creative methodologies, I considered the processes that I could adopt and their values. Due to ethical considerations and the context in which this research project was to be conducted, the decision was taken to adopt an experiential approach and to locate the self as both subject and object. Citing myself as researcher, and being the subject of the research, means that I was able to learn directly from the experiences I was going through. Experiential learning is a 'direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it.'[24] This suggests that the experiential research process, enabling a direct encounter with the phenomena of grief, has a value that has wider social implications and relevance for arts practitioners. Specific features of the process could be of benefit when working with others to support them in dealing with grief. It may be possible to extrapolate these features and to use them in a reiteration of the experiential process that I have undertaken in order to conduct this research enquiry. This proposition will not be considered in detail within this thesis as it is beyond the scope of the project, however the implication is that there is the potential for further practical research in this area so that the efficacy of using elements of this model in applied practice can be more fully considered through, and in, the work of future projects.

Moustakus, in his book *Phenomenological Research Methods* (1994), identifies in detail the value of using a phenomenological research framework to support the work of social scientists and others seeking to unfold the phenomena of a specific experience. He argues that:

> Phenomenology is the *first* method of knowledge because it… attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment, setting aside presuppositions, and reaching a transcendental state of freshness and

[23] See Nichols, p-p. 217-242.
[24] Iana Borzak, *Field Study: A Source Book for Experiential Learning* (Beverley Hills: Sage Publications, 1981), 9.

> openness… not threatened by the customs, beliefs, and prejudices of normal science… or by knowledge based on unreflected everyday experience.[25]

Whilst the use of phenomenology as a research methodology in the discipline of creative arts is not common, it has been used here because the adoption of a hermeneutic phenomenological research framework enables a consideration of sensory and embodied experience in relation to a specified condition or circumstance. Existential phenomenology seeks to articulate our being in the world and reflect on this as a way of reaching an understanding about the human condition. This branch of phenomenology extends Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology[26] and draws on the writings of Merleau Ponty[27] who was concerned to focus philosophical discourse firmly within the realm of embodied experience. As a way of interpreting data drawn from various phenomena, 'it locates the origin of theory in practice… the radical reflections of existential phenomenology do not retreat from the world of action and responsibility… rather, reflection turns towards the world as it is lived.'[28]

Moustakus tells us that the phenomenological research process is about intentionality: 'the internal experience of being conscious of something',[29] in this instance the experience of loss and grief. Phenomenological research directs our intention towards something recognising that there is both an object correlate, termed the noema, and a subject correlate, termed the noesis, present in every intention. The noesis, or the act of perceiving, is embedded with meanings that are hidden from consciousness, whereas the object correlate, or the noema, is 'that which is perceived, the remembered, the judged as such.'[30] The noema however, 'is not the real object but the phenomenon'[31] that exists in consciousness: we experience it perceptually. Therefore, it is both the noema and the noesis that constitute the way in which we understand an object, such as loss, and it is through a process of phenomenological reduction that we can identify the essence of a phenomenon. Moustakus argues that as we direct our attention as researchers to an experience, we see the noema, which is a partial view of the whole and that we need to look and reflect, then to look and reflect again and again to discover its hidden meanings. To arrive at the essence of a phenomenon, we need to find a unity of noema and noesis;

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[25] Moustakus, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (London: Sage, 1994), 41.
[26] For a detailed discussion of this see Moustakus, Chapter 2 "Transcendental Phenomenology" where he reflects on the influences that led to this branch of the discipline, including Hegel and Kant but focussing on Descartes's position on objective reality, which Husserl argued was in fact a subjective reality.
[27] Merleau Ponty's book *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) focussed on the notion that the body is at the forefront of perception, establishing an embodiment paradigm that is utilised and discussed throughout this thesis.
[28] Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 27.
[29] Moustakus, op.cit., 29.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

the 'reflective process makes possible deeper reflection of the structures'[32] enabling us to form a comprehensive view of the thing itself.

The research methodology requires that an Epoche be identified: in this instance it is the notion that an experience such as the one under consideration here, the liminal experience, exists. This determines the direction of the researchers intention. The Epoche is a way to set aside preconceptions and according to Husserl, a 'freedom from suppositions'.[33] Moustakus tells us that this is a way 'to encounter the phenomenon… with a pure state of mind'.[34] He argues that this research should be undertaken 'within an experiential context'[35] as is the case here. Through a process of reduction and the application of the imaginative variant[36] Moustakus argues that it is possible to reach a 'unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole'.[37] The value of this approach to this project is the correlation that this process has to that of liminality. Adopting the role of a pilgrim, venturing into the liminal, I can encounter the varying phenomena of the experience of loss and grief from different perspectives to identify themes within it. These themes can then be bracketed, and the variant features eliminated, so that the invariant constituents can be identified. These constituent features will be used in the application of the imaginative variant, enabling me to apply them in the production of filmworks, which will be carefully analysed in order to identify a universal description of the phenomenon.

The project seeks to determine how the experience of grief is re-presented in film and, through the production of filmworks, identify universal textural features that will enable it to be further re-presented. Film is a form of communication and as such 'is analogous to a language… such language has a grammar and syntax of its own making.'[38] This enquiry will identify a specific set of grammatical elements that can be considered representational of the experience of grief. Film theorist Cole states that: 'grammar is the link that allows us to read or perceive the story being communicated by a series of separate shots.'[39] This implies that the story of grief and how it is experienced can be constructed and re-presented through the use of specific elements of filmic grammar. These elements will attempt to convey the psychological and embodied space of grief: the phenomenon of grief.

[32] Moustakus, op.cit., 71.
[33] Ibid, 85.
[34] Ibid, 88.
[35] Ibid, 91.
[36] This will be more fully discussed in relation to the work of the project in Chapter 3.
[37] Ibid.,100.
[38] Pamela Cole, Georgia State University, "The Grammar of Film Editing," http://pamcole.com/DOCS/film_editing.html (accessed October 2012)
[39] Cole, op. cit.

It is important to determine the value of film as a mode of representation and to consider the domain of filmmaking practice with which this project identifies. Film within this project allows for the possibility of the re-presentation of experience; its particular relevance is connected to the concepts of time and space and how these serve to illustrate the liminal experience. Filmmaker and ethnographer, Maya Deren, writing in 1946 states that in her practice 'the function of film, like that of other art forms, was to create experience… reality must exploit the capacity of film to manipulate Time and Space.'[40] The materiality of film means that it exists within a specific time and space, however the way in which film manipulates these concepts and plays with our perception as we watch them suggests that the time and space of film exists in its own right and is outside of real experience. Film has the potential to mediate and re-present, rather than to document and merely show. In her practice, Deren insisted 'on a filmically visual integrity, which would create a dramatic necessity of itself, rather then be dependent upon or derive from an underlying dramatic development'[41]. She believed that time held creative possibilities and that the process of artistic creation was to make the invisible visible. In her essay, *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film,* Deren 'argues for a filmic art that uses the optical realism or indexical nature of the photographic image and the editing capacity for spatio-temporal leaps as the material for the creative process.'[42] This approach to working with moving image reflects the development of my own artistic practice as film allows for a more immediate and dynamic response to the re-presentation of experience than the still photographic image; despite its value and function as a work of art in its own right, the still image remains still and lifeless.

An intentional manipulation of time and space can be seen in Maya Deren's film work[43] as well as in the work of Dziga Vertov, who's reflexive film *Man With A Movie Camera* (1929) attempts 'to film, in slow motion, that which has been, owing to the manner in which it is perceived in natural speed, not absolutely unseen, but missed by sight, subject to oversight.'[44] The idea of capturing and re-presenting something that has been 'missed' and 'subject to oversight' relates to the lived experience of grief which is pertinent within this enquiry; the possibilities that the filmic form present have the most potential as a mode of expression and re-presentation. Performance

[40] Maya Deren, *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film* in *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde,* ed. Bill Nichols, (USA: University of California Press, 2001), Appendix, 5.
[41] Ibid., 5.
[42] Lauren Holly Rabinovitz, *Radical Cinema: the films of Maya Deren, Shirley Clarke and Joyce Wieland,* (Michigan: UMI, 1992), 47.
[43] *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946) was one of Deren's early works that clearly illustrates her intentions. It is part of a body of avant-garde work that focused on filming dance as a way of exploring time and space through creative ritualistic processes. This was further developed in her work as a ethnographer; she wrote about Haitian dance rituals and the mythical roots of Voudoun in her book: *Divine Horseman: The Living Gods of Haiti* (1953) Many hours of film footage was also collected by Deren at this time, however due to her untimely death (1961) this was not edited and made into a film.
[44] Vertov cited in Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London:/New York, Routledge, 2007), 161.

theorist Peggy Phelan in her discussion of the altering of cinematic time in *Man With A Movie Camera,* reflects on how the manipulation of time and space, and additionally the use of motion, 'reveal[s] a view of time that are optical and psychic possibilities… not actual ones.'[45] This suggests that the filmic form allows for the impossible; Deren writes that a work of art 'involves a conscious manipulation of its material from an intensely motivated point of view.'[46] The role of the artist/filmmaker is clearly articulated by Deren, however she was concerned to ensure that the work created had a value beyond that of the individual expression of the artist and in this context she draws on ritual, suggesting that ideas need to be 'abstracted from the immediate conditions of reality'[47] in order for them to be effective. The ritualistic form of film she advocates should create 'an imaginative, often mythological experience which, by containing its own logic within itself, has no reference to any specific time or place, and is forever valid for all time and place.'[48] The filmmaking methodologies of Deren are an inspiration within my artistic practice and for this enquiry, where film is the chosen art form with which to re-present the liminal experience.

It is useful to discuss some significant aspects of the research process and method here and to consider why certain examples of artmaking were placed within the phenomenological research process, while others were not. The initial research process was broad and included a variety of art works and mainstream films that demonstrated the way in which cultural products respond to the subject under consideration. However, it was important to focus attention on how artists have responded to loss and grief in filmic form. Whilst I have chosen not to focus my research and consideration on mainstream filmic responses to grief, I have drawn on specifc aspects of these works, as they are pertinent to particular aspects of my discussion and practice. As part of the research process written responses were produced that articulate my encounter with these art works and exemplary mainstream films, using thick description. The value of this to the research process was that it allowed for reflection with regard to how these works affect and inform the viewer about their subject. In addition they provided a data set from which to explore the other material being considered. This is commensurate with the phenomenological research process where all expressions of the phenomena are considered equally valuable, regardless of their form or intention. Hence, there are several critical examples of these responses included in the appendix.[49] As the research process continued, the reflection that had occurred with regard to these expressions enabled me to find a form of articulation for the making process itself. In the early stages of the project this takes the form of a production log[50] that describes the process of making and includes references to inspirational and influential texts.

[45] Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memeories,* op. cit., 157.
[46] Deren, op.cit., 33
[47] Ibid., 20.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Selected examples of thick descriptive responses to art works can be found in Appendix 1.
[50] Production Log for the early exploratory work of the project is contained in Appendix 2.

However, on reflection and as the process developed, this form of writing was replaced by the parataxic form which attempts to reflect lived experience directly. This became a tool that supported the expressive and experiential nature of the filmworks made. The process of making the filmworks is articulated in this form, as it is ideally suited to the reflexive nature of the filmmaking practice, and the project as a whole; this writing is also included as appendix.[51] The value of this to myself as maker was that I was able to reflect on the process undertaken in order to make filmworks and consider their efficacy. This proved a valuable tool for evaluative reflection as each film failed in some way to express its intentions fully, however, the elements that were successful could then be identified and taken forward.

Consideration could have been given to artists whose work has been identified as containing elements of the working through of mourning. For example, Leader considers the interdisciplinary work of Sophie Calle as being significant in this regard, as she conducts a dialogue of mourning drawing on the experiences of others, as well as on her own lived experience of loss.[52] However, due to the nature of her work and its lack of resonance with film production, Calle was not considered to be as directly pertinent to filmmaking as other practitioners. Similarly, the work of Marion Milner, psychoanalyst and author was given consideration, in particular, her discussion of creativity and her personal difficulties with artistic expression discussed in her 1950 book *On Not Being Able to Paint.* This work however has not been considered in detail due to the nature of the form she utilises; as a filmmaker, it was important to remain focused on this specific form of creative expression. Importantly, the research methodology of this project is not concerned with the nature of creativity or genius, rather its inspirations come from the assumption that the digital camera enables those who are not trained artists to find expression, as identified in the work undertaken in St. Catherine's Hospice. Therefore, whilst her work has tangential relevance to this enquiry, Milner does not provide a critical point of reference for the discussion of artmaking in this thesis. Another artist whose work resonates with that of the project is the painter and psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger. The term matrixal was employed by her as a way of articulating an alternative approach to the phallocentric notion of the male gaze, as established by Lacan, in her 1995 book *The Matrixal Gaze.* This term has been utilised by theorists in their discussion of the feminine and the concept of female abjection. Griselda Pollock, for example, refers to the matrixal gaze in her discussion of aesthetic approaches, proposing that the matrixal gaze is a reversal of the established notion of subject/object allowing for transcendence of the male gaze. Whilst this notion has value it has not been considered in detail within this thesis due to its focus on the feminine. This enquiry

[51] Parataxic writing articulating the making of *A Work of Memorial: Southend Pier, The Work of Mourning: The Perfect Pirouette, A Performance of Mourning: A Star is Born Part 1 and 2,* and *The End of Mourning: Osea Island* can be found in Appendix 3.
[52] Darian Leader discusses the artwork *Exquisite Pain* (2004) in his text *The New Black: Mourning and Melancholia* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2008), p-p 88-91.

seeks to explore a universal aesthetic approach to processing loss and grief through the making of filmworks, hence the focus on the feminine fails to support the practical work of the project. However, the concept of the matrixal gaze, as articulated by Pollock, is considered in the analysis of the final film work, as the notion of a trans-subjective approach that borders existing modes of representation relates to the liminal experience and its re-presentation in film.

It is useful to consider the nature of the discipline and the location of this thesis within academic discourse. The creative arts take multiple forms and as this project is concerned with filmmaking, it might be deemed necessary to locate its discourse within established ontologies, such as film theory, or film philosophy. However, as this is a practice led enquiry, the theoretical framework adopted necessitates a discussion of inspirations behind the making of artwork and the production of filmwork. In addition, it is necessary to also consider the value of the making process as autobiographical ground. Hence the thesis sets out its terms through the contextual chapter and locates its discussion regarding the themes of the project through a selection of artist film works that illustrate how and in what ways film can and does respond to loss and grief. Then it considers the making process itself, including the processes undertaken and the motivations for these. The nature of the production of artworks and their value is explored through a consideration of the production itself. In this regard, a disciplinary shift has occurred and the making process privileged accordingly.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the contextual ground of the project will be explored. The term liminal will be defined and considered through the lens of anthropology where it was first used to describe a ritualistic or transitional state. The concept of liminal space will be discussed and the notion of transition and transformation established through the work of anthropologist Victor Turner.[53] The concept of pilgrimage will then be explored and its use within this enquiry as a device established: a pilgrimage is both an inward and outward journey and, through a process of reframing, it has the potential to provide a conceptual framework for the journey from life to death. The paths that are used by pilgrims are separated and in the margin; the notion of liminal space is further considered through these paths and the journeys that they facilitate. As a framing device a pilgrimage can be considered a rite of passage that allows the pilgrim to confirm or re-establish their self-identity. This is a necessary and important function of the mourning process as one's sense of self can be significantly altered following a loss. Liminality is an altered state, where time and identity are intrinsically connected and where the subject experiences alterations in perception affecting their lived experience, locating them in a separate

[53] Victor Turner. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual.* (London: Cornell University Press, 1967).

space. The liminal space is a site of action, a heterotopia, where a performative action can be undertaken; this notion will be explored through Lefebvre's definition of representational space, where symbolic frames function to enable a re-presentation of experience.[54] The concept of embodiment will then be explored through the work of phenomenologists Merleau-Ponty[55] and Drew Leder.[56] The notion that our perceptions are related to our bodily experience, as well as to the time and space that the body inhabits, will be established and the irrefutable condition of the body as mortal introduced.

The chapter will then consider thanatology and the recent discourse that has emerged: trauma studies. The notion of the repeated infliction of a wound, which will be discussed through Cathy Caruth's work on the subject, will establish the premise of trauma and its relationship to loss.[57] The contribution to thanatology of the disciplines of sociology and psychology will then be defined. Sociologist Clive Seale considers that culture and story are ways in which we can re-establish a sense of ontological security following a significant loss and this will be explored drawing on phenomenological discourse and the notion of action through narrative.[58] This will lead on to the concept that defines psychology's approach to death and loss: death causes problems for us due to failures in our cognitive and linguistic systems. As a result of this deficit, we construct death in order to find a conceptual framework. Freud's notion of death anxiety is considered and the idea that grief can become a pathological condition if it is not processed effectively is introduced. The function of staged models, such as Kubler-Ross's five stage model, are considered and the establishment of grief as a subject embraced in psychoanalytical discourse is stated. The chapter then considers psychoanalysis and the way in which this particular discourse has responded to the affects of grief discussed.

Psychoanalyst Darian Leader argues that grief as a condition has become subsumed into depression and there is a confusion regarding these two separate states of being within the discipline. The arts, according to Leader, have the potential to enable and support the processing of grief and this is explored through the self story, which is an auto-ethnographic, self-reflexive tool that can function as a method of sharing the lived experience of loss and grief. Arthur W. Frank argues that the self-story has an ethical dimension and that these texts function as witness to the experience of those

[54] Henri Lefebvre. *The Production of Space.* Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991).
[55] Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *The Phenomenology of Perception.* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005).
[56] Drew Leder. *The Absent Body.* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
[57] Cathy Caruth. *Unclaimed Experience.* (Baltimore/London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996). Preface, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* Ed. C. Caruth. (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995).
[58] Clive Seale. *Constructing Death: The Sociology of Dying and Bereavement.* (Cambridge University Press: United Kingdom, 1998).

suffering from illness or loss.[59] Using the hero's journey as a frame of analysis, Frank establishes the three forms of self-stories and their function. A consideration of the self-story of C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* is then undertaken in relation to Freud's four stage mourning process. This identifies that the four stages of mourning, as laid out in Freud's essay *On Mourning and Melancholia*, have limitations and do not function effectively. This leads on to a discussion regarding the subsequent developments in psychoanalysis that attempted to address these limitations. Julia Kristeva considered that if mourning was arrested an individual would develop narcissistic depression due to having internalised the lost object.[60] However, Hanna Segal makes the claim that artmaking, which has the potential to shift the mourner to the depressive position, can address the anxiety associated with the loss of the loved object and that further, artmaking allows for the restoring and recreating of the loved object.[61] This means that the mourner can create their world anew and re-establish their sense of self in the world. The argument of the project is established here in that making a work of art can support the processing of loss and grief.

Chapter two is a thematic review of filmic works that attempt to process grief and loss. These works are by artists who work primarily in the filmic form; they were chosen due to the intentions of their makers who produced them as an expression of their lived experience. The chapter begins by considering the filmic form as a mode of expression for the processing of grief, establishing it as an intra and inter subjective experience equally performable by the filmmaker and the viewer, who perceptually experiences the work. This discussion is framed by Rancière's notion of the great parataxic, where a dissemblance of images are formed into a montage, that he terms the sentence-image.[62] In addition, the concept of the exilic optic as established by Homi K. Bhabha provides a useful frame of reference for the analysis of the filmworks.[63] Chris Welsby's work *Drift,* is a useful illustration of the intersubjective experience of film viewing and this work is considered here due its use of landscape and the automising gaze inherent in landscape art. The use of landscape and the exilic optic is present in Sarah Turner's *Perestroika,* which is discussed in relation to its lack of an automising gaze, which limits it to a subjective work that fails to effectively process loss and grief. In contrast, Andrew Kotting's multi-media work *In the Wake of A Deadad* is an example of mourning made public through a dialogue and critical subjectivity: it transcends the subject becoming a work of thanatography, that

[59] Arthur W. Frank. *The Wounded Storyteller* (London/Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1995).
[60] Julia Kristeva. *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (Columbia. USA: New York University Press, 1989).
[61] Hanna Segal. "Art and The Depressive Position" *Dream, Phantasy and Art.* (London: Routledge, 1991).
[62] Jacques Rancière. The Sentence Image and the Great Parataxis. In *The Future of the Image.* (London/NY: Verso, 2007).
[63] Homi K. Bhabba. "Preface." *Home, Exile, Homeland,* edited by Hamid Naficy, (New York/London: Routledge, 1999).

explores both presence and absence. The notion of performing mourning is introduced here in relation to Peggy Phelan's assertion that psychoanalysis is a performance: through performing mourning we are able to undertake a process of transference and transformation, similar to that experienced in psychoanalytical encounters.[64] A discussion of the phenomenological reduction process undertaken is then introduced, establishing the themes of the project. By identifying the invariant constituents in the artists' films and the variant constituents that are compatible, thematisation can occur; this then leads onto the application of these constituents in the making of film work which is discussed in chapter three.

Chapter three articulates the work of the project: the mode of working, experiential filmmaking, and reflects upon the work produced as project outputs. The chapter begins with a discussion of Rancière's concept of the aesthetic regime and its value within this enquiry, establishing the mode of working and the filmic strategies adopted.[65] The approaches used as methodology within the practical work of the project are considered in the context of the imaginative variant: the application of an imaginative element to the research process that is commensurate with the nature of the project. The film theorist Vivian Sobchack establishes the value of filmmaking and the phenomenological third space, where the film, the filmmaker and the viewer meet and the work is experienced.[66] This notion is considered and the production values of the project stated. The invariant constituents identified in the thematic review were applied and explored practically in the early work of the project. The chapter considers and critically analyses the filmworks made resulting in the production of a textural description that enabled further features to be abstracted and labelled. These features were then applied to the making of further works. Through these works the concept of the self as subject is explored as well as the notion of performing mourning. These filmworks are then analysed to determine their invariant features and compatible elements. The notion of mourning within a symbolic and paradigmatic context is explored through the concept of Frank's mirroring body and this leads on to a discussion of the scopic and the value of this approach as a way of establishing self-identity. Rancière's concept of aesthetic autonomy is introduced and this is applied to the making of the final film work, that aims to function as a universal description of the phenomena of grief and is both a textural and structural description of the experience. This work is then analysed through the concept of the matrixal gaze and its essential elements identified and extrapolated. The process of verification of these elements results in the argument being posited that the final film work is a unified statement of the phenomenon of grief that enables the re-presentation of the liminal experience in film. The value of the process of making

[64] Peggy Phelan. *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories.* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007).
[65] Jacques Rancière. *The Politics of Aesthetics.* (New York: Continuum, 2004).
[66] Vivian Sobchack. *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

filmwork as a way of processing grief can then be determined and its applications considered.

1. Conceptualising Loss, Grief and Liminality

It is useful to begin this thesis with a conceptual overview of the related theoretical discourses in order to establish the theoretical ground for the project. The subject of grief has been considered in various discourses and whilst it does not have its own ontology, several disciplines are concerned to explore grief and its affects. Therefore, this project seeks to identify significant elements of theoretical discourses that are relevant to the subject under consideration. The discourses discussed within this chapter can then be considered in relation to the project outputs and the aims of the project, and provide a framework within which critical analysis and dialogical engagement with the subject can be undertaken.

The title of the project: a pilgrimage into the liminal, suggests that there is a defined context within which to undertake the research; however, the context transits several disciplines and can be considered to be transdisciplinary. Therefore, this chapter will begin by stating definitions of the liminal and considering the elements of liminality that are important to the work of the project. The term has its origins in anthropology and is used to articulate a specific ritual, or rite of passage undertaken. Defining this leads to a discussion of the significance of space and its relation to the concepts of place, transition and transformation. It is posited that these concepts are illustrative of the liminal and its function. The notion of pilgrimage is then explored and its relationship to liminality considered. A pilgrimage is both an inward and an outward journey, a device for framing experience; it functions as a useful concept within this enquiry as it allows for the reframing of experiences that we struggle to conceptually understand. The use of pilgrim's pathways during a pilgrimage indicates a literal marking out of space which functions as a margin, enabling the separation of the pilgrim from everyday life, whereby they might discover a new sense of identity. In this space, this margin, the concept of time is altered and a self-reflexive state emerges that is considered to be that of liminality. In the liminal space, there is the possibility of action, and re-presentation. This will be considered through the concept of the heterotopia and Lefebvre's notion of representational space. The use of frames as symbolic locations for action and self-reflexivity will be established and the notion of embodiment explored through the phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty and Drew Leder. The establishing of the embodiment paradigm for this enquiry enables the notion to be carried forward into the making of artworks.

It is useful to consider how grief is considered in the varying discourses that contribute to thanatology. The study of death is a trans-disciplinary discourse, and while it is not possible to explore this in detail within this chapter, the contributions of the disciplines of trauma studies, sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis will be established and their relevance for this project considered. As Leader states:

'Grief is our reaction to a loss, but mourning is how we process this grief.' [67] Mourning as a process is considered to be an effective way to manage and deal with the affects of loss; however mourning is not a simple process and as suggested by Freud: 'We recoil… from any activity that causes pain… there is a revolt in our minds against mourning.'[68] The self-story, as articulated by Frank, can function as a tool with which to process grief and undertake the work of mourning. The value of the self-story as a way to deal with loss will be considered through the self-stories of C.S. Lewis and the four stages of mourning as laid out by Freud in *Melancholia and Mourning.* This discussion will lead on to the notion established by Hanna Segal, that the making of artworks can support the maker in dealing with the depressive condition, a possible result of blocked mourning. The argument that artmaking can support the processing of loss and grief is significant to this enquiry and will enable a reflection of the project outputs in the final chapter of this thesis.

The Liminal

> Definition of liminal:
> adjective
> technical
> 1. relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.
> 2. occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.
> Derivatives
> liminality
> noun
> Origin:
> late 19th century: from Latin limen, limin- 'threshold'[69]

The liminal experience is defined throughout this enquiry as that which is acquired in the embodied and psychological space of grief: a space that allows for transition and transformation, and that has the potential to allow for the working through of mourning.[70] The term liminal has its origins in anthropology, where it is employed to describe a particular ritualistic and transitory experience, and in addition, a specific space, where such an experience occurs. It is also used to articulate a range of experiences, places and locations. These various uses are worth considering, as the way in which the term is used transits and borders various related subjects and experiences, allowing for a fuller understanding of what is referred to here as the liminal experience. Whilst I use the above definition in my research, the term also

[67] Leader, op. cit., 26.
[68] Ibid, 27.
[69] http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/liminal (Accessed 20/03/10)
[70] The visual themes identified for the initial stages of the project and as a way of collecting data related to the phenomenon of grief are Transition, Transformation and Place. These are discussed in Chapter 3 and an account of their use in the production of filmwork is contained in the Production Log, Appendix 2.

covers ritualistic and performance spaces, transitory sites and locations, such as stations and airports, sites of crisis, such as hospitals and hospices, and the transgeneric or fantasy space that mark films such as Tarvosky's *Solaris* (1972), where the potential for transformation is evident within the confines of the space, or location, of the story being told. Key theorists to be considered include the anthropologist Victor Turner, who writes about this liminal phase and attributes its definition to Van Gemmep and Richard Schechner. Turner subsequently established the notion of a performance space as liminal based on Schechner's work on theatre and ritual.[71] [72]It is interesting to observe that the term is used by other disciplines, for example, art therapy and in discourses about art and film by academics using it to articulate a range of states and experiences. [73] [74]

The term liminal has been used to describe transitional spaces: in the Greek language limen literally means harbour. Within my visual imagination the clearest image that surfaces of a transitional experience is of the journey of the character Pilgrim in *Pilgrim's Progress,* described by its author John Bunyan as: 'The Pilgrim's Progress from this world, to that which is to come'.[75] In this complex allegory, written by Bunyan during a period of imprisonment, it is Pilgrim's awareness of the limitations of his earthly existence that makes him pause and take his journey into the unknown.

The notion of pilgrimage is worth considering, as since its known origin in western culture during the medieval period, such journeys have been replicated and expanded to include secular notions of pilgrimage, in addition to those that seek to reach a 'greater understanding of God'. [76] [77] Pilgrimages are differentiated from other types of

[71] In his 1960 text *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge, 2004), Gemmep was the first ethnographer to observe that there are ritualistic ceremonies in every culture, making the rite of passage a universal concept, regardless of the subject of the rite or ritual being undertaken.

[72] Turner's work on the development of what we have come to know as theatre in the western world, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (1982) was seminal in that it introduced the element of ritual to a performance art form that had previously been considered to be staged story telling. The performer and theorist Richard Schechner embraced this concept and developed an argument for performance as having a purpose above and beyond that of entertainment and storytelling. He produced the influential text *From Ritual to Theatre and Back: The Structure/Process of the Efficacy-Enactment Dyad* (pub. in the Education and Theatre Journal 1974) where he explored various performance concepts and their value before writing his seminal work *Ritual Play and Performance* in 1976. Schechner's use of the term liminal and its relation to liminal space will be discussed later in this chapter.

[73] Art therapist Caryl Sibbert uses the concept of the liminal to articulate the experience of being terminally ill in her PhD project/book *Art Therapy and Cancer Care* (2005). Her use of this term and its relevance to the hospice setting is further discussed later in this chapter.

[74] An example of this is Ian McHugh, who in his PhD project *Liminal Subjectivities in Contemporary Film and Literature*, (University of Sussex 2010) considers the liminal to be a trope of destabilised subjectivity; he explores how liminality functions as an interface and a space whereby literary and film works are experienced.

[75] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (London: Penguin, 1987), 1.

[76] Despite pilgrimage being associated with religious practices, there is evidence that pre-Christianity there were routes that were journeyed for other purposes. For example, filmmaker Andrea Leland and academic Lauren Poluha write about the pilgrimage of the displaced Garinagu people in 'Spiritual Pilgrimages of the Garinagu: Past, Present and Future' as a cultural journey to the land of their

journeys by 'the idea that a pilgrimage is simultaneously an outward and inward journey'.[78] Academic David Imrie, in his essay discussing the pilgrimages of artists Michael Coombs and Rich Webster, writes that the pilgrim's paths 'act as a liminal space where movement through a defined territory brings the spiritual and material worlds into direct proximity… symbols and signs are given depth.'[79] Imrie claims that the journey, which likely consists of varying locations, challenges and tests, 'induces a heightened awareness'[80] that enables a 'reframing of space and place'.[81] Imrie uses the concept of a frame to illustrate the notion of pilgrimage and this is further discussed by Coombs who makes reference to neuroscience and linguistics to support this concept. Describing his coincidental encounter with a television lecture by the linguist George Lakoff whilst undertaking his pilgrimage through the heartlands of America, Coombs quotes Lakoff stating that 'The brain is structured on frames and conceptual metaphors.'[82] He goes on to consider whether a pilgrimage is a process by which we can give a frame of reference to something that we might not otherwise be able to understand. This implies that the function of a pilgrimage is to enable the articulation of something that the brain struggles to comprehend and to provide a frame or set of references that can be returned to and re-examined as required. Coombs then considers the role of concept neurons[83] where in theory, it is possible to make connections between memories and experiences, before surmising that the 'function of a pilgrimage is… to strengthen the links between certain concept neurons'[84] and experiences that we previously have failed to conceptually understand. The experience of transiting from life to death is one such experience that we struggle to conceptually make sense of. Hence the adoption of the notion of pilgrimage here functions as an attempt to conceptually understand this transition. By imaginatively transiting the spaces encountered, for example the Valley of the Shadow of Death that Pilgrim needs to pass through on his journey, it could be

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ancestors. Similarly, Shirley du Plooy writes about indigenous peoples in the Free State of South Africa who journey through landscapes to the burial ground of their ancestors in 'Landscapes, Dreamscapes and Personscapes as Pilgrimage Meshworks'. (*Pilgrim Paths: Journeys of Transformation,* Ed. Mary Farrelly and Vivienne Keely, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2015).

[77] Michael Coombs, "The Faintest Idea" *Are We Here Yet* (UK: University of Cumbria, 2011), 15.
[78] Ibid., 15
[79] David Imrie, "On The Road To Somewhere"(UK: University of Cumbria, 2011), 6.
[80] Ibid., 7.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Coombs, op.cit., 16.
[83] Concept neurons are single neurons in the hippocampus that are triggered by certain visual stimuli as well as related text and images, suggesting that there is associative conceptual thinking within the memory functions of the brain. Discussed in Schacter, Daniel L, and Donna Rose Addis. "The Cognitive Neuroscience of Constructive Memory: Remembering the Past and Imagining the Future." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 362.1481 (2007): 773–786. *PMC*. Web. (28 July 2015).
[84] Coombs, op.cit.,19.

possible to determine a personal frame of reference for the journey from life to death.[85]

The anthropologist Victor Turner in his discussion of liminality describes the process as the undertaking of rites of transgression that happen in three phases: separation, margin (or limen) and aggregation. Whilst undertaking his pilgrimage, Pilgrim is immersed in liminality, 'betwixt and between' and in the phase of 'margin'. Those in the margin, or liminal phase have: 'nothing... no status, property, insignia, secular clothing, rank, kinship position, nothing.'[86] The notion of exploring one's sense of self during liminality is referred to by Coombs who states that 'a pilgrimage is really about making manifest a sense of identity, a scene of what an individual considers fundamentally important.'[87] In his studies, Turner was concerned with how tribal cultures made sense of their transitional stages: from boy to man, from girl to woman, and from life to the after-life, and he observed the way in which these cultures processed these transitions by undertaking rites of passage. This suggests that a pilgrimage has the potential to function as a rite of passage by enabling the pilgrim to consider their own self-identity in relation to something that they think is important. We do not privilege many rites of passage in western culture, and we are subject to a limited range of responses to dealing with and processing loss. It is as if the transition from life to death is so acute that we have no satisfactory conceptual references for it; within my own lived experience of loss, I have struggled to find a way to understand this transition. Whilst Turner's research suggests that to go through a transition is a natural and even expected event, it seems that the end of life comes as a complete surprise to those of us living in the developed world. The notion of framing through undertaking a pilgrimage is therefore a useful device whereby I can conceptualise and begin to understand the experience of loss in relation to my sense of self and identity.

Within this research project, pilgrimage is a device that enables a conceptual understanding of the existence of death and the experience of loss. By undertaking a pilgrimage into the liminal, I can begin to frame my lived and embodied experience and arrive at a conceptual understanding of loss and grief. Turner tells us that 'Liminality is the realm of primitive hypothesis, where there is a certain freedom to juggle with the factors of existence… a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise.'[88] It is important to identify and consider the specific features of liminality and to explore the varying articulations that have been identified as significant to this research project.

[85] The visual image this passage in the book instigates is a powerful visual reference used as inspiration when making filmworks as part of this project. See production log for a detailed discussion of this and other inspirational pilgrimages.
[86] Turner, op. cit., 94.
[87] Coombs, op. cit., 22.
[88] Turner, op. cit., 105.

