THE ESSAY FILM

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THESIS CONTAINS VIDEO

Still from the film 'The Man who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales

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Volume Two

APPENDIXES :

When I started editing, six years ago, the film

'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales,

I had one film in mind - Sunless by Chris Marker -

as an inspiration to try and make a 'different' type of documentary.

Whilst writing the thesis, I have discovered another masterpiece -

The Man With the Movie Camera - by Dziga Vertov.

To both, this thesis is dedicated.

ABSTRACT

This thesis on the essay film is written from the film maker's point of view, following the production of the film The Man Who Couldn't Feel and Other Tales, (54 min, 16mm). The film and the thesis together form the PhD submission. Examination of the completed film led to the definition of the essay film as an avant-garde, non-fiction film genre. The thesis rejects the current positioning of the essay film as a part of the documentary genre. The essay film creates an aesthetic coherence through the use of image and sound fragments, narrative and non-narrative structures, 'methodically unmethodically' edited together. The essay film follows Vertov's and Astruc's steps in 'writing' fragments as they occur to the film maker, which are in turn put together using the editing traditions of the film avant-garde and modernist poetry. The film maker's presence in the essay film results in the cinematic 'text' becoming the 'reflective text' - the mediating medium between the film maker and the spectator. Beside its avant-garde roots, the genre owes much to the literary essay tradition established since Michel de Montaigne. Many of the literary essay's aesthetic, thematic and structural elements are to be found in the essay film genre. Each and every essay film is unique in its structure, and the genre as a whole does not conform to a pre-determined cinematic construction. Nevertheless, the thesis charts some useful characteristics and definitions for the establishment of an independent essay film genre.

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

This thesis on the essay film is written from the film maker's point of view, following the production of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales, (54 min, 16mm) made over a period of four years. The film and the thesis together form the PhD submission. The aim of the study programme at the outset was to investigate the main trends of non-narrative documentary cinema so as to define more closely the 'essay' form of documentary. Producing the film and subsequently reflecting on the film making practice and on the wider context of non-narrative structures led to the writing of this thesis. The thesis rejects the position that the essay film is a part of the documentary genre and demonstrates that the essay film is an independent genre and that it owes more to avant-garde and literary essay practices than to the documentary genre. The advantage of establishing a film theory from inside the work itself, rather than bringing it in from 'the outside', has proved to be immense and very rewarding.

My work as a film maker has developed from my early interest in anthropological film making and the conventional documentary tradition, very much influenced by the work of the French film maker Jean Rouch. After producing several documentaries, I proceeded in my work to look to 'open up' the documentary form of film making. I explored a form that is neither fiction nor documentary in my

film, Jacoba (Holland, 1988). This film points to the possibilities of creating a film structured from separate sequences - some constructed with the help of actors and sets, some traditional documentary segments, others altogether abstract. It enabled me to try for the first time to break down traditional linear narrative structure. The experience of working with fragments and self-contained scenes was, in hindsight, extremely valuable upon embarking on 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales.

Fourteen years ago I travelled to mainland China with 70 rolls of Super 8 film (with no sync sound). My purpose was not to make a documentary film about China. I collected images that were powerful as independent images and contained within themselves an idea that stayed with me longer than the passing impression of travel. Those images were not chosen as representing life in China but as containing within them more general, abstract readings on different levels. Later, I proceeded to collect images from around the globe on subsequent travels. In addition, I brought together, for the purpose of creating the new film, archive material I have collected over the years, musical recordings I made in the past and written texts I have gathered from various sources during my work as a film maker. Conventional editing methods were completely unsuitable in constructing a non-narrative film. I compiled all the rushes randomly into large reels and, throughout the viewing and later the editing process, I kept the material unclassified and resisted grouping it in an

order or form. I started editing, not from a theoretical perspective or according to a pre-determined structure, but from within the material itself - images, sound fragments and music. The theory would come later. Examination of the completed film - 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales - a film that was intended originally to be a non-narrative documentary, led to the definition of the essay film as an independent genre and not as part of the documentary discourse.

This thesis demonstrates that the essay film is a unique genre, creating an aesthetic coherence through the use of image and sound fragments, put together in a variety of narrative and non-narrative structures within a film, 'methodically unmethodically' edited together to create an aesthetic unity. This is bound together with the notion that film maker is present inside the work and introduces it to the audience, asking them to take part in the construction of the film's meanings. As a result, the cinematic 'text' becomes the 'reflective text', the mediating medium between the film maker and the spectator. The essay film follows Montaigne's, Vertov's and Astruc's steps in 'writing' fragments as they occur to the writer, or the film maker. These fragments are in turn edited together associatively, relying on poetic metaphor and juxtaposition.

A detailed look at the essay film form and a full structural analysis of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales reveals the linear and non-linear structural

elements within the genre, and the use of the avant-garde montage and poetic film metaphor techniques to achieve a coherent form based on the fragmentary cinematic text. Beside the avant-garde roots of the essay film, the genre owes much to the literary essay tradition as recognised in modern European literature since the publication of Michel de Montaigne's essays. Many of the literary essay's aesthetic, thematic and structural elements are to be found in the essay film genre. The strong avant-garde elements of the cinematic language within the essay film, together with its links to the literary essay, point to the definition of an independent film genre - the essay film. Each and every essay film is unique in its structure, and the genre as a whole does not conform to a pre-determined cinematic construction. Nevertheless, the thesis will chart some useful characteristics and definitions for the establishment of an independent essay film genre.

The thesis starts in Chapter Two by discussing the literary essay as one of the fundamental and essential principles for the examination of the essay film. It considers in detail the content, style, structure and aesthetics of the modern Western tradition of the literary essay, with some reference to an earlier, fascinating, Japanese medieval tradition of essay writing. This chapter defines the literary essay form in general and looks in particular at Michel de Montaigne's essays. Beside Montaigne, this chapter discusses in detail Theodor Adorno's concern with the relationship between the essay and art, and his major contribution to the debate on the aesthetics of the essay. In recent times, the French writer Roland Barthes has created a

renewed interest in the essay form. Barthes' writings on the subject of the essay and Reda Bensmaïa's writings on Barthes are extremely important to this thesis, as are Graham Good's more general overview of the essay and Richard Sayce's discussion of Montaigne. The second part of Chapter Two examines closely Montaigne's writings as the basis for the comparison between the literary essay and the essay film. A detailed textual analysis of one of Montaigne's essays shows that the writer's personal experiences, coupled with the apparent formlessness of the essay, the associative movement between several ideas and the extensive use of quotations, achieve a unity in diversity through association. It represents directly what Adorno praises as the strongly experimental, 'methodically unmethodically', approach of the essay. These structural and aesthetical considerations are examined further in Chapter Three in the discussion of the essay film form.

Chapter Three begins by discussing and rejecting the existing theories of the essay film, mainly by Michael Renov and Carl Plantinga, who place it inside the documentary genre. Chapter Three then proceeds to define the essay film genre. The essay film form is not new. Dziga Vertov's work and writings, early this century, had already 'shown the way' for the genre, as is the case, to some degree, with Alexander Astruc's 'caméra-stylo' theory. Recently, Nora Alter's writings on some aspects of recent German essay films point toward a better definition of the essay film genre by placing the Russian avant-garde traditions and Adorno's

aesthetics of the literary essay under one roof. A similar attempt is made by Susan Howe in her discussion of American modernist poetry and the essay film. In order to understand in full the avant-garde roots of the essay film, Chapter Three proceeds to consider in detail the use made by Russian formalism and American modernist poetry of associative techniques and their influence on avant-garde film montage through the use of poetic metaphor and film metaphor in the context of symbolic association and montage.

After defining in the two previous chapters the literary essay and the position of the essay film as an avant-garde genre, Chapter Four turns to the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales and discusses it, through a detailed textual analysis, as an essay film. Both origins of the genre - the literary essay and the avant-garde - are identified in this chapter in the discussion of the film. Chapter Four argues that the film is not a documentary film as there is no central theme or single story within it. Nor does it contain a linear structure. The film analysis shows that, as in a Montaignean essay, the multitude of visual and sound sequences and short 'stories', often repeated and interwoven, are 'methodically unmethodically' structured by the use of avant-garde film techniques. Chapter Four looks at the film as a 'caméra-stylo' film and highlights the structure of the film which relies heavily on montage techniques used by the early Soviets and by the Modernist poets. [A complete shot-by-shot breakdown of the film appears in Appendix One to this thesis].

Chapter Five looks at a range of essay films, previously defined as documentaries or as 'difficult to define' films, in order to broaden the definition of the essay film beyond my work and to apply it to that of other film makers. This chapter discusses Alberto Cavalcanti's Rien que les Heures (France, 1924), but concentrates mainly on Dziga Vertov's and Chris Marker's essay films as the most important and striking examples of the genre. Vertov's films - The Eleventh Year (USSR, 1928), Enthusiasm (USSR, 1930) and in particular The Man With the Movie Camera (USSR, 1929) - are discussed as early examples of the genre. Marker's films - A Letter from Siberia (France, 1958), The Koumiko Mystery (France, 1962), and his most famous film Sunless (1982) - which differ in some ways from Vertov's approach, are also analysed as essay films.

The Conclusion to the thesis is followed by nine Appendixes which contain a shot-by-shot analysis of the film "The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales', the complete texts of the film's sound track and a list of the film's cinema screenings to date.

Chapter Two : The Literary Essay

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the main characteristics and features of the literary essay as a basis for the discussion of the essay film. Frequently, the literary essay is studied as an offshoot of, or as a footnote to, other literary works, or as an appendix to an analysis of a writer's output in other literary genres. An historical examination of the essay is useful when the focus of study is literature, but is less useful here, where the focus of study is the genre itself, its structure and its potential relation to the essay film. The main contributors to the discussion of the structure and the form of the essay all attempt to reach a definition of the essay, whilst acknowledging that the essay cannot be categorised, identified in precise terms or 'boxed into' a genre. Nevertheless, we do need some working definition of the form with which to begin our analysis. This chapter will attempt to define the essay form in general and will look in particular at Michel de Montaigne's essays and analyse the form as it appears in his work. A close examination of Montaigne's writings will form the basis for the comparison between the literary essay and the essay film as I believe this comparison will contribute to an accurate definition of the essay film.

The literary essay in modern European literary history started with Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) - the 'father' of the genre and often treated as the writer of

the 'definitive' essay. During the past three hundred years, a large body of study relating to his essays has evolved. The enormous variety of issues which appear in his texts are used to support many and often contradictory theories in literature, philosophy, history or psychology. These contradictions are of course inevitable, when one looks closely at the form, the range, the variety and the style of his essays. For a long time, Montaigne was also unique because of writings included both essays and reflections on the writing of the form itself[1].

A major contribution to the study of the essay as a form in the German-speaking world during the first half of the twentieth century, came with György Luckás (1885-1971) who was followed by Theodor Adorno (1903-1969). Both are concerned mainly with the relationship between the essay and art, and they pose the question whether the essay is an art form. They base their analysis on nineteenth century and early twentieth century German literature. Curiously, neither discusses Montaigne nor any of the studies related to his essays.

The person who created a renewed interest in the essay form was the French writer

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[1]For a complete translation of the three-volumes (named "Books") of Montaigne's essays containing all 107 individual essays, see Montaigne, M. de, Frame, D (trans.) The Complete works: Essays: Travel Journals: Letters, 1958b, London: Hamish Hamilton. All references in this thesis to Montaigne essays are taken from this edition and are in this form: Montaigne, 1958b: 'Essay Title', page number.
For extensive bibliographical references to the study of Montaigne through the ages, see Good, G. The Observing Self. Rediscovering the Essay, 1988, London: Routledge, and Sayce, R The Essays of Montaigne - A Critical Exploration., 1972, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Roland Barthes (1915-1980). R. Bensmaïa and S. Sontag both offer an overview of the development of the essay from Montaigne to Barthes. Sontag, in her introduction to a volume of translations of Barthes' essays, describes Barthes' work as the culmination of both the French (Montaigne and Gide) and the German (Nietzsche) traditions. Bensmaïa, throughout his extremely detailed study of Barthes' essays, declares Barthes to be the new Montaigne. Both regard him as the true follower of the sixteenth century writer (see Sontag, 1982: xxxiii), and the person who rediscovered the essay form and pushed it toward new boundaries and possibilities.

The essay can be described as the triangular relationship between the 'self' (the writer), the 'text' (the writing itself) and the reader, who is drawn into the essay to play an active role in its reading via the text's structural forms. The essay develops its own aesthetics and style, which may be loosely described or defined but which, paradoxically, are easily recognised by the reader. For the purpose of a general discussion of the essay form, G. Good offers a useful and clear introduction with which to begin. According to Good, the following general points are essential in the definition of the essay:

- The essay is normally written in prose. Its language stresses the accuracy of representation, rather than the elaboration of literary style, as is the case with narrative fiction or scholarly study.
- The essay's language is relatively informal, often factual and colloquial. Both

Montaigne and Bacon, the first English essayist, chose French and English respectively in preference to Latin, the common written language of their times.

- The essay is flexible in length. Short and long sentences are often alternated. The length of a paragraph is as variable as is the overall length of the essay itself.

- The essay presents knowledge, but does not offer a complete, systematically organised scholarship. The essayist needs to be an independent observer, rather than a specialist in any field of knowledge.

- The essayist is prepared to face a world in which nothing is known for certain. The essay seeks diversity and the personal and avoids the disciplines of knowledge. In contrast, disciplined modes of study or writing seek unity and use a particular methodology, where access to the thesis is often limited to the specialists in the field.

- The essay concentrates on raw, crude and unsorted material or on experiences which are often unclassified and undefined within a discipline. The essay is not a 'study' which contributes to the general system of knowledge, but is a process of self-learning.

- Quotations in an essay are used as a form of dialogue between the writer and the reader and are not intended to lend authority to the work, as is the case in a disciplined study. Quotations taken from sources in the past are not put in the essay to reinforce the present experience of the writer, but instead they are part of the current experience itself. The modern essay, as established by Montaigne, broke with the previous practice of relying heavily on authoritative ancient texts. Using

quotations, though, was one of Montaigne's only concessions to the previous generation's tradition of writings and to the authority of the 'giant' writers of the past, such as Virgil, Horace and Seneca (Good, 1988: ix-x, 1-9).

Content

Regarding the content of the essay, without proffering a rigid categorisation of the essay's subject matters and accepting the fact that many essays are nearly always a mixture of all or some of the following features, we are able say that an essay may comprise:

- A letter addressed to the reader, or addressed to a real or fictional friend.
- A series of descriptive sketches, in fictional or non-fictional prose, which relate a story or an incident.
- A discussion of a moral issue, but not a complete study of ethics and morality.

In face of big or small moral questions, the essay emphasises the lack of moral coherence and perfection in the human moral stand, accepting the fact that human behaviour often escapes from a system of values and is erratic by nature. The essay will include contradictory ideas from time to time as its charts its route through a series of fragments. Montaigne, after writing essays for sixteen years, makes this point clearly:

> The world is but a perennial movement. All things in it are in constant motion (...) I do not portray being (...) I portray passing (...) I may indeed

contradict myself now and then (...) if my mind could gain a firm footage, I would not make essays, I would make decisions; but it is always in apprenticeship and trial (Montaigne, 1958b: 'Of Repentance', 611).

- A travelogue which highlights a particular location or an experience during travelling. But the essay is not a complete travel book, charting the entire experience of the trip; it is a mixture of self-preoccupation and observation by the traveller. Chance plays an important role within the travel element in an essay. In an analogue to walking, the essay is constantly changing pace and direction, laying itself open to digression, deviation, deflection and wandering.

- Autobiographical elements play an important role as subject matter in the essay. But again, as in the case of the travel feature within an essay, an essay does not chart a complete and systematic account of the writer's life, but instead concentrates on an episode or a single experience (Good, 1988: vii - xiii).

The essay is not about the 'self' only, as J.M Cohen, one of Montaigne's modern English translators, claims (1958: 9). The essay is not a confession either. It is a medium of communication to a friend, no more and no less. For example, Montaigne's essays started as a result of his wish to 'communicate' to his closest friend, Etienne de la Boétie, who had died a short while earlier. A definitive system of presentation of a series of experiences is substituted in the essay by the realisation that everyone's experience is mixed, varied and divergent in a similar way. As P.

Lopate states: "At the core of the personal essay is the supposition that there is a certain unity to human experience" (1994: xxiii). The essayist's truths are 'for me' and 'for now', personal and provisional. The essay is as close to the experience of the individual as a diary. But the essay, in contrast to the diary, does not present a chronological, systematic and complete account of the writer's daily experiences.

Structure and Style

We have seen from the above definitions of the literary essay that one of the crucial elements of the essay is the flexibility with which the writer treats his/her experiences. S/he does not impose a system on them. Judgments and assumptions may be put forward, but they are not used as fundamentals. When conclusions are presented in an essay they are not foregone conclusions: "Knowledge and truth can lodge in us without judgement, and judgement also without them, indeed the recognition of ignorance is one of the fairest and surest testimonies of judgement that I find" (Montaigne, 1958b: 'Of Books', 297). In fact the essay's 'conclusions' (if one can use the term at all) often contradict each other and cannot be used as a basis for a further future study. "Intrigued with their limitations, both physical and mental, they (the essayists) are attracted to cul-de-sac" , claims Lopate (1994: xxvii). Nothing in an essay is carried over. An essay starts every time afresh from a new beginning. An essay offers knowledge of the moment, no more, no less. The essay does not claim to present a definitive study or a properly laid down chain of arguments. Its authority is not in the systematic presentation of the outcomes of

learning but in the experience presented by the writer.

E. Moore in her comparative study of Max Frisch's Sketchbook and Kenko's Essays in Idleness stresses the Japanese concept in which the author's experience is considered to be the historical truth (1988: 168). Furthermore, the Japanese literary tradition accepts that the truth "lies within the perception of the perceiver in his ability to express this reality in an aesthetically persuasive manner" (Ibid: 169). Thoughts, meditations, perceptions and reflections stay close to the objects and ideas put forward in the essay. The truth in an essay is limited, and it does not claim to be all embracing. The essay is a provisional and tentative reflection. Scepticism from the writer's point of view, as it is presented to the reader, is crucial in the understanding of an essay. Montaigne's essays can be seen as the most striking in the genre, precisely because of that feature. In contrast to Montaigne, Francis Bacon, his contemporary, projected a great deal of confidence in his assertion that humans possess clear ability to progress in their understanding of the world (Good, 1988: 43-54).

Ideas within an essay are developed through things, objects or associations and not through a direct line of argument. In a narrative, a presentation of a catalogue of events or a logical argument, one event follows another, often as a result of a cause and effect relationship. In an essay, event and reflection, object and idea are

interwoven and limit each other's development. Adorno uses the colourful metaphor of the woven carpet to describe the process (1984: 160). This characteristic of the essay stands is a stark contrast to the linear structure of the scientific study or the narrative story.

Crucial elements in attempting to define the essay are the selection process and the techniques of ordering issues, ideas and events. An essay is based on the premiss that issues and ideas are selected as they have occurred to the writer, and not as they generally occur. The writer's experience or perception of the 'what, who, where and why' of the subject matter is crucial. It does not mean, though, that the essayist examines his/her navel in an endless anguish and self-interest. S/he speaks freely to the reader about events, hopes, ideas and fears. M. J. Miller in her comparative study of the Japanese autobiographical genre and Montaigne's essays defines the particular nature of the autobiography in the essay:

> Of course, the recreation of this personality or character, as revealed by the views expressed in the essays, is dependent on the reader: the organization of the material is such that the personality is implicit in the work, implicit in what is expressed and in the way it is expressed. The reader recreates for himself a sense of the writer, a portrait that is based on these implications" (1985: 246).

Although the essay includes some direct autobiographical elements, it cannot be studied as an autobiography. Montaigne wrote: "Everyone recognises me in my book, and my book in me" (1958b: 'On Some Verses of Virgil', 667), and in another place: "I have no more made my book than my book has made me" (Ibid: 'On Giving Lie', 504). D. Frame in his introduction to his translation of Montaigne's work declares that "the book is the man" (1958: v). He sees the 'self' as the dominant element in discussing the essay. The same is true of the other modern English translator of Montaigne, J. M Cohen, who calls the work 'an autobiography', although he proceeds immediately to qualify his definition, pointing to the essay as a very unusual autobiography (1958: 9). Both translators' views are somewhat limited. G. Defaux highlights a very important element in the study of the essay. He rejects the idea that the study of Montaigne is the study of the man himself. The 'self' of the text is not the same as the 'self' of Michel de Montaigne. He wholeheartily embraces Barthes' emphasis on the text, as it seems fruitless now, centuries later, to go on and speculate about the writer's life (1983: 73-92).

The 'self' in the essay, either visible or obscured, is often only a reference point. The mixture of elements, events and reflections can only be held together with the concept of the 'self'. R. Bensmaïa, in his study of Barthes, emphasises the notion of the essay as a practice of writing. The essay is a text, generated from fragments which exist outside established classifications. These fragments 'refuse' a fixed

centre or an over-arching scheme. M. Richman in her introduction to Bensmaïa's book on Barthes observes that : "their composition consists of heterogeneous series of ideas 'hinged' together by a '*mot-bas-tant*' a 'sufficient word', the most common being *le corps* - the body" (1987: xi). Bensmaïa uses throughout his book the term 'the reflective text' to point to the overwhelmingly personal character of the essay in its relation to the 'self'. The 'self' and the 'text' are inseparable. The writer stands in the centre of an often eclectic and fragmentary text. The essayist establishes himself as the primary intellectual subject for the variety of digressions, instead of using external stimuli on which to 'hinge' the essay (Richman, 1987: x).

Barthes' writings, in particular his book S/Z and the four books that followed - The Pleasure of the Text, Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes, A Lover's Discourse, and Camera Lucida, contain fragmentary texts and offer an example of a matrix of different genres. But the essay is not the 'mélange of genres', but the genre of 'self-generation', emanating from the 'self' (Richman, 1987: xvii). Barthes himself, in the section entitled 'Step by Step', describes this process in detail. He states that one must first of all renounce structuring the text according to the principles of classical rhetoric, as they are taught from secondary school onward: "Everything signifies ceaselessly and several times, but without being delegated to a great final ensemble, to an ultimate structure" (1975: 12). The writer needs to break down the 'single text' to the last detail, by working back along the multitude threads of meanings. The 'single text' is not used to create a unified model but is an

"entrance into a network with thousands of entrances" (Ibid.). He describes the process as the step-by-step method, elevating digression to a system. As a result, the text is presented to the reader directly, instead of through an assembled methodical structure. According to Sontag, Barthes' writings have, in the final analysis, one great subject: writing itself (1982: vii).

Richman sees the use of the digression method as a way to abolish the distance that separates the producer of the text from the reader. Barthes' text does not belong to a generic category. It creates a strong, close relationship between the writer and the reader and it demands that the reader becomes a producer and not a consumer of the text (1987: xviii). This relationship between the text and the reader is mentioned by M. Miller in her discussion of Japanese essay form: "The reader recreates for himself a sense of the writer, a portrait that is based on these implications" (1985: 246). The same effect on the reader had already been noted by Montaigne's earlier commentators. Frame offers two examples: Emerson commented: "it seems to me as if I had myself written the book (...) so sincerely it spoke to my thought and experience" (quoted in Frame, 1958: vi) and Pascal remarked that: "it is not in Montaigne, but in myself, that I find all that I see in him" (Ibid). Frame describes this as a 'mystery': "no one has explained this" (Ibid). Barthes' notion, years later, of the reader as the producer of the text, offers an explanation of that 'mystery'.

A fascinating footnote to the study of Montaigne's essays and his influence on the

Modernist movement in literature earlier this century, and especially on Virginia Woolf, is presented by D. Marchi. Woolf herself, in her essay dedicated to Montaigne in the volume of essays called The Common Reader, writes of Montaigne as 'the first Modern'. Woolf went 'on a pilgrimage' to France, to Montaigne's castle and visited his study in the tower of his estate. The visit moved her greatly. She describes the effect of Montaigne's essays on the reader as being like standing in front of an old painting:

> But this talking of oneself, following one's own vagaries, giving the whole map, weight, colour, and circumference of the soul in its confusion, its variety, its imperfection - this art belonged to one man only: to Montaigne. As the centuries go by, there is always a crowd before that picture, gazing into its depths, seeing their own faces reflected in it, seeing more the longer they look, never being able to say quite what it is that they see (1925: 84).

Coming away from the visit she reflects on the art of writing in light of Montaigne's essays:

> There is, in the first place, the difficulty of expression. We all indulge in the strange, pleasant process called thinking, but when it comes to saying, even to someone opposite, what we think, then how little we are able to convey! The phantom is through the mind and out of the window before we can lay salt on its tail, or slowly sinking and returning to the profound

darkness which it has lit up momentarily with a wandering light. Face, voice, and accent eke out our words and impress their feebleness with character in speech. But the pen is a rigid instrument; it can say very little; it has all kinds of habits and ceremonies of its own. It is dictatorial too: it

> is always making ordinary men into prophets, and changing the natural stumbling trip of human speech into the solemn and stately march of pens (1925: 85).

Marchi charts the direct line of influence of the Montaigne essay on Woolf via Gournay, Montaigne's editor and the first feminist writer in France, and via the writer Walter Pater, Woolf's mentor. Although Woolf refers directly to Montaigne only once, the Frenchman's scepticism, personal style, historical and cultural diversity and even his ambiguous treatment of gender have contributed dramatically, according to Marchi, to Woolf's work and in particular to A Room Of One's Own and Orlando. Marchi goes as far as to suggest the link between Montaigne's father's surname - Eyquem = Oakham (in English) - and the poem "The Oak Tree" at the centre of the narrative of Orlando. More interesting still is Marchi's assertion that Montaigne's essays, Pater's Gaston and Woolf's Orlando are all "prototypes of the open, scriptible text of Barthes - embodying that provisional mode of literature which always demands further analysis" (1997: 16)

P. Lopate, in his discussion of the literary essay as an introduction to the essay film, raises an important question regarding style: "It is not enough for the essayist to slay a bull; it must be done with more finesse than butchery" (1996: 245). The self-exposure, the doubts, the scepticism, the honesty and the 'rough ride' between ideas and concepts can only be convincing and meaningful for the reader if they project authority, using a style full of surprises and containing freshness and originality. For the readers to become the true producers of the text, to appreciate the 'digressionary', in Barthes' terms, and the 'methodically unmethodically' shape of the essay as described by Adorno, the essay has to possess a flair so as to take the reader along the bumpy road of turns and twists. The essay "reflects a childlike freedom that catches fire, without scruple, on what others have already done" (Adorno 1984: 152). According to Sontag, 'writing itself' is essential to the essay, style and, in particular, the 'excessive, playful, intricate, subtle, sensuous language' must play a role in the establishing the form (1982: xxii).

M.J. Miller in her comparison between the tenth century Japanese collection of sketches by Sei Shonagon, The Pillow Book, and Montaigne's essays observes that:

> An interesting parallel between the two authors (is) their common love of writing for the joy of it (...) Both Montaigne and Sei Shonagon, perhaps because they invest so much in writing itself, seem free of any negative egotism, for all the introspection. The delight in the world around them and in the play of their own wit in recording their reactions seems at

times almost as unselfconscious as that of a child (1985: 261).

In an elegant and concise manner, fusing the two elements of the 'self' and style, Sontag puts two quotes at the beginning of her essay on Barthes: The first is by the American poet Wallace Stevens in a journal dated 1899: "The best poetry will be rhetorical criticism". The second, "I rarely lose a sight of myself", is by the French writer Paul Valéry (1982: vii). In his final question, 'What then is the Essay?', Bensmaïa evokes the art of the Sophist as described by Plato:

> This art of contradiction which, by the ironical part of an art founded on a mere opinion, belongs to mimicry and (...) is concerned with the making of images; this part, not divine but merely human, of the art of production, having discourse as its particular province, fabricates its illusions (Plato, quoted in Bensmaïa, 1987: 92).

The aesthetic question raised by Bensmaïa at the end of his study of the essay form is also the one which forms the centre of Adorno's discussion of the essay.

Aesthetics

Theodor Adorno's 'The Essay as Form', written between 1954 and 1958, reflecting on the shape of the essay form in Germany, comes to the conclusion that in the past it had not fared very well, nor received a 'good press'. He positions the essay between the scientific and the artistic forms. Adorno claims that the essay:

> mirrors what is loved and hated, instead of presenting the intellect (...) Luck

> and play are essential to the essay. It does not begin with Adam and Eve but with what it wants to discuss; it says what is at issue and stops where it feels itself complete - not where nothing is left to say (1984: 152).

