



Screen Rites:

Getting Close to Death and Dying

» TOM MURRAY

OBSERVING LOVE AND DEATH #1

The first funeral I attended was for a woman I knew only distantly, being there to support a friend who was much closer to her. It was a sad occasion, as funerals for young people generally are, and the experience was marked for me by the clumsiness of the priest, who knew so little about the dead woman that he mispronounced her name a number of times. He concluded his address by asking us to ‘thank God for her leisure pursuits and other activities’. He was so awkward that I wondered if another priest had been caught in traffic or suddenly taken ill, leaving him with no time to glance at a curriculum vitae before being called upon to address those forlornly assembled.

As I was not close to the dead young woman, and it being my first funeral, I could (to an extent) watch the ceremony as a performance. I was struck by a sensation that it has taken me years to figure out, if only in imprecise language: the service suffocated expressions of love; it lacked *life force*.

There was no engaging articulation of the sublime or poetic, and nothing to link the worlds of the living and the dead. No invocation of the dream space that Gaston Bachelard described as ‘intimate immensity’,¹ nor a ceremonial nod to what Rainer-Maria Rilke called a ‘communion with the universe’.² No forum in which we could come to terms with this death, and regain a

sense of joy in the world. As a congregation we were not encouraged ‘to come together with others to share in moments of exuberant and at times irreverent exultation’.³ In short, the service provided little succour for our sorrow; my friend and I left with no more understanding of the trajectories that connect life and death than we had when we arrived.

So we went to the pub.

In *H is for Hawk* (2014), Helen Macdonald describes meeting the canon of a local church to discuss her father’s memorial service. At some point he offers her a business card. The absurdity of this banal object becoming the focal point of a meeting about how they might best celebrate her father’s life provokes Macdonald to laughter. This miniature of the clergy as clumsy, commercial and inept, an impediment to wilder, more ‘natural’ expressions of love and devotion, harks back to Gustave Flaubert’s famous church rendezvous scene in *Madame Bovary* (1857). Here, a church official tours the would-be lovers Emma and Leon around inscriptions of historical significance, pointing out architectural features and important personages. The increasingly frustrated Leon notes that his love has become ‘immobilized inside that church just like the stones’.⁴ Milan Kundera describes how this scene manages to capture ‘the concreteness of the present ... the discovery of the perpetual

coexistence of the banal and the dramatic that underlies our lives'.⁵

What connects these examples is the church configured as banal (anti-spiritual), while the dramatic and sublime exist in secular and experiential domains: in sex, love, the experience of death, and the natural world (the goshawk in Helen Macdonald's book, for example). They provide an image of the church as a contrary guide in matters spiritual, while also illustrating the success of (late) modern society in the 'sequestration' (Anthony Giddens' term)⁶ of a fuller comprehension of the sublime, dramatic and banal truth of our mortality.

Facing the reality of her father's death, Helen Macdonald can only laugh. 'The laughter was because there was no way of incorporating these signs of life into the fact of death. I laughed because there was nothing else I could do.'⁷

The things we do *because there is nothing else we can do* are various and not always immediate. It is nearly twenty years since that first funeral and yet I am still processing it in this essay.

GETTING CLOSE #1

A few years ago I began making a documentary film that came to be called *Love in Our Own Time*.⁸ It was inspired as much by witnessing Yolngu (the Indigenous people of north-east Arnhem Land) funerary rites as by participating in their equivalents in my own community of urban Anglo-Australia. The contrast between these two approaches to death and dying could not have been more 'stark', as Frances and Howard Morphy have noted.⁹ Moving between these two societies, as I have for the last fifteen years, has only magnified this starkness.

