

Blurring 'the distinction between fact and fiction'

Cathy Come Home, In Two Minds and The Golden Vision

On his arrival at the BBC Sydney Newman was, in the words of Shaun Sutton, responsible for 'inventing a new sort of television producer' to look after the long-running strands of plays he had promoted.¹⁴⁵ For Newman, the producer occupied both a 'management' and 'creative' position that was clearly distinct from that of the director. Thus, in a talk delivered in 1966, Newman played up what he thought was the producer's role: 'Directors may come and go, Writers come and go but Producers, if they are good, go on for ever'.¹⁴⁶ However, given the number of programmes a producer was required to oversee, the 'creative' input of a producer could, in fact, be quite limited. During 1965, for example, James MacTaggart was responsible for producing over thirty plays, including every 'Wednesday Play' except one. In this same period, he also managed to fit in some directing, working on Clive Exton's *The Boneyard* (which was broadcast during the first week of 1966). As a result, the story editors, working under the series producer, came to enjoy much greater power than their title might suggest, assuming the responsibility for finding new writers, commissioning scripts, nurturing them to completion and assessing which directors might make a suitable match for them.

As noted in Chapter 1, the actor Tony Garnett worked with Ken Loach on *Catherine* before he was recruited by James MacTaggart to become a story editor for 'First Night' and then 'The Wednesday Play'. However, Garnett was not fully convinced by the division of labour that Newman had installed and agitated for the abolition of the role of the story editor in favour of an even more creative role for the producer. 'We must get away from the idea of a producer as some kind of grey eminence who has the patronage of a slot and merely dispenses it,' he told Sydney Newman. 'He must be in there from the start with the writers and following it through with the directors.'¹⁴⁷ This idea of 'following it through with the directors' was effectively put into practice when Garnett was able to push ahead with the production of *Up the Junction* while MacTaggart was away. According

145. Shaun Sutton, *The Largest Theatre in the World: Thirty Years of Television Drama* (London: BBC, 1982), p. 17.

For a long time the BBC did not distinguish between producers and directors and it was common for individuals to combine the two roles.

146. Sydney Newman, 'The Joys, Sorrows and Professionalism of the Television Drama Producer', a talk given on 21 March 1966 to Drama Producers, Associate Producers, Organisers and Departmental Heads, BBCWAC T16/62/4.

147. Memo from Tony Garnett to HDGTel, 12 April 1965, BBCWAC T16/695/1.

to Garnett, MacTaggart disliked the project and suggested he take the producer credit (which he refused).¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, there seems to be relatively little doubt that, in this case, Garnett's role was much closer to that of producer than story editor. The experience was also of crucial importance in forging a lasting relationship with Loach with whom he continued to work until 1980. As Garnett himself was to comment subsequently, the two men possessed 'similar ambitions' and, 'aesthetically and politically', became 'almost like one person'.¹⁴⁹

The contribution of Garnett to *Up the Junction* also appears to have been sufficiently well received to have encouraged Newman to let him have his head. In a letter to the Controller of BBC1 concerning plans for 'The Wednesday Play' season beginning in October 1966, Newman defended his desire 'to widen the horizons of Television Drama' through the support of 'Garnett-type productions' that would provide 'the extra flash of orange' every few weeks.¹⁵⁰ These productions would involve a longer 'turn-around' and be shot primarily on film rather than in the television studio. There was, of course, a degree of opposition to this proposal. Technical staff were concerned that the use of 16mm would lead to an unacceptable drop in picture quality. In response, the Head of Plays, Michael Bakewell argued that, while 16mm film stock might not be as high grade as 35mm, 'the kind of quality achieved in "UP THE JUNCTION"' was 'absolutely in accord with the kind of subject matter ... and ... style' that Garnett's productions would be pursuing.¹⁵¹ The added expense of shooting and editing on film also meant that the proposed 'Garnetts' were going to prove more expensive than the average 'Wednesday Play' and this too came in for close scrutiny. Garnett himself was subsequently to complain that the BBC's system of accounting favoured 'the O.B. and Studio lobby' because of the way in which other producers were encouraged 'to ignore the cost of the Services which the BBC itself provides'.¹⁵² Nevertheless, given the relatively high cost of the Garnett productions, the Controller of BBC1, Michael Peacock, sought to limit their number until the first fruits of the policy were evident. As it turned out, the first 'Garnett' to be completed was *Cathy Come Home*, a production which proved to be an apparent vindication of both the new policy and of Garnett himself.

Jolting 'the conscience of the nation': *Cathy Come Home*

Cathy Come Home (tx. 16 November 1966) was the first television play by Jeremy Sandford. A graduate of Eton and Oxford, he had worked primarily in radio for which he had written a series of documentaries and plays, including a satire on national service, *Dreaming Bandsmen* (tx. 18 September 1956), that had subsequently transferred to the stage. He also married Nell Dunn with whom, as previously indicated, he relocated from well-to-do Chelsea to working-class Battersea. This led to a growing sense of social awareness in his writing and, in 1960, he and a neighbour, Heather Sutton, collaborated on a radio documentary, *Homeless Families* (tx. 11 April 1960), that

148. Hayward, *Which Side Are You On?*, p. 55.

149. *Ibid.*

150. 'The Wednesday Play: Garnett Productions', Memo from HDG to C.BBC1, 31 March 1966, BBCWAC T5/629/2.

151. Memo from Michael Bakewell, Head of Plays, Drama, Television, to C.BBC1, 10 March 1966, BBCWAC T5/695/2.

152. Memo from Tony Garnett to HPDTel, 23 August 1966, BBCWAC T5/695/2.

sought to raise awareness of the '20,000 families in London' who, since the war, had been forced 'to accept public shelter as the alternative to sleeping in the streets'.¹⁵³ The programme itself, according to Sandford, was based on interviews that he and Sutton had conducted and consisted of a compilation of 'recordings of homeless people interspersed with ... the somewhat bland and heartless explanations of those who had the job of looking after them'.¹⁵⁴ Disappointed by the low-key reaction to the broadcast, Sandford continued to campaign on behalf of the homeless and, in 1961, he wrote a famous article for the *Observer* in which he described the grim accommodation available to the homeless at Newington Lodge in Southwark.¹⁵⁵ He also decided to turn his material into a television play, partly inspired by the experience of his neighbour 'Edna' whom he had visited in Newington Lodge.¹⁵⁶ Initially entitled 'The Abyss', Sandford wanted the play to be firmly rooted in his research into the homeless and he referred to it as consisting of 'a large number of little scenes' based on the 'newspaper clippings ... transcripts of tape recordings, actual tape recording [and] notes of people' whom he had met in the course of his investigations.¹⁵⁷ An outline of the play was sent to the BBC as early as February 1964 but met with a lukewarm response, even after it had been resubmitted.¹⁵⁸ A revised outline, sent the following year, fared little better. 'The Wednesday Play' producer Peter Luke declared his admiration for Sandford's 'crusading spirit' but dismissed the play as 'documentary stuff' that would turn 'The Wednesday Play' slot into a 'political platform'.¹⁵⁹ Story editor David Benedictus was also unconvinced of the play's merits and recommended that the story would be better told in a 'light-hearted way ... with ballad song or something to comment ironically on the facts'.¹⁶⁰ By the end of 1965, however, Sandford had also met with Tony Garnett (whom it appears learned of the project through Nell Dunn). Garnett clearly did not share his colleague's reservations and, given his enthusiasm for creating a new kind of television play in the wake of *Up the Junction*, finally commissioned a revised version

153. *Radio Times*, 8 April 1960, p. 26.

154. Jeremy Sandford, 'Cathy Come Home', in Alan Rosenthal, *The New Documentary in Action: A Casebook in Film Making* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 167.

155. Jeremy Sandford, 'Families without a Home', *Observer*, 17 September 1961, quoted in Stanley Alderson, *Britain in the Sixties: Housing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), pp. 110–11.

156. *Edna, the Inebriate Woman* (tx. 21 October 1971) was also, of course, the second of Sandford's television plays to deal with homelessness.

157. Sandford, 'Cathy Come Home', p. 173. In addition to *Homeless Families* and his newspaper articles, Sandford was also involved in interviewing a caravan dweller complaining about harassment by the local authority and police for a radio programme in 1961 (*In the South East*, tx. 2 October 1961) that seems to have anticipated the caravan-site sequence in *Cathy*.

158. The director Alan Cooke wrote to Sandford on 8 July 1964, commending the way in which the play's structure had been 'much improved and strengthened' but also indicating that he still felt that it was not his 'cup of tea' (BBCWAC T48/513/1).

159. Cited in letter from David Benedictus to Jonathan Clowes (Jeremy Sandford's agent), 19 November 1965, BBCWAC T48/513/1. Queried on the meaning of the term 'political' in this context, Benedictus rather unhelpfully responded to Sandford that it was 'a word like strategic and Brechtian and candid, which means all things to all men'. See letter from Benedictus to Sandford, 14 December 1965, BBCWAC T48/513/1.

