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The Wolf's Lair

Dreams and fragmented memories in
a first-person essay film



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Doctor of Philosophy

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A) Declaration

The work presented in this dissertation is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text.

The material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

Catarina Mourão

Edinburgh, 29th February 2016

B) Note

Unless otherwise identified all the images included in this dissertation pertain to the film *The Wolf's Lair*.

C) Manual for the Reader

This PhD by practice comprises a feature length documentary film entitled *The Wolf's Lair* and a dissertation reflecting on the questions, which were explored at different moments in the film.

The first step for the reader is to watch the film by selecting this link: <https://vimeo.com/119534760>

The password is: WOLFSLAIR2015A

This dissertation is not independent from the film. It should only be read after viewing the film. Thank you.

*Strange that there are dreams,
That there are mirrors
Strange that the ordinary,
Worn-out ways of everyday
Encompass the imagined and endless Universe
Woven by reflections*

Jorge Luis Borges

*We feel more emotion before an amateur photograph
linked to our own life history than before the work
of a Great Photographer because his domain partakes of art,
and the intent of the souvenir-object remains
at the lower level or personal history.*

Chris Marker

D) Abstract

This PhD by practice is an attempt to understand personal archives through filmmaking, and the kind of knowledge we can extract from them as well as how we can connect them to a wider social and political context. These questions are the core of my research and are explored in their different ways through both the film/practice and dissertation.

I have chosen to make a film about my absent grandfather and his lost relationship with my mother during Fascist Portugal between the 1940s and the 1960s.

Family archives have been largely used in films as a way of documenting realities, in the same way as any other public archival footage. In this instance, I tried to explore family and official archives acknowledging their contradictions and omissions with a view to finding a new “way of knowing” that is more closely connected to our emotions.

I believe we all own a family archive regardless of its form. I named this archive “the subjective archive” and in it, I include physical archives such as paper documents, photographs and films, as well as a more intangible archive, which includes our memories, the stories we tell and listen to (oral history) and our dreams. The progression of the film is closely related to my journey as I become immersed in the story and learn things through many layers of archive documents.

As a conclusion, I argue that these invisible elements of the subjective archive contain truth independent of their indexical nature, whereas physical documents can mislead us.

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Chapter I: Introduction to *The Wolf's Lair* as a practice research project

This PhD by practice includes a feature-length film *The Wolf's Lair* and a dissertation. This dissertation will become a “secondary revision”¹ of the film. I believe the process of making this film and reflecting upon it can expand the concept of subjectivity and knowledge in documentary filmmaking. The dissertation will reflect on the whole process of the film and develop the research questions that arise from it. It will also indicate other directions the research took me in, which transcended the film itself.

1.1 My family story

Ever since my childhood, my mother's family has always been a mystery to me. I never met my grandparents and only met my aunt and uncle on rare occasions. My family was always my father's family. My mother's childhood albums were rarely opened, and despite my mother appearing to be a very extroverted person, she never really talked about her family. This seemed natural, and as a child I never questioned this or her silence. Sometimes she would tell us (my sister and I) some anecdotal episodes of her childhood and repeat them year after year with slight variations. As we got older, I started questioning her about the fact that she didn't have any contact with her sister and she pragmatically answered that they had fallen out over inheritance issues. As for her father, we only knew he was a writer and that there had been very little contact between them. His books were displayed discreetly on the shelves but were never opened.

¹ Freud, Sigmund, in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) defined the highly provocative concept of secondary revision, from his attempts to explain the construction of dreams. It includes three aspects of the process by which the dream acquires its more or less final form during the experiencing, the remembering, and the telling: the translation of dream images into verbal images, and the transformation into narrative structure.

One day, I decided to question my mother about her family and this was the story she passed on to me.

My grandfather wanted to be a writer and my grandmother and her family forced him to become a lawyer and to accept a job away from the family. This was 1926, the very beginning of Salazar's dictatorship in Portugal². Despite the distance and the short time he spent at home, they had three children: my uncle born in 1930, my aunt born in 1933 and, 12 years later after an attempt at reconciliation, my mother was born. When my mother was two years old my grandparents separated and she only saw her father three times a year.

In 1948, my uncle, who was studying to become a painter, joined the Communist Party against his father's political beliefs. From then on, the family lost track of him because he was living "underground" working for the party and the resistance to the regime. Three years later my grandfather had a major depression and was committed to a psychiatric hospital where he received electric shock treatment and remained for some years.

In 1958, my uncle was caught by the PIDE (the political state police) and locked up and tortured for eight years. My mother, who was thirteen years old at the time, was sent to a catholic boarding school by my aunt and grandmother, who couldn't handle all the disappearances in the family. On holidays, my mother and grandmother would visit my uncle in prison, but my mother says she never remembers my grandfather visiting him or her sister. In fact, she only remembers seeing him again when she was eighteen years old.

When my grandfather left hospital in 1960, he began a new life living in rented rooms in Lisbon and writing full-time for ten years until his death in 1970. My grandfather died five years after my uncle's release in 1965, and my mother and aunt stopped talking to each other.

These last events coincided with the revolution in Portugal in 1974; a time when many layers of the *status quo* suddenly exploded.

² António de Oliveira Salazar was the main figure and ideologist of the Portuguese Dictatorship (1926-1974) and served as prime minister of Portugal for thirty-six years, from 1932 to 1968. Salazar founded and led the Estado Novo ("New State"), the authoritarian government that ruled Portugal until 1974.

1.2 *The Wolf's Lair* as a practice-research project in the context of my filmography

It is very hard to pinpoint the very beginning of a project, a film, a study. There are many beginnings that lead to a train of thought. I am writing this dissertation after finishing my PhD Film and I feel there is a sense of *mise en abyme* in this process. Let me explain better: my film deals with childhood memories and dreams and how the narratives we build to verbalise these memories and dreams are part of our identity.

Now, in order to write this dissertation, I have to remember once again how it all started: it's almost a memory of a memory. Sometimes this journey reminds me of the process I went through when I had to write a treatment for the film before the shoot. Although I knew very little of the film I wanted to make at the beginning, deep down in an almost unconscious way I knew where I was going without realizing. Maybe the creative act, be it filming or writing, is after all a process of revealing that which we knew but would not let ourselves admit we knew.

In the process of writing this dissertation I knew that the reflections that came out were not objective and surely my memory of this journey would become partly fictional. I believe this is what makes the process of research by practice interesting and stimulating. Alisa Lebow writes, in her book on first-person Jewish filmmaking, that “there is a value in pursuing a study of the representation of subjectivity from one’s own situated subjectivity”³. The writing had to become another journey in itself and not an illustration of the journey undertaken in order to make the film.

Even though I knew the filmmaking and the writing would use different tools and sources of knowledge, my intuition told me that in order to embark on this reflexive journey, I had to follow a similar methodology in the written dissertation to the one I adopted in the making of the film. If the film reflects on its own construction, following clues which don't necessarily lead to an answer,

³ Lebow, A. *First Person Jewish*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, p. 18

the written dissertation as a reflexion of this process had to adopt a similar methodology, a certain freedom of perambulation between clues, disciplines and different media sources. I believed there was much more to gain from a multidisciplinary approach within film studies, anthropology, psychoanalysis, visual arts, philosophy, working with text as well as film, painting and photography. The choice of my inspirations and fellow companions, came naturally as I tried to delve into different aspects of my research.

I became a filmmaker twenty years ago and all my films fall into the category of documentaries. This is how others identify my work. Within documentary film, I have always been more interested in telling stories about present time taking a more observational and participative approach. In my earlier films, I was quite dogmatic in my mistrust of the use of personal voice-over. I avoided voice-over and was very much concerned with giving voice to the participants and questioning issues and contradictions of the present time. But as time went by I began to question how much space I was really giving to the voice of others. As David MacDougall points out in his book *Transcultural Cinema*: “How can any representation approximate the self that every self knows itself to be?”⁴ And he explains in his article “Whose story is it?”: “Whose story was it? Was the film our story or his? By what means can we distinguish the structures we inscribe in films from the structures that are inscribed upon them, often without knowing, by their subjects? And is a film in any sense the same object for those who made it, for whom it may have the status of discourse? And for those who passing have left their physical traces upon it? The question of ‘whose story?’ thus has both an ontological and moral dimension.”⁵

Jean Rouch tried to solve this problem through the act of self-discovery, “in the borderlands between cultures or in the liminal zones of ritual and possession. He sees liberation in the crossing of boundaries (...) Filming here becomes a way of creating the circumstances in which new knowledge can take us by surprise.”⁶

⁴ Macdougall, David in *Transcultural Cinema* edited by Lucien Taylor, Princeton University Press 1998:220.

⁵ Macdougall, David in *Visualizing theory* edited by Lucien Taylor, Routledge 1994, p.29.

⁶ Macdougall, David in *Visualizing theory* edited by Lucien Taylor, Routledge 1994, p.35.

Catherine Russell writes in her book *Experimental Ethnography* how “the question of ‘who speaks’ may be the fundamental one of a politics of representation, and yet the point of enunciation can never be really pinned down with certainty. Film ‘originates’ in a fractured, plural form of identity”⁷.

I became more and more interested in this fractured identity and the way it was expressed through a more invisible dimension of life. What was hiding behind the physicality of things happening in front of the lens, what was hiding behind the spoken words? Facts became less interesting to me than speculations. Contradiction and conflict became more exciting than statements. Addressing the past became fundamental to understanding the present, and memory and dreams seemed very important tools for this. As Annette Kuhn writes in her book *Family Secrets – Acts of Memory and Imagination*, “Telling stories about the past, our past, is a key moment in the making of our selves. To the extent that memory provides their raw material, such narratives of identity are shaped as much by what is left out of the account – whether forgotten or repressed – as by what is actually told.”⁸

In terms of my filmmaking, I was slowly making a transition from a Direct Cinema approach to a more introspective approach to documentary and with it, I was necessarily trying to find a more personal cinema where my point of view was less understated. Self-reflexivity became an important approach with regard to questioning my own view on things and highlighting how my filming was portraying them. In order to reach a higher level of emotion and intimacy, I had to produce vulnerability (my own and that of the participants). I had to cross some lines, and question my ethical and aesthetic approaches to film. The relationship between theory and practice played an important role in my research, enriching and questioning each other, creating two dimensions of understanding of my PhD project. This idea referred to by some authors, such as Tony Dowmunt in his PhD dissertation *The Whited Sepulchre* who reminds us of the words of Trinh-T. Minh-Ha “The relationship between the verbal, the musical and the visual, just like the relationship between the theory and practice, is not one of illustration, description or explication. It can be one of

⁷ Russell, C. *Experimental Ethnography: the work of film in the age of video*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1999 p.311

⁸ Kuhn, Annette *Family secrets – Acts of Memory and Imagination*, Verso 1995, p. 2

inquiry, displacement and expansive enrichment. The verbal forms a parallel track and is another creative dimension.”⁹

I was convinced that the role of dreams and memory in documentary film had to be explored in *The Wolf's Lair*. I have always paid great attention to my own dreams, using them to better understand things about myself and how I relate to the world. I believe dreams say as much about us as the actions when we are awake.

I wondered how dreams could be used in documentary film as a narrative and cinematographic device but not in an illustrative way as in many fiction films. I asked myself how dreams could, like memory, become part of our subjective archive and become visible. This was my initial research question when I started my PhD by practice.

During the first year of my PhD I questioned many people about their dreams and when I asked my mother about her dreams she told me a secret. It was a revelation and thus the first step towards the film as it provoked such an effect on me that it became one of the opening scenes of the film.



*My mother never remembers her dreams.
But then, one day, she told me a secret.
When she was 50, she was hypnotised.
She lay down on a bed.
The room was completely white and the air smelt of
incense.*

⁹ Trinh T. Minh-Ha in an interview Quoted in McLaughlin & Pearce (eds) 2007, p.107

*She had to relax and imagine she was at the top of a big staircase.
She had to descend the stairs very, very slowly.
There were a lot of stairs and when she reached the bottom she would meet someone.
- Who is it? She was asked.
- My father.
- Well, go up to him. Give him a kiss.
- I can't...
- Hold his hand. And she held his hand.
Then she woke up and tears were rolling down her face.
She woke up the moment she held his hand.*

(time-code: 00:02:00)

(voice-over from the film *The Wolf's Lair*)

Who was my grandfather? Why was he a stranger to my mother? What did my mother hold against him and why?

I grew up with the idea that he was a Monarchist and a Fascist who never approved of my uncle's political choices. I was always led to believe that he didn't care about my mother and that at some point in his life he became seriously depressed and the only solution was to give him electric shock treatment.

Like *Alice in the Wonderland*, my mother's revelation plunged me into a deep time-hole and launched my journey into my family's story exploring every kind of archive I could lay my hands on.

I first began by reading his books and finding clues here and there. I opened the first pages of *The Wolf's Lair*, probably his most famous book, written in 1943, just two years before my mothers' birth, and found several quotes he inscribed. One of them, not ascribed and in French, reads "On ne guérit jamais de son enfance"¹⁰, which can be translated as "We never recover from our childhood". Is this a famous quote that has become public domain or was my grandfather the author, hiding anonymously? I will never know. Nevertheless, the quote continued to echo throughout the entire film and PhD project.

¹⁰ This quote may have been inspired by a poem from Lucie Delarue Mardrus. Her most famous poem "L'odeur de mon pays (The scent of my country)" ends with a very similar sentence. Lucie died in 1945, the year my grandfather was writing "A Toca do Lobo" (my translation *The Wolf's Lair*). If she was the author why didn't he identify her? Was it a coincidence? Or didn't he write her name because she was a [known](http://wheatoncollege.edu/vive-voix/poemes/lodeur-de-mon-pays/) lesbian? <http://wheatoncollege.edu/vive-voix/poemes/lodeur-de-mon-pays/>.

I couldn't help realizing that all these events that led my grandfather, my uncle and my mother to situations of forced isolation, all coincided at a certain time. I sensed they were related, and that the ghost of the oppressed Portugal of Salazar hovered over them. Because these facts were taboos in the life of my family, I knew very little about them, until I decided to question my mother's memories and confront them with the family archives I had slowly begun to disinter. Gradually I became aware of how the social, political context of the time conditioned many of these events.

The Wolf's Lair also became a post memorial work in the sense that it tries to re-embodiment social/national and archival/cultural memories, which seem to be part of a collective memory through "individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression."¹¹ Photographs, films, oral history and the act of filmmaking are perfect examples of such embodiments of experience, of a living connection to memory and the desire to repair some kind of trauma.

1.3 Research questions

How can the film help me answer questions about the past, my family, and my country and, ultimately, about myself and me as a filmmaker? And, how can a personal film become universal?

Taking into account that this family story takes place during the Portuguese dictatorship in a specific state of order and knowledge, I wanted to inquire into different dimensions of knowing: from the knowledge we acquire from official archives, bureaucracy and disciplinary order to other sources related to our family and personal archives..

Thus *The Wolf's Lair* became the title of my film; an essay film that explores how our identity and affects are influenced by the stories we tell. What happens when we take a critical second look into our subjective/family archive and the way it has shaped our memory? How do different versions of the same story coexist? How can our family archive - composed of paper documents,

¹¹ Hirsch, Marianne *The Generation of Post memory*, *Poetics Today* 29:1, Spring 2008, p. 111

photographs, films but also of fragmented memories and dreams - be tools for the construction of our identity, creativity and emotions?

On a personal level, I asked myself how I relate to this family of mine? How do I relate to my grandfather? What is this journey I am taking my mother on? Why does this matter to me, and why should it matter to anyone outside our family?

On a less personal level, I am also interested in the way this subjective portrait of a family can relate us to the recent history of a country: a country which is slowly waking up from the nightmare of 48 years of Fascism, a moment when emotions and ideas were repressed. "People were supposed to hide their feelings if they wanted to be socially accepted", says my mother in one of our filmed conversations. I believe, like Annette Kuhn, that "bringing the secrets and the shadows into the open allows the deeper meanings of the family drama's mythic aspects to be reflected upon, confronted and understood at all levels. Because this will help us deal with our feelings of the present."

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Before photography and cinema were invented, people's family archives were made up of objects, paintings, letters, diaries, collected or uncollected oral history, memories and dreams.

We all own a family archive independent of its form. I have decided to call this archive "the subjective archive", which not only comprises physical archives such as paper documents, photographs and films, but also the more intangible archive elements, made up of memories, of stories we tell and hear (oral history) and dreams.

Family archives have been widely used in films as a way of documenting realities, like any other public archival footage. For a long time throughout the history of documentary film, the use of archive films has always been indexical and literal, illustrating speech or an argument, as evidence of something. As John Berger puts it "photography became the dominant and most 'natural' way of referring to appearances (...) offering direct access to the real"¹³.

If we consider that these elements of the so-called subjective archive play a crucial role in the construction of personal identity, affects and political

¹² Kuhn, Annette *Family secrets – Acts of Memory and Imagination*, Verso, 1995, p.7.

¹³ Berger, John "Uses of Photography" in *Selected Essays*, ed. Geoff Dyer, Bloomsbury Publishing 2001, p 286-293.

reality, can we admit that our memories and dreams have as much reality as the physical documents? And if so, what kind of veracity can we extract from them?

I am also proposing a new way of interpreting the “official archives”, questioning their “truth” or the knowledge we can extract from them. Could archives have lost their claim to objective truth, their status as verifying facts?

In this research, I try to understand how we can work with different narratives, voices, and contradictions. It’s about how the “subjective archive” can provoke ideas along the way, bringing coherence to experience and memory that is sometimes fragmented and incoherent. For this we must allow ourselves the freedom to reinvent and re-interpret. How much do we need fiction to make sense of our subjective archive? Do we even need any, so called, physical archive to play a role in the representation of our memory and identity?

1.4 Structure and guidelines for the written dissertation

Each chapter will explore the research questions mentioned above and relates to a different problem that may, however, sometimes be triggered by the same findings. The sequence of chapters is not always faithful to the chronological order in which each problem arose, but I have tried to work each chapter from the specific, the particular, a consequence of the practical work to a more general, abstract aspect in connection to a broader academic context.

In Chapter II, I will give the social political context of the 1940s to the 1970s in Portugal according to Salazar’s dictatorship program. How did this program interfere with mentalities and the concept of “family”? I will also explore the role of censorship and prison, and the way Portuguese Fascism dealt with mental illness and psychiatric institutions. While describing this context, I will give examples of how it influenced the way my mother constructed the memory of her past childhood but also the way this context determined the type of archives and the way future generations, like my own, can make use of them. This obviously plays a role in the construction of my film. From there, I will try and trace the process of filmmaking and the different methodologies pursued for

the film, my first steps in autobiographical filmmaking, my findings and how they fed into the final film.

Chapter III will be dedicated to contextual review and this is where I will map the cinematographic and artistic territory arising through these themes. I will explore essay films, which have played with archive images in a more subjective, non-illustrative way, and works by visual artists. I will also define the theoretical territory most relevant to my research.

In Chapter IV, I will discuss the materials that compose my “subjective archive”, my “family archive”, through film language. By reinterpreting these materials, I want to question their role in the construction of our identity and affects. First-person essay-filmmaking tends to incorporate the making of the film in a self-reflexive way. This quality is reflected in a freer form of filmmaking, in the way the author uses sources, which she/he can access from her/his private life, appropriating and manipulating these documents in the process of making the archive subjective.

Chapter V explores the concept of Phantasmagoria and Ghosts in documentary film. Family archives and other invisible archives bring past and present together and in this process become alive and acquire a spectral quality to them. I will develop the question of how we address the past in present time, and the role both film and photography have in today’s understanding of this long period in Portugal. Linked to this idea of exploring the relations between the intangible and the representations of the “indexical” reality, I will analyse some sequences from *The Wolf’s Lair* that share an oneiric dimension and discuss how their process of revelation through filmmaking very much resembles the process of dream working. It is as if dreams and the filmic representation share the same matrix.

Finally in Chapter VI, I want to discuss how we can articulate the archive as well as our compulsion to use it as evidence for objective information, its indexical nature with the essayistic form and why this is relevant to *The Wolf’s Lair*. The reinterpretation of official archives and official responses may be used to find our voice and knowledge, even when the “archives” do not seem to respond. I named this sub-chapter “Bureaucracy becomes poetry”.

Chapter II: Understanding the past through the process of filmmaking

This PhD project is clearly positioned within a specific social and political context, that of Salazar's dictatorship in Portugal. If on the one hand this particular context of repression influenced much of the mentalities and conventions which shaped the story of my family, on the other hand I am aware that many of the questions I explore within my project are relevant to families and generations which did not live in this specific political context. Still, I believe many of the mysteries and taboos in my family are better understood in the light of this context, which will be described in this chapter.

2.1 From research to practice

In a police state where there is censorship and lack of individual freedom, questions related to the "truth" we can find in "official" archives /documents become relevant. While trying to read these documents, we must acknowledge the fiction they are supposed to tell us according to the fascist authoritarian regime.

If we suspect what these archives tell us, or if we have difficulty in extracting meaning from them, we tend to build fictions around them. How our memory integrates our own fictions in the interpretation of these archives is one of the questions underpinning this research.

2.1.1 Gender roles in the social political context of Portuguese dictatorship

"A place for everyone and everyone in his own place!"

This was one of Salazar's well-known dictums. In it we can read a mixture of elitism, determinism, the will to keep a static society static with no social, economical, political changes: everyone who is born has already a pre-defined role. This atmosphere brought an embedded feeling of fatalism to daily life and all its actions.

Unlike Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany, the dictatorship in Portugal was not characterised by a total ideological indoctrination. There was space for resistance in certain educational areas, and freedom in many areas of private life. The main goal of the educational policy of Salazar's regime was to inculcate passivity, resignation, modesty, and humbleness.¹⁴

Unlike Hitler or Mussolini, who represented for many women the ideal husband or lover and for men the example of what they should aspire to be, Salazar was meant to represent the father figure, an unconditional love.

The Family was the basic and sacred nucleus on which the new regime was founded. It was important to build a modern Portugal, but always based on the trinity "God, Nation and Family"¹⁵. A man could only become socially valuable to the development of the Nation and serve God in a better way if he had the support of the mini-structure called Family: women were consequently urged to marry, yet simultaneously be withdrawn from the outside world. Divorce became illegal due to an agreement between the church and the state. This prohibition on divorce was only abolished when the new Constitution was proclaimed after the revolution in 1974 and the first democratic elections. The relationship between my grandmother and grandfather is a consequence of this political, social context. Despite their physical separation two years after my mother was born, my grandmother and grandfather remained married in the eyes of the law.

In the Constitution of 1933, a document that legitimised the new regime, the family is designated "the primary and fundamental reality of all the national organic, upon which the political and social order are founded."¹⁶ For Salazar it was very important to distinguish the married from the unmarried woman. The married woman should not work outside the home, her job was inside the house taking care of her husband and children while the man should compete in the outside world supported by his wife indoors. Obviously, this changed slightly from the working class to the upper classes which my

¹⁴ Pimentel, Irene in *História das Organizações Femininas no Estado Novo* (Círculo de Leitores, 2001), p. 20

¹⁵ Idem, p.26

¹⁶ Idem, p. 26-27

grandmothers' family belonged to. Nevertheless, my grandmother only studied up to primary school and all her studies, as well as that of her sisters, occurred within the home with a private teacher.

Salazar tried to create the illusion of equality by giving the same value to each role, but, in truth, the law gave authority to men, married women were not allowed to leave the country, to inherit property without a male family member's permission, or to vote. Salazar also censured female labour, ultimately as a way of masking the enormous rates of unemployment, which were dragging the country into a huge economical crisis. By keeping women away from employment, Salazar protected the jobs for men, who couldn't compete with the cheaper labour of the underpaid women.

The law of the Constitution of 1933 proclaimed equality regardless of gender, social position or noble titles, but immediately referred to the exceptions regarding women and their nature and the well-being of the family¹⁷. Women were, therefore, forbidden to deal with the family finances; they had no right to child allowance, which was only given to men. Regarding marriage, as I mentioned earlier, in 1942 the church and the new regime of Salazar signed an agreement with the Vatican, stating that religious marriage had an automatic civil effect and, once celebrated, it became sacred and indissoluble¹⁸. This obviously was the reason for so many illegitimate children. Prostitution was to be hidden in brothels and not shown publicly. Adultery practised by women was punished with 2 to 8 years in prison. Adultery practised by men was punished with a simple fine¹⁹.

In school, children were separated according to gender. Only one book for each year was to be used, and only one book of the History of Portugal was to be used in all the schools in the country. In the 30s, there were hardly any girls in school and yet, despite strict state control, this situation began to change dramatically: the presence of girls in elementary and high schools became more and more important. The state, however, argued that high schools weren't preparing these women for marriage and motherhood. So, in 1949 special schools for girls were created, which meant that the presence of girls in high

¹⁷ *Idem*, p. 29

¹⁸ *Idem*, p. 36-37

¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 87

schools was eliminated once and for all. My mother, unlike my grandmother, was encouraged to study and after boarding school went straight to University, but this was not the rule. The church played a fundamental role in the conventions, and women were expected to be its ally in the fight against communism and liberalism, the enemies of the state and church.

A woman should preserve her *innate* qualities of patience, modesty, tenderness, discipline, discretion and with these tools help to generate strong, virile men who were to work for the welfare of the nation. My mother mentions this atmosphere in the scene where I take her to her old boarding school, Sardão.

All of a sudden, my father exited my life. He left! I don't think I even thought about him much. I stopped thinking. I don't remember ever asking my mother why the subject was taboo; talking about my father was taboo.

You just try to adapt to whatever the situation, don't you? And meanwhile, I was to be packed off to boarding school. I cried for 3 days running, I remember it perfectly, I didn't leave the house, just cried, and cried and cried. Then I thought, it's going to happen, I can't do anything about it, crying for 3 days hasn't worked, I'm really going to Sardão, I'd better make the most of it. When I got to the school, the first thing I did was identify possible escape routes. But in any case, I didn't have a cent, so how would I manage after running away?

It was a prison really, wasn't it? A prison. When I had to face life as an adult, the nuns had filled my head with so much stuff that there was no way I could be happy. It wasn't exactly liberating, was it? Certainly not sexually, anyway.

I remember when boys showed an interest in me, I'd say I hated men, hated boys. It must have been a reflex reaction because they were all well-rounded families, with a father, a mother, children, and I had none of that. No brother, nor father, they'd both disappeared. That was Portugal before the 25th of April. It was just like that. A Portugal confined in a straitjacket. There was a mould and everyone had to fit that mould, there was no room for difference. It was all totally laid out.

(time-code: 00'45'14)

(voice-over from the film *The Wolf's Lair*)

Salazar was clever in understanding how women could play an important role in promoting his ideology and, ironically, he was the first to give women the right to vote and be elected²⁰. Obviously these women had to be faithful to the regime. By doing this he was giving women the illusion that they were proclaiming the role by and for themselves. In terms of moral and social behaviour, women and men interiorised certain patterns of behaviour promoted by a moral discourse. Strong self-censorship avoided, in many ways exterior repression.

Childbirth was boosted through catholic and religious rules in response to the high rates of child mortality, a clear symptom of the poverty and terrible conditions in which people lived in Portugal in those days: my mother's mother had two sisters and five brothers. And my great-grandmother had eleven children.

As with the women, the men's role was ultimately also a functional one. As the central element of the family the man was one of the key elements of the society of the new regime. His role, however, was one of authority and the woman's, one of submission.

My grandfather was a total misfit in this program. He had no desire to have a 9 to 5 job and live a life full of rules. He wanted to be free to write, to work during the night, to wake up late, to meet friends in cafés, and criticise Salazar and his “dogs”²¹. My grandfather had a special hatred of Salazar and although he was not left-wing, he believed in freedom of spirit. His wish to write and not to conform to the rules of Salazar and of the petty *bourgeoisie* were part of the reason for his ostracism from my grandmother's family clan. Still, the family - the regime's elected institution - was ironically a place for a whispering resistance. Many parents managed to resist the state and the organisations' will to monopolise education and to interfere in the private sphere. And the reason for this was that the regime never really invested in a political and ideological education, it mobilised women but it also removed them from politics. The New State never chose between a policy of intervention or a policy of liberalism, it always managed to keep a fine balance between totalitarianism and the will to

²⁰ Still in order to vote or be elected these women had to be single or the head of family in case of the [absence](#) of the patriarch.

²¹ In my grandfather's words.

create a "new man and woman" and this is probably one of the reasons why it lasted for so long (48 years!).

This can give us an idea of the country during the 1940s and 1950s when the main story of my film takes place.

2.1.2 Censorship and state control

The concept of "Nation" was the basis and origin for all the theory and political practice of this period. "Nothing against the Nation, Everything for the Nation" cried Salazar. The new regime didn't allow anything or anyone to question it; this is why it concentrated the monopoly of strength in the Government, leaving out the legislative and judicial powers. The regime had a plan for a symbolic unification. Its goal was to institutionalise an idea of Portugal and *Portugality*: a trans-historical nation, cohesive and hardworking. In order to do this, and with the establishment of a modern state in mind, it had to put into practice a dictatorial regime, which extended to all areas including education and culture.²²

Regarding culture, the regime wanted to foment the spirit of an "artistic national culture". In 1933, Salazar created a Secretary for National Propaganda whose main objective was to instil in the population the "moral mentality which should guide the Nation". His specific goals were to fight against any ideas which could shake the interests and the unity of the Nation and to stimulate a solution, within the zone of influence, for every problem concerning spiritual life. To achieve this, the state collaborated with artists and Portuguese writers, establishing prizes for works of art, which helped promote national interests. The use of radio, cinema and theatre were other tools used for this end.

The Modernist literary movement, which had started to gain expression at the beginning of the twentieth century, was completely diminished. All avant-garde movements or futurism were put on hold and all the modernist artists found opportunities only if they would conform to the normalisation and show

²² Some ideas were taken from the chapter "Salazarismo e Cultura" by Jorge do Ó, included in the book *Nova História de Portugal, vol XII Portugal e o Estado Novo*. Editorial Presença 1988 p.391 Unless otherwise noted all the translations are of my authorship.

total respect for the political power. The Secretary for National Propaganda would reject any “morbid manifestations” of “the nostalgic dreamers of decadence”, and oppose anyone who used literature and art “to create personal worlds, which had in its form of expression their *raison d'être*”. It was through the definition of a deontological code for painters, sculptors, writers and poets that the authoritarian state expressed its understanding and limitations of what the intellectual activity of artists should be. Creative spontaneity was censured. It was in this context that António Ferro defined the principles of his Ministry of Information and Promotion, which exercised tight control of all artistic activity, using the severe blue crayon of censorship. According to António Ferro, the aim was to promote “healthy art”. The invocation of the ugly, the bestial, malefic, sadistic literature and the literature of Freudian inspiration, were to be banned. The new ministry declared war on the despots of freedom of thought and on the “free” intellectuals. After setting up literary prizes and censorship, the ministry created libraries all over the country, where the selection of books was firmly controlled. These itinerant libraries travelled all over the country, their mission being to familiarize the rural populations with the heroes of the Nation and the big issues of national culture. However, the regime was always quite distanced from the centres of literary production and its authors, so it never really found a tight group of intellectuals capable of organizing the literary corpus of nationalism.

Three groups dominated the literary scene. There were the neo-realists, whose central theme was “the social transformations”, the surrealists - characterized by a “provocative and iconoclastic attitude in the name of the future, intelligence and the exploration of the deeper areas of the human mind” and finally, a third group of writers, members of the literary magazine *Presença*, which became known as the “movimento presencista” (the movement of the members of *Presença*). This movement championed a subjective vision of poetry and reflection centred on the human personality with a Freudian perspective. My grandfather was a member of this group for some years but then rejected its dogmas and followed his own solitary path.

Regarding explicit censorship, the government's law of 1933 forbade people meeting for any purpose that went against the law and the morals of the public domain, and all political propaganda sessions needed specific

authorisation from the political power. Deportation and imprisonment became common punishments for all republican and working class opponents to the regime, which meant they had to pursue their political activities underground. The censor carefully scrutinised all newspapers and magazines and many were closed down. However, this heavy censorship led to the emergence of new counter-powers, linked to the political opposition, which could then participate in elections although the results were always manipulated.

2.1.3 Doctors and institutions during Dictatorship

“Health became a political goal”²³ in the state of Salazar. Following Michel Foucault’s totalitarian vision of nature and life in *The subject and the power*, it was important to give greater power to doctors as a way of intervening in society.

*Concurrently the officials of pastoral power increased. Sometimes this form of power was exerted by state apparatus or, in any case, by a public institution such as the police. (...) Sometimes the power was exercised by private ventures, welfare societies, benefactors, and generally by philanthropists. But ancient institutions, for example the family, were also mobilized at this time to take on pastoral functions. It was also exercised by complex structures such as medicine, which included private initiatives with the sale of services on market economy principles, but which also included public institutions such as hospitals.*²⁴

Although I am aware that Michel Foucault’s work about different institutions of isolation, such as prison or hospital, addressed these institutions in western political social order and not specifically in dictatorial regimes, I feel his concepts are still very useful in the understanding of how power works in these structures connected to knowledge and the obsession with archiving information. Foucault’s theories are also relevant to this idea of a self-imposed

²³ Garnel, Maria Rita Lino “Vitimas e Violências na Lisboa da Iª República, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2007 pag. 150

²⁴Foucault, Michel “The Subject and Power” in *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 8, No. 4 (Summer, 1982), pp. 777-795

ensorship and conformity to a norm, which together with explicit censorship and repression played a major role in the maintenance of Salazar's regime.

The empowering of medicine, for example, was already a strategy adopted from the nineteenth century's positivity. The doctor was supposed to treat body and soul, interfering at times with the role of the priest. Medicine and the Police were professions that became part of the political power, professions of control. Institutions such as prisons or hospitals shared many rules. The professional confidentiality of doctors became a rule, giving them an additional power. In the twentieth century, doctors become experts in court, having the power to judge whether the defendant was imputable or not. From 1911 onwards, the psychiatric speciality became part of the curriculum of a degree in medicine.

The principles of nineteenth-century rationality became references to define insanity. Insanity was simply the lack of reason, and this disorder was either hereditary or a consequence of a person's background. There was a very fine distinction between the criminal and the insane and it very much depended on the subjectivity of the expert.

As time went by, doctors claimed the power to determine whether or not certain acts were pathological. This was determined using physical evidences and any behaviour that departed from the norm, which was considered the parameter for rationality.

Given these theories of the pathological, it isn't surprising that doctors claimed for themselves the medicalisation of the criminal thereby asserting their entitlement to treat the criminal instead of punishing him. Doctors, therefore, were ascribed the same power of decision and protection over the criminal that they already exerted over the insane.

According to Julio de Matos²⁷ (a famous psychiatrist of the early twentieth century) it was fundamental to verify the diagnosis of insanity in all those who showed "a deviant behaviour, a lack of ethical values, a profound perversion of emotions and instincts." As Machado de Assis²⁸ (a Brazilian writer

²⁷ Júlio de Matos (1856-1922)

²⁸ Machado de Assis (1839-1908)

and novelist) mentioned in one of his short novels, *The Alienist*, “the island of madness, was after all a continent”²⁹.

The writings of Michel Foucault can take this description further and open it to a more universal discussion. In *The History of Madness*, Foucault describes a movement in the seventeenth century across Europe which established institutions that locked up people who were deemed to be 'unreasonable', or socially unproductive or disruptive. At the heart of Foucault's idea of a modern “disciplinary” society are three techniques: hierarchical observation (the Panoptical³⁰ is his most famous example for this), normalized judgement and examination. All three techniques were used at all times in the State of Salazar. This disciplinary control, described by Foucault, is very much concerned with non-observance (what people have not done; their failures to reach certain standards) and therefore it insists on correcting what is deviant.

