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Introduction to epff9 by Andrea Sabbadini

Introduction to *epff9*: Interiors/Exteriors

The complex relationship that psychoanalysis entertains with cinema is built on the many elements in the two disciplines that make them exquisitely compatible: their parallel histories, their important roles in contemporary culture, the similarities of their respective languages, their common focus on narratives and fascination with dreams.

Since our first festival back in 2001, *epff* has become internationally recognized as a main forum where psychoanalysts, therapists, filmmakers, scholars and students of film studies get together under the same roof, contribute to the debate from their respective disciplines, learn from one another, and enjoy each other's company. *epff,* as I have pointed out on other occasions, is not primarily about the application of psychoanalytic ideas to film studies, but is a forum that provides an opportunity to find points of contact and to engage in constructive dialogue and cross-fertilization.

I believe that the experience of watching movies - entertaining, instructive, exciting or relaxing as the case may be - is enriched by the chance to have a free and creative space and time where to reflect on it in the company of like-minded people. *epff* exists primarily to provide such a space and time.

All films in the programme are, as always for us, 'Made in Europe' - something we consider important in view of the poor distribution such films usually receive compared with their 'wealthier' American cousins, with the added symbolic meaning this year that they represent our own modest response to a Brexit which is attempting to isolate our country, culturally as well as politically and economically, from the rest of our continent. This year the programme includes features, documentaries and shorts from Great Britain, Germany, Norway, Italy, Spain, Latvia, Israel, Finland, Romania and Sweden.

This year, te general theme of *epff* is *Interiors/Exteriors.* This is a vast subject that should allow us to explore together the boundaries separating, in real life as well as in the minds of those living it, what belongs inside from what is located 'out there'. Cinema, with its representation of both internal and external spaces, with its focus on events happening out there and at the same time in the minds of their protagonists, by capturing images 'inside' its camera apparatus and then projecting them 'out' onto a screen for all of us to see them, seems to be the ideal medium to make us reflect on the theme of our Festival.

The forward slash (*/*) between the words ‘Interiors’ and ‘Exteriors’ has the double (or perhaps the ambiguous) function to separate these two worlds and, at the same time, to unite them. That graphic symbol is, and stands for, a line - quite thick at times, almost invisible at other times - drawn between different territories. These can harmoniously coexist or else clash with each other, or indeed move, sometimes gradually other times suddenly, from one condition to the other, and then back again. A lot of psychopathology, incidentally, could be conceptualized as originating from a discordance, or even a conflict, between interiority and exteriority. In this respect, the title of one of my books, *Boundaries and Bridges,* may provide apt spatial and temporal metaphors for the discussion of the movies we are going to watch.

Finally, to call this event a ‘Film Festival’ must be understood as a kind of shorthand for what, to all intents and purposes, is a combination of festival and conference. If we have settled for the term ‘Festival’ it is to emphasize the *festive* aspect that we anticipate will characterize the few days we’ll be spending together.

Catalina Bronstein's opening speech on Interiors/Exteriors

Interiors and Exteriors

In name of the British Psychoanalytical Society it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the *Ninth European Psychoanalytic Film Festival* (*epff9*)under the direction of Andrea Sabbadini This year's theme, *Interiors/Exteriors* is one that addresses central issues to both psychoanalysis and film. It is the dynamic link between the two, the relationship between internal and external and often enough the conflict between them, that psychoanalysts often struggle with. By this I mean the conflict between the internal – the drives, our phantasies and anxieties – and the external, the world that surrounds us, the relationship to others, the particular way in which each of us experience external reality – always through our perceptions and influenced by our emotions.

But it might also be relevant to think about how we convey our 'internality?' 'How we communicate it?' We know of patients who we see as 'as if' personalities who cannot be themselves, who live to show something that does not feel genuine or that does not belong to them. In the film *Room at the Top* Alice says to Joe: 'You don't have to pretend. You just have to be yourself'. But Joe is trapped by his own ambition, by his constraints, his anxieties related to class and to his history and he just cannot be himself, follow his passion, his own knowledge of whom he truly loved. Was his choice motivated by the external world, or was he mainly taken over by his internal conflicts and anxieties? These conflicts are clearly highlighted, brought to life by the film. At another moment Alice asks him why during the war, when he became a POW, he did not escape. He said that to be a prisoner was better than to be dead. If the fear of freedom is so great, if freedom is actually dangerous, perhaps then it is preferable to remain dead to our passions. But what is the real danger about? We are permanently confronted by internal sources of anxiety stemming from our superego, from narcissistic loss, from fear of losing the love of our objects as well as fear of damaging others and having to confront guilt. But we cannot underestimate anxiety and fears related to trauma. Was Joe affected by the impact of what happened to his parents? We have to acknowledge that our own demons do affect others. Like the daughter feeling the impact of her mother's hallucinations in *The Girl, The Mother and the Demons* (the Swedish film in the *epff9* programme).

Our way of relating to films has to do with our unique and specific way in which we perceive the world. We live always hovering on the bridge between the internal and the external, between the individual and society.

We should not equate interior/exterior just with internal or psychic reality/external reality. Interiors and exteriors also alludes to location shooting, to the concept of space and geographical situations, ambience, aesthetics and the impact that these factors have on a specific scene. For example, the particular way by which interior and exterior lighting has an influence on the emotional impact created by certain scenes in the German epff9 movie *Fritz Lang*. The impact of the transition between a scene set outside to one indoors can sometimes tell us much more than speech. This could somehow mirror the impact of the transition between being on our own, in our dream-thought world to having to relate to others, to reach out, to adjust to the difference brought by the other with the emotional and physical aspects involved in this interaction.

Amongst one of the factors that play a vital role in psychoanalysis that is on the border of the exchange between interior/exterior is the psychoanalytic setting with its own particular way of lighting, the arrangements of the objects in the consulting room, the atmosphere, the space between the analyst's chair and the patient's couch, the attentiveness of the analyst, his warmth, formality, neutrality. Each setting, with its objective as well as subjective aspects,

offers a particular frame that can in greater or lesser way propitiate the sense of containment, the possibility of enabling contact with the patient's inner feelings, his experience of the analyst and of himself. A setting that enables distance and intimacy, freedom and boundaries, a space for projection and introjection and, like a film, one that can elicit the timelessness of the unconscious only to be both reassured and shocked by its ending.

So there is a constant exchange between the internal and the external, an exchange that is also involved in the relationship between the patient's internal world and the analyst's internal world. But there is also an exchange of different type, but still a very important one, between the artistic work and the experience of the recipient, between the artist – his work which is already occupying a social space – and the spectator. Here we are not just within the realm of the creator's work as we need to be aware of the complexities involved in the filmmaker's relationship to his/her own creation and this is influenced by a number of internal and external factors, many of which are not just psychological: such as the social environment in which a film is created, the technical aspects that are used as well as the collaborative impact of a number of people taking part in it, including the actors.

Art itself – and this includes film - is a type of communication between all these different aspects. Mark Rothko wrote: 'Art is not only a form of action, it is a form of social action. For art is a type of communication and when it enters the environment it produces its effects just as any other form of action does… How far a single impulse can extend in its effect is unpredictable (Rothko, page 10. The Artist's Reality. In Philosophies of Art by Mark Rothko (1998).

Ekkhard Gattig proposed that the particular effect of a work of art on the spectator depends on the '*art-work unsaturated aesthetic potential'*. Perhaps it is this opening, the questions that a certain film leaves us with, the potential for changes in our 'internal' experience, thoughts and feelings, the need for an unsaturated experience where meaning can be created and expanded.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all our speakers, filmmakers the organizers, and everybody involved in creating this wonderful program. A special thanks to Andrea Sabbadini. I am sure we will have a very stimulating weekend.

Dr Catalina Bronstein 2017

Michael Brearley's paper on Interiors/Exteriors

EPFF 9 Interiors Exteriors
For 3 November 9-10.30

A secretive and private person, let's call him John, is reluctant to invite anyone into his house, almost to the point of rudeness. When a friend knocks on his door, he opens it only slightly before closing it with relief, and scuttling back by himself into the interior. It may be that no one apart from himself has ever seen the inside of his house. But we know perfectly well what it would be for us to go inside, to see whatever is visible, in just the way the owner sees it. Of course, things will have meaning for him that they don't have for anyone else. But we understand entirely that the question of what John has in his house is an objective question, and there is no difficulty whatever in imagining what it would be to make a catalogue of the contents, say. As far as logic goes, anyone, including John, is in principle in an equal position to verify the contents of his house.

It's different when the interior is a psychological interior, a mental house. I can't get inside John's mind *in the way he can.* This is what makes the question of what there is in the interior of John's mind a psychological proposition as opposed to the material one. It is not that we believe we can see magically *through* another's eyes, *as* they see things. We are tempted to say 'we can't see just what another sees'. A child might make this philosophical point by demanding, 'Why can't I see what's inside your head? Why can't I be you, just for a while?'

Yet of course we do get access to some people's interiors, and we are barricaded from others'. One way this happens is when a writer portrays the experience of another not only in its content but in its form. I'm thinking of *The Sound and the Fury,* by William Faulkner, where he uses stream-of-consciousness narration to show Benjy's inner world, like that of a toddler, perhaps. When Banji, aged 33, sees one thing he is immediately reminded of another episode in his life, to which he is instantly transported, there are jumps in time and space.

In Colm Toibin's novel *The Master*, the central character, also a novelist, Henry James, who had been known as 'The Master', says*:* 'Thus the reader would see the world through her eyes (the eyes of one of his characters), but somehow see her too, despite her efforts at self-concealment and self-suppression, in ways she could not see herself'.

Like this imagined reader, as a psychoanalyst I attempt to put myself into the shoes of the patient, while also seeing the person in those shoes. I aim to see the world as the patient sees it, through the latter's sometimes distorting lens, but also to see the patient seeing it thus. I feel something of the pain or distress or pleasure felt by the patient, sharing it. Of course, I bring to the situation my own lenses or constructs, including my psychoanalysis ones. Psychoanalysis is in part the attempt to help someone with their professed problems. But it also becomes something more than that, a shared exploration of the patient's way of construing and living his life, an open-ended enterprise without any specific end in terms of removal of symptoms. It is more like bringing up a child, than making a chair when the design is in place before we start. In Bion's words, I try to 'introduce the patient to that person with whom he will have most dealings in the course of his life, namely himself'.

This effort to put oneself into the mind or personality of the other in order to get to know him as a person, that is, to know something of his inner world, is aptly exemplified by biographer Richard Holmes in his book *Footsteps*. Holmes literally follows in the footsteps of writer Robert

Louis Stevenson on the latter's journey on a donkey through the Cevennes in Central France. Here too there is the double movement – Holmes imagines things (as far as he can) through Stevenson's eyes, and, alternatingly, sees Stevenson from the outside.

These achievements are efforts of the imagination. Toibin, James, Holmes and the psychoanalyst immerse themselves in their subject (or object), learning facts about their lives, intuiting and inferring (by both imagination and working things out intellectually), not ignoring their own tendencies to prejudgement, to prejudice. When we share the feelings of another, we feel their pain, say, but we also stand back from too absolute an identification so as to think about what is happening, and to see them more fully.

At the same time I may feel distress projected by the patient, and see the patient from the outside, becoming aware of the patient's impact on me and on other people. This attention may enable us to sense thoughts, emotions and feelings that have been repudiated or denied by the patient. I come to share not only his or her conscious feelings but also her disowned or denied emotions and thoughts. Holding up a mirror, I may tell the patient what I think I sense. If I have the wit to see it, and the good sense not to apply the idea rigidly, I can sometimes learn what a patient is denying in himself by what is projected into me. The boring patient may be letting me know what it was like for him as a child when subjected to a parent who bored into him with torrents of wordiness.

Here is an example. In this case the patient being interpreted is ready to accept the interpretation. A young woman patient seems irritable, even angry, with the analyst. She has snapped at her mother earlier in the day. The patient is about to go away on a walking expedition in a remote part of Central Asia. The analyst registers the anger. But entering her mind-set, and tuning in to some more troubled tone in her voice, he senses her anxiety about the upcoming expedition, about her going away from home and from the analysis. When he finds a way to talk to her about her feelings, suggesting that her aggression is not only anger at him and her mother for not keeping her with them, but that it functions also to protect her from anxiety, the patient's mood changes at once; her tense hostility recedes; she cries about her fears and sadness, but also expresses her excitement about the challenge ahead. She is relieved that the analyst has revealed her underlying feelings to her. The relief allows clarity. In letting go of her anger she is less uptight. She is liberated into a more truthful expression of herself.

At other times people cannot or will not take back what they have unconsciously driven from consciousness. For example, a man deals with self-doubt and vulnerability by becoming cold and superior, even contemptuous towards others. His mode of escaping from such feelings has become hardened into a sort of character-carapace. It has mattered so much to him that he should not need anyone else, should not feel self-doubt, that any suggestion or interpretation of this process arouses more of the contempt that had been so useful in ridding himself of awareness of his true state for so long. Self-deceived, this patient doesn't know that at root he feels vulnerable. Unlike Prospero, who says near the end of *The Tempest* 'This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine', he cannot, with all the sincerity that he can muster, own it.

My main point is that, remarkably, we can sometimes feel something of another's pain when he or she has managed to disown it. We can sense what is disavowed, denied or projected, and at the same time know that consciously the other has quite different feelings and thoughts about his or her inner state.

In *Richard III,* Shakespeare has Richard in his opening speech know himself in his pathology in the way a psychoanalyst might have known him, including what he has repudiated: 'But I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion, Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature, Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time into this breathing world scarce half made up….Why I, in this weak piping time of peace, Have no delight to pass away the time…. And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover To entertain these fair well-spoken days, I am determined to prove a villain, And hate the idle pleasures of these days'. Richard is presented as knowing not only his own character as 'subtle, false and treacherous', but also the causes of this in his hurt and envy at being deformed physically, 'scarce half made up'. Shakespeare also presents him seeking to court some sympathy from the audience with this explanation, which we could scarcely call a justification.

Often we are unable to be sure how much someone's perception of the world is in relevant ways accurate and objective, how far it is coloured by his fantasy, by what Shakespeare refers to as 'wrong imaginations'. Here is one example of uncertainty. There is a portrait of me, painted by Jonathan Yeo. It is reproduced on the cover of my recent book *On Form.* (A plug!). I think it looks like me, But also, when I look at it, especially at the original, I can frequently see my father's face in mine. I don't think I look that much *like* my father. What's more, the artist had never met my father, and my sisters and others who knew him can't see him in the picture. But I do. My experience is not unlike that of suddenly seeing the rabbit in the duck-rabbit having previously seen it only as a duck – this is the famous optical example discussed by Wittgenstein and many others, referring to a picture that can be seen as both as a duck looking upwards to the left, and as a rabbit, its ears represented by the lines previously seen as the duck's beak, looking to the right. With the duck-rabbit, a person who sees both creatures in the drawing, shifting focus from moment to moment, might be able to help a person who can only see one to see the other. He might say: 'Look, here is the head, these are the ears, the mouth is there and this is the rabbit's right eye'.

In the case of the duck-rabbit, we can safely say that both creatures are depicted, and that someone who can see only one or the other is limited in his perception. But with my father and the portrait, it's harder to say. Is my father's presence in the picture a case of my seeing something objective, that only I (so far) have been able to see, though in principle anyone else might? Or is it that I am under an illusion, that for me to think that my father is 'in' the picture is my 'reading in' to the picture? What is the difference between: 'I see my father in the picture', on one hand, and 'The picture makes me think of my father'? There is a difference.

I suggest that film is a wonderful medium for such scenarios. It is a norm of film-making that it can show dream, fantasy and memory sequences vividly, representing a character's inner world. Hugh Brody's film *Nineteen Nineteen* moves between the objective and observational meeting between the two characters, Alexander and Sophie, both of whom had fifty years before been patients of Freud's, and glimpses of their memories, fantasies and dreams. The film oscillates between the objective and the subjective. Such shifts from 'realism' to constructs of a characters inner world as shown in how he sees things, and back, may be registered by changes in the musical soundtrack, or sudden uncanny shifts in the weather (think of Kurasawa's swirling mist of confusion and getting lost, in Burnham Wood), or through moments of surrealism. Something similar happens in Bergman's early films, including *Wild Strawberries.*

Further, there are also ongoing greyer, more ambiguous areas, where the story is told partly through the eyes of one of the characters. The viewer is presented with images that are

somewhere between an objective account of what is happening, as when the intention is for the scene to be what an entirely reliable narrator or observer would see, and on the other hand infusions of a character's individual, perhaps idiosyncratic, ways of taking the world. There may, for example, be a paranoid tinge, or the main character, like Kafka's K, may experience the world as constantly accusing him of crimes or errors of which he is unaware. We may take such a filmed sequence as representative of an actual authoritarian regime's persecution of an individual, but we may also see it as a portrayal of K's inner world, the place he occupies that renders him perpetually frightened, confused and obscurely guilty.
ENDS

NB THE TRIAL, OR THE CASTLE? YOU-TUBE?
Bergman early films and the oscillation (Wild Strawberries)
Interiors Woody Allen
Fellini Juliet and the Spirits

The Japanese film-maker Ozu keeps his camera fixed. Action moves in and out of the frame. This suggests how much we rely on imagination in constructing reality out of the bits and pieces that our frame of mind allows. The issue of objectivity applies to documentary films in a simpler way than in feature films (fictions). But the latter may be described, as by Michael Apted at an earlier EPFF, as a documentary of Lawrence Olivier, say, pretending to be Hamlet. There is less difference in terms of creativity and the achievement of truthfulness between fiction and documentary than we like to think. In each case we have to imagine our way into a character's mind and personality.

