REALISED RECORDINGS: HOW DOCUMENTARY STRUCTURES QUESTION
THE COMMUNICATION, CONSTRUCTION AND MEMORY
OF THE REAL OF PAST OCCURRENCES

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a comparison of documentary case studies to explore how moments from reality are recorded and how future representations of them can offer or instigate a parallax to create a new or different way of understanding the occurrence of such moments and how they have been remembered. I postulate that this shift in perspective offers an interaction with reality through *a reconfiguration of the Real* of these moments. The study will consider this assertion in relation to Žižek's and Baudrillard's reflections on the Real as being an excessive moment unable to be assimilated (Žižek) and the veiled encapsulation of what lies beyond the Image-Event (Baudrillard). After exploring the use of images from reality, my thesis will go on to consider the processes of *recollecting* and *communicating* past occurrences (and people) to highlight the potential that documenting and revisiting past memories – *re-collecting them* – can actively impact and evolve the trajectory of personal histories. Utilising LaCapra's notion of the *working through* traumatic memories enables my investigation to plot a course which considers the memory narratives of my case studies as subject to a, 'continual process of retranslation' (Nicola King) and, as such, explores the subjectivity of the Real of occurrences.

<u>DEDICATION</u>

Dedicated to Emma and my family

&

For everyone who hides something,
now and then

<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u>

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INTRODUCTION

The question of modality is not, 'Did what we see in this image really happen?', or 'Does what we see in this image really exist, but 'Is it represented *as though* it really happened or *as though* it really exists?'

<div align="right">(Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 396, original emphasis)</div>

What is a *Realised Recording*? Surely through the process of capturing a moment visually or aurally, a recording has come into existence; it has become *realised*. It follows that through the action of recording and the resultant document, a *realisation* of the recording process occurs; there is created an artefact to be played and re-played. To that end all recordings are *realised recordings* in this semantic exploration of the term. I use the term to suggest an enrichment of the presentation of past occurrences that are examined in this thesis through two philosophical frameworks; namely, these are theories of the Real and those concerned with the questioning of memory. I utilise various methodologies within these fields to compare differing representations of processes of recording, recollecting (or *re-collecting*) and communicating past moments. This thesis explores the way documented reality can be re-presented for a viewer to offer a heightened connection to the first occurrence of these recorded or recollected moments; I call this heightening of presentation a "reconfiguration of the Real".

My objects of analysis are all based in reality; they take real events as their subject matter, either through their visual or aural communication. What will become clear through my discussion is that the concept of "real events" can be considered a contradiction in terms when considered in light of the theories I will examine. Suffice to say for now, read the words "real events" as would be done in a non-philosophically charged sense. The case

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studies examined in this thesis are two documentary films; *9/11* (2001) by Jules and Gédéon Naudet based on the September 11th attacks, and Clio Barnard's verbatim documentary *The Arbor* (2010) based on the life of playwright Andrea Dunbar. Through elements of their structure and their juxtaposition of real-world accounts with recorded accounts, each example is purposefully displaced from creating a sense of a passive "reality" which envelops the viewer. Instead, each example depicts new perspectives of occurrences that conflict with assimilated and accepted notions of past occurrences. This active challenging of accepted notions of the past, their *modus operandi*, aids the creation of a re-configured Real.

There are a number of common strands that I will trace through each case study to help clarify my argument; these include the capturing of moments and the presentation of this "captured reality", the content and communication of contributors' recollections, and the influence of the passage of time, other documents and bias upon memory-narratives. I will utilise these strands to explore how the potential of a re-configured Real can be present in each example, not as a tool in search of an abstract or sublime "truth", but rather to aid a re-connection to past occurrences and to the people depicted. I intend to highlight the fluid and *uncanny* impact of Real moments on their future exploration and understanding.

The Reconfigured-*What*?

To argue for the potential of a re-configuration we must first consider the Real in isolation. From Jacques Lacan we get the first postulations of the Real, as this study understands it. However, the concepts he discusses stretch back to Plato's *The Cave* allegory from *Republic* (1966). The Lacanian Real is an authentic position that is beyond the material world or interpretation. It is aligned with a sublime idea of the "truth" of the self and of existence in

relation to experiences. Hence the revelation of the various realms of form in *The Cave*

deepens the subject's understanding of the world's creation of images and reality. Malcom

Bowie (1991) discusses Lacan's articulation from his work *Écrits* (1971):

> For Lacan, The Real is that which lies outside the symbolic process, and it is to be found in the mental as well as in the material world: a trauma, for example, is as intractable and unsymbolizable as objects in their materiality. Language has powers over the Real: it is the world of words that creates the world of things. (Bowie, 1991, p. 94)

Slavoj Žižek (2001, p. 82) expanded on Lacan's theories to identify three realms of the Real:

the *Imaginary*, the *Symbolic* and the *real Real*. The Imaginary and the Symbolic take

references of the Real either from signifiers which are shown, assumed, or as Žižek explores,

believed. Žižek attempts to highlight a notional existence of these elements in reference to

the Holy Trinity of the Christian faith; the Father (real Real), the Son (Imaginary) and Holy

Ghost (Symbolic) (2001, pp. 82-83). The *real Real* is almost imperceptible and the most all-

encompassing concept. The Imaginary is an assumed Real, a kind of self-referential *thing*,

while the Symbolic is an ethereal projection. Although Žižek's recent work explores the

concept of ideology,[1] his earlier work tended to reduce the significance of the idea of Truth

as a philosophical finality and place more significance on the Real as that which is sought

after. Bowie comments on this progression when he notes, 'the would-be Truth seeker will

find that the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are an unholy trinity whose members

could as easily be called Fraud, Absence and Impossibility' (1991, p. 112). Although Bowie

suggests this triple relationship holds little potential to decipher something satisfactorily,

Tony Myers articulates the troubling intangibility of the Real by stating that for Žižek, 'truth

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[1] As this study understands it, Ideology is of primary focus to Žižek recently, as it can be understood to represent an articulation of humanity's understanding of its actions.

is always to be found in contradiction, rather than the smooth effacement of difference [...] the Real is the arena of dialectic, where opposing terms can coincide' (Myers, 2003, p. 17 & 27). As such, Žižek follows a Hegelian tract of offering a new path from the collision of other concepts or binaries. For this study, the Real is expressly concerned with happenings, and therefore, is fleeting and belonging to a moment which is almost instantly lost upon its occurrence. Chapter one will take this approach as I utilise these theories alongside those of Jean Baudrillard (2002) to explore the encapsulation of the Real and its presentation through the *Event* of September 11th.

Baudrillard proposes that the Real is absorbed by mass mediated communications; that this communication and assimilation is the *Event*. Importantly, in my discussion I have renamed an event or a happening in reality as a "first occurrence" – this way I intend not to cause confusion by repeatedly using the terms reality or event in a non-loaded sense. My *first occurrence* is not to be confused or aligned with the Real; *first occurrence* is the most basic action or thing that happened or occurred in a physical sense. By default, therefore, it is also important to recognise that the *Real* is not simply "the thing that happened first". When I capitalise the word *Real* or *Event* take it to mean I am discussing the theoretically loaded sense of the term.

For Baudrillard, an Event is an illusion which mediates and filters the Real to communicate it to the Subject,[1] usually via the *Image-Event*; this is an encapsulation of an occurrence through images. Do not misunderstand illusion as "something that does not actually happen". On the contrary, an illusion is very much an action to draw attention in a moment which, in turn, conceals something else; that which is veiled and beyond sight is what Baudrillard

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[1] Commonly termed *viewer* in my discussion, and not capitalised.

would term the Real. An illusion is an elaborate action which firmly establishes the Image-Event as a process imbued with agency, not passivity:

> The image is highly ambiguous. For at the same time as [the images] exalt the event, they also take it hostage [...] the Image consumes the event, in the sense that it absorbs it and offers it for consumption. Admittedly, it gives it unprecedented impact, but impact as Image-Event. (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 27, my capitalisation)

Mediation of the Real via the Image-Event offers only representation for the viewer or subject; this is the presupposition this study places on the majority of footage and communication of September 11th which has become homogenised and ubiquitous. In opposition to rolling broadcast media footage which has come to stand for the attacks, I will utilise the Naudets' *9/11* to explore lesser known imagery and perspectives to suggest new understandings of how the day unfolded as well as implicitly critique how it has been more commonly encapsulated by a few short sequences. This comparison of the Naudets' experiences with the widely received encapsulations of the attacks intends to align my study with Myers' summation that for Žižek, 'the Real just persists, but how we interpret the Real changes' (2003, p. 27).

Remembering To Reconfigure

Seemingly for Baudrillard and Žižek, the Real has a linear relationship from first occurrence to spectator; it is the registration or articulation of the Real which is the focus of the discourse. The relationship I am exploring is that of a personal re-interaction of a viewer who may have second hand knowledge but no direct relationship with a first occurrence. This re-interaction in my study is explored via the reception and engagement with documents

which, through overarching structures and individual techniques, attempt to re-establish a connection to an *occurrence* of the Real; a reconfiguration of the Real.

My case study in chapter two also follows this basic linear relationship principle between an occurrence and a spectator; however, Clio Barnard's *The Arbor* purposefully manipulates and blurs this relationship to pose a number of questions. This documentary not only examines the presentation of occurrences but also scrutinises the construction of them through memory and the processes of recollecting and communicating said memories. This is explored through the prism of the threefold structure Nicola King (2000) establishes which is composed of: a first occurrence,[1] the memory of this, and the *communicating* of this memory. King cites Walter Benjamin's description of memory as 'the capacity for endless interpolations into what has been' (King, 2000, p. 4); which succinctly surmises a distinct proliferation of memory-based discourses over the past thirty years within social sciences and the humanities, a number proponents of which appear throughout this thesis.

It is reasonable to assert that memory is not static. The process of recalling memories will be inflected by *when* that recollection takes place, as well as the obvious interpretations that will be forthcoming depending on *who* is recollecting. Although there are many variants within the discourse of memory studies, my focus is on the re-creation of moments from the past via multiple versions of individual recollections and re-presentations. As such, I primarily focus on aspects of what Freud (Freud & Breuer, 1974) termed *Deferred Action* or what Jean Laplanche (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967) later referred to as *Afterwardsness*. Briefly, this is the balance between the memory and recollection of the past, its latent impact on individuals, and particularly the re-exploration of traumatic moments in the future; in other words, the

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[1] King uses the word "*event*" in a non-philosophically charged sense, but for reasons of clarity I use my term first occurrence at this point until I will quote King's words later.

potential for a past occurrence to rupture the present through a memory. In *The Arbor*, this is explored through the re-presentation of past events or *second-scenes*, the recounting of them by real-life people and the use of archive footage. By combining these, Barnard reconfigures the memorialised impression of the deceased central protagonist (Andrea Dunbar) and examines how, as part of a trajectory of pieces documenting the history of this family, *The Arbor* communicates past events to explore and generate its own new history.

As such, memory is a fluid concept in this discussion; it alters and it evolves. King describes memory as, 'subject to a continuous process of re-translation' (2000, p. 8). If we were to consider it as a process of remembering someone or something in stasis, then we would actually be part of a process of nostalgia, what King refers to as, 'a mode of remembering the past as lost' (p. 5). Examining artefacts or events as nostalgia is another facet of memory studies; however, my discussion of a potential new engagement via a re-configured Real requires the *activation of the past* in the present. For this to be achieved I will examine the varying relationships between the agents and spectators in my case studies. The spectators at the moment of the first occurrence can be agents in the re-configuring of a Real and this can create a blurred relationship between the notions of agents and spectators. This occurs, as I will discuss, in the alignment of the camera and the spectator in *9/11*, or the creation of multiple versions of the same people within *The Arbor*.

If I am proposing the possibility of a re-configured Real through diverse approaches and techniques, it requires a certain attitude to my engagement with my research objects. The position of the documentary viewer cannot be seen simply as one of passivity - a common assumption in relation to televisual and cinematic modes. Rather we must accept the potential of a viewer to engage with the humanity of the people, performers and the

occurrences being represented, and be a viewer that brings with them knowledge and experiences. It is not simply through the images seen or the mechanics of their production that a re-configured Real can be established. It is through the interplay of the presentation, the context and the subject matter that enables an engagement in the viewer and a new parallax in their perspective. The potential of this *realised recording* is that it does not only communicate the past but moreover, in the words of Dominick LaCapra, 'the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present' (LaCapra, 2001, p. 70).

CHAPTER ONE: THE NAUDETS' *9/11*

Introduction

> Contrary to the fiction of universal solidarity surrounding the media and image, events have less and less meaning, less and less reality beyond their near horizon.
>
> (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 54)

Without trying to lessen the impact of the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001, September 11th has become a monument with significance far beyond the horrors and destruction that occurred on that New York morning. The very words "September 11th" are loaded with a myriad of socio-political, cultural, religious and military connotations. It has become a locale in time by which many facets of society have re-contextualised their history in relation to what is termed the "pre" or "post" September 11th landscape. Slavoj Žižek suggests in *First As Tragedy, Then As Farce* (Žižek, 2009) that the first decade of the 21st Century is book-ended by two defining moments; beginning with September 11th and ending with the Global Financial Crisis. Žižek argues how a catastrophic breakdown linked the two, firstly in a material sense and later in an electronic one; both of which plunged the world through a period of chaos, instability and paranoia. As a defining moment in recent Western history,[1] September 11th continues to be a central consideration for many discourses and will, like the Holocaust, be a historical fulcrum around which many varied schools of thought will plot a distinct transition. My discussion explores various representations of the attacks and examines how the notion of September 11th can be re-examined via new, vital or authentic

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[1] There is a wide ranging debate that can be generate by the term *Western*, but for the purposes of this debate let us just assume it is countries and societies who would have aligned sympathies for these attacks with the United States of America.

communications that offer, what I term, a connection to a *re-configured Real*. Specifically, I will critique how the documentary *9/11* offers a re-evaluation of *what* we remember of this occurrence and *how* we have remembered it. I argue that this can inform individuals' perceptions of the Real of this occurrence.[1] In contrast to this documentary footage I will consider news media broadcasts and Hollywood narratives of September 11th to aid my exploration of the communication (mediation) and memory (encapsulation) of September 11th.

My overarching investigation focuses on how occurrences are presented, communicated or performed for a viewer; therefore, my case studies attempt to bring a moment of real-life back into focus, or back into being, in terms of examining how reality and the memory of it is presented and remembered. By *back into being* I mean returning the viewer as close as possible to the moment of first occurrence to examine their individual memory of the occurrence. I will argue that *9/11* (2001) does not simply document what happened via hermetically sealed facts, but rather reinvigorates the first occurrences through new, vital and lesser known footage. I will consider this footage and comparative representations in reference to different theories of how the Real is articulated and either made accessible or veiled, as well as how these occurrences are remembered. By considering my examples in reference to theories of memory and traumatic realism (Rothberg, 2000), I will explore not only how they were communicated and received at the time, but how this can impact on their recollection and lasting resonance.

At various points I make reference to the "notion" of September 11th and its associated signs. By this I am referring to a generalised memory of the occurrence which has been propagated

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[1] Any reference use of "9/11" is expressly referencing the Naudet documentary, not the notional or overarching September 11th via the American colloquialism.

by the media repetition of imagery and informational overload. I offer the distinction of this *notional* September 11th to suggest how communication and the memory of this well-known occurrence can be critically assessed. In our ever more digitised age, as we see an increasing fusion of reality with the virtual, September 11th is a focal moment in the history of global communication as well as global history. The proliferation of images beamed around the world cemented the centrality of rolling news media not simply as part of everyday life, but as part of *every moment* of everyday life and the communication of it. By exploring 9*/11* I will highlight approaches within the documentary which, when contrasted with other presentations and considered against theories of memory and the Real, offer the potential for a re-configuration of the Real of the occurrence. Specifically, this refers to the documentary viewer's re-investigation of his or her memory of September 11th. The documentary *9/11* offers more than an historical retelling; the footage creates an echo that allows familiar moments to unfold in new ways through privileged perspectives and information. Thereby, this contrasts the vast, homogenised imagery of rolling news media and the synthesising that occurs over time as a result of the repetition of such footage. The notional September 11th has conditioned spectatorship of the occurrence to be a voyeuristic viewing from the outside and from afar. The *9/11* experience is a reversal of this commonplace memory perspective; the footage, almost exclusively from two hand held cameras, offers this monumental occurrence to be viewed from the inside looking out.

The Naudets' *9/11*

9/11 is a documentary film by Jules and Gédéon Naudet who embedded themselves in the New York Fire Department (NYFD) to record the probationary first year of a fire-fighter.[1] It intersperses their own footage of September 11th with a small amount of footage from other sources and talking head retrospectives from the fire-fighters who survived September 11th. The film's opening sets this context by showing the process of selecting the "probbie" fire-fighter, Tony Benatatos, and his induction into Ladder One fire-house in Lower Manhattan. The first quarter of the film highlights the generally repetitive and highly domestic chores of everyday life in a fire-house, which include cooking, cleaning, practising fire-fighting exercises and generally playing tricks on probationary fire-fighters. No doubt there is much footage of the September 11th attacks that had to be held back to allow for this opening section and, to that end, a documentary about September 11th that chooses to make a focal point of how life was *before* the attacks, clearly warrants further exploration.

One of the very first images of *9/11* is of the Twin Towers over which an opening monologue states the obvious fact that there was no way the Naudets could have foreseen the attacks, and highlights the creation of the documentary as complete chance. After the domestic first section of the film, the day of September 11th unfolds and the documentary centres on the separation of the three main protagonists; Jules, Gédéon and Tony. Jules accompanied a team of fire-fighters on a routine call early on the morning of September 11th and then went with them directly to Ground Zero – having just recorded the only known image of the first plane colliding with Tower One. Gédéon remained with Tony to guard the fire-house while all other fire-fighters went to Ground Zero. When off-duty fire-fighters arrived at the fire-house, Tony and Gédéon leave on foot for Ground Zero, however, in the ensuing confusion

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[1] *9/11* actually has three directors Naudet brothers and fire-fighter James Hanlon. Hanlon, who commonly narrates the film, was a friend of the Naudets and was their aid into the NYFD to allow the original documentary to begin recording. I refer to Hanlon at various points but for ease of reading, for the practical role the Naudets' have in shaping the recorded footage, and the dramatic tension build up in their separation on September 11th, I refer to the film as the Naudets' film.

they are separated. This leaves Tony absent from half the film during almost the entire

unfolding of the attacks. He is not presented as a talking head either at any point during the

first half of the documentary. Gédéon records his attempts to navigate to the Twin Towers

through the chaos of Lower Manhattan but to no avail as he is stopped by police. In the end

Gédéon waits at the fire-house and records the return of the fire-fighters throughout the day

of September 11th. The film continually emphasises that the Naudets have no method of

communicating with each other throughout the day, though the documentary viewer knows

they both survive from the start because of their talking head retrospectives.

Jules records some of the most defining imagery of the documentary, from his journey into

the Twin Towers, the first collapse from within the Tower One, and the sequence of the

second collapse from directly outside the World Trade Centre (hereafter referred to as WTC).

The sense of confusion is continually conveyed via the chaotic images and the reactions of

people; this is also furthered by the retrospective talking heads who reaffirm their inability to

understand the full scope of the attacks while attempting to evacuate the towers. Jules'

journey through the attacks records the death of some people and the search in rubble for

others, while Gédéon's imagery charts the unfolding sense of horror in the streets north of the

WTC. With sparse use of recognisable broadcast footage of the attacks, Gédéon's

perspective is reflective of the view many global spectators had of the unfolding occurrence,

conveyed more by the images of destruction and debris. Tony is wholly absent from the

moment he leaves the fire-house in the morning until he returns in the evening. Initially this

sets up a dramatic tension as to whether Tony survives or not; furthered by the fact he never

communicates as a talking head until he returns in the evening. However, this does also

reflect the uncertainty of how the day unfolded for the filmmakers. Although being initially a

documentary about Tony, because he is missing for a large part of it, the jeopardy in the

documentary actually revolves around the separated brothers. Despite the fact we know both brothers survive, the film becomes about *how* they survive and what they witness. The immediacy of the footage forces it to take primacy over the documentary's original context – Tony. The documentary spectator is forced to leave behind the preconceived notions of the day which featured Tony as protagonist, and is enveloped in the unfolding of September 11th from these privileged perspectives which starkly contrast the notional September 11th which has been imprinted as a kind of shared occurrence and memory. The culmination of the film is on the days immediately following the attacks, the search for survivors and the attempts to the rebuild in the aftermath.

Approaches

Within *9/11* and the range of comparative documents, I will discuss three approaches that aid my exploration of the occurrence and memory of September 11th; the first approach concerns differing representations of the attacks. Information and images surrounding the day are so abundant that many elements of September 11th do not need communicating as they are part of a kind of shared social archive. The typical thrust of documentaries and explorations post-September 11th is a bombastic approach to the destruction and devastation; one that replays images from many angles. The Naudets' film offers a representation which grounds the viewer in the domestic and relatively mundane life of its protagonists, prior to the first plane collision. In this discussion I make the case for a new way to understand this moment of the first plane crash and the film's build up to this. Jules' recording of this moment became well-known eventually but it was not available until days after September 11th; to see it in context as a true moment of rupture offers a new interpretation of this footage as something that reflects the sense of its occurrence. Moments such as this exemplify the sense of shock that

ripples through *9/11*, both for those directly involved, such as the fire-fighters, and the documentary viewers as they recall how they watched September 11th unfold in 2001. Hindsight and the 'ubiquity of the image', as Patrick Duggan (2012, p. 56) has termed it, means the viewer brings with them an archive of recollections. I will expand on this in the second approach but it holds significance here because the Naudets choose to omit certain elements for reasons of decency and because the viewer can fill a visual void with their memories of moments. Through this documentary September 11th is experienced as Jules and Gédéon experienced it, with very few external additions. This editorial intention to omit many recognisable images is not unique when considered in isolation, but in-light of the domestic context of the film's beginning, this lack of reliance upon homogenised imagery sets *9/11* apart as more than simply a perfunctory retelling of the attacks. Instead it positions the documentary as a vehicle to explore the unfolding of the attacks from their chaotic centre via individual experiences. The point of view perspective is a technique of descaling the occurrence to enhance spectator engagement, as is the detailed exploration of the domesticity of life as a fire-fighter. The use of these motifs forces the viewer to question their assimilated memory of the day, as well as re-establish the impact of the original occurrence by drawing attention away from the homogenised communication. The editorial intention and individual perspective reflects a tension between what is seen and what is not seen; this binary shares a theoretical kinship with Baudrillard's principle of the veiled Real and the Image-Event. I will discuss this concept in the relation to the imagery of *9/11* and the rolling news media imagery of September 11th. These differing representations will aid my exploration of how this strategy examines the communication of the first moment, i.e. the thing itself or the Real, and how this can be reconfigured for post-occurrence viewers.

The second approach is concerned with recollection and examines the notion of a collective memory of September 11th. Slavoj Žižek asserts that we are 'compelled to experience', and remember such occurrences as 'nightmarish apparition', due to their rupturing, excessive nature (Žižek, 2002, p. 19). I will argue that, contrary to Žižek's assertion, the failure to assimilate events such as September 11th demonstrates a societal desire to retain such occurrences as moments which requires re-evaluation. There is a sense of a continual unfolding through *9/11*'s vital and authentic communication that offers a re-configuration of the Real moment as something apart from an archived occurrence. It requires a re-evaluation both of the actual happening and how it has been remembered, or memorialised, since. Examining particularly how the film presents moments mirrored in Hollywood depictions and the technique of talking head retrospectives, I will argue that *9/11* proposes not a *failure to* but rather a "need to re-assimilate". By this I mean that contrary to Žižek's assertion of its categorisation as 'nightmarish apparition' (2002, p. 19), the past is available for a new exploration and *9/11* is an example that monumental moments retain an echo of the traumatic realism of their initial occurrence and communication. This strategy is positioned in terms of questioning the remembrance of the thing itself, the first moment, and how it aids and challenges the homogenised memory of occurrences. It suggests that in post-occurrence investigation, recollection is actually a process of *re-collecting* moments, images and memories for communication and exploration.

