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How does the photographic image play a pivotal role in the recollection of others and what impact does this have on the memories and desires that define our identity and future.

*Film Title – **The Man with a Photograph***

By

1807444

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of MA in *Film Studies*

I certify that I have acknowledged any assistance or use of the work of others in my dissertation for the MA in *Film Studies*.

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A critical commentary on the film production '*The Man with a Photograph*'.

Introduction - How does the photographic image play a pivotal role in the recollection of others and what impact does this have on the memories and desires that define our identity and future.

In this essay I aim to investigate the concept of childhood remembrance and the memories that are passed down by family members, recollected through the photograph image. This enquiry will explore the manner in which photographs evoke memories of both exuberant and dejected events, circumstances that along with our direct experiences help to create all of our individual identities. An examination into our desires to experience not only the new, but what inspired our relatives in a past life will consider how our dreams are directing our futures. Investigations will discuss the thoughts of the Philosopher Roland Barthes, alongside the psychoanalytical theories of Jacques Lacan to understand how these memories are formed and identities created. This background analysis will be compared and contrasted to contemporary authors and historians, Annette Kuhn and Alison Landsberg's writings on memory and the image to understand why we relate to photographic images in particular ways with this investigation forming the context for my practical work.

My work as a commercial photographer and lecturer has been inspired by the photographic image and the use of analogue film for almost forty years, the physicality and purpose of the medium fascinating me through my career, now using the materials and processes alongside my digital workflow. The organic form brings with it a sense of the unknown, elements out of the

individual's control and desires to structure chemical balances much like an apothecary, creating an understanding of how light travels and how this can be captured. This project will not only discuss the use and aesthetic of the photograph, but also realise the practical outcomes informed by this essay using this analogue medium to unify context and practice.

My decision to create this project using these methods is by no means the most conventional in today's reimagined digital stage, a place and time where film has been left for the use of auteurs, established passionate film makers who's ability to finance multi-million pound projects lie in the track record of their numerous films over previous decades. The process of making is transparent and often left to videographers choosing to experiment alongside their digital projects and artists who see the experimental value of the medium. This particular project, captured using Super8 cine film is a natural first step into celluloid and it is difficult to comprehend the size of each frame within the film, not at all realised until the exposed footage arrives from the processing laboratory and viewed for the first time, literally eight millimetres wide.

The artist, Tacita Dean creates bodies of work using this exciting material and discusses how she uses the form to investigate the narrative of time in her interview at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in Melbourne. Dean considers *'the capturing of the unknown and celebrating the blindness to what is being created, the beauty in the mistake and elements that are flawed'*¹.

¹ Tacita Dean, on Film. Interview at ACCA 2013.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dOEXl_3lzI
(Accessed 18/06/19)

Her work enquires into the manner in which we remember and reproduce thoughts whilst viewing her work and the memories that may be created from both her more abstracted work *Film (2011)*, or her enquiry into personality and identity with *Portrait (2018)*.

Chapter 1 - Enquiry to create context.

This chapter will enquire into how photography plays a crucial role in the formation of memories, particularly through childhood and how these recollections affect our desires, these being the two key components the practical element of this dissertation is focusing on. In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes examines memory in connection with photography and considers how the photograph may create realism with actual memories attached to the image for the viewer, compared to another visual depiction where no relation exists. Barthes recounts, shortly after his mother's death, remembering the photograph of her as a child standing posed for a portrait in the glass conservatory of his grandparent's home. The photograph unearthed in her apartment, being one of many, but the one he had always remembered with passed down memories. An important element with the history of any family, reality assured, although knowledge of the event, maybe not as considered.

'I cannot reproduce the Winter Garden Photograph. It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of a thousand manifestations of the ordinary; it cannot in any way constitute the visible object of a science; it cannot establish an objectivity, in the positive sense of the term; at most it would interest your studium; period, clothes, photogeny; but in it, for you, no wound'².