In regard to Yolngu funerals, the Morphys have explained how spectacular, affective and aesthetic qualities ('analogous to an operatic performance'¹⁰) are integral to their perceived success. These qualities, and their attendant audio-visual and metaphorical richness, are understandably a boon to screen storytellers, and two of my documentary films — *Dhakiyarr vs the King* (2004) and *In My Father's Country* (2008) — feature sequences from Yolngu funeral and memorial ceremonies. But how does one go about documenting Anglo-Australian ceremonies and encounters with death and dying that have



(left, top to bottom)

Boy at a **Dhapi** (Initiation) Ceremony that followed a funeral at Dhuruputjpi, north east Arnhem Land.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2008

Filming a funeral at Dhuruputjpi Homeland for the film **Dhakiyarr vs the King**.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2003

Detail of Yolngu hollow log coffin (Larrakitj) painting by Wuyal Wirrpanda showing how human flesh is eaten from the bones by ants, from a sequence in **Dhakiyarr vs the King**.

PHOTO: © TOM MURRAY 2003



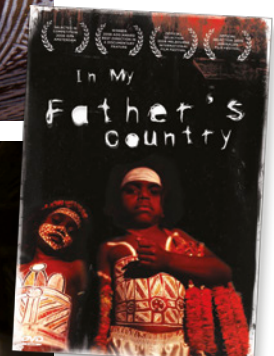
Dance performed at Yolngu funeral ceremony, Dhuruputjpi Homeland, from a sequence in **In My Father's Country**.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2008



DVD cover, **In My Father's Country** (Mayfan Pty Ltd; Tarpaulin Films; Aust. Film Commission; NSW Film & Television Office, 2008).

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limited spectacle and are ‘routinely hidden from view’?¹¹ Here, if we are to believe the influential sociologist Norbert Elias, centuries of ‘civilising processes’¹² have shamed us into viewing

Two initial points regarding screen intimacy and association are relevant. Orson Welles once said that ‘the closer we are to the face the more universal it becomes.’¹⁵ Welles’s point was in

SO WHAT MIGHT BE REVEALED IN GETTING CLOSE TO THE FACES AND BODIES OF THE DYING WITH A CAMERA?

social restraint and the ‘control of emotions’ as indicators of a successfully managed death.

Restraint. Lack of drama. These are significant challenges for a broadcast documentary.

So I decided to *get close* ...

The photojournalist **Robert Capa** was fond of saying ‘if your pictures aren’t good enough, you’re not close enough’,¹³ as if proximity was everything. But, if we set aside the danger faced by combat photographers like Capa, getting close to the action poses the more delicate problem of altering or inhibiting the very thing that you set out to capture. This dilemma is not unique to documentary, of course, and the debate about ‘truth’ in ‘direct cinema’ and ‘observational-documentary’ has covered territory traversed

relation to historical costume dramas, and the ability of audiences to see beyond the *otherness* of the historical figures. In short, close-ups of faces help us to identify with characters as people. This is an important consideration when dealing with subjects that are difficult or little known to audiences, whether that is ‘death’ or ‘Indigenous person’.

Anthropologist/filmmaker David MacDougall has described the way that faces in film can become emblematic of bodies; in the ‘quasi-tactility’ that screen intimacy affords there can be ‘liberation’ from social constraint and conventional ways of seeing.¹⁶ This liberation can be revelatory, as Dudley Andrew enthusiastically explained in regard to the work of Jean Rouch, a pioneer of the French ‘cinéma vérité’ movement: ‘Under the subtle pressure of this approach, relationships within reality become visible, bursting into the consciousness of the spectator as a revelation of a truth discovered’.¹⁷

So what might be revealed in getting close to the faces and bodies of the dying with a camera?

OBSERVING LOVE AND DEATH #2

Phillipe Aries, who is most famous for his work on the history of childhood, is also an important figure in the historical exploration of attitudes to death. His seminal 1977 book *L’Homme devant la mort* (*The Hour of Our Death*) argued that, since mediaeval times, death in Europe has become increasingly ‘untamed’. Social pressures have ‘banished’ death into a private sphere of near invisibility, where it has begun to haunt our imaginations.¹⁸ Anthony Giddens, another sociologist, explained that, during late modernity, not only has death



(above)
Close-up of
John Walker.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY
2012

since Werner Heisenberg’s reflection that the act of observation ‘changes and transforms its object’.¹⁴ With an additional nod to methodological developments and debates around ‘participant observation’ and ‘reflexivity’ in fieldwork-based social sciences during the twentieth century, which are also highly relevant to documentary, I’ll now return to getting close on screen.