The third approach is concerned with perspectives and examines the techniques used in both singular moments and overarching practices of communication, such as the Naudets' hand held cameras. Although not unusual in isolation, there are elements of the documentary which, when considered as part of the larger structure, aid the process of re-configuration. Individual moments such as the unconscious framing of events, or where the operator's face

enters the frame, break any illusion of an omnipotent operator or spectator. These moments bring into focus the relationship between the viewer and the film-makers through a perspective that is contradictory to the voyeurism of other documents of September 11th; this perspective is not looking from afar at the occurrence but is centred within it. The definitive imagery I will highlight, particularly of the second tower collapsing, offers new understandings of the occurrence, particularly from a physical perspective of how people survived and coped through the attacks. As well these new perspectives, *9/11* is distinctive as it offers an almost wholly subjective narrative of September 11th.

These three approaches enable *9/11* to place and sustain the documentary spectator in the centre of the attacks, offering a new kind of witness of the day. It offers a contradictory insight as to how the original occurrence was communicated and how it is remembered. Through the new information, perspectives and heightened confusion it establishes the potential of a re-configuration of the Real by creating a sense of an unfolding occurrence, as opposed to a carbon-copy re-playing of events.

i. Representations & *9/11*

'It did happen right? It's not something that I'm going to close my eyes and
open them again and I'm going to see the tower right? It's not there.'
(Fire-Fighter Dennis Tardio, *9/11*)

Images of the New York skyline pre and post September 11th elicit a sense of the Freudian uncanny or *unheimlich* (Freud, 2003); they are recognisable for what they are, however, distinctive that they are not exactly as they should be. When we look at an image of New York *with* the Twin Towers we know it is incorrect (although correct); yet, for those of us old

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enough to appreciate this, there is a similar recognition that the skyline *without* the WTC is also not how it should be (but how it is). A moment on the evening of September 11th in *9/11* illustrates this, when fire-fighter Dennis Tardio stands outside his station and points into the distance saying, 'it's hard to believe they're not there. They're not there! They're gone'. At various times in the domestic first section of the film, we see the Twin Towers lit up at night and at these moments the viewer recognises, as fire-fighter Tardio does later, that the skyline is alien. We recognise the images with and without to be both simultaneously right and wrong, and that the skyline without the Twin Towers is a silent signifier of both what was there and what has happened. Not only does this image foster a sense of the uncanny but the very collapse of the towers has created an ethereal schism in time and memory; Ground Zero is now an ideologically charged "Time Zero" in western civilisation. Various socio-economic, philosophical and cultural schools of thought have taken and re-evaluated their discourses in light of the new horizon of the post-September 11th landscape.

Only through knowledge of this skyline prior to the attacks do we recognise the void in the current vista. The transitional state of flux between these two realms of the memory and the reality is mirrored in the Naudets' documentary; the film balances the fact that the viewer brings their own knowledge of this monumental occurrence with the domestic and person-centred new narratives unfolding on that day. In contrast to the homogenised imagery[1] associated with September 11th, the Naudets' film was always intended to be about a small group of men and that has remained the focus of the documentary even through the occurrence of the attacks. Descaling the occurrence by focusing on the fire-fighters diverts the documentary from any fixation on the destruction caused by the attacks. It is a purposeful attempt to envelop the viewer within an unfolding narrative that is markedly different to the

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[1] Many examples of which have probably already occurred to the reader of this thesis.

familiar, monumental one. For this descaling to be successful, it is first important that we know these people before we learn how they reacted to the attacks. The general communication of September 11th is centred on the moments of impact and collapse; *9/11*, on the contrary, offers a perspective that centres on the reaction of people during these moments. The Naudets permit short flashes of ubiquitous imagery from news broadcasts as context, to highlight their documentary's dislocation from the more homogenised communications.

The global rolling news coverage of September 11th brought this mode of journalism to the forefront of information dissemination. For a decade preceding this, beginning with the Gulf War and through other conflicts, media outlets competed for the latest "breaking news", broadcasting it at ever increasing speeds. However, second-by-second coverage was never as globally synchronised before the occurrence of September 11th.[1] In *The Illusion of the End* (1994) Jean Baudrillard wrote that so-called breaking news events, 'hollow out before them the void into which they plunge. They are intent, it seems, on one thing alone – being forgotten. They leave hardly any scope for interpretation, except for all interpretations at once' (1994, pp. 19-20). Baudrillard is referring to the self-perpetuating cycle of the news media reporting, that the idea of "news" is diminished in the face of excessive information communication. Without the distanced perspective to allow informed interpretations, the continual search for new material creates the 'void into which they plunge' (p. 19); a void signified by the lack of a robust critical framework. Therefore, in an incessant search for the *new*, the previous is consigned to the past and forgotten or diminished. Individual interpretations do not have the time to be discussed; instead, all interpretations are made and valid due to the lack of debate. This ceaseless drive is symptomatic of a need to out-do itself,

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[1] This may be because there was not an occurrence of such global significance to instigate such a communication event. September 11th was set apart due to the audacity of the attacks and the threat that it thrust upon the global community through the use of passenger aeroplanes as weapons and the location; New York being one of the most recognised and populated cities in the world.

forsaking each last object of scrutiny in favour of the next one. The central aim is to maintain a hold on the viewer via a self-perpetuating sense of "newness"; even the term "breaking" suggests a destruction of the past event in favour of the primacy of the new one. An innate fear is implicit in this approach, which is that to linger too long on any single occurrence would mean the risk of missing the next.

Baudrillard's postulation subtly points to the self-fulfilling nature of this style of reporting, whereby any question of "news-worthiness" is forsaken and the act of reporting becomes the *news-event*. September 11th functioned as a microcosm of this, whereby the complex trickle of detail meant the next new piece of information took precedence. However, the sheer volume of information is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it can lead to an assumption that we know as much as we can ever know on the matter; and secondly, if we know everything, then there exists a danger of negating the importance of re-investigating. Therein, as Baudrillard suggests, all interpretations have been made.

Presenting the "Pre-*9/11*"

Gédéon states in the domestic opening section of *9/11* that 'by the end of August, we knew we had a great cookery show', but Tony was yet to see his first fire as was the intended purpose of the documentary. The detailed exploration of fire-house life in this section of the film establishes the people we meet and their routines; images of Tony show him painting tools, cleaning fire-engines and being the victim of pranks played on him by his mentors. Jules comments that as time went on Tony seemed increasingly anxious to prove to his colleagues that he would be a good fire-fighter; however, the other fire-fighters simply took Tony's anxiety as more of an excuse to irritate him. At one point Tony is lured outside of the

fire-house to have water poured over his head from a great height. Tony is visibly frustrated and a senior fire-fighter calls him aside to explain, 'we're going to keep breaking your chops until you laugh about it. We'll tease you to death until you start laughing. You'll learn to love this job. Sooner or later; and you will'.

The documentary was ordained to 'show how a kid, become a man in nine months' in Gédéon's words, but in the frustrating wait for Tony's first major fire, most of the images in this first section were recorded as camera practice (noted by Jules) and as pleasant context for the original documentary. The footage serves the purpose of showing life in a fire-station but, compared to other representations of September 11th, it is unusual that *9/11* has such lengthy amusing scenes. Recognition of this endows the mundane elements of this opening section with an important contextualising status; something distinctly devoid in the reactionary dissemination of September 11th. For my investigation of a reconfiguration of the Real, and for the success of *9/11*, establishing this prior state, this 'kind of innocent […] different world' in the words of James Hanlon, is imperative in recognising how the film communicates what happened in a reconfigured manner.

As opposed to the repetitious, distanced and bombastic imagery encapsulated by the moments of impacts and collapses, the Naudets interject long moments of relative inactivity, such as the fire-fighters grouping in the lobby of the WTC to discuss their plan of action. These images in the lobby establish early in *9/11* that the viewer has a privileged position within the centre of the occurrence of September 11th, as opposed to looking from the familiar external position. In the structure of the documentary there is symmetry between Jules in the midst of the unfolding attack within the towers and Gédéon on the streets of Manhattan trying to reach him. Jules' footage offers a new perspective for the viewer, which in turn encourages a

renewed engagement with this seemingly familiar material. Gédéon's perspective is the version of September 11th that many people associate with – comprised of footage of debris clouds and people staring transfixed on the horizon or at a television screen. In one such moment Gédéon films Tony watching the television coverage as it lingers on images of the burning towers.

Figure 1: Tony watching the attacks

The fire-house - the domestic heart of the opening section - is otherwise empty at this point as Tony was the only fire-fighter left to guard it. Gédéon frames Tony as mirrors of the people on the streets of Manhattan gazing at the towers. Moreover, his position echoes the perspective of many *9/11* viewers when the event originally unfolded, as he stands mouth ajar staring at a television; Tony is removed and static like much of the global community. The camera is in an extreme close up, cutting between Tony's face aghast and the small screen where the image of the burning tower is spliced with flashes of text. We are given a glimpse into the fact that, as Gédéon narrates, 'the entire world knew more' than the people directly involved. Jules echoes this sentiment via a voice over while footage from inside the towers; 'everyone had seen ... the towers...the planes ... the Pentagon. For us we did not have a clue what was going on outside our lobby'. These fire-fighters experienced September 11th in a

dramatically different manner from experiences depicted in other representations of the day. To communicate this to the documentary viewer requires the breaking down of the ubiquitous imagery that has come to encapsulate the occurrence. Hence why the footage from within, although less visually descriptive of the attacks at large, is the focal material to re-configure or strip away the omnipotence of the homogenised imagery.

The repetition of images of the attacks has helped create a notional September 11th; a synthesised visual chronology of the unfolding occurrence. Multiple angles of plane crashes or of people running down streets are used sparingly in *9/11* and, as such, are usurped in favour of a stream of visual consciousness of what was witnessed by the Naudet brothers. The viewer is offered brief glimpses of familiar images in order to force a re-examination and a re-contextualising of the notional occurrence. It is my argument that *9/11* creates a sense of an unfolding communication of September 11th, forcing a viewer to recognise the violent interruption of the attacks again, as on their initial communication. However, the Naudets' footage goes beyond the iconic moments to include scenes that might, out of the context of the film, be considered insignificant. Such as, when soon after entering the lobby of the WTC, the camera cuts to the an image of a WTC security guard on his intercom attempting to contact each of the one-hundred elevator compartments within the tower to find anyone who is trapped. In contrast to the moments of collision and the images of emergency vehicles streaming through streets, but in a similar way to the mundane approach to life at the fire-house, there is attempt through this to convey a methodical approach to the task at hand which descales the epic notion of September 11th. Such brief moments develop a depth of detail in the individual, unfolding narrative perspective of *9/11*. This moment would not make any newsreel broadcast but, in a small way, shows the approach to the situation by those at the centre of the occurrence. It makes their attempts to assist victims more accessible

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to the documentary viewer and centres on the people within the occurrence and less on the destruction of the occurrence.

Therefore, the Naudets' footage foregrounds less ubiquitous moments and relies on the audience to associate these with more well-known images; this offers a new experience of the day, accessible from the perspective of an unfolding occurrence as opposed to regurgitated facts. Instead of the synthesised occurrence conveying voyeuristic terror, *9/11* retains and exudes a sense of fluid uncertainty – because through these individual perspectives we do not know what will occur next. Baudrillard commented upon the twisting perception of the viewer in reference to such news-events when stating that 'the spectacle of terrorism forces the terrorism of spectacle upon us' (2002, p. 30). This reversal of spectacle and terrorism is a succinct articulation of Baudrillard's theories on the news-event and the omnipotence of image-communication encapsulating an occurrence when aligned with monumental moments such as this. In this sense, the communication helped the terrorists achieve their maximum impact through the repetition of destruction. Baudrillard noted that, 'it is the tactic of the terrorist-model to bring about an excess of reality' (2002, p. 18). These articulations are also examples of the evolution of discourses in the post-September 11th landscape, in view of hysteria surrounding the notion of terror as a potential everyday occurrence.[1]

Terror is a latent force; that is to say it requires post-occurrence labelling to become *terror* or *terrorism*.[2] Whereas *chaos* or the *chaotic*, which is the more primary emphasis in *9/11*, is an immediate and experiential concept; it is the chaotic that creates a sense of the unfolding and immediate sense of communication that makes possible a re-configuration of the widely

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[1] There is a potentially vast discussion to be had regarding the nuanced difference between *terror* and *terrorism*. However, for the purposes of this discussion, terrorism is the activation of terror; the action that brings about terror. The *terrorism of spectacle* aligns the action of causing terror with *spectacle* as a kind of oppressive, all-encompassing communication; Baudrillard here alludes to Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967).
[2] The process of naming an occurrence is expanded later reference to Žižek's *The Ticklish Subject* (1999).

known images of September 11th. The re-exploration in *9/11* is not just of the physical happening but, moreover, it engages a comparison with how the occurrence has been processed and remembered. As my examination of images from reality fluctuates between broadcast media footage and that of *9/11*, it is important to consider the difference between these two representations of the reality of the occurrence. Michael Rothberg (2000) explores representations of first occurrences in various Holocaust narratives in reference to what he terms, 'traumatic realism' which can transform and force a subject to 'acknowledge their relationship to posttraumatic culture' (Rothberg, 2000, p. 109). For Rothberg, imagery of any kind is part of a method of communication within the world, and representing or capturing reality is described as a 'distorted reflection' (2000, p. 111). All captured imagery of September 11th could be argued to act like this *distorted reflection*; not a rounded account of the reality of the occurrence but a kind of projection of it. Baudrillard argues that broadcast media imagery demonstrated that the communication of the occurrence became *more* than the occurrence itself. In his philosophically loaded terms the act of communication became the *Event*, and it was communicated via the *Image-Event*. I have tried to limit my use of the capitalised "Event" as confusion can easily be caused with such loaded, common words. As noted above, I differentiate by employing the term "occurrence" and "first occurrence" to denote *the thing that happened*, as opposed to using the philosophical Event. Baudrillard elaborates on his terminology as follows:

> The role of images is highly ambiguous. For, at the same time as they exalt the event, they also take it hostage […] the image consumes the event in the sense that it absorbs it and offers it for consumption. Admittedly it gives it unprecedented impact, but impact as *Image-Event*. (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 27, my capitalisation and emphasis)

I use Rothberg above to draw a comparison with the presented reality of mass media imagery and Baudrillard's concepts of the Event and Image-Event. Rothberg's 'distorted reflection' (2000, p. 111) is similar to the Image-Event by virtue of the appearances being as they would be in reality; however, there is something which takes the Image-Event out of the realm of reality. The Image-Event is the synthesising and mediation of reality, as part of an apparatus of communication. Its 'unprecedented impact' (2002, p. 27) can be thought of as apparent through its consumption of the moment, ready for undiminished repetition. *9/11* uses commonplace footage sparingly as a repost or as context for its own footage; it demonstrates its own distance from Image-Event communications via this. For example, at the moment of the second tower collapse, which I discuss in more detail later, there is a brief shot from broadcast footage of the top of the tower collapsing just after Jules references the sound he can hear. The frame almost immediately cuts back to Jules' perspective and his fleeing from the scene. This fleeting image of the beginning of the collapse contextualises what is occurring beyond the frame of Jules' camera as it runs for shelter. However, it also reminds the viewer to consider how they have thus far experienced the occurrence and encourages those memories to be recollected in parallel to this unusual perspective of Jules' footage.

The focus of *9/11*, on the proactive response of the emergency services and not the voyeuristic aspect of the destruction, is reflected in the interchange between interior and exterior perspectives. It establishes a link to the familiar imagery but encourages the viewer to engage and compare that previous footage and imagery with this distinct account. The Naudets' footage is an experience of September 11th and positions the viewer within the unfolding narrative of the occurrence; on the contrary, the broadcast media (and what remains of it as Image-Event) presents an omnipotent perspective and in that way can be aligned more with a cinematic interpretation of the day. I will now discuss the first impact and journey to

the WTC as captured in *9/11*. This sequence illustrates the context of the first collision and its immediate aftermath, positioning this moment as a violent rupture of the previous innocence.

Bombastic Omissions

The *9/11* viewer knows inevitably they are waiting for the attacks to begin; however, while reference is made to this impending moment during the domestic section of the film, it is not continually foregrounded. This permits the first twenty five minutes to establish a world before September 11th; the relative safety of which actually serves in part to activate a renewed sense of shock when the attacks unfold. The viewer has been embedded into a familial world but the innate sense of an impending rupture creates a tension that makes the pleasantness of life prior to the attacks seem uncanny; this is because the viewer knows exactly how, but not necessarily when, this world will be shattered. Jules' footage of the first impact became a well-known part of the post-September 11th rhetoric; it being the only known recording of this moment. The everyday routines which lead up to this monumental image align the footage with Žižek's assertion that, 'it is not that reality entered our image: the image entered and shattered our reality' (2002, p. 16). Žižek is writing specifically about the presentation and cycle of repetition that engulfed the imagery of September 11th. His statement suggests that the image superimposes the authority of the occurrence upon its communication; thereby, it usurps the reality of the occurrence. This idea is based on the media broadcasts of the day; however, through the less well-known Naudets' footage, my theory suggests their communication reinserts the reality of the occurrence into the image discourse. I will explore this through the sequence of the first plane impact and the sense of "unfolding" that I repeatedly return to. In contrast to the concept of encapsulation or

mediation, conveying a sense of unfolding allows an echo of the first occurrence to be re-communicated by *9/11*.

The domestic sequence culminates with the French brothers cooking a roast leg of lamb for the entire fire-house; Jules explains it is his speciality and we see him prepare, carve and serve the meat. It quickly becomes apparent that there is a paltry amount of lamb to feed a large number of men and the camera shows a frustrated Jules who becomes the butt of jokes for hungry fire-fighters, who complain about his cooking and French cuisine in general. The camera, operated by Gédéon at this moment, cuts from within the fire-house dining room to the kitchen and back again; this communal dining of the fire-house is demonstrable of the familial bond that the Naudets want to emphasise. There is clearly a humorous atmosphere evoked by the mocking of Jules, as the fire-fighters chew meat straight from the bone. Jules reminisces through narration that despite his glum appearance, 'we all joked all night long. It really was a great night'. We then hear the documentary narrator James Hanlon confirm it was the night of September 10th as the camera lingers on an image of the Manhattan skyline with the WTC in the centre of the frame. This clearly marks an overt transition to the recollection of the *day* of September 11th which now begins.

The frame dissolves through a number of different shots to show the passing of that night into the morning of September 11th. The montage shows views over the Brooklyn Bridge, images of seagulls flying at dawn and morning joggers against the rising sun; over the images as the morning light registers, radio broadcasts confirming the day and the expectant weather are heard. These images are edited together from various recordings and are not from that particular night. A similar montage opens the Oliver Stone's *World Trade Centre* to enhance the idea that this was a normal New York morning. The fire-house day begins like the others

we have seen, with more images of food as breakfast is cooked amid jovial fire-fighters greeting each other. The narrator then states, 'it was about 8.30am and the run comes in for an odour of gas'; the "run" is the notification of an emergency. A loudspeaker is heard calling the fire-house to attention as images of the men moving swiftly but calmly are shown. One fire-fighter as a talking head comments that there was a casual attitude, saying, 'you don't think anything of it. You get on the rig, you go. You say, alright, it's an odour of gas'.

After a short sequence of men gathering equipment the camera cuts to inside the fire-engine; Jules narrates the images explaining that he now goes on every call to practice his recording skills. Inside the fire-engine the camera moves through the streets of New York, capturing images of passing buildings; there is nothing remarkable about this call. The frame cuts to a medium shot of the fire-fighters on the street outside their vehicle. They have handheld gas-detectors and are shown taking readings around the edge of a ventilation shaft, as the meter emits a regular low-pitch noise. Even the person in charge, Chief Pfeiffer, comments that it was all routine as the camera pans up to frame two fire-fighters and the Chief staring at each other unconcerned by their findings. As this happens, we cut to a talking head retrospective account of Chief Pfeiffer who states, 'then we heard a plane come over, and in Manhattan you don't hear planes too often, especially loud ones'. The frame cuts back to the fire-fighters on the street and we see them look upwards; at this point the camera shakes and moves slightly upwards but it does not pan upwards to show any new images. This slight movement presumably indicates that Jules, the operator, also craned his head to look upwards. We hear the sound of the plane which has a tonal shift as it climaxes when passing over the camera position and then decreases as it moves away during this short sequence. It is at this point that the camera quickly swings to the left where the plane is caught in shot for less than a second before the first moment of impact is captured. There are immediate

exclamations of, 'holy shit' and 'oh my God'. The camera springs into life but appears

chaotic; it zooms in but as it does so it also blurs, so it zooms out to refocus before quickly

trying to zoom in again. Here, 'the image entered and shattered our reality' (Žižek, 2002, p.

16) as this footage is known to the documentary viewer, but contextualised within this

unfolding occurrence it offers a reconfigured understanding of footage which is generally

detached from its occurrence. Even if a viewer does not recognise this exact footage, it is

presumable that they will think they do due to the vast quantities of similar footage, which

memory theorists have discussed as the concept of *flashbulb memories* (Greenberg, 2004).
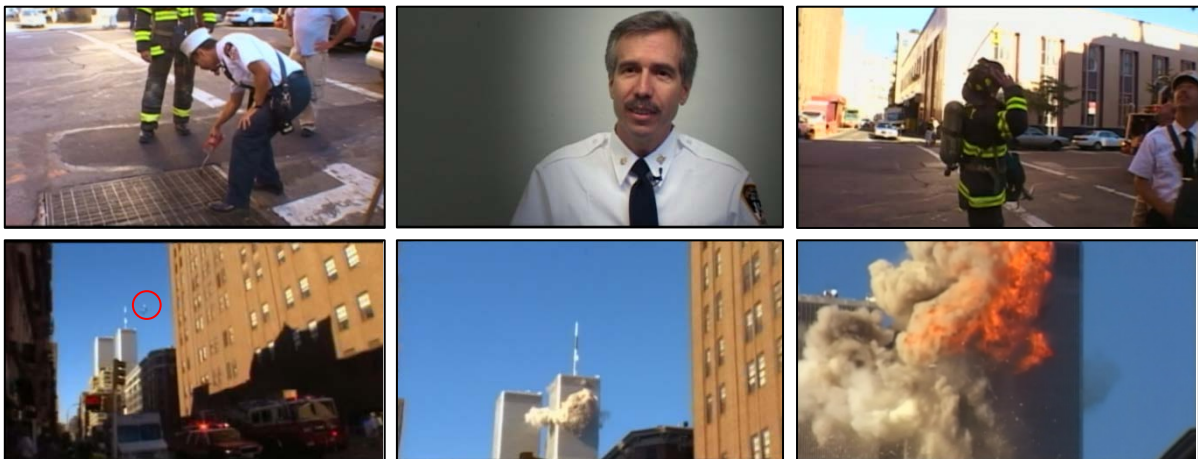
Figure 2: The first impact

As the cycle of zoom-in and zoom-out continues, we observe the resultant fire ball and

projecting debris before the camera begins to shake as it is clear the fire-fighters are not

standing still to view the results but are instead rushing past the camera to attend the

emergency. As much as the cameraman might like to linger on the impact – reflective of the

familiar communication of the day and perhaps a natural compulsion – this documentary is

based on the responders, not on the occurrence and so the camera moves off. In total we see

twenty seconds of the resultant fire ball and Jules trying to capture it from different degrees

of zoom. Jules' constant zooming and refocusing contrasts the familiar static perspective

from far away rooftops, synonymous with news coverage of the collisions. This sequence is the first chaotic or erratic camera movement we have seen and actually serves to initiate a new kind of communication with the viewer in *9/11*, whereby there is kind of response from the camera and operator; again in opposition to ubiquitous, distanced imagery. The Image-Event of the impact is well-known, but the mundane build up to it in this sequence allows it to create a renewed sense of shock in the viewer; partly due to the fact it is captured by a real person through little more than luck. As the fire-fighters move off, the camera cuts to inside the fire-engine speeding towards the WTC. Out of the window, images of the burning tower are seen from varying angles as shouting and the sound of sirens builds over this. On their arrival at the lobby of the WTC, the camera shows various fire-fighters donning high visibility clothing and helmets; we hear Jules in voiceover say that he requests to go inside with Chief Pfeiffer and is allowed. We then enter the sequence inside the lobby.