Subjective/Objective Realities on Film by Peter Evans

Subjective/Objective Realities on Film

Film depicts the exterior and interior lives of characters in a variety of ways, including performance, music, sound, graphics, camerawork, narrative structure and mise-en-scene. I shall here mainly concentrate on the last two, narrative structure and mise-en-scene, adding a postscript on a third way, the significance of spatial relationships, the positioning of characters in the frame, in drawing attention to a character's state of mind.

1. From the point of view, first, of narrative structure, a character's inner self may be revealed, for instance, through dreams (as in many Buñuel films) or a voice-over flashback commentary (as in many film noirs), which can sometimes seem like secular confessions. A good example is Walter Neff's (Fred MacMurray) recording of the events that led up to the murder of his lover Phyllis Dietrichson (Barbara Stanwyck), the married femme fatale in Billy Wilder's unrivalled *Double Indemnity* (1944). Neff comes clean as he sits at his insurance office desk, speaking into a recording machine to his boss, his paternal analyst surrogate, the Claims Manager, Barton Keyes (played by Edward G Robinson), whose symbolic name carries keys to Neff's complex personality.
In other films the inner landscape of a character's mind is revealed through subjective camerawork, i.e. conveying information to the viewer through the eyes of a character. This technique is perhaps most famously associated with Robert Montgomery's Raymond Chandler-inspired film *The Lady in the Lake* (1947), where on all but a couple of occasions the entire film is shot from the viewpoint of the protagonist. Or, in Hitchcock's films, where subjective shots often seal identification between viewer and character-- the most elaborate variant of which occurs in *Rear Window* (1954). There, through L. B. Jefferies's (James Stewart) telephoto lens we observe the anonymous lives of others in the building across the way from his. Jefferies is a damaged individual, his broken leg a synecdoche for an injured mind, his attitudes conditioned by latent suspicion of women, and a fear of commitment (incredibly, to a girlfriend played by Grace Kelly!).
. What he sees in the mini dramas enacted in the apartments in front of him are the distorted projections of these anxieties and phobias--just as, confronted by windmills, Don Quixote saw only the romances of chivalry giants that crowd his fevered mind. As Jefferies watches, responds to and interprets the apartment screen of ravelled narratives, he is our alter ego, making sense not only of life but also of art. The fantasies, desires and voyeurism of L.B. Jefferies, the professional photographer with a broken leg watching the lives of unsuspecting neighbours, assume the exteriorised forms of the viewer's own interiority.

2. Moving on to the second of my categories, mise-en-scene, popular and art films abound in examples where decor, lighting, costume and location represent observable objective as well as imagined realities. Towards the end of *Testament of Youth* (James Kent, 2014), an Oxford university friend of Vera Brittain's (Alice Vikander)--the film's protagonist and author of the memoir on which it is based--says that, since the war (World War I), everyone seems to be surrounded by ghosts. Often dressed in white, characters seem like phantoms, their inner lives devastated by the effects of lost or war-damaged loved ones. Earlier on in the film, Roland (Kit Harington)--later Vera's fiancé--visits her at home, and overhears her angry refusal to conform to provincial middle-class expectations of young women. Vera storms out of the house and makes for the back yard where, as if trapped by domesticity, she hangs out the family washing. Close-shots here, as elsewhere, reveal through the nuances of expressive eyes her interiority. Her feelings are further relayed through mise-en-scene. The billowing, spectral

sheets hanging on the line enshroud her, not only presaging the horrors of a war yet to be declared, but also projecting a character's anxieties about aspirations in danger of being blighted by the stifling atmosphere of a narrow-minded society.
Elsewhere in, for example, the romantic comedies made at Universal Studios in the late 1950s and early 60s, starring Doris Day and Rock Hudson or James Garner, are further cases in point. Pastel shades in the decor of these films match Doris Day's costumes, which in turn represent the prim allure of their female star's persona. Day's wardrobe in films like *Pillow Talk* (Michael Gordon, 1959) and *The Thrill of It All* (Norman Jewison, 1963), acts as a kind of armour in the battle of the sexes. Her suits replicate, in softer shades and patterns, the male businessman's public attire. In *Pillow Talk*, Doris Day's Jan is an interior designer with designs on Brad (Rock Hudson), an implausibly perfect gallant, a Don Juan pretending to be a courteous, sexually innocent Texan. When Brad's real intentions are exposed, mise-en-scene becomes an unambiguously outward expression of Jan's fury, where her customary pastel shades and hues give way to primary, clashing, garish colours, all applied in the redecoration of his apartment in the style of a Turkish harem. A repressed and raging libido returns vengefully through the application of violent colours and provision of cheap and vulgar *objets d'art*.

Postscript

My final reflection considers how spatial relationships may expose the inner and outer perspectives of a character's state of mind. A key scene in *Viridiana* (Luis Buñuel, 1961) illustrates this process, providing additional interest through its focus on a child's viewpoint. The Spanish cinema has generated a number of enthralling child-centred films, such as *El espíritu de la colmena /The Spirit of the Beehive* (Víctor Erice, 1973) or *Cría cuervos* /Raise Ravens (Carlos Saura, 1974), where child protagonists hold the narrative together. *Viridiana,* not a child-centred narrative, at one point concentrates on a female child's spellbound observation of the perverse desires of her mother's employer (and possible lover) inescapably conjures up images of the primal scene. Rita (Teresa Rabal) represents simultaneously innocence and sexual curiosity. Also the film's chorus, witnessing key events, bewildered by the strange impulses of the adults around her, she provides silent or verbal commentary on what to her seems like their eccentric behaviour. At one point she disposes of the crown of thorns kept for self-mortification by Viridiana (Silvia Pinal), taking on the role of executioner in the provincial *auto de fe* of Viridiana's past. In an earlier scene, the Gothic ambience of Don Jaime's estate (Fernando Rey), with its candle lit, shadow-congested mise en scene, accompanied by sacred (*Requiem*) music, acts as a backdrop to a frustrated act of proto-necrophilia (Viridiana has been drugged, not murdered). The child Rita looks on from outside the room, but only at the very end of the scene, when questioned by her mother, does she reveal that the scene she has witnessed has been viewed through the prism of a sexually-charged dream: 'I saw a black bull', she tells her mother, repeating an account of a nightmare she had earlier given to one of the workers on the estate. The black bull, carrying all its traditional associations with male potency, is reincarnated as Don Jaime, attempting to seduce Viridiana, the child's projected substitute. She looks from outside, from the threshold of budding puberty, but is also looked at from inside the room of unfulfilled seduction, caught by a camera to show us the extent of her fascination with the drama of the primal scene.

The scenes I have mentioned here demonstrate the versatility of film in capturing the inner workings of the human mind. Narrative structure, mise-en scene, and the positioning of characters *vis a vis* objects or other characters, can guide the spectator into a film's treatment of selfhood, individual or social relationships and the ebb and flow of desire.

Peter William Evans, Queen Mary University of London

Transitional Spaces in Architecture and Psychoanalysis: The Setting and the Social Condenser by Jane Rendell

Transitional Spaces in Architecture and Psychoanalysis: The Setting and the Social Condenser

Jane Rendell [1]

My talk today focuses on 'transitional' objects and spaces – those located in the overlap between inside and outside/private and public. I position next to one another textual accounts of two specific kinds of transitional objects and spaces, the setting of psychoanalysis and the social condenser of architecture, these are taken from my recent book on the subject; Transitional Spaces: The Architecture of Psychoanalysis.

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* The Narkomfin Communal House, Moscow (1928-1929)
* The concept of the social condenser, developed through the theoretical and then practical work of the Russian constructivists in the 1920s, had to be actively 'revolutionary', and according to its subsequent development by architect and theorist Moisei Ginzburg must 'work' materially.[i] This constructivist design methodology was realized in six schemes, including the Narkomfin Communal House in Moscow, designed by Ginzburg with Milinis in 1928-1929.[ii]

The Narkomfin included four separate buildings: a living block with three types of living unit following the STROIKOM guidelines, the communal block (with a kitchen, dining room, gymnasium and library), a mechanical laundry building, and a communal crèche, which was never built. This accommodation allowed for both preexisting bourgeois living patterns (K and 2-F units) and fully communist F units.[iii] The main distinction between the two was that the former included kitchens and a family hearth, while the latter was primarily a sleeping unit with minimal facilities for preparing food, since cooking and eating were to take place in the communal block. The role of spaces that were not simply private interiors or exterior to the

[1] 'This material has been extracted and reworked from Jane Rendell, *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis* (London: IB Tauris, 2017).'

buildings, but rather shared and transitional such as corridors, were key to the design. OSA believed that architecture had a transformative power, capable of 'induc[ing] a particular form of social organization', and that a building such as Narkomfin would help ease those following bourgeois living patterns into adopting socialist ones.[iv] The Narkomfin Communal House was as a 'social condenser' of the transitional type.[v]

* The Transitional Object or Object of the First Relationship (1951)

* The focus of the theory of object relations created and developed by the Independent British Analysts is the unconscious relationship that exists between a subject and his/her objects, both internal and external.[vi] Psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott introduced the idea of a transitional object, related to, but distinct from, both the external object, the mother's breast, and the internal object, the introjected breast. For Winnicott, the transitional object or what he called the original 'not-me' possession stands for the breast or first object, but the use of symbolism implies the child's ability to make a distinction between fantasy and fact, between internal and external objects.[vii] This ability to keep inner and outer realities separate yet inter-related results in an intermediate area of experience, the 'potential space', between 'the individual and the environment (originally the object)', which Winnicott claimed is retained and later in life contributes to the intensity of cultural experiences around art and religion.[viii]

* *Unité d'Habitation*, Marseilles, (1947-1953)

* The 'slab block' of the *Unité d'Habitation* was designed by Le Corbusier and built between 1947-1953 in Marseilles. The *Unité* is 17 stories high, housing 1600 people in 23 different flat types and includined 23 communal facilities including an internal street of shops, a health centre, and a kindergarden and nursery, roof garden, with a swimming pool for children and a gymnasium.[ix] It's most striking architectural feature is an intricate section which interlocks two-storey apartments with double height living spaces to incorporate a *rue intérieure* every three floors. The *Unité* draws on many aspects of Le Corbusier's earlier research and work, built and unbuilt, and in the mid to late 1920s Le Corbusier also made visits to the Soviet Union to study the architecture,[x] and was inspired by a number of aspects of the Narkomfin design: including its innovative section, the variable range in possible apartment types, including one with double height living space, and the provision of communal facilities. At the same time, Ginzburg and other Soviet constructivists in the early 1920s had read articles by Le

Corbusier,[xi] and references to Le Corbusier's five-point plan are evident in the design of Narkomfin.[xii]

* A Generalised Triangular Structure with Variable Thirds

* André Green considers the analytic setting a 'homologue' for what he calls the third element in analysis, the 'analytic object', which in his view 'corresponds precisely to Winnicott's definition of the transitional object',[xiii] and is formed through the analytic association between analyst and analysand.[xiv] Green notes that the transitional space of the setting has a 'specificity of its own', which differs from both outside and inner space.[xv]

For Green the position of the consulting room between inside and outside, relates to its function as a transitional space between analyst and analysand, as does its typology as a closed space different from both inner and outer worlds.

> The analytic object is neither internal (to the analysand or to the analyst), nor external (to either the one or the other), but is situated between the two. So it corresponds precisely to Winnicott's definition of the transitional object and to its location in the intermediate area of potential space, the space of 'overlap' demarcated by the analytic setting.[xvi]

Green understands this spatial construction, as a 'generalised triangular structure with variable third'.[xvii]

* Alton West Estate, Roehampton, London SW15 (1954-1958)

Alton West comprises around 1867 dwellings located in around 100 acres of parkland. Originally, the dwellings were grouped into 12-storey point-blocks of flats, 11-storey slab-blocks of maisonettes, 4-storey slab-blocks of maisonettes and terraces of single-storey housing for old people.[xviii] Community facilities were provided in the form of schools – nursery, primary and comprehensive – a surgery, shops and a library.[xix] Architectural historian Nicholas Bullock has outlined how Corbusier's *Unité* was a point of reference for the architects of the London County Council in the 1950s, and that while, for example, the architects of Alton East at Roehampton were advocates of New Humanism, those of Alton West were 'pro-Corbu'.[xx] Bullock refers to the 'hot debates' held in London pubs over the adoption of the principles of the *Unité*, and how these were linked to divergent socialist views and attitudes to Soviet communism. Bullock notes that in the translation from the *Unité* to Alton West certain key

design features were lost including the communal spaces, double height living rooms, and the traditional English access balcony replaced the *rue intérieure*. [xxi]

* The Berlin Poliklinik

* Over his life, Freud practised psychoanalysis between two settings, in bourgeois houses in which he both lived and worked: first at Berggasse 19 in Vienna, from 1891 to 1938, and later, after fleeing Austria, at 20 Maresfield Gardens, Hampstead, north London, from his arrival in England in 1938 until his death in 1939.[xxii] Yet despite the elite and restricted location of the settings in which he lived and worked, according to cultural historian Elizabeth Danto, Freud raised the issue of the availability of psychoanalysis in terms of price and accessibility a number of times, but most notably in a speech in Budapest on the eve of the Hungarian Revolution of 1918, where he argued for the need to provide therapy to the masses, who he said suffered no less from neuroses than their social 'betters'.[xxiii] Freud stated that 'neuroses threaten public health no less than tuberculosis', and proposed 'that the poor man should have just as much right to assistance to his mind as he now has to the life-saving help offered by surgery'.[xxiv]

In Berlin and Vienna, free clinics were established in the period after the First World War, as part of a shift in the Weimar Republic from a hospital-based system focused on acute care to a preventative approach based on an outpatient clinic system. The Berlin Poliklinik opened in 1920, and the Vienna Ambulatorium, in 1922,[xxv] as well as one set up in Budapest at the university by Sandor Ferenczi in 1919 and which was revived ten years later.[xxvi] The first psychoanalytic outpatient services to specifically be identified as a free clinic were officially inaugurated on 16 February 1920 by the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society, at 29 W. Potsdamer Strasse, where the innovations included free treatment, length-of-treatment guidelines, fractionary or time-limited analysis, child analysis and the formalisation of psychoanalytic training.[xxvii] The Berlin Poliklinik was located in rented space on the fourth floor of an apartment house, and that the interiors, designed by Freud's architect and engineer son Ernst, included a suite of five rooms for treatment or consultation, soundproofed with double doors, the largest of which was also used for conferences, lectures and meetings.

* 71 Crossmount House

* I wrote the final part of this book in from a tower block in south London, where from my flat on the eighteenth floor I could see the history of London's social housing lying at my feet.

Many of the post-war social housing schemes inspired by communal elements contained in the social condenser of the transitional are currently judged to have failed in their intentions or to be structurally unsound, but the problem is more often the lack of investment in the communal spaces and infrastructure, rather than the original aspirations or engineering design. The years of neglect were visible in my own point-block, where the social condensers – laundries, one on each floor – all lay empty, the doors recently padlocked by Southwark Council, because of the 'health and safety' threat they pose. Yet the one act of repair Southwark Council have invested in, smacks of aesthetic vandalism and will stop residents ever accessing their balconies again.

As spring turned to summer, the beautiful Crittall windows, which framed my view over Burgess Park were removed. The configuration of Southwark Council's new double-glazed units completely ignored the 1960's design: three picture windows were replaced by six narrow ones, whose plastic frames are double the width of the originals, and the sills so high that I could no longer step out onto my balcony, to the edge of the building-line as my lease showed, and perform my duty of repairing and maintaining my property. Arguing that *they* owned the balcony – but with no evidence to support their claim – I asked Southwark Council how they would keep to their part of the contract, and repair and maintain the balcony in the future? Silence. So this transitional space of my balcony remains between owner of free and leasehold.

* The Children's Home Laboratory

* In Moscow, between 1902 and 1906, the architect Fyodor Shekhtel designed and constructed a private home for Stepan Pavlovich Ryabushinsky, a member of a wealthy banking family.[xxviii] After the Revolution, from 1921, the villa housed a psychoanalytic nursery and children's home. Headed by Vera Schmidt, and first named the Children's Home Laboratory and later, from 1922, International Solidarity, the home was not only for orphans but also for children of such state and party leaders as Joseph Stalin and Mikhail Frunze.[xxix] The live-in nursery began with 30 children, ranging in ages from one to five years, who came from a variety of social backgrounds: some were from working-class or peasant families, some had parents who were intellectuals or leading party activists.[xxx] The State Psychoanalytic Institute, whose activities included an outpatient department, lectures, workshops and publications, was also located in the house, from its founding in 1923 by psychoanalysts Otto Schmidt, Ivan Ermakov and Alexander Luria, until it was closed by Stalin in August 1925.[xxxi]

According to the secretary of the Russian Psychoanalytic Society, ‘Our psychoanalytic society was on the mansion’s ground floor and its first floor housed the “psychoanalytic nursery school”.’[xxxii] * Another ex-occupant recalls: ‘At the beginning, the nursery was a day-and-night residency, but in the autumn of 1926 a plywood partition was installed across the stairway, and children started to come just during the day and only to the first floor.’[xxxiii] The dining room with a long table and benches is recollected as having been on the first floor and the room near the balcony housing the medical aid point,[xxxiv] while ‘Artyom Fyodorovich remembers Annushka Albuhina – a cook – treating children with milk in a big kitchen in the basement’.[xxxv] Could this Children’s Home Laboratory, a transitional space between inside and outside defined in the psychoanalytic terms of D. W. Winnicott or André Green, be described as a setting?