György Luckás in his letter to Leo Popper which opens his book of essays, tries to describe the essay as a well-defined art form: "Only now may we write down the opening words: the essay is an art form, an autonomous and integral giving-of-form to an autonomous and complete life" (1974: 18). Adorno disagrees. He fails to see the traditional aesthetic constraints of the form, preferring to describe the essay's purpose as breaking free from any form in pursuit of its truth. Furthermore, referring to the opposite end of the spectrum, Adorno also disagrees with positivism, which claims total separation between form and content. Adorno does not accept the possibility that a discussion on the subject of aesthetics can be done unaesthetically. In fairly strong language, Adorno claims the right of the essay to break free from any system of organised knowledge, from 'the violence of dogma' (1984: 158).

Adorno puts forward the notion that personal experience based on a personal consciousness cannot be separated from the experience of humanity and history. The individual's life experience, as reflected in the essay, is as valid as traditional theory in describing the social history of humanity. Adorno sees the value in the essay form which seeks to discover its subject from within, rather than by bringing in other disciplines and theories to make sense of the subject with which it is dealing.

This opens the way to free associations of ideas. Without relying on outside theories, the essay's individual concepts support each other. This can be related to Bensmaïa's concept of ideas being 'hinged' together, described above. Of course concepts are necessary, according to Adorno: "Even language that does not fetishise the concept cannot do without concepts" (1984: 160). But the essay takes the presentation much more seriously than the traditionally presented theories which often separate the subject from the presentation. Adorno praises the 'methodically unmethodically' approach of the essay (Ibid: 161). The essay works through a series of fragments, mirroring reality, and does not attempt to smooth over the cracks as a disciplined study does. A. Tournon reaches a similar conclusion, while discussing the irregularities in Montaigne's texts: "The resulting irregularities are not simply a fortuitous disorder, it is a consequence of a system in which expression and a critique of thought take precedence over the rule of rhetoric" (1983: 53).

Adorno compares the development of concepts in an essay to the process of learning a language in a foreign country. Unlike the systematically put together teachings of a language in school, a language is learnt in a foreign country through experience, 'without a dictionary', through the repetition of words in different contexts. The price paid by learning through experience rather than by the rules is often making errors in the new language. It is similar to the price the essay pays as a result of its particular mode of writing. The essay form lacks security as a consequence of its

open intellectual approach (1984: 161).

In his critical study of Montaigne's writings, R. Sayce identifies an aesthetic unity in the Montaigne essay. It is achieved by combining the advantages of immediate and spontaneous thoughts with, paradoxically, the grouping of thoughts, however loosely, around some sort of central theme: "One of Montaigne's greatest achievements is the reconciliation of these two opposite poles" (1972: 263). And Adorno claims that "discontinuity is essential to the essay" (1984: 164). The essay is an open form as it does not subscribe to a system. But, at the same time, it can be described as a closed form since it puts a great deal of emphasis on the presentation of ideas. Max Frisch in his introduction to his Sketchbook, a book of short fragments of writings from the late 1940's, asks his readers to address this:

> The reader - always assuming there is one, that there is somebody who is interested in following these sketches and jottings of a youngish contemporary whose claim to attention lies not in his person but only in his contemporaneity (...) - the reader would do this book a great favor were he not to dip into its pages according to whim or chance, but to follow the order as presented; the separate stones of a mosaic - and that is what this book is at any rate intended to be - can seldom stand up by themselves (1977: 1).

Earlier in this study, parallels between the Japanese rich medieval essay tradition, in

particular as represented in Kenko's Essays in Idleness and Shonagon's The Pillow Book, and between Frisch's and Montaigne's work have been already highlighted. A close look at the aesthetics of the Japanese genre of essay writing reveals even more comparisons with the Western literary essay genre and specifically with Adorno's concepts. M.J. Miller in her study of the aesthetics of the Japanese tradition of essay writing in Essays in Idleness and the The Pillow Book describes the practice of using different means to unify a literary work, apart from the narrative story structure. She mentions the use of associative links, seasonal references, and symbolic identification, all which were used to involve the active participation of the reader in the reconstruction of the Japanese essay text (1985: 255). L. Chance lists the different styles used by a Kenko's essay: "(The essay) incorporates subtle multiple genres, including narrative, memoir, journal, poetic criticism, aphorism, Buddhist homily, admonition, court manual, and oral anecdote"

(1997: 446)

Kenko describes this process of writing in his essay no 82:

Somebody once remarked that thin silk was not satisfactory as a scroll wrapping because it was so easily torn. Ton'a [a Japanese poet, 1289-1372] replied, "It is only after the silk wrapper has frayed at top and bottom, and the mother-of-pearl has fallen from the roller that a scroll looks beautiful". This opinion demonstrated the excellent taste of the

man. People often say that a set of books looks ugly if all volumes are not in the same format, but I was impressed to hear the Abbot Koyu [a contemporary of Kenko] say, "It is typical of the unintelligent man to insist on assembling complete sets of everything". Imperfect sets are better. In everything, no matter what it may be, uniformity is undesirable. Leaving something incomplete makes it interesting, and gives one the feeling that there is room for growth (1967: 70).

D. Keene in his introduction to Kenko's essays places them and the The Pillow Book within the Japanese random mode of composition known as *zuihitsu* which means 'follow the brush': "The formlessness of the *zuihitsu* did not impede enjoyment by readers; indeed, they took pleasure not only in moving from one to another of the great variety of subjects treated but in tracing subtle links joining the successive episodes" (1967: xvi). Keene finds the expression of contradictions an important element in Kenko's essays, pointing to his use of random, suggestive style rather than his systematic thinking (Ibid: xxi). He states that the irregularity and incompleteness of Kenko's essays go well with the notion of simplicity:

Simplicity which allows the mind freedom to imagine, to create, did not appeal to nineteenth century (European) observers of Japanese architecture, who contrasted its insignificance with the grandeur of European masterpieces, but today our tastes are better attuned to the understatement

advocated by Kenko (Ibid: xx).

L. Chance in her discussion of Essays in Idleness notes that moving freely from topic to topic, the reader of the essays "enters into active dialogue with a reticent yet highly rhetorical Kenko, who both plays upon and disappoints ordinary reactions. Even his most dogmatic passages (...) anticipate the reader's responses, while ignoring their incompatibility with his intermittent bursts of celebration of everyday life" (1997: 446).

Michel de Montaigne

Michel de Montaigne decided at the age of thirty-eight to leave his work as a councillor in the city of Bordeaux and dedicate his life to writing. In the following twenty years he proceeded to produce a total of 107 essays, covering a vast variety of subjects and topics ranging, from a short segment of two pages to a book-length essay. His writings slowly grew in confidence and maturity and developed organically to become longer, more complex and more personal essays. G. Defaux warns against the temptation to 'anthologise' the work (1983: 79). When the reader of Montaigne is faced with the fragmentary, the reflective and the variety of subject matter, s/he will be quickly tempted to 'organise' the 'mess'. The reader will be also tempted, wrongly, to simplify and reduce the text as it contains a complex layer of voices and discourses (Ibid: 84).

Reading Montaigne is neither the study of the man himself nor the reductive activity of study of the text. It is both. The purpose of the text is for the writer and the reader to stay within it and not to speculate about wider issues. The word 'essay' has its origin in the Latin: to weigh, to test, to examine. The strongly experimental character of the essay is often overlooked, but it is clearly reflected by Montaigne's choice of the term 'assai' to describe his writings. The experimental character of the form is also clearly seen in the style, the choice of subjects and the structure of the essay. Montaigne's essay is a continuous test between the subject matter, the 'text' and the 'self' or, as Defaux puts it: "the intelligence which assimilates, masters and speaks the text" (Ibid: 91). J.A. McCarthy, in his introduction to the German essay makes the following remark about Montaigne:

> The most striking leitmotif in the history of the essay is Montaigne's famous inscription "Que sçais-je?" which has been variously interpreted by emphasising each word independently: "*What* can I know?" "What do *I* know? "and "What do I *know*?". The playful ambiguity is entirely appropriate for the literary form whose *Spielcharakter* (playful character) is often cited as a distinguishing trait (1997: 323, my italics).

Montaigne himself offers very clear insight into the relationship between the writer, the text, the reader and the style of writing. In 'the essay 'Of Democritus and Heraclitus Montaigne' comments about his own practice:

> If it is a subject I do not understand at all, even on that I essay my

judgment, sounding the ford from a good distance, and then, finding it too deep for my height, I stick to the bank. And this acknowledgment that I cannot cross over is a token of its action, indeed one of those it is most proud of. Sometimes in a vain and nonexistent subject, I try to see if it will find the wherewithal to give it body, prop it up, and support it. (...) I take the first subject that chance offers. They are all equally good to me. And I never plan to develop them completely. For I do not see the whole of anything; nor do those who promise to show it to us. Of a hundred members and faces that each thing has, I take one, sometimes only to lick it, sometimes to brush the surface, sometimes to pinch it to the bone (...) Scattering a word here, there another, samples separated from their context, dispersed, without a plan and without a promise, I am not bound to make something of them or to adhere to them myself without varying when I please and giving myself up to doubt and un-certainty and my ruling quality, which is ignorance (...) Things in themselves may have their own weights and measures and qualities, but once inside, within us, she (the soul) allots them their qualities as she sees fit (...) and the coloring that she chooses - brown, green, bright, dark, bitter, sweet, deep, superficial and which each individual soul chooses (1958b: 'Of Democritus and Heraclitus', 219-220).

Montaigne's extraordinary use of rich visual writing is clearly demonstrated in the

quotation above, as is his direct, translucent and personal style. It reveals a flow of "natural form of thought" (Good, 1988: 42). It can be compared with the Japanese essay tradition of Kenko, and the random mode of composition known as *zuihitsu* - 'follow the brush' discussed earlier. Montaigne's style is also an excellent example for Lopate's and Adorno's assertion that a distinctive method of expression is necessary for the essay. Montaigne's strong visual language is even more apparent in his essay 'Of the Education of Children': "The bees plunder the flowers here and there, but afterwards they make of them honey (...) it is no longer thyme or marjoram" (1958b: 111) and in his longest essay, 'Apology to Raymond Sebond': "To really learned men has happened what happens to ears of wheat: they rise high and lofty, heads erect and proud, as long as they are empty; but when they are full and swollen with grain in their ripeness, they begin to grow humble and lower their horns" (1958b: 370). Ralph Emerson, the nineteenth century American essayist describes Montiagne's style as being as "wild and savoury as sweat fern" and observes : "cut these words and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive; they walk and run" (quoted in Chevalier, 1997: 570). Montaigne, in his last essay, 'Of Experience', stretches and expands the essay form to include a detailed account of his daily life, pleasures and desires, all interwoven with his desire for knowledge. Centuries later, Roland Barthes, in S/Z and the books following it, picked up that expanded form of the essay where Montaigne had left it.

During his 'career' as a writer, Montaigne spent eighteen months travelling extensively through Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Italy and incorporated his experiences in his essays. Those experiences appear in the body of the essays as anecdotes, stories or accounts of various events observed by the writer. In the essay 'Of Cruelty', for example, he describes witnessing the hanging of a notorious robber in Rome. His extensive travels are also reflected in the use, after his return, of Italian proverbs and quotations, mainly from Dante and Tasso. Montaigne left behind after his death a separate series of travel journals, not intended for publication. The journals detail his sightseeing and encounters abroad. They form a fascinating 'appendix' to the study of Montaigne's essays, especially as they were not written for public consumption, with no 'reader' in mind and without the direct appeal to us. They were discovered accidentally in 1770, two hundred years after Montaigne's death. D. Frame sees the travel journals as a confirmation of Montaigne's sincerity in the essays, as they display the same style and the relaxed personal and modest spirit of the essays (1958: 862). Montaigne's travels added another dimension to the essays - they broadened the writer's mind and enabled him to draw on a wider range of human experiences and to put his and his countrymen's predicaments in perspective (see for example his essay 'Of Coaches', which is discussed in detail below).

Montaigne himself refers in numerous places to the structure of his essays, for

example, in the essays 'Of Vanity', 'Of Friendship' and 'On Some Verses of Virgil'. He does not see any systematic structure in the essays but suggests that the disorder itself follows a plan, often around a theme and a series of digressions. R. Sayce attempts to identify several formal types of Montaigne's essays:

- The first is the untypical, clearly articulated structure as it appears in some early essays. 'Of Friendship', an essay on Montaigne's closest friend, La Boétie, offers a clearly laid-out catalogue of different types of friendships.
- The second form is identified as an indirect entry, as it appears in 'Of Evil Means Employed to a Good End'. The subject of the essay - foreign soldiers drafted to fight a war as mercenaries - is introduced only half way through the essay after a general introduction.
- A common form of an essay consists of two main themes which are continuously interchanged as the essay unfolds. In 'Of Conscience' Montaigne starts the essay by telling a story of a meeting he had during the civil war with an enemy officer. The meeting made him examine his conscience. He then goes on to discuss the issues of torture and justice which lead him back into the subject of conscience .
- One of the most common and complex structures is that of the interwoven themes. 'Of Vanity' is often cited as one of the best examples of this form. It embraces eleven different topics, according to Sayce (1972: 270). Montaigne himself, at the start of the essay, refers to it: "Here you have, a little more decently, some excrements of an aged mind, now hard, now loose, and always undigested. And when shall I make an end of describing the continual agitation and changes of

my thoughts, whatever subject they light on...?" (1958b: 'Of Vanity', 721).

- A frequent form of an essay is the single theme which embraces a web of digressions and often contradictions. Again his last essay 'Of Experience' (which was discussed earlier in the chapter) is an excellent example of this. 'Of the Affection of Fathers for their Children' is written as a letter to the writer's friend Madame d'Estissac. The clearly defined theme of the essay, which is reflected in the title, includes a wide range of personal stories, historical reflections and observations on related issues concerning family life.

- A circular form can be found in 'All Things Have their Season', in 'Of Cannibals' and of course, in 'Of Vanity'. This form sometimes appears at the end of an essay which embraces a single theme with a range of digressions.

Of particular interest for this present study is the essay, 'Of Coaches' which, broadly covers the two subjects: Royal life in Europe and the activities of the Spanish invaders in the New World. The essay introduces at the beginning the subject of fear through the writer's experience. What follows is a development of a series of ideas through associations of words and images in a circular movement which comes back at the end to the title of the essay - coaches. The structural development of this essay and the use of associative techniques can easily be seen in the schematic outline below of the essay (developed from a short thematic outline in Sayce, 1972: 272). This outline highlights the main themes of the essay, some of them are mentioned

briefly in the text of the essay, others are developed in length. Capital letters are used to indicate the chain of associations between the various themes as they follow each other within the essay:

Writers use multiple CAUSES to find the 'master cause'.

What are the CAUSES for blessing the person who SNEEZES?

The three CAUSES of the body in letting out WIND.

The CAUSE of heaving WIND by sailors during their SEA journey.

The main CAUSE of SEA-sickness is FEAR.

My experience of FEAR on SEA.

"I was too SICK to think of DANGER" (a quote from Seneca).

How I face FEAR and DANGER.

FEAR was overcome in history by great men mainly on the battle field.

"Where there is less FEAR there is less DANGER" (a quote from Livy).

Absence of FEAR in me is due to insensibility of my part, not strength.

I FEAR a long journey by COACH, or BOAT.

I hate riding in a COACH.

I would write the history of COACHES in wars (if I had a better memory).

Examples of the use of COACHES in wars, mainly by the Hungarians.

Early French KINGS travelled in OX-CARTS.

The POWER and wealth are displayed by KINGS in their use of COACHES.

The sources of POWER enjoyed by KINGS and EMPERORS.

ROMAN EMPERORS used COACHES led by strange beasts.

KINGS should not indulge in vanities, as did the ROMAN EMPERORS. But,

ROMAN EMPERORS left behind great heritage, remarkable for its INGENUITY.

INGENUITY displayed by the ROMAN compared to our poor performances today.

We have made little PROGRESS,

"This age is broken down, and broken down the EARTH" (quote from Lucretius).

Our knowledge of the WORLD is poor.

We have just discovered another WORLD.

We are destroying the NEW WORLD, through ignorance.

Attack on Spanish CRUELTY in the NEW WORLD in the name of their KING.

The remarkable buildings built by the indigenous people in SOUTH AMERICA

They built their cities and run their lives without COACHES.

The last KING of PERU was captured after his people were killed by the Spanish.

He was caught by a HORSEMAN and pulled down to the ground.

This simple schematic breakdown hides the amount of detailed descriptions, wealth of quotations, depth and visual richness in the writing of this essay. But the above outline demonstrates clearly the elaborate structure of the essay, which is based on word, theme or image associations. After a short introduction, the subject of coaches is introduced as a personal dislike by Montaigne and via a circular structure of associative themes, the essay ends with the same theme - coaches, this time in

South America. Although the theme of coaches is central to the essay, the essay is not a single theme essay, but it presents several themes through a mixture of personal observations, quotations and stories. In addition, 'On Coaches' also demonstrates, throughout, the style required by a literary essay. The essay's strong criticism of the power enjoyed by the Royals in Europe and of the atrocities performed by the Spanish in America is compelling as the last paragraph of the essay reads:

> That last king of Peru, the day that he was taken, was thus carried on shafts of gold, seated in a chair of gold, in the midst of his army. As many of these carriers as they (the Spanish) killed to make him fall - for they wanted to take him alive - so many others vied to take the place of the dead ones, so that they never could bring him down, however great a slaughter they made of those people, until a horseman seized him around the body and pulled him to the ground (1958b: 699).

This final, highly visual and moving narrative segment of the essay, contains all the previous elements of the essay: the chair, the gold, the horse are all echoes of the description of the Roman Emperors and their coaches, earlier in the essay. The essay's themes regarding the cruelty of the Spanish, the tragic end of a culture and our failing to understand the New World, are all mentioned in this last segment of the essay. The image of a Roman in a coach drawn by four naked girls, previously evoked in the essay, and the image of the dying Peruvian warriors carrying their king on their shoulders at the end, are examples of the rich texture of style in the essay.

Montaigne's personal experiences, apparent formlessness, the associative movement from idea to idea from image to image, and the extensive use of quotations achieve a unity in diversity through association. It represents directly what Adorno praises as the strongly experimental, 'methodically unmethodically' approach of the essay.

P. Lopate clearly sums up:

> The personal essay represents a mode of being. It points the way for the self to function with relative freedom in an uncertain world. Skeptical yet gyroscopically poised, undeceived but finally tolerant of flaws and inconsistencies, this mode of being suits the modern existential situation, which Montaigne first diagnosed. His recognition that human beings are surrounded by darkness, with nothing particularly solid to cling to, led to a philosophical acceptance that one had to make oneself up from moment to moment (1994: xliv).

Conclusion

The literary essay opens the way for the creation of a unique dialogue between the text, the writer and the reader. The text of the essay is written in relatively informal prose. Flexible in length and often mixing various structural elements, the text pays great attention to its representation, rather than to the development of a literary genre. The essay offers the reader knowledge, ideas, stories and observations, but lacks a system of arranged scholarship or a complete narrative. Its

strength is in its diversity and the personal character of the writings. The writer of the essay, either visible or obscured, is often only a reference point, holding the work together structurally. This opens the way to free associations of ideas working through a series of fragments. Without relying on outside theories, the essay's individual concepts support each other. The text's diverse and separate structural forms bring in the reader to play an active role in the construction of the essay.

The Montaigne 'assai' is a continuous test between the text and the writer who absorbs, masters and offers the text to the reader. Anecdotes, stories or accounts of various events observed by Montaigne are often presented as interwoven themes in a circular structure. His extraordinary use of visual writing and his direct, translucent and personal style are crucial to the understanding of his essays. Analysis of Montaigne's essays demonstrates that the writer's personal experiences, together with the apparent formlessness of the essay, the associative movement between ideas and the extensive use of quotations, achieve a unity in diversity through association. It represents what Adorno praises as the strongly experimental, 'methodically unmethodically', approach of the essay. The analysis of the essay's content, aesthetics, structure and style, and in particular the Montaignean essay, offers the foundation for the study of the essay film. Many of the literary essay's aesthetic, thematic, structural and stylistic elements are to be found in the essay film genre.

CHAPTER THREE : THE ESSAY FILM

Introduction

Compared with the vast amount of writings on the subject of the literary essay, the essay film has had only limited exposure within the field of film studies. Most of the writings are analyses of individual films, with few attempts to reach a wider definition of the form. Some attempt to relate, in general terms, the essay film to the literary essay, and in particular to the Montaignean essay, others mention the essay film as part of the documentary genre. Currently the essay film is often presented as a sub-group of the documentary genre[2]. Existing theories of the essay film form have not yet travelled all the way down the road of textual analysis and the close study of the style and structure of the form. This study will do just that. The essay film form is not new. Vertov's work had already pointed in the direction of the genre, although it is true to say that, compared with other cinematic genres, the essay film was not, and still is not, one of the most popular forms in cinema.

The essay film is best defined as a separate genre, utilising cinematic language as the cinematic 'text' in relationship to the film maker and the audience. By a careful use of the different elements of cinematic language - the basic 'building blocks' of image, sound, editing and the organisation and manipulation of time and space - the film

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[2]See for example: Renov, M, "Lost, Lost, Lost, Mekas as an Essayist" in James, D, (ed.) To Free the Cinema, 1992, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

maker's presence is woven into the body of the film. The cinematic 'text' becomes the 'reflective text', the mediating medium between the film maker and the spectator. The essay film is not an autobiographical genre, although it may include autobiographical elements. It is not an organised chain of arguments, a study or an investigation as is the documentary genre. Nor is it an Aristotelean closed narrative form presenting a unity in action, space and time, as is the Hollywood fiction film. It creates narrative and non-narrative structures, 'methodically unmethodically' put together, to form a unique cinematic genre. The essay film is not a part of the documentary genre. It is an independent genre which owes more to the avant-garde and to the tradition of the literary essay than to the documentary genre.

Existing theories of the essay film

Often the term essay film has been used to describe films of different kinds, which cannot be described as part of any other established genre. That alone cannot be enough of a reason to use the term. P. Lopate mentions a large number of films which at one time or another have been called essay films and reaches the conclusion that none of them - except Night and Fog by Alain Resnais - can appropriately be defined as a essay film. Lopate presents five definitions of what, in his view, constitutes a essay film:

1. An essay film must have words.

2. The text of the film must represent a single voice.

3. The text must show an attempt to understand reasoned line of discourse.

4. The text must contain a strong personal view, not only information.

5. The text's language should be eloquent and attractive (1996: 245-247).

As a writer of literary essays himself, and with his overwhelming emphasis on the text, Lopate reaches a very sceptical conclusion in trying to find a common ground between the literary essay and the essay film. Looking through a large number of films, including works by Marker, Godard, Welles, Jost, and many others he concludes that most of them lack a visual quality which is cinematic enough to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with great cinematic works, except Night and Fog (Ibid: 269). Curiously, although mentioning Montaigne in passing as one of the 'fathers' of the literary essay, Lopate does not look in detail at the essay film in light of Montaigne.

M. Renov, on the other hand, does use Montaigne's essay as the basis of his discussion of the essay film:

> In the present context, it is the Montaignean essay, indissolubly coupling personal and social-historical exploration ('the measure of sight' and 'the measure of things'), that provides the ground upon which the figure of the film/video essay can be constructed (...) Within discourse, 'self' and 'other' become enmeshed and mutually defining: the social a representation, always mediated through subjectivity, becomes instead its expression (1989: 7).

Combining the discussion of Montaigne's and Barthes' literary essays, Renov uses

them in his definition of the essay film:

> These visual works, like the literary essay form, can be said to resist generic classification, straddling a series of all-too-confining antinomies: fiction/non-fiction, documentary/avant-garde, cinema/video. In ways that can be specified, these texts are notable for their negotiation of three terms or critical axes around and against which the essay-effect can be said to form: history, subjectivity, language (Ibid: 8).

Being more generous than Lopate, Renov names a large number of possible essay films and focuses his study of the genre on the three above-mentioned elements: history, subjectivity and language. By introducing the three concepts of history, subjectivity and language, Renov tries to identify the poetics of the essay film as a separate entity, yet still as part of the overall new documentary discourse. These new concepts outlined by Renov are a direct continuation of ideas presented earlier in this thesis in relation to Montaigne, to Defaux's and Tournon's literary studies, as well as to Barthes' and Bensmaïa's work. Rightly, Renov rejects traditional documentary discourse as a basis for the study of the essay film. The four fundamental tendencies of documentary are mentioned by Renov himself elsewhere as a basis for constructing the poetics of the documentary genre:

1. To record, reveal, or preserve;

2. To persuade or promote;

3. To analyse or interrogate;

4. To express (1993: 21).

The essay film, like the literary essay, does not conform to these principles. This is also Renov's view, but his argument is an interesting one. He sees the documentary genre's development toward the personal and essayistic as a way-out for the "ailing documentary tradition" (1989: 9). Renov's emphasis on the autobiographical element in the documentary is also clear elsewhere:

> By 1990, any chronicler of documentary history would note the growing prominence of work by women and men of diverse cultural backgrounds in which the representation of the historical world is inextricably bound up with self-inscription (...) Subjectivity is no longer construed as 'something shameful'; it is the filter through which the Real enters discourse as well as a kind of experiential compass guiding the work toward its goal as embodied knowledge (1995: http://www.city.yamagata.yamagata.jp/yidff/ff/box/box7/en/b7en-1.html.).

Renov discusses Raul Ruiz's film Of Great Events and Ordinary People (France, 1978) as an example of the essay film (1989: 12). Renov reveals here the somewhat limited view he has of the genre. Ruiz's film - highly personal, disjointed in places, delivering commentary about documentary and to some degree

self-reflective - is far from constituting an essay film. The French election theme is used in the film as a straight-forward dramatic tool. It gives the film a very strong linear structure, emphasised by the use of inter-titling - Day 1, Day 2, etc. - to cut from scene to scene. The film has a strong sense of a build-up toward the end: the election day. In the last section of the film, Ruiz does open up the linear form to some degree by repeating earlier shots from the film, by talking about different texts in relation to the same shot and by intercutting between huts in the Third World and US suburbs. But this last chapter of the film does not alter the overall closed structure of the film.

Likewise, Renov's discussion of Jonas Mekas' film Lost, Lost, Lost (USA, 1949-1975) as an essay film, although it attempts to place the film "across the historical fields of the documentary as well as of the avant-garde" (1992: 219), puts the emphasis on the autobiographical nature of the documentary, on the reflective character of the film, and devotes little time to the avant-garde elements in the film. Although autobiography and the relationship between 'the inward gaze and outward gaze' (Renov after Defaux) are important in the discussion of the essay film, they form only only one element of the essay film. Jonas Mekas himself describes his film as a diary, or a note book. He compares his work to the literary diarist as a collector of images, recording events in his own life and finally editing it down chronologically (quoted in Sitney, 1987: 194).

A. Williams, before Renov, placed Mekas' work as part of the New American Cinema. Mekas' films, according to Williams, have a strong autobiographical content and tend to be 'moralist' in nature. This 'moralistic' strand in Mekas' film Lost, Lost, Lost is similar, in Williams' view, to the French 'moraliste' spirit of self-examination which can be traced back to Montaigne's essays (1976: 62). Williams very briefly describes the film as having "an almost essay-like style" with a reflective character (Ibid). Williams places the film firmly within the documentary genre, but makes two particularly interesting observations about Lost, Lost, Lost. The first is that the writing quality - à la 'caméra-stylo' (the French concept of the 'pen-like' recording of images) of the film connects Mekas' work to the French tradition (see below the discussion of the French writer and film maker Alexandre Astruc's writings). The second observation is that the distance between Mekas - the collector of images - and Mekas - the editor assembling his own images twenty years later - is crucially important for an understanding of Lost, Lost, Lost. This is particular to the process of making an essay film and takes the 'caméra-stylo' style a stage further (see below the discussion on montage). Williams' observations on 'caméra-stylo' and Renov's identification of the 'reflective' elements within Lost, Lost, Lost are correct , but are not sufficient, in my opinion, to define the film as an essay film. Mekas himself speaks in the commentary sound-track of the film about his reasons for making it: "a camera historian, recording events; making notes with the camera; I was there and I recorded it for ever, for history use". Mekas has lost too much of his past and this is the reason for him to record it for the future. The 'caméra-stylo'

technique which Williams mentions in his article is used in the film, but solely as a diary and home-movie tool for collecting the material. The film is a diary - an autobiographical film - wherein most images are directly connected to the subject - Jonas Mekas - and are not observational or of more general or abstract character. The film is a diary documentary about the experience of immigration, trying to relate to reality through the camera's constant recordings of autobiographical events. Reel five of the film (there are in total six parts/reels to the film) is more experimental in its editing and juxtaposing of images, but all the images presented are still autobiographical, 'home-movie' segments treated, compared to the other reels, with a more abrupt and poetic commentary.