The focus on the fire-fighters undertaking their roles is violently interrupted first by sound and then by image. This rupture counteracts the idea that this moment is almost hermetically sealed as an occurrence and is the beginning of the story of September 11th. The Naudets want to show that the story of September 11th started before the first impact; the chaotic camera movement in this sequence is indicative of the unstructured unfolding of the occurrence as it happened. It conveys a sense of natural reaction to the shock. In *9/11* the viewer does not gaze unflinchingly at an Image-Event; they are taken closer to the reality of the unfolding occurrence as the fire-engine speeds towards it. Jules asking Chief Pfeiffer if he can join him inside establishes the documentary spectator's privileged position and his link to the camera operator; such a perspective should not be taken for granted as commonplace or without risk. The documentary retains the sense of imminent danger lacking in other representations of September 11th because the shattering is not simply of

what Žižek calls "our" reality, but it is also a shattering of "their" reality - the people on the day who we see in greater detail through the Naudets' lenses.

Žižek's reversal of the binary between reality and image reflects the distinction of a directly *experienced* September 11th, from how it is generally recalled via news broadcast imagery. I am suggesting that there is a new way of re-visiting this occurrence which can inform lasting memories by questioning how the occurrence was communicated and received at the time. Žižek's reversal of reality and image, like Baudrillard's Image-Event, suggests 'the image consumes the event' (2002, p. 27) and takes prominence in any relationship with a spectator. The imagery of September 11th has led to a dislocation between the actual unfolding occurrence and its impact. By this I mean that the images of collisions and collapses are the encapsulating memories of the day, but as such, through their proliferation, these have adopted an "un-real" or uncanny sense; we know they are images from reality, however, their repetition has somewhat lessened their resonance and encouraged desensitisation. Even within *9/11* there are references that the attacks were, 'like something from the Towering Inferno, like a movie'. This immediate "un-real" sense of the imagery is the fertile ground that Žižek utilises as to cultivate the notion that the viewer is as willing to absorb the imagery as they would a Hollywood disaster film or what he terms a 'nightmarish apparition' (2002, p. 19), as I will discuss in the next section.

ii. Recollection & *9/11*

> Precisely because it is real, that is, on account of its traumatic and excessive character,
> we are unable to integrate it into (what we experience as) our reality and
> therefore are compelled to experience it as a nightmarish apparition.
> (Žižek, 2002, p. 19)

The televisual images of September 11th are, of course, factual and taken from reality, but they form part of the scheme of informational bombardment composed of these factual elements which are often devoid of the context as to their recording or unfolding. The copious documentation is generally synthesised into three defining tableaus; notably the moments of impact, the moments of collapse and the scenes of people running from encroaching clouds of debris. Contrary to these overriding images, these moments in *9/11* can offer the opportunity to re-investigate and re-assimilate what Žižek terms the 'nightmarish apparition' (p. 19). This is the potential of a re-configuration of the Real. My argument that *9/11* can re-establish a connection to these occurrences necessitates an examination of how we recall September 11th, and what impact this manner of recollection or remembrance can have on previous interpretations. I postulate that there is a societal *unwillingness* to assimilate tableaus such as these, in opposition to what Žižek (to paraphrase) calls an *inability*. My assertion relies upon the belief that the occurrence cannot be satisfactorily resolved via synthesising or hermetically sealing the memory of the occurrence into a few short, homogenised moments. The Naudets' film enables a re-evaluation of how the first occurrence was disseminated, what has been retained from the reception of it and how it is remembered or recollected.[1]

As already noted, September 11th cemented the prevailing trend of rolling news coverage. This aggressive proliferation of footage meant that the most infamous moments were unable to be replicated in dramatic versions of the attacks, due to the entrenchment of the imagery in the shared cultural consciousness. Moreover, it can be assumed that any attempted re-

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[1] A notable difference between remembering and recollecting for the purposes of this discussion is that to re-collect is to place elements into an order and I consider this to be one through a form of outward communication; remembering does not necessarily require communication.

creations would actually fail to be viewed as authentic and, on the contrary, would be considered as gratuitous re-construction. Dramatic re-creations would be usurped by the iconic images spectators would bring with them to the presentation, via what Herbert Blau called, 'the vast seduction of the dispersive media' (Blau, 1990, p. 14). Of the various dramatisations of September 11th, I will consider in close detail a sequence within *World Trade Centre* by Oliver Stone (2006). However, I will also reference *United 93* (Paul Greengrass, 2006) and one other documentary called *102 Minutes That Changed America* (Nicole Rittenmeyer and Seth Skundrick, 2008); each of these three examples is based on the true happenings of September 11th. *World Trade Centre* follows a Port Authority policeman as he responds to the attacks but is trapped under the collapsing rubble of one of the towers with two of his colleagues. They struggle to retain the hope they will survive as the rubble under which they are trapped repeatedly moves and buries them deeper. *United 93* concerns the hi-jacking of the eponymous plane and the struggle between the terrorists and the passengers who challenge their rule. This leads to the plane crashing in a Pennsylvanian field which, in the scheme of events on September 11th, is generally considered a victory, as the hi-jackers failed to reach their intended target (thought to be the White House). *102 Minutes That Changed America* is a documentary without voice-over narration compiled completely of home footage of the attacks from hand held cameras that New York residents operate. The majority of the footage is unfamiliar and although it does offer new perspectives, it holds little new information. Television reports and radio broadcast are overlaid to act as narration and describe the flow of action. A clock in the bottom left hand corner of the screen revolves in real-time to demonstrate the exact time lapse of the title.

These dramatic versions illustrate the impact of the communication of September 11th; they allude to what is innately shared knowledge of the occurrence and offer an interpretation of

how it is remembered. In comparison, *9/11* is a vital document allowing for a re-investigation of *how we remember the occurrence* due to its proximity, footage and contextualised narratives. It is diametrically opposed to the Image-Event of September 11th as it was recorded before the notional September 11th was established, unlike the dramatic versions. Both styles offer differing retrospectives of September 11th and I will examine the varied representations of defining moments, as well as the retrospective talking heads of *9/11*, to suggest how the Naudets' film encourages a re-evaluation of the occurrence, its reception and its recollection. Žižek argues that we are unable to integrate the occurrence and the ubiquitous footage of September 11th 'into (what we experience as) our reality', and that a 'nightmarish apparition' (2002, p. 19) is the unconscious compulsion of how we process such cataclysmic imagery. This suggests that the occurrence can only be understood outside of the realm of reality, and is more akin to a kind of "un-real" or cinematic experience. In opposition to this I will assert that if the dramatic versions chose not to use or reconstruct the iconic imagery, then the occurrence cannot belong to a mode of representation and instead it remains in a realm of dialectic remembrance; something that needs to be retained and not satisfactorily assimilated or archived.

Hollywood: Memories from the Outside

The Hollywood films are important documents for two reasons; firstly, as comparisons in light of their communication of the monumental moments of September 11th and, secondly, as cultural demonstrations of how the occurrence is recalled. Their release five years after the attacks helps us understand how the attacks have been culturally processed and the legacy of their occurrence. The films are examples of cathartic mass-communication; by this I mean they are how western popular culture chose to memorialise the tragedy, to process it

emotionally and historically with the benefit of hindsight. Even the labelling of September

11th as a "tragedy" is part of a post-occurrence process of demarcation that these films

participate in; as Patrick Duggan notes when stating, 'trauma needs time to settle into

tragedy' (2012, p. 37). Comparing these examples to *9/11* will aid an examination of my

research questions as to how we recollect and re-communicate moments or occurrences to

offer a reconfigured sense of the Real. Both Stone and Greengrass demonstrate through their

films the problem of visually communicating images of the attacks that have already seared

themselves into the consciousness of the viewer. As Blau noted, 'an audience without a

history is not an audience' (1990, p. 16), and the omission of moments of impact in both

examples demonstrates the unassailable histories that these filmmakers knew the audiences

would bring to their films. The most familiar moments are not recreated and neither is

archive footage used in substitution by either of the Hollywood films. The moments of

planes crashing are signified through shadow and noise by Stone, and blackout with overlaid

noise by Greengrass. As dramatic presentations, rather than documentary or archive footage,

World Trade Centre and *United 93* lack a sense of urgency in comparison to *9/11*. This is

because the Naudets are at the mercy of the occurrence unfolding around them over which

they have no control; erratic camera movements reflect this. The purpose of the Hollywood

films is different though; it is one of solemn memorial and remembrance, and as such they

had a different kind of responsibility that brought upon them increased scrutiny.

World Trade Centre was received relatively poorly by audiences and reviewers as it lacked a

political context and was criticised for an inability to develop a connection to the reality of

the situation. *The Guardian*'s Peter Bradshaw criticised its 'lumberingly misjudged state-

funeral camerawork and elegiac music actually before, and during, the horrific attack itself,

smothering its dramatic impact' (Bradshaw, 2006). Seemingly, replicating the events without

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opinion, in an overtly patriotic and dramatic fashion, was misplaced in the post-September 11th landscape. On the contrary, *United 93* was widely regarded as a success and although it also lacked a political context, the tension of a simple story seemed to succeed with critics. The fact that fewer details of what actually happened on board United 93 were known to the public contributed to its success, as this would readily engage viewers. In contrast, the viewer of Stone's film is essentially judging their response to his re-telling of a story they are very familiar with.

Specifically in *World Trade Centre* the plane crashes are omitted and communicated in numerous different ways. Firstly we see Nicholas Cage look concerned as vibrations shake the building he is in, blocks away from the Twin Towers. At the same time, other characters turn to look up as large shadows are cast over their faces as the sound of a plane is heard overhead. These moments are soon accompanied by scenes of television screens showing the burning towers and debris laden streets. Not showing the impact allows Stone to focus on the prelude and the aftermath, conveying a strong sense of the immediate horror of the destruction. There would have been a heightened concern in the production of *World Trade Centre* to avoid treating the subject matter in such a way as to undermine the loss of life, or similarly to over-emotionalise it. Therefore, the signifiers of shadows and noises were judged the most appropriate manner of depiction; there was no need to "re-live" it on celluloid.

The balance between repeating, re-living and re-investigating these moments brings me to the theories of Dominick LaCapra. As the Naudets' unfolding experience happens before the viewer's eyes, it forces into recollection the images of how September 11th was communicated at the time. The Naudets' and Stone's inclusion of small amounts of news

media footage offers reference points to highlight this. LaCapra in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) explores perspectives of how traumatic occurrences are remembered and recollected. He utilises psychoanalytical concepts to discuss literary Holocaust narratives, in relation to concepts of "working through" and "acting out".[1] LaCapra explains in his introduction that his work expands on wide-ranging explorations of, 'the after effects – the hauntingly possessive ghosts – of traumatic events [which] are not fully owned by anyone and, in various ways, affect everyone' (LaCapra, 2001, p. x). The processes of *acting out* and *working through* are similar actions but what separates them is the varying degree of success or failure in the recognition of them from participants; they are, 'intimately related parts of a process' (2001, p. 143). LaCapra writes:

> Acting out is related to repetition, and even the repetition compulsion – the tendency to repeat something compulsively […] Victims of trauma tend to relive occurrences, or at least find that those occurrence intrude on their present existence, for example, in flashbacks or in nightmares or in words that are compulsively repeated […] In working through the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish past, present, and future. (pp. 142-143)

I introduce LaCapra here to contribute towards the examination of repetitious communication of news media, but also to consider these films as processes of exploring the occurrence of September 11th and its lingering memories through either repetition or distanced critical perspective. I will now explore this in relation to the varying accounts of the first tower collapse in *9/11* and *World Trade Centre*.

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[1] Literary examples demonstrate an individual's response to (and memory of) an occurrence. The proliferation of Holocaust based studies (see also Rothberg), highlights the defining position of this occurrence. September 11th will increasingly contribute to this discourse as it becomes the defining, global event within *living* memory.

In *9/11* this moment is prefaced by a contextualising statement from the narrator over images

of the burning towers; 'it was just before ten o'clock. A little over an hour since the first

plane hit. Firefighters from all over the city were inside those towers; hundreds of them'.

The statement serves to mark this moment as important for the viewer. The image cuts to

Jules' camera in the lobby with a group of senior fire-fighters standing behind the makeshift

command post. Centred in the frame is Chief Pfeiffer who is pacing and straining to hear

messages from the radio in his hands. As he listens he suddenly stops walking and stares

straight past the camera. He can hear a loud encroaching sound; however, its low resonance

means it does not initially register within the frame from the camera's microphone. The

camera turns to the windows behind; we initially think this is to be shown something outside

which has caught Chief Pfeiffer's attention. As the camera turns the ambient light visibly

darkens and the lens immediately swings back to see the fire-fighters craning their heads

upwards momentarily. The sound of a low hum has started to register and suddenly the

whole group breaks out of stillness and runs away from the camera. The camera shakes as it

begins to run as well, passing under an elevated walkway it continues towards daylight that

appears in the distance. Fire-fighters rush past, into and out of the frame, knocking the

camera as they turn a corner and see escalators to street level above; the source of the

daylight. At this point, just as they begin to mount the steps, the frame becomes increasingly

shrouded in darkness until there is complete blackout. In the last moments before complete

darkness the camera visibly collapses to the ground as debris falls around it. All the while

during this running sequence, the noise has been progressively increasing and, together with

falling debris causing bangs on the microphone, it builds to crescendo before flattening to

silence. The length of this sequence is five seconds. The scene cuts outside to a plume of

smoke and the viewer can then recognise what has just unfolded.

Figure 3: The collapse of the first tower in *9/11*

A radio broadcast conveying a summary of the occurrence is played over a panorama of the debris engulfed Manhattan. As a viewer we see first-hand how it was experienced in great detail and then we see the encapsulated image from afar. We are then shown a short few seconds of the carnage in the streets outside; people fleeing the debris and a radio broadcast proclaiming, 'the scene is just right out of one of those films you would see in Hollywood'. This short display of recognisable footage demonstrates the sense of *acting out* within the repetitious use of such imagery; the encapsulation of the occurrence and its near standard communication is factual, but is not something that either allows for a reconfigured Real or that could be described as aid to the *working through* of this traumatic occurrence. Such repetitious communication is exactly what is implied in Baudrillard's reversed statement of the *terrorism of spectacle*. The spectacle of the image is almost terroristic in its distanced, unequivocal, almost excessive display of destruction. This short montage of the collapse and its effects, framed from afar, is immediately recognisable to the viewer; it contrasts *9/11*'s footage from the Naudets' lenses, which show the occurrence unfold from a new perspective. The contrast of these two sequences reminds the viewer of the manner in which they received their information on September 11th and how this has formed their entrenched memories from that day.

As the viewer sees this short sequence showing the collapse from the exterior, the camera

dissolves into the blackout of Jules' camera and we hear him narrating, 'I waited. Time

slowed down and everything became pitch black'. Shouts are heard from other survivors and

the camera begins to rustle; Jules explains how he stands up, picks up his camera and turns its

light on. One of the first images we see from the camera light within the dust filled carnage

is Jules' hand cleaning the dust from the lens; there is nothing choreographed about this. He

explains that the firefighters shouted that he should use his light to help them find survivors

and Jules summarises the images captured at this time as accidental; 'I was not even

consciously filming. I just had the camera by my side pointing the light wherever they

needed it'. This *unconscious* filming can offer a perspective to *work through* the occurrence.

Instead of the Naudets repeating the past horrors of moments before, the focus is immediately

shifted to the confusion of the present. Literally, the Naudets, like the fire-fighters, work-

through this occurrence and via their recording they offer an unveiling of direct experiences

of the day; thereby granting the potential for a re-configuration of the viewer's recollections

of September 11th.

Figure 4: Jules' camera lit image inside the wreckage

One of the victims of the collapse was Father Judd, the fire department Chaplain. He had been shown moments before the collapse in the lobby and Jules informs through voice-over that Father Judd was being uncovered from the wreckage. Father Judd is the only person in *9/11* that we see both alive and dead; he would be immortalised in an iconic image of fire-fighters carrying his body from the wreckage to lay him in a nearby church. This photograph, shown below, is also shown during the Naudet film. This repetition is important because it takes a well-known image and repositions it within a context to give it both a renewed sense of occurring and a reconfiguration of its happening; we do not simply see the dead body of Father Judd, we see him alive and how he died. In the lobby he is shown praying for the victims and both Jules and Chief Pfeiffer comment that his usual reassuring glances were not offered on this occasion. *9/11* gives both a privileged perspective on this famous image and re-inserts the person of Father Judd into it as we see him alive. This again also represents a w*orking through* of the notion of September 11th. This does not necessarily mean resolving it in a satisfactory manner, neither does my theory of a reconfigured Real. However, *working through* does something more than simply re-tell the facts of an occurrence; it presents or confronts moments in a new way which goes beyond duplication. For the viewer familiar with the image of the deceased priest, the previous moment in the lobby gives the well-known image a new context and resonance; it gives it (as much as it can) the person of Father Judd.

Figure 5: The presence and post-occurrence image of Father Judd

Oliver Stone's *World Trade Centre*, like *9/11*, takes an internal perspective on the collapsing towers and tries to present an unfolding of September 11th from the perspective of the police officers who lived through it. In the narrative of the film lots of conflicting information is presented to illustrate the confusion of the day, such as whether there was one collision or two. Once the towers collapse, Stone's film shows the repetition of broadcast news footage on screens from all over the world, utilising a grainy aesthetic to suggest it is archive footage of this global dissemination. In this respect the film tries to be a dramatization of the occurrence *as it happened*, however, it lacks a sense of reality due to the fact it is clearly a dramatization. The real occurrence is too well-entrenched to require re-presenting. Specifically, the moments of collapse in *World Trade Centre* are constructed so that they maximise the visual description of what is occurring, from shattering glass to floors and ceilings collapsing. In *9/11* it is not clearly recognisable what was occurring because the point of view perspective allows for only one angle of sight. The collapse in Oliver Stone's film is shown from the viewpoint of the five policemen caught in the shopping concourse under the Twin Towers. The scene is immediately preceded by the Chief of Police outside

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calling his men to retreat out of the building. As this happens a large sound is suddenly heard

and the policemen look upwards and then around and then at each other; this entire sequence

is shot in slow motion. The light starts to darken and the camera cuts between shots of lights

exploding, windows shattering, debris falling, walls cracking and the policemen looking

afraid. After thirty seconds of slow motion destruction, Nicholas Cage's character shouts

(also in slow motion) to run for the elevator shaft. They begin to run as clouds of dust and

debris sweep into the concourse; some of the men make it to the shaft and some are swept

away by falling debris. The camera takes up multiple viewpoints to show each aspect of this

sequence in detail and it finishes with the elevator shaft in the centre of the frame as the floor

collapses and the walls fall on top of the men to bury them amid the rising dust. After the

shaft caves in upon itself there is an abrupt cut to darkness and silence to mimic the

unconscious states of the policemen. This sequence is sixty seconds long.

Figure 6: The first collapse in Oliver Stone's *World Trade Centre*

Perhaps the simplest way to understand the difference between these two presentations is this use of slow motion. The Naudets use this only once, when Jules enters the lobby; I discuss this in more detail later but it is principally used to detract from extreme horror and gratuitous gore. Oliver Stone uses slow motion to elongate the moment of collapse and perpetuate the sense of voyeurism that surrounds the ubiquitous images of destruction. The sequence in *9/11* offers a reversal of the ubiquitous Image-Event, as we see it unfold from within the tower. This reversal shatters the encapsulation of the ubiquitous post-September 11th *Image-Event*. *9/11* does not linger on the collapse or rely on repetition to reinforce the shock of the occurrence. It cuts to one scene outside but, concurrent with the reality of the day, it almost immediately returns to Jules' struggle and the recovery of the victims from inside the tower. We strain in the dusty wreckage to understand images that have no composition and are filmed entirely out of necessity. We are also presented with a contextualised reality of the *Image* of Father Judd's death through *9/11*. The Naudet film is devoid of the fixation on repetitive imagery and as such represents a potentially active *working through* of what remains from the Real of the occurrence; the traumatic memory. As we engage with this, we are presented not with simply what happened, but challenged to confront what we have remembered and how communication has shaped those memories. These approaches offer the opportunity to re-assimilate and explore the occurrence beyond the Image-Event. As opposed to a reification of the occurrence as Event, by examining recollections of September 11th we can further challenge Žižek's assertion of the *inability* to assimilate such occurrences.

9/11 & Recalling From Within

The narrative of *9/11* has two strands; firstly the separation of the brothers and their attempt to re-unite, and secondly, how this day would impact on the subject of their intended

documentary, Tony Benatatos. Although a standard documentary technique, it is the talking

head retrospectives which contextualise the footage, illuminating and contrasting the visceral

pictures with the interpretations and emotional responses of the people who experienced

them. The talking heads continually reinforce the sense of shock and confusion at the time,

which imbues the recorded images with freshness as opposed to offering yet another

repetitive exploration of the occurrence. The viewer is subconsciously being asked to re-

think what they know about September 11th. The aim of this is that the knowledge a viewer

brings to *9/11* is superseded by the talking head accounts which challenge preconceptions

embedded by *Image-Event* communication; it positions the documentary as a vital and

authentic[1] document for the viewer.

9/11 is, in a sense, its own memorial; if it did not contain talking head retrospectives and it

flowed as one continuous recording, edited only to help time elapse, I would not be able to

make this assertion. Such a version would simply be footage of the Naudets' activities on

that day and a functional, one dimensional document. *102 Minutes That Changed America* is

structured in this way and thus, through its lack of hindsight is incapable of questioning

memories and the recollection of the occurrence. Albeit, *102 Minutes That Changed America*

does offer new perspectives, but they are not part of an over-arching approach which is in

opposition to the Image-Event communication. The talking heads of *9/11* are outward

expressions of the recollection process; they do not watch the footage as they talk, they are

simply recalling their memories of certain moments to aid the exploration of the occurrence.

However, even in the re-telling of these contributors, minor contradictions occur and

demonstrate the fluidity of memory. One such example is when Jules recalls Chief Pfeiffer

giving him permission to accompany them into the lobby; Jules remembers the Chief's words

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[1] "Authentic" in comparison to dramatic representations, such as *World Trade Centre*.

as, 'yep. Come in with me. Never leave my side'. This is narrated as it unfolds on-screen but the words "never leave my side" are not spoken by Chief Pfeiffer at this moment. This either happens at another point which is not shown and Jules mistakenly remembers it here, or it does not happen at all. If it does not happen at all then perhaps it has regularly happened previously and Jules imagines it happening on September 11th. Or alternatively, the latent fear that Jules retains about September 11th feeds into his memory transforming the Chief's sentiment into a more hyperbolic and protective statement because the occurrence unfolded into such a large disaster. By this I mean that Jules remembers this warning to be more strenuous than it actually was because, with hindsight, the occurrence warranted it.

Throughout history, the communication of memories has demonstrated a common societal drive to document and to archive. Whether it is through hieroglyphics, oral traditions or digital storage, all methods are demonstrative of a need to *remember* and to *communicate memories*. It is for anthropologists, psychoanalysts and philosophers to muse on *why* we want to remember but the fact we do is a crucial point that is arguably lacking at the centre of Žižek's postulation of our inability to assimilate – permit me to re-insert it here once more:

> Precisely because it is real, that is, on account of its traumatic and excessive character, we are unable to integrate it into (what we experience as) our reality and therefore are compelled to experience it as a nightmarish apparition. (2002, p. 19)

Žižek's assertion suggests that agency plays no part; for him, because we cannot understand the occurrence from one perspective we must, by default, experience it as the secondary. This stance mirrors the modern blurring relationship between reality and the virtual via the cinematic. The filmic world, like an apparition, presents a suitable proxy for images of September 11th to be defined against and, as I have already noted, is backed up in many

individual responses to September 11th. The attacks appear as though from a film, an un-Real occurrence. We cannot assimilate it as happening in our reality, so the proliferation of such cinematic images has conditioned society to appropriate such "excessive" events as 'nightmarish apparition' (p. 19). This resolution, however, is contradicted by this study and particularly the talking head retrospectives which, even with their inconsistencies, reinvigorate the recollection of September 11th as something which is active and which can be shaped by new contribution; this offers a potentiality of agency within the post-occurrence rhetoric and reconstitutes the discourse outside of the realm of apparitions. If we considered an occurrence resolved then it could be argued that it holds no active participation in our on-going lives, it is consigned to history and close to being forgotten. An *inability* to integrate can be seen as a deliberate (albeit unconscious) act on the behalf of occurrences that society *wants* to remember, to keep them activated within memory. The talking heads and my argument for a reconfiguration of the Real oppose Žižek's assertion of a compulsion to experience the occurrence as 'nightmarish apparition' (p. 19). These accounts help to establish *9/11* as its own act of remembrance as it continues to pose the kinds of existential questions that impact memory and Real discourses, one of which is rhetorically posed by fire-fighter Tardio; 'why am I here? Why did I make it out? It's not easy being a survivor'.