(left)

Douglas and
Royealeene Batho.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY
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(below)

DVD cover, *Love
in Our Own Time*
(Screen Australia
& Tarpaulin
Productions, 2012).

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become 'routinely hidden', it has also become a 'technical matter ... removed into the hands of the medical profession'.¹⁹ Clearly we also need to add here other professionals in the religion and funeral industries — a fact that the communally experienced and family-oriented death ministrations of Yolngu communities have made abundantly clear to me.

Before making the film *Love in Our Own Time*, my exposure to the reality of death and dying was limited. I was terrified by the idea of death, and disenchanted by the funerals I had attended. The modern secular and religious rites of my experience seemed incapable of the sublime task of connecting the states of life and death in any helpful or meaningful way. My last three grandparents had all recently died, and my experience of their funerals contrasted heavily with the Yolngu version of such ceremonies.²⁰

I became aware that contemporary 'death industries' — from hospitals and nursing homes, to funeral companies and religious organisations — all worked seamlessly to keep the fact of death away from public communities. And even when people came together to mark the fact of death, it seemed that the biggest challenge one faced as a participant was to exhibit civilised 'restraint' and a minimal expression of public emotion, as Norbert Elias notes.²¹ I felt a deep affinity with Phillipe Aries's observation that a 'life in which death was

removed to a prudent distance seems less loving of things and people than the life in which death was the center'.²²

As a result of these experiences I resolved to make a film that would get as close to death as possible. It has been an unforgettable experience.

Take the example of Wally. In his working life Wally had been a police prosecutor, travelling across rural New South Wales to appear in small-town courts where 'big orations weren't necessary'. I'd managed only a few superficial conversations with him before he'd plunged into what seemed like the 'final phase'. Family members had assembled in vigil during the preceding few days, and Wally appeared barely conscious of anything around him. His whole being seemed concentrated on rasping attempts to extract a life-sustaining quantity of oxygen from the faintly antiseptic hospital air.

One morning, outside the third floor window of Wally's wing in the palliative care hospice, an enormous rainbow was stretched from the middle of Botany Bay to somewhere near Mascot. Because I had started my round early, I had already filmed a number of patients responding to the rainbow; each had explained how they had drawn emotional sustenance from it. Now I approached Doug's bed with my camera. Doug was over eighty and battling terminal cancer with a sense of humour that had clearly served him well through life. He was

(right)

Wally King with his wife June, in the middle of his oration.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY
2013



directing his wife's attention to the rainbow: 'Remember how we used to look for the pot of gold when we were kids?' Royealeene answered: 'Never found it though, did we?' She had grown up in the country and didn't come across as a woman inclined to indulge fantasies.

Then, with impeccable timing, Wally — from across the far side of the ward — piped up: 'I've found my pot of gold!' It took everyone a moment to register that Wally had broken a spell that had plunged him into many days of silence. 'And she's right here!' Wally took his wife June's hand and squeezed it. Then began to describe how he had spent so much time close to death that he had not only lost his fear of it, but was beginning to feel some hope for the future. I was on the other side of the ward, but quickly reached Wally's bed and tracked the camera across lines that framed both Wally and his wife. 'I would not have been classed among the faithful', Wally addressed June (and the camera), 'but now I'm getting close to it my hope is rising in my heart, in my breast'.

I slowly zoomed in on Wally's pink and puffy face, a move that one would rarely consider during filming because it draws attention to the presence of the camera. In this case, the move is barely noticed. Wally, one puffy eye half-closed, explains that he hopes to find June in the afterlife and that together they will become the 'two happiest angels in the world'. I am aware that Wally's vision of a transcendental marital future

could sound faintly ridiculous here, but to see it in film is another matter. The absoluteness of his conviction and our visceral knowledge of his impending death combine to illustrate an undeniable *life force*. What he succeeded in communicating was stripped of ego, full of love.

