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Culture and Gentrification on Upper Long Street

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Culture and Gentrification on Upper Long Street

A STUDY OF LONG STREET'S EVOLUTION AND
CONTEMPORARY INCARNATION, WITH A LOOK AT
DOCUMENTARY STYLES AND THE CINEMATIC CITY.

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*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Quique metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum,
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.*

'Happy the man who has learned the causes of things,
and has put under his feet all fears,
and inexorable fate, and the noisy strife of the hell of greed'

-Virgil

University of Cape Town

SPIDER:

Hey Man, jisis! Even these Long Street pigeons have changed. Not just everything else in Long Street, but even the fucking pigeons! They used to sit up there on the roof and shit in the gutter. Decent, polite. For years, controlled kakking: the 70s, the 80s. Then the gutter fell down in 1994, the day right after the election. So full of dove shit it couldn't hold. Crash! But do the pigeons find another gutter? Like over there at the flats? Or over the bookshop? No. They sit just here, where there is no gutter. Where it's not even safe, or comfortable for a dove to sit, because of the sloping roof. Here they sit now, uncomfortable, and shit. On me!

No Space on Long Street (2000)

-Pieter-Dirk Uys

University of Cape Town

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University of Cape Town

Part One

Culture and Gentrification on Upper Long Street

1.1 Introduction

As one of the most heterogeneous streets in Cape Town, Upper Long Street holds an allure over Capetonians and visitors alike. Noting its extensive Victorian-era architecture, variety of shops, bars, restaurants, places of worship, residences, and artists, this paper aims to gain an understanding of the uniqueness of Upper Long Street.

'A city, like a forest, is a delicately balanced ecosystem, always in transition' (Halprin 1973: 18). I intend using the concept of gentrification as a framework for understanding the complex processes of change that have taken place on Upper Long Street over the last four decades.

Coined by Ruth Glass in 1964, gentrification is a process where 'one by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant residences... once this process of gentrification starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district has changed' (Slater 2003: 20).

According to a study by Kotze and van de Merwe (2000), both Lower Gardens and De Waterkant conform to this classic definition of gentrification.

While Long Street's evolution does not conform completely to the classical definition of gentrification, it does contain elements of this process, and is, I propose, a useful framework to gain a better understanding of Long Street's evolution and character. (An alternative, more informal, and watered down word for gentrification, is trendification, definitely pertinent to Long Street's latest guise.)

Certainly, numerous definitions exist, indicating the broad nature of the gentrification process. Neil Smith (1996: 12) defines gentrification as 'the process... by which poor and working class neighbourhoods in the inner city are refurbished via an influx of private capital and middle class homebuyers and renters...' Kotze and van der Merwe propose a definition that incorporates forms of neighbourhood change, 'but without the necessity of residential succession or displacement of lower class households.' (Kotze and van der Merwe 2000: 10). The displacement of a working class residential street by affluent and trendy business is a most accurate description of the history of Long Street.

Smith (1996: 101) goes on to state that 'it may not be possible even to derive useful generalisations concerning the different experiences of gentrification in different cities and different neighbourhoods. Local specificities overwhelm any possible generalisations,' while Slater (2002: 59) says that 'different perspectives on gentrification exist because they are constructed from observations of different urban contexts. It is hard to think of a more convincing argument for gentrification as a varied process – a differentiated process with a complex geography.'

Two schools of thought, one focusing on production, the other on consumption, were until recently at loggerheads in their respective analyses of the gentrification process. Today it is acknowledged that both the production theory – a structural

marxist view, and consumption theory – a liberal humanist view, are both valid and important to understanding the gentrification process.

Fundamental to all definitions of gentrification, though, is class, underlining the strength of the production school of thought, as espoused by Neil Smith (1996). When riot police forcefully evicted homeless people from Tomkins Square Park in New York's Lower East Side in 1988, placards read 'Gentrification is Class War'. Authorities acted with great force to remove homeless people from the park, so as to make the neighbourhood more up-market.

A complex set of processes have seen Upper Long Street evolve from a characterful but stagnating street, to a newly invigorated one due to conservation efforts, tourism and concomitant commercialisation. This paper will proceed to study this evolution highlighting artists, the Group Areas Act, conservation, tourism, commerce and the City Improvement District. My aim is to form a coherent understanding of Long Street today within the broad framework of gentrification.

1.2 Artists

Long Street has had a bohemian sub-culture since at least the 1950s, with artists drawn by its low rent and cosmopolitan city experience. From 1972 to 1979, the Space Theatre ran as an independent platform for both established and up-and-coming dramatists and thespians. Somehow the theatre kept going despite little funding and the watchful eye of state security; the opening of The Baxter theatre in Rondebosch was its death knell.

Satirist and playwright, Pieter-Dirk Uys, lived on Long Street during the 1970s writing many plays during this time, some of which were performed at the Space Theatre. *Carnival* is a play written from his balcony window where he overlooked Carnival Court, a low-rent hotel filled with colourful characters. *No Space on Long Street* is a retrospective play written as a tribute to the Space Theatre's 25th anniversary in 1997.

Ex-Michaelis student, Brett Murray, lived on Long Street from 1986 until 2000 in the same apartment as Pieter-Dirk Uys, above what is today Lola's. During the 1980s he undertook a poster campaign, leaving signs with 'Take Chances' written on it along the street. Besides being monitored by state security for his political activism, Murray also charted the changes of a street evolving from quaint backwater with drunken sailors and prostitutes to trendy strip with ever growing hip night life and boutiques, from quiet residential street to constantly bustling area of business.

Photographers like Arthur Elliot in the early twentieth century, Ted Payne (South Africa's first newsreel cameraman), Billy Monk in the 1960s and Jeff Barbee today, have lived and worked on the street. Wilhelm Langschmidt, Christiaan Schonegevel and Pierneef are some of the better-known artists to have lived and worked on Long street in previous centuries.

According to Zukin (1996: 130), it is the presence of artists 'in studios, lofts, and galleries [that] puts a neighbourhood on the road to gentrification'. While gentrification in certain cities, like the Soho and Tribeca neighbourhoods in New York City, was ignited by artists, Long Street's creativity and artists cannot be said to have directly sparked off a property development drive. Yet according to Smith (1996: 122) 'Representing and patronising the neighbourhood as a cultural mecca,

the culture industry attracted tourists, consumers, gallery gazers, art patrons, potential immigrants – all fuelling gentrification.’ This is a good example of the consumption school of thought, acknowledging the importance of culture in the gentrification process.