² Roland Barthes. *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 2000) p.73

To the other person not emotionally engaged, this is an enquiry, the study of the content within the image that interests. A wealth of gathered family portrait images on both analogue film and digital depicting life over decades and lighting our curiosity for place and time. Barthes looks at those detached images with what he calls *studium*, the content of the image, when in contrast his *punctum* portrays the emotion in a personal photograph, for truly what is punctuating and leaping forward to us. This was a memory of his mother, a time only she would have been able to recollect, yet his memory is passed down from what he was told about the event; he has emotional attachment to not just the photograph, but also to what he remembers his mother talking about during this time in her childhood. A photograph, though not related to the viewer in any manner, can still have the ability to reproduce memories of a similar event. Reflecting on Barthes experience with the Winter Garden photograph, homogeneous emotions could be produced by another reader of the image, evoking memories of their own mother, thus enabling them to relate more succinctly with the photograph.

Photographs play an important part in the creation of memories, be that our own, or that of others, passed down for future generations. The portrait of a loved one is captured for the user, the person who wanted to create the image and others who would have a particular attachment to the photograph. Do we consciously consider these others when the camera shutter opens or is this just an impulsive action when a visual aesthetic creates a connection in our brain. Family albums assist us with remembering our past through a spectrum of recollections, given validity by older members of our family group to help us form an identity for ourselves and where we have originated from. The concept of childhood memory and at what age early recollections are

literally the child's own are elements of every individual's life, but at what point are these considered memories more likely to be passed down interpretations of a particular event that has taken place very early in an infant's life. It would be essential to research the work of others who have also been captivated by the thought of the earliest possible memory of an individual and consider the discourse that arises from such enquiry.

These memories we store as children become difficult to validate as time passes by and are liable for dramatization and exaggeration, a story becoming more favourable when recounted.

Understanding these elements and in the disinterring of potential facts, it is extramental to consider a wider more personal approach, this consideration of first-hand evidence in the form of anecdotal research regarding early childhood memories from family members. Results gathered in this manner cannot draw conclusion, with only a small number of individuals seeming to have recollections of their very early infant stages, pre two years old. What are the considerations that memories, repeated over and over again with accuracy, are not passed down impressions of their past from their parents or older siblings, but we cannot discount them. It is considered by many psychologists that five or six years of age is at the point where the brain is creating solid memories that materialise as valid. This has though, created broad debate in psychology, where trauma or extreme change of routine such as moving home, a hospital visit, or more drastically a death in the family can herald these very early memories. My own early memories appear to focus on events from childhood, slipping and hitting my head on a coffee table, hospitalised in need of stitches, alongside the dental procedure with the huge black rubber mask for anaesthetic, so seems to uphold with the psychological approach to adversity.

Is it possible to differentiate between our memories and the photographic print supplying the narrative, representations we carry of an event in our mind construed as another still image, a fragment of memory from an earlier time. The quality of the memory is not as important as the information that is stored within the memory, in the same manner as the quality and technical photographic abilities of our predecessors are not of principle concern, more emphasis regarding the context of the image and what that brings to the individual. The author Liz Wells discusses personal photographs and their histories in *Photography. A Critical Introduction*, examining how the documentation of family life has altered into the twenty first century. The use of mobile phones to capture images for the private sole viewing of one person, never being printed for all to witness are in conflict with the images that are created to self-represent oneself without relying on others, but all evoking a memory. Analogue and digital mediums are being utilised alongside one another, with instant photography becoming ever more popular, assisted by the rejuvenated Polaroid brand and the low-fi experience with Lomography. The majority of the photographs created using these mediums are for domestic use in documenting our everyday occurrences, for the following generations passed down memories and these domiciliary photographs feature throughout my film as a passage to stored memories.

'The photographs we keep for ourselves are treasured less for their quality than for their context, and for the part they play in confirming and challenging the identity and history of their users'³.

³ Liz Wells. *Photography – A Critical Introduction – Chapter 3: Personal Photographs and Popular Photography.* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) p.122, 152

Wells continues her debate on memory, focusing on childhood recollection in *The Photography Reader*. Her inclusion of the Historian Annette Kuhn's essay *The Child I Never Was*, gives a stark insight to how a photographic memory of her own childhood can be altered due to parental influence and narrative invention. Kuhn's recounting of the memories surrounding one photograph of her sitting in the family home as a child, captured by her photographer father, holding her pet bird, offer a varied account of histories. She discusses how children can invent and exaggerate to make stories more appealing, carving narrative that suits a particular situation. The rear of the photograph also holds some clues with the town written in pen, alongside the word convalescent, but who is convalescing as Kuhn speaks of distinct memories of both herself and her mother needing to recover from illness at different times and places. There is evidence in her writings that explain a family in trouble, losing emotional attachments to one another, a father detached from his wife and a daughter missing her father.