When exploring the traumatic resonance of the attacks, Patrick Duggan comments on the relationship between reality, film and news broadcasts; utilising Marvin Carlson, Duggan suggests, 'we had already seen these events in countless representations [...] Far from being "unimaginable" the scenes were thoroughly rehearsed and known, they were part of the ubiquity of the image' (2012, p. 56). In contrast to the ethereal nature of Žižek's "nightmarish apparition", Duggan's description of the "rehearsed and known" correlates an innate structure through received media with which to appropriate such images. Myers stated

that for Žižek, 'all our knowledge of the world is mediated by language' (2003, p. 25). Once

filtered through some form of mediation – be that visual, written or verbal - the Real ceases to

be and this filtration presents the Subject (viewer) with an encapsulation of the thing that

could once be called Real. This shows the importance of the memory of occurrences when

re-interpreting their significance in the future. The process of communication, the Event, is

already a synthesising of an occurrence before we then recall our memory of the

communication (unless we directly experienced the occurrence). Hence the importance of

the first-hand memory accounts in *9/11*; these convey different understandings at the time in

comparison to the reified memories constructed via the ubiquitous imagery.

9/11 exists in the dialectic between dramatic description and the over-familiarised broadcast,

but it can be argued that *102 Minutes That Changed America* also belongs in this

documentary hinterland. Elapsing in real-time from just before the attacks to the fall of the

Twin Towers, *102 Minutes That Changed America* gives an uninterrupted view of the

growing paranoia and confusion that gripped New York residents. Although emergency

service broadcasts act as narration at certain points, it focuses on how local citizens watched

and reacted to the disaster. The silent clock in the bottom left hand corner shows the passing

minutes and suggests an unbiased and authentic account. Although the film holds no

particular significance with any anniversary, its 2008 production makes it the most recent of

all the examples and could suggest an initial desire to contribute something different to

previous representations of September 11th. While it does offer new material, it does not

encourage a significantly new response.

The potential of a re-configured Real offers a new interaction between material and viewer

that in turn shatters previously accepted assimilations to re-investigate an occurrence and its

communication. *102 Minutes That Changed America* indulges too faithfully in voyeuristic, detailed repetition of the hysteria of September 11th. While it creates limited empathy with the various operators of the cameras – whom we never meet – it does not help to critically re-explore the occurrence or how it was communicated and remembered. It can remind a viewer of their potential reaction on the day but the compendium of material acts more as a factual archive of the occurrence, viewed from the greater New York City area. Although each image is a new perspective we have not seen before, they are resonant of the familiar, distanced, external vantage points from which the majority of the day is remembered.

By comparing different representations of moments and vehicles of memory in this study, I am attempting to discern traces from *9/11* and other narratives that can help to re-explore well known occurrences. Moments which could never have been planned to be captured on film are not just information communication. When considered against reified memories or representations of an occurrence, these new perspectives offer a potential reconfiguration of the *thing itself*; this is in opposition to the encapsulation of it via bombastic and repetitious communications. In the next section I will consider what is distinctive about the perspective of imagery and aesthetic of *9/11* and how this contributes to the establishing of a re-configured Real.

iii. Perspectives & *9/11*

'It's begun to sounds like some sort of a cliché now, but really,
September 11th started out like every other day.'
(Fire-Fighter James Hanlon, *9/11*)

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The *9/11* viewer has the advantage of hindsight and knowledge to complete elements of the documentary that are not shown. They are also presented with detailed information about the fire-fighters caught in the Twin Towers. Therefore, this re-presentation of September 11th is aided by new internal information and footage as well as recollections from the external viewer and the protagonists; the viewer remembers the initial communication and the protagonists recall their memories of living through it. Aesthetic and technical elements of *9/11* aid the embedding of the documentary within the privileged perspective of the film-makers and inhabitants as the first occurrence unfolds. I will argue that the re-positioning of the viewer's physical perspective is a potent tool in *9/11*'s establishing of a re-configured Real, as it creates the potential for a momentary move away from archived perception to a new interaction. Žižek would refer to this fluctuating position as a kind of parallax – a displacement in the consideration or visibility of a *thing* resulting in a shift of a subject's perception or interpretation. However, there should also be a consideration of the experience the Subject/viewer will bring which inflects an individual's parallax:

> The standard definition of parallax is: the displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight. The philosophical twist to be added, of course, is that the observed difference is not simply "subjective," due to the fact that the same object which exists "out there" is seen from two different stances, or points of view […] in Lacanese – the subject's gaze is always-already inscribed into the perceived object itself. (Žižek, 2006, p. 17)

In this section I will consider two moments. The first will be the entry into the tower lobby for the first time by Jules and the choices that are made from an editorial perspective that align the viewer's perspective with that of the camera lens; this develops an unspoken trust between the filmmakers and the viewer. This first moment draws upon elements of the previous two strategies to illustrate the overlapping nature of these techniques; they

interweave to create a cohesive sense of unfolding offering a reconfiguration of the Real of the occurrence. This first moment is the only example in *9/11* where there is a void which cannot be filled by the viewer, as something occurs off-screen but it is not shown and is not a common-image the viewer can replace from other documents of September 11th. The second moment I will consider is the perspective from which we see the collapse of the second tower and the capturing of the physicality of this occurrence in *9/11*. Jules is outside the second tower at the time of collapse which offers a completely different perspective to the first collapse. However, this perspective is distinct from common external imagery of the second collapse as the camera is actually consumed by the debris cloud. With his camera light still on, Jules continues to record unconsciously throughout the moments of collapse, and illuminates for the viewer an internalised view of this iconic occurrence.

There is an innate exchange between a viewer's retained images of September 11th and the new images communicated in *9/11* which cultivates a comparison between these perspectives. This section explores what is shown, how it is captured and the relationship between the image, the viewer and the camera operators – the Naudets. Recognising this triple relationship is important as the images bring forth new information, the viewer brings an engagement between these new images and what is already known, and the camera operators are the conduit (and editors) through which these two other elements communicate. When choosing to place themselves in the frame, the operators reference their physical vulnerability and their role within the documentary's construction; moreover, they underline their persistent need to capture the unfolding occurrence.

This need to capture the occurrence is of primary importance to the Naudets; it is the immediate moment that demands their concentration, not the consideration of later

dissemination. Jules himself notes, 'they always say there is always a witness for history. That day, we were chosen to be the witness'. As filmmakers they recognised the magnitude of the occurrence, hence their persistence in documenting it even when their lives were in danger. Gédéon at one point states he has no medical training and questions what he can do in this situation; he resolves that the only thing he can do is what he is good at - filming the occurrence. This necessity to record strips the footage of any overly elaborate aesthetic and allows for the exploration of a reconfigured Real via a direct and at times spontaneous moment of capture. This could be considered in opposition to a re-framed Real in the other examples I have cited. *9/11* blurs the distinction between reality and representation, and consequently elicits a sense of the uncanny via its new perspectives, offering a parallax from the Image-Event of September 11th. This blurring offers a transitional zone; a missing locale between the thing itself and our reception of the thing where a reconfiguration can be said to occur.

The Viewer / Lens Relationship

Returning to the moments just after the first plane collision, Jules has travelled to the WTC and is permitted to follow Chief Pfeiffer into the lobby. Putting aside the inconsistency in Jules' memory of Chief Pfeiffer's words, this sequence is important for the focus on the lens and the manner of its presentation of the image in the frame. As Jules enters the lobby he goes through a set of double doors into a vestibule. We see Chief Pfeiffer in the centre of the frame as he turns his head to the right; he quickly looks away and keeps walking. A haze of smoke encroaches into the frame from the right hand side and the sound of extinguishers is heard as well as shouting and screaming; both the camera's and the images' movement has decreased into slow motion. As it slows down the image begins to blur and pixilate; the

editing process is clearly responsible for this technique. The process of slowing down lasts

only a few seconds but we see people running across the frame and hear Jules narrate for the

viewer what is happening, 'right to my right there were two people on fire. Burning'. Just

before the camera slows to a complete freeze-frame it cuts to Jules as a talking head to finish

his sentence, 'I just didn't want to film this. It was like, no one; no-one should see this'. The

frame lingers on him a moment before returning to the vestibule; it speeds back up amid the

sound of extinguishers and screams, and continues to follow Chief Pfeiffer into the lobby.

Figure 7: Jules recalling his entrance into the lobby of the WTC

This sequence occurs less than five minutes after the frivolity of Jules' failed attempt to cook

a hearty meal for the fire-fighters and about two minutes after we have seen the first plane

impact. Therefore, early in the film the viewer is informed via this sequence that the lens will

filter moments of extreme horror or gore for reasons of decency; this establishes a trust

between the viewer and the operator. Jules, confronted with 'an excess of reality'

(Baudrillard, 2002, p. 18), decided not to film it; doing this confirms that the camera is not

lingering voyeuristically or adopting completely unregulated "point and shoot" perspective.

The unspoken covenant between the operator and the viewer does not personify the camera

lens as such, but enhances the position of the camera as a threatened one; it experiences the

attacks. This relationship further embeds the viewer in the camera's perspective. *Steady Cam* or "point of view" camera work is not an unusual technique in isolation; however, its use within the context of *9/11* underlines the individual perspective which serves to increase a viewer's understanding of the depth of information and nuanced detail that cannot be communicated from distanced vantage points. This conscious framing of the lobby horror is in contrast to the unconscious filming of the second tower collapse. It could be argued that the manifestation of the decision making process from the operator undermines a sense that we are being presented with an unfolding occurrence; because Jules saw something which the camera did not frame. I consider it more useful to consider this live editing decision as reflective of the operator's *response* to the unfolding occurrence, and thereby underlining the subjective nature of this perspective.

Not only is this sequence important in the establishment of the operator-viewer pact, the omission of gruesome imagery in itself is also an aesthetic principle of *9/11* which aligns it with many other representations of September 11th. Horrific imagery of these attacks is prevalent on the internet but the display of gore is not something that would help to establish a re-configured Real. This is because the abject would overpower; it would usurp the context of the occurrence and strip the viewer of the opportunity to reflect critically. In short, the abject would become like the *Image-Event*, and the documentary, if loaded with such imagery, would become an overtly factual study of the destruction of the attacks, as opposed to a representation of the occurrence unfolding.[1]

The slow motion sequence illustrates the thought process of the operator in the on-screen image. Beyond such post production techniques, generally we can say that the camera's

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[1] See Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* (1982) for a fuller discussion of the abject.

movement mirrors that of the operator's. In this example though, Jules obviously had to turn his gaze to recognise what was unfolding on his right, but he then chose not to turn the camera lens. Although the slow motion is clearly a stylised technique, the incident could simply have been referenced or omitted completely. However, the conscious decision to describe the scene and slow down the image highlights a number of points. Firstly, like the new perspective we witness through *9/11*, there are thousands of other narratives we do not know about the day. This in turn challenges the viewer to recognise what else is happening off-screen which undermines the ubiquitous imagery of September 11th. This sense of unseen perspectives and unknown narratives destabilize the perception of a resolved notion of September 11th that the viewer brings to *9/11*. This moment also brings the viewer much closer to the display of bodily harm than is generally communicated via the ubiquitous imagery; in this sense, it creates a tension that this version of the unfolding of September 11th may not be as sanitized as other depictions.

The point of view perspective is aligned to the experience of the operators and intended to reflect a lack of omnipotence; this is furthered by the talking head retrospective of Jules and Gédéon who continually express their beliefs that the other is in the towers and likely to be already dead. The Naudets' narrations explain their actions and the motivation for the images we see. Physically the camera and the operator are to be understood as one; this is demonstrated when Jules and Gédéon both look into their camera lenses. We see at one point Gédéon talking into his camera to express his shock at the collapse of the second tower, saying, 'holy shit'. We have already seen both Naudets in the frame a number of other times during the domestic opening sequence, as they film each other or themselves in comic moments and cleaning their own equipment. However, since the start of the attacks we have not seen their faces in the frame except retrospectively, as talking head accounts. They both

place their faces within the frame at a similar time; Gédéon after the collapse of the second tower (as above) and Jules just before the collapse of the second tower as he inspects his lens. Jules does not say anything into the lens; instead he looks into the camera, inspects it for dust and blows into it to clean it. In narration he describes this repetitive action as, 'a way for me to try to focus on something so I can stay away from the horror of the reality […] that was just my obsession; my lens needs to be clean'.

Despite the fact the Naudets operate the cameras, edit the documentary and are also retrospective talking heads, it is not until we see their faces within the frame at these moments after the second collapse that we are truly reminded they are present. Moreover, this moment offers an uncanny assertion that everything we have witnessed through these privileged camera positions has been granted by this person looking into the lens. I describe it as uncanny because the viewer is reminded in these moments that the operators have lived through all the destruction captured on film and have been invisible agents in the void between the viewer's position and the camera lens. For the majority of the occurrence the camera has focused on fire-fighters and victims. We do not forget the Naudets are there, but seeing their faces within the frame for the first time during the attacks brings into focus their vulnerability. Practically, seeing the Naudet faces ties their retrospective talking heads to the footage and increases the sense of authenticity of their accounts; it was these two men who recorded the images, they were there, they lived through it. The Naudets are not only the operators of the camera but, like the viewer, become part of what Žižek (1999) explored as the process of identification; the Naudets and the viewer are able to affect what Alain Badiou termed 'an interpreting intervention' (Žižek, 1999, p. 129). This pertains to the subject of an occurrence who draws out the significance of his situation in relation to the occurrence. Žižek utilised Badiou to explore the subject as the agent who, 'intervenes in the historical

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multiple of the situation and […] persists in discerning its traces within his situation' (1999, p. 130). This idea is present in Jules' recognition of himself as the witness of history but more importantly in the placement of the Naudets within the frame, and the association this draws with the documentary viewer; the discernible traces are still to be explored even now.

9/11 is not simply a presentation of notional history but an experience of history. New footage plays a significant role because, although it may appear less bombastic, it offers unknown or unseen elements of the attacks which encourage a reconfiguration of the Real occurrence. As with the first tower collapse, this movement away from ubiquitous perceptions of the Image-Event is also demonstrated by my next example.

The "Eye of the Storm"

During the moments of the second tower collapse, Jules' camera continues to film unconsciously as it did during the first collapse. There is no control or intention behind what is filmed but on this occasion, even in the darkness, everything on-screen is illuminated because the camera's light has remained on since it was used initially in the wreckage of the first tower. What we see gives both a new understanding to what happens as the tower collapses and the ensuing, iconic debris cloud which swathed much of downtown Manhattan and is a prevalent image in the "disaster movie" rhetoric post the attacks. Jules' position is within the centre of the cloud as it spreads and engulfs him; this is distinct from the position of the ubiquitous imagery and offers a context to the aftermath of detritus and fine dust that coated much of the area.

The image of the collapse, as we might think of it, plays little part in this sequence; the noise and the dust are the most significant references to the collapsing tower. The dust is relatively

harmless compared to the collapse, but this sequence illuminates the traumatic experience suffered by people who were engulfed by the cloud that we remember seeing in images of the day, covered in dust. This would be difficult to comprehend without the point of view and information of *9/11*. The viewer is granted a perspective which is radically different to the encapsulated imagery of one or two "safe" perspectives; safe in terms of their proximity. The sense of threat upon Jules and his camera is intensified in this sequence as the viewer transposes their recollections of the dust cloud onto the images in the frame; this engages the viewer to broaden the context of their perceptions via the unfolding events on-screen. During this sequence the viewer gains the ability to look into the eye of the debris cloud, to see it engulf and pass them by. A new understanding of the physicality of this occurrence is offered; it contrasts Žižek's sense of 'nightmarish apparition' (2002, p. 19) and instead encourages a reconfiguration of previously held perspectives, usurping them via this detailed descriptive unfolding.

The sequence opens in the plaza outside the second tower. Jules, Chief Pfeiffer and others have just found their way out of the collapsed first tower and have met up with others in this area; people are filmed sharing water, trying to contact people over their radios and discussing tactics. We see half of Jules' face enter the frame as discussed above; this is when we hear and see him blowing dust off the lens and using a tissue to wipe it. Retrospective narration from the talking heads of the fire-fighters seen gathered in this plaza explains that they knew nothing of the first tower's collapse; their position meant the first tower would have been obscured from sight by the second tower. The air was filled with dust and as Chief Pfeiffer explained, 'it's not unusual for a fire to have a building disappear behind smoke'. The camera alternates between panning around the plaza and moving up and down the second tower. While the camera lens is focusing on the debris strewn ground, we hear Jules say in

voice-over 'then comes that sound again'; at this point a low rumble registers in the frame. The camera cuts to the insertion of a short piece of broadcast footage of the beginning of the collapse of the second tower. This image is not recorded by the Naudet brothers and it serves just to illustrate the collapse of the very top of the second tower. It lasts for less than one second and then the frame cuts back to Jules' camera; 'I don't even have time to think at that point. I just run'. The camera slightly contradicts this statement as it suddenly shakes and turns to look upwards before moving off in the opposite direction amid general shouting. This initial upward turn of the camera goes about one third up the height of the second tower and does not capture any visual sign of the collapse occurring; the need to escape takes over. The inserted footage of the beginning of the collapse shows the viewer what is happening and makes again a connection between the distanced perspective and the proximity of Jules who is in imminent danger. The rumbling sound of the collapse quickly gives way to the pounding of footsteps on the pavement as Jules runs away. As the atmospheric light begins to darken suddenly the camera swings to the left and crouches under a vehicle for cover; we can see the engine undercarriage in the top of the frame.

The camera light now becomes recognisable as the frame darkens to blackness but we can still see what is directly in front of the lens. At this point the atmosphere is filled with dust and it is very likely that Jules has covered his face; therefore, he is not seeing what the viewer sees. As the light darkens, debris such as paper is pulled violently from the right hand side of the frame to the left, but then a couple of seconds later a plume of dust envelops from the opposite direction; from the left hand side of the frame moving to the right. This obscures the vista of the street and plunges Jules and his camera into complete darkness. Through the camera light we see blown into shot various articles of detritus, of which pieces of paper are the most discernible and common; some of them cling to the camera lens for a moment

before being blown onwards. The camera has not moved since sheltering under the vehicle, but we hear the wind whistle past as well as the deep breathing and coughing of Jules. As the dust clears there is a moment of stillness and silence which is broken by Jules' narration; 'I feel the person who is on top of me get up and I recognise it's Chief Pfeiffer – He jumped on top of me to protect me from all this'. Jules' position during the collapse of the second tower captures the surging and eventual passing of the debris cloud offering a detailed insight into the "workings" of this occurrence, as opposed to synthesising it as Event. *9/11* encourages the viewer to confront the physical reality of the occurrence as it happened.

Before the debris cloud surges into view from the left hand side of the frame – the direction of the tower – in the low natural light that remains we can clearly see dust and debris swiftly moving in the opposite direction, toward the collapsing tower. This reversal of movement is explainable for two reasons; firstly, the physical collapse of the tower created a vacuum at its core so the initial result was to pull inwards air and various light objects from the surrounding area. The second reason is because the wind was already blowing in that direction the expelled cloud reversed back on itself quickly. After being smothered by the debris, the air cleared within a minute for Jules to begin moving around and breathe more easily. Immediately after Jules moves from his hiding place we cut to Gédéon who is north of Ground Zero and is still shrouded in the darkened, dusty half-light. Jules was south of the towers and the wind was coming off the nearby Hudson River to push the dust cloud north; this is why the most memorable images of encroaching debris are mainly taken from the north looking south. From this direction the cloud appears to be moving faster, to be thicker and it is prolonged because the debris that was expelled in a southerly direction is pushed back northwards by the wind.

In the collapse of the first tower, survival is the overriding tone; the attempt to escape from the lobby is towards daylight and potential safety. The sound builds to a crescendo as the camera fades to black and then we see the images from the exterior of the tower collapsing; the threat to Jules is to his very survival. The threat of this first collapse seems greater than that of the second collapse because we know that, although very close to the second collapse, Gédéon is moving away from it and is not directly underneath it. As well as this, with the camera light on throughout the second collapse, we can see what is happening when natural light is shrouded out. This ability to observe throughout the second collapse offers knowledge of its occurrence which imparts a more objective view of it. The movement of air transfixes the viewer as the camera lens is positioned in the eye of the debris storm. The camera light permits the viewer to experience what it would have visually been like to be consumed by the debris cloud but in a manner that no one who was *actually* in the cloud could have actually experienced; because they would have had to close their eyes and cover their face. The privilege to gaze through this cloud creates a parallax in comparison to the ubiquitous imagery of this occurrence, as does the sequence of the first collapse in *9/11*. The shift in physical perspective challenges the understanding and the context of the ubiquitous images that followed the first occurrence, enabling recognition of the one-dimensional encapsulation of the occurrence via the Image-Event.

In this second collapse we see the internal movement of the dust cloud which offers a more detailed exploration than the iconic "disaster movie" image of it advancing down narrow streets towards crowds of people. The cloud itself is threatening as we soon hear Gédéon in the darkness trying to aid someone who has collapsed due to suffocation. However, the ability to watch it pass undermines the all-encompassing threat that the gigantic cloud possesses in the ubiquitous imagery. The vacuum which sucks debris back to the tower's

position after the initial moments of collapse is a brand new aspect for many viewers to consider about the physicality of this occurrence. The image on-screen offers the viewer nothing else to concentrate on aside from the movement of small fragments of dust and paper. The monumental image of the second tower collapse, possibly easily confused with the collapse of the first tower in general consciousness, is only shown for one second as Jules reports hearing the same noise as previously. The re-appropriating of this imagery by *9/11* positions it as referential; as the Event and not the occurrence. Even upon repeat viewing, much of *9/11* remains at odds with the repetitious imagery because it cannot broadly usurp it. It can only offer a counter-point but it is this point of differentiation, this dialectic, where the potentiality of a reconfigured Real can occur.

Conclusion

It is as if we are living in the unique time between a traumatic event and its symbolic impact, as in those brief moments after we have been deeply cut, before the full extent of the pain strikes us.

(Žižek, 2002, p. 44)

Žižek wrote this in the months immediately following September 11th to illustrate his point that the inability to assimilate this occurrence was due to the rupturing of the world order post the attacks. Through my discussion of *9/11*, in comparison to other accounts of September 11th, I attempt to suggest how historical moments can be reinvestigated to aid the understanding of their momentary occurrence and their lasting impact; this is done through examining the Real of the occurrence and its resonance in memory. The homogenisation of modern communication methods can be seen as instigating a synthesising and reification of perceptions which, in turn, affect and inform memories; this is why re-examination is

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important and documents such as *9/11* offer this through a reconfiguration of accepted images, information and perspectives.

Commenting directly on the imagery of September 11th, Žižek wrote that 'the same shots were repeated ad nauseam, and the uncanny satisfaction we got from it was *jouissance* at its purest' (2002, p. 15). Translated loosely as "pleasure", *jouissance* is directly taken from Žižek's Lacanian grounding but is used to articulate a delicate balance the sense of knowledge and fulfilment (in possession); similarly to the obtaining of a physical object in his famous Kinder Egg analogy (1999). The object of the Kinder Surprise revolves around the promise of the toy in its central void. This "surprise" should, by rights, deliver disappointment due to its inexpensive plastic form; however, there is actually a pleasurable sense of fulfilment in achieving the hidden promise from the chocolate vessel. The interlocking plastic toy is not a "surprise" at all, because you know it is there and you know what to expect; it would be more of a surprise if on occasion there was no toy to find! There is no pleasure to be had in the images of September 11th or in *9/11*, but it can be argued that Žižek's assertion of an "uncanny satisfaction" suggests a sense of fulfilment via the repetitious broadcast media that we can possess knowledge of this monumental occurrence; moreover, through so many different sources we are, seemingly, presented with a fully expressed memory of it. For Žižek the fulfilment of the Kinder Egg is not the physical article itself, but the sense of completion the object conveys to the subject. He is suggesting that the abundance of visual information can give the impression of a similar sense of satisfaction of the occurrence of September 11th; albeit an *uncanny* one, that is to say, tinged with the sorrow that is inherent to September 11th. The desire to receive and retain information is more satisfying than to want such knowledge and not have it available. However, in *9/11* there is arguably a different sense of fulfilment that such events are able to be communicated beyond

their imposed Image-Event, which has taken the Real hostage. *9/11* permits a re-integration of the individual into the occurrence of September 11th which heightens the personal perspective of the Naudets' film and engages the viewer to recognise the simulacra of the Event.