1.3 The Group Areas Act

While the process of racial segregation had been insidiously underway long before the National Party attained power in 1948, the Group Areas Act of 1950 cemented this policy, ending all mixed areas in South African cities. In Cape Town, all people of colour were to be moved east of the Simon’s Town railway line, and south of the Bellville railway line... into the Cape Flats.

Long Street was considered a gray area until long after the Group Areas Act had been instituted in Cape Town during the 1960s. Meintjies (2003: 23) describes the street during that period as follows: ‘People lived close to work. Cafes and restaurants stayed open until late at night. People from nearby District Six would go home, get dressed up and come back to the city to promenade and meet friends. Aggie Omar, who owned a fruit and vegetable shop on Long Street until the eighties, said the street was “like District Six, only smaller”’. Since then, the forced removals and gentrification ‘have pushed out the old residents of upper Long Street to make way for offices, backpacker lodges and clubs.’ (Meintjies 2003: 25).

A comparison can be made to New York’s Tomkins Square Park, where hundreds of homeless people were forcibly evicted from the park in 1988, and again in 1989 and 1991. As with Long Street there was a state intervention with forced removals, but in

this case class bound (to uplift the neighbourhood), and not race bound as in the Group Areas Act.

It is generally acknowledged that gentrification in South Africa has not followed the classic definition. The Group Areas Act – forced removals based on race – gives gentrification in South Africa its uniqueness. In the case of District Six, an entire neighbourhood was razed to the ground, and over 60,000 people relocated to the Cape Flats (though the land was never redeveloped. No Cape Town building contractor was prepared to touch that land).

But Long Street is unusual in that right through the 1960s, 70s and 80s, a handful of people of colour still resided on the street, and owned some businesses. Declared a commercial zone in 1974, people of colour could still operate out of Long Street, and with the Bo Kaap remaining a 'Malay' district, clientele for these businesses and the mosques always remained.

A row of so-called slum dwellings was pulled down on Vredenburg Avenue, which runs off Upper Long Street, in the late 1960s. But some businesses like James Electrical, the Key Boutique and the Silver shop have been in operation since the 1950s, run by people of colour. A coloured couple, Theresa and Midi Achmat have been living on the street since the 1970s while white and coloured tenants lived cheek by jowl in the original Carnival Court hotel and Blue Lodge which were redeveloped in 1991.

1.4 Conservation and Property Development

Although historic preservation movements were already underway in cities like New York in the early 1960s, 'conservation-oriented development control endeavours' (Townsend 2003: 156) were only carried out between 1986 and 2000 in Cape Town to ensure buildings of historic value could not be altered in any way. Although numerous historic buildings had already been demolished and replaced by modern buildings (known as 'infill'), the albeit belated official recognition of the worth of historic buildings helped Long Street to retain its historic feel.

Another reason Long Street (in particular upper Long Street) has so many historic buildings is that it was safely out of the way of the development drive that ran along roads like Strand Street and Riebeek Street – roads that link the city to the Atlantic seaboard and the southern and northern suburbs.

The explicit acknowledgement of the value of Long Street's buildings was, I propose, a major step in the gentrification of the street. Historic preservation 'indicates the rehabilitation of an area or building while still enabling present land use activity to be maintained' (AEA Town and regional Planners 1982: 12).

As one of the first areas of Cape Town to undergo conservation measures starting in 1982, Long street was then described by Desiree Picton-Seymour, a leading authority on South African Victorian architecture, as a street 'that could belong to no other city than Cape Town; mosques, banks, shops, theatres, hotels, churches, etc, are all backed by vistas of Table Mountain, Signal Hill and the sea' (AEA Town and Regional Planners 1982: 15).

The idea at the start of the conservation drive was to take advantage of the potential of the area as a special historic sector of Cape Town. The Upper Long Street Conservation Study stated it as such: 'If there is a guaranteed trend of upliftment in the area, owners will feel more secure about outlaying money for restoration purposes. Attracting tourists to the Long Street area through the upgrading of the historical architecture increases trade, improves the quality of shopping offered and increases property values.' (AEA Town and Regional Planners 1982: 22).

At this stage Long Street was stagnating, but the conservation drive gave the street a boost, which I would propose the street is still experiencing. With the new state-sanctioned policies, property developers slowly moved in, acting within the strict conservation regulations. In 1991, Bob McGawley, an Englishman, renovated Carnival Court, located in a three-story Edwardian building, turning it from a hotel for the 'destitute and prostitute' (Cape Times, 4 May 1991) to a smart bed and breakfast.

He was quoted at the time as saying: 'My idea is to take over this top end of the street, which has always been known as a grotty area, and clean it up so that people will know that at this end of Long Street one can get decent accommodation.' (Cape Times, 4 May 1991). Carnival Court before renovations in 1990 was described as follows: 'rubbish piling up, broken toilets, holes in walls and floors, no caretaker, fighting in the corridors, broken lock on the door to the street, strangers asleep in the toilets, urine and vomit in the baths' (Argus, 21 June 1990). Numerous long-term residents were evicted prior to renovations.

Mr Devereaux, then landlord, described Long Street as 'unsafe at night and terribly run down. We're trying to breathe new life into the street while keeping its

residential flavour' (Argus, 21 June 1990). As Smith states, 'the economic geography of gentrification is not random; developers do not just plunge into the heart of slum opportunity, but tend to take it piece by piece' (1996: 110).

In the case of Carnival Court, long-term tenants were given minimal notice of eviction, and as Francisca Jones, an evictee, said, 'I'll just stroll the beaches, sleep here, sleep there, even if I have to take a thousand men. They want us to be like that so what can we do?' (Argus, 21 June 1990). The same developer then moved across the road to the Blue lodge, where the same set of changes took place.

Kotze and van der Merwe summarise their study on gentrification in Cape town by saying, 'In most cities of the world urban change and renewal are established processes, and it is also known who is doing the upgrading and where gentrification is taking place in Cape Town. But a question that remains unanswered is: what happens to people in Cape Town as well as other cities of the world who are displaced by gentrification?' (2000: 19).

New York's Tomkins Square Park residents, the last bastion in a neighbourhood where property developers had already gentrified the area, were forcibly moved away in the same year as McGawley's Long Street investments. In New York, riot police charged through the park, and the homeless were literally swept away to a poor neighbourhood. Out of sight, out of mind.