One way of encouraging a functionary to voice an opinion was to compel them to draft a report on their work. Indeed it was his ability to produce, trigger and centralize myriad reports and records on the prisoners, patients, workers, and students that I believe best personified my grandfather's status as a leader. Supervision and control mechanisms were even tougher with the closer presence of the inspector, who had to analyse not only “organizational processes” and “results achieved” but also “the way the reports were written”. A greater degree of control also meant a greater amount of discourse.

When I managed to read my grandfather's clinical file, from the time he was committed to the psychiatric hospital, I was struck by all the comments regarding his arrogant attitude and his ironic smile. Coincidentally, these comments were very similar to the comments that described my uncle in his prison file. The state police reports mentioned my uncle's arrogance and lack of humbleness, but also his ironic smile of spitefulness. The coincidence is probably

²⁹ Assis, Machado de, *The Alienist and Other Stories of Nineteenth-century Brazil*, Hackett, 2013

³⁰ Betham's panoptic is for Foucault an ideal architectural model of modern disciplinary power. It is a design for a prison, built so that each inmate is separated from and invisible to all the others and each inmate is always visible to a monitor situated in a central tower. Since the inmates never know whether they are being observed, they must act as if they are always objects of observation. This principle can be applied to any kind of institution (schools, hospitals, factories) and ultimately leads to self-censorship of the observed. Self-control and repression are the ultimate consequences of this principle that becomes a very effective form of control.

just a consequence of standardized form of discourse, which is common to institutions that exercise power and control.

This context made me understand more clearly why my grandmother's family chose to commit my grandfather to a psychiatric hospital instead of submitting him to trial when he was accused of embezzlement during his stay in Estarreja while he was in charge of the village's notary office. It was not just a question of honour and public humiliation for the family, it was also the mentality of the time so entrapped in a strict norm together with the power of the state to have people conform with a certain pattern and rule.

My grandfather was clearly a deviant within the order of Salazar's dictatorship and thus needed to be controlled and observed. He was regarded by my grandmother's family (who had strong connections with power and the regime) as a loser, someone who didn't like or want to work. He was ironic, an eccentric, and a misanthrope, who woke up late, didn't work or make money and *hélas* who smoked (the words of my aunt in one of the scenes of the film *The Wolf's Lair*, time-code: 01:16:45). Because he wasn't a political activist or shared sympathies with leftist groups he wasn't an obvious catch for the state Police. Nevertheless, influenced by a conscious collective order, the family found a way of putting him into another kind of prison, the psychiatric hospital.

The clinical reports of my grandfather are typical tools of power in the way they elicit truth by mixing the words of the doctor with the words of the patient. At some point in the text, we no longer know whether the words belong to the doctors and nurses or to my grandfather. In the film, I intentionally put these statements at the same level, because this was how I discovered them in the clinical file.

Knowledge and power are clearly interrelated in the New State (*Estado Novo*) of Salazar's dictatorship. This is why data, reports, archives and all sorts of documents become a political obsession. On the basis of these records, those in control can form categories, standards and norms that become a basis for knowledge. To write, report and order is contributing to knowledge. By knowing we control, and in controlling we know. This idea described by Foucault which applied to western societies in general, is explicitly visible in the military dictatorship of Salazar and therefore becomes a useful analytical tool.

My uncle's prison file, which is kept at the Portuguese National Archive, comprising fourteen volumes with 1535 pages in all, is a good example of this obsession for data, records and reports. My uncle was caught in a room in Coimbra with a printing press and thousands of papers and pamphlets. Everything the state police (PIDE) found in the room he was living in was carefully archived and described. Dates, names, places were minutely noted down. Nothing escaped.

Prisons, hospitals, schools and other institutions produced thousands of reports which feed the archive. Access to these archives is also regulated and conditioned, the same way people locked in these institutions are conditioned and under surveillance. This is why the goal to register everything seems, paradoxically, to create more opacity. The more information there is, the more difficult it is to understand the knowledge within the archive. Somehow what is important becomes concealed, lost or censored. In the film I explore this "archive fever"³¹ with a montage of filmed documents.

2.1.4 The of role of memory and dreams as an escape from order and a gateway to another truth.

The taboos and secrets which linger on today forty years after the revolution, some of which I managed to unveil in my research, are symptomatic of the camouflaged kind of repression which unconsciously penetrated mentalities and passed on from generation to generation. José Gil in his book *Portugal, the fear to exist* (my translation)³² believes that the collective dismissal regarding the trauma of Salazar's dictatorship by the generations that made the revolution brought a weight of silence and unconscious fear to the following generations. According to this author, the carnation revolution of April 1974 did not really confront 48 years of Fascism. There were no trials for the members of the state police who tortured and murdered. Instead, post-

³¹ *Archive Fever* is the title of a book by Jacques Derrida *Mal d'archive* where he discusses the nature and function of the archive in Freudian terms. "It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement". In his postscript notes he writes that archives only contain traces of what happened there, not the thing itself, this is what drives us to nostalgia of something lost.

³² Gil, José *Portugal, medo de existir*, 2005, Relógio de Agua Editores, p. 43

revolutionary Portugal lived an atmosphere of forgiveness in face of the crimes perpetrated during the dictatorship.

This inherited silence which he calls “non-inscription” took place not only on a political level (the lack of communication and freedom between institutions, the absence of a greater sense of democracy we feel today) but also in a more social and private sphere in the persistence of taboos and a fear to discuss and confront. Between amnesia, trauma and tolerance there is still a big silence regarding this period.

Within the public sphere, silence or self-imposed silence becomes a practice destined to achieve what Abram de Swann calls the “management of normality”. Power is not an institution which imposes itself on people, rather it is composed of a web of invisible relations.

Maintaining normality is hard work: a body must be rested, cleaned, groomed and clothed everyday; it must be fed properly and decorously at the correct time and it must be made to walk the right tracks and say the right things. Such normality presupposes that everyone else behaves more or less as expected, and that the entire society pursues its appointed course³³.

Through the whole process of filmmaking and research triggered by *The Wolf's Lair* (the quest to understand, access and collect information) I became more conscious and aware of the legacy, institutions and ourselves still carry today of these years of repression. But despite this self-censorship, gradually new generations of historians, researchers and artists are now dealing with this moment of Portuguese recent history.

The film explores the idea that in order to break the *status quo* of this historical knowledge, one needs to reactivate and unblock other sources of knowledge, namely memory and dream, which can help with the interpretation of archives and official documents. It is through acknowledging these new sources of knowledge (family photo albums, home-movies, memories and dreams) that I was driven to other official records that revealed new facets of the story of my family. These new insights, namely the reason behind the

³³ De Swann, Abram *The Management of Normality: Critical Essays in Health and Welfare* Routledge 1990, p. 1

psychiatric confinement of my grandfather, the way he was excluded from the family, and finally the way my mother and he dealt with their separation resonate with many other family stories of this historical period. They create a pattern and define a social context.

In my MA dissertation (2001) *I spy with my little I... In search of Women in Portuguese fascist archive footage of the 30s and 40s*, I wanted to propose a way of looking at these images, of judging the identity projected by women in these images. A perspective that took into account the subjectivity of the viewer, the off-screen space, and the relation between these and film itself (the grain). In order to do this I also had to rely on these subjective sources of knowing: namely memory and association.

I concentrated on actual footage and other private footage during this period in Portugal at the height of Salazar's dictatorship and analysed images where women were physically present from a formal and cinematic point of view. By doing this first exercise of identification, I hoped to explore: how much the representation of women in these images conformed to the role afforded them in this period and how much these images could involuntarily or voluntarily allow room for their self-representation; to what extent we could find depth in these images...and, ultimately, in what way did women inhabit them. Taking into account that images of women were scarce and only on a superficial level, we can say these women were almost invisible.

This theme is also developed in this PhD research, in the sense that I am still trying to look for the invisible and, as with the female *extras* I observed, I am once again interested in a secondary revision of things, memories, images, dreams and archives (private and official).

Behind the choreography and manipulation, and the logic of affectations, so dear to Salazar, I wonder how home-movies and other elements of family archives hide clues to a more profound sense of being of the actors in that oppressed society. At the same time, I am also interested in exploring how these elements of the family archive can be understood today and be used to open doors onto new interpretations and, thus, question our memories.

Michelle Citron talks about two different kinds of memory in her book "Home-movies and other necessary fictions": an explicit memory is an actively constructed narrative built from the interplay between a few important details

and the feelings attached to the event. This memory is continuous, story-like and easily verbalised. A traumatic memory, on the other hand, is fragmented, emotional, and inarticulate. This type of memory is called implicit memory; an image that cannot be positioned within a narrative and is more like an inexplicable reaction to a smell. This kind of dissociation, suppressing the traumatic memory, allows the child/adult to get away psychologically when she cannot get away physically. Re-enactment is another way of dealing with trauma: it is a story from the past, which is played out in the present but in a disguised form. Freud called this “repetition compulsion”. Today, recent psychological theory sees this re-enactment as a possible replaying of the script to change its ending.

“Everything that makes narrative honest for the author is precisely what makes it false for the audience. Pieces not wholeness, discontinuity not fluidity, are a more authentic language for the expression of trauma and its aftermath. Art inhabits the axis between the conscious and the unconscious. It is both the message and the messenger.”³⁴ Citron adds:

In fact there are moments when I can't be sure if a memory is an accurate image of my lived experience or an illusion of a memory anchored in the movie images themselves. (...) Or do I just think I remember because repeated viewings of the home movies have imprinted these scenes in my mind? (...) How do I know that what I write here is actually what I experienced and not memory skewed by what was learned in the intervening years? In part I am helped by journals kept since I was eleven years old. In part, my art has shaped the shadows, creating narratives of my childhood refined over time. With these guides I have formed my necessary fictions: fictions in that their truthfulness to the events of my life can't always be definitively known; necessary in that their creation spins the web of narrative through which life moves. These are not lies I tell myself, but truths that can only find expression through fiction. Necessary fictions. Revealing Fictions. Living Fictions. Each hints at a different nuance of meaning. All are appropriate, none are adequate.³⁵

³⁴ Citron, Michelle *Home-movies and other necessary fictions*, 1999, p. 50

³⁵ Idem , p. 139

In his article, “Memory and trauma in a psychiatric unit”³⁶ (my translation), Luis Quintais suggests that there are two types of memory in the context of psychiatric disorder: a “redemptive” memory and a “destructive” memory. In the first case, this memory coincides with a narrative memory, which tries to create a unity or continuity within the fragmentation of remembered events as a way of dealing with the destructive and painful passage of time. In the case of the “traumatic” memory, we are dealing with “secret” memories: memories that have been blocked. The owner of these blocked memories doesn’t even know he has forgotten them, and therefore has to learn about his own memory from something exterior to him. When this happens “traumatic” memory is unblocked and becomes “narrative” memory.

There is a revealing, unblocking quality to the atmospheres I wish to represent in my film. They become alive through the experience of the subjects, the characters of my film and how they relate to the clues, photographs, films and other documents I show in my journey. As Jill Bennett points out: “images have the capacity to address the spectator’s own bodily memory; to touch the viewer who feels rather than simply sees the event, drawn into the image through a process of affective contagion. Bodily response thus precedes the inscription of narrative, or moral emotion of empathy.”³⁷

Dreams, on the other hand, can be seen as an escape from order and repression and therefore become a less filtered source of knowledge. I kept a diary of reflections and new ideas about my filming and research, together with fragments and notes of parallel research, as well as descriptions of dreams I was having. These notes fed into my research and hopefully these fragments will appear in this dissertation in a way that can expand on the film, and be read autonomously.

In my uncle’s prison file I find a piece of his writing dated 1960. He describes a futuristic dream he had about man’s journey to the moon, which in the dream took place in 1970. I am surprised by his vision and the contrast between his dream (evasion and sci-fi) and his physical

³⁶ Quintais, Luis “Memoria e trauma numa unidade psiquiátrica” in *Análise social*, vol XXXIV 2000, pp. 673-684.

³⁷ Bennett, Jill *Empathic vision. Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art* Stanford University Press, 2005, p.36.

reality, locked in a tiny room with no window. Nine years later, humans would step on the moon.
(extract from research diary)

But if dreams exist beyond physical reality, how can they be interpreted in a media that claims to represent an image, which has an indexical bond with its historical referent? This is also the challenge of the film and this dissertation.

Memory and dreams are nevertheless inevitably linked. They are both represented in similar ways inside our brain: images, sounds, emotions, and information. One has to call upon memory to represent the dream, and dream, on the other hand, can help unblock memory.

While memory is conventionally related to the representation of a historical world, and connected to the conscious, dreams are the representation of an imaginary world and are connected to the unconscious. Both memory and dream ask the viewer to become complicit in the process of making meaning, and both are mainly metaphorical and not analogical. Despite memory being closer to the conscious than dreams, in the words of Annette Kuhn it is still “a montage of vignettes, anecdotes, fragments, ‘snapshots’, flashes. (...) more in common with poetry than with classical narrative.” With dreams, the viewer has to become complicit in the process of making meaning of something, which is mediated by the unconscious: a “history” inside a “history”, a “story” inside a “story”. Many authors like Chris Marker in both his films: *La jetée* (1962), a fiction film or *Sans Soleil* (1983) a documentary film, have questioned this same idea. The films of Agnès Varda, Alexander Sokurov, Derek Jarman, Pier-Paolo Pasolini, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul are other examples of this.

Connected to this and comparing the process of filmmaking and dream working, I was also interested in our perception of film and the way film language is influenced by our unconscious.

I realised my film would trace my journey to understand who my grandfather was, navigating through memories, dreams, his fiction books, his speaking image talking to camera in archives, the photographs he took. I aimed to connect the story of my family to a wider social and political context and to understand how a family dealt with its secrets and contradictions during

dictatorship and how I, brought up after the revolution, could lift the fog and make things, which were invisible, visible.

Silence, an emotional block, and the unspoken were preventing dreams and memories from emerging and all were linked to the process of making the film. Ultimately, I was interested in understanding how I could represent an affect, a void, a longing, a ghost, and a dream.

Affective atmospheres are a class of experience that occur before and alongside the formation of subjectivity, across human and nonhuman materiality, and in between subject/object distinctions. (...) Atmospheres are neither something objective, that is, qualities possessed by things, and yet they are something like, belonging to the thing in that things articulate their presence through qualities – conceived as ecstasies. Nor are atmospheres something subjective, for example determinations of a psychic state. And yet they are subject like, belong to subjects in that they are sensed in bodily presence by human beings and this sensing is at the same time a bodily state of being of subjects in space.³⁹

Emotion is always rooted in a cultural, political context; therefore I am also trying to put together an emotional portrait that takes into account its political dimension. I believe Gilles Deleuze expressed this idea in his famous sentence: “Emotion does not say ‘I’⁴⁰, in the sense that it can be very limiting to judge and work on emotion, neglecting its collective origin and effects. One can extend this idea to the associations created through memory. Kuhn adds, “If the memories are one individual’s, their associations extend far beyond the personal. They spread into an extended network of meanings that bring together the personal with the familial, the cultural, the economic, the social, the historical.”⁴¹ Hence, there is a collective nature to the activity of remembering that cannot be separated from a social historical context. The boundaries between the social and private become easily blurred. Even if, at times, I

³⁹ Böhme, G. Atmosphere as a fundamental concept of a new aesthetics, *Thesis Eleven*, 36 (1) p. 113-126

⁴⁰ Gilles Deleuze’s comment in the interview collection *Two Regimes of Madness*: “Emotion does not say ‘I’. Emotion is not the order of the ego but of the event. It is very difficult to grasp the event, but I do not believe that this implies the first person.” Deleuze goes on to mention Maurice Blanchot’s claim when he says that “there is more intensity in the sentence “he suffers” than “I suffer”.

⁴¹ Kuhn, Annette *Family secrets – Acts of Memory and Imagination*, Verso, 1995, p.5.

thought my practice was distancing itself from my initial research questions, I realise now that my film was trying to tackle this difficult question of how to represent cinematically, the mental, the invisible, and the emotion whilst at the same time exploring how to make a film in the fog, so to speak, and how to dissipate the fog within documentary subjectivity.

2.1.5 Secondary revision

Although dreams are a trigger for some of my remembrances, leading to new pieces of my puzzle, I don't want to make an analysis about dreams and the mysteries they enclose, nor do I want to make film analysis through dreams.

It is the idea of a "secondary revision" that may be useful here: the moment when you look back at things again and, looking at them for the second time, discover new things. This happens when you look at images, when you retell a memory, when you retell a dream or when you re-dream a dream. And all this experience of a "secondary revision" is there to provoke reality, dig new layers of a remembered reality. If we believe memory is a construction, then ultimately all memory is secondary revision, and what separates personal memory from collective memory is not that significant.

For Freud, confession demands its analytical other (the analyst-confessor).

Maybe this is why I felt it was important to use "secondary revision" in this autobiography essay film. Secondary revision in this film plays a visible role within the narrative and the critical approach to memory but also an invisible role in the editing room, where an analytical approach to the material/rushes is taken. Maybe this secondary revision allows the film "to move from acting to remembering or from the unconscious to the preconscious or even to consciousness."⁴² As Tony Dowmunt concludes in his PhD dissertation *The Whited Sepulchre*, through "the processes of self-shooting and editing the confessant in autobiographical filmmaking has the potential to embody her/his own authoritative other."⁴³

⁴² Renov, Michael *The Subject of Documentary*, p.201

⁴³ Dowmunt, Tony *The Whited sepulchre*, 2009, p. 32

Like Jonas Mekas' process in his film *Lost, Lost, Lost*⁴⁴, sometimes I imagine my written dissertation as a "secondary revision" of what I did in my practice. Jonas Mekas' project has been described as an exemplary instance of "secondary revision". In *Lost, Lost, Lost*, images, memory and dream work together with the unconscious. Mekas filmed his everyday life "without a plan" between the 1940s and the 1960s and only many years later added his narration. This wasn't a commentary on the images but more like a "secondary revision" of the images, similar to the process the dreamer goes through when telling his dream. The time lapse between image and sound creates this effect of a secondary revision.⁴⁵

The last time I filmed my mother, she told me a new story that she insisted I knew already. She said one of the reasons she couldn't accept her father was because one night when she was in bed (she must have been 9 or 10 years old) she overheard a conversation between her mother and her aunt (was she awake or was she half asleep?) They were talking about her father who was following his son (my uncle) with a gun threatening him and demanding he surrender to the police. This story doesn't match a letter I found between my uncle and grandfather, written when my uncle was still in prison. This letter shows their affinities, a letter full of nostalgia for childhood. Recently I did some research into my uncle's criminal file in the state police archive, and found out that when he was caught, the police found among thousands of pamphlets, a gun. It made me think....What if my grandfather gave my uncle a gun for protection? I haven't confronted my mother with this new piece of information, but maybe it will open up other secret passages.⁴⁶

November 2013

(extract from research diary)

"Secondary revision" is clearly present in the interpretation of my mother's childhood memory. This episode/scene will be analysed in Chapter IV.

⁴⁴ Mekas, Jonas "Lost Lost Lost", 1976, 178 min. 16 mm, color and black & white

⁴⁵ Russell, Catherine "Experimental Ethnography" Durham and London: Duke University Press 1999, p.282)

⁴⁶ Extract from my personal diary kept during the making of the film.

Rosalind Krauss also elaborates on this idea of a “secondary revision”. Quoting Freud, she compares it to a “ready-made”⁴⁷:

...the ready-made as secondary revision: lying at hand, becomes the vehicle for a past experience – one that had no sense at the time it occurred – to rise up on the horizon of the subject’s vision as an originally unified perception. Freud compares this for example to a secondary revision, that process of the dream work that comes, après-coup, to construct a façade for the dream – the one we seem to remember upon waking, the one that gathers the chaos of the dream representations together, creating the relative coherence of narrative. This façade, Freud says, is a ready made, a narrative lying in wait to be affixed to the dream material. (...) Those daydreams will also be described by Freud as readymade for the subject, lying in wait for him in the scraps he picks up from his parents and grandparents, the legends the family tells about itself and him (...) the romances that he takes from others and assumes as his own.⁴⁸

I believe this “ready-made” quality of dreams and day-dreams obtained through “secondary revision” shows us how the narrative we build around our dreams is probably a façade we need to transcend and yet it is probably the only way we can access our unconscious.

I wonder if there is a ready-made quality to my film. If dream-work using the methodology of “secondary revision” becomes a ready-made, then my film is also a ready-made in the sense that it revisits and reinterprets subjective archives through film language. And yet by doing so, it is also working as a narrative and therefore can become a façade for other perspectives.

⁴⁷ (**noun**) - A term coined by [Marcel Duchamp](#) and, in its most correct use, applied to his work, alone, between 1913 to 1921. From Dada onwards, "ready-made" has been understood to be a common, mass-produced object, such as the urinal and bicycle wheel Duchamp so famously used. However, ready-mades are used in a completely different context from their original, intended functions. Ready-mades are elevated to the status of art simply because the artist **says** they are art.

⁴⁸ Krauss, Rosalind, *The Optical Unconscious*, October Books, 1994, p.64.

2.2 From Practise to Research

2.2.1 First-person filmmaking and autobiography

*“Contrary to what people say, using the first person in films tends to be a sign of humility. All I have to offer is myself.”*⁴⁹ Chris Marker

I realized that in order to explore my research question I had to be implicated in the whole process. It made no sense to talk about the Other when I was dealing with such inner worlds. Maybe it was important to lose some authorial dominance as Tony Dowmunt refers to when using the camera as a confessional (this can be applied to the films of Ross McElwee and to some extent to those of Avi Mograbi). Initially, I had to try to do it through my own experience, and by questioning my own choices in a self-reflexive way. Autobiography became, therefore, a first methodology/strategy to put this into practice and it raised many questions: ethical, aesthetical and technical questions. Not all first-person filmmaking is autobiographical (see *The Cinema of Me*⁵⁰ by Alisa Lebow). First-person filmmaking “entails a dialogic splitting of subjectivity” and this is very clear in my project. Not only because it involves different characters related to me personally, but essentially because the subject as a material part of the film is dialoguing with the subject as the maker of the film. This creates “a somewhat antinomial position that is nonetheless constitutive of being able to reflect upon and represent the self.”⁵¹

I have filmed my mother on three different occasions in the past year, and each time things don't seem right somehow. I believe this strangeness comes from the fact that I haven't yet decided how I will position myself in the film. The first time I was behind the camera and I was questioning her from there. I was asking intimate questions about her childhood and she seemed so lonely

⁴⁹ Walfisch, Dolores published in *Chris Marker – Contemporary Film Director* edited by Nora M. Alter 2006, p.145.

⁵⁰ Lebow, Alisa *The Cinema of Me – the self and subjectivity in first person documentary*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. p 4

⁵¹ Lebow, Alisa *The Cinema of Me – the self and subjectivity in first person documentary*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. p 4

*in the frame. I felt uneasy in this position. Her story was as much my story. I was the one who wanted to disinter things, why should I be hidden? The second time I set the tripod and camera in front of both of us, and chose a medium wide shot. My being there with her looks better, but the downside was I couldn't really control the technical aspects, and the sound was terrible. On the third occasion I decided I would give it a try with a crew. It was a dark, rainy day and we decided to have artificial light. My mother knew the crew but still she dressed up and put on make up as if she was being interviewed for a TV program. The sound is ok and the camera too, but lighting brings a lot of artificiality to it and for most of the time the shot is a closed one of my mother looking out of frame to me on her left. It doesn't work at all. Content wise it lacks strength because my mother was very defensive, always trying to normalize things that were not normal. Trivialising feelings and emotions. I have decided to stop filming my mother for a while.
28 November 2012
(extract from research diary)*

I made a self-reflexive film, which showed my quest into the representation of dreams and memories in my family. But at the same time I was questioning my identity through my family's story. I grew up in a left wing, non-catholic family, a family that like many was affected by the revolution. Before entering and empathising with my past family story, I was first involved and formed by my mother and father's social, political beliefs. Probably the fact that I saw my mother's family as quite representative of the fascist upper middle class very much influenced my point of view in the film. My grandfather was always described to me as a monarchist and an anti-communist and, yet, as my research progressed, I realised he was also an anti-fascist who absolutely despised and mocked Salazar. I tried to find clues in his writings, but I'm aware of the discontinuous way I was reading his books and how all knowledge is "autobiographically located in a particular social context of experiencing and knowing"⁵² in the words of Liz Stanley.

How much of this discontinuity of knowledge and learning played a role in the film and its form? The challenge was also to picture or represent fragmentation in a way that was perceivable and coherent, and yet true to its

⁵² Stanley, Liz *Feminist Auto/Biography and Feminist Epistemology* in *Out of the Margins*, ed. Jane Aaron and Sylvia Walby, London Falmer Press, 1991, p. 210.

own fragmented nature. “A coherent story not only absorbs the listener, but – being a moment in the production of self – satisfies the teller as well, for the moment at least.”⁵³

2.2.2 Post memory

Still, this approach to autobiography is transitive in the sense that I explore the memories of my mother and reveal them indirectly through my point of view. Sometimes my voice and the voice of my mother mix and become one: the voice of the film. Marianne Hirsch refers to this transferred identification between children and their parents as “post memory”. Post memory describes:

*The relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they remember only as the stories and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental as to constitute memories in their own right. (...) The term is meant to convey its temporal and qualitative difference from survivor memory, its secondary or second-generation memory quality, its basis in displacement, its belatedness. Post memory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through projection, investment and creation.*⁵⁴

Hirsch adds that post memory occurs specifically with family members from the previous generation which “implies a temporal distance between self and other.”⁵⁵ Yet, with post memory there is a constant movement toward a collapse of temporal divide, wherein, through an intimate identification, the fantasy of overcoming that gap and properly acquiring the memory as one’s own persists⁵⁶. According to Hirsch, there is a constant movement toward a collapse of temporal divide, wherein, through an intimate identification, the fantasy of

⁵³ Kuhn, Annette *Family secrets – Acts of Memory and Imagination*, Verso 2002, p.22

⁵⁴ Marianne Hirsch, “Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy,” in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, ed. Mieke Bal et al. Hanover, NH: University Press, 1999, p.8-9

⁵⁵ Idem, page 9

⁵⁶ Lebow, Alisa “Memory Once Removed: Indirect Memory and Transitive Autobiography in Chantal Akerman’s *D’Est*” in *Camera Obscura* 52, volume 18, Number 1.

overstories are displaced by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that they can neither understand nor recreate.”⁵⁷

In the *The Wolf's Lair* I consider that post memory has travelled between three generations, from my mother's mother and my mother's sister and aunts to my mother, and from my mother to me. In the film, I am trying to challenge the myths my family acquired through this mechanism of post memory. It is almost as if I want to create a new memory for my mother and me. I see myself reflected in my mother, and my mother reflected in her father. This triangle materializes in the scene where my mother is watching my grandfather's archive on TV for the first time (time-code:01:28:05). She stares at the screen becoming increasingly emotional and keeps looking at me in the camera, trying to find some comfort and confirmation that she is not alone in her journey. I will write further about this scene in Chapter V when I explore the theme of Phantasmagoria, Ghosts and projections. This transferred autobiography becomes ever more coherent when I am attempting to represent an invisible past which never reveals itself in full and when it does, it does so indirectly.

In the words of Alisa Lebow, I can also say this “is an autobiography of another, a self displaced through time, telescoped inter-generationally, beyond the limits of the filmmaker's experience – a ‘post autobiography’”⁵⁸.

2.2.3 Self-reflexivity

Confronted with the difficulty or the impossibility of representing realityentwiof speaking for the other, many documentary filmmakers have taken refuge in making films that integrate the process of making within the film, using a self-reflexive approach. Other times, filmmakers turn to themselves as a way of avoiding the difficulties of speaking for the timesaced through time, telescoped interng at me in the camera, trying to find some comfort and confirmation that she is not alone in her journey. I will write

⁵⁷ Hirsch, M. *Family frames: photography, narrative and postmemory*. Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 22

⁵⁸ Lebow, Alisa “Memory Once Removed: Indirect Memory and Transitive Autobiography in Chantal Akerman's D'Est” in *Camera Obscura* 52, volume 18, Number 1, p.72.

furtherand self-reflexive films cannot ignore the person “pulling the strings”, the author, the director.

Many authors address autobiography as a way of dealing with questions of authority related to authenticity. Tony Dowmunt quotes Stuart Hall in his PhD thesis: “Autobiography is usually thought of as seizing the authority of authenticity. But in order not to be authoritative, I’ve got to speak autobiographically”⁵⁹. This also very much explains my choice to be in the film. By doing so, not only did I avoid speaking authoritatively about my mother and her family, but I also put myself in a position where I had to be critical and self-critical regarding everything I was putting in place in the film. My autobiographical approach is therefore inevitably self-reflexive, because it is also a reflection on how to make this film, how to build coherence out of the scattered and fragmented information I was collecting. “To be reflexive is not only to be self-conscious but to be sufficiently self-conscious to know what aspects of the self must be revealed to the audience to understand the process employed...”.⁶⁰ Coincidentally, or not, my grandfather’s writing is also self-reflexive. My grandfather was pressurised by his publisher to write an autobiography, but he always refused. After all, there was always an alter ego of him in his books, and many of his characters were based on real people. My grandfather believed strongly in the power of writing to create new worlds, and metaphors were fundamental, especially under such tight censorship.

I later discovered that my grandfather wrote many books connected to the world of dreams and memories. One of these books is dedicated to my mother and it is called *Gata Borradeira* (Cinderella). This story is very autobiographic and is very much about my mother’s family and the way he feels they stole his daughter (my mother) from him. I also discovered in his correspondence to a friend that he was writing a book about his depression, which he planned to call *The Rings of Saturn*. I couldn’t avoid establishing a relation to Sebald’s book with the same title. Maybe motivated by this

⁵⁹ Hall, S. (1992) ‘Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies’ in Grossberg, L., Nelson, C. & Treichler, P.A. (ed.s) *Cultural Studies*, London & New York: Routledge, 277-294

⁶⁰ Ruby, J. (1980) ‘Exposing yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology and film’, *Semiotica* 30-1/2, 153-179

coincidence I began to find many *sebaldian* paths in my research, which I explore in Chapters III and IV.

In this self-reflexive approach, the film showed how I processed my discoveries, although my mother and other characters played a role in this process. In some way, I wanted to free myself from my mother's misconceptions and build an imaginary world from these archives, and findings. I was interested in the blurred boundaries between “real” life and dreams, objective physical things and the mental images they could create. I wanted to travel from one to the other. Like the film, the written part is built as self-reflexive and describes a journey in itself.

2.2.5 My mother and me

The link between the documentary filmmaker and those who agree to be in their films is always problematic. It is somewhat connected to a feeling of desire, a “moral contract” between filmmaker and the subject filmed. What made my mother decide to go on this journey with me? I was definitely in a position of power, in the sense that her love for me is in some way unconditional. But she could have objected.

I ask myself many times why my mother avoided looking into her past or the past of her father, never read his books and yet she was so eager to help me when I decided to make this film. She was relying on the effect of post memory in me and, at the same time, I believe she felt shielded by the fact that it was me, my voice that was leading the film. The fiction we would both create from her memories and my post memory would ultimately protect her and, I dare say, reassure her regarding her traumatic feelings and fictions of the past.

It was really important to establish the distinction between my relationship with my mother outside the film and within the film. Sometimes these different dimensions became confused and it was through the editing that I managed to artificially keep both dimensions apart. The scene where I knock over a lamp during the filmed interview with an old aunt is a good example of this. My aunt feeds me a macabre memory of my grandfather kissing my grandmother when she was lying dead in her coffin. It was a disturbing memory for my mother who was tense during the whole scene, and through a mechanism

of transmission or post memory, I too became uncomfortable with the described scene and knocked over a lamp. I decided the confusion was fortunate and kept this failed act in the scene (time-code: 01:20:33)

2.2.6 My aunt and me

I dreamt that I arranged a meeting between my mother and her sister in some teahouse. My mother was really nervous and my aunt came with one of my cousins. She seemed really young, she seemed to be in her 50's instead of her 80's. She wasn't unfriendly but both my mother and I felt a bit uncomfortable and the purpose of the reunion seemed a bit diffused; we hardly talked. Instead I kept finding reasons to disappear giving my work as excuse.

3 rd October 2012

(extract from research diary)

Since the beginning of my research for the film, I was aware of the difficulties surrounding my aunt's consent or non-consent to being in the film, or allowing me to film my grandfather's house, which is now her property.

After three letters and a phone call where my aunt dismisses me and hangs up, she made it very clear she didn't want to be in the film and that if it depended on her I would never set foot in Casares (my grandfather's house). But how could I avoid not incorporating her refusal in the film, when the film deals directly with these issues? By self-denying her voice in the film, she was giving me room for my reflexions about the situation and, in this sense, the image she would reflect depended more strongly on me.

I represented my aunt through her refusal and her letters, despite her lack of consent. My aunt became my own fiction. The fact that I never met her helped to legitimise this fiction. On the other hand, I must admit that what seemed initially a weakness in the film's narrative - the impossibility of entering the house and interacting with her on film - was gradually transformed into a strength. The impossibility of entering the house and having to establish a relationship/ "contract" with my aunt opened new possibilities and a freedom to fantasise and speculate. My aunt's refusal made sense in relation to other refusals, and to the feeling of silence and opacity I wanted to transmit about this family and this specific period of Portuguese history. Besides, a closed door

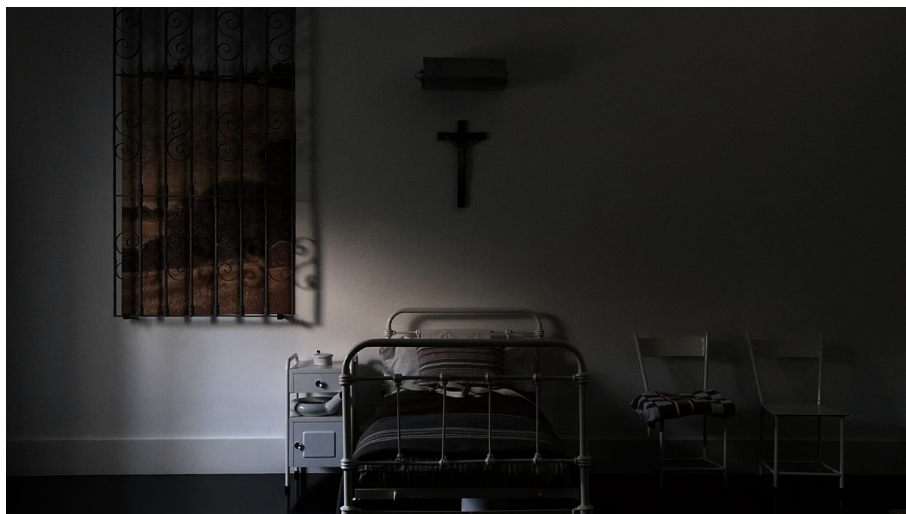
leaves much more room for fantasy and imagination, for mental images of both the viewer and my own. Secrets are important because they propel our imagination and our necessity to tell stories about the past, which become part of our identity process.

Between the past and present, I tried to bring sense to what I discovered, even the silences and closed doors, which kept confronting me. Different voices, mine, my mother's and my grandfather's, but ultimately my story about my family that I never met. How did my film deal with these different voices and stories? How plural and fractured could it become without losing its own identity?