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And so to conclude. The design of Moisei Ginzburg and Ignatii Milinis’s Narkomfin Communal House (1928–9) in Moscow, a social condenser of a transitional type, was influenced by Le Corbusier’s early work, but in turn inspired aspects of his *Unité d'Habitation* (1947–52) constructed in Marseilles thirty years later, specifically with reference to the interlocking section and design of transitional spaces between inside and outside. Certain principles of the *Unité* were then adopted and adapted in some of the public housing schemes built, following the Second World War, by the Welfare State in the United Kingdom, specifically the Alton West Estate in Roehampton, London (1954–8) designed by the London County Council. The transitional status of the Narkomfin came from its role in helping a bourgeois society transform into a revolutionary one, but possibly the key innovation in its design was the focus on the transitional spaces of corridors not only as linking elements but places in their own right. Historically, the *Unité* and many other of Curb’s housing design develop variations on interlocking sections and interior streets, and occupy a transitional space in the transformation of the social condenser from its invention in Moscow to its later reworking in London. Returning to Moscow, to an Art Nouveau villa occupied in the early phase of the Soviet revolution by the Children’s Home Laboratory, we find in a place of experimental pedagogy, closed down by Stalin in 1924, when the transitional concept of the social condenser, which inspired the Narkomfin, was still in its infancy. In the short time that the nursery occupied this building its presence suggested a version of the setting that was socially radical, and which takes the relation between architecture and psychoanalysis out of the context of the private

dyad between analyst and analysand. It allows for a rethinking of the architectural history of the social condenser from a psychoanalytic perspective, as a transitional space in terms of change over time, but also as overlap between interior and exterior,

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[i] Catherine Cooke, *Russian Avant-Garde: Theories of Art, Architecture and the City* (London: Academy Editions, 1995), p. 118.

[ii] Cooke, *Russian Avant-Garde*, pp. 44–5. See also Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*. Oxford, 1999).

[iii] Buchli notes that the original design was the A-1 *Don Kommuna* entered in a competition and exhibition of *Don Kommuny* organized by OSA in Moscow in 1927. Buchli, 'Moisei Ginzburg's Narkomfin Communal House in Moscow', p. 179, note 13. According to Gary Berkovich, the architects of this 1927 design were Anatolii Ladinskii and Konstantin Ivanov, under direction of their professor Andrey Ol'. See Gary Berkovich, 'My Constructivism', translated from Russian, by Gary Berkovich and David Gurevich, extracted from the book of memoirs *Human Subjects*. Excerpts from 'My Constructivism' were first published in the *Inland Architect* magazine, v. 25, n. 8 (1981) pp. 8-19. *See* http://www.e-noosphere.com/Noosphere/En/Magazine/Default.asp?File=20080108_Berkovich.htm (accessed 12 April 2011).

[iv] Buchli, 'Moisei Ginzburg's Narkomfin Communal House in Moscow', p. 162.

[v] Buchli, 'Moisei Ginzburg's Narkomfin Communal House in Moscow', p. 162.

[vi] Gregorio Kohon (ed.) *The British School of Psychoanalysis: The Independent Tradition* (London: Free Association Books, 1986) p. 20. The British School of Psychoanalysis consists of psychoanalysts belonging to the British Psycho-Analytical Society, within this society are three groups, the Kleinian Group, the 'B' Group (followers of Anna Freud) and the Independent Group.

[vii] Winnicott, 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena', see in particular pp. 89 and 94. See also D. W. Winnicott, 'The Use of an Object', *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, v. 50 (1969) pp. 711–716.

[viii] See D. W. Winnicott, 'The Location of Cultural Experience', *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, v. 48 (1967) pp. 368–372, p. 371. See also D. W. *Winnicott: Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1991).

[ix] For the initial designs see, Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complete 1938–1946* (Zurich: publié par Willy Boesiger, architecte, Zurich, Les Editions d'Architecture Erlenbach-Zurich, 1946), pp. 172–187. See also Alban Janson and Carsten Krohn, *Le Corbusier, Unité d'habitation, Marseilles*, (London and Stuttgart: Axel Menges, 2007).

[x] Jean-Louis Cohen, *Le Corbusier and the Mystique of the USSR: Theories and Projects for Moscow 1928–1936,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[xi] Cooke, *Russian Avant-Garde*, pp. 38-9 and Cooke, *Russian Avant-Garde,* p. 122.

[xii] For example the debt Le Corbusier's Unité owes the Narkomfin is noted by numerous critics and historians. See also 'An interview with Richard Pare, photographer and expert on Soviet Modernist architecture', by Tim Tower 13 November 2010. See http://www.wsws.org/articles/2010/nov2010/pare-n13.shtml (accessed 12 April 2011).

[xiii] André Green, 'Potential Space in Psychoanalysis: The Object in the Setting', Simon A. Grolnick and Leonard Barkin (eds) *Between Reality and Fantasy: Transitional Objects and Phenomena* (New York and London: Jason Aronson Inc., 1978) pp. 169–189, p. 180.

[xiv] André Green, 'The Analyst, Symbolization and Absence in the Analytic Setting (On Changes in Analytic Practice and Analytic Experience) – In Memory of D. W. Winnicott', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* v. 56 (1975) pp. 1–22, p. 12.

[xv] André Green and Gregorio Kohon 'The Greening of Psychoanalysis: André Green in Dialogues with Gregorio Kohon', Gregorio Kohon (ed.) *The Dead Mother: The Work of André Green* (London: Routledge, published in association with the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1999) pp. 10–58, p. 29.

[xvi] André Green, 'Potential Space in Psychoanalysis: The Object in the Setting', S. A. Grolnick and L. Barkin (eds), *Between Reality and Fantasy: Transitional Objects and Phenomena* edited by (New York and London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 169–189, p. 180.

[xvii] Green and Kohon, 'The Greening of Psychoanalysis', p. 53.

[xviii] 'Alton Estate (W) Roehampton Lane, London, SW15', *The Architect's Journal* (5 November, 1959) pp. 461-478.

[xix] 'Housing at Priory Lane, Roehampton, SW15', *Architectural Design* (January 1959), pp. 7-21.

[xx] Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 102–107.

[xxi] Glendinning and Muthesius, *Tower Block,* p. 58.

[xxii] See for example, Nixon, 'On the Couch', p. 40.

[xxiii] See Danto, *Freud's Free Clinics: Psychoanalysis and Social Justice 1916–38*, p. 12.

[xxiv] Freud, 'Lines of Advance in Psycho-Analytic Therapy', p. 167.

[xxv] Danto, 'The Ambulatorium', p. 287.

[xxvi] Danto, *Freud's Free Clinics*, p. 25.

[xxvii] Danto, 'The Berlin Poliklinik', pp. 1271–3 for a description of the opening of the premises.

[xxviii] Cooke, *Russian Avant-Garde*, pp. 10–11. Here Cooke discusses *Moderne* as a democratic approach. For a more detailed discussion of the work of Shekhtel see Cooke, 'Fedor Osipvich Shekhtel. See the research of W. C. Brumfield: for example Brumfield, 'Architectural Design in Moscow, 1890–1917', for a discussion of the rationalist aspect of Shekhtel's public works; and Brumfield*, A History of Russian Architecture*, p. 437, figs 575–6, for a discussion of the design of a range of private houses designed by Shekhtel. See also Brumfield*,* 'Building for the Bourgeoisie, and Brumfield, 'The Decorative Arts in Russian Architecture: 1900–1907'. Brumfield refers to Evgeniia I. Kirichenko as '[t]he leading Soviet authority on the work of Shekhtel'. See Brumfield, 'The Decorative Arts in Russian Architecture: 1900–1907', p. 23, note 4. See also Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, pp. 61–70.

[xxix] Anisimov, *Architectural Guide to Moscow*, p. 72.

[xxx] Brenner, 'Intrepid Thought'.

[xxxi] Kadyrov, 'Analytical Space and Work in Russia', p. 475.

[xxxii] Penezhko et al., *Schechtel, Ryabushinskiy, Gorky*, p. 75.

[xxxiii] Penezhko et al., *Schechtel, Ryabushinskiy, Gorky*, p. 78.

[xxxiv] Penezhko et al., *Schechtel, Ryabushinskiy, Gorky*, p. 77.

[xxxv] Penezhko et al., *Schechtel, Ryabushinskiy, Gorky*, p. 77.

An introduction to discussion about the film ”the Girl, the Mother and the Demons” of Suzanne Osten by Anders Berge

An introduction to discussion about the film ”the Girl, the Mother and the Demons” of Suzanne Osten. (Anders Berge)

I have some introductory remarks to this discussion with Suzanne Osten, where I will start with a couple of own experiences from my first meeting with the film ”the Girl, the Mother and the Demons”.

Rather early viewing the drama an anxiety came creeping in over me - at first rather vague and than more and more physical… An unpleasant feeling of confusion - for some moments as the world around me started to move, that my reality apprehension swung. Since I became conscious about what happened to me the state died away - and instead I was aware that the reality sense of Siri there on the screen started to crack. As a psychological gap was opened in front of her. There in the drama, as I was dragged into, was a oncoming nightmare, and it wasn't mine - but hers. The demons on the screen were Siris - not mine - and she fought intensely to retain her sense. Gradually other feelings came in the forefront. I became engaged in the daughter Ti - who from her take-off point fighted for a normal life and to be seen and defended of her mother. So it must be incomprehensible and frightening for her when the mother withdraw and preferred a strange exchange with for her invisible figures. I identified more and more with Ti in front of Siris growing disintegration - and I was anxious that Ti didn’t fast enough understand that her mother became dangerous - dead dangerous… A sense of indignation strongly grew towards the mother, not just against her mortal demons, but also against her self-absorbtion and her lack of care and attention to her daughter Ti. Perhaps also an expression for me that Ti´s worries were put in the shade of her mother´s violent struggle in the drama.

But Siri then - there in the center of the film… As a spectator I physically can feel her fear and anxiety that some evil unknown force occupies her more and more and that the surrounding world becomes more and more dangerous. It must be really frightening to have serious suspicions even against the closest persons in her life - Ti and Tamara. Siri cannot understand that her fight for survival against devastating forces are inside herself, that shape up in hallucinatory evil demons, that claim to rule her. The borders of her body and her reality break down. It´s like her inner world blows out in the total apartment where the struggle for survival lasts. In a megalomanic delusion she is the center of the world - where everything and everybody are parts of her. It is as Siri lives in a nightmare without control and unconsciously torments herself with cruel impulses. Siris reality sense is broken - loosing herself in insanity. Siri feels threaten to death, and she even wonders if she has to take Ti away - to kill her.

In Siris inner battle there are good and evil forces. On the good side Siri has a close and loved Ti and an own hopeful part of herself, where she frenetically tries to rebuild her inner world with help of accumulated broken garbages. I think garbages stand for symbolic left overs from an inner catastrophe, a dreadful trauma she earlier has gone through. On the evil side for Siri there are forces she tries to get rid of. She unconsciously tries to put them into demonic creations or into persons very close to her, even if not an especially successful strategi. Siris

inner conflicts destroys her more and more. As audience we witness Siris psychotic breakdown.

I understand Siris break down as an extraordinary expression for a struggle that we all have to take as human beings, even if most of us have coped with it enough, not to be paralyzed by it. The struggle doesn't threaten us any longer, but help us to empathize with Siri. In addition it appears now and then in the inner world of all of us - say in crisis of life, in nightmares and for me in the slight confusion in the beginning of the film.

Already from early development we all have to tame our hate with our love, to make it possible to live mutual among other humans and enjoy it. Everybody harbour powerful positive and negative feelings from the very start. Of crucial help in this struggle are parents and close persons supporting with love. The determining factor is that love rules - so destruction doesn't become predominant as here with risk for Siri and Tis ruin.

I think my first anger against Siri during the film was awakened by two processes in me, belonging to this human struggle between love and hate - Eros and Thanatos. First there have been some situations in my own life where I was omitted, with some parallells to Ti in the film. Second looking at Ti on a screen I feel unable to intervene to her help - a help that an affectionate aunt Tamara at last will come with. In Ti's dependency, solidarity and love for her mother, she refuses to acknowledge the mortal danger. She should need access to her own anger - to run away, cry for help - or scream at the top of her lungs -n-o-o-o—.

The psychotic breakdown is the focal point of the film. As in the tale where a demon is let out of the bottle - body - and the vital question becomes how to return the evil ghost again.

Gordian Maugg and Sabine Wollnik-Krusche - Fritz Lang

Sabine Wollnik

Gordian Maugg Fritz Lang

1. Let me begin with a quotation by Fritz Lang from his interview with Godard (1967, “The Dinosaur and the Baby”).

" …the director...I think he has to be a bit of a psychoanalyst. He has to get beneath an actor´s skin. He has to know why the characters in the story do what they do.....Perhaps in each of our films, you can find our heart, our desires, everything we love and everything that gives us away. I think if someone someday were to analyze you (Godard) and me, he might figure out, I don´t know, why I made my films. Do you know? (Godard: "no"). You see, I think that person could find out why we do this or that. So I think a director has to be a bit of a psychoanalyst". Then a scene from "M" fades in.

In this interview Lang, describes himself as a psychoanalyst–director, and at the same time, he asks himself if it is possible for a psychoanalyst to analyze him via his films. Fifty years later, Gordian Maugg, the director, does exactly that. In his film he develops something like a scenic psychoanalysis of Fritz Lang by resonating with the creative process in which Lang created his film „M“ (1931).

2. The Psychoanalytic Method

In this paper, I will refer to the intersubjective-relational psychoanalysis, which means the focus is placed on the structure of relationships and how they are embedded in a personal emotional-sensual experience.

Although psychoanalytic treatment focuses on the patient, at the same time relational structures come into being between analyst and patient bi-directionally, within the field in which complex interactions take place. Some third element evolves between the patient and

the analyst which one could call the nascent meaning. It is important to bear in mind that this inter-subjective field is always a part of the social, cultural, and historical background.

Something that is not expressed straightforwardly, is not verbalized, that is acted out awakens special interest because it is here that the unconscious enters the stage. The procedural is decisive, the form which takes shape and gets worked through in treatments, in the sense of “realization“ (Stern, D B 2010) facilitates a new understanding of the world and relationships in which form and content are inseparable.

A similar process takes place, when viewing a film which its complex structures, then something emerges and evokes the viewer´s internalized relational structures both emotionally and physically. The film doesn`t react like a patient. But something emerges within an intermediate space, which offers many opportunities to get engaged on a relational level. A third element then emerges from the viewer´s experience as he watches the film arising from the interplay of his inner world with the world outside experience. The film is a work of art, which is why the form is so important. A message is conveyed and at the same time contained, heightened by the aesthetics.

3. Psychoanalyst - Film Director

Undoubtedly, there are many similarities, but there are also differences between psychoanalysts and artists (Lichtenberg 2016).

First of all, the artist has a creative medium; the producer´s medium is the film he works with and creates according to aesthetic principals in a creative process. There is no medium in psychoanalysis; it is not dependent upon a medium even when something develops between analyst and patient, which could be called a third element. But play and rhythm are also important for the development that takes place in analysis, yet are less determined by any particular form.

The second difference concerns the person who is present, the patient with whom the analyst enters into a relationship and communicates. Here, there is a living person, whether sitting face to face or lying on the couch, who actively influences what is going on in the analysis. In

this way something new takes place within the analytic space, a scene, that can be only partially verbalized and if verbalized something gets lost and something else emerges. Yet, at the same time, something else is being realized when language plays a role.

In recent years, psychoanalysts have become increasingly aware of the role that the scene plays in our work which we create together with the patient, in which we now and then lose our capacity to observe and reflect from a distance. Perhaps this is why psychoanalysts have increasingly developed an interest in films and can learn a lot from them.

This brings me to the third difference. As psychoanalysts, we are always onstage together with the patient. Our inner relational structure also begins to reverberate and to influence the process through our conscious and unconscious verbal and non-verbal interventions. This is different from a film in which we seldom see the director on stage but can perhaps intuit what sort of person he might be.

In the film discussed here, Gordian Maugg brings Fritz Lang onto the stage. Scene by scene he shows how Lang personally became more and more involved while he was looking for a theme: first, during his nightly wanderings about in Berlin when he witnesses a threatening and powerful demonstration by the Nazis - that´s the social background - , and then when he performs a violent and humiliating sexual act with a prostitute - that´s the personal background.

Taking these background determinants, violence and power, into consideration, the next morning he is riveted while reading an article in the newspaper about a serial killer in Düsseldorf who has caused panic in the public at large. He continues to research the theme in Düsseldorf, where he comes into close contact with several persons in the external reality which causes his own personal traumatic and relationship themes to reverberate even more.

For over 30 years, the psychoanalyst Joseph Lichtenberg chaired "a study group /workshop to study creativity…..What all the creative artists we have studied have in common is the ability to transform the narrative of their actual, imagined, and/or observed lived experience into a work of art that is an aesthetic (metaphoric) variant of issues that deeply preoccupy them" (Lichtenberg 2016).

It´s quite remarkable to see how Gordian Maugg illustrates the way these personal themes surface and find their way into Lang´s film. In this film he puts the creative process on stage and develops a phantasy about how the film " M" could have evolved by imagining that he accompanied Fritz Lang on his investigations. He shows how he followed a theme by oscillating back and forth between his inner psychic world and the world outside until he finds images and sound. As the film slowly takes on shape and content according to Lang´s phantasy, Gordian Maugg visually and acoustically blends in scenes from the film "M".

4. The Film

Fritz Lang is in the middle of a personal and professional crisis; his marriage to the screen playwrite Thea von Harbou has become cold, and he goes his own way alone; films now have sound, and he no longer feels ahead of his time; his producer puts him under pressure. According to his biography, in repeated attempts to stabilize himself he takes to cocaine, visits prostitutes; then he takes to the streets of Berlin until he finds an inspiration that he then explores methodically. His own inner relational structures start to reverberate while he discusses his ideas with other people and also as a reaction to contemporary events as they unfold in the background.