1.5 Commerce

Smith says: 'For all the interpretive cultural optimism that shrouds it, the new urban frontier is also a resolutely economic creation.' (1996: 119). Central to Smith's study

of gentrification is the rent gap theory. This is 'the gap between the capitalised ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a higher and better use' (1996: 156).

The rent gap theory was central in the case of Bob McGawley redeveloping Carnival Court and the Blue Lodge. McGawley saw an opportunity to turn a down-at-heel building into a profitable enterprise. With the City Council's historic protection, the buildings were guaranteed to be renovated maintaining their original aesthetic appeal, but according with Glass's original 1964 definition of gentrification, 'working class quarters... have been invaded by the middle classes.' (Slater 2003: 34). As the street evolved, shrewd business sense led to residential flats above businesses being redeveloped into more profitable business enterprises. During the period of the 1970s and 1980s, many urban economies globally were experiencing a loss in manufacturing and an increase in producer services.

During the 1990s, as South Africa became a democracy, certain industries suffered as the nation opened up to global trade and cheap imports. While the working class of colour had been forcibly evicted from their homes in the 1960s, there was still a large working class presence in the city centre. Workers in factories on Long Street and its immediate vicinity filled the streets by day, adding to its economy. By the late 1990s they were no longer a sight on the street; the factory doors closed in the face of new competition. At least three factories closed their doors on and near Long Street during the 1990s.

While lower Long Street retains its white collar workers, the working class element of Upper Long Street has vanished – an evolution to 'a post-industrial city', according to David Ley (1980). The new service-based economy is based on tourists.

1.6 Tourism: 'old town'

Smith says that 'systematic gentrification since the 1960s and 1970s is simultaneously a response and contributor to a series of wider global transformations: global economic expansion in the 1980s; the restructuring of national and urban economies in advanced capitalist countries toward services, recreation and consumption; and the emergence of a global hierarchy of world, national and regional cities' (1996: 82).

Although Cape Town has a long history as a popular tourist destination, recent years have seen dramatic increases in tourist arrivals as South Africa has opened itself to the world. Concomitant to this has been a commercialisation of Upper Long Street as it rises to the occasion of catering to the tourist dollar.

When Long Street historic building preservation was being planned in the early 1980s, it was noted that: 'with the general redevelopment of the central business district and its resultant loss of buildings of architectural and historical interest the city requires a centre of focus for tourist interest. Most major cities in the world have 'old town' areas reflecting part of the history of the city.' (AEA Town & Regional Planners 1982: 22).

Upper Long Street was, until the 1980s and 1990s, lined with shops with residences above them – most of these residences are gone, replaced by various businesses. The opening of The Lounge in 1993 by Shawn Petri (who now owns Detour Travel Centre further up the street), in what was a first floor residence, marked the start of the proliferation of hip bars and bar/lounges that continues to date. Venues like

Placebo Lounge, Cool Runnings, 169 on Long, Lang and Baumann above Jo'burg, and many more line the street: a stark comparison to the mere handful of working class bars in pre-liberation Long Street.

Besides backpacker lodges, the travel centres, restaurants, bars, internet cafes, clothing boutiques and many other businesses that line the street benefit from, and cater to, the youthful tourist trade. The tourist dollar has therefore played a major role in Long Street's recent evolution.

Carnival Court bed and breakfast became Carnival Court Backpackers lodge, a good example of Upper long Street catering to the youthful tourist market. The annual Long Street Carnival ('night vision') has helped draw very mixed crowds of revelers, something like Aggie Omar's description of the lively street scenes in the 1950s and 1960s.

Much like Long Street, gentrification has a multidimensional and variegated character, the street's ebb and flow of people resulting in shifting incarnations. Tourism is the new face of Upper Long Street, and it is arguably the main force in the consumerisation taking place, a reflection of the force of global capitalism.

1.7 CID: 'security'

A major recent development has been the introduction of a City Improvement District (CID) in Cape Town, established in 2000. The CID 'boosts levels of cleanliness and security in the central city through a top-up levy paid by businesses operating within the CID's boundaries' (www.capetowncid.co.za). New York's Times

Square Business Improvement District was one of the models for the Cape town CID.

Zurich's Langstrasse (Long Street) has a similar character to Cape Town's Long Street, with a cosmopolitan vibrancy, many creative people, and traditionally a working class area. 'It is also the only "dodgy" place in Switzerland but it really can be quite criminal: shootings, heavy drug addicts, breaking into cars and the sextrade.' (Lang and Baumann, 2003). Like Cape Town's Long Street, it is an urban space with a dystopic element, a margin of lawlessness within the often strict structures of city life. Maybe that's part of the appeal.

The elements of city danger on Cape Town's Long Street are not found in many other gentrified neighbourhoods around the world, like many parts of the borough of Manhattan, New York. Here tough police action has clamped down on the smallest of misdemeanors, leading to a large reduction in crime. However, on Long Street, crime is more a symptom of a national malaise: poverty, unemployment and the hangovers of apartheid. Tough police action may go some way to keeping Long Street safe, but does nothing for the root issues.

As Long Street has evolved over time, the levels of danger have fluctuated. The recent installment of Closed Circuit Cameras, and introduction of security personnel and City Police (bobbies on the beat) have brought the level of crime down to some extent. However, many street children, who are a threat to the security of the city streets, simply move to just outside the surveillance area. Rows of children are to be seen sleeping on the Bo Kaap side of Buitengracht street at nighttime, just outside the watchful eye of the Closed Circuit Cameras.

Silversmith, dating to the very early days of apartheid. Alongside these reminders of a previous era are internet cafes, tourist centres, backpacker lodges, bars, restaurants and boutiques. Starkers Raunchy Adult Shows is across the street from the Palm Tree Mosque, another of the contradictions of heterogeneous Long Street.

Slater talks about 'postmodern sensibilities expressed in gentrified properties by a striking intermixture of past and present architectural forms... In the renovation of old properties in the inner city, history and modernity complement each other to create an architecture of seduction which serves to attract more potential gentrifiers' (2003: 22)

Gentrification is also becoming known as trendification in places like Australia, a term that is well suited to Long Street today. Journalist, Lori Tenny, writing on Barcelona, which experienced unprecedented growth and change following the fall of Franco's stifling regime in 1975, describes that city's trendification as such: 'every other bar and nightclub is offbeat and hip, there's a new generation of inspired chefs, designer fashion boutiques are aiming to give Paris and Milan a run for their money, and funky, artsy shops are becoming the best place to pick up a unique souvenir' (Teny 2003)

She goes on to describe a city still very deeply rooted in tradition; like Long Street it is the mixture of old and modern that is so compelling. But the gloss of tourism, fashion and nightlife conceals a harsher more unpleasant facet of Long Street, one of crime and homelessness that is rooted in a national crisis of poverty and social ills, and a global crisis of an ever-increasing chasm between the rich and the poor.