Liminality has a specific effect on our perceptions and in particular that of time: it is important to consider the relationship between temporality and identity to explore this effect and to consider whether this is a phenomenon of grief. In his discussion of identity and temporality, Moustakus tells us that the two concepts are indivisible as in lived experience, the two are as one: 'each noematic perception enters and departs with its temporal phases'[89] suggesting that that which is perceived can only be understood in relation to the time in which it occurs, and vice versa. This is an interesting concept to apply to the experience of grief and supports the identification of a phenomenon that connects experience even as each rendering appears differently. This is observed in the work of writers articulating their lived experience of loss and grief: an identical phenomenon is observed which connects them: their altered and distorted perception of time. C.S. Lewis, in his self-reflexive text written as a way of processing and managing his grief after the loss of his wife, *A Grief Observed* (1961), reflects on his lived experience and illustrates this phenomenon: 'Up until this I always had too little time. Now there is nothing but time. Almost pure time, empty successiveness.'[90] In Joan Didion's similarly self-reflexive text *The Year of Magical Thinking* (2005), she describes the year directly after her husbands' sudden death when she did not accept his death and somehow, lived in a timeless place where he could at any moment return to her – his death undone. Didion begins her text with the lines:

> *Life changes fast.*
> *Life changes in an instant.*
> *You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends.*
> *The question of self-pity.*[91]

This is illustrative of the altered state that follows a significant loss and supports the notion that we perceive time differently when we are immersed in such a state. In her writing, Didion returns to these four lines frequently, almost as a measure of and evidence of her continuing experience; a check-in to see if she is still in the same place, experiencing the same thing. Sally Friedman, in her autobiographical book written about her life after the unexpected death of her young husband, *Swimming the Channel,* describes the precise time when she was told about her husband's accident:

> The buzzer rang. I asked who it was into the intercom. 'Police,' they said. And in that instant, the Moment began, when time became unrecognizable to me, when I commenced the trouble to stop it from moving forward… The Moment, if time itself can have emotional components, took on an element of terror, and persisted in progressing.[92]

[89] Moustakus, op. cit.,75
[90] Lewis, op. cit. 30.
[91] Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (UK: Harper Collins, 2009), 3.
[92] Sally Freidman, *Swimming the Channel: a Memoir of Love and Loss* (London: Vintage, 1996), 98.

Friedman is precise in her description of her experience, relating time to emotions and even terror. This is also referred to by Lewis who begins his text with the statement: 'No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear.'[93] In one 'moment' Friedman's awareness changed and everything that seemed certain was no longer so. This parallels the observations of art therapist and cancer sufferer Caryl Sibbert; she cites 'Turner [who] asserts that liminal experience is a 'moment in and out of time.'[94] This means that for those who are in the 'margin' and experiencing liminality that time does not have the same passage: perceptions are altered significantly.

During her research project, Sibbert explored her lived experience 'from an anthropological perspective, paralleling my experience with a rites of passage transition, associated ritual and particularly the state of liminality.'[95] Throughout her project, she draws on autoethnography: 'an autobiographical genre of writing and research connecting the personal to the cultural.'[96] Sibbert makes her lived experience 'explicit by writing in the first person and by the inclusion of biographical and personally reflective material and artwork.'[97] Her research focused on how she 'felt being in a liminal, transitional space… living and practising at the threshold between life and death.'[98]

This illustrates another key feature of liminality, that of space: a '"rite of passage… is often accompanied by a parallel passage in space… the literal crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas."'[99] This description of a 'parallel passage in space' is indicative of pilgrims paths and in addition, the visual imagery of the Valley of the Shadow of Death in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Sibbert draws on Foucault's concept of the '*heterotopia*, a real place set apart from other places,'[100] to help to conceive liminal space: she refers to the space of art therapy and 'the artwork spaces within therapy'[101] as being heterotopias. Sibbert writes that 'Foucault proposes that heterotopias probably occur in every culture'[102] and that they include sacred, ritualistic spaces, such as those studied by Turner. However, in her discussion of liminal time Sibbert tells us that Foucault suggests that the 'heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time.'[103] This illustrates that the concepts of time and space are interconnected during liminality and that, in the same way that Moustakus argues

[93] Lewis, op.cit., 5.
[94] Caryl Sibbert, *Art Therapy and Cancer Care* (England: Open University Press, 2005), 19.
[95] Ibid., 221.
[96] Ibid., 13.
[97] Ibid., 224.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Turner 1982: 25 cited in Sibbert, Ibid., 18.
[100] Ibid..
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Sibbert, op. cit., 19.

that time and identity are connected, these interlinked notions are interstitial and exist within the boundaries, or the 'margin' of the liminal experience.

It is useful to consider that performance space has been identified by Turner as being ritualistic, and the concept of the liminal employed as a way of discussing a form of action. Sibbert cites performance theorist Richard Schechner, who suggests that the space of the 'limen' or threshold becomes 'expanded into a wide space both actually and conceptually,' and this then "becomes the site of the action."(Schechner 2003: 58)'[104] This action is for Sibbert, the action of art therapy. For those engaged in performance the space literally is a site of action, as the performance takes place in a specific time and space. However, this could also be considered the action of the pilgrim in that the journey being undertaken becomes expanded conceptually, regardless of the actual space or path being traversed and the context or time in which the journey takes place.

Imrie in his discussion about pilgrim paths and the spaces that they inhabit, albeit temporarily, draws on Henri Lefebvre's concept of representational spaces as posited in *The Production of Space* (1974)[105]. Imrie writes that 'representational spaces are distinct from spatial practice (our routine, everyday relationship to social space) and representations of space (the dominant, codified forms of knowledge and sign systems).'[106] Lefebvre makes the connection between three different types of space and uses the term 'representational spaces' to illustrate spaces where 'complex symbolisms' are embodied. These spaces, according to Imrie, 'can help us to focus on things, which sometimes pass us by in the repetitive daily routines of our highly technological mediated existence.'[107] The artists' pilgrimages he discusses are documented by digital photography[108] utilising technology as an immediate way of reflecting on and processing their lived experience during and after their journeys. Imrie argues that the artists use these processes as they 'provide the appropriate sensory equipment that fits the topographies of these journeys.'[109] The images produced are a 'result of chance as well as the intention of the photographer-artist' and as such they 'draw our attention… to captured moments.'[110] This supports the autoethnographic processes utilised in the practical work of this project: writing,

[104] Ibid., 20.
[105] Lefebvre's text explores, through the use of Marxist ideology, how space has become commodified and politicized: he discusses how our use of space is affected by hegemonic forces, and the means of production. Lefebvre explores how we use space as social beings and brings a deeper understanding to the concept of space that has proved beneficial in the practical work of this enquiry, particularly the notion of private/public space and the way in which these are inhabited. *The Production of Space.* Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991).
[106] Imrie, op.cit., 8.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Michael Coombs *The Faintest Idea* (2011) and Rich Webster *Sacred Sites* (2011)
[109] Imrie, op. cit., 8.
[110] Imrie, op. cit., 8

photography and digital filmmaking that function as reflective and expressive tools that enable the re-presentation of moments captured from, and in, lived experience.

In his description of the function of representational spaces, Lefebvre includes 'art' which he claims 'may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces.'[111] This implies that 'art' becomes a form of shorthand for space itself and by implication that space can be re-presented by 'art'. The production of artworks by pilgrims who inhabit liminal space are therefore symbolic of the space itself, functioning as sign and frame simultaneously. Frames, as discussed by Imrie, can enable us to conceptually understand an experience that seems unfathomable, such as the experience of loss. However, frames have relevance as a structure that contains an image, as in a picture frame, and these have been identified as symbolic of loss by psychotherapist Darian Leader who discusses, drawing on clinical practice when working with those who are bereaved, how grieving individuals often report the existence of frames in their dream imagery. He describes how 'a special motif frequently emerges: doorways, arches, stages and many other features that serve to frame a space.'[112] Leader suggests that the use of frames in this context is not related to the symbolic, as is the case with other dream imagery for example. Rather, the frame 'draws attention to whatever lies within its boundaries.'[113] He argues that the purpose of the frame is to inform us that what we are looking at is a re-presentation and not the thing itself. This enables the individual to transform their experience of loss into a re-presentation of a representation, meaning that they are able to inscribe their loss into a symbolic space. Leader argues that this signifies that there has been a processing of the loss and that the work of mourning is in its final stages; this is indicative of the Freudian concept of 'an exhaustion of representations.'[114] It is interesting to compare this notion of representation with Lefebvre's concept of representational spaces and how they enable art to become symbolic of the space itself. The implication emerges that artworks made during an encounter with the phenomenon of grief have the potential to re-present grief itself.

The potential for art making in liminal space is evident in the art therapy work of Sibbert and in the photography and accompanying reflexive writing undertaken by Coombs and Rich, who utilise auto-ethnographic methodologies. The use of reflexive and ritualistic filmmaking practices as a way of reflecting on lived experience has also been identified as being relevant and purposeful as a way of re-presenting the liminal. However, there is another feature of the liminal experience that needs to be considered here: that of embodiment.

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[111] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space.* Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 33.
[112] Leader, op. cit., 100.
[113] Ibid, 101.
[114] Ibid.

Existential phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty identified in his work *The Phenomenology of Perception* that it is through the body that we perceive and experience the world:

> The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them.[115]

Defining a paradigm for the notion of embodiment, Merleau-Ponty considers spatiality and how we understand our bodies in relation to our sense of self. Drawing on clinical experiences of working with those who had lost limbs during the war, he identified a bodily awareness, a sense of proprioception, that has little to do with actuality but rather is a result of our individual and unique perception. Merleau-Ponty argues that our bodies allow us to define space, as it is in the relationship that our bodies have to the space that they perceive that we are able to form an abstract concept of space itself, as well our motility within it: 'By considering the body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and, moreover, time).'[116] It is interesting to consider this idea in relation to the journeys of pilgrims traversing through liminality and to recognise the significance of space and motion to these journeys. However, Merleau-Ponty is not only concerned with individual units of experience: he continues in his text to explore the 'sense-experience'[117], which is a unit of perception that is the totality of the visual and the embodied, in relation to both space and time: 'We must therefore avoid saying that our body is in space, or in time. It inhabits space and time.'[118]

This notion of embodiment is similarly articulated by phenomenologist Drew Leder in his book *The Absent Body;* he claims that: 'To be embodied is to inhabit a particular place and time, to have a unique history, physiology, and perceptual perspective.'[119] Leder writes about the lived body as a mode of experience and as a way of directing intentionality, enabling us to better understand our lived experience. He states that 'Through the lived body I open to the world.'[120] This means that it is not only through our senses that we experience the world but that by being embodied and aware of this that we are able to engage in and exist in the world in a different and potentially richer manner: 'The notion of the lived body makes room for a more inclusive sense of spirit.'[121]

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[115] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception.* Trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), 94.
[116] Ibid., 117.
[117] See Merleau-Ponty's chapter on "Sense Experience" in *The Phenomenology of Perception* for a detailed discussion of this concept. p-p 240-282.
[118] Ibid., 139.
[119] Leder, op. cit., 162.
[120] Ibid., 173.
[121] Leder, op.cit., 8.

The relevance of this notion of embodiment to liminality is made explicit by Sibbert who refers to Turner's proposition 'that liminality is an embodied state'[122] that is 'congruent with the embodiment paradigm (Merleau Ponty 1962) which emphasises that the 'body is also, and primarily, the self. We are all embodied.' (Synnott 2001: 1)'[123] This supports the concept of self reflexivity which is of significance in liminality, however, Leder claims that we need to be wary of using only a first person perspective, as this results in a privileging of a particular view. Within his text he refers to 'the embodied person witnessed from the third-person and first-person perspective alike… including intellectual cognition along with visceral and sensorimotor capacities.'[124] In order to direct attention to the liminal experience it is important therefore to consider the entire range of bodily responses: our intellectual responses to experience has as much relevance as the visceral and sensorimotor. In order to fully express liminality therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to our perceptions and to recognise that these pertain to the body and its relationship to space and time.

The liminal experience is a transitory, potentially transformative experience that has been identified as a way of directing attention to the phenomenon of grief. The notion of pilgrimage has been adopted as relevant and useful as it enables a self-reflexive action to take place that reflects the directing of attention implicit in the phenomenological mode of engagement adopted for this enquiry. In addition the potential for artmaking within the representational space of liminality has been identified. However, it is useful additionally to consider other relevant discourses related to loss and grief and how these reflect societal concerns regarding the way we perceive death and the inevitable experience of loss that we will all encounter. As Leder writes: Though none of us has ever experienced our own death, it ever seeds our body, waiting to blossom.'[125]

There are varying discourses that consider death and its effects. The medical profession is fundamentally driven by its concern to cheat death and to privilege life, as has been identified by Michel Foucault in his text *The Birth of The Clinic* (1963). However, this discourse will not be considered here due to its essentially reductionist approach: it is obvious that death is unavoidable, hence what is of concern here is how we might begin to understand our experience of it, rather than how we might stave it off. As Leder writes: 'The body-as-mortal poses a core problematic that cries out for hermeneutic and pragmatic therapies.'[126]

[122] Sibbert, op.cit., 51.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Leder, op.cit., 7.
[125] Ibid., 141.
[126] Leder, op. cit., 141.

Thanatology and Trauma Studies

Thanatology is the study of the phenomenon of death, including psychological responses to it. The discourse is essentially inter-disciplinary: we can see evidence of it as a subject appearing in sociology, anthropology, philosophy, political science, theology, health studies and science, as well as in the more obvious disciplines of psychology and cultural discourses, for example, art history, literature and film studies.[127] More recently, the relatively new discipline of trauma studies has embraced the trans-disciplinary nature of thanatology, focussing its attention on trauma and its effects. It is useful to reflect on and consider the relevance of some of these discourses as part of the contextualising of grief. The value of trauma studies will be considered initially, before a consideration of the approaches of the disciplines of sociology and psychology and their attempts to understand the processes and reactions to loss associated with grief, and societal responses and structures.

Comparative literature theorist Cathy Caruth is widely acknowledged as being the instigator of the discourse that is trauma theory. This relatively new area of academic research arose in response to questions that had been raised with regard to the way the human brain responds to and deals with trauma; as a trans and interdisciplinary discourse it embraces literary theory, psychiatry, neuroscience and cultural theory in its attempts to make sense of the condition of trauma and its resulting effects. It is being considered here as it has a relevance to the experience of loss and grief; loss can be traumatic and in instances where this is the case, the condition of post traumatic stress is often present. This condition shares some of the features of liminality in that the traumatised individual expresses a similar state of disorientation and anxiety, and the effects that trauma has on memory means that perceptions of time and space can be altered similarly. Trauma studies particular focus on memory with regard to historical fact will not be considered here, however the value of its inclusion is that it draws on Freud and his studies of the traumatised individual, illuminating some of the processes that those experiencing loss go through. Further, it enables a consideration of the value of cultural products, such as literature and film, as vehicles for processing and managing loss.

Caruth, in the Preface to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* informs her reader that the development of trauma studies was as an attempt to alleviate the suffering of those experiencing trauma. However, she is concerned to ensure that the treatment of trauma does not include the eradication of the memory associated with it, as this

[127] In November 2011, I presented part of my practical research at the 8th global conference: Making Sense of Death and Dying, facilitated by Inter-Disciplinary.Net: an independent UK based academic network. The conference was an illuminating introduction to thanatology and comprised a trans and interdisciplinary group of scholars who work/research around death and dying. Please see *Death, Dying and Culture: An Interdisciplinary Interrogation*, Ed. Lloyd Stefan and Nate Hinnerman, Inter-Disciplinary Press, (2013): the E-Book published as a result of this conference that contains my research paper: *The Film Musical as Cultural Vehicle for Dealing with Death and Dying.*

would diminish the truth of the event, resulting in the survivors' true stories being lost. Referring to Freud's early writing on trauma, in particular *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* Caruth tells us that the intention of his work with survivors of trauma was to enable a forgetting, so that they are freed from unwanted unpleasant memories of the trauma. However, in her Preface she sets up an intention that she claims is shared by 'therapists, literary critics, neurobiologists and filmmakers alike' to ensure that truthful stories can be told without 'reducing them to clichés.'[128] Using the story of Tancred, from the romantic epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*,[129] Caruth discusses Freud's interpretation of this tale in relation to the survivors of trauma, focussing on the notion of 'the repeated infliction of a wound'[130] Making reference to both the originary meaning of the word trauma, which is a wound from an injury inflicted on the body, and Freud's use of the word: a wound to the mind, Caruth explores the value of literature as a route to understanding such a wound. Freud's use of this story supports her claim and she argues that: 'literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not-knowing', as it is where 'the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience meet.'[131] Caruth questions whether in the story of Tancred it is his encounter with death through losing his love Clorinda that is the trauma, or whether it is the fact that he survives his wound and loss, and continues to live. She suggests that stories of trauma have 'a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life.*[132] Despite her considerations of the work of Freud on this subject and subsequently Lacan, and the argument she presents for a careful examination of literature and cultural products as a way of managing and processing the effects of trauma, including that of loss, the notion of trauma remains unresolved: 'the transmission of the psychoanalytical theory of trauma… cannot be reduced, that is, to a simple mastery of facts and cannot be located in a simple knowledge or cognition.'[133] Rather, this area of investigation continues with research that crosses over into other disciplines, such as neuropsychiatry.[134]

It can be argued that if a loss is accompanied by a trauma, for example an accident resulting in a death that is witnessed by a survivor of the same accident, that loss then

[128] Cathy Caruth, Preface, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* Ed. C. Caruth (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), vii.
[129] *Gerusalemme Liberata,* translated as Jerusalem Delivered (1851), is an epic poem, written by the Italian romantic poet, Torquato Tasso, that tells a mythical story of the First Crusade when Christian Knights fought Muslims for the city of Jerusalem.
[130] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 3.
[131] Ibid., 3.
[132] Ibid., 7.
[133] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History,* op.cit., 111.
[134] In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory,* the psychiatrist Bessel Van der Kolk discusses trauma through the development of psychopathology. In the chapter "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma" sets out a paradigm for traumatic memory, p-p 158-182. Van der Kolk has become one of the leading authorities within his discipline regarding post-traumatic stress disorder and its treatment through The Trauma Center, Boston, USA.

becomes traumatic. Within trauma discourse, research includes such losses, for example the auto-ethnographic work of Peter Bray and Oliver Bray, who perform their reflections on trauma, bereavement and the potential for transformation as a consequence of traumatic experiences. They draw on the Shakespearean story of Hamlet to explore their responses to traumatic deaths within their family, arguing that their actions in this discourse are a form of performance that enables them to 'integrate some of [their] difficult experiences… and catch glimpses of possible post-traumatic paths to growth.'[135] The effects of such traumatic losses, whilst being related to the condition of post traumatic stress disorder, are similar to that of a significant loss, especially if that loss was premature, unexpected, or sudden. In this regard it is useful to consider the context of trauma studies as one of the responses within the modern world to the trauma of loss, and our ever present struggle to conceptualise and understand death and its relationship to our lives.

Sociology

The discipline of sociology is concerned to identify the various structures and systems within society that are constructed in order to support human existence, and embraces a range of subjects as varied as human experience invariably is. However, sociologist Clive Searle writes that the: 'study of the human experience of death allows us to understand some fundamental features of social life',[136] positing the value of this subject to society, and to the discipline of sociology itself. In his book *Constructing Death: the Sociology of Death and Bereavement,* he argues that 'social and cultural life involves turning away from the inevitability of death, which is contained in the fact of our embodiment, and towards life.'[137] Seale believes that social and cultural activities in their varying forms, function in society as 'a continual defence against death'[138] which gives our lives meaning and purpose, despite the fact of our inevitable mortality. Seale considers a range of societal structures that have emerged in an attempt to construct an understanding of death, incorporating the social aspects of death with the medical, drawing on Foucauldian social constructivism and studies by determinist and functional sociologists such as Durkheim,[139] to establish the social constructs that have emerged during modernity. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty he also considers the phenomenological perspective and the embodiment paradigm, in order to reflect on the experiential nature of our encounters with death.

Seale claims that many of the structures that are constructed within society are about maintaining social bonds and connections, and that when someone is moving towards

[135] Bray, O and Bray, P. "Fathers and Sons" *Voicing Trauma and Truth: Narratives of Disruption and Transformation,* (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2013), 4.
[136] Clive Seale, *Constructing Death: the Sociology of Death and Bereavement* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.
[137] Ibid., 1.
[138] Ibid., 1.
[139] See Seale's chapter: "Experiencing and Representing the Body" p-p10-33.

death, due to illness or old age, they fall away from social and cultural practices. This presents a problem that he discusses through an analysis of the varying models that have risen to support such a falling away, for example, the hospice movement and revivalist discourses, that give 'the dying person [a] special status as a liminal being.'[140] He argues that the function of this has been to give death a meaning, despite the fact that it privileges the terminally ill rather than the more pedestrian deaths that most of us encounter. Interestingly, it is not until the final chapter of his book, that Seale begins to address grief directly, which he claims 'is a reaction to extreme damage to the social bond.'[141] Referring to Freud, Seale writes that 'the death of a loved one is, then, linked to damage to a sense of self' and that as a result of this there has been a 'medicalisation of grief.' [142] He itemises a range of physiological symptoms as identified by Worden[143] that are indicative of anxiety and other associative responses to loss, such as a tightness in the chest or throat and breathing problems with deep sighing outbreaths. The range of responses identified by Seale to these somatic symptoms include counselling, which he argues 'can be interpreted as performative ritual.'[144] The conversations and social bonds re-instigated by counselling procedures can support those who are bereaved in re-establishing an ontological security, that Seale suggests the experience of death challenges. Seale introduces Arthur W. Frank, who established the value of narrative reconstructions of illness stories, that in their telling or sharing have the potential to 'restore membership for those in danger of a fall from culture'.[145] In addition to this, mourning rites and rituals are other ways to re-establish ontological security, however Seale points out that these 'can be experienced as both helpful and coercive; their therapeutic value is too often assumed to be universally effective,'[146] suggesting that there is not in fact a simple strategy to solve this problem that can be applied to all. Seale refers to the work of anthropologists studying mourning rituals and practices[147] to make clear that the social context of loss 'affects the symptoms and shape of grief.'[148] This suggests that societal structures and cultural products have an influence on our perception of death, and that ultimately, we construct our own experience of death, depending on the context in which we live. Seale ultimately makes the point that 'the phenomenon conventionally referred to as 'grief' is in fact an extreme version of an everyday practice of 'grief which is routinely worked upon

[140] Seale, op.cit., 6.
[141] Ibid.,193.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Worden 1982, summarised by Littlewood, J., in *Aspects of Grief: Bereavement in Adult Life* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[144] Seale, op.cit., 197.
[145] Ibid., 202.
[146] Ibid., 200.
[147] Seale refers to the work of Lofland (1985) who argues that compared to other cultures and periods in history that we form a small number of intense social relationships, rather than a collection of wider social bonds, meaning that we feel the loss of these more keenly, especially when younger people die unexpectedly. See Seale, p-p. 198-200.
[148] Seale, op.cit., 200.

in order to turn the psyche away from awareness of mortality and towards continuation of life.'[149]

Tony Walter's phenomenological research focuses on the value of an active approach to loss: he makes a claim for narrative reconstruction as a way of managing our experiences that mirrors that of Frank. Further, he argues that 'the dead and the bereaved must somehow find a place in, and be integrated into, society.'[150] In his book *On Bereavement: The Culture of Grief,* Walter's considers how those who are bereaved are 'caught between the world of the living and the dead.'[151] He argues that, 'they must traverse this boundary' in order to 'find a place in, and be integrated into, society.'[152] This notion suggests that the bereaved, or those who are grieving, are outside of normal experience supporting the concept of liminality and of being in the 'margin'.

The discipline of sociology recognises the value of culture and story as functional when dealing with the concept of death; it also recognises the limitations of existing rites and rituals associated with death acknowledging that we are cultural and social beings primarily and dependant on existing models that frequently fail to function adequately. Its attempts to understand the 'role of embodiment in social life' that requires us to recognise 'that our bodies give to us both our lives and our deaths, so that social and cultural life can, in the last analysis, be understood as a human construction in the face of death.'[153]

Psychology

Psychology has a similar approach to that of sociology in that it considers the concept of death to be a construction; its contribution to thanatology however 'has centered around cognitive, affective and behavioural responses.'[154] Robert Kastenbaum, in the third edition of his 1972 work *The Psychology of Death,* writes about how prior to his investigation, psychology had given the subject little attention. He relates his observation that, when he was a student psychologist in the 1950s, there was a resistance to acknowledge the fact of mortality as a consequence of a period of time in history where there had been wars and other events causing deaths on an epic scale. He writes that 'many lived in grief-marked despair or died in agony and isolation.'[155] In contrast, the third edition of his book includes developments in the

[149] Ibid., 211.
[150] Tony Walter *On Bereavement: The Culture of Grief* (United Kingdom: Open University Press, 1999), 19.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., 211.
[154] Robert Kastenbaum, *The Psychology of Death* (United Kingdom: Free Association Books Ltd., 2000), 16.
[155] Ibid., 1.

discipline that have attempted to respond to death and an overview of the approaches that have been developed. It is interesting to identify that Kastenbaum draws on the discipline of sociology to make a claim for an embodied approach, which has 'the body in mind, the total organism adapting both to the outer and inner world.'[156] He also suggests that a cognitive-linguistic approach might be useful for the discipline, as this would allow us to 'construct or reference death' and that this 'might be distinctive in forming concepts such as nonbeing, nothing, and absence.'[157] However, he considers that some of the problems we have coping with death are due to 'the limits and quirks of our cognitive-linguistic systems,'[158] implying that language is not the most efficacious way to deal with such a concept.

Kastenbaum spends some time reflecting on death anxiety highlighting the work of Freud in this area and in particular the notion that it is not possible to be afraid of death itself as we have no awareness of it on an unconscious level. He quotes Freud writing in 1913: 'our own death is indeed quite unimaginable… It follows that no instinct we possess is ready for a belief in death (Freud, p.305)'[159]. Taking this premise forward, Kastenbaum discusses how the anxiety associated with death was considered by Freud to be related to something other than death itself, and that 'we must be projecting some other anxiety to the blank screen known as death.'[160] For Kastenbaum however this notion fails to acknowledge that 'anxiety – *all* anxiety – is rooted in the awareness of our mortality.'[161]

Kastenbaum draws on a range of criticisms of the Freudian death-instinct theory[162] surmising that it 'burdens us with a most unattractive load of pessimism, reductionism, past-drive determinism, and dualism… influenced by the dynamics of failed (neurotic) development.'[163] Psychology has emerged from this perspective to include theories that focus on the raising of awareness through interaction, using forms such as active listening, and stage theory: Kubler-Ross's five stage model where those experiencing death, or encountering it through the loss of a loved one, work through denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance. Kastenbaum criticises the stage model as 'there are methodological and interpretive problems' meaning that 'the existence of the five-stage model has not been demonstrated, either by Kubler-Ross or by independent research.'[164] However, he writes that it 'can be

[156] Ibid., 25.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Sigmund Freud, "*Thoughts for Times on War and Death"* cited in Kastenbaum, 102.
[160] Ibid., 102.
[161] Ibid., 104.
[162] Kastenbaum relates the development of this theory to the historical period in which it was conceived and introduces criticisms and posits explanations. Please see p-p. 161-195.
[163] Kastenbaum, op.cit., 179.
[164] Ibid., 223.

appreciated'[165] despite these criticisms and that it provided helpful guidelines at a time when the subject of death and its effects were just beginning to be discussed.

In his detailed account of psychological responses to grief, John Archer discusses how grief was identified as a human condition that caused suffering as early as 1651. Archer quotes English scholar and author Robert Burton writing that 'grief is a cruel torment… when grief appears all other passions vanish.'[166] Detailing the subsequent appearance of the topic in the development of psychology, Archer informs his reader that Darwin (1872) observed the phenomenon of grief in both humans and animals and that this later became relevant to evolutionary psychologists, whose perspective on grief is that it 'is a reaction to a deficit, representing the disruption of a goal-directed organised system'. This notion was taken forward by the psychologist Bowlby, who developed his concept of attachment theory[167] (1969) applying it to loss. However, Archer identifies the limitations of this approach pointing out that 'grief involves a rich array of feelings and thoughts which go beyond the separation reactions occurring in animals.'[168] Conversely, he identifies that for humans there are 'higher-order mental processes' involved including 'invasive thoughts, hallucinations [and] feelings of a change in identity'[169] that require a conceptual framework that allows for an understanding of how these processes are generated. Of key importance is the idea that these processes are the 'essence of grief.'[170]

Psychologists have considered grief 'a natural human reaction, as a psychiatric disorder and as a disease process,'[171] however, by the late 1980's the psychodynamic framework had become the dominant approach, drawing on the work of Freud and his essay *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) where the distinction was made between normal and pathological states of grief. According to Archer, subsequent developments by Karl Abraham (1924) who worked with Freud, and Melanie Klein (1940), who was analysed by Abraham, continued to explore the concept of pathological grief and the idea that it is necessary to work through grief in order to avoid it developing into a pathological condition, such as melancholia.

Psychology continues to explore, through empirical studies, observation and analysis, the way in which humans respond to loss; however Archer writes that 'the psychoanalytical framework continues to be very influential in writings about grief today.'[172] The psychoanalytical framework for understanding and responding to loss

[165] Ibid., 224.
[166] Robert Burton, (1651) cited by John Archer, *The Nature of Grief: the Evolution and Psychology of Reactions to Loss* (London, Routledge, 1999), 1.
[167] For a fuller discussion of attachment theory and how it can be applied to the experience of loss, see Archer, op.cit. p-p. 45-47.
[168] Archer, op.cit., 6.
[169] Ibid., 7.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., 1.
[172] Burton, op. cit., 15.

and grief has value within this enquiry as the dominant mode of response within western culture. Freud, and his approach in terms of understanding the processes involved in responding to loss, is discussed throughout thanatology and has a relevance to this enquiry as a consequence of it being the dominant discourse related to loss and grief in western culture.

Psychoanalysis has enabled and instigated many and complex discussions about grief. Psychoanalyst Darian Leader states that, 'Grief is our reaction to a loss, but mourning is how we process this grief.'[173] Freud began to explore mourning and a way to move through and beyond this phase in his essay, *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) written at a time when Northern Europe had lost millions of lives due to the First World War and the flu epidemic that followed. Freud identified several stages, or processes, of mourning and argued that 'Although mourning involves grave departures from the normal attitude to life, it never occurs to us to regard it as a pathological condition.'[174] However, melancholia is described as a condition whereby, following a loss, the ego is unable to separate from the lost object and has become narcissistic: 'a turning away from reality takes place and a clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory, wishful psychosis.'[175] The melancholic condition is therefore an arrested response to loss that requires treatment. Freud describes how the work of mourning and 'its orders, cannot be obeyed at once. They are carried out bit by bit, at great expense of time and cathetic energy.'[176] Furthermore 'mourning impels the ego to give up the object by declaring the object to be dead and offering the ego the inducement of continuing to live.' For Freud, when the ego returns to its normal state, the work of mourning is complete and there is an end to mourning. However, he states that 'the mood of mourning is a painful one:'[177] suggesting that it is not always an easy process to engage in and deal with.

Darian Leader, in his book *The New Black: Mourning, Melancholia and Depression*, questions the lack of focus that has been given to the particular experiences of mourning and melancholia since Freud wrote his essay, and considers whether this is due to a new focus within Western society, and within psychoanalytic and scientific research, on the dysfunction that is depression. He argues that mourning and melancholia 'can help shed light on how we deal – or fail to deal – with the losses that are part of human life.'[178] Leader questions whether 'we ever get over our losses? Don't we, rather, make them a part of our lives in different ways, sometimes fruitfully,

[173] Leader, op. cit., 26.
[174] Sigmund Freud. (1917) Mourning and Melancholia *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, 237-258, 243.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 244.
[177] Freud, op.cit., 243.
[178] Leader, op. cit., 4.

sometimes catastrophically, but never painlessly?'[179] At the start of his book, Leader describes how he fails to find any scientific literature that deals with the subjective experience of persons who are mourning. However, he discovers on the fiction shelves that the literature 'that I had been searching for was simply *all literature.'*[180] This leads him to consider 'the relation between mourning, loss and creativity' and to ask, 'What place… do literature, theatre, cinema and the other visual and plastic arts have in human culture?'[181] Leader poses a question that parallels my own experience of making art works and supporting others through this process: 'could the arts in fact be a vital tool in allowing us to make sense of the losses inevitable in all of our lives?'[182]

Leader presents an argument for the use of the arts in culture '*as a set of instruments to help us mourn.'*[183] The experience of our encounters with artworks is also considered by Leader as he draws on Kleinian analyst Hanna Segal's claim that through a process of identification with the maker of the artwork, who has 'created something out of chaos and destruction'[184] we are able to achieve a 'more transitory experience of catharsis than the drawn-out work of mourning described by Freud.'[185]

The Concept of the Self-Story

It is useful here to consider my encounter with C.S. Lewis's seminal text, *A Grief Observed* when I was first bereaved; as a result of reading it I was able to make some sense of my experience. I recall also reading other texts, stories that spoke of grief and how it was managed and dealt with by the writers. Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking* is a self-reflexive, discursive text focusing on the year directly after her husband's sudden death. She describes how she searched for stories that helped her to contextualise and frame her experience of loss and how valuable she found these during her period of mourning; however she observes: 'Given that grief remained the most general of afflictions its literature seemed remarkably spare.'[186] Didion's writing is an attempt to focus on her lived experience and make some sense of it from a subjective location. However, she also looks at the theory related to mourning and loss and draws on Freud and Klein to help her understand her experience. During her year of mourning, Didion reads poetry and other stories, including Lewis's, and in her discussions she describes how she used these other stories of grief, told in a variety of forms, and relied on them.

[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid., 6.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid., 86.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid., 44.

Both of these books describe how the writers came to terms with their loss and were then able to continue with their lives and their work: writing about their experience as a way of managing their grief. This suggests that the process of articulation and the telling of the self-story, in itself, can enable some of the work of mourning to occur. As Frank writes: 'Stories do not simply describe the self; they are the self's medium of being… Stories are a way of redrawing maps and finding new destinations.'[187]

In his book *The Wounded Storyteller*, Frank discusses the patient experience and talks about the way in which those who are suffering need to find ways of telling their stories in order to reclaim their autonomy and identity. Frank talks about the post-colonial experience of the patient, claiming that this is 'the demand to speak rather than be spoken for and to represent oneself rather than being represented.'[188] His argument for the telling of the self-story, which is '*for* an other as much as it for oneself,'[189] has an ethical dimension, which resonates with this enquiry and its considerations regarding the re-presentation of grief and its intentions to 'give a voice to an experience'[190] which is 'embodied in a specific person… As a post-colonial voice, the storyteller seeks to reclaim her own experience of suffering. As she seeks to turn that suffering into testimony, the storyteller engages in moral action.'[191] By drawing attention to an experience that remains hidden and by telling the story of that experience from a perceptual and embodied location, Lewis and Didion take on the role of the wounded storyteller.

