The King

A documentary and exegesis

Figure 1:1 Andy Stankovich boxing to camera at his Scrap Metal Yard in Henderson

Abstract

This Masters Exegesis is a creative practice exploration of the ordinary/extraordinary life of Andy Stankovich: a scrap metal yard worker, a world-class boxer, and an Elvis Presley performer. *The King* is an observational documentary that follows the journey of Andy and his partner Glenys as they embark on their first New Zealand tour. The narrative of each social actor is constructed around the lead character (Andy Stankovich), framed through the perspective of the director (Ursula Grace). Certain themes emerged that were integral to the construction of the documentary narrative. Three themes, in particular, recurred throughout the crafting of this thesis: responsible representation, building trust/rapport, during reciprocal processes of listening and self-disclosure, and retaining authenticity during performance and representation. These ideas prevailed throughout all stages of conceptual and practical development.

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Contents

Authorship

I declare this submission is my work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or another institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the exegesis.

Positioning the Researcher

I've always been a performer. I became aware of this around the age of seven, when our next-door neighbor, Pita Turei, gave me the nickname "look at me." The nickname caught on quickly around our Grey Lynn neighbourhood and from that time forward I acted in many school productions, won many speech competitions, made people laugh in class and aspired to be a television news presenter.

These experiences led to enrolling in a Bachelor of Communications degree at the same time as completing a two-year intensive acting course. As well as an emphasis on improvisation, the Meisner technique taught me to focus my attention on other cast members, listening truthfully to gain truthful responses.

As the passion for television presenting faded, my ambitions to become an actor grew. After starring in a few B-grade movies and ads for products that I did not believe in, I began to look around at my other talented actor friends doing the same thing and knew I had to find some other creative outlet. Luckily, the skills gained through both courses were transferable, and I found something I relished more than being a performer. Being a director.

As well as being an extroverted child, I could also bring people together. Whether it was producing impromptu plays for encouraging neighbors, or hanging out socially, I was always surrounded by an eclectic bunch of people with a creative edge. Networking came naturally and as most of my family had worked in the film industry at some stage; it seemed inevitable that I would end up making films.

Serendipitously, the same neighbor from "look at me" days sparked my fascination with documentary filmmaking. The eureka moment came while assisting Pita with a documentary about the torching of the Owairoa Marae in Howick.

In 2011, I took a postgraduate course in documentary studies with Geraldene Peters and made the film *Wahine Whispers* as my final project, which fueled my enthusiasm for the craft. This film also landed me the role of Chief Directing Assistant at Robber's Dog Films where I developed concepts for films and advertisements with directors, collaborating with them on all stages of production. Although assisting others with their visions was fulfilling, I knew that I also needed to take the next step and direct my professional piece.

My pregnancy during the third year with Robber's Dog Films gave me an opportunity to follow that dream. I already had the idea for the film and a creative practice thesis would allow me the time - and a disciplined conceptual framework – within which to develop and produce *The King*.

Initially I met Andy when I was dropping a load of scrap metal off to his yard in Henderson. I was waiting on the weighing bay with my window down for someone to instruct me on where I should dump the scrap. A familiar song came drifting through the window began to get louder and louder. Before I knew it Andy was serenading my partner Jack and I through the car window with some of the world's most famous songs.

As I got to know Andy I found him very compelling for the extraordinary combination of his current and former lives as a scrap metal dealer, an Elvis performer, and an NZ champion middleweight boxer. I was intrigued by the similarities we shared as born performers.

Internal questions about my role as director also surfaced through the course of making the film. As a documentary filmmaker - how do I recognise and understand an authentic performance during the process of representing someone truthfully and respectfully? Equally, how will Andy's presentation of himself as a social actor within a documentary impact on this world that I am creating/representing?

It is at the forefront of my hopes that this film represents the different lives of Andy from the perspectives of himself, his friends and family in a way that considerately illustrates his extraordinary life. My intention is to reveal these various sides successfully in a way that will pay homage to him and his achievements for as long as this film has a life.

Methodology

I have employed two key methodologies for this creative practice-led documentary thesis: heuristics, which has informed reflective enquiry through the course of pre-production, production and post-production; and truthful listening throughout the non-filmed and filmed interviews. Clark Moustakas is one of the leading experts on heuristics as a method of enquiry, he states:

> Essentially, in the heuristic process, I am creating a story that portrays the qualities, meanings, and essences of universally unique experiences. Through an unwavering and steady inward gaze and inner freedom to explore and accept what is, I am reaching into deeper and deeper regions of a human problem or experience and coming to know and understand its underlying dynamics and constituents more and more fully. The initial "data" is within me; the challenge is to discover and explicate its nature. In the process, I am not only lifting out the essential meanings of an experience, but I am actively awakening and transforming my own self. Self-understanding and self-growth are simultaneously in heuristic discovery (Moustakas, 1990, p. 13).