160. Hand-written comments, BBCWAC T48/513/1. Although not explicitly saying so, Benedictus would seem to have had in mind the kind of Theatre Workshop-influenced techniques employed by *Three Clear Sundays* in dealing with the issue of capital punishment.



The problem of homelessness: Reg (Ray Brooks) and Cathy (Carol White) in *Cathy Come Home*

of the script in early 1966 (nearly two years after Sandford had first offered the play to the Corporation). Garnett also brought Loach in at an early stage to collaborate with Sandford on revisions of the play which by then had been retitled, 'When Cathy Came to Town' (eventually becoming 'Cathy Come Home' during the summer of 1966 following filming). Although Sandford subsequently argued that Loach's contribution was confined to making suggestions at script conferences and strongly resisted the claim that the play was co-written, Loach was nonetheless, paid a writer's fee and, according to a memo from Garnett at the time, worked hard with Sandford on 'the actual writing'.¹⁶¹ Loach himself recalls that 'the original script was very rambling ... and the two of us worked on the shape of the script, which was changed many times'.¹⁶² Thus, while there can be little doubt that Sandford was the driving force behind the script, it does seem to be the case that Loach also played an important collaborative role in preparing it for the screen. This may partly explain why the programme's opening credits, somewhat unusually for a 'Wednesday Play', refer to 'a story by Jeremy Sandford' rather than simply to the play being 'by' him.

161. Jeremy Sandford, 'Why I Do Not Think It Appropriate to Share the Writers Credit or Fee for "Cathy Come Home" with Anyone Other than Myself', <www.jeremysandford.org.uk/jsarchive/warp-oddbits2.html>; memo from Tony Garnett to Jack Henderson, 8 February 1966, *BBCWAC T5/965/2*.

162. Quoted in Hayward, *Which Side Are You On?*, p. 63. Sandford also acknowledges that Loach was responsible for giving the story 'a more simplified ... shape' in 'Cathy Come Home', p. 174.

The play itself tells the story of a young woman, Cathy (Carol White), who runs away to London where she meets and falls in love with a delivery driver, Reg (Ray Brooks). While they are at first reasonably well off, their situation worsens when Cathy falls pregnant (with the first of their three children) and Reg, following an accident, loses his job. This forces them to give up their comfortable modern flat and move in with Reg's mother. When this fails to work out, the family find cheap rented accommodation but are faced with eviction when their landlady dies. The family then move into a caravan, a derelict house and even a tent before Cathy and the children reluctantly enter a hostel for the homeless from which Reg is excluded. Cathy is subsequently moved on to temporary 'Part III' accommodation (involving dormitory living). Still unable to find somewhere for the family to live (and effectively abandoned by Reg, who has gone off in pursuit of work), Cathy is then faced with the final indignity of having her children taken from her by officials from Social Services (in a justifiably famous scene shot at Liverpool Street railway station).

As this might suggest, the programme possesses a much tighter dramatic structure than *Up the Junction*. While the plot is broadly episodic in character, consisting primarily of short sequences emblematic of the family's changing situation, and involves an extensive array of characters, it is nonetheless firmly organised around a single character, Cathy, whose privileged position within the narrative is underlined by the allocation to her of an intermittent 'voiceover' commenting upon what is shown.¹⁶³ Moreover, in contrast to the narrative looseness of *Up the Junction*, in which life carries on much as before regardless of the events that befall the main characters, the plot of *Cathy* possesses a much firmer dramatic logic based on the downward slide of the central character in the face of accumulating misfortunes. However, while the plot places a strong emphasis upon the fate of a particular character, taking advantage of the intimacy that this permits, it also seeks to avoid the individualisation of the drama to which this might lead. Cathy, in this regard, is presented less as a fully rounded character than as a socially representative type who, for Sandford, was conceived as an 'Everywoman', 'quintessentializing' the issues underpinning her particular predicament.¹⁶⁴ Sandford also took the view that, in order to avoid identifying the problem of homelessness in individual terms

163. As various writers have noted, Cathy's voiceover is relatively unusual insofar as it departs from the conventions of both fictional and documentary narration. In film fiction, the voiceover is traditionally associated with a flashback but in *Cathy* the voiceover does not simply describe events that have happened (or the thoughts that past events have prompted) but provides a kind of 'here-and-now' commentary on what is being shown to the viewer in the 'present' (as at the beginning of the play when Cathy declares over footage of London streets 'That house over there ... that one with the broken steps, that's where I went for the room ... That's where I got my first job ...'). This form of voiceover, however, is also unusual for a documentary insofar as it does not correspond to comments or conversations that might have been recorded at the time when the events occurred nor does it provide a straightforward first-person account of them. As John Corner suggests, the voiceover takes on the characteristics of a post-production commentary that 'appears to be organised in response to the depiction of past events rather than to those events themselves'. See *The Art of Record: An Introduction to Documentary* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 94.

164. Quoted in Derek Paget, "'Cathy Come Home" and "Accuracy" in British Television Drama', *New Theatre Quarterly* vol. 15 no. 1, 1999, p. 76. This did, however, lead to objections that one person would be unlikely to have experienced all that Cathy undergoes in the course of the play. Sandford, however, rejected such criticisms as 'nonsense', citing examples that he considered 'far more complicated' than that of Cathy. (Jeremy Sandford, 'Edna and Cathy: Just Hugs Commercials', *Theatre Quarterly* vol. 3 no. 10, 1973, p. 85.)

rather than as the consequence of a general 'housing famine', Cathy should be presented as 'blameless'.¹⁶⁵ While this did not prevent some viewers from criticising Cathy and Reg for bringing trouble upon themselves, it is nonetheless clear that the play itself aims to account for the 'downfall' of the central characters in terms of the economic and social forces that weigh down upon them rather than any specific personal or psychological attributes.¹⁶⁶ Both John Caughie and Deborah Knight have suggested the affinities of Loach's work to the naturalism of Émile Zola, in which the effects of social environment (and heredity) upon character are observed, and narrativised, in the manner of a 'scientific' experiment.¹⁶⁷ It is for this reason that Zola could say of *L'Assommoir* (1872) – a female-centred novel with some similarities to *Cathy Come Home* – that the characters in it are 'not bad' but 'spoilt by the environment of grinding toil and poverty in which they live'.¹⁶⁸ In a similar manner, *Cathy Come Home* emphasises how its characters may be fundamentally 'good' but are nonetheless laid low by social and political factors outside their control. While this sense of social determinism is built into the plot's relentless movement from bad to worse (until, as Sandford puts it, the 'breakup of one family by our society is complete'), it is reinforced by the production's use of documentary techniques that not only provide the means of generalising out from the individual predicament but also of 'documenting' the social realities that the play identifies as responsible for the characters' plight.¹⁶⁹

There is, in this regard, a clear line of continuity with the aesthetic devices previously employed in *Up the Junction*. Although a number of relatively short scenes were shot in the studio, the bulk of the filming took place on location in London and Birmingham during April and May 1966. The play, however, is not as geographically precise about location as *Up the Junction*, aiming, as in the case of the characters, for a degree of 'typicality'. Thus, according to Loach, one of the reasons for filming in Birmingham was to avoid any perception that the problem of homelessness was confined to London.¹⁷⁰ This also seems to be the reason why, in spite of the occasional allusion to specific locations (such as Mantua Street in Battersea), the production largely avoids showing obvious London 'landmarks' (or having its characters confined to Londoners). However, as Birmingham is not explicitly identified in the film (and there is no indication that the family have moved from

165. *Cathy Come Home*, BFI DVD commentary, 2003.

166. Some viewers of the play's repeat in January 1967, for example, criticised the 'feckless' behaviour of the main characters (exemplified, it would seem, by their acquisition of a growing number of children) (BBC Audience Research Report, *Cathy Come Home*, 1 February 1967, BBCWAC T5/965/1). While this criticism is anticipated in one of Cathy's voiceovers (when she comments that she is pregnant with her third child), it might be argued, given the play's grim conclusion, that Cathy's defence of 'love' over 'nice surroundings' is effectively undermined by the events that follow (see Corner, *The Art of Record*, p. 102, for a discussion of this).

167. John Caughie, 'Progressive Television and Documentary Drama', *Screen* vol. 21 no. 3, 1980, pp. 9–35; Deborah Knight, 'Naturalism, Narration and Critical Perspective: Ken Loach and the Experimental Method', in McKnight, *Agent of Challenge and Defiance*, pp. 60–81. It is, of course, the case that this influence is partly mediated through Italian neo-realism, which Robert Philip Kolker associates not only with location shooting and 'poor working-class subjects' but also with 'the use of the environment to define those subjects' in *The International Eye: Contemporary International Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 44.

168. Émile Zola, *L'Assommoir*, trans. Leonard Tancock (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 21.