Long Street gentrification is a complex process, differing from the classical definition by involving business – catering to the wealthy and young - taking over a working class markedly residential street. This hybrid gentrification has included state intervention with the Group Areas Act, yet the street managed to slip through the heavy net of apartheid to some degree. Later state-sponsored architectural conservation was a more constructive influence on the street, a guarantee of keeping her old buildings. Yet, this helped spark off the development drive, as outlined above in the Carnival Court example, leading to the fundamentally changed street of today.

As service industries overtook manufacturing industries, and South Africa became a democracy, the lucrative tourist dollar has become a major factor in Upper Long Street's development today.

The creative energy remains. Or as Margot Saffer, editor of Phrank (Long Street's dedicated magazine) describes Long Street's inhabitants: 'a unique bunch. We are self-exiled outcasts who've come together to realise that our ideas and selves aren't so discarded in this calculated world'. (2002: 1)).

Like Brett Murray's 'Take Chances' poster campaign of the 1980s, an anonymous character, signing him/herself as 'Guldenstern' leaves poetry at certain bars on Long Street today. Perhaps this is an indication of an ever-glowing creative spirit on the street.

It has been a combination of economics and culture that have created the Upper Long Street of today, though I would argue that Smith's production theory takes precedence in understanding Long Street's gentrification, or trendification process.

There has been a gradual shift in the class of people living, holidaying and frequenting Upper Long Street: from working class, blue collar workers, to middle class, young first world tourists and middle-class Capetonians enjoying the street's bars by night and shops and cafes by day. The shift has been difficult for some businesses: Revellas Fish and Chips shop, an institution on Long Street, barely scrapes by, its former working class clientele a distant memory on the street.

With these changes follow the questions; what becomes of those displaced from the gentrification process? What has Upper Long Street lost in becoming a trendy tourist mecca? Or does its bohemian soul live on through the creative energy of its inhabitants?

To repeat Slater's comment: It is hard to think of a more convincing argument for gentrification as a varied process – 'a differentiated process with a complex geography' (2002: 34).

Smith asks, 'how in the larger context of changing social geographies, are we to distinguish adequately between the rehabilitation of nineteenth century housing, the construction of new condominium towers, the opening of festival markets to attract local and not so local tourists, the proliferation of wine bars – and boutiques...?' (1996: 39).

Upper Long Street has evolved into a unique postmodern street with a twenty four-hour rhythm of its own: a fascinating mixture of uses driving along a path of infinitely adjustable purposes.

Part Two

Documentaries and the Cinematic City

2.1 The Documentary: Getting back to basics

Does the filmmaker need to be cognisant of audience and broadcasters' expectations to complete the circle of the filmmaking process? Frederick Wiseman would say 'I think it's totally impossible to make a film with an audience in mind. I make a film to satisfy my own internal standards as to quality and integrity, and I try like hell to make it meet those standards' (Rosenthal 1971: 74). Being talented and having the courage of one's convictions is the catchphrase for independent filmmaking success. And yet, succeeding in a commercial environment necessitates knowing your market. This is the first debate: to make films for oneself or to serve greater commercial interests. I would argue that none of the great artists served any commercial interest, even if some of them died in the poor house.

Kilborn and Izod talk about the 'documentary impulse: humankind's deeply ingrained desire to keep a record of transactions and events that are considered in some way significant' (1997: 17). Any documentation is undertaken by an individual or institution who will influence or alter the 'truth value': the documentary filmmaker has the responsibility of interpreting the real. There remains the belief that the 'basic components will comprise those "fragments of reality" to which Vertov referred and which the filmmaker captures and moulds into the documentary artefact... the documentarist collects, frames and edits the material in such a way as to change it from a mere record of actuality into a form which we refer to as "documentary discourse"' (Kilborn & Izod 1997: 4).

In the manipulation of visuals and sound, the documentary filmmaker creates his or her story – presenting an argument or chronicling an event, and in the former case, attempting to garner audience support for their line of argument. Filmmaker Morton Silverman says ‘I think the documentary must be an instrument of social change, or it is not worth the raw stock it’s filmed on’ (Rosenthal 1971: 114). Documentaries do, of course, serve many more purposes than social change.

John Grierson defines documentary as ‘the creative treatment of reality’ (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 78). The functional, and aesthetic appeal, are the two primary elements in making a documentary, and it is ‘this relationship between the selection and filming/recording of actuality and its transformation into a skillfully crafted artefact that lies at the heart of the whole documentary enterprise’ (Kilbron & Izod 1997: 13).

Brian Winston argues that all the goals of truth, objectivity and responsibility become that much harder to attain, because ‘the documentary’s demand that it be allowed to treat actuality creatively... the twin pressures of representing actuality and doing it creatively means that ethical systems cannot any more easily pertain to the documentary than they do to journalism’ (2000: 131).

‘For documentaries in general, “objectivity” in any of its many meanings applies even less certainly than it does in journalism... Nor is the automatic assumption in journalism that the public have a right to know... always pertinent since documentaries do not necessarily have to be journalistic and cannot therefore always lay claim to it. Documentaries *can* be the equivalent of journalistic features but, despite contemporary received opinion, they can also approximate to opinion pieces, editorials, columns, *belle-lettres* essays, polemics, agitprop, autobiography, poetry’

(Winston 2000: 130). The same debate exists in journalism: truth-telling versus entertainment. However, Winston argues that documentary-makers are 'vehicles for self-expression' far more than journalists. Observational documentaries, as we shall see later in this paper, come close to journalistic truth: a mirror to the world. But, as we shall also see, the various amalgamations of documentary styles make it hard to pin down one type of documentary.

The term 'documentary' today runs the whole gamut of investigative journalism through to feature-length films, adding to the difficulty in offering a strict definition. But, the element of truth, regardless how large or small, remains the binding component of documentaries. The concept of truth therefore is for me the most important element is coming to some understanding of 'documentary discourse'. The second debate is therefore, to what extent are we expressing or revealing the truth in documentaries?