The most recent discussion on the subject of films on the 'edge' of the documentary genre is to be found in C. Plantinga's chapter on 'The Poetic Voice' of the nonfiction film in his book Rhetoric and Representation in Non - fiction Film. There, Plantinga tries to define those documentaries which offer alternatives to the established structures of documentary. These films present, upfront, aesthetic considerations, exploit the tension between documentary representation and composition, or put the emphasis on self-analysis rather than on observation or explanation (1997: 171). Plantinga divides these films into four main categories: the poetic documentary; the avant-garde documentary; the parodic documentary and the metadocumentary. All four, according to him, regardless of their reliance on

formal cinematic tools and their use of 'open voices' (Plantinga's term), are still part and parcel of the documentary discourse as "they perform a central function of the documentary: providing information through explanation, observation, or exploration" (Ibid). Of particular interest to this study is his definition of the avant-garde documentary and the metadocumentary. Avant-garde documentaries are style-centred and manipulate the recorded footage in opposition to the aesthetic considerations of the classical cinematic forms. As a result, according to Plantinga:

> The avant-garde nonfiction film encourages an interplay between two ways of viewing the film. On the one hand, the spectator perceives the referent through iconic, indexical images (and perhaps sounds); on the other hand, style makes referentiality difficult, and becomes itself the primary object of interest. When we view an avant-garde nonfiction, we consistently slide between seeing the images as either a window onto the world or a sequence of nonreferential images (Ibid: 176).

The term metadocumentary is an interesting one, because it is applied by Plantinga to Vertov's The Man With the Movie Camera and to some of Chris Marker's films. Plantinga points to the explicit reflective character of these films, as they seek to highlight the documentary representation itself. This is in opposition to the implicit reflective character of avant-garde films (Ibid: 179). The metadocumentary films

use elaborate montage to distinguish themselves from realism (Ibid: 180) and often rely on the use of the voice-over to emphasise the personal multitude of points of view within the film (Ibid: 182). Plantinga places the 'Poetic Voice' films firmly within the documentary genre. In my view, his separation between the metadocumentary, with its explicit reflective character, and the avant-garde, with its implicit reflective style, is somewhat artificial. He points rightly to the very similar range of cinematic tools used in both of them in opposition to the classical documentary. Therefore, I feel, they should be grouped together but not within the documentary genre at all.

The avant-garde roots of the essay film

N. Alter's view, in her discussion of the essay film in relation to Farocki's film Images of the World and the Inscription of War (Germany, 1988), is extremely interesting because it refers to Adorno's writings on the literary essay, to early Soviet cinema, to the French film maker and writer Alexandre Astruc and to the film avant-garde genre. Although her article is mainly focused on the hidden political message of the film, her general discussion of the essay film is unique. She grounds her definition of the essay film in Adorno's aesthetic approach to the essay in the wider historical and political context (Alter, 1996: 166). She adds her own assertion that the essay film needs to include "the political in/visible and in/audible that moves stealthily beneath, within, and around vision, visuality, and visibility" (Ibid: 167).

She follows this by pointing, briefly, to Astruc, Vertov and Richter in order to establish the avant-garde roots of the essay film. In her detailed analysis of Farocki's film, which follows the general discussion on essay film, Alter looks at the important role of editing in constructing the film, referring in particular to Eisenstein's concepts of montage (Ibid: 186). Alter concludes her general discussion on the essay film by referring back to Adorno's writings on the literary essay:

> As a result, essay films, including Farocki's, demand particular techniques of "reading between the lines" to expose a political im/perception - a level of signification in excess of what the film maker intended (...) If, as Adorno noted of the written essay, "nothing can be interpreted out of something that is not interpreted into it" then the filmed essay shows and tells us that we can view and hear a feature film *as* documentary, a documentary *as* feature. So it is that, as "a form of intelligence" [Farocki's preferred term for the essay film], (the film) *Bilder* (...) asks to be actively co-produced by its audience (Ibid: 172).

Interestingly, the term 'form of intelligence' is also found in G. Defaux's definition of Montaigne's essays (Defaux, 1983: 91).

The avant-garde German film maker, Hans Richter, used the term 'essay film' as early as 1940. It was the first time the term is mentioned in film theory literature. In a very short article - published in the Swiss paper Baseler Nationalzeitung in April

1940 - which he named 'The Essay Film, a New Art of Documentary Film', Richter called for a move away from both the narrative fiction film genre and from what he describes as the 'postcard' documentary. Richter advocates breaking the chronological structure and the use of allegory in the new form of essay film: "to render visible what is not visible" (quoted in Blümlinger and Wulff, 1992: 197). Richter calls in his article for a new documentary language which is more artistic than fiction film. By 1957, he dropped the essay film terminology altogether in favour of 'poetic film' which came to describe the experimental film movements of the twentieth century, namely the abstract, dadaist, surrealist, cubist, futurist or expressionist. In an interview with Jonas Mekas in 1957, Hans Richter speaks about his experience in making, what he calls now, 'poetic films'. Reflecting on his work as a visual artist in the 1920's, Richter describes it as part of the avant-garde, comprising the abstract, fantastic and documentary cinema. 'Film poetry' was used, according to Richter, as an opposition to 'film novel' which represented the entertainment genre (Mekas, 1957: 6). All experimental films were described as poetic. The lyrical form of the film poem, according to Richter, gave the maker the freedom to work with the raw material and develop in parallel to the aesthetics of modern art, poetry and music (Ibid: 7).

The French film maker and writer, Alexandre Astruc coined the phrase 'caméra-stylo' (camera-pen) in 1948 to describe the directness with which the film maker

uses the tools of the cinema to create a cinematic language in order to translate his/her ideas to the screen. This is, in his view, similar to the novelist's mode of working with words in creating literary work (Astruc, 1948: 18). Astruc goes back to the silent cinema era in order to argue his case:

> The silent cinema tried to give birth to ideas and meanings by symbolic associations. We have realised that they exist in the image itself, in the natural progression of the film, in every gesture the characters make, in every one of their words and in the camera movements which bind the objects one to another (quoted in Reisz and Millar, 1968: 322).

Astruc highlights above the symbolic associations which are made possible in 'caméra-stylo'. He calls for a new type of film making which emphasises above all the prominent role of the film maker as a creator of images. In 'caméra-stylo', images form the back-bone of a film, escaping both the commercial industry requirements for entertainment, heavily influenced by literature, and the narrow definition of the avant-garde of the 1920's and 1930's as pure, poetic or surrealist cinema (Astruc, 1948: 21). In this, he aims to broaden the term avant-garde to include films which use the 'caméra-stylo' (Ibid: 22).

The image-writing essence of the 'caméra-stylo' was preceded as a cinematic tool by the Russian film maker and writer Dziga Vertov. Vertov says of himself "I am a

film writer. A Cinepoet. I do not write on paper, but on film" (quoted in Geduld, 1967: 97). In 1929, introducing the term 'Kino-Eye', he wrote: "Kino-Eye is the documentary cinematic decoding of both the visible world and that which is invisible to the naked eye" (quoted in Michelson, 1984: 87). [Alter, as we have seen earlier, points to the essay film quality of Farocki's work by highlighting the political visibility and invisibility of his images, without referring directly to Vertov]. In his writings about his film The Man With the Movie Camera, Vertov describes in great detail his effort to establish the 'Kino-Eye' as an experiment in the creation of an autonomous genre, separate from the fictional tradition, the theatre and literature and from the documentary techniques which existed prior to his work (Ibid: 82-91). Vertov tried to reject the traditional narrative structures by concentrating on the image itself. Vertov defined the image as "purely denotational, having no other meaning than the one that arises from its referent" (quoted in Pirog, 1982: 303).

Montage

The associative and symbolic possibilities inherent in 'caméra-stylo' have been mentioned already by Astruc. Understanding montage in the context of the avant-garde roots of the essay film is crucial to this study. A. Wettlaufer, in her discussion of the pre-cinema modes of literary montage, offers a good definition to the term 'montage' which applies to the image as well as to the word, and to our discussion of the essay film:

(Montage) relies on a deconstructive aesthetic, which produces a constructive experience in its audience. Like poetry itself, montage signifies through indirection, formally providing guideposts by which the reader arrives at the artist's meaning without the artist having *said* what is really *meant*. By fragmenting traditional syntax, an implied rather than explicit narrative is created through juxtaposition. Thus montage allows, even forces, the reader of the visual or verbal text to synthesize meaning from its disparate pieces. The assembly, which constitutes part of its very definition, can only take place when the work of art is experienced, for the integration of the sequentially juxtaposed parts may only take place in the mind of the perceiving audience (1995: 516).

In a study of Eisenstein's montage, V. Sanchez-Biosca traces some of its origins to the Russian formalists at the beginning of the Twentieth century. The formalists developed the concept of the literary 'defamiliarisation' - Ostranenie (literally meaning 'making strange') - within Russian avant-garde poetry. Ostranenie takes a word out of its usual context and puts it in an unexpected setting to project it as a 'vision' (Sanchez-Biosca, 1990: 281). It forces us to notice a word and restores the original meaning of the text which is generally lost through what the formalists called 'automation', i.e. the regularity and the continuous use of a text in an indiscriminate fashion in everyday life. 'Defamiliarisation' is not a single device or a particular technique in poetry, according to V. Shklovsky in his article 'Art as

Technique', but is a result of using different techniques - wordplay, rough rhythm, symbolism or metaphor. Poetry, according to the Russian formalists, is defined by its ability to make the reader read the text with a high degree of awareness, "art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony" (Shklovsky, 1965: 12). This echoes our definition of a Montaignean essay which recognises a similar predicament and urges the writer as well as the reader to accept the fact that one has to be aware of the nature of continuous changes in life which are reflected in the essay.

Shklovsky also looks in detail into the question of rhythm in relation to poetry and the process of 'defamiliarisation' in particular:

> The rhythm of prose is an important automatising element; the rhythm of poetry is not. There is 'order' in art, yet not a single column of a Greek temple stands exactly in its proper order; poetic rhythm is similarly disordered rhythm (Ibid: 24).

Shklovsky addresses directly the possibilities of poetic devices in film in his article 'Poetry and Prose in Cinematography'. He identifies the formal possibilities of constructing a film with the use of poetic techniques: rhythm, repetition, montage - in contrast to a 'prose' film, based on clearly articulated semantic values (1973: 130). Vertov's film Sixth of the Earth (1926) and Pudovkin's film Mother (1926)

are cited by Shklovsky, in 1927, as films based on poetic formalism (Ibid: 129)[3].

Sanchez-Biosca describes the formalists' approach to the poetic image and to the montage of a text:

> The Ostranenie of a fragment, a phoneme, or any other textual part referring to the logical and credible sense of the whole, introduces the reception of heterogeneity through montage of series that do not belong to the homogeneous continuity of the text. Shklovsky's definition refers expressly to the place of reception, the reader, as the basis of opposition (1990: 281).

This reading of Shklovsky ties together the ideas on the use of the fragment, the heterogeneity through montage and the position of the reader of the text, described earlier in this thesis.

In 1931, Tristan Tzara in Paris reflected on the art of the collage, the montage technique within a single image in painting, in light of Picasso's use of newspaper cuttings within the texture of his paintings. Picasso's use of newspaper cuttings, decorative wrapping paper or wallpapers emphasises the 'defamiliarisation' process mentioned above. Tzara too bases his discussion of the collage in painting on the use of the written word within poetry:

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[3]As early as 1923, Vertov, Eisenstein and Shklovsky were part of the Soviet avant garde artists group, LEF. See Chapter one in Petric, V, Constructivism in Film: The Man with the Movie Camera- A Cinematic Analysis, 1987, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, for a detailed overview of Vertov's place within the post-revolutionary Russian avant-garde world.

> A word put beside another, by a secret association which cannot be controlled through known means of investigation, can with a shock - a strange process - reveal in some particularly sensitive or experienced readers, a feeling of the poetic kind. (...) The commonplace expression, this autonomous block in spoken language, introduced as one unit in the written sentence, represents an opposition in the poetic order where the nature of thought can be elevated to unsuspected transparencies (1931: 62).

The same occurs, according to Tzara, in painting:

> A shape cut out of a newspaper and inserted into a drawing or a painting encompasses the commonplace expression, a bit of everyday reality, in contrast with another reality constructed by the mind. The difference within the materials, which the eye is capable of translating into a tactile feeling, gives a new depth to the painting where weight is inscribed with mathematical precision into the volume's equation, and its density, its taste on the tongue, its consistency place us before a unique reality in a world created with the power of thought and dreams (Ibid).

Picasso had 'discovered' with his paper collages in 1912 that "the sign has slipped away from the fixity of what the semiologist would call an iconic condition - that of resemblance - to assume the ceaseless play of meaning open to the symbol" (Krauss, 1998: 28).

Dziga Vertov in his 1929 lecture on 'Kino-Eye'[4] talks about his principles of montage in his films The Eleventh Year (1928) and The Man With the Movie Camera (1929):

> To make a montage is to organise pieces of film which we call the frames, into a *ciné- thing*. It means to write something cinegraphic with the recorded shots. It does not mean to select pieces to make 'scenes' (deviations of a theatrical character) nor does it mean to arrange pieces according to subtitles (deviations of a literary character) (quoted in Sitney, 1971: 373, my italics).

Here Vertov takes his' Kino-Eye' approach to recording an image a stage further into the organisation of the images into sequences. Vertov's theory echoes our discussion, earlier in this thesis, of the literary essay. Ideas within a literary essay are developed through things, objects or associations and not through a direct line of argument, a catalogue of events in which one event follows another, often as a result of a cause and effect relationship.

Vertov calls his montage 'the theory of intervals'. The use of the word 'interval' is unusual in relation to film. The term is used in music to suggest melodic or harmonic relationships between individual notes. Vertov strives for 'a cinematic scale' (quoted in Sitney, 1990: 43) to establish a set of relationships between independent images, not necessary defined as juxtaposition. Once the 'interval' is

[4]Appeared first in Film Front no 3, 1935. See Sitney, P, Film Culture - Anthology of American Avant-garde Film, 1971, London: Secker and Warburg.

applied both 'melodically' and 'harmonically' a complex structure of multi-layering sequences of images can take place. The 'ciné-thing', mentioned earlier by Vertov, is based on 'intervals': movement between frames; proportional association between them or the transitions from one frame to another. The movement between the frames - 'spectacular interval' - as Vertov calls it, is achieved by the following techniques:

1. Relations of planes (small and large).

2. Relations of foreshortening.

3. Relations of movements within two frames of each piece.

4. Relations of lights and shades.

5. Relations of speeds of recording (quoted in Geduld, 1967: 104).

Vertov puts the emphasis in his 'theory of intervals' on the "spectacular value of each distinct image in its relations to all the others engaged in the 'montage battle' which begins" (Ibid). The viewer is left to 'navigate' among the different layers of intervals to create an overall impression, a task similar to that facing the reader of formalist poetry.

Unlike Vertov, who stressed the 'Kino-Eye' recording and editing of the image and the attention to the writing-like quality of the film process, Eisenstein saw the importance of the added emotional and stylistic values of the image in order to develop a montage (Pirog, 1982: 306)[5]. According to Eisenstein: "Montage has

a realistic significance when the separate pieces produce, in juxtaposition, the generality, the synthesis of the theme, that is the image embodying the theme itself" (Ibid)[6]. D. Scheunemann discusses Eisenstein's montage in detail. As the word 'montage' is taken from the industrial world of assembling several ready-made elements, it applies, in the cinema, to a method of working aesthetically to construct a meaning out of images. As a result, the film maker is not bound by the dominant eighteenth and nineteenth century ideas of creating work which imitates existing structures or represents reality (Scheunemann, 1990: 6). Eisenstein's concept of montage relies on the elements of attraction borrowed from the spectator's experience in the pre-cinema world of the circus and the music hall[7]. The 'montage of attractions' reaches the spectators' emotions in order to convey an idea or a theme in the film:

> To use montage of attractions as a basic device, means therefore, a break away from the course of fictional plotting, from presenting a consistent and coherent flow of action (...). It is rather the tension between various elements, their conflicting nature and their ability to arouse the spectator's emotional response that determines the selection of scenes and incidents and their compositional

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[5]At times, Eisenstein considered Vertov's formalist approach as "unmotivated camera mischief" referring to the film The Man With the Movie Camera. See Eisenstein, S. 1949, San Diego: HBJ: 43.

[6]Pirog's article offers a detailed account of the Eisenstein's and Vertov's opposing views of the montage.

[7]On early cinema and the concept of the 'cinema of attraction' see also Gunning, T, "The Cinema of Attractions, Early Cinema and the Avant-garde" in Elsaesser, T, (ed.) Early Cinema- Space Frame Narrative, 1990, London: BFI.

arrangement (Scheunemann 1990: 7).

Eisenstein himself writes, including in his definition even what he sees as the 'Kino-Eye' approach to film: "(Montage of attractions) is this path that liberates film from the plot-based script and for the first time takes account of film material, both thematically and formally, in the construction" (1988: 40). He describes the process of 'the montage of attractions' as a comparison of topics for thematic impact and explains: "It is not in fact phenomena that are compared, but chains of associations that are linked to a particular phenomenon in the mind of a particular audience" (Ibid: 41). This system of emotionally-calculated assembly of attractions through associative elements, guides the spectator through an Eisenstein film, according to Sanchez-Biosca (1990: 284).

Modernist American poetry

The influence of Russian formalist poetry on Vertov and Eisenstein, on montage and the avant-garde film in general was charted above in detail. S. Howe's article on the essay film adds a direct and useful link between the essay film and modernist American poetry. Howe relates montage techniques used by the American modernist poets to film montage within the particular genre of the essay film. This forms the basis for her study of the essay film and, specifically, the study of Marker's film Sunless and Vertov's work. Howe looks at Marker's editing in the light of the associative techniques developed in poetry: "Emerson, Melville,

Dickinson, Elliot, Moore, Williams, Stevens, Olson, Cage (...) use letters as colliding image-objects" (1996: 331). She quotes William James' assertion that: "association, so far as the word stands for an effect, is between things thought of - it is things not ideas, which are associated in the mind. We ought to talk about (the) association of objects not the association of ideas" (Ibid). Vertov's montage of 'cine-thing' within 'Kino-Eye', Eisenstein's description of the process of the 'montage of attraction', Adorno's portrayal of the associative techniques used in the literary essay and, similarly, the Japanese tradition of the essay, bring the study of the avant-garde and some of the aspects of the literary essay together. According to Howe, the writings of the poets Melville, Dickinson and Whitman "involved comparing and linking fragments or shots, selecting fragments for scenes (...) constantly interweaving traces of the past" (Ibid). The free associations of images, following the 'stream of consciousness' used already in modernist poetry (for example the works of T.S. Elliot), also inform the nature of the editing in Marker's Sunless. Howe compares the poet Dickinson's concept of the 'Pen Eye' to Vertov's 'Kino-Eye' in a way similar to the relationship established earlier in this study between Astruc's 'caméra-stylo' and Vertov's 'Kino-Eye'. Modernist poetry's use of associative techniques and its influence on film montage should be discussed here in relation to the use of the poetic metaphor, the film metaphor in the context of symbolic association, and montage in general.

J. Mooij offers some good definitions of the poetic metaphor based on the three main functions of metaphor in literature: the emotive; the persuasive and the cognitive[8]. According to him metaphors were generally used in poetry to elaborate an idea for stylistic reasons, to express a particular world view or to introduce different levels of meanings and symbolism. Focusing his attention on modernist poetry, Mooij points to the fact that, in modernist poetry, the metaphor has developed further, in the following ways. Firstly, fusion occurs between the principal ('the tenor') and the subsidiary ('the vehicle') components of the metaphor so that the distinction between the literal and and figurative meanings of the metaphor collapses (Mooij, 1992: 320). Secondly, poetic metaphors are not necessarily very clear, they are unclear and 'hesitant' in Mooij's words (Ibid: 321). Thirdly, more often than hesitant, the metaphor operates in modernist poetry in an opposite fashion - it is bold, creating a collision of images rather than a collusion (Ibid). These definitions of the poetic metaphor bring us directly to the discussion of film metaphor within montage.

T. Whittock and N. Carroll expand the definition of a film metaphor to the wider study of the cinematic image in the context of the discussion of the notion of seeing[9]. Nevertheless, both discuss metaphor within editing in some detail.

Whittock identifies the following types of metaphor used in film editing:

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[8]See also Steen, G, "Metaphor and Literary Comprehension", Poetics, 1989, vol. 18, pp. 113-141 for general discussion on the metaphor and Lewis, E, "Super-position: Interpretative Metaphor", Paideuma, 1994, vol. 23, no. 2-3, pp. 195-214 for a study on metaphor in modern poetry

[9]See also Clifton, N, The Figure in Film, 1983, London and Toronto: Associated University Press. Clifton, as part of his larger study of the figure in film, simply lists a variety of different types of film metaphor.

1. Image A is like image B.

2. A is B.

3. A is replaced by B.

4. Juxtaposition.

5. Metaphor by a direct association or by contextual metonymy.

6. Disruption of the syntax, similar to the formalists' Ostranenie

(1990: 50-69).

Whittock identifies, in addition to the above mentioned types of film metaphors, the distortion of an image to create a metaphor (e.g the use of a fish eye lens or dissolves), whilst Carroll cites the use of superimposition by Vertov in the film The Man With the Movie Camera in which 'eye equals lens' functions as a film metaphor and as a visual technique (1996: 810-811).

A particularly interesting association between modern American poetry and film is made by B. Singer. He mentions the American modernist poet Walt Whitman's profound influence on Dziga Vertov and Vladimir Mayakovsky but mainly on Vertov's film The Man With the Movie Camera. Whitman's influence on Russian literature in the 1910's and 1920's was extensive, and his poetry book Leaves of Grass (published in 1855) became a best-seller after the Soviet revolution. As soon as the film The Man With the Movie Camera came out in the USSR, Vertov was hailed as the 'Soviet Whitman' (Singer, 1987: 247). Singer also refers to the

testimony by Vertov's brother and collaborator - M. Kaufman - recorded in 1976, recalling Vertov's familiarity with Whitman's poetry (Ibid: 248).

Accepting the fact that the film The Man With the Movie Camera cannot totally be read as a 'Whitman poem', Singer nevertheless highlights several points of similarity between the two artists' work. Both offer a rich intense overview of their subject matter, unprecedented for their period, using diversity, eclecticism and fractured text in the work, and rejecting 'smoother' structures. Both works project the fast rhythm of urban modernity and use real life ('Kino-Eye') as the 'raw material' (Ibid: 250) for their art. Whitman in his poetry explores the relationship between the poet and the raw material surrounding him, as does Vertov with his camera. Both document their environment and monitor the social, scientific and political changes in which they take an active part[10]. Whitman's Leaves of Grass was seen by the poet as a 'gift' to the American people[11], offering his personal views and highlighting his involvement in the world around him, just as Montaigne presented his essays to his reader. Finally, Singer brings examples of what he calls "the ethnographic montage" (Ibid: 253) in Whitman's poetry and Vertov's film. Both use montage techniques to chart, in a quick succession of short sentences/image sequences, a long list of different daily activities in order to describe the world of the poem/film.[12]

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[10]See also Sharpe, W, Unreal Cities. Urban Figuration in Wordsworth, Baudelaire, Whitman, Eliot, and Williams, 1990, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press for a fascinating study of Whitman's city landscape and the poet's position within it, as reflected in Leaves of Grass.

[11]See Jerome Loving introduction to Whitman, W, Leaves of Grass, 1990, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[12]See also Greenspan, E, "The Poetics of "Participle-loving Whitman"" in Greenspan, E, (ed.) The Cambridge

Conclusion - definition of the essay film

Alter and Howe have taken the examination of the essay film beyond the study of the documentary genre on one hand, and the comparative study between the essay film and the literary essay on the other hand. They introduce elements of the avant-garde to the discussion. They look at the relationship between the ideas presented in Chapter Two relating to the content, style, structure and aesthetics of the literary essay and some fundamentals of the avant-garde. Alter's study, although concentrating specifically on the hidden political significance of Farocki's film, offers the closest definition of the essay film to date and with its study of Farocki's editing techniques, points the way to the form of textual analysis of the essay film genre which has been long overdue.

The essay film cannot be placed inside the documentary genre. It is clear from the comparison with its literary predecessor that its main aim is not to record, reveal, preserve, persuade, analyse or investigate as it is the case, generally, with the documentary. B. Nichols' definition of the documentary reads:

> In documentary, a typical scene establishes time and place and a logical tie to previous scenes; it presents the evidential nature of some portion of a larger argument (such as an illustration, example, interview with witness or expert, visual metaphor or sound/image counterpoint), and it

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Companion to Walt Whitman, 1995, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for a similar comparison between The Man with the Movie Camera by Vertov and Whitman's Leaves of Grass and Crossing Brooklyn Ferry

terminates with suggestions of how the search for a solution might lead to another scene, in another time or place (1991: 19).

The documentary tradition is far too closely identified with the linear, narrative cinematic language and is often completely removed from the autobiography of the film maker in its endeavour to fulfil the goals outlined above. More often than not, the documentary seeks to present a closed structure of cinematic language, similar to the Aristotelean tradition which is dominant in the fiction film genre. The Aristotelean impact on narrative film is described by R. Armes as follows:

> We are given dramatic actions in which everything is precisely plotted to exploit to the full the interweaving of consecutiveness and causality in the construction of the story (...) Action and character are locked indissolubly together in the unfolding of the story, so that one reveals and confirms the truth of the other. The plot may be highly patterned in terms of repetitions, parallels and variations of events and characters, but the meaning is assumed to lie somewhere else, in the subject of the story rather than the structure itself (1994: 107).

This definition makes it extremely clear that the essay film is not constructed along the lines of an Aristotelean dramatic structure - it is not constructed as a closed form and its meaning lies in the structure itself. This, coupled with its strong roots in both the literary essay and the avant-garde, points to the fact that the essay film genre stands outside the documentary genre. Although, as M. Renov has pointed out, the

documentary genre does include work of highly personal character and may include substantial autobiographical elements within it, it cannot include within it the essay film genre. The essay film cannot offer, as Renov wishes, a remedy and a way forward for what he sees as an 'ailing documentary tradition'. I disagree also with Richter's final aim to place the essay film inside the documentary genre as a way to change it radically 'from the inside' and move away from what he calls the 'post-card' documentary (Richter, 1992: 198). C. Plantinga's term - metadocumentary - is an interesting one, as it identifies the reflective character within this term. Nevertheless, Plantinga places metadocumentary within documentary. He identifies in metadocumentary a range of cinematic tools used in opposition to the classical documentary, and therefore, the films he includes in his definition should not be put within the documentary genre at all.

The essay film with its roots in both the literary essay and the avant-garde has tried indirectly, since Vertov's work, to establish its own language. The essay film creates its own discourse by using the tools of cinematic language - image, sound, editing and the organisation of time and space - to create the cinematic 'text'. It creates narrative and non-narrative structures, 'methodically unmethodically' edited together. This is bound together with the notion that the film maker is present inside the work and introduces it to the audience, asking them to take part in the construction of the film's meanings. As a result, the cinematic 'text' becomes the 'reflective text', the mediating medium between the film maker and the spectator.

The strong avant-garde elements of the cinematic language in the essay film, together with its links to the literary essay, point to an independent genre. The essay film can be described thus as an independent genre within non-fiction film. A. Piotrovskij in his essay 'Toward a Theory of Ciné-Genres'[13] which was published in 1927 as part of Poètika Kino (Poetics of Cinema - a collection of Russian formalist writings on film, including among others, Shklovsky's) wrote:

> We shall define a ciné-genre as a complex of compositional, stylistic, and narrative devices, connected with specific semantic material and emotional emphasis but residing totally within a specific 'native' art system - the system of cinema. Therefore, in order to establish the 'ciné-genres', it is necessary to draw specific conclusions from the basic stylistic laws of ciné-art, the laws of 'photogeny' and 'montage'. We will observe how the use of 'space', 'time', 'people', and 'objects' varies from the point of view of montage and photogeny, depending on the genre. We will also observe how the narrative sequences are arranged, and what the interrelations among all these elements are within a given ciné-genre (Eagle, 1981: 131-132).

I hope this chapter has done just that, with regard to the essay film.

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[13]Translated by Anna Lawton in Eagle, H, Russian Formalist Film Theory, 1981, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan: 131-146

CHAPTER FOUR : 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales - TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

The film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales offers insight into the essay film form. The textual analysis of the film in this chapter will define in detail the genre characteristics as they have been outlined in the previous two chapters of this thesis. Existing writings to date on the essay film are general in their discussion of the genre and none includes a detailed textual analysis of a film which belongs to the genre. V. Petric offers a detailed textual analysis of Vertov's film The Man With the Movie Camera using only constructivism as his basis for the analysis of the film[14]. A detailed analysis of 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales will reveal the linear and non-linear structural elements within the genre and the use of avant-garde montage to achieve a coherent form based on the fragmentary cinematic text.