Myers wrote that, 'the Real is the world before it is covered up by language' (2003, p. 25). The Naudets' film is, of course, a form of language communication; however, through motifs and moments that reverse the ubiquitous imagery, *9/11* can offer a reconfiguration of the first occurrence and cut through the encapsulated or presented Image-Event to re-explore September 11th as it unfolded. The Naudets' choice of content and editorial intention revolves around what we see that has not been shown before as part of the general communication of the occurrence, as well as offering new perspectives on encapsulated sequences of the attacks. Exploring various recollections of the attacks and the memorialising of September 11th in post-event presentations enables an examination of the construction of what we remember and how this is manifest and, thereby, explores the ongoing memory of the occurrence. Finally, moments of September 11th can be reinvigorated through the new perspective the viewer is given in *9/11*. This parallax is not simply the physical shift of a point of view, but can bring about a reconfiguration of the occurrence as the viewer is in the midst of the colossal event in all its unfolding reality. The different perspectives of ubiquitous moments expose a latent resonance in the *9/11* imagery which reminds the viewer of *their memory* of the first occurrence. It positions this occurrence as a moment still requiring re-evaluation, which needs re-assimilating; as opposed to a memory to be consigned to an archive. The embedded perspective underlines the subjective narrative account and encourages individual re-evaluation of how this occurrence is remembered.

I consider the moments of a re-configured Real to be when there is no Baudrillard-esque substitution of a Real by an Image-Event; which is the case for the majority of *9/11*. However, more precisely, it is when a communication has the potential to engage the viewer in a detailed way that creates a heightened sense of understanding an occurrence and its unfolding in reality. In reference to September 11th, such moments aid the re-assimilation of the occurrence by rejecting Žižek's assertion of a 'nightmarish apparition' (2002, p. 19), instead offering a more direct kind of mirroring, or in Rothberg's term, a 'distorted reflection' (2000, p. 111). This reflection is not an exact replication but a reversal of recognised locales creating a familiar yet recognisably different presentation; in *this* sense there is an uncanny kind of satisfaction. The re-configured Real in *9/11* is the moment of interplay where the viewer is confronted with the supposed supremacy of their archived information. The new imagery and perspectives reveal the Image-Event to be an encapsulation and the viewer is party to a new unfolding as the attacks re-occur; in this way the viewer questions the way they have processed the occurrence previously. If we return to, and further, Žižek's analogy from the start of this conclusion, we can say that once healed the *deeply cut* wound will leave a scar. Contemplating the occurrence of that scar can reveal different aspects of what we remember about its happening and what we have learned from it; therefore, we can go back beyond the time of *symbolic impact* to re-evaluate its occurrence and our constructed memory of this.

CHAPTER TWO: CLIO BARNARD'S *THE ARBOR*

Introduction

> We are living in an age in which the ground is shifting and the foundations are shaking.
> I cannot answer for other times and places. Perhaps it has always been so.
> We know it is true today.
>
> (Laing, 1967, p. 108)

This chapter develops a different kind of reconfiguration of the Real as it is spawned by very different source material. However, it continues my exploration of methods wherein viewers can interact with their given material in a manner that goes beyond simple duplication, reification or encapsulation. The aim again is to draw out approaches, strategies and techniques which are appropriate to question how this is possible, how it is successful and why. To that end I intend to demonstrate that my articulation of a reconfigured Real is robust and applicable to different types of presentation; through this I intend to examine how post-occurrence performance can offer a renewed interpretation of moments and of their memories. To demonstrate the flexibility of this concept, I have chosen to contrast the monumental global occurrence of September 11th with a second case study of a small family narrative known to comparatively few. Between them they span realms of reality, film, theatre and news broadcasts.

My first chapter questioned various methods of communicating a first occurrence to confront a viewer with new perspectives and understandings. The aims of the approaches identified were to trigger the viewer's recognition of Image-Event encapsulation, as well as to offer the potential of a reconfiguration of the Real of past occurrences through distinctive

communication of well-known occurrences. Chapter One examined the presentation of reality from multiple individual points of view; in this chapter I will explore the re-creation of memories and the process of recollection from community as well as individual perspectives; this will be in reference to Clio Barnard's documentary film *The Arbor* (2010). This case study will allow me to discuss the multiplicity of memories presented and their contribution to the evolving perception of people and past occurrences. It is not the recording of images but rather the *recollection* and *re-presentation* of past occurrences that is central in this chapter. The layering of dramatic reconstructions with real-world accounts aids a reconfiguration of the Real occurrence of these moments of recollection. Presenting multiple versions of characters from different timelines facilitates what Barnard calls a 'push pull' effect (Barnard, 2010, p. 4). Her aim is to illustrate the contradictions between various memory accounts and, thereby, question the accuracy of the accounts offered, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of real life people, both those that are recalled and those that are in the process of recollecting.

I will identify three strategies within *The Arbor* and explore them in relation to Nicola King's overarching articulation on the interaction and communication of memory narratives. Developing her theories around autobiographical literary texts, King identifies a, 'threefold model of narrative as 1) the event; 2) the memory of the event; and 3) the writing of (the memory of) the event' (King, 2000, pp. 5-6). *The Arbor* has a diverse, layered structure which relies upon the intermingling of narratives and aesthetics while intersecting different linear timelines. Therefore, I will explore the documentary as a fluid construction, utilising each strategy I have identified within King's structure to aid my articulation of a reconfiguration of the Real of past occurrences. It bears mention early in the chapter that King's model does not capitalise *Event* as I have explored it in chapter one – from

Baudrillard and Žižek. For King, the event is *the thing itself*, the first occurrence in my terms, and that which is consigned to history in the moment of its happening.

The Arbor

Set on Bradford's Buttershaw council estate, *The Arbor* spans thirty years exploring the life of playwright Andrea Dunbar and her family who lived on Brafferton Arbor; known locally as "the arbor". Dunbar's three most renowned plays are *The Arbor* (1980), *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* (1982)*,* and *Shirley* (1988). To clarify this duplicity of names, the play *The Arbor* has not been turned into a film by Barnard. The film's title obviously references both Dunbar's first play and her childhood residence; however, the documentary is a separate text from the play. I will differentiate them by referring to either the medium or the creator (Barnard or Dunbar); if I do not differentiate then assume I am discussing Barnard's film. The first half of *The Arbor* charts the success of Dunbar's plays from their Royal Court Theatre premieres to the cinematic release of the screenplay, *Rita Sue and Bob Too* (1987). Alongside these achievements, Barnard's documentary explores Dunbar's tumultuous personal life and her relationships with various men; three of which fathered her three children – Lorraine, Lisa and Andrew. Dunbar's dysfunctional personal life and alcoholism mirrors the home life she was born into and is something that, it might be said, she inflicts upon her own children. Slipping further into alcohol dependency, Dunbar died of a brain haemorrhage in 1990, leaving her three children to her extended family and foster carers. Dunbar's eldest daughter, Lorraine, contributes significantly to the varied representations of Andrea Dunbar in the first half of the film. The second half of the documentary centres on Lorraine as we learn she has fallen into a similar cycle of substance dependency and abusive relationships as her mother. Lorraine blames her misfortunes on Andrea and makes a number of accusations about her

mother; as the offspring of a relationship with a Pakistani man, Lorraine accuses Andrea of racially abusing her and recalls a childhood memory of hearing her mother wish she had aborted Lorraine. Half way through the film we recognise that the setting where Lorraine is framed is the inside a women's prison. In the film's finale we learn that she has been convicted for the manslaughter of her third child, Harris, in 2007; he died from swallowing methadone prescribed for Lorraine's heroin addiction.

Structurally, *The Arbor* is a mix of verbatim accounts, reconstructed sequences, archive footage and scenes from Dunbar's plays, which I term *theatrical in-scenes*. By *in-scene* I mean more than literally a scene from a play within the scene of the film. Barnard presents these in-scenes not only to offer past occurrences for consumption but to question how memories are constructed and communicated within her multi-layered filmic world. The first layer of *The Arbor* is inhabited by one set of actors portraying Andrea's family; they discuss her life and their lives with her. This first set of actors do not speak; they lip-synch to the words of audio accounts which are heard over the on-screen image. The recorded audio accounts are recollected memories from interviews Barnard conducted with the real life versions of the people that the actors portray. Therefore, when Andrea's daughter Lorraine talks about her mother, the viewer hears the voice of the real-life Lorraine speaking, while the actor on-screen (Manjinder Virk) lip-synchs to the words.[1] I will commonly refer to this first set of on-screen actors as, "the lip-synchers". The lip-synchers are a physical appropriation of the real people they represent, which immediately suggests a blurring of the absent aural witness with the on-screen physical person.

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[1] I generally refer to each person as one entity; e.g. "Lorraine" meaning both the on-screen actor we see and the real Lorraine of the off-screen voice-over. I specifically reference the actor playing them on-screen, the real life person or the theatrical version if that is the focus of a conceptual idea. For the purposes of a simplified discussion and narrative progression it is often best to consider them the same.

The theatrical in-scenes are the second layer. These are performed on the grassland of "the arbor" by a different set of actors; during the theatrical in-scenes the "the lip-synchers" can usually be seen as audience around the edge watching the theatrical versions of people; sometimes the theatrical versions of themselves. The content of the in-scenes serves to present exposition of the preceding audio accounts and through this, to inform the documentary viewer of the lifestyle of the characters. The theatrical in-scenes are a kind of retrospective street theatre and enable narrative progression by contextualising some of the lip-synchers' accounts or displaying the actions that are described. The actors within the theatrical in-scenes do not lip-synch; they speak the words Andrea Dunbar wrote in her play but with their own voices. The autobiographical nature of the play *The Arbor* makes it as though the lip-synchers are watching earlier versions of themselves; this is reinforced by the physical similarities of both sets of actors. There are two types of physical similarities; one exists purely within Barnard's constructed film, as with David Dunbar who we never see a real-life image of, however Barnard offers a physical comparison between the lip-synching David (Jonathan Jaynes) and the in-scene version (Robert Emms). The second type of physical similarity is shown by the representation of Mr Dunbar (Andrea's father); this is governed by the archive footage we see of the real-life man which has informed Barnard's choice of actor to play him in the in-scenes.

Figure 8: David Dunbar: Jonathan Jaynes, lip-syncher (left), Robert Emms, theatrical in-scene (right)

Figure 9: Andrea's Father: Real Image, archive footage (left), Danny Webb, theatrical in-scene (right)

The third layer is archival footage. This is distinctive from the other two layers aesthetically and in its presentation of real-life people. The archive footage takes the position of authentic image offering a reference point particularly for viewers with no knowledge of the Dunbar family. The archive footage's grainy visuals and 1980s' fashions present a reality-reference, bridging the visual gap between the audio accounts or actors, and the real people (albeit captured in a historical moment). Even in the archive footage, it is suggested, we are only presented with a "version" of these people. Barnard recognises this and utilises the physical similarities, the lip-synched audio accounts and theatrical in-scenes to create and develop multiple versions of the same people. This is acutely shown through the multiple versions of Andrea. Although Andrea is the focus of much of the archive footage, Barnard undermines the authority of the archive version through the other strategies, creating an unresolved presentation of this central protagonist. Alongside the overlapping of timelines from different strategies, this multiplicity of personas explores the tension between the past and its effect or echo in the present.

The film's investigation of cause and effect suggests that the abuses and negligence afflicting the heads of differing generations of the Dunbar family have proliferated down, creating a continuing cycle of despair; at least from certain perspectives. The manner in which Lorraine explains her mother's plight and her own situation is in marked contrast to her siblings

Andrew and Lisa. This is emblematic of the isolation that Lorraine feels subject to, and that Barnard is exposing. In her *Director's Statement* accompanying the DVD of *The Arbor*, Barnard states that she feels a sense of responsibility for the information she is privileged to be given by the Dunbar family, and that she wants to highlight the individual and collective responsibility for the future of children like Harris. Her intention is to incite in the viewer an empathetic reflection on 'the fallout of deprivation, marginalisation and neglect in the UK today' (Barnard, 2010, p. 5).

Strategies

I will identify three different strategies within *The Arbor* which Barnard utilises to explore the re-construction and re-examination of the past. These strategies do not necessarily align with the three layers I have defined above, or with King's threefold model but I will highlight the appropriate points of correlation. The first strategy concerns the displacement and interweaving of linear narratives which blur the distinction between a "then" and a "now" in the documentary. The verbatim audio accounts, theatrical in-scenes, archive material and reconstructions weave multiple, contrasting layers of information in *The Arbor* which raise questions of accuracy, historicity and "truth". The created theatrical in-scenes serve as both exposition and fluid progression within the constructed world. Versions of past and present are constructed through *and because of* the recollected memories of the inhabitants. In their reconstruction, past events are the contexts for the present day questioning of accounts and a counterpoint to the archive footage. Although the potential binary of past and present should be disparate, the "then" and the "now" actually collide via these theatrical in-scenes. Barnard herself admits to this intention:

Paradoxically, the distancing techniques might create a closeness, allowing a push pull so an audience might be aware of the shaping of the story but simultaneously able to engage emotionally. (2010, p. 4)

Barnard utilises the in-scenes as an arena of conflict where the Dunbar family disputes are aired publically. Situating them on the community grasslands brings the past back into being for the lip-synching embodiments of the real-life people around the edge, as well as the local inhabitants, as the in-scenes 'are filmed with locals [Brafferton Arbor residents] watching and acting in some of the roles' (O'Riordan, 2010, p. 10).[1] This strategy goes on to explore the different constructed versions of Andrea; the archival version, "The Girl" of the in-scenes, and the version from reconstructions of audio accounts (both of these last two are played by actress Natalie Gavin). These presentations of this central protagonist are explored from the absent presence of her image and her voice, to investigate the active or lasting role she continues to have on her family. The contrast between the authentic presence from the archive footage and the representation through Gavin mirrors the central doubling of persons throughout *The Arbor*. Inherent in each audio account is the fact that it is spoken by a real-life person who can defend his or her assertions; on the contrary, Andrea's death means that the only accounts of her are the archive footage, the play texts and other people's memories. Her absence removes her ability to counter what is said, therefore, Barnard clouds these versions with the possibility of bias and the subjectivity of memory.

The second strategy concerns sound and its displacement in *The Arbor*; this displacement is another facet of the overriding scheme of what is hidden and what is visible within the film. The audio accounts and their lip-synching conduits are an overt construction by Barnard.

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[1] This construction mirrors the Social Realism of Dunbar's dramas as well as of cinematic social and neo-realism by deploying "real-life" people in acting roles; the politicised blurring of individuals is discussed later.

Such manipulation blurs factual presentation with mimicry; the displacement means the audio accounts come from unseen people that are both present and absent. The lip-synchers are involved in a process of visual imitation on-screen but their sound appears diegetic - occurring off-screen – and thereby marks the real-life speakers' physical absence in the frame. Barnard constructs this as part of her *push pull* motif to remove the sense of a singular recollecting individual who could potentially be considered a reified "truth". The visual repetition of the audio accounts illustrates a doubling relationship in viewings of and within the film. By this I mean that firstly the people within the film (the lip-synching representations of the real people from the audio accounts) are watching versions of themselves in the theatrical in scenes; this watching will be mirrored by the real-life people (who speak the audio accounts) when they view Barnard's film. Recognising this, *The Arbor* is positioned within a trajectory of studies into the Buttershaw estate which started with Andrea's plays and continued with Robin Soans' verbatim play, *A State Affair* (2000), which the Dunbar family contributed to. Barnard's continuation of this trajectory culminates in the denouement as Lorraine's foster parents, Steve and Anne, recount the last days of Harris' life and archive news broadcast informs the viewer of Lorraine's sentence. As this recollection becomes more emotionally draining to Anne and Steve, the synching of sound to image in this sequence becomes disjointed and distancing. This particular example of sound dislocation is suggestive of the off-screen space in which the recording of the interviews happened and highlights the process of communicating recollection.

The third strategy I will consider is how the complex aesthetic and structure of *The Arbor* aids an exploration of the film's contrasting presentation of artefacts and artifice. The integration of real documents such as archive footage, play texts and verbatim recordings questions the documenting of memory, however, such documents are also self-referential and

the overt usage highlights their position as impetus for recollections. This strategy explores how Barnard inserts schisms of reality to bring into view that which is hidden. Ideas of authenticity, truth or fact could all be argued to be exemplified in the historical artefacts, yet for the majority of the film Barnard chooses not to imbue them with any overriding sense of authority; they simply communicate a version of events or of people. Combined with the retrospective accounts, the scenes based on artefacts demonstrate various versions of what King refers to as, 'the writing of (the memory of) the event' (2000, p. 6). The underlying question is whether the multiplicity of versions undermines the varying artefacts as simply part of a larger establishing of artifice, or whether it enables a re-configuration of the past occurrences (and people) for renewed scrutiny. To aid the exploration of this question I will also consider the contrast between the theatre of *A State Affair* and the *theatricality* of the in-scenes. Integrating actors from the original performances, Barnard utilises *A State Affair* as a context for Lorraine's downfall into substance abuse and to examine the contemporary Dunbar family disputes. Barnard does not re-create scenes from Soans' play on the grasslands of Brafferton Arbor; rather situates it in an actual theatre. The audience is made up of four of the Dunbar family lip-synchers in what appears more like a rehearsal or audition than a performance. While the theatrical in-scenes offer a more nostalgic looking inwards, Robin Soans' play is utilised by Barnard to explore a brutal self-reflection of the Dunbar family and as the culmination of conflicting memories that have been layered throughout the film.

i. Now and Then / Then and Now: Imploding Timelines in *The Arbor*

'I've got loads of memories, but none of them are any good.
I don't think you remember the good ones.'

(Lorraine Dunbar, *The Arbor*)

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In her monograph *Memory, Narrative, Identity - Remembering the Self*, Nicola King (2000, pp. 4-5) explores semi-autobiographical and autobiographical literature to investigate the creation or *re-creation* of the self through memory narratives. Her study questions how we remember events, how we construct our re-telling of these events and how this process of communicating reflects the impact of these events. When discussing this potential impact, King cites Jean Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis (1967) in plotting a movement between psychoanalytical ideas of *Deferred Action* and *Afterwardsness*. These phrases evolved out of the translation (and re-translation) of these ideas from Freud's instigation (Freud & Breuer, 1974) through Lacan's exploration (1971) and then Laplanche's development.

Born out of Freudian psychoanalysis of sexual behaviour and seduction theories, *deferred action* was loosely the identified retrospective meaning, or labelling, of a first occurrence as a traumatic occurrence later in life. This process of identification could then help to explain or be evidenced in an action or desire. Therefore, *deferred action* confirms both the impact of an occurrence and its latent potential to re-occur through memory. Freud originally employed the term *Nachträglichkeit* as a reasonable appropriation of the German words for "afterwards" and "deferred". Lacan later rejuvenated the idea of *deferred action,* or *après coup* in his words, however, King focuses on Laplanche's furtherance of the translation and investigation of *afterwardsness* in the discourse of memory studies; a discourse which King broadly breaks into two realms of the static and the fluid:

> Freud, by means of an analogy with archaeological excavation, assumes the past still exists 'somewhere' waiting to be rediscovered by the remembering subject, uncontaminated by subsequent experience and time attrition. The other imagines the

> process of memory as one of continuous revision [...] reworking memory-traces in the light of later knowledge and experience. (King, 2000, p. 4)

King exploits this critical evolution of theoretical language when she articulates that, 'memory is subject to a continual process of retranslation' (2000, p. 8). With reference to the terminology, she is commenting on the journey of *Afterwardsness* from German into English via French. Moreover though, *continual retranslation* is central to King's exploration of the recollecting and the recalling of memories; this is in opposition to a concept of inherent synthesising that can occur over time or the perception that memories are locked away awaiting re-discovery. According to King, these processes shed light on not only the past occurrences, but the manifestation of the person recalling these memories:

> 'Remembering the Self' is not a case of restoring an original identity, but a continuous process of 're-membering', of putting together moment by moment, of provisional and partial reconstruction. (2000, p. 8)

Applying King's theories to *The Arbor* will aid my analysis of the recollecting and reconstruction of events and people amid the layered perspectives for both external and internal viewers. The malleability and corruptible nature of memory is suggested through the passage of time and through *The Arbor*'s filtration of multiple layers of perspective. Memory is not a concrete entity but more sponge-like; it can flex, change shape, absorb and expel elements, consciously and unconsciously.

Barnard's composite world creates duplicitous roles for the inhabitants to be both actors and reactors to the events that unfold within the theatrical in-scenes; this develops an interaction between the audio accounts, the lip-synching realm and the theatrical realm. The reliance

each realm has on the other as its foil quickly reduces the sense of jarring from their interaction. Conventions are established, and the symbiosis between these different realms is apparent, as they weave together to support the narrative flow which retells this family history. Although the events have already unfolded for the Dunbar family, for the documentary viewer they unfold narratively in the viewing. However, the blurring of the audio accounting person with their lip-synching double suggests that the on-screen vestige of the real person watches an earlier theatrical version of themselves; this produces an uncanny sense of an unfolding also in operation for the internal viewer. The internal viewer is the spectator within the documentary observing theatrical in-scenes and, sometimes, versions of themselves. This relationship between the internal presentations and the Dunbar family is suggestive of the active position of Barnard's film within the family history. I will discuss how these in-scenes progress the narrative by looking backwards to go forwards. Their form of exposed memory is not simply the privilege of the documentary viewer but is accessible to all the inhabitants of Barnard's created world. The in-scenes are set in the past but performed within the present day of the documentary; they are looking inwards as well as backwards. Their position in the present day Brafferton Arbor means they are not hermetically sealed exposition, but a lingering echo of the past in the present, a *second scene*.

Theatrical (Looking-)In Scenes

Andrea Dunbar's plays were borne out of her experiences growing up on the Buttershaw council estate; staging the theatrical in-scenes in this locale infuses *The Arbor* with a sense of exposure of the past and of what is hidden. Barnard learned which events from Andrea's life were depicted in her plays through discussions with the Dunbar family; the director incorporates these into the film as historical reference and to allow the external viewer access

to a version of these events. The real-life people are asked to go through a kind of re-experiencing when they recollect these scenes for their audio accounts; this is shown by their lip-synching doubles acting as audience watching the in-scenes. Performing the in-scenes within a present day realm suggests a blurring of time and memory within the film; the past is active in the present and these theatrical performances are positioned as what Rothberg calls 'a distorted reflection' (2000, p. 111), of the recollected audio accounts. The in-scenes are distinct from other methods of displaying the past, such as talking heads or flashback techniques, because the in-scenes reposition the past within the present to be observed by "arbor" residents as well as the lip-synching embodiments of the real people. This motif demonstrates *The Arbor*'s overarching structure of reflecting and repeating the past in the present to offer a re-examination of construction and lingering perceptions of the past. The watching community on the grassland alludes to a national crisis, beyond the familial one, and Barnard recognises this when describing *The Arbor* as a, 'film about responsibility; the responsibility of the filmmaker, individual and collective responsibility' (2010, p. 5). Situating the in-scenes on Brafferton Arbor roots the memories not in a wholly abstract world but rather in a solid context that appears unchanged in the thirty years between the archive footage and Barnard's film.

Returning to the physical *sites of memory*[1] is a common thread in memory discourse. However, King does not conclude that place is a panacea which easily supports a successful evaluation of memory. Instead, King highlights a problem that can arise when, 'metaphors of archaeological excavation and the finding of keys to open the locked doors of memory suggest the act of remembering is the process of uncovering a secret' (2000, p. 15). On the contrary, King uses Laplanche to elaborate on the importance of returning and re-exploring

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[1] Pierre Nora coined this phrase, in the French *"Les Lieux de Mémoire",* and is perhaps best championed for the locking (or unlocking) of this principle of memory and place.

not just archived memories but the *process* of recalling and communicating this recollection to examine what can be learnt or how they can help resolve memories or traumatic occurrences. King utilises some of Laplanche's key terms when stating that, 'following a potentially traumatic but "unregistered" original event, "only the occurrence of a second scene can endow the first one with a pathogenic force"' (2000, p. 4).