Bill Nichols (1991) says documentary offers us access to *the* world, whilst fiction lets us enter *a* world. However, to try to pigeon-hole fiction and non-fiction is a pointless exercise, as many works of fiction are informative stories of real events, like the autobiographical *In America* (2003), while many documentaries employ fictional techniques such as the dramatisation of scenes, as in *The Thin Blue Line* (1987).

This is an important starting point: to accept that there will be some ambiguity in differentiating between the two. The very action of picking up a camera and framing a shot is already forming a subjective perception of events. Indeed 'certain well-known documentarists (Paul Watson is an example) have sometimes claimed that all documentaries are to some extent fictional constructs' (Kilborn & Izod 1997: 15).

The presence of a camera is itself liable to change behavioural patterns of subjects.

Documentary-making is after all a deceit, in that the film-maker captures various images, narration and music and arranges them to create a story. It is art, and because it draws from so many mediums it truly is the richest, most powerful, and most deceptive of all the arts.

As direct cinema filmmaker Frederick Wiseman said, 'I wouldn't know what's typical or untypical in film, or in anything else. My films are totally subjective. The subjective-objective argument is from my view, at least in film terms, a lot of nonsense' (Rosenthal 1971 : 70). So truth in filmmaking is an aspiration only, but a noble and necessary aspiration.

2.2 Documentary Styles

Cinema is very new compared to the established six arts, all of which existed fully fledged in Ancient Greece – literature, painting, sculpture, music, dance and drama. These are exciting times to be a filmmaker, with the variables constantly increasing. Experimentation, discoveries, genre-breaking amalgamations, and accessible technology are the buzz words for the newest, and seventh art. 'Less than one hundred years after the invention of motion pictures, scarcely fifty years after the invention of the talkies, *it is early days to say what it is we have here*' (Jarvie 1987 :166).

'Some of the most interesting developments in the *form* of documentaries have been directly attributable to television's constant generation of new types of programming in the relentless quest to maintain or increase audience share. One of the clearest illustrations of this is a marked tendency to produce hybridised forms, in which

generic boundaries have been blurred in the effort to create an attractive new format (Kilborn & Izod 1997: 8).

The four commonly accepted documentary styles are: expository, impressionistic, observational and reflexive. (Barbash & Taylor 1997)

'Expository documentaries typically address the spectators directly, through either an on-screen commentator or a voice-over track' (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 16). The soundtrack takes dominance over visuals, which typically are chosen to match the narration. Expository documentaries tend to inform and instruct, a style used by John Grierson who said the documentary is not a mirror, but a hammer.

Critics describe the disembodied voice-over as authoritative, 'colonial', 'an enemy of film', the 'voice of God' and even 'the nonexistent view from nowhere' (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 19). Some describe this documentary style as little more than an illustrated lecture, patronising to the viewer in its presentation of a very clear point of view.

The second style is impressionistic film. 'Impressionistic films tend to be lyrical rather than didactic, poetic rather than argumentative. They imply more than they inform, and evoke more than they assert' (Barbash and Taylor 1997: 20). Impressionistic documentaries also tend to be aesthetised and stylised.

Thirdly, there is the observer style, which developed as a reaction to both the expository and impressionistic styles of documentary, seeking to be a mirror to the world rather than a 'propagandistic hammer', or 'aesthetised lyricism'.

With the advent of synchronous sound developments, the introduction of lightweight 16mm cameras with zoom lenses, as well as the availability of ever-faster film stock in the 1950s and 1960s, two strands of the observer style emerged: direct cinema and *cinéma vérité*. While the former evolved in the USA, the latter emerged in France.

'The direct cinema documentarist took his camera to a situation of tension and waited hopefully for a crisis' (Barnouw 1993: 254). 'Direct Cinema filmmakers tend to be noninterventionist and self-effacing, at times aspiring to be invisible flies-on-the-wall' (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 29). 'Ricky Leacock used to insist that, for the direct cinema documentary, the event always had to be more important than the filming. Rouch, for *cinéma vérité*, made filming the event central and put himself on the screen to reveal that he was doing this' (Winston 2000: 139).

The American filmmaker Rob Nilsson made his first film, *Northern Lights* (1975), when he was 40. Before that he was a poet and a painter, and he valued sitting in a coffee shop watching 'the small miracles of everyday behaviour' (2003 Resfest). His feature filmmaking technique, which he calls Direct Action Cinema, involves coaching actors only on the 'back story' (or character and story backgrounds), and allowing them the latitude to create the story on the fly, or *sur le vif* as the Lumière brothers called the art of spontaneous filmmaking.

Nilsson believes a film production should be open to anything, that there should be an element of chaos, and in fact he frequently hopes something will come along by chance, and completely change the story. Nilsson's 'cinema from the ground' (2003 Resfest) relies on close observation, and revels in the maneuverability of digital

technology. This is fictional feature filmmaking brought as close as possible to the documentary observer style.

While direct cinema aspired to invisible observation, *cinéma vérité* strove to make the filmmaking process more transparent. Inspired by Vertov's *kino-pravda*, 'film truth', French filmmaker-anthropologist Jean Rouch is considered one of the founders of the cinema verite documentary style. In *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961), Rouch, and co-director Edgar Morin sent out interviewers to conduct a study of Parisians randomly on the streets of the city. They began by asking people on the street if they were happy, and then proceeded to conduct more lengthy interviews with a number of participants. The idea was to precipitate events and draw out hidden truths in the process. Participants were then invited to watch footage, and their discussions which ensued were filmed and included in the film, an unusual and brave inclusion of criticism. As an interesting aside, Angelo, the mechanic, lost his job, as we see on-screen, because of the filming. 'Attempts to find him other work, including a job at Billancourt film studios from which he was also sacked, were off-screen (Winston 2000: 145).

The Russian filmmaker, Roman Karmen, well known for his Russian propaganda films blurred the line between fiction and fact considerably by reenacting battle shots to be intercut with real war footage. Karman said there is no such thing as cinema verite, as the filmmaker always decides what to film. American filmmaker Brian de Palma, once said the camera lies 24 times a second. While *cinéma vérité* is arguably not a 'cinema of the truth', it attempts to bring the deceptive art of film one step closer to honesty, by making the filmmaker and filmmaking process visible.

One of the most honest films I have seen is *Caucasian Prisoners* (2002), by Yuri Khashchavatsky, an hour-long documentary on the war in Chechnya. Using archive footage never used on television, the documentary provides a harrowing look at the misery and futility of war: executions, starvation, brutality, yet told with poetic elegance. *Caucasian Prisoners* is as honest as Roman Karmen's propaganda films were fake. Khashchavatsky's documentary, in its truthful portrayal of war, stands out in a sanitised and over-controlled global media system.

