Films of Hope

Elizabeth Cowie

Emeritus Professor of Film, University of Kent

Hope, the theme of the 11th European Psychoanalytic Film Festival, has been understood in many different ways by poets and writers, and by psychoanalysts and philosophers.

John Keats: 'To Hope' February 1815

> Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,
> Strive for her son to seize my careless heart;
> When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,
> Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart:
> Chase him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,
> And fright him as the morning frightens night!

Emily Dickinson:

> "Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all."

William Shakespeare:

> 'The miserable have no other medicine. But only hope: I have hope to live, and am prepared to die." *Measure for Measure*

Charles Dickens:

> It's always something, to know you've done the most you could. But, don't leave off hoping, or it's of no use doing anything. Hope, hope to the last." *Nicholas Nickleby*

Hope is always a future tense in relation to the imagined possible as an event or action that is longed for. To hope is thus not to the same as optimism about the future, for optimism implies an assessment of the likelihood of the event sought. Thus philosophers - and psychoanalysis - place desire as intrinsic to hope, in the wish for an action or event, or a person, in a future time but where the fulfilment of the wish is uncertain and unpredictable, or even unlikely, as in the phrase 'Hope against hope'. Indeed the uncertainty of hope is also true for the myth of Pandora's box itself, for it has multiple Greek and later versions and interpretations. It was not a box, of course, but a *pithos*, a large pottery jar and according to Hesiod, when Prometheus stole fire from heaven, Zeus, the king of the gods, took vengeance by presenting Pandora to Prometheus' brother Epimetheus as his wife. Pandora opened a jar left in her care containing sickness, death and many

other unspecified evils which were then released into the world. Though she hastened to close the container, only one thing was left behind – *Elpis*, in Greek - that has usually been translated as Hope, though it could also have the pessimistic meaning of 'deceptive expectation'.[1] Thus we have the phrase 'to open a Pandora's box', that gives rise to unforeseen problems - 'a can of worms'! It is also argued that hope was simply one of the evils in the jar, the false kind of hope, and was no good for humanity, since, later in the poem, Hesiod writes that hope is empty and no good), and that it makes humanity lazy by taking away their industriousness, making them prone to evil.[2]

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, in *Human, All Too Human*, also saw hope as a negative emotion, arguing that 'Zeus did not want man to throw his life away, no matter how much the other evils might torment him, but rather to go on letting himself be tormented anew. To that end, he gives man hope. In truth, it is the most evil of evils because it prolongs man's torment.'[3] While for Lacanian psychoanalysts, as Véronique Voruz declares that 'the end of analysis was the end of hope, it is not a bad thing', the end of the hoping for the lost object of desire, the *objet a*, that sustains the subject in her neurosis.[4] Esthela Solano-Suárez writes that, 'The identification with the symptom at the end of analysis comes down to accepting the enjoyment [jouis] that underlies the "I am" [suis], purifying the sinthome. We can say that this identification opens onto the horizon of the possible, beyond hope.' [5]

What kind of hope, then, is involved in watching the films selected for the 11th European Psychoanalytic Film Festival in the context of its theme of Hope? For it is clear that the hope is not only - if at all - in the films and their characters themselves. Rather it is as well the hope in the thoughts - and feelings - that arise in us as viewers which leads us to hope for the characters, both in relation to what they themselves may express as their hopes, and in relation to what the filmic action involving the characters prompts us as spectators to hope - that is desire - for them and, through that emotional engagement we call identification, for ourselves. In the following I explore the hoping that is engaged in two films being shown at the Festival, *Vitalina Varela,* and *Ali and Ava.*

Vitalina Varela (Portugal 2019), directed by Pedro Costa, is a reconstruction of the story of the central figure -Vitalina, playing herself – travelling to Lisbon to find her husband who had abandoned her many years before when he left the Cape Verde Islands. But he has died and just been buried. Her travel to Lisbon was an act of hope - that she could finally learn from her husband why he left them, abandoning her, their children and the house they built together and perhaps also, hoping for a reconciliation with him. Such hope is then dashed when she learns of his death and that she is too late for his funeral and burial. The film has three elements, Vitalina's

story, the story of male emigrants to Lisbon and their poverty and exploitation, but also the loss of faith - and failure of Catholicism. It is Vitalina, however, who is the central focus as the film hauntingly visualises her sorrow and loneliness as she takes over her husband's house, comes to know his friends, and seeks solace in religion through the local priest who has abandoned the church - the only fictional element. Her husband remains an enigma - as Costa says, 'was her husband a gangster, drug dealer, a decent working man? Did someone kill him?' Costa, however, did not want the film to be about her husband but about Vitalina and what he was, and was not, for her. The film takes us on a journey that isn't self-evident, and which may engage and challenge us emotionally in equal measure.

