

THIS IS NOT US:
Performance, Relationships and Shame in
Documentary Filmmaking

Daisy Asquith

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Summary

This thesis investigates performance, identity, representation and shame in documentary filmmaking. Identities that are performed and mediated through a relationship between filmmaker and participant are examined with detailed reference to two decades of my own practice. A reflexive, feminist approach engages my own films - and the relationships that produced them - in analysis of the ethical potholes and emotional challenges in representing others on TV. The trigger for this research was the furiously angry reaction of the One Direction fandom to my representation of them in *Crazy About One Direction* (Channel 4, 2013). This offered an opportunity to investigate the potential for shame in documentary; a loud and clear case study of filmed participants using social media to contest their image on screen. In the space between documentary confession and the reception of a story by the audience, a dangerous moment comes, in which shame can be received, perceived, projected, internalised or imagined. The point of this research is to offer to existing documentary theory a practitioner's understanding of the processes which produce shame and to establish for documentary filmmakers some practical ways to resist and prepare against the rupture in identity that representation can cause those they film. Engaging both theory and practice in pursuit of the same research questions, I make a self-reflexive investigation into the ethics, affect and impact of representing others, employing the mediums and methods of fans to answer their complaints.

All the films, artwork, documentation of the installation, sources, written work, appendices and past documentaries referred to in this thesis can be best experienced online at <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com>, the website hosting this PhD, but are also provided on the accompanying USB drive.

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Introduction

On 13th August 2013 a disturbing hashtag began to trend worldwide on Twitter. #RIPLarryShippers appeared to be reporting and mourning the tragic deaths of 42 *Larry shippers*—the One Direction fans that celebrate, fantasise, and sometimes believe in the idea that Harry Styles and his bandmate Louis Tomlinson are in a secret gay relationship. Thousands of fans on Twitter were claiming that the *shippers* had killed themselves as a direct result of the inclusion of their homoerotic *Larry* fan art¹ in a documentary I had made for Channel 4, *Crazy About One Direction*. Although the program was only officially available on British television, the tech-savvy fandom had copied and shared it globally overnight with astonishing speed. The fandom were furious that I had included *Larry* in my representation of them, and sent hundreds of death and bomb threats to my Twitter account.

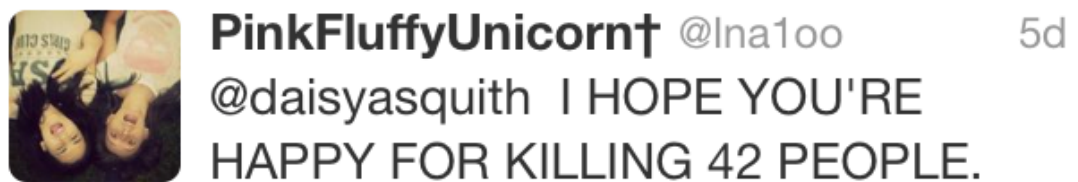


fig.1 example of angry tweet

#RIPLarryShippers trended worldwide for 48 hours. The fear that I felt, particularly before it became clear that the suicides were a hoax, has inspired this PhD in Creative and Critical Practice. Why were the One Direction fans so angry and upset with me? I genuinely admired them and enjoyed their enthusiasm, savviness and humour. What was it about the way that I represented them that caused this tsunami of shame and somehow ruptured their collective identity? This PhD represents my investigation of that question, engaging with the response from fans, as well as a number of other people I have filmed in the past, to try and analyse the way that performance,

¹ for an example see <http://rockitrocket.tumblr.com/tagged/larryfanart>

identity, representation and reception interact, sometimes producing shame. Identities that are performed and mediated through a relationship between filmmaker and participant are examined with detailed reference to two decades of my own practice. A reflexive, feminist approach engages my own films - and the relationships that produced them - in analysis of the ethical potholes and emotional challenges in representing others on TV. In the space between documentary confession and the reception of a story by the audience, a dangerous moment comes, in which shame can be received, perceived, projected, internalised or imagined. The point of this research is to offer to existing documentary theory a practitioner's understanding of the processes which produce shame and to establish for documentary filmmakers some practical ways to resist and prepare against the rupture in identity that representation can cause those they film.

I define performance as the way a person presents themselves to the documentary camera. This is related partly to the person they wish to be, partly to the person they are, and partly to the person they think others expect to see. So a documentary performance is made up of a complex mix of identities and projections. The representation of that performance adds another layer of complexity, engaging the subjective perspective of the filmmaker, as well as the influence of their funders who are likewise influenced by the expectations of their perceived audience. Stuart Hall shows us that "meaning is a slippery customer... (and) does not survive representation intact."² In the slippage of meaning and representation there is a strong risk of shame being felt or imposed. Shame is not to be confused or conflated with 'guilt' as it is in many languages. Shame always happens in the presence and awareness of others.³ It is only possible when a person asks "What do they think of me?" It is a self-conscious emotion that shifts with the movement of public opinion.

² Hall *Representation: Cultural Practice and Signifying Practices* 2013: 9

³ see Stearns *A Brief History of Shame* 2017

Thus, television documentary is a perfect storm in which shame can occur. The filmed person risks sharing their intimate life with a characteristically judgemental public audience, in the case of my documentary work, on the BBC and Channel 4 between 1998 and 2018. The trigger for this research was the One Direction fandom's furious response to my representation of them, but the potential for shame has been a recurring theme in my 20 years in documentary, and I experienced it myself when I made a film about my own mother's secret adoption from rural Catholic Ireland.⁴ Certain subjects have more potential for shame projection than others, depending on the society the documentary representation is broadcast. In Ireland, adoption, abortion and homosexuality are key areas for prejudice and shame. In the UK currently, being on benefits, having plastic surgery, being obese are the most shamed.⁵ One Directions fans are widely derided and characterised as stupid and hysterical, in a patronising, misogynist and generalised way. This PhD will look at the way audiences help create the meanings made by documentary on television.

In Chapter One, *This is Not Us*, I conduct a reflexive post-mortem on the fandom crisis of my own causing. While my extensive research at the time of broadcast quickly established that the *Larry shipper suicides* were in fact just a rumour, the fans reasons for starting the rumour are important. I have happily extended my immersion in the creative, subversive and globally networked fandom of One Direction to uncover the queer erotic meanings in their *Larry* fan art and investigate the subcultural codes that dictate who can enjoy it and share it. I look at fan performances, collective identity, the relationships between fans and myself as filmmaker and how shame is seeded and reinforced. It is important to look at the wider media context in which my documentary was made. The hierarchies, taste policing and internalised shame

⁴ see *After the Dance* (re-titled *My Mother the Secret Baby* by the BBC), BBC4, 2015

⁵ see Stearns *A Brief History of Shame* 2017 for more detail

within the fandom⁶ collide awkwardly with the projected shame and derision that is applied from outside. I will argue that in moving *Larry* from Tumblr to television my film may have decontextualised it, but the fears and fury of fans result from their understanding of the total unacceptability of teenage female desire and to some extent the *female gaze*⁷ in patriarchal society. Analysis of the fan response to *Crazy About One Direction* must be situated and understood within this climate of shame.



fig.2 example of Larry fan art

In Chapter Two I investigate further the concept of performance in documentary, comparing the public and private personas of the people I have filmed. I focus on two of the subjects of my past documentaries: Holocaust survivors and gay fathers. I look at the way stories change in our memories and interact with what our audiences need to hear. Does the truth, or the 'true self', become irrelevant when the purpose is to warn the public of the extreme cruelty possible in human behaviour for example? Or to attempt to alter public opinion on the rights of homosexuals to have families? How do audiences impact upon the stories they receive by privileging and

⁶ see Larsen & Zubernis 2012

⁷ see Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". Screen. 16. and its now popular flip side

welcoming the heroic, cathartic and heartwarming versions of history over the disturbing, meaningless or *shameful*? And how willing are documentary participants to alter their performances in light of audience expectations?

In Chapter Three I look at the way longitudinal documentary interacts and impacts upon the identity of the filmed participant by investigating the long term relationships I have had with documentary participants. Kimberley, who I first met when she was only 14, has allowed me to film her life over a period of 20 years and the resulting films have become a part of who she is and how she sees herself, an influential factor in her ever-evolving sense of identity. Josephine allowed me to start filming her 13 years ago when she and her children were newly arrived refugees to the UK from Zimbabwe. I filmed their experiences of moving to Britain for five consecutive years for the Channel 4 series *My New Home*, and Josephine and I later made a film about comparative poverty together for the BBC's *Why Poverty?* season. Longitudinal documentary projects have a particular set of ethical considerations and challenges and the relationship required is ever-shifting and flexible but must also be robust. I look closely at these relationships and at the way filming alters what is filmed, not only in the moment, but over long periods of time.

In Chapter Four I engage with the way people choose to represent themselves in the 21st century, on Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook and Youtube. Many of the filmed participants of my past documentaries now choose to self-film and publish their lives to audiences of varying sizes. I unpick the differences between the selves they choose to share with the world and the selves they shared with my camera. I look at the Facebook Live videos of Kimberley (*This is Me* 2000) and Josephine (*My New Home* 2011) and the way that these unmediated versions of the self are performed. The self-

representation of One Direction fans on Youtube, both before *Crazy About One Direction*, and in response to it, and their collective use of voice on Twitter can then be compared to these examples and analysed in the context of the current mass popularity of self-documenting.

Chapter Five looks at the process and results of my own reflexive and creative practice research. Engaging with the Youtube response of One Direction fans, transcribing, analysing, sharing, editing and re-sharing them results in a rich understanding of both their feelings about my documentary and their sense of collective identity. It also uncovers a complex power struggle over that identity, between the fans, the documentary maker and the audience. Juxtaposing the videos in an installation, as well as online space, with interviews with other participants of my documentaries, Kimberley (*This is Me* 2000), Marshal and Josephine (*My New Home* 2011), my own relatives Johnny and Mary (*After the Dance* 2015), Tommy Tickle (*Clowns* 2008) and Vegas, one of the original fans filmed for *Crazy About One Direction*, creates an analysis of the relationship between filmer and filmed, the sense of performance that participants have and the way being filmed has impacted upon their identities.

A note on the use of terms

The titles of my chapters, and subtitles, reflect the privileging of the *relationship* in my creative practice. The "Us", "Me", "We", "You", "I", "Them" and "They" are recurring terms and the spaces in-between them feature heavily as the overarching theme of this research. *This is Not Us* can refer to the collision between the way we see ourselves and the way *they* see *us*, as well as challenging the power structures of *them and us*, that risk a damaging *othering* of filmed participants in documentary. The title of

chapter three, *This is Me*, was also the title of one of the first documentaries I made in 1999-2000. It was inspired by the words of the film's protagonist Kimberley, for whom "this is me..." followed by an impression of what she had said to someone else previously, was a much-used figure of her daily speech. The use of these three words allowed her to own the storytelling; rather than just being recorded by me, she was representing herself. I have taken this idea and applied it to all my chapter headings, using them to highlight and think about the ways in which filmed participants perform the self. *The real me* as opposed to the *me that others see*, the *me then* as opposed to the *me now*, the *me I am* as opposed to the *me I want to be*.

The idea of a "*real me*" is popular in the 21st century, as audiences have found enjoyment in deciphering the "realness" from the "fakeness" on reality TV. An acceptance that performances of the self are controlled by the protagonist, even in documentary and that they may be edited fairly or unfairly by the producers has become part of the experience of watching. The meaning of the concept of reality is not challenged by the emphasis on performed identities in this thesis. Performances of the self are rather included, so that fantasies and ideal selves are treated as an important part of reality. Desire and projections of desire are worthy of representation as much as the physically visible and audible layers of our realities. Fantasies, dreams and imagination can perhaps be seen as authentic as emotion and memory, as all are created by the human brain, and these processes are very much a part of the reality that documentary aims to represent. For the purposes of this thesis the word reality is used in different contexts, to refer to both reality television and the individual subjective sense of what *feels real*. Performance should be taken as part of reality too, in that the documentary camera records *a version of the real self* performed by the filmed person.

Taking as my main title the very words of the One Direction fans themselves, used powerfully to oppose my representation of them is purposefully designed to signify a relinquishing of a little of that power. The fact that they created this hashtag #ThisIsNotUs specifically to refer to One Direction's own documentary, titled *1D3D: This is Us*⁸, is neatly symbolic. Morgan Spurlock would have been in search of a title that promised the very intimacy that neither he nor the fans could ever have with the band. Whether the fans appreciated the irony of the comparison between a scripted and heavily mediated performance of five slickly constructed pop star personas, who trade on *being themselves*, and the far more courageous, honest and "real" performances of fan love that they were protesting against, doesn't really matter. I have used their words to trigger an investigation into what performance, relationships and shame in documentary are made of, and how they impact upon each other.

This thesis can be found online, alongside many of the sources I have collected, curated and represented, as well as the creative practical work and documentation of the gallery installation, at <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com> and it is best experienced as a whole in that space.

⁸ Morgan Spurlock's feature documentary 2013

Methodology & Literature Review

Research as creative and critical practice is still being theorised by practitioner-theorists and my understanding of the modes and methods it encompasses and allows has grown with each year of this PhD. This thesis engages three forms of research, which do not exist separately but overlap and interact:

- 1. Theoretical research into the ethics, aesthetics, tropes and relationships in documentary filmmaking**
- 2. Reflexive textual research that interrogates the researcher's own practice**
- 3. Creative practice research which both makes, and interrogates the making of, documentary film**

Renov has called documentary a “discourse of jouissance”⁹, rather than sobriety, he sees playfulness, fun, excitement, joy, in the experience of making a documentary, both for filmer and filmed. Comolli describes the process of filming as “a precious and fragile gift for all involved: the filmmakers end up with a film, but the filmed ones are also gifted because the process of filming involves a break, the ordinary becomes extraordinary.”¹⁰ Piotrowski makes use of a little-known essay by Comilli, in which he describes the trust between filmer and filmed: “A ‘two of us’ is created, an ensemble that’s not stated as such. If we come to use the word ‘contract’, it is understood as a ‘moral contract’ that should and does remain implicit, tacit, unspoken ... You can, if you like call it ‘confidence’, but I prefer to locate it under the aegis of desire. Desire of

⁹ Renov 2004:23

¹⁰ Comollie in Piotrowska 2014:71

one for the other, desire of the other in each.”¹¹ It is possible that the damage done to those filmed is done when filming stops, when the attention is withdrawn (if it is withdrawn) and life returns to banal ordinariness. Certainly this is a problem when filming continues for up to a year in the filmed persons’ life. Rosenthal says the single most important question is “how the filmmaker should *treat people* in films so as to avoid exploiting them and causing them unnecessary suffering.”¹² Positive documentary experiences occur when the filmed person is treated as a collaborator rather than a resource, and fully informed of the intentions of the filmmaker and the ambitions of the film. In television, the need for what is rather disturbingly called “aftercare” is acknowledged, but in more than 20 documentaries I made for British television, no-one ever funded me to do it. Any meaningful responsibility assumed by documentary filmmakers is overwhelmingly a personal undertaking.

My filming methodology has barely changed in twenty years practice and maybe that is because it was instinctive to start with. I began making documentaries without realising it, as a teenager with a second hand camcorder bought from the Friday Ad. I filmed my family first. Their behaviours, languages, jokes, arguments and dysfunctions were all recorded, and I had a sense that it mattered. I recognise now that it also gave me power in a powerless situation; a chance to be heard, even if just by the camera. I realised quickly that I would be able to film more interesting and honest moments if I had the collaboration of the person I was filming. That intimacy and trust became the foundation of the films I made. The relationship was always way more important than the exposure, focus, sound quality, or steadiness of the camera. I used the smallest semi-professional cameras I could find. I wanted the camera to fit in my handbag; and to fit into my relationship with the person I was

¹¹ Comolli, Jean-Louis 1999:45

¹² Rosenthal 1988:245

filming, rather than the other way round. The visual beauty of the film was desirable, but it was worthless without the emotional depth of an intimate relationship with the filmed person.

In the practice research for this PhD I have tried to use the same techniques to get to the heart of these relationships, what they mean when filming, what they are based on and how they change over time. I have tried to unpick what being in a documentary does to a person's identity and why for some documentary participants this a deeply therapeutic and positive experience, while for others it is disturbing and unsettling. I have made the filmmaking and the relationship the subject rather than using it as a means to another story. I have also used *found footage*, limiting my control, to investigate my own motives in mediation. Editing and charting this footage has been challenging and revealing. The slightest cut carries with it meaning, and even the curation of footage involves subjective and partial decisions. Interestingly, it also feels unethical at times, as the footage was not meant for me, or directed at me. Robinson unpicks this problem in her work about subcultures - "as historians we are unavoidably working with sources that were never meant for us."¹³ Those sources that were aimed at historicisation would of course be unreliable sources anyway.

I try in the written element of this thesis to unpick the ethics and aesthetics of my past practice; to both trigger and respond to current practice; to engage with the process of research; and to assess the impact on both audience and documentary participant. I have engaged in interdisciplinary fashion with queer and feminist theory, documentary and representational theory, fan studies theory and psychology, social media theory and audience theory for this project. I rely heavily on

¹³ Robinson, Lucy, reflexive history lecture, University of Sussex 2017

Judith Butler's theories of *performativity* - to think about the way identities are performed in relation to the filmmaker and their camera; Stuart Hall's construction of identity as a work in progress - and in particular how identities respond to representations by an *other*¹⁴; Larsen and Zubernis on *shame* - the way shame is imposed from outside, but then internalised and self-policed¹⁵, with particular reference to fandoms; Stella Bruzzi on *performances of the self* - how negotiations and power flow between filmer and filmee give rise to a particular version of the self being offered¹⁶; and Erica Rand on *queering popular culture* - the phenomenon of subverting, refashioning and repurposing original products for the heightened pleasure of the consumer¹⁷.

The gender paradigm is dominant in this thesis - it focuses on the relationships of teenage girls to each other, to the fan-object and to the female filmmaker. For reasons of duty of care in television, a male filmmaker would not be allowed to film alone with teenage girls in their bedrooms, and there are very few male fans of One Direction, so the situation is resoundingly a female one in many ways. The audience reaction is also best analysed with reference to feminist studies on performative gender and the discomfort of men around teenage female sexuality. However the thesis could legitimately have focussed equally or solely on class - the class of the fandom in question, as well as the class background of the documentary filmmaker and the overwhelming dominance of the middle classes, in particular Oxbridge-educated, in television. The resulting structures which allow certain stories to be told in certain ways by certain people have been resistant to intermittent attempts to diversify voices on television. The BBC journalist Fahana Dawood brought a telling

¹⁴ Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practice* 2013

¹⁵ Larsen & Zubernis, Lynn. *Fandom at the Crossroads* 2012

¹⁶ Bruzzi, Stella. *New Documentary*, 2006

¹⁷ Rand, Erica. *Barbie's Queer Accessories*, 1995

and resonant anecdote to a debate at Goldsmiths in December 2018 - on being turned down for promotion she was told she simply wasn't seen as "a safe pair of hands". This is a familiar phrase and perfectly avoids the discomfort of describing what "a safe pair of hands" actually constitutes. In this insipid, risk-averse culture, the power remains in the hands of the white and privileged at the BBC and ever has. The commissioning editor that ordered *Crazy About One Direction* was a relatively young and progressive member of the Channel 4 factual team and took a risk on something she thought would be both an opportunity for girl power and humour. It is important to note that her immediate boss put us all under pressure to provide extreme and outrageous behaviour and that when the programmes she commissioned didn't rate well her contract wasn't renewed. Class and gender intersect in this story, as always, and although this thesis focusses on gender, the fact that I have been persistently asked to make documentaries about working class people is ever-present.

I engage with the methodology of other documentary filmmakers such as Jerry Rothwell¹⁸, Errol Morris¹⁹, Werner Herzog²⁰, Sarah Polley²¹, Kim Longinotto²², Agnieszka Piotrowska²³, Cahal McLaughlin²⁴ and Joshua Oppenheimer²⁵: details on their practice and reflexive theory to follow. A theoretical foundation is the first layer in any documentary work I have made since beginning a Cultural History MA at Brighton university in evening classes 8 years ago. Pulling apart the issues, the contradictions and the affect theoretically before attempting to film a story helps me

¹⁸ www.jerryrothwell.com

¹⁹ <http://errolmorris.com/>

²⁰ <https://www.wernerherzog.com/>

²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/jun/23/sarah-polley-stories-we-tell-interview>

²² <http://guru.bafta.org/kim-longinotto-interview>

²³ Piotrowska, Agnieszka, *Psychoanalysis and Documentary Film*, 2013

²⁴ McLaughlin, Cahal, *Truth or Dare* 2007 (updated 2013)

²⁵ <https://westminsterresearch.westminster.ac.uk/researcher/88955>

to know what the subject's important values and meanings are, creating a more productive and sensitive filming experience. I could not have made *After the Holocaust* (2012) without reading Saul Friedlander on the limits of representation²⁶ and Anne Karpf on the impact of trauma on the generation that follows²⁷; I could not have made *Crazy About One Direction* (2013) without reading Matt Hills on the "exoticisation" of fandom²⁸ and Katherine Larsen on the way female fans use fandom to build networked families²⁹; I could not have made *Queerama* (2017) without understanding the work of Andrea Weiss on decoding queer representations³⁰, Andy Medhurst on subtextual representations of queerness in the early 20th c.³¹, Richard Dyer on later 20th c. queer cultures³² or Matt Cook on historicizing queer lives³³. In turn the practice - filming or editing of material - counter-challenges the theory.

One of the most effective relationships between the theory and practice is the way doing both enforces a certain subjectivity. What is our relationship to the things we love when we study them? What happens when we study the things that directly affect our own lives? If a history is our own, or that of our ancestors, does our historiography lose or gain rigour? If a theory describes our own class, race, sexuality, gender, religion, workplace or family can we still be objective and impartial theorists? Is it possible to make ethnographies about our own communities with as clear eyed

²⁶ Friedlander, Saul *Probing the Limits of Representation*, 1992

²⁷ Karpf, Anne. *The War After*. Faber & Faber, 2009

²⁸ Hills, Matt. *Michael Jackson Fans on Trial?* 2007

²⁹ Larsen, Katherine. *Fangasm: Supernatural Fangirls*. 2013

³⁰ Weiss, Andrea, *Film: A Bit of Scarlet, 1996*, <https://andreaaweiss.net/>

³¹ Medhurst, Andy, *In Search of Nebulous Nancies: Looking for Queers in Pre-Gay British Film*, British Queer Cinema ed. Griffiths, Robin, 2006

³² Dyer, Richard, *Now You See It*, Routledge 2002

³³ Cook, Matt, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London*. Palgrave, 2014

an approach as when we talk about others? The enforcement of ideas over emotions, facts over feelings is gendered. Feminist writing encourages the combination of robust theory with genuine feelings. Philosophy has established the value of situated knowledge over rationality. Anthropology and Sociology have challenged the imperial gaze of traditional ethnography. New models embrace local knowledge and acknowledge the complex relationships between researcher and subject. In documentary theory our subjectivities, viewpoints and affects are increasingly embraced as bringing another layer of truth to a film, and doing away with the artifice of “fly on the wall” or the pretence of objectivity. New cultural studies embraces the intimacy, immediacy and proximity afforded by a researcher’s positionality and subjectivity. Werner Herzog has said the best documentaries “are when the filmmaker is clear about who they are in the story.”³⁴ A researcher close to their subject, embedded in it even, is beginning to be recognised as an asset rather than a liability.

In the documentary film *Derrida*, the philosopher notes at one point that the interviewer asks him a question, followed by an immediate technical interruption as the cameraman wants to adjust the reflector. Derrida complains that he can’t concentrate and can’t answer a question if his attention is continually drawn to the process, saying “the reflector interrupts the reflection”.³⁵ But the scene tells us much about him, perhaps more than his answer to the original question could have. In Nick Broomfield’s film *The Leader, the Driver and the Driver’s Wife*³⁶, a similar effect is achieved when Broomfield irritates Eugene Terre Blanche by arriving late to do an interview. Broomfield has often claimed he was late on purpose, as the resulting tantrum was so revealing about the nature of the South African tyrant. Sometimes,

³⁴ Herzog in Vice interview 2013

³⁵ Derrida in *Derrida*, Ziering Kofman 2002

³⁶ Broomfield *The Leader...* 1991

drawing attention to the process can be more revealing than filming what supposedly would have happened had the camera not been present, or filming the performances that are so meticulously controlled by participants to documentary.