Moustakas' (1990) excerpt introduces the idea that to discover the external problems we must also be fully aware of the internal experiences to solve the questions at hand. Heuristics, with an emphasis on reflexivity and trial and error processes, has proven useful as a method of enquiry for design and creative industries practices (Shah & Oppenheimer, 2008). Ings (2011) argues that the use of heuristics as a mode of enquiry working in parallel with creative practices legitimizes an artist's (filmmaker, or otherwise) medium of communication. As a form of examination, this process and experience of enquiry combine "informed subjectivity" with an innate knowing in the act of creative problem-solving (Ings, 2011, p. 227). This equates to a combination of well thought-out research and practical decision-making which, when executed, enables the researcher to recognise and direct the research theme or problem at the same time as being responsive to change. It does this by placing the artist/researcher "at the centre of the problem to be solved" (Ings, 2011, p. 4). The central figure/researcher can then identify

and develop solutions in the act of problem solving. It requires "rigorous definition, careful collection of data, and a thorough and disciplined analysis. It places immense responsibility on the researcher" (Frick, 1990, p. 79).

An heuristic approach has been intrinsic to the self-reflexive decision-making that informed the directions I took through the duration of this project. I began using heuristics during the early stages of conception. Knowing that I was going to make a film about Andy constituted a primary phase of "initial engagement" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990, pp. 27-37). Impelled by the initial curiosity of the first phase, a secondary phase of immersion requires the researcher to be alert and concentrated on a sustained process of self-enquiry during research.

The initial engagement with Andy occurred after a series of challenging life events. The prospect of working with Andy to capture the extraordinary elements of his contrasting lives at the yard and on tour provided me with respite from an otherwise difficult period. I began conversations with Andy and his wife Glenys about whether I should make a film about Andy, two years before they agreed. During that time of patient persistence, I refined my ideas about visual style/tone, becoming absorbed with the nuances of performance in the act of re-presenting Andy's lives. In heuristic research the researcher "must have had a personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 14). This autobiographical component meant that my life story was unfolding alongside the lives of Andy and Glenys. Overall, as a part of my methodological practice, heuristics provided a framework with which to pursue the essential significance of our everyday human experiences. Well before I began the act of filming or experimenting with ideas I employed an internally reflexive form of observing and engaging with Andy's life. It was a sensory way of being that combined the experiences of "vacancy and heightened awareness" which prepared me with a tacit form of interpersonal knowledge that complemented other kinds of knowing associated with technical, aesthetic and production-based enquiry (MacDougall, 2005, p. 7).

To facilitate the heuristic approach, methodologies such as employing the unstructured interview, establishing trust and rapport (by turning trust into a verb). Listening truthfully (through Meisner acting techniques, rather than just hearing people) were also

approaches used throughout this research. These methodologies/methods also facilitated three key constituents of the documentary filmmaking process: establishing content, physically filming each shot, and editing/post-production.

A key component of any kind of a creative practice (especially documentary exploration) is the qualitative interview (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002) as it is one of the most insightful ways we can get to know and then come to understand people (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 361). Three principal factors of the qualitative interview are open-ended questioning; minimizing the power imbalance between the parties; and having a predetermined level of trust and confidentiality around the content disclosed (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 20). The unstructured interview process informing *The King* is a specific type of qualitative interview that incorporates these three elements (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Blumer, 1969).

According to Fontana and Frey (1994) the unstructured interview offers more in-depth understandings compared with other types of interviewing processes. It involves the interviewer establishing some themes or topics that he or she wishes to explore, with a focus on open-ended, rather than closed questioning. Furthermore, it empowers interviewees to ask questions during the interview and acknowledges that the interview may be influenced by the personal responses of the interviewer as well as the interviewee (p. 366). In summary, the unstructured interview elicits information about complex behaviours and ideas from participants without restricting the full potential of these elements and their relevance to the field of enquiry. With this in mind, I made use of unstructured interviews before and during filming to encourage the development of rich content and the unfolding of narrative direction within the documentary. Unstructured interviews also presuppose establishing rapport and gaining trust to ensure sincere and worthy answers. For the purposes of my research, this began before picking up the camera when I spent nearly two years getting to know Glenys and Andy, an approach which was intrinsic to conducting this research.