Daniel Kasman suggests that, 'Together, Costa and his collaborators work to produce films that hauntingly transform the real lives and stories of Cape Verde immigrants living in Lisbon's slums into a monumental, otherworldly cinema of ghosts, dreams, fear, pain, and longing.' [6] Costa's films are influenced by a wide range of documentary and fictional filmmakers such as the films of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Ingmar Bergman – perhaps especially *Persona* – and he references many in his interviews. Asked about the isolation of Vitalina, he comments that 'With women we're more able to sense the materiality of a certain clausura. Maybe because with men there is always a slightly pathetic drama that shows, a cowardice which is rare with women. Just think of all the Naruses, Dreyer, *Europe '51* [1952, Roberto Rossellini], even *7 Women* [1966, John Ford]'. [7] It is the films of Danish director Carl Theodor Dreyer, and in particular his film *Gertrud* (1964) that I want to draw upon here to consider the desire in hope and its ending. For not only can we recognise in Costa's film the long take, fixed camera position, and the physical distancing of characters that are characteristic of Dreyer's films, but also the focus of both directors on women.

Costa speaks of Vitalina's wish to re-enact her time of mourning for her husband some ten years earlier, suggesting that the filming is a way that Vitalina can now, ten years later, 'properly' say goodbye to her husband, in a process of mourning not fully achieved when he died; it is a mourning for the man he was for her for more than twenty years, as her husband and father of their children. The film performs this mourning cinematically, through long takes and ghostly semi-lit spaces for most scenes, rather than more conventionally through dialogue in Vitalina's interaction with others. We may listen as analysts to the unsaid in the actions and words of Vitalina, while the cinematography and *mise-en-scène* effect a haunting sadness that is also Vitalina's, and perhaps becomes ours. At the same time, we hope for her, hope that she is reconciled to her loss of her husband, in the past and in the present. This is Vitalina's hope. At the same time there is also an end of hope, in the sense of the end of Vitalina's symptom, of her

inability to process her desertion by her husband that led her to journey to Lisbon to find him after many years. It is this process of an ending of hope and its enjoyment in the symptom, replaced by what Lacan called the 'sinthome', in a knotting of the real, the imaginary and the symbolic, that I suggest arises in the film's final shots.

It is such an ending of hope that is enacted in *Gertrud,* Dreyer's last film, and which he felt was one of his most important works. It centres on a woman's desire for love that remains unfulfilled, which is explored in relation to masculine desire through the relation of its three male characters to Gertrud.[8] The film's plot, its central enigma in Roland Barthes' sense[9] - both for the other characters and for the spectator - is the love that its protagonist, Gertrud, seeks from each of the men, and it is in the filmic narration of her quest that the symptom/sinthome appears. *Gertrud* was for Dreyer a highly personal project, demonstrated both by his very different scripting of Gertrud's story, and in his film form that, pared down and simple but at the same time foregrounded, distancing the spectator to produce a sense of separation, while also experienced as portending. The very long takes result in a sense of elongation or extension to scenes unrelieved by shot changes or point-of view 'insights'; and the similarity of scenes organised around dialogue exchanges – with characters moving between chairs, sofas, chair-arms, benches, etc. as they talk to each other but rarely gaze at one another or are shown exchanging looks – produces an awareness of form as such. It is a mode of 'gapping', a perceived incompleteness of visual meaning. It is through the film's form that Dreyer enables the film's 'secret magic' that Milne writes of, [10] while for Jean-Luc Godard the film was 'equal, in madness and beauty, to the last works of Beethoven'. [11]

The film is based on the play *Gertrud* by the Swedish writer, Hjalmar Söderberg, set in the early 20th century, about his unhappy affair with the opera singer Maria von Platen, in which he stages the question that baffled Freud: *What does woman want?* Dreyer, however, has reversed the narrative perspective of Soderberg's play from that of the men and their loss of Gertrud, to that of Gertrud and her gospel of love, and in doing so poses the problem of the question itself, namely - as Lacan identifies it - that there is no sexual relation. Dryer retains the three main characters from the play, as well as using scenes and dialogue, but he places the spectator very differently: narratively by centring Gertrud, and by changing the play's story arc in the epilogue he added. And he changes the play filmically, by his highly formal and stylised filming and *mise en scène*.