It is useful to consider the work of Frank as he is referred to throughout thanatology and his discussion regarding the self-story has relevance to the work of this enquiry. His approach, which enables a form of ethical witnessing that has a resonance for both the story teller and the reader, relates to the practical work of this project and provides a conceptual framework to facilitate an analysis of the project outputs as well as shedding light on some of the motivations and functions of stories. Frank describes three different types of narrative forms for the self-story: the restitution narrative, the chaos narrative and the quest narrative. It is useful to consider these in relation to the written stories of Lewis, Didion and Freidman in order to determine their value as expressions of the liminal experience that enable a re-framing of our embodied experience. It is interesting to note that Sibbert similarly draws on the notion of story in her art therapy work, suggesting that 'Narrative approaches… have been viewed as a form of expressive embodiment of experience.'[192]

[187] Arthur W. Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller* (London/Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1995), 53.
[188] Ibid., 13.
[189] Ibid., 17.
[190] Ibid., 18.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Sibbert, op. cit., 70.

The restitution narrative provides a tool for those who are sick to tell the story of how they become well again. In the context of the phenomena of the liminal experience, elements of this narrative are contained in the self-stories of C.S. Lewis, Joan Didion, and Sally Friedman who tell the story of how they overcame their loss and found a way to re-integrate post liminality. This type of story reflects how 'contemporary culture treats health as the normal condition that people ought to have restored.'[193] For Frank, this narrative allows for the status quo to be restored: if you are sick, medical science has the potential to make you well again. For those who are bereaved and experiencing loss, the restitution story tells us that there is a way to regain one's sense of wellbeing and to recover. However, Frank draws our attention to the limitations of this narrative, as 'eventually the reality and responsibility of mortality, and its mystery have to be faced.'[194] Frank argues that, 'the restitution narrative is a stage *in the embodiment process…* that everybody passes through.'[195] Frank posits that the issue with this type of narrative is that its' author is seeking control over what they are experiencing as: 'What needs to be staved off is the deeper contingency represented by illness itself: the contingency of mortality.'[196]

The chaos narrative is 'the opposite of restitution: its plot imagines life never getting better.'[197] This type of story is in contrast to the restitution narrative as it is about a lack of control: chaos stories are 'anxiety provoking'[198] and within them 'the modernist bulwark of remedy, progress and professionalism cracks to reveal vulnerability, futility and impotence.'[199] For Frank, the chaos 'story traces the edges of a wound that can only be told around.'[200] The way that these stories are therefore told is as an '*anti-narrative* of time without sequence… the story has… only an incessant present.'[201] This relates to the notion of liminality, and suggests that the function of the chaos narrative is to locate the viewer/reader in the present, alongside the storyteller. Frank goes on to discuss the value of the chaotic self-story as by turning the chaotic 'interruptions into a coherent story, [the storyteller] neutralizes the chaos in them.'[202] The importance of the telling is re-iterated as: 'The attendant denial of chaos only makes its horror worse.'[203] Frank argues that there is a need to honour chaos stories, as chaos 'must be accepted before new lives can be built and new stories told.'[204] Through the writing of their self-stories, Lewis and Didion attempt to transcend the chaos of the liminal experience by telling the story of their

[193] Frank, op. cit., 77.
[194] Ibid. 84.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid., 85.
[197] Frank, op. cit., 97.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid., 98.
[201] Ibid., 99.
[202] Ibid., 105.
[203] Ibid., 112.
[204] Ibid., 110.

lived, embodied experience of grief. However, the danger here is that 'the suffering is too great for a self to be told. The voice of the teller has been lost, and this loss then perpetuates that chaos.'[205] For Frank, the quest narrative is the ultimate self-story, as even though the restitution and chaos narratives are still part of the story, 'when the quest is foreground, the quest narrative speaks from the ill person's perspective and holds the chaos at bay.'[206]

Frank introduces the quest narrative through the concept of the hero's journey, which 'represents a form of reflexive monitoring'[207] and is broken up into three distinct phases. The first of these is '*departure*, beginning with a call'[208] which for Frank is the symptom of the illness. For those who are bereaved, this call is their awareness of their loss, the 'moment' described by Sally Friedman, when they were first plunged into liminality. There is often a denial of this 'call', both by those who are ill and those who are bereaved, however, the call is eventually heard and the journey commences. 'Crossing the threshold begins the second stage, *initiation*.'[209] This threshold relates to the limen and the liminal experience itself, which must be traversed in order to reach the final stage of the quest, the *return*. As in the initiation rituals studied by Turner, this experience is that of 'being transformed… Quest stories… imply that the teller has been given something by the experience, usually some insight that must be passed on to others.'[210] For Frank, this is the ethical position of witness: that by telling a story, a testimony of suffering, insights can be given to others and moral agency can be restored: 'quest stories practice an *ethic of inspiration…* rooted in woundedness; the agony is not concealed.'[211] The use of the quest narrative will support my intention to unfold the liminal experience and re-present it through the filmic output of this enquiry, so that it can be experienced, shared in a communality of experience, and witnessed. The question that needs to be considered however, is how the production of artworks, whether it be writing or a visual form of expression, enables the subject to engage with the process of mourning and to process their grief.

In an attempt to answer that question, it is useful to consider the four processes of mourning as laid out by Freud, in relation to C.S. Lewis's seminal text *A Grief Observed.* Drawing on Freud's writings on the subject, Leader lays out four processes that indicate that the work of mourning is occurring, reminding us that it 'won't happen automatically, and we might even be doing our best to resist it without being aware of this consciously.'[212] The first of these processes is 'the introduction of a frame to mark

[205] Ibid., 115.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid., 117.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid., 118.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid., 133.
[212] Leader, op. cit.., 27.

out a symbolic, artificial place.'[213] For Lewis this 'place' is the perceptual and embodied location from which he is writing, as well as the page on which he is writing: a marked site of encounter, for it is in the dialogue that we have when reading Lewis's work that we encounter his experience. The second process is 'the necessity of killing the dead.'[214] Lewis struggles with this part of the process, he considers how mourning rituals and rites 'made the dead more dead'[215] and concludes that, 'passionate grief does not link us with the dead but cuts them off from us.'[216] For Lewis, it was important to find a way to allow his dead wife to exist, even if it was only in his imagination. The third process of mourning involves 'the separation of the image of the loved one and the place they occupied for us.'[217] Lewis discusses his life before he met his wife and how he might live without her now, trying out various activities to see how they feel. He also considers 'the separation that is death itself'[218] as something that 'waits for all'[219] – we all die and separate from our perceived reality at some time. The final process of mourning involves 'the giving up of the image of who we were for them'[220] and it seems as if Lewis is not able to complete this process through the writing of his self-story. He ends his writing by asking, angrily, 'How wicked it would be, if we could, to call back the dead!'[221] He considers that his lost loved one's words to the chaplain before her death, ''I am at peace with God''[222] were not directed at him and that 'She smiled, but not at me'[223] - setting his sorrow in stone it seems. Lewis's self-story attempts to master chaos and come to some sort of restitution but he finds this an almost impossible task.

Lewis's self-story seems to 'co-exist and emerge and recede between perceived agentic and victimic poles'[224] and to feature 'curative 'restitution', unending 'chaos' and transformatory 'quest''[225] narratives, simultaneously. Lewis is able to locate his reader in the present, in *his* present, through the use of image-laden language, and by reflecting on his location he demonstrates the self-reflexivity of liminality:

> One flesh. Or, if you prefer, one ship. The starboard engine has gone. I, the port engine, must chug along somehow until we make harbour. Or rather, until the journey ends. How can I assume a harbour? A lee shore, more likely, a black

[213] Ibid., 168.
[214] Ibid., 168.
[215] Lewis, op. cit., 48.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Leader, op. cit., 168.
[218] Lewis, op. cit., 14.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Leader, op. cit., 168.
[221] Lewis, op. cit., 64.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Sibbert, op. cit., 241. (Polkinghorne, 1996).
[225] Ibid, (Frank, 1997).

> night, a deafening gale, breakers ahead – and any light shown from the land probably being waved by wreckers.[226]

The value of the self-story therefore, is dependent on several factors: it enables a form of self-reflexive monitoring that facilitates the marking out of a symbolic place, where mourning can occur, and it draws on conceptual frameworks, such as the hero's journey to help us to make sense of the experience. However, the implication is that unless this particular expression is carefully formed and considered, that it merely represents the lived experience without allowing it to be understood fully. Another element seems to be needed in order for the story to be effective: its reception and by implication, its production or publication, so that it can be experienced by others for whom it might have significant value. Hence it is useful to consider that the writing of the self-story is a mode of artistic production that is made public through the process of its publication and to reflect on this.

Leader states that there has been an 'erosion of public mourning rituals'[227] since the mass slaughter of the First World War. This erosion was first observed by anthropologist Gorer, who considered that 'the surplus of the dead – and bereaved – was far more extreme and concentrated than in earlier warfare.'[228] As a consequence of the sheer number of deaths that occurred away from home and community, mourning became 'distanced from community life'[229] and 'grief moved inwards.'[230] Arguably, this inwardness is problematic: Gorer in his anthropological study conducted in 1965 found that 'mourning rituals that involve public displays.' are found in 'every documented human society.'[231] Leader moves on to criticise Freud's position that mourning is an individual process, arguing that, 'if today's societies… tend to make grief more and more a private event… Is mourning more difficult today?'[232] Leader draws our attention to the difficulties that mourners have when attempting to engage in the mourning process:

> When we look in detail at individual cases of mourning, we can see that they are nearly always impeded. They may certainly develop over time, but these unconscious processes are never as smooth as… the neat stages of mourning suggest.[233]

This implies that the process of mourning is problematic; however, the publication of written texts that address and focus on the author's journey through the process have value for others who are similarly mourning. By making the process public in some

[226] Lewis, op. cit., 30.
[227] Leader, op. cit., 73.
[228] Ibid.,72.
[229] Ibid, 73.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Leader, op. cit., 8.
[233] Ibid, 168.

way, the opportunity exists for the work to be shared with others and for them to gain something from their encounter with the work. Leader argues that losses 'always require some kind of recognition,' for it is through this recognition that we gain 'some sense that it has been witnessed and made real.'[234] We can consider the process of writing and making that work public as a way to begin what Leader refers to as 'a dialogue of mournings.'[235] Further he suggests that this dialogue 'can allow one person to actually start the mourning process proper, and it can provide the material necessary to represent their loss.'[236] The implication is that through the process of viewing another person mourning, 'other phenomena'[237] become apparent to us and we are able to make some sort of comparison with our own experience: 'Living with loss is what matters, and writers and artists show us the many different ways in which this can be done.'[238] This implies that there is significant value in the sharing of stories and other artworks that re-present the lived experience of loss and grief. It is useful here to reflect on the value of this and to draw on discourses within the field of psychoanalysis that present an argument for the production of art as a mode of expression for those experiencing liminality.

Psychoanalysis and its relationship to artmaking

Julia Kristeva in her thought provoking text, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*[239] supports this notion of using art as a way of managing and dealing with the effects of loss: 'art seems to point to a few devises that bypass complacency, and without turning mourning into mania, secure for the artist and the connoisseur a sublimatory hold over the lost Thing.'[240] Referring to artworks generally, she makes a claim for them as being able to communicate effectively through 'prosody, the language beyond language'[241] and 'the polyvalence of sign and symbol… building up a plurality of connotations… [that] affords the subject a chance to imagine the nonmeaning, or the true meaning of the Thing.'[242] Kristeva uses the term Thing to refer to the lost object, as discussed by Freud, that becomes incorporated into the subject when they are unable to process and deal with the loss or absence of such an object. Freud believed that it was necessary to separate from the image of the loved one that has been lost as part of the process of mourning, and that this involves the necessity of giving them up. This process then enables the subject to attach their love to another. However,

[234] Ibid., 57.
[235] Ibid., 79.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid., 99.
[239] In her discussion "Beauty: The Depressives Other Realm" Kristeva suggests that beauty and by implication sublimation, can help to alleviate the suffering of the melancholic, drawing on Freud's essay "On Transience" (1915-16). See p-p97-103.
[240] Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* Columbia, (USA: New York University Press, 1989), 97.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.

when the subject decides not to, or is unable to go through this process, 'the ego devours the object in fantasy in order not to separate from it, in order to be at one with it.'[243] This process of internalising the lost object in an attempt to hold on to it is considered by Freud to be the cause of melancholia and a significant block to the mourning process. For Kristeva, it is this internalising that causes narcissistic depression. However, it was Melanie Klein that instigated the notion of the internal object; she believed that once the external or lost object had been internalised that it then became an internal object, which is discussed and considered in relation to the value of artmaking by Kleinian analyst Hanna Segal in her essay "A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics." It is useful to reflect on this and other writing by Segal as she makes a claim for artmaking as a result of, what Klein termed, the "depressive position".

Drawing on her clinical practice and observations of children, Klein developed the concept of the depressive position enabling, according to Segal, psychoanalysts to 'further our understanding of the aesthetic value of a work of art, and of the aesthetic experience of the audience.'[244] This she relates to the desire of analysts to understand aesthetics and their value by shedding 'more light on the problem of the creative impulse and sublimation.'[245] Klein was concerned with object relations: how we understand ourselves in relation to others, and developed the concept of the depressive position to illustrate the phase in an infant's development when they become aware of their parents as real people in their own right and not as a part of themselves. At this stage, there is a change in the object relations of the infant and the loved object is introjected, which enables the forming of an integrated ego. However, for Klein, this introjection generates 'a new anxiety situation… the predominant fear is that of the loss of the loved object.'[246] The effects of this anxiety are that the ego wishes to 'restore and recreate the lost loved object'. According to Segal, 'this wish to restore and re-create is the basis of later sublimation and creativity.'[247] Further, and of significance to artmaking, is Segal's claim that a 'successful working through of the depressive anxieties has far reaching consequences.' [248] Segal refers to Klein's supposition, expounded in "Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States" (1940) that 'mourning in grown-up life is a reliving of the early depressive anxieties'[249] to support her discussion of how the process of mourning is enabled through an awareness of and the re-presentation of the lost objects, both internal and external, in the work of art.[250] In her essay "Art and The Depressive Position" Segal

[243] Leticia Glocer Firoina, *On Freud's Melancholia and Mourning,* (Karna Books: London, 2007), 183.
[244] Hanna Segal, "A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics" *The Work of Hanna Segal: A Kleinian Approach to Clinical Practice* (London: Free Association Books, 1986), 186.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Segal, op. cit., 187.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid., 188.
[249] Ibid., 190.
[250] Segal refers to Proust writing about his process of writing and how it enabled him to mourn through the recreation of his lost world. See p-p 188-190.

argues that the impulse to make artworks is rooted in the depressive position and that in order for their expression to have meaning it is necessary to symbolise and to be able to perceive both and inner and outer realities and that this ultimately allows for an 'ability to bear separation and seperateness.'[251] Segal posits that:

> all creation is really a re-creation of a once loved, and once whole, but now lost and ruined object, a ruined internal world and self. It is when the world within us is destroyed, when it is dead and loveless, when our loved ones are in fragments, and we ourselves in hopeless despair – it is then that we must create our world anew, reassemble the pieces, infuse life into dead fragments, re-create life.[252]

This notion of artmaking as a result of and as a way out of the depressive position parallels the work of this project, in that the impulse to create work is driven by actual experience of loss, and reflections on the lived experience of others who have similarly experienced loss. In addition, the sharing of that work, through its productions and publication has a value for the recipient, who is able to bear witness to the story being told. Segal's notion of the value of artmaking as a way out of the depressive position, mirroring and enabling the work of mourning to occur, has relevance to the practical work of this project, as it is through the making of artworks, from an auto-ethnographic and self-reflexive location, that the liminal experience can be re-presented.

This chapter has set out the context of the project and considered a range of cultural responses to the essential problem that we have with understanding the transition from life to death. In addition, the function of the self story and its sharing through the creation of a dialogue of mournings has been explored. The value of the psychoanalytic approach to grief has been considered and its limitations identified for the mourner who may struggle to process their loss. The value of artmaking has been introduced through an analysis of the concept of the depressive position, and the action of artmaking, that has the potential to enable the working through of the depressive anxieties related to the internalisation of the lost object, has been established. However, it is now necessary to consider the mode of representation adopted within this project: filmmaking. The motivations for using this particular mode will be considered, as despite the value of the narrative approaches already identified, the value of the visual, making the invisible visible, needs to be determined. For as Lacan writes: 'It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its affects.'

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[251] Hanna Segal, "Art and The Depressive Position" *Dream, Phantasy and Art* (London: Routledge, 1991), 97.
[252] Ibid., 190.

2. The Re-presentation of Grief and Liminality

Film has been identified as the main mode of expression within this experiential enquiry and it is useful here to consider the reasons for this and to identify the functionality of film as a mode of expression. As a mode of re-presentation, film has the potential to enable the expression of experience; its optical and psychical possibilities, as identified by Maya Deren in her writing on film, can function to determine the specific time and space of the film and its materiality can support the concept of embodiment, which is pertinent to lived experience. As such, it has the potential within this enquiry to function as a mode of re-presentation that reflects the nature of the research project and support its intentions to uncover and reveal the liminal experience of grief.

This chapter will begin by outlining the function of this specific artistic form and its relevance to the phenomenological mode of working, taking into consideration the work of film theorist and phenomenologist Vivian Sobchack who, at the start of her book, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience,* questions film and its purpose: 'What else is film if not 'an expression of experience by experience'?'[253] Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's writing in *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964) to answer her question, she argues that, 'More than any other medium of human communication, the moving picture makes itself sensuously and sensibly manifest as the expression of experience of experience.'[254] The communality of imagery, as identified by philosopher Jacques Rancière, and its relevance will be considered through the concept of the phenomenological third space posited by Sobchack, where the filmmaker, film, and viewer meet and experience the film directly. This suggests that film is an efficacious way to enable the work of art to be experienced by the viewer so that they can identify and engage with their own experience of loss through the images conveyed. The filmmaking enables an expression of experience and the film viewing enables this to be shared, thereby this mode of expression has the potential to process and support the work of mourning.

The work of visual artists who have used the film form as a way of expressing the experience of grief will then be considered. Within the research for this project, a range of artists' films have been explored as examples of the re-presentation of loss and grief; however, this chapter will focus on three significant works that have the most relevance to this project. These works are all by pioneering British filmmakers who in different ways challenge the boundaries of artist film: *Drift* (1994) by Chris Welsby; *Perestroika* (2009) by Sarah Turner, and the multi media work *In The Wake of a Deadad* (2006) by Andrew Kotting. The films have been chosen as examples: they functioned for the maker as a form of mourning, allowing them to re-present

[253] Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992) 3.
[254] Sobchack, op. cit., 3.

elements of their experience of loss and grief. [255] The value of using the film form as a method for processing grief will then be discussed. Through the use of a phenomenological analysis of the artists' films mentioned above, a phenomenological reduction will be identified enabling the bracketing of elements of the filmic grammar utilised within them to be clustered, and a set of themes that are invariant constituents of the liminal experience to emerge. The application of these constituents of filmic grammar can then be utilsed in order to produce filmwork that attempts to re-present the liminal experience.

It is important here however to identify the value of this particular form of re-presentation and to consider its functions. Sobchack in her analysis of film viewing draws on Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the relationship between the visible and the invisible, in his book *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964), arguing that the entirety of an object cannot be seen, or experienced at the same time, meaning that even as something is invisible to the human eye, it is still there. This implies that the visible contains the invisible and, that more importantly, the location of our bodies as we encounter something is tantamount to our perception of such a thing. Sobchack uses this concept and applies it to the experience of viewing a film, positing that film is in fact experienced in a phenomenological third space, and that the act of viewing a film is a 'commutation of perception and expression'[256] that 'is both an intrasubjective and intersubjective experience equally performable by film-maker, film and spectator.'[257] Sobchack argues that, 'the film experience is a system of communication'[258] that '*represents* and reflects upon the prior direct perceptual experience of the filmmaker.'[259] This suggests that by using filmmaking as a mode of expression, the filmmaker can communicate their lived, embodied experience.

Sobchack defines, through the application of existential phenomenology, how as viewers, we engage in film viewing in a different way than is defined by classical and contemporary film theory. Drawing again on Merleau-Ponty, she makes a claim for the viewer's experience as embodied, sense-experience. Describing the film experience as a semiotic system of communication, Sobchack claims that film 'opens up and exposes the inhabited space of direct experience as a condition of singular embodiment [which] makes it accessible and visible.' [260] This, she argues, is in contrast to contemporary neo-Marxist and feminist film theory which, 'has focused on

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[255] These works are expressions of individual loss whereas the other artists' films researched as part of the work of the project are expressions of collective loss and forms of public mourning: Phillipe Pareno's *June 8 1968* (2009), Douglas Gordon's *k.364* (2011), Elizabeth Price's *The Woolworths Choir* (2012), and Ori Gerscht's *Evaders* (2011) Whilst some elements of filmic grammar used within these films have been identified as relevant to the representation of grief, they will not be discussed in detail here due to their lack of specificity in relation to the work of the project.

[256] Sobchack, op.cit., 21.

[257] Ibid.

[258] Ibid., 9.

[259] Ibid., 48.

[260] Sobchack, op. cit., 9.

the essentially deceptive, illusionary, tautologically recursive, and coercive nature of the cinema.'[261] She also critiques contemporary film theory for its 'psychopathological and/or ideological functions of distorting existential experience.'[262]

For Sobchack, the experience of viewing a film is an embodied activity that is an active encounter, rather than experiencing the preserving of a moment in time that is contained in a photographic image:

> Although dependent on the photographic, the cinematic has something more to do with life and with the *accumulation of experience* – not its loss. Cinematic technology *animates* the photographic and reconstitutes its materiality, visibility, and perceptual verisimilitude in a difference not of degree but of kind. The *moving picture* is a visible representation not of activity finished or past but of activity coming into being and being.[263]

This suggests that the use of moving image has the potential to re-present lived experience and as a result of the phenomenological third space, which Sobchack posits is created when a film is being viewed, that the experience being re-presented can be actually experienced by the viewer.

It is interesting to reflect on how the phenomenological third space relates to the viewing of the film works made as part of this research project and to consider the actual viewing experience in an exhibition context directly. Sobchack posits that the film viewing experience functions as a mode of communication, suggesting that a dialogue occurs between the filmmaker and the viewer. In addition however, Sobchack considers that the film is a material object that functions to communicate itself, as the filmmaker's perceptual experience. In the context of viewing work made as part of this project, the communication that occurs is a three way process: the viewer is able to perceive the direct experience of a singular embodiment in the first instance, that of the filmmaker. The film itself then communicates by locating the viewer in the inhabited space of the filmmaker. The final part of the three way process is that of the viewer's perceptual experience: they are present in the time and space of the film viewing experience, yet the film locates them in an alternate time and space. This suggests that in an exhibition context, the filmworks are experienced as existential experience.

Filmmaker and academic Trinh T. Minh-ha explores this concept in her writings on subjectivity and objectivity in filmmaking: 'In short, what is at stake is a practice of

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[261] Ibid., 17.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture,* (Berkeley/London, University of California Press Ltd., 2004), 146.

subjectivity, that is still aware of its own constructed nature.'[264] This resonates with the self-reflexivity of liminality and indicates that in the viewing of filmwork, such as that which occurs in the phenomenological third space, there is the potential for 'the cultural, sexual, political inter-reality of the film-maker as subject, the reality of the subject film and the reality of the cinematic apparatus' to be evident within the work.'[265] For this project, the value of this is clear: the subjective experiences of the filmmaker can be conveyed and shared through the use of self-reflexive filmmaking processes in this communal space with the viewer, in a direct and immediate manner, allowing the viewer to share the experience being re-presented. In addition, this reflects the self-reflexive filmmaking practices already identified as useful to this enquiry and its outputs. This concept implies however that the images being represented contain a communality that is shared by the filmmaker and the viewer.

It is useful to consider the concept of the phenomenological third space in relation to the writings of Marxist aesthetic philosopher Jacques Rancière who, in his essay, *Sentence, Image, History* discusses the communality of the image in relation to cinema and argues that it is precisely this communality that gives images their power:

> On the one hand then, the image is valuable as liberating power, pure form and pure pathos dismantling the classical order of organization of fictional action, of stories. On the other, it is valuable as the factor in a connection that constructs the figure of a common history. On the one hand, it is an incommesurable singularity; while on the other it is an operation of communalization.[266]

Rancière writes about how the image has become codified within modernity and that consequentially, cinematic images have the potential to be, not merely material manifestations of things, but operations: 'relations between a whole and parts; between a visibility and a power of signification and affect associated with it; between expectations and what happens to meet them.'[267] It is precisely these operations that function to reveal the invisible as they 'couple and uncouple the visible and its signification,'[268] which challenges the viewers expectations. Rancière uses the example of Bresson's 1966 film *Au Hasard Balthazar* to illustrate how the image functions through its fragmentation, that occurs in the process of editing, to challenge mainstream narrative cinema, that in contrast uses images as mere signifiers indicating precisely what is expected. Rancière argues that Bresson's use of fragmentation not only breaks the narrative sequence but 'performs a double operation with respect to it… it reduces the action to its essence… undo[ing] the link

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[264] Trinh T. Minh-ha *Not You/Like You: Post Colonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference* www.ucsc/edu/CultStudies/PUBS/Inscriptions/vol3-4/Trinh-ha.html (21/01/08)
[265] Ibid.
[266] Rancière, *Sentence, Image, History* in *The Future of the Image* (Verso: London/NY, 2007), 34.
[267] Rancière, *The Future of the Image,* 3.
[268] Ibid., 4.

between perceptions, actions and affects.'[269] This means that for Rancière the image has different functions and that the word image has different meanings:

> There is the simple relationship that produces the likeness of an original: not necessarily its faithful copy, but simply what suffices to stand in for it. And there is the interplay of operations that produces what we call art; or precisely an alteration of resemblance.[270]

Rancière suggests that the alteration can take many different forms, including those adopted by Bresson, for example when a particular shot does not follow the previous one and defies expectations: 'A camera movement anticipates one spectacle and discloses a different one.'[271] Further he claims that 'the images of art are operations that produce a discrepancy, a dissemblance.'[272] This suggests that the image has the potential in cinematic terms to not only disrupt expectations but to raise questions and encourage an active encounter with the material being presented and that this can enable the presentation of 'a relationship between the sayable and the visible… which plays on both the analogy *and* the dissemblance between them.'[273] Rancière argues that the artistic image should be separated from its resemblance by its operations in order to 'discover a different resemblance… that rejects the mirror in favour of the immediate relationship between progenitor and engendered;'[274] he terms these types of images hyper-resemblances. This concept resonates with the phenomenological third space identified by Sobchack, as this type of image is not a copy of a real thing, rather it 'attests directly to the elsewhere that it derives.'[275] This suggests therefore that the film form has the potential to use moving images that re-present in an immediate manner the place that they originate and hence the experience associated with the original image, or the experience being re-presented.

Rancière argues for a particular form of image making that he identifies as originating in the literature of the 19th century: the great parataxis. It is useful to explore this concept and its relevance to filmmaking as the use of montage, for example in the work of Maya Deren and Dziga Vertov, potentially enables the dissemblance of images and the disruption of expectations in the viewer, allowing for a particular access to the material being presented. In his essay, *The Sentence-Image and the Great Parataxis,* Rancière argues that 'the law of "profound today"… is that there is no longer any measurement, anything in common… It is the common factor of dis-measure or chaos that now gives art its power.'[276] Rancière discusses how writers have made use of the parataxic to articulate that which was considered

[269] Ibid., 5.
[270] Ibid., *6.*
[271] Rancière*, The Future of the Image*, op. cit., 7.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Ibid., 8.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Rancière*, The Sentence Image and the Great Parataxis,* in *The Future of the Image,* op.cit., 45.

unrepresentable.[277] Making reference to the writing style of Robert Antelme, who in his book *The Human Race* (1945), attempts to convey his lived experience of being a concentration camp prisoner, Rancière suggests that this form of writing allows for 'the parcelling out of experience.'[278] Antelme uses a diary form, dating his entries, and writes from the present, thereby locating the reader in the present, as the actual events and experiences are being played out. Rancière claims that this form of writing means that the lived experience of Antelme is 'conveyed according to the same logic of minor perceptions added to one another, that make sense in the same way, through their silence, through their appeal to a minimal auditory and visual experience.'[279] Rancière also refers to the poet Blaise Cendras, writing in 1917, who used sentences or 'phrases that tend to reduce to juxtapositions between words, boiled down to elementary, sensory tempos.'[280] For example:

> Phenomenal today. Sonde. Antenna. . . .Whirlwind. You are Living. Eccentric. In complete solitude. In anonymous communion. . . .Rhythm speaks. Chemism. You are.' Or again: 'We learn. We drink. Intoxication. Reality has no meaning any more. No significance. Everything is rhythm, speech, life . . . Revolution. The dawn of the world. Today.[281]

Rancière suggests that this rhythmic style of writing is similar to the early cinematic montage of filmmaker Jean Epstein: 'The power of the correct sentence-image is therefore that of a parataxic syntax… such syntax might also be called montage.'[282] Its' use is iterated by Rancière as 'with its disruptive force it repels the big sleep of indifferent triteness.'[283] This suggests that film, through the use of the parataxic form, can enable images to speak directly and for the viewer to experience the images in a similarly direct manner. Again, it is interesting to relate this to the concept of the phenomenological third space and to take this into consideration when reflecting on the films researched and produced within this project.

Another useful concept to consider in relation to the films under consideration is that of the exilic optic. Homi K. Bhabha describes the exilic optic as 'contiguous' and 'contingent', inhabiting 'the realms of human consciousness and the unconscious, the discourses of history and psychoanalysis.'[284] Bhabha sites Walter Benjamin as the originator of this term and refers to Derrida's *The Specters of Marx* (1993) in which he

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[277] As part of the research for this project, this style of writing was utilised in order to document immediate responses to encounters with artworks that convey elements of the liminal experience, for example, paintings by Francis Bacon, Edvard Munch and Pablo Picasso. It was also used in an attempt to convey my actual lived and embodied experience when making work. See Appendix 1 and 3.
[278] Rancière, *Are Some Things Unrepresentable?* in *The Future of the Image,* op. cit., 126.
[279] Rancière, *Are Some Things Unrepresentable?* op. cit. 126.
[280] Rancière, *The Sentence Image and the Great Parataxis* in *The Future of the Image*, op.cit., 44.
[281] Blaise Cendras cited by Rancière, Ibid., op. cit., 44.
[282] Rancière, *The Sentence Image and the Great Parataxis,* op. cit., 48.
[283] Ibid., 46.
[284] Homi K. Bhabha, *Preface* to *Home, Exile, Homeland* ed. Hamid Naficy (New York/London: Routledge, 1999), vi.

claims the whole of Europe to be in mourning subsequent the traumas of Fascism, Stalinism and the development of psychoanalysis and our encounter with the real. Bhabha states that the exilic optic is: 'not only time that is out of joint, but space, space in time, spacing.'[285] Film theorist Marcelo Antelo writes about this concept and draws on the notion of the visible and invisible to illuminate the concept further:

> When the threshold of the visible is amplified, the gaze retracts. The invisible is not the opposite of the visible; it is its secret counterpoint. On this secret of the visible does the ever-hungrier eye feed. In cinema, something is at stake beyond the visible.[286]

The exilic optic functions as a lens re-presenting a sense of longing and loss, albeit through a trope that is recognised and understood throughout cinematic history. The sense of loss evident in the longing gaze of the exile can be seen in Chris Welsby's 1994 film *Drift* and also observed in Sarah Turner's *Perestroika.*

The only image that we see in Chris Welsby's film *Drift* (1994) is a grey horizon dotted with moving ships at the edge of Vancouver docks. However, the camera has been placed onto something that is floating, so the gaze is in a state of constant flux, never actually fixing on anything, yet still managing to convey a sense of its location. The distant shore is never clearly in view and the fluctuating camera pans across the seascape, searching for something that is never found. The viewer can sense Welsby's discontent with his seemingly anchored location, and his inability to do anything about it except to gaze wistfully at the horizon and the ships, that could take him to another, preferred location. Thus the sense of place conveyed is both literal and psychological: the viewer is aware of the embodied and psychological location of the filmmaker. However, it seems that the filmmaker's subjective experience is that of melancholia and the inactivity replicated and indicated by the camera that floats rather than moves, is redolent of the inactivity of the melancholic, depressed individual.

> On one level *Drift* is a film about the ocean, about winter light and about ships at anchor in a sheltered bay. However, it is also a metaphor, an essentially filmic metaphor about time and space, about being and perception, a metaphor for the act of looking, looking at film and looking at the World.[287]

Welsby says that the film, 'had to do with memories of being lost in fog at sea and being an immigrant to another country.'[288] This resonates with the exilic optic and also with his subjective lived experience of being away from his home and in a

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[285] Ibid.
[286] Marcelo Antelo, *The Sound of Fear* in *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media* ed. Harper, Doughty and Lisentraut (NY/London: Continuum Int. Pub. Group, 2009), 659.
[287] http://www.sfu.ca/~welsby/Drifnote.htm (Accessed 22/04/12)
[288] Chris Welsby, http://fredcamper.com/Film/Welsby.html (Accessed 22/04/12)

temporary, liminal space. The seascape and the horizon function as metaphors for the liminal: the space betwixt and between, potentially the border between here and there. The motion of the camera relays a sense of flux, such as that experienced by those experiencing liminality. The sense of loss and longing is clear in the use of the seascape, recalling boat journeys across the sea, common to the exile. It is interesting to consider Welsby's articulation of his intentions for this, and his other film and video work, that focuses on the landscape and its transient elements:

> Unlike the landscape painters and photographers of the nineteenth century, I have avoided the objective view point implicit in panoramic vistas or depictions of homogeneous pictorial space. I have instead concentrated on 'close up' detail and the more transient aspects of the landscape, using the flickering, luminous characteristics of the film and video mediums, and their respective technologies, to suggest both the beauty and fragility of the natural world.'[289]

The apparently diegetic soundtrack is comprised of a mournful fog horn, punctuated by the occasional screech of a sea bird and the quieter lulling sound of the waves lapping at the shoreline. The use of sound in *Drift* is worth considering as its effect is quite dramatic enabling 'not only intersubjective communication but also a differentiation in the perception process.'[290] Barbara Flueckigers' definition of territory sounds in films is that they 'surpass the mere indication of a location in order to provide a psychological description of the character's feelings… territory sounds can be interpreted as elements of a latent subjective transformation'[291] This is an important effect of sound in film occurring 'when sound and image deviate from each other'[292] meaning that 'a logical conflict arises which has to be solved by the spectator.[293] Subjective transformation functions in *Drift* as a 'sensory surplus of the merely communicative and indicative,'[294] allowing us access to the filmmaker's lived experience and his psychological state. The sounding of the fog horn is a symbol relaying an abstract concept as well as a literal one – we never see the ship sounding the horn, hence as viewers we have to imagine the source of the sound for ourselves. In addition to the effects of the soundtrack, the camera motion functions as a form of embodiment, locating the viewer in the space and time of the filmmaker and conveying significant information with regard to the place and the filmmaker's perceptual experience of that place.