169. Jeremy Sandford, 'The Abyss', BBCWAC T48/513/1.

170. *Cathy Come Home*, DVD commentary.



The use of authentic locations:
Cathy Come Home

one city to another), it could be said that the production seeks to construct an image of a composite city that stands in for urban experience more generally. However, as in *Up the Junction*, the display of real locations does nonetheless provide a key means of verifying the 'authenticity' of the events that are shown as well as underwriting the claims about homelessness that are being made. For while the conventions of fiction may entail a suspension of disbelief, documentaries, according to Bill Nichols, endeavour to 'instil belief' in the spectator that the world presented is 'actual'.¹⁷¹ In this respect, the showing of real places within *Cathy* is central to its claim to be about 'real' problems that can be demonstrably 'documented'. The team, for example, was particularly pleased (as well as surprised) to be granted permission to film in Newington Lodge, the notorious hostel that Sandford had previously visited and reported on in his journalism. As a result, the location was used as the setting for the scenes at 'Holm Lea' near the end of the film. However, while these scenes are staged, and feature actors, the filming of the production in such an authentic location offered an eloquent means of reinforcing, and 'instilling belief' in, the 'reality' to which the drama lays claim.

This pursuit of 'authenticity', and observational accuracy, within a fictional framework, is reinforced by the co-option of other documentary-like devices already familiar from *Up the Junction*. Even more so than in the earlier work, the production seeks to emulate the appearance of documentary through the employment of apparently casual camerawork and untidy framing that give the impression that actions are not being staged for the camera but are being observed as they happen. Thus, to take one small example, when Cathy is shown queuing for food in the first of the homeless hostels, 'Cumbermere Lodge', the camera moves along a line of women and children before alighting upon her. The camera movement is unsteady and our view of the line is partially obscured by a head in the foreground of the frame. Unidentified women also walk in front of the camera, temporarily restricting our view of Cathy. Combined with a soundtrack of background noise and chatter that makes it difficult to hear any particular conversation, the impression created is that of the camera struggling, as in observational documentary, to capture what is happening (rather than, as is actually the case, recording a scene that had previously been rehearsed). As

¹⁷¹ Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 2.

this example would indicate, the perspective of the camera tends to be that of the 'onlooker', avoiding shots, and forms of editing (such as reverse-field cutting, eyeline matching and point-of-view shots), that it would not normally be possible for the documentary film-maker to achieve.¹⁷² Thus, while there are certain scenes (such as the one at night between Cathy and Reg in the hostel) that make use of close-ups and character-driven forms of cutting, most of the scenes dispense with the vocabulary of 'classical' editing. Thus, to take another small example, when a council inspector arrives at the family's slum dwelling prior to their eviction, their conversation is filmed at a slight distance in one take without resorting to the reverse-field cutting that might normally be expected to occur in such a situation.

However, if *Cathy* downplays 'classical' forms of editing, it also relies heavily, like *Up the Junction* before it, on the use of montage as a means of contextualising the individual drama and identifying the 'environmental' factors that impose upon the characters. This is particularly so of the many descriptive montages, composed of documentary-like shots of people and places overlaid with the asynchronous speech of unidentified characters, that are knitted into the plot and which, as John Corner suggests, provide the impression of 'documentary referentiality around the main line of narrative action'.¹⁷³ Following Reg's accident, for example, the family are forced to move in with Reg's mother, Mrs Ward (Winifred Dennis). She is shown climbing the stairs of her tenement block while unidentified speakers comment on the conditions in which they live ('Kiddies here have seen rats running around the place nearly as big as cats', 'The damned places are so old, they want pulling down'). Some short scenes inside Mrs Ward's flat then follow, intercut with shots of the surrounding tenement block and its inhabitants accompanied by further unidentified voiceovers. Although the location is not specified, filming took place at the notorious Edinburgh – or Popham – Cottages in Islington (the line in the play 'you can sit on the lavatory and do the cooking' was apparently sufficiently recognisable to provoke the concern of the local council). Although staging was involved, many of the shots of local people were apparently unplanned and filmed as they occurred. In this way, what is, in effect, 'actuality' footage (of a kind that might appear in a documentary) is intercut with scenes of staged drama in order both to authenticate the 'reality' of the story being told as well as to generalise out from the family's particular situation by demonstrating the shared character of the conditions under which they live. These strategies are reinforced by the inclusion of voiceovers. According to Sandford, some of these voices were recorded by him (either before or during the shooting) and were then, as in Denis Mitchell's documentaries, edited together with the film images in post-production.¹⁷⁴ Although the speakers are not identified, they are clearly intended to be understood as actual residents and, according to

172. For John Caughie, it is the employment of a 'documentary' rather than a 'dramatic look' that is one of the most distinctive features of Loach's work. By this he does not simply mean that Loach's films look like documentaries but that they imply a different spectatorial 'subject-position' as well. See Caughie, 'Progressive Television Drama and Documentary', p. 26.

173. Corner, *The Art of Record*, p. 92.

174. *Cathy Come Home*, DVD commentary. It is not clear, however, how many of these voiceovers are actual documentary recordings (even though they may have been based on them). Although clearly intended to give the impression of documentary authenticity, many of the voices in the programme were, in fact, recorded by professional actors (as in the scenes at Holm Lea).



Generalising from the particular: residents of the tenement block in *Cathy Come Home*

Loach, their words deliver 'the criterion of authenticity that the rest of the film has to live up to'.¹⁷⁵ They also play a crucial role in situating the experience of the central characters within a wider context and in underlining that it is not unique. As Sandford himself puts it, they serve as 'a constant reminder that this is not the story of one family ... but the story of hundreds of thousands of people'.¹⁷⁶

This process of broadening out from the individual experience is taken one step further by the use of voiceovers to provide factual information about the more general state of housing in Britain. In *Up the Junction*, the official-sounding voiceover was confined to the abortion sequence. In *Cathy Come Home*, however, it becomes much more extensive. Thus, when Cathy goes in search of a place after Reg's accident, a male voiceover declares that there are '200,000 more families in the London area than the homes to put them', '60,000 single persons living without sinks or stoves' and overcrowding in 'at least one in ten of all households' of 'seven central London boroughs'. When the family resumes its hunt for somewhere to live, following Reg's appearance in court, another voiceover proceeds to list the numbers of homeless across England ('Birmingham, 39,000 families on the waiting list; Leeds, 13,500; Liverpool, 19,000; Manchester, nearly 15,000'). Although these voiceovers are sometimes linked by critics to the 'voice-of-God' commentary characteristic of expository modes of documentary, this is not really the case insofar as the production features a variety of 'official' voices, rather than one authoritative narrator, and seems to imply, as in the case of the recordings of 'ordinary' people, that the voiceovers are recordings based on the words of actual people (whether they be local government officials or concerned commentators). Nevertheless, it is also clear that the film does want to draw on the rhetoric of expository documentary as a way of going beyond the particularity of the story and arriving at more general conclusions about the individual family's circumstances. As Bill Nichols indicates, documentaries seek not only to 'instil belief' but also to 'make a case or argument'.¹⁷⁷ In this respect, the introduction of 'facts and figures' relating to housing in Britain is designed not only to lay stress on the general

¹⁷⁵ *Cathy Come Home*, DVD commentary.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. 4. For a discussion of the conventions of the expository mode of documentary, see pp. 105–9.



A victim of the system: the emotionally powerful ending of *Cathy Come Home*

character of the social problem that Cathy's experience typifies but also to bolster the case that the film is making for social reform.

In this way the play's combination of drama and documentary techniques aims to mobilise both emotional and intellectual responses. Arguing for a more positive consideration of 'popular' forms of television drama within cultural criticism, Julia Hallam suggests that the prestige of 'The Wednesday Play' series, of which *Cathy Come Home* is one of the most celebrated examples, is associated with a 'preference for realism and "objectivity"' and an apparent 'abhorrence of melodrama's focus on personal feelings'.¹⁷⁸ This seems, however, to set up a false opposition. For while *Cathy Come Home* may employ documentary-like techniques, or 'realism', in order to reinforce the legitimacy, or 'objectivity', of its claims and arguments regarding the social world, it also relies heavily on plot and character conventions more commonly associated with melodrama, including the victimisation of an innocent (or, in Sandford's description, 'blameless') heroine, a foreshortening of relations between cause and effect, outbursts of feminine 'hysteria' and scenes calculated to arouse pathos (including the enforced separation of mother and children at the play's end). Indeed, for one unsympathetic critic, the production was found wanting precisely because it was a 'tear-jerker' which, it was claimed, fell far short of the 'realism' and 'objectivity' that would be expected of documentary.¹⁷⁹ In this way, the 'argument' that the play seeks to make through the use of documentary elements is reinforced by a melodramatic mode of address designed to elicit a clear emotional response. At the same time, it might also be said that the play's aura of documentary serves to insulate it against possible scepticism regarding the 'believability', or dramatic plausibility, of its melodramatic, and narratively 'excessive', elements (and the emotions that these encourage). As one viewer commented to the BBC, 'Nobody could fail to be moved by this play The semi-documentary treatment discounted any fiction about these real-life situations.'¹⁸⁰

178. Julia Hallam, *Lynda La Plante* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 28.

179. Grace Wyndham Goldie, 'Stop Mixing TV Fact and Fiction', *Sunday Telegraph*, 8 January 1967, p. 14. Wyndham Goldie was, in fact, the former Head of Television Talks and Current Affairs at the BBC and her attack on the play will be considered in more detail later.