Gertrud is a former singer, now married to an ambitious politician, Gustav Kanning, but this marriage has become (or always was) without love on her part, though not without sexual passion. Gertrud instead finds love with a young composer, Erland Jansson. He is revealed,

however, to be unworthy of her by Gabriel Lidman, her former lover and a celebrated poet returned home to receive the honours of his country and, perhaps, to persuade Gertrud to return to him. Gertrud had left Lidman when she discovered that he saw her love for him as a distraction from his work and hence as secondary to his more serious project as a poet. Each man Gertrud has loved fails her by showing that she is not sufficient to his desire. Kanning says, 'But Gertrud, dear, love can't fill a man's life. It would be ridiculous, for a man'; while Lidman had earlier written alongside his sketch of her profiled face, 'woman's love and man's work – enemies from the start'; and for Erland she is 'too proud', in refusing to share him with other women. Gertrud, for these men, is the *objet a* cause of their desire, and their symptom, which is not love. Thus Gertrud also fails each of them, her jouissance being elsewhere in her desire to be loved unconditionally. As Erland performs his composition 'Serenade' on piano, Gertrud sings the words: 'The darkness has formed a pearl, The night has borne a dream. Hidden, it will grow inside me, Blindingly white and tender.' The scene is the prelude to their love-making, while the dream that is growing echoes Freud's account of the formation of the symptom as like that of a pearl.[12] Here, as viewers, our hope is raised that now she has found her true love, but which very shortly later is dashed.

In the play Gertrud's pursuit of love leads her to loneliness, when she leaves all three men, each of whom has failed to meet her ideal of love. Dreyer, in contrast, gives her a future, for she chooses to go to Paris with her friend Axel Nygren - a character not in the play - to study dreams and psychoanalysis. Gertrud identifies as a woman of free will, consciously choosing to forsake those men's form of love, and thereby she follows Lacan's demand that one should not give up on one's desire, 'given that desire is understood here .... as the metonymy of our being'.[13] Moreover what Gertrud declares to each of her three lovers is not simply 'not you', but more importantly, it is an affirmation of 'love' and thus a declaration of 'not that': not that kind of love each offered her, namely of woman-as-symptom. This is the 'but not that' which Lacan introduced[14], and which Harari argues is the 'beginning of an escape from the subjection to the neurotic symptom'[15] The love that Gertrud sought was on the one hand a love that each man was not capable of because, as symptom, she was 'not all' for them in their lives; on the other hand their lives were 'not all' without her. For Gertrud, there is an 'all of love' in loving that she demands, and it is here that we can see her symptom-as-sinthome in the repetition of her demand, while in leaving each of the men she acts out the impossibility of being for them their symptom.

Dreyer also added an epilogue - drawing on comments Söderberg had later made[16] - in which we see the now elderly Gertrud many years later meeting for a last time with her old friend Axel. Dreyer's central concern in introducing the epilogue was to ensure sympathy for Gertrud at

the film's closure, rather than ending with her running away to Paris, so that 'the public had the satisfaction to see this woman didn't break down and she didn't regret. She had chosen solitude and she accepted it'.[17] Dreyer replaces loneliness with solitude, removing the sense of absolute tragedy in Söderberg's play. By giving her a life after her lovers – namely her work in Paris – Dreyer makes Gertrud a woman of her own choices and not a woman who sacrifices herself to a fatalistic ideal of a reciprocated love. Here Tom Milne now sees beneath 'its naturalistic surface, its near-Ibsen conflicts, that it is Dreyer's most mysterious and personal, most supernatural film, glowing with a more secret magic than any previous work' and 'the whole film echoes like counterpoint for two voices – "I love you" and "Come with me" – which never quite coincide'.[18] Rejecting the story and what he calls its 'almost dogged literalness' of treatment, another meaning is obtained whereby Milne comes to find a position, a place of address, of the impossibility of the two discourses: of the masculine and the feminine. Love, for Lacan, is similarly not straightforward thus, in his seminar on anxiety, he declares that, "What we give in love is essentially what we haven't got and when this not having comes back at us there is most certainly regression and at the same time a revelation of the way in which we have left him wanting, so as to represent this lack".[19] Instead, in *Encore,* Lacan points to love as the illusion that the sexual relation 'stops not being written, and thus 'doesn't stop being written'.[20] It is this illusion that *Gertrud* addresses.