*'Photographs are evidence, after all. Not that they are to be taken at face value, necessarily, nor that they mirror the real, nor even that a photograph offers any self-evident relationship between itself and what it shows. Simply that a photograph can be material for interpretation – evidence, in that sense: to be solved, like a riddle; read and decoded, like clues left behind at the scene of the crime. Evidence of this sort, though, can conceal, even as it purports to reveal, what it is evidence of'*⁴.

⁴ Liz Wells. *The Photography Reader* – Chapter 36: Annette Kuhn. *Remembrance - The Child I Never Was*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003) p.395, 396, 399

We cannot study these photographs, nor remember the memories given to us by others with an openness of understanding to how events become reality, in fact one individual's concept of reality could easily be another's fabrication. We witness families chronicling their children's life in stages of development, but where are the first photographs, the images that evidence the child's entry into the world. Photographs of births are not common, maybe due to the squeamish amongst us, but an image of our own birth could be the catalyst to provoking the very earliest memory or would this even be possible with the human infant's stage of development at birth. My children, now grown adults had their births documented photographically and these are remembered fondly, yet there were times of anguish and pain during the events. The information has always been passed onto the children, as were the photographs when they were of an age to appreciate, but I wonder if they form a solid, truthful memory of the day or alter to *rose tint* the occasion. I have not encountered another individual that has photographed the start of life in this way, not as an art form, nor for education, but for the family album. What will other generations to come deduce from these images with another set of ideals and presumptions, what will the understanding of the event suggest, alongside the passed down memories. Will these photographs be looked upon with the same emotion and memory of the initial user, whereas the new reader of the image can only depict what is being viewed. Would the image bring the viewer closer to the memory of the actual event, a new-born child not even reminiscent of themselves.

The concept of passed down memories has been investigated in Alison Landsberg's *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*, where she

has not only asked questions regarding this type of memory, but also connected her thoughts with contemporary film making. Landsberg's concept of one's memories not being one's own, and therefore prosthetic seem understandable, just as an artificial limb didn't originate with the user. These memories, however, become our own memories and our ownership just as an amputee's prosthetic limb becomes part of themselves, enabling us to create a scaffold for our undetermined futures.

'Prosthetic memories thus become part of one's personal archive of experience, informing one's subjectivity as well as one's relationship to the present and future tenses... either way, they become the building blocks from which to construct narratives of the present and visions for the future'⁵.

The prosthesis is discussed with remembrance through the viewing of documentary, journalism and even fictional film, not merely the passed down family memories discussed earlier. Our enquiring minds naturally view, contemplate and store information given to us, our brains in turn transforming these pockets of narrative into memories of events we have never witnessed. The media, and ever-changing technological world has allowed the majority of individuals to own these new memories without copyright infringement, never to be reproduced, but to be discussed and adapted as the situation dictates. There is little difference in the information that we gather without conscious involvement from the media compared to the images we store

⁵ Alison Landsberg. *Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) p.26

when visiting a gallery, taking ownership of artwork that would cost millions of pounds to own in reality, yet we possess for free in our virtual mind.

Landsberg's discussions of prosthetic memory in regard to cinema could primarily be considered with objectivity and proof of existence. The films discussed, investigating individual's implanted memories through both a mechanical constructed memory with cyborg replicants in *Blade Runner (1982)*⁶ and the desires we have in humanity in *Total Recall (1990)*⁷. Although this remained a fantasy, the memories the subjects were given had actually existed in another time, much like the passed down memories we ourselves encounter in everyday life, through family histories or watched through the media.

*'Some science fiction films like Blade Runner and Total Recall explore the effects of technology on memory, literalising prosthetic memory. In so doing, these films disrupt some basic postmodern assumptions about experience'*⁸.