180. *Cathy Come Home*, Audience Research Report, 6 December 1966, BBCWAC T5/965/1.

For James Smith the portrait of 'a blameless hero' as 'the victim of the system' is a basic characteristic of what he refers to as the 'the melodrama of protest'. However, for Smith, it is also a form of melodrama that is doomed to fail because its protest against existing social conditions 'speaks exclusively to the converted'.¹⁸¹ While *Cathy Come Home* clearly conforms to his definition of a 'melodrama of protest', it could hardly be said to have failed in the way in which he suggests. For not only did the play succeed in winning a wide audience but it also succeeded, as the Labour MP Frank Allaun put it, in jolting 'the conscience of the nation'.¹⁸² The estimated audience for the programme ran to around 12 million (or 23.6 per cent of the population) for whom the 'reaction index' was well above 'The Wednesday Play' average.¹⁸³ In order to capitalise on the interest generated by the play, the BBC decided to repeat it less than two months later when the 'reaction index' was even higher and the Audience Research Department was moved to declare that, in terms of audiences for 'Wednesday Plays' in 1966, *Cathy* had 'hit the jackpot'.¹⁸⁴ Although the charity Shelter was not, as legend sometimes has it, formed as a direct result of the play, it did nevertheless capitalise on the uproar created by the programme when it was launched a month after the programme's first transmission. It also took the opportunity of the repeat screening to run adverts in the press featuring a picture of Carol White and asking the question, 'Did you see Cathy last night?'¹⁸⁵ The widespread public reaction to the play also led the government to request a special screening of the programme that was attended by, among others, the Labour Minister of Housing, Anthony Greenwood, and the Minister of Health, Kenneth Robinson. Greenwood also met with Loach, Garnett and Sandford to discuss what could be done about the homeless. According to Garnett, the group was 'not challenged at any point on either our intentions in making the film or our facts', although the Minister did indicate that he felt that 'the captions at the end, particularly the one about West Germany, were unfortunate'.¹⁸⁶ Loach himself subsequently took to complaining that the establishment's rush to welcome the programme as a contribution to understanding the problems of homelessness was a way of co-opting the programme without making any commitment to effective remedial action. Two years after *Cathy's* original broadcast (when the programme was scheduled for a third repeat), Jeremy Sandford was also gloomy about what had been achieved, noting that the numbers of children in care, families on housing lists and occupants of

181. James L. Smith, *Melodrama* (London: Methuen, 1973), p. 74. Michael Walker has also suggested how Smith's term may be applied to Loach in 'Melodrama and the American Cinema', *Movie* nos 29–30, Summer 1982, p. 15. My own account of how Loach's later films may be understood as a form of 'materialist' melodrama in which the personal choices and predicaments faced by characters are shown to be underpinned, and circumscribed, by social and economic factors may be found in John Hill, 'Ken Loach: Every Fuckin' Choice Stinks', *Sight and Sound*, November 1998, pp. 18–21. Leigh builds on these ideas in *The Cinema of Ken Loach* but, in criticising my own work, reveals a degree of misunderstanding about the concept of 'convention' which he takes to be an evaluative, rather than an analytic, term.

182. Allaun was speaking in support of the second reading of the Housing Subsidies Bill in the House of Commons on 15 December 1966 (BBCWAC T5/965/1).

183. *Cathy Come Home*, Audience Research Report, 6 December 1966, BBCWAC T5/965/1.

184. *Ibid.*

185. See *Guardian*, 12 January 1967. The BBC had given its permission for a photograph of Carol White to be used.

186. Memo from Tony Garnett to HDGTel, 1 December 1966, BBCWAC T5/965/1. The title in question claimed that West Germany had built 'twice as many houses as Britain since the war'.

'Part III' accommodation had all grown. The main change, he suggested, was that conditions in 'Part III' accommodation had at least got better.¹⁸⁷ While such evidence provides a salutary reminder of the limited capacity of any single film or television programme to accomplish significant social change, it would also be wrong, as Derek Paget suggests, to discount the enduring 'resonance' the programme has achieved within both the political and cultural spheres.¹⁸⁸ The play has continued to be repeated at regular intervals and remains an icon of socially conscious television drama. In 2006, for example, on the occasion of the programme's fortieth anniversary, the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and the *Observer* all ran special features on the play and how it continued to retain a relevance for contemporary debates about housing.¹⁸⁹

Documentary drama

While the production provoked a level of response that was unusual for a television play, it did not receive unanimous praise. Given the programme's unsympathetic portrayal of local authority officials, the head of the local government office, Laurence Evans, achieved a degree of notoriety for his call to local council members and officials to 'spot the boobs' in the programme's treatment of the handling of homelessness on its repeat.¹⁹⁰ Certain doubts about the way in which elements of drama and documentary had been combined were also raised. These were not, in fact, new concerns and many had already received an airing, both within the BBC and in the press, in the wake of *Up the Junction*. Maurice Wiggin, for example, had complained in the *Sunday Times*, that the introduction of the 'so-called "documentary" element' into *Up the Junction* had helped to 'smudge the line between fact and fiction' while T. C. Worsley, writing in the *Financial Times*, argued that the audience might have been 'confused' as to whether the production was 'supposed to be reality or fiction'.¹⁹¹ The BBC's own audience research also indicated that some viewers were disconcerted by *Up the Junction*'s departures from "'drama" in the usual sense' and that they might have been happier had the programme 'been offered as a "dramatised documentary" rather than a play'.¹⁹² However, given the controversy surrounding the programme's subject-matter (and its

187. Letter from Sandford to Gerald Savory, 26 October 1968, BBCWAC T5/965/1. The play itself was broadcast on 13 November.

188. Paget, "Cathy Come Home" and "Accuracy" in British Television Drama, pp. 75–90. For a less-nuanced assessment of the play's impact, see MacMurrough-Kavanagh, "Drama" into "News", pp. 247–59.

189. 'Out of the Box', *Guardian*, 15 February 2006; 'Drama out of a Crisis', *Independent*, 3 November 2006; and '40 Years after Cathy Come Home ...', *Observer*, 19 November 2006. A few weeks earlier the *Observer* also ran a piece by Nick Cohen entitled 'Poor Cathy Still Can't Come Home Because There Is No Home to Go to', 15 October 2006, p. 11.

190. *Daily Mail*, 11 January 1967.

191. *Sunday Times*, 7 November 1965; T. C. Worsley, 'Up the Junction', *Television: The Ephemeral Art* (London: Alan Ross, 1970), p. 36.

192. *Up the Junction*, Audience Research Report, 7 December 1965, BBCWAC T5/681/1. The BBC's Head of Drama, Sydney Newman, was also discomfited by the techniques of the play and suggested that 'the producer had exceeded his brief in adding the documentary element to a dramatic creation' (Television Weekly Programme Review Minutes, 10 November 1965, BBCWAC R78/1919).

representation of sexual behaviour), the debate about the mixing of documentary and drama (and by implication fact and fiction) took something of a backseat. Given the huge impact of *Cathy Come Home*, however, it is hardly surprising that the issue should have re-emerged with even greater force.

As has been seen, some of the delay in the BBC accepting the play for production had been due to the perception that it was, in fact, too much like a documentary. There was also a degree of dispute within the BBC, prior to the programme's transmission, concerning the extent to which the play should make use of documentary devices. Although Garnett sought to avoid the scrutiny of his superiors, he was still effectively 'on trial', given the high cost of his productions relative to other 'Wednesday Plays'. In August 1966 (around three months prior to transmission), Sydney Newman and Gerald Savory, Head of Plays, both viewed a rough cut of the play which, by Garnett's admission, was running 'ten minutes too long'.¹⁹³ Savory subsequently reported to Michael Peacock, the Controller of BBC1, that Garnett had been asked to cut 'the more "documentary" bits', as well as '[m]uch of the spoken commentary', in order to allow the audience to 'concentrate on the human story of Cathy and her family'.¹⁹⁴ While it is unclear to what extent Garnett and Loach actually followed this instruction (particularly given the amount of voiceover material that remains in the final version), it is evident nonetheless that both Newman and Savory were keen to reduce the documentary component and make the production conform more closely to the existing norms of the television play.