In the new introduction to the cultural studies anthology *Hop on Pop*, Henry Jenkins identifies three areas in which embedded and invested researchers in pop culture and fandom can add value³⁷. These are important elements of research which so called insiders may better understand and communicate. The first is intensification - the exaggeration of everyday emotions which provoke strong feelings or a release from normal perception. This can also be related to spirituality, trauma or other experiences which are triggered by certain knowledge or intense memories. The second is identification - strong attachments to fictional characters or celebrities, which I argue is also applicable to the attachments we feel to communities, our families, our ethnicities or sexualities. The third element is Intimacy - the embedding of popular culture into the fabric of our daily lives, into the ways we think about ourselves and the world around us. Intimacy is perhaps the most important element. Intimate documentary filmmakers and researchers have access to the best information, insights, experiences of their participants.

The rational, political, objective and emotional distance that has been seen to exempt researchers, filmmakers and journalists from accusations of partiality or unprofessional attachments has made for a dry and even untrustworthy voice, unjustly authoritative and inauthentic. Involvement, participation, passion, and engagement are not allowed. Fantasy and imagination are seen as irrelevant. So, Jenkins asks, how do we write/speak as insiders rather than outsiders and still be respected? Otherwise...how can queer people talk about queerness? Poor people

³⁷ Jenkins *Hop on Pop* 2003

talk about poverty? Black people talk about race? Existence, affect and experience can be the starting point for critical research, a source of knowledge and motivation. Intimacy, intensification and engagement, those core skills of fans, should perhaps be remodelled as expertise.

Documentary filmmakers have long grappled with the impact of subjectivity on truth. For some there is no such thing as truth, certainly not in film. Errol Morris responded to Bruno Forestier's claim that "cinema is truth 24 times a second" with "cinema is lies 24 times a second."³⁸ For Morris in 1989: "truth isn't guaranteed by style or expression. It isn't guaranteed by anything."³⁹ He has developed this idea in the following years, further configuring truth as a complex criss-cross of subjectivities. In 2018 Morris said "If your goal is to talk to another human being and hear the truth, you're going to be disappointed. Truth isn't handed to you, it is pursued. And sometimes falsehood wins. That's the ugly truth."⁴⁰ The "endless choices" that Barrow describes the filmmaker making, impact on every frame of the film, adjusting and shifting what is real, until it is unrecognisable. But perhaps that doesn't matter. Stella Bruzzi argues "a documentary will never be reality, nor will it erase or invalidate that reality by being representational."⁴¹ In my own work subjectivity has been ever present. My documentaries are records of the relationship that was developing between myself and the person I was filming.

Desmond Bell has very clearly described practice research as *artistic research*.⁴² As a practitioner and researcher I try to combine theory with practice, allowing one to

³⁸ Forestier in Wright 2010:92

³⁹ Morris in Cineaste 17, 1989:17

⁴⁰ Morris, Errol, *The Ugly Truth about Truth*, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-XIKHTRfn4>

⁴¹ Bruzzi *New Documentary* 2006:6

⁴² Bell, Desmond *Screen Production Research* 2018

challenge, enrich and deepen the meanings of the other. I try to see theory and filmmaking as two methods of research after the same set of insights, rather than as two different research areas. Making documentaries requires a robust and rigorous research period, as there are stringent fact checks in television, and each film is examined carefully by lawyers before it can be broadcast. They look for fakery, false claims, inconsistencies, slander and chronological aberrations. They also look for inappropriate suggestions, lazy conclusions, the use of misleading words or pictures, holes and gaps in the story. The commissioning editor of each film made for television will demand that the story is fully coherent, contains no dog-legs, *feels* authentic and *appears* to be true. They will also demand *entertainment*, which is possibly the only way the process differentiates from academic peer review.

Linear narrative documentary filmmaking, particularly when it engages with subjectivity and reflexivity, is a very rewarding form of research, but opening my mind to other forms of practice research has been very fruitful. Working with found footage, curating both self-shot and archive video online, juxtaposing videos in a physical space and thinking about audience interactivity have all made this work more rigorous and interesting.

My creative practice research exists in five modes:

1. **A grid film** made from found footage created by One Direction fans on Youtube - *This is Not Us*, 20 mins. <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/films/#/this-is-not-us-film/>
2. **A linear film** made from new filmed interviews with eight past participants of my television documentaries - *This is the Real Me*, 22 mins. <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/films/#/20-min-film/>

3. **A gallery installation**, including the reconstructed bedroom of a One Direction fan, the two films above and looped digital media. First exhibited at the Attenborough Centre for Creative Arts at the University of Sussex, April 2018.
<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/installation/>
4. **An online space** that curates the sources from Youtube, Twitter and my own practice - <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com>
5. **This written thesis**

Chapter 1

This is Not Us

Contested Representation in the One Direction Fandom

When Channel 4 asked me to make a documentary about One Direction fans I was delighted. Fandom has fascinated me since the late 80s when I first tippexed *Siouxsie and the Banshees* on the back of my leather jacket. Perhaps my decision to wear that Siouxsie uniform (despite a secretive musical preference for pop), indicated a desire for subcultural capital: a “cultishness” that pop music didn’t offer me⁴³. So it seems I was born to be a *Larry shipper*—a rare deviant space of queer rebellion within a fandom that couldn’t be more mainstream in its musical taste. Professionally, as a documentary maker, I saw a gap that needed filling between what I knew of fandom and the way it has been represented ever since screaming Beatles fans were derided by the media in the 1960s. This simplification of young women’s emotional and cerebral response to an artist or production takes the threat out of the phenomenon, infantilising them and belittling their emotional experience and overlooking their impressive skills - networking and coordinating large groups in common purpose, producing and distributing creative fan material and gathering intelligence on their chosen subject. Fandoms have always been “stereotyped and pathologised as cultural ‘others’—as obsessive, freakish, hysterical, infantile and regressive social subjects” writes Hills⁴⁴ marked by “danger, abnormality and stillness”⁴⁵ and thought to engage in “secret lives... without much purpose”⁴⁶. And of course there is the musical taste-policing, where “if girls like it, it must be shit”⁴⁷. This chapter deals with

⁴³ Hills 2002a

⁴⁴ Hills 2007: 463

⁴⁵ Jensen 1992 in Hellekson and Busse 2015

⁴⁶ Harris 1998: 11

⁴⁷ Robinson lecture, *History as Feminist Practice*, University of Sussex, March 2015

both the internalisation of shame by One Direction fans, as well as the way shame is projected onto them by their families, friends and both tabloid and social media.

Ruth Deller specifically unpicks the class and gender prejudice that One Direction fans are subject to: "Lots of different fans are seen as strange. Some of that has to do with class: different pursuits are seen as more culturally valuable than others. Some of it has to do with gender. There's a whole range of cultural prejudices. One thing our society seems to value is moderation. Fandom represents excess and is therefore seen as negative."⁴⁸ There is no doubt that *Crazy About One Direction* was commissioned in the wake of yet another fuss about the fandom's behaviour in the tabloids, and it is undeniable that television commissioners desire their audiences to be both compelled and appalled by the most extreme stories possible. In this chapter I will also engage with a recent full chapter critique of the documentary by the Star Trek fandom theorist William Proctor.⁴⁹ But it is also true that the commissioning editor on this occasion was a One Direction fan herself, and that she and I shared huge admiration for the fandom and an explicitly feminist mission to celebrate this unashamed display of teenage girls' desire, rather than the passive consumption model that persists. As Barbara Ehrenreich said of Beatles fans in the 1960s: "When they screamed they were also celebrating themselves, their freedom, their youth, their power. Screaming didn't drown out the performance: it was a performance."⁵⁰ The One Direction fandom and particularly Larry Shippers, seemed to have answered "that often asked feminist query, how can pop culture be subversively refunctioned for women's pleasure?"⁵¹ Television has the least self-selecting audience in the world - it is possible to bring a story you are proud of into the living room of someone who

⁴⁸ Deller quoted in Observer article by Dorian Lynskey, 29 September 2013

⁴⁹ Proctor in Booth, Paul & Bennett, Lucy, eds. *Seeing Fans*. Palgrave, 2017.

⁵⁰ Lynskey, Observer article, 29 September 2013

⁵¹ Rand *Barbie's Queer Accessories* 1995: 1

would never otherwise come across it, for which reason I will always love and defend it as a medium. The opportunity to celebrate fandom in public was irresistible.

Seeing Fans

If, as Hills says, fans and academics have an uneasy relationship⁵², fans and the media have a completely dysfunctional one. Perhaps being a documentary maker I don't suffer from the type of *imagined rationality* that an academic might project in fan representations. Instead I suffer from an imagined "media-type" *untrustworthiness*, or conversely an imagined *journalistic objectivity*, depending on your perspective. In fact my representation of fans was an entirely subjective one, as I will argue all documentaries are, and I had no dark motive other than to understand what drives the immersed and passionate fan. The reflexivity that Hills employs in his theoretical work acknowledges that his "theories are also stories"⁵³. Our gender, class, age, sexuality, politics, and sense of self are all players in the stories we tell. This chimes with much recent work in documentary theory on the impossibility of objectivity⁵⁴. Neither the reader nor the TV viewer benefit from the invisible or detached researcher. My practice was characterised by a personal, experiential, authored and immersive approach which aimed to speak with the *authentic* voice of a fan.

Authenticity and intimacy have been important themes for One Direction, endlessly batted back and forth between the band members, management and fans. The band's own use of video diaries during the X Factor competition was a defining moment for the fandom. When the band were first formed and moved into the X

⁵² Hills 2002a

⁵³ Hills 2002a: 11

⁵⁴ see Bruzzi 2000; Pearce 2007, Morris 2013

Factor house⁵⁵ a weekly video diary⁵⁶ was broadcast. The 5 boys, aged between 16 (Harry Styles) and 18 (Louis Tomlinson) took to this routine like ducks to water. They sat huddled together on the stairs, chatting and teasing each other like the ordinary teenage boys that they were, still, at that time. They thanked individual girls that they had waited to meet them outside the studio. They answered individual questions from girls on Twitter. They were shambolic, sometimes confused, often silly. It was partly scripted, but even to an authenticity-sensitive teenage audience it was very clear that a large part of the chatting was spontaneous. The boys also appeared to grow up a little each week. Harry and Louis appeared very close. They cuddled, stroked each other's hair and faces, even pretended to lick each other. This combination of ordinariness and vulnerability with cuteness and new found fame was completely addictive and exhilarating to the teenage girls watching. For the first time ever they were watching five normal boys that they could imagine going to their school (albeit with better haircuts than most of the teenage boys they knew), turning into pop stars in front of their eyes. And the audience had a hand in their transformation. The group of girls at the studios grew massively each week, until by week 4 the boys could no longer come out to meet them as it was considered too dangerous. They apologised for this in their video diary, assuring fans that they loved the attention, and that they noticed the familiar faces. Their fandom on Twitter grew at speed. The fans looked up to other fans that by meeting the boys, or being tweeted by them, were rising up the fandom hierarchy. A community was formed on Twitter. This passionate fandom was noticed by Simon Cowell who then decided to break his own rules and sign the band even though they only came third in the competition. The fans had a strong and justified sense of having themselves lifted the band to success.

⁵⁵ a kind of holding pen where they are tortured until they sign lifetime contracts

⁵⁶ X Factor 2010 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGrcGnnaHBw>

The video diaries that were so popular were ripped and shared hundreds of thousands of times on Youtube and became the most admired element of the canon for many fans. When the One Direction machine was in full swing and they had a team of people to tweet for them if necessary, authenticity became more and more important in the fandom and the video diaries were held up as a nostalgic “true” space. At time of writing the One Direction Vevo Youtube channel still has 23 million subscribers.⁵⁷ The fans noticed and raged whenever a tweet was written by “management”. They analysed interviews with the boys for anything “scripted”. They were furious if they felt the boys were being dressed in too coherent a style, and fought for their right to be individuals. Thanks to Twitter One Direction’s management were well aware that the fans were craving the authenticity of the early video diaries and tried to deliver it in a controlled way. The band’s official documentary *1D:3D This Is Us* (2013) was a perfect example of constructed authenticity, in the way that much documentary that claims to be authentic is. Even the title promises the “real”. The documentary maker behind *Super Size Me* (2004), Morgan Spurlock, who had a reputation for intimate personal journalism, was reportedly paid £1m dollars to make this feature length advert for the band, with their X Factor mentor Simon Cowell as one of the producers. It grossed \$67.3m worldwide, but the reviews were less than favourable, with Miriam Bale in the *New York Times* writing: "With a group so evidently versed in the visuals of rock history, it's a shame that a filmmaker wasn't hired who would pay homage to classic pop films instead of offering a satisfactory paid promotional. In the end credits — Richard Lester-style scenes of the boys in costumes doing pranks — we see how this film might have been more successful: as an obvious fiction starring these appealing personalities rather than a tame and somewhat fake documentary."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most-subscribed_YouTube_channels

⁵⁸ Bale, Miriam "Meet the Boys: A Mutual Lovefest." *One Direction: This Is Us*, Documentary by Morgan Spurlock. The New York Times. (29 August 2013).

A request was made in early 2013 by the band on Youtube for fans to upload comments to be included in the final edit, but ultimately fans were only represented as Robinson's "amorphous mass of screaming bedwetters"⁵⁹, with a white coated psychologist explaining (or *mansplaining!*) what was happening in their brains. In scenes that were sold as "intimate" in *This is Us* the band



members were filmed in "off-duty" situations, such as lying on a boardwalk chatting, fishing rods in hand, which couldn't have been less authentic (by which I mean a faithful approximation of what happened rather than a genuinely unguarded moment) in reality (by which I mean part of the unperformed physical actuality of their daily lives). Their chats felt scripted and insincere, and failed to live up to the messy immediacy of fans' favourite moments from the early days. In fact the only spontaneous access fans had to the band after the Youtube video diaries of 2010, was in other fans' videos uploaded to Youtube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Keek, of

⁵⁹ Robinson, Lucy, blog *Now That's What I Call History* <https://proflrobinson.com/>

chance encounters with the band in the street. It was this passionate communal fan space that I set out to represent.

Filming Fans

When I arrived at the Manchester Arena in April 2013 there were around 500 teenage girl members of the One Direction fandom waiting outside. Sandra and Becky had been there since 8am and bounced over to my camera and me. They were singing and dancing in the street, not so much waiting for “the boys,” as partying, being together, belonging. Sandra and Becky were extremely keen to be part of the film—as were almost every one of the hundreds of fans I met. Of course having your identity represented on television is a powerful form of recognition and establishes belonging. The performance of the self that occurs when a camera is pointed at someone is a powerful way of working through identity. The camera seems to say *I see you and hear you and you exist and matter*⁶⁰. Two and a half decades after Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990), the social media generation is accustomed to performing their own identities online and constantly thinking through the way they represent themselves. Every selfie posted on Facebook, every invitation to “ask me anything” on Tumblr, every Instagram photo and tweet invites recognition or offers it to someone else, or both. If love is returned, then all the better, but if criticism, or “hate” is the result, then at least the initial poster has received attention, and has a chance to learn something more about who they are, who they might become, and what their impact and position might be in the world, or in other words, “instigate a transformation”⁶¹. In the case of *Crazy About One Direction* the “becoming” they may have wished to solicit was the elevation of self into uniqueness, from “just another fan” into a significant fan, so significant in fact that the band were bound to notice

⁶⁰ see Piotrowska, *Psychoanalysis and Ethics in Documentary Film* 2013

⁶¹ Butler 2004: 44

them, and to see oneself projected onto the future, immortalised and made special, making the ordinary extraordinary⁶². My job in this context was to make sure I found fans who were emotionally capable of managing this extraordinariness and prepared them psychologically for the impact of broadcast. Their parents were also engaged in this process.

Unsurprisingly there was some pressure from Channel 4 to include the most angry and *hysterical* fans, the *crazy* fans. I resisted this simplistic stereotype from the start, but I am also obliged to accept the commercial demands that ultimately fund my programs, and I also understand that the medium is designed to be entertaining. The pre - title sequence and trailers therefore privilege the most extreme moments in order to attract an audience, but as all makers of television documentaries understand, this does not obstruct the documentary itself being subtle, thoughtful, and even warm. Humour is also very important, and without it documentary is a dull proposition. Humour does not negate respect if handled with care and the joke should be owned or at least shared by the filmed participant to avoid a sneeriness which sometimes exists on Channel 4 at 9pm. However, when it came to the title it is significant that I was not allowed to keep my preferred choice: *I Heart One Direction* was changed by Channel 4 on the very last day of the edit to *Crazy About One Direction*. This news required me to speak personally to all the fans in the film and explain that it wasn't me calling them crazy, and it wasn't the intended message of the program. They took the news well, at that moment accepting more readily than I did that this was their *dramatic* reputation and therefore inevitably the selling point of the documentary.

⁶² see Piotrowska 2014: 268

The Michael Jackson fan documentary *Wacko About Jacko*⁶³ was another victim of Channel 4's trick of re-titling its programs at a late stage, with or without the approval of the filmmaker. The problem is, Hills writes, that *Wacko About Jacko* "undermines fans' moral narratives by linking them to emotivism"⁶⁴ but actually *Wacko About Jacko* appears to have been made with genuine affection and respect for the fans. The process of editorial selection, narration, use of slow motion and soundtrack are all mediation on the part of filmmaker Leveugle, but they are not utilised in such a way as to make fun of, or exoticise Jackson fans. The fans are not *wacko* at all, but likeable, passionate people who are willing to be led by fantasy rather than behaving in a self-consciously sensible fashion. It would be counter-productive to suggest that a focus on the affective or embodied response should be considered less important, valid, or interesting than a response driven by rationality or cognitive critique. Hills rightly argues that the film does nothing to *normalise* fandom⁶⁵, but many fans I met did not wish to be *normalised*, preferring that their extraordinary passion and creativity be celebrated. The words *Wacko* and *Crazy* are clearly what are considered necessary to draw an audience to a slot. *Wacko* can be seen as a judgment call offered to the audience. Unfortunately, as in the case of *Crazy About One Direction*, the title's impact has the potential to reach far beyond the program's attentive audience, and taken at face value, it can have a stigmatising effect.

Ethical documentary practice can be an elusive and imprecise target. There are clear ethical guidelines in television that take care of the audience with regard to the truth claims of a documentary (exemplified by the BBC's Safeguarding Trust course to be

⁶³ Leveugle 2005, film 47 mins, Channel 4

⁶⁴ Hills 2007

⁶⁵ Hills 2007: 468

taken by every producer after 2008)⁶⁶. But what about ethical practice with regard to the care of participants in television documentaries? Winston has claimed it is our relationships with the people we film that are the most important measure of ethical production.⁶⁷ Ethical - by which I mean emotionally intelligent, sensitive and responsible - documentary is made when the filmed person is treated as a collaborator rather than a resource, and fully informed of the intentions of the filmmaker and the ambitions of the film. Piotrowska has described how when filming finishes "the relationship is broken"⁶⁸ and sadly this is often the case. But if attention is not abruptly withdrawn at the end of filming but a meaningful relationship pursued throughout the edit, broadcast and beyond; if participants are shown the rough cut, genuinely consulted on its veracity (not necessarily on editorial decisions); and if they are held in equal regard by the filmmaker as the ratings-hungry executive. In these ideal circumstances a documentary can be a truly rewarding and satisfying experience for those filmed—the film about their life a rare and therapeutic reflection to be treasured. At the opposite extreme, if those filmed are treated as a commodity by a team of researchers as inexperienced as they are eager to please, lazily commodified as "contribs" (contributors), sweet-talked, flannelled, made to sign release forms within five seconds of the camera rolling, abandoned instantly the camera returns to its bag, ill-informed, misunderstood, then re-fashioned in the edit to fit whatever the broadcaster has been promised, being filmed can be a disastrously disturbing experience of powerlessness and misplaced trust. **The reality - in this instance I mean the actual experience - can fall anywhere between these extremes.**

⁶⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/safeguardingtrust/introduction/index.shtml>

⁶⁷ Winston 2000: 1

⁶⁸ Piotrowska *The Horror of a Doppelgänger in Documentary Film* 2013:305

If my filming of Directioners was to be ethical, it was necessary I try to make the film in the language of the fans so that they became active collaborators rather than defensive subjects. As Heinich writes: "in matters of admiration and celebration every request for justification produces a backlash"⁶⁹. By asking a fan to explain their fandom, a filmmaker (or academic) immediately invites defensiveness. I attempted to get around this by participating in fan activities alongside the fans I filmed and allowing their voices to overtake mine. I waited outside the back gates of arenas for hours, spent days on YouTube and Twitter following One Direction themed hashtags, even spent a night on a Dublin pavement with them in pursuit of concert tickets. I also included, with specific individual permission, their YouTube videos, filmed before and during my filming period, and not originally intended for my film. These captured a performance of fandom that was intended for other fans, but they translate well to an outsider audience. The "stalking" of Zayn and Niall in the corridors outside their hotel room is here represented by the fan as tongue-in-cheek comedy as well as evidence of the courage required to get close to the band, an important status booster within the fandom. In the filming period I allowed a space for fans to perform the identities they wanted. Bruzzi argues that all documentaries are "performative acts, inherently fluid and unstable and informed by issues of performance and performativity"⁷⁰. There are many subtle forces at play in their fan performance. It must be sufficiently true to the self that they inhabit, and sufficiently close to the self they wish to project. Documentary maker Errol Morris describes this territory as "a strange limbo land between fantasy and reality"⁷¹, and both realms should be welcomed when filming. The self projected must also be the self that they are comfortable offering in the presence of filmmaker and camera. The camera

⁶⁹ Hills 2002a: 65

⁷⁰ Bruzzi 2006: 154

⁷¹ Morris in Vice 2013

creates a space for feelings to be verbalised, enacted, and shared, and in a complex exchange “a documentary only comes into being as it is performed”⁷².

There is also an element of performing the behaviours that are expected by the rest of the fandom, and by the wider society. Derrida, in the reflexive documentary about him by the same name, comments “when one improvises in front of a camera one ventriloquizes.” He says he felt obliged while being filmed to “reproduce the stereotypical discourse”⁷³. I found that One Direction fans did this to a point, particularly before they felt confident enough to present a more subtle version of themselves. They were more complex in their performed identities when in the familiar safe space of their own bedrooms, whereas outside in the street, in large groups, they performed more stereotypical fan identities. It may be most accurate to say that *Crazy About One Direction* is a documentary about *what happens when you make a documentary about Directioners*. What is recorded is the space between the filmer and filmed, an ever-evolving negotiation resulting in a complex, compromised truth⁷⁴. Nash describes a “flow of power” that happens in an ethical documentary relationship; “a contested relationship in which each is acting with the goal of influencing the other”⁷⁵. And furthermore, by virtue of their subjectivity, any other filmmaker would have made a different film.

There is no doubt that my subjectivity was in play when making this film. It was *my* story about the One Direction fandom. Consequently it is not a definitive version of

⁷² Bruzzi 2006

⁷³ Ziering, Koffman and Dick *Derrida* 2002

⁷⁴ Bruzzi 2006: 9

⁷⁵ Nash 2010: 27

all fans everywhere. I do not make overt truth claims in my films, but hope instead that the reflexive and interactive aspects of what I do communicate an experiential integrity. As the filmmaker Chris Terrill says: “Our stock in trade has to be honesty; not necessarily truth, whatever truth is—truth is a construct”⁷⁶. Making a documentary involves “endless choices”⁷⁷ and *Crazy About One Direction* was no exception—the choices of who to film; where to film; what questions to ask; what cuts to make; what music to add; what meanings to convey; were all mine. In addition to the title, some choices were made by Channel 4, such as how long to allow me to make it (six weeks filming and seven weeks editing), how extreme the trailer should be (very), who should record the voice over (not me, it was decided eventually, but the comedian Julia Davis). These choices all result in signifying certain meanings⁷⁸ and render the notion of one truth an impossibility.

Shaming Fans

On broadcast of *Crazy About One Direction*, it was significantly not the fans I had filmed that objected to my representation of the fandom. By taking care of all the stages of research and production myself, I had been able to be consistent with my participants, keep my promises, and keep them informed and consulted during and after filming. Apart from being ethically sound, the sense of increased power this gives subjects during filming tends to make for a better, more intimate film, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will approve of the final cut. Relationships also affect the reception of a documentary because “the assumptions which the viewer makes about this relationship, on the basis of signals intended or unintended, will

⁷⁶ Terrill in Lee-Wright 2010: 103

⁷⁷ Barnouw in Bruzzi 2006: 6

⁷⁸ one fan complained on Twitter that the voiceover was recorded by someone who was “famous for playing a psychopath” - Julia Davis in the comedy show she wrote and starred in, *Nighty Night*.

inform his [sic] perception of the film”⁷⁹. My relationships with the fans I filmed were strong enough for them to have positive expectations of the film and understand its affectionate humorous tone. For reasons I will explore in this section, their confidence and appreciation was not shared by the majority of the fandom.