There are characteristics that will build our personalities that cannot just be given to us and we need to digest the information to secure an understanding of what we see and know. This will often not take place until we have reached adulthood and can fully comprehend the information

⁶ Blade Runner dir. Ridley Scott (The Ladd Company, 1982)

⁷ Total Recall dir. Paul Verhoeven (Carolco Pictures, 1990)

⁸ Alison Landsberg. *Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) p.32

that we have stored, and some individuals, of course, may never experience this understanding at all. Ultimately, we have an impulse to be civil and have a sense of community, enjoying the experiences that present themselves. We have yearnings to be remembered just as our forefathers have been and desire to be and have what we want.

The French philosopher Jacques Lacan was interested in the abstraction that could occur in our dreams and the fantasy that led on to our desires. Desire can have its complexities and Lacan suggested that our own desire emanates from the very thing that the other person desires. His journey into clinical psychoanalysis in the 1930s took an alternative route having read an article in a journal on Surrealism by Salvador Dali, who later became friends with the philosopher. Lacan could witness Dali's work first-hand and being able to discuss the content of his painting on reality and dreams, giving him a unique position to combine this radical thinking.

'What is clear is that Lacan spent six years in analysis – longer than was usual at this time – and that he remained in analysis until he was accepted as a training analyst. During this time, Lacan's links with the Surrealists developed further. He was a friend of André Breton and Salvador Dali and was later to become the painter Pablo Picasso's (1881–1973) personal physician'⁹.

His theories are focusing primarily on sexual desire with manhood and the female as the object, although desire could also be considered with the experience of something more spiritual and

⁹ Sean Homer. *Jacques Lacan – Routledge Critical Thinkers*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005) p5

repose. As human beings we can all suppose and often exhibit an animal instinct with this desire manifesting itself as sexual attraction and inevitable lust, a study that Lacan also continued after Freud's initial theories on desire. This want for connection can be related to by most individuals in their quest for love and sexual encounter, with the confident exploiting whilst the other may spend a lifetime in torment, not able to realise the desire, that only becoming real within the dream. That alternate desire though, can seem as strong as the lifelong love yet comes in the form of a different experience, a freedom or release. The desire to be in a specific place, with little disturbance from outside influence; the chance to live a life how it was once dreamt, a possible fantasy that may never be realised, yet remains as hope. Lacan himself discussed desire as not being material, so therefore this non-materialism should represent the experience, instead of desire fixated on the female form. These elements are represented from both viewpoints within my film, considering sexual desire alongside the desire of something more ethereal mediating the experience.

'The object of man's desire, and we are not the first to say this, is essentially an object desired by someone else. One object can become equivalent to another, owing to the effect produced by this intermediary, in making it possible for objects to be exchanged and compared'¹⁰.

¹⁰ Andrew Furman and Steven Levy (eds), *Influential Papers from the 1950s: Jacques Lacan, Some Reflections on the Ego*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018) p.295, 296

Childhood behaviour has also been studied by Lacan with theory on the human psyche being divided into three structures, The Imaginary, The Symbolic and The Real. It is the Imaginary Order that becomes relevant to this enquiry, this being focused on a time during early infant life which Lacan entitled The Mirror Stage. The child, pre 6 months, would look at its own reflection in a mirror, not realising that it was the image of themselves and therefore an image like any other image the child may see. It is not until 6 – 18 months that the child begins to start reacting to its own reflection with motor movements followed by facial expression and recognition of their own face. Lacan suggests that it is at this time when the infant develops an identity, the reflected image of themselves though, appearing as the perfect image, therefore creating an ego that the child can aspire to. Lacan's theory suggests that we all narcissistic at various levels experiencing the world through imagery with a fundamental desire for the perfect life and self-image, which the majority could probably relate to; we wish to succeed and hope we will be looked upon fondly by others.

'Jacques Lacan has described how the moment when a child recognises its own image in the mirror is crucial for the constitution of the ego... Recognition is thus overlaid with mis-recognition; the image recognised is conceived as the reflected body of the self, but its mis-recognition as superior projects this body outside of itself as an ideal ego'¹¹.