Concerns about the artistic tactics employed by the production continued to be expressed once the programme had been broadcast. Although there was general admiration for the production at the meeting of the BBC's Weekly Programme Review Group, both Michael Peacock and Paul Fox, the Head of Current Affairs, expressed doubts about the programme's 'blurring of the distinction between documentaries and plays'.¹⁹⁵ A number of newspaper critics also raised the matter while the BBC Audience Research Department reported that some viewers had also objected to the combination of 'drama with documentary facts'.¹⁹⁶ However, probably the strongest complaint about the programme came from the former Head of Television Talks and Current Affairs, Grace Wyndham Goldie, who mounted a vigorous attack on its methods of intermingling 'the real with the fictional' a few days before its repeat in January 1967. Although acknowledging that the play was 'an effective piece of television', she nevertheless considered it to be 'an early example of a new

193. Memo from Garnett to Gerald Savory, Head of Plays, Television, 22 August 1966, BBCWAC T5/965/1. There appears to have been a degree of mythologising of the degree of subterfuge involved in bringing *Cathy* to the screen. Jeremy Sandford, for example, claimed that, given the secrecy surrounding the production, 'not one of Garnett's bosses saw *Cathy Come Home* before it was actually transmitted'. This, however, is clearly not the case. See 'Patronising the Proles', *Plays and Players*, May 1972, p. 58.

194. Memo from Savory to Controller BBC1, 25 August 1966, BBCWAC T5/965/1; see also Memo from Savory to Garnett, 31 August 1966, in which he is asked to eliminate 'a fair amount of voiceover' and make cuts 'not affecting Cathy and her family' (BBCWAC T5/965/1).

195. Television Weekly Programme Review Minutes, 23 November 1966, BBCWAC.

196. *Cathy Come Home*, Audience Research Report, 6 December 1966, BBCWAC T5/965/1. By the time of the play's repeat the following January, this objection was less commonly raised by viewers, possibly as a result of the acclaim that the production had by then achieved ('Repeat of *Cathy Come Home*', Audience Research Report, 1 February 1967, BBCWAC T5/965/1).

and dangerous trend in television drama' that 'deliberately blurs the distinction between fact and fiction'.¹⁹⁷ As this is a complaint that was destined to dog Loach's work for many years to follow, it is worth pausing to take stock of some of the issues at stake.

As various commentators have observed, the certainty with which the division between 'documentary' and 'drama' (and 'fact' and fiction) is invoked in these debates is certainly peculiar, given the multiple ways in which documentary and drama have historically overlapped. As Bill Nichols points out, there is no agreed definition of documentary and certainly 'no absolute separation between fiction and documentary'.¹⁹⁸ This is evident from the history of documentary practice which reveals how extensively documentaries have relied upon dramatic devices. Indeed, for the 'father' of documentary, John Grierson, the employment of organising principles associated with 'drama' was taken to be a key factor in distinguishing the documentary proper from the 'lower categories' of non-fiction films such as newsreel or lecture films.¹⁹⁹ In the case of British films of the 1930s and 1940s, therefore, what was held to distinguish documentaries from dramas was not, as Brian Winston indicates, that 'the camera filmed things as they were happening' but rather that they 'filmed things as they had happened and been witnessed'.²⁰⁰ Thus, for Winston, it is quite legitimate to describe Humphrey Jennings's film *Fires Were Started* (1943) as a 'documentary' despite its use of a carefully prepared script, actors and a studio. By the same token, it would also be possible for *Cathy Come Home* to be defined as a documentary, given that it too was based on events that, as Sandford repeatedly claimed, were known to have occurred and had, in many cases, been directly observed (i.e. 'had happened and been witnessed').²⁰¹

However, as John Ellis suggests, the management of the boundaries between fact and fiction, and documentary and drama, has assumed greater significance for television than film as a result of the 'flow' of television's programming and the institutional importance of maintaining trust in television's 'regime of factuality'.²⁰² Nevertheless, the organisational and technological circumstances of early television also meant that the boundaries between documentary and drama had demonstrated considerable fluidity. There was, in fact, no separate television documentary department at the BBC until 1953 and, up until then, the small Documentary Group, working under Robert Barr, was attached to the Drama Department. Barr himself did not adhere to any strict demarcation between drama and documentary, claiming that the television documentary 'form' consisted of a 'dramatisation of facts' which could take advantage of 'any dramatic device to make its point'.²⁰³ During the 1950s, the 'dramatised documentary' also emerged as a distinct televisual genre and, according to Arthur Swinson, accounted for most of the 'original writing' currently on

197. Wyndham Goldie, 'Stop Mixing TV Fact and Fiction'.

198. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. xi.

199. See Paul Ward, *Documentary: The Margins of Reality* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005), p. 9.

200. Brian Winston, *"Fires Were Started" -* (London: BFI, 1999), p. 20.

201. It is partly for this reason that the play is also discussed in books devoted to documentary rather than just drama. See, for example, Rosenthal, *The New Documentary in Action* and Corner, *The Art of Record*.

202. John Ellis, 'Documentary and Truth on Television: The Crisis of 1999', in Alan Rosenthal and John Corner (eds), *New Challenges for Documentary*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 352.

203. Memo from Robert Barr to Cecil McGivern, 3 August 1951, quoted in Elaine Bell, 'The Origins of British Television Documentary', in John Corner (ed.), *Documentary and the Mass Media* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), p. 77. Bell herself describes early television documentary as consisting of 'strange hybrid forms' (p. 80).

television.²⁰⁴ This was due in part to the relative absence of original drama on television at this time but it also reflected the constraints imposed upon television by economics and technology that meant that documentary, like drama, was mainly produced 'live' in the studio. As a result, it could be said that the 'dramatisation' of documentary became something of a necessity for television at this time.

This situation had, of course, changed by the mid-1960s. The growing use of 16mm film in television news and documentary had not only reduced the costs associated with 35mm film but also allowed producers and directors to depend much less on the studio. As Dai Vaughan indicates, 'the appearance of a silent-running 16mm camera (the Eclair) and a professional-quality lightweight tape recorder (the Nagra)' in the early 1960s not only made synchronised shooting on location with portable equipment a possibility but also encouraged the emergence of a 'new type of documentary' that could be shot quickly and cheaply with a small crew.²⁰⁵ These developments also gave rise to a new ideology of documentary, associated with 'Direct Cinema' and 'cinéma vérité', which placed a particular emphasis upon supposedly non-interventionist forms of observation.²⁰⁶ As a result, the methods of studio 'dramatisation' that had once appeared to be such a normal part of television documentary became much less common. However, the tradition of the 'dramatised documentary' also survived through the work of the Drama Documentary Group which, among other things, was responsible for initiating the long-running police series, *Z Cars* (to which Loach, of course, contributed three episodes).²⁰⁷ Ken Russell's arts documentaries for *Monitor* (1958–65), such as *Elgar* (tx. 11 November 1962), also incorporated highly speculative dramatisations while

204. Arthur Swinson, 'Writing for Television', in Paul Rotha (ed.), *Television in the Making* (London: Focal Press, 1956), p. 42. In a more extensive account of the 'dramatised documentary', Swinson notes that it is 'played by actors who give, as far as possible an accurate interpretation of the people they represent', that it is 'produced "live" in the studio, with the help of film sequences', that the 'locations in which the action takes place in life are copied and reproduced in the studio' and that the 'stories are true in the sense that they are taken from life with as little modification as possible'. See Arthur Swinson, *Writing for Television* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955), p. 80.
205. Dai Vaughan, *For Documentary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 13–14. Norman Swallow also discusses the role of the tape recorder and 16mm equipment in changing attitudes towards television documentary (which he suggests had previously meant 'the reconstruction of reality in the studio, using built sets, rehearsed actors, and written dialogue') in *Factual Television* (London: Focal Press, 1966), pp. 194–200. He suggests that Jack Gold's short BBC film about a factory outing, *Happy as Can Be* (tx. 3 August 1959) (which he mistakenly refers to as *The Outing*) was pioneering in its use of both 16mm cameras and quarter-inch tape recorders.
206. As various commentators note, even though the terms quickly became confused, British film-makers were more influenced by the US model of 'Direct Cinema' than the more interventionist forms of 'cinéma vérité' practised in France. For a discussion of the rise of 16mm filming in British television, see Sexton, "'Televérité" Hits Britain', pp. 429–44.
207. In a memo of 27 February 1961, Elwyn Jones identified five 'documentary formats': magazines, personal statements, full-length films, casebooks and dramatised documentaries (BBCWAC T16/61/2). It was in his capacity as Drama Documentary Supervisor that Jones initiated the idea of *Z Cars*. While this may have been a fictional police procedural, it was nonetheless listed as a 'dramatised documentary' in the BBC's annual report (BBC, *Annual Report and Accounts 1961–2*, Cmnd. 1839 (London: HMSO, 1962), p. 119). At around the same time, the Independent Television Authority also referred to the hospital drama *Emergency Ward 10* (1957) and the fictional *Probation Officer* (1959) as 'semi-documentary series' in its own *Annual Report and Accounts 1959–60* (London: HMSO, 1960), p.15.