Gaining trust from participants is paramount to a researcher's success especially when using media (such as film) and methods (such as unstructured interviews) that have the potential to emphasise the vulnerability of participants. Establishing close rapport with participants is a valuable tool for opening doors to deeper and better-informed research (Barbash & Taylor, 1997, p. 44). Although the researcher/filmmaker must be able to

empathise with the interviewee to elicit trust, this doesn't equate to embracing a meaningful connection to everyone at every time within the research process. Rather, a more realistic approach is to form a relationship with the community that the filmmaker intends to record or represent (Barbash & Taylor, 1997, p.46). The most honest way to do this is by turning trust into a verb and modeling trustworthy behaviours that in turn facilitate the impulse to trust among participants (Western, 1996).

As I suggested earlier, gaining confidence in the preliminary stages of this research involved a lot of unrecorded and informal interviews/meetings (usually accompanied by tea and Glenys' baking). These gatherings engaged both myself and Andy/Glenys in the process of listening and responding truthfully to each other's disclosures. This was not with the intention to form "fictive kinships," (Barbash & Taylor, 1997, p. 46) but rather to establish a genuine place within Andy and Glenys' community and environment. An example of this came about when Andy and Glenys would invite me to their home in Te Atatu to discuss the intricacies of *The King* (what days would suit, who would be interviewed, appropriate locations, etc.). These meetings would more often than not turn into informal dinners at their place, ordering in Indian takeaways. It was in these moments where I was told intimate stories about their current and past lives including, past partnerships, their children (which they both had with previous partners before meeting each other), as well as the ways they were raised as children. Equally, in this space, I divulged personal stories about my current situation, my children and parts of my past life. Truthfully talking and listening provided the foundations for a genuine and reciprocal sharing space within their private environment.

I found that studying the Meisner acting technique over two years slowly instilled the art of listening truthfully. Meisner provided me with some tools to "really listen" (Meisner & Longwell, 1987, p. 15), where I was encouraged to get out of my head and behave in a way that meant I could work intuitively with the surrounding environment. As students, this involved in-class exercises whereby we would shut off from the world of dialogue, instead focusing on listening to environmental sounds such as cars driving past, the wind's tempo, and one's own breath - anything that attuned us to our current context. Over a period of two years we listened to our environment (by staying still and silent), listened and responded to our first thoughts (by being aware of our initial reaction to someone or something), and listened to our instincts (through the process of repetition).

Sanford Meisner believed that listening was the primary skill of any actor because we (as actors) do not listen *as a character* but rather we listen *as ourselves*. When an actor can learn to listen truthfully to both their environment as well as another actor, then they can truly respond organically as someone else, moment to moment (Meisner & Longwell, 1987; Esper & DiMarco, 2008).

The King was informed by a practice of reciprocity in conversation, which involved me as the filmmaker listening intently and empathising with the stories of social actors as well as disclosing my own stories. Douglass and Moustakas (1985) state: "at the heart of heuristics lies an emphasis on disclosing the self as a way of facilitating disclosure from others - a response to the tacit dimension within oneself sparks a similar call from others" (p.50). The act of being truthful during the messaging and receiving ends of conversations was a mindful methodological component of this research that enabled me, the filmmaker to represent social actors in the most effective way possible.

Literature Review

The King: an exegesis and documentary film explores two primary questions: 1) what are the roles of the director in the process of shaping the character(s) in the documentary? 2) what are the roles of the social actor (Andy Stankovich) as a character and performer within the film? I am particularly interested in the themes that overlap both of these primary questions. These topics are: responsible representation, the ability to create mutual trust/rapport, as well as truthfulness and authenticity in the acts of listening and divulging. Each of these themes are explored through the lens of myself, as director and Andy, as social actor.

Responsible Representation

What is Representation?

The pleasure of the documentary space is that we not only see the world from *our* cultural, social, political and economic perspectives, but we can see or represent *other people's* experiences through the technical affordances of sound recording, cinematography, and editing programmes. Engaging with this distinctive documentary filmmaking space where we gather evidence from the "real" or historical world as we encounter it, has charged me as director, with the responsibility to represent my participants ethically when making decisions about contextualisation, interviews, soundbites, juxtapositions and the aesthetic/material qualities of the medium (Nichols, 1991).

Equally, we need to consider the ways in which participants represent themselves in terms of expressing their experiences of day-to-day life to a) the director and crew and b) to wider documentary audience(s). When someone 'plays' a character (whether it be as a part of his or her everyday or on-camera performances) they are asking the observer to believe that they actually possess the attributes they appear to possess (Marquis, 2011; Goffman 1991). The art of representing oneself has the potential to foster desirable or

undesirable impressions from audiences in various contexts (Goffman, 1991). In relation to this, issues of trust can also arise between those who are framing the material and those framed, as Renov states:

> It is important to recall that the documentary is the cinematic idiom that most actively promotes the illusion of the immediacy insofar as it forswears 'realism' in favour of a direct ontological claim to the 'real.' Every documentary issues a 'truth claim' of a sort, posting a relationship to the history which exceeds the analogical status of its fictional counterpart (Renov, 1986, pp. 71-72).