In the epilogue, Axel visits Gertrud on the occasion of her birthday, bringing her a copy of his new book, and she returns to him the letters he had sent her, for she does not want strangers to read their 'warm and good words spoken from your heart'. Axel then burns these in the fire - a corresponding act of closure. He asks her if she has ever written poetry, in reply Gertrud takes from her desk and reads her short poem written at the age of sixteen which she calls her 'gospel of love':

> Just look at me. Am I beautiful?
> No, but I have loved
> Just look at me. Am I young?
> No, but I have loved
> Just look at me. Do I live?
> No, but I have loved.

And with quiet satisfaction she tells Axel that she has asked the words '*Amor Omnia*' – love is everything – to be on her gravestone. It is here that Gertrud's identification with her symptom-sinthome appears, namely in the identification realised in Gertrud's avowal in her poem whereby she asserts her being and her agency without reference to the other of her loving, and thus

independently of either the other's reciprocation or its absence. The anticipatory grammar of the poem written as a young girl, in which being beautiful is denied while having loved is claimed, implies a future time that is identified with, in which 'being beautiful' - object of desire/symptom for men - is denied. Instead she affirms herself as 'having loved', in an identification that secures her consistency as an individual, her individuation. Her identification with the sinthome is a naming of her Real, individualising the lack in the symbolic as other than The-Name-of-The-Father, and thereby assuming the real lack in the Other.[21]