the 'reconstruction' of historical events in the style of a contemporary news programme in Peter Watkins's film *Culloden* (tx. 15 December 1964) led to questions in the press as to whether it was a 'drama or documentary'.²⁰⁸ Shot completely on location on 16mm, and using non-professional actors, the programme was also to prove an important influence upon Loach.²⁰⁹ *Culloden* was, however, officially a 'documentary' that had emerged from the Documentary and Music Department.²¹⁰ *Cathy*, on the other hand, was the product of the Drama Department and, while it bore similarities to earlier examples of *dramatised* documentary, its novelty was in presenting itself as a new kind of *documentarised* drama. Thus, while Ellis, in his account of television documentary, suggests that television's regime of 'factuality' may face 'a crisis in genre relations' when 'material proposed as fact involves more fictional elements than the current generic understandings would allow', the 'crisis in genre relations' provoked by *Cathy* could be said to have involved a shift in the opposite direction, the inclusion of more factual (or documentary-based) elements than television drama (or fiction) had previously permitted.²¹¹

In many respects, it was because *Cathy* had been produced by the Drama, rather than the Documentary Department, that Wyndham Goldie particularly objected to the programme.²¹² She argued that, whereas 'every factual programme' was 'planned and scrutinised' to ensure accuracy and avoid 'advocacy' in 'areas of controversy', this was not the case in drama which could be used to circumvent 'the fundamental rules under which broadcasting organisations are permitted by society to exercise their privileges'.²¹³ In this respect, her objection is not simply that the form blurs the boundaries between 'fact' and 'fiction' (which had, of course, been a long-standing feature of the 'dramatised documentary') but that the incorporation of documentary elements into drama could offer the means of evading institutional controls regarding political partisanship. While Goldie's conclusions may be questionable, her point is not without merit. As Schlesinger *et al.* indicate, the single play has, as a result of its 'authored' status, tended to permit a more 'open' expression of politically 'alternative' and 'oppositional' views than more heavily regulated forms of

208. 'TV Drama and Documentary Pool Ideas', *The Times*, 18 September 1965, p. 12.

209. In a television documentary on *Culloden*, Loach comments on the 'terrific impact' of Watkins's film and links it with his own desire to achieve 'the same surface' as documentary in his work (*Making Reel History*, BBC Scotland, tx. 15 April 1996).

210. In 1955, the BBC's Documentary Department had been dissolved and staff absorbed into other departments. A new Documentary Department was established in 1962 under Huw Wheldon (with Music added in 1963).

211. Ellis, 'Documentary and Truth on Television', pp. 351–2.

212. It is worth noting, however, that Goldie's background in television current affairs had made her more generally hostile to the cinematic tradition of documentary which she felt was too personal and subjective, elevating 'the attitude of one man – the film-maker' to the status of 'an unchallenged truth'. See Grace Wyndham Goldie, *Facing the Nation: Television and Politics 1936–76* (London: Bodley Head, 1977), p. 54. Ken Russell also recalls her dislike of 'film directors *manqué*' working for the arts documentary series, *Monitor* (1958–65) in Joan Bakewell and Nicholas Garnham (eds), *The New Priesthood: British Television Today* (London: Allen Lane, 1970), p. 135.

213. Wyndham Goldie, 'Stop Mixing TV Fact and Fiction'. A similar point of view was also expressed by James Thomas of the *Daily Express* (8 March 1967) following the transmission of *In Two Minds*: 'Once a writer with a bee in his bonnet sat down and wrote a documentary which was balanced by an experienced features team to present a fair case. Now he writes a documentary and calls it a play – and under the banner of the drama department he acquires a freedom of expression which could not be tolerated by a current affairs producer'.

television news and current affairs.²¹⁴ Loach himself, talking in 1969, took the view that if he and Garnett had been working in 'the sensitive areas – public affairs, documentary and so on' they would not have been allowed 'to do anything like what we wanted to do.'²¹⁵ It is clear, therefore, that Garnett and Loach did seek to take advantage of the relative 'openness' that 'The Wednesday Play' slot afforded in order to express views that they felt were at odds with the 'official' voice of the BBC's factual programming. As 'The Wednesday Play' followed the evening news (and, at the time of *Cathy's* broadcast, also preceded the current-affairs programme, *Twenty-Four Hours*), the positioning of the series offered the opportunity to exploit the 'flow' of television to set up a kind of internal dialogue between purportedly 'factual' and 'fictional' programming (and the viewpoints embedded within them). This was, of course, recognised by Wyndham Goldie who argued that, due to television's reliance upon a 'succession of images', the intermingling of 'the real with the fictional' in 'semi-documentary' posed a particular threat to the 'integrity' and 'validity' of factual programming.²¹⁶ Loach and Garnett would not necessarily have disagreed with this analysis but they drew a different conclusion. For they did not accept the claims made on behalf of the 'integrity' of factual programming and sought to challenge the terms upon which television news, current affairs and documentary professed to be 'balanced' and 'objective'. As Garnett was later to argue, "fiction" and "fact" were 'woven into the fabric' of virtually all programmes and that, in seeking to deny this, the BBC was only succeeding in maintaining a 'hypocritical and tendentious pretence of objectivity'.²¹⁷ He also criticised the Head of Documentary Programmes at the BBC since 1965, Richard Cawston, for making documentaries that were 'fair, balanced and responsible' but that were nonetheless 'public-relations jobs for establishment institutions'.²¹⁸ In this respect, Garnett maintained that his work with Loach (and others) provided a counterweight to the 'imbalance' of the programming surrounding it and helped to put into question the 'objectivity' of the methods it employed. However, in seeking to do so, *Cathy* might also be said to be partly divided against itself, relying on the 'authenticity' associated with documentary conventions in order to make its case about homelessness but also seeking to raise questions about the 'authority' to which these same documentary conventions could lay claim.

Thus, while the 'documentary drama' debate that *Cathy* prompted initially appeared to be about the mixing of 'fact' and 'fiction' (and the possible response of audiences to this), it also extended to more general social and political considerations. This partly explains why Loach's experiments appeared to be more problematic than the earlier cycle of 'dramatised documentaries' that had already, quite evidently, mixed 'fact' and 'fiction'. The original 'dramatised documentaries' were

214. Philip Schlesinger, Graham Murdock and Philip Elliott, *Televising 'Terrorism': Political Violence in Popular Culture* (London: Comedia, 1983), pp. 108–9, 166.

215. G. Roy Levin (ed.), *Documentary Explorations: 15 Interviews with Filmmakers* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 105.

216. Wyndham Goldie, 'Stop Mixing TV Fact and Fiction'.

217. Letter from Garnett to Huw Wheldon (CPTel) concerning *Five Women* (later *Some Women*), 6 June 1968 (BBCWAC T47/176/1). In an interview with Paul Ferris, he puts the argument even more strongly: 'my main fact/fiction argument with Huw (Wheldon) was that I thought the most accomplished piece of fiction the BBC put out every night was the News, that Current Affairs dealt in fact, and told lies, whereas I dealt in fiction and told truth – not the truth but a truth'. See Paul Ferris, *Sir Huge: The Life of Huw Wheldon* (London: Michael Joseph, 1990), p. 245.

218. Levin, *Documentary Exploration*, p. 106.

inscribed within an ethos of paternalist broadcasting concerned with public information and education, explaining the workings of social institutions or identifying the benevolent role of the state in tackling social problems.²¹⁹ Loach's work, on the other hand, was motivated by a new social and political impulse critical of 'the establishment' and the shortcomings of public institutions. *Cathy*, therefore, not only sought to show the realities of 'a Britain many of us have never seen' but also to identify the failures of public policy in addressing a major social problem.²²⁰ As a result, it was the social and political purposes to which Loach's 'documentary dramas' were put, as much as their formal features, that shaped the discussion of them. This may partly be seen in relation to the television plays that followed *Cathy*. Given the manner in which it interweaves documentary material of real people with fictional characters, *The Golden Vision* (1968), for example, could be said to be the most formally transgressive of all Loach's dramas. However, because it is a relatively good-natured account of football fans, it did not provoke anything like the same kind of critical fire as more overtly political work such as *The Big Flame* and *The Rank and File*. However, by the same token, the emphasis upon the polemics of Loach's drama in critical discussion also detracted from a proper consideration of the variety of techniques actually employed by Loach in his 'documentary dramas'. This may be seen, for example, in the case of *In Two Minds* which, although dubbed in the press as just 'another of those documentary dramas', was nevertheless a much more formally complex work than most critics acknowledged at the time.²²¹

'The actual meaning of a person's madness': *In Two Minds*

According to Loach, *In Two Minds* (tx. 1 March 1967) was 'very much Tony's project' and, certainly, Garnett worked on the idea for several months before Loach became involved.²²² The play was written by David Mercer and was based on the work of R. D. Laing and David Cooper, who acted as paid technical advisers on the production. Partly due to his own experience of a nervous breakdown (in the 1950s), Mercer was particularly drawn to the theme of madness and had already achieved considerable critical acclaim for his earlier television play, *A Suitable Case for Treatment* (tx. 21 October 1962). Although Mercer claimed that he did not read Laing's work until after writing *A Suitable Case*, the play's portrayal of madness as a form of revolt against social conformity undoubtedly chimed with Laing's own ideas, particularly his characterisation of schizophrenics as 'outsiders' who create a 'false self' in response to their estrangement from self and society.²²³

219. In his introduction to the published version of Colin Morris's *The Unloved* (tx. 7 June 1955), dealing with juvenile delinquency, Donald Wilson notes how the writer of 'drama-documentary' sought to achieve 'a balanced picture'. See Donald Wilson, *The Television Playwright* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960), p. 446. The Independent Television Authority also praised *Probation Officer* for bringing to public attention 'the unobtrusive but dedicated and compassionate way in which the probation service deals with the problems of delinquent behaviour'. See *Annual Report and Accounts 1959-60* (London: HMSO, 1960), p. 15.