A puzzle emerges, and, just as in the analytic situation, Lang endures the chaos and uncertainty until he finds a narration. He picks up a theme and then researches it intensely; in so doing, his personal experiences begin to reverberate, and at the same time he addresses the Zeitgeist as a background melody and background story. Fritz Lang moves through the world in a state of evenly hovering attention just like an analyst, who, however, in contrast, stays physically in the consultation room.

In „M", Fritz Lang presents a scenic, artfully created draft of the psychoanalysis of a mass murderer; so doing, he places an emphasis on the police investigation and the public´s hysteric reaction based on current events, which provide a sounding - board for his own biographical themes.

Gordian Maugg in his film focuses on a murder who lived in real life. This is quite different from Lang´s Film "M", in which the murderer is a fictional character, the result of his long investigations of several different criminals who committed different crimes that have been condensed into one character, the child murderer.

In the 1920´s the public became increasingly alarmed by the crimes of serial killers, Gordian Maugg constructed his docu-fiction based on one of those, Peter Kürten, who lived in Düsseldorf and indiscriminately attacked men, women and children, some of whom he murdered, often like a wild beast, occasionally even drinking their blood. This series of murders escalated in 1929 and created uproar among the city residents. Finally, Kürten was accused of committing nine murders and seven attempted murders and was finally sentenced to death.

A second real person in Mauggs film is Gennat, the Berlin detective superintendent who was deeply involved in the investigations; it was he who investigated the unsolved murder of Fritz Lang´s first wife. In Mauggs film, Lang follows the clues. At the same time this takes place: "a continual oscillation between relating to the outside other and the inner object" (Winnicott 1971 a, quoted by Benjamin 2018, P. 5).

Because rooms always play a major role in Fritz Lang´s films, or rather how people are placed inside a room, reflecting the scenic aspect, he inspects the scenes of the crime himself. In the film, Fritz Lang´s own murderous themes resonate with the murder scenes, above all in the fictive conversations with the murderer. Highly emotional and meaningful personal events begin to resonate: a childhood scene, a shooting scene in the First World War in which an eye is lost which led to his wearing a monocle. Associations are made with the same pistol which later haunt different scenes to the box containing monocles which looks like a pistol case that Lang carried around with him during his research trip. The unsolved death of his wife resulting from a gun wound was declared an accident. However, Fritz Lang and his mistress were present at the scene of the crime, which was also investigated by the same police commissioner, Gennat. His feelings of guilt originate here and surface as a result of his thorough research and thus the film "M" emerges.

5. Contemporary Public Events

The Weimar Republic refers to a period in German History between 1918 and 1933 in which for the first time a parliamentary democracy was established. This epoch began with the Declaration of the Republic on the 9th of November, 1918, and ended with the appointment of Hitler as Reichs Chancellor on the 30th of January, 1933 (Wikipedia, accessed on October, 18, 2017). The end of the turbulent Weimar Republic in the 1920´s, with its aesthetic forms of expression, appears astonishingly modern even today. There are similarities even to the extent of the exaggerated nationalism. This might be a good reason to show this film today and to view it as a member of an audience.

Contemporary events are repeatedly faded into the film: we see a society in upheaval, in uproar. The stock market crash in 1929 and the financial disaster that ensued led to an increasingly political radicalization. When Fritz Lang wandered through the streets of Berlin at night, he witnessed a threatening march of National Socialists; later on there was a similar incident at a popular restaurant on the outskirts of the city involving Nazis who once again demonstrated their strength.

These powerful demonstrations of threatened or actual violence provide the background for the murderous activities of Peter Kürten and later on in the film “M”. The underworld court hearings in the film “M” are blended in at the end; the murderer is threatened to be lynched. New structures have developed outside constitutional democracy. Power, the masses, and violence are the themes.

In 1930, the First World War had ended just only 12 years before. In the 1920´s, there was a new mass movement, a desire, almost greed to live and to enjoy one´s own body (see Metzger, R. 2017). Berlin in the 1920´s was the place to have a wild time, full of sexuality, drugs, and violence, but it was also a creative time. Above all, the “Roaring Twenties” was tolerant (Metzger, R. 2017, p. 26). There were many secretaries and young housewives who suddenly had free time in the evenings. Popular Culture developed, some films became box office hits, among them several of Fritz Lang´s.

He sought contact to his fans, young women who were household servants. A dialogue originated from these encounters. The self-determination of women gained ground; even if

they were unable to afford to buy a film ticket themselves, they allowed themselves to be invited by men in return for sexual favors - this is where Peter Kürten found his victims.

However, in the increasingly crowded cities, people developed a longing to set themselves apart from the masses. Gordian Maugg depicts this in his film when he has the murderer show up on the sidelines of the investigation and later on when he has him sending out messages to the public at large.

6. The Form

As a result of coming to grips with these themes, Fritz Lang creates a work of art in the film “M”; he calls “M” a documentary ("The Dinosaur and the Baby" 1967). The form reflects the fragmentation of reality in modernity from which both film producers, Lang as well as Maugg, construe a story. Both succeed in creating a narration in a symbolic system, i.e., the film itself.

Gordian Maugg´s film is docu-fiction: screen material is blended into historical film shots, making a mash-up. In this way Gordian Maugg condenses the historical truth, brings it sharply into focus and by that arrives at a psychologically coherent statement, just as scenes are linked, connected together in our psychic reality via chains of association and not as exact 1:1 copies of the reality outside. This is why certain scenes in which Fritz Lang meets Gennat or the interviews with Peter Kürten can be understood more as inner monologues rather than actual dialogues. Fritz Lang works through his own traumatization in the way he creates his film "M".

This method of interweaving the present with the past by fading the actors into old film material contradicts the way our psychic life works, because in our memory past events fade into the present. But it also corresponds to the viewer´s emotional experience when he sees a film and projects himself into the film.

7. The Role of the Viewer´s Response

Meaning gradually emerges as part of a process due to an intense relationship to the art object, which is part of the outside world. But at the same time the art object is experienced in a complex inside-outside relationship which can be felt in a physical, sensual experience, so something new develops. This process takes place in the artists, and also in the recipients, for example the viewers of a film.
Meaning comes about through relatedness, in an unpredictable, uncontrollable way.

"M" externalizes his inner, tormented relational structures concretely in his actions. But the artist has the ability to use symbolic forms in a creative process; by working through and configuring his themes they attain a more formal, aesthetic Gestalt which the viewer responds to when his own inner relational structure resonate with it.

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Catherine Portuges, University of Massachusetts Amherst: "From *Shoah* to *Son of Saul*: Cinematic Traces and Intergenerational Dialogues"
European Psychoanalytic Film Festival epff9 "Interiors/Exteriors" London, November 2017

"There is no why here"--*Shoah,* Claude Lanzmann

Although innumerable films have addressed the Holocaust in a variety of representational styles, it was Claude Lanzmann who transformed Holocaust film representation with the release of his magisterial documentary, *Shoah*[1], commissioned in 1973 by Alouph Hareven, an official in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who suggested that Lanzmann make a film about the Holocaust from "the viewpoint of the Jews"-- a film that is not "about the Shoah, but a film that *is* the Shoah." Lanzmann discovered that "what was most important was missing: the gas chambers, death in the gas chambers, from which no one had returned to report. The day I realized this, I knew that the subject of the film would be death itself, death rather than survival, a radical contradiction since in a sense it attested to the impossibility of the project I was embarking on: the dead could not speak for the dead. . . . My film would have to take up the ultimate challenge; take the place of the non-existent images of death in the gas chambers." Rising to that challenge meant plumbing the depths of soul and psyche for all involved. Appearing himself in hundreds of hours of daring and controversial conversations with victims, perpetrators and bystanders, filming with a hidden camera in life-threatening circumstances, Lanzmann courageously imposes his vision on what Sartre terms "le

[1] (the Hebrew word for catastrophe) *Shoah* (France, 1985, 566 min., in French, Hebrew, Polish, English, Yiddish and German). See also Richard Brody, "Witness: Claude Lanzmann and the making of "Shoah." *New Yorker*, March 19, 2012. (At over 9 hours, the film is approximately the same length as the miniseries *Holocaust*.)

néant," re-visiting the sites of what he has called "les non-lieux de mémoire," or non-sites of memory,[2] seeking to inscribe in viewers' perceptions the massive material and emotional realities whose physical traces had been deliberately and comprehensively effaced by the Nazis. This strategy echoes recent efforts in museological and photographic research to portray actual sites and material objects associated with trauma rather than the experience itself, such as images taken from trains bound for the death camps.[3]

Claude Lanzmann and Shoah

To revisit *Shoah* thirty years after its release is to realize that, not unlike in the intimate relationship of analyst to analysand in the consulting room, the documentary filmmaker and his or her subject engage a cycle of transference and counter-transference through the arc of a film's production, which in the case of *Shoah* lasted well beyond a decade. The mutual dynamic of transference as a way of knowing the world (in contradistinction to its function in the consulting room) and its negation that can occlude the space between filmmaker and interviewee/participant may also be seen as both an ethical and an emotional encounter in this form of representational practice. For the filmmaker confronts the challenge of considering how to integrate the pursuit of historical traces through testimony into a narrative inevitably

[2] In a reversal of the French historian Pierre Nora's formulation, elaborated in *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, three volumes that analyze the places and objects that are presumed to embody French national memory, perhaps also a play on the French legal term, 'non-lieu' (dismissal).

[3] Annette Wieworka, *La Shoah : témoignages, savoirs, oeuvres* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes), 2000; Ori Gersht, "History Repeating," 8/25/12-1/6/13, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

focused on an absent subject--what Lanzmann had described as a "circle of flames...a limit which cannot be crossed because a certain absolute horror cannot be transmitted." [4]

In Lanzmann's case as in others, a kind of affective bond develops in the necessary collaboration between filmmaker and subject. Here he is compelled to inspire his subjects to speak the unspeakable, at time forcing them beyond what some consider to be acceptable ethical boundaries, guaranteeing that the cost of such emotional risk will ultimately be redeemed by the importance of their participation. Entirely dependent as it is upon verbal testimony, *Shoah* is a work of reflexive filmmaking, devoid of archival footage, newsreels, or re-enactments, with thousands of hours of unused outtakes, parts of which were later re-edited into subsequent documentaries:[5] [*A Visitor from the Living* (1999, 68 min; *Sobibór, October 14, 1943, 4 p.m.* (2001, 102 min); and *The Karski Report* (2010, 49 minutes).]

Claude Lanzmann has described the making of *Shoah* itself as a kind of hallucinatory voyage, positioning himself in the figure of a pioneer in the desolate ruins of the camps, "spellbound, in thrall to the truth being revealed to me...I was the first person to return to the scene of the crime, to those who had never spoken." He chooses to construct his films on the testimony of survivors, perpetrators and bystanders, and it is their words that provide the primary account of the *univers concentrationnaire*: in one of many controversial statements, Lanzmann has denounced visual representations of the death camps as "sacrilegious," asserting

[4] cf Introduction by Michael Renov in Agnieszka Pitrowska, *Psychoanalysis and Ethics in Documentary Film* (Routledge, 2013); see also Lanzmann's objections to NBC's 1978 television miniseries in "From the Holocaust to the *Holocaust* (1979/80)" published in *Le Monde* (1994).

[5] I was present for the film's premiere at the New York Film Festival where, in the Q&A that followed the screening, Lanzmann acknowledged: "There are a lot of staged scenes in the film. It is not a documentary," comparing his film subjects to theatrical characters on a stage.

that if he were to discover footage of Jews being asphyxiated in the gas chamber, he would destroy it.[6] *Shoah* nonetheless remains the most significant and celebrated intervention in modern cinematic Holocaust narrative,[7] and a touchstone for subsequent filmmakers. [8]

In reaction to the practice of "organized forgetting" that prevailed during the socialist decades under the Kádár regime in Hungary when ethnic and religious identities were discouraged in favor of communist internationalism, large-scale co-productions featuring multigenerational narratives have been instrumental in drawing attention to the differences between western and eastern European experiences of the Holocaust.

Out of the Past: Transgenerational Fictional Representations

Perhaps not surprisingly in view of the silence in which the Holocaust was shrouded for almost a generation, fictional representations were among the first to emerge. István Szabó's *Sunshine* (A napfény ize, 1999), an English-language film with a predominantly Anglo-American cast, was produced in Canada and filmed in Hungary. With a screenplay co-written by an American playwright and a Hungarian director renowned in the West for a film in German (the Oscar-winning *Mephisto*), it is a transnational epic with a decidedly Hungarian theme: the fate of the Jews in 20th century Europe and its sequellae for Hungarian identity after the Holocaust.

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[6] Adam Shatz, "Nothing he hasn't done, nowhere he hasn't been" review of *The Patagonian Hare: A Memoir,* in *London Review of Books*

[7] Simone de Beauvoir, whose life Lanzmann shared for seven years, later called the film "a monument – one that for generations to come will enable everyone to understand one of the most sinister and enigmatic moments in history." From my conversation with Claude Lanzmann at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, April 2009, following the launch of the English translation of his memoir, *The Patagonian Hare.*

[8] I am deeply grateful to my friend and colleague Professor Barton Byg (University of Massachusetts Amherst) for his close critical reading of an earlier version of this paper.

The subjectivity and interior monologue of a single narrator is the focus of Lajos Koltai's *Fateless* (Sorstalánság, 2005),[9] based on Nobel Laureate István Kertész's autofictional account of his deportation to Auschwitz as an adolescent: "The experience that contributed to writing the novel was about solitude, a more difficult life … the need to step out of the mesmerizing crowd, out of history, which renders you faceless and fateless." The film transposes the novel's first-person singular voice of the protagonist, fourteen-year-old Gyuri Köves, who recounts his deportation from a Budapest city bus in the fall of 1944 to Auschwitz, and the carceral isolation that ensues. Gyuri knows nothing of concentration camps nor of Nazism: indeed, his knowledge of the Jewish origins for which he is condemned is at once superficial and inexpressible. Kertész has suggested that he did not know even as a child what to make of the Jewishness that had been thrust upon him: "What kind of Jew is one who did not have a religious upbringing, speaks no Hebrew, is not familiar with the basic texts of Jewish culture, and lives not in Israel but in Europe?"[10] *Fateless* shifts the locus of cinematic discourse to a quasi-autobiographical mode with documentary undertones, suggesting--however momentarily--a greater receptivity toward confronting and perhaps even integrating parts of the experience, notwithstanding Kertész's belief that Hungary has yet to face its role in the Holocaust.

Counter-narratives and Transferential Dialogues: Son of Saul

[9] Catherine Portuges "A Hungarian Holocaust Saga: *Fateless*" in *The Modern Jewish Experience in World Cinema* ed Lawrence Baron (Waltham: Brandeis U. University Press/University Press of New England)

[10] Catherine Portuges, "Cinematic Memory of the Holocaust" in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: the Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, eds. Joanna Michlic and John-Paul Himka (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press) 292-300

The fall of communism has led to manifold changes in the representation of the Holocaust, in both Eastern and Western Europe, opening access to archival sources in Central and Eastern Europe that have altered its perception and representation by younger generations of filmmakers. As a counter-narrative to visualizations of the camps discussed earlier, the début fiction feature, *Son of Saul* (Hungary, 2015) brings to the screen a controversial chapter of Holocaust history: the role of the Sonderkommando (the special command unit known as *Geheimnisträger,* bearers of secrets), teams of Jewish prisoners forced to assist the SS in the gas chambers and crematoria, themselves in turn condemned to extermination. The 38-year-old Hungarian director, László Nemes, whose own family were Holocaust victims, was inspired by his discovery of the publication of hidden manuscripts written by Sonderkommandos buried in the grounds of the crematoria in 1944: from 1945-1980, eight sets of documents by five known authors were recovered.[11] Retrospectively known as the Scrolls of Auschwitz, they are of extraordinary immediacy, composed as they were within the *univers concentrationnaire*, and include witness accounts, letters and lists in Yiddish, Greek, French and Polish that raise critical questions with regard to the ethics, memory and interpretation of Holocaust testimony.[12]

[11] *Les voix sous la cendre ou Rouleaux d'Auschwitz-Birkenau, lettres de prisonniers rassemblées entre 1945 et 1980* (Paris: Calmann-lévy / Mémorial de la Shoah, 2005). The following note was found buried in the Auschwitz crematoria, written by Zalman Gradowski, a member of the Sonderkommando who was killed in the 7 October 1944 revolt: "Dear finder of these notes, I have one request of you, which is, in fact, the practical objective for my writing ... that my days of Hell, that my hopeless tomorrow will find a purpose in the future. I am transmitting only a part of what happened in the Birkenau-Auschwitz Hell. You will realize what reality looked like ... From all this you will have a picture of how our people perished." < https://www.google.com/search?q=yad+vashem&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8>

[12] Nicholas Chare & Dominic Williams, "Searching for Feelings: The Scrolls of Auschwitz and *Son of Saul*," Berghan Journals <http://berghahnbooks.com/blog/searching-for-feelings-the-scrolls-of-auschwitz-and-son-of-saul> accessed 2/8/16.