In the viewfinder I could see that June was now light in her chair, floating in sentiments that were clearly delightful to her. Still recording, I slowly withdrew from them. Wally had invited me into this moment by raising his voice to the camera, but it felt right to now leave them alone. I was not conscious of how I had covered the scene with the camera, but felt satisfied that the movements had been in tune with what had happened.

The sensation of synchrony between self and subject has been described since the earliest days of mobile ethnographic film equipment. Jean Rouch saw the phenomenon as a 'cinetrance', and its more ecstatic qualities have been described by pioneering ethnographic filmmakers, such as John Marshall ('You have this feeling, "I'm on; I'm on ... I'm getting it. It's happening. It's happening"') and Robert Gardner ('as close to cinematic orgasm as I'll get').²³

Filming bed-bound patients in the palliative care wing of a hospice does not readily yield ecstatic thought, but I was aware of a kind of 'condensing back to self' as I left the intimacy of Wally and June's moment.

If I could imagine myself as a molecule of water momentarily held in suspension, I was now aware that the air was rapidly cooling around me and, as if nothing more than a matter of physics, my suspended state of witness had ceased. I was returned to the olfactory realities of a palliative care hospice, to the artificial lights and metal-framed beds, and to the mercantile whine of daytime TV.

Across the corridor Wally and June were still holding hands.

It was only much later that I realised Wally had taken me on an expedition into the territory of my greatest fears, a journey to the furthest edge of life. He was reporting on the experience of leaning against the boundary

authorised him to say something he thought it was important for people (the world) to know.

Certainly it is clear to me that the camera can offer self-belief to 'social actors' (the people on camera) in a way that validates thoughts as being important enough to express. Perhaps there is no better example of this than the context of reality TV and celebrity culture. A camera validates the opinion-worthiness of a speaker and can also act as an agent provocateur. Two decades ago, prior to the flood of reality and 'factual' television, documentary theorist Brian Winston detailed how 'direct cinema' techniques provoked actuality (real life) when he noted Molly Haskell's claim that the titular couple of the documentary *A Married Couple* 'seem to have been catalysed by the camera into forcing the marriage to a showdown'.²⁴

(below)

Noelene Kennedy watches the rainbow – 'That's telling me something', Noelene said, pointing to the rainbow.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2013

BUT I OFTEN WONDER: WOULD WALLY'S 'REPORT FROM THE EDGE OF LIFE' HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT MY CAMERA?