This chapter will also highlight the film's resemblance to the literary essay form. Many of the literary essay's aesthetic, thematic and structural elements, together with the strong avant-garde techniques used within the film, define 'The Man who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales as an essay film. This chapter will discuss the thematic content of the film, its overall structure, the narrative and non-narrative forms within it, the role of autobiography, travel and archive footage in determining

[14]Petric, V, Constructivism in Film: The Man with the Movie Camera- A Cinematic Analysis, 1987, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

the aesthetic and thematic content of the film, as well as the avant-garde editing techniques used throughout the film. A shot-by-shot analysis of the first twenty three minutes of the film is also included in this chapter (for a shot breakdown of the complete film and the transcription of all texts on the sound track, see Appendixes One to Eight).

The film does not belong to the documentary genre, neither it is structured as a fictional narrative, as it avoids the disciplines of documentary and the other main narrative cinematic genres. The film creates narrative and non-narrative structures, 'methodically unmethodically' edited together, using the editing methods of the avant-garde. These are bound together with the notion that film maker is present inside the work and introduces it to the audience, asking them to take part in the construction of the film's meanings. The film does not offer a complete, systematically organised presentation of one or more of its themes. There is no central theme or single story in the film. The film includes a variety of subject matter and does not offer a well-rounded study of ethics, morality, politics or humanity in general. As in a Montaignean literary essay, the multitude of visual and sound sequences and short 'stories', often repeated and interwoven, offer the viewer a large variety of ideas, themes and observations in order to construct the dialogue between the film maker, the film and the viewer.

Thematic content

The film lacks a core motif, a thesis, a single voice or a central text or topic. The themes in the film do not go through a process of elaboration or enlargement, exposition or development - all usually identified as important elements of the documentary or the fictional narrative genres. The film emphasises the lack of coherence and the imperfection of the human condition, accepting the fact that human behaviour often escapes from any system of values and is erratic by nature. The film's overall structure reflects just that. The film includes from time to time contradictory ideas as its charts its route through a series of fragments. A variety of themes appear and disappear throughout the film, among them are:

1. 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and the effect of the poverty of our emotional world on other themes in the film.

2. The relationship between the First and the Third Worlds.

3. Travel and the fascination with the 'other' or the exotic through the activity of travel.

4. Mankind and the environment.

5. The idea of the global village - Gaia.

6. The horrors of war.

7. The oppressive nature of 'big' ideologies.

8. Representation of images and sound, editing and the cinematic process.

9. Life in different countries and cultures.

10. Loneliness and despair.

11. Autobiography.

12. Countryside versus the city.

13. Religion

The film does not impose a system on the different themes contained in it. Opinions and sentiments are put forward from time to time, but they are not used as fundamentals. When suppositions are presented in the film they are not presented to the viewer as foregone conclusions and cannot be used as a basis for an over-arching theory which informs a conclusive argument, as is often the case in the documentary genre. The same is true about the series of stories (or 'tales') contained within the film which are not linked dramatically and are not presented to the viewer according to any of the conventions of narrative development. Crucial to the understanding of the structure of the film is the scepticism of the film maker which is presented to the viewer. As a result, the truth in the film is limited, and it does not claim to be all-embracing. The authority of the film is not in the systematic presentation of themes and views, but in the experience presented by the film maker - the film is a provisional and tentative reflection.

Two of the film themes - autobiography and travel - need to be looked into in detail at this stage of the analysis in light of our definition of the essay film genre.

Autobiography

Autobiographical elements play an important role in the subject matter in the film. But the film does not chart a complete and systematic account of the film maker's life or offer a complete account of any episode in his life. The autobiographical element of the film is most recognisable in the film maker's voice-over, told toward the end of the film, recalling the experience of his bus-ride from Bulgaria to Turkey (251c-279d)[15]. The bus-ride story is told in the first person mode by the film maker himself for the first, and only, time during the film. Because of its prominence in the last part of the film, this story brings the film maker directly into the film and makes the viewer aware of the nature of the travel footage shown earlier throughout the film. A less prominent autobiographical feature, close to the beginning of the film, is the image of a Western Man engaged in a conversation with a Chinese sailor, while travelling on a river boat (7b). Another autobiographical element throughout the film is inherent in the use of home movie format - Super 8 film - as an image-recording device. For a long time, the use of a small-format, individually owned home-movie camera has pointed to the intimacy and direct involvement of the film maker with his/her images.

An important element in the film which brings the viewer closer to the process of gathering the images is the fact that some of the persons photographed look directly

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[15]For a complete shot list of the film, see Appendix One. All shot numbers in this chapter refer to the film's shot list.

into the lens. Among these are:

1. The Chinese boatman (11-12; 263-263a).

2. A Chinese girl stops dying a fabric - and looks at the camera (62).

3. A Chinese man on a bicycle (136b).

4. Chinese children in the market (145).

5. A Chinese man cooking with a wok (148).

6. Jewish boys in a class room (201a and 211-212).

7. Chinese men riding on a top of a track (261a).

The gaze into the traveller's camera lens establishes the film maker's presence in those locations, and as the film contains a large amount of travel footage, the viewer concludes that the traveller is the film maker. But more importantly, those images are included in the film as a commentary on the process of film making itself - as indication of the self-reflective character of an essay film - and as a comment on the nature of travel in foreign lands - one of the film's themes.

Although the film includes the autobiographical elements mentioned above, it cannot be described as an autobiographical film. The film lacks a definitive system of presentation of events in the film maker's life. The fragmented series of experiences presented in the film produces the opposite effect - the realisation that everyone's experience is mixed, varied and divergent in a similar way. For example, the overwhelming experience in the past thirty years of global travel and the ease of

access to remote corners of the world, coupled with the wealth of opportunities to record images, are universal for viewers in the West. The extensive travel footage is presented as a theme in the film and not as a travelogue of the film maker. Furthermore, none of the images are presented with sync sound. Thus they are detached from their particular settings or location. Sync sound grounds the image in the experience of the film maker as the person behind the recording in a specific time and place. The absence of any sync sound in the film removes the images from the personal and anecdotal identification of the viewer with the film maker.

The result of the multitude of themes, subject matters and observations in 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales is not a film about the 'self' nor it is a autobiography or a confession. Like in a Montaignean essay, the 'self' in the film, either visible or obscured, is the Barthean 'self', part of the discourse created between the author, the 'text' and the viewer. The mixture of the often eclectic and fragmentary cinematic texts, events and reflections can only be understood by applying here the concept of the 'self'. The film maker establishes himself as the primary intellectual subject for the variety of digressions, instead of using external structure to 'hinge' the film on.

Travel

Most of the film's scenes were filmed during the film maker's travels in different

countries of the world. The images filmed during various journeys are totally removed from the travel experience itself. The images are presented as non-sync filmic images, detached from any geographical or anthropological context. They are chosen primarily for their cinematic quality - colour, movement, dramatic content, framing - and their suitability to be used in several contexts. In this way, these images represent a whole range of meanings as they hold more general, abstract readings on different levels (see our discussion above about the non-sync use of images within autobiography). The travel images are used in the film to support ideas and general observations and are often presented in a mixture of self-preoccupation, reflection or commentary by the film maker. Although most of the film was shot during periods of travel, the film is not a travelogue, a film about the experience of travelling itself, or a documentary about the individual locations. The film does not chart the entire experience of a trip or a series of trips. It does not give any general travelling or geographical information about the places visited. Although the film contains one direct travelling experience which is told by the film maker in the first person on the voice-over track of the film (shots 251c-279d), and one, indirect, reference to the nature of travelling in the text of the Italian sailors' song (shots 287-303), the film does not offer an overview of the film maker's travel activities. Nor does it offer a succession or a progression of travel tales.

The following segments of the film are travel footage:

1. A journey on a river boat in China and through the Chinese rural countryside (6-12; 37-63b; 132-150; 261-271b; 128-131; 220-221; 252-257b).

2. Landscapes of Antarctica (3-4; 14; 20-26; 77-79; 189-190).

3. American highways and suburban neighbourhoods (65-70a; 184-184g; 250-251c; 279-179d).

4. Italian village houses covered with wall paintings (70b-76; 286-298).

5. Bombay city and beach scenes (80-87b; 151-156; 236-242b; 273-274).

6. A boat tour of a container harbour in Holland (230-235a).

7. Many of the individual images - images of water, forests, wood, temple bells, a woman near a lake, a woman on a boat bench, children playing on a helicopter ride in a fair ground - are travel footage.

In addition, one travel episode is introduced in the film on the sound track alone and was discussed earlier, namely the personal voice-over account of a bus-ride from Bulgaria to Turkey (shots 251c-279d). The subject of travel in the film has to be seen in a similar context to the issues concerning autobiography which were highlighted earlier on. The film's travel theme is is a mixture of self-preoccupation or observation by the traveller, which in turn functions as a method for digression or deviation in the context of other themes.

Film structure

The overall structure of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales corresponds in parts to the following structural elements of a Montaignean essay, which were discussed in an earlier chapter:

A. Interwoven themes through digression and association:

The variety of the film's themes, some already mentioned in this chapter, are developed briefly within the film through images ('ciné-things' as described by Vertov), or associations, but not through a linear argument. Themes are not linked as a result of a cause and effect relationship. Different themes and ideas are interwoven in the film in a structure that limits their development.

The following are examples of this structure:

1. The themes of travel, the relationship between the First and the Third Worlds and 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' are presented in the pre-title sequence of the film (1-14).

2. The horrors of war and the relationship between the First and the Third Worlds (161-184).

3. Political movements versus the individual (37-64; 112-131).

4. Different aspects of American way of life (65-77).

5. The story of creation in Genesis and man's cultivation of the land (14-63b).

6. A wind surfer's body movements and Japan's atomic bomb victims treated in a hospital (80-97).

7. Children in different cultures (192-223).

8. A busy Indian train station, Bombay's business district and a deserted old train station next to the sea (236-251c).

9. Travel and voyeurism (37-63b; 261-272).

10. Industrial landscape and production followed by images of war (162-183).

11. A young girl, holding balloons, who stands on the sea shore, gazing at the sea, followed by the Bomb's victims and a cut back to her on the shore. This time the sea is motionless; the waves resume their movement and after a while the girl walks away (84a-102c).

12. The girl with a balloon is part of a sequence which also includes porcelain dolls - lit by a single candle-light and moving slowly in darkness inside a cabinet - and a teenage girl sitting at a shore of a lake (98-103a). This sequence is intertwined with the previous one.

B. Circular form and repetition:

The film has, in parts, a circular structure which alongside, and often in conjunction with, the previous cinematic structure of interwoven themes through digression and association, defines its overall structure. This circular structure is often created

through repetition. The last two examples above of interwoven themes - nos. 11 and 12 - already highlighted repetitions within them. In addition, the following sequences suggest a circular form through repetition:

1. The first image of the film - the closed window with a ceramic bowl in front of it - also closes the film.

2. Two other images from the pre-title sequence of the film reappear in the closing sequence of the film: 5 and 301; 13 and 298.

3. The text, 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel', (see Appendix Two) opens the film and is then repeated twice, creating an impression of a three-part temporal structure for the film. As a result, each part of the film starts with the same text on the sound track but in a different visual context. In addition to the temporal effect, this creates a very loose resemblance to a 'theme and variation' structure. A close examination of the multitude of themes presented in each of the 'three parts' of the film shows that the film's structure is not defined through a three-part linear developmental structure nor by a 'theme and variation' structure which implies a central theme to the film with slight variations to it during repetitions. The film's structure is determined by the variety of interwoven themes, digressions and repetitions.

4. The splitting up of a long sequence into two is used in the film to repeat themes and modify them as a result of a new sound and image relationship.

This in turn helps to create some of the circular structural components in the film. The following long sequences are treated in the film in this way: The Chinese revolutionary parade; Scenes from the Portuguese revolution; Japanese atomic bomb victims; A text over music: English for beginners - 'Good morning Mr. Jones' (see Appendix Three); Long travelling shots of American neighborhoods; A deserted old train station next to the sea.

5. Many of the images relating to Chinese peasant' life, which appear first near to the beginning of the film, are repeated during the 'bus-ride' tale toward he end of the film. This repetition of a series of images a second time around with a different sound track changes the reading of the images and creates new themes.

6. Repetition of single images throughout the film create small internal structures. Often they are used to connect two or more sequences or 'tales' [see below for the discussion of the 'tales']: A closed window / door (13; 75; 185; 192; 205; 213; 241; 298); A woman sitting on a river boat's bench; the same bench empty (37; 49; 169; 183; 272); Images of forest or wood logs (29-33; 104; 275-275b; 277); Blue ice landscapes (14; 20; 190); A teenage girl sitting on a shore of a lake (103-103a; 191); Crowds (64; 187-188; 223); A temple bell (186-186a; 222).

The film's interwoven, circular and often repetitive themes are presented with a variety of narrative and non-narrative constructions based on avant-garde film editing techniques and using metaphor.

Narrative 'tales'

Twelve segments of the film, or 'tales' (as indicated in the film title), are of sufficient length to contain linear narrative structures. These 'tales' are characterised by their relative long duration and resemblance to a complete narrative linear framework in their internal structure. These descriptive sequences and sketches, fictional or non-fictional, relate a story, a theme or an incident. They offer complete narratives either on the sound track, or as part of a visual sequence using narrative visual continuity editing techniques.

A. The following 'tales' are introduced on the sound track as a voice-over:

1. The text of 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' is a transcription of a psychoanalytical session between an analyst and a chief executive officer of a major company (3-14; 128a-146; 230-238). The text is presented as a dialogue between the two men. It starts with a series of general questions and answers and slowly develops into more personal and detailed exchange. It ends with a dramatic admission by the businessman that he is incapable of talking about his feelings (see Appendix Two).

2. The text of an Italian sailors' song (287-303) belonging to a traditional song structure of verse and refrain (See Appendix Eight).

3. The personal story of the film maker's bus-ride from Bulgaria to Turkey (251c-279d) is told as a narrative linear tale, charting chronologically the events as they unfolded during the night journey (see Appendix Seven).

4. The archive interview with the American pilots who dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki (173-184c) is presented as a series of questions and answers between a journalist and the pilots and forms part of a newsreel item of the time (see Appendix Six).

5. The voice-over tale of the bachelor, his neighbour and her husband (70a-77) belongs to the narrative joke structure (see Appendix Four)[16].

B. The following are long narrative 'tales' described in image sequences:

1. A visual sequence, following a text on screen which contains the first phrase of the book of Genesis, depicting the different stages of creation according to Genesis from ice landscapes to Chinese peasants cultivating the land (14-39).

2. Sequences of Chinese peasants working the land, working as market traders or as travellers along the river (37-63b; 132-150; 261-271b). These are documented in a descriptive style moving between long establishing shots, medium shots and close-up details.

3. The use of a long travelling shots of empty American suburban streets from a moving car (70-70a; 184-184g; 250-250c) offers a continous, 'real-time' view of the subject.

4. The wind surfer who struggles to control his board, watched by a group of Indian onlookers on the shore (80-87b), is shown through a series of

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[16]For an analysis of this joke's literary structure, see Martin, W, Recent Theories of Narrative, 1986, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 65-71; 104-106; 169-170.

establishing and close-up shots and the use of reverse shots to tell the story of the event. The surfer himself goes through several cycles of manoeuvers in his efforts to control his board.

5. The young Jewish children learn to pray in a class room. (192-213). Their repetitive body movement during the lesson is introduced through a series of long and close-up shots as well as reverse shots between the children and the teachers. As the lesson progresses the children become more and more tired and lose interest in the lesson.

6. The two children on a 'helicopter-ride' at a fair ground (214-219b). This segment starts with the children boarding the 'helicopter' and is followed by the ride itself. When the ride ends, they refuse to get off despite their mother insisting they do so.

7. A short story of a woman dressed in white (280-285a), carrying a suitcase in her hand, entering a train station, pacing up and down the platform. During the final shots of this sequence, the camera pulls out to reveal that she is waiting in vain, in a deserted train station.

The narrative 'tales' mentioned above represent complete narrative structures and are a result of the use of continuity editing techniques. To achieve it, the following continuity editing techniques are used as dramatic tools in the construction of the 'tales' and other short narrative segments in the film:

1. Matching consecutive actions: The sequence showing a Chinese woman planting rice (45-46); Chinese peasants boarding and disembarking a river boat (137-141a); Children on a helicopter ride (214-219b).

2. Cut on action: The surfer struggling to control his board (81-83b); Teaching Chinese passers-by to use a camera (254-257b); Chinese women dying fabric (264-266).

3. Change of image size and angle: Jewish children in a class room (193-212); Bombay train station at night (237-240); The woman in white in a deserted train station (280-286a).

4. Preserving a sense of direction: Portuguese crowd in a bull ring during a demonstration (112-117); An elderly couple on a boat in a container harbour (231-235a); Woman in white in a deserted train station (280-286a).

5. Manipulation of the duration of an event through shortening or lengthening the sequence: A journey on a river boat in China in which a Chinese sailor is engaged in conversation with a traveller (6-12); Cars travelling at night (65-68); The wind surfer watched by a crowd on shore (80-87b).

6. Sound flows over a visual cut: The sound of sea waves covers the cut between Antarctica (77-79) and the wind surfer (80 and onwards); Wind sound starts over the room with the art installation (88-89) and crosses over the Japanese bomb victims (90 onwards) and again before the second sequence of the bomb victims (160-161); the Italian song track begins

earlier, during the deserted train station scene (285a-286).

In some cases the tales on the voice-over track or in the image sequences coincide to create a multi-layered narrative story. In other cases, the 'tales', either in sound or image, are themselves repeated in different contexts and, as a result, new narrative sequences are created. Here are two examples:

- The voice-over text of 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' is repeated three times throughout the film: at the beginning, in the middle and near the end of the film. On all three occasions the text is edited together with images of travelling: twice the text is told over sequences of Chinese peasants in the country-side, the third time over images of an elderly couple travelling in Rotterdam harbour. Two dramatic effects are achieved as a result. The first: each 'section' of the film starts with the notion of travelling which is one of the themes of the film. The second: the text describing the ambition of a Western businessman is dramatically juxtaposed with the Third World images during the first two repetitions and is reflected in the image of the 'Western' man and his wife, as a retired couple, in the third repeat. This repetition may suggest an element of a loose cyclical structure to the film, but as we have stated earlier, it does not determine an overall three part structure for the film. Each and every 'part' of the film which follows the text of 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' is structured differently and presents new themes and image and sound constructions. Although a suggestion of linear development or a 'theme and variation' structure is

created, the film does not conform to either pattern. It is, though, an example of the 'play' throughout the film between narrative and non-narrative constructions.

- The long, single travelling shot of empty American suburban streets is used three times throughout the film, in different contexts: The first time as an illustration to the tale about the bachelor, his neighbour and her husband, creating an imaginary location to the tale, as it corresponds visually to the general atmosphere and to some of the details in the story. The second time the shot appears in the film is at the end of the atomic bomb pilots' interview, describing the Japanese city underneath their flight path. The image of empty American suburban streets is in contrast to the content of the interview on the sound track, and throws a new light on the dramatic content of the interview. The third time the shot is used is as an 'epilogue' and a contrast to the crowds inside the Portuguese bull ring arena on one hand and as prologue to the bus-ride tale which follows on the sound track.

Archive material

Linked to the notion of narrative structures within the film is the inclusion of sound and image archive material. The archive footage in the 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales is used primarily to provide individual images, like the travel footage and all other the self-originated images in the film. Similar to the way quotations are used in a Montaignean essay, these images do not provide historical information as such, nor are they used to illustrate an historical event. Archive

images are used as raw material from which to construct various themes and ideas throughout the film, and thus are often used several times in different contexts. They are chosen for their cinematic qualities of image, dramatic content, rhythm, colour and framing. A clear example of it is the use of the Chinese athletes' repetitive movements with red flags (227-229) which creates a near-abstract image. At times they are used as part of the narrative 'tales', as we have seen above. They are independent visual or sound segments which form part of the dialogue between the film maker and the viewer. In taking an archive image or a sound segment out of its context, they are used in the formalist way - 'out of automation'. Historical images are not intended to lend authority to the film, as is the case in a documentary, nor to support a thesis. They are not chosen from sources in the past to reinforce the present experience of the film maker. Instead, they form part and parcel of the experience itself.

The following sound archive sequences are included in the film:

1. The text over music - English for beginners, 'Good morning Mr. Jones' - is taken from a 1950s commercially available language teaching sound record. The text, divided in the film into two (39-64 and 184f-188), contains basic English phrases, greetings and polite exchanges, spoken by a male teacher in a slow and authoritative voice. It portrays the use of language, broken down to its most basic elements in speech, mirroring the

use of individual shots as 'building blocks' for the film as a whole. The first half of the text is spoken over images of Chinese peasants working the land and scenes of Chinese village market. It is used here as a tool of irony. The conclusion of the text is narrated over moving shots from a car in an empty neighbourhood in the USA, followed by the image of an empty room with an open door, followed by a temple's bell, images of crowds and blue ice. Here, the slow, impersonal and alienating text accentuates the feeling of alienation and loneliness in the image.

2. A second text over music - 'I must advise you...'(103a-114) - a meditation text (see Appendix Five), read by a male voice, is taken from 1960s meditation instruction tape. The text, conveying a large dose of personal doubt and self-questioning, is juxtaposed with images of individuals and crowds who are strongly motivated by a cause and display their convictions, vigorously, in public.

3 An archive interview with the American pilots who dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki (sound: 173-184c - see Appendix Six for the text of the interview - image: 179-182) is part of an American cinema newsreel. The interview links together several themes in the film, as was described earlier in this chapter.

The following picture archive material is also used in the film as 'raw images':

1. Archive scenes of peasants' mass demonstrations during the Portuguese

revolution (112-117; 243-249) are taken from television news reports of the event.

2. Archive footage of Chinese revolutionary parade (118-127; 225-229) is part of a Chinese government newsreel covering the tenth anniversary celebration of the Chinese revolution.

3. Archive footage of Chinese industrial landscape and the interiors of a steel mill (170-178) is taken from Chinese official monthly cinema newsreels.

4. Archive footage of peasants practicing Tai Chi (220-234a) is taken from official Chinese monthly cinema newsreels.

The use of archive material in the film, especially the visual material, is dispersed and fragmented. Images often only appear as a brief sequence or a part of a 'tale'. Archive images and sound tracks are taken out of any historical or geographical context and are utilised instead, throughout the film, as cinematic material to construct the film, alongside the original footage shot by the film maker.

Non-narrative structures and editing

The thematic content and the variety of narrative structures in the film, outlined above, have shown that these do not create an overall linear narrative structure for the film. It is the linkage of narrative and non-narrative elements in the film, edited together, which determines the overall definition of the film as an essay film. In a

stark contrast to the above described narrative 'tales' in the film, the film contains a large number of individual, autonomous images and sound segments. These often break the narrative structures and introduce some of the non-narrative elements to the film. At other times they are used as linking images in the editing process, as metaphors, as a commentary on the tales, or to create a rhythmic pattern in the construction of the film. These images echo the image-writing essence of the 'caméra-stylo' and more closely the 'Kino-Eye' experiment in the creation of an autonomous genre, separated from fiction and from the narrative documentary. These images are "purely denotational, having no other meaning than the one arises from its referent" similar to the way Vertov's 'Kino-Eye' was described earlier in Chapter Three. The 'Kino-Eye' approach to montage is often used in the film.

The 'interval' montage creates what Vertov called the 'ciné-thing' - cinematic structures - by selecting images in not order to make scenes, but in order to articulate and focus on the image itself, making the viewer alert and receptive to it. Although these images and short structures are used regularly throughout the film, as metaphors, they function mainly by breaking a narrative sequence or connecting between sequences. These individual images and sound segments are:

1. A closed window with a ceramic bowl in front of it (1; 34; 302).

2. A 'window' shape gate at an entrance to a lake. Water flows inside the 'window' (5; 35; 301).

3. A closed window / door (13; 75; 185; 192; 205; 213; 241; 298).

4. A window overlooking a lake (36; 278)

5. A woman sitting on a river boat's bench; the same bench empty (37; 49; 169; 183; 272).

6. Images of forest or wood logs (29-33; 104; 275-275b; 277).

7. Blue ice landscapes (14; 20; 190).

8 A US plane crushed into snow (78).

9. A young girl standing on the sea shore, holding balloons (84; 102-102c).

10. A teenage girl sitting on a shore of a lake (103-103a; 191).

11. Porcelain dolls, lit by a single candle light, moving slowly in darkness inside a cabinet (98-101).

12. An artist's steam installation in a gallery (157-160).

13. An artist's installation of a room filled with oil (2; 88-89).

14. Crowds (64; 187-188; 223).

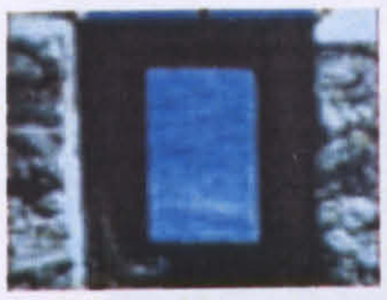
15. A temple's bell (186-186a; 222).

16. A sound segment of an argument between a man and a woman (152-155).

17. A male Indonesian voice singing (81-88).

As already mentioned above, the film is based on a series of narrative and non-

narrative structures using associations of images and sound, repetitions and metaphors in a circular movement. Before continuing to discuss the non-narrative elements in the film, their relationship to the narrative elements and the structural development of the film, a shot-breakdown of the most important scenes for our discussion, in the first 23 minutes of the film, is presented below. Similar to our structural analysis of one of Montaigne's essays, earlier in this thesis, the following schematic image analysis of the first 23 minutes of the film will start our discussion about editing. Capital letters are used to indicate the chain of associations between the various images as they follow each other within the sequence. This mirrors our analysis of the structure and literary techniques used by Montaigne in his essay 'Of Coaches' :

	IMAGE		SOUND
1		Closed WINDOW with a ceramic bowl in front	*Atmos track*
2		ROOM filled with oil	
4		SNOW landscape	*Text: 'The Man Who..'.*
5		WINDOW with WATER behind	
6		LAKE	
7		Chinese SAILOR	
11		A RIVER BOAT- Chinese SAILOR talks to traveller	
13		Closed WINDOW on wall	
14		ICE landscape	

15  ICE landscape

Titles

Atmos track

Text on black: Genesis' first words

"Vibrators" music track

20  ICE landscape

27  WATER

28  LAKE with TREES in the background

29  TREES

33  LOGS in SQUARE shapes

34  Closed WINDOW with a ceramic bowl

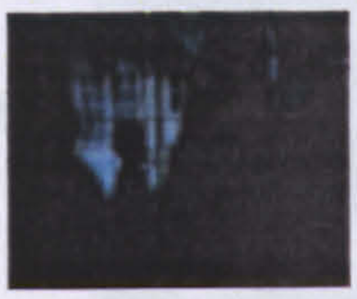
35  WINDOW with WATER behind

36  WINDOW overlooking a LAKE

37  WOMAN on benche on a RIVERr boat observing the view

45  Chinese WOMAN in a field *Text over music: 'Good Morning'*

63a  WOMEN MOVE across the frame

64  CROWD MOVES across a DARK frame

65b  TRAFFIC AT NIGHT *Music:"Roll th'Harp"*

69  MOVING SHOTS FROM A CAR in daytime

70  Suburban HOUSES from a MOVING CAR *V/O:'The bachelor'*

71  Village HOUSES with shut WINDOWS

73  A mural PAINTING of Sophia Loren on a village HOUSE

77  A STILL IMAGE of a man in SNOW wear

78  Plane crushed in SNOW

79  Two tractors 'plough' SNOW *Sound: Waves*

87a  WIND SURFER at sea *Music: Male singer*

87b  SURFER board POINTS FORWARD

88  A bridge POINTING FORWARD inside a room filled with OIL *Atmos: wind*

94  Japanese BOMB victims

100  SINGLE CANDLE illuminates DOLLS in slow motion *Music: " C. Kay"*

102  A GIRL with BALLOONS in front of frozen SEA WAVES

103  A teenage GIRL sits near a LAKE *Text /music: Meditation text.*

104  FOREST

105  A CHINESE DANCER in a FOREST (POSTER)

106  CHINESE WOMEN DANCERS (POSTER)

107  CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY PEASANTS (POSTER)

110  A ROUND detail from a CHINESE POSTER

112a  A ROUND BULL RING

115  Portuguese SOLDIERS during the REVOLUTION WATCH the BULL RING

121  Crowds WATCH CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY parade

122  CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY PARADE *Sound fx: coin spinning*

129  CHINESE SOLDIERS and families on SIGHT-SEEING

130  CHINESE OFFICERS take PHOTOS of each other *Text: 'TheMan Who...'*

132  A MURAL IMAGE of Mao in a CHINESE village

The above shot-breakdown of the opening of the film highlights the associative and non-narrative montage techniques used in conjunction with the narrative tales in order to create the interwoven and repetitive thematic structure of the film, 'unmethodically methodically' put together. The film introduces at the beginning the theme of feeling and proceeds to develop a series of ideas through associations of images and sound segments in a repetitive, interwoven and circular movement. At the end of the first 23 minutes the film comes back to the subject of feeling. This pattern is repeated throughout the film which ends with the Italian sailors' song - the sailors' relentless journeys in search of love.