The fourth documentary style is reflexive, which developed as a response to direct cinema. Proponents of the reflexive style argue that fly-on-the-wall filmmaking's failure lies in the camera's presence altering people's behaviour. 'Reflexive documentaries make not only their subject matter but also their own formal qualities the object of questioning and doubt' (Kilborn & Izod 1997: 75). Hence, with its roots in *cinéma vérité*, *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961) can be regarded as the prototype reflexive film where directors Morin and Rouch interact with their subjects on screen. However, reflexivity can be traced all the way back to Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929).

Two well known reflexive style filmmakers currently are Nick Broomfield and Michael Moore, both of whom appear in person in their investigative documentaries, steering the story as commentator, interviewer, investigator, presenter, and in the case of Broomfield, Soundman too. Nick Broomfield 'specialises in projecting the persona of an irritatingly persistent but amateurish investigator' (Kilborn & Izod 1997: 78). 'He's Michael Moore with a better wardrobe but without the social crusade, having chosen to turn his camera on topics of the tabloid variety' (Cape Argus, 9 January 2004). Other reflexive documentaries have the filmmaker talk to us only in a voice-over.

Criticism of this style of filmmaking is that it can be perceived as being self-indulgent, and narcissistic, deflecting the attention, as it frequently does, from the story itself to the filmmaker.

However, as with *Caucasian Prisoners*, Raoul Peck's *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet* (1992) is a documentary uncovering truth in an elegant way, without stealing the limelight from the story's protagonist, Patrice Lumumba. This reflexive film recounts Lumumba's brief presidency of the former Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Having grown up in the DRC in that period, as the son of a Haitian civil servant in the newly independent Zaire, Peck uses a combination of old 8mm family footage and his voice over to personalise the untimely death of Patrice Lumumba. When the USA and former colonial power, Belgium, saw they didn't have a stooge in the outspoken anti-colonial Lumumba, they assassinated the first president of independent Zaire. This was ensued by decades of corruption and mismanagement under Lumumba's successor (and 'friend of the west'), Mobutu Sese Seko.

The film crew never leave Brussels because of a subtle threat by the Zairean Secret Service just before their imminent departure. The documentary contrasts wintry Brussels street scenes, interviews with former Belgian civil servants and journalists who worked in the newly independent Zaire, old footage, and Peck's family footage, to create an elegant and evocative film with a powerful message about African independence and the cold war, told in a personal way.

All four of the documentary styles listed above are in use today in numerous combinations. Our challenge is to find new ways of blending these different styles to suit new subject matters. 'The hybridised documentary can get the best of both worlds, being able, for instance, to make use of both a commentary that provides a

historical context to what is seen and direct access to the words and actions of the people in front of the lens' (Kilborn and Izod 1997: 74). 'Documentary is on an impossible and unending quest to depict the depth of life as it is actually lived. Life will always run away from our films, and exceed our grasp, but the task, however vain, is to run after it again' (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 33).

What is a cinema of the truth today? In the case of *Caucasian Prisoners* (2002), the message is powerful. If more people sitting at home in their comfortable lounges were to be made aware of the absolute brutality of war, if they were given a truthful account of war, the populace (voters) would be more inclined to protest the next time the generals say, let's go to war. The USA's current Iraqi incursion is a good example: the general US populace have the wool pulled over their eyes by a heavily controlled media industry.

In the case of *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet* (1992), the filmmaker unpacks a carefully orchestrated assassination which was then swept under the carpet. Without mythologising or making a martyr of Patrice Lumumba, we are shown how the west killed a leader of principles and replaced him with a stooge, so as to keep their hand in Africa's pot of gold (resources). It is a powerful story of neo-colonialism.

The world needs a revolution: a cinema of the truth. The digital revolution ought to be the catalyst for a democratisation of film, but simultaneously making films of high artistic standards. Making films that uncover the uncensored truth, yet imparting this information in an elegant way, can be a powerful force for change.

2.3 An historical overview of the cinematic city

The Lumière brothers of Lyon, France, have the profound privilege of being the inventors of cinema. Following the introduction of the *cinematographe* in 1895, a camera, printer and projector all in one, documentary film was born. Lumière operators were sent around the world to make their short documentaries of everyday life, and 'by 1897 the *cinematographe* was already giving its audience members an unprecedented sense of seeing the world.' (Barnouw 1993: 21). Creating film *sur le vif* (on the fly) was the Lumière credo.

'Incredulous audiences from all over the world flocked spellbound to the public screenings of these first films, in some cases astounded to see themselves on the screen, filmed in the streets only a few days earlier' (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 15). When the Russian writer Tolstoy watched his first film in 1906 he said, 'That's it! We don't have to invent stories any more; we have an instrument now where movies can be made of ordinary people, of Russia, in ordinary situations...' (Rosenthal 1971: 80).

Boleslaw Matuszewski, a Polish *cinematographe* operator wrote *A New Source of history* in 1898, in which he proposed a cinematographic museum or depository. 'The depository should contain, he argued, not only the meetings of foreign rulers and departures of troops and squadrons, but the changing face of the cities' (Barnouw 1993: 45).

The fascination with the exotic, already established through writing and photography in previous centuries, was now being depicted through the new medium of film. Robert Flaherty's seminal *Nanook of the North* (1922) was the first personal account of foreign peoples, the Inuit of the Canadian north. 'But if Flaherty and

Cooper/Schoedstack familiarised viewers with the exotic, the city films exoticised the familiar' (Macdonald 1997: 2). Macdonald, in his article entitled, 'The City as the Country' explores the dichotomy of the modern mechanised city, and traditional pre-industrial cultures. In comparison with early societies where people roamed freely, maintaining their traditional ways, Macdonald says 'the modern world is, increasingly, a place of precise and rigid boundaries between territories of all kinds, a kind of machine that produces a life of security and contentment (or the illusion of it) through the rigorous compartmentalisation of experience' (Macdonald 1997:3).