Within minutes of the broadcast of *Crazy About One Direction* on 15 August 2013 it was being ripped on Tumblr, viewed (in part at least) and criticised passionately by fans all around the world. One link I found the following day had over a quarter of a million views. There were 368,139 tweets during the hour of transmission, ten times more than the next most tweeted show - *Big Brother* - initiated that evening.⁸⁰

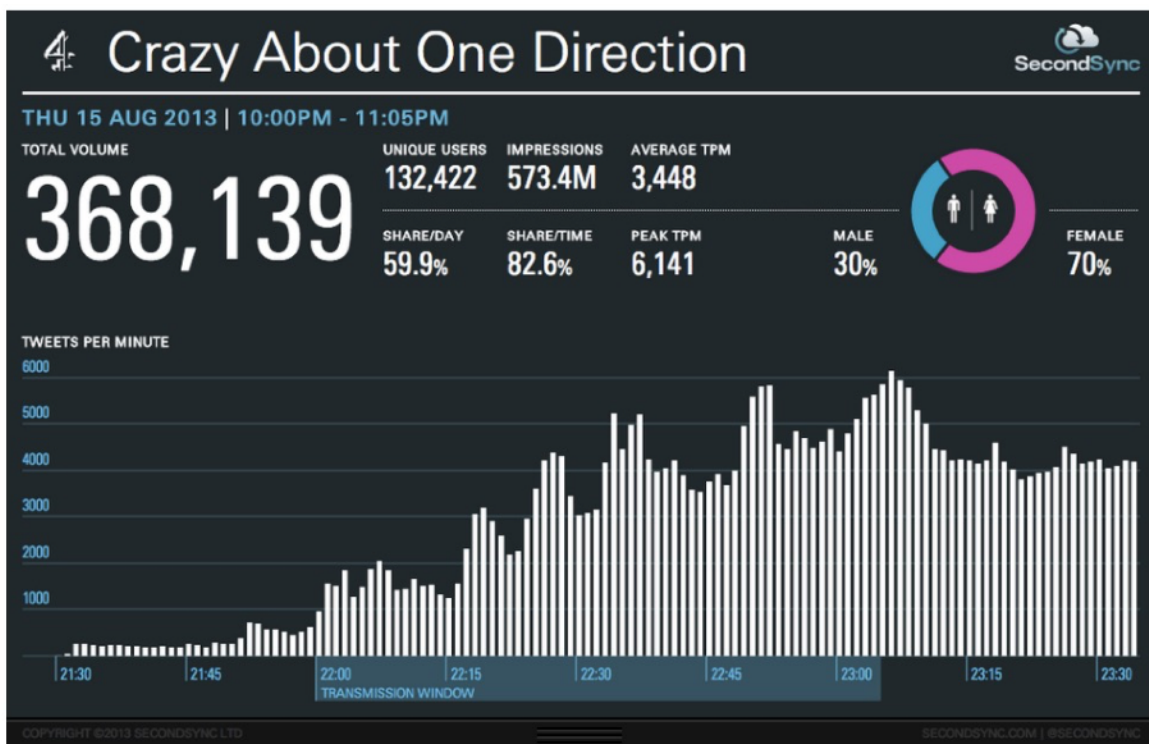


fig.4 Twitter response during broadcast, data visualisation by Second Sync

⁷⁹ Vaughan in Austin 2007:104

⁸⁰ according to Second Sync Big Brother got less than 30,000 tweets during transmission

Twitter was dominated by related hashtags for the next 48 hours, including *#RIPLarryShippers*, *#ThisIsNotUs*, *#1DWereNotLikeTheseGirlsOnTheDocumentary*, and *#BeliebersAreHereForDirectioners*, touchingly uniting the normally antagonistic Justin Bieber fandom in rare sympathy with the One Direction fandom.⁸¹ Twitter has been used by One Direction fans since the band's first *X Factor* appearance to gather and share intelligence on the boys. Fans use it to collectively protest management decisions, share fantasies, police each others' fan behaviour, provide tactical false information and rumours, vote in competitions, and form factions and hierarchies within the fandom. Ultimately each fan covets a tweet or follow from a band member, a high-value chip of cultural capital in the fandom which gives an instant boost to fan status. In the days after the broadcast, tweets were split between hate for *Larry shippers*, who had supposedly embarrassed the fandom by sharing their fantasy, and hate for the producers of the documentary for broadcasting it. There

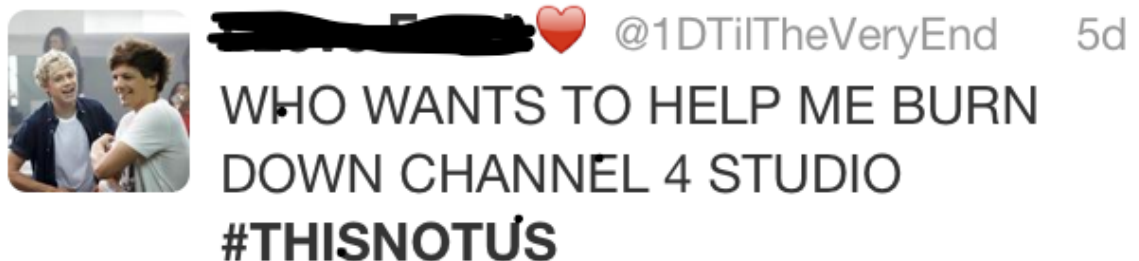


fig.5 example *#ThisIsNotUs* tweet from Aug 13 2013

were thousands of bomb threats to Channel 4, death threats to me, and invitations to *Larry shippers* to "Go kill yourself." Following *#RIPLarryShippers* in real time I watched the number of reported *Larry* "suicides" creep up from 4 to 12, then to 19, to 28 and then 42 in a few hours.⁸² It was a huge relief to me to discover the concept

⁸¹ see some example tweets in appendix 7 and online at <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com>

⁸² I looked in detail at one of the fans who had supposedly committed suicide *LovinLarry17* and her Tweets during the saga are reproduced in appendix 6

“pseuicide”⁸³ in which an online avatar dies when a Twitter or Tumblr account is deleted, often in protest. Why and how teenagers use suicide as a cultural bargaining tool, or an emotional weapon, is beyond the scope of this thesis, but an analysis of the YouTube rants that were tagged #ThisIsNotUs provides some understanding of the fans’ issues with my film.

The shame these fans describe does not necessarily originate in *Crazy About One Direction*. The meanings carried by a documentary are the result of a complex negotiation between text and context. The reception of a film by its audience is a factor in the making of those meanings, arguably as important an influence as the intentions of the filmmaker and the cultural moment it is released into. In this light the defensive reaction of the fandom was unsurprising and even justified in the context of three years of negative and patronising media representations of Directioners. Just as tabloid journalists might assume that the documentary is about the mass hysteria of silly teenage girls; just as fan sympathisers might connect with the positive aspects portrayed about fandom; Directioners will receive the message they expect, which is one of derision, criticism, humiliation. They have adopted a generalised sense of shame about their fandom, taught to them by a patriarchal society that looks down on expressions of extreme emotion, teenage passion, mainstream pop and female sexuality. *Larry* in private fan spaces is fun, clever and naughty, but seen through the public eye it suddenly feels embarrassing and stupid to fans, not because it is, but because everyone keeps telling them it is.

⁸³ <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Pseuicide>, also see tweets recorded on <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com>

The *Larry ship* is the biggest and most hotly contended division in the One Direction fandom. Approximately half the fandom *ship Larry*, the other half preferring *Elounor* (the heterosexual relationship between Louis and his girlfriend Eleanor). *Elounor shippers* are deemed homophobic and in opposition to Louis and Harry's human right to be gay together in public. *Larry shippers* are often accused of invading the band members' privacy and of being pornographic and morally vacuous. *Larry* is an erotic space in which fans can play out their sexual fantasies unhampered by the dull and limiting sexual identities offered to them as teenage girls. The boys in their artwork are often rendered so androgynous that gender is transcended. They have queered and given emotional and erotic depth to what is on offer to them by the band's corporate producers making something less blandly fixed in gender roles, and far more desirable and limitless in potential⁸⁴. Similarly to the mass queering of Barbie analysed by Rand, Larry Shippers have subversively refunctioned Harry and Louis for their own pleasure.⁸⁵ However they were not happy to share this subversion outside the fandom. One of the most intriguing arguments made by the YouTubers in my sample is that including *Larry* meant I had trespassed on their "private" fan spaces. But although the majority of fans use aliases online, they do not prevent outsiders from seeing their productions, which are readily available on Tumblr, Twitter and



Youtube. Although all the fan art I included was cleared with individual artists, the fandom assumed they must have been stolen. They consider Tumblr to be an almost sacred space, in which the *Larry* fandom can be private, and this false sense of obscurity may have prevailed for a few years because outsiders did not know what to look for. As Larsen & Zubernis write, "The twin cultural biases against overt displays of emotion and (for women) displays of inappropriate sexuality combine to keep fans in the closet."⁸⁶ *Larry* is in the closet and the closet is Tumblr.

So *Crazy About One Direction* outed the *Larry* ship. Jenkins describes being asked by fans not to write about real person slash (RPS) for the first edition of his landmark fan studies book *Textual Poachers*, as it was seen as "fandom's dirty little secret"⁸⁷. But he acknowledges that these secrets are not as easy to keep in digital fandom, raising important questions as yet unanswered about the etiquette of online cultural spaces and the way meanings are altered by context. "What happens when materials produced within a subculture get decontextualised, when slash videos circulate to people who do not have slash reading practices?"⁸⁸. He cites the example of the *Closer* video—a Kirk/Spock slash cut to a *Nine Inch Nails* song, which broke out of the fandom and now has 1.7 million views on YouTube⁸⁹. Jenkins says it received titillated laughter from outsiders, despite being originally intended to make people think about sexual violence. The conclusion that moral codes of slash can only be understood by *insiders* seems rather old fashioned and unworkable; a parochial approach to a cultural practice that is defined by its open-minded, open-source

⁸⁶ Larsen & Zubernis 2012

⁸⁷ Jenkins 2012d: xxxiv

⁸⁸ Jenkins 2012d: xxxvi

⁸⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uxTpyCdriY>

sensibilities. Striking a balance between the invisibility of texts that express female desire and the kind of mainstreaming of subcultural information that causes it to lose its value⁹⁰, is a challenge. But agreeing not to document some forms of slash at all carries a judgment and only helps perpetuate the perception of *wrongness*.

This projected shame seems to have been further internalised by fan studies scholars, or aca-fans, as they call themselves. There is shame in being a fan and also shame in being an academic, as some fans have rejected those that study them from the sites of their fandom online and expressed resentment at being *studied* at all. Sometimes this awkward straddling of two identities can mean an ultra-defensive perspective on the representation of fans. The Star Trek aca-fan William Proctor contributed a chapter which preceded my own in the 2017 collection on fan representations *Seeing Fans. In chapter 6 - A New Breed of Fan?: Regimes of Truth, One Direction Fans and Representations of Enfreakment*⁹¹ he writes:

"Crazy About One Direction not only negatively stereotypes Directioners as "non-normative" fans but, also, functions as "an entertainment spectacle" within which teenage girls are "peered at by the predatory camera" (Richardson 2010, 1). In so doing, CAOD promotes an exploitative narrative of "enfreakment" (ibid) wherein Directioners are embroiled within a representational display of otherness that rehabilitates the boundaries of "normalcy."

Proctor applies Richardson's argument about the "freakshow style" programmes on Channel 4 such as *Embarrassing Bodies* (2007) and *The 15 Stone Babies* (2012) to social subjects, claiming that "enfreakment" is also taking place in *Crazy About One Direction*, as well as *Benefits Street* (2014) and *The Undateables* (2012). It is not clear at

⁹⁰ Thornton in Hills 2002a

⁹¹ Proctor, William, in *Seeing Fans, ch. 6, A New Breed of Fan?: Regimes of Truth, One Direction Fans and Representations of Enfreakment*, Palgrave 2017

which stage of documentary production this enfreakment is considered to take place - at the moment the Channel 4 commissioner decides they want a programme about the fandom's most extreme behaviours? During the filming stage in the choice of participants? During the edit when many decisions are made to create an entertaining hour of television? Or in the way the scenes are received by an audience, particularly an audience that is preconditioned to disapprove of girl fans? Proctor betrays his disdain early in the chapter when he identifies One Direction as a "bad" fan object, presumably not worthy of the kind of fandom Star Trek merits. He refers to the fans portrayed as "these poor girls", somehow able only to see them as victims rather than active collaborators in both fandom and documentary storytelling. He also appears to have missed the tongue-in-cheek delivery of some of their funniest claims and in-jokes, which is an important lesson for a documentary filmmaker - no shared cultural knowledge or space can be assumed about the audience reception of a TV documentary.

"Not only do some of the fans represented in CAOD perform their affective involvement through discourses of violence towards those who threaten the fan-object, but towards themselves, often using signifiers of suicide or self harm, even murder, to proclaim their dedication. "What would you do if you get to meet them today," asks the narrator. One girl states that "she would die," while another claims she would "jump off that cliff over there." Other proclamations include: "I wouldn't kill a puppy but I'd probably kill a cat" which is challenged by a friend—"Oh that's so horrible"—so she revises her statement to, "Okay, I'd kill a goldfish." Another believes that "people would kill each other, I reckon. Definitely." ⁹²

This quote from the film is presented as a literal threat of violence, while to the fandom, and I had thought the wider audience too, it is clearly tongue-in-cheek.

⁹² Proctor, William, *Seeing Fans, ch. 6, A New Breed of Fan?: Regimes of Truth, One Direction Fans and Representations of Enfreakment* Palgrave 2017

Ultimately it is part of the job of a documentary maker to communicate clearly and unambiguously, but much of the best television storytelling can be received on a number of different levels. The new Bros documentary "When the Screaming Stops" is a very interesting example. The film was made with the full cooperation, permission and final approval of Luke and Matt Goss. But it clearly communicates in-jokes to its audience, which they may or may not be in on. When they agree on camera during rehearsals for their O2 reunion show that "*Rome wasn't built in a day... but Rome had more time than us*" or "*We used to be called Caviar, until we found out what it meant*"... the Spinal Tap-esque hilarity is clearly purposeful on the part of the filmmakers. But the Goss twins are also constructed as lovable, relatable protagonists that the audience wish well. The audience is well able to read the film in these different but parallel registers and perhaps the genuine affection alongside tongue-in-cheek amusement has something in common with *Crazy About One Direction*. There is one moment, when challenging myself as a practitioner, where I feel uncomfortable about the Bros/filmmaker relationship, and it is when they say they also considered the name "Epitome" for their band, both pronouncing and defining the word wrongly. This seems to me a moment when I might not allow them to be ridiculed, as it is correctable, rather than a subjective viewpoint. There aren't specific moments in *Crazy About One Direction* which I think fail this ridicule test: the fans I filmed were robustly in on the joke. But I do think the decision to remove my voice from the film and replace it with the brilliantly funny and clever comedian Julia Davis had an impact on the tone. It signalled to viewers that there was ridiculousness on the screen being identified from *outside the fandom*, rather than allowing the fandom world to be opened up to outsiders in a way in which the humour *belonged* to the fans. Whether this would have helped Proctor to get the joke I am not sure. He was not alone as a middle-aged middle-class man in failing to enjoy the sight of teenage girls having fun with desire. At one conference in 2014 I finished my paper on the

talented and globally networked fan producers of Larry artwork to be met by this un-ironic question from a pop music professor: "How can I stop my daughter getting into this stuff?"

It is important to recognise that a fandom that is repeatedly pathologised and derided by the media will have low expectations of any representation. Fan identities are riddled with internalised shame which is consistently reinforced by the performance of distaste, even disgust, that largely male critics and detractors display to them. Schoolboys, their brothers, their fathers, the music press, tabloid journalists, even teachers: all would like to tell girls what music they *should* like, and how they *should* behave around it. This encourages secrecy and the anonymity they are afforded online allows for both free expression and a global audience of like-minds, for the first time in fandom. This is a story that deserves to be told, albeit with careful attention to ethical documentary practice, which foregrounds the needs of the filmed and recognises the subjectivity of the filmmaker. Documentary theory has dispensed with the idea of objectivity and a single authoritative truth in recent years, and it may be most accurate to say that *Crazy About One Direction* is simply a documentary about what happens when you make a documentary about Directioners. Representing the identity of an entire fandom to their satisfaction may be impossible, but the One Direction fandom is a story of creative female sexuality and international networking that has given 20 million teenage girls a voice, and to ignore it would do them a great disservice.

In this chapter I have unpicked the circumstances and context of the initial trigger for this research project - the mass rejection and contestation of my documentary by the One Direction fandom globally. The conclusions I have drawn indicate a complex



fig.7 example of press pathologisation of fan hysteria

interaction between documentary representation and the social context in which it lands. Identity and self-image and our perceptions of the way *others see us* can be influenced by many factors, in this case patriarchal disapproval of teenage girls’ sexual desires being a prominent player. I had great power in the way they were represented and my subjectivity was in play in the final storytelling. The large number of participants diluted the trusting relationship I would normally build with those I film, compounding the sense of the fandom in general that they were being represented as a whole. In chapter two I look at the way people in documentaries try to influence and please their audiences with their performances and what it means to record and represent behaviours that are unperformed.

Chapter 2

This is the Real Me

Performance, Reality and Reception

This chapter looks more deeply at the way performance interacts with reality in documentary, and what the role of audience is in performance. I will investigate the meanings hidden in *performing* for the camera, and analyse the relationship between the *acted self* and the *true self*. Comparing the public and private personas of the people I have filmed, I attempt to embrace both the way they wish to be seen and the way I see them, as parallel subjective truths. I take as case studies Holocaust survivors and gay fathers, both past participants of my own documentaries. I look at the way stories change according to our memories and identities and interact with what our audiences need to hear. Does the truth, or the 'true self', become irrelevant when the purpose is to warn the public of the extreme cruelty possible in human behaviour for example? Or to attempt to alter public opinion on the rights of homosexuals to have families? How do audiences impact upon the stories they receive by privileging and welcoming the heroic, cathartic and heartwarming versions of history over the disturbing, challenging, inconvenient or *shameful*?

Holocaust Survivors and the Unperformed

After the Holocaust (2012)⁹³ was a film inspired by research rather than the other way round. Under the excellent supervision of Dr Cathy Bergin I was writing a research paper on representations of trauma after political violence when Channel 4 called for pitches for a new film about survivors for the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on 27 January 1945. I wanted to make a film about the way the trauma of the concentration camps had continued to play out in the rest of their lives, and it

⁹³ retitled *Britain's Holocaust Survivors* by Channel 4

was commissioned over the telephone. I had only 5 months to make the 48 minute documentary in time for the planned broadcast. All the research I had already done was indispensable. But the research and the reality didn't necessarily get along, which gave me an opportunity to engage with the way practice and theory can work together and enrich each other.

Holocaust survivors are keen to be filmed. They are on a mission to communicate their experiences so that the Holocaust is not forgotten. It is an uncomfortable message they have and complicated by being misunderstood or mistranslated by audiences, hijacked by Rabbis and politicians in service of their own causes, labelled unreliable by historians due to failures in memory and by the awkward fact that some survivors feel the need to romanticise, embellish and imbue their stories with false heroism.⁹⁴ Audiences are to blame for needing happy endings when they hear these tough talks and survivors are adept at responding to the need. Over 70 years they have learned to perform their testimony in a cathartic way for the audience, which requires stories of heroism, faith, friendship etc, rather than their more disturbing experiences of human nature. My intention with *After the Holocaust*, was to try and get behind the learned performance and be allowed to understand the un-neat and un-inspiring side of their experiences.

Freddie Knoller was 91 when we met in 2011. He told his wife and two daughters nothing about his life in the camps for 30 years after he was freed. In later years he had become a self-confessed Holocaust obsessive, meticulously documenting his own desperate journey

⁹⁴ Hassan *A House next Door to Trauma* 2003: ch2

through Europe as he tried to escape the Nazis; his betrayal by a lover while hiding in the hills with the French resistance and the eighteen months



fig.8 Freddie Knoller, still from documentary

he spent in Auschwitz and Belsen. *"I was determined to survive, I had to survive, and I did survive. This was my attitude. I'm pretty sure this optimism saved my life. Because I saw so many people who gave up, and they didn't last long... they just couldn't go on."* His family told me they suspected his optimism was sometimes "an act" but Freddie firmly refuted this charge.

Gena Turgel was 89 and living in Stanmore, at the far northern end of the Jubilee line. She was always beautifully turned out, with freshly blow-dried hair and long painted



finger nails. Her appearance was significant. In the camps, looking fit and healthy could make the difference between being selected to live or die. She said

fig.9 Gena Turgel, still from documentary

"the stench of Belsen followed me" for years after liberation and that

she had to *“use perfume to try and get rid of that”*. Gena had always had a fear of being vulnerable, and pushed herself hard to be as perfect as possible in everything she did. When we first met a three course meal was served by her housekeeper in the dining room. Gena told me that she believed God saved her life. When asked why God would allow so many others to be randomly slaughtered she replied *“Who are we to judge God? We are not worthy.”* Her story was characterised by religious and spiritual notions of divine justice, faith and destiny.

Zigi Shipper was 82 at time of filming and living with his wife Jeanette in Bushey, where they were surrounded by their two daughters and six grown-up grandchildren. Zigi was extremely charming and funny, and claimed to have never stopped joking, even in the worst times. *“Well it was no use moping - you’re not going to get any bread so you might as well get on with it... my joking got me in trouble but I didn’t care.”* Zigi had

many friends who were also survivors and they knew how to enjoy life, throwing parties for each other and eating out. His wife said he had been *“dreadful”* to live



fig.10 Zigi Shipper, still from documentary

with though, particularly when he was younger and had problems with drink and gambling. Zigi didn’t display the optimism of Freddie or the faith in God of Gena. His attitude to his own survival was a harder one for a survivor to live with and possibly for an audience too, who prefer heroic stories, but it rang the truest: *“We were lucky,*

that's all. Nothing saved us but pure, pure luck." His performance was about making everyone laugh, and love him, knowing charm was his greatest asset in being heard.

Holocaust survivors are as prone to performing the role society gives them as anyone else. Zigi, Gena, and Freddie were all used to giving talks on their experiences. While this made them confident participants in the documentary, it also presented the challenge of getting "under the skin of memory",⁹⁵ as Delbo describes it. Those who record testimony have particular imperatives, the biggest challenge facing being installation of confidence in the survivor that the unbearable is welcome. But Holocaust survivors are acutely aware of their audiences. Their silence until the 1980s was partly due to the knowledge that no-one was ready or willing to hear the truth. Gena Turgel illustrates the lack of an audience with the following anecdote: *"I tried to tell a lady I knew once how I suffered, how I was starving... she responded by telling me "You're not the only one who suffered you know - we also couldn't get oranges."* A distinct lack of perspective prevents ordinary people from hearing the testimony correctly.

Most audiences want some catharsis in the story. The commissioning editor in the history department at Channel 4 would consider it her job to be aware of the expectations of the audience for a Holocaust survivor documentary. The request made by her was that the film should not be "too depressing... make it cheerful, otherwise people will switch it off."⁹⁶ The job of the commissioning editor is, after all, primarily to gain as large an audience as possible for their programmes, thereby winning as much advertising revenue as possible for the channel overall. When commercial pressures such as this influence the representation of survivors of the

⁹⁵ Delbo in Langer 1991: 6

⁹⁶ Channel 4 History commissioner 7th Oct 2011

worst atrocities in memory, there are uncomfortable compromises and difficult moral ground to navigate. Interestingly though, the attitude of survivors to the way they should be represented is remarkably similar to that of the commissioning editor. They do not wish to be sacralised, held on a pedestal, feared, or avoided in case they are too upsetting. The Holocaust survivor colludes with the interviewer to give the audience what they want. This can be a happy ending - a liberation story or a wedding, in Gena's case, to one of the British soldiers that liberated Belsen. Or it can be a moral lesson: "Do not hate!" is Zigi's favourite. Or it can be a heroic story, such as Freddie's, full of wit and resistance. The testimony is tailored to the audience.