Rather than the revelation of these secrets, the question that most interested me is what happens in the activity of bringing secrets to light? What is it that makes us remember... the reminders of the past that remain in the present?

This becomes clearer in the scene where I try to represent through images of different house interiors, my own fantasy of my grandfather's house.

Unable to gain access to Casares, I started fantasising about the house. I imagined rooms, corridors, bedrooms seen through half open doors. I built an imaginary house. Looking at this window, I realised I'd already been here but differently. I shivered and remembered the trompe l'oeil image I'd filmed in the museum in Telhal. I thought about my grandfather behind those bars and suddenly, in an association of ideas, I imagined Casares as a prison where my grandfather was still locked away with my aunt or by my aunt.
(time-code; 01:26:26)
(voice-over from The Wolf's Lair)



Speaking about Foucault and his legacy to the future, Georges Didi-Huberman once said in a class I attended, that imagination creates knowledge of unremarked things. It creates relations between things, which apparently have no relation with each other. Like Foucault, he said, “we need to cross borders like an image or a stamp.”

My aunt’s refusal and denial became an important part of my narrative arc, creating suspense all through the film and stimulating my imagination, making me cross borders and create associations: would she ever invite me in? This was obviously something which I played with in the film, even if outside the film and as a human being this denial still bothers me and makes me uncomfortable. Once the film was finished, I sent her a copy in DVD but up until now, I have had no reaction.

2.2.7 An essay towards my “filmic truth”

One of the challenges of this research came from the difficulty in accessing information from the past. In trying to meet this challenge, I was confronted with an inheritance today of a historical context of the country during the years of dictatorship, which I could not dissociate from the different events which took place in my family and which linger on today. How pertinent is it to establish such connections? In both dimensions - family history and public history - I am often confronted with a certain amnesia or anaesthesia regarding difficult issues of the past, similar to the effect of a post-traumatic event. It is inevitable to establish a connection between the two. Filming as a tool and film as a means of expression helped me give voice to the complex reciprocal relationship existing between the two narratives: the personal family narrative and the historical, political narrative of a country.

Each of these narratives feeds the other. The historical context of repression and censorship allowed me to understand my mother’s conscious or unconscious choice not to ask about, and to accept the disappearance of her father. On the other hand, my family story and its different episodes, namely my grandfather’s commitment to a psychiatric hospital and my uncle’s prison files helped me understand in a more emotional way, the atmosphere and spirit which haunted the country in those days.

If I had accepted the official records and the information given by the official archives as the only “truth”, my grandfather’s portrait would not only be bi-dimensional but would lack coherence when articulated with other information and sources I explored. These rely more on affects, memories and dreams. For a more sincere portrait of my grandfather and his time I had to navigate between different sources and make sense of the fragments I gleaned. A state or a structure of power cannot operate on fragments and doubts; it needs a fiction of order that should be accepted or imposed on those who live in it.

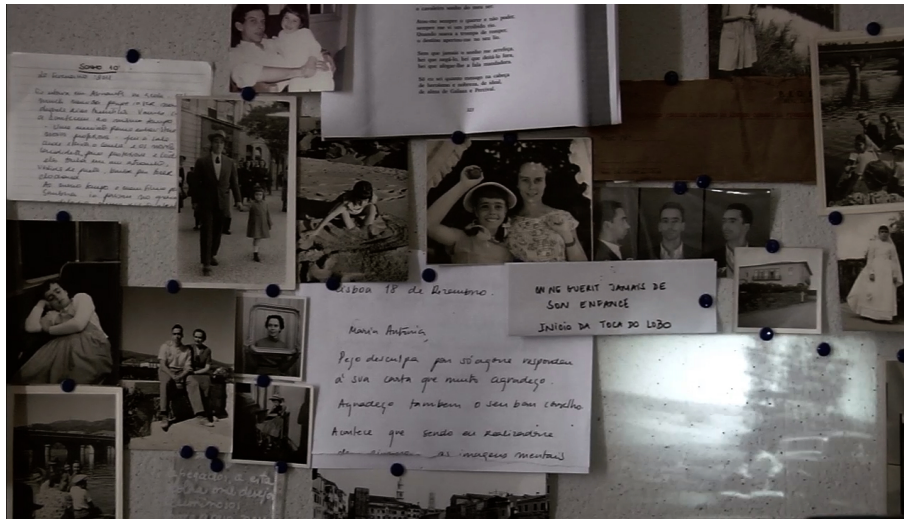
Here, on the contrary, I tried to find my truth by acknowledging these fragments.

The film becomes a multi-layered navigation of a very personal/family and yet public question about knowing. In contrast to this state of order imposed by Salazar's dictatorship, I propose my own "filmic truth" with my own methodology: a practice based research through essayistic filmmaking both in the shooting and editing.

The film is my journey to a past that has been kept from me, but also my mother's journey to meet her father. Finally, it is also the story of a family during the dictatorship: its secrets and mysteries clouded by the atmosphere of forty-eight years of fascism in Portugal. The progression of the film is very much related to my journey as I become immersed in his story and learn things I didn't know before. And yet this is not an investigative film. I know I will never understand the truth. I am much more interested in the process of confronting contradictory information, and memories and playing with the archive footage and documents I discover. Dreams, recollected memories, coincidences, and associations all play a strong role in this journey.

In order to build the portrait of my family, I used my personal voice and reflections to navigate between the images, photographs, archive footage and documents from the past that I discovered. In present time, I filmed the moments of discovery, the findings, but also the moments of failure in this search: closed doors; letters of rejection; missing photographs, unspoken words. I filmed the different spaces and objects that played a role in the family's past: the psychiatric hospital my grandfather was committed to, the different prisons where my uncle was locked up, the boarding school my mother was sent to and, finally, I tried to enter the house in the north of Portugal, where my grandfather's books, paintings and strange collections remain.

I tried to establish the chronology of events because through this I could find patterns and rhythms. I navigated between the images and scenes, but also through the dialogues I had with my mother and other characters that gradually appeared in the film. I wanted the film to reflect my doubts and uncertainties and to question the ability of the images and the film itself to tell this story.



The ingredients of my journey:

- Description of dreams
- Description of memories
- Photographs
- Letters
- Home-movies (Especially interesting because in the first instance they seem a result of a less mediated gaze, closer to the automatic, to the unconscious with less authorial dominance, freer in some way. But on the other hand they create an affective involvement with regard to the spectator, helping to unearth memories and dreams.)
- Closed spaces: the psychiatric hospital; the prison; the boarding school, The Wolf's Lair (my grandfather's house which now belongs to my mother.) I want to film the spaces where my uncle, grandfather and mother were closed in. Besides the effect they had on their life, they seem great metaphors for what was going on politically in the country during the dictatorship:
- Open spaces – landscapes
- Faces
- Books
- Writings
- My diary
- My narration: Who am I as a narrator? Will I use my voice? Will narration anticipate things or react to things that happen?

As Catherine Russell writes in her book *Experimental Ethnography*:

A common feature of auto ethnography is the first-person voice-over that is intently and unambiguously subjective. This is however only one of three levels on which a film or video maker can inscribe themselves, the other two being at the origin of the gazes, and as body image. The multiple possible permutations of these three voices – speaker, seer and seen – are what generate the richness and diversity of autobiographical filmmaking.

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In her book *Home-movies and other necessary fictions*⁶², Michelle Citron explored this idea of the inherent fragmentary nature of auto-ethnography connected to memory and forgetting. She writes: “When auto-ethnography becomes an archival practice, memory is fragmented into a nonlinear collage. The pieces that are assembled into the shape of a diary forsake the authenticity of documentary realism for a fiction of forgetting.”

In *The Wolf's Lair*, the film, I accepted that there is not one narrative. The film is about how my discoveries (the visible and invisible archive) can provoke ideas along the way. Archives can help bring a coherence to experience that doesn't really have coherence, but here I am not so much interested in this coherence as in the incoherence of recollections, the paradoxical moments. But still the challenge was to build a coherent film. Gradually, I realised my film was heading towards a more essayistic approach as defined by T.W.Adorno:

In the essay, concepts do not build a continuum of operations, thought does not advance in a single direction, and rather the aspects of the argument interweave as in a carpet. The fruitfulness of the thoughts depends on the density of this texture. Actually, the thinker does not think, but rather transforms himself into an arena of intellectual experience without simplifying it.(...) The essay freely associates what can be found associated in the freely chosen object.(...) The essay abandons the main road to the origins, the road leading to the most derivative, to being, the ideology that simply doubles that which already exists; at the same time the

⁶¹ Russell, Catherine *Experimental Ethnography* Durham and London: Duke University Press 1999, p.277.

⁶² Citron, Michelle In *Home-movies and other necessary fictions*. 1999, p. 313

*essay does not allow the idea of immediacy, postulated by the very concept of mediation, to disappear entirely. All levels of the mediated are immediate to the essay, before its reflections begin. (...) The essay becomes true in its progress.*⁶³

The words of Adorno echo my process during the making of *The Wolf's Lair*. Max Bense said:

*He writes essayistically, he who writes while experimenting, who turns his object this way and that, who questions it, feels it, tests it, thoroughly reflects on it, attacks it from different angles, and in his mind's eye collects what he sees, and puts into words what the object allows to be seen under the conditions established in the course of writing.*⁶⁴

I believe this was also my approach to *The Wolf's Lair*, as it is to some extent with this research and dissertation. I was experimenting while filming and filming while experimenting, collecting elements along this journey which I ignored at its outcome. Maybe this essayistic nature is, after all, inherent to the idea of practice by research – which makes me wonder if all films made in the context of practice research become essayistic in some way or another. Adorno adds:

*The discontent with this procedure, the feeling that it could all go on indefinitely, has its truth and untruth. Its truth, because in fact the essay comes to no final conclusions and makes explicit its inability to do so by parodying its own a priori (...) The essay thinks in fragments just as reality is fragmented and gains its unity only by moving through the fissures, rather than by smoothing them over.*⁶⁵

To try to define essay film is, nevertheless, a paradox. Essay film by nature should never confine itself within rules or categories. It clearly favours a discourse of delirium in opposition to a discourse of sobriety⁶⁶; more poetic than

⁶³ Adorno, T.W. *The essay as form*, 1958, It is now contained in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 152

⁶⁴ Bense, Max, "Über den Essay und seine Prose", *Merkur* 1:3, 1947, p. 418.

⁶⁵ Adorno, T.W. "The essay as form", 1958, p.152

⁶⁶ Renov, Michael "The subject of Documentary", 2004, p.100

expositional; more feeling than thought, a more introspective approach to documentary film, a language that plays with our vulnerability.⁶⁷ This definition of essay film takes us on a personal quest of the author, crossing boundaries between documentary and fiction. The need to represent the inner world, the immaterial, the memory, the past, the fantasy, becomes a priority. Many documentaries and essay films use mechanisms related to “memory” and “dream” as a way of portraying this inner subjective world.

In the case of *The Wolf's Lair*, the essay form was clearly an approach that built itself into the film and research. The subject matter, a family story with so many truths to it, told through dreams and memories and experiments, which would lead to no conclusion, could only find coherence within an open-texture essayistic approach. This was not a decision in itself; it was imposed almost in an unconscious way by the very nature of my research. “The untruth in which the essay knowingly entangles itself is the element of its truth...”⁶⁸ Adorno reminds us.

Once it was clear that an essayistic approach was the most organic for the film, I followed a very careful construction, a detailed puzzle, which determined both the shooting and the editing stage. If the beginning of the film involves us in the atmosphere of a thriller, or something mysterious, which seems controlled by myself-the narrator, gradually the narrator is taken by

⁶⁷ The essayistic approach to film has always been present in cinema since its invention, even though not always acknowledged as such. In the late 1940s with the influence of the realist theories of Bazin, and all the new approaches to film which celebrated the “author” film, theorists began to defend an idea of cinematic subjectivity, even within documentary, giving space to a new film treatment, more experimental, more personal: the “Essay film”. In the 1950s and the 1960s, with the beginning of, Free Cinema in Britain, Direct cinema in the United States, and Cinema Verité in France, filmmakers felt the urge to question film language, and the mainstream American cinema that was considered too artificial and disconnected from “real” life. The challenge was to allow the spectator of fiction films to enter the characters’ subjectivity, or the director’s inner world, and sometimes dreams were a tool for this. *Otto e Mezzo* by Federico Fellini (1963); *The mirror* by Andrej Tarkovsky (1975) or *Wild Strawberries* (1957) by Ingmar Bergman are examples of this. Inspired by this new cinema closer to the spontaneity of life, and with the new technological advances (portable cameras, and sound equipment, synchronised sound and more sensitive film-stock) Documentary became the territory for experimentation. Documentary no longer aimed at “objectivity” with the mission to inform and teach but instead played a stronger role in exploring the subjectivity of its characters and narrators (“The Grey Gardens” (1975) Albert and David Maysles). Documentaries became concerned with giving voice to the characters and portraying their inner world. Memory, self-explorations, dreams and affects became not only the subject of many documentary films but also influenced their form, adopting a dream-like feel to them. Alain Resnais, “Night and Fog” (1955) is a good example of a documentary which treats memory in an oneiric way.

⁶⁸ Adorno, T.W. “The essay as form” in *New German Critique*, No. 32. Spring - Summer, 1984, p.152

different clues that disorientate the viewer. The film becomes a puzzle, and disorientation and fragmentation are necessary for the viewer to become immersed in the different layers of the film.

I believe my film resides in this fragmented territory between truth and untruth. By trying to raise questions and answer some of them, I have definitely unearthed new questions which were left unanswered in the film. Why was I never allowed in my aunt's house? Why did my aunt become the owner of the house? What happened to my uncle after leaving prison? Questions can go on indefinitely like the reflection of a mirror in another mirror.

This game of reflexions reminds me of Michel Foucault's analysis of Velasquez' painting *Las Meninas*. The painter is depicted pausing and thus appears from behind the canvas. The spectator occupies the same position as the painter's subject. The model and the spectator coincide here. The light illuminates only a mirror that seems to reveal what it represents, the figures who are the models whom the painter is depicting. These figures occupy that place for the painter, but the viewers of the painting also occupy this place. And yet the mirror of the painting cannot physically represent the image of these viewers. For Foucault this painting is after all a representation of the functions of representation, but it contains a paradox because it cannot represent the act of representing itself.

The Wolf's Lair is also a film about the representation of the invisible - of what is hidden - and the opacity of things towards "a truth" and the very act of trying to make these "truths" visible and transparent through the film itself.



Las Meninas by Diego Velasquez, 1656

Chapter III: Literary review, cinematic approaches and visual inspirations

In this chapter, I trace my journey into different sources of inspiration which enlightened or inspired my understanding of the relationship between film, memory, dreams and knowledge. Following my own free association and instinct, I connected artists, essayists and filmmakers, whose thought and practice brought light or new perspectives to what I was trying to do.

This sense of perambulation or “flanerie” which connects different spheres of thinkers and artists imposed itself naturally following a certain idea of free association and fragmentation which was already present in the structuring of the film and which deeply connect to the way our memory works. Foucault believed that by writing, we transform ourselves and that if we knew where we were going in our writing we wouldn’t write at all. He dreamt of the possibility of “a discontinuous writing something visible but imperceptible as writing. A fragment, chaos, an instrumental thought⁶⁹”. I also see this dissertation as somewhat instrumental, a toolbox for the viewer, made of fragments.

3.1. Dreams, memory and film

Dreams play an important role in my practice, mainly as tools for reflexion and a device to tell stories. Dreams have always had a strong connection to film, sometimes entering the plot, other times inspiring the surrealist filmmaker. Often they remain in the shadow of the film and the filmmaker’s gaze. In *The Wolf’s Lair*, they became the trigger of my quest (my mother’s hypnosis, my dreams).

⁶⁹ Pol-Droit, Roger *Michel Foucault , entretiens* Odile Jacob 2004, p. 110

Dreams have conventionally been exiled to the field of fiction, a fiction within a fiction. But lately, documentary and its quest to portray subjectivity has felt more and more the need to represent the immaterial, the memory, the past, the fantasy. Dreams and blocked memories can play a role in the representation of the inner life of the mind and “soul” of the dreamer. Because we are in the realm of total subjectivity, the boundaries between documentary and fiction become easily blurred. In chapters IV and V, I will analyse different scenes from *The Wolf's Lair* where this will become clearer.

This grey area becomes the ideal landscape for the representation of the immaterial, the psychic, the dreams and memories. I wanted to explore the possibility of using the representation of this unconscious world as a filmic approach to documentary and a source for documenting our minds and the way we perceive the world. How can dreams and blocked memories become a tool for documentary film language, how can they be interpreted in a media that claims to represent reality?

In non-fiction *first-person films*, dreams and memories can play an important part because they allow a multiplication of the self, adding different layers to the self-portrait. Sometimes they appear in a disguised form, sometimes they are only conveyed through words and yet, because of their uncensored nature, they are a fertile landscape for exploring subjectivity and experimentation with film language. The process by which the unconscious produces a dream, the dream-work, is analogous to the process by which the filmmaker creates metaphors, narratives and other symbolic forms. My practice will clarify this analogy already identified by Pasolini and others. In this way, the representation of dreams in film can also help question the mechanisms of representation carried out by the film. Because this process involves a performance or a “staging of subjectivity”, the representation of dreams plays a double role in this ethnography of the self.

I was interested in understanding how dream was defended by many authors as something that could generate knowledge in philosophical and sociological terms. Walter Benjamin, Henri Bergson, and G. Agamben, all spoke about the value of dreams and dreaming.

“What difference can there be between remembering our dreams and remembering the past?”, asks Jorge Luis Borges. In *Dream Kitsch*, Walter Benjamin writes:

This history of dreams remains to be written, and offering insight into it means to break by means of historical elucidation the superstitious bias towards nature. Dreams participate in History. Beyond the charms of the anecdotal landscape, dream statistics would advance into the wasteland of the battlefield. (...) The practical and useful consciousness of the present” is a block to the richer functioning of memory. (...) When memory ceases to merely confirm or adjust a perception and instead opens up a reverberating process of “endosmosis” of remaking an object of perception, of creating something new.⁷⁰

For example in Chinese history and philosophy there are documents that tell us the Kings had a specific dream and describe this same dream. Dreams were therefore accorded a historical value, in the sense that they were told (orally reproduced) as a way of finding clues for contemporary History.

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For Lucy C. Daniels, dream analysis can help solve creative blocks: “Dreams function as transitional objects which permit the witnessing of unconscious aspects of our lives that we could not tolerate awake. And by continually providing evidence of our current psychological landscape, they give us information and the courage to advance both consciously and unconsciously”⁷². According to Ernest Hartmann, REM sleep improves learning and the memory process⁷³. For Freud, dream is a way of connecting past, and present with a view of the future⁷⁴, and this is similar with memory. Hartmann argues that in order to understand dreams and their importance, we must first of all accept the importance of metaphor in our lives and in the

⁷⁰ Miller, T. “From city-dreams to the dreaming collective – Walter Benjamin’s political dream interpretation”. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*. Vol 22, no.6, 1996, pp.87-111.

⁷¹ Caillouis, Roger, *Puissances du rêve* (Le Club Français du Livre, 1962) – Le rêve du Doc de Tsin, p. 31

⁷² *Dreams 1900-2000 Science, Art and the Unconscious Mind* Edited by Lynn Gamwell Cornell University Press, 2000

⁷³ Hartmann, Ernest, *Outline for a Theory on the Nature and Functions of Dreaming*, 1996.

⁷⁴ *Dreams 1900-2000 Science, Art and the Unconscious Mind* Edited by Lynn Gamwell Cornell University Press, 2000

structure of our minds. As we move from a waking to a dreaming state, our mental process becomes increasingly metaphoric. The metaphor is like an overlap of representations by way of concepts, ideas and memories, which are stored in our mind. “The broader connections made in dreaming sometimes allow us easier or better access to what is going on outside our consciousness”⁷⁵. Dreaming is acknowledged as a better way of making connections than being awake, and therefore a valuable source to better understand the world around us, and to better transform it into art.

I believe it is also important to understand how dreams have been strongly connected to film since the invention of cinema and how filmmaking shares similar mechanisms to dream working. When cinema was invented, it had to struggle to become recognized as an art form, overcoming the idea that it was simply a technique. Filmmakers were immediately drawn by its capacity to manipulate reality and transform it. Dreams became obviously a source of inspiration. Dreams were present in all early Cinema, especially with Méliès, and later with the avant-garde movement. Sometimes dreams were part of the plot, showing the character falling asleep, allowing the spectator to be fully aware that she/he was entering a sub-plot within the plot (ex: Buster Keaton’s *Sherlock Holmes Jr*, 1924), or the famous *traum films*, films where the dream only becomes explicit at the end of the film (ex: *The Woman in The Window*, by Fritz Lang (1944)). In other cases, the entire filmic experience could be described as an oneiric journey. This is the case with many surrealistic films and avant-garde films, which adopted Freud’s and especially Jung’s theories to legitimise their cinematic approach.

In one way or another, dreams have been conventionally part of the territory of fiction. Even if, as in some documentaries of the 1920s influenced by poetic impressionism, modernists seemed to transform reality according to the image of their dreams. Examples of this are *Rien que les heures* (1926) by Alberto Calvancanti or *À propos de nice* (1930) by Jean Vigo.

In Hollywood narrative cinema, dreams help build characters, create suspense, give clues for the narrative, and their role is very much related to the way the film implicates the spectator in this inner fiction.

⁷⁵ Hartmann, Ernest, *Outline for a Theory on the Nature and Functions of Dreaming*, 1996.

The fact that Cinema and Psychoanalysis were invented more or less at the same time enhanced this dialectic approach between film-work and dream work.

This analogy between film and dream has been researched by many authors, especially through the psychoanalytic approach to dreams based on Freud's theory in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and later with Jung and Lacan. Christian Metz⁷⁶ argued that both dream and film were concerned with the symbolic and latent sense of the images.

Edgar Morin in *L'Homme Imaginaire*⁷⁷ argues that both involve a great level of subjectivity. There have also been many comparisons between dream-work and the filmmaker's work and between dream-work and the film-spectator's work. Jung, for example, argues that dreams develop according to an authentic dramatic structure.⁷⁸ He says characters in dreams can be compared to actors, or ultimately the dreamer plays all the roles from the director to the actor. Once awake the dreamer becomes the editor.

In his seminal article "The Cinema of poetry" Pasolini discusses what can be a new language for film, which is closer to poetry than prose. He writes:

*The cinema author has no dictionary but infinite possibilities. He does not take his signs, his image-signs, from some drawer or from some bag, but from chaos, where an automatic or oneiric communication is only found in the state of possibility, of shadow.*⁷⁹

Pasolini wrote that people could read films and their latent meanings, because they were used to reading dreams. (...) All dreams are a series of image-signs which have all the characteristics of the cinematic sequence: close-ups, long-shots, etc...He believed that the deep artistic nature of cinema, its expressive force, lay in the power to embody the dream, and herein lay, according to him, its "essentially metaphorical character.

⁷⁶ Metz, Christian, "Le Cinema: langue ou langage", *Communications*, 4, 1964, p. 52-90

⁷⁷ Morin, Edgar "Le Cinéma et l'Homme Imaginaire" 1958 Les Editions de Minuit.

⁷⁸ Jung, Carl Gustav "On the nature of Dreams" in *The collected works of C.J. Jung*, 1977, Routledge.

⁷⁹ Pasolini, Pier Paolo 'Il cinema di poesia' (1965), En. trans.: 'The Cinema of Poetry', in Bill Nichols (ed.), *Movies and Methods* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 542-558.

“...Linguistic archetypes of image-signs are the images of memory and dream” this was how a spectator read and interpreted cinema. Pasolini concludes that:

“The use of the “free indirect subjective” in the cinema of poetry is only a pretext enabling the author to speak indirectly – through some narrative alibi – in the first person; thus the language used for the interior monologs of the character-pretexts is the language of a “first person” who sees the world according to an essentially irrational inspiration and who, to express himself, must therefore have recourse to the most brilliant means of expression in the “language of poetry.”

Raymond Bellour introduces the notion of “blocage Symbolique”⁸⁰ referring to the content of films that is not perceived immediately as the hidden or disguised content. He also compares the mechanism of oblivion in dream to the oblivion in film. Laura Rascaroli refers to the fragmented nature of film when we analyse it subsequent to the experience of watching the film, and compares it to the analysts report about the patients’ dreams.

The interpretation of the dream is carried out on the patient’s report of a memory of the dream or even worse on the notes of the narration that the analyst took. When we analyse a film we are not confronted with the same text that we saw in the cinema (...) but with a series of episodes, sequences, images, codes and figures, which we arbitrarily select, group and replay various times, sometimes in slow motion.⁸¹

But sometimes there are images we cannot recall, images we thought we saw but can no longer see and images we transform into something different.

Nearly all the bibliography, which deals with the relationship or the analysis of dreams in films, has restricted itself to fiction film and never to documentary. Even when focusing on the similarities between what happens during dream working and what happens during filmmaking or film watching,

⁸⁰ Bellour, Raymond. "Le blocage symbolique." *Communications* 23, 1975 p. 235-350. (Special issue on Cinema and Psychoanalysis.)

⁸¹ Rascaroli, Laura. “Like a dream: A critical History of the Oneiric Metaphor in Film Theory”, in *Kinema* 18, 2002

the examples quoted always belong to fiction films⁸². And yet the analogy between dream working and filmmaking or film watching can be applied to documentary.

With documentary and its contract with the audience, dream has been neglected and ignored. “This desire to dream, to provoke imagination, seems to lead the documentary away from the realm of history and truth into the realm of art and artifice. How are we to judge historical documentaries if they call themselves dream?”⁸³

The analogy between the film process and the dream process is interesting to me in the sense that it acknowledges a hidden subconscious side to films and spectatorship, and therefore it can help me explore the value of the representation of dreams in documentary as a valuable source to better understand our minds and experiences. The dream metaphor, as Laura Rascaroli calls it, points strongly to the idea that film is the ideal media to represent dream, based on the assumption that dreams are visual and pictorial rather than verbal⁸⁴, and therefore film can be a door onto the understanding of our dreams.

I also realised that memory and dream were deeply connected within filmmaking, and that my journey into dreams within documentary had to acknowledge the role of memory as a tool of discovery. I am not comparing film to memory or photographs to memory despite the fact they both project images in our brain. With regard to a mechanical reproduced image, time works in a completely different way from memory. Film and photograph fix time, something which the brain cannot do simply because we are moving and changing all the time. Memory, on the other hand, fixes or preserves meaning and reflexion. We can argue images might be able to do the same, we just can't prove they do or don't because reasoning needs time and photographs don't have time. Conversely, film happens in time, and we can manipulate its time in

⁸² *Dreams 1900-2000 Science, Art and the Unconscious Mind* Edited by Lynn Gamwell Cornell University Press, 2000

⁸³ Godmilow, Jill “Far from Finished: Deconstructing the Documentary, An Interview by Brooke Jacobson,” in *Reimagining America: The Arts of Social Change*, ed. Mark O'Brien and Craig Little Philadelphia, 1990, p. 181.

⁸⁴ *Dreams 1900-2000 Science, Art and the Unconscious Mind* Edited by Lynn Gamwell Cornell University Press, 2000

search of meaning and understanding. Still, what is important to me is the dialogue that memory and images have with each other. Memory can bring meaning to images and, similarly, images can unearth new memory.

I therefore became more and more interested in this relationship between images (cinema/photography) and psychoanalysis, especially in the interplay between them. If, on the one hand, psychoanalysis and the search for the unconscious was inspiring cinematic language, on the other hand it seemed clear to me how images were also inspiring peoples' dreams and hidden memories.

I became drawn to the essay form in documentary film because this was the "genre" that went further in the exploration of this dialogue. It seemed to me that documentary and especially essay film could be a privileged territory for exploring more than just the value of dreams and memory as a tool to reflect on the world and reality. The whole process of dream-working and secondary revision could become a valuable grid and methodology for a more poetic filmmaking, creating a dialogue between a more tangible, physical reality and an intangible, invisible dimension.

3.2. Forgetting and remembering

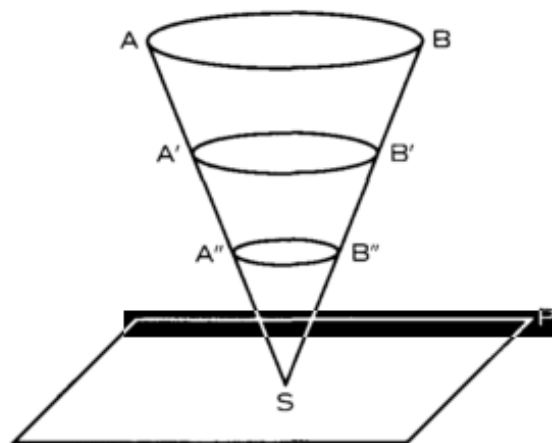
Paul Ricoeur mentions in his book *Memory, History and Forgetting* the notion of "reserve of forgetting" which has strong connections with this idea of finding the voice of the unconscious in our memory. By "reserve of forgetting" he means "the treasury of forgetting that I draw on when I have the pleasure of recalling what I once saw, heard, felt, learned, acquired". This happens when a neural trace disappears in opposition to a physical trace. The recalling produces an image, a memory-image, in much the same way the age of a tree is read by counting the concentric circles drawn on the tree stump.⁸⁵

Ricoeur tells us that if a memory returns, it is because it was forgotten. Gilles Deleuze better explains this apparent paradox stated by Ricoeur in his essay on Bergson, *Bergsonism*, Gilles Deleuze explains what he calls "The most

⁸⁵ Ricoeur, Paul, *Memory, History and Forgetting*, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p.417 and 426.

profound paradox of memory (...) the past is 'contemporaneous' with the present that it *has been*. If the past had to wait in order to be no longer (...) it could never become what it is, it would never be *that* past.(...) Not only does the past coexist with the present that has been but it is the whole, integral past; it is *all* our past, which coexists with each present”⁸⁶. This coexistence shares some similarities to Freud’s idea that the unconscious is timeless and always present, because the past once experienced is indestructible. For both Freud and Bergson, memory becomes a function of the future.

For Bergson, there are different planes of memory. The larger plane includes all of our past. If we represent memory as a cone, the segment AB that covers the basis of the cone corresponds, according to Bergson, to *the dreamed physical existence*, and the bottom of the cone S to *the acted physical existence*. These images stored up in the spontaneous memory, in opposition to an active memory, are dream-images which appear and disappear independently of our will and which hide all our past⁸⁷.



Memory cone by Henri Bergson

The famous metaphor of the cone used by Bergson represents this coexistence between past and present, and the role dreams play within the

⁸⁶ Ricoeur, Paul, *Memory, History and Forgetting*, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p.434

⁸⁷ This notion is similar to Walter Benjamin’s notion of an *involuntary memory*, a compromise between remembrance and forgetfulness. For Benjamin to believe in a memory without the forgetting would be like believing in an absolute truth, an impartial account of reality. (McCole, John. 1993. *Walter Benjamin and the antinomies of tradition*. Cornell University Press. 259)

memory. And he continues: “If almost the whole of our past is hidden from us because it is inhibited by the necessities of present action, it will find strength to cross the threshold of consciousness in all cases where we renounce the interests of effective action to replace ourselves, so to speak, in the life of dreams”⁸⁸

He concludes: “To call up the past in the form of an image, we must be able to withdraw ourselves from the action of the moment, we must have the power to value the useless, we must have the will to dream” (Bergson 1988,83). And speaking specifically about dreams, Bergson says, “Now the exaltation of the memory in certain dreams and in certain somnambulistic states is well known. Memories, which we believed abolished, then reappear with striking completeness; we live over again, in all their detail, forgotten scenes of childhood; we speak languages which we no longer even remember that we have learned.”⁸⁹

This notion of an unconscious memory related to dreams is used by Ricoeur to conclude in favour of the existence of a previous life that contains much more information than the experienced life which can only give us a partial perspective:

“We are free to accord the same sort of existence to memories that have not yet been brought to the light of consciousness through recollection as the existence we grant to the things around us when we are not perceiving them. (...) In this epitomised form, our previous physical life exists for us even more than the external world of which we never perceive more than a very small part, whereas on the contrary, we use the whole of our lived experience”⁹⁰

And coming back to his notion of “*reserve forgetting*” he ends by saying that forgetting in this sense refers to “the *unperceived* character of the perseverance of memories, their removal from the vigilance of consciousness”. In this reserve, forgetting implies a work of mourning and letting the unconscious reveal itself, letting dreams come to the surface as a way of making sense of the past through the present.

⁸⁸ Bergson, Henri (1988) Matter and Memory. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer, New York, Zone Books, 1988, p. 154.

⁸⁹ idem

⁹⁰ Ricoeur, Paul, *Memory, History and Forgetting*, University of Chicago Press, 2004, p.592

Both Bergson and Ricoeur value the power of dreams in this quest for knowledge and believe they are intimately connected to memory. Unlike Ricoeur and Bergson, Maurice Halbwachs believes dreams and memories have totally different sources:

*“It is not in memory but in the dream that the mind is most removed from society. If purely individual psychology looks for an area where consciousness is isolated and turned upon itself, it is nocturnal life, and only there, that it will most be found. (...) The dream is based only upon itself, whereas our recollections depend on those of all our fellows, and on the great frameworks of the members of our society”.*⁹¹

For Halbwachs this is the reason why dreams are most easily forgotten.

3.3 Dreams: The Mass-Observers and the database Dreams of the 1950s in the USA.

In the same way that we are influenced by the memories of others, and hence play our role in the social construction of collective memories, can our dreaming activity be shared and influenced unconsciously to the point of becoming part of a collective dreaming? This question is not an original one. All along the history of social sciences different attempts have been made at working and collecting dreams.

The sociological movement called “Mass Observation”, founded by Charles Madge, Humphrey Jennings and Tom Harrison in the late 1930s in the UK, was one of them.

Among many issues of everyday life, the report of Dreams was one of the goals of the Mass-observers. Through dreams, they believed they could obtain “a dominant image” (especially in times of war) and establish a bridge between individual consciousness and social imaginary. Surrealism played a role in the study led by the Mass-Observers, “through the poetic potential of everyday life;

⁹¹ Halbwachs, Maurice. *On collective Memory*. The University of Chicago Press., 1992, p.24.

secondly in the importance of coincidence as a way of ordering experience; finally in the perception of an urban uncanny.”⁹² Nevertheless “the partialness of the sample, the unsystematic nature of the collection effort, the absence (in most cases) of the dreamer’s associations with the dream images, the possible influence of the survey itself on what was dreamed or recorded, and the “irrational” figural form of the dreams themselves would together appear to render intractable to the historian’s methods”⁹³ It was hard to give a historical use for these dream reports. However this movement gave me many clues. It emphasized the idea that what really interested me, more even than the content of dreams, was the way people translate their dreams, and the way conscious thought acts upon them. It made me think that people take pleasure in telling their dreams, and an occasional dreamer quickly becomes a compulsive one: the narrative of a dream quickly stimulates the remembrance of other dreams. What is the meaning of this “socialization” of intimacy? It made me become really interested in the way some people use the sharing of dreams as a social skill while others say they don’t dream or can’t remember their dreams to create a wall in relation to the other. The non-said becomes as important as what is said. It made me reflect on the different kinds of silence my project would have to deal with.