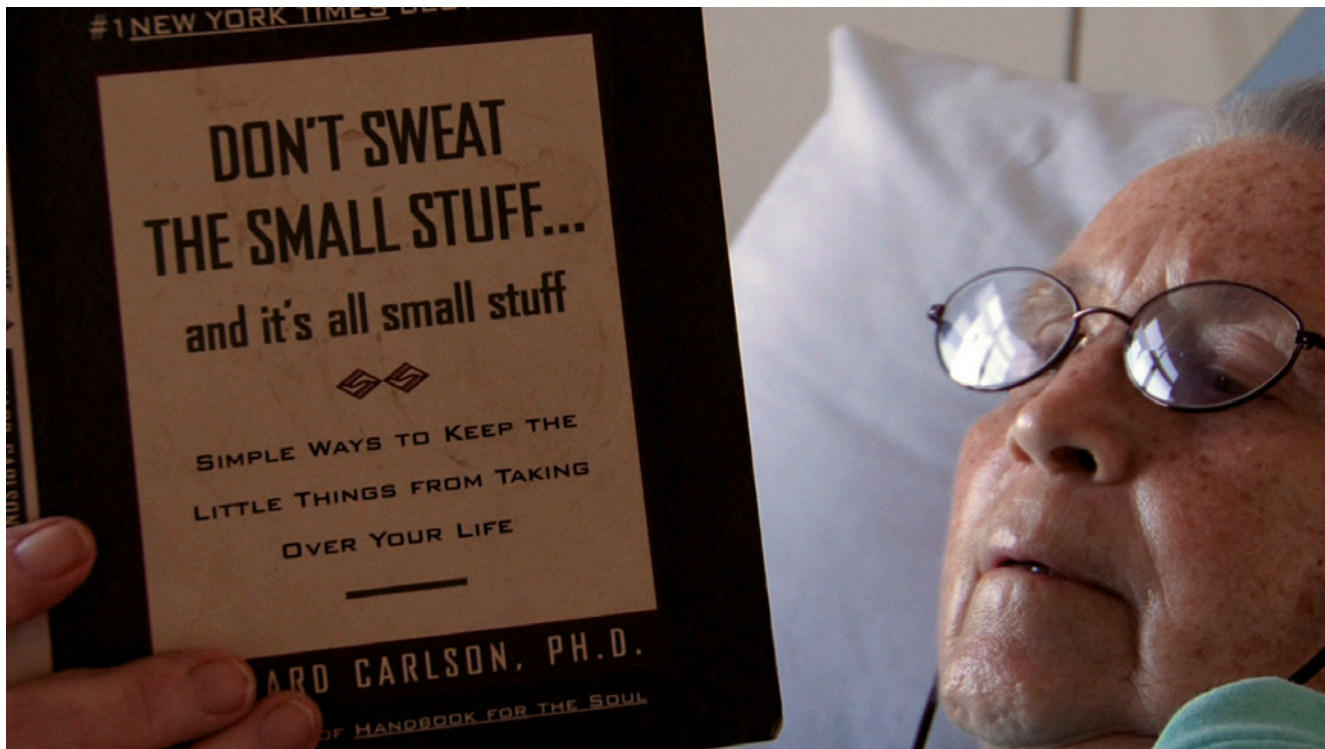
fence that separated his living and his dying, and he was telling me that he wasn't afraid. It was the first time anyone had taken me there, and I am thankful to him for having done so. I am certainly richer for it.

But I often wonder: would Wally's 'report from the edge of life' have happened without my camera? Would, for example, he have reported it quietly to June as they contemplated the rainbow? Would he have reported it to some other family member lucky enough to have arrived during this final window of Wally's lucidity? My honest, if perhaps self-serving feeling is 'no', for a number of reasons.

I think the camera offered Wally the appropriate platform for one last tilt on the stage of life. The camera allowed him to express something that in the course of ordinary life might have seemed, to Wally and others, like 'making a fuss' or, in Norbert Elias's terms, emotionally 'unrestrained'. Wally's understanding of my filmmaking task gave him contextual permission to express something that I believe would have remained unsaid, given the lack of appropriate social contexts in which to say it. In other words, the camera gave Wally the physical, emotional and practical power that

I have no doubt that the camera and my project was a catalyst for Wally's extraordinary oration. I don't believe, however, that it was about the camera per se but rather about the permissive space in which he felt authorised to express his thoughts and feelings.





(above)

Jutta Thomas, only weeks to live and reading *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2012

GETTING CLOSE #2

James Nachtwey, the celebrated American photojournalist, has described how much of his work is made at close range: 'I like to work in the same intimate space that the subjects inhabit. I want to give viewers the sense that they're sharing the same space with a photo's subject.'²⁵ The reverse of this is that as viewers we are, more literally, sharing the space of the image-maker. Leonard Retel Helmrich, a documentary filmmaking colleague,²⁶ argues that his own body is more deeply inscribed in the images he captures than it is in any image of him: 'You are what you see. When you say that you see me, you only see a projection of me. If you really want to see me then you should see what I see from the point in space where I am. In that case you are me.'²⁷

David MacDougall has argued that the body of the filmmaker is 'inscribed in the camera's vision', and that as viewers we 'respond to the filmmaker's body as we experience it through the decisions that guide the movements of the camera.'²⁸ The flow of communicated corporeality, between the embodied participant-observer (with a camera), the subject and viewer, has led ethnographer Sarah Pink to advocate the possibilities of

communicating 'empathetic co-presence' through audio-visual technologies.²⁹

There is a politics to this proposal, of course, in that we are asked (both as viewers and as image-makers) to consider how we comprehend and validate the other that is being represented. Further, as we come to terms with sentiments of 'fellow-feeling' toward this other, we must consider our relation to them. In this regard, we must account for the situational or socio-cultural distance that may exist between any of the agents in the matrix of representation. This may include gaps of context, process, media, represented, representer, viewer. If this gulf is wide, how can we be sure to not do 'violence' to the other? How can we ensure that our 'looking relations' (gendered, encultured, politicised) are compatible with communicating in good faith?