Humour is used in a surprising way that grabs the attention of an audience, particularly a young one. Cracking jokes about the Holocaust is the last thing teenagers expect from a survivor and therefore it is incredibly effective. Rather than make the Holocaust light or palatable, it makes it real and accessible. Freddie Knoller manages to begin his testimony to a room full of teenage boys, by making them all laugh at the fact that the reason he was deported to Auschwitz was that his "moody" girlfriend betrayed him to the Nazis. Gena Turgel laughs at her own food obsession, teasingly interrogating everyone around her about how many sandwiches they have had: "Come on, eat now! You look underfed!" Zigi Shipper is king of the one-liners: "That was no holiday camp!" he says chuckling to himself. Care must be taken though, that this humour remains the property of the survivors. It doesn't give permission to the listeners or the audience to make such jokes. What Holocaust survivors do give us is permission to laugh, which actually makes us more receptive to their message. As Aaron Kerner writes: "To deny humour is to deny yet another aspect of humanity."⁹⁷ Humour is used as a tool in their survival, assisting them in taking back some control of their memories, owning them, integrating them with

⁹⁷ Kerner 2011: 80

their present day lives and getting their story told. And the bigger the audience, to their minds, the better.

In many documentaries about the Holocaust, survivors are allowed to add detail and emotional colour to the subject, but never to *be* the subject. Their life stories and the ways they impact on their testimony aren't confronted. Because of this, behaviours and gestures which could illuminate so well what it meant to be in a camp, are ignored. Behaviour can sometimes transmit unspeakable truth better than the verbal. K Zetnik, the Holocaust survivor that fainted at the Eichmann trial, perhaps communicated his feelings best of all. The significance of his fainting for the poet Haim Gouri was very important: "In fainting, he in fact said it all"⁹⁸. When a survivor panics because their lunch is late, they communicate so much more about the hunger they felt in Auschwitz, than when they attempt to describe it verbally. All three of the survivors filmed for *After the Holocaust* were obsessed with food, the single most enduring legacy of the starvation they experienced in the camps. It became clear that eating with them was as important as listening to their stories; that the way the food was constantly being prepared, recycled, squirrelled away and enjoyed in abundance, was a resounding piece of testimony itself. A hugely generous and ever-present platter of smoked salmon sandwiches, never allowed to run out, transmitted the experience in a way that words could not. Other traits which are common amongst survivors are nightmares, gallows humour, fear of hospitals, dislike of bureaucracy, mistrust of authority and uniforms, fearful parenting, anxious saving of money, refusal to retire, smart appearance, "relentless, driven productivity."⁹⁹ All these behaviours are linked by survivors to their loss of control in the camps, of their total loss of agency, dignity and humanity. In *After the Holocaust* I managed to film a few behaviours that reached beyond performance and offered a greater insight to

⁹⁸ Hirsch/Spitzer in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* 2010: 394

⁹⁹ Laub 1991: 73

the reality of the camp experience. Zigi wanting his whole family around him, hating to be alone; Freddie needing his meals at exact times to stay calm; Gena overfeeding her grandchildren and being so meticulous about her appearance. These were the most precious moments in *After the Holocaust*, and I was lucky to find three survivors brave enough to allow me to record them and allow themselves to be represented as fully human, rather than sacralised as heroic other-worldly beings.

Performing Gay Parenting

Finding a commission for a television documentary about anything seen as *gay-themed* has been difficult for the past 20 years, due to the accepted shared wisdom amongst executives that “gay doesn’t rate”. I heard this phrase repeatedly in response to my ideas about the culture of camp, coming out, gay muslims, civil partnerships, gay parenting and gay icons as subjects for documentaries. When I pitched the Drewitt-Barlows story though, it got through, on the strength of the unusual IVF arrangement they had set up. And probably also because of their willingness to perform a wildly camp and flamboyant version of their own lives, which amused Channel 4 executives and fitted their simplistic sense of queerness. They called the film *My Weird and Wonderful Family*. The Drewitt-Barlows understood this transaction perfectly and traded publicity for a fun performance. My challenge was to know how much to get the real story, and how much to tow the line in their performance of themselves. I wanted very much to represent a happy family with two fathers, and their performed version I feared would be counter-productive in improving the public attitude to gay dads.

Barrie and Tony Drewitt Barlow were living in a bungalow in Essex when we met, with their 10 year old twins Saffron and Aspen and 6 year old Orlando. Saffron and Aspen were the first British babies to have two gay dads genetically and be carried by

a surrogate. Their biological mother was an egg donor, chosen for her looks and intelligence, according to Barrie. They were each related to one of the dads and carried together as twins by a surrogate mother. No-one was supposed to know which was which, but it was physically obvious that Barrie was Saffron's biological father and Tony was Aspen's. Orlando was Aspen's identical twin, frozen and born to a different surrogate four years later, perhaps leading him to be interestingly different physically from his twin brother. It was this process which attracted the interest of Channel 4's Head of Documentaries at the time. Barrie and Tony were planning another set of twins, using a new egg donor, chosen from a catalogue, and paying a surrogate around \$50,000.

My first impression of the family was a really good one. My own kids came with me to play with Aspen, Saffron and Orlando. They all roamed in and out of the garden, enjoying swings and bikes, and followed by various friendly dogs and chickens. They were watched in a relaxed and loving way by Barrie and Tony, who laughed together about the difference between their public and private personas. Barrie told me that people give him abuse in the supermarket, and the school playground. It had made the family retreat somewhat into their private world, not wanting the children to grow up with any sense of shame. The importance of showing the reality of this good, loving, incidentally gay family was clear to me. We started filming straight away that Summer, with the idea we would continue until the new babies were born in the new year. But I wasn't able to film what I had seen on that first day.

Perhaps due to his bad experiences with public opinion, Barrie became defensive when the camera was on. He performed a flamboyant and extravagant version of himself, which I never felt was his true self, and was actually much less likeable than the relaxed private him. It felt to me like a challenge, almost a pre-emptive strike on

those that might criticise him. He would describe the money he had spent on Saffron's wardrobe, including a mink coat and Vuitton luggage. He talked about private schools, cars, Rolexes. He claimed he wouldn't want a disabled child, only a beautiful one. He said vaginal birth made him feel sick and he hoped the new babies would be born by caesarean. It was like a sitcom about an outrageous gay father; an uber-camp performance to play into the expectations of his perceived audience.



fig. 11 Barrie Drewitt-Barlow, still from the documentary

Camp is perhaps a way of hiding from the political or moral, as Sontag explains, it values the aesthetic over content and seriousness. "Camp refuses both the harmonies of traditional seriousness, and the risks of fully identifying with extreme states of feeling."¹⁰⁰ In this way Barrie's camp performance can be seen as a defence mechanism; a way of not confronting the issues and emotions he faces just for wanting to be a father, and taking refuge in mink coats, designer labels and the bitchy queen persona. As with One Direction fans, projected shame is important. The reactions he has experienced from previous audiences, telling him repeatedly to be ashamed of his sexuality and his desire to have children, inform his performance. As

¹⁰⁰ Sontag Notes on Camp 2018:24 (1966)

with Holocaust survivors, comedy is important: a camp comedy. "The whole point of camp is to dethrone the serious."¹⁰¹ It is also a way of releasing frustration and anger at the way he was treated in public.¹⁰² The camera allowed Barrie to perform a version of the private that he wanted the public to see. He performed someone who didn't care what anyone thought; provocative and unashamed. I knew this was counter-productive and despite my efforts to tone it down in the edit (which I felt guilty about), the press was predictably moralistic:

This was all about Barrie, clearly the driving force of the Drewitt-Barlow house. 'We just went on looks in the end,' he chirpily replied when asked about the latest egg donor. 'The first time there was a bit of intelligence as well.' It was said in such an offhand manner, you could almost kid yourself this was how things were supposed to be. But what it boiled down to was this: if you've got the cash, then it's your entitlement to genetically engineer the world to your own template. It stuck in the craw, not least because Barrie's world was a stereotyped universe of consumerism and ego. He bought Saffron a mink coat for her tenth birthday and cackled: 'I don't care who throws paint on yer.' Just as Big Brother's Steve is ably showing that being disabled doesn't stop you being a creep, so Barrie put anyone's gay-friendly credentials to the test.

- Metro 21 July 2010

Weedon writes: "As individuals inserted within specific discourses, we repeatedly perform modes of subjectivity and identity until these are experienced as second nature".¹⁰³ The discourse that gay dads Barrie and Tony were situated in was that of a suspicious and heteronormative public opinion, characterised by Eamon Holmes'

¹⁰¹ *ibid*: 27

¹⁰² see Alexander Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer* 1993: 131

¹⁰³ Weedon on Butler's theory of performativity *Identity and Culture* 2004: 7

interview of them when Saffron and Aspen were born. "It's not natural, is it?"¹⁰⁴ I hoped that in including this original footage in my documentary, the audience would see how projected shame had affected the family and stop projecting it. But this may have been rather optimistic. Still, it was hard to deny that the kids were perfectly happy with two dads, and I finally had to accept the advice of a close friend... "queers are allowed to behave badly too." As with One Direction fans, the sense of responsibility at this dangerous game of having a whole range of different members of a community feel they are being represented by just a few, was uncomfortable.

Playing the Self

The idea of performance in documentary is constantly re-theorised, with its first recorded conceptualisation in the films of Flaherty and Grierson, where *Nanook and The Man of Aran* reconstructed their lives efficiently for the expensively-rolling film cameras. Joris Ivens also regarded his documentary participants as *(non)actors* that he would direct in only a slightly different way to *real* actors¹⁰⁵. Waugh points out that Ivens "refers to 'acting naturally' in reference to 'not looking at the camera', the code of illusion by which... (non)actors should 'perform' unawareness of the camera." This illusion was of course perpetuated by Direct Cinema, undermining its fundamental claim to observe reality without impacting upon it. This representational mode has now been rejuvenated by filmmakers such as Roberto Minnervini (*The Other Side, The Trilogy*) and Alma Ha'Rel (*Love True*) who collaborate with their participants and arrange for them to play themselves in an explicit way which requires none of the manipulation Joris Ivens admitted to.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ see *My Weird and Wonderful Family* 2010, this footage is included.

¹⁰⁵ see Ivens in Waugh *The Right to Play Oneself* 2011:75

¹⁰⁶ *ibid* 2011:81

Stella Bruzzi's work on performance in documentary resonates best with the experience of relationships in the filming process. She writes; "documentaries are performative acts, inherently fluid and unstable and informed by issues of performance and performativity."¹⁰⁷ Bruzzi applies Butler's theories of gender performance¹⁰⁸ in thinking about the layers of real and imagined existing within documentary and creates a more subtle and affective way of approaching each film, than the rigid or cautionary approaches of Nichols (2000) or Winston (1995). The idea that imagination and fantasy are part of reality and as much of value to document is still relatively dangerous in the documentary industry, but it is becoming more acceptable as the form matures creatively. In *The Act of Killing*¹⁰⁹ Joshua Oppenheimer willingly records the inner fantasies and re-written memories of his subjects, despite their distastefulness and horror. It is through this courage in allowing people to perform the self that they wish, which leads a documentary to reveal emotional depth and truth, rather than just facts - "facts exist without meaning" as Lanzmann says¹¹⁰. This creative evolution also allows filmmakers to unpick the space between reality and imagination, which is after all the space humans tend to inhabit each day. As Bruzzi writes: "it's a fine line between the real and fake, and what is of far more interest to documentarists at the moment it seems to me is the complexity and productiveness of the relationship between the two."¹¹¹ She also argues very effectively that audiences are better at understanding this subtle interplay than theorists perhaps: "the spectator is not in need of signposts and inverted commas to understand that a documentary is a negotiation between reality on one hand and

¹⁰⁷ Bruzzi, Stella *New Documentary* ***:1

¹⁰⁸ Butler, Judith *Gender Trouble* 1990

¹⁰⁹ Oppenheimer, Joshua *The Act of Killing* Dogwoof 2012

¹¹⁰ Lanzmann 1964

¹¹¹ Bruzzi ***:5

image, interpretation and bias on the other.”¹¹² Winston’s claim that “the supposition that any ‘actuality’ is left after ‘creative treatment’ can now be seen as being at best naive and at worst a mark of duplicity” seems to betray a fear of any ambiguity. Audiences prefer to read for themselves into the relationships they see on screen and not be told what to think or that the factual truth is indisputable. The truth is in the eye of the beholder and exists subtly in the encounter between filmmaker and filmed, rather than in bullet points, or carved into stone.

In this chapter I have investigated the performances for television audiences of both Holocaust survivors and gay fathers. The performed realities they offer the camera are the ones they choose to share, according to their own identity and self-image, an idealised projection of the self and ideas about the way others see them. Although it is sometimes possible to represent alternative truths about their lives, these are the result of a subtle negotiation between filmmaker and filmed and are sometimes rejected by one or the other for social or political reasons. What is represented is the relationship and the negotiation which takes account of the predicted response of the audience in its offered performance. In chapter three I analyse the way that long term filming relationships impact on the identity of the filmed participant and their ability to resist projected shame.

¹¹² *ibid*: 6

This is Me Now

Identity, Reflection and Longitudinal Relationships

This chapter looks at two more case studies from my own documentary work, both longitudinal studies that have resulted in long lasting relationships. The first is Kimberley who I have known for 20 years, and made two one-hour films with for Channel 4: the first about her love for a pirate radio DJ at 15¹¹³; the second about her fight to prove she was a good mother at 25¹¹⁴. The second case study is Josephine, the mother of Marshal, who I started filming 13 years ago when he was an 11 year old boy and the family came to live in the UK as a refugee from Zimbabwe. I made three films about the family's new life in Newcastle¹¹⁵ and then a fourth about Josephine's experience of relative poverty in Africa and North East England¹¹⁶. I will analyse how these long-term filming-friendships impact on the identity of the person filmed, how they use the documentaries for reflection, and how the relationships are negotiated and sustained.

Kimberley: Between You and Me

The day I met Kimberley was different from the day I met anyone else I have filmed, as she approached me. I was trying to make a film about an Iraqi teenager who had claimed asylum in the UK after stowing away in a truck with his father. He was not particularly keen to be filmed. I thought his story was so important that I should perhaps persist. But Kimberley interrupted me in the street in Stockwell, South London. She got in the way, demanding I film her instead. This is extremely unusual

¹¹³ *15: This is Me* Channel 4: 2000

¹¹⁴ *Kimberley: Young Mum, Ten Years On (This is Me Now)* Channel 4 2009

¹¹⁵ *Britain: My New Home* Channel 4 2005-2011

¹¹⁶ *The Queen of North Shields (Why Poverty?)* BBC1 2013

behaviour as there is a shame in British culture about demanding too much attention, or pushing oneself forward. There is also a sense among documentary makers that those that want to be filmed are not somehow the right people to film. Perhaps it is a leftover from direct cinema; the idea that we should film reality as if a fly on the wall, that those that wish to perform the self may perform too much. It was the first film I had approached independently and I was not yet aware that performance is an important version of reality. In this chapter I will interrogate that idea and question the notion that documentary ever records anything that would happen identically were the cameras not there. The first day I filmed with Kimberley she very frankly and entertainingly narrated to me the story of how she first met the pirate DJ she had fallen in love with:



fig. 12 Kimberley, still from the documentary

"One of the days I musta heard "This goes out to all the sexy ladies round London town!" and I went wheyyy! Yeah! I was just like woah! And started going mad! And my friend goes "You're not sexy..." and I go "So? I don't care." So I rang up and I goes... "Yeah can I send a massive massive shoutout to all the Supreme family yeah? And that's

coming from Kimberley in Camberwell yeah?" I goes "You've got the sexiest voice" and he goes "Thankyou." This is me: "What's your name?" and this is him: "DJ Paul Edwards." This is me: "Oh, my names Kimberley and I'm from Camberwell." This is him: "Yeah I just gathered that." This is me: "There's no need to be rude." This is me: "You're black innit?" This is him: "No..." This is me: "Don't lie!" This is him: "Nah, nah, nah... I'm white."¹¹⁷

I was an inexperienced 22 year old and accepting her performance was a challenging concept to me. By the end of the day however, I realised instinctively she was right to play a provocative version of herself. She took me home to the flat where her family lived, which happened to be the block of flats next door to where my sister lived with her baby. She was 15 and the second of four children. Her dad was an alcoholic and her mum was long-suffering and no longer felt she had any control over Kimberley, who hardly ever attended school. Kimberley was hard to parent, hard to teach, hard to even keep track of, as she would disappear on a whim from Brixton to Croydon in pursuit of DJ Paul Edwards, sometimes returning 24-48 hours later. What I realised quickly was that Kimberley and I understood each other perfectly. We communicated quickly and with complete understanding. She was familiar to me, the opposite of an *Other*, never exotic. Filming her was effortless because of this, and also because she wanted to be heard more than anything. She needed me to be a sounding board so she could listen to her own thoughts, experiment with who she was and wanted to be, to play with her performance of self. Stuart Hall's concept of identity as "an ever-unfinished conversation"¹¹⁸ is extremely helpful in understanding what was happening. For Hall identity is "a tricky concept, requiring both identification and recognition' and "a production, which is never complete, always in

¹¹⁷ *I5: This is Me*, Channel 4: 2000

¹¹⁸ Hall, Stuart, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* 2013

process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.”¹¹⁹ The camera allowed Kimberley to have that conversation about her identity aloud, to try out different hats as it were. I wanted her to express herself freely and spontaneously and with total honesty, so that I could make a film about her inner motives, the way her mind was working and the trap she found herself in as a teenage girl growing up on an estate in South London. I also saw the film as being about first love; the infatuation that can take over your every waking moment and desire. The film was about the idealistic fantasy of love. That fantasy and the performance of the self it inspired was what was most interesting to film. I was documenting less reality and more imagination and the idealised projection of self. Through that projection though, always seeps reality:

“I goes to him yesterday... I was walking down the street... I goes “I’ve missed you a lot.” He goes: “D’you know something? I’ve missed you too.” He goes “I really have missed you.” And his eyes started going all watery and everything. I goes: “You alright?!” This is him: “Yeah.” He goes “ You got any money?” This is me: “Why what d’you want?” He goes: “Cigarette.” This is me: “Oh alright then.” I never come home did I? Stayed with him. Cos we got stuck in Battersea didn’t we? And I couldn’t get a train home. Had to get a night bus. And I was meant to be in by 9 and I didn’t turn up. Come in at 1 o’clock this morning... my mum and dad were going mad. I don’t care though. Well, I do care, but I don’t... if you know what I mean.”¹²⁰

Looking at *15: This is Me* after 20 years, two things about its style are notable. In the late 1990s the semi professional Hi-8 camcorders that were acceptable for TV broadcast at the time, had just got small and simple enough for a person with no training to use. We built our own accessory to feed both a radio mic and directional

¹¹⁹ Hall in Weedon *Identity and Culture* 2004:5

¹²⁰ *15: This is Me*, Channel 4: 2000

on-board mic in to the camera, recording both tracks of sound on the tape. There was an opportunity to film solo, which allowed much more time spent with the person we were filming, and a much more intimate relationship. The relaxed interactive style of filming that was characteristic of my work with Kimberley and others, was not implemented with any understanding of what had gone before. But it was affected by the opportunity to be alone with the person I was filming for many hours, days and weeks, building genuine trust and friendship while we collaborated in telling their story. It felt fair and clear and honest. It was the most effective and simple way of starting to film, without making a participant too self-conscious, or defensive perhaps. It was also the only way to afford to spend a whole year with them, rather than spending the whole budget on six days of crew. The first observation I make looking back at *This is Me* is the absolutely natural way that Kimberley and I interacted on camera, in a way that I am not sure is any longer possible, now that documentary participants are so ultra conscious of the way they are representing themselves and will be mediated for television. The second notable element is the sparse use of voice over on the film, which at the time I wasn't keen to record at all. It feels stiff and out of keeping with the rest of the documentary, detached and reluctant. It seems to me now that it is an awkward leftover from the style my producers were accustomed to in the previous two decades, a shadow of the old way. Later, when voice over was emphatically required for effective storytelling, I recorded it in a more personal register, embracing my own subjectivity.

DAISY VO: Two weeks later. Kimberley knows she's not pregnant. DJ Paul's still got her phone, but he isn't calling her and she hasn't seen him.

KIM: Hi is Paul Edwards there please? See what I mean? See how hard it is to get hold of him? His mum's not there. He's not at the fucking... You know... every day, every hour, every night, every second... I'm thinking about him. And my heart's breaking, for

*real. I feel fucked up. I feel proper fucked up That's why I ain't been in school for about 3 weeks. My mum said that my schooling's gone down. I'm just fucked... dunno.*¹²¹

The power balance between documentary filmmaker and the person they film is an uneven one. The power is heavily on the side of the person with the camera in their hands, who may not even appear on screen, but gets to choose who they film, where, when and how, while pretending not to impact the situation. Marcel Ophuls said in an interview "as a filmmaker... you are always exploiting. It's part of modern life."¹²² But there are some ways of sharing some of this power in a more collaborative productive relationship. Allowing oneself to be led in conversation, or at least relinquishing control of the subject matter is one, so that filming is a conversation rather than an interview. A reflexive approach which acknowledges the impact of filmmaker and camera is another. Documentary filmmakers rarely make themselves vulnerable during filming, but the impact of doing so can be significant. Power can also be shared by discussion of the decisions on what to film, where and when. The filmmaker Roberto Minnervini has taken this approach a step further. For his 2016 film *The Other Side*, he documented the daily lives of two crack cocaine addicts, including their arguments, their drug use, their comedowns and even their sexual relationship. To do this he solicited their ideas in planning what to film, and then set up the sequences in a filming schedule more akin to drama than documentary, whereby they in effect "played themselves".¹²³ One of the most important ways to share power is to promise a viewing of the documentary while there is still edit time and the genuine intention to recut it if the participant deems necessary. This is an unpopular promise amongst television executives as it is so risky - what if the participant hates the film and withdraws their consent, leaving a hole in the TV

¹²¹ *I 5: This is Me*, Channel 4: 2000

¹²² Ophuls, Marcel in Rosenthal & Corner 2005: 196-7

¹²³ Minnervini Roberto, *The Other Side* (Q&A at Frames of Representation festival ICA, 2016)

schedule and the loss of the entire budget? But the trust and access afforded a filmmaker when this promise has been made, results in a far better filming relationship and therefore a far better documentary, which is far less likely to need to depend on a mere release form for shaky legal permission to broadcast. The power balance between Kimberley and I was unquestionably uneven (although relative to other TV filming relationships it was extraordinarily well balanced) - I was 7 years older than her; I was being paid, she was getting expenses only; I was looking at the story of her life from the outside and had control of the story that was eventually told. She accepted this imbalance with trust and good humour, and I have continued to attempt to share this power with her ever since we first met.

I have relationships that have lasted more than 20 years after filming began. There is a need as a filmmaker, as well as a filmed person, to continue a relationship that has contained such intensity. In some cases it is the filmed person that chooses to move on and abandon the relationship first. In this way Piotrowska's comparison with psychoanalysis is extremely helpful. The need of each protagonist for the other is equally strong. Piotrowska compares the relationship to the transference-love that occurs on the analyst's couch, arguing that this relationship is far more important in the decision to allow oneself to be filmed than any narcissistic notion of celebrity.¹²⁴ It is about finding out how someone else sees you. The need for an audience, for recognition. Echoing Lacan on recognition, Judith Butler writes: "To ask for recognition, or to offer it, is precisely not to ask for recognition of what one already is. It is to solicit a becoming, to instigate a transformation, to petition the future always in relation to the Other."¹²⁵ It could be argued that teenagers are particularly used to inviting and offering recognition to and from each other. Weedon writes: "As individuals inserted within specific discourses, we repeatedly perform modes of

¹²⁴ Piotrowska, Agnieszka 2014:87

¹²⁵ Butler, Judith 2004:44

subjectivity and identity until these are experienced as second nature." As a result of all this, the many hours of tape I recorded with Kimberley are not a document of her reality at all, but a document of our relationship, as well as a film about *what happens when you make a film*. Her reflective comments would have been heard only in her own thoughts if I had not been there to listen. Her image of herself evolved as she saw herself through my eyes and the eyes of the future audience. The camera gave her a mirror in front of which to question, re-imagine and transform herself. So her performance, as Butler and Stuart Hall would have it, was a dance between real experience, how she saw herself, how she felt others saw her and how she wished to be seen.

DAISY: Would you like to marry him?