The following 'tales' are introduced in the above schematic outline: 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' (3-14); Creation according to Genesis - from ice landscapes to Chinese peasants cultivating the land (14-39); Scenes from the Chinese countryside (37-63b; 132-150); The joke about the bachelor, his neighbour and her husband, together with images of empty American suburban streets (70-70a); The wind surfer (80-87b). Their thematic content was discussed earlier in this chapter, and here some of the editing techniques used are highlighted.

The pre title sequence (1-15) presents two main themes - travel and 'The Man Who Could Not Feel' which, when combined, create a third theme - a comment on the relationship between the First and the Third Worlds. The pre-sequence title uses

juxtaposition of sound and image - the voice-over text of 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' (3-14) is juxtaposed with the Chinese sailor and the traveller sequence (6-12). To achieve this, the sequence relies on associative editing between:

1. Water, river and ice (4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15)
2. Frames dominated by the colour blue (2, 4, 5, 6, 14, 15).
3. Square shapes (1, 2, 5, 13)

Repetition of single images creates associative editing throughout the film, as well as small internal structures, often used to connect two or more sequences or 'tales'. The following images, taken from the above outlined shot-breakdown represent this technique: A closed window/door (13; 75); A woman sitting on a river boat's bench; the same bench is empty (37; 49); Images of forest or wood logs (29-33; 104); Blue ice landscapes (14; 20).

Juxtaposition is also used in the section of the film following the title. Sequences of Chinese peasants working the land, Chinese market and river scenes (37-63) are juxtaposed with the text of 'Good morning Mr. Jones' (39-64). In this juxtaposition between text and image, the text itself evokes a series of images, when, for example, we may identify persons in the images as'mentioned' on the sound track. The theme of political movements versus the individual (112-131) is linked through an association between two similar-shaped (round) frames - the Chinese round structure depicted on a poster (110) followed by bull-ring in Portugal during

the revolution (112a). Another example of an individual, autonomous, image which links through association two themes is the image of crowds moving across a dark frame (64). This image resembles the framing and the movement of the last frame in the Chinese country-side sequence (63a) and is linked associatively with the next image (65b) of traffic at night.

Metaphors in the film are a form of 'Ostranenie' - they stand out of context and together with adjacent images or words, create a new 'theme' (a 'ciné-thing' through the use of the 'interval') or are often repeated themselves in order to establish a similar effect. The most obvious uses of a cinematic metaphor in the opening section of the film are found, for example, in the following images:

1. A closed window with a ceramic bowl in front of it (1; 34) and another closed window/door (13; 75). These images are not only used as metaphors within their sequence, but whenever repeated later, throughout the film, create their own theme.
2. The same is true about the blue ice landscapes (14; 20) which are also repeated later in the film.
3. A US plane crushed into snow (78) is linked as a metaphor to the text on the sound track and also links thematically to the image preceding it and the one following it.
4. The wind surfer's board in frame 87b is pointed forward and this framing is

matched by the following image of a bridge in a room filled with oil (88). This last image is used as a link between the stormy waves of the surfer and the stillness of the oil and as a metaphor to the suffering of the Japanese woman lying on her back in a hospital.

5. The image of a porcelain doll (100) - lit by a single candle-light, moving slowly in darkness inside a cabinet - is used as a metaphor for the bomb's victims preceding it and for the girl with the balloons which follows. The young girl, holding balloons, stands on the sea shore, gazing at the sea - the sea is motionless; the waves resume their movement and after a while the girls walks away (102).

A different editing technique, also part of the avant-garde tradition, is the 'montage of attractions', which is used in the opening section of the film:

1. A male Indonesian voice singing (81-88) over the surfer's actions (80-87b). The two separate components of the edited sequence amplify its emotional impact.

2. Text over music: 'I must advise you...' - a meditation text read by a male voice (103a-114) - over the images of Chinese revolutionary posters depicting peasant life (105-111), followed by archive scenes of peasants' mass demonstrations during the Portuguese revolution (112-117) is used to introduce the sense of scepticism and alienation to the scene as a whole.

Conclusion

The non-narrative elements of the film result in fragmenting the twelve segments, or 'tales', which are long enough to embrace internal linear narrative, forcing the viewer to map out a meaning from its diverse, and often repetitive and interwoven parts. Vertov's 'theory of the interval' in creating an overall 'spectacular' can be used to describe the structure of the film. The film asks the viewer to accept the Ostranenie - the fragment taken out of its usual context and put in an unexpected setting to project it as a 'vision' - as the basis of the montage. In this respect, the film also resembles the American Modernists' poetic montage, which involves comparing and linking fragments, selecting them into scenes and use letters as 'colliding image-objects'. The mixture of narrative tales in 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales, on one hand, and an overall non-narrative structure on the other hand, represents directly what Adorno called the 'methodically unmethodical' approach to the essay.

In order to present its ideas, the film emphasises the accuracy of representation of sound and image instead of expanding on a cinematic genre. The film follows the Barthean assertion that one must first of all renounce structuring the text according to the principles of classical rhetoric. The film images are 'broken down' to the 'single text', to the single image, in order to assemble them back by editing frames along the multitude threads of meanings. The single image is not used to create a unified

model but is an "entrance into a network with thousands of entrances" (Barthes, 1975: 12). Without relying on outside theories or structures, the film's individual images or sequences of images support each other. 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales works through a series of fragments which mirror reality, but does not attempt to 'smooth over the cracks' as fiction or documentary films do through narrative continuity editing. The variety of stories, themes, image and sound segments together with the film maker's personal experiences, apparent formlessness, the associative movement from idea to idea, from image to image and the use of archive footage, all achieve a unity in diversity through association. In this, the film resembles a Montaignean essay. The film is a 'caméra-stylo' film - the 'pen-like' recording device of images with its direct use of the cinematic language to translate the film maker's ideas. The style and the structure of the film rely heavily on montage techniques used by the early Soviets and by the Modernist poets.

The textual analysis of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales leads us to look again at the definition of the essay film as it was developed earlier in the thesis. The essay film creates its own discourse by using the tools of the cinematic language - image, sound, editing and the organisation and manipulation of time and space - to create the cinematic 'text'. It creates narrative and non-narrative structures, 'methodically unmethodically' edited together. This is bound together with the notion that film maker is present inside the work and introduces it to the

audience asking them to take part in the construction of the film's meanings. As a result, the cinematic 'text' becomes the 'reflective text', the mediating medium between the film maker and the spectator. The strong avant-garde elements of the cinematic language of the essay film, together with the links to the literary essay, point to it as being an independent genre, and not part of the documentary genre.

Chapter Five : Essay Films by Cavalcanti, Vertov and Marker

Introduction

Following our definition of the essay film genre in the light of the analysis of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales, this chapter looks at several films by Alberto Cavalcanti, Dziga Vertov and Chris Marker and considers them in terms of the definitions given in earlier chapters. In the past, these films were either described as documentaries, essay documentaries, 'unexplained films' or said to contain a 'unique' form of film making. Many commentators have brought forward various issues in relation to the films discussed in this chapter, issues which are often very similar to the outcomes of our discussion of the essay film, but only one has described the films as essays. We will define the films in this chapter as essay films, often by referring to existing analysis which resulted in placing the films as documentaries or as belonging to something other than the essay film genre.

This chapter begins by discussing Alberto Cavalcanti's film Rien que les Heures (1926). Cavalcanti's film is a unique film in his career, displaying an experimental form which he never repeated. The film is defined here as an essay film. The film was produced before Vertov's essay films, but it is unlikely that Vertov saw it or was aware of its existence. Therefore, there is no question of an historical

development of the essay film genre from Cavalcanti to Vertov. Interestingly though, another French avant-garde film of the period, René Clair's Paris Qui Dort (France, 1923), was seen by Vertov in 1926[17]. Clair's film - a narrative fictional comedy - uses freeze-frame techniques to enhance the comical character of the film. Clair's manipulation of the camera speed, as a dramatic tool, is echoed in Vertov's later films.

Vertov produced three major films between 1928-1930: The Eleventh Year (1928), The Man With the Movie Camera (1929) and Enthusiasm (1930). The Man With the Movie Camera is the most important of the three films and of the greatest significance to Vertov's career as a film maker. The first of the three films, The Eleventh Year, already shows many of the characteristics of an essay film which are, in turn, fully developed in The Man With the Movie Camera. The third film, Enthusiasm, is an extraordinary attempt to apply the essay film form which was developed in The Man With the Movie Camera to Vertov's first sound film. The result is a sound-based essay film which is in many respects similar to the image-based The Man With the Movie Camera. Both The Eleventh Year and Enthusiasm are, thematically, very much part and parcel of the dominant political agenda of their time, whilst The Man With the Movie Camera is a unique film in its thematic content, style and structure.

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[17]Vertov's diary entry in which he refers to the viewing of the film is reprinted in Michelson, A, "Dr. Crase and Mr. Clair", October, 1979, vol. 11, Winter, p 32.

Nearly three decades later, the French film maker Chris Marker produced the film A Letter from Siberia (1958) followed by The Koumiko Mystery (1962), and his most famous essay film Sunless (1982). Although these films differ in some ways from Vertov's approach, they are part of the essay film genre and are defined as such in this chapter.

Alberto Cavalcanti's Rien que les Heures

The film Rien que les Heures (1926), made by the Brazilian director Alberto Cavalcanti during his stay in France, ends with the following intertitles: "We can fix a point in space, freeze a moment of time, yet, both space and time elude us". Nearly sixty years later, the film Sunless by Chris Marker starts with the following quote from T.S. Eliot's Ash Wednesday: "Because I know that time is always time and place is always and only place". Both quotes are significant in our reading of an essay film as a 'reflective text'. In addition, Cavalcanti's first intertitle of the film reads: "This film has no story to tell. It is just an impression of time passing and is not intended to represent any specific town". This intertitle indicates the lack of an overall narrtaive structure in an essay film and its considerable 'distance' from the documentary genre, as defined by the film maker himself and by our own definition of the essay film. Rien que les Heures, which takes place in Paris, is often described as the first 'city documentary' film, preceding Ruttman's Berlin, Symphony of a City (Germany, 1927). But Ruttman's film is, in contrast, a single

theme documentary and not an essay film. R. Barsam describes the differences between Cavalcanti and Ruttman as follows:

> In contrast to Ruttman's film, the rhythm of Cavalcanti's film is paced, rather than orchestrated; his vision is *episodic*, rather than symphonic; and he relies on the cumulative impression of a *series of images*, rather than on a unified thematic approach (Barsam, 1974: 29, my italics).

The fragmented nature of Rien que les Heures leads Barsam to call the film a 'mosaic-film' which leaves the viewer with a long-lasting impression:

> When the film is over, we are left with the impression that life goes on, that the next day will again bring work and play, love and hate, food and garbage. Young people will play, artists will create, old people will wander unregarded, and lovers will kiss. Some of the *images are linked through contrast*, others through *irony*, and still *others are unrelated*, but the overall impression is that of a mosaic. The images relate only when they are considered in their relation to the whole picture (Ibid: 30, my italics).

Barsam describes above some of the avant-garde techniques used in the film - the episodic and often unrelated series of images, linked through contrast - which support our definition of the film as an essay film. His term - 'mosaic-film' - could be replaced by the term 'essay film'.

J. Chapman highlights two fundamental elements of our definition of an essay film in Rien que les Heures. Firstly, he observes that the film is in fact a series of interwoven and repeated individual situations which enable Cavalcanti to draw his audience to a variety of ideas inside a single film. Secondly, Cavalcanti generates a feeling in the film which resembles a personal observation by the film maker. Chapman therefore rightly places the film inside the French avant-garde tradition (1971: 39-42). Similarly, S. Lawder describes the film as an avant-garde impressionist documentary, but positions the film firmly inside the documentary genre (1975: 103). E. Barnow sees the significance of the Vertovian opening of the film - the ladies' moving image sequence which is transformed into a still photograph inside a picture album - as a clue to the character of the film: "Cavalcanti loves tricks (...). (He) wanders from topic to topic. He uses a few staged scenes, sometimes embarrassingly amateurish. He lacks Ruttman's sense of organization, but seems far more genial" (1983: 74). Interestingly, Barnow highlights an important element in the film, which we have identified already as part of the essay film aesthetic: "Rich-poor contrasts are suggested throughout the film, but *no meanings are developed* from them: rich and poor are mere threads in the fabric of city life" (Ibid, my italics).

The intertitles of Rien que les Heures, the variety of themes, its structure, the use of short narrative sequences and the avant-garde techniques used in the film, all correspond to our definition of an essay film. The self-reflective nature of the film,

as an essay film, is expressed in its first and last intertitles, which are quoted above. The film is an essay film with its main theme - the city - presented through a complex structure of narrative and non-narrative segments edited together. A 'day in the city' structure can be traced in the film, but only in the background, and not as the main structural element of the film, as is the case with the 24-hour structure of Ruttman's documentary film, Berlin, Symphony of a City. In line with our definition of the essay film, the themes in Rien que les Heures are presented through fragmentation and a mixture of short, acted, narrative stories and non-narrative images. The suggestion of a temporal structure to the film (with the use of a repeated image of a clock) is interwoven with an indication of a narrative thread which can be read in the film through the character of the woman at the beginning of the film and the woman witnessing the mugging incident toward the end of the film.

The repetitive thematic structure of an essay film can be identified in one of the themes of Rien que les Heures - homelessness and poverty versus wealth. The film uses a multitude of avant-garde techniques both in editing and in creating the film texture itself. The film is characterised by presenting short episodes, together with autonomous individual images edited through juxtaposition, association and the use of metaphor: a car becomes a horse; an image of an eye watching a painting is followed by a still image of a painting, followed by an image of rows of eyes which are followed by a row of flags. Associative editing is also employed in cutting from

dog hair to washing clothes in a river and to people washing clothes outside their homes; a woman breathing is followed by the up-and-down movement of a machine. Contrast and juxtaposition are used in editing between the swimming pool and the drunken men sleeping in the street. In addition, Cavalcanti often inserts abstract images in the edited sequences, for example in the newspaper sequence. The film reflects upon and uses extensively the medium itself. It employs photomontage, split screens, superimposition and double exposure: a plate of meat is superimposed on a slaughtered animal; images of an accordion and dancers are superimposed; a photograph taken of a group of ladies becomes a picture in an album. In another scene the camera is mounted on a fun-fair carousel to create very fast-moving revolving abstract images. The extensive use of avant-garde editing techniques, the multitude of interwoven and repetitive themes and the reflective character of the film, all point therefore to the definition of Rien que les Heures as an essay film.

Dziga Vertov

Vertov made his three essay films in the Ukraine, away from Moscow, between 1928 and 1930. In some respect, these films can be described as the culmination of his theoretical and practical work since the Soviet revolution. During the first ten years after the revolution, Vertov produced mainly newsreels and agit films and wrote extensively on the theory of 'Kino-Eye' and film making in general[18]. The

[18]For a complete list of Vertov's oeuvre as a film maker and a writer see Feldman, S, Dziga Vertov- a Guide

three essay films - The Eleventh Year, The Man With the Movie Camera and Enthusiasm - are more ambitious than any of his previous films in their length, scale and degree of structural complexity. They represent a clear break from the earlier 'agit' film genre. Sixth of the Earth (1926), produced before The Eleventh Year, was the last major 'agit' film and ends with a strong political message to the viewer in its final intertitles. Its structure is dominated by a regular cross-cutting throughout the entire film between intertitles and images (see below the discussion on the relationship between Whitman's poetry and the film). In one aspect Sixth of the Earth points to future development in Vertov's work as it was named by Vertov himself a 'ciné-poem' whereas he had named his previous films 'newsreels'. Abramov, the first Russian biographer of Vertov, looks at the film as a cinematic 'theme and variations', referring to Vertov's background as a composer (quoted in Bordwell, 1972: 41). The film Three Songs about Lenin (1934), which followed Enthusiasm, represents the end of Vertov's avant-garde film making. The film signifies a return to a clearly structured, single theme documentary that is divided into three easily defined parts. From the early 1930's, Socialist-Realism became the dominant political and artistic ideology in the USSR, replacing nearly two decades of the Soviet avant-garde movement which had started with literary formalism[19].

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to References and Resources, 1979, Boston: G.K.Hall as well as Petric, V, Constructivism in Film: The Man with the Movie Camera- A Cinematic Analysis, 1987, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[19]Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's cultural right hand man in the 1930's and 1940's, talking at the first congress of the Union of Soviet Writers in 1934, declared: "All Soviet artists (should) produce a truthful and historically concrete representation of reality (...) in the spirit of Socialist Realism" (quoted in Petric, 1987: 244n). See also Chris Marker's documentary film The Last Bolshevik (France, 1993) for a unique and moving depiction,

Outside the Soviet formalist circle of film makers and critics, Vertov's efforts to establish a new cinematic genre through his essay films were already recognised by one of the foremost film theoreticians of the time, the Hungarian Bela Balàzs:

> The search for the literature-free 'pure film style' led directors not only to travel with their camera into unknown distances, but also to penetrate into a yet *undiscovered and unknown nearness*. The first such traveller who went on a voyage of discovery into *proximity* was the Russian Dziga Vertov (Balázs, 1970: 164, my italics).

Balàzs makes a clear distinction between narrative and documentary films on the one hand and Vertov's work on the other. He points to the role of the camera as a personal tool in 'travelling' into the, then, new world of the cinema and the film maker himself - the creation of the 'self-reflective text' which is part of our definition of an essay film:

> These entirely authentic shots of actual reality are the most subjective of all. *They have no story but they do have a central figure, a hero.* This hero is invisible because he is the one who sees it all out of his 'cine-eye.' But everything he sees expresses his own personality, however unconstructed the reality in his shots may appear. It is he who is characterized and reflected in the shots which he took in preference to some other fragments of reality. Only his own subjective feeling determined the choice, the sequence, the cutting rhythm of the things he

based on eye witness accounts, of the post-revolution Soviet film world.

shows us. He is an artist who seems to yield himself up to objective impressions without looking for a link between them. But he himself supplies the link and his subjective self is the constructive principle on which the film is built (Ibid, my italics).

Balàzs here describes Vertov's work in a way very similar to our definition of the essay film, in particular to the Barthesian notion of the 'self', touching upon the role the film maker takes within an essay film. Vertov is quoted as having said of himself that "within him there are two 'I's': One follows the other. One is a critic, the other a poet" (Pirog, 1982: 303).

The particular use in the essay film of the 'interval' as one of the avant-garde methods of the genre was recognised by A. Bakshy in 1931 when he wrote about Vertov's editing :

> Attempts have been made to base the composition (of a film) as a whole on such methods of formalized treatment of the image content as the arrangement of 'rhymed' sequences with certain images recurring at definite intervals, or of whole cycles of sequences on the lines of a repeating pattern somewhat after the manner of certain verse forms. Dziga Vertov is regarded in Russia as the head of this school of cinematic composition (quoted in Jacobs, 1969: 300).

The film The Eleventh Year (1928) was produced by Vertov in celebration of the eleventh anniversary of the Soviet revolution. This fact determines the overall theme of the film and puts it in part in the 'agit' film genre. The film still contains some short political intertitles, but in its complexity, richness of interwoven and repetitive themes, many of the essay film elements later fully developed in The Man With the Movie Camera are already recognisable. A members' panel of the Soviet journal Novy LEF published their reaction to The Eleventh Year in 1928. Shklovsky criticises Vertov's use of metaphorical intertitling and accuses him of diversion from the main function of an 'agit' film (quoted in Petric, 1987: 21). Eisenstein reacted to the film by attacking its complexity derived from the use of 'interval' editing (Eisenstein, 1949: 73). The film The Eleventh Year should be described as an essay film as it contains only a suggestion of a narrative structure - morning through to evening - through a sporadic repetition of the image of a worker blowing a trumpet. But this image can be seen as a repetitive autonomous image rather than as an indication of a closed structure in the film. The film contains a large variety of themes and locations - road building, electricity works, farms, mines (some shots are later reused in The Man With the Movie Camera), sailors and soldiers - mostly put forward as individual images rather than as documentary sequences or political messages linked to intertitles. The film, as an essay film, relies on associative editing, often following the movement of the machine in the individual images. The images of the African and the Indian toward the end of the film are intercut with fast

cutting and repetition of images from earlier scenes in the film. The film also makes extensive use of the medium of film itself by using super - imposition to create powerful and highly graphic effects which are fully developed in the next film, The Man With the Movie Camera.

The Man With the Movie Camera (1929) is described by Vertov in the opening titles of the film as:

> A record on celluloid in six reels. An excerpt from the diary of a cameraman. The film presents an experiment in the cinematic communication of visual events without the aid of intertitles, without the aid of a scenario, without the aid of the theatre (a film without sets, actors etc). This experimental work aims at creating a truly international absolute language of cinema based on its total separation from the language of theatre and literature.

This definition by Vertov of a new film form, departing from the 'agit' film and documentary and narrative forms, is significant to our claim that Vertov and the film The Man With the Movie Camera should be prominent in any discussion of the essay film genre. In addition to the opening titles of the film, we should also consider Vertov's own description of the film which was distributed by him to audiences during the film's first screenings in Kiev and Moscow:

> The film is the sum of events recorded on the film stock, not merely a

summation of facts. It is a higher mathematics of facts - visual documents are combined with the intention to preserve the unity of conceptually linked pieces which concur with the concatenation of images and coincide with visual linkages, dependent not on intertitles but, ultimately, on the overall synthesis of these linkages in order to create an indissoluble organic whole (reprinted in Petric, 1987: 130).

The images, according to Vertov, are not linked through any established form but nevertheless they create an 'organic whole'.

Earlier in this thesis, the relationship between letters and images was highlighted in the discussion of American modernist poetry and its links to the essay film genre. In 1929, after viewing The Man With the Movie Camera in Germany, L. Britton wrote in The Realist - a British journal for science, industry, art and economy - about the film. He comments that the film offers a new film language - "a *new film alphabet* (...) (images) form a library of *film elements, which can be likened to the letters of the alphabet or the characters of the musical notation*, and in the same way they are recombined in the artist's brain to produce imaginative creations" (1929: 127, my italics). The film, according to Britton, is not an 'agit' film, neither does it aim to preach Communism. Britton observes that The Man With the Movie Camera is also not a documentary film chronicling a series of events, but should be described as a 'composition'. This, because the film uses the 'interval' technique which we

have identified in our definition of the essay film, or in Britton's words: "(the film) not merely employs a succession of scenes where each impression, like the successive notes in a melody, is influenced by those that precede and follow, but he (Vertov) also uses scenes shown simultaneously like the simultaneous notes of a harmony." (Ibid: 128). Britton states that the real interest of Vertov in The Man With the Movie Camera is the human condition - "the grandeur and majesty, the pathos and simplicity and wonder of human life, the sublimity of the human ideal" (Ibid: 126).

This observation of Britton is very similar to our discussion of the literary essay, and of the character of Montaigne's writings in particular. Britton offers the reader his opinion about the general state of the cinema in 1929 - a crucial year in its relative short history - in light of Vertov's The Man With the Movie Camera :

> The appearance of Vertoff (sic) in the forefront of the international film discussion is particularly interesting at the moment when the talkies have produced a sudden arrest of normal growth of film technique, and are forcing the film back within the stunting and stultifying limits of the stage (Ibid: 129).

Nowadays, seventy years later and from a much further distance, we can only observe that Britton's premonition was extremely accurate. Essay films, alongside other avant-garde and non-narrative cinematic forms, have definitely played second fiddle to the dominant narrative film language.

Among modern commentators and writers, some place the film The Man With the Movie Camera firmly within the documentary genre, others within the avant-garde, and some find it difficult to place it within any established genre. None describes it as an essay film, but many, nevertheless, point to different elements within it which coincide with our definition of the film as an essay film.

E. Barnow, in his book on the history of the documentary film genre, places Vertov within the 'reporter' category of documentary film makers. He does, though, analyse in detail the formalist background to Vertov's film and defines The Man With the Movie Camera as an avant-garde documentary film (1983: 63). Barnow also mentions Walt Whitman's influence on Vertov's work and in particular Whitman's use of a catalogue of occupations (and locations) in a direct-address manner[20]. He compares it to Vertov' style in an earlier film - Sixth of the Earth. This direct 'You' style in the film - 'You in the Tundra... You Uzbeks' - is, according to Barnow, the forerunner of the style in The Man With the Movie Camera. Furthermore, Barnow calls The Man With the Movie Camera "an essay on film truth, crammed with tantalizing ironies" (Ibid). But he does not develop further this line of argument. Instead, he describes the film as 'dazzling in its ambiguity' and leaves the reader with a series of unanswered questions: "What did it finally mean for audiences? Had Vertov demonstrated the importance of the reporter as documentarist? Or had his

[20]See, for example, 'Starting from Paumanok' in Whitman, W, Leaves of Grass, 1990, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 18-29.

barrage of film tricks suggested - intentionally? unintentionally? - that no documentary could be trusted?" (Ibid: 65). These questions reveal the limitation of Barnow's definition of the film as a documentary.

D. Vaughan in his analysis of the film calls it "a study in film truth on an almost philosophical level. The levity of its treatment - the fact that it is argued in the mode of fun - does not disqualify this judgement" (1971: 56). He concentrates his discussion on the film's efforts to destroy its own illusion "in the hope that reality will 'emerge' from the process, not as a creature of screen illusion but as a liberated spirit" (Ibid). Without defining it as such, Dai Vaughan points to the self-reflective character of the film, one of the fundamentals of any essay film.

J. Mayne argues that the film defies any classification inside formalism. It is a complex film in which technology, ideology and social practice are linked. She claims that the film is a self-reflective political film which defines the cinema as an ideological medium. She portrays the film as a "meta-narrative, i.e. a film that tells a story about itself, about the activities of the cameraman in the place of a central narrative character" (1977: 83). S. Croft and O. Rose similarly use the film as a route to offer a Marxist analysis of film in order to "understand the ideological basis of the cinema through its relationship to the mode of production as located within social formations" (1977: 11). They define the film as a 'city documentary'

although they remark that it is clearly different from any existing dominant cinematic codes: "Meanings are read from the film not through any simple re-presentation of an anterior reality in the form of closed history, but through the film's placing of shots within itself" (Ibid: 20). A. Michelson also describes the film as a 'city documentary' and depicts it as a film which defines the outmost limits of its medium by employing a great variety of innovative cinematic devices (1972: 69).

B. Nichols puts Vertov's films among the 'reflexive' mode of documentary films (1991: 33). This mode of documentary, according to Nichols, uses many common devices of the documentary but "sets them on edge so that the viewer's attention is drawn to the device as well as the effect" (Ibid). M. Renov's book, Theorizing Documentary, in which he discusses the four main tendencies of the documentary film, mentions The Man With the Movie Camera twice: Once as a documentary which seeks to promote or persuade (1993: 29) and also as a film which analyses the process of film making itself (Ibid: 31).

M. Le Grice puts the film firmly within the avant-garde genre and in particular within the formalist, revolutionary approach of the new Soviet cinema. Le Grice combines in his discussion the interwoven thematic elements of the film and the editing techniques employed by Vertov and his editor. The 'methodically unmethodical' arrangement of sequences which occurs in an essay film, is described by Le Grice as

'clusters of short sequences' which achieve a coherence through a 'precision in these relationships':

> The massive work, whose emergent theme is the inter-relatedness of activity, enterprise and movement of the Soviet metropolis, functions through the most *intricate weave of thematic connections*. The basis of the connections is *multi-levelled*, but clear (...). In addition to (this) coordination at the visual and kinetic level, thematic relationships are continually established through identification of the material (...). In order to create this weave, a temporal simultaneity is effected by *clusters of short sequences of images intercut in rapid succession*. Though a precision in these relationships is sought and achieved in the film's editing, the spectator always participates in synthesizing the material for himself (1977: 59- 60, my italics).