We can't. We try, and we submit to being judged, always understanding that our work is part of an ongoing conversation. As Paul Chaat Smith said at the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian (in the hope that the institution would become a site of 'national conversation'):

like any difficult conversation, it can be rough going, especially at first. Let's keep arguing, because at least it means we

are talking ... But we'll get better at this, because we have to. I mean, it's not like anyone's going anywhere, right?³⁰

Accepting that it is impossible to represent another with 'complete understanding', and that miscommunication is always possible, Davinia Thornley has written that collaborative acts of representation (acutely important in cross-cultural environments, but true of all acts of representation) revolve around 'process as practice': foregrounding the context of the representation and the production methods employed.³¹

James Nachtwey talks about approaching people with 'respect' and 'deference':

I do it slowly and gently and I think about the way I move, the way I speak and the way I use the camera. I let them know that I respect them and what they're going through ... They become a participant in the picture. I could not make these pictures without their acceptance and participation.³²

important reason why he declines to look through his camera view finder at eye-level, a practice he believes leads to the objectification of the subject (he does, however, use the LCD screen to see what he is capturing). Instead, he argues, 'I become [to them] one of the characters'; in this way he creates a form of participatory drama where the presence of the camera may act as a catalyst for certain actions but remains just another presence, merely 'a part of the whole'.³³ Additionally, through his use of shooting angles (high angle, low angle) and choice of subject and framing, Helmrich tries to communicate his 'emotional subjectivity' to the audience.

Helmrich has also spoken about 'directing' social actors through the movements of his camera. His preferred movement is an orbit around key characters which he believes best communicates interrelationships between subjects. By shifting his camera orbit to foreground one person or another, he manages to communicate his perspective with regard to the subjects, indicating what (and whom) he



(left)

Scene from *Love in Our Own Time*.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY
2012

Leonard Retel Helmrich speaks about entering the 'aura' (less poetically: the close personal space) of a film subject as a way of forging a mutual pact with them in the production of images. Helmrich understands this as a relationship of complicity that refuses the objectification of the subject. This is an

considers most dramatically significant in a scene at any given point.

In briefly describing Helmrich and Nachtwey's techniques and motivations, I don't want to claim that the exercise of negotiated proximity solves ethical issues in either documentary practice or viewership. There are critiques of

(right)

John and Veronica Walker at church.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2013



(above, left)

Veronica Walker says goodbye to her dead husband John.

(above, right)

Priest prays over the body of John Walker.

BOTH IMAGES: © TOM MURRAY 2013

both of their photographic projects. What I wish to explore are some of my considerations when filming subjects for *Love in Our Own Time*. It is clear that the close scrutiny and presence of a camera (and myself) certainly provoked and shaped 'actuality' in a range of subtle ways.

Audiences who have seen this film respond to the subject matter and the obvious proximity of the camera, often remarking: 'the families must have really trusted you.' And, in exposing their lives to such obvious scrutiny, they most certainly did. But beyond that, what they appeared to trust most was a conviction that their stories might help others to navigate the vast distance between health and sickness, living and dying.

OBSERVING LOVE AND DEATH #3

John Walker lay dead in his hospital cot, a towel tucked beneath his chin to prevent his mouth from sagging open. He had been alive, if

barely, just a few minutes earlier. I filmed him: this is what death looks like — disorienting, inscrutable, not quite serene, but certainly still.