KIMBERLEY: Yeah man! I imagine myself with a white little skirt, white belly top, a white little jacket and knee high boots, bopping down the aisle, like "C'mon then!" But I dunno, I dunno! We'll just have to wait and see. Twenty Mayfair please. I started smoking from the age of 7 or 8. I don't smoke because my friends do it or nothing. I don't think I look good doing it or anything. I dunno why I do it, I just do. Ooh you tooting at me?! Take me, take me!¹²⁶

My own performance has also been a part of the films I have made about Kimberley. The listener, the antagonist, the friend, the nagging big sister, the godmother. These roles come naturally, and are not faked, but they are also performed to the best of my abilities, with self-awareness. Am I good friend/ a bad influence? *"If you keep doing this Kim, you're going to lose Harvey!"¹²⁷* We deal with these dualities in daily life - the endless contradictions within personalities that mean no two people are alike.

Filming the performance of certain selves may exclude other selves or simply amplify

¹²⁶ Kimberley in *This is Me* 2000

¹²⁷*This is Me Now, More 4: 2010*

a part of the whole. Kimberley at 15 chose to amplify her romantic self, her adult self, her sexy self, to the exclusion of her troubled self, her childish self, her fears. The latter seeped through, but only via the performance of its opposite. Waugh writes of observational documentary: "The genre offers as one of the pleasures of the text the deciphering of borders between social performance, film performance, and so-called private behaviour and the discovery that the borders are both culturally encoded and imaginary." The choice of self that we make when being filmed contains a lot of information about us. Our fantasies and dreams are all made up, but they are a truth about us. When these coincide with the unperformed behaviours that I described in chapter 2, the audience is left with a rich and complex language to decode.

Josephine: Give Me a Voice

Josephine and I met when she was in temporary refugee accommodation in Tyneside, awaiting her children arrival from Zimbabwe, which had been stressfully delayed by the theft of their passports. She was understandably upset and angry and had little patience for anything but the opportunity I was offering her to have her voice heard about her predicament. Her voice was powerful and as long as I just listened and didn't question her, I was allowed to record the situation. Questions reminded her of the arduous process she had gone through to be granted asylum and I didn't want to be another white interrogator. I allowed Josephine to give me whatever version of her story she was most comfortable with. When we met her children off the plane, her son Marshal didn't remember her. There was no need to make any comment, only to record the sadness of it, that they buried in hugs and optimism. I never asked Josephine to talk about it, only letting Marshal tell me from his innocent child's perspective. Josephine used the camera to make intelligent observations about British life - everyone works too hard, mothers are slaves, schools



fig.13 Josephine, still from the documentary

are too lenient, the streets are unkempt, everyone wastes money all the time and the weather is appalling. Apart from this the camera only viewed her through Marshal's eyes, as the person who would not allow him to get his ear pierced for example, as it was un-African for a boy. I also allowed myself to be a protagonist where it helped the story. On one occasion Josephine tested me from her revision book for the British Citizenship Test, delighting in my failure to correctly answer her questions, and brilliantly demonstrating the petty pointlessness of the system.

JOSEPHINE: Who is the head of the Church of England today?

DAISY: Um... the Archbishop of Canterbury?

JOSEPHINE: No! The Queen! (laughs loudly) Right. How many MPs make up the cabinet?

DAISY: Um.... twelve?

JOSEPHINE: No! Twenty! When was the Welsh Assembly established?

DAISY: I don't know.

JOSEPHINE: 1999! Ha!

DAISY: Oh my god...

This adept use of the camera as a political tool to attempt to raise awareness of the tough treatment of refugees arriving in the UK made Josephine much more a collaborator than a subject. We discussed the purpose of the series we were making, what its impact might be and how the sacrifices she was making (time and privacy) to do the filming balanced against the benefits of being heard. When she decided to do another film with me a few years later, it was even more a joint endeavour.

Josephine talked a lot about her experiences of poverty in Zimbabwe as compared to her experiences of poverty in Tyneside. She understood that poverty is relative, but wanted to use her African experiences to try and compel her friends in Newcastle to deal with it better. The BBC were looking for documentaries for a strand called *Why Poverty?* instigated by Storyville commissioner Nick Fraser, so I pitched the idea to them and they liked it. Josephine became partly a presenter at that point, rather than an observed documentary participant, a role she embraced and is extremely proud of, going to this day by the nickname I gave her in the title: *The Queen of North Shields*.

I'll Be Your Mirror

Longitudinal documentary has a distinctive impact on its participants' identities. A review of 7Up in the Evening Standard in 1984 described the series as "television as a magic mirror, a crystal ball in reverse, able to show people their previous forgotten selves, undistorted by tricks of memory."¹²⁸ Until 28Up when Claire Lewis joined the production team, no-one maintained relationships with the 'children' they filmed and Lewis found she had to spend considerable time tracking them down. Subsequently she has kept in touch and considers them 'family'¹²⁹. But Peter dropped out after

¹²⁸ Grove, Valerie 1984:25 in Bruzzi *Seven Up* 2007:3

¹²⁹ Lewis, Claire 2006

28Up saying “The problem we have is when the camera portrays people maybe accurately, but doesn’t match people’s perceptions of themselves.”¹³⁰ Longitudinal studies since *Seven Up* have been largely made by women, perhaps because of the necessity to maintain intimate relationships. Marilyn Gaunt’s *Class of ’62* revisits the classmates she filmed 33 years earlier. Annie Goldston’s *Sheilas: 28 Years On* also revisits previous filmees and Gillian Armstrong’s *Not Fourteen Again* is the fourth film in a series about the same three working class Australian women growing up over 20 years. Robert Winston’s *Child of Our Time* is an exception, but takes a much more scientific standpoint, and undoubtedly relies on a team of female researchers to liaise with the families, as very many documentary series do. The strong female friendships between Kim, Josephine and I were the very basis of each film, both the subject and the means to completion.

The complex cocktail of a real friendship and a professional commitment to representing it is not straightforward to navigate. As Bruzzi writes: “Documentaries are inevitably the result of the intrusion of the filmmaker onto the situation being filmed... the truth comes into being only at the moment of filming... through the encounter between filmmakers, subjects and spectators.”¹³¹ That encounter can be warm while the camera is on, and in some cases it remains warm when the camera is returned to its bag. Kimberley and I have genuinely remained friends in between filming. Many things have happened in our lives that have gone unrecorded. I was at Kim’s bedside on Christmas day when she gave birth to her first child. She was there to support me when my relationship broke down. I helped Kim move house when she needed to start afresh in another town. She came to visit me when I was broke and gave my daughter the courage to swim in the sea. I visited often when she was in hospital having chemotherapy. She trusted me when at her most vulnerable and

¹³⁰ Lewis 2006 in Bruzzi 2007

¹³¹ Bruzzi 2006:11

honoured me by making me godmother to two of her kids. We are those rare people for each other that have been constant with support and love for twenty years, and I expect another twenty. Returning to the camera after ten years without it was odd, but not difficult. We used it as a way to talk about things that life usually deters. We used it to think about motherhood and relationships and our friendship. In a way it triggered us both to be better and Harvey aged two, was the benefactor. Without the camera we might have been lazier, less thoughtful, more selfish. On the first day of filming Kim said to me "I can't believe you're a mum." I replied "I can't believe you are." The camera gave us space to step back and look at ourselves in a way you don't when doing laundry or making a toddler a meal that you know will mostly end up on the floor. When she was 15 and I was 22 there was an age gap, but at 25 and 32 it seemed to have shrunk. Our second children, both boys were born a week apart. Their relationship was starting to take shape and as two three year olds they began to have a lot of fun together, as well as some feisty battles. SO in the making of the second film there was no point even pretending there was a professional line between us. Josephine and I stay in constant touch using Facebook and Whatsapp. Although we live 300 miles apart we see each other a few times a year, both of us travelling for important events. I attended her graduation and her first community Culture and Diversity event. She attended my birthday party and my PhD exhibition. We behave like family and she initiated us calling each other sister. Our sons are close too, often spending holidays together skating and breakdancing. There is an understanding that we might do more filming in the future and we occasionally mention it, running ideas past each other, or reflecting on how things have changed since the first film.

The convention in the mid 90s was observational camerawork - a "fly on the wall" as opposed to what filmmaker Sean McAllister has more interestingly called "a fly in the

ointment”¹³². Kimberley made me realise that I needed to be present and involved. It was both a storytelling technique and an ethical decision. I knew I couldn’t simply watch as she became upset or got into trouble. I had an elder sister role in her life, regardless of the camera. I knew that I was a part of the story as Harvey’s godmother and Kim’s friend. Even the relatively tiny budget of £60,000 from More4, was enough to buy us both some time to reflect on her situation. My relationship with Kimberley meant the power balance in the production process was somewhat disrupted. The access I offered to More 4 was entirely dependent on this long term relationship, which bought a degree of autonomy in the edit. The pervasive unspoken idea that documentary participants are a resource to be harvested for factual television held no weight in this edit. The production adhered more to the rules of a very personal project, similar to that made by a filmmaker about their own family or personal journey. I was both director and participant myself, as the relationship between us was very much the subject of the film. More 4 allowed a first person voice over and some control over the title - their first suggestion, the reductive and sensational “*Teen Mum, Ten Years On*” being strongly rejected by Kim and myself. The press was also handled sensitively, with Channel 4 appointing a PR person known for managing sensitive stories. This led to Kim and I being invited onto the *Lorraine* show on the day of broadcast, together as a mother/godmother filmmaking team. Lorraine was requested to be sympathetic rather than judgemental as is her usual style anyway, and the interview was remarkably insightful, far from dwelling on the mistakes Kimberley and I may have made. This treatment as a human being, rather than a media commodity, reinforced Kim’s confidence and expectations of empathy. My own role, as godmother and filmmaker was also accepted as a natural, useful and therapeutic one, from which important lessons about the way young single mothers are viewed by society could be drawn. The parallel universe I feared, whereby Kim’s

¹³² McAllister in masterclass at Goldsmiths January 2016

life became another example of how teenage mums fail and deserve their own failures, did not materialise as a result.

Kimberley's positive clear-eyed and empathetic experience of reception by the media meant she was willing, and is still willing, to share her intimate life with the outside world. This extract from our 2017 interview for this research project exemplifies her sense that the more and better an audience got to know and understand her the more they would empathise and the less they would judge:

"I wanted to connect with the people watching me. I wanted them to know me, the person I was. I wanted them to get to know me when they were watching me and really get that connection and think yeah I get that girl, i understand where she's coming from and I get that. I think I always try to get that. For me it was just about being real... keeping it real."¹³³

Josephine too took a very philosophical attitude when her documentaries were broadcast, despite plenty of bigoted hatred from EDL members against her and her kids on Twitter:

DAISY: Did you ever regret letting me film you?

JOSEPHINE: No, not at all. I don't regret... not one thing.

DAISY: There must have been moments when you regretted it?!

JOSEPHINE: You know the moments that I regretted it... well the last thing I wanted was to put my children at risk. That was the moment when I wished that I had not done it. Wishing otherwise, it could have turned out differently. But it wasn't a very

¹³³ Kimberley interviewed for *This is Not Us*, 2017

*easy choice. Cos not saying anything was also wrong in its own way. I wanted people to know the real truth about life and what happens.*¹³⁴

Nash has described the way that “power flows between filmmaker and participant, with both actively influencing the documentary text... in a constantly negotiated relationship.”¹³⁵ This collaborative, relational process and rolling consent, is key to maintaining positive long term relationships. There is also a sense that in these one-to-one scenarios individuality is clearer and better respected, avoiding Cooper’s central problem in filming an other: “the privileging of universality over particularity¹³⁶”, which was certainly one of the problems One Direction fans identified. Nash’s four key requirements for filmmakers seeking an ethical encounter are very helpful¹³⁷:

1. acknowledge the contribution of the other
2. acknowledge the limits of one’s own understanding
3. become vulnerable in the filming relationship
4. admit the limits of one’s own power

I would like to add a fifth requirement, which is unpopular amongst risk-adverse production companies, but I think:

5. allow participant input into the final representation

Nash uses a Foucauldian perspective to foreground the contest between filmmaker and participant, focussing on the mode of engagement as the most important limiter

¹³⁴ Josephine interviewed for *This is Not Us*, 2017

¹³⁵ Nash *Documentary for the Other* 2011:230

¹³⁶ Cooper 2006 in Nash *ibid* 2011

¹³⁷ Nash *ibid* 2011:238

of risk. But the idea of participant as active creator¹³⁸ is not simply an ethical choice, but also a creative one. It opens up a more interesting realm within a film, of how the participant actively wishes to be seen. Joshua Oppenheimer succeeds at this marvellously in *The Act Of Killing*¹³⁹, allowing his participants to co-direct the scenes which reconstruct the murders they committed. Errol Morris says the film is about “the lies we tell ourselves.”¹⁴⁰ Documentary is at its best when it contains a tension between the perspective of the filmmaker and the performance of the filmed person.

In this chapter I have analysed the impact on identity of being filmed, reflecting, being filmed, reflecting as a regular longitudinal experience. Since filming the documentaries, Kim and Josephine have both chosen to continue sharing their experiences on social media, filming themselves on their phones and broadcasting live on Facebook. The intimacy and unmediated access that Kim gives others to her thoughts and decisions has been a powerful tool in resisting the shame she once felt about her situation. Josephine uses her broadcasts to talk about the politics of race and class, and to inspire her extended family with her latest exploits. They have both developed a pragmatic habit of taking negative comments with a large pinch of salt, choosing instead to reflect thoughtfully on the self and make their own decisions about what to change or not. As a number of those I have filmed have also continued to self-represent, chapter four looks at the difference between being represented and self-representing in more detail.

Chapter 4

¹³⁸ see McDougall in Nash 2011

¹³⁹ Oppenheimer *The Act of Killing* 2012

¹⁴⁰ Morris in Vice 2013

This is Me Unmediated

Representing the Self

YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr have swept in a new phase in storytelling where each person can own and publish their own life story if they wish. Jerry Rothwell calls this “the continuous rise of the subject, towards a participatory utopia in which everyone is broadcasting their own ‘unmediated’ stories.”¹⁴¹ Now that everyone films, edits and represents themselves, how has the role of the documentary filmmaker changed? The reservation Rothwell expresses about this trend is key to my practice: “What space does this leave for a critical filmmaking in which material is taken at more than it’s surface value?”¹⁴² Bill Nichols has described documentary as occupying “a complex zone of representation in which the art of observing, responding and listening must be combined with the art of shaping, interpreting, or arguing.”¹⁴³ As Rothwell says: “The filmmaker is not just a collector of images. As a filmmaker you try to get underneath your subject’s performance, which may include putting the material in a context different from that originally intended by the subject.”¹⁴⁴ Ultimately the intention of the filmmaker is all important; are they trying to faithfully represent the story, if through their subjective viewpoint? Or are they deliberately misrepresenting the subject, due to pressures which are likely commercial? How much mediation is too much? My research, both theoretical and creative must engage with the new fashion for self-representation and investigate what it means to the documentary filmmaker, when as Tommy Tickle asserts in his

¹⁴¹ Rothwell, Jerry in Austin & DeJong 2008:155

¹⁴² Rothwell, Jerry in Austin & DeJong 2008:155

¹⁴³ Nichols, Bill 1997

¹⁴⁴ Rothwell, Jerry in Austin & DeJong 2008:156

interview for this project: *"Everybody's a fucking documentary-maker nowadays... everybody's got a phone haven't they? Everybody's got one of these nan!"*¹⁴⁵

In 1998 Cheryl Harris wrote "Television is our most pervasive representation of a shared cultural space."¹⁴⁶ But 20 years later it has been slain by YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, which have left television looking distinctly old-fashioned and undemocratic. There are many ways and mediums now by which we circulate meanings in everyday life, represent the world to each other, and represent ourselves to the world. YouTube is represented itself in the media as a lawless... amateur... free-for-all, the home of an exuberantly creative and dangerous exotic youth, addicted to the new technology and possibly ruined by it. They are seen as savage and undisciplined, sometimes even referred to as "the YouTube generation", and combining anxieties about youth morality and new media, they are frequently the subject of moral panic; a problem amplified in the public imagination. Burgess and Green note that this panic mirrors all panics at new technologies, particularly those that put cultural production in the hands of the masses, or lower classes, like the introduction of the pauper press in the early nineteenth century.¹⁴⁷

Youtube

One Direction fans used Youtube voraciously between 2010 and 2016, to represent themselves and share their thoughts and feelings with other fans. Leader fans such as *thatsojack*, *Lottie tommo*¹⁴⁸, *Tyler Oakley* and *Caspar* would also gain huge followings for One Direction related vlogs. Tyler Oakley has made a Youtube career of his

¹⁴⁵ Asquith *This is Not Us*, University of Sussex 2018

¹⁴⁶ Harris *****

¹⁴⁷ Burgess & Green 2013: 14

¹⁴⁸ sister of Louis Tomlinson

fandom, getting retweeted by Harry in July 2013, cheered by a stadium full of fans that August and even drawing the attention of One Direction's management who allowed him to *interview*¹⁴⁹ them in September 2013, with a rather limited range of allowed questions, but managing to ask them if they "don't wanna see fan fiction" holding on to his status as an *insider* as well as a *leader* fan. The interview got 5.7m views on his Youtube channel and took him to 1m followers. The "One Direction effect" has apparently meant a huge increase in subscribers for white male Youtubers in the last four years, particularly the British ones.¹⁵⁰

YouTube gives *ordinary people* access to the media world, to a voice that can be heard by anyone in any country, and if sufficiently interesting, go viral and reach enormous audiences. When Chris Crocker became globally infamous for his "Leave Britney Alone!" video in 2007¹⁵¹, which in at time of writing in 2018 has had nearly 50 million views, it became clear that anyone could become a YouTube star just by having a strong opinion on something. The YouTube "rant", the genre of video that I am about to investigate, was born. In the 2010s it is possible to be a professional YouTuber, and earn a wage from the advertising revenue. The understanding of amateur bedroom video producers as to how public or private their videos are, varies. For the most part, the sheer scale on which YouTube operates now protects individuals from over-exposure. Jenkins asks "How many visitors to the site move below the most visible content, especially if they don't already have a stake in the topics or communities involved?" But take the example of *Lonelygirl15*, a YouTube vlogger whose emotional post about her religious parents ruining her relationship with her boyfriend attracted half a million hits in 48 hours. That the video turned out to be a filmmaking

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teg6qTE9Hjs> Tyler Coakley's Youtube channel

¹⁵⁰ Denis Crushell, vice president of Europe for Tubular Labs in BBC article 2015 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-34504053>

¹⁵¹ <https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=kHmvkRoEowc>

experiment did not detract from the fact that such a seemingly intimate teenage space combined with the confessional genre had a powerful draw on an audience. It is unclear what amateur YouTubers' expectations are of who else might see their videos. Certainly their parents are not supposed to. But this will be the last generation of Western teenagers with parents who are not digitally literate, who are on the other side of Jenkins' "participation gap"¹⁵². Perhaps they are the only generation ever who won't expect adults to enter their space online. The anonymity that is afforded YouTube participants means the comments sections are routinely filled with 'hate' and 'trolls' being provocatively unpleasant. Lange states this is accepted "as part of the game, taking the bad with the good. Learning how to manage 'trolls', both practically and emotionally, is one of the core competencies required for effective or enjoyable participation."¹⁵³

For the One Direction fandom YouTube is yet another social network, a way of communicating with each other. The vlog is technically easy to produce, requiring little more than a webcam and basic editing skills¹⁵⁴ - jump-cuts being the tradition - and the direct conversational style inherently invites feedback. The comments area below the video is a central feature of this genre, often physically pointed out from within the vlog, inviting critique and discussion. Lange notes that YouTubers then respond to and address the comments they receive in their next vlog.¹⁵⁵ Those that merely watch, without participating have earned the dismissive name 'lurkers'¹⁵⁶, or more recently 'creepers'. Arguably, says Henry Jenkins, people are using YouTube "because they feel the emotional support of a community eager to see their

¹⁵² Jenkins, Henry in Burgess & Green 2009:116

¹⁵³ Burgess & Green 2009:96

¹⁵⁴ Burgess & Green 2009:54

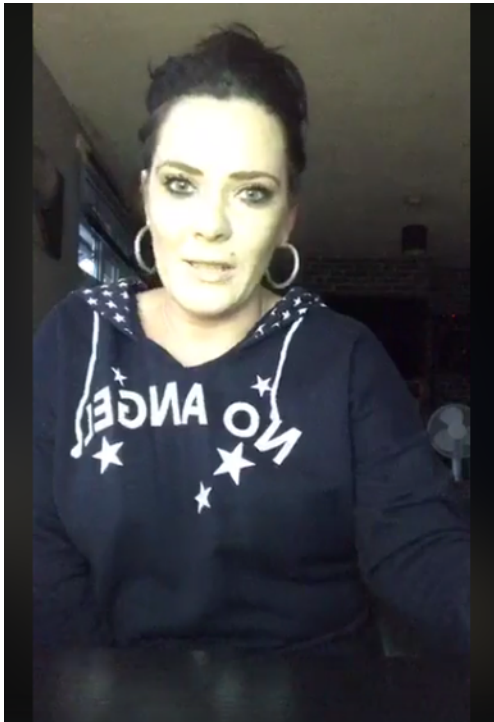
¹⁵⁵ Lange 2007a

¹⁵⁶ Burgess & Green 2009:82

productions... YouTube transforms all consumers into potential authors."¹⁵⁷ Before YouTube however, fans were more cautious about who saw their fan productions. The 'vidders' featured in Jenkins' *Textual Poachers* in 1992, did not want to be identified for fear their videos would be misunderstood by the world outside their fandom. For example "when a Kirk/Spock vid, set to Nine Inch Nails' 'Closer' leaked onto YouTube without its' creator's permission, its queer reading of the Star Trek characters as lovers was widely read as comic..."¹⁵⁸

Facebook

Facebook Live has allowed video diarists or vloggers to be selective about their audiences. I will look at three sets of videos broadcast on Facebook by previous



participants of my documentaries. Kimberley uses Facebook Live to film her kids and allow her Facebook friends to see how they are getting on, with an intimacy which she may not wish to share on Youtube. She also uses it to sell a range of items, from bath bombs to Ann Summers lingerie and vibrators.¹⁵⁹ Most days it is possible to spend 20-30 minutes listening to her talk about a product and/or share a story from her life with partner Dan and four kids. Barrie from *My Gay Dads* uses

fig.14 Kimberley, Facebook Live 2018

¹⁵⁷ Jenkins, Henry in Burgess & Green 2009:116

¹⁵⁸ Jenkins, Henry in Burgess & Green 2009:117

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1519544428135288/> Kim's BeYoutiful Boutique on Facebook



fig.15 Barrie, Facebook Live 2017

2018)¹⁶¹ to keep fit and achieve their dreams. Many of her posts appear to be aimed at family and friends back in Zimbabwe. All three are in control of the way they represent themselves and their families, performing the self that they wish to share with the outside world. This control does not mean the audience necessarily get the impression that is intended however.



fig.16 Josephine, Facebook Live 2018

"... I'm just popping on to say that I am literally super excited because we've got 20% all toys this weekend, so I'm really really excited... Who is going to watch the Fifty Shades movie tonight? I'm s excited about it. Well if you are going, screen shot your cinema ticket

¹⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/Gaydads> Barrie Drewitt-Barlow Twitter account

¹⁶¹ <https://www.facebook.com/josephine.siziba> Josephine Siziba Facebook account

and send me it over and I can give you 15% off all orders until 10am tomorrow morning. I've read all the books so literally I'm super excited. Please feel free to add your friends, family, work colleagues to my group and they can get the offer too. What's everybody up to this weekend? We've got loads and loads and loads of amazing offers... I'm just going to show you a few of the amazing items we are launching, amazing colours. A lot of my ladies love the Ellen non-wired bra.... mags how are you, hope you're doing well. These are £10. £10 for such a lovely bra, they sit lush, honestly. Match em up with our mix and match bottoms as well.... a thong or a Brazilian or... Hot pink, the green, honestly ladies these do look amazing on.... I've always been quite reluctant to wear a non wired bra but these pick you up in all the right places and they wash really well too. All you've got to do is pop me your address and I'll pop you over a catalogue...."¹⁶²