¹¹ Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds), *Film Theory and Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) p.840

Is this a time in the child's life that is remembered, their understanding of what they look like and how they move or is this once again an example of prosthetic memory, a parent giving narrative to an event. An element that people may be able to connect with is their adult self, detecting their reflection and the image that they are confronted with causing immediate discontentment, with the reflected image almost looking down making a judgement on the actual self. Maybe we have not fulfilled ourselves or we have betrayed someone close, but we are our own judge, be it with a reversed reflection. This could be the natural way that we scrutinise ourselves, an unconscious method to ensure that we are always striving for the best, once again, not in the material sense, but in the well-being of ourselves and those around us. This is reflected upon with the early scenes of my film, the main character unhappy with his personal situation, his reflection offending, making use of photographs to help remember events from his past and making a journey to bring closure to his emotional anguish.

The critical research examined has allowed me to focus my intentions for the practical assignment on my initial thoughts regarding photographs creating memories for the development of one's desires for the future. The variety of reading material and transmission of information gathered has widened my thoughts for what can be achieved practically and with theoretical structure.

Chapter 2 - Influence from other practitioners

Within this chapter I will investigate the work of other practitioners to illustrate how they have used not only the form of their work, but also the context when looking at the subject of memory. The practical piece of work has been informed from a wide range of influences, not just researched through the time span of this body of work, but from a collection of sources over decades of cinematic appreciation and photographic awareness. The visual aesthetic has been condensed to retain focus on the key elements that are of interest in the production of practical outcomes, an allurement to the diverse, alternative approaches which entice the viewer into the possibilities available in displaying narrative.

The use of black and white allows the spectator to detach from the outside world and be drawn into scenarios devoid from the manner in which the human eyes gathers information. The absence of colour adds a neutrality yet delivers apprehension for what may happen with the narrative. Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962)¹² allows the viewer to be consumed into the life of a man traveling back through time, reliving memories of a woman he saw as a child and repeatedly meets as a grown adult, a juncture that is not his to keep in the real world. This is reflected in my loosely autobiographical film where we too follow an individual's journey and the affliction as well as desires that are created from photographic memories. The use of still photographs in *La Jetée*, in the place of moving image gives the eye the ability to navigate each scene without

¹² *La Jetée* dir. Chris Marker, (Argos Films, 1962)

distraction of gesture, although still maintains fluidity with compulsive narration and gives this film a link to slow cinema. Personal influence in this vein was taken from Yasujiro Ozu's *Tokyo Story* (1953)¹³ and Lav Diaz's *Melancholia* (2008)¹⁴, both exploring the use of long observational scenes using black and white to allow the viewer to navigate the scene, much like the study of a still photograph, taking time to appreciate the content and decipher the context. My own scenes have the same thought process of wanting the viewer to experience the memories of the protagonist through slow cinema, but to also add an unbalance with occasional fast-moving scenes to alter the viewing experience.

*'The very first image of La Jetée is of Orly airport near Paris. As soon as the image appears it begins to expand rapidly by way of a zoom-out, starting on the horizon-line, moving along the diagonal perspectival axis of the image and finally comes to a rest, displaying a grey and grainy bird's-eye-view of the airport grounds, with parked planes and cars and an oblong airport-building on whose roof a few tiny figures can be discerned. The image's initial zoom is exposed, in retrospect, as a supplementary or external rather than an inherent and internal movement; the image is thus identified as a still photograph'*¹⁵.

¹³ Tokyo Story dir. Yasujiro Ozu, (Shochiku Co. Ltd., 1953)

¹⁴ Melancholia dir. Lav Diaz, (Sine Olivia Productions, 2008)

¹⁵ Uriel Orlow, La Jetée and Photography as Cinema. <http://urielorlow.net/wp-content/uploads/2007/01/Uriel-Orlow-Photography-as-Cinema.pdf> (Accessed 07/02/20)

It was Andy Warhol's, *Poor Little Rich Girl* (1965)¹⁶, also filmed in monochrome, that would make provision for art film to draw ambiguous narrative with moving image projects. The study of one person's existence, a fly on the wall documentary visit into the socialite and fashion model, Edie Sedgwick's life. The viewer watches as a voyeur, her daily routines, the mundanity of her consummation of coffee and cigarettes, telephone conversations to an unknown listener or merely laying in bed in isolated thought. Warhol's visionary reality, which we are now immersed in and take for granted as convention. How often is documentary film really just about the unknown and letting the camera run without interference, the lack of control removing personal creativity; but maybe it is these elements that create autonomous inventiveness. What do we understand about Warhol's influence on the footage and how much of the production was actually directed, although the reels of film give nothing away and the result appears as a natural spectacle, a collection of uneventful moving image memories. It is this mundanity that I have attempted to realise within my own film footage; although a work of fiction and directed, the scenes are shot predominantly chronologically and offer spontaneous performances due to the single sequence of film captured for each scene.