220. *Radio Times*, 10 November 1966, p. 35.

221. The phrase 'another of those documentary dramas' may be found in R. W. Cooper's review of the programme in *The Times*, 2 March 1967, p. 10.

222. Fuller, *Loach on Loach*, p. 25. Garnett had, in fact, originally planned to recruit Roy Battersby to direct.

223. R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (London: Tavistock, 1959).

A Suitable Case for Treatment was, however, a playfully absurdist work that employed dream sequences and extracts from films, such as *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and the Tarzan series, as a means of moving between 'reality and 'fantasy'. In *Two Minds* was, by comparison, considerably more sombre in tone, assuming many of the features of the 'documented' play. However, by virtue of the way in which the production shifts from 'objective' observation to 'subjective' perception, *In Two Minds* also reveals a debt to the contemporary 'art cinema' of Michelangelo Antonioni, Ingmar Bergman and Alain Resnais that takes it well beyond the normal conventions of 'documentary' (and, in Loach's case, connects it with the use of subjective sequences in *Diary of a Young Man*).

Mercer and Garnett were particularly drawn to Laing and Esterson's study, *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (1962) in which the authors mount a challenge to existing explanations of schizophrenia in biochemical or neurological terms. For Laing and Esterson, the experience of schizophrenia was not so much an individual 'physical' phenomenon as a product of patterns of communication, and processes of psychological reinforcement occurring within the family 'nexus'.²²⁴ They develop this argument through a series of case studies of the families of female patients in which they make extensive use of the interviews that they have undertaken with family members. As a result, the book is similar, in a number of respects, to the interview-based work of Nell Dunn, Jeremy Sandford and Tony Parker which undoubtedly made it more amenable to adaptation than a more traditional academic study. Garnett and Mercer initially set out to dramatise one of the book's case studies and Garnett went so far as to request Laing's original tape recordings. Laing, in turn, approached the parents of one of his patients to ask whether Mercer might come and talk to them. The influence of Laing and Esterson's book is particularly evident in the first part of the film.²²⁵ This consists primarily of a series of interviews with a mental patient, Kate Winter (Anna Cropper), her parents, sister and erstwhile boyfriend, investigating the emotions, pressures and tensions at work within the Winter family and the effects that these have had upon Kate. The second part follows Kate's return to hospital, her treatment at the hands of doctors and nurses and growing mental deterioration. Although this section is less indebted to *Sanity, Madness and the Family* than the family interviews, it nonetheless retains an allegiance to Laing's ideas in the way in which it seeks to demonstrate the failures of the medical profession in dealing with Kate's 'illness'. In an article for *New Left Review* in 1964, Laing had sought to account for the workings of the family (a 'social sub-system') within a more general 'political' context. 'Schizophrenia,' he argued, was not an identifiable 'condition' but rather a 'label' employed by the medical establishment as well as society more generally. For Laing:

224. R. D. Laing and A. Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family: Families of Schizophrenics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp. 26–7. See also R. D. Laing, 'Series and Nexus in the Family', *New Left Review* no. 15, May–June 1962, pp. 7–14. For Laing, the nexal family achieves the unity of the group through 'the interiorisation by each of the group' with the result that '[e]ach person may then act on the other person to coerce him (by sympathy, blackmail, indebtedness, guilt, gratitude, or naked violence) into maintaining his interiorisation of the group unchanged' (ibid., p. 12). For the schizophrenic, however, this process of 'interiorisation' involves a 'loss of 'ontological security' and the overpowering of the 'normal self' by another 'alien self'.

225. Although the documentation reveals *Sanity, Madness and the Family* as the play's main source, there are, as some commentators have noted, similarities with the case study to be found at the end of *The Divided Self* in which 'Julie' believes 'a child has been murdered' ('The Ghost of the Weed Garden: A Study of a Chronic Schizophrenic').

The person labelled is inaugurated not only into a role but into a career of patient ... After being subjected to a degradation ceremonial known as a psychiatric examination he is bereft of his civic liberties in being imprisoned in a total institution known as a 'mental' hospital. More completely, more radically than anywhere else in our society he is invalidated as a human being.²²⁶

It is this dehumanising process of 'invalidation' that *In Two Minds* also seeks to record, demonstrating the way in which the 'role' of 'schizophrenic' is imposed upon Kate and reinforced by the medical establishment, culminating in her final 'pacification' and adoption as a passive exhibit by her consultant in a lecture to university students.

Although Mercer subsequently claimed that he believed the play would be produced 'in the studio' with 'actors and constructed sets', this was never, in fact, contemplated by Garnett.²²⁷ From the beginning, Garnett insisted that the film would use 'documentary techniques' and that Mercer's 'imagination and dramatic ability' would be 'firmly anchored' in 'documentary accuracy'.²²⁸ Indeed, Mercer himself, corresponding with his agent Peggy Ramsay, suggested that the work should be viewed as 'a kind of drama documentary' rather than an 'orthodox' play.²²⁹ The production, in this respect, marks the completion of the shift towards film in Loach's television drama. It is the first to be shot entirely on location and, unlike *Up the Junction* and *Cathy Come Home*, contains no studio inserts of the kind that Loach had now come to resent.²³⁰ Like the earlier plays, it is also based on 'documented' evidence and draws on filming techniques with documentary associations as a means of reinforcing the 'authenticity' to which the drama lays claim. The particular novelty, in this case, is the way in which the shooting of interviews appears to draw on the style of recent television documentary programmes such as *Man Alive* (launched in 1965). This series had acquired a reputation for pioneering a new kind of 'human-interest' reporting based on the interviewing of 'ordinary' people about their personal experience of current social issues (as in its programme on unmarried mothers, 'Love Me and Leave Me', broadcast towards the end of 1965). It is undoubtedly this 'intimate' style of interviewing that *In Two Minds* aims to evoke by virtue of the way in which it shows members of the family talking to camera about their various predicaments. However, in this case, the interviewer is not a television journalist but rather a psychiatrist (or R. D. Laing surrogate) who explains in a voiceover, at the play's beginning, that he is undertaking research on the families of schizophrenic patients. However, while the production clearly draws on the vocabulary of the contemporary television documentary, it only follows its conventions to a certain degree. Thus, apart from the short explanation of events delivered by the psychiatrist at the play's start (and later when Kate enters hospital), the production avoids the use of any expository

226. 'What Is Schizophrenia?', *New Left Review* no. 28, November–December 1964, p. 64. In this analysis, Laing was undoubtedly influenced by Erving Goffman's definition of mental hospitals as 'total institutions' in *Asylums* (1961).

227. David Mercer, 'Birth of a Playwriting Man', *Theatre Quarterly* vol. 3 no. 9, 1973, p. 49.

228. Letter from Tony Garnett to R. D. Laing, 23 February 1966; Letter from Tony Garnett to David Cooper, 21 April 1966 (both BBCWAC T5/1522/1).

229. Letter from Mercer to Peggy Ramsay, 27 July 1966, BBCWAC T5/1522/1.

230. The previous year Loach had complained that the mixing of cinematic inserts and studio recordings was 'a hopeless venture' due to the basic incompatibility between 'discontinuous shooting and continuous recording'. 'The change of gear', he observed, was always 'apparent', exposing 'the mechanics of both'. See Kenneth Loach, 'Film versus Tape in Television Drama', *Journal of the Society for Film and Television Arts* no. 23, Spring 1966, p. 12.



Mrs Winter (Helen Booth) interviewed in
In Two Minds

voiceover commenting upon what is being seen and heard. Even more strikingly, the psychiatrist himself remains off screen and is only to be heard questioning the interviewees. Unlike the conventional documentary, therefore, there are no over-the-shoulder shots locating the interviewer in relation to the interviewees or reverse shots of him asking the questions and reacting to comments that the interviewees have made ('noddies').