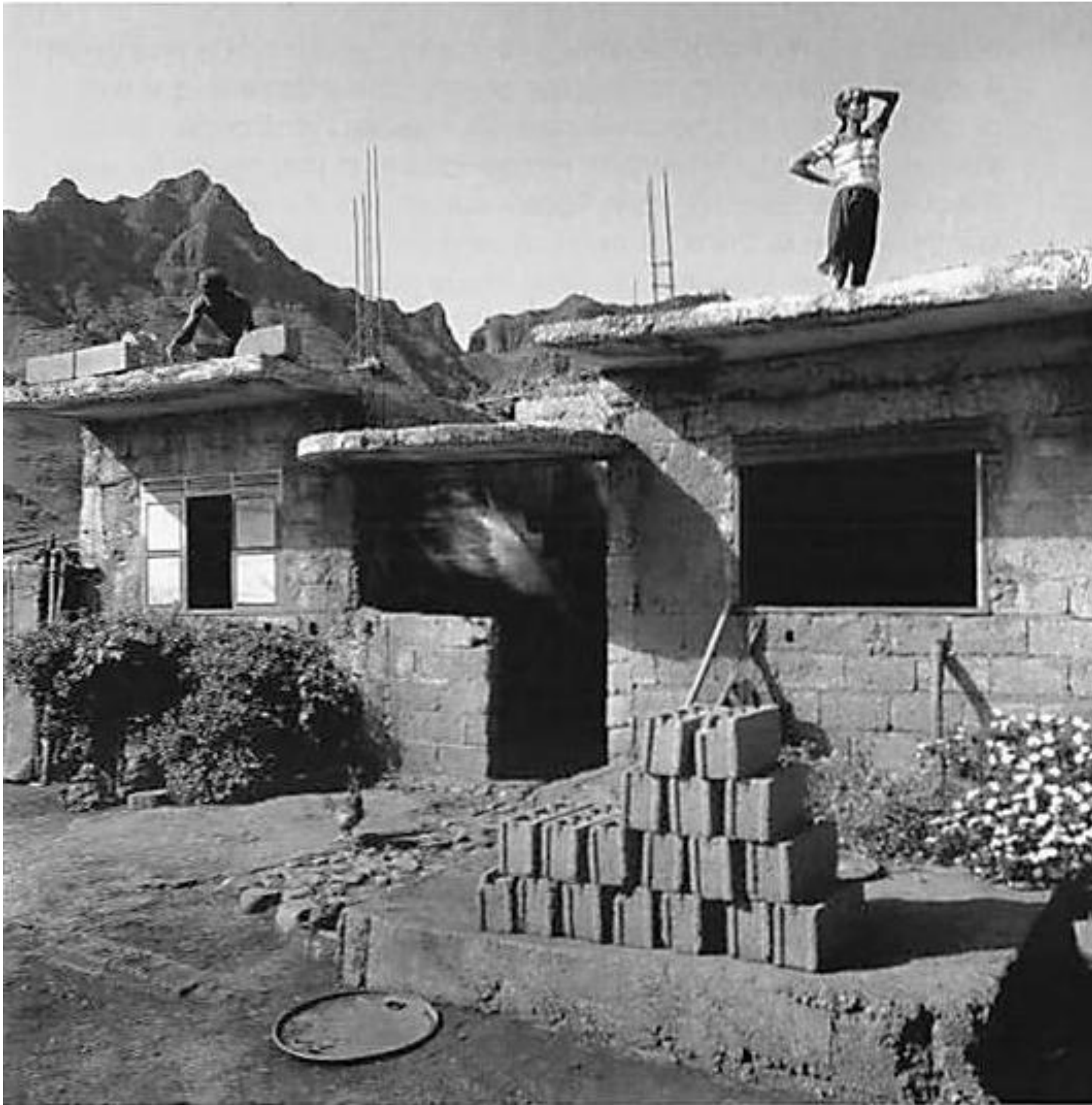
In the epilogue Dreyer relents on his earlier highly formal style, with an intimacy absent from earlier scenes with her husband and lovers, as Gertrud joins Axel on the sofa and reads to him in a single shot some five minutes long. They are initially framed in a medium-close two-shot, with the fire burning brightly, seen in the background between them, while they look directly at each other as they talk. Gertrud, answering Axel, affirms that she regrets nothing, and declares 'I suffered much and often made mistakes, but I have loved.' The shot ends as they each rise from the sofa and walk to the door, and Gertrud describes how she has imagined Axel in the future visiting her grave and picking the anemones growing on it, and she tells him 'Take it as a word of love that was thought, but never spoken'. She says this in closure, for she now asks him to go, 'otherwise we'll end up by running off to Paris', and the shot ends as they say goodbye, with Gertrud in medium-shot, standing by the open door that Axel has just exited, watching him leave. There follows the only sequence of point-of-view shots exchanged in the film with four reverse-field shots, firstly of Axel in long-shot walking away, then turning to wave goodbye, secondly of Gertrud as she waves back to Axel seen from her vantage point, but now in medium shot, thus we do not see her from Axel's position. The third and fourth shots repeat the first two, as Axel picks up his hat and coat then looks back and again waves to Gertrud, then the film cuts to Gertrud as in shot 3, who also waves and then slowly closes the door. The sound of church bells ringing and the music that were heard at the beginning of the epilogue are now heard again as the film ends.

Dreyer's shot composition as well as the absence of point-of-view shots and shot/reverse-shot editing earlier in the film, can be understood as figuring Gertrud as 'caught' by the gaze/desire of the three men who cannot love her as she desires. Indeed it is this which is directly alluded to in the painting Dreyer positioned behind Gertrud at the reception for Lidman, of a naked woman pursued by hounds, which startles and distresses her, as well as the mirror Gabriel gave her so that she might see how beautiful she is. In filming Gertrud and Axel's leave-taking through these POV shots, however, Dreyer is visually presenting an epiphany, of Gertrud now 'free' of such a male gaze. Dreyer suspends narrative, storytelling, in this sequence while the closed door beyond which is Gertrud is both a closure and a holding fast to being, in herself,

unburdened from being for another, unburdened from hope as symptom.