I felt that it was important that the practical element of this project was enquiring into fine art territories as well as the mainstream, allowing the viewers perceptions to be challenged. Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975)¹⁷ is a complex layered, semi-autobiographical piece of work where the

¹⁶ *Poor Little Rich Girl* dir. Andy Warhol, (Andy Warhol, 1965)

¹⁷ *Mirror* dir. Andrei Tarkovsky (Mosfilm, 1975)

audience is surveying the memories of a child growing up through religion and war. The context illustrates a confirmation of his deep affection for his mother, despite her disturbed nature, and her resemblance to his own wife. Tarkovsky's surreal memories show us the protagonist's wife looking into a mirror after the interior of the room has disintegrated, his mother being reflected in the mirror instead. We understand that relationships often form with a similarity to a parent and I wanted to play on this with the concept of the women in my film having some form of parallelism through facial features, clothing or even just body language. The mirror, also reflecting his childhood memories, would add another complexity for the viewer to attempt to understand the anxieties that he is experiencing.

Family memories have been investigated by artist, Lorie Novak, producing bodies of work that have examined other people's families as well as her own relations, enquiring into the cultural meanings of photography and the formation of memory and transmission. Novak carries out her work primarily through the projection of transparency images, her work exploring the way we perceive ourselves, present our 'self' to the camera and how we are seen by others. Images of cliché feminine poses or uncomfortable moments steer her work in understanding how these images came into existence, a developed context from the original usage of the family photograph. We choose our memories to be favourable for the most part, our undesirable recollections being held in the reserves of our memory bank, resurfacing to find closure to certain events. Maybe these images we hold so dear, contain more narrative than we originally suspected with prosthetic memories having been altered so much over the years.

'Family collections [of photographs] are never just memories. Their disconnected points offer glimpses of many possible pasts, and yet, in our longing for narratives, for a way of telling the past that will make sense in the present we know, we strive to organize these traces, to fill in the gaps'¹⁸.

Insight gathered from other practitioners has become vital in the production of my practical work, allowing critical thinking to inform the manner in which the context is formed and manipulated. Researching beyond mainstream film has stretched and challenged my conceptions of the moving image and allowed the use of fine artists installation work to extend the thoughts I have been investigating on memory and the photographic image. As photographers, we observe and when the moment is auspicious, we capture, considering the single still frame from a real life of moving images, and so this is where we make acquaintance with *La Jetée* again, a collection of memories that steer focus and intent for the future.

There are so many additional influences, fragments of remembered cinematic scenes and pivotal dialogue spoken that assist with the formation of context of a body of work, far too many to mention in a dissertation of this size. It is important to acknowledge the human brain's capacity to store information and recollect the wealth of material fact relevant for particular purpose at any given moment. The importance of additional sources outside of the context of a piece of work, so often not engaged with, but should also be recognised; the song of a bird, sound of an

¹⁸ Marianne Hirsch (ed) *The Familial Gaze: Lorie Novak, Collected Visions* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999)

aircraft passing by or the unrecognisable language spoken by an infant. Everything we see, hear and touch add a valuable collection of haptic memories that we call upon to add diverse context in the practical work we produce.

Chapter 3 - External elements that inform the development of practical outcomes.

This chapter will enquire into how the concepts for this dissertation film have been informed by style as well as other outside influences and why these have become so influential in defining the context of the work. The use of black and white was an important element in the aesthetic of the outcome, with the work being loosely autobiographical and my own personal photographic work being predominantly monochrome. It became an early decision with the project that the form of the film was created using Kodak Tri-X, a solid well used film stock, used not only by myself over my career, but also by countless photojournalists to communicate stories for over 70 years, this also now being produced in reversal format with cine film.