The observational mode that surfaced during the 1960s carried with it influential claims to truth advancing the notion that "what we saw on screen was a pristine, unaltered set of events that simply materialized in front of us" (Navarro, 2005, p. 28). Although 'fly on the wall' films continued the appearance of capturing the pure-lived experiences of documentary participants, it became clear to a growing body of visually literate audiences that the participants/performers were "produced by the filmmaking process itself" and were "staged for the camera" (Navarro, 2005, p. 28). To this day, these ideas remain a paradox, once known and concealed by many observational filmmakers.

Accordingly, many theorists have argued that the concept of a purely objective documentary film is problematic (Renov, 1986; Nichols, 1991; Barnouw, 1993; Bruzzi, 2006; Marquis, 2011; Spence & Navarro, 2011). Pure objectivity is clearly impossible, given the constructed nature of the filmmaking process that involves: selecting topics and people, various camera angles, choices made about lenses, lighting, juxtaposition and sound (Barnouw, 1993, p. 287). A key responsibility of the director then is to provide audio/visual evidence of these various "truthful" experiences to qualify what is said through the course of the film narrative. According to Nichols (1991), documentary "like other discourses of the real, retains a vestigial responsibility to describe and interpret the world of a collective experience, a responsibility that is no small matter" (p. 10). This is to say that there are ethical implications to the filmmaker's ability to actively construct a view of social reality where someone else's experiences become a "reality [that] is ours for the making" (Nichols, 1991, p. 11).

When it comes to the social actor, the creative treatment of actuality takes a different turn as constant decisions are made about which aspects of oneself to downplay, include, ignore, or accentuate (Navarro, 2011, p. 2). Bruzzi (2011) suggests that it is sometimes necessary to remind ourselves that there are components of reality existing within documentary, which can be represented without needing explanation in terms of 'constructed reality'. These components, which I like to call "elements of truth," exist within one's real life context (e.g., real workplaces and homes), as well as through the character traits of actual people performing themselves in the presence of a camera. This performance shapes the representation of oneself and thus also impacts on the documentary narrative.

Representation of Self in the Everyday

Goffman describes everyday performance as "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his (or her) continuous presence before a particular set of observers" (Goffman, 1969, p. 22). There appears a consensus among theorists that it is the presence of observers that defines that one is performing, rather than the subject's activity (Goffman; 1978; Blumer, 1986; Baron, 2004; Marquis, 2011). Additionally, performance is not confined to the space of acting (in a theatrical sense) but rather is an innate part of being a person. Goffman (1991) claims that we are born into the world as individuals, but leave the world as characters. This character is refined through developing "impressions" within various contexts to make up a person and then projecting these impressions to observers who respond accordingly by either believing this performance or not (Goffman, 1991, p. 17).

Considerable importance is attached to the subject's relationship with the observer as the role of the observer differs according to different contexts. For example, if you know someone well (say a partner, a sibling etc.) you may relax in terms of projecting the 'ideal you.' However, if a new observer comes into view (or a possible film audience), you may want them to think you *are* the 'ideal you,' which no doubt you've been practicing innately for a long time. Goffman (1991) sees these behaviours within various social contexts "for the benefit of other people" (p. 28). Bourgeois and Hess alongside Chartrand and Bargh describe this as the "Chameleon effect" whereby behaviour (unintentionally or otherwise) changes to match one's social environment (2008, p. 343; 1999, p. 893). Thus, performances are determined by social context and presuppose the presence of

observer(s). Social actors are exposed to the interpretation of audiences, which compounds a director's ethical obligation to represent social actors responsibly.

Representation of Self within the Documentary

There is a nod to the idea that filmmakers, when filming, can become "quasi-invisible, easily forgotten flies on the wall" (MacDougall, 1998, as cited in Marquis, 2011, p. 10). Paradoxically, filmmakers are "forever interfering with what it is they seek" (MacDougall, 1998, as cited in Marquis, 2011, p. 48). Filmed 'real life' is not the same as non-filmed everyday life, but at the same time 'being oneself' in front of the camera is still acting or performing but acting/performing naturally, with attention to one's historical truths (Marquis, 2011). As Baron et al., (2004) state, "All forms of human interaction are in one sense strategy notions of 'character,' 'personality,' and 'self' and are merely outgrowths of the various roles we play in life" (p. 4).