It is October, 1944, the Allies are approaching as the film unfolds over a day and a half in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Saul Ausländer (his family name translates as 'foreigner' or 'stranger') stumbles into focus in the square 40mm frame; the camera remains only inches away from him in the chaotic space of his forced labor, following him into a concrete block where the door closes behind them: only at this point do we realize we are in the antechamber of a gas chamber. Convoys arrive transporting deportees; as Saul rescues the corpse of a young boy he believes to be his own son, a fellow prisoner accuses him of having failed the living--the Sonderkommando, then engaged in rebellion against the camp commanders--for the dead. Saul (played by Géza Röhrig[13]) is forced to lead prisoners into the fictitious showers of the gas chambers; in over-the-shoulder point-of-view throughout, extended shots of his impassive face against a blurred background, and an immersive wall of chaotic sound design, Nemes creates a claustrophobic hell of confusion and incomprehension. Indeed, in opposition to Primo Levi's view of the Sonderkommando as numbed servants of the Nazis, the writers of the Scrolls engaged in acts of resistance of which the writings were a important part.[14] Saul's moral dilemma—to participate in the extermination machine or join its victims—is a foregone conclusion. Because the Sonderkommando were summarily executed to remove evidence of Nazi atrocities, his own demise is simply a matter of time. In his influential 1986 essay, "The Grey Zone," Levi uses the Sonderkommando to instantiate the moral dilemmas of Jewish

[13] In a television interview broadcast on Charlie Rose (WGBY-TV) on January 4, 2016, Röhrig stated: "Overwhelmingly, the prisoners did not survive--two out of three Jews in Europe were murdered. A few weeks ago we met a Greek Jew, possibly the last surviving Sonderkommando, in L.A. Elie Wiesel said: 'I'm ready to put my name on the line for this film.' I didn't have a chance to meet any of them before the shoot, he's a man who can still smile, there's a spark in his eyes."

[14] N. Chare and D. Williams, "Searching for Feelings: The Scrolls of Auschwitz and *Son of Saul*"

prisoners who 'compromised themselves by collaborating," addressed in his book, *The Drowned and the Saved*:

"The arrival in the Lager was indeed a shock because of the surprise entailed. The world into which one was precipitated was terrible, yes, but also indecipherable: it did not conform to any model, the enemy was all around but also inside, the “we” lost its limits, the contenders were not two, one could not discern a single frontier but rather many confused, perhaps innumerable frontiers, which stretched between each of us."[15]

As if apostrophizing Levi, Nemes explains his own conception of the film's visual representation:

The camera is hand-held, we planned all the camera positions and the movement of the main actors in the background action, but as everything is moving, introduces a sort of chaos into the scene, this idea that it's unpredictable, and that you're in a place that is very well known to the public but at the same time we believed it was never shown the way it was. Having this chaos and organization at the same time--this frenzy, the voices, the languages, the lack of information--everything about that and the fact that much is left to the viewers' and their imagination, these things are put in place in the very first moments of the film.[16]

Unlike in other Holocaust films motivated by a redemptive narrative, there is no savior here, no heroic or rescuing figure, only victims trapped in the killing zone. “I didn’t want to make a film with a distant, detached point of view,” says Nemes, instead seeking to “place the

[15] Primo Levi, ‘The Memory of the Offence’ in *The Drowned and the Saved* (London, 1988), p. 12.
[16] László Nemes analysis, "Anatomy of a Sequence: *Son of Saul*" video by Mekado Murphy (03:35) *New York Times* January 22, 2016.

audience from the point-of- view of one person in the middle of the killing machine. Otherwise the Holocaust becomes an abstract concept and the audience can back away." This relentless use of close-ups, shallow focus and long takes denies spectators the possibility of de-cathecting or distancing ourselves from Saul's experience, nor are we allowed the relative comfort of abstracting his existential fate. Through its insistence on a relentlessly personal, subjective perspective, subjectivity itself thus becomes in a sense the film's own subject while paradoxically denying the audience access to Saul's inner world. Yet *Son of Saul* conveys a sense of loss by virtue of these very cinematic strategies, distinguishing itself from the films referenced at the beginning of this essay and, in so doing, radically reinventing film language for a subject at risk of losing resonance seventy years on.[17]

Nonetheless, as a descendant, so to speak, of *Shoah*, *Son of Saul* is perhaps after all not a film about the Holocaust, seeking neither to denounce nor describe its horrors; rather, it places the spectator in the Sonderkommando's cinematic body, evoking the sensation of seeing through his terrorized gaze, hearing strictly what he sees and hears. Every shot is tightly framed and often in close-up, accompanied by a disorienting sound mix of SS voices in Hungarian, German, Polish, Russian and Yiddish, mixed with concentration-camp slang. The set, designed by Hungarian architect László Rajk, who was also responsible for designing the Hungarian exhibition at Auschwitz, is essential to the film's taut energy. Long takes, at times of as much as four minutes duration, executed with a hand-held camera, required sets of

[17] Cited from Nemes's presentation at the Golden Globes Foreign Language Film Symposium, to which I was an invited participant, January 11, 2016, Egyptian Theater/American Cinematheque, Hollywood, California.

complete rooms that could accommodate 360-degree takes for which Rajk recreated a Nazi crematorium in an abandoned 1912 warehouse on the outskirts of Budapest:

Assigned to the gas chambers whose functioning he must oversee, Saul robotically scrubs the showers, removes cadavers, collects clothing and effects from those who have been gassed, loads the ovens, scatters ashes in the neighboring river, believing (or imagining) he recognizes his own son among the victims. The boy has not died in the gas chamber, and the doctor intends to administer a fatal injection. In a scene between Saul and the camp doctor, the following dialogue takes place: CLIP

It is at this point that Saul seems to realize that, in Röhrig's reading, "this boy belongs to him and he belongs to the boy. Even for a second the boy survived the gas chamber--he survives and then is killed by the Nazi doctor." This death, then, is different from the others, offering Saul a moment of emotion, of empathy and identification. Whether or not it is his own son--a question left ambiguous in the film--through Saul's seemingly random dedication to the fate of this one individual, can the viewer, too, engage authentically with the otherwise overwhelming reality of the Shoah? Desensitized and psychologically annihilated by his inhuman tasks as a Sonderkommando, Saul is suddenly galvanized, consumed by the desire to recover the child's body for burial and to identify a rabbi to recite the mourners' Kaddish.[18] The dénouement, criticized by some critics as a *reductio ad absurdum*, sees Saul swept up in the Sonderkommandos' attempted escape that takes him across a river, where the precious body he has 'saved' drifts away in the current, and ultimately taking refuge in a shed in the

[18] In many commentaries on this point, Talmudic scholars and others have noted that it is not strictly speaking required that a rabbi be present for Kaddish to be said at a burial.

forest where his fellow fugitives plan their next moves. Suddenly, a small blond (Polish, we imagine) boy appears, glimpses the men and quickly runs off. The ambiguous conclusion may be read as a moment of transcendence for Saul, whose face grows beatific at the sight of him, perhaps imagining in his madness that his 'son' is alive, or simply from the joy of seeing a living child. [19]

Unlike Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, in refusing to depict the Holocaust as 'décor'--a trivialization for which Lanzmann has strongly reproached Spielberg--Nemes proposes instead to limit himself to the raw reality of quotidian details while resisting the lure of voyeurism, instead de-coupling each frame from familiar or unquestioned representational modes. This is accomplished through Saul's gaze alone in images often blurred, out of focus or oblique, and through the deafening, often unbearable diegetic noise heard off-screen. Resisting the kind of redemptive discourse prevalent in certain Holocaust films and rejected by Lanzmann, Saul's obstinately determined struggle may be read as leaving open the possibility of a hopeful gesture even from the depths of despair. Indeed, in a sense recapitulating the affective bond between filmmaker and subject referenced earlier, Lanzmann states: "...[László Nemes] is young, intelligent, handsome, and he has made a film about which I will never say anything negative...*Son of Saul* is the anti-Schindler's list. It doesn't portray death, but rather the lives of those who were forced to lead their own to death."[20] The French philosopher/art historian Georges Didi-Huberman, author of *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic*

[19] cf Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Lost in Auschwitz: *Son of Saul*" posted February 7, 2016 From the *Chicago Reader* (January 28, 2016).

[20] Claude Lanzmann, *Télérama*, http://www.telerama.fr/festival-de-cannes/2015/claude-lanzmann-le-fils-de-saul-est-l-anti-liste-de-schindler,127045.php

Iconography of the Salpêtrière (MIT Press, 2004), devoted a slim volume to *Son of Saul* in the form of an open letter addressed to László Nemes, published immediately following the film's Cannes premiere, commending an intelligence that justifies the film's brutal cinematic strategies:

> What a demanding test, this crush of images, this hell of sound that incessantly cadence your narrative! Yet what a necessary and fertile test! […] Your story (your fiction), out of the dark, itself 'carries' the secret [that of the Sonderkommandos], transporting it toward the light.[21]

The protagonist is driven to expiate an ambiguous, perhaps fantasized 'paternal' sorrow or guilt through the symbolic enactment of rescue, despite the fact that the object of his obsession is no longer among the living.[22] *Son of Saul* thus reframes the camp without engaging in the kind of 'mirroring' or repetition of violence that has been the object of much critical debate Holocaust representation. Its boldly existential terms counter the more conventional narrative approach of a film such as *Fateless* a decade earlier (with its embrace of iconographic images of beauty despite horror) without betraying and Lanzmann's ethical

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[21] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Sortir du noir* (Éditions de Minuit, 2015); my translation from the original French: [Quelle épreuve que cette foule d'images et que cet enfer de sons rythmant inlassablement votre récit ! Mais quelle épreuve nécessaire et féconde ! […] Votre histoire (votre fiction) sort du noir, : elle-même « porte » ce secret [celui des Sonderkommandos], mais pour le porter à la lumière] See Jacques Mandelbaum*, Le Monde*, 4 November 2015. <http://www.leseditionsdeminuit.com/f/index.php?sp=liv&livre_id=3184>

[22] László Nemes, *Son of Saul* (Saul Fia, 107 min, in Hungarian, English & Yiddish, 2015). 68th Cannes Film Festival, May 2015. Following a bidding war, the film was acquired on May 17, 2015 by Sony Pictures Classic for North American distribution. Nemes, the son of director András Jeles, served briefly as assistant to Béla Tarr whose insistence on an austere and rigorous film practice is legendary. Since its Cannes premiere in May 2015, *Son of Saul* has thus far won 36 international awards, 17 for best foreign film. It is worth noting, however, that the positive reception by most Hungarian critics and audiences has been tempered by dissenting voices, including those from the far-right Jobbik party who claim that Son of Saul is part of "a booming Holocaust industry," and that Hungarian filmmaking should focus on other parts of Hungary's history.

proscription of fictionalized portrayals of the *univers concentrationnaire*--indeed, of representation itself--as if cognizant of Adorno's proscription that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric."[23]

In press conferences at the film's Cannes premiere and often thereafter, the lead actor, Géza Röhrig, urged greater understanding of-- and renewed debate on-- the controversial role of the Sonderkommando. In *The Drowned and the Saved*, published in 1986, the year after *Shoah* was released, Primo Levi, inclined as he was to sympathize with those who had experienced such humiliation for so many months and years, remarked that those who had worked in the special squads could not be trusted to tell the truth about what they had been forced to do and their motives. These survivors, he wrote, would more likely utter “a lament, a curse, an expiation, an attempt to justify and rehabilitate oneself: a liberating outburst rather than a Medusa-faced truth.” As a result of such characterizations and condemnations, in the aftermath of testimony by witnesses at early trials of Nazi criminals, most retreated into anonymity, haunted by what they had seen and done, and understandably fearful of attempts at retribution to which they were subjected.[24] Claude Lanzmann continues to believe that this period should not be approached through the prism of fiction, insisting that: "Un certain absolu de l’horreur est intransmissible." [25] Considering that cinema may always be regarded with

[23] Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Sherry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 34.
[24] cf. Stuart Liebman, "Lanzmann's Theater of Memory," Criterion Collection. A 2001 film, *The Grey Zone*, based on a book by Dr. Miklós Nyiszli, takes its title from a chapter in *The Drowned and the Saved* by Holocaust survivor Primo Levi. The film tells the story of the Jewish Sonderkommando XII in the Auschwitz concentration camp in October 1944, the month and year during which *Son of Saul* takes place. These prisoners were made to assist the camp's guards in shepherding their victims to the gas chambers and disposing of their bodies in the ovens.

[25] "A certain absolute horror in not transmissible" Lanzmann writes in *La Tombe du divin plongeur* (Gallimard, 2012).

suspicion with regard to the Holocaust, these debates continue to fuel controversy. As Lanzmann has noted, the autumn of 1944 was a particular moment in the chronology of Auschwitz when some 250 Jews assigned to the Sonderkommando unit organized a mutiny, succeeding in exploding crematorium No. IV and the adjacent gas chamber before being massacred by the Nazis. The revolt, a real historical event, is suggested in *Son of Saul* as background to the fictional narrative of a man seeking to bury a child with dignity.[26]

Thirty years after the release of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, a documentary, *Claude Lanzmann: Spectres of the Shoah,* written, directed, and produced by British filmmaker and journalist Adam Benzine, was scheduled for release on Holocaust Remembrance Day, 2016.[27] Benzine secured exclusive access to the director who sat at length to discuss the making of *Shoah* in a riveting portrait of a tough, determined and uncompromising man. Lanzmann movingly recalls his efforts to convince traumatized death camp survivors to relive their

[26] Olivier Bouchara, interview with Claude Lanzmann.< http://www.vanityfair.fr/culture/cinema/articles/fils-de-saul-shoah-cinema-cannes/25988> In the same interview Lanzmann compares the film *The Grey Zone* (1997) to *Son of Saul*: Il est vrai que les ressemblances sont troublantes. *The Grey Zone* raconte la révolte des Sonderkommandos d'Auschwitz du 7 octobre 1944 en empruntant un ressort fictionnel du même ordre : les détenus découvrent une jeune fille – vivante – sous un amas de corps dans la chambre à gaz. Ils décident de la sauver puis de la garder auprès d'eux, au secret, dans les baraquements, tout en préparant la mutinerie. Contrairement au héros de Nemes qui veut inhumer son fils à tout prix (il menace même les détenus qui se mettent sur son chemin), les personnages de *The Grey Zone* n'échappent pas aux questionnements sur l'obligation morale de sauver la jeune fille quand leur propre vie est en jeu. En ce sens, parce qu'il soulignait l'impossibilité d'être un homme parfait à l'intérieur d'un camp de concentration, *The Grey Zone*, qui a été très peu diffusé en France et en Europe, était peut-être plus troublant et moins acceptable que *Le Fils de Saul*, lauréat du Grand Prix du festival de Cannes 2015."

[27] *Claude Lanzmann: Spectres of the Shoah* (Canada, 2015, director/screenwriter/producer Adam Benzine, 40 min). HBO Documentary Films has acquired the US Television rights. World premiere, April 25, 2015, Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, in Toronto. I attended a screening at NuArt Theater, Los Angeles, May 14, 2015, for Academy Award consideration. The film marks the directorial début of Adam Benzine who states: "Claude Lanzmann is a filmmaking icon and a Jewish hero. His 12-year journey to make what is now considered to be the definitive Holocaust opus was really an against-all-odds story of defiant resilience in the face of tremendous adversity. I am deeply honored that he agreed to participate." http://www.screendaily.com/news/hbo-to-debut-spectres-of-the-shoah-doc/5087182.article.

experiences, confessing to the life-threatening dangers he encountered while tracking down and secretly filming SS officers with a hidden camera. Now 90, he speaks of his engagement in the French Resistance as an adolescent, his romance with Simone de Beauvoir, and his friendship with Jean-Paul Sartre, admitting that he deceived *Shoah*'s financiers who expected a two-hour screening time. It is perhaps an act of poetic justice that Lanzmann, himself a voting member of the Academy who has never been nominated, attended the ceremony for the first time ever, witnessing the triumph of *Son of Saul*,[28] although *Lanzmann: Spectres of the Shoah* failed to win the Oscar in the short documentary competition. Documentary films, many of which, as I have suggested, are inevitably influenced by or in some way in conversation with S*hoah*, occupy a consequential position at least equal to that of fiction in Holocaust reconstruction and memorialization.

CINEMA/PSYCHOANALYSIS/SHOAH

In a remarkable counter-transferential moment in the filmmaker/subject relationship, Benzine asks Lanzmann to narrate for the camera a dramatic episode during the production of *Shoah* in which he and an assistant conducted secret undercover filming of former Nazi Heinz Schubert using a hidden camera, the 'Paluche,' during which he director was brutally attacked, sustaining physical injuries requiring hospitalization. Visibly reluctant and disturbed by this request, Lanzmann at first refuses, then relents when Benzine says: "Je sais que c'est difficile," echoing

[28] During the five-year editing process, Lanzmann was repeatedly confronted by hundreds of hours of footage of atrocities. The film features previously unseen material shot by the director and his team in the 1970s. The filmmakers are continuing to work with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Israel's Yad Vashem, who jointly own this material, to restore and digitize it. HBO will produce DVD and BluRay versions in 2016 including supplemental interviews. Sincere thanks to the director, Adam Benzine, for personal communications. Nominated for an Academy Award for best short documentary, the film is the only Holocaust-themed documentaries to have failed to win the award, and the first in that category to use the word "Shoah" in the title.

the words Lanzmann had used to urge Bomba, the barber, to confront the worst atrocity he had experienced when incarcerated in Treblinka: the sight of a fellow barber forced to cut the hair of his own wife and child in the gas chamber, a scene that has been the subject of voluminous debate on the part of film scholars, philosophers and psychoanalysts.[29] "We must do it," Lanzmann insisted then, explicitly using the first-person plural. Lanzmann's primary consideration, then, is not to provide emotional support to his survivor witnesses, but rather to persuade them to give testimony in the very *lieux de mémoire* of exterminations which some had to witness a second time when corpses were exhumed and burned in an effort to further disguise traces. Some of his questions cannot be answered: "You survived, but are you really alive?" thereby allowing no clear point of entry for empathy, denying the viewer the catharsis or sense of superiority that condemnation can elicit. As spectators, we are outsiders as we enter Lanzmann's film; yet even after reactivating the past over nine hours, we emerge understanding relatively little about the internal world of its subjects.