Despite the difficulty inherent in extracting sociological knowledge from these surveys, this experience has been reproduced in other contexts. In the 1950s Bert Kaplan, an anthropologist, started a “database of dreams”. Among the methods for surveying subjectivity was the famous Rorschach inkblot test. Kaplan believed that “data sets culled from hundreds of workers – when put together en masse and miniaturised by machines into micro cards, made possible a vision of the whole universe of subjectivity independently of being analysed.” The idea was simply to collect and archive without any goal to analyse or draw any conclusions from this data. This lack of purpose was probably the reason why the database was jettisoned in the mid-sixties. But

⁹² Miller, Tyrus. (2001) “In the Blitz of dreams: Mass-Observation and the historical uses of Dream reports” in *Mass observation as poetic and Science* Scott McCracken (ed) New Formations Number 44 Autumn, 2001 p 15

⁹³ Miller, Tyrus. (2001) “In the Blitz of dreams: Mass-Observation and the historical uses of Dream reports” in *Mass observation as poetic and Science* Scott McCracken (ed) New Formations Number 44 Autumn, 2001 p 37-38

maybe the problem lay in the difficulty of collecting objectively and systematically something that is totally subjective. What are the rules for an objective transcription of a dream?

These questions are relevant to this project *The Wolf's Lair*, in the sense that here too, the representation of dreams can only be truthful to the dreamer and the dream itself if that representation is done assuming the first person. At the same time, the question of objectivity related to the archive is also questionable and is explored in this project. How objective and truthful is the archive?

One of the problems of tracing people's dreams in a context of dictatorship is that I realize people have repressed their dreams completely and this is something I am still finding, among younger generations. On the other hand, the very act of gathering personal details in a vast data archive can be seen as a nightmarish strategy to control and normalize our lives, even if Facebook and other social media are now the containers and deliverers of this data. This data is now being studied by many academics within social sciences. Still, I believe there is definitely a space for dreams in the new documentary, in a new history, as a portrait of a country. I think dreams have the power to convey simultaneously the individual and the universal.

Among film and other visual arts I was inspired by the work of other artists and filmmakers which expanded and opened doors in my journey from dreams to memory and film, from family archives to public archives and their role in the construction of our identity be it collective or individual. The following sub-chapters will better explain these inspirations.

3.4. *Santiago* by Joao Moreira Salles

Santiago by João Moreira Salles was an important case study, which later developed into a paper. In this documentary film, the director João Moreira Salles (JMS) embarks on a self-reflexive journey, revisiting and reinterpreting rushes of his butler Santiago he had filmed 13 years before. By revisiting the footage, JMS is questioning documentary and its aim to represent "reality" and giving real voice to the "other". How can documentary convey inner worlds (of the character Santiago, and of the director João) through memories and dreams?

How can the inner world of a character be revealed through the director's point of view? The film is dealing with different levels of memory, conscious and unconscious, as well as dream-memory. Ultimately, the film *Santiago* is a journey through the subconscious of both characters. In my paper *Ghosts in the House of Gavea*⁹⁴, I tried to examine this documentary from the point of view of its implicit content and how the director used first-person strategies and self-reflexivity to reveal his attempts to represent his background, contradictions in his filmmaking.

In the second instance of editing the film, JMS had to unlock a lot of censored material in order to make the film work. A lot of “accidents”⁹⁵ as João calls them, had to be revealed: body gestures (turning the camera off), mistakes, awkwardness (the way João insistently directs Santiago) and other failed actions. In one of the strongest scenes of the film, Santiago tries to tell João how he has always felt part of a cursed group. I believe he is referring to his hidden homosexuality. But the only thing we are left with is Santiago's voice over a dark screen. João has turned the camera off and completely dismissed Santiago's attempts to reveal an important part of his inner world. By including the black screen and Santiago's voice, João is now acknowledging his mistake. He tries to represent what he once was unable to perceive, but still we are left only with an intention, a whisper, and a secret. In a way this is the uncensored quality we find in dreams, which is also useful, when one revisits the rushes in a “secondary revision” approach.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Mourao, Catarina “Ghosts in the House of Gavea” in *Photography and Cinema : 50 years of Chris Marker's La Jetée* edited by Margarida Medeiros, Teresa Mendes Flores and Joana Cunha Leal. Cambridge scholars publishing 2015.

⁹⁵ See interview [with João Moreira Salles](http://scottishdocinstitute.wordpress.com/?s=Santiago) by Noemie Mendelle <http://scottishdocinstitute.wordpress.com/?s=Santiago>

⁹⁶ see appendice 3

3.5. *Tren de Sombras* by José Luis Guerin – fictional reinvention of archives

Tren de Sombras. El espectro de Le Thuit (1997) by Jose Luis Guerin is a fiction film, which tells us the story of the encounter between some home-movie footage shot between 1928 and 1930, and the disappearance of its author, an amateur cinephile, who vanished in the lake Le Thuit in France. The way Guerin uses archival footage (even if it was fictionalised) and the way he plays with family secrets revealed in the shadows of the archive stimulated me to think about and to use my own family archives in a more expressive-poetic way.

Tren de sombras begins by showing us the footage found by the director, and his process of restoring this footage. We can see different scenes of happy family life of the upper bourgeoisie, focusing on different characters of the family, including the servants.



Still grab from *Tren de Sombras*, 1997

In the second part of the film, Guerin finds in present time the location where these films were shot - a big house in the countryside. He then films

different empty rooms where he projects images of this found/fake footage on the walls creating an atmosphere of shadows and ghosts.

After this double reality, we watch again the footage only this time on a Steinbeck machine, where the images are slowed down, frozen, repeated, and reedited in a different order. This gesture upon the physical materiality of the footage ends up revealing a parallel story, something that was present in between the images but not fully visible: the secret love affair between the uncle and the servant. This is almost an archaeological gesture. One manipulates the images in order to discover more beneath them, in order to give a sense to them. The image of the family is fragmented and recomposed to reveal a new set of relationships. By isolating one frame and emphasizing another, Guerin makes us understand how the simple gesture of *mise en scène* is a creative gesture, a construction, and an artifice, which can take many different forms through the editing. This new reality of the images is obviously fictional or subjective, and makes us doubt the reality of the footage itself. Did Guerin really find this footage? Did he shoot it pretending it was archive?



Still grab from *Tren de Sombras*, 1997

Gradually, *Tren de Sombras* begins to reveal the process of making the film in a self-reflexive mode. And this is where it becomes interesting to me

because by doing so, Guerin is inventing a memory, an author, characters in order to represent the exact opposite of a fiction, a home-movie which pretends to be the least manipulative possible⁹⁷. But ultimately despite its fictional approach, like any film *Tren de Sombras* becomes a documentary of its own making.

I believe this same process took place in *The Wolf's Lair* when I decided to manipulate the images of the 9.5 mm film. Here, though, I was doing the opposite. I was using a documentary source to represent my mother's memory and in doing so, I invented my own memory of my mother's memory. As a departure from a nostalgic appropriation of the archive, this manipulation opens up new readings that reveal the double life of an image and the way it is perceived, which is not only reality but also fiction.

This is probably an interpretation for Walter Benjamin's concept of the "optical unconscious"⁹⁸ regarding the moving image. Walter Benjamin's interest in psychoanalysis gave origin to this expression, which has become so relevant in the past few years and has given the title to a book by Rosalind Krauss: «It is through the camera that we first discover the optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis». Benjamin recognizes that photography and cinema have the ability to record aspects of reality that do not fit within the natural optics, namely because they are too quick, small or disperse. Although the retina frequently receives these aspects, they are not transformed into information by the perceptive system. As he demonstrates, these technical images allow a better analysis of the performance of actors in a film, as it becomes «more easily isolated in its constituting elements». On the other hand, close-up and slow motion in cinema, and blow-up and the retarder in photography are not merely means to display known elements from reality, but mainly means to «bring to light entirely new structures of matter», he says⁹⁹.

⁹⁷ Siguenza Sarabia, Jose António in "Las formas de memoria", *Letras de Cine* n°6, 2002, p.58.

⁹⁸ Benjamin, *Walter Selected Writings vol IV 1938-1940*, Harvard University Press, 2003 p.266

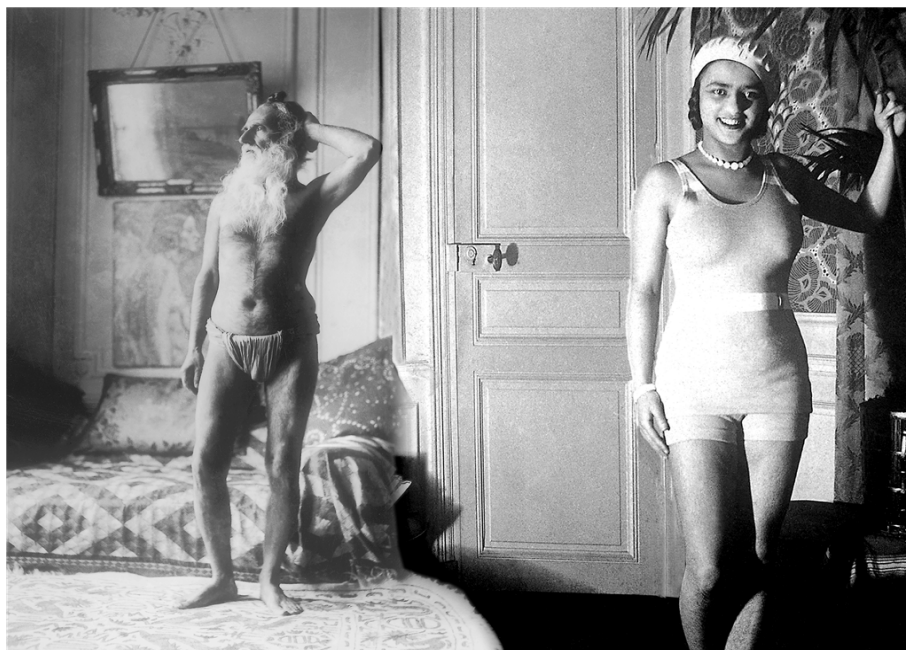
⁹⁹ Benjamin, *Walter Selected Writings vol IV 1938-1940*, Harvard University Press 2003 p 267

3.6. *Retake of Amrita* by Vivian Sundaram

Other works inspired my research. One such is the case of the work of Indian visual artist Vivian Sundaram in his project *Retake of Amrita* (2005). In this work Sundaram explores the photographic collection of his grandfather Umrao Singh Sher-Gil (1870-1954), re-appropriating it through digital photomontage. The main character of this collection is Amrita Sergill, Sundaram's aunt, who was also an artist. Amrita's death at 31 years old was a deep shock to the family, more so because it was surrounded by a family secret. When she got sick, her husband, a Hungarian doctor, insisted on treating her and she eventually died. Sundaram's re-appropriation of these photographs deals with this family secret and the blame related to it. On the one hand he mixes images belonging to different times and different generations through very subtle photomontages and, on the other he relates the surroundings of Amrita's time with her paintings, which dealt with female sexual and erotic identity. With this mixing of time and places, real people and pictorial representations, Sundaram gives his photographs a phantasmagorical effect, which despite its anachronism reproduces the way memory and its mechanisms of association work. Sundaram becomes haunted by the memory of his aunt the same way I became haunted by the memory of both my mother and grandfather.



Re-Take of Amrita series, 2001 by Vivan Sundaram



Re-Take of Amrita series, 2001 by Vivan Sundaram

In *The Wolf's Lair* I am also playing with these different temporalities. In the initial scene of the film, “the hypnosis scene”, I have created a montage of my mother at different ages, in different places, with different levels of consciousness - sleeping, hypnotised, pretending to be asleep - together with

images of her sister, my daughter, and the sound of my voice narrating her story in the third person and then in the first person (in a transferred narration similar to that of Chris Marker in his film *Sans soleil*). This same approach was used in the Christmas scene in *The Wolf's Lair*. Here my mother writes a text recalling her childhood memories. But what is interesting about this very visual and descriptive text is that despite being written in the past tense, we - the listener - feel it was written almost at the time it was experienced. This is probably due to its highly sensorial nature. Like Proust whose memories are provoked by the scent of the *madeleine*, my mother's text is concentrated on the smells connected to the experience of her missing father. Past becomes present and the archive footage I used, which was initially taken from Fascist propaganda of the 1940s, becomes dream-like.

In all of these works, archive images have been used as a way of reflecting on the materiality of the affection and the representations that sustain them, independently of their more or less fictional starting point.

The books by WG Sebald, namely *Austerlitz* and *The Rings of Saturn* also exerted an important influence in *The Wolf's Lair*, the film and the dissertation. The fact that my grandfather was planning to call one of his books *The Rings of Saturn* was just one more coincidence in the constant serendipity that permeates my research. In Sebald's literary work there is always a will to explore the past and at the same time an absolute awareness of its elusiveness. This quest is always undertaken in the first person and the narrator sometimes becomes confused with the author: Sebald uses his narrator as an alter ego whose search and quest is not very different from his own in his process of writing.

In Chapter V, I will develop this question of different temporalities within the same scene and the way they provoke each other, in a process of contamination between different generations' subjectivities and narratives through a somewhat unconscious communication.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Gregory Bateson and Paul Watklawick showed how madness was fabricated through family secrets and paradoxical communication ("double bind"). In Medeiros, Margarida "Re-working Family memories in ruined images: Snapshot, Identity and Telepathy in Vivian Sundaram's *Retake of Amrita*" in *Photography and Cinema*, Oxford books, 2015

Chapter IV: The subjective archive

In this chapter, I examine the role of our personal archives in the building of our identity by examining different scenes in the film, which correspond to different sources of archive I found during my research. Personal archives are also subjective archives in the sense that their ingredients depend on our perception of what matters to us independent of their physicality or “truth”. Through them, we create our narratives, our stories. These family stories have always been there, regardless of the invention of photography and film. Nevertheless, the pretence that photography and film are a more objective representation of reality, gives them a greater imprinting power in our quest for identity and because of this they have, over the years, become an obsession with different motivations. Italo Calvino in one of his short stories *The adventure of a photographer* reflects on this obsession:

The minute you start saying something “Ah how beautiful! We must photograph it!” You are already close to the view of the person who thinks that everything that is not photographed is lost, as if it had never existed, and that therefore, in order really to live, you must photograph as much as you can, and to photograph as much as you can you must either live in the most photographic way possible, or else consider photographable every moment of your life. The first course leads to stupidity; the second to madness.¹⁰¹

The stupidity Calvino refers to is the idea that one can capture everything. Family photo-albums that show only “snippets of happiness” prove exactly the opposite. Calvino carries on this reflexion in his story “The taste for the spontaneous, natural, lifelike snapshot kills spontaneity, drives away the present.”¹⁰² The album becomes a mask, a disguise, and an illusion. People are captured only when smiling and so they smile in order to be captured, in a true *mise en scène*. Reality is forced on the subject photographed in order to comply with the idea of a happy family. In the case of my mother’s family I wonder how conscious she was of its fiction.

¹⁰¹ Calvino, Italo, in *Los amores difíciles*, Tusquets, Barcelona, 1989, p 45

¹⁰² idem, p. 46

I believe that in my project, these subjective archives go beyond being a means to reach a “truth”, or of collecting useful information; they are a chance to tell stories and recreate fictions about ourselves that we definitely need to make sense of the world around us and of who we are. I am convinced that this is one of the richest ways we can avail ourselves of the imaginary of the past linked to family photo-albums and home-movies. This is because there is an inherent subjective quality to these archives from the moment they are conceived/shot to the moment they are shown and interpreted in the family context.

*As archival documents that inscribe aspects of the past, photographs give rise to certain bodily acts of looking and certain conventions of seeing and understanding that we have come to take for granted but that shape and seemingly re-embody, render material the past that we are seeking to understand and receive.*¹⁰³

And sight, Jill Bennett has argued, is deeply connected to *affective memory*: “images have the capacity to address the spectator’s own bodily memory; to touch the viewer who feels rather than simply sees the event, drawn into the image through a process of affective contagion.”¹⁰⁴

This phenomenology of photography also plays a fundamental role in the process of post memory. “These “not-memories” communicated in “flashes of imagery” and “broken refrains”, transmitted through “the language of the body”, are precisely the stuff of post memory”, adds Marianne Hirsch.

In his book *Time frames. The meaning of family pictures* Michael Lesy points to this idea referring to the unconscious associations we establish with photographs and especially with family photographs.

Pictures that are psychic tableaux, in which the flow of profane time has been stopped and in which a sacred interval of self-conscious revelation has been imposed by the cutting edge of the frame, the glare of the sun, or the flash of a strobe. Pictures like frozen dreams whose

¹⁰³ Bennett, Jill *Empathic Vision, Trauma, Affect and Contemporary Art*, Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 36

¹⁰⁴ idem

*manifest content may be understood at a glance but whose latent content is enmeshed in unconscious associations, cultural norms, art historical clichés and archetypes, vulgar and miraculous, fact and fiction.*¹⁰⁵

Snapshots are primarily psychological documents. And because they are personally and privately made images whose information is graphic, factual and allusive, they must first be deciphered as if they were dreams.

I am interested in the construction of reality people create around facts, as a way of placing themselves in relationships and building their identity. Can images, atmospheres and sounds unblock memories and dreams? Can this change the way we feel about someone, even when they are already dead?

At the end of Calvino's short novel *The adventure of a photographer*, the main character Antonio ends up falling into his own trap, photographing every single moment of his life. The narrator concludes: "photographing photographs was the only course that he had left – or, rather, the true course he had obscurely been seeking all the time."

This process of *mise en abyme* is, after all, almost inevitable in our re-appropriation of the archives. It's almost as if this is the only way we can grasp the apparent anonymity or irretrievability of what is kept in an archive.

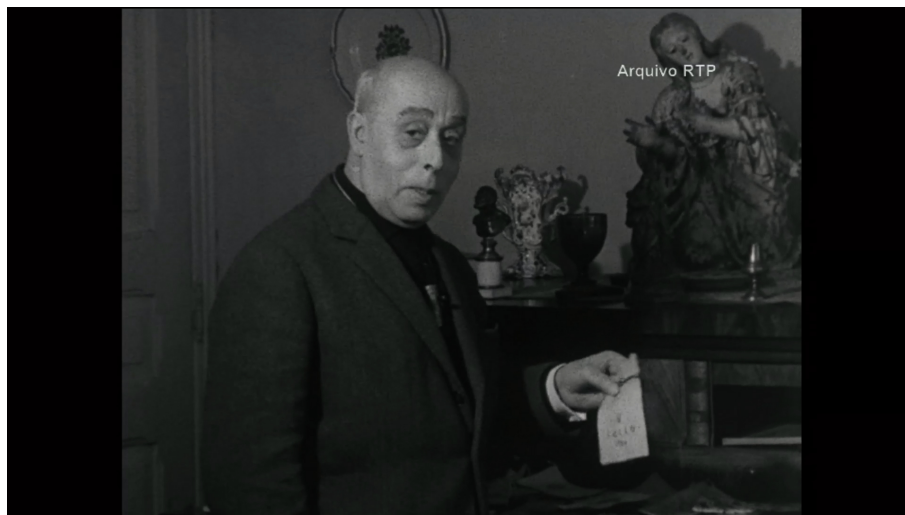
When we transfer this fictionalising impulse to the family context (a context we are supposed to have more knowledge about), we tend to move in two paradoxical ways. Either we crystallise family myths, keeping their *status quo* unchanged, or we question these myths and taboos, to find ourselves opening doors that have been shut for years.

In this chapter I will therefore attempt to anatomise some scenes of the film *The Wolf's Lair*. Anatomy seems too scientific a word for a film that addresses subjectivity, feelings, emotions, and the invisible world they live in. But I chose this word on purpose because the goal is exactly to dissect its materiality in order to reach new meanings. And for this I will begin by dissecting and elaborating on the different types of archives I have used to make this film. As I mentioned earlier, this text will attempt to make a "secondary revision" of the film, in much the same way we do with our dreams according to

¹⁰⁵ Lesy, Michael *Time Frames: The Meaning of Family Pictures* Pantheon Books, 1980, p.XIV

Freud. I proposed to use these chosen scenes as a way of rethinking and questioning the role of family archives in the construction of our identity, namely playing with the subjectivity with which they are perceived beyond their physical representation, and exploring our perception of film within our world of affects. In this process, we are inevitably transcending the realistic conventions of documentary film language.

4.1. The Collectors' Club: 16 mm film from 1967 found in the archive of RTP (Portuguese Public Television).



It was my grandmother (mother of my father), with whom I had a strong relationship, who mentioned this TV program. I must have been eight or nine years old, but it took thirty years for this memory to stir in me.

In my research that reflects on the film, the discovery of this footage is not the end of a journey but more a beginning. In the film, I am as interested in the archive as in the process of reminiscence. What could have triggered this memory?

At the beginning of my PhD research, in 2012, I passed by the street of my grandmother's apartment in a rundown neighbourhood of Lisbon and realized it was for sale. For some irrational reason, I decided I had to go in there one last time before the house was sold. As I was filming the empty walls, the abandoned backyard, the pruned-back plum tree, I remembered my afternoons after school chatting with my grandmother and then like a spell I remembered her once confiding a secret. She said: "Catarina, your grandfather the writer was on television one day and I'm so sorry you didn't hear what he wanted to tell you." I don't recall paying much attention to this story. I didn't know my grandfather; he died months after I was born. Why would he have had something to say to me? But nevertheless it's strange that I buried this bit of information for so long. After all, I have been working with film for the last twenty years, it's odd that I never came back to this memory and tried to find this piece of archive film.

Maybe this moment of reminiscence is what Walter Benjamin calls the "flash" of remembrance. He says that in order to articulate the past historically, one needs "to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger"¹⁰⁶. This moment could be one of many things: It could be the historical moment, forty years after the revolution, a moment when we can finally deal with the past, free of our parents' preconceptions; it could be the moment I myself am living, a moment of search and quest for my identity at the age of forty-five, or it might simply be the act of making images of a place where I spent my childhood.

What played the role of Proust's *madeleine* could be one of many things.

¹⁰⁶ Benjamin, Walter *Illuminations*, Thesis on the Philosophy of History edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books 1968, p. 255.

But unlike Proust I didn't stay in the past; I travelled to the past in order to fetch a key to unlock something of the past in the present time.

I met my grandfather for the first time in 2012 in the archives of Portuguese television. It was a 1967 program called *The Collectors' Club*. The film no longer exists in its original format, which would have been 16 mm and has been transferred to a Betacam tape. I was invited to sit in one of the viewing compartments of RTP (Portuguese Public Television) separated from the main open space production room by a leather curtain. I inserted the Betacam tape and entered my grandfather's living room.

A slow pan reveals a room full of objects and paintings. At the end of the pan we see an old man fiddling with something on a desk. The camera comes closer and the old man addresses the camera and shows the spectators his unexpected collection of pipe-pouches. At some point he says these bags could become great toys for his future granddaughters who could make dolls dresses out of them. He mentions an imaginary granddaughter named Catarina playing with these bags.

...and now it's time to put the pipe-pouches back in their place...and let's see what might be their destiny. They might become nests for mice, but I prefer to imagine that my grand-daughters or great-grand-daughters will invent new ways to play with them, and in this way might even long for a grandfather they have never met.

(time-code:00:19:26)

voice-over from *The Wolf's Lair*)

I believe this discovery was the turning point of my research, the moment when there was no going back. My grandfather was challenging me to answer him. But I could only answer him by making a film. This is the language that better allows me to travel in time.

Who is this man speaking to me from beyond the grave? How do I relate to this grandfather I never met? How do I fit the role of the imagined granddaughter? Will I find the pipe-pouches and what use will I give to them?

This might be the *MacGuffin*¹⁰⁷ of the film. I was completely mesmerised by his speech and when he spoke my name I literally got goose bumps all over my skin. It was as if he were speaking to me from the afterlife, inviting or pulling me to connect with him and discover his world. I wondered if I resembled him, despite feeling he was a stranger. Is biology that important?

I tried to imagine how this program was filmed. How much was this scripted? Did my grandfather write his speech beforehand?

When my grandfather talks to me it's a bit like Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo* or Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Holmes Jr.* It's as if I enter the screen or he jumps out and meets me. In these films, the surprise of the viewer who is trying to understand what is happening and the order of events is similar to my own surprise when viewing this program for the first time. I tried to pass on this feeling to my own film through editing, time, image and sound. This is the moment we understand the *matryoshka*¹⁰⁸ form of the film.

We only really understand the mystery of what happened to my grandfather at the end. This is when we fully understood how manipulated he was, how much he was a body controlled by the dictatorship which in the film takes many forms, family, mental illness, political repression.

In this same program, just before showing his collection, my grandfather's first words are about the difference between the media of TV/cinema and the media of the mind. He says that nothing compares to the capacity of the brain to create a world:

"I think the media TV has at its disposal are very poor, or even all the exterior media, if we compare them to the media of the mind", he says showing his collection of pipe-pouches. I understand him when he says the images created by our imagination are far more complex and richer than the mechanical reproduction of reality around him. He is enunciating the limitations of film in comparison to the screen of the human mind. Film cannot, for example, give the

¹⁰⁷ Alfred Hitchcock liked to call the mysterious object in a spy thriller that sets the whole chain of events into motion the *MacGuffin*. In his 1962 interview with François Truffaut, Hitchcock explains: "The main thing I've learned over the years is that the *MacGuffin* is nothing. I'm convinced of this, but I find it very difficult to prove it to others."

¹⁰⁸ A *matryoshka* also known as a Russian nesting doll, or Russian doll, refers to a set of wooden dolls of decreasing size placed one inside another.

audience the sense of smell and touch. How odd it is to listen to him say this when I am now dealing with this difficult task of representing through film, images of the mind such as dreams or once forgotten memories. And yet if it weren't for film I wouldn't be living this experience.

What served in place of the photograph, before the camera's invention? The expected answer is the engraving, the drawing, the painting. The more revealing answer might be: memory. What photographs do out there in space was previously done with reflection.¹⁰⁹

But in this phantasmagorical appearance of his I couldn't help but feel there was some hidden irony in his words and that he was addressing himself to me as a filmmaker, almost challenging me to prove to him how film could also create and represent inner worlds of the mind and spirit. I wonder what my grandfather would think of this research of mine. I wonder how he would connect to the film.

The archive of my grandfather and his pipe-pouches had a haunting effect on me. It was as if he had always been there for me to discover and only now was I open to establishing a relationship with him. Because he is dead, I could only establish a dialogue with my grandfather through dreams and filmmaking.

I see myself in Tony Downmunt's reflexions on the motivation of a filmmaker to address a story of an ancestor. I also wonder if there are "larger cultural forces behind my particular decision"¹¹⁰ and he quotes Robert Pogue Harrison: "Whether we are conscious of it or not we do the will of our ancestors: we submit to their dictates even when we rebel against them"¹¹¹ or even when we have never met them, I add. "We inherit their obsessions; assume their burdens; carry on their causes; and very often we die trying to vindicate their humiliations."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Berger, John "Uses of Photography" in *Selected Essays*, ed. Geoff Dyer, Bloomsbury Publishing 2001, p. 287

¹¹⁰ Downmunt, Tony *The Whited sepulchre*, 2009

¹¹¹ Harrison, Robert Pogue *The Dominion of the Dead* The University of Chicago, Press, 2003

¹¹² idem, preface.

I watched the TV program once again and I was bewitched by the way he talks to an invisible audience in such an engaging way... I thought to myself that after all he and my mother have so many things in common, even if she is reluctant to accept this. My mother is also a collector, working as a curator in a museum, she is also building worlds through static objects...and I am also trying to create worlds with film.

19 December 2012

(extract from research diary)

What was really going on in his head when this program was filmed? The pipe-pouches seem obviously a pretext or a metaphor for something, and the program, a channel to talk about his emotional frustrations, the lack of love and family and, ultimately, a tool to recover something lost even post-mortem. The footage is black and white in still shots with very little intercutting. The variation in scale of framing is almost minimal, from a chest shot to a close-up of his face, and the way my grandfather slowly and hesitantly chooses his words, transports me back to a past I never lived: an austere, sad and melancholic atmosphere. My grandfather's words are somewhat hypnotic, full of "pathos", in his emotion and "impotence", using the words of Didi-Huberman in his conference about emotions ("Quelle émotion! Quelle émotion?"¹¹³). But despite the hesitancy and the *pathos* in his sad, drawled words, there is something ghostly and simultaneously very alluring in the way my grandfather expresses his desire for something to happen in the future: as if he were almost sure I would listen to him one day and act upon his words.

The discovery of this archive became the driving element of the film; it triggered my journey into the film, and finding the collection my grandfather had fantasised about giving me, became its *leitmotiv*. Would I ever find this collection and discover a use for it? In order to do this I believed I had to enter his childhood house. This house now belongs to my aunt and both my mother and I have never visited since the two sisters lost touch forty years ago. It is the setting for my grandfather's most famous book: *The Wolf's Lair*.

I decided I wanted to travel with my grandfather into his world, and establish with him an impossible dialogue. I would take this film with me each

¹¹³ Didi-Huberman, Georges *Quelle émotion ! Quelle émotion?* Collections Les petites conférences, Bayard éd, 2013

time I travelled, I would show it to people (family, historians, researchers who have worked on his books) who met him but I would also project it over spaces, rooms and nature. At some point I would enter the archive. I would be sitting in some chair listening to what he had to tell me.

This journey would confront my findings about his imaginary world and my imaginary world in present time. My narration would be partly a letter, partly a diary of my research. He would be listening and watching me.

4.2. My mother's childhood family photo-album.





My encounter with my mother's family album was not an encounter with "the familiar", the homely or the comfort zone. On the contrary, what I experienced was an encounter with something alien to me, an encounter with strangeness. I wonder if this strangeness derives only from the fact that, despite genetics, I never really met these people? Maybe like Austerlitz (the main character in Sebald's novel, *Austerlitz*) this uneasiness came from the fact that these images were telling me I was the stranger, I was the outcast. There seemed to be a role reversal, as if it were the photographs that had the power to remember, or to remind me that I could never remember the "life" they represented, reminders of our "forgetfulness". Photographs are evidence but in the sense that they are subject to interpretation, they can point us away from themselves.

All I remember of Pilsen, where we stopped for some time, said Austerlitz, is that I went out on the platform to photograph the capital of a cast-iron column which had touched some chord of recognition in me. What made me uneasy at the sight of it (...) was the idea "that this cast-iron column, which with its scaly surface seemed almost to approach the nature of a living being, might remember me and was, if I may so put it, said Austerlitz, a witness to what I could no longer recollect for myself."¹¹⁴

I believe this feeling of uncanniness provoked by the album was very much related to the graphics of the photos themselves, together with the titles my mother inscribed beside them. I learnt very recently that it was my mother, at the age of eighteen who put together her own childhood album, something parents normally do for their children and themselves: this also enhanced this unsettling feeling. And last but not least, when I realized this happened at the very moment my mother finally reencounters her father again after eleven years of total separation, compels me to find new layers of meaning in this album. Curiously my mother never linked these two events.

The context in which this album was made opens up to new readings regarding its constructed nature. We are no longer flipping through a typical family album, where parents keep a record of family life, with some awareness

¹¹⁴ Sebald, W. G. *Austerlitz*, Vintage Books, 2002, p. 206

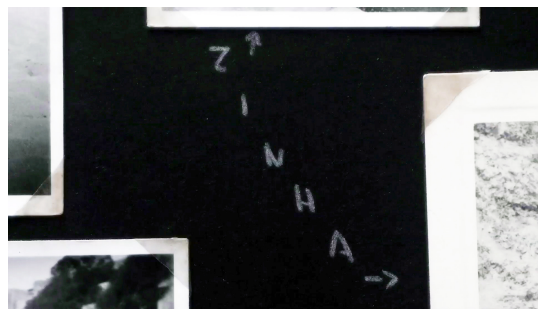
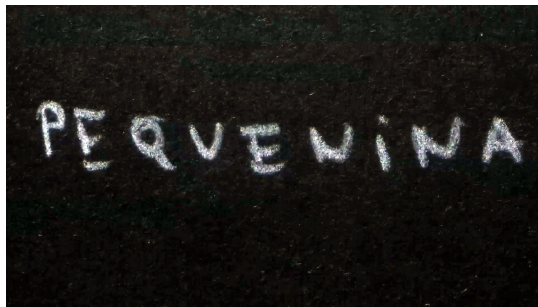
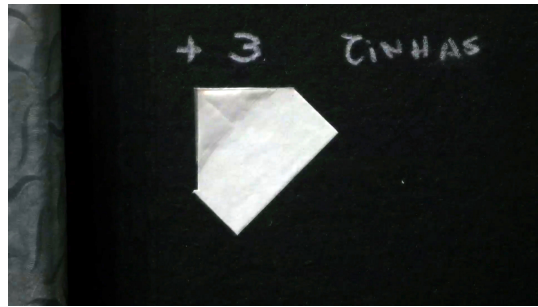
towards the enactment involved. In the majority of cases, the family album is compiled soon after the photos were taken, and the emotional detachment to the pictures is very little. In my mother's family album there is an enormous time-lapse between the moment the photos were taken and the moment they were organized in the album. There is also an inversion in the roles. My mother makes her album for herself with pictures she has not taken but, instead, with pictures taken by others of her.

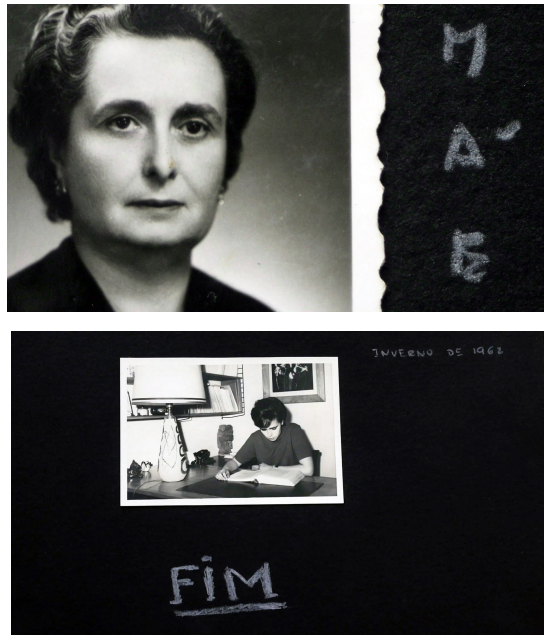
She decides to do this in a moment when her family is completely torn apart: her brother is in jail, her father has just come out of a mental hospital, and her depressed mother is apparently absent from her life.

The action of making this album seems almost like a self-therapy or an action to salvage an emotional bond with a family whose inner relationships have been destroyed. The album is clearly a fiction of what my mother wanted her family to be. And yet many of the photographs and the deeper memories attached to them reveal clearly that this is a farce. Photographs become a pretext to evoke memories that may have little or nothing to do with what is actually in the picture, setting the scene for recollection.

To make a statement of her "fantasy family", my mother decides to insert titles next to the photos to clearly identify each character. But still, the white minimal and systematic words on the black paper only seem to emphasize the melancholy and sadness of this family, and of a country through these photographs. According to John Berger "A radial system has to be constructed around the photograph, so that it may be seen in terms which are simultaneously personal, political, economic, dramatic, everyday and historic".¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Berger, John, *About looking*. Vintage International, 1991, pp. 52-71





Each word seems to create a memory, an affectivity, a little fiction the photos sort of betray (my voice-over in the film).

If the memory of our family and childhood always involves some fiction and lies, my mother's black and white album is a fiction of a fiction. And maybe it is this double fiction that makes the album truer to my mother. Let me explain this better:

Many of the photos inside the album are pictures taken by my grandfather on the very rare occasions when they were together, other are pictures taken in the street by street photographers. Even if they intend to show snippets of happiness, there is always something disquieting about some of them, a constant *trompe l'oeil* in others.