In the rockumentary *PULP* (2014), director Florian Habicht addresses the question of performance when interviewing Jarvis Cocker about his onstage performances. He asks Cocker halfway through a formally constructed interview "are you performing right now?" To which Cocker loosely responds "no." Cocker then pauses to consider this question at more length and adjusts his response by saying "well I mean I am aware that you're filming me." As discussed earlier, it is this simple idea of awareness that someone is watching or listening to you that is the fundamental impulse for performance (Goffman, 1991). So the various ways in which social actors perform themselves change according to circumstance, just as they do in non-filmed everyday life.

Marquis (2011) identifies a difference between acting and performance when she suggests that acting is a 'subcategory' of performance (p. 3). Kirby (2002) concurs and writes that not all types of performing are acting because documentary subjects are rarely asked to 'enact' situations that aren't a real part of their identities as acting is generally exclusively associated with performance in a non-fictional sense. MacDougall (1998) observes that if people appear before a documentary film camera and are not behaving naturally, then they are contributing creatively to the constructed text. Along these lines, Marquis (2011) states "nonfiction subjects are, most certainly, performers,

and their work merits examination in its own right" (p.11). Baron (2004) also discusses crafting performances that are influenced by various kinds of script-driven incentives. Whether it be actors working themselves up by recalling events from their lives, relying on the guidance of directors, or simply falling back into habitual behaviour. While Baron is specifically talking about scripted actors, her comments are relevant to documentary social actors. People 'act' and engage with the expectations of the role they are 'playing out,' whether in everyday life or onscreen.

The Actor and the Director

Who is more influential shaping the narrative - the actor, or the director (Baron, 2010; Carnicke, 1991)? Often, when viewing a film, "there is no way of distinguishing between what the director does and what the actor does" (Ross & Ross, 1984, p. 307 as cited in Carnicke, 1991, p. 76) and therefore any argument has been circular. We can approach this conundrum from two angles. To what extent does the *actor* drive the narrative when drawing upon their knowledge and experience, gestures, expressions, and intonations (Baron, 2010)? Similarly, to what extent does the *director* influence the actor's performance within the present moment of the performance and during editing (Carnicke, 1991)?

Some commentators argue that the subjectivity embedded within a performer's action demonstrate unique traits that only the individual actor can impart to the performance and the narrative as a whole (Baron, 2010). Baron (2004), with reference to fictional film argues, "practitioners assume that the actor (not the director) was responsible for studying the script to create a character with a complete life history, and they consistently argue that the script must serve as the blueprint for building characters" (p. 84). Developing and representing character requires the backstory of character and the breaking down of each scene to discover "its purpose and the character's task" (p. 87). She continues by stating that only after this point is an actor truly able to take direction. The implication is that without the actor's initial work deeply analysing the script, applying training techniques and knowing their character, the director cannot make the best use of their expertise to develop theatrical performances. Therefore it could be argued that the actor is the principal interpreter of the script and thus drives character development. For directors of documentary the social actors are already located within

their factual histories and represent themselves by simply being themselves. If the social actors are playing themselves, then it is the director's role to guide their 'performances.'

An example of a director guiding the performance of a social actor is evident in the documentary *Bombay Beach (2011).* Filmmaker Alma Har'el shows the imaginative characteristic of Benny Parrish (a young boy diagnosed with bipolar disorder). Her interpretation of Parrish's imagination (as well as his distinctive personality) is located within a playful scene based on the choreographed dance performances of children from the film's setting on the shores of the Salton Sea. In this scene Benny is often ostracised physically as he pulls faces at the other children. The portrayal as an outsider alludes to his different ways of functioning in the world and his disconnection from others as a result of these differences. The guiding hand of the director is apparent in terms of the physical positioning of Benny and the choreographed participation of the other children. There is a moment where the camera holds on close-ups of the children's faces then pulls focus to the foreground of an over-the-shoulder shot of Benny standing alone, peering in from afar. These shots are taken from multiple angles, which create continuity within each sequence and clearly demonstrate ways in which the director can influence audience perceptions of Benny's character.

This example shows that although social actors represent themselves through their natural traits, the director enables them to fit within the wider narrative world of a film. Some commentators argue that a talented dramatic performance is less a consequence of the performer's efforts than the labour of "costuming, makeup, lighting, framing, editing, sound design" (Baron, 2004, p. 13) - choices largely made by the director. In this instance, as Weston (1996) suggests "The actor has a responsibility - and prerogative - to create truthful behavior whilst following direction" (p. 9). In the case of documentary, the truthful behaviour informing performance often relies as much on the social actor's relationship with the director as the director's filmmaking techniques and decisions.