My life experience had not prepared me for this, and I am relieved that the camera preserves a distance between me and John's dead body. It was hard not to like John, and I liked him very much, so I kept recording and captured Veronica, John's wife, quietly stroking his face and wishing him the best of journeys. As Veronica moved away her son whispered a plea into John's ear: 'Look after mum.' John's brother, less-at-ease than the others, introduced himself as if the body he addressed was perhaps just temporarily blinded: 'John, it's your brother', he said. They were speaking to his spirit in the room, to the possibility of a consciousness nearby.

In this moment I am choosing not to think except in camera terms: where should I stand next? What additional angle will I need for the edit? And yet I know that if it were not for the camera I would drown here. As an outsider I am

not free to submit to grief, or to the relief that all is now over. So I keep filming until everyone leaves the room.

GETTING CLOSE #3

Why did I need to witness and broadcast these images? Our work always comes back to self. Hans-Georg Gadamer explained that ‘when something other or different is understood, then we must also concede something, yield — in certain limits — to the truth of the other’.³⁴ And for those of us in fieldwork disciplines who explore the limits of our own knowledge as we grasp at the understanding of others, the process of yielding becomes a secondary part of our nature: as initially uncomfortable as it may later be liberating.

In *The Ethnographer’s Eye*, Anna Grimshaw argues that personal transformation and experiential knowledge have been at the heart of documentary endeavour since at least Robert Flaherty’s (1922) *Nanook of the North*:

The filmmaker must not be just separated from his familiar world and relationships; he must, in addition, be prepared to submit himself to the experience of disorientation, vulnerability and ignorance.³⁵

I often feel that, as filmmakers traversing numerous scholarly territories, the most important skill we bring to a subject is the experience of *yielding*. Of yielding to an acceptance of the flaws of assumption, yielding to the delights of new learning, and so delivering the yield we are ultimately responsible for: production. As scholarly explorers, although not alone amongst fieldworkers, we have been trained to accept disorientation and allow ourselves to be reoriented through encounter, but only so long as we remain able to communicate the experience. Perhaps this is what Scott MacDonald means when he infectiously describes how cinema can be employed as a mode of exploration for ‘sensuous learning and interchange’.³⁶

Screen media is a naturally inquisitive form. We examine the interplay between *self* (the viewer/witness) and *other* (as represented on screen) precisely because of the sensuality

Scott MacDonald describes: the audio-visual encounter draws us into an unavoidable dialogue with the subjectivity of the other. This is why I wanted to film close-ups of John and Wally and all of the other subjects in *Love in Our Own Time*. I wanted audience members to witness their own humanity in these dying men and women. And if that sounds idealistic, it is. The civilised ‘deskilling’ of late modernist communities³⁷ with regard to death, and the lack of any strongly shared ritual and purpose in our approach to it, have taken such a toll on our understanding of life that there is something radical about even the most modest undertaking that seeks to shed light on dying.

In terms of my own fear of death, I believe that psychologists describe what I have been through as ‘exposure therapy’. It is one of the legacies of John and Wally and the others in the film, their gift to me, that I live with less mortal fear. And I am more capable of grasping the wonder of life in the face of my own mortality. ¶



TOM MURRAY has a PhD in media/history; his research and teaching have focused on screen storytelling, documentary and Indigenous history. His screen works have won numerous Australian awards and been

selected for many international film festivals. Tom has extensive experience in teaching screen production and facilitating screen research and storytelling in indigenous communities in Australia and the Pacific. His ongoing research interests are in the capacity of screen media to open new ways of understanding in cross-cultural environments, and to help investigate ideas of memory, history, colonialism and place. He is a Senior Lecturer in Screen Media in the Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University. In 2014 Tom was awarded the Academy’s prestigious Max Crawford Medal.

1. Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 183–210.
2. Rainer-Maria Rilke, quoted in Bachelard, p. 203.
3. Howard Morphy, “Joyous Maggots”: The Symbolism of Yolngu Mortuary Rituals’, in *Appreciation of Difference: W. E. H. Stanner and Aboriginal Australia*, ed. by Melinda Hinkson and Jeremy Beckett (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2008), p. 145.

4. Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (London: Penguin, 2003), translated by Geoffrey Wall, p. 226.
5. Milan Kundera, *Testaments Betrayed* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 129.
6. Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 168.
7. Helen Macdonald, *H is for Hawk* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2014), p. 150.
8. *Love in Our Own Time* (Sydney: Tarpaulin Productions/Screen Australia/Screen NSW, 2013). Available at <www.loveinourowntime.com>.
9. Frances and Howard Morphy, 'Afterword: Demography and Destiny', in *Mortality, Mourning and Mortuary Practices in Indigenous Australia*, ed. by Katie Glaskin, Myrna Tonkinson, Yasmine Musharbash and Victoria Burbank (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp. 209–14.
10. Frances and Howard Morphy, p. 213.
11. Giddens, pp. 161–62.
12. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (Charlottesville: Urizen Books, 1978), p. 188.
13. Robert Capa, quoted in Richard Whelan, *Robert Capa: A Biography* (Michigan: Knopf, 1985), p. III.
14. John J. Stuhr, *Philosophy and the Reconstruction of Culture: Pragmatic Essays after Dewey* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 139.
15. Orson Welles, from an interview by Juan Cobos, Miguel Rubio and J. A. Pruneda in 'A Trip to Don Quixoteland: Conversations with Orson Welles', in *Orson Welles Interviews*, ed. by Mark W. Estrin (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1964), p. 118.
16. David MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography and the Senses* (Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 22.
17. Dudley Andrew, *Andre Bazin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 109.
18. Phillipe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. by Helen Weaver (London: Allen Lane, 1981), pp. 602–14.
19. Giddens, p. 161.
20. Martin Thomas contrasts the 'rupture' between flesh and spirit that exists in the Judeo-Christian tradition with the complex and ongoing connection that exists in Bininj culture in west Arnhem Land. In 'Because it's Your Country: Bringing Back the Bones to West Arnhem Land', *Australian Book Review* (Melbourne: 2013), pp. 33–34.
21. Norbert Elias, *The Loneliness of the Dying*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 89.
22. Aries, p. 315.
23. MacDougall, p. 27.
24. Brian Winston, *Claiming the Real: The Documentary Film Revisited* (London: BFI, 1995), pp. 159–60.
25. In Douglas Cruickshank, 'Interview with James Nachtwey', published on Salon.com as 'James Nachtwey's "Inferno": Pictures from an Exhibition — in Hell', 22 April 2000, <<http://www.salon.com/2000/04/10/inferno/>> [accessed 21 January 2015].
26. Leonard collaborated with me on *In My Father's Country* (2008).
27. Leonard Retel Helmrich, conversation with the author after finishing shooting the majority of *In My Father's Country* (2008).
28. MacDougall, p. 54.
29. Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (London: Sage, 2009), p. 110.
30. Paul Chaat Smith, Talk, National Museum for the American Indian, Washington, 4 March 2005, p. 11, <<http://www.smithsonianconference.org/expert/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Presenting-Evidence-030405.pdf>>.
31. Davinia Thornley, *Cinema, Cross-Cultural Collaboration, and Criticism: Filming on an Uneven Field* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), p. 7. Thornley also notes Faye Ginsburg's critique of the 'fetishised text', and the importance of a wider critique that also looks at processes.
32. Cruickshank, 'Interview with James Nachtwey'.
33. Much of this is from conversations that I have had with Leonard over more than ten years of friendship and collaboration. The direct quotes are from Leonard Retel Helmrich and Anton Retel Helmrich, 'Single Shot Cinema: A Different Approach to Film Language' (Moniz: Avanca | Cinema, 2013) pp. 4–5.
34. In Darren R. Walhof, 'Friendship, Otherness, and Gadamer's Politics of Solidarity', *Political Theory*, 34, 5 (2006), p. 581.
35. Anna Grimshaw, *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 48–49.
36. Scott McDonald, *Adventures of Perception/ Cinema as Exploration: Essays/Interviews* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p. 1.
37. Brian Heaphy, *Late Modernity and Social Change: Reconstructing Social and Personal Life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 155.