Zigi Shipper from *After the Holocaust* has also taken control of his own representation since I made a film with him. In 2017 his grandson Darren Richman finished a documentary that exclusively told Zigi's story, and in the way he wished it to be told. It was a simple and beautifully made project that allowed Zigi to tell his life story without having it compared to anyone else's, juxtaposed or mediated in any way. Zigi was a very supportive collaborator on *After the Holocaust*, but even so he understood that the documentary was about more than just his rehearsed story. The power to control that story and offer it without the subjective viewpoint of a filmmaker must have been important to him.¹⁶³ Even my cousin Johnny Browne has now embraced Facebook. After I printed and posted to him all the reviews of the documentary we made, and all the messages that were sent to me on Facebook, he began to take an interest in the conversation he couldn't access, finally persuading me to take him to buy a tablet, which he now uses with some guidance, in the library, once a week. Johnny is interested in his online image and how he can represent

¹⁶² 9 Feb 2018 1pm Kimberley Walker, Facebook Live

¹⁶³ 84303 by Darren Richman <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/84303-doc-film/8-4-3-0-3-doc-film>

himself with photos and stories, as well as videos others tag him in when he sings Irish ballads in the pubs of West Clare.¹⁶⁴

Jerry Rothwell notes that “the use of self-shot footage of intimate moments is becoming part of documentary language and one of the ways that new technologies - digital video, internet distribution, home recording and editing - are transforming documentary practice.”¹⁶⁵ This new prevalence “opens up different kinds of relationships between filmmakers and subjects, raising new questions about where the role of the filmmaker starts and ends.”¹⁶⁶ The first appearance of the confessional video diary was in the 1980s, when Hi8 camcorders made it possible for people to film themselves, and it is now the dominant form on YouTube. Rothwell describes the attraction of the diary format as being that “it plays into our fantasy of seeing what really goes on when we aren’t there, of getting closer to how life might be without the cameras present at all.” He quotes Vertov here on the impulse to “show people without masks, without makeup, to catch them through the eye of the camera in a moment when they are not acting, to read their thoughts, laid bare by the camera.”¹⁶⁷ But the modern video diarist has a strong idea of the audience they are performing for. The difference is in the subjectivity of the filmmaker being bypassed. “what makes this material distinctively different from other material captured by the lens is precisely its mix of private and public, its ambiguous combination of intimacy and performance.”¹⁶⁸ Rothwell goes on to describe the video diary as “an experiment with the borders of public and private.”¹⁶⁹ More and

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/johnny.browne.71697> Johnny Browne’s Facebook page

¹⁶⁵ Rothwell, Jerry in Austin & DeJong 2008:152

¹⁶⁶ Rothwell, Jerry in Austin & DeJong 2008:152

¹⁶⁷ Vertov 1984:41 in Rothwell, Jerry in Austin & DeJong 2008:153

¹⁶⁸ Rothwell, Jerry in Austin & DeJong 2008:153

¹⁶⁹ Rothwell, Jerry in Austin & DeJong 2008:154

more the documentary maker's subjectivity is removed from the equation at the shooting stage - fixed rig series in which cameras are placed all over a hospital (*One Born Every Minute*), a school (*Educating Essex*) or even a family home (*The Family*) are immensely popular, because they offer a view of an institution that doesn't appear to be authored by a journalist. However the decisions that are made during an edit shape the tone and message of these films far more than is evident on screen. Perhaps using YouTube footage rather than shooting one's own documentary footage is a logical progression in a movement that has seen cameras get smaller and lighter and less intrusive - what Chanan calls "the invisibility of the camera"¹⁷⁰ and more able to capture reality faithfully. Subject-shot footage is the next step a filmmaker can take into their interior world, into their private space and into their thoughts. Although it could be argued that being in charge of the camera themselves may actually increase the performance of the self. Pennebaker answered criticism of the 'acting up' in his film "Don't Look Back" about Bob Dylan, by saying that of course Dylan was performing - "he was playing himself, and doing it very well".¹⁷¹ In Chapter three I explored the idea that we all *play ourselves* in everyday life, not just when a camera is pointing our way. However, Butler suggests that pressuring a witness to speak may lead to 'falsifications'¹⁷² due to their desire to please. Could this section of the ethical documentary minefield be avoided by making a film entirely from YouTube videos? Could the filmmaker be removed from the filming part of the process, so it can not be said that they influenced it in any way, particularly when the producers of the videos did not know when they made them that they might be used in this way?

¹⁷⁰ Chanan, Michael in Austin & DeJong 2008:124

¹⁷¹ Chanan, Michael in Austin & DeJong 2008:125

¹⁷² Butler 2004:45

Twitter

The voice that the One Direction fandom worked together to amplify on Twitter, and that I began to explore in Chapter One, was the only way they could be heard - en masse. They would encourage each other to retweet certain hashtags over and over, in some cases hundreds of times in one sitting, to get it trending and noticed around



the world. One Direction's management latched onto this powerful resource in the shape teenage girls' thumb-time, by creating competitions and votes that involved their choice of publicity-friendly hashtags. But the fans also used it to promote their own ideas,

fig.17 Twitter Worldwide Trends 15 Aug 2013

Larry being the prime example. The ideas could involve picture themes like #HarryBodyShots which was very popular, or requests to the band such as #NiallTakeASelfieWithTheo which begged for a photo of Niall with his newborn nephew. #StrandWatch chronicled Zayn's haircut and which bit of his quiff was falling forwards at any given moment, while #HarryWeKnowWhatYouDid let Harry Styles know that the fans had busted him for favouriting a sexy photo of a naked girl. He responded to this global Twitter trend by immediately favouriting as many cute animals as possible. The voice Directioners found collectively was also used to raise money for charity, vote the band into award success and request their choice of next single off the album. It gave the girls a sense of being part of a fierce community. It also reinforced the sense that they were stronger together as a unified group, which gave rise to much internal policing of any divisions. Twitter also was the hub for

sharing other media - fan art on tumblr, fan fiction on Wordpress or fan vids from Youtube.

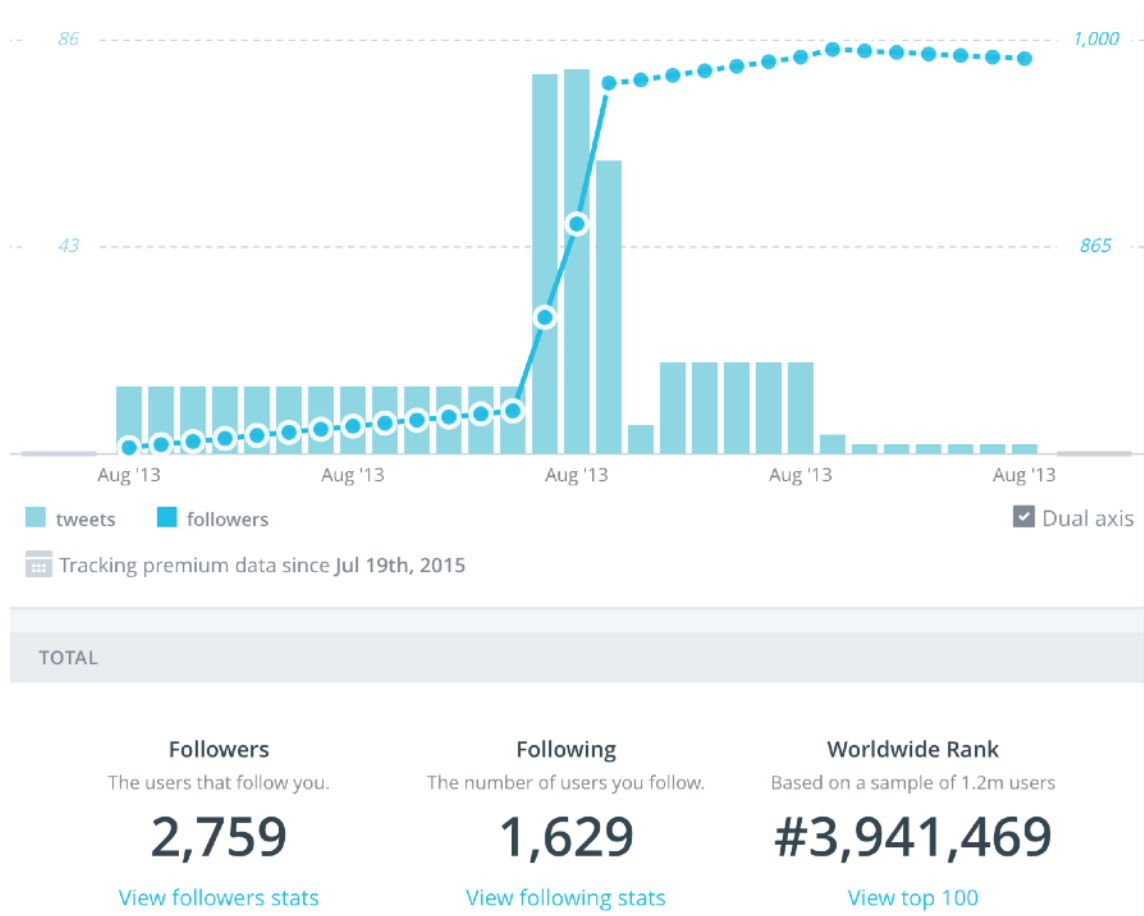


fig.18 Graph showing spike in followers of @daisyasquith by TwitterCounter

The collective voice that Twitter affords the fandom came into its own when *Crazy About One Direction* was broadcast. A huge spike occurred in mentions of "larry" in the 24 hours after broadcast. As fig.19 shows there is also a sharp spike in followers to @daisyasquith. Getting hashtags to trend first in the UK during broadcast, and then worldwide, meant the Larry Shippers were heard and acknowledged by mainstream news journalists as well as famous vloggers and bloggers all over the internet. Mike Willis (7.5k subscribers) got 13,328 views for his vlog *#RIPLarryShippers Did 42 One*

*Direction Fans Commit Suicide Over Documentary? (Liam Payne Responds).*¹⁷³

AbnormallyAdam (77k subscribers) got 17,431 views for CRAZY ABOUT ONE DIRECTION DOCUMENTARY.¹⁷⁴ The hugely popular Youtube Shane Dawson (12m subscribers!) also made a video about Larry Shippers, which attempted to persuade the fandom that the suicides were a hoax, getting 730,072 views.¹⁷⁵ Many fans didn't appreciate his suggestion though, that Larry might not be real.



fig.19 Tweet claiming Larry is real

Found Footage

The first site of my creative and critical practice is YouTube, and the response videos that fans made to my documentary in the few days after it was broadcast. They turned to YouTube to “reassemble (themselves) in their own likeness.”¹⁷⁶ Their Youtube rants are autobiographical and work as sites of resistance against the dominant representation of the fandom (my documentary). This resistance is powerful and shouldn't be underestimated, as Jenkins writes: “Human rights activist Ethan Zuckerman argues that any platform sufficiently powerful to enable the distribution of cute cat pictures can also be deployed to bring down a government under the right circumstances. Right now, people are learning how to produce, upload and circulate content. What happens next is up to us.”¹⁷⁷ I downloaded and analysed a

¹⁷³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWoFAHYhc-o>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysu8R9qwEP4>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogwZvVbzSII>

¹⁷⁶ Gusdorf in Piotrowska 2014: 180

¹⁷⁷ Jenkins, Henry in Burgess & Green 2009: 114

large number of these videos and took a core sample of 40, which includes almost all the videos available with the hashtag #ThisIsNotUs, only rejecting a few of them during the edit for either technical reasons, usually sound problems at the recording stage, or ethical reasons if the girls appear to be under 16. All the Youtube videos in my sample are transcribed in Appendix 1, and many are available on the website for this project <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com>.

The videos offer an opportunity to allow the fandom to represent themselves in the way they feel is appropriate, and to give them a chance to critique my documentary. They passionately criticise the choice of fans for being too *extreme*, not *normal*, too *intense*, not representative of *them*. The *true* Directioner documentary that they say they would like to make themselves is not visible on any of their YouTube channels and may have proved too difficult to complete. The temptation to help them make this film is strong. Could this new film serve the fandom's desire to set the record straight and let the boys know they aren't all crazy? Should this be part of the intention of my practice? By setting out to help them make their response I would also be making a documentary project that interrogates the ethical issues in documentary representation. The form and content both ask questions about representation.

Of the 40 videos in my sample, thirty-six are made by US teenagers, two are British, one German and one Danish. Their superficially observed ethnicities are as follows: twenty-five white, six Hispanic, five black, four Asian. There are thirty-eight girls and two boys, both boys identifying as gay within their channels. Their ages appear to range from 13 to 20. The videos last between three and nine minutes and have many features in common. They are all filmed on either a computer webcam or a mobile

phone and they all feature one teenager addressing the camera directly, almost always from their bedroom. The videos share content as well, sometimes seeming to chime together, occasionally using almost the same words to make the same arguments. The first part of my practice involves the purposefully minimal editing of this material to create a new film, which allows the fandom to contest my representation of them while simultaneously questioning the shame that they have internalised.¹⁷⁸

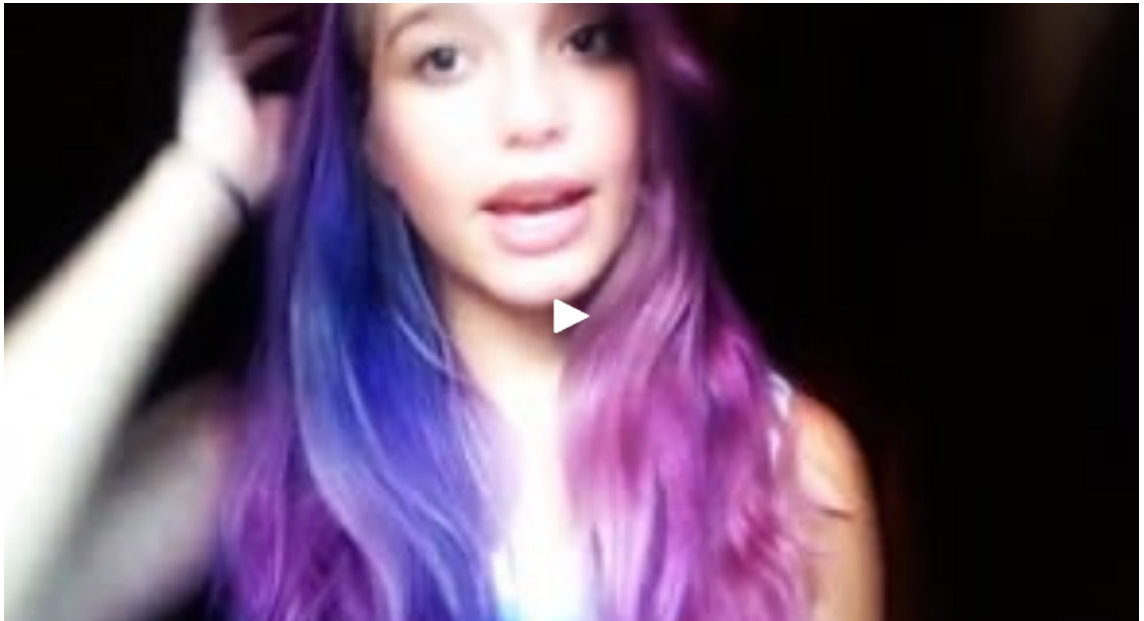


fig.20 'Casey' contests the documentary on her Youtube channel, August 2013

Twenty-one fans were critical of the girls who were filmed and said the documentary should have been about "normal fans who have never met the boys and have boring lives" (justalyssa)¹⁷⁹. Eleven of the videos expressed the idea that *Larry shipping* and fan art should not be on television: "that stuff doesn't go on television!" (alanagrace). Nine said they were ashamed of the fandom "Right now I'm ashamed to show my face!" (6directionerxo) and eight said they were afraid of what the band would think: "The boys are gonna see that! Aaargh!" (iwannabeaunicorn). Seven YouTubers worried that *Larry shippers* may commit suicide and five admitted that fans are

¹⁷⁸ <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com>

¹⁷⁹ see appendix I for transcript

“sometimes crazy.” Five of the videos were extremely critical of Channel 4, but three admitted they had not seen the documentary yet. It was completely acceptable to join the protest against the documentary, in fandom solidarity, without having actually seen it. The actual sequences in the program do not get specific mention. The Larry section is considered most offensive, but in the fandom response the noisy fact of its simple existence overwhelms and drowns out the actual content.

Working with found footage has now become a genre in itself, with festivals such as *Jornadas de Reapropiación* in Mexico and *Frames of Representation* at the ICA giving a platform to films made entirely from footage found on the internet, CCTV, or home videos. Adam Curtis has made it his speciality, using masses of BBC archive, much of it from the 1970s, to demonstrate and illustrate his polemics.¹⁸⁰ Xu Bing’s recent film *Dragonfly Eyes* ignores the original intention of the footage entirely, using randomly sourced CCTV images to construct a love story.¹⁸¹ Maxim Pozdorovkin’s *Our New President*¹⁸² takes yet another step into this danger zone of reappropriation, by embracing the lies told in the found footage. Using Russia Today broadcasts intercut with Youtube representations, the film allows Russians to tell us why they want Trump to win the election, and disturbingly, why they know he will, because Putin will fix it. My reflexive practice for this project investigates the possibilities for telling a story using only the footage found on Youtube.

In this chapter I have engaged with the ways in which self-representation has altered the territory of documentary and the role of the filmmaker in representing reality. The possibilities for broadcasting the “unmediated” self are increasingly more popular and I deal here with just a few of them. These representations however are as

¹⁸⁰ see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/adamcurtis>

¹⁸¹ Bing *Dragonfly Eyes* 2018.

¹⁸² Pozdorovkin *Our New President* 2018.

performed as mediated ones and influenced by the many factors described in chapters one to three. What is missing again here, is the space between filmer and filmed, the actual subject matter of a documentary. Found footage seems to offer an opportunity to delete the relationship from a film, but is it preferable to reduce the sense of mediation? In chapter five I describe, analyse and reflect upon my practice work with both found and filmed footage for this PhD.

Chapter 5

Reflexive Practice

The creative research for this project has finally resulted in three different modes of practice apart from this written thesis: a gallery installation, a curated online space and a linear narrative film. All three indications of the research are titled *This is Not Us*, and they answer the same enquiry in slightly different ways. They purposefully employ different degrees and style of mediation, in an experiment of both ethics and aesthetics. The linear narrative film is the closest to the type of documentary making I am familiar with, where editing is designed for clarity and entertainment. The installation has been constructed with the viewer in mind as an interactive and active participant, challenged more directly to think about their own role as audience. The online space is designed to free the source material from as much of my own mediation and juxtaposition, what Tommy Tickle might call “mischief”(!)¹⁸³, giving the audience a chance to explore, uncover and curate a story for themselves. These three modes of documentary work all enquire after the impact upon filmed participants of documentaries; they all investigate performances of the self; they all challenge the ethics and limits of representation and they all ask the audience to consider their role in meaning-making.

This is Not Us

The first element of my practice is intended to both interrogate my previous practice as a filmmaker and challenge an audience to think about the way they see the fans in my work. Working with their self-shot footage removes many of my usual opportunities for mediation of a story; all those that occur during filming. Any desire to please the filmmaker is removed from this footage, but there is undoubtedly still

¹⁸³ Tommy interviewed for *This is Not Us*, University of Sussex 2018

an element of performance, as they are playing to the fandom, a different crowd, but just as demanding of certain language, tone, passion, content. Their sense of community is evident, with some validating of others, echoing and supporting other Youtubers, to create a shared voice, which is exemplified by their use of Twitter hashtags as described in Chapter 4. The authoring of an edit is not removed by my use of this footage, and this is also investigated by the edit itself. Is it admissible for me to make cuts in their videos? Or should I play them uncut for an audience in the way “open space” documentary might? In service to this idea I have presented their videos uncut on the website for *This is Not Us*. At the same time I ask: is there a way to make the questions raised by their videos more accessible, and therefore more effective, by editing? How does juxtaposition of videos by different fans create new meanings? This question is explored by the editing of a 22 minute linear film, designed to be watched in full in one sitting.¹⁸⁴ The arguments are grouped thematically so that the fans voices chime together, and the film has a sense of progress. The jump cuts that were part of the creator’s original videos remain, but I haven’t created any new jump cuts. If there is a cut in a video, it is clear where it is, as it cuts to another speaker. There are no cutaways available anyway. In editing I was aware that I was making the fans more succinct, possibly more coherent, but I accepted this level of mediation of their material as an unavoidable side effect of making the material accessible. If the videos played back to back uncut the film would be around 3 and a half hours long and extremely repetitive and slow-moving, as it would include every diversion, re-emphasis, interruption and pause that occurs in the recording. My mediation exists in the film nonetheless, in the choice of participants, although I have represented them evenly across the group and only rejected some for technical issues. The initial 22 minute film contains no titles, music, voice over, exteriors or cutaways. It rejects all the aesthetic tricks of television and

¹⁸⁴ <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/youtube/?p>

attempts to cut as infrequently as possible. However it does contain cuts in the service of narrative and also to a comparatively small degree, of entertainment. This is not to say that the cuts ever mislead as to the meaning that the creator of the video intended, but they allow the meanings to be transmitted more succinctly. The film is designed to be viewed at a festival or in a gallery space, more on which later in this chapter.

This is the Real Me

The second part of my practice takes in participants from five of my other self-shot documentaries: Kimberley from *This Is Me (2000)*¹⁸⁵ and *This Is Me Now (2010)*¹⁸⁶, who I have known for 20 years now and is subject of chapter three; Marshal and Josephine

from *My New Home*¹⁸⁷(2005-10), a five year documentary project about refugee families settling in Britain; Johnny and Mary, my family members from the film about my mother's secret adoption from Ireland *After the Dance (2015)*¹⁸⁸; Vegas from *Crazy About One Direction (2013)*, who is now 16 years old; Zigi Shipper from *Britain's Holocaust Survivors (2014)*¹⁸⁹ and Tommy Tickle aka Gary Lawford, from the film *Clowns (2008)*¹⁹⁰ who has been an on-off friend for 10 years since filming.

In *This is the Real Me* I set out to make a film about being filmed. I asked the experts what the impact of being in a documentary is on their lives. I asked them eight core questions:

¹⁸⁵ Asquith *I5:This is Me*, 48 mins, Channel 4 2000

¹⁸⁶ Asquith *This is Me Now* retitled by channel *Kimberley:Young Mum Ten Years On*, 47 mins, 2010 More 4

¹⁸⁷ Asquith *Britain: My New Home*, 5x47 mins 2010 More 4

¹⁸⁸ Asquith *After the Dance* retitled by channel *My Mother the Secret Baby*, 77 mins, broadcast 30 March 2015 BBC4

¹⁸⁹ Asquith *After the Holocaust* retitled by Channel 4 *Britain's Holocaust Survivors* 47 mins, broadcast 14 January 2014 Channel 4

¹⁹⁰ Asquith *Clowns*, 58 mins broadcast 7 April 2008 BBC2

1. **Why and how did you decide to allow me to film you?**
2. **Do you think you were your true self during filming?**
3. **When you saw the film did you like the way you were represented by me?**
4. **What was the audience reaction to the film?**
5. **What has the impact of being filmed been on your life and identity?**
6. **Did you ever regret your decision to be filmed?**
7. **Can you describe our relationship?**
8. **Would you be filmed for a documentary again?**

Question one took each participant back to the moment we met, before they understood what it meant to be represented by a documentary filmmaker, and long before they became known, and recognised in the street for an aspect of their lives. The remaining questions are designed to challenge them to think about what aspects of their selves they were performing when filmed, and whether that matters. I gave them all an opportunity to talk about the way the film was mediated by me and whether they felt misrepresented at any point, to reflect on the way they were received by an audience and to describe the way being filmed has changed them. I encouraged expressions of regret or ambivalence about the decision to be filmed and whether they would make the same decision again. I also asked for an honest appraisal of our relationship and what it meant to them. The full transcripts of these interviews are in appendix 3 and the interview videos and original documentaries are available online at <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/vegas-lola>

Kimberley admits she had no idea what she was getting herself into, but just craved the attention, *"for someone to listen to me"*. She never let go of the value of that, despite receiving criticism when the film was broadcast. She talks about using the

film to reflect, watching it regularly to help her work out what was going wrong in her life. She expresses happiness that our friendship has sustained twenty years of ups and downs and she says she has used the critical comments of the audience to re-evaluate her relationships with men, some of which were violent, and to reflect on her own behaviour and emotions. Kim's clear-eyed understanding of the range of reactions from the audience enables her to filter the helpful from the unhelpful and the constructive from the meaningless:



fig.21 Kimberley in 2000 (L) and 2017 (R)

You learn from it. It was a very big learning curve for me in my life and years down the line when I've watched it back it's helped me in so many ways, not to be the way that I was, if that somehow makes sense in some way. And it really helped me move on, how can I explain it? I think it bettered me as a person as well. I think it helped me calm down and I'm a mum now so things are very different for me now.¹⁹¹

Kim also talks about the difference in her attitude between the first film we made together in 2000 and the second ten years later. She is frank about her innocence going into the first documentary:

"I didn't know what I was letting myself in for. I didn't know what the reaction to me being filmed was gonna be. It was all fun and games to begin with, you know I was quite young,

¹⁹¹ Kimberley interview August 2017 <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/new-gallery-87/?p>

bit out there, quite inquisitive and I suppose I just wanted to be like everybody else at the time. But it's only after the documentary's actually made and edited and then you sit down and actually watch it back that it really hits you and it really sets in, like wow, this is what we've been doing for all that time. Then you get yourself all geared up cos you know it's gonna go on TV and I think that's the most nerve-racking part is knowing that night it's going live, being aired and then it goes to the public and that their reaction is gonna be and you're always gonna get good and bad. I did get a negative response from it but I also got a positive response so you have to weigh it up."