It is such a resolution, I suggest, that *Vitalina Varela*, too, achieves, for what has been filmed is not Vitalina's mourning but her melancholy - her symptom - in Freud's terms - of having internalised the lost love object, her husband and her unresolved feelings towards him. Costa's film style has figured for us the closed world of her grief, both in his filming and in the brief and awkward encounters she has with the other immigrants, her husband's male friends. This reaches its apogee and its transformation in the scene where Vitalina struggles to nail down the roof of her husband's house where she now lives in, and which rain and storm have torn open. But the hopelessness of her struggle is transformed into hopefulness as her neighbours - and husband's friends - come to help her. Hope arises firstly, and very practically, when her late husband's friends help her repair the roof of his house that she now occupies, More importantly, as Vitalina battles with the wind as she stands on the roof, she stops and looks out into the distance with her hand to her head. Costa comments that 'I thought we'd be in a documentary situation, so we would keep shooting and, in the end, we'd select the best moments from all the material … the shot with this gesture. I thought, 'she's seeing something'. Costa expected to end the film with 'those sad men' helping rebuild her roof, but instead, seeing this shot he, 'imagined a girl on a roof in Cape Verde. I thought it could be a sort of counter-shot, with matching wind, of a young girl watching Vitalina from across the ocean….So I guess I also began feeling that we couldn't let Vitalina remain closed in that house for ever. It would have been too complacent and stupid.' [22]So the crew and Vitalina went back to Cape Verde, and shot 'the actual house that Vitalina and Joaquim were building, the boy working on the roof in the last shot is Vitalina's son'. And the film ends in glorious sunshine, in the gesture of looking out, of hope for that something to come, it suggests her new present in Lisbon is also a hopeful new start. And indeed it was, for on a chance meeting with the director Costa, she became an actor in his film *Horse Money*.

The intense cinematic involvement that Costa's editing and cinematography creates for the viewer in following Vitalina's journey of mourning has nevertheless not offered the possibility of hope, thereby challenging our empathy, our ability to feel for her as if for ourselves the hopelessness of Vitalina's melancholy, so that the final shots in Cape Verde are an epiphany, offering a new and optimistic understanding. Costa, in these shots, brings Vitalina, as Gertrud had, to relinquish the hope that is a demand to the other: 'love me, stay with me',



Ali and Ava

Clio Barnard's film presents a different hoping. She comments,

> "It started with the characters of Ali and Ava, and a question," Barnard told *Variety*. "What would happen if you took melodrama as a genre and applied it to a social-realist version of Bradford that's based on real people? It's an opportunity to think about what it means to be part of a community. There's a lot of kindness, generosity and support in Bradford and I

wanted to see that writ large on the big screen." [23]

The film is a love story, for which Barnard based her two characters, Ali and Ava, on two people she got to know while making *The Arbor,* landlord Moey Hassan, then later, making "The Selfish Giant," she met Rio, a mother and teaching assistant at a Bradford school. Collaborating with Bradford-based writer Kamal Kaan as script consultant, Barnard started to shape a story around the kind of people Hassan and Rio are, yet not their own stories. The Bradford we see in *Ali and Ava* is working-class, and the issues of racism are central, but Barnard's focus is on hopefulness in relation to 'left behind Bradford'.[24] She has described her film as the love story of two people who are "a catalyst for change in each other's lives" and, I suggest, for others in the film. It is undoubtedly a 'feel good' film, on a level with Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life* (1945) but with gritty realism! As one reviewer observes, however, 'Despite *Ali & Ava* proving a heart-warmingly funny and rich love story, its strength truly lies in the characters' melancholic confrontation with their underlying pain.' [25]

For Ali and his wife Runa the pain is the loss of the baby she was carrying, symbolised in the rocking chair that Ali repaired for the nursery in readiness for their baby, and that later he sits on in his basement as he learns to sing a Dylan song (the kind of songs Ava likes) and play the ukelele. And it is a loss that may have precipitated Ali losing Runa, as she turns to education and new friends at university, leaving behind Ali the DJ and his music and dancing. Yet Ali, by trying to live with Runa as 'flat mates', and by keeping the truth from his extended family, is unable to mourn his loss. For Ava, the unsaid in her family of her husband's abuse of both her, and her daughter Michelle - Callum's half-sister - but of which Callum remains ignorant. It is a legacy of silence that bears down on Ava as a trauma, as something not fully worked through when she took the children and left him and rebuilt her life, gaining degrees and a job she loves. Callum's ignorance of his father's brutality enables Callum hero-worship him, represented by the boots of his that he keeps in his room, but which at the same time figure Ava's abuse by her husband for they are the boots that his father always wore to physically assault his wife, and later his daughter. In sustaining the lie Ava perhaps also sustains within herself her own 'failure', holding her back from new relationships, for it is after she tells Ali of the abuse that they first make love. In pursuing their relationship together, Ali and Ava turn away from melancholy, enabling mourning, enabling us as spectators to hope for them a future life together. But, as in all good melodramas, Barnard introduces a series of obstacles to their happiness, for Callum's adoption of his Dad's racism, then fuels his hostility to Ava's growing closeness to Ali, while Ava later discovers that Ali still lives with his wife Runa, and believes he has been lying to her, ending their relationship. But Ali has finally accepted his marriage is ended, as we see Runa packing and leaving by taxi,