In his survey of British artist's film and video work, David Curtis makes reference to the way in which artists such as Welsby, use landscape within their work, following in

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[289] Chris Welsby, http://lux.org.uk/collection/artists/chris-welsby (Accessed 22/04/12)
[290] Barbara Flueckiger, *Sound Effects* in *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media* ed. Harper, Doughty and Lisentraut (NY/London: Continuum Int. Pub. Group, 2009), 171.
[291] Ibid., 157
[292] Ibid., 172.
[293] Ibid., 172.
[294] Ibid., 156

the tradition of early filmmakers in the late 1800's. Curtis points out that the tradition of using landscape in film was adopted from painting, where landscape had been used as a way of presenting a 'space freed from eventhood'.[295] Film theorist Martin Lefebvre posits that landscape is in fact the inverse of setting and suggests that it is in fact an 'anti-setting' with a distinction between 'parergon and ergon, which is… landscape as spatial "accessory" to a painted scene… and landscape as the primary and independent subject of the work.'[296] Lefebvre suggests that this distinction brings forth 'the emancipation of landscape from its supporting role as background or setting… it establishes the condition of its emergence as a completely distinct aesthetic object.'[297] This object, according to Lefebvre, has its own distinct and autonomising gaze, which manifests itself in the work of filmmakers.

Curtis describes how the Lumiere brothers utilised this automising gaze in their work in films such as *Panorama pris du chemin de fer electrique* (1897), which was shot from an elevated light railway in the Liverpool docks: 'Silent, and without explanatory titles or framing narrative, early studies such as these were presented to the viewer simply as landscapes, and were open to different interpretations to the viewer'.[298] Curtis considers how the lineage of artist film developed from this origin and that Chris Welsby, along with his peers and contemporaries - artists such as William Raban and Michael Snow - continued to explore landscape as a subject in its own right, often adopting structuralist filmmaking methodologies.[299] In this regard, we can see how *Drift* can be considered to be a landscape film, albeit one that uses a specific methodological approach that enables the psychological and embodied location of its maker to be experienced by the viewer. This is in contrast to the work of the Lumiere brothers described by Curtis, who were simply presenting a view, an autonomous gaze, that the viewer shares as a form of spectacle. Lefebvre argues that landscape 'manifests itself in the attempts by artists to translate their gaze into their work and by spectators to either interpret this translation or provide their own interpretive gaze.'[300] However, he also points out that 'it is equally possible to represent space in more "anthropological" terms… space may be represented as pertaining to lived experiences.'[301] It is interesting to consider Sarah Turner's film *Perestroika* in this context, as in it she attempts to convey a sense of her lived experience through an engagement with the landscape that she temporarily inhabits.

In *Perestroika,* the images we see are mainly of shots from train windows; even when the camera is positioned outside of the train, it still focuses on the train and its

[295] Martin Lefebvre, "Between Setting and Landscape in Cinema" *Landscape and Film* ed. Martin Lefebvre (New York: Routledge, 2006), 22.
[296] Lefebvre, op. cit., 23.
[297] Ibid.
[298] David Curtis, *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain* (London: BFI Publishing, 2007), 94.
[299] For detailed discussions of this development see Curtis, p-p94-102.
[300] Lefebvre, op. cit., 51.
[301] Ibid., 52.

passengers. The Trans-Siberian railway is the location of the filmmaker and this is also the place from where the narrator – Turner herself - speaks, reflecting on her experience of the journey and her encounters with the other travellers, some of whom she is travelling with. Turner claims that her intention is that the film should be read as a meditation on memory and loss, however the only time we are conscious of this when watching the film is when the narrator and her friends disembark from the train searching for a hotel that had been visited previously, when her deceased friend had journeyed with her. Turner describes her work 'as a metaphor and a narrative conceit. Without memory, there is no experience; likewise, without the other, our memory is lost because, when a person dies, we lose their experience of us, how they hold our stories.'[302] Despite her intentions, the narration fails to locate the viewer in this space of memory and reflection, rather choosing to place us in the position of witness to an internal monologue that speaks only of paranoia and confusion: 'At the end of the piece, its author seems more scared and bewildered than before.'[303]

Despite *Perestroika* being an attempt to process loss and work through mourning, the viewer is unaware of this intention, being forced as a result of the narration to be located in the place of chaos, from where Turner speaks. The visual imagery in the film is entirely representational and fails to elicit any independent responses in the viewer: we are being told what to think and how to respond by the use of single static shots, and the carefully constructed synthesised soundtrack, rather than being allowed to draw our own conclusions about the material being presented. Turner fails to create any relationship between the 'material and the intelligible'[304] preferring to focus on her own fictional re-presentation of this actual journey and ignoring her subjective experience of loss. The artist is clearly struggling to engage with the work of mourning and to process her loss; her use of the train as a motif for a journey into the past reveals nothing to us about the experience of grief and loss, except perhaps to illustrate its chaos and unending search for illumination. Her use of spectacle feels contrived and conscious and her subjective experience is conveyed to the viewer in a raw and uncomfortable manner. This is in direct contrast to the filmwork of Andrew Kotting, who through a form of critical subjectivity conveys to the viewer not only his subjective experience, but the processes that enabled him to transcend his experience of loss and undertake the work of mourning.

The artist Andrew Kotting made a piece of work in 2007: *In the Wake of a Deadad,*[305] that is useful to consider as it is an exemplary artistic response to the lived experience of loss and appears to function as an effective way of processing grief. This

[302] Sophie Mayer http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/interviews/tracks-time-sarah-turner-s-perestroika, 2014, (Accessed 23/02/12).
[303] Peter Bradshaw, http://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/sep/02/perestroika-review 2010, (Accessed 23/02/12).
[304] Rancière, *The Future of the Image,* op. cit., 111.
[305] http://www.deadad.info/ (Accessed 23/02/12).

inter-disciplinary work includes the production of a book that enables a form of dialogical mourning to occur. Kotting asked friends, family members and other artists to write a letter to him in response to the death of his father. The resulting letters tells us about Kotting's father, as well as others' imaginative concepts about him and the effects of the loss. These letters enable us to become familiar with Kotting's subjective self through their sharing of impressions, memories and imaginative ideas that contribute to this dialogical artwork. Further, this sharing 'help[s] to inscribe the mourner within a shared, public space'[306] and situates Kotting's 'loss in a different, more symbolic space.'[307] Leader argues that this approach 'illustrates the bridge between the private model described by Freud… and the subjective public dimension,'[308] of mourning.

In the Wake of a Deadad is presented as an installation, which includes an original and unusual performative concept, that is filmed and then re-presented in a gallery space using multiple monitors: Kotting re-creates his dead father through the use of a twelve-foot inflatable of his father's form. Described by Kotting as a sort of exorcism, the work functions as ritualistic process, as a pilgrimage, as well as being a performance of mourning. Kotting takes the inflatable on a journey to places of significance to either himself, or his dead dad, and whilst filming this process, he inflates his father – and later his grandfather - on-site, before deflating him to move on to the next location. The work does not follow any representational path: in fact the work forges an entirely new path. Subjectivity, exorcism and a ritualistic process, which allows for an auto-ethnographic self-reflexive approach, enables Kotting to transcend more formal mourning processes. In this regard, he is producing an artwork that functions as a kind of thanatography.

Performance theorist Peggy Phelan argues that film is a place where the body can leave a trace. In her discussion of the documentary film, *Silverlake Life*, that tells the story of its makers experience of having AIDS and his death, she suggests that the link between the temporality of death and the temporality of the cinematic form allows for a 'cinema of the dead'[309] and that 'such a cinema has a specifically curative appeal in relation to mourning.'[310] Phelan goes on to suggest that the making of such a film, 'can effect a transference beyond the usual notions of the limits of the body's time.'[311] Kotting's film of the inflating and deflating of his father's larger than life representation allows him to explore the absence of his father, through his presence, and can be considered as just such a transference. This can be compared to a psychoanalytical encounter that could potentially be undertaken as a way to process the loss of his father. Phelan describes psychoanalysis as 'a performance of

[306] Leader, op. cit., 72.
[307] Ibid., 77.
[308] Ibid., 89.
[309] Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex, Performing Public Memories,* op. cit., 156.
[310] Ibid.
[311] Ibid.

mourning'[312] and in the same way as she makes the comparison between Joslin's autobiographical film *Silverlake Life* and psychoanalysis, the film making process itself can be considered as a psychoanalytical encounter of sorts. Kotting is performing his mourning, however, as Phelan suggests in her discussion of Joslin's film, it is the process of filmmaking itself that allows for the mourning to occur. Phelan proposes that, 'temporal art forms, such as music and cinema are able to perform the working through of mourning in the work itself.'[313]

It is useful to consider the work of Kotting as being within Rancière's concept of the aesthetic regime as it allows for a more precise analysis of the way in which the use of imagery transcends representation. In *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Rancière calls for an identification with both logos and pathos which is free from the hierachical organisation of genres, thereby allowing new forms of art to be developed. In opposition to the representative (Aristotelian) and ethical regimes, (Platonism) which rely on systems of mimesis and recognition that privileges certain art forms and processes over others, the aesthetic regime allows for multiple forms and new meanings to be construed through the use of a new combination of forms, or modes of production, including the relational and the interstitial. This means working in 'the present as against historicization,'[314] and 'represent[ing] an accounting of the means, the materiality of the process, as opposed to the representation of causes.'[315] This allows for a direct and immediate experiential response to lived experience as demonstrated by Kotting's work *In the Wake of a Deadad*. By focusing the viewers' attention on his lived experience, in the present, and by using film to capture this, he manages to 'convey a lived, comparable experience.'[316]

Rancière argues for an alternative approach to making artworks: 'an alteration of resemblances' that he describes as the great parataxis; he posits 'that there is no longer any measurement, anything in common.'[317] This situation is a chaotic state, which must be controlled by the use of the sentence-image. This 'is the unit that divides the chaotic force of the great parataxic into phrasal power of continuity and imaging power of rupture.' The sentence-image is, 'the sound of the true, the breath of chaos undergone and mastered.'[318] The work of mourning is an attempt to master the chaos of the liminal experience of grief and in regard to the work of Kotting, to articulate this through the production of re-presentations of representations. It seems as if Kotting has embraced this approach and used its power to create a way of managing the chaos caused by loss, as 'with its disruptive force, it repels the big sleep

[312] Ibid., 170.
[313] Phelan, *Mourning Sex, Performing Public Memories,* op. cit., 170.
[314] Ibid.
[315] Rancière, *Are Some Things Unrepresentable?* op. cit., 126.
[316] Ibid., 126.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid., 47.

of indifferent triteness.'[319] In comparison to the work of Turner discussed above, Kotting's auto-ethnographic, multi-media approach that embraces the performative and utilises it effectively, has value as, through its sharing and in its reception, it is possible to elicit in the viewer a comparative experience of processing loss. Leader writes that 'Living with loss is what matters, and writers and artists show us the many different ways in which this can be done.'[320] Works of art 'have been *made,* and made usually out of an experience of loss or catastrophe… making supposes that they have been created from an empty space, from an absence.'[321] He posits that when these works of art are then experienced by others, they 'allow us to access our own grief and to begin the work of mourning.'[322]

The artists' films considered above have been chosen due to their subject: an individual experience of loss and absence conveyed through the film form, in an attempt to represent elements of the experience and process loss. Their varying features have been discussed and analysed so that their individual elements can be considered in relation to the theoretical ground of this research project. However, the films have also been considered in order to determine their themes in relation to the phenomenological methodology of the project. In order to arrive at a phenomenological reduction, the phenomena: the artists' films under consideration are experienced from different perspectives to arrive at a horizon of the phenomenon of grief. The perspectives taken are: time, space, body, materiality, causality, relation to self, and relation to others. This allows 'the what of the appearing phenomenon… [to] be explicated texturally in order to arrive at noematic phases and the full noema.'[323] Moustakus is clear that 'every dimension or phase is given equal attention' and he insists that when undertaking a phenomenological analysis that 'the order embedded in everyday experience… can only be grasped through reflection.'[324] This process necessitates 'entering a pure internal place,'[325] enabling the researcher to 'encounter the phenomenon… with a pure state of mind.'[326] Of primary significance is that 'Nothing is determined in advance'[327] and that the phenomenological reduction occurs 'within an experiential context.'[328] This approach supports the experiential nature of this enquiry and enables a textural analysis to be employed that determines the themes that will be the basis of the experiential filmworks made as part of the project outputs. [329]

[319] Ibid., 46.
[320] Leader, op. cit., 99.
[321] Ibid., 206/7.
[322] Ibid., 207.
[323] Moutaskus, op.cit., 78.
[324] Ibid., 79.
[325] Ibid., 87.
[326] Ibid., 88.
[327] Ibid., 87.
[328] Ibid., 91.
[329] Please see Appendix 4 for the phenomenological reduction.

Focussing on these perspectives has enabled the process of bracketing to be undertaken. This means that the horizons of the phenomenon can be explored more fully through the practical work of the project. The results of the research are bracketed so that all else can be eliminated. Those elements that are irrelevant are then deleted leaving only textural meanings and the invariant constituents of the phenomenon. This phenomenological reduction has been undertaken so that the appearance of the experience of loss and grief in specific artists' film can be identified. The representation of the liminal experience in the films under consideration has been identified as containing several constituents that are invariant. These include images as sign and symbol: skies, seascapes, horizons, landscapes, journeys undertaken on trains and in cars, the locating of the self in the work, and the use of motion, as in the embodied or transitory, fluctuating placing of the camera/gaze. The use of sound, as in the diegetic sounds incorporated into the filmworks discussed, is an element that requires more detailed consideration as sound has the potential to expand and elucidate the concepts inherent in the work: sound is 'the foundation not only of inter-subjective communication but also of a differentiation in the perception process.'[330] In addition, there are several variant features that stand out and require further exploration to determine their efficacy. These are the filmmaking process itself and its incorporation into the filmic construct, ritual, and the performative. It is clear that there are three underlying themes within the phenomena being considered here that 'account for the emergence of a phenomenon'[331]. These are place, transition and transformation. These themes have been identified and subsequently utilised in the practical work of the project, in order to make work that is a coherent textural description of the phenomenon. The next chapter defines the processes involved in the making of the practical work and articulates the development of a structural description of the phenomenon that is a 'unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole.' [332] This articulation is the production of the filmic outputs of the project for, as Rancière states, 'Producing unites the act of manufacturing with the act of bringing to light.'[333]

The value of film as the mode of working within this project has been identified through this analysis of artists' film and the phenomenological reduction undertaken. It is clear that film has the potential to re-present experience and to allow for an engagement with the subject of the film, however, the particular approaches to filmmaking explored within this chapter have not determined a specific methodology that can be utilised. It is necessary to consider the various aesthetic approaches that could be adopted for the practical work of the project and to refer to existing approaches that can be drawn upon. This will enable the efficacy of the filmic mode of working used to be determined.

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[330] Flueckiger, op. cit., 157.
[331] Moustakus, op. cit., 99.
[332] Ibid., 100.
[333] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics,* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 44.

Film is both an intra and inter subjective experience that has the potential to be experienced perceptually by the viewer in the phenomenological third space where the film, filmmaker and viewer meet in order to experience the film. Film is an expression of experience and as such can support the representation of the liminal experience. Rancière, in his discussion of the dissemblance of the image, establishes the value of the sentence-image, which is a consequence of the great parataxic, a form of montage employed by artists and writers to effectively express experience. Taking this concept forward as an intentional approach has value within this enquiry as its' use establishes a mode of working, that can support the representation of the liminal experience in film. The processes employed in the production of filmworks and the inspirations and influences adopted and explored are laid out in the following chapter.

3. Processing Grief and Liminality

The outputs of this project consist of the production of a series of film works that have been made in order to address and elucidate the concept under investigation: the re-presentation of the liminal experience in film. The project outputs adhere to the main research question: what does experiential filmmaking contribute to the re-presentation of the liminal experience? Furthermore, their production makes the claim that the filmmaking process functions as a way of processing grief and liminality. It is useful to define the practical processes adopted as the mode of working throughout the project and to highlight certain elements that support the theoretical concepts identified as the framework for the research. These elements have been explored in the contextual review: grief and the processes inherent in western culture that attempt to address and resolve working through grief, for example, psychoanalysis.

It is important here however to define the practical research methods that have been used throughout this enquiry and to consider how phenomenological processes have contributed to this mode of working. As the mode of engagement, phenomenology has enabled the research material to be considered without prejudgement or bias, and with a 'freedom from suppositions'[334]. In her book *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience,* film theorist Vivian Sobchack describes the phenomenological method that she uses in her research as a set of hermeneutic rules, that describe, thematise and interpret 'the existential experience of a specific phenomenon.'[335] These rules 'can be seen as a demand for critical rigour and for an interrogation of the very common places and common sense from which they emerge.'[336] The first rule is to: 'Attend to the phenomena of experience as they appear'[337] in the present. Within this enquiry, this refers to the experience of my encounters with artworks, the self-stories of Lewis, Freidman and Didion and artist's films: the research material of the project. The second rule is simple: 'Describe, don't explain.'[338] The parataxic writing undertaken that articulates my dialogical encounter with artworks follows this rule and in addition, attempts to locate the reader of the text in the present, in the same psychological location as the writer.[339] The third rule is to ensure that all the phenomena, or research materials, are equalised: 'do not assume a hierarchy of "realities." '[340] Sobchack is clear that this rule allows for an opening, or unfolding of 'the field of experience in its fullness and multiplicity,'[341] which then allows for a process of reduction to take place, whereby the 'structural or

[334] Moustakus, op. cit., 85.
[335] Sobchack, op. cit., 48.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid.
[338] Ibid.
[339] See Appendix 1 for examples of this
[340] Sobchack, op. cit. 48.
[341] Sobchack, op. cit., 48

invariant features of the phenomena'[342] can be found. This is the fourth rule, and thus 'Through the use of a free imaginative variant that contextualizes features of the phenomena within the whole… a pattern of experience emerges. The meaning of the phenomenon… is specified in the *phenomenological interpretation.*'[343] Sobchack argues that this allows for an explicit correlation to be determined between 'experience and consciousness in a body-subject [that is] both particular in existence and universal in structure.'[344] For this project, the making of film works in an attempt to explore the particular features of the liminal experience has allowed this to happen; the correlation between experience and consciousness in myself as filmmaker is particular to my lived experience. This means that by focussing on the structural elements of the filmic re-presentations it is possible to draw conclusions about the phenomena being researched. Sobchack's final hermeneutic rule succinctly summarises this: 'Every experiencing has its reference or direction towards what is experienced, and contrarily, every experienced phenomenon refers to or reflects a mode of experience to which it is present.'[345] The phenomena of the liminal experience refer to and reflect the 'mode of experience', that is the psychological and embodied space of grief. The work produced is therefore a phenomenological interpretation that has the potential to be both individual and yet have elements of universality in its structure. This is by no means a claim for universality; rather it relates to the phenomenological research methodology that identifies structural features of the re-presentation of the experience that are universal. In the context of this project, this means that the research undertaken: the practical filmmaking, which is experiential and intuitive, will be able to determine universal structural features within and of itself.

This chapter sets out the processes that have been adopted as the mode of working and discusses their individual features as a way of determining a 'synthesis of meanings and essences' that have enabled the production of film work that functions as a 'unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole.'[346] These film works and their development will be analysed and discussed to support the argument that the final film work is a structural description of the liminal experience that can be experienced by the viewer in the phenomenological third space, enabling a commutation of perception and experience. It is important here however to reflect on the aesthetic qualities of film and to state the specific forms that will be utilised as modes of working.

Rancière, in his essay *Are Some Things Unrepresentable?* considers the problematics of representation and how these might be addressed through artistic production. He

[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid., 49.
[346] Moustakus, op. cit., 100.

claims 'that a certain type of object leaves representation in ruins by shattering any harmonious relationship between presence and absence, between the material and the intelligible.'[347] The liminal experience of grief could be considered to be such an object: it could be argued therefore that it is unrepresentable. However, Rancière is clear that it is the way in which things are re-presented that is the issue and in fact, he claims that, 'In the aesthetic regime of art, nothing is unrepresentable… There are simply choices.'[348] Furthermore he argues that: 'Modern works of art then have to become ethical witnesses to the unrepresentable.'[349] For Rancière, it is not about the subject being considered by the work of art but the modes of production being employed by the artist. In his essay *Are Some Things Unrepresentable?* Rancière talks about how the lived experience of the Holocaust has been determined as unrepresentable. However, he argues for particular approaches to articulating lived experience that he defines as the 'aesthetic revolution', that 'establishes this identity of knowledge and ignorance, acting and suffering, as the very definition of art.'[350] This means that there is no hierarchy of values applied to image production, for 'everything is equal, equally representable'.[351] Within the aesthetic regime: a part of the aesthetic revolution, there is no distinction between art and non-art, between the ordinary and the spectacle, between, 'words and forms, the sayable and the visible, the visible and the invisible [that are] related to one another in accordance with new procedures'.[352] This notion relates to the use of the sentence image and the great parataxis discussed in the previous chapter: the way in which a work of art is constructed and produced signifies something about the work of art and speaks to the viewer in a direct and precise manner. It is important that the filmic outputs of the project consider and adopt this mode of operation, so that it can be experienced directly. The intention for the work made as part of this project is to locate it in the aesthetic regime, which is, according to Rancière 'the very definition of art... of thought and non-thought… a radical passivity of material being there.'[353] This suggests that rather than being unrepresentable, the liminal experience is 'equally representable.'[354]

In his essay, *Aesthetics as Politics,* Rancière explores the relationship between aesthetics and politics and how this manifests in the aesthetic regime as part of the distribution of the sensible: a conceptual ideal that determines how art and society can function to challenge dominant forms and ultimately re-present experience through the production of art. Rancière states: 'This is what 'aesthetic' means: in the aesthetic regime of art, the property of being art is no longer given by the criteria of

[347] Rancière, *Are Some Things Unrepresentable* in *The Future of the Image*, op. cit., 111
[348] Ibid., 129.
[349] Rancière, *The Aesthetic Revolution and its Outcomes*, in *The Future of the Image,* op. cit., 68.
[350] Rancière, *Are Some Things Unrepresentable?* in *The Future of the Image,* op. cit., 119.
[351] Ibid., 120.
[352] Ibid., 13.
[353] Ibid., 119/20.
[354] Ibid., 120.

technical perfection but is ascribed to a specific form of sensory apprehension'.[355] This notion pertains to the viewing experience and the way in which the senses perceive the artwork suggesting that the artwork should be a challenge to the normal modes of representation that are mimetic. This also relates to the dissemblance of the image that Rancière discusses in *The Future of the Image*. In relation to sensory forms of art, such as those within the aesthetic regime, Rancière proposes that the artwork 'suspends the ordinary connections not only between appearance and reality, but also between form and matter, activity and passivity, understanding and sensibility.'[356] Relating this notion to the term 'play' he argues that when playing, ordinary experience is suspended, and that the artist can adopt this concept within the aesthetic regime to 'engage in free play'[357] which is in contrast to the notion of 'work'. The contradiction here is apparent: the artist makes works of art, that are then understood and judged in relation to the way in which they represent something real. However, by adopting the notion of play, an artist can counter the notion of work and create freely. The political element of this is that artwork is perceived as having value only when it sits within the dominant forms: the representational and ethical regimes of art. Rancière states that: 'The power of the elite here is thus the power of educated senses over that of unrefined senses,'[358] implying that currently it is not possible to access and appreciate art unless one is educated in accordance with the dominant forms that exist within the hegemony. Arguing for aesthetic autonomy, Rancière posits that this is not the 'artistic "making" celebrated by modernism. It is the autonomy of the form of a sensory experience.'[359] In this regard, we can make the connection between the expression of lived experience that the filmwork of this project is attempting to produce. Using the notion of free play as a tool with which to approach filmmaking adds an element of freedom to the making, that supports the experiential filmmaking processes adopted. For Rancière, this freedom means that 'lived experience is not divided into separate spheres' rather, the viewer 'no longer experiences art as a separate sphere of life.'[360] Within the aesthetic regime, art is not a separate reality: it has become transformed into a form of life. The re-presentation of the liminal experience being undertaken within this research project attempts such a transformation and through its use of free play and a lack of distinction between separate spheres of life it attempts to locate itself within the aesthetic regime. The use of alternative forms, processes and modes of working as outlined below support this intention.

[355]Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics as Politics* in *Aesthetic and its Discontents,* trans. Steven Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 29.
[356] Ibid., 30.
[357] Ibid., 31.
[358] Ibid.
[359] Ibid., 32.
[360] Ibid., 35.

It is useful to consider the visual themes of the project and to discuss them in relation to films and the imagery being explored, before considering the processes and modes of working in the production of the filmic outputs.

Visual Themes: Place, Transition, Transformation

Within this enquiry and following the phenomenological reduction undertaken in relation to the artists' films under consideration in the previous chapter, three visual themes have been identified to convey the liminal experience: place, transition and transformation. It is important to restate that the liminal is both a psychological and literal space/place: it is both a real place that the mind and body inhabits, and an imaginary or transgeneric location that is psychologically inhabited. The images collected as part of the research process function as a re-presentation of lived experience but it is also important to re-present the imaginary space of the liminal. Bachelard states that a 'phenomenology of the imagination cannot be content with a reduction which would make the image a subordinate means of expression: it demands, on the contrary, that images be lived directly.'[361] This suggests and furthermore supports the experiential nature of the project: the liminal experience is 'lived directly' and the images lived are 'taken as sudden events in life. When the image is new, the world is new.'[362]

Place

The concept of place is co-dependent on that of space: a geographical space that surrounds a person, or a specific location. The terms place and space are often used interchangeably however, in the terms of this enquiry, it is useful to separate them and to acknowledge their co-dependency. This means that place here refers to the location of the person: the space they inhabit, and to the actual place where the person is located, the geographical space they are inhabiting. The image then re-presents both the gaze: what is visible from that place, and the experience of inhabiting the place. In this way, a focus on the present can be maintained and documented through the capturing of images.

In the mainstream film *Tidelands* (dir. Terry Gilliam 2006) a very precise place/location is utilised that captures the experience of the main character, a young girl who is left alone following the sudden death of her parents. Gilliam uses a dramatic prairie landscape with its bright light and never ending sky to convey her extreme isolation, as well as the space of her imagination: her psychological location. The viewer feels compelled by the experience of the girl, through this re-presentation, and is able to imagine how, being in such a landscape, under similar circumstances, might feel. Place is conveyed according to the lived experience of the character in the

[361] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1969), 47.
[362] Ibid.

same way as in Chris Welsby's *Drift.* This visual theme works in accordance with the themes explored below and is an element of transition and transformation, even as the location or place changes.

Transition

A particular feature of the liminal experience of loss and grief is that of transition: the liminal is a transitional space, temporary and not fixed in any specific time. This visual theme allows for an exploration of transitory spaces such as stations, airports, trains, entrances and exits, and temporary or ritual spaces such as sites of worship, ruins, rituals and performance.

The horizon and the beach, which both symbolise the end of one reality and the beginning of another, are also important images to consider, as they have been used in film to convey the transition between life and death, and the end of life itself. In Powell and Pressburger's film *A Matter of Life and Death*, (1946) a fighter pilot who has said his goodbyes to the world in anticipation of his death, finds himself washed up on a barren beach. The viewer, like the fighter pilot, thinks that this is the afterlife and that he is dead, however, after exploring the dunes bordering the beach he discovers that he is in fact alive, and on an English beach, close to the airfield that he was flying towards when his plane was damaged by enemy fire. The film plays with the concept of the beach as a transitory place, whilst also cleverly referencing the many deaths that occurred on the beaches of northern Europe during World War two. In Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, (1957) the first encounter that the knight has with Death occurs on a beach and it is there that they begin their game of chess to determine whether the knight lives or dies. The use of images of the beach, or horizon, will allow for an exploration of this transitional site, and its symbolic connection to the end of life.

Transformation

The use of transformation as a visual theme relates to the liminal experience: it is through transiting the liminal experience that transformation can potentially take place. Physical sites of transformation considered include piers, and bridges that stretch out across water, as these structures suggest the potential for transformation, as they are in-between spaces, leading to somewhere else. Sand banks, and pathways through dunes and sands, that allow access to islands situated just off the coast, are also considered, as these routes become transformed by the tide, which cuts the island off from the mainland. Symbolically, these routes and pathways refer to journeys to a transgeneric space: a path betwixt and between.

In the film *The Way* (dir. Emilio Estevez 2010) the main character undertakes the pilgrim route, El Camino de Santiago, after his estranged son dies whilst undertaking it. Through his journey and the encounters along the way, he undergoes a transformation, whereby his attitude towards life is significantly altered. The images

of the pilgrim's way, through the mountainous landscape of the North West of Spain, are used within the film to convey sadness, progress, self-reflection, and the communality of the experience of the pilgrim. Within this enquiry, the imaginative and allegorical route taken by Pilgrim in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) provides a framework for the visual work of this part of the enquiry. In particular the Valley of the Shadow of Death with its singular and hazardous route, will be considered. The valley 'is as dark as pitch… and over that Valley hangs the discouraging clouds of confusion; death doth also spread his wings over it: in a word, it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without order.'[363] Portrayals of specific landscapes and their sublime potential have been considered as this allows for a literal re-presentation of the pilgrims route: the way to transformation.

The themes above were responded to in the early work of the project, which also determined the production values utilised. The filmworks made in response were valuable in that they allowed for a reflection on the processes and methodologies employed, including post-production strategies.[364] Through the process of making these works, various approaches were eliminated and the production values, including the aesthetic of the project, were established. These were then taken forward into the production of the major filmworks.

Filmmaking Process

It is useful to discuss and identify elements of the filmmaking process that have been utilised within this enquiry, specifically in the production of filmic outputs for the project. In accordance with Rancière's aesthetic regime, it is important to utilise both new and existing filmic modes of production. Through using a range of modes of production in my practice, I can potentially expand and elucidate the canon of artist filmmaking practices, reflect on dominant forms of filmmaking, and create a new grammatical form for the re-presentation of the liminal experience, without dismissing either the documentary tradition, or the photographic aesthetic. It is useful to reflect on some of the filmmaking traditions that have been inspirational and influential in my practice and within the work of this project.

The potential for the adoption of the documentary film tradition within this project is illustrated in the films of Frederick Wiseman, who describes his filmmaking process as 'totally subjective. The films are my response to a certain experience'[365] Wiseman exposed himself to situations that were usually hidden filming what his gaze was drawn to.[366] This footage was then worked with to show his experience of these

[363] Bunyan, op. cit., 56.
[364] See Appendix 2, Production Log.
[365] Brian Winston, *Claiming The Real* (British Film Institute: London, 1995), 41.
[366] An example of this is the film *Titicut Follies* (1967) a documentary shot in the high security state hospital for the criminally insane in Massachusetts. The film was banned in the US due to concerns

situations and places. As a way of capturing experience through images, Wiseman's approach is a useful one to consider. Despite working within the tradition of documentary, Wiseman refused to use the voice-over as a way to expand the information being presented on screen and in this respect, his films are reminiscent of Cinema Verite and Michel Brault, who memorably said: 'Truth is something unattainable, you cannot claim to write truth with the camera. What you can do is to reveal something to your viewers that makes them discover their own truth.'[367]

Cinema Verite was a response to the formal structure of documentary filmmaking and utilised the filmic language of European avant-garde cinema to show the ordinary everyday lives of Parisian people.[368] Brault's ambition, to enable the viewer to find their own truth in the imagery they are watching, relates to the Brechtian distanciation technique. Brecht made his viewers aware of the devices within the theatre and this is similar to Cinema Verite, in that it makes its viewers aware of the filmic devices being employed. In order to challenge the filmmaking forms that support and perpetuate the representational and ethical regimes of art, it is important to be conscious of how the dominant forms operate and to actually show the making process within the work.

A film made by Wim Wenders, that documents the last few days of American director Nicholas Rays' life, *Lightning Over Water*, (1980) is a remarkable example of self-reflexive documentary film. In it, Wenders shows the actual making of the film as well as the filmic construct. Wenders arrives at Rays' New York loft apartment to begin filming and unusually, the footage shows his actual arrival, cameras and lights evident in the frame, and as a filmic construct, with no filming apparatus evident. The film continues in this way enabling the viewer to feel as if they have privileged access to the making process, the actuality, the real circumstances surrounding this man's death. Ray is filmed as he receives medical treatment, visits old friends, gives a talk about his work and ultimately, lies almost lifeless in his bed. The film ends with footage of the film crew on a boat trip as they celebrate Rays' life and mark his death. This process of reflexivity is valid and entirely necessary within the context of the filmic output for this enquiry: this raw reflection of actual lived experience reveals the visible and the invisible, and as viewers we are compelled by the insight we have into the making process. In some ways, it feels as we are a part of the process ourselves and this correlates with the concept elucidated earlier by Segal: that by witnessing the processing of grief through the production of artwork we are able to undertake some of the work of mourning ourselves.

about the footage, which showed catatonic patients being force fed amongst other abuses, and not shown publically until 1991.

[367] Michel Brault, *Cinema Verite* (London: Academy Video, BFI, 1993).

[368] *Chronicle of a Summer* (dir. Jean Rouch, 1961).