I identify three categories of pictures:

- Pictures where things are missing or concealed.
- Pictures with *trompe l'oeil* where things are pretending to be something else.
- Pictures of my mother, which seem very similar to each other.
- Pictures that are simply missing: empty spaces in the album.

This first category is well described by my mother in a scene where she shows pictures to her grandchildren. The most iconic of them all is the photo

where she is holding my grandfather's hand in a street in downtown Lisbon, a photograph taken by a street photographer. She must be four years old. The photo looks like any other photo but there is something missing in it, and our eyes are immediately attracted to this *punctum*: my mother is missing one leg.

This photograph...everybody always teased me about this photo. My sister and family would mock me calling me a peg-leg. Because I was photographed with one leg behind the other.

(voice-over from *The Wolf's Lair*).

At first, my mother tells me this was the only photograph she had together with her father, so it became simultaneously a reminder of something lost (her father) and something cruel (her sister mocking her). Later, I came across another photograph of them together, this time my mother must have been ten and, coincidentally or not, the same phenomenon happens: my mother is once again portrayed with one leg. If we look closely, we see the shadow of the photographer and my mother tells me it was her sister who took the picture in one of the few years they spent on holiday with their father. How conscious was my aunt of this composition?

There are also many other photographs of my mother taken by her father where parts of her body are missing, concealed by other parts of her body, buried in the sand. How staged was this, how conscious was my grandfather of the *cadaver exquis* he was composing? It's tempting to interpret these compositions as a metaphor for broken love and affection. My grandfather only saw my mother for brief moments.

The second category of pictures is all of *trompe l'oeil* images: Photos, which are pretending to be something else. I will transcribe my mother's words in the scene in the film:

This was during the two or three years I went to visit my father in Estarreja with my sister and we'd go for long walks. That was when I let my hair grow long, the only time in my life that I had long hair. As much as I wanted my hair to grow, it just wouldn't. Anyway, I loved this photograph because I had a ponytail, and here the reflection just behind the tree line looks like an extension of my ponytail. In this one I was pretending to be asleep but I wasn't really. I remember thinking they're taking my photograph and hearing them say: "Look Zinha's gone

to sleep” but I was wide-awake¹¹⁶. Like on several other occasions. I have some photos of the salt mounds in Aveiro that I’d try to trick my friends into thinking was snow, something I’d never seen.
(voice-over from *The Wolfs Lair*)

A fake ponytail, a leg you can’t see, a salt mound posing as snow, an amputated arm hidden in the sand, another leg without a mate. The choice of each photograph in the careful edit of my mother is not random. I believe that even though my mother wanted the album to reflect an apparently organic and functional family, the photos end up revealing fractures and absences that existed in the family, as well as the make-believe and *mise-en-scène*. How conscious was my mother of this, how conscious were the photographers (my grandfather; my aunt and others) of this?

I remember a photo of my sister and me where my sister seems to be sitting inside a fruit bowl. I used to tease her about this and she became really upset. It was a question of power. I felt I had power over my sister because I was older and less shy. It definitely marked our childhood.



There is a third category of images: pictures of my mother that seem very similar to each other and create an almost obsessive pattern and seem to shout “I am here, don’t forget me! Look at me!” The titles, *one Zinha*, *two Zinhas*, *three*

¹¹⁶ Here my mother is referring to another childhood memory, which in the film became “the revolver scene”. I will develop this further in Chapter V.

Zinhas, emphasize this idea. My mother at eighteen seems to be acting as her own mother, sharing the same lack of editorial criticism and distance parents have when they make their children's album. Parents are normally unable to choose the best photo and end up putting all of them, even when they are very similar to each other.

There is a final page, where my mother has displayed her "photo booth" pictures from the age of eight years old till the age of twenty. The last caption "20 years old" has an empty space beneath it, waiting for a new photo to come. I remember this page always struck me as being rather conceptual in its approach, there was care and preparation. And before I knew it was my mother who had compiled the album, I was always quite surprised by my grandmother's systematic and modern idea to juxtapose my mother's face at different ages, enhancing the idea of the passage of time all on one page. This reminded me of Nicholas Nixon's photographic project *The Brown Sisters*¹¹⁷.

Finally, in the album there are also many photos missing, despite the titles that announce them. Did they ever exist and had fallen out of the album? Or were they wished for photographs that my mother desired and never found? What does this mean and how did it affect the construction of my mother's identity?

Georges Didi-Huberman says that we are always confronted with a simultaneous feeling of truth and obscurity when we see a photograph¹¹⁸. This is true about my mother's family-album, the 9.5 family archive-film, but also about the TV program *The Collectors' Club*. They can tell us as much about our own needs and desires (as readers and spectators) as they can about the past world they presumably depict, argues Marianne Hirsch. "While authentication and projection can work against each other, the powerful tropes of familiarity can also, and sometimes problematically, obscure their distinction."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ In 1975, Nixon began his project, *The Brown Sisters* consisting of a single portrait of his wife, Bebe, and her three sisters each year, consistently posed in the same left to right order. As of 2014, there are forty portraits altogether. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_Nixon

¹¹⁸ Didi-Huberman, Georges, 2012 *Imagens apesar de tudo*, Imago, KKYM

¹¹⁹ Hirsch, Marianne *The Generation of Post memory*, *Poetics Today* 29:1, Spring 2008, p. 117

4.3 The 9.5 mm archive film. What story does it tell?

With my mother's help, I discovered in the house of some cousins two rolls of 9.5 mm film. In the first roll of the film, we are in 1940 at the height of Salazar's dictatorship. In it we see my maternal grandmother's clan, a bourgeois family perfectly at home with the regime. My mother wasn't yet born. My uncle Tomás would have been nine years old, and my aunt Mitó five. My grandfather is nowhere in the images. There is a shot of the whole family standing still facing the camera, their backs to a viewpoint. Beside them, there is a stone plaque inscribed with the word *Salazar* and the date *29-7-1933*. I believe the date reveals the day the dictator Salazar came to visit this place, but what is interesting to me is the care the filmmaker (one of my uncles) took to get the plaque in the shot.

My mother only appears in the second roll of film. She must be about five years old. My aunt is sixteen. My uncle no longer appears. At twenty years old, he was already part of the Communist party, living underground. Portugal was living the hardest times of Fascist Dictatorship.

My mother tells me this wasn't spoken about at home. All that was said was that he was "contra" (against the regime). Nobody knew where he was, until he was locked up for eight years by the state political police (PIDE) at the age of twenty-eight. He was only released in 1965. My mother saw him until she was five and then when she was fourteen she saw him in prison. They were complete strangers to each other.

In this second roll of film, there's a little enactment. My mother, her mother and some aunts are peacefully having a picnic on the ground in the middle of the woods. In the next shot my aunt and a cousin assault them with a fake gun, and force them to stand, arms in the air and leave the picnic site. Their goal is quite innocent, they just want to steal the food but my mother (aged three or four) seems to be frightened and puzzled by the whole scene. We feel she is having a hard time differentiating fiction from reality. Some shots later, we see her crouching on her knees and getting hold of the gun, while my aunt and cousin are seemingly distracted eating the picnic food. She points the

gun at them and in this way restores order. In the background, we see my grandmother directing her for the sake of the film inside the film. I feel this scene seems to anticipate, symbolically, strange events that would happen in the future.





I showed this film to my mother and decided to keep a record every time I showed her the film. When I first showed it to her, she said she had no memory of the film. “It’s incredible,” she said. “Time passing and rewinding so many years...I feel I am receding into my mother’s womb (...) I recognize all these people, but I recognize them through pictures because I don’t remember them like this, I never saw them as young....it’s strange....At this time I wasn’t born yet, I couldn’t have a memory of them...”. Is it true that we can only have a memory of what we have experienced in the flesh? Despite my mother’s rational conclusion, the fact is she did have a memory of those people as they appeared on the screen and the proof was that she could recognize them all. She could have remembered them from photographs and yet I have the feeling she would have remembered them anyway, despite the photographs. I believe this is a good example of post memory, which I explored in Chapter III in relation to my motivation in the film. Sixty years after the 9.5 mm film was shot, my mother felt she was meeting ghosts from her past. In fact, almost everyone who appears in the film was either dead, or had lost contact with her for many years.

The second time I showed this film to my mother, she said the only thing she remembered was a scene where she was walking towards the sea and someone was holding her hand. I asked her if she could remember who this

person was but she had no memory of the person holding her hand. In the 9.5 mm footage there is only one scene with a small girl running towards the sea. This girl is my aunt but she very much resembles my mother. My mother wasn't born yet. I wonder if this film on the beach ever existed and who was holding her hand. I wonder if my mother mistook herself for her sister, because of her need to have a memory of herself. But if this is true, then my mother did see this film when she was a child and had meanwhile blocked the memory of it. I'll never know. But still, it shows how memory is a constructed process that we activate in order to fill our needs. On another level, this story is very redolent of a mechanism of post memory: "These 'not memories' communicated in flashes of imagery" and "broken refrains", transmitted through "the language of the body," are precisely the stuff of *post memory*.¹²⁰



At the same time I think the confrontation between her post memory of the film and the actual film and then her reaction to the film can easily be compared with the whole dream process: the dream, the account of the dream and later the interpretation and narrative we build and the things we discover with our dreams. All are composed of fragmentary images, lacunae and fiction. The third time I showed it to her, I edited it basically slowing down the speed of some shots and editing out some scenes. She was persuaded it was a different film altogether. And after all, she was right. This did become another film.

Catherine Russell writes how "by means of montage (a technique that is neither strictly modern nor postmodern in this reading), the past is transformed from a fixed space of forgetting to a dynamic space of historical imagination. The

¹²⁰ Hirsch, Marianne *The Generation of Post memory*, *Poetics Today* 29:1, Spring 2008, p. 109

past is the allegorical form of the future, as it is in found-footage filmmaking” (idem: 253). Using different editing strategies such as repetitions, new juxtapositions, commentary, silence or a new sound track, the past takes on another form creating a new dialogue with the present.

In her book, *Home-movies and other necessary fictions*, Michelle Citron explores her childhood home-movies to extract from them their implicit meanings. For this, she confronted the home-movies with her own voice expressing what she felt as she was watching them (Michelle Citron was raped by her grandfather when she was a child): “Slowed down and repeated, the images reveal another film that had been obscured at the normal speed (...) It is in this shadow film of the home-movies that I believe my real family exists. (...) In presenting the image of an ideal selective past, home-movies announce what is absent.” she says. “They stand in for what is there and what is not there. In their ambiguity they both confess and hide.”¹²¹

Searching for his mother in a Nazi film he found, shot at the Terezien concentration camp, Austerlitz describes this same process: “set a little way back and close to the upper edge of the frame, the face of a young woman appears, barely emerging from the back shadows around it. (...) Around her neck, said Austerlitz, she is wearing a three-stringed and delicately draped necklace which scarcely stands out from her dark high-necked dress and there is I think a white flower in her hair. (...) and I gaze and gaze again at that face which seems to me both strange and familiar, said Austerlitz.”¹²². What Austerlitz sees or doesn’t see in these images is totally motivated by desire. I find myself wanting to find things in images in the same way and I’m therefore aware of how much this influences the way I interpret them. Michelle Citron adds:

The meaning of home images is in constant reflux. This is due to the fact that we provide a second track, either stories or memories, at the moment of the viewing, like the movement of a yo-yo. By doing so we fuse the present tense of viewing to the past tense of the recording. Time

¹²¹ Citron, Michelle *Home-movies and Other Necessary Fictions*, 1999, p. 19

¹²² Sebald, W. G. *Austerlitz*, Vintage Books, 2002, p.251

*folds back on itself. Two places on the time line of our life meet. In this moment of superimposition, a space is created from which insight can arise. This is the latent hope in all home-movies*¹²³.

I felt this in the way my mother mistook herself for her sister in the seaside scene, but also in the way she was commenting on the images, recalling traumatic stories that were out of the frame.

In my MA dissertation, *I spy with my little eye, something beginning withW. In search of Women in Portuguese fascist archive footage of the 30s and 40s*, I wanted to propose a way of looking at these images, of reflecting on the identity projected by women in these images taking into account the subjectivity of the viewer, the off-screen space, and the relation between these and film itself (the grain). I therefore decided to edit a thirty-minute sequence of images of women, taken from different real-life footage of the period. In this sequence, I also included some images of men. In these images, women were seen working in factories, schools, taking care of the children, serving food at dinner tables, posing for the camera, at receptions, greeting Salazar in special demonstrations, etc. I introduced each session to my viewers by explaining how I arrived at these images, and how compared to the footage of men in different situations, the footage of women represented a small percentage.

Each experience is one experience and although viewers sometimes share reactions, they many times diverge. As Vivian Sobchack puts it, these variables depend very much on the “Is’ (eyes) address”. Despite the artificiality in the portrayal of people in these images and the obvious choreography and manipulation, these images are authentic in the sense that they reveal quite transparently the ideological strategy of the regime. Thus, they have both a historical referentiality and an ideological authenticity. This perspective is only possible when looking at these images retrospectively. Ultimately, these images are more authentic today than they were at the time they were filmed. I believe this is also true in some way with these home-movies. Despite the fact that they were private films, not shown publicly and therefore less vulnerable to censorship, there is definitely a self-imposed censorship which both the person

¹²³ Citron, Michelle, *Home-movies and Other Necessary Fictions*, 1999. p. 25

filming and those being filmed were aware of. I am not talking of a self-imposed censorship because the development of home-movies was also controlled by the state police PIDE but of an unconscious set of rules, a form of power which makes individuals subjects as Michel Foucault would put it; a self-imposed silence that becomes a practice in view of normality.

For many people these images correspond to their imagining of the past and life during the fascist period. How much can the idea of historical authenticity that many viewers confer on these images, allow space for a new point of view on these images, a different way of reading them?

Avoiding a nostalgic perception of these images, contemporary cinema and visual arts explore these archive images (home-movie and photos) by addressing the unconscious and the quest for identity and history in the context of the present.

For example, in Susana Sousa Dias's *48*, the images of the still photographs despite their basic function as stereotypes due to their documental and archival status, are finally transformed by artistic interpretation into people with histories of political resistance.¹²⁴ These kinds of appropriations involve, in many cases, mechanisms of post memory, where photography and film have become privileged tools. Marianne Hirsh writes: "...the key role of photographic image – and of family photographs in particular – as a medium of post memory clarifies the connection between familial and affiliated post memory and the mechanisms by which public archives and institutions have been able to re-embodify and to re-individualize "cultural/archival" memory (...). The retrospective irony of every photograph, made more poignant if violent death separates its two presents, consists precisely in the simultaneity of this effort and the conscientiousness of its impossibility."¹²⁵ As Marianne Hirsh puts it, these images that mediate the screens of familiarity function in this way like a protective shield against trauma itself, diminishing harm but at the same time reinforcing the living connection between past and present. I believe the film's effect on my mother contains this double effect. It allowed my mother to

¹²⁴ Through the manipulation of archive images and oral testimony, *48* by Susana Sousa Dias reveals the violence and brutality exercised by the Political Police (PIDE) during the Portuguese Dictatorship (1926-1974).

¹²⁵ Hirsch, Marianne *The Generation of Post memory*, *Poetics Today* 29:1, Spring 2008

transform trauma into a story, it gave her space to verbalize her contradictions and, in some way, helped her make peace with her past.

As Merleau-Ponty said, film is "an expression of experience by experience (...) an art of which life is at one and the same time the subject and the object"¹²⁶. The consequence of this is that cinema returns the viewer to its own senses. In her book *Address of the eye*¹²⁷ Vivian Sobchack explores the idea that there are always two embodied acts of vision at work in the cinema, two embodied views of constituting the intelligibility and significance of the film experience. The film's vision and the spectator's do not conflate, but meet in the sharing of a world and "constitute an experience that is not only intrasubjectively dialectical, but also intrasubjectively dialogical."¹²⁸

This same dialogue happens all the more with home-movies. There is always something new that escapes control, and reveals a secret. Sometimes, it is simply the passing of time that gives the viewer of a next generation this feeling of discovering a secret, something silenced through the generations. Other times the *mise en scène* is troubled and becomes unbearable - revealing the wild spontaneity of the situation.

These displacements make us question the film's indexicality, as Olin writes in her article *Touching photographs: Roland Barthes's Mistaken Identification*: "The fact that something was in front of the camera matters; what that something was does not...What matters is displaced."¹²⁹ She concludes by suggesting that the relationship between these images and the viewer is influenced by the reality of the viewer's needs, desires and affects more than the authenticity and "truth" which loses focus with time and distance. I believe this displacement happened with my mother and myself. We both used the film in different ways according to what mattered to us.

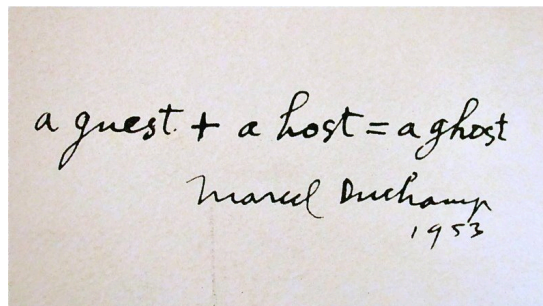
¹²⁶ Merleau-Ponty, M, quoted by Sobchack, Vivian in *The address of the eye* (Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 3

¹²⁷ Sobchack, Vivian "The address of the eye" (Princeton University Press, 1992)

¹²⁸ Idem, p. 24

¹²⁹ Olin, Margaret *Touching Photographs*, The University of Chicago press, 2012, p. 66

Chapter V: Ghosts – the haunted “reality” and the projection. When film allows the past to speak with the present.



In this chapter, I explore the analogy between film and phantasmagoria¹³⁰ as a way of allowing a dialogue between past and present, memory/dream and reflexion. The knowledge ghosts and film can bring us is somewhat similar to the knowledge dreams can give us. Both can help unblock information and memories within us.

Film, on the other hand, becomes a tool to make these spectres visible. Filmmaking allows the past to play with the present propelling memory and dream towards a different type of knowledge. I share Tom Gunning’s view,

¹³⁰ Phantasmagoria (also fantasmagorie, fantasmagoria) was a form of theatre, which used a modified magic lantern to project frightening images such as skeletons, demons, and ghosts onto walls, smoke, or semi-transparent screens, frequently using rear projection. The projector was mobile, allowing the projected image to move and change size on the screen, and multiple projecting devices allowed for quick switching of different images. Invented in France by a Belgian physicist in the late 18th century, it gained popularity through most of Europe (especially England) throughout the 19th century. One uses this term for **any optical** illusions produced chiefly by means of the magic lantern but also for a shifting series or a succession of phantasms or imaginary figures, as seen in a dream or fevered condition, as called up by the imagination, or as created by literary description.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phantasmagoria>

explained in his article *What's the point of an Index? Or faking photographs* when he writes:

*I am not sure that the indexical explanation fully accounts for our fascination with the photographic image, its sense of perceptual richness and nearly infinite detail that strikes us as somehow more direct than other forms of representation. Confronted with a photograph, I do not so much make a judgement based on my knowledge of its means of production as I immediately inhabit its image and recognize it, even if the recognition involves the playful discovery that this world is impossible.*¹³¹

I will develop this idea of inhabiting an image in spite of its impossibility by analysing eight different scenes of the film.

¹³¹ Gunning, Tom *What's the point of an Index? Or faking photographs?* [*Nordicom Review* 1-2/2004](#) p.45

5.1 My daughter's dream followed by my mother's hypnosis

The opening of the film is composed of two scenes: the very opening scene is a one shot scene of my daughter confiding in me a dream she had when she was six years old when her brother was born. Francisca, my daughter is 12 years old in this scene and her remembrance of the dream together with her interpretation of the dream is clearly a narrative she has built years after. It is a secondary revision of her dream, enhanced by the camera (me) who clearly expects something from her. Francisca is lying down on the grass, this is how I caught her with no preparation. The comparison to the psychoanalyst's couch is possible.



-Dreams I can remember?

I remember when Lourenço was little, I dreamt I was looking after him because you'd both gone to the canteen... when Lourenço was just born.

-At the maternity hospital?

-Yes.

-And you'd gone to the canteen for something to eat, you were hungry, and I stayed to look after him. I was cuddling him like this...I was holding him and suddenly he got really small. He shrank...he was like this and then like this.

I was really worried... then I hid him under a pillow and I slept on top of him.

-But that was worse. You could have suffocated him.

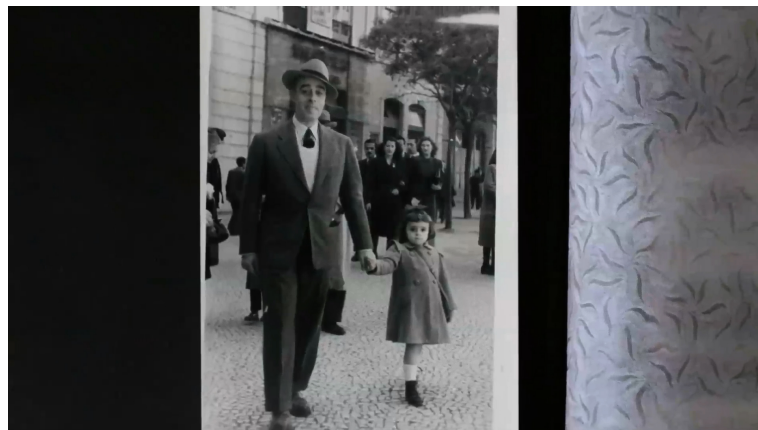
-I don't know...he turned into a doll.

I think it must have been worrying about being his big sister and having to take care of him.

(time-code: 00:00:13)

From this scene we enter the next scene where I describe my mother's remembrance of her hypnosis. This was a consequence of showing her the 9.5 mm home-movie she had never seen before. In one of these sessions, she told me a story I didn't know and reveals to me that she was hypnotised into a kind of soul regression into the past. The whole episode kept resonating with me and I couldn't somehow dissociate it from the photographs and other archive images I had been discovering. I filmed her many times telling me this experience, but in the film I thought it was stronger to use my voice telling the story she told me, instead of having her voice in direct discourse. This transference made sense because after all, this is a film about stories that pass on from generation to generation. By representing my mother's dream, I am speaking on behalf of my mother and yet I am trying to recreate her experience of hypnotism.

The image my mother describes plunges us directly into the one-legged-girl photograph that my mother claimed for a long time was the only photograph she kept of her father with her.



This photograph symbolises two absences: her father and her leg. It consequently raises two kinds of feelings: nostalgia and at the same time humiliation because she was always mocked by her brother and sister for being a peg leg. Each time my mother describes this, she is immediately taken back to other scenes of humiliation:

My brother would torture me at my grandmother's house. He would force me to lie down on one end of the carpet and then he would roll the carpet around me and I would stay there stuck, rolled in the carpet for hours. I could hardly breathe, I would scream and cry but he would leave me there, watching me suffer. My sister enjoyed convincing me that I was adopted, and that I was named after Rosinha, the woman who sold fish in the street and who was supposed to be my real mother.
(this dialogue belongs to the rushes of *The Wolf's Lair*)

I decided the only way I could show this hypnosis or dream would be to use elements of the family archive to build her experience, in a kind of a jig-saw puzzle.

I find it intriguing to think that if it weren't for my mother's hypnosis she wouldn't have connected to her father, and if it weren't for the TV Archive, *The Collectors' Club*, I wouldn't have connected to my grandfather. In both, the imagery is strong and the simulacrum or phantasmagoria plays an important role in this connection. By representing these two moments cinematographically, I allowed my mother, myself and the viewer a secondary revision of these two moments, creating a renewed connection to her father, my grandfather, this time integrated in a more trans-generational context.

"The digitisation of analogical material provides us with a sort of ghost gallery, which is established through its apparent immateriality, and at the same time, through its ability to reinforce the way photography reveals the flow of time."¹³² In here lies its uncanniness, because photography can recall the ghosts of the past and yet this phenomenon becomes normal and diluted in the everyday life of the present.

"Ghosts are simultaneously comic and terrifying" writes Siegfried Kracauer and he continues describing photography: "It represents what is utterly past and yet this refuse was once the present. (...) Now the image wanders ghostlike through the present like the lady of the haunted castle. (...) In a photograph, a person's history is buried as if under a layer of snow."¹³³

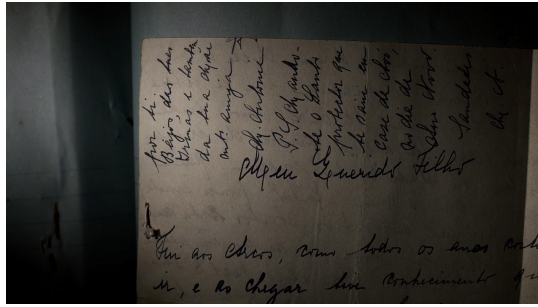
¹³² Medeiros, Margarida "Re-working Family memories in ruined images: Snapshot, Identity and Telepathy in Vivian Sundaram's *Retake of Amrita*" in *Photography and Cinema*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015

¹³³ Kracauer, Siegfried "Photography" in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 19, N.3 (Spring 1993) pp 421-436

I am using the word *ghost* here following a psychoanalytic concept taken from Freud and Jacques Lacan, which refers to *ghosts* and *phantasm* as a hallucinatory realization of desire, opposing imagination to reality and perception.

Both scenes, my daughter's dream and my mother's hypnosis, share an oneiric nature. In both there is nothing tangible or physical, there are only mental images and yet in order to represent them more deeply or meaningfully, I had to hold on to something tangible which at the same time connected deeply to the world of dream and affect. I wanted to use completely different formal strategies for my daughter's dream and my mother's hypnosis.

At the same time as I was collecting these stories, which could be true or false, factual or fictional, I was using an ethnographic methodology to create physical evidence for my subjective archive: family albums, family films, letters, strange objects, keys, labels, but also police archives; psychiatric hospital records, police photos, etc. All of these provided physical evidence or clues for hidden stories of the past.



5.2 A film inside a film: My grandfather's revolver

One of the 9.5 mm film rolls has a dream-like structure because within the film there is a small fiction, where characters play metaphoric roles, archetypes: the thieves, the victims, the saviour, good and evil: a film within a film, like a dream within a film. I call it the picnic scene that I have already described in Chapter IV.

In this scene the “real” becomes performative, and the performance in its turn becomes real, in the sense that it preserves a dimension of intimacy. My mother's comments regarding this scene are a good example of this, in the sense that they reveal a journey in time, an intimacy that hides in the shadow of the images:

It all seems like something staged to frighten me. They did many things to frighten me. They would dress up as ghosts and show up on the rooftops to scare me. I was a very scared kid. Look at my face! They must be telling me terrible stories. They're saying: We have to run!

When the familiar becomes performative, it can easily become alienating and take us to unknown places, where we no longer feel at home. This is probably due to the fact that we sense there is another story in amongst the images. One that questions the official, latent story.

The second time I showed my mother this film footage, she told me a new story she insisted I knew already. She said one of the reasons she couldn't accept or forgive her father was because one night when she was in bed (she must have been nine or ten years old) she overheard a conversation between her mother and her aunt (was she awake or was she half asleep?). They were talking about her father, saying he was following his son (my uncle) with a gun and threatening to give him up to the police. This story seems like a dream and doesn't match a letter my uncle wrote to my grandfather when he was in prison. This letter shows their complicity and fatherly love; a letter full of nostalgia for childhood.

Meu querido Pai :
intenções mais louváveis - se fez o
da minha última carta correu sob a
de suprir a qualidade pela quantidade

I did some research into my uncle's criminal file in the national archive and found a document mentioning a gun, among thousands of pamphlets. I wondered: What if my grandfather gave my uncle a gun for protection? If he chased him that meant he knew where he was...

a) - uma pistola de marca "SAVAGE" de calibre 7,65 m/m, com o nº 112.365 com carregador e nove cartuchos de mesmo calibre e dois de calibre diferente;
b) - grande quantidade de documentos, "panfletos" de "partido comunista português" e de "organizações" subsidiárias e papéis soltos;
c) - várias folhas de papel, copiografadas, com inscrições de carácter subversivo que, uma vez recortadas, iriam constituir tarjetas idênticas àquelas que o "partido" usa divulgar e divulgou durante o período da campanha eleitoral para a Presidência da República que teve lugar no ano transacto;

Does memory work as an archive memory bank? Can it be stored and systemised like physical documents? Joseph Yerushahmi¹³⁴ argues against this idea because according to him if documents were memory we would have no need to retrieve them. But this position only serves to argue that documents are not memory but not the other way round. Still, it is clear that sometimes archive is at odds with memory and vice-versa. This small episode is illustrative.

By appropriating these images the way I do in the film and subjectifying them, I inevitably question their "realistic" dimension, and fiction becomes important in this process of imbuing these family images with a deeper sense. Antonio, the character in Calvino's short novel, lives through this same experience while photographing:

¹³⁴ Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim *Series Z: An archival Fantasy*, <http://www.psychomedia.it/jep/number3-4/yerushalmi.htm>

*It was like a dream, Antonio thought (...) like a dream when a presence coming from the depth of memory advances, is recognized, and then suddenly is transformed into something unexpected, something that even before the transformation is already frightening because there's no telling what it might be transformed into.*¹³⁵

I tried to expand visually on what archive footage and photographs showed us, in order to represent the outer frame, the concealed. In this process, I worked with the juxtaposition of dreamtime and awake time. I played with the interpretation of these archive images in association with documents given me by my mother or found by me. For example, the photo where my mother is seen with one leg is explained and interpreted. I have also found other strange photographs of my mother taken with my grandfather's Rolleiflex, where her arms and legs have been amputated. What does this mean and how did it affect the construction of my mother's identity?

The scene begins with a mysterious travelling through a tunnel with a flowing river (time-code: 00:54:01:18); the trajectory has been reversed as if we were travelling to the past. But this detail is only revealed when we see the wake created by the boat. This travelling dissolves to images of the picnic scene from the 9.5 mm archive with the re-enacted scene of the robbery at the picnic, the fake gun and my aunt disguised as the thief.

Many questions arise from this scene built from my mother's memory. What is true, what isn't? Was my mother asleep when she heard this story? What did she in fact overhear? What was actually said? Why would my grandfather do this? If he despised Salazar so much...How does this story help my grandmother in the event this was her fiction too? How did it help my mother? Ultimately, how did this constructed story shape the relationship between my mother and her father or, inversely, how much was this version of the story already a consequence of a broken relationship and in this way became its *leitmotiv*?

Finally, what am I trying to do in this constructed scene?

¹³⁵ Calvino, Italo, *Los amores difíciles*, Tusquets, Barcelona, 1989

By using the iconographic image of the revolver, by emphasizing some coincidences in the documents, and piecing them together, the toy revolver my aunt is holding in the archive film and the revolver mentioned in my uncle's prison file, am I not creating my own image of a good grandfather? And if so, why am I doing this? I am not an innocent bystander. This new puzzle questions my mother's narration, and in so doing changes her own view of this episode.

Being truly involved in the making of *The Wolf's Lair*, my mother experiences her own memory today in a different way. Even though she shields herself behind a somewhat pre-determined memory, she finally questions its veracity (time-code: 00'55'22'05).

But the fact that we experience our memories as peculiarly our own sets up a tension between the "personal" moment of memory and the social moment of making memory, or memorising; and indicates that the processes of making meaning and making memories are characterised by a certain fluidity. Meanings and memories may change with time, be mutually contradictory, may even be an occasion for, or an expression of, conflict.¹³⁶

When relating to home-movies we are always interlacing the present time (the moment the film is viewed) with the past (the moment the film was shot). Home-movies create therefore a new time-space. This idea becomes critical when we understand how these films involve us on a more unconscious level, and if we trust Freud's idea that the unconscious has no time, maybe we can risk saying that these home-movies take us into a dimension where time is felt in a different way. In the same way as Sundaram uses photo-montages, the way I am re-using and re-interpreting the archive reveals how much our identity is intertwined with family ghosts and memories. Maybe we can mourn these ghosts through an act of creativity and fiction.

As John Berger writes in his essay *On Photography*: "If we want to put a photograph back into the context of experience, social experience, social

¹³⁶ Kuhn, Annette *Family secrets – Acts of Memory and Imagination*, Verso 1995, p 14

memory, we have to respect the laws of memory”.¹³⁷ For Berger, the laws of memory imply a context, a given time and a narrative constructed with words, but like an image, memory works radially as opposed to linearly, as a cause and consequence of numerous events.

I had this feeling in the way my mother was commenting on the images, recalling traumatic stories that were out of the frame and which contrasted to the bucolic feeling of what was shown in the home-movie. The context provided by her own narrative in relation to an image allowed each memory to unfurl new memories.

My mother’s identity was built around managing the silence and the absence of love from her father, mother, brother and sister, or at least this is how she perceives it. Sometimes it seems I made this film to give voice to some of these silences: the silence of my mother towards my grandfather and her family, a silence which transcends the family itself and finds its roots in forty-eight years of fascist dictatorship (1926-1974), but also the silence of my grandfather towards her and myself. To work around silence is also to look at the facts from a completely different perspective and to give importance to what we construct around them as a way of finding our identity regarding others and ourselves.

In her book, “Home-movies and other necessary fictions” Michelle Citron recalls the importance of fiction to make sense of reality: “Fiction reframes the world, and in the shift leads us into hidden rooms of our interior lives, where inchoate truths linger. Fiction reveals truths – more sensed than known – that lie at the crossroads of self-story and biography.”¹³⁸

Did my mother need this fiction in order to accept her feeling of being abandoned by her father? If he was such a bad father - one who threatened his son with a gun - then it made sense that he didn’t care about her. I believe fiction helped my mother overcome her feeling of loss, or at least it helped her to disguise it. As Marianne Hirsch points out “To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one’s birth or

¹³⁷ Berger, John “Uses of Photography” in *Selected Essays*, ed. Geoff Dyer, Bloomsbury Publishing 2001, p 292.

¹³⁸ Citron, Michelle, *Home-movies and other necessary fictions*, 1999, p. 54

one's consciousness, is to risk having one's own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation".¹³⁹

Fiction also allowed me to have a dialogue with myself when writing about my mother and grandfather and through it connect with my grandfather. The challenge of the revolver scene was to represent cinematically how memory works and creates its fictions.

5.3 The dance scene followed by the song scene



The dance scene in the regional club where I find a cupboard named *Library Tomaz de Figueiredo* (the name of my grandfather) inscribed on it, is a scene of transition in the whole film (time-code: 00:56:14:16). Before this scene, the film travels mainly into the past with a somewhat oneiric dimension. The dance scene due to its formal nature, a four-minute shot of people dancing in a room, bounces us into another time dimension. We are clearly in present time but in a hypnotic kind of present which once again impels us to dream and wander. My grandfather's name written on the cupboard is a hidden ghost in the room, which we only realize at the end of the scene. In a certain sense it is a scene of awakening in Walter Benjamin's words "as it engages time in a way that pertains to our daily experience yet is not of that time"¹⁴⁰. Benjamin describes the moment of awakening as "identical to the "Now of recognisability"

¹³⁹ Hirsch, Marianne *The Generation of Post memory*, *Poetics Today* 29:1, Spring 2008, p. 107

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin, Walter "N: The theory of knowledge, Theory of Progress" in Benjamin: *Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, ed. Gary Smith, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 49.

in which things put on their true – surrealistic – face”¹⁴¹ Truth, for Benjamin is always partly hallucinatory and surreal. And I believe this dance scene shares a kind of surreal atmosphere.