As viewers, we inescapably we join the 'now' of the film in its *longue durée*, which in turn becomes our own present tense; the strategy of filming and translating in real time gives the slowed-down space and time to reflect, imagine, and place ourselves in its narrative. Composed of real-time testimonies by witnesses remembering and working through layers of resistance to excavate their memories, not unlike the psychoanalytic process itself, *Shoah* makes meaning of the unimaginable past in the present by its very refusal to resort to archival evidentiary substantiation. Unlike other films on the aftermath of genocide, it offers no

[29] cf Dominick LaCapra, 1998; Joshua Hirsch, 2004; Agnieszka Piotrowska, 2013.

reassurance nor catharsis, instead enduring as a monument to what has been lost, to a catastrophe whose sequellae continue in the present. Lanzmann thus retrospectively bears witness to his own epic struggle, enacting the 'law' he established for himself during the making of *Shoah*: "...rester froid pour le film...il ne fallait pas que ce soit facile." [30] Describing himself as having felt as if he were at total war with everything and everyone while making *Shoah*, his truest confidante and unfailing supporter, emotionally and financially, was Simone de Beauvoir: "I was proud of what I achieved, definitely, yes," confides Lanzmann, who was 87 during the filming of *Spectres of the Shoah*: "But it did not relieve me from anguish," acknowledging a "feeling of bereavement" on the day *Shoah* was finished: "I was swimming in the ocean in Jerusalem, nearly drowning from fatigue, and not happy to be saved [by a passing boat]; I rather wanted to commit suicide," arguably a reference to Primo Levi's death in 1987 at age 67. After falling down the stairwell of his apartment building in Turin, Italy, his fellow writer and survivor Elie Wiesel delivered an epigrammatic coroner's report: "Primo Levi died at Auschwitz forty years later."

Two generations later, Nemes acknowledges *Son of Saul* as a direct descendant of *Shoah*, the film that inspired him throughout his life. Abraham Bomba's testimony, and the film that immortalized it, are systematically evoked by László Nemes as one of the major sources of *Son of Saul.* To embody the daily life of an Auschwitz Sonderkommando, Nemes chose a hybrid representational mode, neither fully fiction nor documentary, inhabiting a 'grey zone' in the interstices of the inferno: "Even in the darkest hours of mankind, there might be a voice within us that allows us to remain human. That's the hope of this film. Nemes believes Hungarians

[30] "Remain calm for the film...it was important that it not be easy..."

have not dealt with the trauma of the Holocaust, during which during which some 600,000 Hungarian Jews perished, almost all after Nazi Germany invaded in March 1944. "Every kid should watch it," he said of the film, "not because the cinemas should be full, but that many of them lack empathy."[31]

Like Spielberg, who approached the Holocaust via the true story of a thousand Jews rescued by a single German industrialist, Nemes tells the singular story of a man determined to bury a boy he believes to be his son. But the comparison ends there, according to Lanzmann, who famously reproached *Schindler's List* for using the Holocaust as 'décor.' He is interested in *Son of Saul* precisely as a Hungarian film, having devoted numerous scenes in *Shoah* to the deportation of Hungarian Jews in the spring of 1944, particularly through the testimony of Auschwitz survivors Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler. Lanzmann seems to have found in Nemes an heir worthy of him and of his memory work, having purportedly whispered to Nemes, in an Oedipal moment on the Croisette in Cannes: "You are my son," declaring in press interviews *Son of Saul* to be "a film I will never denigrate."[32] Thus does Lanzmann perhaps wish no longer to be the one who condemns, instead choosing for himself, *in extremis*, a classic mode of survival--a symbolic son, like the boy chosen by Saul. Although such an intergenerational bond, at once affective and artistic, may be traced through many of the works referenced here, it is, I believe, most powerfully present between Lanzmann and Nemes. Both have created works that incarnate terrifying reality, neither sparing us as viewers nor offering a comforting

[31] http://news.yahoo.com/son-saul-film-holocaust-hell-earns-oscar-050113737.html
[32] Rachel Donadio, *New York Times*, 'In 'Son of Saul,' Laszlo Nemes Expands the Language of Holocaust Films' December 15, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/15/movies/in-son-of-saul-laszlo-nemes-expands-the-language-of-holocaust-films.html?_r=0

distancing or separation between present and past. Their images are fiercely embodied, as if wrenched directly from the nightmare, yet rendered with an audacity, urgency and intimacy that nonetheless complicates prior representational strategies. Both compel us to think visually, through a radically personal and original point of view, in images that are themselves tantamount to originary experiences transformed cinematically into a continuous present tense. Seventy years after the end of WW II, under often precarious financial, political and psychological circumstances, these filmmakers are reframing a legacy of guilt and sorrow into artistic projects that engage viewers in transformative encounters, reckoning with its long aftermath in dialogue with themselves and each other, and with the films that continue to resonate across generations. [33]

[33] "Jewish Identities and Generational Perspectives in Hungarian Cinema" *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas*, ed Anikó Imre (London: Wiley-Blackwell) 101-124

Behind the Façade

Room at the Top

This above all – to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 3

During a romantic scene in *Room at the Top*, Joe Lampton attempts to recite the lines above to his lover, Alice, who had patiently taught them to him. “This above all – to thine own self be true / And... and... and...” When he forgets what should follow as the night the day, it is an omen that he is about to lose his soul.

Room at the Top was the first major film to pull back the veil of modesty that had long dominated the British cinema. The famous “stiff upper lip” of the British that had seemed commendable during the years of wartime adversity ossified during the 1950s into a cinema of middle-class reserve that seemed increasingly irrelevant to the lives that the majority of the population actually lived. It was this gulf between exterior restraint and interior reality that fuelled the criticisms of a new generation of writers whom journalists labelled the “Angry Young Men”.

One of the angriest of those young men was critic and documentary film-maker Lindsay Anderson, who attacked a commercial cinema that he described as “snobbish” and “wilfully blind to the conditions and problems of the present”, a cinema in which “our emotions are so bottled up that they have ceased to exist at all”. With his friends Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson, Anderson founded in 1956 the Free Cinema movement, whose manifesto declared: “As film-makers we believe that no film can be too personal.” It became an important foundation for the British New Wave of the 1960s, which – with such films as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, A Taste of Honey* and Anderson’s own masterpiece, *This Sporting Life* – forged an emotionally mature, social-realist cinema, but it required the commercial cinema itself to make the break-through. Produced by the established and very prominent production company Romulus Films, *Room at the Top* was an adaption of John Braine’s 1957 bestselling novel, which captured the mood of a post-war society in the throes of change. Its success offered the necessary proof that anger could be profitable.

With its tough, abrasive hero Joe Lampton, the film gave voice to a working class that had previously been confined to mostly subordinate, deferential roles. Upon its release in 1959, reviewers celebrated a film that took advantage of an increased latitude in the rules of censorship to bring a new realism to the way people actually behave. “At long last a British film which is truly adult,” wrote the critic of *Reynolds’ News*. *"Room at the Top* has an X certificate and deserves it – not for any cheap sensationalism but because it is an unblushingly frank portrayal of intimate human relationships.”

It is the destruction of intimate human relationships that becomes the key theme, as Joe’s ambition drives him to place conformity to social convention ahead of his own inner feelings. He is in love with Alice Aisgill, an older, unhappily married woman, but courts Susan, the daughter of the millionaire industrialist Mr Brown, the most powerful man in the provincial town of Warnley where the drama is set. In his pursuit of Susan, Joe puts on a pretence of a love that he does not feel. But with Alice, the boundary between exterior and interior is removed: he doesn’t have to act; he can be himself.

In what becomes a dark, Faustian tale, the emotional honesty that Alice taught him is sacrificed to Mammon, as Joe opts for the material advantages of marriage to Susan rather than fight for a relationship that is encumbered in so many practical difficulties. “You’re a timid soul, aren’t you, Joe?” Alice reproaches him during their final parting. “These people at the top. They are the same as everybody else. But you had it inside

of you to be so much bigger than any of them. You just had to be yourself."

In laying bare the mechanism of self-interest and emotional deceit that causes Joe to opt for bourgeois propriety, the film bleakly suggests that it is the usual way of the world. Susan's father, the millionaire Mr Brown, started out as a young, ambitious working-class man rather like Joe. They share the same energy, persistence and pragmatic ruthlessness. If it is Joe's readiness to put ambition before sentiment that brings them into the same family, it is clear that Mr Brown long ago followed the same path. The icy coldness of his wife offers some evidence: if Mrs Brown ever loved Mr Brown, it is hard to escape the impression that such feeling long ago gave way to disillusionment, so that now, as her daughter marries Joe, the only values left to defend are those of social respectability.

'To thine own self be true…' By daring to take an uncompromising look behind the façade of exterior appearances, *Room at the Top* – succeeding where Joe failed – lived up to this injunction, and, albeit briefly, inspired the British cinema to hold up a mirror to the reality of people's lives.

Charles Drazin, 26 April 2017

Gloom at the top by Michael Halton

epff9 talk Gloom at the Top.

Room At The Top. (1959) Jack Clayton, from the novel by John Braine (1957).
I have titled my paper ‘Gloom At The Top’ I hope the following comments go some way towards explaining why!
John Braine’s novel Room at the Top and Jack Clayton’s film of the same name have much in common, besides the latter being a more or less faithful adaptation of the former with a screen play by Neil Paterson. Importantly they share a similar place in the pantheon of British post war cultural life. Both the novel and the film are now considered to be prime examples of the artistic vanguard of the late 1950’s.

Braine the novelist, along with other writers such as Kingsley Amis, John Osbourne, Alan Sillitoe, etc, were all part of the literary movement that came to be known as the ‘Angry Young Men’. Clayton the film’s director was less than happy to be described as angry and young, being 40 at the time of the films release but none the less shared some of his literary colleague’s sensibilities and his critically esteemed film is now considered to have inaugurated the realist tradition in British cinema called the British New Wave. The film version of Room at the Top was immensely popular with the public, controversial for its frank and challenging take on sex and class and was shortly followed by equally gritty films about working class life directed by such luminaries as Lindsay Anderson, Tony Richardson, John Schlesinger and Karel Reisz.

There is much one can say about the film in terms of its post war and post imperial background. The fiasco and national shame of Suez was very recent and the social expectations of the British post war population were high and getting higher. Class privileges were increasingly questioned and the merits of the established order, robustly challenged. Middle class gentility and the moral war time codes of self sacrifice as exemplified in Lean’s film Brief Encounter were considered in many intellectual circles to be elitist and twee. Patriotic writers who beat the drum for King and country like Coward and Rattigan were out, along with the brilliant but snobbish likes of Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene. The favoured subjects of artistic endeavour were gritty realism and ‘frankness’. There was an explosion of writers from humble backgrounds in the north and south of the country with an axe to grind, an injustice to right and a tale to tell of overlooked working class subcultures.

Yet the character of Joe Lampton whilst not without some sympathetic qualities is not what one might choose as the ideal of a worthy class avenger. He is no working class hero that would fit John Lennon’s anti-materialist bill! True he is decidedly not passive and lumpen but his fierce ambition coupled with his sense of entitlement, which he never doubts, leads him onwards and upwards. He knows what's his due and his right to ascend up the greasy pole is never in question. This rise, often at the expense of others, doesn't come with many qualms or hints of an underlying moral code. He is anything but the admirable antihero and is a questionable cipher for many of the justifiable causes for social change that were brewing in the culture.
We are vividly shown more than once that Joe Lampton comes from a deprived and bleak external world that is all too real but we are also told Joe sees little in his class that could redeem itself, and he seems to live in a corresponding inner world of emotional squalor and poverty with little faith in family or community. Yet his lack of perceived worth in his own origins is subtly contradicted by his aunt and uncle. On a return visit they are rather nonplussed and alarmed by his unalloyed ambition and he is reminded by his concerned aunt of Polonius’s words to Hamlet “To thine own self be true” and again gently warned not to sell himself for ‘a handful of silver’. The handful of silver is a line from Robert Browning’s poem, The Lost Leader (1845).
‘Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a ribbon to stick to his coat

Browning’s poem berates his former idol Wordsworth for betraying the liberal causes of his youth and turning to conservative values in later life, a subject we will return to later. The handful of silver is a reference to the 30 pieces Judas is paid for his betrayal of Christ. It is interesting that such literary references are subtly or

unconsciously put in the mouth of his supposed philistine aunt with no education, who's world Joe betrays and rejects on the basis of its worthlessness.
All we know of Joe's parents is that they are an absence, having been killed by a bomb in the war. However we see no signs in Joe of any loss or filial loyalty to his folks. He seems to lack the internal warmth and love that would provide some emotional strength and continuity with his past. A warmth that would link him with some of the good things in his background. Contrast this with a later working class writer like Denis Potter who creates characters who are deeply conflicted by their social mobility and troubled by abandoning their roots because they retain deep affection for their origins.

Joe Lampton is alienated from his past and only looks forward to a future that's different. This is identical to his creator Braine who said that he could't wait to get away from his roots and never turn back. Joe is an orphan with no parents and no history, Joe has little memory or awareness of what needs to be cherished and what might need to ditched. The room at the top is the place he's headed with little idea of what's actually there. The top room is more valued for what it's not than what it is. At least its not like where he starts from even if he has only the vaguest of ideas where he's headed. We get little sense of the contents of Joe's dream of the good life except a pained and aching sense of what he doesn't possess. In a telling exchange with his smug rival and fellow prisoner of war Jack Wales he bitterly complains that unlike the privileged Wales he had nothing at home worth trying to escape back too! His POW camp experience was more like home from home but with more leisure time. If Joe Lampton were ever to be a socialist (which he certainly isn't!) it would probably be the vengeful type that goes around scratching Rolls Royces, seeking revenge for injustices rather than the Ken Loach approach who's anger could be seen to have a loving element that seeks justice for neglected communities and mobilises collective action for the benefit of all.

When he first espies Susan and the flash car from his lofty hight, he is a newly arrived outsider in a rented flat, in a posh part of town but he says "I'm going to have that"
not "I want that" or I'd like some of that. The chilling quality of that simple statement comes from its omnipotent and delusional belief in the power of possession. But deep down Joe posses very little, whether it happens to be self worth or self awareness.

The posters which sold the film at the time of its release shouted boldly; 'A savage story of lust and ambition'. In Joe's mind sex, social status, and material possession are inseparable. To be fair to Joe none of the other central characters with whom he intersects have much of a moral compass either, or if they do, they can't, because of desperation and insecurity, afford to listen to it too carefully. They seem to range from the ingenue Susan, overprotected and lost in her dreams of romantic love, who fails to perceive Joe in any real sense, repeating "Wasn't it absolutely wonderful" about their 1st sexual encounter and the same refrain again on their wedding day, blinded to Joe's inner turmoil and despair—all the way through to Alice's cruel reptilian husband George. Along the way we meet Susan's snobbish and cold mother, her plutocratic father, and the forlorn and depressed Alice who painfully tries to find solace and escape in an affair with a younger and crucially immature Joe who can't really provide her emotionally with what she needs. This is a cynical world not unlike our current Trump universe where dog eats dog and the meek get used or trampled under foot. In this world there are only winners and losers and Joe is alert enough to be determined he will be a winner. The sequel Life at the Top confirms what we all expect that having got to his top room the story ends badly for all the protagonists with no one finding much happiness or fulfilment.

In the limited time left I would like to examine this cynical world and the bad faith of its inhabitants a bit more and propose some contributory psychological factors.
Braine in his youthful years as well as writing novels and poetry was a left wing commentator and CND activist. Later in life, like his fellow left leaning angry, (by now old) comrades Kingsley Amis, Robert Conquest, John Osbourne, he had moved radically to the right. Brain publicly advocated the raising of a private right wing army and wrote a pamphlet, 'Goodbye to the Left' published by the Monday Club a right wing group of the Conservative party. Like his character Joe Lampton there was no pretence to any faith in social change or the search for a more just world, only individualistic self preservation mustered conviction. Braine a heavy smoker and drinker took some pleasure in being a pamphleteering pugilist.Ditto Clayton, though not as overtly political as Braine, Clayton was also a difficult man not comfortable with himself or his times. By the end of his career he had completed only 7 feature films and at odds with many of his fellow producers and the film industry at

large. Only one other film arguably his masterpiece, The Innocents an adaptation of Henry James's novella The Turn of The Screw, achieved the same critical success as Room At The Top.
One of Clayton's editors remembers him thus;

'He was a complex man, he drank too much, smoked too much and was dangerously unpredictable. Jack was a bar room brawler who would if provoked, attack other people with his fists.
He was also charming and seductive which masked many of his faults. He had a sadistic sense of playing practical jokes on the innocent'.

Is his editor making a sly hint here as to why Clayton chose James's novella which amongst other things is about childhood cruelty masked in innocence. Besides the drinking and brawling does something of Clayton's character remind us of Joe Lampton's sado/masochistic relationship to both Susan and Alice and too the power relations of their social worlds?

As I have already mentioned not all W/C writers responded to social inequalities as Braine and his fellow reactionaries did, Potter being a case in point. Braine is a classic example of someone who when young was a committed and active left wing radical who in middle age became disillusioned and moved to the right and conservative values. The unforgiving bitterness of the disappointed revolutionary all to often mutates into the curmudgeonly reactionary. A cynical dislike of the present coupled with the loss of hope for a radically different future can become a bitterness for the loss of an idealised past. It is my contention that Joe Lampton is the child of such a disillusioned imagination!