The Japanese street photographer Daido Moriyama creates the majority of his still imagery using this stock, applying the technique of push processing to underexpose and over process his work, the final outcomes bearing the trademark heavy grain and elicit contrast this process exudes. This same treatment of the film was taken up during the 1960s by Duane Michals with his work on narrative sequencing in photography and it was his friendship with the surrealist artist René Magritte that yield the experimentation with multiple imagery and surrealism in homage to the artists own work that allowed Michals to develop a style that others would replicate. It could be considered that this is merely a desired aesthetic, although the choice to work in this manner is actually considered. It is in the understanding of the working abilities of film and push processing that allow for the sole use of ambient lighting and the decisions made on the visible integrity of

each scene composed. The apprehension whilst waiting for film reels to be processed becomes part of the making process, the film maker being unified in the project creation.

An unconstrained and impulsive method of creation relying on the use of ambient light can be witnessed with cinematic drama, a fiction created to give illusion of the truth. We watch, and are drawn into the story, this recital being played out with the casualness of a spectator. The work of Thomas Vinterberg with *Festen* (1998)¹⁹ demonstrates how a release from the confines of creative input can be juxtaposed to the precision we see so often in film. By stripping back the necessity to over light and stabilise, reality naturally shines through, even with the movement in the frame from the hand-held camera substantiating this. The family photograph was previously discussed in regard to the quality of the image not outweighing the context and this is evermore veracious with the concept of creating realism in film. *Festen's* use of available light, minimal sound equipment and the adventurous use of video tape as a recording medium allowed Vinterberg to approach his subjects and observe a unique intimacy between subject and camera allowing participants in the filming to react spontaneously, with often disturbing actuality. The low-fi aesthetic, not that dissimilar to Super8 analogue colour negative film in many respects, complete a viewing experience of events that one could have been a spectator of in the real world.

¹⁹ *Festen* dir. Thomas Vinterberg, (Nimbus Film, 1998)

Through the research gathered it became interesting to consider the concept of a film with no dialogue and an element of ambiguity with the narrative. Through exploration, a decision was established to use a background of ambient sound in contrast to particular isolated sounds that would revisit memories both prosthetic and directly created, creating a haptic experience for the viewer with mundanity and repetition of sound. This would consider the mood changes with the scenes of the film with no alterations to the narrative ambiance, creating a platform for the viewer to relate personal experience to the visuals and sounds around them. It was important to understand the desires of the family members participating in the film, with yearnings to live in particular locations with freedom and feeling of release, the feeling of being at one with your peripheral space. It had to be understood how, although we enjoy our possessions, it is not the owning of these items that give us our pleasures. The experience that is gained through material ownership is what is desired, rather than the actual object to view. These memories and desires have shaped the content of the scenes and how the narrative unfolds over the process of the film, allowing myself to take on all of the memories of others in participation experiencing these as my own memories of the past.

How do we deduce the desires we have for the future, a time not yet realised, yet dreamed with predilection and enthusiasm for what may be. Will these projections to the future be fulfilled just as a memory waiting to occur, these desires being played out just as planned or would elements undoubtedly alter when events can not be foreseen. Despite these obvious alterations and outcomes, if desire is strong enough, the experience should therefore be encountered in some form or another. Our prosthetic memories of our childhood have shaped our pathways in life and

helped to give us thoughts for our future lives and even considerations of how we might finally pass away, these being thoughts often left in the back of our conscience, but never the less created with a basis of what may have occurring in the past to our close relatives. Stories recollected about grandparents passing away in early life create memories of how that may have come to pass and how their lives may have ended abruptly; concerns regarding our own lives and whether fate will replicate any similar patterns; altering the manner in which we live our lives to change the circumstances. If the prosthetic memories given to us become revisited due to the desires that have become inbuilt and naturally developed upon, this then will become our own reality.

Considering our dreams, usually in some way containing an altered reality are often forgotten and left as so, but dreams can be vivid and although often fragmented and abstractions of a world we could live in, they can also be, and in many cases are informed directly by the memories we hold, prosthetic or otherwise. These fragmented dreams can therefore become the catalysts that give thought for our futures and steer us into uncertain, but exciting pathways. Of course, there are many of us who see dreams for what they are, a fantasy created in our sub-conscious and either enjoy them in remembrance or exclude them as confused alienations of the truth. Maybe a gift has been given in our genes to those of us who stimulate the creative cortex of our brain and hanker for something more than what we already have, not in a materialist way, but that desire to experience.