Speaking about Chantal Akerman’s film *D’Est*, Alisa Lebow explores this idea and writes:

*Understanding Benjamin’s notion of the Now of recognisability is critical to unravelling the sense of time, history, and memory.(...) For Benjamin, the present time, history in the making, comes into the realm of “the Now” only as it relates to a prior era, the “Then” of a powerful imaginary field. It is always in an in-between time that truth emerges: “The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again” He adds: “The truth about history can be found only in the intervals: between sleep and wakefulness, between the present and the past, at a historical moment of a transition when the future’s uncertainty constitutes the only certainty.*¹⁴²

This moment of awakening is also true of the TV archive *The Collectors’ Club*. Watching my grandfather speak about an imaginary Catarina, speaking about a visionary future, I wonder if we are dealing with past or present. This in-betweenness gives the archive a ghostly feeling because like ghosts, its origin is in the past but it inscribes itself in the present. Once the past is no longer accessible to us, and the present indecipherable once removed from the past, we can only find truth, according to Benjamin, in the interstices. I believe dreams and involuntary memories are the landscapes for these interstices.

The dance scene is an interstitial moment and from then on actuality is more and more present in the film in its dialogue with the past.

The scene which follows the dance scene is propelled once again by an archive I found on TV. In this instance, we are in a studio where both my grandfather and a presenter are sitting down, smoking and in conversation. At the beginning of the program the presenter introduces the writer Tomaz de Figueiredo (my grandfather) to the audience.

¹⁴¹ idem.

¹⁴² Lebow, A. *First Person Jewish*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, p. 13



Appearing in published form at the age of 43, Tomaz de Figueiredo is calmly yet determinedly giving rise to a singular body of work.

Interested in theatre, poetry, short stories and novels, it is the novel that is best suited to his love of minutiae, digression, prolific use of words and studied discourse.

- I should go to the country, to live in my house there; that would be the way to write some more books. But things are somewhat complicated...so in the meantime, I'm here.

- Even so, fortunately, you have carried on writing.

- Oh, Dear Lord! In all humility, when I think how much I could have written and the little I did write... I could have written much more, so much more...But as I was about to say, every now and then I'd go to the Douro. To the house of a friend, Fausto José. Now that's where I took full advantage, because in the months I spend in Lisbon I learn nothing... unless from a book I read, I don't learn a thing from the Lisboners...

- Meanwhile your search for illiterate teachers continues...

- I go looking for my illiterate teachers. I've found some wonderful illiterate teachers in the couple who work for Fausto José - Diamantino and Sra. Lucília and even their daughters. I have now hit upon a method of working; I think that instead of writing a novel, I'll be able to dictate it into a tape recorder. So, I am going to gather a lot of material in the Douro and wherever I go. If you'd like to hear some, listen to Sra. Lucília Gomes from Aldeia de Cima, in a song about the grape harvest. Just a bit...

(time-code: 00:59:56)



Lucília and Teresa watch this archive scene in present time, almost forty-five years after it was shot. The passage between these two moments, the archive and the two women, is something I have developed previously in other films but which I use very specifically and not only as a formal strategy. I took this same approach in one of the final scenes of the film, when I show my mother the TV archive of my grandfather and his collection (see next paragraph). In the same way as the TV archive where my grandfather invokes my name, here my grandfather convokes Lucília, the woman on the left. It's almost like a session of spiritualism, the other way round. It is not the spirit of the past that is called by the present, but it is the present that is called by the past. I enjoyed this idea of turning temporal sequentiality upside down. This calling is so effective that it immediately transports Lucília and Teresa from the present to the past:

(time-code: 01:02:07)

*-Oh time, time that goes by and doesn't return!
-Do you see how charming your grandfather was? He was, wasn't he?
He was always very well turned out, very... and he was someone...
- But I didn't sing it all...-
-He spent a grape harvest here, because he was "handing over the branch"...
-"Handing over the branch"?
-Yes, for you to be singing...
-No! We're talking about the harvest...
- Oh mum, it was buzzing, everyone was happy. It was the end of the harvest.*

- I don't know whether it was the end of the harvest or what. I do know that at the end of the harvest he wanted to hear the song...

- He stayed here for the harvest...

- But it's not all recorded! Because then we sang like this...he showed half, and then:

*our bosses are sad
putting on a good face
this year was bad
God will give more next year"
it was like that...that was the end.*

- My mother's memory is better than mine...

*good evening, good cheer
we are leaving now
next year, God willing
we'll be back again here.*

- He didn't record the whole song! Or I didn't sing it all...he recorded just half..

- Oh mum, it's because he was at the harvest and because his recorder was always on, he heard and came down to the yard..

- But I didn't even have to sing! It was the women who had to! I was the housekeeper.

- But you were there...

- But the bitches asked me to sing!

- Don't curse!

- Don't worry. That's all right. Wait, is that on the recorder too!? Ahhh!

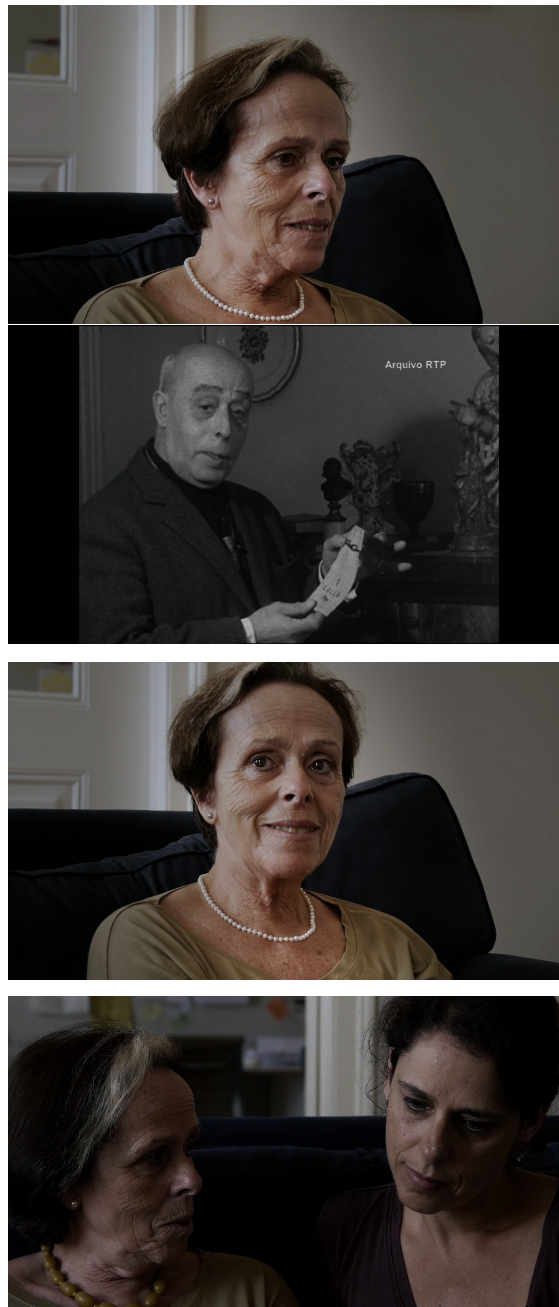
- Quite...

- Oh bugger. What now?

Lucília's biggest concern in this scene is that my grandfather hasn't recorded her singing the entire song. He has only captured a fragment. She wants to understand why this happened, what went wrong. This concern belongs to the past, the mistake was made in the past and yet through filmmaking she has the chance to rectify this past by re-enacting the scene for my grandfather's granddaughter, me. I have become for Lucília a ghost of my grandfather. By showing her my grandfather's archive through my laptop, my grandfather has taken possession of me. He is a magician who used his tape-recorder forty-five years ago (Lucília refers in the rushes, to her fright when she first heard her recorded voice. She says it was the work of the devil) and is now using my camera and me to speak to her from the grave. Except that now, this does not frighten her; instead it transports her naturally into another time, like

a hypnosis. Like my mother, this encounter with the past in relation to the present has allowed Lucília and Teresa new insights into their identity and history.

5.4 My mother and my grandfather meet again



My mother had never watched *The Collectors' Club*. I decided to film her watching this footage (time-code: 01:28:04:17). She is literally haunted by these images. This is a typical scene of phantasmagoria and mourning, in the sense that it involves both an optical illusion but at the same time a kind of *reverie*. The fact that my grandfather has been dead for more than forty years and he is addressing me before I ever existed is a perfect image of two ghosts from different times speaking to each other (one from the past, another from the future). My mother becomes the spectator of this phantasmagoria.

As she mentally processes these images and the words of my grandfather, she looks at me intermittently as if seeking my complicity. Both my mother and I are looking for ourselves in others. Faces encapsulate what is both familiar and beyond ourselves. According to Emanuel Levinas, the other is never fully knowable or containable in our experience or understanding; therefore the face of others represents infinite possibilities.¹⁴³ Paul de Man suggests that faces are portraits of the dead, resurrected by the living in a conversation with “an absent, deceased, or voiceless entity”¹⁴⁴. Alisa Lebow refers to this as an “illusion of reference that entails the illusion of presence that hides the ungraspability of the deceased, like reaching a shadow from the grave.”¹⁴⁵

At one point in the film I decided to project this piece of archive on the wall as a way of better grasping my grandfather's physicality. By changing the scale, I managed to cast my shadow on the projection giving me the illusion that I was there with him in his room. The result was another scene of *mise en abyme*, a film within a film, a double illusion of presence and absence. Hopefully the audience believes in the film as I believe in the film inside the film.

¹⁴³ Levinas, Emanuel, *Totality and Infinity* (1961; Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998), p. 24.

¹⁴⁴ De Man, Paul, *Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 75.

¹⁴⁵ Lebow, Alisa “Memory Once Removed: Indirect Memory and Transitive Autobiography in Chantal Akerman's *D'Est*” in *Camera Obscura* 52, volume 18, Number 1, p. 60.

5.5 The opening of the package (from black and white to colour) followed by an epilogue.

Phantasmagoria is once again present in the last scene of the film when my mother and I open the package and find the pipe-pouches my grandfather had destined for his granddaughters (time-code: 01:32:12). The pipe-pouches are an obvious gift from my grandfather and unlike him they have managed to travel physically in time and space. From the 1967 archive footage in black and white shot in my grandfather's living room to 2014 in colour shot in my mother's living room. They have travelled in space from my grandfather's living room in his childhood home, which became the property of my aunt, and from there they travelled to my mother by post. In this process they regained their colour, their texture, and their smell: features to which I had no access before. They are a clear vehicle to my grandfather. Physically they seem the closest I will ever get to my grandfather.



Am I closer to a truth because I am now confronted with the pipe-pouches in colour? This revelation somehow erases a kind of mystery that my imagination brought to the grey areas of the black and white film. By denying us the dimension of colour, black and white images demand more from our imagination. It's a bit like secrets or closed doors. We imagine something behind the door or effabulate something that is concealed from us, and then sometimes when the door is open, what is shown is trivial and boring. I remember watching black and white westerns on TV when I was a kid and later watching the same films in colour and feeling that I had lost something. Probably it was nostalgia for the experience of watching the film in my childhood surrounded by my father and grandmother. In this final sequence of the Wolf's Lair, I think the viewer may experience mixed feelings with this ending sequence. A certain loss of mystery but at the same time a gratifying feeling of retrieving in the present something that seemed lost in time and film. I used the pipe-pouches today as a way of showing how the spirit of my grandfather was still around us; even if the pipe-pouches seem to have lost their context, they have yet to find their new home.

In the last epilogue scene, my daughter and son play with the coloured pipe-pouches and here it seems as if the pouches have been rescued from a dream and the spirit of my grandfather is watching from above. Awake time (present time) and dream time (the past brought by the pipe-pouches) become fused in this scene and clearly project a new time which points to a future. The scene works as an epilogue in this journey of generational transmission and if on the one hand it closes a cycle with some sense of optimism, on the other hand it raises the question about the future and creates a new time: the time of the film.

The scenes described in this chapter are examples of how film (technically and as *mise en scène*) can become a vehicle for new readings and interpretation of archive, which unblock memories and other unconscious manifestations of knowledge, providing us with tools for the construction of our identity, creativity and emotions.

Chapter VI – Bureaucracy, poetry and the space between fragments

As a documentary or as a film with a close connection to the “real”, dealing as it does with history and archives, *The Wolf's Lair* is expected to convey a factual kind of knowledge ; at least this is what the average viewer expects from it. But it is clear now that this knowledge is not susceptible to objectification.

In this last chapter, I want to discuss how we can open the path to a different kind of knowledge about our personal history and ourselves by articulating the archive in a more nuanced way. I have done this by contrasting the archive's indexical nature and compulsion for objective information with the subjectivity and fictional nuances I have explored in Chapters IV and V.

The film tries to play with the relationship between bureaucracy and poetry by exploring the interspaces of factual knowledge. I believe this will become clearer when I explain my approach to my uncle's prison file and my grandfather's clinical file.

W.G Sebald and his books *Austerlitz* and *The rings of Saturn* were very inspiring in the process of finding a way to navigate between archives and affect through film. I believe what connected Sebald's writing to my research and film was the way Sebald is constantly questioning truth and imposing layers of fiction over documents and photographs, creating “free-floating disconnected and disorganised feelings of loss and nostalgia”¹⁴⁶. In *Austerlitz*, the narrator quotes his school history teacher: “Our concern with history is a concern with performed images already imprinted on our brains, images at which we keep staring while the truth lies elsewhere, away from it all, somewhere as yet undiscovered.”¹⁴⁷ These images according to Marianne Hirsch may be “screen-memories – screens on which we project present or timeless needs and desires and which thus mask other images and other concerns”¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁶ Hirsch, Marianne *The Generation of Post memory*, *Poetics Today* 29:1, Spring 2008, p. 111

¹⁴⁷ Sebald, W. G. *Austerlitz*, Vintage Books, 2002

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem*

The implication of using the 9.5 mm home-movie in my film might be a good way to explain this. This family film represents a fragment of my mother's childhood and a subjective gaze upon it. In my film, I use these images and through the editing create a new layer as developed in Chapter IV. And yet through a mechanism of screen memory and post memory, this fragment becomes the very definition of my mother's childhood. I can no longer imagine my mother's childhood and family without immediately connecting to these images. This synecdoche later becomes a memory, which I have invented through the making of *The Wolf's Lair*. But this process does not end here. For my children, the memory of my mother's childhood, the atmosphere of the 1940s and 1950s in Portugal, will be inevitably linked to the atmosphere and the way I have used these archives in the film. This is an example of how film can trouble or transform collective or individual memory. By making *The Wolf's Lair* I have produced more archive.

We must therefore remain suspicious: these screen memories, according to Freud are images which screen out or block other memories.

The Wolf's Lair tries to acknowledge this phenomenon by playing with these images desacralising them through the editing of the archive, working in a somewhat similar process to the way we construct memory. The film is clearly shaped by the way I have used documents, photos and film and, in the process, reinterpreted them.

When a private image or document is appropriated and becomes part of a work of art its status immediately changes and it becomes part of the public sphere. If we believe images like these are matter and tools for our individual memory and use them to create "new archive", this shift in *status* also gives them the power to influence and play with our collective memory.

This brings me to the relationship between Essay and the Archive. How can the essayistic approach allow us to incorporate the archive in a way that leaves the question of its veracity open? And how do we extract what we need from these archives whether we are looking for answers to personal questions or not? In order to absorb all the information in the archive, to ask the right questions and arrive at the right answers perhaps we need to forget, erase, select. Bearing in mind the role of memory and fiction, I believe essay film can deal with all these issues. It is only through memory, association and recreation

that we can make sense of the archive. Remembering and adding to the archive is not necessarily the only way to make sense of it. We also need to forget and erase. It is as important to interpret what we find as it is to interpret the silence and the unanswered.

6.1 My uncle's prison file: PIDE crime-process nº 1212/58 NT 5249

My encounter with the Portuguese National Archive and with my uncle's prison file in particular can better enlighten how I dealt with this fissure between "objective" information in the documents, subjectivity and appropriation of these same documents. There are several notes in the diary I kept during filming that might help develop this idea and show how these issues were constantly present in my research.

My mother came for dinner and told me something I had forgotten: years ago when my uncle died in 1994, she decided to organize an exhibition of his paintings and all his work. My cousin Tiago and I were helping her with this. I filmed many interviews on Hi8 camera with my uncle's friends. But when everything was prepared and my mother had already arranged a great space for the exhibition, my cousin Tiago said he wanted to give up. He thought my uncle wouldn't have wanted this homage. Today I realized the real reason for this: apparently my mother and Tiago read his prison files and found out that my uncle had cracked under torture, and had given out names. This was a big shame within the Communist Party.

What will I find in the archive?

3 November 2012

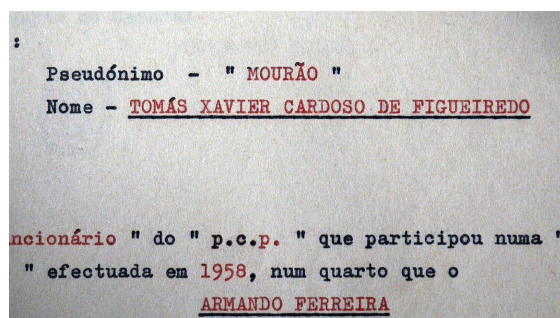
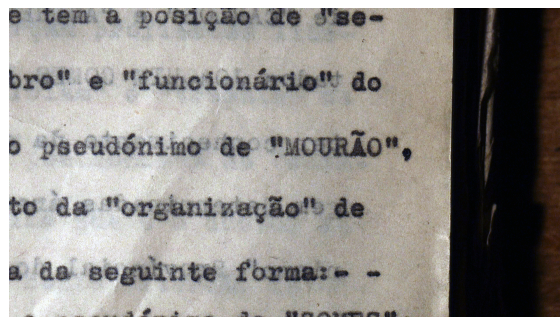
(extract from research diary)

I went to visit the Portuguese National Archive where all the Fascist police documents are kept. I asked to see my uncle's files. The first thing they showed me were the pictures taken before he was arrested and when he came out ten years later. The change in his face and gaze shocked me. He had grown old, swollen, sad and seemed apathetic. The file comprises almost 1535 pages; the archivist tells me it is one of the longest reports. I realize this is so because my uncle was interrogated many times, under a lot of torture and finally spoke, and spoke a lot. I read his confession and although the police have rewritten it, it seems too systematic, almost mechanical. My uncle enunciates everything about the organization of

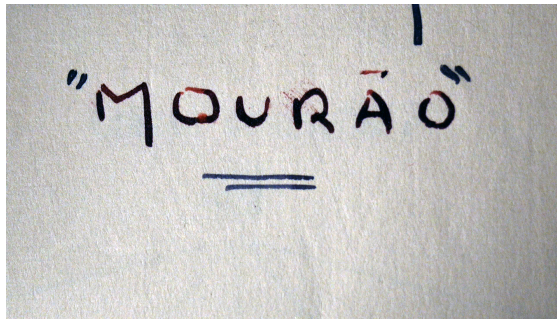
the Communist Party in the country from North to South, from every important city to every small village. And then suddenly on top of one page I see my name. Not Catarina but Mourão, my surname. Apparently it was my uncle's code name while he was underground in 1954. Mourão is the name of my father, whom my mother only met in 1963; it's not a very common name. It's a New Christian name (new names given to Jewish people who were forcibly converted to Christianity¹⁴⁹) and it is also a name given to an insect called wood louse. This coincidence has no factual bearing on my research but it triggered something weird in me. It caused me to understand more about my uncle and the whole prison process. It engaged me. Suddenly I became part of this story in a more direct way. Once again I was being called by an archive from the past.

17 November 2012

(extract from research diary)



¹⁴⁹ This took place during the Inquisition.



Since 1992, the archives of PIDE (the police force set up by Salazar) have been available to the public. The file on my uncle is one of the most extensive. An “archive”, whether it is a family archive or an official archive like the Portuguese National Archive I filmed, is always a place of instability. Secrets are always whispered and we are unable to grasp them entirely. I wonder if there is a “Beyond the Archive”, a part of the archive that escapes from the archivist’s control and remains inaccessible to his search tools.

“The tension between the indexical and the iconic dimensions of the archive image – still or moving – is crucial to the problematic which arises with the historical documentary”¹⁵⁰. *The Wolf’s Lair* is not a historical documentary *per se* and yet it acknowledges this problematic and simultaneously plays with it.

The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities; that which determines that they do not withdraw at the same pace in time, but shine, as it were, like stars, some that seem close to us shining brightly from far off, while others that are in fact close to us are already growing pale.”¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Lebow, Alisa *The Cinema of Me – the self and subjectivity in first person documentary*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. p 27.

¹⁵¹ Foucault, Michel *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, p.129.

According to Freud, the “unheimlich”, the uncanny, marks the unexpected return of a record we recognize as familiar despite its being missing from our file register. Such a return is felt with a sense of fright and discomfort. Is my discovery of my uncle’s code name Mourão, which is also my surname, the “unheimlich”, the secret home?

I believe the fascination around the archive and the way it systematises images and other paper documents, is comparable to the fascination around the idea of ruins that struck so many authors in the nineteenth century¹⁵². Today the archive tends to become digital, producing thousands of new images, which ultimately make us feel we are facing a ghost gallery, as I have previously mentioned. This is why contemporary artists feel a compulsion to look for analogical documents and appropriate them in their works of art¹⁵³, reflecting this complex paradox of an apparent immateriality but which still connects us to the past¹⁵⁴. Brian Winston argues that digitalisation destroys the photographic image as evidence of anything except the process of digitalisation. Therefore, Documentary can only survive the widespread diffusion of such technology if it relinquishes its “claim on the real”. “Archives do not record experience so much as its absence, they mark the point where an experience is missing from its proper place and what is returned to us in an archive may well be something we never possessed in the first place.”¹⁵⁵

Leafing through my uncle’s file, I discover the authorities of the archive have removed a page from one of the files. It is page number 84, which for image copyright reasons and in the name of decency, I will only be able to access in twenty-one years time. The more I find, the more I realise what I don’t know and probably will never learn. I feel the archives register more an absence than a presence. Despite being told that the archives held in the Torre do Tombo, laid out page-by-page on the ground would cover the distance between Lisbon and Moscow, about 3,500 kilometres. I wonder... and if what we don’t know could be measured in kilometres?

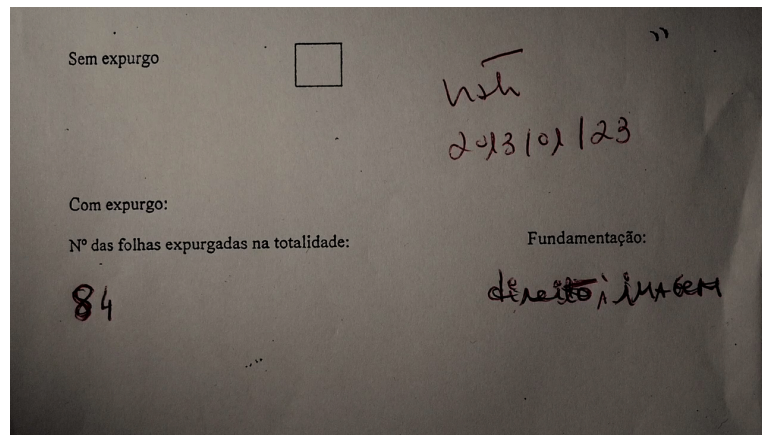
(my voice-over in the film, time-code: 00:51:30)

¹⁵² For example Turner or Constable.

¹⁵³ Tacita Dean, among many [others](#), is a good example of this.

¹⁵⁴ Medeiros, Margarida “Re-working Family memories in ruined images: Snapshot, Identity and Telepathy in Vivian Sundaram’s Retake of Amrita” in *Photography and Cinema*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015

¹⁵⁵ Winston, Brian *Claiming the real: The Griersonian Documentary and Its Legitimations*, British Film Institute, 1995, p.259



If the idea of absence is as inherent to the archive as the notion of presence, then forgetting, as I have referred to before, becomes as important as remembering in this work of processing and understanding the archive. Using the geographical metaphor of the 3.500 km of documents, I believe that like a traveller who needs to forget some of the steps of his journey in order to make sense of the whole experience, the same happens when it comes to telling stories of our past. We need to forget, erase and add elements to our personal narrative in order to find coherence (see references to Paul Ricoeur in Chapter III). On the other hand, memory work as Annette Kuhn mentions “is potentially interminable: at every turn, as further questions are raised, there is always something else to look into.”¹⁵⁶

Writing about Susana Sousa Dias’s film 48¹⁵⁷, Emilia Tavares says: “The historical path taken by the image now prevents it from being used and seen as a model of moral reliability, a fact that immediately undermines any ideological discourse on the image. In the case of the public archives of the Fascist State Police (PIDE) it is important to note that there is current legislation that prevents the public from freely accessing these images.”¹⁵⁸ Even though these

¹⁵⁶ Kuhn, Annette *Family secrets – Acts of Memory and Imagination*, Verso 1995, p.6

¹⁵⁷ The artist filmed the police photographs of some political prisoners compiled in dozens of albums preserved in a national archive and in each case convoked memories of their personal histories of prison and torture.

¹⁵⁸ Tavares, Emilia “The Imprisoned Images: On Susana Sousa Dias’s 48” in *Photography and Cinema, 50 years of La Jetée* edited by Margarida Medeiros, Teresa Mendes Flores and Joana Cunha Leal. Cambridge scholars publishing, 2015, p.165

archives were opened to the public in 1992, there are different criteria one has to meet in order to access them. One of them is to belong to the family of the ex-prisoner. Still, even when this permission is granted, there is a board who can decide that some of the documents cannot be accessed according to the prerogative of “the right to the image” and “the right for privacy”. The downside of this is the continuing anonymity and historical ignorance that prevails over the victims of repression. Walter Benjamin stated “every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably”¹⁵⁹. Emilia Tavares adds in her paper: “The archive image contains in itself that inherent state of non-recognition, that dilution in form of a document/testimony with abstract outlines, that directing of interpretations under a generalist hallmark.”¹⁶⁰

I felt this very clearly when I shot different scenes in the archive, many of which I did not use. The women who spend their days dusting old books and cleaning old documents, or the man who restores them, glues and sews them, seem perfect metaphors for the difficulty or impossibility of controlling the archive. It is a monster with a life of its own that takes possession of those it surrounds. It feeds us in our thirst for answers or fantasy to travel in time but some time later, it devours us in its abyss of information, which is physically, and emotionally impossible to grasp. Sometimes more information can lead to a more diffused “truth”, sometimes to a void and other times to fiction.

The researcher who, like the archaeologist, looks for answers in an archive comes across the experience of serendipity. I am using this analogy in the same way as Foucault used it for his study of knowledge. The archaeological method according to Foucault does not rest on the primacy of the consciousness of the individual subject, but rather operates at an unconscious level involving the power of relating things.

Serendipity, on the other hand, might be defined as “a consequence of recombining observations into unusual but meaningful associations”¹⁶¹. Serendipity relies on creativity and coincidence. We must rely on our capacity to

¹⁵⁹ Benjamin, Walter *Illuminations*, Thesis on the Philosophy of History edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books 1968

¹⁶⁰ *ibidem*

¹⁶¹ de Ron, Mark and Morley, Iain ed. *Serendipity. Fortune and the prepared mind*. Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.3

construct new meanings, even from silence and missing information. In *The Wolf's Lair* serendipity determines the way I navigate through my findings. This is true for many of the associations I make, connecting memories and archives in the film. The dance scene, the picnic with revolver scene or my remembrance at my grandmother's old apartment are examples of this.

I filmed a conversation with Paulo Tremoceiro, one of the archivists of the National Archive and I think his words translate this sense of complexity. He explained to me that there is a sense of discretion used by the staff of the Archive in giving access to documents. They have to manage certain conflicts between free access to the archives, the right for information with the right for privacy and reputation protection. Sometimes they have to conceal information regarding the intimacy of the person named, sexual orientation, diseases, etc...He tells me he has conversations with the documents, which are private, almost like the relationship between a psychoanalyst and his patient. Regarding page 84 and my access to it, he tells me I have to wait fifty years after my uncles death which took place in 1994 or seventy-five years since the date of the document which is 1960 (1994 + 50 = 2044 or 1960 + 75 = 2035).

Derrida writes in his book *Archive Fever* that the archive "should call into question the coming of the future." "The archive: if we want to know what that will have meant, we will only know in times to come (...) It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow."¹⁶²

In Portugal, despite forty-eight years of Fascism, a strong State Police and thousands of people arrested, there has never been a Commission of Truth and Justice, like in other countries that have suffered from totalitarian regimes. The exception was the so called *Livro Negro do Fascismo*¹⁶³ (The black book of Fascism). This role has been generally left for activists, social scientists and artists who have patiently taken on board this work of reconstitution, against the erasure of time and the different ideologies which, more than establishing

¹⁶² Derrida, Jacques, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression* The University of Chicago Press ,1996, p.36.

¹⁶³ In 1978 a commission was created to release *The black book of Fascism*. The role of this book released in 1976 was to clarify public opinion on violence and abuse committed during nearly half a century in Portugal, as well as political acts and governing acts that led the country to a situation of national crisis, which was brought to an end with the revolution of April 25, 1974.

different points of view, have tried to rewrite history by underplaying the repressive nature of Salazar's regime¹⁶⁴.

The history of the regime and its movements of resistance remain somewhat invisible. I believe that aside from the physical archives that document this period, there are what one can call the invisible archives of Portuguese dictatorship, made up of personal stories or fragments of stories; an invisible subjective archive made of memories, dreams, symbols and signs. Slavoj Žižek tells us that "the real" cannot be apprehended with a direct gaze, but must be seen indirectly, by looking "awry"¹⁶⁵. He is referring to the memories of the Holocaust but I believe this can be applied as well to any traumatic family memory or collective memory. Walter Benjamin in his text "One way Street" refers to this idea of how impossible it is to grasp truth directly because it inevitably eludes. "Truth is a recalcitrant subject, facing the lens of writing while we crouch under the black cloth, refusing to keep still and look amiable"¹⁶⁶. The only access we can hope to have is via an indirect route.

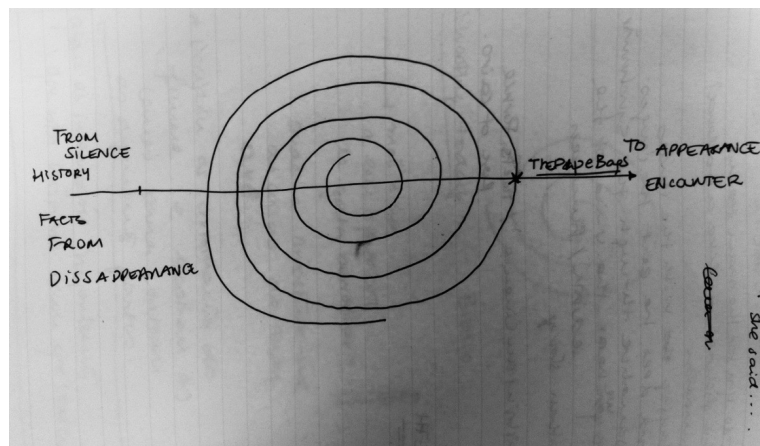
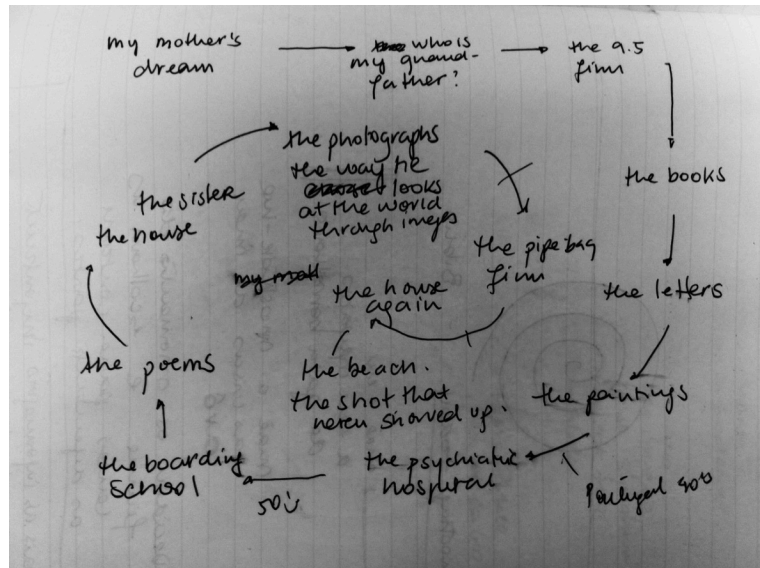
When I look back on the narrative structure of my film, I realise how much this makes sense; my journey is made of detours, deviations to the supposed objective facts. I begin with a dream that leads to a hypnosis, that plunges me into my own childhood memories that lead to an archive film, where I meet my grandfather who indirectly convinces me to make this film. Slowly the portrait of a family and its voids emerge. Small objects are clues but also vessels of some "truth". The pipe-pouches enclose a sentimental failure and a desire to be loved, and the anticipation of a sense of belonging. The silver ball hides the frustration of not being understood and the obstinacy to keep on writing. In between data, letters and archive files, these seemingly unimportant objects play a role, which is simultaneously proof and poetry. And yet if the form of the film is true to my process it is still a very constructed film in the sense that this same fragmentary dimension is intentionally preserved or enhanced. At other times, this fragmentation seems to hide behind a more coherent classical narrative.

¹⁶⁴ Godinho, Paula *Introdução a Aurora Rodrigues, Gente Comum – Uma História na PIDE* Castro Verde: 100Luz, 2011

¹⁶⁵ Žižek, Slavoj, *Looking Awry*, Cambridge, MA:MIT Press, 1993, pag 8-12.

¹⁶⁶ Benjamin, Walter *Selected Writings*, vol 1, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 480.

Sometimes, I wonder what the film would be like if it started at the end. I wonder what new experiences we could gain from it. Film editing options are similar to the way we edit our remembered narratives. What we decide to erase and to forget, the order we create for our events, all this is somewhat analogous to the way we edit a film. Beneath are small diagrams that reflect some of my approaches to the structure of the film.



6.2 My grandfather's clinical file: Psychiatric file number 4881

This relationship between bureaucracy and poetry is expanded in another episode involving silence and opacity. For a whole year, I tried to access my grandfather's clinical file (Psychiatric file number 4881 – 8 February 1957) from when he was committed to the psychiatric hospital. This access was systematically denied on the grounds that the file involved sensitive data that could affect the honour of the patient. Finally, I decided to take another “route” to persuade the Portuguese Commission of Data Protection (Comissão Nacional de Protecção de Dados) to let me read and film his clinical file. Instead of simply using legal arguments I related artistic subjective arguments using my grandfather's poems, with legal arguments. Beneath is a translation of the letter I sent to the commission.

Lisbon, 23 May 2013

Dear Madam/Sir

I am doing a practice based PhD in Documentary Filmmaking at the University Of Edinburgh - Edinburgh College of Arts. This research includes a film and a dissertation, which will dialogue with the film. The main subject of the thesis is the role of memory and dream in Documentary Filmmaking. In this context, I decided to explore the world of my grandfather Tomaz de Figueiredo who was a writer. The majority of his books explore his living life and phantasies and in this sense his books (fiction, essays and poetry) are very autobiographical and self-reflexive. From his books and memories of living people I realised there were many versions to his story and his life seemed full of contradictions.

Many of his books describe in detail his psychic state and his daily life when he was committed to the Hospital do Telhal (psychiatric hospital). I am referring especially to a corpus of poems, which have already been published. Still there are many gaps in the memory of those who met him and witnessed his story. Nobody can tell me when he was committed, when he was released, whether he was committed more than once. Who signed him in? What was the real diagnosis of his mental illness?