Her overall attitude to having chosen to live her life in public is a pragmatic and positive one:

"...with television and documentary making I always think it's better to just be yourself and make that connection and let people get to know you the way you are. I personally think it's better to just be that way. It was definitely a challenge put it that way, and very enjoyable as well the fun we had doing it!"



fig.22 Marshal in 2005 (L) and 2017 (R)

I met Marshal when he was only 10 years old and had arrived in Britain three weeks earlier to be reunited with his mum Josephine, a Zimbabwean refugee who had been living in the UK for five years. For Marshal I was a fun distraction and someone to talk to about rap music, earrings, hairstyles and girls, when he feared upsetting his mum. I

also irritated him with my camera, asking too many questions about “boring” stuff. But mostly he enjoyed the experience. When the documentaries (five of them made over 5 years) were broadcast on Channel 4 he was embarrassed, in the acute way teenagers are, by the image of himself as a child, with a Zimbabwean accent, that couldn't read well. This was a mighty challenge to our relationship but Marshal's nature being happy-go-lucky and his wide popularity amongst his peers meant he didn't let the shame of others get to him, and was never angry with me. He instead decided to learn to read well and following an eye test that showed he needed a strong prescription, the root cause of his struggle with literacy was found. He also says his behaviour was altered by being filmed.

“Yeah I guess I've changed myself after watching it cos I get the chance of seeing myself on TV and seeing what I'm doing wrong and what I'm doing right. Not everyone gets that opportunity like... they just do what they do. Whereas if you get the vision of somebody else seeing it, it's like wow, that's what you actually look like? You don't wanna be too embarrassed about how you come across... if that's you, do you, 100 per cent.”¹⁹²

Thankfully Marshal was not aware of the appalling response on Twitter from racist white nationalists who don't merit recording here. I discussed it with Josephine whose courage was far too great to be visibly shaken. When I ask her if she ever regretted taking part in the films she is very reluctant to admit it, but on being pushed by me she says the racism did scare her. But that it was worth it.

“Did you ever regret letting me film you?”

No, not at all. I don't regret... not one thing.

There must have been moments when you regretted it?!

¹⁹² Marshal interview July 2017 ¹⁹² <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com>

You know the moments that I regretted it... well the last thing I wanted was to put my children at risk. That was the moment when I wished that I had not done it. Wishing otherwise, it could have turned out differently. But it wasn't a very easy choice. Cos not saying anything was also wrong in its own way."

This exemplifies Josephine's approach to being filmed. She has taken confidence and dignity from the experience and used it as a platform to speak out about injustice:

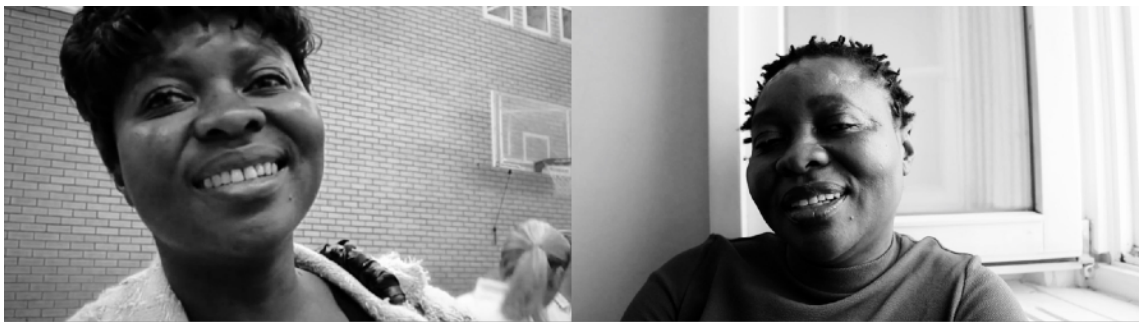


fig.23 Josephine in 2006 (L) and 2017 (R)

"Yes it has changed our life in many ways. On the negative, when people think that what we have done or said is wrong, they will just literally hate us for no apparent reason and we wouldn't even be knowing. And sometimes on social media they can actually try to attack and things like that... so that was a negative. But um... on the positive it has actually... I can see it through Mento. She stands out and she likes to speak out. And she wasn't like that when we... I think confidence. Everybody has been boosted in their confidence. It didn't happen like hey here is your confidence coming! It happened gradually, when we were living and experiencing and talking and hearing the feedback and everything. I think... it was a good outcome. I kind of felt that your filming is very eloquent, and different. It make you feel at home. You don't feel pressured to do anything and I think that way you actually get more out of people than if you would be questioning them..."

Josephine has campaigned for asylum seekers under threat of deportation and made speeches at marches in Newcastle against Brexit, austerity and the treatment of asylum seekers. Josephine interestingly doubts whether I had any influence on the way she and her family came across:

“How did you feel about the way that I represented you? Did you like the way I made you look? Or did you think that’s just the way she sees me, it’s not how I really am? *Er... did you have any influence on the way we seemed? I don't think that you did. Because the way you film is totally different from other things as I said... because you just allow people to be themselves. So it wouldn't be... you were allowing us to be what? Everyone was just being what they were, and that is exactly what the film was intending to be.*”

For her the film is a simple mirror that reflects - perhaps the documentaries about her succeeded in matching up with her identity, or perhaps she found the version of herself that she saw pleasing.



fig.24 Johnny & Mary in 2014 (L) and 2018 (R)

Johnny and Mary are my relatives in County Clare, on the far West coast of Ireland. They live largely like their family did a century earlier, in a broken down farmhouse surrounded by the cows, donkeys, horses and chickens they raise for a small living. I met Johnny and Mary when my mum and I went searching for the story behind her

adoption as a young baby. I was filming our trips to Clare, unsure at the time whether it would ever be comfortable or permitted to make a documentary that anyone else could see. Johnny and Mary were not keen on the idea of being on television, but I put no pressure on them at all. They were ashamed that their Uncle Tom had got my grandmother pregnant in a hay barn, and didn't relish the world finding out about it:

"When I was first asking you to make a film, what did you think of the idea?

J: Sure, when we first heard the story that Tom was the father, we kinda felt ashamed, cos we always looked up to Tom kinda, as a pillar of society. We'd kind of preferred if it would never have went on television or anything. We thought we were blackened and we didn't know what kind of reaction we'd get - would people look down on us? But we were kind of surprised that people seemed to, you know, were happy that we'd done it for you. They encouraged us for doing it, you know, it brought our families together. And everywhere we go we meet someone that's seen the film, and we're kind of happy with that. They say how love the film and how natural we were in the film and that if you paid actors to do the film it wouldn't have come out as natural. We took no notice of the cameras - we just spoke from the heart and that got across to the people."

We travelled to New York looking for trace of my grandfather Tom's escape from Ireland. The journey released them from the strict attitudes of the Catholic community back home and once they saw the film I had made, they loved it and got right behind it (many of my family did not, and some still do not talk to me as a result of the *shame* I unleashed on them). Their experience of the festival screenings and broadcast on BBC4 has been extremely positive, when rather than the shame they imagined, the audience respond jubilantly to their open-minded and loving attitude. They were widely hailed as heroes, causing other families to seek out their relatives, lost in the fog of shame imposed by religion:

"J: We've met with people and they tell us they had much the same story you know, or they knew of people that had the same story, that was kind of brushed under the carpet like, long ago. And they were happy that they got encouragement from the documentary to look for their relations you know, and we were happy that we got to do good for other people. We were happy with that like. At the start we didn't think things would turn out so good and we'd get so much reward from the film. We thought it would be the other way round after doing the film, that we'd be looked down on, you know. But we didn't... I feel we were looked up to."



fig.25 Vegas & Lola in 2013 (L) and 2018 (R)

Vegas appeared in *Crazy About One Direction* when she was only 12, alongside her friend, Lola, 11. They are now 16 and 15. Vegas is not necessarily representative of all the fans I filmed, just as they weren't representative of all fans. But she has a bold and articulate analysis of the experience of being filmed as well as the reaction of fans. There was one fan in Manchester who regretted taking part in the film at the time and still wishes she hadn't. The Twitter hate affected her and she needed a lot of support from me and other participants at the time of broadcast, to encourage her not to listen to the trolls and be proud of herself. There were five participants to the documentary that celebrated their inclusion without doubts, and three that had mixed feelings - liking the film, but hating the attention on social media. I was in touch with all of them after the broadcast and repeatedly over the following days, and in the case of those that needed my support, much longer. Vegas has some

interesting comments to make about the relationship a documentary maker has with their participant though, and challenged me more than anyone else to think about my motives and how my personality structures the films I make.

"V: You just encourage everyone to be as cheeky as they can. And then you just laugh at them when they do it.

So I'm sort of like that as a person you think?

V: Yeah, as a person though. Like with anyone. You'll just encourage anyone to do whatever you think... like, whatever's funny!

That sounds so irresponsible... oh god...

Why weren't you kinda mad at me that I put you in that situation?

V: I don't know. Cos... it's never actually affected me, like, being in it, or... what happened... I never got any hate for it, like, I actually... it was really enjoyable when we did it. / Nobody would really recognise me from it though. No-one would see that, unless they knew me, no-one would watch that and say That's definitely Vegas! Literally you wouldn't even know it was the same person unless you knew me well enough."

This one comment contains a cutting analysis of the space between reality and entertainment that documentary film inhabits. It shatters the idea of the impartial observer, and simultaneously that of the uncaring and irresponsible filmmaker, finding a grey area where documentary is naughty but fun. Tommy (*Clowns* 2008) expresses a strong sense that the film was a collaboration between us as performer and filmmaker:

"So did you feel like you were performing a role for the film?

There was an element of performing a role for myself, because I was making the kind of television that I would actually want to watch. And I've gotta admit to ya, I made lots of...

It is a decade old that film and it's still spoken about in very fond terms and people who still see it remark about how timeless it is, how we just managed to nail the zeitgeist of what was happening at that time... drunk parents, uptight parents, cheesed-off children's entertainers, the state of society as it was at the time."



fig.26 Tommy in 2008 (L) and 2018 (R)

Tommy's knowingness about the process of documentary filmmaking, which partly comes from our friendship and partly from other encounters with what he calls "media-types", means that he is in some ways more suspicious of the decisions made by the filmmaker, and in other ways less suspicious, as he understands clearly the purpose behind. He is quick to assume more deviousness and plotting than actually exists though:

"The only thing that I got cheesed off about, which you later told me, which is the classic thing that documentary filmmakers don't tell you.... They can be as honest and as doe-eyed and as batty-eyelidded as they want, but when it come to certain things they do... like you deliberately made me late to a party! So that we had to..."

No I didn't!

Yes you did!

It wasn't deliberate!

You said that you deliberately held back! You were drunk at the time!

I accidentally made you late by suggesting we went on the coast road.

Well there was that as well but I did... if you remember I was doing 90 in a 30 and that was in one of the final edits and I did say Do you mind just taking that bit out? While you were filming down there... I mean that was just... you know. Yeah it was thrilling, but anyway. It happened years ago so it doesn't matter. they never hired me again! / Right lets backtrack. Ask me the question again.

Are you asking for final edit in this one as well?

I already sent you the text saying I want a final edit in this...

Oh yeah.

And you just said Yesssss."

Both Tommy and Josephine felt they should have been paid for their appearances in the documentaries, expressing the firm belief that as collaborators they had a *working* role. Josephine describes this as being comparable to writing an autobiography, perhaps with a ghost writer, whereby she should have the rights to her own story. Rangoon's work on immaterial labour is interesting in thinking about this transaction. She argues with specific regard to *Born into Brothels*¹⁹³ that "a coercive cultural logic underpins the invitation to subjecthood mediating... autoethnographic labor". Basically, the privileged filmmaker commodifies the willingness of their participant to share their private life, or at least perform a version of it, in an exploitative neoliberal project. I always wondered if there would be a way to pay people for being filmed, but was never allowed to pay as broadcasters feared it would undermine the integrity of the documentary if anyone was paid. There are so many ways in which the integrity of a documentary can be undermined, or fail to exist at all, that it seems very convenient that this is the rule that is enforced. I broke it anyway, by dishing out expenses, which could total £1000 over time. Not a lot

¹⁹³ Rangan, Pooja Camera Obscura 2011

compared to what I was paid (approx £20k for a TV hour including an 8 week edit), but at least something.

Vegas and Tommy comment on the mischief they perceive in me as a documentary filmmaker. These comments are made in humour and fondly, but they are very important, as they acknowledge the devilishness in documentary filmmaking. The stories we tell are the ones that resonate with us and that we find entertaining or revealing in some way. Or most dangerously, that we find funny or dark. The power to entertain can slip unpleasantly into a laughing-at, rather than a laughing-with, and even horribly into a sneery bullying, which regularly occurs in some factual television. Nash's analysis of the trust in the documentary relationship between participant Molly and filmmaker Tom Zubrycki, echoes this sense of naughtiness: Molly says "I think he's naughty, but that's because he's a filmmaker".¹⁹⁴

Marshal and Kimberley resiliently used the response to the film to work out how to change life for the better. An increase in confidence is reported by Johnny and Mary, Josephine, Marshal and Kim. A sense of knowing oneself which grows and gradually demystifies the idea that we can never be understood, is reported by all participants.

¹⁹⁴ Nash *Exploring Power and Trust in Documentary* 2010:26

*Installation at ACCA*¹⁹⁵

fig.27 Installation at Attenborough Centre for Creative Arts, 21 April 2018

The medium of art installation as opposed to linear narrative invites a different way of thinking about all the material. I was aware in designing the installation that the fan videos could be projected simultaneously on adjacent walls, with headphones attached to each, allowing the viewer to choose, and reducing the sense of mediation for a second time. They could also be played in random order so that a “chat-roulette”¹⁹⁶ effect is in play, more fitting to their original medium. Determining the way the videos demand to be seen is crucial and experimenting with that was revealing. I settled on a grid effect, where 9 fans could be seen all at once, but only one heard. It gave the Youtube footage a feel of cacophony and collective voice. I

¹⁹⁵ The Jane Attenborough studio at ACCA Centre for Creative Arts in the University of Sussex was the venue for the installation.

¹⁹⁶ “chat-roulette” is a website that randomly connects users to each other by webcam www.chatroulette.com

attempted to have a different grid square speaking at any one time, but the clips were too short and the eye didn't find the clip before it was over. So I prioritised the middle screen and enlarged it.



fig.28 This is Not Us grid, installation at ACCA, 21 April 2018

The timeline pictured communicates that it was a very complicated project. When the videos were allowed to appear randomly, there were regularly 3, 4 or even 5 screens in the grid featuring the same person at one time. This was not aesthetically

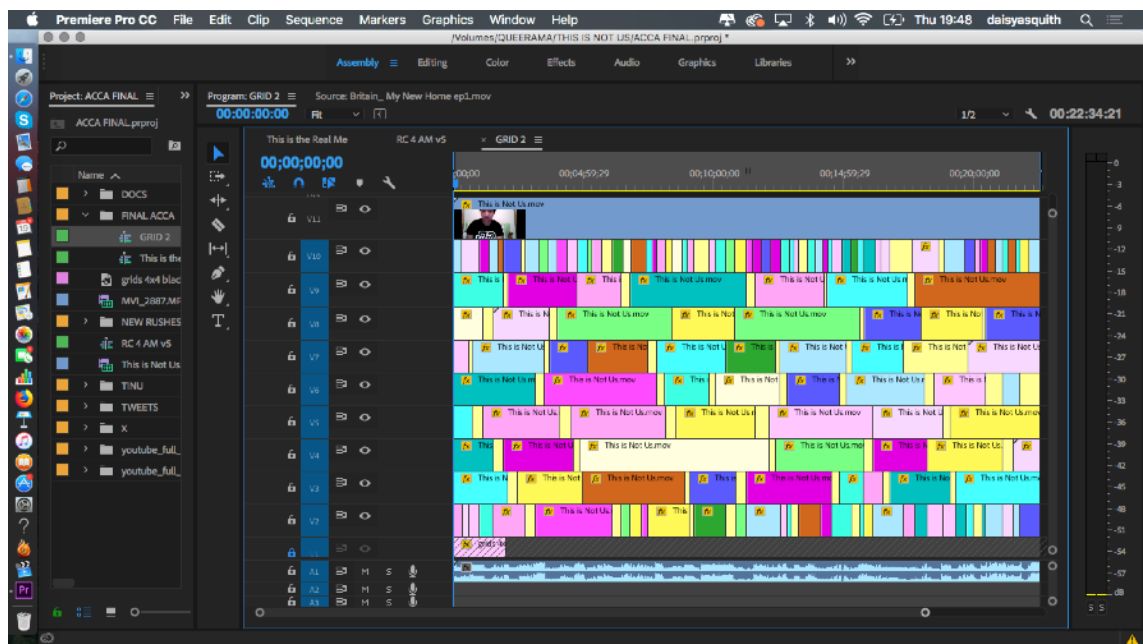


fig.29 This is Not Us edit timeline in Premiere Pro

pleasing, and spoiled the feel of the collective voice. So I engaged with the concept of 'pseudo randomness'. This is the technique used by Spotify and iTunes to make sure

the same song doesn't keep repeating. It gives an illusion of randomness that appears to be more random than true random appears to be. It created a lot more work. It is fascinating that true randomness is so displeasing, but that investigation is a distraction from this thesis.



fig.30 Mike Nicholls and Tommy Tickle in the bedroom of a fan, ACCA April 2018

The alcove was the perfect space in which to re-construct the bedroom of one of the fans, Becky (with the pink hair), who appeared in *Crazy About One Direction*. I purchased from her the contents of her bedroom in Manchester in 2016, when she decided to take down all her posters and merchandise. The single bed and a couple of the smaller items are not original from her room, but the majority of the items were hers. I reconstruct the room in an attempt to collapse the space between participant, filmmaker and audience. As Tracey Emin reconstructed her own bed at the Tate in 1999; Adrian Goycoolea reconstructed his uncle Quentin Crisp's bedroom in 2010, and Jeremy Deller reconstructed his childhood bedroom at the Hayward in 2012. The reconstructions offer a powerful experiential possibility to the audience,

offering the chance to “feel, not see” as Emin describes it¹⁹⁷. Visitors to the This is Not Us exhibition were able to sit or lie on the bed, gaze at the posters and watch the original documentary from the perspective of a One Direction fan. This was designed to create empathy and identification, rather than contempt and derision, the default societal response to teenage fans. It was interesting to see complete outsiders to the fandom, by way of gender, age and taste in music, put themselves in the position of a fan.

There were two more projections onto other walls in the studio - one a loop of all the angry tweets from fans after broadcast and the other a loop of their beautiful Larry



fan art. Installing the practice at ACCA strikes a happy medium in many ways between the distilled linear film project and the open-source style curated collection of the online space. The two can be combined in installation, allowing both the controlled, time-

fig.31 Twitter loop at ACCA

specific storytelling that I am used to, with the satisfying deeper dive on offer for those that want to immerse in the surrounding material. Building a physical space for reflection offers another layer of investigation into the space between them and us. What impact does being in the bedroom of a One Direction fan have on our reception of this story and of the original documentary. Can the audience empathise better with the fans’ complaints, when sitting in their bedroom? How does it impact on the way the audience think about fans - is it possible to create empathy using this space? The comments in the visitors book seem to argue the case that it is indeed

¹⁹⁷ Emin in Tate interview 2014

possible. One visitor notes: "Sitting here watching the film I was struck by how much of a family you build with your films. The fans are a family. Johnny and Mary are family and you have built us all into your family. <3"

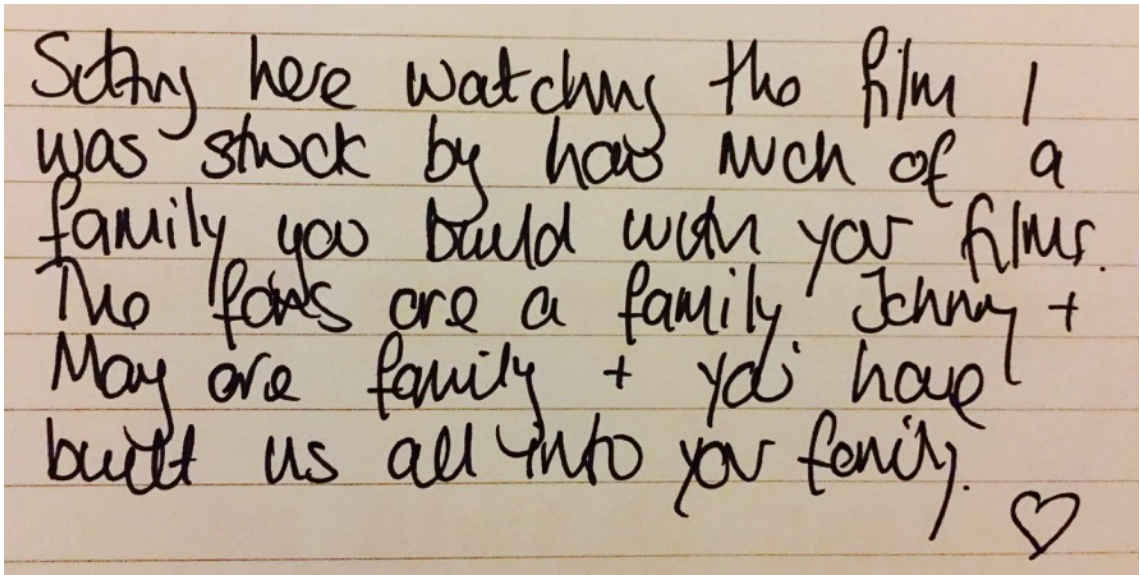


fig.32 From comments book at installation

Linear Film

My final video project was to try to answer the fans concerns in a linear film. I initially planned to combine the arguments of fans against my representation, with some space for critical analysis from those that were actually in *Crazy About One Direction*, and then extend the analysis to other collaborators and participants. The trigger for this investigation was the Youtube response of fans though, so they would start the film and reappear consistently throughout it in small groupings of clips. The effect was designed to be unsettling and uncomfortable, combining their rage with the more measured discussions from within long term relationships in many cases, sometimes critical, or gently scolding, sometimes movingly supportive and appreciative of the documentary process. The editing brought the issues into sharp focus for me, highlighting aspects of my practice which I had been oblivious to. When

focussing on the financial, legal and practical challenges of making each documentary, it is easy to forget the fun bits. Being reminded that I am mischievous and cheeky and possibly slightly irresponsible when filming was good for me in two ways. It pulled me up on my behaviour, made me question whether it is ethical to chase comedy in any and every scenario in the way that I do. It also made me realise that the people I have filmed have overwhelmingly enjoyed the experience, whether they have received difficult feedback afterwards or not. But the film didn't work as a story. It was too dense and too diverse in meanings. The two types of footage - found and filmed - worked well in contrast to each other in the installation, but clashed badly in the linear mode. I decided I needed to film a response to the fans in their own style.

The form of filming I settled on employed the style of the Youtube confessional in order to bring my own voice and perspective into the film. Writing a letter directly addressing the fans that were so angry with me was a way of avoiding an authoritative voice, and expressly announcing my subjectivity. It was also a way of creating more of a balance of power; using the technology that they had access to, rather than giving my own voice a professional grandeur which was out of their reach. I wrote the letter as follows, only altering it on recording where I slightly misremembered what I had planned to say:

Dear One Direction fans. I want to say sorry for what I've done. I always loved you and found you spectacular. I love fans. I love your secret codes and subversive attitudes. I love your passion and stamina. One Direction fans are the best of all fans. You have built a global girl power network on Twitter and created thousands of beautiful fan productions to share amongst yourselves.