The theory that a *second scene* unintentionally occurs or is needed to aid a process of assimilating a latent traumatic occurrence is arguably present in Barnard's structures and exposure of memories. *The Arbor* is not a single piece of memory narrative but a compendium of many perspectives. Through its splicing of time and place it forces the *second scene* into action and, therefore, in its very production, *The Arbor* is not only a *vehicle* for the exploration of Dunbar family memories, it is a *trigger* for them. According to King, it is the manifestation of memory - her third stage - by which the latter-day intervener can access the relationship between the past (event) and the present (reconstruction). Therefore, documentaries such as *The Arbor* are needed not simply to communicate information but to build a narrative that communicates beyond factual representation and instead 'engages emotionally' (Barnard, p. 5). King states:

> I suggest a threefold model of narrative as 1) the event; 2) the memory of the event; and 3) the writing of (the memory of) the event. It is the third stage of this process that constructs the only version of the first to which we have access, and memory is the means by which the relationship between the event and its reconstruction is negotiated. (2000, pp. 5-6)

The first theatrical in-scene is immediately preceded by the first archive footage; the frame cuts from a close up of the real Andrea to a close up of the actress Natalie Gavin sitting on a sofa in the grassland Brafferton Arbor. I will discuss the different versions of Andrea later,

but for now I will simply note that transition from the archive footage means the viewer is already rooted in the past. Having been presented with an image of Andrea from the 1980s, this has set an authentic aesthetic tone for the in-scenes, exemplified by the clothing and hairstyles. This short first in-scene contains three characters; The Girl, The Mother and The Father. The two women sit on one sofa watching a television set, and The Father sits alone in an armchair. The transition from the archive footage draws a physical parallel between The Girl and Andrea, as later archive footage similarly does between The Father and The Mother to the real life Dunbars. The ring of resident viewers around the edge denotes the theatrical stage space.
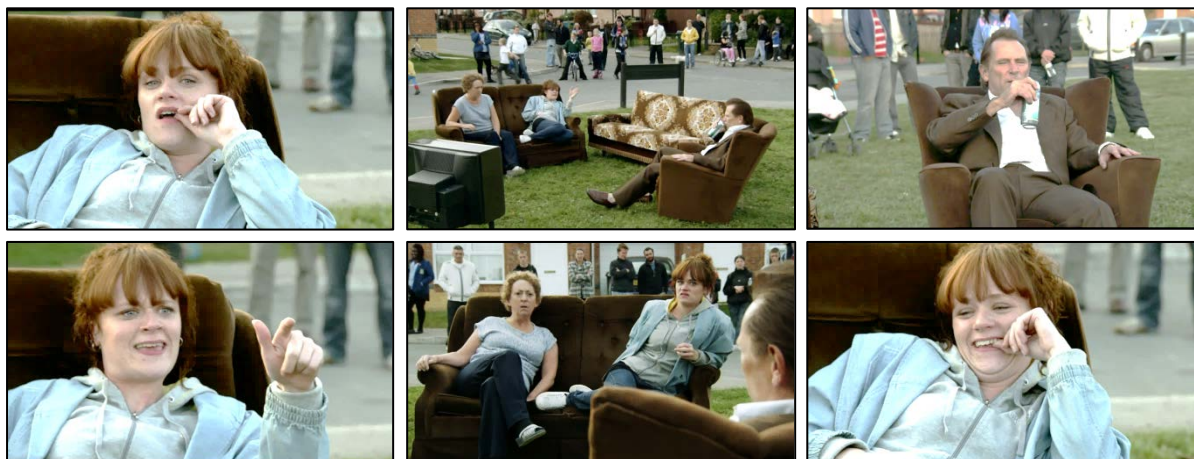
Figure 10: First theatrical in-scene

The scene opens with Gavin reading the stage directions and scene numbers, as is prescribed by the play text. We see the character of The Father (Danny Webb), an abusive drunkard in a tatty brown suit, telling The Girl, 'as soon as you have enough money for you and that baby you can get out'. The archive versions of Mr Dunbar show him drinking in a local pub and telling the BBC that he hopes Andrea makes a success of her playwriting career. We can learn very little from the archive or from the in-scene portrayal of The Father. However, as established by Andrea herself, it is clear that many of the events in the play were from her

real life, as she says, 'You write what's said. You don't lie. If you're writing about something that's actually happened you're not gonna lie and say it didn't happen, when it did all the time'. Therefore, although we do not see an abusive Mr Dunbar in the archive footage, we believe that The Father is an accurate reflection of him. The physical similarities bridge the gap between the real Mr Dunbar and The Father. For the purpose of Barnard's film, the play text is both a version of the memory of the event and a version of the *writing of* the memory of the event; to paraphrase King (2000, p. 8). The presentation of it as theatrical in-scene is an overt version of the *writing of* the memory of the event, but it is the only conduit through which we can access the past; through its situation within the community setting it is seemingly as true now as it was at the time.

King discusses literary works in a similar vein to Dominick LaCapra (2001) in his study of Holocaust narratives. LaCapra notes that there can be a mutually informative relationship between factual and fictional representations of occurrences; 'the interaction or mutually interrogative relation between historiography and art (including fiction) is more complicated than is suggested by either identity or a binary opposition between the two' (2001, p. 15). The establishing of binaries that hold representation in opposition to studies or archival material is not helpful, LaCapra suggests. As discussed in chapter one, he explores the ability of narratives to process and assimilate traumatic experiences, both individually and on a societal level. He explores the symbiotic relationship of an occurrence and its remembrance or reconstruction between factual and narrative representations:

> In a documentary or self-sufficient research model, priority is often given to research based on primary (preferably archival) documents that enable one to derive authenticated facts about the past which may be recounted in a narrative (the more "artistic" approach) or employed in a mode of analysis which puts forward testable hypotheses (the more "social-scientific" approach). (2001, pp. 2-3)

Barnard is not utilising a rigorous social scientific approach to test a hypothesis but rather, in her own words she hopes that, 'the film will provoke compassionate thought and reflection […] because I think we have a collective responsibility for Harris and all children in similar circumstances' (2010, pp. 4-5). Within *The Arbor* what could be classed as documentary evidence is the BBC archival footage, Andrea's letters and the autobiographical play text. The audio accounts come from witnesses of the events but would be considered as secondary evidence as they were recorded for this film. Barnard's challenge is to present a documentary that balances the authentic and factual against the varied perspectives of collated accounts. The play text is the key to establishing this balance. The lip-synching and audio accounts are the views of the family, while the archive footage represents a window to the authentic Andrea. However, the theatrical in-scenes are the meeting ground of these two worlds and are used as a kind of shared reference point in the film. Barnard applies the in-scenes as *second scenes*, demonstrably articulating a blurred and permeable relationship between the past and the present and putting into action a confrontation of the past *with* the present. For Barnard, binaries of "now" and "then" (present and past) are broken via these sequences which develop, what LaCapra termed 'the mutually interrogative relation between historiography and art' (2001, p. 15). This is well articulated in *The Arbor* by the transition from a theatrical in-scene version of David Dunbar to the older lip-synching version, when the interplay of ages and linearity comes to the fore.

The actor playing Andrea's brother David (Jonathan Jaynes – circled in image), watches from the edge as the in-scene version of his younger-self (Robert Emms – also circled) argues with his alcoholic father on the night his younger brother died; at this point he has not been singled out, so the documentary viewer does not yet know the older David. The family of the in-

scene sit on sofas accompanied by Yousaf, The Girl's partner. The young David is disgusted that his father does not seem to care and threatens to hit him; Yousaf asks David to calm down. David then subjects Yousaf to racial abuse and violent threats before storming out through a free standing door on the grassland. As this scene continues, in the background new members join the internal audience around the edge and others leave; some people are talking and pointing, laughing at the obscenities and a group of children ride their bikes, all while the actors perform. The camera cuts between different angles of the scene demonstrating that the point of view is not static, as if from one audience member's position. The community surrounding the performance area create a "Theatre in the Round" aesthetic with the documentary viewer completing the circle. After this argument the camera cuts to Lorraine reminiscing on what it was like to be the offspring of an inter-race relationship in 1980s Bradford; she concludes by wishing she had never been born instead of living through the rejection from both sides of her family.

Figure 11: Interaction of Theatrical and Lip-Synching Realms: David Dunbar lip-syncher (circled in top left) as viewer; In-scene David (circled bottom right) passing lip-syncher leading to response

When we return to the in-scene, the younger David is being led away by a policeman; he is being arrested for the attempted murder of the killers of his younger brother. The policeman collects young David from the theatrical space and walks him "off-stage" through the lines of the audience. As they lead him through the audience the camera stops following young David as he passes the older David, the lip-synching version, amongst the ranks of the audience; we know it is also David because of an on-screen subtitle.[1] For the first time the viewer then hears the real life David and his interpretation of those events through his recorded audio account, while Jonathan Jaynes lip-synchs on-screen. The intermingled layers here are composed of the real David who has given an audio account of his memory of this event, the on-screen lip-synching David, and finally the theatrical younger David who is acting out a *version* of the events written by Andrea. Lip-synching David looks on as the policeman drags the younger version of himself away; he comments that he was ready to kill someone that night and chuckles as he reflects on his temper as a younger man. This overt re-creation of the past illustrates what LaCapra calls the 'mutually interrogative relation between historiography and art' (2001, p. 15); as real life people are shown reflecting on the presented representations of themselves, which have been retold by another person. Barnard, as Andrea did, is holding a mirror up to these people and their actions; moreover, Barnard is asking them for a response. In this moment David takes the opportunity to explain why he subjected Andrea's partner Yousaf to racist and physical threats; 'I'm not a racist but I just couldn't do with Pakistanis. In them days you just didn't agree with it'.

It is via his audio account that we hear this comment from David. This is how Barnard asks the interviewees to revisit their past and contribute to the representation of it. In their commenting on the play's representation of such moments, the interviewees are also

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[1] See Figure 8.

reflecting on their ongoing memory of it. Hence David explains his racist language, recognising that in the present it requires some contextualising from him. The re-presentation of these accounts, combined with the play text, are 'the writing of (the memory of) the event' in King's terms (2000, p. 6). By virtue of the presentations not appearing as flashbacks but instead as an active part of the community space, they are themselves a kind of re-configuration for the family to re-explore their past actions and memories in the present. The overt theatrical scenery and props of the in-scenes highlight the reconstruction within an already constructed world. This, like the lip-synching, creates a parallax for how a viewer sees, interacts and appreciates what they are shown.

The concept of *viewers* within *The Arbor* is two-fold; the viewer *of* the documentary and the viewer *within* the documentary. Both sets of viewers are in the process of learning new information via the new perspectives of presented or recounted events. The layering of communication methods and overlapping of timelines offers the potential for a kind of re-configuration of what was previously only accessible through the play text. The linear and physical boundaries of the dramatic space are broken and show that the theatrical scenes play an active part in the unfolding of the Dunbar family narrative, as opposed to being hermetically sealed as a past to be simply observed or uncovered. This furthers the principle King upholds that memories are more than just archaeological discoveries; they change and evolve. I will now examine how Barnard brings into focus for the external and internal viewer the central absent protagonist of Andrea, and how her conflicted construction offers very individual differences between recollections and modes of communication.

The Occurrence of Andrea

The first half of Barnard's film explores the life of Andrea Dunbar, her playwriting success

and her struggle with alcoholism; however, *The Arbor* is not a memorial to Andrea Dunbar.

While Max Stafford Clark notes it is a tragedy she has died so young and did not write more

plays, the film does not pine for her in the second half. Rather it merely continues with the

story of the family since Andrea's death in 1990. To that end it is not a film about mourning,

though it is about the effects of latent grief, as Barnard notes when commenting on Lorraine's

aggression towards her mother that, 'not grieving can be a way of protecting yourself from

pain' (2010, p. 5). Despite not being wholly about Andrea, she is the catalyst for the various

forms of documentation of the Buttershaw estate over the past thirty-five years. Therefore, as

part of this oeuvre of studies into the Dunbar family, it is useful to consider *The Arbor* in

relation to a distinction between ideas of repetition and acting out versus memorialising or

mourning. For LaCapra, there is a difference between the grief of mourning and the latent

potential of a traumatic event returning via a second scene; this difference is based on the link

of mourning to notions of absence, loss and repression:

> In acting out, the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully
> present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as
> the repressed. Mourning involves a different inflection of performativity: a relation to
> the past which involves recognizing its difference from the present – simultaneously
> remembering and taking leave of or actively forgetting it, thereby allowing for critical
> judgement and a reinvestment in life. (2001, p. 70)

This is a complex and subtle distinction between a re-presentation of occurrence as if it were

in the present of its presentation, versus recognition of a past occurrence being represented as

both past and present. For me the theatrical in-scenes are performances of memory that

reside more in the presentation of mourning. While they are the context for, or expressions

of, the audio accounts, they are also the performance of Andrea's play text which is her

autobiographical memory of events in a narrative framework. Their performance on

Brafferton Arbor does not suggest they re-occur as reality but instead, closer to my theory of

a reconfiguration of the Real, suggests a new kind of interaction is possible; one that, to

paraphrase LaCapra, simultaneously remembers and actively forgets through the blurring of

different layers and timelines.

As prescribed by the play text for theatrical productions of *The Arbor*, actors on-screen in

Barnard's film take on multiple roles; for example, Danny Webb who plays The Father is

also the lip-synching persona of Max Stafford Clark. Likewise, the character of The Girl in

the play is called Andrea Dunbar, as she confirms when confronted by a policeman, which

sets a precedent of the doubling motif. Barnard creates a vestige of Andrea within the

narrative through the actress Natalie Gavin and physically inserts an authentic image of

Andrea through the archival footage. Through these two versions Andrea is both present and

absent; she is seemingly, in LaCapra's terms, tied in a 'feedback loop' (2001, p. 21). The

idea of a *feedback loop* suggests something that is both impacting but is also locked in

repetition, and by its own repetition is self-perpetuating. Gavin's Andrea is the manifestation

of Andrea's self-perception via the in-scenes, and the physical articulation of the descriptions

of Andrea from the audio accounts. This version of Andrea, like the archive Andrea, does

not have any direct interaction or influence with the people of the lip-synching realm; to this

end, Andrea's presence within the film is locked-out of the "reality" of the internal viewers

and those who offer their audio accounts.

By locked-out I mean separate so that the "version" of Andrea we see is the collage of

different moments Barnard places together and not directly related to one person's memory.

Andrea is locked-out because she cannot interact with the sealed individual memories of

events, she cannot reach beyond the self-containment of the in-scenes and she cannot break the frame of the archive footage. Visually, she still plays an impacting part in the narrative and to that end repeats and presents occurrences as moments of acting out, via the repetition of the theatrical in-scenes. However, the similarities that are drawn with the archive footage relate this past as both "then" and part of the "now" of *The Arbor*'s created world; in that way a memorialised version of Andrea can be seen as part of the impetus for Gavin's Andrea, and here there is a blurring between Gavin's performance as an object of acting out versus an object of mourning to portray the recollections of the wider Dunbar family.

Therefore, the construction of Andrea is a notional one; it is a manipulation on the part of Barnard facilitated by recollections to present an elusive figure for the documentary viewer. The archive footage presents a static version of Andrea against which the recollections are compared. Although the film looks backwards to construct Andrea, the constructions of her through recollections represent the versions that remain in the memories of present day contributors. Although no version of Andrea lip-synchs, the archived words of Andrea feel distant because they are from a document which is viewed as historic. Therefore, the archive Andrea presents both a sense of "now" for her immediate presentation of her thoughts but, because they are trapped in stasis, they also represent a "then" for the rest of the documentary participants. This reaffirms Barnard's assertion that the paradoxical nature of these communication methods is an attempt to draw a kind of closeness between them; a *push pull* effect. The intention is to blur boundaries of time and versions of Andrea to offer the viewer a parallax through which to question the status of presentations as occurrence or recollection.

Natalie Gavin's Andrea has two facets; she portrays the autobiographical in-scene version of herself in the play and she also acts out the version of Andrea created by the audio accounts.

Gavin uses her own voice entirely and only speaks the words of The Girl in the play text or the introductions at the start of each in-scene; 'The Arbor: Act One Scene Six […] They pull up and The Girl is left in the car'. These stage directions serve multiple purposes; to inform the viewer of what they are watching, to clearly mark the transition into a different method of presentation and to replicate their reading as called for in the play text. Barnard weaves these re-constructions into her film as part of the examination of family history and offers the audio account interviewees the opportunity to respond. The representation of the theatrical in-scenes as a foil to the audio-accounts, as an alternative memory narrative, encourages the viewer to absorb them as context but not necessarily as an unequivocal "Truth"; instead as part of a layering of *truths*.[1]

The archive footage presents an authentic version of Andrea, framed in the stasis of this historical world. However, there is also sense of the uncanny in her presentation via the archive material, because we are presented with a shifting impression of Andrea. Particularly at moments in the archive footage when Barnard uses the voice of Andrea as narration over images of her, there is a sense of her ghosting, omnipotent presence which pervades the archive materials, and through the physical likeness of Gavin also suggests an orchestration within the in-scenes. This physical similarity is established in the transition from the first archive footage into the first theatrical in-scene. It suggests that the inward looking tone of Barnard's constructed sequences is born out of the lasting effect of Andrea; while she is locked out of directly influencing the realm of lip-synchers and audio interviewees, she still has a fluid impact on both their memories of the past and of her. This is why the narrative of *The Arbor* exists in the present world; it is not simply looking backwards but looking at the effect of and memory of the past in the present.

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[1] One person's version will always be their *truth*.

Figure 12: The archival presence of Andrea

The first archive sequence conveys a disturbing image of Andrea where we see her displaced

voice used in narration over an image of her. She is seated in the centre of the frame, in what

is seemingly a dark rehearsal room of the Royal Court theatre; she stares straight into the

camera, smoking and smirking. This sequence is near the start of the film and is an unsettling

image because Andrea's smirk suggests something mischievous about this person or an

underlying thought that the viewer is not privy to. This suggestion that something might be

hidden contrasts directly the words we hear Andrea speaking over this, that 'if you're writing

about something that's actually happened, you're not gonna lie'. The version of Andrea

communicated through archive footage is contrasted by the other accounts of her; this

seemingly authentic representation becomes clouded by increasing uncertainty. The footage,

which initially seemed an authentic image of Andrea, becomes another presentation, another

version, as other contributions are made to the notion of Andrea. As with the audio-accounts

which only communicate that which the interviewees will allow to be heard, the position of

the authentic Andrea is undermined through the conflicting memories and varying

appropriations of her. Andrea's second daughter, Lisa, remembers her mother fondly and is continually used as a counter point to Lorraine's accusations. The documentary viewer is continually questioning which version of Andrea to believe; the one that locks her children in their bedroom or the one that is shown protecting Lorraine from the cold as they board a train in the final sequence of the film.

In her comment about the responsibility of the filmmaker as well as the community, Barnard is alluding to the challenge of balancing the history of the subject matter with the artistry of the presentation (La Capra); this balance is mirrored in the interplay of the archive materials and the theatrical in-scenes. The archive footage presents an authentic fulcrum for the exterior viewer to view Andrea, but the creation of the constructed presentation undermines the totality of the archive footage, to show there are many ways to present or communicate perspectives. These varied perspectives cannot be conclusively drawn together. The theatrical in-scenes do not simply re-present past events but are intrinsic in offering a cathartic resonance by recognizing the past's 'difference from the present' (LaCapra, 2001, p. 70). LaCapra refutes the establishing of binaries, referring rather to a dialectic approach. To suggest *The Arbor* explores the process of mourning is not to suggest it is a piece *about* mourning. It can be argued that re-presenting the past in a present day constructed world allows Barnard to offer the theatrical in-scenes as a kind of performative regeneration, to paraphrase LaCapra (2001, p. 70); and that these explorations of the past and its lingering memory are manifestly subject to what King calls the 'continual process of retranslation' (2000, p. 8).

ii. Sounds like Diegesis: Audio Dislocation in The Arbor

In studies of film, *diegetic sound* refers to noise heard on screen but which is created off-screen and which draws attention to that which is not framed. I use it here in the additional sense of those sounds utilised out of the frame to reference the "presence" of that which is off-screen; I question how this on-screen / off-screen tension is used as a foil for the difference between processes of recollection and communication. The manipulation of sound is a primary distancing technique that Barnard employs to paradoxically develop the *push pull* relationship between the viewer and the on-screen narrative. Not only does this layer demonstrably articulate the innate questioning of the accounts and thereby the memories presented within *The Arbor*, it also draws attention to the process of the film's construction and that which is not shown on-screen. The process of recording the audio accounts is, in a small way, brought into being within the documentary. More commonplace techniques for communicating such accounts could be via talking head retrospectives, having people on-screen listen to the recordings, or overlaying the accounts as narration. However, using actors to lip-synch the words of overlaid audio recordings, Barnard's film creates images which express the two-tiered production of these words. The technique also serves to make present the accounts within the constructed world of the film, but simultaneously highlights the absence of the physical speaker - the interviewee.

The disjointed presentation of the first-hand accounts is suggestive of the inherent bias of memory. This is because it draws attention to the performativity of the process of recalling in the interview as well as the fact the interviewee will only communicate that which they are happy to share. Added to this, if we consider that information will be shared *in a certain way*

(or edited to reflect a certain motive), then the interviewee is only presenting a version of their account. If we recognise this as a viewer, we have to question what we are being told and *who* is giving us this information. The physical displacement of the audio accounts from the interviewees also creates a multiplicity of persona within the film; this is the vehicle by which Barnard encourages the viewer to question *who* we hear as well as *what* we hear. Such concerns are compounded by visuals contradictions in the film, such as the opening sequence when Lisa and Lorraine recall a childhood memory. Lisa is shown walking up a carpeted staircase and recalls herself breaking the door-handle, thereby locking her in as she accidentally sets her bedroom on fire. Lorraine walks up an *uncarpeted* staircase and says Andrea used to lock them in their bedroom overnight. Lorraine recalls *purposefully* starting the fire to keep herself and her siblings warm, but that it got out of control. The visual stripping of comforts, like carpet, illustrates the harsh childhood Lorraine recalls and is at odds with the humorous way Lisa recalls this occurrence.

If we hold to the idea that *The Arbor* asks the contributors to look inwards at their histories, then the disjointed audio-visual harmony of the lip-synching accounts becomes like an inner monologue of the actor on-screen and the real person off-screen. The dislocation of sound suggests a void between what is communicated and what is thought or remembered; between what is "said" and what is "not-said". This binary actually draws attention to the natural process of editing in the recollecting of memories as well as the inherent degradation that will inflect them over time. This section will explore how the disjointing of sound highlights both the 'memory of' and 'the writing of (the memory of)' events (King, 2000, pp. 5-6).

(Re)Collecting Sounds

Barnard depicts events of Andrea's life by utilising scenes from her plays and audio accounts from her extended family. We can consider the play text as "her words" because, as Andrea herself says about the character of The Girl, 'she's more like me than not. I wrote about my feelings'. The regional dialect firmly entrenches the viewer in West Yorkshire. The accomplishment of the lip-synching actors is clear through their capturing of the idiosyncratic audio accounts, complete with heavy sighs, mispronunciations and short bursts of laughter. The skill of this technique is important to retain a viewer's investment in the sequences but not detract from the words and sound of the interviewee.[1] At points during this discussion I will also refer to the audio accounts as "verbatim accounts"; this is because firstly, they are taken from real-life sources, and secondly, Barnard appropriates these recordings from their primary source by editing and re-constructing them for the purposes of her narrative flow. Barnard then mediates the viewer's consumption of these accounts through the filter of the visual lip-synching technique. The term *verbatim account* resonates with the theatrical context of the film as well as reminding us of the genre's questions of truth and authenticity.

The impact of bias upon the verbatim accounts is intrinsic to Barnard's questioning of what is accurate as well as to the very fabric of her layered narrative structure in *The Arbor*. Verbatim accounts are by their very nature conflicted, as Jenny Hughes noted:

> [In the theatrical tradition] the verbatim aesthetic, of course, limits the discursive remit of the play to the topics those people interviewed (or represented by other sources) are prepared to say in a public forum, as well as determines to some extent the manner in which they share their experiences. (Hughes, 2011, p. 168)

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[1] By *sound* I mean the creation of unseen space or locations that can be conjured from the echoes and background noise of the audio accounts – I will refer to this later.