Weston (1996) argues that "the *director's* main responsibility - and prerogative - is telling the story" (p. 13). This reflects an overriding bias in fiction film literature that argues it is almost exclusively the director's role to construct the narrative. Directors give the actor direction for the actor's actions and interactions to "illuminate and create those events" and best represent the script and film in terms of the vision of the director (Weston,

1996, p. 9). It is the director's role to "stand in for the audience" (Weston, 1996, p. 6) and tell him/her whether or not their performance has succeeded in evoking emotion, contributing to character formation, or advancing narrative direction.

My experience with documentary film is that performances are constructed through the filters of both the social actor *and* the director. The stories I framed were told by social actors who lived their historical truths and told their stories while performing as themselves. For me then, there is an interplay between the role of performers/social actors and the role of the director. The director intervenes through framing, interviews, sound design, editing etc. and the social actors express themselves through gestures, voice, psychological responses and physical actions (Baron, et al., 2004, p. 1). The director and actor(s) "collaborate and combine with other cinematic elements to create meaning in film" (Baron, 2004, p.17). Their collaboration is paramount for the success of any film.

To achieve the level of synthesis needed to collaborate effectively, there needs to be a tremendous amount of trust between both parties. Actors/performers want to be actively engaged with the director not only physically (through playing out action), but also emotionally (through developing trust). Acting/performing is syncretically *doing* and *feeling* and if the balance of these are aligned the audience will be compelled (Weston, 1996, pp. 29-30). A technique I actively employed when directing *The King* was turning trust into a verb. However, achieving this level of trust is easier said than done as there are no shortcuts or quick fixes to developing rapport between people.

Creating and Placing Trust

Commentators exploring the idea and experience of trust suggest that there are two broad categories. Firstly, the different conceptual types of trust (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and dispositions), and secondly, different referents (e.g. trust in something/someone), or more specifically, trust in a characteristic (e.g. someone's honesty). These categories are interrelated, whereby people can possess some of, or all of the necessary components to influence one's trust of another (Mcknight, Cummings & Chervany, 1998). Mcknight & Chervany posit that trust-based characteristics come under five broad 'sub-constructs'; competence, predictability, benevolence, integrity and other

(2000, p. 829). The constructs of competence and benevolence are most relevant to my argument. The idea of competence suggests expertise in a field and evidence of a dynamic approach.

Demonstrating competence to Andy and Glenys throughout the making of *The King* was paramount to gaining their trust. For them, Andy's tour was a personal and professional ritual that had the potential to be either very satisfactory and lucrative or very unsuccessful and expensive. As Glenys states in the documentary "we took on board a huge risk." Therefore, allowing crew behind the scenes of the tour entailed placing trust in the crew's expertise to ensure that the filming process would not negatively influence the outcome of the tour. Having the backing of *Robber's Dog - A Film Company* worked like a guarantee for the project enabling Andy and Glenys to trust us as industry 'experts.' Benevolence, as denoted by its title, refers to a person retaining good morale, goodwill, a caring nature and a warm personality (Mcknight & Chervany, 2000). Benevolence characterised relationship dynamics while making *The King,* especially off-camera. During the early stages of discussion and interview, I soon realised that Andy and Glenys were very generous people. Glenys would often supply bountiful baking (banana chocolate muffins, to be precise) for the crew and I. Andy would also insist that he pay for our toasted sandwiches at lunchtime. Andy and Glenys' scrap metal yard employees also recognised their caring natures. Josh states in *The King* "I've had a lot of bosses in my lifetime, but none of them are like Andy, he'll come out and talk to ya, shout you lunch on a regular basis." It seemed to me that their generous natures extended to the crew of their everyday lives as well as the crew behind the camera.

Unfortunately, their generosity has previously been exploited, and they voiced this to me several times through the course of our early conversations. I knew that reciprocal generosity was especially important given this. So instead of allowing Andy to always pay for lunches and Glenys to provide the baking I would often surprise them by turning up with lunch and baked goods - ham, tomato and cheese toasted sandwiches (and the occasional Sauvignon Blanc) for Glenys, and steak and mushroom cheese toasties (and the occasional Heineken) for Andy. These acts of reciprocal goodwill and care contributed to our trusting relationship and meant that I became more attuned to the 'real' Andy and Glenys. It was at the point where I felt I knew them well, and we had developed a firm relationship of trust that I wanted to begin the filming process.