While making a documentary about your fandom for Channel 4 I immersed myself in your online Narnia. My favourite of your fan productions is the Larry fan art which gorgeously depicts Louis and Harry of One Direction in a homosexual relationship. I think you clever fans were very perceptive about this relationship. Your intense and sustained scrutiny of the boys meant you probably knew them better than they knew themselves? Louis has always denied it but Harry is less, er, straight laced.

Harry has always said gender wasn't an important factor in who he was attracted to, and now he has pretty much come out, so it looks like the Larry Shippers had a point. Maybe it was just about Harry crushing on Louis. But it doesn't really matter to me whether it is real or not. If it's just a fantasy that's just as good. Taking Harry and Louis as a blank canvas, millions of you have been able to project your own desires onto their androgynous bodies with gay abandon. In these fantasies no one gets pregnant, or has to stay at home doing housework. No one is compelled to be passive or pretty. It is an erotic space free of the limits of gender.

Some of you hardcore Larry shippers are queer, and use the Larry ship as a campaign for gay rights. I loved it when you set up a fandom subsect called Rainbow Direction to implore Louis to apologise for being so angry every time someone so much as hints he might be a gay. Some of you are straight girls that just find it hot to see your favourite boys together. Some of you like to ship different combinations of the band members according to your current mood. The sexiness of Larry is freeing as you can shift your desire as you wish between objectifying their beauty, to imagining yourself in the picture, to projecting your own queer fantasies on them.

However you approach the artwork and fan fiction, it is basically soft porn made by and for teenage girls. This is hugely threatening and causes adults, particularly your fathers, to freak out and want to repress your teenage sexual urge. None of them believes it is their daughter that creates or enjoys this stuff. Perhaps the shame projected by fathers, and by boys in your lives, often disguised as derision at your taste in music, has pushed you underground into dark corners of Tumblr. And you didn't expect me to be looking.

I'm sorry One Direction fans that I found your Larry fan art. I'm sorry that I loved it. I know it wasn't meant for me. And I'm sorry that I told the TV audience about it. I was genuinely thrilled by your creativity. I had no idea you would be this upset. I'm just so relieved that none of you actually committed suicide. I understand why you threatened me with it - it made your voice louder on Twitter. #RIPLarryShippers stayed in the top 10 trends globally for 48 hours. I'm glad you made yourselves heard, as mostly people just ignore and dismiss you. For the record, I'm a hardcore Larry Shipper too.

I used the full length version *Dear One Direction Fans* as a basic Youtube apology video. I also edited my video into a new linear film *RIP Larry Shippers*, which combines the original Youtube fan protests with my apology, the section of *Crazy About One Direction* that deals with Larry shipping, some tweets and plenty of Larry fan art. Interestingly the linear film works less well for me than the installation, and was far more frustrating to create. It is more self-conscious, didactic and rushed, leaving little space for the viewer to interact with the material. It is a quick and effective way to tell the story, but over-simplifies it and offers nothing experiential.

Online Space

Creating an online space was an extremely rewarding project. It was also totally new to me. Providing the raw material, virtually (though not entirely, for reasons of discretion) uncut was not something I had ever before taken any interest in doing. It relinquishes some control on the part of the filmmaker to share *rushes* in this way. It possibly affected to a degree the way the interviews were filmed, although it was not what was on my mind during filming. It also limited the level of mediation I could apply to the found footage I worked with. It offered a transparency to the project which in many ways deepened and enriched its meaning-making. Editing is by definition reductive. It is a process of distillation, of simplification, at times rather a brutal slaughter of individual loved sequences that don't work well as a team.

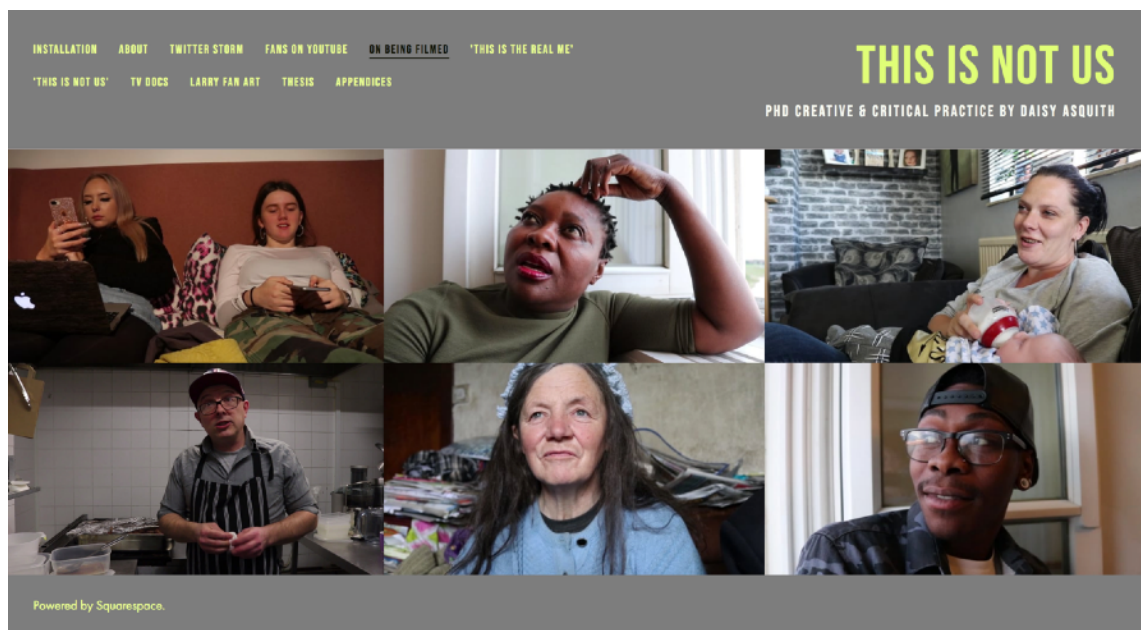


fig.33 Screen shot of This is Not Us website

Allowing the many symbols, signals and signs that exist in uncut material to also be shared with an audience is liberating. Whether those elements are discoverable in such a large collection of video is unclear. My instinct is that an audience will not explore the website thoroughly at all, but just dip in briefly and take away a sense of a body of research existing, without really understanding what or why. It would be

hugely rewarding to hear someone respond with critical practice of their own, creating a analytical conversation about performance, relationships and shame in documentary. The artistic process of making an explorable archive is satisfying and appealing, but I wonder if a total lack of engaged audience would soon send me back to linear narrative.

The creative practice research in pursuit of the question of how and why shame is produced in documentary has taught me many things. I learned the uncomfortable news that at least some of those I have made films about believe me (and perhaps all documentary filmmakers) to be mischievous in nature. Acknowledging this is challenging to the identity of documentary practitioners, who have positioned and themselves in history as trustworthy, objective assistants in the business of giving voice to others. This is of course far too simplistic and in my own case studies the humour and crafty editing applied to my documentaries betrays to the audience the mischief and also power that a television storyteller possesses. A reflexive feminist approach, in which the voice of the participant interacts with the voice of the filmmaker protects against the damaging power that the faux-objective "voice of God" might wield.

Conclusion

This PhD in creative and critical practice has taken a logical step forward in reflexive feminist theory-led practice research. Taking as a trigger the furious reaction of the One Direction fandom to the broadcast of my documentary about them, I first explored the reasons they rejected it. I took into account my own subjectivity in the representation, the filming process, and the way the film interacted with the views of patriarchal society on fans. Thinking about the way that fan identities were performed in my film according to the way they expected to be received then initiated research in performance and *playing the self*. I took as case studies two further participants to my past work; Holocaust survivors and gay fathers, who had in common a set of defensive reasons which impacted on the performed versions of reality they chose to share with me. This work led me to investigate how repeated performances over a number of years, in the longitudinal documentary projects I have produced, further impact upon the identity of the participant. Many of the people I have filmed for documentaries have continued to broadcast themselves over social media after the filming is finished, aware that in this way they can take control of their own representations and no longer require mediation. I analyse the way this builds on or clashes with the mediated performance and conclude that mediation has an important place in documentary. My creative practice explores the mediums and methods of fans in self-representation in order to unpick the ethical and aesthetic challenges in storytelling for television. My conclusions follow.

Documentary meets the reaction of its audience in an intangible space which is best represented by the detached and unaccountable world of Twitter. The response of the viewer to the filmed person is judgemental and blunt. A television documentary

crashes awkwardly into the context of the current fashionable views of society, and is often designed by broadcasters to chime with those views rather than challenge them. As a result, shame is often produced for the person who shares their life on television. This is a shame which Kimberley felt, confronted and used to change her life. It is the sense of shame that Tommy rejected, choosing rather to have the film filter out those people that tried to project shame onto him for drinking and swearing in clown clothes. My cousin Johnny wildly over-estimated the shame he would feel about his uncle making my grandmother pregnant in a haybarn, instead becoming a hero of honesty and kindness in West Clare. This shame was discovered by Josephine when her film was broadcast, but challenging racism and jealousy in her local community and on social media gave her family great confidence. Zigi has spent a lifetime thinking about shame - the misplaced shame about surviving and being unable to save others. In his film he powerfully expresses that shame and counter to so many Holocaust stories, refuses any heroism or catharsis and instead embraces his own flawed humanity.

The One Direction fandom was not in a position to stand up to that shame. It is of course impossible to represent all fans at once. They are “not an amorphous mass of hysterical bed-wetters”¹⁹⁸ as Robinson rightly points out. But neither are they all sensible thoughtful citizens. Fans vary wildly and it is the interaction between them that constitutes fandom. The fans are perpetually re-writing their communal rulebook and trying to pin down their collective identity and own it, and my documentary trespasses on and meddles with that delicate process. Fans are of course a problematic source on themselves and not a source of “pristine knowledge”¹⁹⁹. As Hills writes: “personalised, individual and subjective moments of

¹⁹⁸ Robinson 2014 in a paper at Sussex University *Queery* March 2015

¹⁹⁹ Hills 2002a: 68

fan attachment interact with communal constructions and justifications without either moment over-writing or surmounting the other"²⁰⁰. In representing them we should not treat "the ways in which fan identities are legitimated as authentic 'expressions' of a group commitment"²⁰¹, but explicitly allow each fan to perform their personal individuality simultaneously alongside their communal fan identity. The individual and the communal are both important parts of Hill's definition of fandom as a "cultural struggle over meaning and affect" of which contested descriptions, identities and representations are a large part. Perhaps it was difficult for fandom to accept the individuality of the performances in *Crazy About One Direction*. When Natasha says she got braces because Niall got braces and that Zayn being from a Muslim family has helped her deal with her own identity issues, she is not speaking for the whole fandom. When Pip cries because she can't afford tickets to the stadium tour, or gasps in comedy performance at the hotness of Harry tweeting Louis, she is not speaking for every fan. But because the fandom have committed themselves to the labels that outsiders use to identify them i.e. *Directioners*, they feel as if they are being universally represented, and sadly their expectations of representation are dominated by the internalised shame that a derisory patriarchal society, fearing the sexuality of teenage girls, has projected on them.

Larry shippers took the brunt of the shame after *Crazy About One Direction*. Moving *Larry* from Tumblr to television decontextualised it and had a destabilising effect on the fandom, who were already arguing about its significance - the Christian right wing girls in the Southern states of the US were particularly appalled by it, disapproving of both the sexual explicitness and the homosexuality; while the girls from more liberal or permissive backgrounds, or those escapees from the former,

²⁰⁰ Hills 2002a: xiii

²⁰¹ Hills 2002a: xii

were revelling in the erotic fan art and fiction and celebrating the queer pride that went along with it. The mainstreaming of *Larry* may have destroyed some of its subcultural authenticity for some fans, who wanted to keep it their little secret. But the various negative responses to its inclusion also importantly highlight the taboo around expressions of teenage female sexuality and the shame that is *projected onto* One Direction fans. Girls making porn for girls is something they only want each other to know about, aware as they are that the idea is unacceptable to adults. A fandom that is repeatedly shamed and derided by the media will have low expectations of any representation and therefore respond defensively regardless of the content.

Piotrowska suggests that our efforts should lie in “creating true fictions that people we make films about can live with.”²⁰² Perhaps as a result of their powerful desire to be noticed by “the boys”, not one of the girls in the film expressed any regret over their decision to take part, even when the resulting “hate” on Twitter was ferocious. I was grateful for their continued positive attitude to having been filmed, and I hope it was also partly due to their sense of having been faithfully and affectionately represented. It was in fact the only time I have ever failed to show people the film I have made about them before broadcast, due to the number of people featured in the documentary and the lack of time available. It is important to note, that in British law a release form is worth nothing if the filmed person changes their mind about appearing. They may not always realise how much power they have over the filmmaker, but if they were unhappy with their representation, it would take little effort to find out. In the case of *Crazy About One Direction* the girls had to trust me to edit their interviews fairly. But they each had a strong indication from me of the spirit

²⁰² Piotrowska, Agnieszka 2014:207

and tone that the documentary would engage, and that held true in the final cut. As Piotrowska notes, making sure the people you are filming continue to want to be filmed, and remain happy to be edited and broadcast is “almost as valuable as any creative, artistic or aesthetic qualities one might have”²⁰³ and lasts for months, if not years, even decades in some cases. This straightforward trust is at the centre of ethical practise and perhaps the most important factor in the avoidance of shame.

Trust between filmer and filmed is also a fundamental indicator in the editorial quality of a finished film. It is sometimes necessary when filming for a documentary to film silence, or the behaviours that I called “unperformed testimony”²⁰⁴ in Chapter 2. Unperformed testimony refers to those behaviours that the filmed person displays which communicate their emotions, experiences and character unwittingly. Filming such intimacy requires much patience and time. Time spent with the camera in its’ bag is a much undervalued part of making ethical engaged documentary. At other times it is necessary to push the filmed person to speak. There are times when pushing is the only way to do justice to their story, to avoid doing the participant a disservice by allowing them to be silent or misunderstood. But the necessity increases proportionately to the importance of the information being pursued. In the case of filming survivors of an atrocity, there is justification for pushing (e.g. as Claude Lanzmann did) in order that the testimony is not lost forever. When making a documentary about pop culture, or other fascinations and distractions, for entertainment purposes on television, I would argue the justification for pushing is significantly less. Unfortunately this suggestion of forcefulness proportional and appropriate to the subject is not in general use. Filmmakers are so keen to show their strength of authorship and their dogged persistence that they will interrogate and confront for the most banal of revelations. Much television currently encourages a

²⁰³ Piotrowska, Agnieszka 2014: 105

²⁰⁴ Asquith, Daisy *Filming the Shadows* 2012

horrified, distanced gaze, a superiority on the part of the viewer who is encouraged by commentary to be both appalled and amused by what they see. Entertainment should not preclude the application of warm, respectful authorship, which in turn does not preclude humour.

Zizek has said that the relationship between filmer and filmed is too intimate - that it produces a form of "emotional pornography"²⁰⁵ and that filmmakers become obsessive, immoral characters in pursuit of this intimacy. There is certainly an obsessive desire to know, to understand the Other. But it can be argued that this desire is a loving act, towards both the filmed persons and the audience that may benefit from new insight into the lives of others. Zizek shares with Kieslowski a squeamishness about emotion, the inner worlds of human beings. Kieslowski famously wrote "I am frightened of real tears. In fact, I don't know if I have the right to photograph them. At such times I find myself in a realm, which is in fact, out of bounds. That's the main reason why I escaped from documentaries."²⁰⁶ Zizek, in his article of Kieslowski's escape from the genre, writes "the only proper thing to do is to maintain a distance towards the intimate, the idiosyncratic, fantasy domain - one can only circumscribe, hint at, these fragile elements that bear witness to a human personality."²⁰⁷ Piotrowska has written of a falling in love between filmer and filmed, which is not the exact experience I have had but I become obsessed each time I make a film; the intimacy is addictive. As a filmmaker, if not as a person in general, we fall in love with the story, with the idea we have in mind of who the person is. As Lacan says "*I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you - the object petit a - I mutilate you.*"²⁰⁸ Crazy About One Direction for example was made in a style

²⁰⁵ Zizek, Slavoj 2006:30

²⁰⁶ Kieslowski, Krzysztof in Cousins & MacDonald 1988:316

²⁰⁷ Zizek, Slavoj 2001:73

²⁰⁸ Lacan, Jacques 1998 (1973): 268, emphasis in original

that I felt suited the fandom, rather than a style that was recognisably my own. It was relatively fast cut, fairly noisy, full of pop songs and included plenty of nods to the style of their own homemade fan videos. It is a brightly coloured documentary, with a backdrop of posters in bedrooms and crowds of girls in neon. This aesthetic was demanded by the environment of course, but also served the subject well. However it may have contributed to the rejection of the film by the fandom, as no-one likes to be imitated, least of all teenage girls. Perhaps my imitation - the greatest form of flattery - was in fact taken as what Lacan would call a mutilation.



fig.34 Meta representation: Vegas and Lola in front of the film in which they discuss representation

The choice of who to film is the most powerful decision a documentary filmmaker makes, but often it is more circumstantial than creative. Barrie and Tony were the only gay dads that were willing to share their lives in such intimate detail, albeit a rather defensively fabulous version of the real. Gena, Zigi, and Freddie allowed the camera to witness varying forms of unperformed testimony, the shadows in their present,

including difficult behaviours, while resisting any shame attached to their fallibility. Kimberley shared her most intimate thoughts and feelings on camera at the ages of 15 and 25 and took a pragmatic attitude to any shame projected upon her by the audience. Her approach of total honesty allows for Žizek's notion that when there is "transparency...the very notion of shame will be rendered irrelevant."²⁰⁹ It is this resistance of shame that is most important in those that allow their lives to be filmed. In *A Brief History of Shame* by Peter Stearns, shame is explored as an emotion that some are more prone to than others. In particular, marginalised groups experience shame more readily.²¹⁰ There is a way of preparing to resist this shame, which involves a warm and validating attitude in the edit of a documentary, with a collaborative approach that confronts and discusses the sources of shame. There used to be a word for this in English; *shamefast*, which described making insurances against the onset of shame. Perhaps it used to refer to secrecy about such things as homosexuality, abortion, adoption, adultery, disability etc. But it could have a new emotional use if it were reinstated in common language. There is a shame resilience theory, which the popular social worker Brené Brown (of *Oprah* fame) calls "speaking shame"²¹¹, the act of drowning shame in openness. And documentary does have the effect of drowning shame for the filmed person. The same confessional relief is found on Facebook and Twitter and there is a very modern sense that once the shameful fact is shared, it is no longer shameful. It may be that the shame is actually a good way to find communities of like-minded people... "to use shame to help define and bolster identity"²¹², and translate their shame collectively into pride and solidarity.

²⁰⁹ Žizek *The Fright of Real Tears* 2001: 73

²¹⁰ Stearns, Peter *A Brief History of Shame* 2017: 97

²¹¹ *ibid* 106

²¹² *ibid* 98

“Whatever the intentions of the creators of this shit were, it clearly didn’t work, because its helped us to become stronger as a family in this fandom. Yes it did cause a lot of harm, but because of it, Beliebers are backing us up... and we’re always fighting with them... but they still have our back. Even the fans of The Wanted are with us on this. It’s bringing Elounour and Larry shippers closer together, because we are part of the same fandom, even if we ship different people together, we’re all still part of the same fandom. So whatever this documentary thing was, what they were trying to prove... it didn’t work.

We’re strong, we’re stronger than all of you.”

- Vanney G on Youtube

I have shown how dangerous the potential for shame can be in the production of a documentary, particularly when it represents a collective identity rather than an individual. I have also described the approach that makes it least likely shame will be produced. A collaborative process, in a relationship of genuine warmth and trust is the best way to create a positive experience of being filmed. Performances should be allowed, as they represent a part of the filmed person’s identity. Participants in documentaries must be able to respond to their representation and be heard, before it is transmitted, in order that they share in the power of the storytelling. It is with this strength and pride in their performance that any projection of shame by the audience will fail.

Index of Creative Practice

All the films, artwork, documentation of the installation, sources, written work, appendices and past documentaries referred to in this thesis can be found online at <https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com>, the website hosting this PhD.

'THIS IS NOT US'

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/this-is-not-us-film/?p>

'THIS IS THE REAL ME'

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/20-min-film/>

'RIP LARRY SHIPPERS'

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/20-min-film/>

'DEAR ONE DIRECTION FANS'

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/20-min-film/>

Installation at ACCA, University of Sussex April 2018

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/installation/>

Josephine (from My New Home 2005-11) interview 2 July 2017

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/josephine/?p>

Marshal (from My New Home 2005-11) interview 2 July 2017

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/marshal/?p>

Kimberley (from 15: *This is Me* 2000) interview 31 August 2017

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/new-gallery-87/?p>

Johnny & Mary (from After the Dance 2015) interview 4 November 2017

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/johnny-mary/?p>

Tommy (from *Clowns* 2007) interview 12 January 2018

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/new-gallery-13/?p>

Vegas & Lola (from Crazy About One Direction 2013) interview 13 January 2018

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/vegas-lola/?p>

Zigi (from Britain's Holocaust Survivors 2008) interview 26 March 2018

<https://daisy-asquith-xdrf.squarespace.com/zigi/?p>

Past Documentaries

Those in bold are available on the website for reference.

Queerama, 70 mins, broadcast 31 July 2017, BBC/BFI <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p057n8sz>

After the Dance, 77 mins broadcast 30 March 2015, BBC/IFB <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05psdvz>

Velorama, 70 mins, broadcast 6 July 2014, BFI/BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b048wqcc>

Crazy About One Direction, 47 mins, broadcast 14 August 2013, Channel 4 <https://www.channel4.com/news/one-direction-directioners-channel-4-crazy-about-documentary>

The Queen of North Shields, 29 mins, broadcast 22 May 2013, BBC1 Why Poverty? Strand <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01xt726>

Britain: My New Home, 5x47 mins 2005 - 2011, last broadcast 22 March 2013 <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/britain-my-new-home/on-demand/40282-003>

Britains Holocaust Survivors, 47 mins, broadcast 14 January 2013, Channel 4 <https://www.thejc.com/community/community-news/survivors-featured-in-channel-4-documentary-1.40478>

My Weird and Wonderful Family (My Gay Dads), 47 mins, broadcast 21 July 2010, Channel 4 <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2010/jul/22/my-weird-and-wonderful-family>

Liz Smith's Summer Cruise, 58 mins, broadcast 12 July 2009, BBC4 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00lpjw6>

Kimberley: Young Mum Ten Years On (This Is Me Now), 48 mins, broadcast 22 April 2009, Channel 4 <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1423567/>

Clowns, 58 mins, broadcast 7 April 2008, BBC2 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b009r2kf>

The Oldest People in the World, 48 mins, broadcast 20 August 2007, Channel 4 <https://distribution.channel4.com/programme/the-oldest-people-in-the-world>

The House Clearers, 48 mins, broadcast 13 July 2005, Channel 4 <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2005/jul/14/tvandradio.comment>

Whatever: A Teenage Musical, 50 mins, broadcast 5 May 2004, Channel 4 <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0417260/>

Marrying a Stranger: Shabba and Sabeena, 2 x 50 mins, broadcast 2002 Channel 4 <http://www.windfallfilms.com/show.aspx?program=1128>

Fifteen: This is Me and *Looking for My Mum*, 2 x 50 mins, broadcast 2000, Channel 4 <http://www.windfallfilms.com/show/1231/Fifteen.aspx>

The Decision: Dodger and Jermaine, 2x50 mins, broadcast 1998, Channel 4 <http://www.windfallfilms.com/show/1180/the-decision-series-2.aspx>

Presentations of this research

May 2014	Doctoral Research Group, University of Sussex
June 2014	Pop Life conference, University of Northampton
March 2015	Catalyst Club, Brighton
April 2015	Popular Music Fandom and the Public Sphere, University of Chester
June 2015	Paper - Student Research in Popular Music, University of Westminster
June 2015	Paper - Fan Studies Network conference, University of East Anglia
July 2015	Paper - Fandom & Religion conference, University of Leicester
August 2015	Talk - Wilderness Festival, Odditorium Tent
Feb 2016	Paper - Goldsmiths, University of London
March 2016	Paper - Lets Hear It for the Girls, University of Warwick
April 2016	Paper - Society for Cinema & Media Studies conference, Atlanta
Feb 2017	Lecture - Representing Reality, Goldsmiths, University of London
July 2017	Publication - <i>Seeing Fans</i> , book edited by Paul Booth & Lucy Bennett
April 2018	Exhibition - Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, University of Sussex

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