From a psychoanalytic perspective we could make a great deal of Joe's oedipal sexual jealousy and possessiveness, for example his questions to his lover Alice as to whether she continues to have sex with her husband or his rage at learning of her youthful naked modelling or his confusion and impulses to rescue Alice as a mother figure from her own depression and the brutish control of her husband. However in my view a deeper insight is afforded if we interrogate what the room at the top may unconsciously represent.

Melanie Klein has pointed out that emotional deprivation in early life reinforces in the infantile mind the compensatory phantasy of a supremely good idealised figure or state of affairs. In my view such a phantasy underpins the extreme versions of belief in revolutionary change and the cynical bitter retreat to a misanthropic view of human nature that is embodied in the character of Joe Lampton when this idealisation collapses.

If the room at the top is believed to contain endless bliss, just out of reach, its eventual occupation can only lead to disillusionment and the counter-belief that present reality is a huge disappointment. Endless bliss turns to endless gloom at the top, to cynicism or the pursuit of yet another idealised solution as a desperate attempt to evade despair. If the place at the top is so profoundly idealised it is the place we have never truly occupied and never will. To reach heaven we must first agree to be dead to the messiness and compromises of real life.

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Michael Halton

The presence of the absence - On "One week and a day" by Noa Ben-Nun Melamed

The presence of the absence
On "One week and a day"
Noa Ben-Nun Melamed

The way we observe the world combines what our eyes see and what our mind complements; our perception of reality from the point of view of our self. Attempting to put order in the endless input of our senses, we organize it through a map of symbols, in-between individual symbols and collective or archetypal symbols. When something does not fit this map, or is too unbearable, we may not see it at all, to become blind to it. On the other hand we may see non-existing things through our imagination. This film alternates between the two states: lack of vision, and replacing it by imagination and play.
"One week and a day" subverts the Israeli genre of exploring the figure of a son killed in his military service – a genre in which the effort to paint an individual portrait often gets clouded by collective images promoted by institutionalized mourning. The son here, Ronnie, died of an illness, with no heroic circumstances. We don't hear much about him, we never see him. He is an empty space, a transparent abyss, around which the story evolves. The struggle not to be sucked into this abyss characterizes the figures, the narrative and the cinematic means. The film is generated by the whirlwind around the absence.
Side by side with this complexity, the film succeeds in maintaining a subtle human dimension characterized by the breadth and delicacy of emotions, in which humor and pain coexist.
In the opening scene we hear the sounds of a ping pong game. This brings to mind the make belief tennis game in Antonioni's "Blow Up", with which "One week and a day" resonates. Eyal, the bereaved father, plays with a boy. He is a grownup who behaves childishly and aggressively, to the amazement of the other children and to our amazement as an audience. Is he a child pretending to be a man? A man inside whom an angry child is hidden? Later on his mother kisses and hugs him warmly, telling the son/father "Bye, sweety". He goes to the courtyard, watches the kittens in the jar, and brings down the shutters attempting to block the neighbors. Vicky, the mother, goes to the graveyard as is customary at the end of the Shiva. She returns, dyes her hair, receives a message about her dental appointment, and – awkwardly – goes to the school where she works as a teacher, surprised to find there the substitute teacher. She struggles to re-establish her routine, telling Eyal, "we said we will go on".
Eyal behaves as a capricious child, refusing to go to the graveyard. He goes to the hospice to look for a blanket "my son forgot… we forgot…" as he says to the man dying in Ronnie's former bed. This is the first time the son is mentioned. Eyal describes the blanket vividly, it's blue, green, orange, yellow and pink. The ill man gives him instead a package of medical cannabis left in the drawer, "an inheritance".
Both parents, each in a unique way, search their way around the absence and the pain. The kittens which Eyal wants to keep alive and Vicky wishes to get rid of, the blanket, the shutters going up and down creating a partition between the reflection of Vicky – who is imprisoned inside herself – and extroverted Eyal, all acquire symbolic significance. They express the poles of returning to childhood and to a rescue illusion versus the stubborn clinging to mundane reality – in both cases averting one's look from the son's absence.
Vicky asks Eyal to acquire for them the plots adjacent to Ronnie's grave, but he cannot fulfill this mission, just as he cannot visit the grave. As long as he keeps his son's soul within himself, he cannot acknowledge death – the son's death or his own.
Two children accompany the plot. Bar continues Ronnie's life in the hospice, where she wanders as if it was her home. She covers her ill mother with the colorful blanket which may have been Ronnie's transitional object and is now utilized as a transcendental object which could save her mother's life. She seems a happy girl who dissociates her difficult reality.
Zooler, the neighbors' son, once younger Ronnie's friend, is an ageless youngster, childish and wild, much closer to Eyal's present state of mind than to his own parents. He teaches Eyal how to roll marijuana joints, addresses Vicky as "teacher" – erecting a boundary between kids and grownups in this house – and she wants

to get rid of him, similarly to the kittens. Eyal warns they shouldn't touch the kittens, as they can be abandoned by their mother – resonating with the danger of parents abandoned by their child. Zooler and Eyal play as two kittens. Eyal's relationship with Zooler serves more to maintain himself as a child than to offer fatherhood to the youngster.

We know very little about Ronnie, gain just a glimpse into his room – a contrabass, an oxygen concentrator, discs, a half-empty disposable glass, as if the room is just temporarily abandoned. Eyal is furious because from his son's room he hears the neighbors "fucking like rabbits". Later on he finds Zooler there, lying in bed with his thumb in his mouth. Eyal lies down next to him, Vicky joins them – a moment of sad unity, maybe recreating a bygone family scene, disrupted by Zooler senior, who comes to avenge his wife who was slapped by Eyal.

The gentle acceptance between Eyal and Vicky – in spite of their divergent behaviors – is contrasted with the hypocritical neighbors, who turned their eyes away when Ronnie fell ill, and arrived at the Shiva after it's over.

The "as if" motive – resonating with "Blow Up" – is expressed in the parents' attempts to deny their mourning, as well as in the wild dance of Zooler recreating his and Ronnie's Air Guitar passion, a make belief rock concert; he proposes to show a video recording of such a joint dance, but showing it within the film would have sabotaged Ronnie's illusory non-presence.

The film reaches its turning point when Eyal and the kids enact an "as if" rescue fantasy, while Vicky seemingly struggles to survive by insisting on her dental treatment.

Eyal and Zooler search for the blanket – as if this could revive Ronnie. Jolly Bar meets Zooler in the hospice yard, playing his imaginary guitar. Zooler tells her: "The fact that you don't see it doesn't mean it does not exist". Understanding vision as an act of the imagination helps her to invent a game. Above her mother's bed, covered with Ronnie's blanket, Bar, Eyal and Zooler perform a pantomime surgery, removing the illness, which Bar later throws into the sea. Reality may exist, may be hallucinatory; life and death are not certain either.

The game is over, reality hits back. The three rush to the graveyard; the adjacent plot is taken, someone is going to be buried in it. "We have to bury people, pal" says the gravedigger, breaking up the illusory mechanism. Eyal – hoping to prevent the burial – finds himself in a ceremony in which a man eulogizes from the depth of his heart his young sister, Meirav, who also died of cancer. The camera follows a very different way of mourning. Through Meirav's conventional funeral Eyal is able to acknowledge his son's death.

Vicky, in the dental clinic, accepts silently Eyal's phone about the failure of the mission to keep the plots in the graveyard. A minute later, while she is imprisoned in her chair, her mouth blocked by the x-ray film, the camera captures her by surrounding her. Vicky's mouth arches in voiceless weeping, tears come out of her eyes. She cannot escape knowing. As in Antonioni's film, the camera plays a role in attempting to captivate reality, so difficult to grasp.

The imaginary surgery and the insistence on the dental treatment bring the diversion methods of both parents to the edge. Now they start to meet the painful reality – and therefore each other. Vicky returns home, bringing back the kittens. Eyal and Zooler bring Bar back to the hospice; she is sad and disillusioned. Eyal tells Zooler to go home; his childish spirit is gone. Zooler gives him the VCR and the remote – it will be possible to see Ronnie, though in a different film.

The Capacity for Forgiveness in Cinema and Psychoanalysis, with reference to The Documentarian by Ivars Zviedris by Helen Taylor Robinson

HELEN TAYLOR ROBINSON

The Capacity for Forgiveness in Cinema and Psychoanalysis, with reference to The Documentarian by Ivars Zviedris

You have just seen Inta—the ostensible 'subject' of our film—in both her garish, flashing and also her gentler colours, as she gives her primitive 'all' to the intrusion into her life that a film of her necessitates. For, Ivars, the documentarian, apparently stumbles onto her outcast existence as she has constructed it --in the harsh but beautiful Latvian landscape—deep, deep snow, vicious mosquito bitten swamplands, serene sunsets and frozen waters, winds driving through the trees and grasses—its an implacable background at all times to the onscreen journey Ivars wants to make with his camera.

Its clear to us that Ivars, for his reasons as a documentarian, persists against **great odds**. What are his reasons? The film leaves us to ponder this.

Inta, his subject and her setting, also persists **against the odds.** Each has their own illusion of what is taking place between them. Her reasons are unclear also.

Both parties, we could say, as in any good film or artistic experience, are also to some extent out of their depth and control, in front of the camera, and allowing something greater to evolve.

We, and the camera, witness a titanic onscreen battle. The magic of omnipotent language (let alone all of that actual weaponry) are brandished by Inta, **not** Ivars, (except for his offending camera ofcourse)—and throughout this documentary landscape, it seems that things can barely resolve to any comfortable and harmonious happy ending….true to much of real life we might say.

This is no young prince rescuing an abandoned princess from her fairy tale tower……no gallant knight 'bearding the dragon' in his den and returning victorious.

Or is it? What is it?

The momentary flickers of interiority—Ivars on screen being called a German soldier with a hooked nose (the Germans, like so many other nations, have occupied Latvia) and having to manfully take this insult and rub at his nose—the camera steadily watching his bewildered but nevertheless un-retaliatory reaction—or, Inta on screen for once bending lovingly over her accordion playing a folk song with unexpected fluency—the camera again still and focused—or Inta and Ivars now like a husband and wife couple happily working to collect and chop wood together,(note how her hands move from holding his body, to holding the chair he stands on, to avoid direct intimacy with Ivars, and to stabilize the chair), or again Inta and Ivars indoors laughing over a celebratory candle light meal,-or Inta and Ivars -a kind of mother and son sharing the bleak knowledge the film will end and their time will be over together—is she sad or is she 'acting' sad—is Ivars sad or relieved, or is he playing a kind of son who must move on from home—the camera rightly leaves us with all this, in evocative uncertainty and irresolution.

Because of course such moments of **interiority** are disrupted again and again- unpredictably (as in the fearful opening sequences) by volatility and chaos—and though these images of interior calm-- and there are more-- are like those of that visionary landscape—some kind of brief respite reflecting inner stability—they are nevertheless set against that outer recurring and brutalized reality-- of driven snow, metal crowbars, literal assault, of both the man and his offending camera, threatened rape, witches' curses, the hurling of acid, and also coy sexuality. And this cruel **exteriority**, both Nature's and Man's, painfully, and seemingly, predominantly, **prevails**.

All these fragments are skillfully edited (do not forget the mastery of illusion that the film is -it's a deliberate screen illusion created between film maker and editor Inese Klava—(and, by the way, the DVD of this film shows many cut and unused scenes on which I cannot dwell here—but there are some very touching and wretchedly disturbing scenes of yet other kinds—I think particularly of the visit to the tramps' home, where a Dickensian picture of hopeless and squalid degeneration is witnessed with compassion, or again, the ludicrous comedy of a young priest trying to offer prayers at a candle lit table, with the disruption of Inta's off-screen incessant ranting, threatening to topple him at his task) ---all this material is available in order to make a documentarian's vision of this strange year's journey—and this strange hour and a half for the viewer.

To what end -we may ask?

Ivars clearly, by his title, which focuses on himself--wants to document the experience of a film maker and his camera—he is not just there for Inta—but he needs her as 'the other' in this setting, and she knows it, and challenges him on it constantly. Because in one sense she **is** being **'used'** once again-- as she feels she always has been from her brief account of her life events, which may very likely be accounts adapted to fit her sense of immense persecution and abandonment. Inta has had it 'very bad'-- she wants Ivars and everyone to know it, and to be recompensed for it somehow—with trips to the shops, briquettes for warmth, medicines, snow shoveling—yet at the same time shouting out her endless offensive and abusive refusal of all help or money. She is wholly impossible to penetrate—virtually impossible to comfort, please, support or pity. She has, in her onscreen persona, what we term clinically a 'borderline personality', sensitive to the smallest of insults and then, at such moments, unable to think— only **react**. Her interior is forbidding --like her shut green door—for the most part a 'No Entry' zone and even when open, yielding more trouble, along with occasional respite. Hers is "fright and flight" behaviour….a common response to the profound unknown which Ivars represents. And which this fearful landscape also depicts. Yet she is also cunning, curious, and intrigued. She won't easily allow entry, but she wants to enter into something that might yield to **her**.

Ivars' exterior is gentle but dogged—he won't give up. But as Inta says—(and its hard to remember this moment, but it happens, as they sit outside quietly at that mosquito ravaged table again after a lovely shot of steady falling rain beating on the table surface)--what is it he wants?—what is his film for- or about?—what is the main idea?

It's an important question for us all perhaps. And it is edited IN.

Ivars is off-screen—Inta is full screen, eating cherries.

Ivars answers very quietly his film is a piece of art……in the widest sense, and…….. it's also about their relationship….Inta adds 'but you said it would be about forgiveness'—'that too'- Ivars admits……Inta declares it will be a bad film if its about their relationship which, she says, has deliberately engineered conflict— she asserts you cant make a film about such a relationship, and also about forgiveness—you will be disgraced--its like mixing salad with soup —you cant do it. Ivars quietly says each has ingredients in common…….and for once it's a piece of serious and moving dialogue—it enters **us**-amidst the anarchy we have had to take in. And it presages ending.

For actually do we not need forgiveness for inordinate wrong-doing—whether it be personal, intergenerational, societal, or international? Do these two areas not have common ingredients? The causing of suffering leads, we hope, to understanding, redress --- forgiveness—they are intimately related.

Does Ivars get it, or indeed create a film that implicitly makes-- out of a most unlikely relationship-- forgiveness its theme?

Do Ivars and also Inta learn to briefly trust, and to some extent forgive the wrong doings, the misunderstandings, the virulent clashes that each have differently been subject to –recorded permanently now on camera?

It's a lot to ask, perhaps. But could this documentary have been made **without** this element somewhere—or would it have ceased from the start as the opening sequence threatens?

In an analytic experience, a journey over many years, not just one year, like this one, (though I should say Ivars and Inta have remained in touch off-screen, as is often the documentary way) both patient and analyst make any number of painful attacks, small hurts, deep humiliations, just or unjust, deliberate, or wholly unintended, on the inner worlds of each—it is built into the process of entering from outside that other green door called our externally functioning selves, into the darkly lit interior where things are not what they seemed and where violence, hurt, bewilderment, as well as relief and insight may occur. This is particularly true in a heightened way in work with highly disturbed adolescents or children, as well as with the more psychotic adult patient. Analytic experiences not unlike those with Inta and Ivars do take place. And they too cannot continue without some mutual understanding. For both parties suffer, and each can only try to gradually learn from it. Each has to try to trust finally, and forgive finally, that 'documentary' (that record of all the internal illusory world they have generated together) that each has made, and will always carry inside them in some form. And of course we know that forgiveness is a necessary part of all human activity—it is not limited to the sphere under consideration here.

We also know that it does not always happen that forgiveness is recognized as present, or indeed recognized as necessary. Often when it is most in order- it fails us. (Think of the unforgiving Shylock…….at the culmination of Portia's speech on mercy--two figures-- equally at extreme odds- and finally punishment,

with a modicum of forgiveness, is meted out to the unyielding Shylock.) (Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice.)

When mutual forgiveness is there—the fragments of the analytic relationship, or indeed those of the documentary journey may cohere, to some extent, into a loving and accepting whole. Donald Winnicott calls this "The Capacity for Concern"; Melanie Klein calls it "The Depressive Position". It is an achievement analytically to attain this stage of internal functioning. And when the self doesn't reach that stage, matters remain in an un-integrated, unresolved and painful state, leaving both parties affected long term. The interior self damages the exterior self. It is not a small matter to be unable to understand, and then forgive, to allow the common ground of that 'salad' and that 'soup' to be found.

Perhaps it's a big question to raise —and not necessarily to be answered here and now--forgiveness as an element of both the documentary and the analytic journey, but I respectfully raise it, because I think the film, to its credit, quietly raises it also.

I leave you now to make your own approaches to our film.

Thank you.

HELEN TAYLOR ROBINSON ©

FUOCOAMMARE by Pietro Roberto Goisis

epff9 2017

FUOCOAMMARE
Pietro Roberto Goisis

When I saw *Fuocoammare* last year I was shocked.
I live in Italy and of course I know “something” about migrants and their tragedy.
But the movie was a surprise to me… day after day I couldn’t stop thinking about it…

I wonder why this movie is not being screened in every schools, in every place of work, in the community centres. In malls, airports, stations, in every "non-places" of our countries. There is a moment when the question "why it happened?" or the sentence "we have to stop them!" must go into the background, to allow everyone to watch what it’s happening.

It's a beautiful, painful, poetic and awesome film which succeeds in showing us the harrowing confrontation between life (hope for the future) and death (resignation, suffering and helplessness). Every thinking person, every psychoanalyst, should watch it.