This inherent tension is utilised by Barnard for the development of differing perspectives; however, *The Arbor* is distinctive because it employs strategies and techniques that lay bare and build upon this trait to explore the accuracy of accounts. Although *The Arbor* is a film *about* history, in a similar manner as Dunbar and Soans' representations of the Buttershaw estate, through its production Barnard's film becomes *part of that history*; hence it is significant that *The Arbor* draws particular attention to the process of recording the accounts and of constructing the documentary.

Through the re-telling and the reconstructing of events, Barnard's film explores the ability of the medium to inflect recollected memories with the presence and uncertainty of first occurrences. The representations of memories via the theatrical in-scenes create a shared impacting *second-scene*; the interviewees see a version of their recollections through the in-scenes, and this re-presentation, like *A State Affair*, asks the internal contributor to examine their own memories. This echoing of occurrence is mirrored in the displacement of the audio accounts and the on-screen lip-synching technique; not only does it highlight the absence of the real speaker but this absence suggests there is a tension between what is said and what is not said. It is intrinsically so when something is said, that something else is thereby *not said*. However, what is unusual about *The Arbor* is that the on-screen person is not speaking the words that are heard, but instead is acting as a conduit for the interviewee's account played over the lip-synching. Therefore, by not producing sound, the on-screen person is not actually speaking and so we are asked to question who this present person is that we see, what is the reason for their being in this place, and who is the absent person we only hear. By creating a space inhabited by absent and present figures, where the sound of real people is mediated by versions of themselves, combined with archive and theatrical presentations of them, Barnard constructs a re-occurrence of the past within a created present. This created

past is not simply the past of Andrea's life, but that of the contributors' own accounts. This interplay mixes memories as old as thirty years with those as young as three years. More than simply a collage of timelines, Barnard weaves together remembered pasts as part of a working present-space that impacts the narrative flow of the film; as already stated, we look backwards to go forwards.

The soundscape of *The Arbor* re-collects an audio event as well as presenting a visual one; by this I mean that the sound we see on-screen has a relationship to both what is on-screen and what is suggested off-screen. When the actors undertake mundane tasks such as making tea or opening doors, the sound that is created by the action of the on-screen actor is what is heard in *The Arbor*, so there are two soundscapes at play; one is the diegetic (off-screen) audio accounts and the other is the sound effects from the on-screen space. The lip synching scenes were filmed in complete silence, therefore the noises that came from the physical movement of the actors in the on-screen space are recorded by the camera, and the audio accounts were added in post-production.[1] Like what is said and not-said, there is a tension here between the diegetic and non-diegetic noise; between the sound which occurs within the space of the frame and that which occurs exterior to the frame. The overdubbing creates points where the viewer feels there is a dislocation of what they are hearing against what they are seeing, when the movements are not exactly in sync. The majority of the time they are not purposefully out of sync; rather it is a viewer's brain that knows, despite the sound looking in synch, it has not come from the on-screen person. This idea of *sound out of sync* is furthered when the diegetic echo is out of place to what is shown on-screen. For example when an actor is shown sitting in a room, yet the echo of the overdubbed audio account is clearly a larger sound or echo that is not in harmony with the space on-screen. This disrupts

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[1] The on-screen actors wore ear-pieces while lip-synching so they could exactly mimic the words of the audio accounts which were overlaid in the editing process.

the image of the "reality" being shown on-screen and draws a viewer's attention to the unseen Real off screen. By *unseen Real* I am referring to the process of recollecting and recording these audio accounts. This diegetic echo resonates with the multiple realms Barnard layers through the different strategies, such as the theatrical in-scenes.

There are a number of ways Barnard marks the transition between the different sound spaces of the actors' real voices during theatrical in-scenes and the lip-synching of verbatim accounts. One example is Natalie Gavin speaking the stage directions to introduce an in-scene, another is a sharp intersection of 1980s punk music, or on some occasions Lorraine reads Andrea's description of the scene from her letters to Max Stafford-Clark. This not only separates the structures and prepares the viewer for something different but contextualises the in-scenes as a theatrical "double" of the occurrence in the film and in Dunbar's life. The music offers a stylisation of these in-scenes reflecting something of the sense of the scene; such as when Andrea and Yousaf are travelling down a street, the piece of music has a quick tempo as they walk to accentuate the movement and sense of a journey. Andrea notes this herself as this scene is introduced by Lorraine reading an extract from her letter stating, 'I think it's better talking to each other on the way, rather than in the house. Hope it doesn't matter, but I like it better'. This use of sound binds these different realms together but also marks out each new scene for consideration. Similarly to the contrast of the lip-synching with the audio accounts, the use of music techniques or the reading of stage directions is not part of an overarching motif by Barnard to assimilate or smoothly weave these different sections together to the point where they become nondescript. Instead, their combination is to elicit the *push pull* effect she desires to be recognised by the documentary viewer. Through this combination and distancing effect, the viewer is party to the reconfiguration of

the past events as represented dramatically, but is also made aware of the other side of the

present day recollections – the process of the audio account interviews.

Not only does the sound around the audio accounts seem out of place or the mouth

movements appears sometimes out of sync, there is one other kind of aural issue; voices can

seem to get quieter or change in tone as if the speaker is further away without the person on-

screen moving. This highlights movement that occurred during the recording of these

accounts which is absent on-screen and is again suggestive of the absent real person at the

centre of the frame, as well as alluding to other hidden occurrences that are out of view and

can only be assumed. I will now discuss in more detail this un-seen scene as a location of

authenticity which infects the on-screen scene through its soundscape.

Sounding Out The Truth

At the moment of recording the verbatim accounts, the interviewee can be considered to be in

a mode of performing. They were not in counselling and not speaking "off the record" to a

friend or confidant; they knew they were taking part in Barnard's exploration of the current

state of the Dunbar family and the Buttershaw estate; as Robin Soans did in 2000 for *A State

Affair*. Barnard's film is starkly broken into two halves; the first follows Andrea's life to her

death and the second half follows the life of Lorraine since her mother's death and her own

descent into drug addiction. The transition between these two sections is signified by two

moments. The first one is a slow fade to black – the first of the entire film. The second is a

loud noise as blackness cuts across the frame blocking out the image of Lorraine seated on a

bed. The camera cuts to a wider shot showing the blackness cutting the frame was reflective

of a guard shutting the viewing hole in a prison cell door. This is the when the viewer first

recognises Lorraine has been in a prison for the entire first half of the film. Prior to this, all transitions between scenes are a simple cross-cut from the end of one scene to the beginning of the next. The slow fade to blacks denote the passing of an individual into death and happens twice in *The Arbor*; at the announcement of Andrea's death and that of Harris. The separation of the documentary into these two sections serves to progress the larger, overarching narrative in a linear fashion from Andrea's youth up to the modern day. The varying movements backwards and forwards between theatrical in-scenes and reconstructions are used in a smaller sense as part of this larger narrative flow. This division in Barnard's film also places Soans' play as a theatrical counter point to Andrea's play, and reaffirms the film's position as part of the dramatic oeuvre surrounding the Buttershaw estate.

The disjointing of voices creates and demonstrates the layering of different soundscapes and, through the physical repetition of the aural words, alludes to King's notion that the event, its memory and the communication of that memory is subject to the 'continual process of retranslation' (2000, p. 8)'. This is particularly resonant when the voice of an audio account changes tone and seemingly becomes distant from the front of the frame, without the on-screen person moving. A second, more subtle, example would also be when the echo of the physical space suggested on-screen does not match that of an audio account. It is at this juncture between the audio accounts and Barnard's presentation of the re-telling of these memories that we can draw a distinction between the memory of events and 'the writing of (the memory of) the events' (p. 6). These ideas are made evident in the finale of the second section of *The Arbor* when we learn of the events surrounding the death of Harris, aged two years, and that Lorraine is in prison for the manslaughter of her son.

This section opens with Lorraine admitting, 'Anne and Steve, I put them through hell'. Anne and Steve were Lorraine's foster carers after Andrea died; she recalls her fondest childhood memories were the times she spent with them. By this point in the documentary, we know Harris dies because people have already referred to him in the past tense. For the entirety of the second half of the film Lorraine has been very open about her substance abuse and describes her various exploits to earn money to support her habit, from drug dealing to theft and prostitution. We learn Lorraine has been in prison on various other occasions and she already has two other children that have been taken out of her care by social services. As opposed to earlier in *The Arbor*, when theatrical in-scenes were used alongside the archive footage to act as Andrea's version of occurrence, in this second section there are fewer in-scenes and documentary footage. Instead, because we have the primary source in the form of Lorraine and her extended family, there are fewer requirements for this and thus the film unfolds with increasingly swift cross-cutting between various lip-synching recollections. This is reflective of the new kind of dialogue that Soans' play opened the Dunbar family up to; one that does not linger on the past but rather explores the family's present situation, its impact and conflicts. This is shown through the emotive reactions of Steve and Anne expressing their memories simply through audio accounts; there is no visual expression of their thoughts like the in-scenes of the first half of the film.

From seeing Lorraine in a close up we cut to Steve at his kitchen table, raising questions about the involvement of social services and why they allowed Lorraine to keep Harris in her care. The sound of Steve's voice is in sync with the surroundings; there is nothing jarring aside from the normal lip-synching technique. However, after Steve has finished the camera cuts to a different angle of the same scene and we see a wider shot of the kitchen showing that Anne is also present. Steve continues to talk but his voice has a different tone. This

could be because he is further away from the microphone in the recording and, therefore, the change of camera position could be to reflect this. However, it could also be that this is from a different recording session and Barnard has edited the accounts together. Either way, because the sound has a different tone, the shift in camera perspective attempts to cover this distancing of Steve's voice.

Through the course of the film the lip-synching is accepted by the viewer as part of the presentational structure; however, in moments such as this it can appear almost as a kind of "failure" in the communication method. Barnard has thus far created a film where many different techniques are woven together so that, although they are distinct, they still enable the engagement of the audience with the ideas of the fluidity of memory and the re-presentation of people and events. Not since the establishing of the lip-synching technique at the start of *The Arbor* has the external viewer been confronted with such an *uncanny* questioning of this communication style. Yet, as I will discuss, this is less to be seen as a "creation" of Barnard's and rather a natural occurrence in the process of collecting the verbatim accounts, reflective of the most traumatic of the memories that are recollected.

The camera cuts between close ups of Anne and Lorraine as they recount their memories of Harris' death. Lorraine informs us she could not get any drugs the day Harris died, while Anne repeats a neighbour's account that she heard Lorraine shouting at Harris to 'get the-F to sleep'. In common with many of the lip-synching scenes, the camera is focused in a medium shot, at a straight angle, on the face of the person lip-synching, but in the final scene of Lorraine, where she describes her memories of Harris' last night alive, the camera is positioned at an unnaturally high angle looking down on her diagonally, while she is crouched in the corner of her bed with her knees up in a foetal-like position. She looks

downwards and to her left as she recalls how Harris died; 'I went to sleep with him on the bed. I had my arm underneath his head and we went to sleep. I woke up, he never did'. She looks directly into the camera after speaking and the frame fades slowly to black.

Figure 13: The description of Harris' death

The next scene opens with a shot of the front door of Anne and Steve's house; previously when we have entered Steve and Anne's house this door has always appeared open, to give the welcoming impression that mirrors why Lorraine remembers their house so fondly. The camera then cuts to Steve in focus in the foreground sitting at the kitchen table again, while Anne is in the background, out of focus, sitting on the sofa. Steve opens by saying, 'I remember sitting on the caravan steps just crying'. This sentence and the interchange between Anne and Steve which follows is tonally jarring. Steve's sentence opens as if he is far away from the microphone, but by the time he finishes the audio account sounds as though it is next to the microphone; as would be expected. Despite this unseen aural and physical movement, Barnard does nothing to compensate for this on screen. Practically, during the recording of these interviewees, the microphone may have been passed around or moved towards each speaker at the beginning of their sentences, thereby making them sound as though they are further away at the start of their sentence than when they finished. The same can be observed of Anne's opening sentence in this scene, which is nearly inaudible due to the tremors in her voice as she is demonstrably upset by her recollected memories. However, on this occasion Barnard visually compensates by altering the focus of the frame.

There is a transition from the near focus on Steve to a longer focus on Anne in the background. This shift in focus is a camera and frame alteration that serves to bridge the tonal change in the audio account. By the time Anne comes into focus she sounds tonally as you would expect, close to the microphone of the audio account. After Anne finishes, Steve speaks and again he sounds far away from the microphone at the beginning before a few seconds later his voice sounds close again; this time Barnard reflects this movement in another transition of focus. Steve then moves from the table to join Anne on the sofa while the camera remains static.

Figure 14: The shift of focus and tone during Anne and Steve's audio accounts

The shuffling movement of the lip-synching actor playing Steve is heard from the on-screen space, however, the sounds of crying and sniffing come from the audio accounts and are mimicked by the on-screen actors. This clearly disjointed section of audio returns the documentary viewer to their initial discomfort at the entire lip-synching technique. Albeit not something we can necessarily call purposeful, this clear schism in the lip-synching technique has a subtle but important contribution to this thesis. It draws attention away from the visual display of emotion on-screen to the aural, off screen or absent occurrence of emotion. This contributes to Barnard's *push pull* approach. The viewer is emotionally engaged, as Barnard

wants them to be, with the story of Harris' neglect. The inability of Anne to communicate her words through her emotions is something which is actually heightened by the fact we cannot see her facial expressions in great detail. If the film were to offer this account in minute detail, it could be argued *The Arbor* would drift into the realm of drama or become a simplistic reconstruction; thereby, it would lose the critical distance required to appreciate the reconfiguration of the Real of the account and its sense of the emotion at the time of Harris' death.

The displacement of this emotion behind the lip-synching and tonal shift highlights the process of recollecting and of communicating those recollections through the interviews. The tonal movement contrasts the stillness of the camera and invisibly points to the aural and physical space of where the audio accounts were recorded. The transition of focus on-screen is governed by the stimuli of the real accounts and these techniques are how the documentary viewer can interpret this 'writing of (the memory of) the event', because for King, 'memory is the means by which the relationship between the event and its reconstruction is negotiated' (2000, pp. 5-6). Barnard chose to use these recordings rather than re-record them because of her desire to communicate the authentic occurrence of this account as well as an ethical responsibility that, when dealing with such traumatic events from real life, she would not want to overtly re-shape their recollection.

After the emotion of this we hear recollections from Lorraine's siblings of how she did not seem as distraught as they expected in the days immediately after Harris' death. We then return to Anne and Steve's kitchen as they watch archive footage of BBC local news (broadcast from 2007) reporting Lorraine's sentence and recapping the events of Harris' death. As with the 1980s archive footage of Andrea which was brought into the film through

Lorraine watching it (discussed in the next strategy), this footage from BBC news is brought into the unfolding narrative through Anne and Steve viewing a repeat of it. This interjection of historical documents in the present day lives of Anne and Steve is instigated by Barnard in the process of triggering recollection for the film. This archive footage contextualises *The Arbor* and its audio accounts against the backdrop of reported history. During the replaying of this news broadcast, almost inaudibly, we hear Steve mumble that the presentation of the Buttershaw is 'not very flattering is it? […] Embroidered it a little bit didn't they'. [1] On-screen, as should be expected, the actor playing Steve lip-synchs these words and the actress playing Anne nods her head in agreement. This is a seemingly flippant comment by the real life Steve and one which could easily have been omitted by Barnard. However, she retains it to increase the sense of spontaneity in the external viewers seeing these internal people watching this historical document. This small example reaffirms that behind the construction of the lip-synchers, the authentic audio recording of the events which are being depicted are not constructed. Considering Steve's comment for a moment, his opinion of how the BBC depicts the Buttershaw estate is something that has either remained with Steve since he saw this broadcast at its original time of airing, or this is a new interpretation he has made from the footage in view of the fact he is not as centrally focused on the facts of the case anymore, because he knows them. He is looking at the archive document in a different way; his re-watching of it elicits a different response as there is a new impetus for his watching. In a way, his comment reflects the document's historicity, as the external viewer similarly appreciates in the 1980s archive footage; it is a document of its time.

This reflects Barnard's entire aesthetic structure, to present previous documents, from archives to plays, for the re-exploration of memories, of what remains and what new ones are

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[1] "Embroidered" is the word used in the audio account, though presumably "embellished" was meant.

uncovered, within the created world of the film. Towards the end of *The Arbor* Barnard

balances the trajectory of her work against that of Robin Soans' *A State Affair*, exploring this

play through accounts of its premiere and re-constructing sequences of it. This offers a

comparison with the in-scenes as well as the archive footage and enables an activation and

correlation of Soans' verbatim play with the audio accounts recorded by Barnard. Lorraine's

words from *A State Affair* mirror the accounts she has already given in *The Arbor*; the

difference is Barnard's staging of these words. The techniques Barnard uses to distinguish

and to blur the parameters of the archive footage and the theatre based materials are the focus

of the final strategy.

iii. History in the (Re-)Making: Aesthetics and Structure of The Arbor

> 'To me, *A State Affair* is a progression of *Rita, Sue and Bob Too*. It highlighted how the
> arbor and the Buttershaw estate had changed and the people living on the estate
> had changed. From drug addiction to a serious lack of communication;
> how it all broke down. That's really all that is to me.'
>
> (Lorraine Dunbar, *The Arbor)*

In the very naming of the film, *The Arbor*, we can identify a multi-faceted approach from the

director, via the referencing of Dunbar's play and the geographical location. Elements of

repetition, revisiting and reworking are reflected in the aesthetics and structure of the film to

help demonstrate how past occurrences and recollections can be reconfigured to allow new

interpretations of them; this is in opposition to the reification of perceptions. In Chapter One,

with reference to explorations of the Real, I argued that simple repetition can encapsulate and

distance the Real of past occurrences. However, when an occurrence is somehow reworked,

this can form a parallax - a shift in the viewer's perspective of an occurrence, offering a

reconfiguration of the Real. Barnard's stylised treatment of the subject matter utilises multiple strategies to repeatedly imbue a sense of newness and gently disjoint the narrative to encourage the engagement of both the internal and the external viewer but not to offer an overly dramatized presentation. Barnard admits to knowing little of the Dunbar family history and that her initial connection to the subject matter came through the childhood memories of her upbringing in the north of England. However, the stylistic approach she brings to the material was well known to her, as she writes, 'my work is concerned with the relationship between fiction film language and documentary. I often dislocate sound and image by constructing fictional images around verbatim audio' (2010, p. 4). Andrea Dunbar similarly utilised what she knew best in her work and this is why her plays attempt to communicate a harsh realism via authentic depiction, which is what Barnard strives to replicate. The film implores the viewer to recognise the preventable social conditions and their cyclical consequences for innocent children in similar circumstances; it is not simply a biopic of Andrea Dunbar.

The aesthetics and structural techniques employed in *The Arbor* enable an investigation of the relationship between the various modes of presentation. Barnard creates a filmic world where three different modes of presentation exist simultaneously to blur information for the viewer. This is so that the recollected memories, archive footage and reconstructions do not seem sealed in another time, but appear as active contributing factors to the present day situation of the Dunbar family. The aesthetic shifts between the modes of presentation demonstrate the tensions between the private face of situations and the public perception and presentation of them. Such tensions are visible in the contrast between the interviewees standing in their houses looking out of windows, while the acting out of family arguments occurs on the grassland outside. The blurring and overlapping of realms offers the

documentary viewer a new parallax through which to explore the archive documents and recollections. The varying documents and artefacts that formed part of Barnard's research for *The Arbor* are utilised in the film to communicate a developing study of the Dunbar Family. The integration of modes such as the archive footage within the narrative framework blurs the boundary between where the recorded and the representative meet, similar to the disjointing of the audio accounts from the lip-synching double.

In this section I will draw comparisons between the overt theatricality of scenes from the play *The Arbor* with the representation of scenes from *A State Affair*. The use of Robin Soans' play in the second half of the film places Lorraine firmly at the centre of the narrative. In contrast to the theatricality of the in-scenes, *A State Affair* is composed of various verbatim accounts from family members and Buttershaw residents. It has already played an active part in the family history in the wake of its first performance in 2000. The subtle differences between the theatricality of the in-scenes and the scenes from *A State Affair* suggests Soans' play continues to impact and shape the family disputes in a more fluid way, whereas Andrea's play is somewhat consigned to a more historical and referential piece by the end of the film. Such evolution is reflective of the degradation of memory narratives – that they can hold less sway with the passing of time. Accounts from actors of *A State Affair*'s premiere reveal it to be a vehicle that left much of the Dunbar family conflicted as a consequence of the contrasting interpretations and troubling depictions of Andrea and the Buttershaw; a role that may similarly be fulfilled by Barnard's documentary in time to come.

Blurring boundaries: Artefact and Artifice

To evaluate the communication, re-presentation and re-creation of events in *The Arbor* we need to consider how the process of recalling first occurrences impacts on future presentations. *The Arbor* fluctuates between the moments of memory recollection and reconstructed memory in performance. The inter-modality between the archive footage, the real-life accounts, the lip-synching reconstructions and the theatrical in-scenes is what I propose enables the reconfiguration of past events. The film blurs the boundary dividing reality and dramatic performance as it interweaves various aesthetic and structural modalities to communicate authentic accounts and constructed representations. By this I mean that the re-constructed scenes, for example, have a heightened sense of reality due to the input of the authentic elements such as archive footage or audio accounts; they express visually some sense of the process of recollecting and the *continual retranslation* (King, 2000, p. 8) that can occur through the multiplicity of accounts and of viewers.

The interaction of the archive material within the overall narrative presents the external viewer with different versions of the people interspersed throughout the reconstructed scenes, furthering the idea there are multiple versions of persons and events; again offering the sense of a *distorted reflection*, in Rothberg's terms (2000, p. 111). Through this technique, any sense of the archive footage being hermetically sealed is negated as it plays an active part in the re-examination of the past within the present, as well as of the memory (or notion) of Andrea. The different modes of presentation serve to strengthen and underpin each other by offering resonances of the information they depict but also allude to slight variances that occur between different recollections. This is established near the start of the film where Barnard sets up the multiple layers that will be utilised to construct the narrative.

The film opens with two opposing accounts of a house fire that nearly kills Andrea's

children; I have already touched upon this but suffice to say Lorraine remembers all the

children were locked in their bedroom overnight by their mother, causing their near-death

experience, and, on the contrary, Lisa blames herself for breaking the door handle which

could have released them. After this sequence the frame then cuts to a shot of Lorraine

sitting on a bed opening a parcel; the inference is that we are moving from hearing *versions*

of historical events, to being given artefacts from which a more factual account will be

communicated.

Figure 15: The artefacts utilised by Barnard and Lorraine

The camera peers over Lorraine's shoulder as she opens the brown manila envelope and takes

out some A4 white paper, a book and a DVD. Close ups of the materials show them to be an

original copy of the play text of *The Arbor*, a DVD copy of the *BBC Arena North*

documentary and some letters; the letters are revealed to be from Andrea to Max Stafford

Clark when Lorraine reads them at varying intervals to introduce theatrical in-scenes. These

articles are windows to the past and are the source materials for this new exploration of the

Dunbar family. Lorraine's ownership of them positions her as a privileged person in the film

and as one who is likely to guide the external viewer. The various artefacts mirror the modes

of communication and representation that Barnard utilises in the film; this is because they are

also the physical materials Barnard used in her research.

As Lorraine opens the parcel, the frame reveals both the articles that drive the narrative and the pieces around which the film is constructed; these articles are historical but utilised in the modern setting. Half way through the film, when we realise Lorraine is in a women's prison, we understand this package is literally a form of communication with the outside world. These documents are trapped in time as Lorraine is locked in prison, with only memories to look back on and re-assess. She has no ability to fashion new memories until her release and instead is locked physically and mentally in a state where she can only reflect on the circumstances of the past which have led her to the present. Alongside the audio accounts, these artefacts form the basic aesthetic drivers of the film and we begin by being shown the BBC documentary of Andrea as Lorraine inserts the DVD.