Ritualistic filmmaking approaches are also significant as identified by Maya Deren in her writings on film. Discussing her own development as a filmmaker, she describes how initially she wanted to 'create experience… a semi-psychological reality'.[369] Deren then became concerned to 'exploit the capacity of film to manipulate Time and Space.'[370] Ultimately, she makes a claim for 'the creative possibilities of Time, and that the whole form should be ritualistic.'[371] Deren defines what she means by this: 'the ritualistic form is not the expression of the individual nature of the artist… the ritualistic form treats the human being not as the source of the dramatic action, but as a somewhat depersonalized element in the dramatic whole.'[372] Whilst Deren is referring to ritual in a wider sense in this discussion, the implication is that by adopting a ritualistic approach one can comment on the universal as opposed to the personal. Deren argues that it is necessary to understand that the film form is 'the product of a completely unique complex: the exercise of an instrument which can function simultaneously, both in terms of discovery and invention.'[373] This supports Rancière's argument for free play in artmaking and suggests that film in a ritualistic sense allows for new forms and approaches to be discovered through the making of the work. This is illustrated in her film, *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946) where the action frequently freezes, forcing the viewer to focus on the image presented and to reflect on the characters' lived experience. Two visually similar female characters perform rituals associated with women: weaving and winding wool and taking part in a social dance, before Deren forces us to focus on a freeze frame solarised image of one of the women entering the sea as she escapes a male pursuer. The women both undertake rituals associated with womanhood but ultimately, for one of these women, societal expectations are a trap, forcing her to find an escape route. Her personal transformation is greater than those of the societal rituals she performs, which function to maintain the position of women within society. Deren comments on a universal element of female experience in this work and conveys this through the use of symbols that are understood in relation to the individual woman in the film, as well as in a wider sense.

The potential of ritualistic processes is clear within the film outputs of this project; Deren writes summatively with regard to the ritualistic possibilities afforded by filmmaking: 'The complexity of the camera creates, at times, the illusion of being almost itself a living intelligence which can inspire its manipulation on the explorative and creative level simultaneously.'[374] The ritualistic form is used in this project due to the creative and explorative qualities it enables.

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[369] Maya Deren, "*An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film"* in *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde,* edited by Bill Nichols (USA: University of California Press, 2001), 5.
[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid.
[372] Ibid., 20.
[373] Ibid., 46.
[374] Deren, op. cit., 47.

The use of experiential filmmaking is also important to outline as this constitutes the main mode of working and determines the filmic outputs. The use of one's own experience, that is the filmmaker's experience, is the primary focus of the work. The filmmaker's gaze is directed at images, symbols and signs that reflect lived experience and comment on it in a direct and immediate manner. The use of post-production editing techniques additionally enables elements of the film to be exaggerated or highlighted in order to focus the viewer's attention on specific features of the experience being conveyed. These features will be considered and explored when the film outputs are analysed later in this chapter.

Grammatical Features

The initial process undertaken is the making of filmwork in response to the themes identified: place, transition and transformation,[375] following the phenomenological reduction that identified these themes. The films made are experiential and respond to the themes directly; their contribution to the representation of the liminal experience has been considered and elements have been abstracted and labelled as constituent moments of the liminal experience. The making of the films followed an experiential methodology and alternately explored the placing of a camera on a tripod and the locating of the camera close to the body. The use of focus pulling was also explored as, through the process of losing focus, the image becomes abstracted. The films tell small stories of lived experience: the exploration of a location, a place both literal and psychological; journeying from the coast to the city, and various transitory locations. These locations were transited in an attempt to find a language for the process of transformation; however this element fails to function and the work is observational, documentary in style and form, despite its abstract qualities. There is a sense of resolution however as destinations are reached and through these experiments with form and function, sound and its potential was considered. The films contain constituent moments of the liminal experience: moments that are necessary and sufficient in order to understand liminality. Anxiety, fear, stillness and motion in contrasting contexts, and a sense of confusion and disorientation are evident. In grammatical terms, the significant features abstracted and subsequently labelled are: temporality and identity, framing, motion, and sound/silence. Using a process of reduction and elimination these themes have been identified as having value to the representation of the liminal experience; other elements have been eliminated as not being a constituent moment of the experience in that they overlap with other forms and filmic approaches, for example, static panning and zooming which both operate in the horror genre.

Temporality and identity are related and interconnected in that our identity is dependent on the time of the experience. In relation to the work under consideration,

[375] See Appendix 2, Production Log.

the hidden and embodied camera tells us about the lived experience of the filmmaker, conveying what is visible as well as what is not visible. The fluctuating time codes within the films illuminate the experience of liminality in that time is not experienced in a static manner, and the absence of the gaze means that the body is the main communicator. The use of the embodied camera means that the concept of framing is significantly altered: there are occasions when the film frame is distorted and the image curtailed or restricted. These images are dissembled in that they are unexpected and confusing for the viewer, further supporting the concept of liminal experience. Motion relates to the embodied camera and to the moving location of the camera, which is hand held. Temporal qualities can be further exploited through the use of this element: the speeding up and slowing down of footage exaggerates and draws attention to the sense experience of the traveller. The use of diegetic sound is another feature that can be exploited and distorted: in liminality, our perception of sound can be thus effected and particular locations have particular sounds associated with them, meaning that sounds can be added and removed in order to accentuate the perceptual effect. The incidental recording of diegetic sounds included music, carried by wind or picked up in passing. Reviewing the effect of this suggests that the incorporation of pre-recorded music can bring a significant meaning to a piece of footage and draw the viewer's attention to the perceptual experience by the lyrics or rhythm of the music. The use of no sound at all: silence, whilst a device frequently used in a range of film genres, has an interesting effect. Silence 'is synonymous with rituals of time, memory and death,' suggesting that being silent 'is to be in the company of one's own mortality.'[376] For this reason, silence is an element that has been identified as being a useful addition to the grammatical features being explored.

In addition to the earlier themes identified and in support of these, the locating of the self in the work is a necessary constituent for understanding liminality: within the filmworks made the presence of the self was evident in reflections and on occasions when words were spoken. The use of images that convey a sense of transition: seascapes, beaches, horizons, train stations and trains have been labelled as sufficient in terms of the location of the film. These features have been clustered and identified as the mise-en-scene. Further, the notion of journeying, as in the experience of pilgrims, supports both the grammatical tools employed and the filming methodologies adopted. These elements have been identified as textural descriptions of the liminal experience, conveying the experience of the maker, that of loss and grief. These are to be applied to the making of filmwork that attempts to summarise the constituent elements of the experience, by the use of the imaginative variant. In order to arrive at a structural description of the experience of grief it is important to use divergent perspectives and to apply an imaginative quality to these perspectives. However, the process of working in an experiential manner means that the film will

[376] Des O'Raure, "Film, Sound and the Poetics of Silence" *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media,* op. cit., 87.

not be planned or storyboarded. Instead the camera will be held and the journey recorded in a truthful manner, with the application of post-production editing techniques to exploit identified and significant features.

A Work of Memorial

For the next stage of the practical research the decision was made to attempt to make a work of memorial that would also function as the work of mourning, and a location/journey was identified to enable this to occur. Southend Pier, which is almost a mile long, has a train that runs its length, taking travellers to the pier head. This location has potential as it contains essential elements in terms of mise-en-scene: seascape, horizon, train journey and transitional space, and it also has a personal significance and is associated with memories of previous journeys to the same location. The making of the film is described in the production log and will not be considered here. However, it is useful to analyse this filmwork and determine the structural features of the work.

Mise-en-Scene

The use of the train journey as a motif, or mise-en-scene in *Southend Pier*, is part of a tradition that can be seen throughout the history of film. Trains are transitional locations or sites, where specific events occur, and we encounter people on journeys of discovery, whilst often also providing an escape route, or an opportunity to become in some way transformed. In Sarah Turner's film *Perestroika,* the train has been used as the mise-en-scene, however, the journey it portrays does not allow for the personal transformation of the narrator. It is useful to consider other artists films that make use of this same motif.

Phillipe Pareno's film *June 8 1968* (2009) recreates the journey taken by the corpse of senator Robert Kennedy, whose assassination, coming shortly after the tragic killing of Martin Luther King, re-opened the wound in the national psyche caused by the assassination of John F. Kennedy five years earlier. In 1968, the route taken by the funeral train was lined with mourners, who stood silently beside the track as the train passed through stations, towns and the landscape. In his recreation, Pareno sites multiple cameras in various locations on the train, so that the direction of the journey and the mourners can be seen clearly. Alternately, the footage slows down and speeds up, which allows the viewer to focus on the faces of the mourners, the train tracks, or the sky. The effect of this is to make it appear as if the spirit of Robert Kennedy was looking out from his coffin: it is the gaze of the corpse that we assume when we watch and this allows us to reflect on the lived experience of public grief. Rancière in his discussion of the parataxic, states that when lived experience is 'conveyed according to the same logic of minor perceptions added to one another,'[377] that they make sense

[377] Rancière, *Sentence Image and Great Parataxic*, op. cit., 126.

'through their appeal to a minimal auditory and visual experience.'[378] The simplicity of Pareno's film means that we can make sense of the effect that this death had on the public, without the need for complex narratives, voice-overs, or sophisticated soundtracks. As a public work of mourning, this film functions effectively, and corresponds to Phelan's assertion that temporal art forms, such as film, allow for the working through of mourning, through the work itself and our encounter with it.

It is fruitful to also reflect on artist Douglas Gordon's recent filmwork[379] *K.364,* which seeks to re-present the experience of the Holocaust - albeit through the next generation of survivors and their experience. The film's title is an abbreviation for Mozart's composition, Kochel no. 364. The film follows two Polish musicians who are travelling across the German border on a train, to play this composition with the Sinfonia Concertante in Berlin. Gordon cleverly references the documentary film *Shoah* (dir. Lanzmann, 1985), which uses shots from a train as interludes to the main visual material in the film: talking heads, and as a motif to symbolise escape. The use of the train journey allows Gordon to let the motion and temporal nature of the train journey create an atmosphere that comes close to one of anxiety. Gordon frequently shows a white screen and stops all sound, so that for the viewer, there is a suspension of the temporal reality of the film, a time to reflect, before the power of the music is played out in full force by the orchestra when the musicians finally reach their destination. In the installation of the film, two screens are used with a collection of mirrors, allowing the screens to be seen from different angles. The effect when entering the installation space is one of disorientation, and this adds to the anxiety conveyed by the use of silence, multiple perspectives and alterations to the temporality of the piece. The final section of the film however, is of the musicians playing with the orchestra. We see them in an ecstasy of production, but we never see anything other then restricted and confusing shots, we never see the orchestra, or the musicians performing in their entirety; it is as if Gordon wants us to only see this experience from the musicians' point of view. The use of music as a response to the traumatic conditions of the concentration and death camps during WWII is referred to here and in an accompanying exhibition, Gordon has charred sheets of music framed and displayed on the wall as a direct re-presentation of the struggle within the camps to keep music alive. This suggests that there is an argument for both the playing of, and the hearing of music as a way of managing anxiety, as the value of its use is evident in even the most horrific circumstances of the concentration camps. Gordon is telling us that music was a vital component in the survival tools utilised at this time, and that it continues to perform a function when we reflect on traumatic experiences and their effects. The film functions as a document of a journey, drawing on real and associated memories of similar journeys. In addition, its use of the train allows us to journey with the characters and to reach their destination. *Southend*

[378] Ibid.
[379] Part of an exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery: London (Feb-March, 2011).

Pier's textural description of the liminal experience is enabled through its mise-en-scene and this feature will be used in further filmwork when the universal structures of the phenomenon are determined. It is useful to consider the use of sound as both diegetic and non-diegetic elements have been incorporated and utilised.

Sound

The use of pre-recorded music in *Southend Pier* is useful to consider here, as its function is to expand and inform the viewer about the intentions of the work, revealing information about the maker and the subject of the work, as well as contributing to the effect of the work and its perceptual reception.

The artist Elizabeth Price utilises music in her filmwork: *Woolworth's Choir of 1979,* and it is useful to reflect on this filmwork as the music provides a dramatic relief from the subject being considered. The subject of the film is the tragic death of ten Woolworth's employees when a fire broke out in the furniture store of the Manchester shop. Through the use of archive news footage and a reconstruction of the store where the fire broke out, the story of the fire, its effects and consequences is played out for the viewer to witness. Price contrasts this footage with a clinical dissection of church architecture and snatches of the 1960's girl group The Shangri-Las, constructing a rich and haunting soundtrack that locates the viewer firmly in the time and space of the film. As a reflection on a series of cultural phenomena, Price's film functions as a collective expression of loss, and the responses of the employees as they tell their stories allows the viewer to share in the experience through the act of witnessing. The music of The Shangri-Las, and other elements within the soundtrack, punctuate and expand the viewer experience, and the seemingly disparate elements re-presented are seamlessly connected through the use of both visual and auditory motifs. The use of popular music as a device to connect the viewer's emotions and memories to the visual imagery is employed here to full effect and I reflect on how this relates to the use of pre-recorded music in *Southend Pier.*

As an individual experiencing liminality, I can identify that music functions as a way to deal with anxiety; however it is also possible to argue for its use within the filmworks made. In particular, music is used to support and manage the anxiety caused by the fluctuating temporality and confusing shots from the moving train in *Southend Pier.* As the pier head is reached, and the train doors open, the song heard ruptures the tension and functions to relieve the anxiety of the viewer, allowing them to relax, breathe and even to smile at the ironic connection of the lyrics to the filmmaker's experience. The music also allows for cultural references to be made by the viewer and to introduce memories associated with the music. However, this implies that the viewer needs to recognise the music and this cannot be determined in advance, rather, the choice of music and the lyrics of that song are informing the viewer of the memories of the filmmaker, whilst allowing them to make their own interpretation of the lyrics. The connection of the viewer to the music is actively

sought through the use of specific pieces of music, that contain cultural references as well as information about the subject of the film. The use of songs as a device within *Southend Pier*, draw on a body of cultural responses to loss that are universally understood even as they may not be recognised and known. The use of diegetic sounds within the film are also important to consider as they draw attention to the perceptual and embodied experience of the filmmaker at the time of making.

As part of the making process, sounds were recorded at the same time as the visual footage. These were then reviewed and decisions made with regard to their inclusion in the final edit. The use of the sound of the train rattling on the tracks means that the 'sound is essentially related to movement' and the materiality of the location: 'material traces are of extraordinary importance to sound aesthetics.' [380] The sound of the wind, which is evident once the pier head is reached inform the spatiality of the piece giving information about 'the spatial qualities of the location itself.'[381] It is interesting to consider the narrative connotations of sound as 'hearing impressions catapult us… back to our early experiences, even after years. Every place leaves its impression as a complex of specific sound objects.'[382] The implication here is that the sound of travelling on a train, or the sound of wind coming in from the sea, takes us sensually back to our experiences, exploiting connections to memories of past experiences when we similarly travelled on a train, or visited a seaside location. The way in which sound can be exploited as part of the editing or post-production process is discussed by Jamie Sexton in his illuminating essay on the development of sound in Avant Garde film. Making reference to the work of Eisenstein and Vertov, he writes that: 'sound usage was conceived along similar lines to visual montage, where separate images were juxtaposed in order to create new meanings.'[383] The contrast between the visual images and the sounds within *Southend Pier* exploit this notion and function to challenge the viewers expectations with regard to the correlation between the sound and the image, whilst drawing on their memories and experience to expand perception.

The use of sound effects drawn from the diegetic and the inclusion of pre-recorded music have been considered and identified as useful. These elements are considered to be functional as they allow for the expansion of the viewer experience, incorporating perceptions, memories, emotions and reactions. As textural descriptions of the liminal experience, sound and music serve to illuminate and inform; therefore they will be further investigated and employed in the making of the final film work, where the universal structural features of the phenomenon will be determined and defined.

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[380] Flueckiger, op. cit., 153.
[381] Ibid., 154.
[382] Ibid., 168.
[383] Jamie Sexton, *Avant Garde Film,* in *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media,* op. cit., 578.

Journeying: Temporality and Identity

Camera motion and the embodied camera is also an important element of filmic grammar used within *Southend Pier:* the use of the embodied camera allows for the gaze of the maker to become the gaze of the viewer, locating the viewer in the place and time of the film. However, it is useful to consider this device in relation to the notion of journeying: in the film a journey is being undertaken. This journey reveals something to the viewer about time and place but also about the identity of the filmmaker. As Moustakus suggests, identity is intrinsically linked to temporality and by using the gaze: the 'kino eye' of Vertov, the relationship between identity and temporality can clearly be seen. In her writings on Vertov, Phelan writes that he does not work with the familiar filmmaking techniques of shot and counter shot, the 'reciprocal gaze'[384] of narrative and documentary filmmaking. However, the use of the 'kino eye' technique was not intentionally applied in the making of *Southend Pier*, rather it was the result of creative exploration and free play. Phelan argues that this approach is 'the failure to have one's deepest gaze returned.'[385] Yet within the film, I see myself in reflections, as if I am trying to return my own gaze, to find myself within the re-presentation. Reflecting on this I am reminded of the earlier practice work undertaken: I found that often I was reflected in images as if I was trying to find a way to re-present myself as well as to re-present the liminal experience. This suggests that locating the self in the work has a function and that this function relates to identity. Phelan writes that: 'The process of self identity is a leap into a narrative that employs seeing as a way of knowing… one seeks a self image within the representational frame.'[386] This correlates with my experience as when making the film I was concerned to find myself within the frame; however, as Phelan articulates, this is not merely about self image, rather it is a desire to know the self that facilitates this action. This feature requires further investigation and will be taken forward as a possible structural description of the phenomenon of grief; it correlates with the self-reflexive nature of liminality and also the autoethnographic processes employed within this enquiry. It is also evident in the critical subjectivity of Kotting where he performs the action of inflating and deflating his father's form. The concept of the performative has, according to Phelan, the function of enabling us to perform mourning, potentially recovering from the trauma of loss in so doing. However, she also states that: 'Memory. Sight. Love. All require a witness, imagined or real.'[387] The camera in this case can be considered to be such a witness and the viewer, imagined or real, also functions as witness to the mourning process.

Journeying, as in the notion of a pilgrimage, is clearly bound up with identity and temporality and is here considered as both literal and metaphorical. However,

[384] Phelan, *Mourning Sex, Performing Public Memories,* op. cit., 165.
[385] Ibid.
[386] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London/New York: Routledge, 1993), 5.
[387] Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance,* op. cit., 5.

the 'meaning of the journey emerges recursively: the journey is taken in order to find out what sort of journey one has been taking.'[388] The attempt to produce a work that functions as a memorial involved undertaking a journey to a specific location that has literal and metaphorical meanings. The use of experiential filmmaking techniques and the adoption of the 'kino-eye' has enabled the re-presentation of the journey, and the creative explorations undertaken have revealed further features of the liminal experience that reflect the phenomenon of grief. The elements of temporality and identity have been, through the process of phenomenological reduction, reduced to the concept of journeying as this reveals the time and identity of the filmmaker, allowing the viewer to locate themselves perceptually within the experience being re-presented. As a result of accidental re-presentations of the self, the camera equipment is also evident. This element of self-reflexivity is connected intrinsically to the concept of identity; the filmmaker is identified clearly in this manner and seen by the viewer. As a mourner, this relates to the need to be seen publically mourning, a need identified by Leader who argues that losses 'always require some kind of recognition,'[389] for it is through this recognition that we gain 'some sense that it has been witnessed and made real.'[390]

As a textural description of the phenomenon of grief, *Southend Pier* functions effectively; however, further textural elements surfaced during the making process that require further consideration. These are the inclusion of elements of the process: showing the self making the work within the work itself, and the concept of the performative. It is interesting to reflect on the way in which this concept can be adopted in film and to determine its efficacy in terms of the re-presentation of the liminal experience through the making of filmwork that addresses this concept directly.

Moustakus suggests that the imaginative variant should be applied so that it is possible to determine a 'systematic variation of possible structural meanings that underlie textual meanings.'[391] Taking this into consideration, further filmworks were made that continued to focus on undertaking and processing the work of mourning in an attempt to locate within the work structural features of the phenomenon.

The Work of Mourning

Using the self as subject and directly placing the self in front of the camera was the methodological approach adopted in the making of *The Perfect Pirouette.* The intention was also to explore self-reflexivity through citing the camera so that it could be seen by the viewer. As the location for the work was a dance studio, the mirror

[388] Frank, op. cit.,117.
[389] Leader, op. cit., 57.
[390] Ibid.
[391] Moustakus, op. cit., 99.

reflected the body, as well as the camera on a tripod. The diegetic sound was recorded as part of the process and no additional sounds were used, however, the language of grief has been inserted as subtitles into the work, breaking up the action whilst also commenting on and making reference to it obliquely. This element was added during the post-production process as a creative exploration regarding language and its use in processing grief. It is useful to critically reflect on this work and to draw conclusions about the use of self-reflexivity and the placing of the self directly in the work to determine whether these textural features contain structural elements that are a necessary constituent for understanding the phenomenon of grief.

Within this work, the language of mourning is used to illustrate and direct the viewer into an engagement with the mourning process taking place on the screen before them in what Leader refers to as 'a dialogue of mournings.' [392] Leader tells us that this dialogue 'can allow one person to actually start the mourning process proper, and it can provide the material necessary to represent their loss.'[393] Leader suggests that through the process of viewing another person mourning, 'other phenomena'[394] become apparent to us and we are able to make some sort of comparison with our own experience. In the making of this film, and the subsequent consequence of being able to view myself mourning, it is possible to engage in such a dialogue with my own self. I am meeting myself on the body of film. Sobchack says that: 'at its most radical, the act of reflection discovers its origins in the *subjective body that sees* and rescues the latter from anonymity and invisibility by re-cognizing and re-presenting it to consciousness.'[395] This means that by the process of filming and seeing myself, both in the mirror and on the screen, that I am re-presenting my unconscious self to my conscious self and am therefore in a position to be able to reflect on this. By directing my gaze at myself, I am able to access myself 'both as seen and visible subject[s] and as seeing and visual subject[s].'[396] Sobchack considers this act of seeing from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis as well as through existential phenomenology, as a way of exploring the relationship between the Self and the Other. 'The Self… is the subject of vision as well as the visible Other's direct object of vision.' [397] Sobchack discusses a dialectical tension between these two oppositional ways of seeing, yet she argues that the 'directions that they take converge in the actual dialectical experience of the seeing subject.'[398] This suggests that the process of seeing myself on the screen means that I am able to see my own subjective experience of mourning as an object, that I can carefully dissect, articulate and engage with. There is also a value for the viewer who is seeing the work for, as Frank tells us: 'The body itself *is* the message; humans commune through their bodies… The

[392] Leader, op. cit., 79.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Sobchack, op. cit., 97/8.
[396] Sobchack, op. cit., 98.
[397] Ibid., 99.
[398] Ibid.

communicative body *communes* its story to others; the story invites others to recognize themselves in it.'[399]

When I view the filmwork, my attention is continually drawn to my body and I consider that the body, as a somatic container for grief and loss, needs to be further explored: '"when our wellbeing is disturbed, one notices one's own body." Body comes to play the role of Other.'[400] Frank tells us that 'Bodies are realized - not just represented but created – in the stories they tell. This realization can and should be reflexive.'[401]

Sally Friedman's self-story, *Swimming the Channel: a Memoir of Love and Loss*, describes her loss and how she attempted to come to terms with it through her body. As part of her mourning process, Friedman decides to undertake a quest: swimming the channel, and her ultimate victory over her body, which fights against the cold water she is swimming through, can be read as a triumph of the mind over the material reality of the body's ultimate demise. The quest narrative articulated here is familiar and many mourners mark the loss of their loved ones in similar ways: undertaking journeys and re-visiting places previously inhabited by their lost loved-one. The acts of endurance that Friedman subsequently undertakes: swimming in ever colder water, enable her to reconfigure her reality and undertake the work of mourning through her body itself.

> When the water drops below 65 degrees, I wear earplugs… helping me to lull into this energetic state of grace. And I am reminded of why I do the things I do: to feel alive in every molecule of my body, to stay awake, to shock myself into motion. It is a mystery to me, as I return to the dock, feeling undeniably wonderful, how I could have made it past the point where it hurt so cruelly, how I trusted I would benefit from the cold once past the initial pain. [402]

Friedman places her faith in her own body: the way that it supports her demands as she tries to develop her endurance is reassuring; I recall on reading this story that I was inspired by it. However, in *The Perfect Pirouette* the body fails to perform the pirouette perfectly and its struggle is evident. The body appears restricted and is limited in its actions, whilst the struggle involved in each attempt is enormous, requiring more effort than is expected. Each failure causes visible stress and the realisation that the pirouette will not be perfectly performed becomes clear.

Leader discusses how experiencing loss can manifest 'bodily symptoms ranging from the mild to the serious.'[403] He draws on Freud's discovery that the manifestation of

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[399] Frank, op. cit., 50.
[400] Buytendijk in Leder, op. cit., 126.
[401] Frank, op. cit., 52.
[402] Sally Friedman, *Swimming the Channel: a Memoir of Love and Loss* (London: Vintage, 1996), 246.
[403] Leader, op. cit., 94.

physical symptoms in patients often correlated with anniversaries of losses. He then goes on to tell us that Gorer, in his study that was supported by anthropological research, found that as mourning rituals became eroded in industrial societies, physical symptoms emerged in those who were bereaved. Gorer identified that these symptoms were 'much more frequent in those geographical regions where mourning rituals were least prevalent.'[404] It seems that physical 'symptoms and somatizations would occur when mourning was blocked.'[405] This suggests that the mourning process is connected to well being and that arrested mourning can result in significant bodily symptoms, as well in the melancholic state as identified by Freud. Phelan supports this notion discussing symptoms and their manifestation: 'All symptoms, like all words, are metaphors, substitutes for unportable things. The symptom, then, is an interpretation, a substitutive metaphor, written within the syntax of a physical body.'[406] This suggests that the bodily symptom, identified by Gorer and observed in *The Perfect Pirouette* is an effect of grief: a substitute for the blocked process, or act of mourning.

This focus on the body as a site of reflexivity relates to Frank's discussion of the problems that the body has in dealing with suffering. Frank describes four typical bodies and discusses how these represent the ways in which we deal with our suffering. The first of these bodies is 'The disciplined body-self [which] defines itself primarily in actions of self-regimentation; its most important action problems are those of control.'[407] The attempt to perform the perfect pirouette is indeed about control; however, Frank tells us that in its attempts to 'reassert predictability… the body seeks to compensate for contingencies it cannot accept.'[408] In its attempts to elicit control over itself, the body becomes an "it" that 'the self becomes dissociated from.'[409] For Frank, this becomes increasingly problematic as 'the body becomes *monadic.*'[410] This results in its isolation and the subsequent sense of dissociation means that the potential for healing is limited as, unless the body is able to recognise and communicate with itself and others, it will remain in a state of suffering. This suffering is visible in the body I see on the screen attempting to perform the perfect pirouette and it is clear that the work of mourning has not been undertaken through this action/filmwork.

In the making of the work, a symbolic frame has been marked out, as in Freud's first stage of mourning, identified in his essay *On Mourning and Melancholia.* This frame is the screen on which the filmwork is presented; on which I can re-present my own self-story. This marked frame provides a location, a luminous space, where the

[404] Ibid., 95.
[405] Ibid.
[406] Phelan *Umarked, The Politics of Performance,* op. cit., 168.
[407] Frank, op. cit., 41.
[408] Frank, op. cit., 41.
[409] Ibid.
[410] Ibid.

viewer can meet and encounter my re-presented experience. It is also the location where my subjective Other can meet my Self as a subject and engage in a form of counter-transference, a form of reflexive seeing, that functions as a mirror, allowing for a recognition of the ways in which my body carries its loss: its symptoms. I have embodied the trauma of grief, and I wear the loss as identity. Phelan tells us that:
Our "own" body… is the one we have and the history of the ones we've lost.'[411]

The making of *The Perfect Pirouette* has enabled the consideration of the body and the subjective self as other, and its production has resulted in the invisible nature of bodily symptoms becoming visible. However, the work fails to determine any significant features of the phenomenon of grief, rather it suggests further exploration into the use of the self and the body. The visibility of the camera similarly fails to have any significance as the gaze is redundant and the work becomes a documentary requiring additional information, for example the subtext inserts, to become clear. The static quality of the fixed camera merely shows, it does not facilitate any action in the viewer, or require them to interpret the action: they are being told what is occurring and what to think about it also. This is not commensurate with the filmic intentions and this element is now eliminated. However, the placing of the self within the work is taken forward into additional filmwork that explores the performative and its value.

A Performance of Mourning:
A Performance of Mourning: Part 1 Barbra – A Star is Born begins with the image of a microphone against a black backdrop. Voices are heard off screen as into view comes a woman dressed in a shirt and waistcoat, with an abundance of curly hair. A series of short scenes ensue and we see the woman attempt to perform a song. At the start of the song, the woman cannot look out it seems – she closes her eyes, afraid of what she might see, how her song will be received. It is almost embarrassing the way this need to perform has possessed her. The attempts are repeated as they each fail, as she coughs, forgets the words, or has to stop mid-song because of technical problems. We hear the voices of others and her responses and interactions, but we do not see anybody else: the image of the woman fills the brightly lit frame. The struggle to sing is clear and we witness her embody and embrace the role of another. When eventually she does manage to sing the entire song, we are aware of the struggle, of the distress evident in her cracking voice and pained expression, as she sings over and over again, 'Watch closely now.'

A Performance of Mourning: Part 2 Judy – A Star is Born begins with the revealing of a simple stage set, into which walks a woman dressed in black. The woman is wearing a black wig and during a series of short scenes, we see her attempt to perform the song made famous by Judy Garland, from the film *A Star is Born: The Man That Got Away.*

[411] Phelan, *Unmarked*, *The Politics of Performance,* op. cit., 172.

However, her attempts are repeatedly thwarted and we see the song begin, before a blackout takes us to the end of the song, and her discussion about how the performance needs to be repeated, yet again. External interruptions punctuate the attempts: the creaking of a sofa, the protrudence of the microphone cable, the passing by of a wailing police car, and her own failures to recall the words and sing without coughing. We see the film crew interrupt to resolve issues, provide support and encourage the woman to complete her performance, however, the woman demonstrates signs of increasing anxiety and distress as each attempt is thwarted. We are witness as viewers to the process of performing, and as Phelan states: 'Memory. Sight. Love. All require a witness, imagined or real.'[412] Eventually, the performance begins and is played out in its entirety – the song is sung and the film ends as 'Judy' expresses her relief and inability to perform the song to a higher standard. Phelan says that,

> One of the central assertions of theatrical performance is that the affective experience of the body can be authentically conveyed regardless of whether or not such experience is the consequence of a 'real' event or a well-rehearsed repetition of an imagined one.[413]

In *A Performance of Mourning*, it is irrelevant therefore whether or not the event is a repetition or real. For the viewer, it is not clear in what context this work is being performed, unless one is aware of the title and background to the piece. However, this does not invalidate the work, rather it forces the viewer to engage with it directly in an attempt to make sense of the action: 'the image is valuable as liberating power, pure form and pure pathos dismantling the classical order of organization of fictional action.'[414] The actual appellations, the ruptures into the expected action, disrupt and challenge the narrative action, leaving questions unanswered and unresolved, whilst allowing the viewer to engage in a communality that reflects their sophisticated awareness of images, and especially those of the female body in most filmic output. Without knowing the original films, or for whom and what the woman is performing, the viewer is able to engage with the work in a direct and immediate manner. This recognition 'is valuable as the factor in a connection that constructs the figure of a common history.'[415] The concept of the phenomenological third space is also important here: the filmmaker, the film and the viewer are all in this third space and sharing an experience, that of the performing of mourning.

In his discussion of the body and the problems it has in coming to terms with altered states and illness, Frank talks about the mirroring body and the need it has to 'recreate the body in the images of other bodies.'[416] Frank tells us that the images that

[412] Phelan, *Unmarked*, *The Politics of Performance,* op. cit., 172.
[413] Ibid., 105.
[414] Rancière, *Sentence, Image, History*, op. cit., 34.
[415] Ibid..
[416] Frank, op. cit., 43.

'this body mirrors come most often from popular culture, where image is reality.'[417] The mirroring body is driven by a monadic desire and a 'conformity to an internalized set of ideal images.'[418] In this instance, the images conform to the ideal re-presentations that I have seen and experienced, where women perform their mourning and appear to process it effectively. The mirroring body 'is almost compulsively *associated* with its body, but the body is now a surface… the visual is primary.'[419] This mirrors the way in which my body has become more important in the production of filmworks and how I am conscious of its visual representation in this enquiry. However, Frank goes on to discuss how Lacan's concept of the Imaginary is made up of a collection of images from somewhere outside of ourselves and that additionally, we can 'complement our imaginary selves with entry into… the Symbolic.'[420] It is in the Symbolic that we can engage in a series of symbolic and paradigmatic exchanges, as opposed to 'simply appropriating others' images for itself, the body-self communicates with these others.'[421] The way in which the 'performer' engages in a dialogue with the 'characters' she is playing in *A Performance of Mourning*, suggests such an exchange is taking place, whereas when the songs are sung and the performances recreated, a mirroring occurs. Frank argues that the body moves through different states of being at different times when telling a self-story: 'Some exchanges with others are openings for ethical relationships; other exchanges, sadly, are not.'[422]

Kaja Silverman in her work on the female voice in psychoanalysis and cinema: *The Acoustic Mirror* explores the way in which the female body exists in filmic output. Silverman says that the woman in film is 'dependant… upon the gaze of the cultural other. Subjectivity is installed not only through an identification with external image, but through the 'click' of an imaginary camera.'[423] Silverman goes on to quote Lacan in this extract from *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis:* In the scopic field, the gaze is outside. I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture… Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which… I am *photo-graphed.*[424] I reflect on how this has a resonance with the way in which images of the self have emerged as subject throughout this enquiry. In the film work *Southend Pier*, the embodied camera often lingers on reflective, mirror images of the self, as if it is trying to find a visual representation of the self to identify with. Subsequent to the making of this work and critically reflecting on this element of the work, the desire to actually film the self and make the self the subject of the work became evident. Working from and through the

[417] Ibid., 45.
[418] Ibid., 44.
[419] Ibid., 44.
[420] Ibid., 46.
[421] Ibid.
[422] Frank, op. cit., 46.
[423] Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 161.
[424] Ibid.

Freudian concept of mourning, the transformation into Judy Garland/Barbra Streisand and her re-presentation on the screen is an attempt to directly reflect the work of mourning: the repeated attempts to recreate and represent the self in relation to the other, the lost loved one, and to see themselves through their eyes. Considering Lacan and his ideas about the scopic field allows for a more detailed understanding of where the self is placed within the work and what function this location serves.