after a warm hug. Then Callum, learning of his Dad's abuse from his sister, returns to the house and tells Ava he has thrown away his Dad's boots, and they are reconciled. The penultimate scene of Ava in the school playground fulfils an earlier hope the film has given rise to, when we see Sofia, the young Slovakian schoolgirl Ava has been helping, at last having the courage to get down on her own from the climbing frame, as Ava watches with delight, then looks up at the sky - delaying what we may also hope for, namely Ava and Ali's reconciliation. For the film then cuts to Ali dancing to on the roof of his car with techno music playing, as in the first shot of the film, and he screams; next we see then Ava looking up at the sky, as if perhaps hearing him, but of course that is impossible as it is in daylight, by the juxtaposition the film suggests that she might be thinking of him, as the next shots - the moon in the Bradford night sky, and then of Ali as Ava joins him, smiling.

The hopefulness that the film engages us in is not the that of the symptom, rather it is the idea of hope articulated by Ernst Bloch: 'It is a question of learning hope. Its work does not renounce, it is in love with success rather than failure…..The emotion of hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them'.[26] It is a hopefulness that the film creates for the spectator, of the capacity for people to change, and to feel for others on the basis of humanity, not race or ethnicity. Central to this is the role of music and dancing, which the film opens with, firstly with Ali dancing on his car roof in the misty night to music - repeated later in film when Runa leaves him, and at the film's end. Secondly, in the morning with Ava, Callum holding his new-born baby, and Ava's granddaughter as they all dance on the sofa to trance music on a tv keep fit programme before going off to work and school. We learn directly of Ali's loss as he meets his wife at breakfast and she reiterates that 'things have changed', while Ava on a bus to work watches, perhaps wistfully, a young couple in love. Subsequently Ava and Ali's developing relationship is figured through music and dance as each comes to know and love the other's favourite music. It is song that Barnard uses to reference loss, desire and hope when Ava sings 'Grace',[27] about Joseph Mary Plunkett and the artist Grace Gifford who were married in the chapel of Kilmainham Gaol just hours before he was executed by a firing squad in 1916. The desire for an Ireland free from English domination, love for Grace and the hope that it will be known beyond his death are all expressed in the song. It is through song and music that the film suggests community beyond racism, seen and heard vividly when Ali gives Ava a lift to her home on the Holm Wood estate the kids start stoning his car, but Ali and Ava's remonstrations are ignored until Ali turns up his car music playing MC Woods - a local boy who grew up on the estate - and the hostility is suddenly transformed into a joyfully riotous scene as the children and Ava join Ali dancing and singing along with MC rapping, seen in a series of short cuts. The

film's shifts of pace and tone here and throughout the film are striking, alternately creating tension, or uplifting, in relation to loss and, ultimately, to hope.

[1.] Hesiod, 'Works and Days', p. 90, in *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica* with an English Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, Cambridge, MA.,Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1914. Online version at the Perseus Digital Library. With thanks to the Wikipedia entry https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandora%27s_box#cite_note-hesiod-4. Downloaded 28/9/2022.

[2.] See Jenifer Neils, 'The Girl in the Pithos: Hesiod's Elpis, in *Periklean Athens and its Legacy. Problems and Perspectives*, eds. J. M. Barringer and J. M. Hurwit (Austin: University of Texas Press), 2005, pp. 40–41 especially.

[3.] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, *A Book for Free Spirits*, Section Two, 'On the History of Moral Feelings', para 71'Hope, Cambridge University Press, 1986. Nietzsche writes, 'Pandora brought the jar with the evils and opened it. It was the gods' gift to man, on the outside a beautiful, enticing gift, called the 'lucky jar.' Then all the evils, those lively, winged beings, flew out of it. Since that time, they roam around and do harm to men by day and night. One single evil had not yet slipped out of the jar. As Zeus had wished, Pandora slammed the top down and it remained inside. So now man has the lucky jar in his house forever and thinks the world of the treasure. It is at his service; he reaches for it when he fancies it. For he does not know that the jar which Pandora brought was the jar of evils, and he takes the remaining evil for the greatest worldly good—it is hope, for Zeus did not want man to throw his life away, no matter how much the other evils might torment him, but rather to go on letting himself be tormented anew. To that end, he gives man hope. In truth, it is the most evil of evils because it prolongs man's torment.'