Dziga Vertov, whose pseudonym means 'turning, revolving' in Polish, was a futurist, a movement which began in 1909 and glorified 'the clamour and rhythm of machines, and the dynamism of a world in change' (Barnouw 1993: 56). Vertov was a poet who had studied medicine and psychology. As a filmmaker in the early days of post-revolution Russia, he saw the task of Soviet film as documenting socialist reality. 'Subject matter was seldom spectacular. This was part of its essential quality: drama was revealed in the prose of life' (Barnouw 1993: 55). In *Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov takes us on a journey of people at work and at play in Moscow; it is at heart, 'a day in the life of the city' (Clarke 1997: 15). Including the cameraman in some of the shots allows us to see the film being made, as well as the film itself, a first in reflexivity.

An admirer of Vertov, Walter Ruttmann was a painter who had also studied architecture and music. His 1927 documentary, *Berlin: Symphony of the city*, spawned a wave of 'city symphonies' – where city rhythms and patterns are explored usually within a-day-in-the-life framework. Macdonald (1997) remarks that these city symphonies of the 1920s represent the filmmaker's vision of the nation through the metropolis. 'If *Berlin: Symphony of a City* reflects Germany's post-war hunger for

social order, *The Man with a Movie Camera* reflects the new Communist Russia's excitement about the revolution and the advent of modern industrialisation' (Macdonald 1997: 6).

A fundamental shift in documentary filmmaking took place in 1929, the year of the great depression. Films like *Berlin: Symphony of the City*, described by Barnouw (1993) as 'art for art's sake', were being sidelined by issues-driven documentaries. John Grierson's *Drifters* portrays British workingmen as heroes, and proved hugely successful with British audiences – a fresh approach of bringing ordinary people to the screen, easier to relate to than the kings and queens of yore.

In Germany, all media was brought under state control, and Leni Riefenstahl created *Triumph of the Will* (1934), considered to be a great propaganda success. 'The politicising of documentary was not a Grierson innovation but a world phenomenon, a product of the times (Barnouw 1993: 100).' In New York City, the Workers Film and Photo League was set up in response to a new conservative attitude towards controversy in the cinemas. They achieved increasing success in the 1930s, and by 1939, produced *The City* (directed by Ralph Steiner and Willard van Dyk), a documentary screened at the 1939 New York World Fair. '*The City* was characterised by experimentation; hidden cameras produced gems of the idiosyncracies and problems of city life' (Barnouw 1993: 124).

The Second World War drew filmmaking into the arena of war, followed by post-war prosecution and reconstruction themed films. *Roma, Citta Aperta* (1945) by Roberto Rossellini, launched the neo-realist movement. The film follows events in Rome during five days in 1944 when the city was under German occupation, and combines elements of reality (such as authentic locations, untrained actors, real events) with

fiction. As a documentary record, the film shows what the city and its inhabitants looked like in 1945, and in particular the extent of war damage. 'It is a work of great emotion, indelibly stamped by the conditions of its making, by the war and the anti-fascist struggle, and it is one of a number of works from that period to have established a movement towards a realistic and committed art' (Forgacs 2000: 10). Documentary-like fiction extended to films like Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* (1954), described at the time as a documentary.

In the 1950s the new focus was on speech, after being long neglected because of difficulties in synchronising sound: the equipment needed had been too cumbersome for documentary filmmaking. Real people talking gave the subjects far greater power than they'd ever had. 'New, light equipment made possible an intimacy of observation new to documentary' (Barnouw 1993: 232).

In 1960, Denis Mitchell produced for BBC-TV a documentary entitled *Chicago: First Impressions of a Great American City*. In so doing he made history in the evolution of the 'city symphony' – he added speech. Assisting Mitchell was Chicagoan, Studs Terkel, who in 1975 presented a documentary entitled *Studs Terkel's Chicago*, one in a thirteen-part series of great cities around the world. This is one of the first documentaries in its genre to utilise a personal narrative, although it is nothing as personal as today's documentaries. Studs Terkel takes us on a walking tour of his city, stopping at landmarks, discussing historical points of interest, and interviewing people on the street.

In the 1970s video technology developed rapidly, with the introduction of colour, ever smaller cassettes and ever better quality. 'A single individual could now be a production unit' (Barnouw 1993: 287). The era of the guerilla filmmaker had begun

in earnest, and from the grassroots upwards the effect on filmmaking was tremendous. The democratisation of filmmaking, as predicted by Francis Ford Coppola in the documentary, *Hearts of darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991) – was arriving. Soon anyone could be a filmmaker.

Finding patterns in the city's shapes, lines, movements, is what Vertov did in *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). Much later, Hillary Harris' *Organism* (1975) depicts the growth of New York City 'as though it were the action of living cells multiplying in obedience to some irresistible life force. Pulsating heartbeats were heard along with a montage of phrases from human psychology' (Barnouw 1993: 305).

Federico Fellini made *Roma* in 1972, a spectacular ride through Roman culture, and a celebration of decay: an orgy of food and sex, much gesticulation, and passion. The movie is described by Pauline Kael as follows: 'Roma is an imperial gesture at documentary – a document about the city of Fellini's imagination, an autobiographical fantasy in which he plays ringmaster to the Roman circus' (1976: 25).

If Rome is Fellini's obsession, then New York City is the obsession of Martin Scorsese. In 1973 he made his breakthrough movie, *Mean Streets*, where we follow a group of small-time hoods, in Manhattan's Little Italy, Scorsese's home neighbourhood. 'What Scorsese, who is thirty, has done with the experience of growing up in New York's Little Italy has a thicker-textured rot and violence than we have ever had in an American movie, and a riper sense of evil' (Kael 1976: 169). In each of the main characters, including those played by Robert de Niro and Harvey Keitel, then unknowns, is a part of Scorsese, thereby making a truly personal film. By investing himself so intrinsically and with such depth in the film, Scorsese created

something with great power. People respond well to personal films, and by drawing from one's own experience in filmmaking one comes that much closer to truth.

In Woody Allen's *Manhattan* (1979) 'as its title indicates, New York is a central character in it. If *Annie Hall* was a romance with a woman, *Manhattan* is a romance with a city. Its opening voice over finds Isaac seeking to express a character's love of New York, and the music consists entirely of George Gershwin tunes' (Jarvie 1987: 346). Rob Lapsley writes that 'the city is rarely the object of idealisation... overwhelmingly, fictional representations of the city have been hostile... filmic affirmations of city life such as Woody Allen's *Manhattan* are infrequent' (Clarke 1997: 195). Perhaps urban spaces represent the dystopic side of human nature. Built environments with large concentrations of people, which are only ever under limited control, are spaces where every level of society rubs shoulders, and crime or conflict is frequently an outcome of this contestation of space.