G. Pirog in his article on the different approaches of Vertov and Eisenstein to montage seen from a semiotic point of view, looks in detail at Vertov's The Man With the Movie Camera. The film, according to Pirog, continually attempts to subvert linearity even in its own constructions which, from time to time, emerge within the film. Using Russian formalist terminology, Pirog describes the film thus: " (The film) is a cinema of *Ostranenie gone wild* (...). Vertov was fully aware that the acceptability of film content most often depends on its adherence to film

conventions rather than on its adherence to reality. Vertov turns the tables on device, deconstructing it, and tries thereby to clear the iconic sign of any taint of conventionality" (1982: 298, my italics). The role of the film maker as both an observer and a self-observer underpins the entire film, and is contrary to the documentary film's purpose of observing reality as an 'object': "Once the subject is in place and firmly established as the central point of reference he deconstructs it, explaining meaning in terms of systems of conventions" (Ibid: 303). The result, says Pirog, is that any linearity suggested in the film is disturbed and does not develop into a story. As a result, one of the outcomes of this approach is the lack of a central character in the film.

Pirog's comments above highlight the definition of an essay film as a reflective text, lacking a central theme which is presented in a linear fashion to the viewer. Pirog also describes the role of the camera, the cameraman and the editor: "This larger matrix serves not only to underscore the meta-nature of the film but to assert the particular power film making has over the reorganization of the world it records" (Ibid: 300). The process of editing, the selection of shots, which is paramount in our discussion of the essay film, is described by Pirog as the most important element of the film: "So important is this process for this film that combination is not based on a linear narrative chain but serves to underscore the very paradigmatic nature of the filmic process" (Ibid). He brings to our attention the example of the still images of children that appear and disappear at various points in the film: "They are part of

the larger fund of images that Svilova (the editor) can draw upon in her editing work" (Ibid) The images are not developed throughout the film toward a 'story', but are used as an editing tool by Vertov:

> These sequences are connected to each other not on the basis of narrative coherence, but on the basis of their being representative of the same filmic process. This is made clear by *metaphor*, as in the mouse-conjuring trick and the fade-ins of the swimmers and carousel, and explicitly, as in the stills of the children who appear in new combinations later on (Ibid, my italics).

Pirog links the discussion of the filmic metaphor with the recurrent image in the film of the windowed door with light streaming through it. The image is used to highlight the experience of viewing an editing process on one hand, and the breaking up any conventional expectations for a linear pattern on the other. This also mirrors our discussion of editing of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales, the use of the film metaphor and of the individual images in it. Pirog in his detailed analysis of the film concentrates on its cinematic techniques which are derived from formalism and which as has been shown, are also part of our definition of the essay film. Pirog, though, does not attempt to place the film within a particular cinematic genre.

V. Petric devoted a complete book to this film alone - Constructivism in Film (1987)

- analysing it as an avant-garde film and looking in detail at the aesthetic, thematic and structural elements in the film. He too discusses the film according to the theories of formalism, constructivism and Russian avant-garde cinema of the period. The detailed, scene-by-scene, analysis by Petric is extremely accurate and useful in the context of this thesis, but I would like to put a slightly different emphasis on it and, as a result, to place the film inside the essay film genre. Throughout his book, Petric discusses the following aesthetic and thematic elements of the film, which are extremely relevant to our discussion of the essay film:

1. The film is not a single theme documentary about a city - a 'city documentary'.

2. The different themes in the film are constructed by the viewer's active participation during the screening of the film.

3. The film combines, on the one hand, narrative sequences and, on the other hand, it defies any notion of an overall narrative structure by constantly interrupting narrative flow and introducing non-narrative elements into the sequence.

4. The film is self-referential because of the role played in it by the camera, the cameraman and the editor. In addition, some of the people photographed in the film react and interact with the camera.

5. Unlike a documentary, in which the point of view resides always with the third person - the director or camera person - in The Man with the

Movie Camera point of view is continually shifted between the film maker, the camera itself, the editor, the character or what Petric calls 'the ambiguous one' who cannot be pinned down to any of the above. This constant shift in point of view is also used to break up narrative sequences.

6. The film offers a variety of commentaries on social and political levels, but none of them are definitive, being instead left open for the viewer to take part in their construction and interpretation.
7. The film uses juxtaposition, cinematic metaphor and associative editing techniques to establish different themes.
8. The film uses multi-textured cinematic devices - freeze-frames, super-imposition, reverse motion, accelerated motion, slow motion, stop frame, pixilation, strobe-flickering effects and dissolves.

Petric describes the film as an avant-garde constructivist film. He depicts the film as an "integration of its filmic devices (particularly its shot composition and montage) with all other elements to form a self-contained cinematic whole" (Ibid: 130). Because of its constructivist principles, the film can only be read, according to Petric, as a sum of the detailed textual analysis of the film. In his book, Petric, therefore, follows his definition of the film with a detailed shot analysis of a wide range of formal and other cinematic devices in the film.

The two definitions of the film which are mentioned by Petric - one by Vertov himself that the film is an attempt to create a "film thing" (quoted in Petric, 1987: 130) and Petric own's 'constructivist' term - are in my opinion unsatisfactory. To use Vertov's terminology within modern film theory seems impractical. Nevertheless, one should take note of his use of the term 'diary of a cameraman' which appears in the opening title of the film to describe the film. In parts, the film is a diary of a sort, but the complete film is far more complex and rich in themes, so that it is difficult to define it solely as an autobiographical diary film. The autobiographical element in The Man With the Movie Camera is compatible with our previous discussions on the place of autobiography and the film maker within the essay film genre. The autobiographical element in the film is linked to the use of the camera - the 'Kino-Eye' or the 'caméra-stylo' in 'writing' the film and representing the film maker through his camera as the 'self' and as the main intellectual entity within the film which binds the different components of the film together. It is impossible to understand The Man With the Movie Camera without seeing the central role played in it by the camera and, through it, the cameraman/film maker. Petric's constructivist readings of the film and of the aesthetic and thematic elements within it are accurate, extremely valuable and lead us very far down the road to an understanding of the film. The term 'constructivist film' though, describing the genre of the film as a whole, is somewhat limited because it describes solely the cinematic devices used in the film. It does not take into account, for example, Petric's own catalogue of aesthetic and thematic elements which are part

of any discussion of the essay film genre.

The Man With the Movie Camera is an essay film in which the 'text' is self-reflective, similar to Montaigne's articulation of the writing process within the essay itself. The film addresses its 'text' by the use of the camera, editing, movement, framing, speed and film texture. The cameraman in the film introduces an autobiographical element to it and holds the fragmented sequences and short narrative stories together. But, The Man With the Movie Camera is not a film about the cameraman nor is it a documentary on life in the USSR. The film is shot in different cities and locations and does not offer a portrait of a particular place. Fragmented observations, ideas, documentary segments and short stories are held together by the film maker and the representation of the film making process itself. It is like an essay by Montaigne - everyone finds something in this film. Similar to our analysis of the integration of narrative 'tales' and non-narrative elements in the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales, Vertov's film offers 'short stories' through short narrative sequences - e.g: the beach, sport, morning in the city, factory life - while other edited sequences create an impression of a story through editing fragments of sequences and individual autonomous images. Some of the fragments of ideas and short stories are introduced early in the film and then repeated and developed later. Some are completed during the film, others reappear as image repetitions within an edited sequence. Vertov constantly manipulates the film

language itself, reworking the presentation of the image rather than seeking to create an overall structure. As an essay film, The Man With the Movie Camera does not rely on external concepts, instead it is the cinema of the spectacle, magic tricks and showmanship: images are repeated in different contexts; rhythmic editing is created through the use of individual images in a kinetic metaphor or graphic match; extensive use is made of film techniques such as freeze frames, super imposition, reverse motion, accelerated motion, slow motion, stop frame, pixilation, strobe-flickering effects and dissolves which dominate the texture of the film.

Enthusiasm (1930) is Vertov's first sound film, in which many of the thematic and editing concepts of the essay film are deployed both in the image, but more importantly, in the sound design. In place of the cameraman, the radio operator offers one of the elements in the film which connects the various themes in it and reflects on them. The radio operator's images offer a comment on the process of sound recording and editing in the same way that the cameraman and the editor did in The Man With the Movie Camera. As Enthusiasm was the first experiment in using sound, produced one year after The Man With the Movie Camera, the result is a fascinating experimental sound essay film, although it is crude in places. It uses juxtaposition and multi-layered symbolism in the sound editing through a mixture of electronic tracks, ambient sound, documentary sound footage, sound effects, sync speech and music. The film presents a multitude of themes - religious, personal,

industrial and political. These are interwoven and often repeated to create a rhythmic pattern and also include 'image quotations' from earlier films. One of the features of Vertov's essay films is the re-use of images - a form of self-reflective quotation - across all his three films. The different themes in the film are presented in an extremely fragmented style and are cut abruptly, often in order to create a rhythmic effect together with the sound track. In fact, more than the two previous films, Enthusiasm is a complete 'Kino-Eye' film in which the images are so thoroughly fragmented that it is difficult to identify long sequences. This is in addition to the extensive use of constructivist imagery and super-imposition which create strong abstract and graphic effects. As a result, the essay film character of the film lies in its 'sound picture' with its interwoven repetitive themes, which are bound together with the notion that the radio operator/film maker is present inside the work and introduces it to the listener/viewer. The sound track often determines the relationship between sound and image through the use of juxtaposition and associative and metaphoric editing. L. Fischer describes the film as a documentary film which is also an experimental sound film, demonstrating Vertov's ideas on sound and the 'Radio-Eye'. In a detailed analysis of the sound track, Fischer highlights the self-reflective, multi-layered and experimental techniques used in editing sound and image, but positions 'The Woman with Earphone' (Enthusiasm) alongside The Man With the Movie Camera as 'Kino-Eye'/'Radio-Eye' documentaries (1977-8: 27). I suggest that both belong to the essay film genre.

Chris Marker

"Words achieving equality with images,

ideas achieving equality with facts,

art achieving equality with life,

how d'you say in Russian?

Dziga Vertov"

(Chris Marker quoted in Kämper, 1997: 175)

Chris Marker's three essay films, A Letter from Siberia (1957), The Koumiko Mystery (1962) and Sunless (1982), differ from Vertov's essay films primarily in the considerable use of long personal commentaries on the sound track by the film maker. The personal commentaries are, in one respect, the dominant element in Marker's essay films, similar to the central role played by the camera in Vertov's The Man With the Movie Camera[21]. The length and the highly personal character of the commentaries may lead to the films being defined as personal documentaries. But there are important fundamental differences between Marker's commentaries and the documentary genre which enable us to place his three films inside the essay film genre.

The commentaries are constructed through a strong associative 'text-editing' technique, mirroring Marker's highly associative image editing. The commentaries

[21]In the early years of his career, Marker published the texts of his essay films under the titles Commentaires 1 (1961), Paris: Seuil and Commentaires 2 (1967), Paris: Seuil.

do not rely on external, pre-determined literary or cinematic structures. They do not convey a single theme to support documentary images. The commentaries in Marker's films are not structured as a linear narrative, but they contain narrative segments and non-narrative segments edited together. The commentaries do not constitute an autobiography or a travelogue, as, for example, Wim Wenders' personal documentary films Tokyo-Ga (1985) and Note Books on Cities and Clothes (1989) do. The commentaries constitute essays in their thematic and structural complexities. Similar to the overall structure of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales, the commentaries are a combination of anecdotes, poems, travelogue, biographical, political, social, historical observations and quotations from other sources. The commentaries often reflect on the making of the films themselves and on film as a medium. The film maker is present in the work through his voice, which is similar to the place of the camera in Vertov's The Man With the Movie Camera. This determines the overall structures of the films, structures which rely on the concept of the 'self', offering coherence to the films. The spoken commentaries in Marker's essay films are extremely prominent and, by themselves, point toward the definition of the films as essay films. But the films should also be defined as such because of their overall thematic, aesthetic and structural principles and the use of the avant-garde techniques in constructing the image of the films. The films' use of different formats, multi-surfaces, animation and video also point to

their definition as essay films.

The film Letter from Siberia (1957), one of Marker's earliest films, came to the attention of A. Bazin in 1958 as a type of film which had not been seen before in France: "How can one present Letter from Siberia? At first one must do this in a negative way, by noting that it resembles nothing which has hitherto been made in the way of documentary ('topic-based') films" (1983: 179). Although, superficially, the film looks like another travel report from the USSR, Bazin claims that this is a wrong description and suggests his own definition for the film:

> Letter from Siberia is an *essay* in the form of a cinematographic report on Siberian reality past and present (...) An *essay* which is documented by the film. The important word here is *essay*, with the same meaning as in literature: An essay at once historical and political, even though written by a poet (Ibid: 180, my italics).

Although his definition of the literary essay - *at once historical and political, even though written by a poet* - is somewhat simplistic in view of our discussion of the essay, Bazin follows on in his argument to recognise that the film maker's presence in the film defines the essay form of Letter from Siberia. Bazin's use of the term 'intelligence' as the 'raw material' of the film is similar to Alter's definition of the role of the film maker in the essay film and to the definition Defaux gave to Montaigne's presence in his essays [See also Balàzs' notion of the 'absent hero' in

Vertov's work which was mentioned earlier in this chapter]. Bazin continues his argument by highlighting editing as a crucial element in the study of the film:

> Chris Marker brings in his films the absolutely new notion of '*horizontal*' editing, as opposed to traditional editing which approaches the film print lengthwise through the relationship between shots. Here the image doesn't refer to what precedes it or follows it, but - in a way laterally - to *what is said.* Better still, the essential element is the beauty of the sound, which makes the mind reach for the image. Editing is *done from the ear to the eye* (Ibid, my italics).

Bazin asks us to look at the image itself in a way similar to how the formalists and the Russian avant-garde film makers described the word/image in poetry/film. Without mentioning Vertov's 'theory of the interval' and the practices of the 'Kino-Eye' and the 'Kino-Ear' Bazin describes the editing in Letter from Siberia as "horizontal (...) done from the ear to the eye" (Ibid).

Thirty years later, R. Bellour takes Bazin's definition of Marker as an essay film maker in Letter from Siberia and applies it to most of Marker's films. Furthermore, he sees a direct link between Barthes' fragmented writings and Marker's films (Bellour 1997: 109). Bellour also places Marker alongside Montaigne and Barthes as an artist who works through the logic of his medium and continuously invents the rules of his own game (Ibid: 125). Bellour adds Michaux's poetry as influencing

Marker's films (Ibid: 110) and, more importantly, the central role of the viewer in the exchange between him/her and the film maker: "He (Marker) knows that the only real exchange resides in the address, the way the person who speaks to us situates himself in what he says, with respect to what he shows" (Ibid). Both the Bazin and Bellour definitions of Letter from Siberia as an essay film are very useful, if somewhat brief and limited in their scope.

To add to their observations on the film and to illustrate some of them, Letter from Siberia should be defined as an essay film for the following reasons:

1. Despite the fact that it contains a central theme, it is an essay film which presents a multitude of themes: man and nature, city and the countryside, politics, history, the medium of film, the nature of editing.
2. The film includes a variety of styles: voice-over, animation, long wide vistas and travelling shots, archive material, documentary images, TV commercials and distinct, graphical, constructivist photography.
3. The film, in places, reflects on itself: during the beginning scene of men building telegraph poles across the open spaces; shots of the camera filming in the street; repetition of shots of the bear in one example and of the road workers in another in order to offer commentary on the viewer's perception of the film.
4. The film uses associative editing techniques in constructing its scenes: dance extracts are intercut with images of water, followed by costume-

drama in local old costumes and archive images of the Sputnik rocket. Images of men digging underground are followed by first cave paintings, then the cut-out animation of a Mammoth, the history of the Mammoth and finally cut back to rivers in Siberia. Siberian nomads riding deer are followed by a TV animation commercial for Kellog cereal featuring a deer, and the sequence goes back to the nomads. A series of the first photographs of the region is matched with live footage.

5. Similar techniques are used on the sound track: a French song about Paris, sung by of Yves Montand, is played over a loud speaker in Siberia as part of a street scene and is followed by a cut to a Russian translation of the song and then a cut back to the French version with Montand. Similarly, later in the film, a modern French song sung by a woman changes to Russian over scenes of taking a bear for a walk. The French woman's voice is edited over images of animals in a zoo in Siberia and over animal miniatures, intercut with Russian songs

The Koumiko Mystery is not a documentary film about Koumiko as a Japanese woman representing other women, representing Japan, or any other issue. It is an essay film. "She does not make history, she is history" says Marker in the commentary sound track. The film is not a documentary on the Olympic games which in places acts as a kind of a 'backdrop' to the film. The answers by Koumiko

herself in what seems to be, at the beginning of the film, an interview with the film maker, become Marker's own 'voice' on the commentary sound-track, a shift which is repeated later in the film Sunless. Her voice is only one of the voices in the film, which include extracts from radio broadcasts and sync sound. The textures and the sources of images in the film are as varied as in Marker's other essay films. The Koumiko Mystery includes documentary images of Japan; crowd shots intercut with a variety of highly stylised close-ups, often stills, of Koumiko's face; adverts and Samurai films from Japanese TV; newsreel images of political figures of the time across the world; drawings on a TV screen; a poster of the French film Umbrellas of Cherbourg followed by a sequence of of Japanese people in the streets with open umbrellas together with the original film music. The film also includes long sequences on martial arts, boxing, childhood, animals and department stores which are continuously interrupted in the process of associative editing.

In discussing Marker's film The Koumiko Mystery (1962), T. Rafferty sees only a difference in tone between the 'playful' approach to Letter from Siberia and the 'haunting' effect in The Koumiko Mystery. He observes about the film: "The shift from the present tense of documentary to the past tense of reverie isn't just a formal experiment in the relationship of sound and image" (1984: 285). The film offers a new relationship between sound and image, which does not exist in documentary. The usual illusion of a documentary which reads, to the viewer: 'you are there', and

uses on-camera interviews, is substituted by retrospection and by a new illusion: - 'what we see, is what Marker is' (Ibid). But, Rafferty does not go further in attempting to define the film outside the documentary genre

One can look, superficially, at The Koumiko Mystery as an essay film which preceded Sans Soleil (Sunless) (1982), because of Marker's 'return' to Japan in Sunless. But, more interestingly, Sunless has developed the genre even further in its degree of complexity of thematic content, the use of the avant-garde and the associative character of the personal commentary on the sound track. Sunless is probably Marker's most watched and discussed film, alongside La Jetée. E. Branigan writes extensively about Sunless. He examines in detail the boundary between fiction and non-fiction, narrative and non-narrative, subjectivity and objectivity and the relationship between the 'story world' and the screen. His approach is a cognitive one, looking at the multiplicity of levels of text and the complex temporal structures in the film. Branigan, correctly, rejects the notion that the film is a documentary - a film with a closed structure which seeks to represent the world to the viewer:

> The spectator assumes in a documentary that there is a close (causal) connection between the logic of the events depicted and the logic of depicting. Or, to put it another way, the world on the screen has left its trace on film because it is closely connected to our ordinary

world and to our familiar ways of depicting (1992: 202).

The film can be seen, initially, as a travelogue about a large number of exotic places. The enormous variety of locations visited suggests, according to Branigan, some of the themes of the film: island nations, isolation, different cultures, cities, non-Western societies and the contrast between industrial nations and their former colonies (Ibid: 207). The method with which the stories, anecdotes and travel experiences are linked together and related to the different themes in the film is very particular. Therefore, the film is not actually a travelogue, according to Branigan, because of its thematic complexity which is a result of the extensive use of association and memory, and because of the lack of any clear travel pattern in it (Ibid). Discussing another element in our definition of the essay film, namely, autobiography, Branigan observes:

> The identity of the person who is making the trip, and the manner in which impressions are being registered becomes progressively less certain. To make matters still more complex, the film undertakes to document the general problems of documenting a place and culture as well as to speculate about the interpretive problems being posed for a spectator by its own images and sounds (Ibid: 208).

The role of the film maker in the film, the self-reflective nature of Sunless and the rejection of both the documentary and the travelogue genres expressed by Branigan above, all point to the definition of the film as an essay film. Branigan looks at the

film differently - he adopts a post-modernist perspective. He lists the following points as defining post-modernist acsthetics:

1. Lists of things and permutations, rather than a series of events which derive from an origin and move step-by-step toward a conclusion.
2. Middles without explicit beginnings or ends.
3. Inconclusiveness, indeterminacy.
4. Surface, randomness, and possibility.
5. Diversity and plurality without hierarchy.
6. Fragmentation, dissonance, admixture, layering.
7. Incongruity, rather than unity or purity.
8. Multiple media, eclecticism, pastiche, intertextuality.
9. Pop culture, stereotypes, cult of the everyday.
10. Quotation, distance.
11. Detachment, self-consciousness (Ibid).

A close look at these definitions reveals that they reflect accurately the complex thematic content and aesthetics of Sunless and further more, they are very compatible with our description of the essay film. The film's post-modernist's reading convinces Branigan that the film cannot be seen as a documentary film at all (Ibid: 209). In addition, argues Branigan, Marker's use of quotes in his film; his reflections on the role of the cameraman (e.g. at the beginning with the shot of the

three Icelandic girls, similar to Vertov's The Man With the Movie Camera); the expression of doubt by the film maker and the film discussion's of the film itself, all point, to the definition of the film as a "cautionary tale" (Ibid: 215). Essay film is a more appropriate term to describe the film, especially in the light of Branigan's conclusion:

> Sans Soleil is also balanced precariously between narrative and non-narrative. Stories and anecdotes collected during a journey are arranged in a dramatic way to suggest the changing attitude of the traveler toward memory and history (...). The result is neither catalogue, concordance, nor index, but rather something like a 'hyperindex' of stories where one can begin with any 'entry,' or item in a story, and discover not only references to particulars of the story but also references to additional 'entries' that collect related sets of particulars from other stories. A 'hyperindex' (...) continues to disperse outward onto a network of other entries and cross-references offering an indefinite number of routes by which to trace the knowledge base (Ibid: 216-217).

Branigan's analysis of Sunless, expressed above, is compatible with our definition of the essay film but, as a previous discussion of Petric's analysis of The Man With the Movie Camera demonstrated, the essay film definition offers a clearer framework for the discussion of both films' genre.

A. Casebier describes Sunless as 'a deconstructive documentary':

> The film offers a multi-level exploration of many interrelated phenomena. It is about filmmaking, and it is about the making and forgetting of film images (...). The film aims to deconstruct certain traditional conceptions about documentary filmmaking, the representation of history, and our consciousness about both (1988: 34).

Casebier argues that the film is both a documentary and a non-documentary as it is a deconstructive critique of the form itself (Ibid: 35). The same duality is mentioned by T. Rafferty. The questions asked by the viewer while watching any documentary are often: how do people live or what has happened in a certain place? In Sunless the questions are different, according to Rafferty, they are about the film itself: where are we now? why does a certain image appear where it appears? etc. The film is both highly personal and detached; a documentary and a film full of retrospection:

> The far flung documentary images of Sans Soleil are assembled as an autobiography - the film has no subject except the consciousness, the memory of the man who shot it - yet Marker attributes this consciousness to the invented 'Sandor Krasna', removes it from himself to yet more spectral entity (Rafferty, 1984: 286).

The central role of 'the consciousness' of the film maker inside the work is an

important element, as we have seen earlier, in defining the essay film.

Casebier also raises an interesting comparison between the film Sunless and the Japanese tradition of the diary - Utanikki (Casebier, 1988: 36). He highlights the fact that the Utanikki was often narrated by a woman, comparing it with Marker's use of a woman narrator to represent the film maker in the film. The Utanikki-diary form of the film is a central element in the film, as it is used to deconstruct the traditional documentary form, according to Casebier (Ibid: 37). This supports his conclusion that the film is a deconstructive documentary. But a closer look at the Japanese Utanikki form reveals some other interesting parallels with our previous discussion on the literary essay and the essay film. The thousand years old tradition of the Japanese diary has to be seen in a different light from the Western diary form. E. Miner in his introduction to four of the best known Japanese diaries coins the term 'poetic diaries'. The diaries are works of art, mixing freely facts, fiction and poetry. In the Tosa Diary, the woman narrator reflects on the diary form and speaks about the nature of writing itself: "I do not set down these words, nor did I compose the poem, out of mere love of writing. Surely both in China and Japan art is that which is created when we are unable to suppress our feelings" (cited in Miner, 1969: 87). Miner mentions the use of poetry as a formal device, the "narrow margin between truth and fiction" (Ibid: 8) and the stylistic emphasis of the diaries as crucial in understanding the form (Ibid: 9). Kenko's Essays in Idleness, which were discussed earlier in the thesis in relation to Montaigne's literary essay, are described

by Miner as a transitional form between two different types of poetic diaries (Ibid: 210).

Y. Biro starts her discussion of Sunless with a quote from Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities:

> Marco Polo describes the bridge stone by stone. But which is the stone that supports the bridge? - Kublai Khan asks.
>
> The bridge is not supported by one stone or another, Marco Polo answers, but by the line of the arch they form.
>
> Kublai Khan remains silent, reflecting. Then he adds: why do you speak to me of stones, it is only the arch that matters to me.
>
> Polo answers: without stones there is no arch (Calvino, 1997: 82).

The choice of Invisible Cities to illustrate Sunless is very appropriate. Alongside Barthes' writings toward the end of his career, there are few other examples in modern prose of 'methodically unmethodically' structured literary works, which share many of the characteristics of the essay film. Among the books which come to one's attention, alongside Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino, are Motel Chronicles by Sam Shepard, Sketches by Max Frisch, The Voices of Marrakesh by Elias Canetti, and The Songlines by Bruce Chatwin. Biro finds it difficult to define or classify Sunless. Referring to Invisible Cities, Biro describes Sunless' structure as an arch of individual images: " Sans Soleil lingers with delightful sovereignty on

disjointed, telling images, suggesting that without stones there is no arch. A sort of Gesamtkunstwerk which defies the conventional pose between the 'raw and the cooked' that is: document and fiction, but also between word and image" (1984/5: 173). Biro finds Sunless, in fact, more ambitious than a mere "essay" (Ibid: 174) - a term which she does not define as a cinematic form. The audience experiences a "vertigo of time", according to Biro, as it watches a dazzling chain of scenes, struggling to hold to the experience of watching individual images (Ibid).

B. Nichols also finds it difficult to define the film and describes Sunless as a "troubled text" (1991: 241) which constantly questions the experience of the film maker and the viewer. The film creates an opening for a multitude of experiences beyond the ideology of narrative unity by means of breaking down the contradictions inherited in narrative (Ibid). Two other commentators correctly describe the editing techniques used in Sunless. T. Rafferty puts the emphasis in his interpretation of the editing process in the film on the film as miming the involuntary process of memory. But he rightly mentions the fact that the editing in Sunless takes Marker's use of montage beyond Vertov's work as he seeks to develop the rhythm of the juxtaposition (1984: 285). M. Walsh looks at the editing patterns in the film with its graphic matching in relationship to the political themes in it (1989: 29-36). This brings him to conclude that the themes of the film are indistinguishable from its style and that the film can, as a result, be defined as an open-structure film.

R. Rosenstone and R. Bellour use the term essay to describe some aspects of the film Sunless, but their definitions are brief and incomplete. Rosenstone writes about the film as an historical document, describing it as "a free-form visual essay" (Rosenstone, 1995: 152). Considering the make-up of an essay, he observes very briefly: "In form, the film is an essay, a series of simultaneous verbal and visual reflections" (Ibid: 156). Rosenstone does not elaborate further, but is instead interested in the possibility of an essay film, like Sunless, presenting a new form of history in a visual age. The essay does not assemble facts in a logical order to introduce an historical argument but it

> ruminates over the possibilities of memory and history, personal experience and public events - and the relationships among them. And how we might use these things, or our images of them, to understand ourselves and our world. These reflections are not those of everyone, but of a very specific film maker with a specific set of memories and experiences (Ibid).

Rosenstone also highlights another important fundamental of the essay film, the fact that the film maker in Sunless delivers his essay with a great degree of uncertainty and doubt which enriches the complex texture of the film. Sunless is also accurately described by Bellour as "an essay, haunted by the fiction of a self-portrait, traced in it like a watermark in paper" (1997: 120).

In addition to Rosenstone's and Bellour's definitions of the film as an essay film, we have shown above that many of other commentators' observations on the film form a part of our definition of the genre, even if they have often described the film as a 'difficult' film to categorise. The role of Marker's commentary on the sound track is paramount in understanding the film as an essay film, as we discussed it at the beginning of this consideration of Marker's essay films. Sunless, like Montaigne's literary essays, is a complex and thematically and structurally rich essay film, which enables different viewers to find different ways to consider it. The variety of textures in Sunless includes the use of video, tv images, freeze frames and radio broadcasts. Often constructivist elements in the film are used to put together rhythmically edited sequences. Sunless introduces a new technique, which of course was not available earlier, to reflect continuously on itself and on the reality of its images. This technique is the use of the video artist's manipulations of images seen earlier in the film to add to the texture, the thematic content and the self-reflective character of an essay film. Vertov's camera and its role as both a recording device and an essayistic self-reflective tool has come full circle with Marker's video processing of the film images in Sunless.