I need to have access to this information and at the same time, I am interested in filming the physicality of the documents, the files, the yellowy papers, the handwriting... I therefore need to film his clinical file, although I realise it is considered a “sensitive matter”

under article 7 of the law n. 67/98, of the 26 October (Protection Law for personal Data). In this particular case and to answer the questions asked by this Commission, it will not be possible to conceal the identity or codify it. This is not scientific research based on statistic data but research on Film, the history of the Family and of Portugal through it; therefore the identity of the person in question is the basis for this study. On the other hand, since my grandfather died in 1970 it is impossible for him to give me consent to access his clinical file. Nevertheless, I find in his published poetry so many references to this period of his life spent in the psychiatric Hospital of Telhal that it seems to me there is a clear intention to leave behind a witness of this experience for future generations. I therefore believe that he wouldn't object to my accessing this sensitive data in the clinical file. Finally, I believe there is also a public interest in this research, which surmounts any conflict of interest between data protection and public interest in the investigation (see attached one of his poems). Beneath is one of his most emblematic poems written in the asylum.

Looking forward to hearing from you,
Yours sincerely, Catarina Mourão

Yellow House

*I know. The lunatic asylum beckons
and its drab-coated tormentors,
with cloven and porcine trotters,
who spit on my flights of fancy*

*and as well on my waxen-faced brothers,
Who howl in chorus on the ward,
Falsettos, ohs, spats of toms and cats,
Cuckoo calls announcing early Spring*

*The hard cot, there, where patients reject
The acetylcholine that takes their breath,
Confining, illicit underground stretcher.*

*There, injections of ultradynamite,
That neither revolt nor plea can evade,
Recreate Hiroshima in every head.*

*At dawn, the lunatics, like so many sheep,
With prods and pokes rouse us from sleep.
Whether doves or hawks, they all will suffer
The loudspeaker belching out fado.*

*Some lie their battered bodies down
In heaps on the grassy mound
And some solitary hallucinating wretch
Bunks on the concrete bench.*

*Several play cards, uttering curses.
Others ponder General Salvation,
And the female-form scribbler and the smiler.*

*There's the eternal rope twiner,
The ones that foam, livid with rage and bile,
Those that navigate fractured sleep*

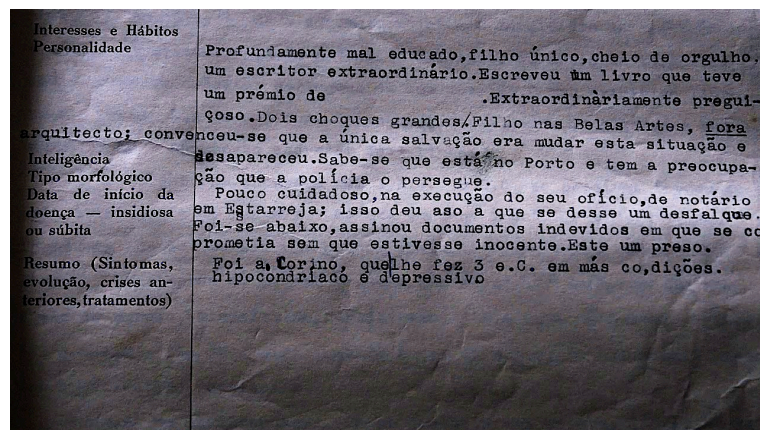
*In the asylum the harsh jangling bell
Orders the lunatics about in raucous din,
The place, the sound, the hiss of the whip
The affront of the perfidious hosing*

*The Director, like a monk dressed
in purest white but blackest breast,
is seen from time to time, cold and brisk,
a deaf-mute to the keenest complaint.*

*It is the realm of Silence, of the Not-World,
Deeper than the farthest depths of Hell,
Heartless, forgiveness: not ever again...*

Almost six months later I received a positive answer from the Commission and I was allowed to read and film his clinical file.

One of the documents in this clinical file clearly links his being committed to the hospital with the mysterious case of embezzlement at the notary he was in charge of. But I was aware how this connection between facts might well have been my own fiction and my way of making sense of the documents I found. Surprisingly, other members of the family managed to confirm he was submitted to electric shock treatment and hospitalised just as a way of escaping a trial for embezzlement. But if I hadn't had access to this file and allowed myself this freedom to associate events, I wouldn't have unearthed this story.



What interests me in this story is not so much to capture “truth” or why truth presents itself in a specific way, but much more how truth has been constructed, shaped. It is in this circumstance that Foucault’s project is useful to me. According to him, the purpose should not be to denounce falsity but instead to describe, even fragmentarily, the ways in which truth has taken shape historically. Foucault doesn’t believe in a society where the forces that rule order collectively and individually are transparent for those who live in it. But in order to achieve an idealized collectivism, the individual must be self-conscious of his acts. Foucault sees in this self-control a form of tyranny. And according to him this hermeneutics and self-control only becomes collective when permanently verbalised. It is language and communication that materialize this self-consciousness of thoughts and the self-censorship it entails.

I recall my aunt Luzita’s words speaking about my grandfather when my mother went to visit her.

*- Your poor father...
I don't want to speak ill, he's your father.
I have a lot of respect for people's souls, poor thing, but he
had a screw loose, that he did.
He'd get up late, that's what uncle Eugénio said, uncle
Eugénio was a very good friend of his, they hunted
together in Arcos, they were always together. He had fun
with him but he knew something wasn't quite right...
We'd play canasta. And he'd be watching...
He'd walk around, with an ironic air, not speaking to
anyone.
He'd stand around all evening watching what was going
on, and listening too, of course. He was an odd person,
and you can't live without working.
- But he thought his job was writing.
If it was nowadays maybe,... a writer is a writer.
- But he should have known he couldn't live on that.
- No...he was born in the wrong age, because if it were
today he could make a living.
-...because he wrote a lot...writing is also work, but apart
from that, he got up late.
-His timetable was different because he'd write at night a
lot.
- And he smoked!
(time-code: 01:17:04).*

For my aunt Luzita, it is clear that my grandfather “had a screw loose” because he was different. Writing for her, wasn’t working. Instead writing was

as eccentric and condemnable as smoking or waking up late. These very fixed ideas are a result of a specific context of Salazar's Portugal. They are continually verbalised in a closed discourse, necessarily conditioning the construction of our memory.

In his book "Rewriting the soul: Multiple personality and the sciences of memory"¹⁶⁷ Ian Hacking argues that the words we use to describe our experiences aren't just labels for pre-determined mental facts. According to him, both the content and the sensorial quality of any social practice are highly conditioned by the words we use to describe them. This also happens with the relationships we establish between our conscious and the stories we tell about ourselves.

When I decided to film the encounter between my mother and my aunt Luzita, I didn't expect my mother to feel provoked by Luzita's remarks, after all she has known this discourse since she was a child. Nevertheless, she reacted with annoyance and tried to reason with Luzita regarding her description of her father. I believe this only happened because of the presence of the camera, myself and the whole *mise en scène* of the film.

6.3 The true lies of memory

In this quest to explore data and bureaucracy poetically, different questions concerning the ontology of image and other archive documents arise. What is their ability to speak the "truth" taking into account issues of perception, secondary vision, memory and dream?

In his article *The mystic writing pad*¹⁶⁸, Freud compares the way we explain the system of perception-conscience with the process of memory. In this same text, Freud refers to the different technologies Man has built to surmount his lacks of memory and mentions the photographic machine and ear-trumpets, both built in resemblance of the human organ they wished to replace or

¹⁶⁷ Hacking, Ian *Rewriting the soul: Multiple personality and the sciences of memory* Princeton University Press, 1998

¹⁶⁸ Freud, Sigmund *A Note upon the Mystic Writing Pad* in *General Psychological Theory*, Chapter XIII, 1925.

optimize; but, according to him nothing can replace the power of memory and mental imagery. This passage immediately made me connect to my grandfather's words in the program *The Collectors' Club*.

The Portuguese television was looking for collectors and one day they heard I had a unique collection of pipe pouches so they decided to come here to my house.

I think it's very poor, the means available to television are poor. In fact, all external means are poor compared to what the brain has recourse to.

If television were in colour, it could give us the straw tone of this pouch that looks like burlap. It could give us, perhaps, the crimson shade of this other pouch. It's a Swedish pipe. And it would be wonderful if it could give us a sense of smell as well.

(time-code: 00:19:18)

Freud deconstructs the mechanisms of perception and memory using a metaphor: "The mystical writing pad"¹⁶⁹. According to Freud the mystical writing-pad (a children's toy of the time) has two capacities: it provides not only a receptive surface that can be used over and over again, like a slate, but also permanent traces of what has been written, just like our mental apparatus performs its perceptual function.

If we unglue the celluloid from its wax plate, we can use the note-book, because what we inscribed initially has disappeared. However, if we scrutinise it under a certain light, we can still read what we wrote before because it has been engraved permanently in the wax plate.

When photography appeared in the late nineteenth century, it married the concept of visual representation with an aura of mystery and a magical dimension. The mechanical reproduction of reality raised by photography led to a shift in the theories of perception. Perception was no longer something seen as a result of the mechanisms of light and its optical transmission to a passive subject, but more and more as a way of questioning the physiological mechanisms of the human being. It was on the basis of this embodied vision,

¹⁶⁹ To make use of the Mystic Pad, one writes upon the celluloid portion of the covering-sheet, which rests upon the wax slab. For this purpose no pencil or chalk is necessary, since the writing does not depend on material being deposited upon the receptive surface. It is a return to the ancient method of writing upon tablets of clay or wax: a pointed stylus scratches the surface, the depressions upon which constitute the "writing".

that the new nineteenth century philosophy developed its science of perception. In the light of this romantic vision, the rigid separation between Subject and Object, which was the base for the rationalist optimism, no longer made sense and the blurring of this frontier had decisive consequences for the self-understanding of the subject, and the opening up to a more phenomenological approach.

Years later, Merleau-Ponty explored this same path regarding the theory of perception, emphasizing the experiential phenomena of the imaginary and the “real” through the eyes of the subject: an embodied subject with a memory; an embodied subject that remembers its dreams through perceptions, and dreams about its remembered perceptions.

There are moments when my film is structured as a dream, something that is unresolved. Like an unresolved dream, my film is also unresolved and unfinished. And this is why I believe that although I have tried to build a narrative through my different events and discoveries, the dream feeling prevails. As John Berger writes in his book *G*: “The strange thing about dreams is not so much what happens in them but what one feels in them.”¹⁷⁰

When I dream, it’s as if I gain some clairvoyance towards reality. In my dreams, my memories become visual, different times coexist and in long sequence-shots I can connect different spaces and geographies, unite people who never met or were decades apart. My dreams and my memories are completely related to each other, I cannot distinguish them easily, or so I think...but the way they dance together enriches each one of them. My dreams help me fill the gaps in my memory and mix future with the past. My memory helps my dreams live in my present. My dreams allow me to process my traumas, some of which seem inherited traumas.

When I first learned my grandfather had been submitted to electric shock treatment, half way through the filmmaking process, I told this to an old friend who reminded me that a long time ago, I had made him promise, he would never allow anyone to give me shock treatment. I asked him whether I had ever mentioned my grandfather in this context and he said that he didn’t even know of his existence. This made me question how much the film was acting in a

¹⁷⁰ Berger, John *G* Bloomsbury London, 1972 p.121

psychoanalytical way, as if I was overcoming something I had heard and forgotten about in my childhood. Alisa Lebow's words regarding Akerman's film *D'Est* are relevant to this idea when she says, "Filmmaking then becomes a vehicle for the process of mourning, of healing historical wounds, of closing a chapter."¹⁷¹

In his discussion of the uncanny, Freud tells us that "once an emotional impulse (perhaps generated by a memory) is repressed, it is transformed into anxiety and as such recurs continually. The uncanny or the not-home "is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old – established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression."¹⁷² This process of repression applies to our dreams because according to Freud what we first forget in a dream and only subsequently remember, is the most important element in a dream, or perhaps in any other representation of our desires. Maybe this is why I always forget where my father's grave is located in the cemetery, and my mother forgot how her father would meet her at the station platform for many years, or the sweets he laid on the table when she went to meet him in hiding when she was eighteen.

Dreams become part of this subjective archive which always requires interpretation independent of its inherent nature, be it paper, sound, film, collective memory, individual memory, post memory, dream. Exploring the paradigm of suspicion, Foucault writes in a short essay: "The further one goes in interpretation, the closer one approaches at the same time an absolutely dangerous region where interpretation is not only going to find its points of no return but when it is going to disappear itself as interpretation, bringing perhaps the disappearance of the interpreter himself."¹⁷³

This enigmatic sentence of Foucault reminds me how the archive can suck us into its abyss to an extent where we can lose our own sense of identity and being. The archive can feed our memories and dreams and in this way

¹⁷¹ Lebow, Alisa "Memory Once Removed: Indirect Memory and Transitive Autobiography in Chantal Akerman's *D'Est*" in *Camera Obscura* 52, volume 18, Number 1.

¹⁷² Freud, Sigmund, "The Uncanny" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 17, London: Hogarth, 1962, p. 220.

¹⁷³ Foucault, Michel, "Marx, Nietzsche and Freud", in *Nietzsche, Cahiers du Royaumont*, Paris: Les Editions du Minuit, 1964, pag 64

create more archive. But because of its multiple reflexions and references it can also change our perceptions and become a void instead of a structure. This reminded me of a scene in the film *The Specialist* by Eyal Sivan ¹⁷⁴ where one of the prosecutors in the Nuremberg trial, commenting on Eichmann's obsession with documents, records and dates as a way of evading some of the moral questions underlying the interrogation, says to him: "Could you for once rely on your memory instead of documents?" Even in a trial where the question of proof is a fundamental one, the status of truth regarding a document or a memory is questionable.

The attitude of inquiry provided by poetics is particularly apropos for the documentary insofar as poetics has, as we shall see, occupied an unstable position at the juncture of science and aesthetics, structure and value, truth and beauty. Documentary film is itself the site of much equivocation around similar axes given nonfiction's too-frequently-presumed debt to the signified at the expense of the signifier's play. It is the "film of fact," "nonfiction," the realm of information and exposition rather than diegetic employment or imagination--in short, at a remove from the creative core of the cinematic.

¹⁷⁵

I am aware that more than twenty years have passed since Michael Renov wrote this fundamental text. Nevertheless his problematisation around the issue of "truth" in documentary filmmaking, and his suggestion of poetry as a path is still a valid input in documentary film today.

¹⁷⁴ *The Specialist*, portrait of a modern criminal, documentary | 128 min | 35mm | B&W | 4:3 | Dolby SRD | 1999. The incredible trial of an appallingly ordinary man. Drawn entirely on the 350 hours of rare footage recorded during the trial of Adolf Eichmann, in 1961, in Jerusalem, this film about obedience and responsibility is the portrait of an expert in **problem** resolving, a modern criminal. The film is inspired **by** the controversial book by Hannah Arendt : "Eichmann in Jerusalem, report on the banality of evil".

¹⁷⁵ Renov, Michael *Theorizing Documentary*, Routledge, 1993, p.12

7. Conclusion

During the past year I have shown *The Wolf's Lair* to different audiences at festivals and other screenings (see Appendix 1), and in almost every Q&A session I was always asked a set of questions:

How did this film change me? What did I learn from it? And why did I feel this strong impulse to tell the story of my excluded grandfather and take my mother with me on this journey?

When it comes to the construction of our identity, memory and personal history, there are no right or wrong answers. Film accentuates this ambiguity, and I can only find honesty by reflecting on my filmmaking process.

The Wolf's Lair takes place in a specific social and political context: an authoritarian fascist regime where censorship, explicit and tacit, was the rule. Because this context still lingers silently in the present, my journey had to entail new ways of interpreting reality and finding clues to answer its enigmas and silences.

Through my filmmaking practice and research, I proposed to explore "tarian fasknowledge" which has been wrongly disqualified as "low-ranking", in the words of Michel Foucault¹⁷⁶.

This involved a new reading of documents, questioning the "truth" commonly attributed to them and opening the concept of archive to other, more subjective and invisible sources, such as memories, blocked memories, dreams and other unconscious manifestations of self.

As a consequence I had to play with family archives in a less narrative mode, letting them guide the emotion, acknowledging their gaps, silences and

¹⁷⁶ Foucault, Michel, *Power/Knowledge, Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* Edited by Colin Gordon, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, p. 82

fragmented nature, using them in a way which more deeply connects to how we construct our memory. I consider this is the only way we can really understand these archives and through them reflect upon the infinite metaphoric possibilities memory-images and dream-images can offer us.

Film language, being highly metaphorical and symbolic, is a rich tool to produce consciousness and awareness from memories, dreams, ghosts and other mental images, making visible what is invisible, thus creating and awareness from memor

The whole *cinematic apparatus* and the *mise en scène* involved in the construction of another *reality* gives a double function to archives: on the one hand they become a storage for our memories, dreams and narrations of family histories; on the other, they become a catalyst for new memories, thoughts and emotions that were previously concealed.

The Wolf's Lair became a playground to question my identity, both on a personal level and as a filmmaker. First-person filmmaking allowed me to question the intangible and immaterial dimensions of our identity, to reassess memory and post memory. Using this methodology, the film offers insights into the strategies my mother and I have used to make new sense of our history and past.

Through my research and practice I have strengthened my own initial belief that documentary and essay filmmaking that transcend the realistic conventions of film language are an ideal medium for exploring these “new ways of knowing”. Because of its point of view, construction and manipulation, film can highlight the lacunae, shadows, inter-spaces and contradictions found in the physical archives (photographs, home-movies and other documents), leaving space to be filled with a subjective archive made of mental images. This dialogue between both kinds of archive involves a re-enactment of different temporalities and even timeless zones in the filmmaker and spectator’s unconscious, allowing for new readings and interpretations.

Film, like poetry, has this extraordinary capacity for portraying reality in creative ways, thereby opening new paths for an understanding of our past and present, and conferring universality on personal and family stories.

The Wolf's Lair has definitely been a new, experimental step in my filmmaking. I believe its main strength lies in its attempt to build formal coherence through fragmentary and unclosed content. My “flanerie” or perambulation between random memories and dreams allowed me to question the truth we can reach through our (visible and invisible) archive. Through this process of free association, I discovered new stories about my family and found the film’s truth.

While we will never know for sure if something really happened in the past, it is the way we describe it in the present that is truthful. Truth is not in the past, but there is always a truth about the past. Sometimes the fictions we tell ourselves through memory are the closest we can get to a “truth”. Memory never remembers the same things in the same way.

I am aware that by telling this story through my mother’s memories I am also playing with my own memories in a displaced way, with a kind of generational remove.

The film became a vehicle for a dialogue between three family generations. In the real time of narrating and listening, people choose aspects from the endless archive of family narratives and images that make most sense to them. This happened to me while making the film, but happened also to my mother, whose version of her family story changed as my research and her participation in the film evolved.

When I think about this intergenerational transmission I sometimes wonder: if one day my daughter Francisca decides to make a film from my archives, how would she approach it? What kind of truth would she extract and how would new “technologies of the self” play a role?

How present technologies of visual self-representation are transforming our subjective and family archives, and their consequences on the construction of our memories and identity, interests me as an area for future research.

During the final process of writing this dissertation I deactivated my Facebook account. Some hours later, I received a worried text message from Francisca saying: “Mum, you’re no longer on Facebook. What did you do? You lost everything...all those pictures on your wall...”

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Appendix 1 - Screenings

- [2015] Rotterdam International Film Festival (World Premiere)
- [2015] IndieLisboa Festival Internacional de Cinema Independente (Audience Award for Best Film)
- [2015] Iberodocs, Edinburgh
- [2015] Doc's Kingdom Seminário Internacional de Cinema Documental - Arcos de Valdevez
- [2015] IndieCork - Festival Internacional de Cinema Independente
- [2015] Viennale - Vienna International Film Festival
- [2015] Semana de Cine Português de Buenos Aires, Rosário e Córdoba
- [2015] Semana de Cine Português de Montevideo - Uruguay
- [2015] The Portuguese Conspiracy UK - Mostra de Cinema Português
- [2015] Porto/Post/Doc Film & Media Festival - Porto
- [2015] Cineclube de Faro - Mostra de Cinema "Laços Familiares"
- [2015] Porto/Post/Doc Film & Media Festival
- [2016] Kinemathek Hamburg - Metropolis Kino
- [2016] Mostra de Cinema Português em Macau – Cinemateca Paixão
- [2016] European Union Film Festival – Bangkok, Tailândia
- [2016] Filmes do Homem, Festival Internacional de Documentário de Melgaço – Award for Best Portuguese Documentary.
- [2016] Films Femmes Méditerranée - Marseille
- [2016] Doku Arts, Essaydox – Berlim - <http://www.doku-arts.de/>

Appendix 2 – Press

FESTIVAL. Porto/Post/Doc : un nouveau festival documentaire à Porto.

Le passé resurgit à Porto

Crée en 2014, Porto/Post/Doc est un nouveau rendez-vous de la cinéphile portugaise, déjà riche de manifestations comme IndieLisboa, Doclisboa, Queer Lisboa, Curtas-Vila do Conde ou le Festival d'Estoril. En apparence, cette floraison a de quoi réjouir. En réalité elle témoigne de l'effondrement quasi total du réseau d'art et d'essai au Portugal. Les festivals constituent donc le seul moyen de faire circuler des œuvres plus fragiles. La première édition de Porto/Post/Doc avait été marquée par la venue de Manoel de Oliveira, citoyen d'honneur de la ville. L'édition 2015 (du 1^{er} au 8 décembre) a proposé une programmation pointue dont des hommages à Chantal Akerman, Lionel Rogosin et Thom Andersen, ainsi qu'une série de tables rondes autour de la pratique documentaire contemporaine. La compétition a été marquée par une révélation : *A Toca do lobo*

(« La tanière du loup ») de Catarina Mourão, déjà présenté à IndieLisboa sous forme de *work in progress*. Partant d'une histoire familiale, celle de l'internement de son grand-père écrivain dans un asile psychiatrique, la réalisatrice plonge dans le passé obscur d'une famille et d'un pays sous le régime fasciste de Salazar. À travers l'utilisation subtile d'archives historiques et familiales (magnifiques films de famille en 8mm), Catarina Mourão restitue des années 50-60 caractérisées par le silence et le non-dit. L'histoire du grand-père, entrecoupée par celle de l'oncle, militant communiste emprisonné, dessine un environnement familial pesant dans lequel l'absence de ces figures perturbe soterrainement le quotidien. La beauté de ce film réside dans le choix de la réalisatrice de laisser certains événements dans leur mystère, des récits non résolus, témoignant de l'ambivalence

d'une époque qui n'a pas révélé tous ses secrets.

Les ombres du passé hantent aussi le passionnant *Como se* (« Comme si ») de Daniel Blaufuks. Ce cinéaste, écrivain et essayiste portugais d'origine allemande traite de l'inscription de la mémoire individuelle et collective dans le présent (vestiges, monuments, musées, archives). Il se rend en République tchèque, à Terezín, 3000 habitants, qui a abrité durant la guerre le ghetto de Theresienstadt, où furent emprisonnés près de 140000 Juifs. Des vues actuelles – images de lieux vides ou captant les habitants dans leurs activités quotidiennes – sont confrontées à des archives et des fictions restituant le passé et son imaginaire. Du fameux film de propagande nazi tourné par le prisonnier

Kurt Geronne en 1944 présentant Theresienstadt comme un lieu idyllique, jusqu'au fameux feuilleton américain *Holocauste* (1978), en passant par le magnifique *Transport from Paradise* de Zbyněk Brynych (1962) (une des perles de la nouvelle vague tchèque se focalisant sur le personnage du Benjamin Murlmstein, le dernier dirigeant du conseil juif du ghetto, dont la vision diffère largement de celle véhiculée par le film de Claude Lanzmann, *Le Dernier des injustes*). Dans une démarche archéologique s'inspirant ouvertement de la littérature de W.G. Sebald, Daniel Blaufuks fouille des lieux et des architectures aujourd'hui anonymes, tout en interrogeant les différents régimes d'image qui prétendent révéler le passé.

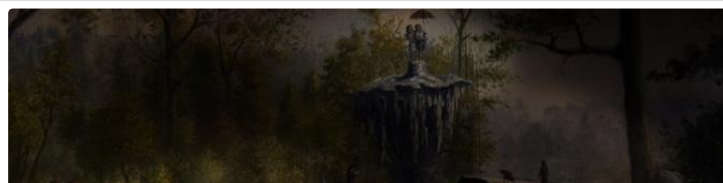
Ariel Schweitzer



A Toca do lobo de Catarina Mourão (2015).

Acoperișul de Sticlă

Articole din aceeași categorie



HOME FILM TV INTERNET MUZICĂ ȘTIINȚĂ & TEHNOLOGIE SOCIAL REALITY CHECK PIGGY BANK DESPRE NOI

Interviu CineMAiubit - Doru Nițescu: Festivalul studențesc e un fel de junior league

De ce să (nu) piratăm și de ce scriem despre film

LES FILMS DE CANNES A BUCAREST ÎN DEZBATERE

Les films de Cannes a Bucarest, context și recomandări

Realisme asiatice de văzut la Les Films de Cannes a Bucarest

Note critice și teoretice despre filmul-eseu

Era greu să alegem ce dublă păstrăm pentru că toate erau savuroase - Interviu cu ...

Studiu de caz: Cinema DeBalie, Amsterdam

Catarina Mourao Interview

Autor: Irina Trocan

2015-02-19



The Wolf's Lair/A toca do lobo screened at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in a section called Spectrum, launching new films of directors who are already established. The documentary is an attempt to retrace the director's family history and it's an unpredictable journey through the family archives (old photographs, black & white films, as well as an official dossier from the days of Salazar's dictatorship referring to the director's grandfather, who was a writer), and it's commented alternately by the relatives who give out their own versions of the past. I've asked Catarina Mourão to talk a little bit about the documentaries she made so far and about the potential interpretations and associations provoked by *The Wolf's Lair*.

C.M. I started making films in 1997, which was 17 years ago. I did film school, I studied in England & then I came back to Portugal, where there was no culture on documentaries. The things that were shown on TV here had more of a journalistic approach. Myself & many people started to be interested in this idea of creative documentaries, especially since there were no funds for making big-budget films and the thought of working with only a small crew was appealing. I know today you can make fiction films like this, but seventeen years back, there was no digital, we were working with betacam tapes – or film, when you had money to buy it. I started watching documentaries from outside with a group of friends and, slowly, each one of us started developing our own subjects. The common denominator, what was interesting to us all, was showing the present. We were interested in direct cinema, the observational approach, so many of my films are in this vein, even if, one after the other, they become less naïve, more constructed.

I won't tell you about all my films, but at least three that I think have a connection with "The Wolf's Lair", indirectly. My first film was about a lady who was living in a really decadent house. It was shot in Goa, which used to be a Portuguese colony in India, but I wasn't really interested in the large-scale history of the place, I was focused on this story of this woman. She was 80 and she was taking care of this immense house on her own. What I was recording was her everyday life in the house, trying to preserve it and at the same time showing it to tourists – it was about this conflict between her nostalgia for the past and trying to be pragmatic at the same time, thinking about preserving the house for the future. Also, going deeper into her beliefs, you notice things are shifting – for instance, although she's catholic, you can see that

Hindu culture and civilisation are also very present, it's a fusion of cultures. The film was called "**The Lady of Chandor**" and it's been shown around quite a bit.

I.T.: I can sort of see the connection..

C.M.: Yeah, there's this idea of people trapped in spaces and becoming isolated (or not). In "The Wolf's Lair", my aunt, even if you don't see her, is sort of in the same situation.

I.T.: The second time I've seen the film, it became more obvious that you wanted to get closer to the locked-up house.

C.M.: In "The Lady of Chandor", what I did was I spent about two-three months with the woman and filmed everything she did. I was interested in the exotic life in Goa, which seems a place trapped in time, it still has all this phantasmagoria about the past but at the same time globalization is taking over and the tourists are always coming in.

I.T.: But they're not there for the present, it's almost like they come to Goa to see the past.

C.M.: Of course, they want to be immersed in nostalgia... Anyway, this film was important for me, in its context, because all the documentaries that were being made at the time around colonies were factual and they were explaining this and that. My film was also about history, but from a different angle. It was more organic and more cinematic, I was interested in this idea of time and space and how they revealed themselves to the camera. After that, I made other films much more concerned with the present time, about, for instance, housing estates: I made a film called "**On Edge**" about kids playing at summer in a housing estate – what do kids do when they have nothing to do? Again, there was this sense of the scenery, the backdrop, and the way it influences the people. I also did this film called "**My Village Doesn't Live Here Anymore**", about a community that was submerged, since they built a dam – the biggest in the Iberian Peninsula – and they built a replica of the village nearby. This meant that people had to leave their space, leave behind the past, there's an emotional link that was cut. I filmed this old couple that had difficulties moving because they left their trees behind and they wouldn't have time in the new place to watch another tree growing.

I.T. Did your film document the process of their moving from one place to the next?

C.M. This film was done at the same time when I started a production company with a friend – also called Catarina, who is connected to visual anthropology – and we had a project for this new museum they built in the new village; the idea was to film the daily life of the village for nearly three years, to get a sense of the agricultural cycles, something close to the ethnographic perspective. But when I grabbed the rushes, obviously, I edited something that was my version of it.

I.T. From what you describe it, it seems to have a strong cinematic stake – since, probably, at first, the villages look more similar to us, as spectators, than to the people who lived in the first village and moved to the second. They notice that the trees are different, for one thing.

C.M. You'd have to watch it to tell, I guess. Because I'm partial too, I've been living with the villagers for a long time. After this documentary, I've made another film with an old woman in a large house...

I.T. You must've really liked "Sunset Boulevard", I guess. (giggles)

C.M. "Sunset Boulevard"! I did, actually. That film marked my childhood, I remember watching it when I was very young. (Nostalgic tone:) "I'm ready for my close up now". This time, in my new documentary, the woman I was filming was an artist and she worked with shadows. The film was observational and not really, because what happened is that she wanted to be in control of the film, she used it as a work of her own. She was a well-known artist in Berlin but, at the age of 45, she retired to her native village and started taking care of her beautiful garden. Later, her art became more and more abstract, she stopped doing paintings – the type of art you can put on your wall – and she became interested in the "theatre of shadows" – these performances with shadows and light. When I met her, she wasn't doing any of that, which was really disconcerting for me because – although what I expected was pretty conventional –, I thought I would see her make art. She told me "I'm not doing that anymore, my art is my garden". So it's a film about how she projects herself and her creativity in that garden. So, that was made in 2010 and it's called "**Through Shadows**". My last film, "The

Wolf's Lair", was made in 2014. I make films really slowly. (giggles)

I.T. Which brings us back to "**The Wolf's Lair**". How did the project start?

C.M. I was pushed into a PhD after teaching film for a long time and I was initially afraid of being forced to do theoretical, academic work because what I really enjoy is making films. But I discovered I could do a practical PhD and that's how I started working on this film. My initial proposal was to investigate how to represent dreams in documentaries – in fiction, a lot of films have dreams included and there are many clichés about them. Sure, there are experimental films like Maya Deren's that create dream imagery, but a lot of narrative films that use dreams are non-imaginative, they're just a way of pushing the plot forward, not much more. Anyway, I was interested in how dreams can help you, in a way, and how the fact that they're represented cinematically can make you learn more about yourself and the world around. It was a pretty broad idea, very abstract, too – about a form of cinema representing not only dreams, but also memories.

I did a lot of experiments – I wouldn't call them short films, because they're not finished, but experiments with dreams: I filmed a lot of people sleeping and, gradually, I started talking to people about their dreams. I started talking to my mother, who's a very pragmatic person about anything that's slightly troublesome. She likes to see herself as an incurable optimist, nothing is really a problem, you have to go straight ahead. She was never interested in digging into her trouble.

I.T. Your film also articulates the flipside to this optimism, though: somebody says that your family never talked as if they had feelings.

C.M. Yeah, it's true. Maybe because I make films and I use them to question myself, I put more passion into finding out stories and seeing how people relate to each other, the emotions involved.

I.T. What I found interesting about your film was this sort of cognitive exploration of how family stories work. It seemed to me that it's less about dreams and more about narrative ellipses.

C.M. Of course, that was only the starting point. Afterwards, it's about trying to understand how families construct their identities, which also means understanding how memory works and how you can trick memory; the link of memory with what actually happened is very fragile. I think if I said that my film is about my grandfather, it would be very reductive, because his character is used to see how everyone relates to each other and how they remember him.

I.T. What struck me when watching your film was the care for visual detail – it's constructed as a sort of long trek through the family album and every detail is scrutinized. I also wondered if this visual construction that frames your film was constructed first, before interviewing your relatives, or you built it to support what they were saying.

C.M. It started with the visuals. I was really interested in how families construct their image and I think that, after photography was invented, it played an important role. It was my mother who took care of putting together the family album, we didn't have one before. You have to keep in mind that it was rare at the time, especially in Portugal, for families to have home movies, for instance, even if my family was wealthy enough to afford it. It was through the visuals that I started seeing the film – it might seem redundant, but it's true. Also, discovering the archive materials with my grandfather was a breakthrough moment – that's when I said to myself, "Ok, I want to make a film about this".



I.T. I was also curious to ask about the resemblance between the women in your family – to me, it's obvious, although I know that it always seems more striking from the outside. It gives a sense of ritualistic repetition to the photographs, since the faces have in common distinguishable features.

C.M. I had this notion because everyone tells us that we look very similar. My sister isn't in this film, she just appears in a small photograph, but when I saw pictures of my aunt that you think looks a bit like me – she looks exactly like my sister. And in the last scene, when we were opening the package with the pipe bags, I even cut my hair to look more like my mother.

It's strange because daughters never want to look like their mothers and so, when everyone told me "you look just like my mother!", I didn't like it because it made me feel less independent.

I.T. The generation conflict, I guess. There's another thing that made me wonder, during the film, especially after seeing the archive footage with your grandfather – he presented the pipe pouches (in black and white) and commented on the nuances you'd see if television was in colour. And toward the end of your documentary, you recuperate the bags and actually shoot them in colour. There are many forms of visuals, belonging to different technologies, and it all sort of plays out as a history of image-making.

C.M. You know, these things happen. It wasn't intended to play out like that, but maybe in a sense I'm questioning it, when my grandfather says that television will never be as big and strong and capable of reproducing reality, the way that the human brain can do it. Also, I'm not sure how this seems outside of Portugal, but that television show with my grandfather now looks so slow and different to what's happening now. But I really love that slowness, the sense of it being uncut.



Cronici Film Muzică
Eseuri Film Știință & Tehnologie
Topuri Film Social
Cronici TV Reality Check
Eseuri TV Piggy Bank
Internet Contact

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Archive:

Catarina Mouráo: The Wolf's Lair

Skrevet den 07-08-2015 16:21:29 af Tue Steen Müller

Portuguese film director Catarina Mouráo pitched the film as a project back in Prague March 2013 at the Archidoc workshop with a brilliant trailer. I was there to



moderate the session. I knew Catarina from workshops in Lisbon, she was one of the founders of the Apordoc documentary association and I had watched several of her films (among them "The Lady from Chandor" from 1999) that always had a fine sense of aesthetics, helped by the unique cinematographer João Ribeiro.

The project started off from these lines from the Apordoc catalogue: "In the 1950'es my grandfather was committed to a psychiatric hospital, my uncle became a prisoner, and my mother aged 11 was sent to a boarding school... Based on the background of Salazar's dictatorship a true drama unfolds in a split family. Mouráo wants to "unravel secrets and mysteries" 38 years after the 1974 revolution." The film, I wrote back then, if it can keep the level of the teaser, has definitely a theatrical/festival potential. I saw it this morning and it keeps its promise.