Authenticity

Figure 1:2 Andy Stankovich on stage at The Civic Theatre

The development of trust-based relationships enabled momentary and sustained authentic experiences to unfold before the camera alongside the material that was framed and constructed with an eye to responsible representation. Trilling (1972) argues that although there is no absolute or concise definitions of authenticity, it is somewhat close to the idea of staying true to oneself. This kind of self is an unmediated expression of who someone truly is; it is the opposite of being false (1972, p. 6).

One technique used to avoid the social actors appearing false was to lock the gear off and ask the crew to step away from the camera. This entailed the risk of either overloading the memory cards or running the batteries flat. However, because we knew the life of the gear we could often take our chances and remove ourselves so that the social actors could talk freely with me. Bringing out the 'real' Andy Stankovich meant enabling a careful exploration of Andy's experience of himself. How could I assist Andy to reveal authentic characteristics while capturing him on camera in his 'real' world? How would I ensure that I wasn't just revealing the 'ideal' Andy? As Trilling suggests "every

individual human being [...] carries within him, potentially and prescriptively, an ideal man, the archetype of a human being, and it is his life's task to be, through his changing manifestations, in harmony with the unchanging unity of this ideal" (1972, p. 5). It is this forever changing, morally true ideal of a man/woman that "stands in" for one's self in social contexts (1972, p. 9). Would it ever be possible to capture moments where Andy simply forgot about the camera? Even just for a moment to reveal 'real' emotions and behaviours rather than self-conscious performance?

According to Trapnell and Campbell (1999), self-consciousness is the "most influential trait measured in social psychological research" (p. 284). They claim that *self-consciousness* is a personality trait that can be attributed to the constant need for humans to accomplish deep self-knowledge (Franzoi, Davis & Markweisse, 1990, as cited in Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). Commentators such as Turner (1977), Hull (1978) and Bess (1980) have concluded there are two psychologically distinct self-focusing tendencies under the umbrella of self-consciousness: "private self-consciousness" and "public self-consciousness" (Trapnell & Campbell, 1999, p. 284).

'Private self-consciousness' refers to a tendency to "think about and attend to the more covert, hidden aspects of the self, aspects that are personal in nature and not easily accessible to the scrutiny of other persons" (Scheier & Carver, 1985, p. 687). It is apparent when people inspect their moods, fantasies, motivations, goals, etc. and as a result of the repeated self-reflection they come to know themselves very well (Bess, 1980 as cited in Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). In contrast, 'public self-consciousness' is the tendency to "think about those self-aspects that are matters of public display, qualities of the self from which impressions are formed in other people's eyes" (Scheier & Carver, 1985, p. 687) through one's mannerisms, expressive nature or behaviours. This reflects the need that humans have to ensure their social audiences condone their public self.

Complementing this view of public self-consciousness, Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1987) suggest that self-consciousness is a measure of social dependency rather than self-attention. The driving force behind the need for social relations is often fuelled by one's curiosity and concern for social norms (Schlenker & Weigold, 1990). This disposition suggests that there is an "authentic self-knowledge" present in oneself that is critical for reflecting on social cues and norms (Trapnell & Campbell, 1999, p. 286). Stepping outside

of these social norms can be socially debilitating as there is the potential for people to judge your way of being.

Self-consciousness is intensified for the subject of documentary film as you are letting the director see the most private aspects of yourself by inviting him or her into your home, workplace etc., while also trusting them to represent your private spaces to others. Seeing the lack of Andy's self-consciousness off screen made me more aware of his self-conscious behaviours on screen. Whenever Andy felt he didn't know what to do (e.g. when we were concentrating on getting the camera focus right) he would do one of two things: either sing down the camera barrel, or box to the camera. Both of these self-conscious tendencies were shown in *The King.* In the opening sequence (shot on day one) Andy comes out in the rain and begins boxing to the camera. Just as we hit record, Andy came over towards us not saying anything, just boxing and laughing. This action was not explicitly directed, but rather a nervous, playful Andy performing in a moment of self-consciousness.

Similarly, when we were setting up an interview from the outside of the lunch room looking in through the square framed window, my cinematographer Tim and I were setting up appropriate focus. Before I got the chance to ask him any questions, Andy came straight up to the window and started singing *'Love me Tender'* (thank goodness we had hit 'record' on both the camera and the sound recorders). These impromptu, nervous moments helped to develop Andy's character beyond the interview. They were authentic emotions (even if triggered by an awareness of the camera) that contributed to a true expression of Andy's personality, rather than an ideal. It was a very rare occasion when Andy would forget about the presence of the camera. When he was performing on stage as an Elvis tribute artist he connected with the audience and was taken away in his moment on stage.