CHAPTER SIX : CONCLUSION

The film Sunless by Chris Marker has always intrigued me in its complexity, since it first came out in 1982. I thought initially that the film was a documentary film, but subsequent viewings of the film triggered a series of questions regarding the documentary genre and more importantly, the particular cinematic language used in the film. Embarking upon the editing of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales, I tried to recreate Sunless' unique structure, style and aesthetics. I began to discover a cinematic structure different from the documentary. During the editing and after the completion of the production of 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales a new cinematic form emerged, which in turn also shed a different light on the film Sunless. This cinematic form stood clearly outside the documentary genre and belonged to the avant-garde. I define it as the essay film. As a result, in this thesis, the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales offers insight into the essay film genre, into Sunless and other films. In this thesis the textual analysis of the film defines in detail the genre characteristics and establishes it as an avant-garde genre. The literary essay's aesthetic, thematic and structural elements, as they have been discussed in the early part of the thesis, especially in light of Montaigne's writings, expand the definition of 'The The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales as an essay film and point toward the establishment of the genre as a whole. The textual analysis of the film explores the

linear and non-linear structural elements within the genre and the use of avant-garde montage to achieve a coherent form based on the fragmentary cinematic text. The film, like other essay films, asks the viewer to accept the formalist literary concept of *Ostranenie* within poetry as it is applied in film as the basis of the montage. In this respect, the film also resembles the American Modernists' poetic montage which involves comparing and linking fragments, selecting them into scenes and using letters as 'colliding image-objects'. The mixture of narrative tales in 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales, on one hand, and an overall non-narrative structure on the other hand, represents directly what Adorno called the 'methodically unmethodical' approach to the essay.

This thesis demonstrates that, in common with the other essay films, individual images or sequences of images in 'The The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales support each other to form a circular, interwoven and repetitive patterns without relying on pre-determined cinematic structures. In every essay film, the variety of stories, themes, images and sounds together with the film maker's personal experiences, the apparent formlessness, the associative movement from idea to idea, from image to image and the use of archive footage, achieve a unity in diversity through association. In this, the essay film resembles a Montaignean essay. The essay film is a 'caméra-stylo' film - the 'pen-like' recording device of images with its direct use of the cinematic language to translate the film maker's

ideas. This, together with the structural and editing elements highlighted above, define the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales and the other films which were discussed in the thesis as essay films, as part of the avant-garde.

The films of Cavalcanti, Vertov and Marker which have been discussed in the thesis in light of our definition of the essay film are defined as such, sometimes in opposition to existing descriptions of the films as documentaries. Bazin and Bellour have identified two of Marker's films as essay films, but their definitions were brief and incomplete. Some of Vertov's commentators have identified his films as part of the avant-garde but have not identified them as essay films. Our definition of the essay film genre and the textual analysis of the film 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' and Other Tales bring together the films of Cavalcanti, Vertov and Marker and locates them inside the essay film genre.

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THE ESSAY FILM

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX ONE

A SHOT LIST OF THE FILM 'THE MAN WHO COULDN'T FEEL' AND OTHER TALES.

1 

atmos track begins -
a small boat travelling slowly on a river

m. s. f.

00.00.00

2 

00.10.12

3 

00.17.01

V.O 1 (*male psychotherapist*) What do you do?

4 

V.O 2 (*male executive)* I run a data processing firm. It is a subsidiary of a large multinational. 00.26.13

V.O 1 Can you say something about your work?

V.O 2 I like the work. I like the office. It is rather big, I sit in a corner. I have a good view.

5 

V.O 1 What can you say about the people you work with? 00.36.04

V.O 2 Not much... I find it hard to describe how I feel about them. 00.42.18

6 

V.O 1 What career prospects do you have?

V.O 2 I don't know. A colleague of mine who used to work for me got promoted recently to group vice president at head office. 00.49.09

7 

V.O 1 Did you get upset about that? After all, he used to work for you.

7a 

V.O 2 No, those are the breaks. 00.56.07

V.O 1 What is your relationship with your wife like?

m. s. f.

7b 

V.O 2 All right. We have been married for fifteen years. She had an affair once with another man. 01.11.14

V.O 1 How did you deal with it? Did you feel hurt?

7c 

V.O 2 I didn't feel very much. When she told me about it, I said it's all right... I think all this talk about feelings is crazy. What's important is to get on with life. 01.23.15

V.O 1 How is your relationship with your wife now?

8 

V.O 2 She sometimes screams at me for no reason. 01.28.10

V.O 1 Have you found out why she gets upset?

V.O 2 No.

V.O 1 Do you have children

9 

V.O 2 Yes.

V.O 1 Can you tell me something about them? 01.42.12

V.O 2 I have a boy and a girl. They are doing fine. I haven't much contact with them, given my working hours.

V.O 1 How do you feel?

10 

V.O 2 I have had stomach pains for three years. They got worse but I discovered that if I held my body in a certain position it hurt less. I managed until the ulcer perforated. Now I take pills and watch my diet. 01.52.00

V.O 1 What do you usually do when you are at home?

11 

V.O 2 I am not at home that much given my working hours. But when I am there I watch television. 02.04.23

V.O 1 What was the last program you watched?

12 

V.O 2 I don't remember. I usually forget the story line immediately. 02.11.01

V.O 1 Do you ever dream?

V.O 1 Do you ever fantasize or have day-dreams?

V.O 2 Not that I can remember.

V.O 1 Do you ever cry?

13 

V.O 2 No.

V.O 1 Do you ever get excited about things? 02.27.20

V.O 2 No.

V.O 1 Are you anxious being here?

m. s. f.

14 

V.O 2 My wife told me I might.
V.O 1 What thoughts do you have now?
V.O 2 I don't know...none. What do you expect me to say? I find it hard to describe how I feel... I am not much of a talker.

02.37.11

15 

atmos track end
" Charlie Kay" music track begins

02.50.23

16 

TITLES

17 

18 

" Charlie Kay" music track ends
Atmos track- light aircraft and fireworks

03.20.09

19 

Text at the bottom of the screen-
In the beginning God created heaven and earth
And the earth was without form and and void...

20 

Music Track- Vibrators- begins

03..31.24

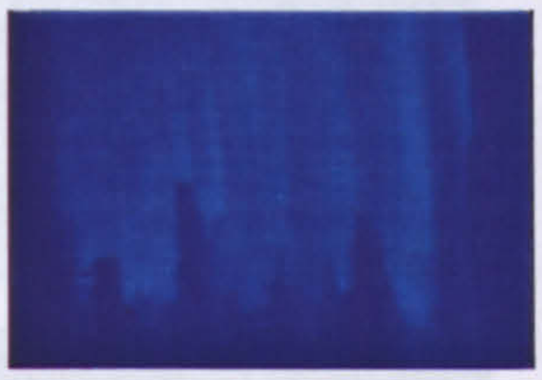
21 

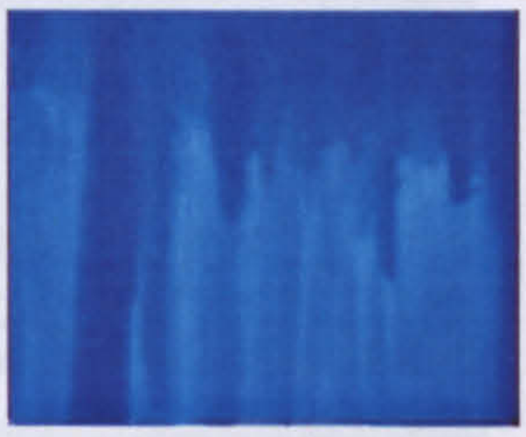
03.41.21

m. s. f.

22  03.51.13

23  04.01.04

24  04.10.19

25  04.17.06

26  04.24.19

27  04.34.09

28  04.42.00

29  04.47.00

m. s. f.

30 

04.52.09

31 

04.57.21

32 

05.04.11

33 

05.08.15

34 

05.14.14

35 

05.18.23

36 

05.25.14

37 

05.29.23

38 

m. s. f.

05.41.03

38a 

05.52.19

39 

Music track- Vibrators- ends
cross fade to
Music track- Good Morning Mr. Jones begins

05.55.04

TEXT on the sound track-

Good morning...

06.02.04

40 

...Good Morning...

06.04.21

41 

...Mr. Jones...

06.10.02

42 

06.19.02

42a 

...How are you...

43 

...I am thirsty...

06.26.04

...How are you...

			m. s. f.
44		...very well...	06.39.06
45		...very well, Thank you, very well, thank you. And how are you?...	06.42.00
45a		...And how are you? Fine, fine , thank you. It's early...	07.08.00
45b		...It's clear..	07.28.18
46		...do you understand me?...	07.31.09
47			07.37.12
48			07.41.09
48a		...good afternoon Mrs. Jones..	07.46.14

m. s. f.

49 

...How are you?..

07.42.07

50 

07.53.20

51 

...How <u>are</u> you?..

07.55.20

52 

...I am ready,
Fine...

07.59.15

53 

..and you?...

08.04.00

54 

08.07.14

55 

...very well,
Thanks...

08.14.20

56 

08.26.06

			m. s. f.
57		...may I introduce myself...	08.31.02
58		...I am John Wallis...	08.40.06
59		...permit me..	08.44.20
		...to introduce myself..	
60		...John Wallis...	08.55.01
61		...where are you from?...	09.03.01
62		...I am from Texas...	09.06.09
63		...Is it made of wood?..	09.14.05
63a			09.18.13

			m. s. f.
63b		...escuse me. but I don't understand...	09.23.20
		...Good afternoon..	
64		...Good afternoon.	09.28.17
65		*Music track- Good Morning Mr. Jones- ends.* *Music track- Roll th'Harp -starts*	09.44.05
65a			09.58.04
65b			10.03.19
66			10.13.20
67			10.28.21
67a			10.37.10

m. s. f.

68 

10.46.21

69 

10.49.22

69a 

11.07.06

69b 

11.12.10

70 

11.17.08

Music Track- Roll th'Harp - ends
Music track- Playtime on Pluto - begins

70a 

This man was a bachelor and he lived in this big residential area, and this man and woman moved in beside him, you know, and the woman was real beautiful-she had long blonde hair and she was built real good, and every day she'd get out and cut the grass and all, in short shorts and tight pants and everything. Now the man, he said,

11.22.29

70b 

"I just got tohave a little bit of that."

11.55.11

So finally one day he got the nerve to go over there and ask her. And he said,
"Can I have a little bit of that" and she said,
"Well, tomorrow when there ain't no body around, you come over here and bring fifty dollars and I'll let you have it."
So the next day he went over there...

71 

12.05.08

m. s. f.

72 

and took the money and he got it, you know, 12.09.10

and it was real good, and he goes back home. 12.12.07

73 

And that night her husband come home and he says,

"That man next door come over today?" 12.18.09

74 

(And she says, "Oh, I'll bet he knows.") She says, "Yeah, he come." He says,"He bring that fifty dollars?" 12.22.22

75 

(She says, "I know he knows now.") She says, "Yeah, he brought it." 12.29.04

76 

He says, "Well, I's just wondering, 'cause he come by my office this morning wanting to borrow fifty dollars and he said he'll bring it back to you today." 12.35.02

77 

12.46.10

78 

Music track- Playtime on Pluto- end
Cross fade to
Atmos track- waves 12.56.02

79 

m. s. f.

80 

13.09.05

81 

13.19.10

music track- Tambang - begins

81a 

13.25.08

81b 

13.37.14

81c 

13.48.16

82 

13.50.01

83 

13.54.07

83a 

14.12.07

m. s. f.

83b 

14.18.24

84 

14.20.20

84a 

14.30.07

85 

14.34.19

86 

14.49.05

87 

14.56.23

87a 

15.05.06

87b 

15.12.06

m. s. f.

88 

music track- Tambang - ends 15.21.20

89 

Atmos track - waves- ends
cross fade
Atmos track- wind- starts 15.28.11

90 

15.40.03

91 

15.51.02

91a 

15.56.03

92 

16.03.17

93 

16.07.09

94 

16.14.10

m. s. f.

95 

16.17.13

96 

16.25.22

97 

16.37.00

98 

Atmos track- winds- ends
Cross fade
Music track- Charlie Kay- starts

16.41.04

99 

16.58.02

100 

17.09.13

101 

17.25.24

102 

17.33.20

m. s. f.

102a 

17.35.15

102b 

14.46.08

102c 

103 

Music track- Charlie Kay- ends
Cross fade
Music Track-King of Rock - starts with
coin spinning

17.47.15

103a 

TEXT on the sound track-

18.02.21

I must advise you,
That I am under curse...

104 

18.12.09

...and fifty percent of the time
I am wrong,
and I don't know which fifty percent it is...

105 

...so what I am telling you,
maybe the wisest thing I've ever said
or it maybe totaly wrong.
and that's roughly our predicement.....

18.19.05

106 

...The words that come to me...

18.27.23

m. s. f.

107 

...may or may not be of use to.... 18.35.00

108 

...whoever you think you presentaly are... 18.42.15

109 

18.49.20

110 

18.56.05

111 

19.02.03

112 

...the place I live in now... 19.08.00

112a 

... must be far out.
it doesn't seem that way to me,
but when I think about it from the frame work
of whome I used to be when I was a psychology
professor, I think I am crazy... 19.22.03

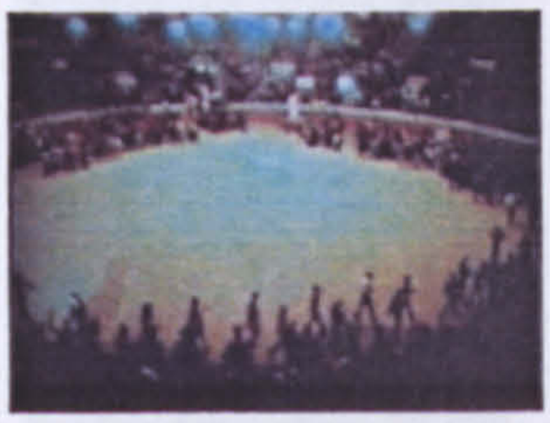
112b 

19.24.04

m. s. f.

112c 

...and all the rest of it... 19.30.23

112d 

...you and the stuff
and the floor and the trees... 19.31.14

113 

...and the automobiles and the polution... 19.35.14

113a 

...and the birds, behind all of this stuff
you try to get high... 19.40.04

114 

...you want to bliss out... 19.45.21
coin spinning starts again

115 

19.49.14

116 

19.51.13

117 

19.55.08

m. s. f.

118 

20.02.06

119 

20.09.11

119a 

20.13.22

119b 

20.22.23

120 

20.24.18

121 

20.34.09

122 

20.36.02

122a 

coin spinning- end music track-
cross fade
music track- Sun Rise - statrs

20.40.00

m. s. f.

123 

20.43.10

124 

20.46.02

125 

20.55.08

126 

20.57.09

127 

21.01.02

128 

21.09.16

128a 

V.O 1 (*male psychotherapist*) What do you do? 21.10.24

129 

21.14.03

m. s. f.

130 

V.O 2 (*male executive)* I run a data processing firm. It is a subsidiary of a large multinational. 21.16.24

131 

21.18.20

132 

V.O 1 Can you say something about your work?
V.O 2 I like the work. I like the office. It is rather big, I sit in a corner. I have a good view. 21.21.14

V.O 1 What can you say about the people you work with?
V.O 2 Not much... I find it hard to describe how I feel about them.

21.32.23

133 

V.O 1 What career prospects do you have?

21.38.06

133a 

V.O 2 I don't know. A colleague of mine who used to work for me got promoted recently to group vice president at head office.
V.O 1 Did you get upset about that? After all, he used to work for you.
V.O 2 No, those are the breaks. 21.40.21

134 

21.43.03

134a 

V.O 1 What is your relationship with your wife like?
V.O 2 All right. We have been married for fifteen years. She had an affair once with another man. 21.51.12

135 

m. s. f.

135a 

21.55.21

136b 

22.02.05

V.O 1 How did you deal with it? Did you feel hurt?

137 

V.O 2 I didn't feel very much. When she told me about it, I said it's all right... I think all this talk about feelings is crazy. What's important is to get on with life.

22.02.19

137a 

22.10.00

V.O 1 How is your relationship with your wife now?

V.O 2 She sometimes screams at me for no reason.

138 

22.14.19

V.O 1 Have you found out why she gets upset?

V.O 2 No.

139 

22.18.01

V.O 1 Do you have children

V.O 2 Yes.

139a 

V.O 1 Can you tell me something about them?

V.O 2 I have a boy and a girl. They are doing fine. I haven't much contact with them, given my working hours.

22.21.14

140 

V.O 1 How do you feel?

22.26.07

m. s. f.

140a 

V.O 2 I have had stomach pains for three years. They got worse but I discovered that if I held my body in a certain position it hurt less. I managed until the ulcer perforated. Now I take pills and watch my diet. 22.28.09

141 

22.33.24

141a 

V.O 1 What do you usually do when you are at home? 22.41.08

142 

V.O 2 I am not at home that much given my working hours. But when I am there I watch television 22.46.24

V.O 1 What was the last program you watched?

143 

V.O 2 I don't remember. I usually forget the story line immediately. 22.57.19

V.O 1 Do you ever dream?

V.O 2 No.

144 

V.O 1 Do you ever fantasize or have day-dreams? 22.59.24

V.O 2 Not that I can remember.

V.O 1 Do you ever cry?

V.O 2 No.

V.O 1 Do you ever get excited about things?

144a 

V.O 2 No.

V.O 1 Are you anxious being here?

V.O 2 My wife told me I might. 23.07.16

V.O 1 What thoughts do you have now?

145 

V.O 2 I don't know...none. What do you expect me to say? 23.17.15

Music track- Sun Rise- ends

Cross fade

m. s. f.

146 

music track- Charlie Kay- starts
I find it hard to describe how I feel... I am not much of a talker. 23.20.06

146a 

23.31.04

147 

23.31.20

147a 

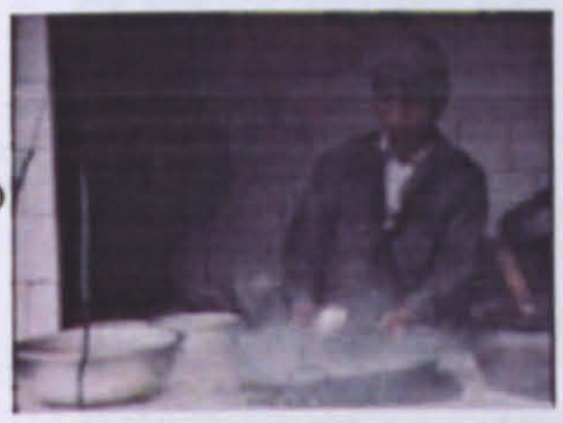
23.47.22

148 

23.53.21

148a 

24.00.05

148b 

24.01.17

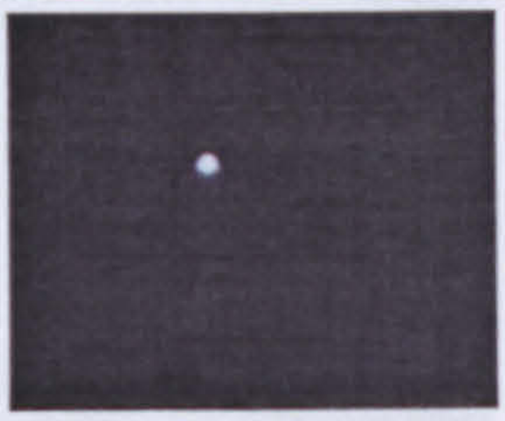
149 

24.07.09

m. s. f.

150 

24.07.20

151 

24.11.10

152 

Text in the music track-
....you remember what I talked to you about?

24.15.13

153 

(man and a woman screem at each other in the background)

24.21.00

154 

...that she is not real,
Yes she is.
She is real because...

24.29.02

155 

...she seems like this in your mind.

24.34.03

156 

24.46.05

157 

24.49.08

m. s. f.

158 

24.56.05

158a 

25.00.10

159 

25.01.13

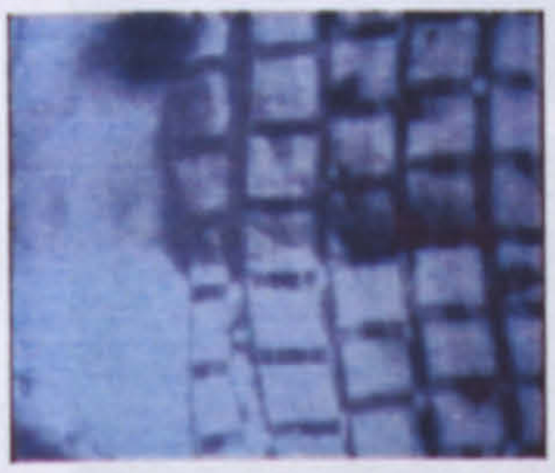
160 

25.06.05

music track- Charlie Kay- ends
Atmos track- wind- starts

161 

25.13.20

162 

25.22.15

163 

25.32.22

164 

25.45.20

m. s. f.

165 

25.48.10

166 

25.49.22

167 

25.57.01

168 

26.07.09

168a 

26.16.16

169 

Atmos track- wind- ends
cross fade
Music track- - starts

26.18.11

170 

26.24.20

171 

26.29.14

m. s. f.

172 

26.35.09

173 

26.39.03

VO 1 (US Journalist) This is Brigadier Gen-

eral Thomas O' Farrel , of Albany, New York, theatre commander of the atomic bomb project. 26.43.05

174

Will you tell us something of the atomic bomb project, General O'Farrel?

26.48.12

175 

176 

26.49.10

VO 2 (US Pilot 1) I know I speak for every man and woman of the huge strong... who worked so long and so faithfully on this great fantastic, fairy land project. which had such a tremendous impact on the war against Japan.

177 

26.53.23

27.02.00

178 

So much credit is due to so many that it is difficult to properly portion that credit. 27.08.15

179 

m. s. f.

180 

We have however a sense of great moral

27.12.13

181 

responsibility...

27.15.15

182 

...because this big power has been given to us...

27.18.00

183 

...and we should be ever humble and

...grateful that it has been given to us and...

...rather then to our enemy.

27.22.03

184 

...and all of us who had a part in its development and in carrying it out its use to dedicate our strength, our wealth our brains and even our lives that it is always used for good and never for evil.

27.27.02

184a 

27.36.12

184b 

27.40.15

184c 

VO 1 Captain Kermit K Behan of Houston, Texas, Bombardier of the great RT., what was your out standing experience on this historic flight?

27.51.10

m. s. f.

184d 

VO 3 I suppose it was when the cloud

27.56.14

opened up over the target and Nagasaki, and

the target was pretty as a picture I made the

184e 

run, let the bomb go, that was my greatest

28.03.24

thrill

Atmos track ends
cross fade

Music track- Good morning Mr. Jones- starts

184f 

28.14.15

TEXT of the sound track-

Do you understand me now?...

184g 

28.25.09

...I understand it, but I don't speak it...

185 

28.35.18

...I am hungry...

...I am tired..

186 

28.50.18

...It's late...

186a 

28.52.15

...I am thirsty...

187 

28.57.06

...the coffee is cold...

m. s. f.

188 

...the window is closed... 29.02.20

...Good morning, good morning Mr. Jones.

189 

29.22.23

190 

29.28.02

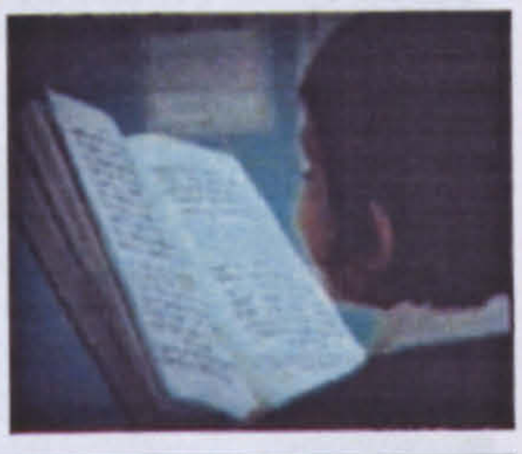
191 

29.37.22

192 

29.47.11

Music track- Good Morning Mr. Jones- ends cross fade
Sound track- Jewish children school's chanting- starts

193 

29.54.20

194 

30.07.07

195 

30.19.06

m. s. f.

196 

30.26.03

197 

30.35.10

198 

30.40.16

199 

30.44.06

200 

30.49.06

201 

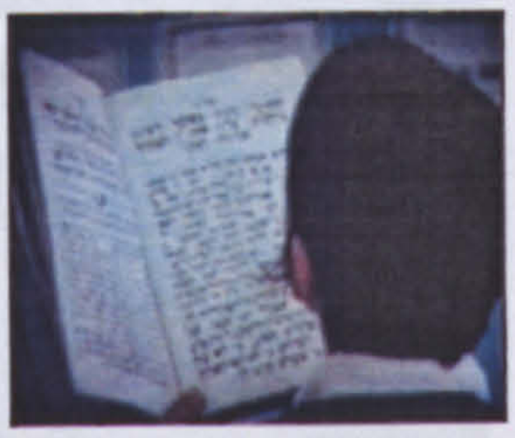
30.56.10

201a 

31.09.02

202 

31.09.21

		m. s. f.
203		31.15.10
203a		31.19.13
204		31.20.19
204a		31.39.24
	Sound track- Childern Chant- ends *Music track- Tehillim/ Steve Reich- starts* *(text of the track is Psalma , sung in Hebrew)*	
205		31.49.09
206		31.56.01
207		32.03.16
208		32.08.16

m. s. f.

209 

32.16.04

210 

32.24.01

211 

32.29.24

212 

32.36.04

213 

32.42.00

214 

32.47.20

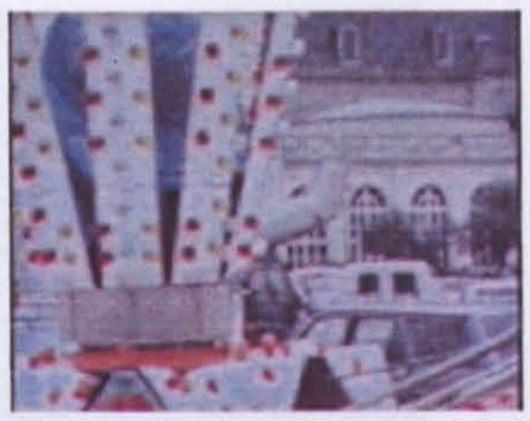
215 

32.57.22

215a 

33.07.17

m. s. f.

216 

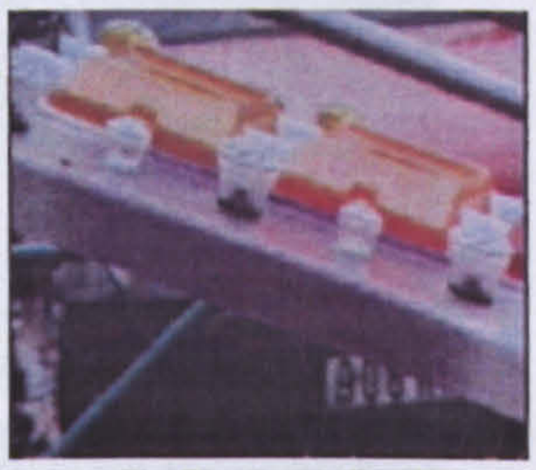
33.15.05

216a 

33.23.21

217 

33.29.23

218 

33.41.18

218a 

33.48.02

219 

33.50.13

219a 

34.03.24

219b 

34.12.24

m. s. f.

220 

34.16.20

221 

34.25.16

221a 

34.41.21

222 

34.44.02

223 

34.48.16

224 

34.53.07

224a 

34.58.23

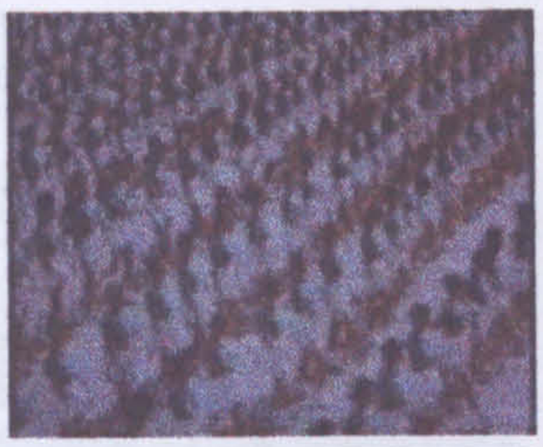
225 

35.07.15

m. s. f.