Take a look at the photo – the director caressing a pipe pouche, a

bag for a pipe, in this case from the well known company Stanwell. From smoking experience I remember these bags, that the grandfather collected. As something special. In a clip from Portuguese television the grandfather, the writer Tomaz de Figueiredo (1902-1970) shows his collection, stating the limited possibilities of film compared to what the brain is able to do... the clip is b/w, you don't see the colours and you are not able to smell the remains of the tobacco that has been in the pipe that has been in the bag.

These pipe pouches lie in the house in Casares of the grandfather, where his daughter is living protecting his legacy and letting no access allowed for the younger sister, the mother of the director, who tries to get access. Without success. On the television clip – quite moving – the author says that he hopes

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Mallory

Magnificent7 Belgrade/

that one day one of his granddaughter or his great granddaughters, even if they have never met him, will find use of the pipe pouches... and remember him.

Catarina Mouráo has made a fascinating film using family archive of photos, tv clips with the grandfather, b/w film material to catch atmosphere of the time of the Salazar dictatorship – as she step by step with her own voice tells the story and reflects on why she wants to know about the grandfather and his hard destiny in the psychiatric hospital and is suffering, when his son is being imprisoned for being – as it is said – “a contra”. Mouráo visits the archives of the secret police and of the hospital and she has many conversations with her mother. These scenes are very moving, you see how difficult it is for the mother, who had no real contact with her father but – a strong introductory sequence – has had dreams about him, holding his hand, and there is a photo with that motive.

It's a very personal film, on the importance (so say it in a banal way) of finding out where you come from and do so while there are still someone around who can help you do so. But you need to be a good filmmaker to make it interesting for others. Mouráo has found a quiet, un-bombastic, subtle way to get us interested.

2015, Portugal, 102 mins.

<http://www.scottishdocinstitute.com/films/the-wolfs-lair-a-toca-do-lobo/>

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Report 1

Sylvain Biegeleisen:
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Allan Berg: Mand falder distribueres ad Danish Documentary:
<http://danishdocumentary.com/>
Skriv og spørg der.
Venligst Allan Berg...

Tina Sørensen: Jeg bor i Aarhus og nåede desværre ikke at se filmen Mand falder, da den kortvarigt kunne ses her. Kan man downloade den et sted - eller vises den et ...

JR: Not nice, but I couldn't agree more with Kossakovsky....

Sigrid Dyekjær: the film will premiere at IDFA around the 20th. Of November. ...

Krishan Arora: I like the thoughts about a different style of pitching Tue. Maybe we could learn from TED and do some of the pitches standing up with some moving aro...

Relevant websites

www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfo...

www.den2radio.dk/

www.dfi.dk/aktuelt

www.docomedy.blogspot...

www.dokweb.net/cs/

www.dr.dk/dokumania

- [Inscrição de Filmes](#)

- 18.5.2015 9:33 -

Jorge Mourinha: On Eye Opening



The names of the possible future winners of the 8th edition of the [Doc Alliance Selection Award](#) are already circulating across festivals and media. The luckiest of the [nominated directors](#) will receive the award on **August 8, 2015 in Locarno**. However, the important decision about the award winner is not brought by luck but rather by the jury comprised of seven leading European film critics. We are introducing the first one of them, Portuguese representative of [Público](#) Daily **Jorge Mourinha!**

Dear Jorge, it is our pleasure to welcome you on the DAFilms.com portal. First of all let me express our gratitude for your participation in the jury of the 8th edition of the international documentary competition Doc Alliance Selection Award and thus for your support of young emerging talents in the field of documentary cinema.

My pleasure, Andrea!

The competition is based on a collaboration of 7 key European documentary film festivals which create a platform known as Doc Alliance. Each festival nominates one juror from its country and one film regardless of the country of origin. You have been nominated by the Portuguese festival [Doclisboa](#). Why have you accepted the invitation? Why do you consider it important to participate in the jury?

Well for starters a big thank you to Doclisboa for the absolutely remarkable role they've been playing here in Portugal for 12 years now. I remember interviewing one of the festival's former directors, **Sérgio Tréfaut**, and in that interview he said that one of the intentions behind Doclisboa was to be a sort of public-service event that would open people's eyes to things they wouldn't otherwise be able to see and enrich their worldview. In many ways Doclisboa did that for me. I've been following the festival professionally for the past ten years and it's been an eye-opening, enriching experience that has allowed me to discover some of the finest filmmakers at work in the world right now. So when they invited me I thought this was a great opportunity to in some little way thank them for the incredible work they've been doing. I tend to politely decline every invitation I have so far received to be part of a jury but the opportunity to in some way help to bring worthwhile documentaries to a wider audience all over the world clinched this one for me.

Do you see any common link among this year's nominated films? Do they have something in common regarding topics, genre or style of filmmaking? How would you define the group of nominated films?

One of the aspects of documentary filmmaking – probably the most traditional and classical – is to have it be a very special type of witness to events happening right now in the world around us. It's clear to me that this year's crop of selections suggests that such an idea of the witness-documentary, of

the topical current-issues film, is again in the ascendance. Not having seen most of them yet, I'm curious to see how they will treat their chosen subjects. It's also curious to point out that the Portuguese selection is the one battling against the grain, so to speak.

You have a long-time experience of being a journalist in Portugal. You are a film critic of Público (daily newspaper) among many other media. What kind of space is offered to the topics of film and documentary film in Portuguese media?

I'm proud to say that Público is one of the few outlets where you can still see regular in-depth arts and culture reporting in a country where the media space devoted to arts, and film by consequence, is shrinking more and more. In a country where the box-office is continuously shrinking every year and American blockbusters seem to have the upper hand, it's a good sign that media outlets as a whole still make a point to speak of other, non-blockbuster films reaching screens or of the many festivals happening in the country, but there's only so much that the media can do when the audiences aren't there and the distributors and exhibitors tend to be more motivated by the short-term need for financial revenue than by a mid- to long-term strategy to keep the market alive and healthy. It's good that a few distributors and exhibitors believe there is an audience for documentary film and persist bullishly in releasing documentaries commercially. This week alone, we have three reaching theaters: Johannes Holzhausen's *The Great Museum*, Ulrich Seidl's *In the Basement*, Frederick Wiseman's *National Gallery*.

The last two winning films of the Doc Alliance Selection Award come from Portugal ([Captivity](#) by André Gil Mata in 2013 and [The Quest of the Schooner Creoula](#) by André Valentim Almeida). How do you reflect the contemporary Portuguese documentary scene? Do you follow any new trends or significant progress there?

As I'm sure you've heard, Portuguese filmmaking – whether fiction or documentary, feature or short film – has been struggling with financing issues, as the entire state-based system has been torn down and rebuilt. So a lot of the films that have been made are what I'd call “no-budget”, very personal pictures that are directly connected to the director's own experience. But even before the system collapsed, it's interesting to see that there is an intensely personal dimension to much of Portuguese documentary filmmaking, a sense of personal journal or video diary: I'm thinking of Gonçalo Tocha's *It's the Earth, Not the Moon* or Joaquim Pinto's *What Now? Remind Me*. So I think that both *Captivity* and *The Quest of the Schooner Creoula* are actually pretty good examples of the current “mainstream”, so to speak, of Portuguese documentary film, of a very personal cinema that finds ways to make do with what it's got and tries to use the personal to reach a wider, universal audience, though I like Almeida's film much better than Mata's. The [IndieLisboa](#) festival has just wrapped up here and in competition they did have a couple of documentaries that ran in that direction as well, one of them being another absolutely fantastic example of that personal-into-universal thing - [Catarina Mourão's](#) *The Wolf's Lair*, which builds on her own family history to create a wonderfully layered excursion into Portuguese history.

Outside the DAS Award, what are the films that have attracted most of your attention this year? Could you provide us with any titles we should not miss?

Again, Catarina Mourão's *The Wolf's Lair* premiered at Rotterdam I think and it's a gorgeous piece of filmmaking that deserves to break out in a way Gonçalo Tocha's or Joaquim Pinto's films did. I was also extremely impressed by Jean-Gabriel Périot's *A German Youth* – it's a remarkable work of archival research and editing that creates a very thought-provoking picture about the relationship between art and politics, and André Novais Oliveira's *She'll Be Back by Thursday* for its ingenious melding of documentary and fiction.

Thank you for your precious time, Jorge. We look forward to the winner of the DAS Award 2015 a lot!

3rd February 2015

The Best of IFFR 2015



[<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-nKC1->

[vrz9so/VNKSN9IETLI/AAAAAAAAAL68/2vUl6U0v0fs/s1600/Paradis.jpg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-nKC1-vrz9so/VNKSN9IETLI/AAAAAAAAAL68/2vUl6U0v0fs/s1600/Paradis.jpg)

Le paradis

The dearth of good new films by new directors continues to be reflected in the selection of films screened in the various sections of 2015's International Film Festival Rotterdam. A quick look in the catalogue seems to hide this, as the festival is traditionally used by the Benelux distributors to launch the most prominent films of the season: this year it saw the avant-premières of a number of films already released in Cannes ("Timbuktu", "Le meraviglie", "Amour fou"), Venice ("A Pidgeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence", "Loin des hommes") or in the US ("Inherent Vice", "A Most Violent Year"). Apart from the films in the Tiger competition, all the other sections in Rotterdam - like most festivals do - include films that are doing the festival circuit (reviewed in this blog in other festivals' reports: "Cavalo Dinheiro", "Buzzard" or "Heaven Knows What"). The good new films that are lacking are the ones that had their world premieres (or at least were being shown for the first time outside their countries of origin) in the IFFR. I also wonder (and I was not alone) what were doing in the festival a good many films screened: most of them are not reviewed here because I simply walked out. Does this mean that there is an actual *dirth*, that is difficult to select films at this time of the year (Rotterdam has to compete with Sundance and Berlin), or rather that Rotterdam is dangerously lowering its bar? This tendency was already felt in last year's edition, and a number of critics claim that the trend started long before. I am not so pessimistic, and I could even sense an improvement this year.

My favourite's list shows a strong presence of the documentary form (#2, 3, 6, 7 & 9), that would be even stronger if we added two more non-fiction films ("Le paradis" and "Five Year Diary"), leaving only three actual fiction features (#5, 8 & 10) - maybe the crisis is really of the narrative form...

1. **Le paradis** [<http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/01/rotterdam15-le-paradis-cosmodrama.html>] by **Alain Cavalier** (France)
2. **João Bénard da Costa - Outros Amarão as Coisas Que Eu Amei** [<http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/02/rotterdam15-joao-benard-da-costa-roger.html>] by **Manuel Mozos** (Portugal)
3. **Bitter Lake** [<http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/01/rotterdam15-bitter-lake-storm-children.html>] by **Adam Curtis** (UK)
4. **Five Year Diary Reels 22, 23 & 80** [<http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/01/rotterdam15-toca-do-lobo-five-year.html>] by **Anne Charlotte Robertson** (US)
5. **Maastik mitme kuuga (Landscape with Many Moons)** [http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/02/rotterdam15-landscape-with-many-moons_4.html] by **Jaan Toomik** (Estonia)
6. **Tomorrow Is Always Too Long** [<http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/01/rotterdam15-no-place-for-fools-tomorrow.html>] by **Phil Collins** (UK)
7. **A Toca do Lobo (The Wolf's Lair)** [<http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/01/rotterdam15-toca-do-lobo-five-year.html>] by **Catarina Mourão** (Portugal)
8. **Nøgle hus spejl (Key House Mirror)** [http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/02/rotterdam15-landscape-with-many-moons_4.html] by **Michael Noer** (Denmark)
9. **Mga anak ng unos (Storm Children - Book One)** [<http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/01/rotterdam15-bitter-lake-storm-children.html>] by **Lav Diaz** (Philippines)
10. **Tired Moonlight** [<http://cinefiloinvertebrado2.blogspot.pt/2015/01/rotterdam15-tired-moonlight-stinking.html>] by **Britni West** (US)

Laços de família, estilhaços de família

KATHLEEN GOMES 23/04/2015 - 10:12

O que é a família? Coincidência ou não, as quatro longas-metragens em competição nacional no IndieLisboa têm coisas a dizer sobre isso.



Um filme freudiano

O que é a família? Um buraco. Não é por acaso que o novo filme de Catarina Mourão se chama *A Toca do Lobo*. Ele começa profeticamente com uma descida: uma vez, numa sessão de hipnose, a mãe da realizadora imaginou-se no alto de uma grande escadaria; ao descer, encontrou o pai, figura ausente, a quem disseram que desse a mão; ela acordou, em lágrimas, no momento em que deram as mãos.



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A Toca do Lobo DR

A Toca do Lobo

Catarina Mourão

COMPETIÇÃO NACIONAL

Culturgest | 28 Abril |

21h30

Culturgest | 30 Abril |

16h30

Tem qualquer coisa de Alice no País das Maravilhas esta expedição ao mistério de uma família: há encontros fantásticos, portas fechadas, uma tia sentenciadora. Quando uma realizadora volta a câmara para a sua própria família, isso não é necessariamente familiar. “Quando abro os álbuns de família da minha mãe há uma sensação de estranheza porque não tenho familiaridade nenhuma com aquelas

pessoas”, diz Catarina Mourão, 46 anos, notando que o lado paterno da família lhe foi sempre mais próximo e lugar de afectividade.

A Toca do Lobo começou como um projecto do doutoramento que a realizadora está a fazer na Universidade de Edimburgo, na Escócia. A ideia inicial era, explica, “explorar a questão das memórias que bloqueamos, os sonhos, o inconsciente e como isso é representado no cinema”.

A sessão de hipnose da mãe era o catalisador disso, mas Catarina Mourão não tinha pensado em fazer um filme sobre a sua própria família. Quando ela olhava os álbuns de fotografia, a sua família parecia-lhe “igual às outras – acomodada e funcional”, como diz no filme. Mas a descoberta de um antigo programa de televisão nos arquivos da RTP com o avô materno, que ela nunca conheceu, foi profética: o avô parece estar a falar-lhe directamente, de um tempo em que Catarina ainda não era

nascida. “Aí foi o momento em que eu disse: este filme tem de ser sobre o meu avô. Porque senti que, de uma forma quase fantasmagórica, ele me estava a convocar para fazer este filme.”

O avô de Catarina, Tomás de Figueiredo, publicou vários livros, mas *A Toca do Lobo* não é um filme biográfico. É, antes, uma investigação obstinada onde as memórias de família são confrontadas e postas em causa. Por que é que a mãe de Catarina cresceu longe do pai? Por que é que ele foi internado num hospital psiquiátrico? É verdade que quis entregar o próprio filho à Pide?

Muitas das histórias que a família contou a si própria para sobreviver são falsas. “O filme está cheio de ficções”, diz a realizadora. “O objectivo não é encontrar ‘a verdade’ e responder a todas as questões. Pelo contrário: não sei até que ponto não saio do filme com mais perguntas ainda do que quando comecei. Não sei se sei mais ou se sei menos do que sabia inicialmente.”

Este não é um filme sobre o passado, como se ele estivesse inerte, à espera de ser desvendado ou descrito. O filme assenta numa cadeia transgeracional, freudiana: sendo um filme sobre o avô de Catarina, é também um filme sobre a sua mãe, e um filme sobre a realizadora, como se cada um se prolongasse no outro. Até os filhos de Catarina estão no filme, implicados, como se a genealogia fosse uma conexão inescapável. “Passado, presente e futuro estão todos juntos ali como se fossem um só”, resume.

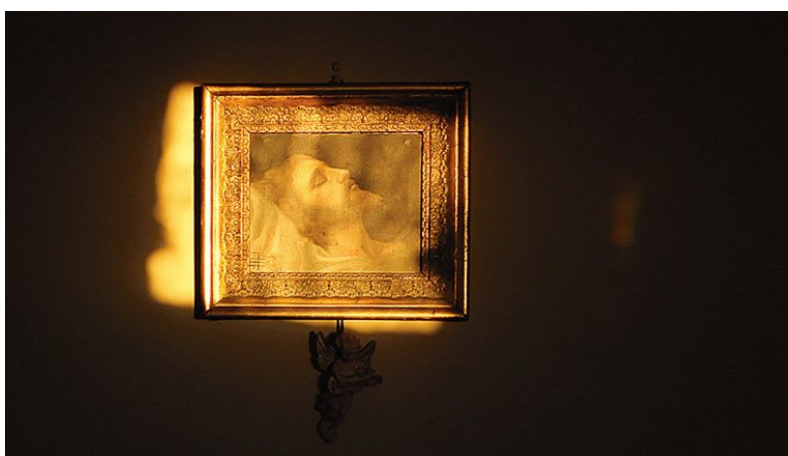
É um filme diferente dos anteriores por incidir sobre a família da realizadora? Por colocar a mãe à frente da câmara? “A proximidade da história de família, não acho que seja muito diferente. Agora, com a minha mãe, sim. Filmei a minha mãe milhares de vezes. Da primeira vez o microfone não funcionava, da segunda vez o enquadramento não estava bem. Eram actos falhados contínuos”, diz Catarina Mourão. “Apesar de ser a minha mãe, em cinema as pessoas são sempre outra coisa. E isso não é diferente de qualquer outro filme. Foi preciso tempo. Se não, mais tempo ainda. Porque eu conheço-a, portanto topava quando é que a minha mãe se estava a defender.”

O filme é narrado na primeira pessoa pela realizadora, que também aparece – questionando a mãe ou organizando fotografias e documentos como um detective. “Eu sabia que eventualmente a minha voz iria aparecer. Mas mal comecei a filmar a minha mãe, não me pareceu justo ela estar ali sozinha. Achei que havia momentos em que eu teria de estar

com ela. Apareço com ela e depois apareço mais em ligações a coisas, de costas, a mexer nas coisas. Achei importante esse lado de ‘escritório’. É muito um filme de papelinhos, de coisas que se colam.”

Vertigo

Gipsofila também é um filme sobre a família e ligações umbilicais. E também é um filme que integra o seu próprio processo de procura no resultado final, mas aqui não há segredos nem omissões nem tabus familiares a propulsionar o caminho. *Gipsofila* parece ser feito com muito pouco: a realizadora, Margarida Leitão, levou a câmara para a casa da avó, sem programa prévio nem intenção muito definida, e foi filmando a rotina das duas, fechadas naquele espaço.



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Gipsofila DR

Gipsofila

Margarida Leitão

COMPETIÇÃO NACIONAL
Culturgest | 27 Abril |
21h30

Culturgest | 2 Maio | 15h

O filme, um documentário, é um trabalho de mestrado. “Depois de vários anos a fazer filmes – curtas de ficção e documentários – senti a necessidade de repensar a minha prática de cinema. Isso foi motivado pelo meu regresso à escola de cinema para tirar o mestrado”, explica Margarida Leitão, 39. “Tive vontade de pegar eu na câmara, coisa que nunca tinha feito até agora porque trabalhei sempre com directores de fotografia.”

FESTIVAL DE ROTERDÃO



Dois filmes em confronto com um sentimento de perda: o notável "A Toca do Lobo" (Portugal), de Catarina Mourão e "Poet on a Business Trip" (China), de Ju Anqi

familiar' a que nos referimos é a da realizadora. À partida, julgamos estar perante um invulgar álbum íntimo que vai unir quatro gerações da mesma família, recuando a uns anos 40 em que esta vivia confortavelmente em Lisboa, em pleno Estado Novo. Contudo, à medida que as dúvidas da cineasta se vão entrelaçando, levando-a a recorrer a material de arquivo (de *home movies* descobertos por acaso a uma 'visionária' entrevista a Tomaz de Figueiredo feita nos anos 60 para um programa da RTP), é a um fundo de *thriller* que o filme se entrega: em que circunstâncias, envoltas em segredo, terminou o avô os seus dias? Porque se separou ele da mãe da cineasta a dada altura? Porque não falam mãe e tia há mais de três décadas? E o que aconteceu ao tio, um resistente ao fascismo, preso pela PIDE, de quem a família evitava falar? Neste inquérito pessoal, necessariamente afetivo, "A Toca do Lobo" supera, afinal, o seu registo autobiográfico, revelando tabus e não-ditos de uma vida portuguesa sob a ditadura, bem como as suas consequências no presente.



Entrevista

Catarina Mourão presenta en la 3 Semana del Cine Portugués el documental "A Toca do Lobo"



Juan Pablo Russo

29/10/2015 19:12



La directora **Catarina Mourão** presenta en la 3 Semana del Cine Portugués su último documental **A Toca do Lobo** (2015), retrato de su familia a partir de una investigación centrada en la figura de su abuelo, el escritor **Tomás de Figueiredo**. De visita en Argentina dialogó en exclusiva con **EscribiendoCine**.



Película relacionada



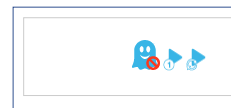
A Toca do Lobo
(2015)

A Toca do Lobo es un documental personal donde la directora revela historias de su familia a partir de una investigación centrada en la figura de su abuelo materno, **Tomaz de Figueiredo**. Escritor de la época de la dictadura cuyo nombre fue immortalizado en varias calles del país – siempre, por alguna razón extraña, en los suburbios de las ciudades– **Figueiredo** está, hoy, casi olvidado. Incluso su nieta, la directora, no conocía la mayor parte de su obra, y ni siquiera había leído su novela más conocida, *A Toca do Lobo*, cuyo título la película evoca. Pero un día, animada por el comentario de un familiar, **Catarina Mourão** encuentra en los archivos de la televisión pública nacional una entrevista con su abuelo, de 1968, y descubre en ella una motivación para conocer mejor

el pasado de su familia.

¿Qué te llevó a trabajar sobre los recuerdos familiares para construir este retrato de tu abuelo?

Construir un retrato de mi abuelo fue el pretexto para hacer un film sobre memorias y la forma como las construimos a partir de archivos de familia. Así, la primera fuente de pesquisa tenía que ser inevitablemente el archivo personal y familiar hecho de álbumes, fotos, cartas y films de familia. Más allá de este archivo mas físico habría que explorar un archivo mas invisible hecho de memorias mas o menos



ccionales y de sueños.

¿Por qué tu abuelo era un desconocido para vos antes de *A Toca do Lobo*?

Esa es una de las preguntas a las que el film intenta contestar. Mi abuelo fue un tabú para mi mamá. Así, aunque no fuera un tabú para mí, heredé ese vacío y ese silencio. Solo ahora con la película decidí desenterrar historias en el intento de dar sentido a ese silencio.

¿Cómo fue encuadrar tu historia familiar dentro de un contexto político que marcó tanto a Portugal?

Este encuadramiento de una historia personal en el contexto social y político fue inevitable y natural. Todos los acontecimientos que fui descubriendo en el pasado de la familia, (mi tío preso por la PIDE, mi abuelo internado en el hospital) solo tenían sentido encuadrados en el contexto social y político de un país sufocado por una dictadura de 48 años.

La mayor parte de la película está construida a partir de los recuerdos de tu madre ¿Qué desafíos te propusiste al llevarla a emprender ese viaje a través de los recuerdos familiares?

Llevar a mi mamá en este viaje a través de sus memorias envolvió varios desafíos. Por un lado era importante sentir que este viaje era bueno para ella, que no la iba a debilitar pero, al revés, la iba a enriquecer. Pero, al mismo tiempo, era importante que mi mamá se auto cuestionase a lo largo de la película sobre ciertas memorias o versiones sobre su infancia que se cristalizaron. O sea, era importante sentir un cambio de mi mamá en relación a su papá, a lo largo de la película.

¿Fuiste descubriendo otra historia a medida que avanzabas en la investigación?

Sí, fui descubriendo muchas cosas a medida que fui conociendo a mi abuelo o a medida que fui construyendo mi versión de su retrato. Pero también fui sorprendida por muchos silencios, tabúes y puertas cerradas. Aprendí, a lo largo del film, que también estos eran descubrimientos que deberían ser interpretados.

¿Pensás que cierta parte de la obra de tu abuelo está implícita en tu cinematografía?

Creo que no. Hago films hace algunos años y solo ahora me encontré con su obra. Solamente si fuera por un mecanismo inconsciente de post-memoria. Sin embargo es claro que puedo arriesgar que con este film establecí un diálogo con la obra de mi abuelo en la medida en que tanto en la película como en su obra existe una dimensión auto-reflexiva, una narrativa en la primera persona y el intento de representar un universo más mental y onírico.

Esta no es tu primera película sobre un artista, ¿hay algo que te moviliza a trabajar sobre ellos?

No especialmente. **Por las Sombras** (Pelás Sombras, 2010) sobre la artista **Lourdes de Castro**, y este film, **A Toca do Lobo**, tratan efectivamente personajes que tienen una obra artística pero todos mis otros films giran alrededor de personajes que de alguna forma están desplazados en el tiempo o que buscan cuestionar el presente a través de sus acciones. Son generalmente personajes que viven un cierto conflicto interior con el espacio/ microcosmos que los rodea.

Comentarios

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inicio » espectáculos

29/10/2015 13:05 [Cine portugués](#)

Catarina Mourao presenta “A toca do lobo”

“A TOCA DO LOBO” (“EL REFUGIO DEL LOBO”), ES UN FILME DE CATARINA MOURAO ACERCA DE SU ABUELO, EL NOVELISTA, CUENTISTA Y POETA LUSITANO TOMAZ DE FIGUEIREDO (1902-1970), EXPONENTE DE UN ESTILO PROPIO TAN ANTIGUO COMO MODERNO EN LA DÉCADA DEL 60, QUE SE PUEDE VER EN BUENOS AIRES EN EL MARCO DE LA 3RA SEMANA DEL CINE PORTUGUÉS QUE SE DESARROLLA DESDE HOY Y HASTA EL DOMINGO EN EL MALBA Y LA SALA LUGONES.

etiquetas

cine Portugal

multimedia



El filme, que toma el nombre de una de los más célebres relatos de Figueiredo publicado en 1947, repasa la historia del personaje y también la de su momento en el mundo de las letras, de su mundo y la relación con su tiempo político, su familia, su hija, y también su nieta dispuesta

a encontrar la historia de aquel hombre y relacionarla con el presente de su propia vida.

Mourao, como lo hicieron los argentinos Andrés Di Tella con “Fotografías” y Javier Olivera con la inminente “La sombra”, toma una figura familiar como eje central, y diseña con prolijidad de arquitecta la perspectiva que le permita reconstruir a la distancia aquel personaje que, a pesar de ser su abuelo, tiene un significado que va más allá de su protagonismo en la literatura de su país.

La cineasta, autora de “Desassossego”, “A flor da pele” y “Pelos sombras”, acerca de la artista plástica portuguesa Lourdes Castro, contó para este repaso familiar con numerosos álbumes familiares, documentación variada, e incluso filmaciones y en especial un viejo programa de TV acerca de singulares coleccionistas donde aparece Figueiredo mostrando su secreta galería de fundas para pipas.

-¿Por proximidad, tomar como eje de un documental a un familiar, no implica renunciar a objetividad?

-La idea del cine nunca fue la objetividad, fue siempre explorar un punto de vista. En este film, el universo que quiero tratar es aparentemente un universo cercano pero simultáneamente distante. A veces la familiaridad puede tornarse muy extraña, es lo que Freud denomina el “uncanny”. Los álbumes, las fotografías y los filmes de familia son archivos tal como las memorias y los sueños, y eso es perfectamente asumido en la película.

-Igualmente, el desafío sigue existiendo...

-El desafío no era tanto tornar más objetivo lo que es familiar pero sí tornar lo familiar en universal. Y para eso es fundamental envolver emocionalmente al espectador.

-¿Cómo fue el proceso de búsqueda de material propio y ajeno?

-El proceso de pesquisa, el rodaje y el montaje de la película se fueron dando más o menos en simultáneo. Fui encontrando historias, fui filmando, fui montando. Y después volvía nuevamente a encontrar nuevas pistas que a veces hasta contradecían las pistas iniciales o las memorias de mi mamá. Quise que el film, más allá de la narrativa más cronológica sobre la historia de mi abuela y de mi mamá, reflejase mi propio viaje navegando por los archivos que iba encontrando.

-El hecho de tener mucho material familiar del tema encarado, ¿facilita o complica la posibilidad de sintetizar una historia tan vasta?

-En principio tener mucho material nos permite tener más opciones, un diseño más rico de la historia en su complejidad. Pero después es necesario saber elegir para tornar la historia inteligible. A veces se nos es negado el acceso a material, a veces somos confrontados con puertas cerradas y silencios y eso también es “material” en si mismo, un hallazgo que quise incorporar en la película. El hecho de nunca haber logrado entrar en Casares, a la casa de mi abuelo, fue determinante y moldeó el film que hice. Fue frustrante pero simultáneamente liberador.

-La abundancia de fotografías de notable calidad ayudaron en la tarea, más allá de que también hay filmaciones caseras de varias épocas.

-Sí, haber encontrado filmes antiguos en buen estado de conservación y en los que quien filmaba tenía una mirada cinematográfica ayudó muchísimo. Fueron estos descubrimientos de filmes caseros, así como un fantasmagórico programa de TV con mi abuelo, que desencadenaron las ganas de hacer la película.

-¿Qué dificultades tuvo, a nivel familiar para encarar a semejante personaje, y cuál fue el mayor obstáculo que tuvo en el rodaje?

-Creo que transformé la dificultad en una fuerza del film. El film es sobre la opacidad y el silencio que dominaron 48 años en Portugal y que claramente tuvieron efectos en la esfera más familiar y personal de la vida de los portugueses. Mi tía, a partir del momento en el que no quiere colaborar en la película e impide mi visita a la casa de mi abuelo, se torna en un personaje casi ficcional pero ausente del film. Ella es obra de una construcción sobre su identidad y una metáfora perfecta para toda una época.

-Tu obra aborda un subgénero del documental que es el de la obra autorreferencial...

-Hacer un film en primera persona con esta dimensión auto reflexiva implica un nivel de exposición que yo desconocía. Se trata del primero que hice con mi voz en off y en el que yo aparezco. En el inicio la idea no era esa pero a medida que fui filmando las conversaciones con mi mamá se hizo inevitable mi presencia en la película. No podía dejar a mi mamá hablando sola en la pantalla. Este viaje era un viaje de las dos. Claro que este abordaje más autobiográfico coloca muchos desafíos.

-Es imposible salir del gran tema que es una historia personal...

-Se trata de intentar que una historia personal sea relevante para los demás, sea tratada con suficiente profundidad que permita que otras personas se vean en ella o que se envuelvan en su viaje y que las memorias personales tengan eco en un contexto social y político mas vasto.

-¿Qué cree haber aprendido haciendo este trabajo?

-Aprendí que la gran cuestión en el documental es la distancia justa en relación al que queremos filmar y, en este caso, no es muy distinto. Aquí era importante en muchas ocasiones distanciarme de la historia que estaba contando, olvidar que era la mía y mirarla desde afuera. Es un ejercicio difícil pero no más difícil que filmar el "otro" y tener la pretensión de que le podemos dar una voz y representarlo como pasa en los documentales que no son autobiográficos.

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Artes



Doc's Kingdom: o convívio íntimo com o cinema

Artes

19 DE SETEMBRO DE 2015
12:54

Inês Lourenço



PARTILHAS



ENVIAR POR EMAIL



IMPRIMIR



PUB

O Doc's Kingdom regressa, desta feita em Arcos de Valdevez. Catarina Mourão assina o filme de abertura. A Toca do Lobo é sobre o seu avô, escritor da terra.

É sob o título "Todas as Fronteiras" que o Doc's Kingdom abre a sua 12ª edição. O seminário internacional fundado em 2000, e que até 2010 se concretizou em Serpa - tendo passado pelos Açores em 2013 -, desta vez, **assenta a bússola no Alto Minho, em Arcos de Valdevez, a poucos minutos de Espanha. Mantendo-se numa linha alternativa aos festivais de cinema, esta é uma proposta ímpar, que promove o diálogo entre realizadores e participantes, autores e espectadores, em sessões diárias seguidas de debate.**

As inscrições estão abertas por ordem de chegada, ao custo de 25 euros, e garantem acesso às 14 sessões que decorrem até 25 de setembro. Embora todos esses dias contemplem filmes pré-anunciados, o alinhamento não é conhecido, de modo a que a **experiência dos participantes se pautе pela imersão total no discurso coletivo que se vai construindo.** Esta aparente falta de coordenadas tem, no entanto, pontos fortes de orientação: os realizadores convidados.

Entre outros, o brasileiro Adirley Queirós vai apresentar a sua premiada longa-metragem Branco Sai, Preto Fica, Eric Baudelaire dá uma conferência sobre o último trabalho que realizou, Letters to Max (vencedor da primeira edição do Porto/Post/Doc), e o israelita Eyal Sivan traz o extenso filme-viagem. Route 181. Fragments of a journey in Palestine-Israel.

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INDIELISBOA 2015

Uncovering family secrets in *The Wolf's Lair*

by VÍTOR PINTO

23/04/2015 - Catarina Mourão paints a portrait of her family by means of an investigation centred on the figure of her grandfather, author Tomaz de Figueiredo



Following *Pelas Sombras* (2010), **Catarina Mourão** is back at IndieLisboa to present her latest documentary, *The Wolf's Lair* [+], in the national competition. The movie is a personal project in which the director reveals stories about her family by means of an investigation centred on her grandfather, Tomaz de Figueiredo. Figueiredo was an author during the dictatorship era, whose name was immortalised through various street names across the country, but is today all but forgotten. Even his granddaughter, the director, did not know the majority of his body of work, and she hadn't even read his best-known novel, *The Wolf's Lair*. But one day, spurred on by a remark made by a relative, Mourão was searching through the archives of the national public television station when she came across an interview with her grandfather, dating from 1968, and this footage gave her the motivation to get to know her family's past a little better.

(The article continues below - Commercial information)

Mourão has created an essay about memory – and the tricks it plays on us – in order to untie the knot of mystery surrounding the figure of her grandfather. Blending archive images of Salazar-era Portugal with old family films and photographs, *The Wolf's Lair* conveys a large part of its narrative arc through interviews with Maria Rosa, the director's mother. It is a rather cathartic process, as the youngest of the author's three children was also the one who had been deprived of her father's presence ever since her childhood. Figueiredo, who struck a balance between literature and other areas of work, spent long periods of time away from home and was admitted to a mental hospital more than once. The reasons for those absences resulted in the daughter's coldness towards her father, something that is impossible to make amends for today, more than 40 years later...

But perhaps even more interesting than delving into the dramas of a family is the delicate and effective way in which Mourão frames those dramas in a wider context, that of a country stifled by the dictatorship. From the influence of religion on an upper-class upbringing that left no room for being different, which her mother experienced, to the parallel investigations into her uncle's resistance in the past, the director manages to let her film take on a social dimension that rises above that of being a mere personal portrait. From a distance, it gives us a glimpse of a Portugal that no longer exists, but which left behind a legacy of frustration for many of those who lived through it. Fortunately, the final scene of the movie, which incorporates the new generation of the family, seems to point to the path towards overcoming the past, and towards the peaceful integration of that past into a brighter present.

The Wolf's Lair is a Laranja Azul production that forms part of the promotional catalogue of the recently founded Portugal Film.

(Translated from Spanish)

See also

[The Wolf's Lair \[PT\] \(2015\): film profile, film review, trailer](#)

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Appendix 3 – paper published in *Photography and Cinema : 50 years of Chris Marker's La Jetée* edited by Margarida Medeiros, Teresa Mendes Flores and Joana Cunha Leal. Cambridge scholars publishing 2015.

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