Silverman describes the way in which the subject relates to its visual representation. In the Lacanian mirror stage, 'she incorporates an image'[425] and in the photo session stage, 'she is appropriated as image.'[426] This seems to support the process that I have been undertaking: using the performing self to see the self. In *Southend Pier*, I incorporated the image of the self into the work; in *The Perfect Pirouette,* I filmed the body in an attempt to meet myself on the body of film, and in *A Performance of Mourning* I have appropriated an image of myself as image and reflected that back to myself by filming the process of performing. However, I am conscious of the warning of Phelan in her writings on the politics of performance, that: 'The danger in staking all on representation is that one gains only re-presentation.'[427] Phelan goes on to discuss how limiting the eye is, in terms of actually seeing the self, despite the use of various apparatuses and devices to support the act of seeing: in this instance, the use of a video camera to record the self, 'one needs always the eye of the other to recognize oneself… the gaze guarantees the *failure* of seeing.'[428] This suggests that attempts to resolve the issue of self-identity through the making of this work, which is here undertaken through the framework of a narrative structure, fails to fully address this issue. Phelan writes that:

> Identity is perceptible only through a relation to an other – which is to say, is a form of both resisting and claiming the other, declaring the boundary where the self diverges from and merges with the other. In that declaration of identity and identification, there is always loss, the loss of not-being the other and yet remaining dependant on that other for self-seeing, self-being.[429]

In her self-story Joan Didion articulates this notion as she notices the significance of seeing herself through her husband's eyes and how his death affects this:

> This year for the first time since I was twenty-nine I saw myself through the eyes of others… when we mourn our losses, we also mourn, for better or worse, ourselves. As we were. As we are no longer. As we will one day not be at all.[430]

[425] Ibid.
[426] Ibid.
[427] Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance,* op. cit.,10.
[428]Ibid., 15.
[429] Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance,* op. cit.,13.
[430] Didion, op. cit., 197.

The work *A Performance of Mourning* has identified a specific feature of the phenomenon of grief that is considered to be structural: that of the performative. However, the use of the self placed directly within the work fails to function and is not necessary, rather the use of the embodied camera locates the body firmly in the representational frame avoiding any specific or particular object of the gaze. It is through the camera that the body is experienced by the viewer and thus it is the body that performs. This is the structural feature that will be taken forward into the making of the final film work that attempts to determine the universal features of the phenomenon and their re-presentation in film.

This chapter has focused on the processes involved in the practical part of this enquiry and identified the product outputs, the practical processes and the phenomenological mode of engagement in relation to the mode of working: experiential filmmaking. The relationship between experience and consciousness, individual and universal has been established and the value of ritualistic processes determined. Through a discussion of the concept of aesthetic autonomy, the ideas of Rancière with regard to the production of artworks has been considered and the intention to not separate art from life has been stated. The visual themes of the project have been explored and the particular filmmaking processes adopted have been identified. The value of these approaches has been considered and utilised: documentary, self-reflexivity, ritual and experiential filmmaking. The grammatical elements of the early filmworks have been analysed and the filmworks made have been critically considered. Through this process, it has been possible to determine essential components of the phenomenon of grief and to explore them practically through the making of filmwork. These elements can now be taken forward to the making of the final film work, which attempts to function as a universal description of the phenomenon of grief and as a re-presentation of the liminal experience.

The End of Mourning

The final filmwork is entitled *The End of Mourning: Osea Island;* however, this title makes the assumption that the end of mourning is a possibility. However, among the discourses related to grief and loss, I encounter Phelan's assertion that 'the work of mourning… is never complete.'[431] She states: 'I do not believe that there is an end of grief. But working through grief sometimes give us a way to let the dead be as dead.'[432] In contrast to the concept of blocked mourning, which has the potential to develop into melancholia, 'a pathological condition'[433] which requires 'medical treatment,'[434] the notion of letting the 'dead be as dead' is appealing. Leader tells us

[431] Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories,* op. cit., 171.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Freud, op. cit., 243.
[434] Ibid.

that Freud, alongside other analysts[435], came to question whether the work of mourning could ever be completed. He includes an extract of a letter sent by Freud to Binswanger in 1929, in which he wrote that:

> We will never find a substitute [after a loss]. No matter what may fill the gap, even if it be filled completely, it nevertheless remains something else. And actually, this is how it should be, it is the only way of perpetuating that love that we do not want to relinquish.[436]

This suggests that the attempt to reach an end of mourning is bound to fail, however there is still a need to process loss and find ways of managing the lived experience of grief and its bodily symptoms.

Griselda Pollock in her essay *Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma,* discusses how Lacan, as part of his contribution to the development of psychoanalytic theory, was 'trying to escape the Freudian idea of stages through which the human subject passes.'[437] Pollock explores the concept of the matrixal gaze and locates this within the discourse of aesthetics and psychoanalysis, drawing on both Rancière and Lacan. Pollock tells us that 'Lacan postulated three regions on which subjectivity and meaning are organized.'[438] The first of these regions is the Real, which she argues cannot be represented. The other two regions: the Imaginary and the Symbolic, can and do, through the use of images, language and signs make some sense of our experience of trauma: the 'hole in the symbolic network that cries out to be mended, rehearsed, revised.'[439] The Imaginary is a result and a condition of the mirror stage, which she argues results in alienation and fantasy, whereas the Symbolic 'forms the basis of conscious act and thought.'[440] Pollock tells us that the Real 'is the Symbolic's Intractable beyond'[441] and it is useful to consider how this relates to the re-presentation of the liminal experience. The liminal experience could be articulated through the Lacanian concept of the Real and explored through the Symbolic: I have a conscious intention to make artwork, to act, in response to the liminal experience, as a way of making sense of the experience of the Real. It is through the production of images and signs, such as in the making of filmwork, that this is possible.

Pollock writes that: 'Innovation in aesthetic form seeks to negotiate the abyss since the aesthetic, according to Rancière is "an economy of affects" (Rancière, 2009:112).'[442] This suggests the use of an innovative approach to the making of

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[435] Margaret Little and Helene Deutsch are referred to by Leader, op. cit., 98.
[436] Freud (1929) in Leader, op. cit., 98.
[437] Griselda Pollock, *Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma* (2010) EUROAMERICA, Vol. 40, No. 4, (December 2010), 833.
[438] Pollock, op. cit., 833.
[439] Phelan, *Mourning Sex*, *Performing Public Memories,* op. cit., 105.
[440] Pollock, op. cit., 833.
[441] Ibid.
[442] Ibid., 835.

artworks such as the creative explorations and experiential nature of the making process. In order to deal with this abyss, Lacan subsequently 'allowed himself to research the potential psychic space between trauma (the Real) and phantasy (the Imaginary)'[443] It is this 'co-emerging border space'[444] that the matrixal gaze, can help to negotiate. Pollock tells us that the 'work of mourning… takes time and needs the regular space of encounter to occur, unpredictably, even while transformation is always anticipated, hoped for, and welcomed.'[445] This supports the practical work of the project in that there have been multiple encounters with the subject and multiple attempts to re-present lived experience have been undertaken.

The making of *Osea Island* is articulated in the production log; however it is useful here to critically reflect on the work, which is essentially a self-story, albeit one without any clear narrative or story. Rather it is a circular piece, beginning and ending in the same location, however there has been a transformation experienced as part of the journey, the pilgrimage into the liminal experience. The film work functions as a self-story, but more specifically as a quest story: 'What is quested for may never be wholly clear, but the quest is defined by the ill person's belief that something is to be gained from the experience… the quest narrative… holds chaos at bay.'[446] Frank tells us the quest, which usually involves some sort of journey 'represents a form of reflexive monitoring.'[447] It is useful to consider that the embodied camera here functions in the same way as Frank's communicative dyadic body, allowing for an expression of the contingency of the quest and the desire to share the experience of the self/other with others. Frank tells us that the 'desire of this contingent body is *productive,* but the direction of the desire – unlike the desire of the disciplined and the mirroring body – is conditioned by its *dyadic* relation to others.'[448] The desire to produce artwork and to share it with others through the phenomenological third space, where the viewer, the film and the filmmaker meet in a communal experience, is precisely that of this project. Through sharing the experience of life itself, it is possible to 'reach out as a way of being.'[449] In addition, the making of the film has allowed me to observe and engage with my own suffering; the embodied camera has facilitated this. Through telling the story of the journey I have been able to re-connect with my own body, as the 'story is one medium through which the communicative body recollects itself as having become what it *is,* and through the story the body offers itself to others.'[450]

[443] Ibid., 833.
[444] Ibid., 865.
[445] Ibid.
[446] Frank, op.cit.,115.
[447] Ibid., 117.
[448] Frank, op. cit., 126.
[449] Ibid., 127.
[450] Ibid., 127.

The filmwork also functions as an encounter with the Real, through the use of the Symbolic, which enables the re-presentation of the Real through images and signs. The use of imagery that relates to the imagined concept of the road to the afterlife and the use of the symbolic sun illuminating the pilgrim's route, for example, enable the viewer to engage with this re-presentation of the Real. It is useful here to return to Pollock's discussion of the matrixal gaze and to consider how within *Osea Island* this device has been utilised. Pollock tells us that 'Art can… create an occasion for the emergence into aesthetic encounter of aspects of our subjectivities that are open to responding to the other… and receiving and processing aspects of the trauma, including death, of the other.'[451] This suggests that the staging of an encounter with the Real has enabled me to process the trauma of loss and manage grief. It is in this encounter that I have attempted to re-present the co-emerging border space, which is 'an overlay and interweave of psychoanalytic processes and aesthetic process.'[452] Using the film itself as a body on which I might mark my presence whilst also reflecting on absence, has allowed me to express my bodily symptoms and play out the possibility of my own death. Staging this encounter has been an exploration of my own mortality and it is useful to consider how this is a feature of the experience of liminality.

Lewis, in his written encounter with his experience of loss, writes that 'Death only reveals the vacuity that was always there. What we call living are simply those who have not yet been unmasked. All equally bankrupt, but some not yet declared.'[453] This suggests that for Lewis, as is the case for many bereaved people, the experience of losing someone brings to the fore an awareness of mortality, that is not generally discussed and considered by the living. Frank argues that it is 'only by displaying our common mortality can humans accept this mortality and cease to fear it.'[454] This notion has emerged as an unintentional feature of the work; the adoption of specific filmic methodologies, allowing for creative explorations and free play has enabled this to be discovered. Instead of finding a way of processing mourning and reaching the end of the mourning process, the making of the work has enabled an engagement with this very real fear: that of our own demise, that is frequently brought to the fore by the death of significant others. By re-presenting the actual encounter that I experienced through the use of the matrixal gaze and the communicative dyadic body, I am able to reaffirm my own existence: 'Where I am as a living experiencing body, the corpse is not, and vice versa.'[455]

Through the use of ritualistic filmmaking practices, that respond to and re-present my lived experience, I have been able to find a way for that which is invisible and

[451] Pollock, op. cit., 860.
[452] Ibid., 865.
[453] Lewis, op. cit., 26.
[454] Frank, op. cit., 121.
[455] Ibid., 144.

unknown to be made visible and seen. Phelan writes that 'dying, as a performative act, consists of – is – the marking and mapping of the border between living and dying.'[456] In *Osea Island*, this border is explored and experienced, and the consequence of the journey is to enable a return to the land of the living, a re-aggregation as articulated by Turner, in his discussion of the liminal as ritual and rite of passage.

This sharing of the experiences of loss through the making and presentation of artworks reflects Frank's assertion that the communicative body telling its self-story functions as a witness, and as testimony: 'Because the communicative body is dyadic, the self-story is never just a *self*-story but becomes a self/*other* story.'[457] This, for Frank, is an ethical action, an '*ethic of inspiration'*[458] that 'inspires because it is rooted in woundedness; the agony is not concealed.'[459] Frank argues that it is through the truthful telling of the self-story that the possibility of testimony emerges: a testimony of suffering that '*implicates* others in what they witness.'[460] This suggests that there is an intrinsic value in providing self-stories that others can share: 'in its testimony the communicative body calls others into a dyadic relationship. Testimony as an activity defines the communicative body.'[461] As a culture, our experience of death and its effects is not something that we commonly witness; however our encounter with death is humanity's uniting experience. Leader discusses Freud's essay *Civilization and its Discontents*, wherein 'Freud names not psychoanalysis but culture as the only possible panacea for the terrible demands that civilized life places upon us… he is saying that it is the arts that can save us.'[462] This supports the process of making artworks as a way of managing the trauma of loss and processing grief.

Summatively, the filmmaking processes explored in the practical work of this project have enabled the ethical witnessing of a specific experience to be encountered. The liminal experience, which is the psychological and embodied space of grief, has been uncovered and the invisible made visible. The production of film work means that there is the possibility of sharing and directly encountering the experience through the phenomenological third space, thus the viewer can share in the experience being re-presented on the screen. The grammatical elements adopted in *Osea Island* enable this re-presentation to occur. These elements include: journeying and the use of the embodied camera, which locates the gaze in the body, determining the identity of the maker and the time and place of making; this is a form of critical subjectivity requiring elements of self reflexivity to be evident. In this context, the introjection of reflections and brief images of the filmmaker fulfill this function. Additionally, the use

[456] Phelan, *Mourning Sex, Performing Public Memories,* op. cit., 167.
[457] Frank, op. cit., 131.
[458] Ibid., 133.
[459] Ibid.
[460] Ibid., 143.
[461] Frank, op. cit., 143.
[462] Leader, op. cit., 207.

of the train and other forms of movement, including walking, locate the maker in a specific time and place. Constant shifts in the gaze as a result of the hand held camera serve to disorientate the viewer and force them to consider what it is that they are actually seeing. The use of sound and music to convey experience end enable subjective transformations has also been determined as an essential element of the re-presentation. The inclusion of snatches of pre-recorded music communicate memories and experience and the use of sound effects result in a disassociation of sound and image meaning that 'a logical conflict arises that has to be solved by the spectator'[463] The structural elements of this re-presentation can be considered to be a 'unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole'[464] and to express a 'synthesis of meanings and essences'[465] related to the liminal experience. It is important to reflect on the outputs of the project and to consider them in relation to the theoretical ground of the project. This will be undertaken in the following conclusion.

[463] Flueckiger, op. cit., 172.
[464] Moustakus, op. cit., 100.
[465] Ibid.

Conclusion

The production of the film work *Osea Island* is an attempt to reach a final identification of the re-presentation of the liminal experience in film. This conclusion will begin with a verification of the universal structural features of the phenomenon of grief and their re-presentation in this film, and analyse the work of the project to determine whether its significant features have been identified through the phenomenological research process and the making of filmworks. It is useful to restate the grammatical features of the liminal experience and to refer to their use in the final filmwork of the project. It is then important to consider whether the aims of the research question have been met: has experiential filmmaking contributed to the re-presentation of the liminal experience, and to consider whether the same results could have been achieved using a different approach. In order to do this it is fruitful to reflect on the phenomenological research methodology used and its efficacy, and to discuss the various limitations that this research model imposed, for example, using a small selection of self-stories and artist's films, allowed for a detailed examination of the way in which other artists have used creative expression to process grief. However, this small sample was selected according to the perceived value these artworks had for the overall project. On reflection, it could be considered that a more systematic approach that included a range of art forms might have been more fruitful. Or that conversely, the inclusion of self-stories, a form of literature, diluted the specific features being considered and confused the intentions of the project.

It is important to reflect on the contextual review in chapter one and its relevance to the filmic outputs. In particular, a discussion regarding the making of art as a way out of the depressive condition will be conducted, so that the value of the theoretical framework of the project can be understood: using a psychoanalytical framework and drawing this together with a particular aesthetic approach to making art work is considered vital to the work of the project and to the possibility of the efficacy of this approach being determined. The value of using this route to artmaking can then be considered.

Within the filmwork *Osea Island* a range of symbols and signs pertain to the lived experience of the maker, which relate to the Lacanian concept of the symbolic and allow for a re-presentation of the real. However, it is useful to consider Pollock's assertion that the real cannot be re-presented. The symbolic is the basis of conscious thought and as Frank tells us, this is a useful register for opening up engagement and enabling an exchange, such as that which occurs within the phenomenological third space of film viewing. However, unless we are adopting and utilising symbols and signs that are universally understood it is not possible to precisely ensure that this engagement occurs. Rancière suggests however that there is a communality of images that can be drawn upon, such as those found in *Osea Island.* Rancière argues for a particular form of aesthetic autonomy with regard to artmaking and makes the claim

that there should be no separation between the different spheres of life and art. It is useful to relate the notion of aesthetic autonomy to the work of this project, which is experiential filmmaking: using free play and a ritualistic methodology, meaning that creative exploration is at the fore of the production process. Therefore, the value of using this methodology is evidenced in the results of the research: the final film work. It is useful to consider in what ways *Osea Island* meets the project aims and enables a re-presentation of the liminal experience and a universal structural description of the phenomenon of grief.

The textural features of the phenomenon of grief have been identified through the analysis of a range of artists' films and the production of filmwork made in response to the visual themes of the project: place, transition and transformation. The early work of the project, along with the artist's films, have been analysed using a process of phenomenological reduction; their varying horizons have been bracketed to reduce and make explicit the textural features identified. Film, as an intra and inter subjective experience that is performable allows for the expression of experience and for this to be perceived by the viewer. However, the expression produced needs to consider and adopt grammatical features that will allow for intersubjective communication and subjective transformations to occur. These features include the sentence-image and the parataxic form, utilising montage of both visual and audio material to enable the viewer to experience the work as an expression of lived experience and to engage with it fruitfully. The artists' films considered demonstrated elements that were identified as invariant features of the phenomenon of grief: the use of landscape and the automising gaze, the exilic optic, critical subjectivity in the form of performing mourning publicly, and a particular mise-en-scene that illustrated the concept of transition and the potential for transformation. The use of diegetic and non-diegetic sound was explored and considered, and the use of sound as a way to expand, inform and challenge viewer expectations was established as relevant. Film as a form of thanotography was identified and the possibility of using filmmaking as a form of psychoanalytical transference considered. The adoption of new and interstitial forms of production that do not follow dominant forms has been considered to be useful and the notion of artmaking as a way of marking absence and processing loss made explicit. Various perspectives were considered when analysing the filmworks: time, space, the body, materiality, causality, and relation to the self and others. This analysis resulted in the establishment of several modes of working that were then adopted in the production of further filmwork. These modes of working were the process itself being evident in the film, ritual, and the performative.

Further filmic outputs examined the efficacy of these modes of working, using experiential filmmaking and adopting the invariant features of the phenomenon. The final filmwork functions as an expression of the lived experience of grief and utilises a range of grammatical features established as universal structures of the phenomenon of grief. The making of *Southend Pier* and its critical analysis established the value of

the mise-en-scene: symbols and signs related to the end of life, such as the beach and the horizon were used in conjunction with modes of transition, for example the train that travelled along a pier. The notion of journeying as a way to establish the time and place of the film was considered as necessary in order to determine and demonstrate identity, in this instance the identity of the maker. The filmwork *The Perfect Pirouette* explored the self as subject and the self as other through the body and its re-presentation on screen. The value of this work was established as being limited as the fixed camera and the necessary inclusion of text had the effect of fixing the meaning or interpretation of the work. However, seeing the self on the screen was taken forward into *A Performance of Mourning* where the mirroring body was considered through Lacan's concept of the scopic. The idea that the self is incorporated as image enabling a symbolic and paradigmatic dialogue to occur was seen as important; however, the concept of the mirroring body was considered to be variant and not useful to the re-presentation of grief. Rather, the use of the body as a tool when making filmwork was established. In contrast to the gaze, the notion of the kino-eye and the embodied camera were considered to be of significance. The body as camera allows for an expressive and creative response to the encounter being filmed; this approach does not limit or restrict the encounter to a specific time and place, rather it locates it in a universal location: that of the body.

The final filmwork *Osea Island* functions as a quest story, telling a circular self-story of a journey, a pilgrimage into the liminal. It offers the opportunity of engagement and exchange through the communicative dyadic body: the body where the camera is cited during the making of the film. This enables a reconnection with the bodily experience that is being presented, in the symbolic frame set out for the encounter: the screen. The elements of the film that are essential universal features include this notion of embodiment and journeying, which has been established through the reduction process and includes as part of itself identity, time and place. The feature encompasses these through the use of the embodied camera enabling a form of critical subjectivity, reflexivity, and performance. A further feature is the use of the sentence image and the great parataxic through visual and auditory montage, which establishes the matrixal gaze: an aesthetic encounter with the real through the symbolic. The matrixal gaze exists in the co-emerging border space of liminality: betwixt and between, and is both an interweaving and a combination of psychoanalytic and aesthetic processes. The encounter with the possibility of one's own death, which it could be argued is a significant, if not universal feature of the phenomenon of grief, occurs here as a staging and a performance that functions as an ethical action, a form of witnessing. These features form a unified statement of the phenomenon of grief and effectively enable the re-presentation of the liminal experience in film.

It is useful to reflect on the research question and in addition to consider whether the same results could have been achieved through different means. The question was

devised in order to determine the efficacy of a specific methodology: that of experiential filmmaking. Taking the principle of experiential learning as a mode of operation and employing it practically resulted in unique, original forms being identified. The ritualistic form, using creative and explorative processes combined with the specific intention of documenting lived experience has proved efficacious and enabling, allowing the embodied and psychological experience of grief to be re-presented. The use of the body as camera, and allowing for free expression during the making process, were of significance in this regard, as was the self-reflexive nature of the process: by returning to the work and reflecting on it repeatedly, it was possible to apply and utilise post production and editing features that further expanded the re-presentation. Features such as altering the speed of the footage and exploiting the cut within the edit allowed for a specific focus on moments within the film to come to the fore. Alternative approaches that could have been used are demonstrated somewhat in the early work of the project, when the production values and themes were being determined. In this work,[466] the static camera was employed, with long panning shots and pulling focus as strategies to create the effect of anxiety, fear, and other features of liminality. However, this proved to be limiting, as the result was similar to the filmic strategies used in specific genres of film, which were therefore considered to be overlapping and non-specific to the phenomena of grief. The use of the still static camera is a photographic approach used widely in artists' film; however, this results in a still effect, which does not relate to, or re-present embodiment. In Chris Welsby's *Drift,* this effect is avoided by the placing of the camera on a floating platform, resulting in a sense of embodiment that conveyed the psychological condition of the maker. The still static camera however fails to achieve this function, being removed and in some ways abstracted from human experience. The concept of documentary filmmaking has relevance to the work of the project and this approach could have been utilised; however, the lack of opportunity for the scopic to be explored within this style of filmmaking limits its potential as a tool for re-presenting experience. The documentary construct is also rarely truthful and this element means that regardless of the truth of the filmic representation, the form suggests a contrived and untruthful result, meaning it has little value to this project, where the intention is to re-present actual, truthful, lived experience. The composition of a script that drew on lived experience in the form of a self-story might have been interesting; however, this approach would have relied on language and narrative and this, as seen in Sarah Turner's *Perestroika,* is limiting. Turner's use of a narrator that attempts to express the psychological position of the maker tells the audience what to think and feel in response to the work, meaning that the viewer does not make the connection to their own lived experience that might make the work beneficial. The telling of an individual experience of loss is considered to have little value here as this results in the work having no universal function and is only significant if, as in narrative film, we identify with the character and their

[466] *Folkestone Harbour*

experiences. The use of performative approaches has been utilised within the project; however the work is not performed in a conventional sense. It is more as if the accidental filming of an experience has occurred and on occasion, the body of the maker is briefly visible; this form of critical subjectivity serves the function of identifying the filmmaker. The decision to include this accidental imagery was influenced by the observation that this had occurred without intention. The purposeful inclusion of the image of the self, which would have been necessitated had the story been performed, would have required different production processes, thereby altering the aesthetic quality of the work, resulting in a lack of aesthetic autonomy. The film was made with a small hand held camera and field sounds were recorded separately. The encounter being filmed required little technical equipment, meaning that it was possible to film intuitively, without having to consider the transportation and setting up of large amounts of equipment. Filming whilst on a train or in a car would have been limited had this been the case and the element of the hidden camera would not have been possible. The hidden camera, as utilised in the early work of the project[467] is a useful device as it records without drawing attention to itself, meaning that snatches of conversation and other elements can be recorded surreptitiously. Whilst not used extensively in *Osea Island* this strategy is improvisational and enables an intuitive response to events occurring at the time of making. However, using this approach throughout would have resulted in an element of confusion with regard to the images being represented, hence its infrequent inclusion.

Whilst the filmic devices discussed above have proven to be effective in part, the use of experiential filmmaking allows for the inclusion of multiple modes of working. The value of this approach to the project outputs is that experimentation is commensurate with the experiential nature of the enquiry as a whole. This has resulted in the work demonstrating features of liminality that would not have been evident otherwise. The apparently casual approach of working experientially, in conjunction with the self-reflexivity of liminality, allows for the expression of experience. By producing work, reflecting on this work, and subsequently making more work, a summative statement could be produced in the form of the final film work that demonstrates the universal structural features of the phenomenon of grief.

It is useful to reflect on the mode of engagement employed in this enquiry and the methodological approach: the Van Kaam method of analysis of phenomenological data, modified by Moustakus.[468] The artist's films and the filmwork produced as project outputs were analysed according to this method as it was identified as being the most relevant given the nature of the enquiry. However, Moustakus makes reference to research participants and co-researchers as this form of research is more

[467] *Transitions: London Train Stations*
[468] Moustakus, op. cit., 120/121.

commonly used in the social sciences. The use of interviews and discussions with participants are the main mode of working in this context, whereas in this project filmmaking is the main mode of working. Despite this anomaly, the adoption of this research methodology has proved valuable, as through its use the possibility of exploring lived and embodied experience becomes realised in the production of a structural description of the experience in the form of a film. In social sciences, this description would inevitably be text based, using language to express the results of the research process, whereas in this project, the filmworks function, through their use of communal imagery, as a structural description of the experience that re-presents the range of phenomena observed. Moustakus states that the final description produced should be 'a Composite Description of the meanings and essences of the experience'[469] that represents the research group as a whole. In this context, the research group consists of the artists making work, myself included, and the films analysed, including those produced as project outputs.

The method used for analysing the data is set out in a staged process by Moustakus, which begins with listing and preliminary grouping. This process is horizontalisation and consists of listing 'every expression relevant to the experience.'[470] As part of the research process for the project, the artists' films that explored grief and its effects were considered in this way. Filmworks made as part of the process were then considered in the same manner. This meant that it was possible to consider the features of the phenomenon of grief and how they appeared in filmic form regardless of who produced them; the early filmworks contributed to the findings in this part of the process and were considered equally. In order to undertake the phenomenological reduction and eliminate the non-essential features of the phenomenon the artists' films were considered first and then the collection of films made as outputs were reflected upon in the same manner. Moustakus states that each expression must be tested to see whether it contains a 'moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it.'[471] In addition, it is necessary to see whether the expression can be abstracted and labelled. This process resulted in several variant constituents being eliminated and some other features taken forward for further consideration. The conflict apparent in this process is that as an artist, my curiosity and imagination could have diverted me from the relevant and constituent features. However, by returning to the research material and reflecting on it repeatedly, as well as sharing the work with others and collating informal responses, this conflict was minimised[472].

[469] Ibid., 121.
[470] Ibid., 120
[471] Ibid., 121
[472] The main filmworks were shown to conference participants as part of a presentation of research: *Southend Pier* was shown at the Trauma: Theory and Practice Conference; *A Performance of Mourning* was shown at the Making Sense of Death and Dying Conference and *Osea Island* was shown at the Pilgrimage Conference. Responses were invited but are not included or discussed within this thesis as they were not systematic or in response to a specific set of questions. However, the responses, which

The next stage in the process is the thematisation of the invariant constituents. As with the earlier stages of the process, this was undertaken repeatedly, beginning with the artists' films and continuing with the filmworks made as the project outputs. These themes were applied to the production of visual material; this part of the process, according to Moustakus requires validation. In this respect, the validation occurred as the filmworks were reviewed and the following questions were considered in relation to each of the works: are the invariant constituents 'expressed explicitly'[473] and if not, are they compatible with the expression? The variant constituents identified were considered to be compatible, albeit with some alterations, and therefore accepted as relevant enabling a textural description to be produced that included these elements. In order to construct a structural description of the phenomenon the imaginative variant was applied to the textural elements identified and this resulted in the production of the final filmwork that functions as a composite description containing both textural and structural features. The use of the imaginative variant allows for an imaginative element to be introduced to the research process and applied to the production of artworks. This element functions fruitfully, enabling an expression of the results of the research that is compatible with the approach undertaken in social sciences, where a researcher composes the universal and final description as summary and statement. In this context, the form of the composite description is a film; however, in the same way as with a written piece of text, the description can be experienced by others and the statement shared. For this reason, Sobchack's concept of the phenomenological third space, where the film, filmmaker and viewer meet to experience the work, was included and her hermeneutic research process considered in addition to Moustakus'. Fundamentally, this was because of the variance in the ontological discourses related to the subject of grief and the use of the film form as the mode of working. As a tool of expression, film has the potential to convey experience and as such, this mode of working was considered to be the most efficacious in this context. Summatively the adoption of Moustakus' phenomenological research process, with the inclusion of elements of Sobchack's model, as a mode of engagement has enabled a detailed examination of the phenomenon of grief and its re-presentation in film to be undertaken. However, it is useful to consider the limitations of this mode of engagement and reflect on alternative approaches that may have proven equally efficacious.

It is interesting to reflect briefly on the limitations that this mode of engagement places on a creative arts research project. As already identified, phenomenological research is most commonly used in the social sciences, however, its origins in philosophical discourse suggests that it has the potential to support an enquiry that has a creative intention at its heart. Philosophical discourses enable the creative arts

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were largely informal, served to assure me that I had managed to achieve the intentions that I had for each of the above works and gave me the opportunity to reflect on the viewer experience of the films.

[473] Moustakus, op. cit., 121.

to work with a framework for analysis that is conceptually and paradigmatically useful; however as a framework for the analysis of an experiential project, it has obvious limitations. The experiential nature of this enquiry to a certain extent dictated the mode of engagement and as such, phenomenology provided a useful framework that enabled the self-reflexive nature of experiential research to be supported. In addition, the mode of working required aesthetic considerations as the work produced needed to be of a particular aesthetic quality in order to convey lived experience effectively. Another researcher may have considered this differently and adopted alternative approaches; however, the decisions made at the start of this enquiry have proved fruitful and enabled a truthful re-presentation to be produced.

The results of the research may have been different had a group of co-researchers also responded to the themes and produced work as a way of processing grief. It may have been useful to compare different modes of working and for the experiences of others to be considered, rather than the adoption of an autoethnographic approach which, it could be argued, limits this project to subjective, individual experience. The use of the ritualistic form was included as an approach to avoid this as this form allows for both an individual and universal expression of experience. Furthermore, as the phenomenological approach had considered a range of artists' films, and the wider research included various art forms and mainstream film, it was possible to identify the universal structural phenomena of grief and apply these to the making of work, thereby avoiding a subjective expression. The implication here is that future research studies in this area should include working with others as co-researchers: a group of participants who have suffered a loss and are processing grief. Whilst using film as a mode of working has proven beneficial in this project, the opportunity to use other forms of expression and artmaking and to reflect on these would be productive.

The implication of this is that the project could be re-staged with a group of participants and that parts of the process utilised in this enquiry could be extrapolated and used in this context. Whilst this will not be considered in detail here, the parts of the process that could be taken forward would be the focussing of attention on the expression of lived experience, regardless of the mode of working. Artworks, including film and photography, would be produced by the participant and reflected upon therefore enabling the self-reflexive nature of liminality to be expressed. The importance of witnessing, as established by Frank, is relevant here: artworks have the potential to become a testimony of suffering that '*implicates* others in what they witness.'[474] It is useful to reflect on the value of this project and its findings to applied art practices and the wider community of practitioners working in applied contexts.

[474] Frank, op. cit., 143.

The project has established the value of artmaking as a way of processing loss and grief and argued for the production of filmworks as a specific approach that has the potential to enable the working through of mourning in the production of work itself. This is due to the self-reflexive nature of this filmmaking approach and the possibility of undergoing a transformative experience, whereby the self as subject can be seen. However, the value of other forms of artmaking may be equally valid and therefore it is not possible to eliminate other modes of working. Rather, it is useful to consider that the process of telling a self-story has value and that the form of the story be individualised. Whilst this enquiry has argued for film as a significant form, the project cannot claim this as an essential element as the filmmaking has enabled the production of a self-story that tells the story of an encounter with the lived experience of grief. It is the facilitation of this encounter that is of significance in an applied context, not the form of expression employed. The framework of a pilgrimage is useful as it provides a context and a conceptual frame for the experience. Furthermore, the notion of journeying inherent in pilgrimage provides a model that can be adopted by others and facilitated through different means. This suggests a level of flexibility that ensures that the artmaking remains responsive to lived experience and intuition, allowing for the adoption of individual ritualistic approaches. This means that each individual undertaking the process can claim it for themselves rather than it being already determined. The self-reflexivity of the liminal experience however requires careful facilitation to avoid formulaic and stock responses being produced.

The contribution to knowledge that this project engenders revolves around this notion. The value of the making of the work is more significant than the final product; the value of artmaking as a tool for processing loss and grief has been considered and established. However, in contrast to the writings of Hanna Segal, who claims that artmaking is a way to recover from the depressive condition, this project claims that filmmaking, due to its particular aesthetic possibilities, enables the subject to face and deal with their loss and the ensuing effect that this has on the body. This is apparent in the encounter undertaken in the final film work with the body as mortal: this fear, that we all will die, can result in extreme anxiety and ultimately depression. The value of artmaking as a tool to deal with depression and its effects has not been considered here; however the psychoanalytic viewpoint is that unresolved grief results in narcissistic depression, or melancholia. In this respect, filmmaking resolves issues of self-identity and enables the maker to see themselves differently following a significant loss. The liminal experience, once re-presented, can be considered and reflected upon through the scopic. Additionally, the project has identified significant features in terms of the filmic grammar used to re-present the lived experience of grief. These features can be abstracted and labelled and therefore used in different contexts. For example, the sentence image: a form of visual and auditory montage employed, establishes the lived experience of the filmmaker and enables its re-

presentation. This feature has value in varying contexts and can be utilised as a tool for re-presenting almost any lived experience.

It is important to reflect finally on the value of the project from an autobiographical point of view and to consider the value of the production of filmwork in the processing of my own loss and grief. Segal writes that 'The truth that the artist is after is primarily psychic truth.'[475] She claims that the act of creation is to do with the unconscious memories we hold of an internal world that was once harmonious. However, when our internal world has become destabilised, such as occurs in response to a significant loss, there is a need to respond to this inbalance and recreate stability. Artmaking is therefore a reparative action that results in the creation of symbol: 'this symbolic recreation is a psychic act.'[476] Segal uses the term psychic to refer to phenomena that do not respond to natural laws. It could be argued that the phenomena of grief is an example of this in that it emerges in the mind of the subject in contrast to natural law. We all know that we will die: this is a natural law that cannot be altered; therefore the anxiety associated with this knowledge is a psychic truth and not an elemental one. As an individual I became conscious of this truth some years after the experience of loss and in terms of the definitions of arrested mourning encountered when researching for this project, I could locate myself within them. It was therefore necessary for me to face this truth in order to process my loss, manage my grief and reintegrate with the world. This is essentially what occurred for me during the making of the filmworks. I was conscious of the failure of each of the early works to enable this reintegration, despite the expression of experience they conveyed. It was only in the final film work, where I staged an encounter with this anxiety directly, that I was able to express this psychic truth. Segal writes that it is 'true of all creative work: an unceasing search to reconstruct inevitable truths and to find ways of symbolising them in a way that impels us to relive and continue that search.'[477] This suggests that for an artist, the process of searching for truth is compelling and in this respect, the search that I undertook to find an efficacious form of expression for my experience was a reconstruction. The re-presentation of the lived experience of grief, as I experienced it personally, was contained within the final film work; it served the function of allowing me to symbolise and express a psychic truth that I could not have found an expression for by other means. As Segal implies, the search continues despite having resolved and managed my loss, for the resolution of one psychic truth leads to another, and so on.