The Arena North program could, in simple terms, be considered the most truthful or unbiased element of *The Arbor*, because it is a fact-based historical document, aesthetically of its time. As discussed in the first strategy, the most basic of intentions in the BBC documentary is to highlight Dunbar's potential as a playwright. Barnard utilises this material to bring into the frame an authentic image of Andrea, as opposed to having her completely represented by an actress as well as her sister Pamela, her mother and father; Lorraine is shown laughing at these older images of people she remembers. The archive footage, at varying points, is the impetus for the memories Lorraine and others will recall; it serves to bring to light how the past still impacts on the present and how the memory of the past can be a creation of the person who remembers it. This BBC documentary should appear as impartial; however, Barnard does not situate it as a wholly accurate depiction of the Dunbar family, because elements of it are contrasted by Andrea's plays and by audio accounts. The archive footage is not a memory; it is an articulation of Andrea from an omnipotent perspective. However, its situation within *The Arbor* positions it as part of the process of remembering and as an aid to

recollection, hence it is used as a foil for other aspects of the film. Physical similarities are one way the archive footage resonates throughout Barnard's film, as well as the seemingly unchanged backdrop of Brafferton Arbor. Through these similarities we can identify the conceptual mirroring that Barnard is presenting between the archival capturing of the Dunbar family with Andrea's own representation through her play-text.

The camera cuts between showing Lorraine watching the DVD archive footage and simply presenting the footage for the benefit *The Arbor* viewer. This change is recognisable by both the point of view shift but also by the tonal shift in the audio narration from the archive footage. It sounds distant when we see Lorraine watching it, to show the camera is outside of the television set, as opposed the narration sounding nearer and louder when it is being presented for the viewer of *The Arbor*; as if there is no difference between the camera lens and the television screen. During this intercutting of perspective, the BBC documentary shows Andrea in the Royal Court during rehearsals for the premiere of her play, and a short image of Andrea pushing Lorraine's pram around the Buttershaw estate. It is at this point we hear in narration the voice of Andrea stating, 'If you're writing about something that's actually happened, you're not gonna lie', as I have already discussed. The frame then shows a close up of Andrea smoking and smirking before cutting to Natalie Gavin as The Girl in the first theatrical in-scene. This authentic image of Andrea is a document from the time and place upon which this film is based, and to establish a clear connection between the presented world Barnard creates and the first occurrences that are re-presented through Andrea's autobiographical play.

Barnard's film offers a blurred presentation of the past to suggest it has an ongoing effect in the present. The past is not brought into being, but rather the past, via the in-scenes, is

seemingly fully present for the observation of the lip-synchers; as LaCapra notes, 'the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present' (2001, p. 70). The archive footage is the window through which the in-scenes gain their sense of authenticity. The external viewer is taken back to the time of the archive footage and this sets the context for the theatrical in-scenes. These encourage the lip-synching actors to comment on the events and the people involved as if they are the real people; for the interviewees of the audio accounts – the unseen scene – they are commenting on the real life versions of the people on screen. Filtering the artefacts of the audio accounts through the artifice of the mediating lip-synchers further develops Barnard's *push pull* effect. It is a clear convention that the recollections of the extended Dunbar family will be presented through these actors. This distances the moments of recollection but is suggestive of the performative bias that is involved in communicating recollections. Through this technique, *The Arbor* democratises the presentation of these audio accounts; it is not the real person we see speaking, therefore, the account becomes more critically distanced and the presentation encourages a focus on the words as opposed to actions. This shows how the artifice of the film supports and communicates the artefacts of the family narrative.

The words and image of the *real* Andrea in the archive footage is the only section devoid of filtration. However, Andrea's account is equally subject to her internal bias, interpretation and a sense of artificiality as it is still "performed" for the BBC documentary. This is furthered by the fact that for the majority of the time when we hear Andrea's voice it does not actually come from her mouth but is projected in narration over an archive image of her. As such, not only is the 'continual process of retranslation' (King, 2000, p. 8) at play in the memories that others bring to *The Arbor*, but it can be suggested that this process affects Andrea in her recollections and her writings of her own past.

Blurring boundaries: Theatre and Theatricality

By utilising different linear narratives *The Arbor* highlights the influence of past occurrences in a repetitive cycle of Dunbar family tragedy. The re-occurrence of past events and the recollections of multiple interpretations are used to explore the present day situation of the on-screen personas. The few joyous moments that exist in Barnard's film appear as a kind of dream, such as when we hear Lorraine recall her absent father, Yousaf, returning one day with gifts of expensive Asian robes. This short sequence is instigated through the mirror of Yousaf's car showing a child-version of Lorraine; however, it is the older version of Lorraine behind the wheel of the car, orchestrating her memory of this occurrence. She imagines herself dressed in these clothes, dancing to traditional Asian music on the top of a hill. This is the only time music is used outside of the in-scenes; because this is not an in-scene; it is a reconstructed memory of Lorraine's, and is apparition-like. The codification of the theatrical staging on the grassland and the position of the audience spectators within the documentary set the theatrical in-scenes apart from the reconstructions.

Figure 16: Dream / Apparition sequence of Lorraine's happy memories

When the in-scenes have lip-synchers as internal viewers watching them unfold, there is an intentional blurring of the definition between performer and spectator. This is furthered by the addition of real life Brafferton Arbor inhabitants as other in-scenes spectators, as anyone could be revealed as a latter-day version of an in-scene person. In this section I will draw a distinction between my term "theatrical in-scene" and the theatre of *A State Affair*. The scenes from the play *The Arbor* are "theatrical" ruptures of the past within the film's present day compiled recollections; the in-scenes progress the narrative and, as such, play a part in the constructed reality that Barnard creates. On the contrary, the scenes from *A State Affair* are presented as "theatre" in a more traditional sense, through their setting within a theatre and the use of techniques such as harsh, non-natural lighting. Scenes from *A State Affair* offer only Lorraine's interpretations of her mother and the estate; this is in opposition to contextualised re-creations of occurrence for a range of viewers in the theatrical in-scenes. At points in Barnard's treatment of *A State Affair*, there does not appear to be anyone watching Lorraine and such moments suggest this is a chance to hear the inner monologue of Lorraine from ten years previous. The potential that Lorraine is not talking to anyone is in stark contrast to the gathered crowds of the re-creations on the grasslands and show that the in-scenes are a *theatrical event*, whereas *A State Affair* is an *event of theatre*. By this contrast I am highlighting the difference between a codified outward expression of thought and a more introverted thought process.

Our first introduction to Robin Soans' play is from Max Stafford Clark's audio account, lip-synched by actor Danny Webb. The scene prior to Stafford Clark's introduction is a short conversation between two residents of the Buttershaw talking about the degradation of the estate due to an upsurge in drug abuse and crime between the 1980s and 2000. After the

basics of the verbatim structure and context of Robin Soans' play are explained by Stafford-Clark, Lorraine is shown sitting on a stage describing *A State Affair* as 'a progression of *Rita, Sue and Bob Too*',[1] which highlighted the breakdown in community around the estate. The camera then cuts to the front of the stage, at auditorium level, where we meet Gary Whitaker, an actor from the original production, reminiscing about the play's premier run. He recalls one performance when he saw Lorraine crying in the auditorium and remembers having to compose himself to continue. Another performance is recollected when he saw Lisa Dunbar in the auditorium. As I have mentioned, Lorraine openly criticised her mother in *A State Affair* and Whitaker remembers that Lisa left the auditorium screaming and crying in opposition to the depiction of Andrea and the account given by her sister. Whitaker states that on that night other members of the audience shouted at Lisa and chastised her for interrupting the performance as they did not know who she was.

The person on-screen is the real Gary Whitaker, however, Barnard still persists in recording his audio account and overlaying it so the on-screen Gary lip-synchs to his *own* words. Until the credits of the film, the documentary viewer does not know which on-screen actor is the actual person and which is a physical stand-in; this is the same for every lip-synching double. It is significant that although Barnard has the real Whitaker at her disposal, she solidifies her strategy that when recollecting, the accounts people give will be recorded and then replayed over the on-screen person, thereby dislocating the sound of their audio accounts through the lip-synching technique. By utilising one person for the full spectrum of this dislocation, Barnard re-affirms the idea that recollecting is subject to a 'continual process of retranslation' (King, 2000, p. 8). Gary Whitaker experienced the first event, which he recalls for the audio accounts and, finally, he portrays his own recollection via his lip-synching on-screen

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[1] As detailed in the opening quote of this section.

presence. This suggests that even without other sources of mediation, our memories will be inflected by how *we* remember them, as well as the passage of time. In the process of remembering we are also re-telling *ourselves* the events and different elements will have greater or lesser significance on different occasions of recollecting; this will, in turn, inflect what and how we recollect next time by each re-telling contributing to the version of a memory we subsequently retain. As I have already stated, King articulated this as a, 'continuous process of 're-membering', of putting together moment by moment, of provisional and partial reconstruction' (2000, p. 175). This process can happen unconsciously but, as I have already discussed, in the verbatim tradition accounts are subject to what the person will allow their selves to communicate (Hughes, 2011, p. 168).

As Gary recalls this second anecdote of an audience chastising the distraught Lisa Dunbar, Lorraine is seen in the background of the frame walking towards the foreground. With the precision of an on-stage scene change, when Gary comes to the end of his words a bright light immediately shines down on Lorraine at the front of the stage. This is accompanied with a loud mechanical clunk, to signify the turning on of this large light and the change of the scene. The camera cuts to a close up of Lorraine as she reads her words from a copy of *A State Affair* she holds:

> If my mom wrote the play now, Rita and Sue would be smack heads, on crack as well and working the red-light district, sleeping with everybody and anybody for money. Bob would probably be injecting heroin, taking loads of tablets as well. As a piece of writing *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* is OK; as a piece of autobiography, it's disgusting. She made herself look a right tart. Ok, she's got three different kids to three different men; that's bad enough, but to tell everyone.

At this point the camera perspective cuts to the back of auditorium and we see Lorraine alone on stage, in the harsh top light with a ladder behind her; Gary Whitaker gone and instead, a lone figure sits half way down the auditorium with a cloud of smoke rising from a cigarette. The camera lingers on this long shot for a time before returning to a close up of Lorraine. It is as if is Lorraine is auditioning for her own role in *A State Affair*. This sense of auditioning and authenticity within the verbatim play text can be argued as exemplified when Lorraine makes as a mistake reading her closing speech. She looks up and apologises towards the auditorium and repeats her line:

> It was coming up to her memoriam, she'd been dead eight years and Jack was trying to persuade me to go to the grave with flowers. I couldn't. One night when she thought I was asleep I heard her say she wished she'd had… thought... err… sorry... I heard her say she wished she had an abortion with me.

The camera then cuts to a medium shot of the person in the auditorium who is smoking. Panning slowly around this seated figure it is revealed to be Andrea in a similar pose to when we saw her originally in the rehearsal rooms of the Royal Court theatre. It is, in fact, not an archive image of Andrea, but the actress Natalie Gavin dressed in Andrea's clothes from the archive footage and clouded in smoke with strong top lighting. The two elements of lighting and smoke make it difficult to distinguish that it is in fact Gavin and, for a moment, the resemblance seems as though it is the real Andrea on-screen. The camera then cuts back to Lorraine as she finishes her final sentence and walks off stage with Andrea looking on; 'How could she say that. Every day I feel hurt, pain, anger, hate. That's why I went on heroin, to block out those feelings'.

Figure 17: Lorraine's performs her speech from *A State Affair*

This presentation of (Manjinder Virk as) Lorraine is as an actress in a formalised rehearsal of Soans' play; this shows the difference between the two different uses of theatre pieces in the film, both aesthetically and in the differing roles they play in the history of the Dunbar family. The in-scenes are theatrical in their setting within the community as a kind of spontaneous street theatre, albeit they clearly are looking back to the past. In opposition to the formalised theatre of *A State Affair*, they reflect the natural reaction that writing her plays was for Andrea Dunbar and how they grew out of and belonged to the Buttershaw community and to her family. The in-scenes are utilised by Barnard as an impetus for the internal viewer to give their reaction to the past, as I have discussed with David Dunbar, and they are as entrenched as the play was in the unfolding history of the Dunbar family, hence they are theatrical; it is an adjective for the method of communication in *The Arbor*, not simply the method of communication.

On the contrary, the use of *A State Affair* puts the lip-synching actors *into* the scenes, as opposed to viewers on the periphery observing versions of their selves. It places Virk as Lorraine on stage, while in the auditorium is, first, Natalie Gavin as Andrea, and then later the wider Dunbar family also become audience members, studying Lorraine's account. *A*

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State Affair changed the Dunbar family discourse. Andrea received criticism from some Buttershaw residents for her portrayal of the estate through her early plays and film, but not internally within her family from what we are told. However, Lorraine's criticism of Andrea isolates her from her extended family, hence in this theatre scene there is no sense of a community watching, there is a clear divide between the stage and the auditorium in a confrontational style. The theatrical in-scenes are a looking to the past within the present which affords them some natural detachment; *A State Affair* affords Lorraine no such protection, but clearly still has an affecting part to play in recent Dunbar history.

Figure 18Figure 18: Lorraine's family watch from the auditorium

After Lorraine has walked off stage the camera frames four of Lorraine's extended family in the otherwise empty auditorium: Lisa and Andrew (Lorraine's siblings), Kathy Dunbar (Andrea's Sister) and "Wiggy" (Andrew's father). Three of these people describe Lorraine's accounts in *A State Affair* as inappropriate and suggest she is using Andrea's troubles to mask her own; Wiggy says he can understand Lorraine's perspective. This highlights the clear division between the family members and Lorraine in the aftermath of Soans' play. There exists a clear contrast of memories and opinions between the characters and Barnard expresses this confrontation in a theatre to mirror where Andrea chose to express her memories. The balancing of the theatrical verbatim tradition within this filmic mode offers a

platform which enables Barnard to, 'derive authenticated facts about the past which may be recounted in a narrative' (LaCapra, 2001, pp. 2-3).

The theatrical in-scenes show autobiographical elements of Andrea's family life to an audience of actors and residents whose presence marks the theatrical space. This performance method is part of a process asking the internal viewer to recollect and comment upon themselves. Robin Soans' play is equally comprised of true life accounts; however, the accusations from Lorraine twist the impetus of the usage of *A State Affair* away from self-reflection and towards confrontation. The formalising of the sections from Soans' play within a theatre makes it less nostalgic and more factual; as well as the fact it concerns events about which all the contributors to the film can recall from recent living memory. The external viewer of *The Arbor* understands Lorraine's stumbling over her own words on stage to be a mistake during the audio recording; it is interesting again that Barnard chooses to retain this as opposed to re-record it and use an error free version. Although probably a simple error in Lorraine's reading aloud of the text, Barnard includes this to demonstrate that mistakes can occur even in the simple *re-reading* of our own words; this could be through our evolving interpretation and intonation as perceptions change over time. The visual context of the stage setting and the audition-like configuration underlines that the persona of Lorraine maybe unsure of her thoughts or words. By asking her to re-read her account from ten years previous, Lorraine is confronted with the question as to whether she still believes her words. Perhaps it is due to the process of re-examining her thoughts and memories while contributing to Barnard's film that, in the finale, forces Lorraine to admit her errors and her responsibility for Harris' death. By documenting this, Barnard's film cements its place in the trajectory of the Dunbar history; *The Arbor* has written itself into the shared memory of this family as an impacting document.

Looking Back

> All metaphorical accounts of memory indicate that it cannot be thought or represented except in terms of something that already determines how we conceive of it.
>
> (King, 2000, p. 9)

The archive footage, the verbatim accounts and the autobiographical theatrical extracts form a triangular relationship of authenticity within the composite, layered structure of *The Arbor*. Each element is singular as it belongs to a different time in history but Barnard successfully weaves them into her filmic world to demonstrate the impact of this tapestry of history upon the present. The mix of techniques creates a multi-faceted form of exploration that I argue creates a new connection with the two types of viewers in and of the film. By creating a realm where the contrasting of information, styles and sound can be the accepted reality, there exists the opportunity to explore the re-configuration of the memories of occurrences and the process of recollecting and communicating these memories.

Barnard presents a construction *of a construction* through actors representing the theatrical versions of people in Dunbar's play *The Arbor*; this is within a world where they are watched by lip-synching versions of themselves. Over the mouth movements of these lip-synchers is laid the verbatim audio accounts of the real-life people; the film thereby blurs the presentation of the actors with their absent real-life double. The on-screen version stands for the off-screen person and observes the event of their recollection, re-enacting it silently. The interweaving of timelines to aid the forward progression of the larger narrative makes the very real environment of Brafferton Arbor double as a site of memory, or *les lieux de mémoire* (Nora, 1996).

When sound appears logically at odds with the image there is highlighted a questioning of the visual and the audio personas within Barnard's film. This foregrounds the question of what we can trust, seemingly separating *words* from *witness*. Barnard questions the accuracy of the audio recordings through the overdubbed and lip-synching motif. The unfolding of inconsistencies or contentious details between accounts quickly establishes a precedent that the viewer will be presented with conflicting views and neither will be presented as definitive by the filmmaker. The accuracy of the account is correct to the individual who recalls it, or how they allow themselves to recollect it; albeit Barnard acts as the overarching director and historiographer, or historical editor, of the recollected events. In this vein, Barnard and the film play a similar role in the history of the Dunbar family as Soans' play. *A State Affair* takes a central role in the film as it becomes clear that it is the present day accounts that Barnard is more concerned with as this offers an impetus for future change. *The Arbor* is not a historical documentary; it is one part of this ongoing history.

As LaCapra suggests (2001, p. 15), there is a mutual inflection between the explorations of events from approaches of both artistry and historiography. My discussion of *The Arbor* attempts to highlight techniques which allow viewers to appreciate a re-configuration of the Real of occurrences and of the process of recalling occurrences. I consider this a process of *working towards* first occurrences in *The Arbor*, offering recollections of previous occurrences via communication techniques that highlight the contentious nature of the construction of memories and the recollections of occurrences. Within King's threefold structure, we can break down the third section of 'the writing of (the memory of) the event', as two different elements (2000, p. 6). Within *The Arbor* "the writing of" is representative of the entire film, with its varied layers from Dunbar's dramatic texts to Barnard's

reconstructions. While "the memory of" is the composite accounts, from verbatim audio accounts to the play texts, "the memory of the event" is already its own section (as part two of King's structure) and is the practical recalling of this memory in the recorded accounts. Ultimately, it is Barnard who weaves these varied threads of memory together, moving back and forth between the past and the present in her layered world constructing "the writing of" the events. Through the text and accounts, and as per the double meaning of the documentary's name, Barnard takes the viewer back to where Andrea Dunbar took her inspiration from, and constructs a version of the occurrences to which we have access; this is a technique of bridging the relationship between the first occurrence and the event of its recollection and re-presentation. Finally, as part of her push-pull motif, the dislocation of sound and the lip-synching of the audio interviewees, attempts to reconfigure the occurrence of the recollecting process and demonstrate its subjectivity.

CONCLUSION

If history remains the nightmare from which we are trying to awaken, perhaps it's because in
the unbalancing wheel of modernity, rocked to hallucination by contingency,
we've managed to neutralize history.

<div align="right">(Blau, 1990, p. 16)</div>

To "reconfigure" is to take something, change its make-up or composition and replace the

original thing with a new or altered version of that thing; but for all intents and purposes it is

the same *thing*. I have specifically chosen to examine two diverse examples so as not to

suggest a through line of strategies or techniques which might articulate a formulaic approach

to the reconfiguration of the Real, but on the contrary to examine diverse approaches by

which such a concept may be conveyed. *9/11* and *The Arbor* could not be further removed

from each other or from their global impact. One is synonymous with a myriad of images

and occurrences instantly recognisable to the general public simply upon mentioning the

words "September 11th" or "9-11". Another will be unknown to all but the Dunbar family

and friends, save a relatively small circle of theatre and literary enthusiasts. Utilising such

different examples allows me to assert that there is no prescribed way or manner to evoke a

reconfiguration of the Real, but there exists a potential for it across drastically divergent

material.

A common thread of my examples is the appropriation of history and the manner in which it

is it presented. Be that through archive (documentary) footage, through the process of

recollecting and reconstructing past occurrences via memories, or through the dislocation of

time and space in a narrative, these examples serve to offer or demonstrate a new parallax

engaging with past occurrences. *9/11* is contrasted against the ubiquitous and memorialised imagery of September 11th, while *The Arbor* offers a study of the processes of recollecting and communicating to examine these recollections against internal viewers and their subjective perspectives.

Where there can be a correlation between the theoretical frameworks employed in Chapter One and Chapter Two in this thesis is in Nicola King's articulation of the continuous process of remembering, what she calls (as already quote above), 'a continuous process of 're-membering', of putting together moment by moment, of provisional and partial reconstruction' (2000, p. 8) and what LaCapra notes that, 'the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present' (2001, p. 70). Aside from my focus on Žižek and Baudrillard in Chapter One, and in an attempt to draw from this thesis a forward thinking approach, I suggest King and LaCapra's articulations are the most appropriate to aid the ongoing exploration of a concept of reconfiguration. Utilising these theories can help answer some of the common questions of this thesis and of the concept of reconfiguration; notably, how do we remember the past, how can it be represented after an occurrence and how can re-viewing or recollecting an occurrence alter its memory, efficacy or a viewer's relationship to that occurrence?

In essence I am exploring both case studies not only in terms of their representation or re-creation of reality and first occurrences, but implicit in this is an exploration of how moments or people are *remembered and reconfigured by contributors.* It is this memory which gives a reference to gauge the efficacy of these modes of communication. The memory of September 11th is embedded and yet shown to have shortcomings despite the sense of finality which is granted from the copious repetitions of imagery. As such the Naudet film instigates

a "re-membering" through its constituent moments. In *The Arbor*, Clio Barnard physically traces the continual process of remembering through a multi-layered chronology which allows no assumptions to be made of situations or of people, because a confrontational perspective soon offers an alternative vision. As such the patchwork nature of familial structures (and divides) is displayed for all to see – irrespective of the relative fame of the central protagonist; *The Arbor* could have been a story about many families.

This is the significance of my postulation that the version of Andrea Dunbar in *The Arbor* is "locked out" of the reality of the documentary for the internal viewers or contributors. She is the appropriation of memories of her interspersed with archive images which come from a documentary trying to give a rounded picture of her; but she is a cipher in Barnard's film, a haunting presence as she does not speak except posthumously from her text or from the archive footage. What this locking out does is reify the image of Andrea on screen, so that the accounts given of her reflect more about the person speaking them then they do Andrea Dunbar. This differentiates the central *thing, person, idea*, from the perception of that *thing, person, idea*; and this distinction is also at the core of the duality of the *9/11* film.

We are able to re-witness through the Naudet film a different perspective of the unfolding occurrence of September 11th which challenges the homogenous memory of the attacks from three standpoints; representation, recollection and perspective. Approaching the subject matter from over a decade after the occurrence means it can only be seen in a new way; a way that brings with it the known history of terrorist attacks since, a greater understanding of the details surrounding the attacks and an appreciation for how the same newsreel footage pervades other documents of the day, even those made very recently. From the abundance of information and visual knowledge, we can look again at a single or individual perspective of

the attacks, a perspective that is positioned in the middle of much of the broadcast footage and that looks outwards instead of inwards.

Žižek asserted that there is an inability in humanity to assimilate traumatic occurrences and proposed we were instead compelled to experience them as 'nightmarish apparition' (2002, p. 19). This apparition might be applied not only to the sense of the disaster movie rhetoric of the imagery of September 11th, but also, in a way, to the presentation of theatrical in-scenes and dream-like sequences in *The Arbor*. Perhaps Žižek will come back to this in time and consider again the *Afterwardness* of such traumatic occurrences, as memory discourses continue to do with different descriptions of the Holocaust. By this *Afterwardsness* I mean an investigation along the lines of what Laplanche called the 'pathogenic force' that is endowed through a second scene, a re-interaction or re-interpretation of an occurrence. Herbert Blau similarly, as above, likens history to a kind of nightmare, with modern hallucinatory communication sealing it or making it in-accessible. However, Blau asserts that in the face of such a *compulsion*, we are 'trying to awaken' (p. 16); Blau offers more of a sense of agency or the *potential of agency* to our relationship with past occurrences, with history, with memory. This potentiality is what I theorise as viable through the re-configured Real, an investigation of what we remember and how we recollect and communicate that memory; ultimately giving an informed understanding of a *thing* that reinvigorates an appreciation of it originally and its ongoing efficacy.

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