[4.] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsC4ELFmQDk. Downloaded 19/9/2022.

[5.] Esthela Solano-Suárez, 'Identification with the Symptom at the End of Analysis', in *The Later Lacan, An Introduction*, eds Veronque Voruz and Wolf Bogdan, State University of New York Press, Albany, pp. 95-106.

[6.] 'Interview with Pedro Costa', https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/cinema-must-be-a-ritual-pedro-costa-discusses-vitalina-varela, accessed 28/9/2022. Costa's earlier film, *Horse Money* is also set in the area of Cape Verde immigrants in Lisbon.

[7.] Ibid, 'Interview with Pedro Costa'.

[8.] My discussion here develops my earlier analyses of *Gertrud* in Elizabeth Cowie, *Representing the Woman* (Macmillan, London and University of Minnesota, 1997, pp.248-260), and in my essay 'The Certainties of Difference' in *Femininity and Psychoanalysis: Cinema, Culture, Theory*, eds. Agnieszka Piotrowska and Ben Tyer (London, Routledge, 2019, pp 8-36).

[9.] In *S/Z* Barthes terms the 'hermeneutic code' the series of enigmas that are posed by the narrative, of questions whose answers are suspended, until a final disclosure.(Roland Barthes, *S/Z (*1975, John Wiley & Sons, pp.18-19.)

[10.] Tom Milne writes that ‘the film is about a rather tiresome woman mid-way between an Ibsen bluestocking and a Strindberg shrew whose behaviour seems almost like an advertisement for women’s rights’. In *The Cinema of Carl Dreyer*, London, Tantivy, 1971, p. 168.

[11.] Godard, defending the film, cited by Jonathan Rosenbaum, who comments that ‘one wonders whether he might have been partly thinking of the question and answer written by Beethoven as an epigraph to the finale of the last quartet (the corresponding musical passage figures centrally in 2 Ou 3 Choses que je sais d’elle):“Muss es sein? Es muss sein!” (Must it be? It must be!). in *Placing Movies: The Practice of Film Criticism*, Los Angeles, University of California, 1995, pp. 114-115.

[12.] Sigmund Freud, S.E.VII, 1905, p 83.

[13.] Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, trans Denis Porter. London, Routledge, 1992, p. 321.

[14.] Jacques Lacan, *The Sinthome: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X,* trans. A.R. Price, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2016, p. 6.

[15.] Robert Harari, *How James Joyce Made His Name: A Reading of the Final Lacan*, New York, The Other Press, 2002, p. 32.

[16.] Cited by Rosenbaum, *op cit*, p.111.

[17.] Carl Theodor Dreyer, ‘My Way of Working Is In Relation to the Future’ ,in *Film Comment* no 4, 1966, p.36.

[18.] Milne, op cit, pp. l70-l71

[19.] Jacques Lacan, *Anxiety: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X*, trans. A.R.Price, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2014, p.141.

[20.] Jacques Lacan, *Encore: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XX: On Femininity, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-3,* trans. Bruce Fink, , New York, Norton,1999*,* p.144.

[21.] As described by Lorenzo Chiesa, in *Subjectivity and Otherness*, Cambridge, MA, MIT, 2007, p. 188.

[22.] *op it*, Interview with Pedro Costa, https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/cinema-must-be-a-ritual-pedro-costa-discusses-vitalina-varela, accessed 28/9/2022.

[23.] Naman Ramachandran writing in *Variety,* https://variety.com/2021/film/global/cannes-directors-fortnight-ali-ava-first-clip-1234992683/ Downloaded 28/9/2022

[24.] Bradford, in the West Riding of Yorkshire has some of the most deprived communities in Britain, labelled in recent British politics as one of the ‘left behind’ areas in England.

[25.] Jared Mobarak review for *The Film Stage*. https://thefilmstage.com/tiff-review- ali-and-ava/ downloaded 26/9/2022.

---

[26] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope,* vol. 1, 'Introduction', Cambridge, Mass, MIT, p.3.

[27] Written in 1985 by Frank and Seán O'Meara, sung by Ava, it references her Irish roots - her father refused to talk to her after she married an Englishman.