Tokyo-Ga (1985) is a documentary made by Wim Wenders as a tribute to Japanese film director Yasujiro Ozu. Opening and closing with scenes from Ozu's *Tokyo Story* (1953), Wenders' documentary is part exploration of Tokyo and Japanese culture, and part direct tribute to the now deceased Ozu. *Tokyo Story* tells the story of an aging couple visiting their adult children in the city, thereby exploring traditional versus contemporary society. His film is made in a purist, simple and naturalistic style. Wenders' impressions of contemporary Tokyo in *Tokyo-Ga* are in stark contrast to the purity of Ozu's *Tokyo Story*. Yet, the artificiality and fakery he comes across in modern Tokyo is something akin to the deceptive art of filmmaking, and thus he alludes to his quest for realness as a filmmaker as a non-starter.

Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989) is set on one block in Brooklyn, New York, on a sweltering mid-summer's day. Gradually the simmering tension, as played out by prejudice amongst a few of the neighbourhood's characters, builds to boiling point, just as the mercury rises. 'Do The Right Thing shows how a twenty-four-hour period can erupt into a seething interracial and interethnic display of mistrust that will further explode into civil disobedience and, in the "real world", into urban uprisings that leave many dead or homeless' (Reid 1997: 10).

The Oscar-nominated documentary *A Great Day in Harlem* (1995), by Jean Bach, uses as its centrepiece a photograph taken in 1958 in front of a Harlem Brownstone, featuring many of the great names in Jazz. The photograph, which was first published in *Life* magazine, brought together jazz artists like Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk and is now a world-famous photograph of America's jazz legends. The documentary zooms in and out of the picture, interviews surviving musicians, and uses footage taken on the day to recreate a golden era in New York City.

Jo'burg Stories (1997) delves into the lives of several Johannesburg residents in a poetically styled 75-minute documentary made by Brian Tilley and Oliver Schmitz. The story of an evolving city is compelling, and the characters are all naturally dramatic. 'Their stories intersect at times but the film is mainly a highly textured, very cinematic look at downtown lives that plays more like a feature film than a talking heads documentary' (Mail & Guardian, 11 December 1997).

2.4 My Long Street documentaries

Since the invention of cinema, over a century ago, cities have been filmed in many different ways. The purpose of the second part of my paper has been to review some

of the ways cities have been represented in film, as well to look at documentary styles. In making a documentary on Long Street, I was faced with a myriad of options on how to realise this project. Ultimately, I have chosen to draw from different styles of filmmaking, and have simultaneously remained cognisant of the influence of a century of the cinematic city.

I have chosen to make two different documentaries. The first, *One Mile Long*, is a half hour film that utilises four characters, all of whom have a long and intimate association with the street. They are; a lawyer, a bookshop owner, an electrical repair shop owner, and a journalist. I divided the interviews into four parts: the first, an introduction into each character, giving the audience an idea of what they do. In the second part, they talk about how the street has evolved since they first worked there. The third part concerns the melting pot that exists on the street - the mixture of people found on Long Street. The fourth part brings the audience to a slightly more personal aspect of the character, revealing something unexpected about each of them. The final part is an exploration of the city at night.

I have used a combination of styles, but the primary style is expository, with formal interviews being the mode of imparting their information. Cutaways are then used to illustrate, or on occasion refute, their narration. However, I have also utilised, with some of the characters, a direct cinema approach, of hanging around and catching every day events – interactions with other people, which often says more than a plain interview situation can. In addition, I tried to include some stylistic elements where suitable, drawing therefore from the impressionistic school of documentary-making.

In using four ordinary people I have tried to give a genuine account of the street, rather than use experts, thus harking all the way back to the Lumiere brothers' films of everyday events and people. The fundamental aim of my project is to provide a filmic document of Long Street in 2003. My Long Street film will, I hope, show how the changing face of the street is emblematic of a country entering an era of globalisation, and of the effects of increased tourism. On a secondary level, I hope to highlight an ever greater disparity between rich and poor, increasing crime and surveillance, and the vestiges of apartheid. I also want to highlight the melting pot that is Long Street, and the eclectic nature of the street and its inhabitants. Ultimately I hope this will be an affirmation of city life, an ode to Long Street.

Working with cameraman, Roy Macgregor (aka 'Royeur'), we took on a voyeuristic style of shooting on the street, capturing people going about their urban business and pleasure, without their knowledge. Like Steiner and van Dyk's *The City* (1939) 'hidden cameras produced gems of the idiosyncracies and problems of city life' (Barnouw 1993: 125). Another technique used, inspired by *Chronicle of the Summer* (1961) was vox pop: approaching people on the street and asking their opinions of Long Street. We were utilising digital technology to our advantage, shooting on the lightweight, fairly compact and broadcast quality Sony PD150. The democratisation of cinema, as predicted by Francis Ford Coppola in the 1970s, is here.

The second documentary, *A Smile On My Face*, relates much more closely to the first part of this paper: gentrification on Long Street. It concerns one of my four characters from above, Glenda James of James Electrical. It is 13 minutes in length, and will hopefully be a poignant tale of a 55-year old establishment, that in many ways has not changed in all those years, being shut down, to be replaced by a trendy restaurant. Employing a combination of interviews, and direct cinema 'fly-on-

the-wall' filmmaking I hope to have captured a personal account of gentrification. And, as elucidated in the first section of this paper, gentrification is for me the crux of Long Street's contemporary evolution.

In the form versus content debate, I believe that it is possible to document relevant, pertinent, and interesting events in an honest way, maintaining high standards and being ethical, whilst lending the film elegance, poetry and beauty through creative filmmaking. In the commerce versus personal vision debate, the challenge is to understand the market, yet remain true to one's convictions. I see both these dichotomies as delicate balancing acts where artistic spirit, integrity and vision will always dominate.

I know Long Street well, having spent much time on it, and I know many of its characters. I hope that somehow my personal connection with Long Street will show in the films. However my connection is implicit. In making both these documentaries I have attempted to document an evolving street through the eyes of its inhabitants. While they were expressing their 'truth', I chose how to represent it through shooting and editing decisions, but the idea has been for the people of Long Street to speak for themselves. My goal has been to uncover the truth of contemporary Long Street, just as a journalist does, but the medium of film, in all its complexity, allows for artistic expression way beyond the written word. The challenge lies in telling one's story in a visually interesting way. I hope I have attained this goal in making *One Mile Long* and *A Smile On My Face*.

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