Remember these numbers… over the last 20 years more than 400,000 people have landed on the coast of the island of Lampedusa… deep south in the Mediterranean. Of these at least 15,000 died at sea.

Gianfranco Rosi has spent a long time on the island for the first time, while processing required a whole year. The film shows the everyday life in a territory of only 20 square km. Apparently it is built like a documentary, but I think it actually contains a sophisticated screenplay, in which the days of a child, the activities of the island’s inhabitants, the work of the military and the dramatic events of the migrants are shown in parallel.

Being a movie, a docu-film, gaze is central. But gazing in this case is a way to take us by the hand and lead us into history, within human affairs.

There is no comment, no ideology, no theory. Only so many stories…the history. *Fuocoammare* was a war. They/we are still at war.

Beautiful pictures, eg the stunning glittering coats, like Star Wars warriors. It’s a film that speaks almost exclusively through images (its wonderful photography reminds us of the landscapes of Salgado and the portraits of Mc Curry). Still a gaze. The one of the child, aiming at a target, with a gun or a sling. He is at war too, the war of a child playing war and hunting birds.

Then the turning point arrives. One of Samuel’s eye doesn’t work well. His left eye is lazy and his brain is not stimulated, it’s not able to watch. If the left eye doesn’t work well, the right hemisphere doesn’t record. The right hemisphere is the one where reasoning occurs. But in this case the division between reason and emotion doesn’t matter ... what matters is what the brain tells us. In any case, Samuel must train the eye that works less... so it trains the brain, connects the two hemispheres. He has to see with the other eye. It's a wonderful metaphor!

Without any rhetoric, the director speaks to us through the power of his gaze, that of a man who didn’t just go to Lampedusa for shooting a few meters of film or digital bytes, but who has lived upon himself and intensely the experience of those who live day by dat the stories he tells us.

It is a psychoanalytic film because through the function of the gaze we reproduce within us the fundamental dimension of listening, without judgments, without preconceptions, “only” receiving datas first, and later thinking about them.

There are two strong stories in the movie as symbolic metaphors of the transformation process that everyone goes through, if able to look at things with the mind of a child, a "beginner". Samuel is shown at the beginning of the film as he builds slings to hunt birds, or while miming the act of shooting; in the end it seems like a latter-day Saint Francis talking with animals. Because of this change, it has happened that, for medical reasons, the child is temporarily prevented from looking with his right eye (the good one he used for taking his aim) and has to use and train his left eye (the almost-visually impaired one). The ability to "look with other eyes", to see it in full, without blindness or selective myopia, symbolically allows the young protagonist to operate an internal transformation within himself. To become really able to see ...

For me, the internal/external dilemma is a false dilemma. The internal/external reality is an artificial separation. We can stay well, our mind can work in a good way, only if the two worlds are integrated and not separated.

This the work of a psychoanalyst. This has been the work done by Gianfranco Rosi, the film director.

In May 2016, after a short and intense discussion after the movie screenshot, the Italian Psychoanalytic Society, in a perspective of "attention" to the migrants' situation, set up the European Psychoanalytic Workers' Group for Refugees (PER… that means "for"), with the aim of activating coordinated projects of clinical aid, psychoanalytic training and elaboration, enhancing the realities already in place throughout the country.

Recalling what Lampedusan physician says, "It is the duty of every person, who is a person, to help these people."

Imperfections of the Familiar: A Psychoanalytic Reflection on 'Perfetti Sconosciuti' (Perfect Strangers) by Kannan Navaratnem

Imperfections of the Familiar:
A Psychoanalytic Reflection on '*Perfetti Sconosciuti*'
(*Perfect Strangers*)

Kannan Navaratnem

I start with a brief synopsis of the film's story, but only after confessing to my dissatisfaction with the deliberatel y contrary title of this presentation. Given all that which startles us in the film, the suggestion that the film tells a bout imperfections of the most familiar people in our lives is an understatement. It does not adequately capture the essence of that to which we, as viewers, and the characters in the film, are exposed. Nevertheless, I will a ddress a few important points in this short psychoanalytic reading of *'Perfetti Sconosciuti*'.
A married couple – Eva, a psychotherapist, and Rocco, a plastic surgeon - invite their friends, two married cou ples and a recent divorcee to a dinner party at their home. The interior setting is a spacious and finely furnishe d flat that clearly conveys the dwelling of a comfortable middle class family (those amongst you who are more f amiliar with Italy's socio-cultural aspects of life could add more to this during our discussion). During this suppo sedly cosy late evening, they also watch the eclipse of the moon. We soon discover that the eclipse turns out t o be a symbolic event mirroring a dangerous possibility of a dark shadow being cast over the conviviality of the company and the brightness of their friendships. Soon, we also feel that the much anticipated but late arrival o f Peppe, disappointingly without his new girlfriend, also spells an omen for the evening. Similarly, the complex dynamics which emerge at the beginning of the film between the teenager Sofia and her parents, especially he r mother Eva give an edgy start to the film. A game is proposed as an entertaining accompaniment to the vario us courses of the meal. With some reluctance, they agree to put their personal mobile phones – their individual interior 'black boxes' - on the table and openly to share in the group all calls, incoming texts, photo and voice messages. These come thick and fast and ruin the evening.
Eventually, the exterior closeness and familiarity of the group, as well as the intimacy of the atmosphere which initially develops, shatter and disintegrate into distance and estrangement leading ultimately to the complete co llapse of relationships between the couples and the friendships between all. Or, do they?

Well, the creative writing team of co-writer Paola Mammini and director Paolo Genovese offers us a tantalising possibility of just such an outcome in this deceptively simple plot and I will refer to this later. In actuality, the co mplexities which emerge during the evening reveal unbearable and painful truths about the reality of the secret and parallel lives of all individuals. The story unravels rapidly with exposure of deceit, lust, passion, intrigue, b etrayal, devastation, distress, regret, rage, hurt, prejudice, loneliness and despair - though not necessarily in th at order. As viewers, we feel increasingly anxious, worried and stunned by all this but, do we also allow ourselv es to be deceived by the ***exterior*** presentations at the beginning? I would say they are full of some unsettling p ointers to the ***interior*** reality.
The film starts with our seeing a couple, Bianca and Cosimo, being playful and intimate with each other as they get ready to leave. Yet, during their car journey, do we not sense that something is amiss? We also witness th e difficult dynamics and painful process of separation between an anxious and controlling but insecure mother and her adolescent daughter. Sofia is in the full throes of exploring and experimenting with her sexuality and p otential sexual life. There is a painfully palpable atmosphere in which the margin between boundary setting and intrusiveness become blurred. However, do we not really feel that for the mother, Eva, this confrontation is lad en with anxiety, fear and guilt which stem from another interior source? In another scene, we see a family in th e exterior of an ordinary homely setting with a grandmother and children. The mother hurriedly sends off her ch ildren to bed before the parental couple, Carlotta and Lele, make their way to the dinner engagement. Then, w e see the father sitting on the toilet making a hasty but secret call on his mobile phone. Also, just as they are a bout to leave, the mother returns quickly to their bedroom to remove and put away her underwear. Do they not give us a clue to a hidden rift between them? How about that brief but anxiety provoking and taunting joke abo ut Bianca not being one of the gang? What do we make of the reference in the conversation between these frie nds about the affair of their friend Diego and text message that caused his family to break up? Are the congeni

ality and joviality which pervade the atmosphere just an exterior cover to the dark and disturbing possibilities w hich lie beneath?
The evening certainly flows well with wine, capers, olives, mascarpone sauce, fried zucchini flowers and gnocc hi but, I would suggest that we are also fed some other less appetising starters right from the beginning of the fi lm. One of these is the series of jokes which are made with the best intentions of humour and fun but which stri ke us with notes of anxiety.

I will not refer to all of these, but just to refresh your memories, the topics include surgery for breast augmentati on, the reference to Barbie and Ken – plastic with no balls, the computer guy by the name of Steve Jobs, the e xercise App on the mobile phone, the goodnight photos, a so-called five star rest home for the mother-in-law a nd the issue of seeing a therapist and not a prostitute. I will start my brief psychoanalytic reflection on 'Perfetti Sconosciuti' with this last point about jokes. It was Freud's argument that jokes gave us much pleasure by allo wing us to communicate, that is to say exteriorise, the aggressive, cynical thoughts and emotions we hold in ou r deepest unconscious. He pointed to the centrality of sexual aggression in suggesting that "*a tendentious joke calls for three people: in addition to the one who makes the joke, there must be a second who is taken as the o bject of the hostile or sexual aggressiveness, and a third in whom the joke's aim of producing pleasure is fulfille d*" (Freud, 1905).
Another closely related but a more pivotal element in the narrative structure of the film is secrets. Many in this film are oedipal secrets. Why do we keep secrets even, or especially, from our dearest and nearest? To protect them and to protect ourselves would only be one answer given by the film, but the story here imploringly asks us, the viewers, another question. Are we, in the end, really able to keep secrets from our loved ones? Once again, Freud observed, *"He that has eyes to see and ears to hear can convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his finger-tips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore*" (Freud, 1905).

In referring to secrets between couples, Freedman suggested that couples construct secrets in an attempt to draw lines of autonomy and create distance by withholding knowledge, fantasies, wishes, or behaviour (Freedman, 1998). Pincus and Dare, in their groundbreaking study of secrets in the family, emphasised that all marriages have secret contracts reflective of unconscious needs and desires (Pincus and Dare, 1968). But as the film shows the maintenance of secrets comes at a high price. As Ferenczi remarked, "*every secret that has to be kept is a burden*" (Ferenczi, 1949). At a previous film festival on '*Secrets*', I stressed that secrets which contain intense emotional charge and pose potentially serious danger to the order of the individual's psychic organisation, naturally have a precarious and threatening quality to them (Navaratnem, 2013). Cosimo's and Eva's affairs and Peppe's homosexuality are two of the many examples of such secrets in the film.

However, as Andrea Sabbadini told us on Thursday night during the opening of this festival, the forward slash i n the title of this film festival, '*Interiors/Exteriors'* refers to a separation as well as a connection between these t wo spatial aspects.
In that connection, we may usefully employ Winnicott's formulations of the true and false selves to make more sense of the dilemmas faced by all the characters in the film. According to him, while the 'False Self' defends t he 'True Self', the 'True Self' is nevertheless acknowledged "*as a potential and is allowed a secret life*" (Winnic ott, 1960). Ulanov, referred to another aspect of this divide by delineating the inner world as remote and unreal compared to the tangible world around us. She wondered if people often failed to see the connection between t heir psychic attitudes and their outer actions, because inner and outer aspects of their selves and their world ar e rent apart and alienated. She wrote that "*The estrangement of our inner lives and our outer participation in ou r society is fundamental because it applies to all. We all suffer to some degree from a sense that what goes on inside us is partitioned off from what goes on outside us. The people around us are often the first to suffer from the unacknowledged stranger within us*" (Ulanov, 1974). I think this last comment applies especially to those cl osest to us in our lives.
At the beginning of this presentation, I commented that in giving us an end to the film which stood contrary to the trajectory of the narrative line, the makers of '*Perfetti Sconosciuti*' presented a tantalising opportunity to imagine what would have happened to the couples and friends. ***If*** the 'Black Box' game had proceeded, the characters would have exposed and shared their private feelings, thoughts, fantasies, states of mind and actual acts - all of which were compartmentalised as secrets contained in their inner world. Such an outcome

would have fundamentally transformed and signified important turning points in their lives as well as their relationships with each other. Of course, we know that the characters did not embrace this possibility, as we don't often do in our lives. The opportunity passes and their lives, just as our lives, carry on as before. The defences are reinstated and the characters, and all of us, are reassured, falsely in fact, that all is well. The ***interior*** is protected and the ***exterior*** is maintained. We may say that it is the nature and function of human defences. At the end of the evening after all their guests are gone and when Eva asks why he did not want to play the game, Rocco remarks "*because we are breakable*".

In saying this, he is not only referring to the fragility of our characters and personalities but also, by implication, the precariousness of our relationships and our social structures of friendships.

As a psychoanalyst, I find there is so much to learn from this film and to fertilise the work in our consulting rooms. As Busch proposed, one way to conceptualize psychoanalysis is that, at any one moment, there are many strangers in the room. The patient is a stranger to many parts of himself. "*In a successful analysis, the patient continues to bring in new parts of himself that are strangers to the analyst. Inevitably, the analyst also finds himself discovering aspects to which he has been a stranger in the analysis*" (Busch, 2006).

For the record, I wanted to state that the scenes in which Sofia calls her father Rocco to ask for advice and guidance about her anxiety about having sex and his brief responses to her and, the final scene in which Peppe declares that "I'm the one who's the fag but you are the ones who came out" were my favourite one. I found them very poignant. However, you may have read in the Eidos magazine in your folders that, our chair, Rossella Valdre, has suggested "*The commercial success of 'Perfect Strangers' is not mostly attributable to the reflexions it stimulates, but rather to the 'human factor' which seduces and blinds the viewers*" (Valdré, 2017). I will leave that for you, the viewers, to ponder about alongside the many issues which I have not addressed in this short paper. Amongst others, these include Gender Politics, Homosexuality, the increasing centrality of modern technology in social communication and Italy's socio-cultural aspects of life, which is the exterior setting to this fascinating and intriguing possibility of the emergence of the interior.

Those of you, who may be avid fans of the London theatre, would know about the two popular plays currently running in the West End, 'The superlative beginning' and 'The end of hope'. Both deal with aspects of risks involved in exposure, intimacy and honesty in relationships. Perhaps, *'Perfetti Sconosciuti*' is part of a modern cultural trend to examine the vicissitudes of human tendency to conceal part of its true but frail nature: Our propensity for splitting and denial and the defences we employ against the resultant anxiety. The film vividly portrays all of these issues through the insidious anxiety and psychological tension which build up as the story unfolds.

Here, and for all this, we have to be thankful to director Paolo Genovese and co-writer Paola Mammini for providing us with such an engaging and entertaining multi-layered tragicomedy with depth and a lightness of touch.

Film

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Sigmund Freud, The Origins of Psychoanalysis and its Relevance to Modern Times by Romolo Petrini

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Alessandra Balloni explores the origins of psychoanalysis by interviewing four voices from the Società Psicoanalitica Italiana (SPI). She calls on an outsider, the philosopher Carlo Sini, to provide the historical background to the birth of psychoanalysis in the light of the social and cultural context of the times.
Among the video's merits, is to make you feel intense emotions: I still feel them after seeing it three times. My enthusiasm is for the sophisticated film clips, music, and commentary. In addition, the complex concepts and notions are treated with simplicity, highlighting the masterly direction.

Diverse points of view emerge, showing the different cultural and scientific relationships that Italian psychoanalysts share in their community.

For example Antonino Ferro, argues that the principle of the transformation of emotive contents through narration is the cornerstone of psychoanalytic treatment.
Cono Barnà asserts the importance of the hermeneutic process.
Tiziana Bastianini underlines the importance of creating links.
Anna Ferruta reflects on the fundamental elements of the setting.

The film underscores the idea of a dynamic scientific community dedicated to enriching research in the analytic field. This depends on the particular Institutional structure of the SPI in Italy, which has no equivalences in other countries.

When you think of it, a small country like Italy has eleven Psychoanalytic Centres! These are in Torino, Pavia, Milano, Genova, Venezia, Bologna, Firenze, Roma, Napoli and Palermo. Each local Centre has its Executive Board and Scientific Programme, but they all remain branches of the SPI.
As I was saying, this particular situation gives a sense of belonging to the Members who participate to the Institutional life of the Centre and its scientific activity. At the same time participating to the national scientific programme of the SPI. There is a good climate of cooperation, even when ideas and models tend to differ. This is a remedy against the tendency to split which has come about in other IPA Societies.

At this point I would like to make a brief excursus: Stephen Mitchell in "Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis"(1) asserts:

(Mitchell S.A.(1993). Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis, New York: Basic Books)

"psychoanalysts, are principally called upon to face the atemporal and universal dimension of the human experience that lies beneath the surface, rather than the superficial waves of cultural ch.ange and the latest scientific and social trends. For psychoanalysts it is important to believe there has only been one revolution, the Freudian one, and that all other research and studies have gradually contributed to the works of the founder. Many analysts identify themselves as direct descendants of Freud and are bound by this close affinity, partaking of his genius and authority."

I believe that a strong sense of belonging to a theoretical *corpus* and to its founder satisfies an enriching symbiotic need of its members; it gives validity and substance to the group and to the idea that sustains it; and in my opinion the members feel protected from hate and guilt.

The other work I would like to propose for comment is Joseph Sandler and Dreher's, What Do Psychoanalysts Want? (2) (Sandler J., Dreher A.U. (1996). What Do Psychoanalysts Want? London: Routledge.)

"Since the Second World War, psychoanalysis has witnessed the development of an incredible variety of new theoretical orientations. Groups of analysts have given rise to Ego-psychology, Self-psychology, object-relation theories, the Kleinian school and others. New formulas appear that differentiate from the initial aims of psychoanalysis. For instance, the elaboration of depression, the increased cohesion of the Self, the achievement of a major autonomy of the Ego, and the development of a capacity to 'worry about' the object,….."

As we can see, a distinct gap has emerged between these new orientations and the position described by Mitchell.

What Alessandra Balloni's video highlights is the interweaving between the dependence on the exegesis of Freud's thought, and the determination to break away from it. This can be seen in the elaboration of theories and models aimed at interpreting mutating social, cultural issues and pathologies, and the different philosophical views of contemporary society.

1. *Mitchell S.A.(1993). Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis, New York, Basic Books*
2. *Sandler J., Dreher A.U. (1996). What Do Psychoanalysts Want? London, Routledge*