226 

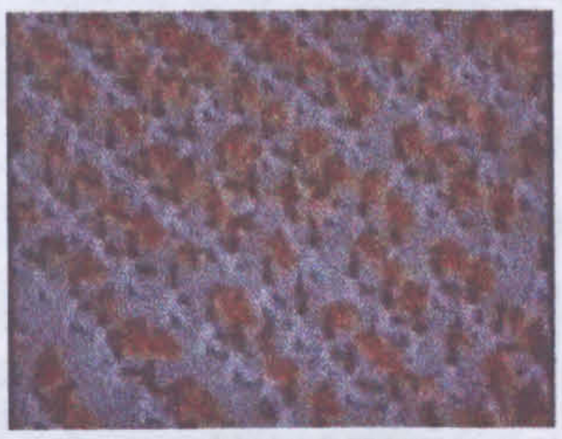
35.11.08

227 

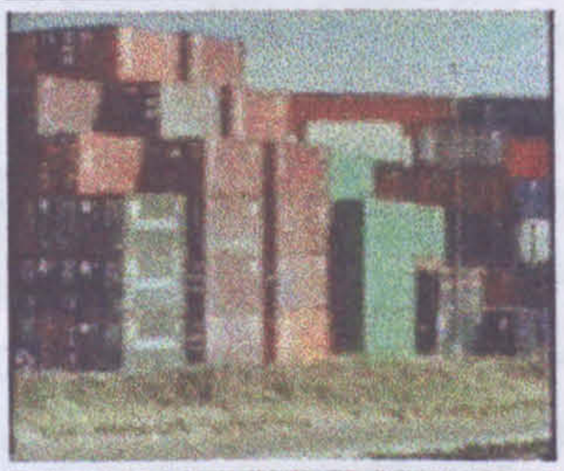
35.15.05

228 

35.20.07

229 

35.23.08

230 

Music track- Tehillm- end
Music track- Storm Clouds- starts

35.27.07

V.O 1 (*male psychotherapist*) What do you do?

230a 

V.O 2 (*male executive)* I run a data processing firm. It is a subsidiary of a large multinational.
V.O 1 Can you say something about your work?
V.O 2 I like the work. I like the office. It is rather big,
I sit in a corner. I have a good view.

35.56.00

230b 

V.O 1 What can you say about the people you work with?
V.O 2 Not much... I find it hard to describe how I feel about them.

36.03.01

231 

36.03.09

m. s. f.

232 

V.O 1 What career prospects do you have?
V.O 2 I don't know. A colleague of mine who used to work for me got promoted recently to group vice president at head office. 36.09.15

233 

V.O 1 Did you get upset about that? After all, he used to work for you. 36.10.11
V.O 2 No, those are the breaks.
V.O 1 What is your relationship with your wife like?
V.O 2 All right. We have been married for fifteen years.She had an affair once with another man.

233a 

V.O 1 How did you deal with it? Did you feel hurt?
V.O 2 I didn't feel very much. When she told me about it, I said it's all right... I think all this talk about feelings is crazy. What's important is to get on with life. 36.33.02
V.O 1 How is your relationship with your wife now?
V.O 2 She sometimes screams at me for no reason. 36.38.23

234 

V.O 1 Have you found out why she gets upset?
V.O 2 No.
V.O 1 What do you usually do when you are at home?

234a 

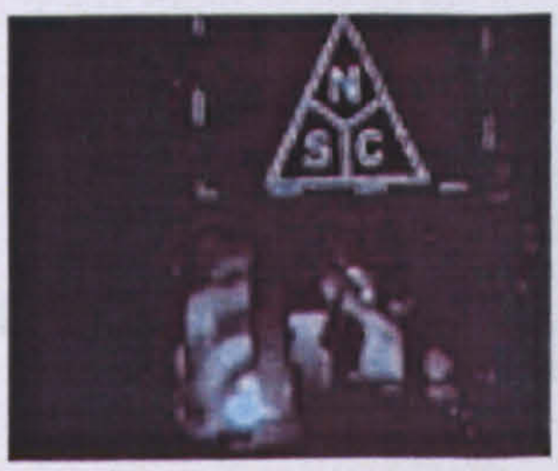
V.O 2 I am not at home that much given my working hours. But when I am there I watch televi sion. 36.48.16
V.O 1 What was the last program you watched?
V.O 2 I don't remember. I usually forget the story line immediately.

235 

V.O 1 Do you ever dream? 36.53.01
V.O 2 No.

235a 

V.O 1 Do you ever fantasize or have day-dreams?
V.O 2 Not that I can remember.

236 

V.O 1 Do you ever cry?
V.O 2 No. 36.59.11
V.O 1 Do you ever get excited about things?
V.O 2 No.

237

V.O 1 What thoughts do you have now?
V.O 2 I don't know...none...

m. s. f.
37.05.15

238

...What do you expect me to say? I find it hard to describe how I feel... I am not much of a talker.

37.10.15

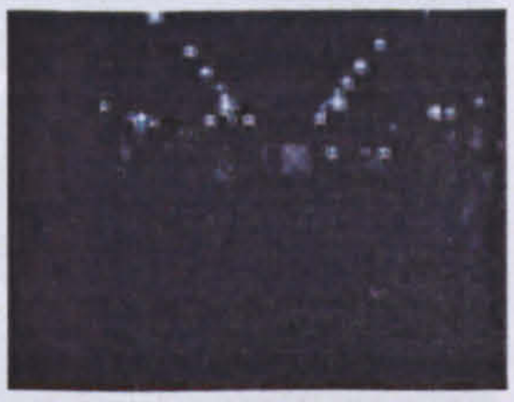
Music track- Storm Clouds- begins

238a

37.16.01

239

37.34.19



240

37.47.13

241

37.55.21

242

37.59.01

242a

38.11.08

m. s. f.

242b 

38.19.20

243 

38.22.16

244 

38.26.12

245 

38.29.21

246 

246a 

38.34.21

247 

38.40.24

248 

38.47.19

m. s. f.

249 

39.04.23

250 

39.10.16

250a 

39.15.10

250b 

39.26.14

Music track- Storm Clouds- ends cross fade

Music track- Allsorts - starts

250c 

39.36.15

251 

39.37.13

251a 

39.45.04

251b 

39.53.23

m. s. f.

251c 

A late afternoon in the Bulgerian city of Varna. 40.01.00

252 

A small travel agency sells bus tickets to Istanbul.

40.02.09

A cheap ticket , no doubt. The other route to take

253 

will be to travel all the way to Sofia and take a train 40.06.13

from there to Istanbul. Too long and too expensive.

254 

40.11.17

254a 

40.13.14

254b 

The journey has started on the train from Victoria's

40.18.19

international platform , sitting down on my small

255 

sleeping bag holding a copy of Brave Soldier

40.19.02

Schweik.

256 

{Atmos track- boats travelling on a river- starts} 40.22.04

Schweik describes his travels to the Russian front via Hungary and Romania.

257

I needed a guide for my summer travels so I

m. s. f.

40.29.02

decided used him. I always loved the old

257a

soldier. I had to leave Schweik at Sulina on the

40.32.01

Black sea as he continued toward Odessa and

257b

there was no way I could go there.

40.38.22

258

I have arranged with Elena that we'll meet on

40.40.19

259

the last Friday of August , at 6 pm at the Istan-

bul's Hilton. Good old Hilton chain. For years

40.49.18

it has been our meeting point any where in

260

Europe . Elena said she might be in Istanbul

that month so it would be a good ending for my summer travels.

40.59.21

261

From Sulina to Istanbul it is a straight line on

the map.

41.06.21

Just continue along the shores of the Black sea.

261a

Disgusted by Chauuscesko's Romania I left it

41.12.21

earlier and walked across the border into Bulgaria to the annoyance of the Rumanian

m. s. f.

262 

border guards who disturbed by the lone walker 41.14.13

who crossed the border on foot.

263 

I slept the last night on the floor at the train 41.19.01

station , hungry and cold and could not find a

coffee or bread in the village.

263a 

So I started to walk to the border post. Bulgaria 41.25.13

was not much better but at least there was some

264 

food. Kebab and beer three times a day . 41.27.21

After Romania , every thing tasted delicious.

264a 

It was near the end of August and I have 41.32.15

travelled enough and Varna was nothing special.

So I decided to take the shortest route to

265 

Istanbul. 41.41.06

{ Atmoa track- boat- ends}

265a 

41.45.11

I bought the bus ticket and was told to be at

266 

4 pm around the corner to board a Turkish bus. 41.50.04

m. s. f.

267 

Few Turks were busy loading the bus. 41.53.15

Huge roles of material were stored underneath

268 

the body of the bus. 41.56.23

We boarded the bus- myself and a group of

268a 

20 Saudi students dressed immaculately in

traditional white long gowns. 42.05.01

269 

The bus was filled immediately with 42.09.16

Turkish music played loud on the radio.

270 

The Saudi s didn't like it , to say the 42.12.22

least. It was not their type of music.

271 

42.17.15

One of them stood up and walked to

271a 

ward the driver with a cassette in his

42.22.09

271b 

hand asking if he wouldn't mind playing

their music . Um Kulthum.

42.23.24

It is my favourite music too, especially on those long bus journeys at night .

m. s. f.

272 

It was not the Turkish driver's , though. He flatly rejected the request . 42.33.25

273 

As the Saudi turned back to go back to his seat his friends shouted to him : pay him! Pay him! 42.37.21

274 

That Turkish driver discovered a gold mine that night. 42.44.23

{ Music track- Umm Kulthum- starts)

For each Um Kulthum tape he received a $ 20 bill.

274a 

After few hours we stopped on the way in a small Bulgarian village for some petrol and a short run to the toilet . 42.50.07

275 

I got back from the toilet to find the Saudis arguing with the owner of the petrol station . He was ex- 43.00.04

275a 

tremely sorry but there were no toilets in the station ."

What do you mean - no toilet " I said , " I have just been to one" He looked side ways and whispered to me - but those Arabs are so dirty.... 43.03.24

275b 

He got paid $50 for each student visiting his filthy toilet. I thought the Saudis were the new Americans 43.09.14

{ Music track Um kulthum -ends}

275b 

arriving to Europe after the war with their pockets stuffed with dollar bills . 43.35.04

{ Music track-Allsorts - starts}

We arrived at the border.

m. s. f.

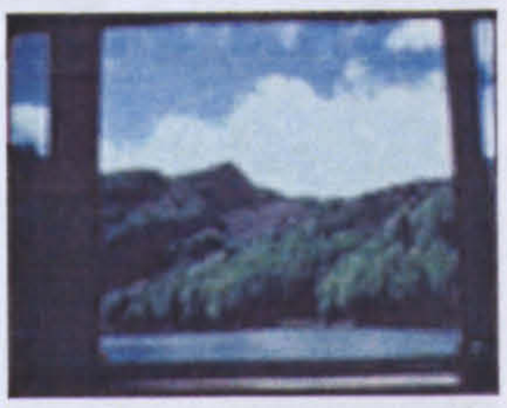
276 

On the Turkish side 43.36.13

All became clear few hours later.

277 

Suddenly, the bus went off the main road and entered a small village. In no time a group of 43.40.23 women came out from the houses and were

278 

helping the drivers to unload the bus. From underneath the body of the bus came huge 43.53.22 rolls of first class Chinese silk and from under the bus seats came sacks full of bank notes.

279 

No wonder the bus tickets were so cheap. 44.04.22

The Saudis were relieved to be back in Istanbul . They complained bitterly about Varna and although they went there initially 44.10.15 to look for the blonde women they felt back at home and much happier in Istanbul.

279a 

279b 

44.13.05

I went to Hilton once, at 6 pm on the last Friday of the month. I saw them at a distance sitting at the bar.

279c 

I moved away and waited another half an hour 44.23.24 hidden behind the newspapers stand.

279d 

Elena didn't arrive.

I went back to my youth hostel. 44.29.15

{ Music track- Allsorts - ends}

m. s. f.

280 

Atmos track- wind- starts 44.31.11

281 

44.39.06

282 

44.47.15

283 

45.01.13

284 

45.04.20

285 

45.07.24

285a 

Atmos track- wind- ends 45.20.13

Music trak- Addio mia bella Napoli- starts

286 

45.26.09

m. s. f.

287 

Subtites(text of the song)- 45.39.09

288 

Goodbye my beautiful Naples
Goodbye... 45.47.07

Goodbye my beautiful Naples
Goodbye....

289 

I'll never forget you... 45.54.14

Where do the sailors go
in their white coats

290 

looking for a brawl or bazar?

where do the sailors go 45.59.02
with their tired faces

looking for a girl to kiss?

291 

what do the sailors do 46.03.04
when they arrive in a port?

they go and find love
inside the bar

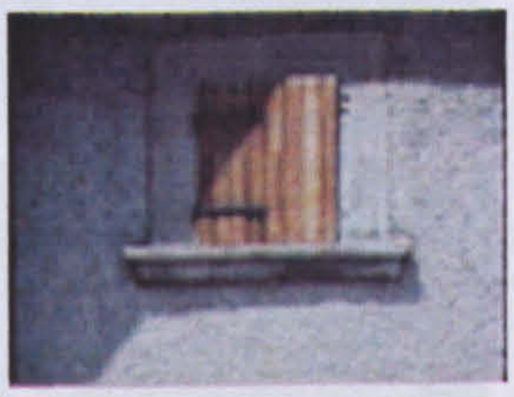
292 

some are alive, fortunately, 46.07.11
one or two are dead.

293 

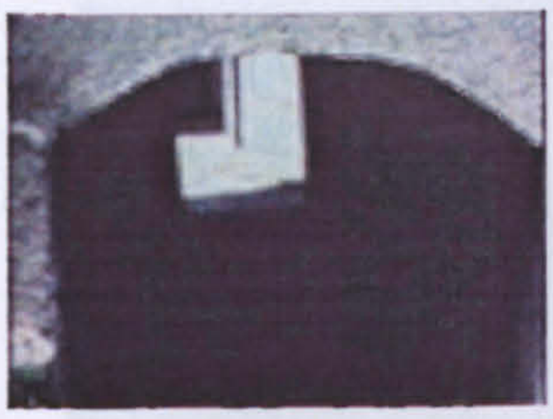
'There's a widow we have to
go and visit...

'how do the sailors manage 46.13.08
to recognise the stars

293a 

always the same, at the equator
or at the North Pole?
tired of this drudgery?
tired of life 46.10.02
a life full of mosquitoes

m. s. f.

293b 

how do the sailors manage
to kiss and embrace each other

46.24.16

and yet still remain real men?

293c 

around the world without love
like a postal package

46.35.07

with no one to ask them
'How are things?

294 

'their heart given to a woman
a woman without a heart'

46.36.09

I wonder if they ever think of us...?

295 

'But where do the sailors go
rascals, taking chances

46.44.15

with life in their trousers
destiny between their teeth

296 

beneath the prostitute moon
and the smiling sky?

46.54.04

where do the sailors go
with boredom that kills them

297 

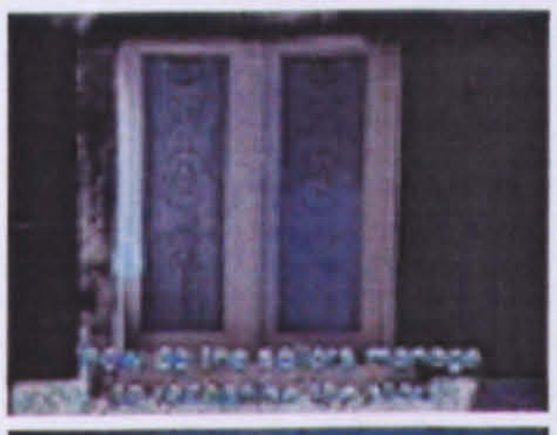
asleep on a bridge
deep down, reluctantly

47.03.14

they dream of coming home,

what do they care about
in the middle of the sea

47.07.01

298 

on this never ending course
between Genova and New York

299 

47.12.19

300 

47.22.09

301 

how do the sailors manage
to do without people 47.31.15

and yet still remain real men?

around the world without love

302 

like a postal package

47.49.14

with no one to ask them

'How are things?

'their heart given to a woman

303 

a woman without a heart' 48.06.13

I wonder if they ever think
about it...?

I wonder...'

END CREDITS 50.10.07

APPENDIX TWO : 'The Man Who Couldn't Feel' Text

VOICE-OVER TEXT, SHOTS 3 - 14; 128a- 146; 230- 238.

SOURCE: Kets de Vries, 1993: 72-74

- What do you do?

- I run a data processing firm. It is a subsidiary of a large multinational.

- Can you say something about your work?

- I like the work. I like the office. It is rather big, I sit in a corner. I have a good view.

- What can you say about the people you work with?

- Not much...I find it hard to describe how I feel about them.

- What career prospects do you have?

- I don't know. A colleague of mine who used to work for me got promoted recently to group vice president at head office.

- Did you get upset about that? After all, he used to work for you.

- No, those are the breaks.

- What is your relationship with your wife like?

- All right. We have been married for fifteen years.

She had an affair once with another man.

- How did you deal with it? Did you feel hurt?

- I didn't feel very much. When she told me about it, I said it's all right... I think all this talk about feelings is crazy. What's important is to get on with life.

- How is your relationship with your wife now?

- She sometimes screams at me for no reason.

- Have you found out why she gets upset?

- No.

- Do you have children?

- Yes.

- Can you tell me something about them?

- I have a boy and a girl. They are doing fine. I haven't much contact with them, given my working hours.

- How do you feel?

- I have had stomach pains for three years. They got worse, but I discovered that if I held my body in a certain position it hurt less. I managed until the ulcer perforated. Now I take pills and watch my diet.

- What do you usually do when you are at home?

- I am not at home that much given my working hours. But when I am there I watch television.

- What was the last program you watched?

- I don't remember. I usually forget the story line immediately.

- Do you ever dream?

- No.

- Do you ever fantasise or have day-dreams?

- Not that I can remember.

- Do you ever cry?

- No.

- Do you ever get excited about things?

- No.

- Are you anxious being here?

- My wife told me I might.

- What thoughts do you have now?

- I don't know...none. What do you expect me to say? I find it hard to describe how I feel. I am not much of a talker.

APPENDIX THREE : 'Good Morning Mr. Jones' Text

TEXT OVER MUSIC, SHOTS 39-64; 184F-188.

SOURCE: "Living English", Crown Music Records Publishers, NY, 1958.

Good morning,

Good Morning, Mr. Jones.

How are you?

I am thirsty.

How are you?

Very... well,

Very well, thank you,

Very well, thank you.

And how are you?

And how are you?

Fine. Fine, thank you.

It's early.

It's clear.

Do you understand me?

Good afternoon Mrs. Jones.

How are you?..

How are you?..

I am ready.

Fine.

And you?

Very...well,

Thanks...

May I introduce myself?

I am John Wallis.

Speak more slowly.

Permit me...

To introduce myself,

John Wallis.

Where are you from?

I am from Texas.

Is it made of wood?

Excuse me, but I don't understand.

Good afternoon.

Good afternoon.

Do you understand me now?

I understand it, but I don't speak it.

I am hungry,

I am tired

It's late.

I am thirsty.

The coffee is cold.

The window is closed.

Good morning,

Good morning Mr. Jones.

APPENDIX FOUR : 'The Lover's Gift Regained'

VOICE-OVER TEXT, SHOTS 70a-77.

SOURCE: 'The Lover's Gift Regained' Martin, 1986 191.

This man was a bachelor and he lived in this big residential area, and this man and woman moved in beside him, you know, and the woman was real beautiful - she had long blonde hair and she was built real good, and every day she'd get out and cut the grass and all, in short shorts and tight pants and everything.

Now the man, he said, "I just got to have a little bit of that". So finally one day he got the nerve to go over there and ask her. And he said, "Can I have a little bit of that" and she said, "Well, tomorrow when there ain't no body around, you come over here and bring fifty dollars and I'll let you have it". So, the next day he went over there and took the money and he got it, you know, and it was real good, and he goes back home.

And that night her husband come home and he says, "That man next door come over today?" (And she says, "Oh, I'll bet he knows"). She says, "Yeah, he come". He says, "He bring that fifty dollars?" (She says, "I know he knows now"). She says, "Yeah, he brought it". He says, "Well, I'm just wondering, 'cause he come by my office this morning wanting to borrow fifty dollars and he said he'll bring it back to you today"

APPENDIX FIVE : Meditation Text

TEXT OVER MUSIC, SHOTS 103a-114.

SOURCE: "Shree Hanuman Chaleesa - Forty Verses for Hanuman, the Breath of Ram", ZBS Foundation, NY, 1973.

I must advise you, that I am under curse and fifty percent of the time I am wrong, and I don't know which fifty percent it is, so what I am telling you, maybe the wisest thing I've ever said, or it maybe totally wrong. And that's roughly our predicament.

The words that come to me, may or may not be of use to whoever you think you presently are.

The place I live in now must be far out. It doesn't seem that way to me, but when I think about it from the frame work of whom I used to be when I was a psychology professor, I think I am crazy.

And all the rest of it, all of you and the stuff and the floor and the trees, and the automobiles and the pollution and the birds, behind all of this stuff, you try to get high, you want to bliss out.

APPENDIX SIX : US Air Force Pilots' Interviews

VOICE-OVER TEXT, SHOTS 173-184c.

SOURCE: USA Air Force Archive Film, 1945.

JOURNALIST: This is Brigadier General Thomas O' Farrel, of Albany, New York, theatre commander of the Atomic Bomb project. Will you tell us something of the Atomic Bomb project, General O'Farrel?

AMERICAN PILOT 1: I know I speak for every man and woman of the huge strong team who worked so long and so faithfully on this great fantastic, fairy-land project which had such a tremendous impact on the war against Japan.

So much credit is due to so many that it is difficult to properly portion that credit.

We have however a sense of great moral responsibility, because this big power has been given to us, and we should be ever humble and grateful that it has been given to us rather then to our enemy. And all of us who had a part in its development and in carrying it out its use to dedicate our strength, our wealth our brains and even our very lives to see that it is always used for good and never for evil.

JOURNALIST: Captain Kermit K Behan of Houston, Texas, Bombardier of the great RT, what was your most outstanding experience on this historic flight?

AMERICAN PILOT 2: I suppose it was when the cloud opened up over the target and Nagasaki, and the target was pretty as a picture I made the run, let the bomb go, that was my greatest thrill.

APPENDIX SEVEN : A Personal Story

VOICE-OVER TEXT, SHOTS 251c-279d.

A PERSONAL STORY.

A late afternoon in the Bulgarian city of Varna, a side street near the main square of the city. A small travel agency sells bus tickets to Istanbul. A cheap ticket, no doubt. The other route to take will be to travel all the way to Sofia and take a train from there to Istanbul. Too long and too expensive.

The journey has started on the train from Victoria's International platform, sitting down on my small sleeping bag holding a copy of The Brave Soldier Schweik. Schweik describes his travels to the Russian front via Hungary and Romania. I needed a guide for my summer travels so I decided used him. I always loved the old soldier. I had to leave Schweik at Sulina on the Black Sea as he continued toward Odessa and there was no way I could go there. I have arranged with Elena that we'll meet on the last Friday of August , at six p.m. at the Istanbul's Hilton. Good old Hilton chain. For years it has been our meeting point any where in Europe. Elena said she might be in Istanbul that month so it would be a good ending for my summer travels.

From Sulina to Istanbul it is a straight line on the map. Just continue along the shores of the Black Sea. Disgusted by Chaüscesko's Romania I left it earlier and walked across the border into Bulgaria to the annoyance of the Rumanian border guards who were disturbed by the lone walker who crossed the border on foot. I slept the last night on the floor at the train station , hungry and cold and could not find a coffee or bread in the village. So I started to walk to the border post. Bulgaria was not much better but at least there was some food. Kebab and beer three times a day. After Romania, every thing tasted delicious. It was near the end of August and I have travelled enough and Varna was nothing special. So I decided to take the shortest route to Istanbul.

I bought the bus ticket and was told to be at four p.m. around the corner to board a Turkish bus. Few Turks were busy loading the bus. Huge roles of material were stored underneath the body of the bus. We boarded the bus- myself and a group of twenty Saudi students dressed immaculately in traditional white long gowns. The bus was filled immediately with Turkish music played loud on the radio. The Saudis didn't like it, to say the least. It was not their type of music. One of them stood up and walked toward the driver with a cassette in his hand, asking if he wouldn't mind playing their music: Um Kulthum. It is my favourite music too, especially on those long bus journeys at night. It was not the Turkish driver's, though. He flatly rejected

the request. As the Saudi turned back to go back to his seat his friends shouted to him: Pay him! Pay him! That Turkish driver discovered a gold mine that night. For each Um Kulthum tape he received a $ 20 bill.

After few hours we stopped on the way in a small Bulgarian village for some petrol and a short run to the toilet. I got back from the toilet to find the Saudis arguing with the owner of the petrol station. He was extremely sorry but there were no toilets in the station. "What do you mean - no toilet" I said, "I have just been to one". He looked side ways and whispered to me "but those Arabs are so dirty"

He got paid $50 for each student visiting his filthy toilet. I thought the Saudis were the new Americans arriving to Europe after the war with their pockets stuffed with dollar bills.

We arrived at the border. On the Turkish side, all became clear few hours later.

Suddenly, the bus went off the main road and entered a small village. In no time a group of women came out from the houses and were helping the drivers to unload the bus. From underneath the body of the bus came huge rolls of first class Chinese silk and from under the bus seats came sacks full of bank notes. No wonder the bus tickets were so cheap.

The Saudis were relieved to be back in Istanbul. They complained bitterly about

Varna and although they went there initially to look for the blonde women they felt back at home and much happier in Istanbul.

I went to the Hilton once, at six p.m. on the last Friday of the month. I saw them at a distance sitting at the bar. I moved away and waited another half an hour hidden behind the newspapers stand.

Elena didn't arrive.

I went back to my youth hostel.

APPENDIX EIGHT : Italian Song Text

TEXT OF AN ITALIAN SONG, SHOTS 287-303.

SOURCE: "Addio a Napoli / Ma Come Fanno I Marinari", Dalla and De Gregori,
Rome: RCA, 1979.

Goodbye my beautiful Naples,

Goodbye...

Goodbye my beautiful Naples,

Goodbye. I'll never forget you...

Where do the sailors go

in their white coats

looking for a brawl or bazaar?

Where do the sailors go

with their tired faces

looking for a girl to kiss?

What do the sailors do

when they arrive in a port?

They go and find love

inside the bar

Some are alive, fortunately,

one or two are dead.

There's a widow we have to

go and visit.

How do the sailors manage

to recognise the stars.

Always the same, at the equator

or at the North Pole?

How do the sailors manage

to kiss and embrace each other

and yet still remain real men?

Around the world without love

like a postal package,

with no-one to ask them

'how are things?'

Their heart given to a woman

a woman without a heart'.

I wonder if they ever think of us?

I wonder...

But where do the sailors go

rascals, taking chances,

with life in their trousers

destiny between their teeth

Beneath the prostitute moon

and the smiling sky?

Where do the sailors go

with boredom that kills them

asleep on a bridge

deep down, reluctantly

They dream of coming home,

tired of this drudgery?

Tired of life

a life full of mosquitoes

What do they care about

in the middle of the sea

on this never ending course

between Genova and New York?

How do the sailors manage

to do without people

and yet still remain real men?

Around the world without love

like a postal package

with no one to ask them

'how are things?'

Their heart given to a woman

a woman without a heart

I wonder if they ever think

about it...?

I wonder...

APPENDIX NINE : List of the Film's Cinema Screening

LIST OF CINEMA SCREENINGS OF THE FILM

'THE MAN WHO COULDN'T FEEL' AND OTHER TALES

1. Rotterdam International Film Festival, Holland - 4/1 '97
2. Berlin Film Festival, Germany - 11/2.- 21/2 '97
3. San Francisco International Film Festival, USA - 24/4- 8/5 '97
4. Image Forum, Tokyo, Japan - 26/4- 5/5 '97
5. Marseilles Documentary Festival, France - 16/6- 21/6 '97
6. Barcelona, Sonar Electronic Music Festival, Spain - 12/6- 14/6 '97
7. Jerusalem International Film Festival, Israel - 10/7- 19/7 '97
8. New Zealand International Film Festival - 11/7- 26/7 '97
9. Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia - Aug. '97
10. Sheffield Documentary Film Festival, UK - 13/10- 19/10 '97
11. Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA - 15/12 '97
11. Harn Museum of Art, Florida, USA - 31/3 '98
12. Images international Film Festival, Toronto, Canada - 23/4- 2/5 '98
13. Zone Media Festival, Maidstone, Kent - 7/11 '98

In archive collections-

1. The German Cinematheque, Berlin, Germany.

2. Brown University, Providence, RI, USA.

3. Image Forum, Tokyo, Japan.

4. University of Florida, USA.