Taking this into consideration, it is useful to consider the creative inspirations that the work has enabled and to reflect on how these might be applied in the future. As already established, it would be fruitful and productive to explore the process undertaken in this enquiry with participants and to consider how specific features

[475] Segal, op. cit., 82.
[476] Ibid., 95.
[477] Ibid., 100.

might be applied. In addition, I posit that the identification of a mode of working that effectively enables the re-presentation of experience can be applied to other subjects of significance. Having established the use of embodiment and the efficacy of other grammatical features within film, it would be interesting to adopt this mode of working in the production of filmwork addressing subjects, such as the post-colonial experience and its effect within contemporary western society. A continuing exploration of the aesthetic qualities of film, and the concept of the matrixal gaze, would be of particular interest: the alteration and dissemblance that this gaze brings to film aesethetics is an area that requires additional invesigation from both a theoretical and practical location. The working process of reflecting and then reflecting again as a mode of engagement with the material in this enquiry is a significant element that will be taken forward into future projects as its efficacy has been clearly established and the work produced herein as a result of this process is satisfying. The potential of artmaking as a way of bridging and dealing with psychic trauma and the gaps in our psyche that trauma causes has been clearly established and furthermore experienced. In addition, the sharing of filmwork as a way of conducting a dialogue with the viewer enabling them to experience the expression perceptually is considered to be of value, meaning that the production of art does not simply revolve around the self; rather, it is as identified by Rancière, a communality that is shared and essentially universal.

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Appendix 1

Written responses to artworks: thick description.

This appendix contains a selection of writing that was undertaken as part of the research process and considers a variety of cultural responses to the experience of grief in varying forms: paintings, films, music and public memorials. This selection has been included as examples of the way in which the writing as a research tool developed throughout the project.

The Sick Child, 1885, Edvard Munch.
I cut out an image of a painting by Edward Munch and fix it right in my line of vision. I am drawn to this image of this fragile young woman. Grey and dull, her skin seems to be fading, cracking – or is that the paint? I research the making of this image and discover that this painting is of Munch's younger sister, who died after a long illness. It seems that Munch painted this image, in varying forms, over and over again. That he continued to return to the making of this image – the re-representation of this time when death lingered over his sister – before finally claiming her as his own – seems to suggest that for Munch this process was not effective as mourning.

Casagemas in his Coffin, 1901, Pablo Picasso.
I see Casagemas in his Coffin, before I enter the room. It hangs in my line of vision and even though the small room is full of people, none of them are even near the painting. I am grateful for the space surrounding the image as this means that I can get close and stand – in my preferred location – immediately before the image so that it fills my gaze and is imprinted on my retinas, fixed in my visual memory. I can recall it now as I write. Sharp. In focus still. Always remembered now. Blue. It is blue. The outline of Carles's face, in deep blue, outlined, is ugly, out of perspective - was his profile recalled inaccurately? Or painted in pain? I read that this image was painted from Picasso's imagination. He never saw his friend in his coffin. He was not there at the burial. He was away in Spain. Yet this loss that Picasso experienced is supposed to have affected him greatly. On his return to Paris, he moved into his dead friend's apartment and began an intimate relationship with his friend's lover. Odd. Was he embodying his dead friend? Making him live on through his physical relationship with his home, his things, his lover? I read that the images Picasso painted of Carles were hidden – as if he was ashamed of his need to paint the images and of their production. They only came to light after Picasso's own death. I see that next to the image of the dead head in the coffin is a complex allegorical image, painted at the same time, which depicts the imagined burial of Carles. My eyes are drawn to it as if it might hold some clue to this mystery. The body is on the ground, covered in a shroud. Next to it faceless figures dressed in dark blue robes stand, kneel and embrace, heads bowed, their bodies bent and broken, bearing the unexpected and shocking loss of a bright young life. In the swirling clouds above the body, Carles is rising to heaven on a white horse, arms outstretched. Yet hanging onto

him is a naked woman who we only see from behind – her white flesh contrasts with the dark blue of the sky. Why? Why is she there I wonder? Is this the woman who Carles attempted to kill, when she tried to end their love affair, before taking his own life? Was this the woman who beguiled Picasso and who comforted him when he was first facing the trauma of loss? Was Picasso able to work through his trauma through his paintings? Did seeing these images he created help him to suffer such a loss?

Triptych, 1973, Francis Bacon.
I stand before the painting. I am compelled to stand here. I cannot move away. I seem to see the soul of the dying man leave his body – but this is a still image –how can it seem to be moving? Fluid and flowing, moving from one canvas to the next, the three images are depicting different times, yet simultaneously I perceive them – I watch over and over again, as the troubled soul rises – is released. It is tragic, the circumstances of this death. The body slumps on a toilet, bottles are spilt, life is lost – yet this image manages to facilitate a release. Sad, but functional – Bacon cannot/could not stop this tragedy from happening – but how could he not be effected by this death? Does the painting of the image, the setting down, the fixing on canvas, do the work of mourning for Bacon?

William Blake's Grave, Bunyan Fields, London.
He told me about the graveyard. Yet I already knew it existed. How could I not have known that these people were buried here? I like graves. I like cemeteries and graveyards – our culture's response to death: we bury them – immortalise them – recall them – but keep them in their place – the graveyard. Not for our culture the shrine to dead ancestors that we see in the houses of Buddhists. Not for us the Mexican Day of the Dead – where the dead come to life again - oh no! We tell each other scary tales of graves being opened and the dead walking out into the world of the living. We are afraid of this. The dead cannot be allowed to escape their coffins. We must keep them there, where they belong. Out of sight and only in mind when we choose to visit – to pay our respects – whatever - I find graves peaceful. I decide to visit – to pay my respects to these artists, who I feel are kindred sprits. It is raining. It is cold and grey. One of those dark London winter days that end so soon. I hurry – aware of the speed of the day – afraid that it will outwit me and leave me unable to enter the cemetery. But I get there in enough time. I take out my camera and I capture what I see. How is it that Blake's grave has been decorated? There are pennies along the top – a plant placed before it – evidence of recent visitations by fans/enthusiasts/other artists and kindred spirits seeking to find a communion with this great visionary. I am excited to be here and I feel something. A connection. Yet I know that the grave cannot in itself connect me to Blake, or Bunyan, whose sculptural form has eroded as it lies in state atop his memorial. I stay for as long as I can. I breathe. I think. I am at peace here. Yet these graves that I visit are not the graves of anyone I actually knew. I have no grave to visit. Only scattered ashes –

lost in the wind. Would I like it if there was a grave to visit? A Memorial? Would it be easier?

Rashida, 1973, Jon Lucien.
What is that melody that is running round and round in my head? Where has it come from all of a sudden? Why am I thinking of that now? 'Rashida. Oh my darling come to me.' I see the singer, tall, proud, standing mic in hand on the stage. No longer as youthful as the photo on the album cover, but how blessed do I feel to see him in the flesh, standing not twenty feet away from me – if I moved closer I could reach out and touch him – but I move closer to my love, who stands beside me wide eyed and excited. For he too has longed to see the singer and I got the tickets. I gave him this gift. It was a surprise. I like that he is enjoying it. I smile. I smiled. 'Oh my darling come to me. Rashida needs your love.' How vivid the memory. How brightly it shines. And then – each time – I knew – of the sorrow I would feel – each time I heard it – how could I know of such things? Absence. Longing. Deep melancholia, deep longing. I know this feeling well. I knew this feeling well before I lost him. How is that possible? I find the song. I am so desperate to hear it. Now it plays. And again it plays. And again. 'Oh my darling come to me. Funny how a woman looks, when her man is gone, and she is all alone.' All alone. I am all alone. The words sting. But the strings make me want to sing. The harp plucks at my over taut heart strings and I weep. But the percussion regulates my heart rate, my breathing, and I feel the anxiety subside. For now. For just a short while I am calm. At peace. 'Rashida. Oh my darling come to me.' Here it comes again. Again – it plays – and again. The darkness envelops me. Again. Still, I listen – hearing it falling. Hearing it rising. Chords. Melodies. All together now. Then syncopated, late, separate. Like a memory that fades in and out of focus. Sometimes sharp – so sharp it takes my breath away. And then, nothing. And then, softly it plays before me, blurring, blurred. Like ghosts we move together. Formless. Transparent. Drifting. Turning. Constantly in motion. Like the song - we move. The song moves me. Over. Over. Over again. And again. And still, he sings, 'Oh my darling come to me. Oh my darling come to me.' How can I bear it?

West Side Story, 1961, dir. Jerome Robbins.
At the end of the film, there is nothing but death – Tony lies bleeding on the playground floor – his love, Maria kneels over him unable to bear what has happened – her cousin has been killed by the man she loves and now he is also dead. Despite her tears and distress – and the surrounding crowds of young men, police and on-lookers – Maria starts to sing. She tries to sing of love and of hope – a song we have heard her sing before and we are reminded of an earlier scene when we shared in the hopeful new love of Maria and Tony - even as we watch the screen knowing that love has not made a difference here – in this city full of divisions and racism and anger. How is it possible to sing? How can the words be sung? Maria's voice cracks and she is unable to continue with her song. The musical score takes over and it soars and swells to take us to a place of safety, to allow us to deal with the ultimate abyss: the loss of another. The music has

the effect of lifting our spirits as the camera rises to show the scene from a bird's eye view – is the camera Tony's spirit as it rises to the heavens? We wipe our tears as the credits start to roll. Life goes on, regardless. Love and Death intrinsically linked.

Appendix 2

Production Log

This appendix demonstrates the making and production process of the early work of the project where the visual themes were explored. It is included here as an example of the production process and the early writing undertaken as a way of reflecting on the practical work undertaken.

Place:

What is this place? I observe, I inhabit, I try to breathe it in, to feel it, but all I can see are tunnels and gates, frames and doors and windows that show nothing but my own reflection, staring back at me.

I feel trapped. I am unable to escape. I try to capture the feeling: I take photographs, I walk with my video camera – but nothing is satisfying my gaze – hungry for substance I reflect on what is happening here. I feel melancholic, miserable. I search for explanations, reasons, answers, illuminations. I find Darian Leader describing the melancholic as 'situated between two worlds: the world of the dead and the world of the living.'[478] The melancholic, according to Leader, 'is desperate to articulate his state, yet how can he describe where he is if he inhabits two places at once? From which space shall he speak?'[479]

I find myself looking often out to sea, but when the coast of France is not visible, I find the sea to be a frightening concept. I search for frames and some evidence of humanity, without which the sea seems terrible, terrifying even.

I come across Edmund Burke writing about the sublime in 1757, expressing a similar fear about the sea. He considers how 'things of great dimensions' can be terrifying: the ocean is an object of no small terror. Indeed terror, is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime.'[480]

Terror becomes a very real concept for me as I reflect on this idea. What does Burke mean by terror? And can I make this a feature of my film work? Can I recreate this terror, which is also seemingly sublime, so that the viewer is conscious of my intention, my emotion, my feeling about this place?

I consider the gaze and how I am using this. What am I looking for? I try to inhabit the place I am living in by reading *Kipps* by H.G. Wells, which is set, and was written

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[478] Leader, op. cit., 174.
[479] Ibid., 187.
[480] Edmund Burke *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful* in *The Gothic* ed. By Gilda Williams (London: Whitechapel Pub/MIT Press, 2007), 22.

here.[481] I mediate my experience of place through a literary character – I think his thoughts, I walk the same routes, I imagine what he saw and how different this is to what I now see. But Kipps was a poor person and as such, he was excluded from many of the things that the town had to offer. His gaze is longing, as he observes and aspires to the upper classes. This makes me think about the towns' glorious past, when it was a centre for the wealthy and the literati, when it was a fashionable place to be – unlike its present state: run down and neglected. The harbour train station was constructed in the 1840's and was the place to arrive. The first ever boat trains connected with ferries to France from here and the Orient Express came through here on its way to the continent. However, two World Wars and the new channel tunnel link made this station, and this town, somewhat redundant and the harbour train station is now a strange, derelict place. But, I am drawn to the site, its ugliness compelling. It is as if the site is a visible wound that says something about my experience of being here, of being trapped, whilst also illustrating what has happened to the town itself. The dereliction adds to my feelings of being trapped, for if the train station is not open, then how will I escape?

I realise, with excitement, that the train station as a setting, will allow me to exploit my feelings of terror, and the horror of being trapped here, whilst it will serve as a place, not unlike a theatre stage, where I can construct meaning. When reading about setting and place in documentary, I find reassurance in my choice of setting: 'if the film is to exploit the vividness, the very smell of a place – then it is necessary to find a setting whose strong visual and symbolic presence imposes itself as such, so that filming can bring these concrete qualities to light.'[482]

I decide to take a video camera to the train station and I apply a series of approaches to filming. I pan, I zoom, I pause, I lift, I search with the camera, through its lens, for things that convey the sense of dereliction I feel here, but that are also aesthetically pleasing, that are in fact, quite beautiful. The light is strangely Mediterranean, the seagulls are squawking and the sea provides its terrifying sublime element to the opening shot. I tour the site with the camera, pulling focus to explore and exploit both abstraction and the uncanny. I enter through doors, I climb stairs, I zoom in on reflections, shadows, light filtering through structures and gaps, but there is nothing and no one here. There is just detritus. No object of fear is found – merely absence, emptiness, lack.

On reviewing what I have filmed, I am struck by the hungry gaze of the camera as it searches for something inexplicable, unattainable, for there is nothing there. Marcelo Antelo helps me to understand what this means:

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[481] Folkestone, Kent 1905

[482] Jacques Aumont, *The Invention of Place* in *Landscape and Film* ed. Martin Lefebvre, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 4.

When the threshold of the visible is amplified, the gaze retracts. The invisible is not the opposite of the visible; it is its secret counterpoint. On this secret of the visible does the ever-hungrier eye feed. In cinema, something is at stake beyond the visible.[483]

But how can I emphasise, draw attention to, highlight, the invisible in this work? I consider the options as I review the footage. The seagulls squawking sound quite terrifying, especially as they are not visible in the footage, and there is an other-wordly sound, like a droning hum emanating from some invisible machinery that seems to be providing a ghostly echo of the train station when it was inhabited. I realise that often when I pan the camera across the platforms, it is if I am searching for life, for the ghosts of this place. I consider how I can use sound to bring these invisible ghosts to life. I decide to record some sounds from the harbour itself – the part of the harbour that is inhabited and used – by fishermen, seafood stalls, consumers, and drinkers, who spill out of the pubs on a Sunday afternoon to smoke and take a break from the cover bands playing badly inside. I walk about the harbour taking a circular tour that begins and ends by the derelict train station, using my video camera with lens cap firmly on, to record the sounds. I encounter stalls being shifted, snippets of conversation and drifting music as well as the sound of my footsteps and the sea wind, which makes a strange strangled sound when recorded in this way. I return to the footage to see how I can insert these sounds to expand the filmic space of the train station.

I read about sound and discover 'conceptual resonance' which alters the way in which we see an image. The relationship between image and sound becomes circular, allowing for new things to be revealed both visually and aurally: 'Sound has an impact on our perception of time and space.'[484]

I read further and find a description of the USO: the Unidentified Sound Object, where the sound present in the film is not connected to an obvious source – it is not in the diegesis – it is an extra, or non-diegetic sound, that can result in, 'a logical conflict… which has to be solved by the spectator.'[485]

When applying the sounds to the footage, I am conscious of how the sounds build tension and this seems to cause confusion and even distress. Barbara Flueckiger explains: 'The longer the ambiguity – and the information deficit that accompanies it

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[483] Marcelo Antelo, *The Sound of Fear* in *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media* ed. Harper, Doughty and Lisentraut (NY/London: Continuum Int. Pub. Group, 2009), 659.
[484] Graeme Harper, *Introduction: The Sound of Fear* in *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media* ed. Harper, Doughty and Lisentraut (NY/London: Continuum Int. Pub. Group, 2009), 2/5
[485] Barbara Flueckiger, *Sound Effects* in *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media* ed. Harper, Doughty and Lisentraut, (NY/London: Continuum Int. Pub. Group, 2009), 172.

persists – the stronger the emotions that are triggered… it is experienced as a loss of control.'[486]

Useful, I think, and I make a mental note to return to consider this further. For now, I return to the making. What next, now that I have made my film version of the terrors of the forgotten, the ghosts of the past, inhabiting the mise-en-scene, the filmic space?

Transition and Transformation

I return to my desire to leave – to escape the liminal space I am living in. The town has another two train stations – evidence of the town's hey-day – and there has recently been a new super fast line added so that the journey back to the city takes a different route. This train is exciting. It goes really, really fast and arrives without the accompanying trauma that the other route seems to elicit. On its way to the city, it travels through the edges of the city's industrial landscape, where the widening river is bridged by a curving, tall, pulsating structure which is the Queen Elizabeth Bridge, and where the docks are populated by enormous car parks for brand new shiny cars, scrap yards and warehouses. Huge container ships are visible rising above the human habitation as they travel along the river and back out to sea. Before the train reaches this place, it travels through a tunnel, so that the effect of seeing the landscape is made more dramatic by the emerging from the tunnel. The journey then passes through marshlands where wildlife is free to makes itself at home, before entering another tunnel that takes you directly into the city, to St. Pancras station.

I decide to take my camera with me and to record part of the journey from the train window. I begin by filming the train station as its lines and forms are aesthetically pleasing to me – but is it just that I have found myself here, on this platform, desperate for escape, and that this has made my neurons fire at the sight of this station and its empty platforms, where the train will shortly arrive to carry me away? I position myself so that I can see the view out of the window and I capture sections of the journey, often finding that my own reflection is part of the footage as the light changes and the train moves in and out of tunnels. I consider whether this is what I want – to see myself in the work – but I follow my instinct and continue – I can reflect more on this later I think, as I become more aware of the subjective other in my work.

I research landscape, visiting the National Gallery to find the first time a painter privileged a landscape above the (human) subject. I look at photographic images that convey crumbling empires and barren vistas, and I watch films associated with landscape: *The Birth of A Nation*, (dir. D.W.Griffith 1915) which was the first time in cinema that the separation between public and private space was evident. I look at classic Westerns that are credited with showing the landscape and making use of it as setting, metaphor, giving it meaning and providing an illustration to the developing

[486] Ibid., 157.

concept of Empire. I read about landscape in film, finding the most useful definition of how landscape relates to the gaze in an analysis of Antonioni's films by Matthew Gandy: an essay entitled *The Cinematic Void*. In his essay, Gandy talks about the cinematic landscape as cultural artefact and this reminds me of Raymond Williams and the way in which he defined the modern idea of landscape as 'one of separation and observation'.[487] I decide to read Raymond Williams' book: *The Country and the City* (1985) and to consider this in more detail. But for now? I plan to edit the footage to convey the sense of a journey with no end, a repetitive return that cannot, it seems, be resolved. By making the footage speed up and then slow down, I can force the viewer to confront the way this journeying makes me feel: my lived-experience – always in motion but reaching nowhere. This is satisfying, but I am still not entirely satisfied that I have expressed this liminal place, this liminal experience.

I consider the anxiety associated with travelling. At this time, I inhabit many transitional spaces: train stations being spaces that I transit through frequently. I am often extremely anxious at these times – afraid that I will miss a connection, lose a ticket, be unable for some reason to travel – it is often as if the very process of travelling reassures me, reduces my anxiety, as then, I am moving somewhere – I am not stuck. So I visit the train stations I transit with my camera, hiding it so that it is not questioned and I am not challenged. I also like the idea that I cannot actually see what is being filmed. I am not able to rely on the gaze, on my 'kino-eye', and I will have to use the editing process to find images and sequences that work – that convey my experience of these places.

On reviewing the footage, I am struck by the abstraction evident and how the sounds that accompany this abstraction are really anxiety inducing – they have no place, they are USOs', non-diegetic, and seem to fit Barbara Flueckiger's definition of 'territory sounds' in films that 'surpass the mere indication of a location in order to provide a psychological description of the characters feelings… territory sounds can be interpreted as elements of a latent subjective transformation'[488] I am intrigued by the concept of 'subjective transformation' which seems to work directly on the viewer: 'The separation of the visual and auditory perception of space is significantly different from our normal perception: and this undermines our feelings of security.'[489]

I exploit this effect further when editing as I slow footage down and speed footage up. Barbara Flueckiger writes about how this process contributes to 'subjective transformation': 'Time is seldom experienced as a static metric, but it is influenced by

[487] Matthew Gandy, *The Cinematic Void* in *Landscape and Film* ed. Martin Lefebvre (New York: Routledge, 2006), 316.
[488] Flueckiger, op. cit.,171.
[489] Ibid., 174.

many factors such as stress, fatigue, interest, happiness and boredom; time is experienced subjectively as either stretched or compressed.'[490]

As I slow the footage down, I focus on shots of people passing me by, staring in my direction. I follow them move through the space and feel predatory, as if in the edit I am observing people in minute detail.

I focus on small abstract sections and use them as a motif throughout the film, so as to allow the viewer's eyes to rest temporarily, even as they do not know what their eyes are resting on. I highlight and reduce sounds to enable the use of found sound and conversations overheard in passing, and edit around visual patterns that draw the eye, even as the camera moves frantically. The camera motion relates to my footsteps as I transit these places, which are neither entirely public, nor private. I remind myself of Henri Lefebryes' definition of the development of such, as I work on the edit, struggling to find a resolution, a moment of satisfaction within this random footage. Finally, at the end of the tour, I focus on the entrance into St. Pancras and slow this footage right down. I find myself wanting to end the film on a sequence shot when walking past the flower stall. At this point, the sound of the lens cap banging against the side of the camera has made a sound like a heartbeat, which if I slow down sounds most strange. This is, I realise, the way in which I have embodied the camera – not by use of my gaze, but by the use of my body. As my body moves through these spaces, it has effected what the camera lens has seen and the way in which it moves, as well as the sounds that I have recorded.

I find Barbara Flueckiger describing how sounds, like heartbeats and breathing, contribute to viewer experience and I decide to make this section the end of the film, the camera movement repeating itself until it gradually fades away: 'These sounds… represent automatic bodily functions, without which no life is possible… life as a value to be protected and as the opposite to death.'[491]

On reviewing the finished edit, I am no longer anxious when watching it as I have become used to the strangeness of the piece, and also I am aware of what is actually being filmed, even if it is not clear to the viewer. As maker, I am in no position to review my own work. I ask for opinions, for feedback on the work I have made, for responses, and I ask, importantly, how it makes people feel. I am reassured as the feedback tells me that I have achieved what I set out to do – I have made work that begins to re-represent the liminal experience. I have begun to determine a filmic grammar for this experience and, through the use of an experiential approach, determined the production values that I will be using throughout the enquiry.

[490] Ibid., 174/5.
[491] Ibid., 176.

The harbour train station film is beautiful, yet hauntingly so: this was my intention – to make a horror film that has no subject at all except the place/setting that it was shot in and my subjective experience of that place. The transitional space film in London train stations makes the viewer most uncomfortable, as it shows nothing in particular that conveys any surety – it is all impressionistic, unfamiliar, without context, yet I receive some interesting feedback about the final sequence – the transformative sequence – for it is in this small section that I think that the film is resolved. It is as if everything is all right once St. Pancras has been accessed. Escape routes are clear, breathing slows and the heart stops panicking. Anxiety subsides.

I critically analyse what I have made in order to reflect on the filmic grammar used. I consider the 'exilic optic' and look at films that convey this. I watch Theo Angelopoulos' films shot literally across borders.[492] I read Homi K. Bhabha who describes the exilic optic as 'contiguous' and 'contingent', inhabiting, 'the realms of human consciousness and the unconscious, the discourses of history and psychoanalysis.'[493] Bhabha sites Walter Benjamin as the originator of this term and refers to Derrida's *The Specters of Marx* (1993) in which he claims the whole of Europe to be in mourning subsequent the traumas of Fascism, Stalinsm and the development of psychoanalysis and our encounter with the real. Bhabha states that the exilic optic is: 'not only time that is out of joint, but space, space in time, spacing.'[494] This is a perfect description of the liminal experience and I conclude that the exilic optic provides a useful tool to use throughout.

I am now ready to move on. I feel armed by the words of the film theorists who have reassured me that my enquiry into how I might re-represent the liminal experience in film is valid, and that through the determination of a fimic grammar that re-presents the liminal experience I can undertake the work of mourning and re-aggregate. I am motivated by the practice I have undertaken to move forward; taking with me a language that relates to the liminal, and that inhabits the aesthetic regime. I am fascinated by how psychoanalysis can help me to better make and understand the making process, and I am conscious of the philosophical and political foregrounding evident in my work. By defining my practice in writing, I can reflect on where I have been, where I am going and continue this reflective process. But where am I going next? I pause. I collect my thoughts. I observe, I spectate. I articulate. I am in the liminal. I continue, determined to find an exit route. But I now know that there might be a way to re-enter the land of the living through the making of artworks: to travel through and out the other side of this place/space. I continue.

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[492] Theo Angelopopulos *Ulysses Gaze* (1995) *The Weeping Meadow* (2004)
[493] Homi K. Bhabha, *Preface* to *Home, Exile, Homeland* ed. Hamid Naficy (New York/London: Routledge, 1999), vi.
[494] Ibid.

In conclusion, the methodology of this research project is foregrounded in the experiential filmmaking processes described in the preceding section, where the production values for the project have been explored. The use of a phenomenological research methodology allows for a thorough and rigorous approach that explores the phenomena, that is, the cultural output associated with the liminal experience. The production of still images and writing that responds to the phenomena and articulates my lived experience has enabled me to take the necessary distance from my own subjective experience and to be able to observe it more closely. In this way, I am able to contextualise and use my visual imagination to further unfold and ultimately, to re-present my own lived experience through the production of moving image work. The efficacy of this approach as a tool and a process, that is reiterable and equates to that of psychoanalysis, can then be analysed. The film work that is produced will attempt to re-present the liminal experience of the maker; this will be critically analysed and reflected on through viewer feedback, as well as through its use to the maker: does it enable and facilitate a coming to terms with loss?

On reflection, I conclude that the most effective way for me to realise my intention and ambition for my work: that of re-presenting my own lived experience, is by use of a low aesthetic but with the additional use of editing and post-production techniques. I examine Rancière's *The Politics of Aesthetics* and find his argument for a new regime: the aesthetic regime, that abolishes the representative regime (Aristotlinean) and the ethical regime (Platonism). Rancière calls for an identification with both logos and pathos, which is free from the hierarchical organisation of genres, thereby allowing new forms to be developed. According to Rancière, in mainstream cinema, there is a contradiction between the representative and the aesthetic, as there is usually an accompanying fictional narrative. Within my own practice, however, there is no distinct narrative, enabling me to play more freely with form, to truly 'juggle with the factors of existence'. I am inspired by Rancière's description of the aesthetic regime where 'the ordinary becomes beautiful as a trace of the true… if it is torn from its obviousness, in order to become a hieroglyph, a mythological or phantasmagoric figure.'[495] I reflect on how, through the use of the aesthetic regime, I can enable the truthful re-presentation of the experience of trauma and loss, and produce a hieroglyph, a mythological work that will support the concept that the production of artwork and its reception allows for a place of knowing to be reached. It is this place that I seek to inhabit and to share with the viewer, so that they might also reach a place of knowing and be able to manage and deal with the trauma of loss.

[495] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics,* op. cit., 34.

Appendix 3

Making of Filmworks

This appendix contains parataxic writing produced as a way of recording the making process. Each of the major filmworks were written about as a way of reflecting on the making and editing process as well as enabling a critical reflection on the efficacy of the filmworks for the maker. They are included here as the self reflexive nature of the writing process is indicative of the processes undertaken during the production of moving image work throughout this project.

Writing from the outset of the project

This is the beginning of my pilgrimage. Into the liminal. Into the unknown. It is only through production that the invisible, the hidden, the impossible and the unknown can be brought to light and a place of knowing reached.

What is this place then? What am I doing here? I have been here before – I now seem to have been here for a long, long time – time has no beginning, middle or end here – in fact there is no time – it is time-less. I try to recall why I am here. I force myself to recall a previous time, when I did not know about the existence of such a place as this, but I keep drifting off into abstraction, losing myself. I am finding it almost impossible to maintain concentration on the present, to live in the present, to be able to observe myself in this place. How can I say it so that it is understood? Nothing is clear.

I consider definitions and ways to describe the liminal experience. I search for others who have described this place – so that I can use their words – their articulation. I search for words I can use to build a vocabulary for this place – to express how it is to be here. Limen is the Greek word for harbour and this helps: I think about how harbours contain those who enter; often they cannot leave without guidance from tugs and pilots; often they wait there indefinitely. I think of Dover harbour and the fascination that this place holds for me – I collect images of harbours, walls: frames for the daunting void of the seascape.

But I find that even with all the images that I have collected to re-present my lived and embodied experience, I am floundering – where to begin? How to manage and sift through this, 'exhaustion of representations'[496] *to find a way out of here?*

Here – in this place, I want to begin – but what place is this? A place of in-articulation it seems – I have no voice. I am silent even as I attempt to speak – no sound is emitted –

[496] Leader, op. cit., 105.

nothing is heard. I consider the implications of what I am about to do – to begin a journey with no map, and no logical conclusion: I am not travelling to a sacred location, as the definition of a Pilgrimage implies. I am not undertaking a religious journey, metaphorically or literally – religion has been eliminated already from my enquiry – I am free from the burden of representing the god myths that have been created by man to explain that which appears inexplicable – yet in the freedom there is a fear, a falling away of axiomatic symbolic orders and their relational concepts, which leaves me beached and exhausted from my fight with the tide. Where have I been washed up? What place is this?

The Making of *A Work of Memorial: Southend Pier*.

I consider how to make my own work of mourning in order to facilitate a re-integration – a return to life – a way to actually live. I recall places that were inhabited, are inhabited still in some way, by the lost loved one. I recall many journeys made, many processes undertaken and a plan to film/record a place that we both loved: Southend Pier. As a site of transition, it has much meaning: it is a place where visitors depart and arrive, and have done since it was built in the Victorian age. It has a train that runs along the length of it and a lifeboat station at the pier head. It is the longest pier in the world. I look at images of Southend I have collected over the years – images of my children, of the fair, the muddy beach and the grey water, the endless skies and of the lights that illuminate the pier and the shoreline as it starts to get dark. I revisit a story-board made some years ago for this film – for this work of memorial that I have felt the need to make for a long, long time - and I visit again and again to test shoot, to determine the actual nature of the work. I try different cameras, explore different production values, but none of the planning and filming is satisfying – I am not sure what to do now – how to proceed? Plans for clean shots of train tracks and horizons seem impossible to achieve and are dull and lifeless. I realise that I cannot convey my lived-experience in this way. I realise that I have to use my instinct, my kino-eye, and the embodied camera to truly re-represent my lived-experience – to satisfy and serve as witness I also need to see myself in the work somehow. I decide to re-visit on a specific day – regardless of weather or mood and to use a digital video camera with automatic focus and a low aesthetic, and to hand hold the camera at all times, using my own body movement and my gaze to convey my actual lived experience of being there – of making the work.

The day is absolutely perfect – the sky is grey, the sea is grey – this is the Southend of my dreams – the route to other destinations, the way out. It won't be long before darkness falls - I must get moving. The train is almost ready to leave. I remove the lens cap – ready. The train starts to pull away – the fair is visible from the window: the carriage I am in – at the back of the train – offers a 360 degree view and I press record, allowing my eye to be drawn to whatever attracts it. The journey is long – puzzling, confusing

even as I know why I am here and where I am going. I am not sure what I will find – what I will do when I reach the pier head. I have to return, but when and how will I know when it is enough, when I have captured enough to work with, to convey my lived-experience? I am anxious. I am in a transitional phase – I have re-entered the liminal space.

On arriving at the pier head, I wander aimlessly, avoiding the few other people who are wandering about, holding their coats tight against them as the wind blows ceaselessly and cruelly, invading even the most protected. I focus on the horizon – trying to fix my gaze, to find something to hold on to here, but nothing feels right, nothing seems to satisfy. I encounter my own reflection and this feels reassuring. I am reassured that I do exist, even here in this liminal place. I find sectioned off parts of the pier, dark places that my camera invades, looking for something but finding nothing at all. I look back at the shore as a train travels along the pier – this is also reassuring, there is a shore still, it has not gone away – I can return. Lights start to twinkle – bright coloured lights that move and vibrate – inviting and compelling me to return, for what is there out here, at the end of this long, long pier? I move to the very end of the pier but instead of a blank horizon, I see other places, places indistinguishable and vague. My eye is drawn to the sky, which is full of swirling colour – it is as if the sky is trying to reveal something, but beneath the clouds are more clouds: grey sky parts to reveal more grey sky – a never ending swirl. I circle beneath the swirling, accentuating the motion and raising the camera so that it records only sky. Release? Have I managed to find a release? Unsure, I return to the train and find I am the only passenger on the return journey. Fraught with anxiety, I find the camera wobbling with the train, I seem unable to hold it still now. The train unexpectedly stops and I sit in silence wondering what has happened? What has occurred here? Eventually, the train blows its whistle and continues on its journey. I breathe a sigh of relief and focus my gaze on the shore, only momentarily returning to the horizon before the train shudders into the station. The fair continues to compel me and demand my gaze – I film out of the windows as the train begins to halt and then from the shore. I pan the camera over the fairground, before finally resting on the train station. I want to recall the place, the journey, the site of transition. I want to reflect on this as transformation – have I managed to make a work of memorial? Have I done the work of mourning here finally? Has this collection of imagetic representations managed to demonstrate my lived-experience?