In summary, with a nod to Bruzzi (2006), I consider that it is possible for the documentary lens to capture authentic, unmediated moments of real life. Throughout the filming of *The King* there were moments when the 'real' Andy Stankovich came into view at times inspired by the presence of the camera itself (those self-conscious moments) and at other times lost in moments of performance, oblivious to the camera.

Conclusion

My overarching thesis is that to capture the authentic performance of social actors in documentary film, the director needs to exercise a responsible approach to representation. The director temporarily steps in for the audience to ensure their portrayal of character is truthful and contextually appropriate. The rapport established in the pre-production phases with Andy and Glenys that continued through production and post-production ensured I knew them well enough to judge the responsible aspects of representation. Through the process of gaining their trust, I was able to draw out authentic performances which I could use as a guide to shaping the narrative during the editing and post-production phases.

This is a symbiotic relationship which requires the documentary social actor to trust the director enough to demonstrate their authentic self for representation. The social actor's trust is integral to the success of a documentary, ensuring that the director can capture something 'real.' This is particularly important for documentary film as the director also acts as a proxy for audiences. Thus representation (director) and self-representation (social actor) is exposed to multiple views. This kind of vulnerability reminds us that we also need to consider the balance of power between social actor and director when determining narrative development.

There is an oft-cited axiom that the writing of a documentary occurs during the editing stage, and the director is usually in the position of steering the narrative. Editing and other elements of post-production can include the following; taking interviews out of their original filmed contexts, embellishing the meaning of what is said during interviews, selecting cut-aways to distract the audience from breaks in the conversation, adding music to accentuate the desired tone and so on. Further exploration around the inevitable hierarchy between director and social actor would give more dimension to my discussions of trust and responsible representation (Weston, 1996; Baron, 2004).

Another limitation was the availability of scholarship that specifically engaged with documentary performance. Aside from Marquis (2011), I had to rely on theorists such as Goffman (1991), Bourgeois and Hess (2008) and Chartrand and Bargh (1999), to draw on

performance at large and fiction based performance. Carnicke (1991), Kirby (2002) and Baron (2010) assisted my understanding of performance within a film context. Although there were strong ideas and arguments to draw from, more scholarship around documentary performance would have led to an increased engagement of my practice with questions of what it means to perform as a social actor in 'real' life, to direct social actors and to reflect on my performance as a documentary director.

A further theoretical limitation was the lack of research engaging with questions of trust from a social science, rather than psychology field. I felt limited to McKnight and Chervany's (1996; 2002) research - what it trust is and how to gain and/or place trust. While they provided me with some tools to articulate the tacit knowledge around the intuition to trust, characteristics of trust and so on, it would have been deeper research had I been able to cross reference their ideas with those of other researchers.

I would have liked to develop a consideration of audience response to close off the performer, director, audience loop. *The King's* selection for the Sydney, Wairoa Māori, and New Zealand International Film Festivals would have been a perfect platform for further field work. However, it was beyond the scope of an MPhil thesis to include this aspect of production research, although I anticipate developing these considerations in the future.

From a creative practice perspective, it was an ambitious goal to direct, write and produce a short documentary for film festival release (the equivalent of 'publication') within the parameters of an MPhil thesis. I would have liked more time to reflect solely on my role as the director. If more funding were available, I would have employed others to fill those roles so that I could have been more reflexive during the physical moments of filming, digging deeper into my role as director. Notwithstanding this, reflecting on my time on set was still a fundamental aspect of my methodology and significantly enhanced the research and production processes.

Bearing all of this in mind the biggest joy emerging from this project has been Andy and Glenys' response to the film. I think as a director, the most nerve racking screening has to be the one where you show your lead participants the final cut. The three of us sat down to watch the film in their home in Te Atatu. Andy and Glenys remained hand in hand during the documentary and after watching it twice, they smiled warmly and sincerely thanked me for my work. They felt there was balance in the way they had been

represented which was both true to who they are in their everyday lives but also attuned to how they wanted to be represented as the ideal projections of themselves. An intentional balance I had been striving for as the director.

The King was invited to screen in front of 1300 people for our opening night (at The State Theatre) and 700 people the second night (at the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace) during the 2016 Sydney International Film Festival. Although other highlights of the film's journey so far such as being awarded *Best Emerging Pasifika Director* at Wairoa and selected as a finalist for the *New Zealand's Best 2016* short film competition have been exciting, going to Sydney with Andy and Glenys has rated the best so far for strengthening our new found friendship in the 'real' world.

Figure 1:3 Andy Stankovich and Ursula Grace at the Sydney Film Festival 2016

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