Maybe the answer is to let our passed-down memories remain somewhat ambiguous, reflecting back on Barthes and the photograph of his mother in the Winter Garden as a child, the memories that the photographed evoked were his to recollect, but remained as that, a memory not to be taken any further. Considering Barthes thoughts of his mother's life from childhood, my film is based upon memories of actual events and with family members as actors playing the same person over a space of seventy five years, the photographs incorporated with relevance in scenes throughout to create a blend of prosthetic and real life memories to steer the narrative into a desired future with the practical project.

Conclusion

The concepts I have investigated during this dissertation are vast, each element of memory, childhood, identity, dreams and desire could each be a separate body of work. One theme has developed into another within my research, initiating the development of my film context. These were all concepts that had come to mind, almost subconsciously before the project began and had been written down and put to one side. The context for my production has come full circle and revisited these elements, exciting me to produce this body of work examining these areas of human engagement. These are all debates that will continue without solid validity and the process has unearthed a passion to revisit these concepts in the future, definitely through further research, but undoubtedly using the medium of moving image.

Whether imagery is created using analogue film or the ever developing medium of digital capture, the images that we create are a collection of memories, different views for different people, but all allowing the viewer to take away a prosthetic memory. As individuals we must celebrate the memories we already have and those we will acquire in the future and the manner in which the photographic image transmits feelings and creates vivid narrative.

Digital was a medium I embraced commercially as a photographer half way through my career, saving time and money with all commissions, but the production of a personal project shouldn't just consider these savings and emphasis should be placed on the context and whether the extra time and money invested will assist with the final outcomes. Why create a crisp digital image that

requires post-production to realise your ideal aesthetic when your initial concerns are not for the quality of the image, but what lies beneath in the context of the work and how the apparent lessening of quality can actually bring more depth to the project. It was evident that the use of digital would be incorporated within the editing process with the project having to be submitted online electronically. This method of cross platform workflow had its advantages, assisting with exposure and contrast balancing and eventually the awareness of the project via social media platforms. The clarity and abilities that digital usage holds above analogue is endless and clear to see for all users and it became straight forward to think of this project digitally, just like a commercial commission from my time as a photographer.

The film was completed on time, although was the digital incorporation really how I envisaged the project, working with an organic material with all the unknown entities. Working with film on a small budget is about confidence in your approaches, an overwhelming possibility of chance and risk taking, contemplation of what these combined elements will bring to the outcomes. The first chance to see the film footage comes in the form of the digital scan, which is far removed from the frame gauge when viewed on the computer screen, a detachment that can only be reversed through watching the reversal film through its primary source, the projector. It is only then when the reels of film are being loaded that you can relate to the whole process of the moving image and eighteen tiny frames which will be projected in one second. It is this fascination that inspires me to create work in this medium, my background in photography studying the narrative within a single still photograph, yet a collection of images captured in quick succession and played at speed releasing that narrative and bringing a new element of life to the

photographic image. Despite this movement, I still see this moving image as a single image, an ability that is unique to analogue, being able to inspect the raw footage how it was created in the camera.

Moving forward, I would like to work on a re-edit of the film created, cutting scenes by hand and producing a final print of the project so that it is realised in its physical form and projected with synced sound to an audience. It is this physical appearance and how the context viewed forms memories, both new and prosthetic that interests me. I would like a sensory experience associated with this display and witness an audience's unmediated reaction to scenes that may evoke their own personal remembrance. It will not be until then that I will truly understand the level of success I have achieved with this project. My personal reflections illustrate areas where I could still problem solve much further given longer to work on the project, with more decisive scene and location possibilities, alongside sound development opportunities. It is not the budget of creating an analogue film that is demanding, it is the time management and planning needed in the production of a film, but I find that this pressure is essential in ensuring that the production carries part of the creator's personality. The entire process of building a moving image production, from research through to viewing has empowered me to continue to produce other bodies of work for the screen. I will always be a photographer, a spectator of a moment, but I am excited to see how these frozen junctures can unfold through cinematic expression.

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