I reflect on the footage, editing it so that it closely re-represents the journey, the experience. I use the reflections of the self, in windows and structures, I use the horizon with the footage slowed right down to invite stillness, to describe the void and I add music to alter the dynamic, to reveal more about the subject, the lost loved one, and my feelings about him. I use the sweet voice of a young Michael Jackson, to remind me of the lost loved ones eyes and the experience of looking in and through them. I use the sad mournful song of John Martyn, as he tells of his lost love, to remind me that I always knew I would be here in this place, without him, for I obsessively played this song when

we first met and during our first Christmas together, in Southend. I use the remarkable song by Terry Callier that takes the haunting theme from the film Spartacus and adds to it lyrics describing the fight for freedom during the Civil Rights Movement, before finally adding the rhythmic reggae music of The Abyssinians, singing of the road to Zion, the final return home. This song is from a tape that was made for my son by his father; after his death, our son played this tape every night before he went to sleep. He did this for five years - until he was thirteen and until the tape became too worn to play any longer. It seems fitting that this is the last song, the last piece of music, to accompany the last image. I review this finally. The video makes me want to weep. I find myself sharing the anxiety of the camera as it tries to fix on something, to focus. I am lost in it as the footage slows at the pier head. I watch as the clouds pass and the sky reflects back the endless absence. I find the music causes an eruption of emotions, of feelings, of memories, and even as I find the music heightens the pain I feel, it also makes me smile. I am relieved by the first song and I love hearing MJ sing of looking through the window just as the camera looks in the café windows. John Martyn's almost intelligible mutterings are lost in the mix, like the words unsaid, unremembered, unforgotten. And the Terry Callier song, with its lurching rhythms, much as it hurts to hear it, somehow eases my anxiety, bearing witness to my sorrow whilst also expressing the pain of others. I am totally reassured by the return to the shore, the rhythmic music settling my heart, making it beat normally again. Have I managed to let go? Can I now return to the land of the living?

In the liminal space, in the midst of the liminal experience, I find myself – still and stoic – silent. It is as if I exist in a strange bubble. I can see out and I am also seen – but it is as if I am unrecognisable, as if I have slipped out of time, out of joint. I recall the feeling so easily – it fits like a well-worn glove – how long have I been here? Or is this the repetitive return of the repressed that I cannot seem to transgress? I have been here many times and for how many years have I worn these gloves? I cannot recall. It is time now – time to move on – to find a way out of here – to reach a place of safety finally, to return to the self, to re-integrate, to reassume an identity not dependent on the existence of another– to transform the self, to be transformed. But what process shall I undergo in order to find myself again? What process will assist me in letting go? How and in what way can I undertake the work of mourning?

The Making of *The Work of Mourning: The Perfect Pirouette.*

'Like all forms of work, the labour of mourning is tiring.'[497]

I recall how hard it was to learn how to do a pirouette. First, I had to learn how to turn – to spot – without getting dizzy. To do this, you fix your gaze on a spot directly ahead,

[497] Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, op. cit., 21.

and then you turn leaving your head in its place until the last possible moment – then – you spin your head around really really fast and locate the spot that you fixed on again, so that you don't fall over, lose your balance and make a fool out of yourself. Then, you have to practice the footwork, the pull up after placing the feet in fourth, the landing in a perfect fifth so that you are ready to start the cycle again, and again, and again. The arms have to be in third, so that you can use them to help you turn, for it is important to turn quickly and to recover quickly also, and to do it all with such grace and ease that you look like you are able to fly, to transcend the earthly plane – even if only for a micro second. How I loved the feeling of flight, for when I got it right – after many many hours of practice – I showed off my new-found skill at every opportunity – or was it that I enjoyed the feeling so much I would leap at any possible chance of experiencing it. Whatever. I loved it. I recall it well. I feel a pull, a desire to reach that feeling again – can I still do one I wonder? Can I perform a pirouette without falling over? Can I do it now?

I decide to film myself attempting to perform the perfect pirouette – not so that I can pat myself on the back and reassure self that I am still able – no. I want to feel that feeling again. And I want more than that. I want to know that I am strong enough to do it, without him helping me, for I recall that one evening, many years ago, when our love was new, after a glass or two of wine, I decided to show my love that I could perform a pirouette and even though I had not done this for years, I prepared myself, I pulled up, I got my arms into first, my feet into third. He stood nearby, smiling at my foolishness, but the look on his face was expectant – so I did it – well I tried. It was romantic the way he caught me, stopped me from falling. Instead of falling on the cold floor, clumsily, embarrassingly, I fell into his arms and he held me fast. Even though the likelihood of me falling was always high – given the circumstances and that I had not attempted such a thing for a long time – I attached much significance to this act of catching. I felt safe and secure and life seemed to be more palatable now that I knew that he would catch me if I fell. But now. He is not here. He cannot catch me. But if I can do it on my own. Then surely, I can carry on. Surely then, I will be able to carry on without him.

I arrive at the dance studio with nothing but my camera and tripod and an old pair of practice shoes. I quickly put these on and set up the shot. I decide to film from different places and different angles – so that the camera sometimes sees me in the mirror as well – or it focuses on my feet, foreshortening and constricting the space surrounding me as I struggle and stress. For how is this going to be possible? How am I going to do this? I prepare. I try to convince myself that this will work. That whatever happens, it will be interesting. And I try. I try to pull up and tuck under. I use my elegant arms, my high instep, I try to spot turn. I try. My first ginger attempt works well – I recall how to do it – or my body does – and I assume a position of confidence and I try again. I fall – fast – hard – slamming into the floor - and it hurts. But I pick myself up and start again. This time, furious at myself – how can I be so weak as to fall so quickly – I am determined. But again, I fall. I overturned. Too ambitious. I am not ready for this yet. So, I try to focus. I practice spot turning. I practice using only my feet. I re-focus. I turn to the left. I

turn to the right. I finally manage to achieve a turn without stumbling, but I crash into the mirror. I stress. I struggle. I feel sick - I am not used to all this spinning. I find that I am sighing, in the same way that I do on sad days – as if I have forgotten to breathe out for days and days and I have to out breath consciously so as not to poison myself with carbon monoxide. Yet, I am determined. I must be able to do this. I have to do this now. Time is running out. I look at myself reflected in the mirror and try again. If I don't try too hard I find that I can just about do it – but it's not great - its weak and slow and it does not feel good. I don't feel good. Where is that feeling I recall so well? Where is that sense of flight, of grace, of elegance? Where has it gone? Defeated - I remove my shoes. I leave the dance studio and I am completely exhausted. I find that I am still spinning, still nauseous and that nothing can settle my anxiety. I look at the footage hoping to see myself performing the perfect pirouette, but all I see is the look of pain on my face and the struggle to hold myself up and to recover from each dizzying turn.

I edit it so that the different angles and perspectives are clear – I leave the sound so that my breathing and the weight of my landings on the wooden floor are audible. I feel the need to break up the different attempts and to punctuate them with a black screen – to separate them so that the passage of time is evident – I select each attempt carefully and then decide to name them – to interpret them – as literally as I can within the language of mourning and loss. I fill up the frame with the words, making them as large as I can- as if they were being shouted rather than read. I locate my performing body within the liminal space so that I can see it and reflect on it. My body carries my loss. I can see it. I can feel it. I don't stand as tall. I am not as strong. My legs not as muscular, my feet not as flexible. My torso somehow undefined, as if I am merely a shape, a shadow. I sigh, I struggle to breathe, I sigh again. Yet I am functioning still. I can see myself on the screen. I have managed to do it – to perform a pirouette without falling over but how weak and pathetic is my attempt. How disappointed am I in myself. What am I to do now?

In what ways can the performative contribute to the re-presentation of the liminal experience?

Precipice. Confused. Overwhelmed. Unsure as to how I am to proceed – before me nothing. Nothing but darkness. I am standing over a precipice. Below yawns a vast void. I gasp for air even as there is no shortage of it up here. I try to allow oxygen to flow through my veins, but I can feel my heart constricting, struggling to comprehend. What is occurring here? Here in this place. This place with no name, no allegorical reference, so signification, no light. There is no light. Dizziness threatens to overcome me. Afraid now. Very afraid. But also curious, compelled. I have no choice now do I? I cannot leave – I can see no way back – out of here. It is as if this is where I have to be – for now at least. Breathing slows. Strength wells up from somewhere. I open my mouth to see what comes out. A sound. A song. A lament. Wailing. Screaming. Words spat out. Watch out.

For the heart can hear. The heart can hear its call. I can conjure your image before me – is that really you? Did you hear my song? Will you stay long?

The Making of *A Performance of Mourning: A Star is Born.*

My name is Christina Lovey. I have always sung – sung my joy, sung my pain, but recently, it has been hard to even open my mouth to speak – let alone sing. I feel paralysed and mortified by grief and loss. It is a tragedy. I know that I need to find a way to recover from this loss – to move on, but the exhaustion of representations I have been producing have led me nowhere. I feel as if I am moving in circles, going nowhere. So I make a decision – I decide to proceed even as I am afeared. The process will make me face the loss again, but I know that it has not left me as yet – that all I have been able to do is suppress it – to carry on as if nothing tragic has occurred. My body carries the stress of this and I know that it is important to find a way to work through this grief – to manage it effectively.

I recall, on first losing the loved-one, that I sat and listened to all of the music that we had shared over the years – all of the songs needed to be played, as if by playing them I was moving through the relationship in my imagination. I cannot recall how I felt – I felt nothing at all at that time – it is as if music was the only way that I could manage the extreme anxiety that I was feeling. Music and performing had been a part of our life together – but subsequent the loss, I have been silent – I have not performed at all.

I listen to the songs I want to recreate – to perform as Esther does in A Star Is Born. I find a compilation of Judy Garland's songs – famous torch songs by which we come to know her pain outside the vehicle of the narrative musical drama. I decide to recreate this performance of The Man That Got Away, as it is sung live, without the audience or the orchestra being visible. I watch Barbra Streisand's performance of Watch Closely Now, closely. I learn the lyrics to both songs, I practice with a backing track, I sing along with Judy and Barbara, watching them move as they perform, expressing their emotions through their bodies as well as through their voices. I am ready. I am ready to perform them now, to perform them for the camera. The camera functions here as witness. The evidence of the performance, this performance of pain, will be recorded on film – in this way, I can witness myself performing. But in order to fully immerse myself into the performance I need to transform myself into Judy and Barbara. I do not want to be myself – I am not myself – I do not know who I am anymore. I play with wigs and costumes so as to recreate the era of the films in my video – to be convincing in my recreation. I am able, by this process, to transform myself – to be somebody else. I elicit help with the styling and make-up, the recording and the set up of the shot. I want to be fully immersed in the performance, so the camera is static, as it is in the Streisand film – a single shot. In this way, I can concentrate fully on being Judy and Barbara – the filmmaking becomes a ritual, a process that is occurring regardless. I have no choice

about it – like Esther in the film, I am going to perform regardless of my pain – or any other distraction. It is all about the performance and the filming of it is incidental, the camera unimportant apart from its function as a recording device so that this ritual can be played out over and over again- as much as is necessary to enable the work of mourning to occur. But can I do this? Can I play these tragic women and sing my heart out? And will it work? Will this process enable me to re-integrate, to move on from this liminal place?

I reflect on what I have done. I watch myself and find that I do not look like myself, or move, or act like myself. I have somehow erased me – Christina Lovey – sad person, suffering still even after all this time. In her place, I see a strong woman, facing her pain and all the fears that she has been carrying with her. I see a woman who stands stoic and brave, singing her heart out. Yet in Judy's song there is a resignation, an acknowledgement that now, nothing will ever be the same. No new love can replace the one that is lost. This is tragic and I am glad to see Judy fade as Barbra comes in to replace her. Barbra sings to her dead loved one saying that if he watches her she will not fall. She sings about how she will soar; how she will fly like an eagle. I know that she is singing about her career, but in that lyric, I recognise a new desire – a desire to move away from the sad and lonely place that is my grief and the experience of Judy. Barbra finishes her song and life goes on – I imagine that she has hope in her heart. I am reminded of the lyric from Carousel: 'Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart, and you'll never be alone. You'll never walk alone.' Yet I am alone. I see myself emoting, mourning, tragic, unresolved. I struggle to resolve the edit. I play with devices: black screens, transitions, I try to show the ruptures, the passage of time, the work, the performing, the transforming. I did transform myself. I did see myself reflected back on the screen. I saw myself in his eyes. And here I stay. Held. For now at least. Aware of the fragility I feel. It all feels temporary. Still. I watch myself performing. I watch myself mourning. Have I done enough yet? Am I done?

What does experiential filmmaking contribute to the re-presentation of the liminal experience?

Hold on my love. Hold on. Can I hold on? The cold wind cuts right through this place. It howls and whips itself into a frenzy – will it carry me away? Will it take me to you if I surrender myself to it? Will it lift and transport me to where you are my love? I look about me but its dark and I am not sure what lies ahead. I look behind me. Darkness. Fear. Panic as I struggle to breathe – tears falling now. I wipe them away furiously. I have come this far - I cannot stop now. I try to orientate myself – I look for the stars, the moon, some light, illumination. The shadows move in the darkness. I am trying to hold on. Hold on. Can I hold on? I see the road ahead. I can just about make it out in the gloom. Are those lights in the distance? Are you calling me now? Shall I follow? Shall I take this road? Will it lead me to you my love? Where will it take me? Silence. Sorrow. Silence. Yet I can feel my heart is beating. Fast. It beats and I breathe in and out. In and

out. In and out. Sigh. I am sighing. I walk on. With hope in my heart, I walk towards you now. My lost love. Hold on.

The Making of *The End of Mourning: Osea Island.*

I am haunted by the images that inhabit my imagination. I cannot seem to resolve the desire – no, the need – to see and experience the end of the road, the end of life, the ultimate destination – as sought by Pilgrim in Pilgrim's Progress: the final crossing to the other side. I am pulled by the darkness. I recall finding next to the lost loved one's dead body a small Bible, open and marked by a red ribbon – why was it there I wondered? What did the page say? I read it at the time, struggling to comprehend what it meant – was he aware of his impending death? Was he afraid of his ultimate demise? He was not a believer – he preferred the writings of Nietzsche to the preaching of Jesus – I was confused. Did he gain comfort and some peace by reading this page I wondered? The words are with me now: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.'[498] *Subsequently, the imagery that these words conjured up in my fertile visual imagination has stayed with me and I am plagued by it – the notion that he was afeared. Was that why he came to me when he died? Is that why I experienced anxiety – instead of the more commonly reported effect of post-death communication – that of feeling at peace. Did he not go lightly?*

The road to the afterlife compels me: the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I consider how there are islands that are cut off when the tide comes in and this appeals to me as potential location/subject, as I imagine the afterlife being like an island – you cannot return even as you have journeyed that way – there is no return – it is a one way journey. Yet I have to return. I cannot leave just yet. There are still things to do – to be done. I consider the British islands that have such a road: Lindisfarne, St. Michael's Mount, but these islands are the location of monasteries, where monks lived and worked, for centuries. As I look at images of these places now, their medieval architecture defines their sense of place, not the route, or road that takes you there. Also I am repulsed by the false spirituality that these locations propagate and by the religiosity – it does not help me to deal with the Real, with the hole in the symbolic network that is crying out to be repaired, to be healed. I research the locations of the films I have seen – the phenomena of the liminal experience. The beach that the pilot washes up on in A Matter of Life and Death (dir. Powell and Pressburger, 1946) appeals, but when I find its location, I can see no reason to travel there as it is just a beach, just a transitional space – there is no potential for transformation there. I recall seeing the recent film version of The Woman in Black, (dir. James Watkins 2012) and I remember that the hauntings take place on an island reached by a causeway that is only accessible at low tide. I locate this causeway and its island in the estuary of the River Blackwater,

[498] Psalm 23. Verse 4. The King James Bible.

Essex. The river that leads to the sea. It is thought that the causeway was built by the Romans and that the island has always been inhabited, but since the establishment of the monarchy, the island has been private and after being gifted to various Lords and Earls for services to the crown, it became the property of Frederick Charrington in 1903.[499] *Since then, the island has housed a hospital for those suffering from the effects of alcoholism – Charrington set up the first ever temperance society after being horrified by the effects of his family business: Charrington Brewery – he provided a home for those who needed to recover from the ill effects of alcohol, and it was also requisitioned by the Navy for a secret war base. More recently, the island was declared a site of scientific interest and used by Cambridge University as a research site – Osea Island is the only place in Britain where the entire five species of British owl can still be found - and a location of a private rehabilitation clinic for the addicted rich and famous, the most famous guest having been the tragic and talented singer Amy Winehouse, who sadly died from alcohol poisoning at the age of twenty seven in 2011. Now it is the location of holiday homes and a recording studio, and the quaint cottages and buildings built in the 1900's have been sensitively renovated and facilities for holiday makers provided: carp pond, outdoor swimming pool, and yoga and art studios. Access to the island is restricted not only by the tide, but by the owner, who discourages the casual visitor. I contact the owner through the management company, telling them about my research project and that I want to film the causeway – they invite me to stay when one of the cottages, The Sweet Shop is empty, mid-week, and I enthusiastically respond and make my travel arrangements. The train will take me to Witham and the cab driver Rob, will drive me over the causeway when the tide is low. I can then stay there and experience the tide coming in and going out again, before returning to the mainland the day after. I pack my tiny Go Pro camera, that I can hold close to my heart, to my solar plexus, so as to be embodied; the tripod, warm clothes and wellingtons and I set off – into the unknown – like Chirhiro in Spirited Away, I do not know where this journey will take me. I know where I am going, for this is my pilgrimage into the liminal, my ritualistic encounter with the Real. My Quest. But as to what it will be like when I get there, what I will do when I get there, what will occur and how I will feel – these are all unknowns. I am in the place of not-knowing. I am open to this encounter with the Real. I am in need of resolution. I step out into the unknown. I begin my journey, my encounter with the liminal, my pilgrimage.*

The day is bright. I wake early, Excited or anxious, it's hard to tell. I look out of the window at the sky. I sing along to songs on the radio as I pack. I walk through the cemetery en route to the train station. I look at the sky through the leafless trees, I watch the sun shining through. Bright for the time of year. I make my way up the street to the station. The train comes swiftly and I sit, camera in my hand, as the train takes me into the city and then out again. Reaching green fields eventually. The sun is still shining. I am glad about that. The last few days have been wet and windy but this day is

[499] http://www.oseaisland.co.uk/about-us/history Accessed 20.03.12

fine. Fine. I am fine. Today. This day that I journey to Osea Island. The sun shines through the windows as I gaze at the world passing by. I watch and I wait. Witham station is soon reached and I find Rob the taxi driver waiting for me and I get into his cab and he drives me through the small town and out again, into the country. Suddenly I am somewhere different. The road rises so that Osea is suddenly visible - the sun shines a spotlight – biblical almost – the way is illuminated clearly, compellingly. I site the camera so that it captures what I see, my view, my experience of sitting passively being taken somewhere I have never been before. I have never been anywhere like this before. The road curves and slopes, it is old. Ancient. It has been here forever it seems. This road to the afterlife. The way is clear. There is only one way to go. Forward. Onwards. No question about it. No doubt. No fear now, no anxiety. I am here.

I take a walk. The island is small. I can easily circumnavigate it but I cross diagonally across fields and through woods to reach the North Beach, where the Manor House has stood looking out at the estuary for over a hundred years. On my way I find old buildings, an old orchard, pylons, huts, abandoned buildings, a broken pier, and I film everything that I see, everything that I encounter. But I am pulled to the shore, compelled to enter the water, the estuary, the river that leads to the sea. As I submerge myself in the cold water I find the pull to return to the shore stronger and I walk towards the setting sun. Night falls. Be still my beating heart. The darkness cannot hurt you. Even as you are enfolded by it. You are safe here in this place. Embraced. Here you are safe. The stars watch over you as you sleep. You will be fine. Hold on now. Hold on.

A new day arrives. Another day here. I walk out and at the crossroads I take the path to the causeway. I walk along the shore as I reach it. The day is bright, but the clouds move and the sun is shrouded. A shroud. The dead are wrapped in shrouds I think as I walk. My mood becomes darker than the sky as I reach the causeway, the road to the mainland. I pause. I look about me. There is no one here. No one at all. Except me. I begin to walk. I take the road but it is leading me nowhere. I stop. I wait. I look up as the sky changes and the tide starts to come in. I walk some more. I stop again. I look about me. I take in the view, I drink it in like liquid. I wait. I continue to wait. I am always waiting it seems. But for what? I turn back to the island as the water covers the road behind me. The clouds gather to the right. The clouds part to the right. I look up. I look down. I sit. I look out across the stones, the sands, to the mainland, but I have no desire to return. This is where I am. This is where I stay, waiting. Still. Waiting. The tide begins to come in slowly and I locate myself safely on the road near the island shore. I watch as the water covers the causeway, preventing me from leaving now. I cannot now return to the mainland, even if I so desired. Overwhelmed. Shocked. Alone. I am compelled to walk into the water as it comes ever closer. It is cold and the clouds seem to be pressing me down, into the water, under the water. As my eyes adjust I see the sun start to shine again – above me – the sky is suddenly clear and I rise. I rise up out of the water. I feel my sprit soar. Not now. This is not the time I think and I hastily return to the island, to the shore as the day darkens again. What is this pull that I feel when I am near the

water? What is it that makes me want to be submerged? Am I yearning for death? Am I searching for the lost loved one even now, after all this time? Don't look back Eurydice. Don't look back now.

Later, I walk out into the dusk. Blue. Deep blue. Lights twinkle on distant shores. The Saltings[500] are close and I reach them before it gets dark. I film the view. I take photos of the water. I walk to the edge and again I am compelled to enter it. The water is pitch black. Pitch Black. I see nothing. Nothing but darkness. No light. No warmth. No lost loved one here. Nothing is here – just absence – just loss. Yet there is a chink of light just above me and I search it out, letting myself return to consciousness as I rise. I rise above the water now. I soar into the dark sky. I find myself searching, reaching out, for light. For love. I do it all for love. Love is all I have. Love survives when all else is turned to dust, ashes, blown away with the wild wind. Love is still with me. But where are you my love? Where am I now? I see another light – the light from a window, a door. I move towards this light. Bright in the darkness. I look in. I see a safe place. A warm place. A light place where I know, somehow, that I will be safe. Am I safe now? Have I faced my fears here on this island? Have I found what I was looking for? Can I now return to the mainland and live without him? Alone. At peace.

I go home. The day is grey and overcast. I am pacified like the sky. Calm. The journey home is swift, smooth, easy. I arrive at the door. I enter. Everything is different somehow. Strange. Uncanny. Yet I am calm. Silent. Breathing is calm. I breathe in and out. Still. I am still breathing. The water did not fill my lungs. I did not drown. I found some peace. Somehow. I look at the footage excitedly as it is in the edit that I can relive the experience, to make sure that I fix it, secure it, for all time. For the rest of my time here. Without him. Then I can reflect on it – my lived experience of loss – maybe then I can distance myself enough to be able to reconfigure and be reborn. I cut the footage. I speed it up, slow it down. It is so beautiful in places that it takes my breath away. Other times it is as dark and sad as I am, but it's still beautiful. I recall that when I first met the lost loved one I thought that he was the most beautiful, yet the saddest man that I had ever encountered. How odd that it was my own sadness that I saw, like Esther in A Star is Born, I knew somehow of my own impending loss. Even then, years and years ago. Was this anticipatory grief – or some sort of eerie precognition? I return to the footage and I add sounds, music, snatches of things that I recall. That I hear. That I know will assist me in making this re-presentation of my lived experience clear, accessible, relatable, Real. The songs and their lyrics almost break my heart but they also help me to manage it, my anxiety, my fear, my trauma – the trauma of loss. The footage shows the struggle, my struggle, to hold on. I avoid it for what seems like a long time but eventually I force myself to edit it so that it tells the story of my journey, truthfully, as it occurred. I am relieved. I watch. I observe myself through the camera and its actions. My body is the camera it seems and the motion of the camera is like the motion of my body, anxious,

[500] The Saltings are where sea salt used to be collected.

twitching, unable to settle until the return, when the shots are almost shockingly still. After so much motion, confusion, anxiety, fear, the final static shots reassure and calm me. I can see that I have been transformed through the making of this filmwork. Yet am I not sure if this is done now. Is this the end of mourning. Of my mourning? Can I finally re-aggregate? Is this the end?

I watch the final film over and over again – it inhabits my dreams and the songs and their lyrics remain in my head as I am constantly reminded of visual images from the film – I recognise and feel a sense of familiarity each time I look out the window, sit on a train, look at the sky, walk through the cemetery. I find ever more strange sounds to add to the soundtrack as this makes it all seem other-wordly, like the hereafter, like the underworld. I feel as if the camera is my spirit, rising and falling, as it does. Some days it is soaring. Sometimes the blue sky calls me and I feel myself rising. Sometimes the darkness pulls me down and I am deflated, flat, dead almost, melancholic certainly. Yet the music helps me to manage the abyss. I can bear it now. The film is a powerful expression of my feelings, my psychological state, my body, my perceptual reality, my lived experience. I feel as if this film is truly an expression of myself – my self-story. And I do feel as if this expression has enabled a release. My encounter with the Real is visible, evident, clear. I have staged this encounter and now I present it to the world as testimony to my suffering. Witnessed. I am witness to my own loss. I have re-presented the liminal. I am finally able to rest, to be still, to be quiet and breathe deeply and easily. To allow the dead to be dead. For I looked back. I returned home alone. I begin my life anew. The time is now. I move on. I re-aggregate into the land of the living. I leave the darkness behind me.

I dream a vivid dream as I am working on the edit. In it, I see the lost loved one rising – into the heavens – like Carles Castagena. My heart swells and is full to bursting as I feel his happiness. Has he been waiting all this time for me to let him go? Is it only because I allow him to leave this earthly realm that he is leaving now? Maybe there were other things he needed to do before he could leave? Our son is grown now. Maybe that is why he can go. He seems to be bigger, grander, more than he was – like Jonathon Seagull rising through the ranks of the seagull afterlife and becoming ever more powerful as a being. Like Billy Bigelow in Carousel, who can move through the ranks of heaven by doing good on earth and helping his daughter. I am a little afraid of this image in my dream. It is like nothing I have ever seen or experienced before. Yet I know that dreamwork is a way that we can analyse and help ourselves, as it is a direct route into the unconscious. I think about the image and hold it closely. For then I can recall it whenever I need to. It becomes familiar, warm, reassuring. I know where he is now. At peace my love. You can be at peace now. For now I know. I have faced my own mortality and I know. I am in the place of knowing. At last. You are free my love to be as dead. I am free to live on without you. It has been a long time coming this release, but it is here now. I have found an end to mourning. At last.

Final Reflection.

Still. The waiting is over. I am still. The calmness of the river and its gentle ebb and flow is within me. Now. Keeping the waters within me calm. Still. Flowing gently towards the sea. 'I've known rivers. Deep and dusty rivers… My soul has grown deep, like the rivers.'[501] *Know. Now I know. No more confusion. No more anxiety. No more fear as I look into the darkness. No more sorrow winding and weaving its way through my life. I can stand here now, on this precipice and look up, into the blue blue sky - for now I know. I have seen the way out. I have seen the hereafter – the other side. Rising. The sun rises and illuminates my way. I rise. And I flow. Like the river that flows to the sea. Watch me as I drift. At peace. Still. I am still. It is over now. It is done. I can breathe. I live. I love. I am. Here. For now at least. Until it is my turn to travel to Hades. To go where the river ceases to flow. The end. To find the love that transcends the border, the space between. But the valley of the shadow of death cannot contain me now. I am free. Watch me flow. Watch me go. Like the river, I flow. For now I know.*

[501] Langston Hughes *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* (1955)

Appendix 4

Phenomenological Reduction

In order to arrive at a phenomenological reduction, all phenomena, the artists' films under consideration are experienced from different perspectives to arrive at a horizon of the phenomenon of grief. The perspectives taken are: time, space, body, materiality, causality, relation to self, and relation to others.

Time:
In *Drift,* the passage of time seems suspended; there is no indication of time of day or of time of year to contextualise the time of the piece, indeed, it is timeless. In *Perestroika,* the passage of time is related to the journey of the train as it transits through the Siberian landscape, however, the way in which the film is edited means that this passage of time is never clear; there is no night or day, just a perpetual sense of motion. Even when the train is still, it is always in view, ready to leave at any moment. *In the Wake of a Deadad* has a similarly timeless feel, as the time between the multiple inflations is not determined – the pilgrimage could have taken one day, or many, or indeed occurred over a long period of time. The experience of watching these films highlights the way in which time is experienced by the neophyte and as stated by Flueckiger: 'Time is seldom experienced as a static metric, but it is influenced by many factors such as stress, fatigue, interest, happiness and boredom; time is experienced subjectively as either stretched or compressed.'[502] Phelan says that 'cinematic time forces us to wonder what we actually mean by actuality.'[503] This element of timelessness that appears as an invariant component of the film works supports that of liminality and is a feature of the phenomenon under consideration.

Space
The space of *Drift* is not clearly established: without reading the film notes the viewer would not be aware of the location. However, the seascape is clearly defined and the horizon evident even when it is obscured by fog. The use of space relates to the phenomenon of the liminal experience in that it is one of margin and the in-between. In *Perestroika,* the defined space of the train has an almost claustrophobic effect and the camera gazing out the window suggests the desire for escape. On the one occasion when the train is left behind, the space is indeterminate as the camera fails to focus on anything other than edges of the space. However, this conveys a sense of alteration and the dissemblance of the image here is effective, causing the viewer to relocate themselves and their perceptions in accordance with the distinctive change of space/location. *In the Wake of a Deadad* has a real engagement with space as the

[502] Flueckiger, op. cit., 174/5.
[503] Phelan, *Mourning Sex, Performing Public Memories,* op. cit., 157.

journey includes locations and landscapes that are instantly recognisable as the English countryside. All of these spaces are in fact transitional: ships and harbours, trains and car trips to tourist locations all indicate transition: another feature of liminality.

Body

The body we are conscious of in *Drift* is inactive and wistful, with a longing gaze that seems to be the only window onto the world for the filmmaker. The body is also in a state of constant motion, as is the case in both *Perestroika* and *In the Wake of a Deadad.* There are occasions when there is stillness in Turner and Kotting's work, however, these are brief and only allow for a temporary reflection on the action within the filmwork, before the motion begins again. This almost constant flux has the effect of creating anxiety; without pauses for reflection and contemplation – the action, the motion continues relentlessly. However, the occasional pause, which allows the viewer to reflect and process what has occurred on screen stands out as an exemplification 'that vividly illustrate[s] the invariant structural themes'[504] of liminality. The bodies that we are aware of in *Perestroika* are inactive mostly and seem to merely exist as passengers on an indeterminate train journey, with no control over their own motion. Conversely, the bodies in *In the Wake of a Deadad* are both absent and present – the constant inflating of the dead dad is a constant reminder of presence and absence and are indications of this feature of human experience. Lewis articulates this feature in his self-story, writing that 'There is one place where her absence comes locally home to me, and it's a place I can't avoid. I mean my own body. Now it's like an empty house.' [505] We all die, we all leave our bodies, yet they remain, they continue to exist, however as Phelan argues, the viewer is 'positioned as witness to the return of the culturally repressed body… This body can be edited, replotted, revised.'[506]

Materiality

The materiality of film is present in *Drift,* we are aware of the camera due to its fluctuating position; this is indicative of self-reflexive filmmaking practices which allow the 'reality of the cinematic apparatus' to be evident within the work.' [507] The notion of film as material suggests its haptic qualities and in its original form, the process of manual editing. As viewers, we are not aware of whether a film has been manually or digitally edited, however, the construction of a piece of moving image will have invariably involved far more film footage than is presented in the final edit. As a structuralist filmmaker, Welsby may have followed a specific methodology with regard to the film material he was working with, however, this is not stated by the

[504] Moustakus, op. cit., 99.
[505] Lewis, op. cit., 12.
[506] Phelan, *Mourning Sex, Performing Public Memories,* op. cit.,155.
[507] Trinh T. Minh-ha *Not You/Like You: Post Colonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference* www.ucsc/edu/CultStudies/PUBS/Inscriptions/vol3-4/Trinh-ha.html 21/01/08

artist or evident in the film itself. In the making of *Perestroika,* some five hundred hours of footage and still photography were edited into the final version and there is a sense of this in the work as the feeling one has is of a never ending journey, with no real beginning, or end. In a material sense this suggests a surfeit of material and a conscious process of exclusion in order to meet the filmmakers intentions. Kotting's work plays with its materiality in an inclusive fashion; it appears as if we are witness to every single occasion of inflating and deflating and that more importantly, that these actions were undertaken primarily for, and in front of the camera. The effect of this is that the viewer feels witness to events that occur, and a sense of the present is evident in this. The material processes of filmmaking gives way to the material reality of the actions being performed in front of the camera, meaning that we are aware of the events in a very real sense: 'Cinema is by no means an exhibition. It's a matter of experience.'[508]

Causality

The causality of the work *Drift* is conveyed according to its use of a seascape as image. The title of the work also informs the viewer of its causality. Considering the artists intentions for the work it is clear he has been able to demonstrate these within the work itself, which is in opposition to Turner's work that fails to fully realise its makers' intentions or to reveal its causality. It does however give a sense of chaos a voice, and as argued by Frank there is a need to honour chaos stories, as chaos 'must be accepted before new lives can be built and new stories told.'[509] The title of the work adds to the confusion as it suggests a political motive and intention for the work that is never expiated. It is interesting to consider Kotting's work as a multi-media piece as with the inclusion of the book, the causality of the piece becomes clear. The filmwork itself, due to its presentation, similarly conveys a sense of its causality: the use of multiple play back monitors supports the many inflations and deflations of the dead dad and the stops made along the journey. Kotting's work has the function of informing its audience, without the confusion of chaos, that the work of mourning can be undertaken efficaciously, albeit in a unique ritualistic form. This quality of the work is important as it exemplifies a methodological approach that has value to this enquiry, however it is a variant constituent of the phenomenon under consideration and therefore it can be considered as containing a textural meaning with an underlying structure that requires further consideration.

Relation to Self and Others

The way in which the viewer relates to *Drift* is through the conveying of a psychological and embodied experience that they either identify with, or understand in relation to the experience of another. It has a clear sense of itself and there is no confusion regarding how it might be received, even as the viewer is able to make their

[508] Antelo, op. cit., 660.
[509] Frank, op. cit.,110.

own interpretations of the work. Within *Perestroika* the self has been submerged into a narrative conceit that is nearly impossible to penetrate. The viewer can share in the gaze of the maker, but cannot begin to make sense of how the experiences being relayed to them on the screen relate to their own experiences. By deliberately obscuring her subjective experience of loss, Turner has disabled the viewer from being able to relate to the work as mourning, instead it is merely a view from a moving train that is frequently beautiful, yet meaningless, showing merely the surface of the transitory experience of travelling across Russia, and no transformation or resolution. In contrast, Kotting facilitates the viewers' relationship with himself, as performer undertaking the work of mourning, and with his larger than life dead dad. Through reading the letters in the book, and the visual encounter with the artist's body and the inflatable form of his father on the screen, we feel as if we actually know Kotting and his father. In this way, we are potentially able to process our own losses through an engagement with the artwork as we can relate to both Kotting and our own lived experience of loss. There is a sense of transformation evident in the work as Kotting processes his grief and is himself transformed through this process. This is another variant feature of the phenomena under consideration: it stands out as a significant feature that has value within this research project.