As in the Tally Man sequence in *Up the Junction* in which Barney is shown to talk to an unseen listener, this creates an unsettling effect. The original script refers to the doctor providing the 'camera's "voice"' and to the characters 'being interviewed, as it were' by the camera.²³¹ This rather odd formulation suggests something of the ambivalent status that the resulting images come to possess, suggesting, at different points, both the 'objectivity' of the documentary look and the 'subjectivity' of the doctor's apprehension of events. Thus, while on some occasions the view of the camera appears to be observationally 'neutral' (occupying the position of an imaginary documentary crew slightly to the side of an interviewee), at other times it approximates much more closely to the unseen doctor's point of view (implying that the camera represents not only his 'voice' but also his 'eyes'). The sense of subjectivity that attaches to these shots (as a result of spatial positioning) is reinforced by the stylised character of many of the images themselves. This derives from the use of various techniques – such as extreme close-ups, movements of the camera and high and low angles – that are much more 'expressionistic' than those normally employed in television interviewing (where they would have been regarded as unfair).²³² For example, when the camera zooms in to an unflattering close-up of Mrs Winter (Helen Booth), the camera's apparent closeness to the character, the cropping of the image and exaggeration of the character's facial features (especially her bulging eyes) does more than show 'objectively' what might be seen from the doctor's point of view

231. See David Mercer, 'In Two Minds', *Collected TV Plays* (London: John Calder, 1981), p. 181. Although similar in many regards, the completed production also departs from the published version of the script.

232. The use that the film makes of the zoom is clearly significant in this regard. Although it can be seen to have been borrowed from documentary, it also has a potential, as Robin Wood notes, for 'dissolving space and undermining our sense of physical reality'. See *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 35. Given how the camera is associated with character point of view in *In Two Minds*, the use of the zoom tends, therefore, to reinforce the 'subjectivisation' of space that occurs within the film.

but also reveals how the character is interpreted 'subjectively' – as unsympathetic and menacing – by both the psychiatrist and, indeed, the film itself.

This movement between apparently 'objective' and 'subjective' viewpoints (and occasional blurring of the boundaries between them) is taken one step further midway through the film when the psychiatrist announces that, due to Kate's readmission to hospital, he will no longer be able to continue with his interviews. At this juncture, the camera's association with the psychiatrist ends and, completely unexpectedly, it becomes identified with Kate. Thus, after the doctor's announcement, we cut to Kate's parents walking down a hospital corridor. They are, however, turning to talk directly to the camera which has now, in effect, adopted the viewpoint of Kate. Kate's inner thoughts are also heard on the soundtrack and, as the Winters proceed down the corridor, the camera pans onto a bare white wall to show Kate's hands appearing in shot. Although this linking of the camera with Kate is maintained in many of the scenes that follow (such as those involving nurses talking to Kate off screen), the appearance of the character in front of the camera means that the look of the camera is not confined to her (approximate) point of view but also shifts between 'subjective' and 'objective' modes.

In some cases this entails a change of perspective within a single shot. In one scene in the hospital, for example, Kate is initially seen in front of the camera before moving out of the frame when her mother kisses her goodbye. The camera then holds on her parents as they talk to a nurse before unexpectedly zip-panning in the direction of the unseen Kate. In so doing, the status of the shot is also transformed, now becoming Kate's point of view as she rushes through a door and throws herself onto her bed, burying her head in the pillow (whereupon the screen becomes completely white). In other cases, the alternation between 'subjective' and 'objective' perspectives is more complex and is achieved through a combination of compositional and editing techniques. This may be seen, for example, in the sequence in which Kate is interviewed by the consultant and his medical colleagues. As Kate's answers become more incoherent, the camera closes in on her face and, on the soundtrack, we hear her inner thoughts (*rather than the actual conversation that is taking place*). Kate's voiceover is accompanied by a number of extreme close-ups of the interviewers shown from her point of view indicating her estrangement from them. Then, in a sort of switch back to an 'objective' viewpoint, the camera zooms out to behind the character to pick up on her conversation with the panel. The resumption of her inner thoughts ('The shouting. When was it?') provides a motivation for a flashback involving an argument with her parents about sex that culminates with her father hitting her.²³³ The film then returns to the hospital interview. However, whereas Kate's flashback had not been specifically marked as 'subjective', the return to the 'objective' world involves

233. Although, in this case, the scene could not be interpreted as anything other than a flashback, there is a degree of temporal indeterminacy about some of the film's earlier scenes. During the first part of the film there are, for example, shots of Kate outside a café and shots of her shopping cut together with material from the psychiatrist's interviews. The images do not directly illustrate what Kate is saying and it is, therefore, unclear whether such scenes provide examples of the type of activity that Kate is undertaking around the time that the interviews are taking place (as might be the case in a television documentary) or whether they are flashbacks to events that have occurred prior to the interviews. Part of the indeterminacy here seems to result from Loach's desire to open out the play and include short scenes (some of which do not appear in Mercer's original script) that break up the flow of interviews. As noted in a subsequent chapter, the remake of the play, *Family Life* (1971), retains the use of flashbacks but makes the order of events easier to understand.



Breaking down the borders between 'objective' reality and 'subjective' perception: *In Two Minds*

a degree of stylisation suggestive of mental hallucination. Kate, for example, is shot from behind the consultant and the young female doctor. However, by setting Kate against a stark white background, and employing an exaggerated perspective, the shot less 'documents' the conversation than offers a 'subjectivised' version of it, emphasising the sense of belittlement and loss of mental control that Kate is experiencing (even though the shot includes her and does not correspond to her point of view).

This breaking down of the borders between 'objective' reality and 'subjective' perception may also be seen in the way in which Loach employs montage. Towards the end of the film, following her parents' visit, the film cuts from close-ups of Kate to a series of shots of other patients while the voices of her mother and then her father (George Cooper) are heard on the soundtrack. As in previous montages in *Up the Junction* and *Cathy*, that seek to generalise out from the individual condition, this sequence partly encourages an identification of Kate's experience with other patients who may be seen to share her situation. However, in contrast to the broadly 'sociological' character of the earlier examples, this sequence functions primarily as an outward expression of an inner mental state, indicating how Kate has internalised the negative views of her parents and come to believe in her 'bad self'. Thus, while the film does, of course, seek to account for the character's mental decline in terms of social – or 'environmental' factors – it is also the case that the production goes much further than the rest of Loach's work in employing 'subjective' techniques in order to give expression to inner emotional states. In this respect, the production reveals a debt to a tradition of European art cinema – and its use of fragmented narratives, troubled protagonists and self-consciousness about style – as much as to television documentary.²³⁴ Indeed, insofar as these techniques are employed to give expression to subjective states that are not immediately visible, it might be argued that the production effectively demonstrates the limitations of a documentary mode that is confined to the observation of external realities.²³⁵

234. Bordwell, 'The Art Cinema as Mode of Film Practice', pp. 56–64.

235. A further level of self-consciousness is inscribed within the production through the inclusion of 'a play within a play'. In Mercer's original version, it is much clearer than in the film that the play is about Kate and that its author is the father of her aborted child.

Given this formal radicalism, it is surprising how much *In Two Minds* was interpreted simply as a form of simulated documentary. Some members of the audience researched by the BBC did confess to being disconcerted by the 'bittiness' of the narrative and its use of a 'disembodied voice' and 'extreme close-ups'.²³⁶ However, most of the critics largely ignored such features, preferring to discuss the production solely in terms of its importation of documentary devices into drama (and the impact that this might have on the gullible viewer). This also meant that the play was mainly discussed in terms of its factual accuracy. On the evening of the broadcast, *Late Night Line-Up* ran a discussion of the programme in which the well-known psychiatrist William Sargant, from St Thomas's Hospital in London, queried whether the character's symptoms were in fact those of a schizophrenic. Sargant then followed up his television appearance with a letter to *The Times* in which he claimed that the character of Kate was 'unrecognizable as a typical schizophrenic' and that 'conditions in mental hospitals' were not at all like those represented in the play.²³⁷ This question not only succeeded in framing much of the discussion that followed but also helped to reinforce the tendency towards reductionism that characterised critical accounts of the film. It also obscured the extent to which the film itself queried the very 'label' of schizophrenia and engaged in a more general mode of social analysis and critique. Thus, in his response to Sargant's letter, Mercer not only attacked Sargant's description of Kate (during *Late Night Line-Up*) as 'a hysterical psychopath' whose probable 'destiny' was 'Holloway Prison' but argued that his criticism had missed the point. Kate, he argued, had not been presented as a schizophrenic but as 'someone who had been described as one' by a 'psychiatric ideology' that 'deals with everything except the actual meaning of a person's madness'.²³⁸ This was a point he developed in response to a letter from another psychiatrist (Dr M. Ward) who had written to Loach to complain of the harm the play might cause. However, for Mercer, it was not the diagnostic 'label' itself that was important but 'the meaning' of the patient's condition in relation to the 'micro-society of the family' and 'the macro-society' more generally.²³⁹ Thus, while it was important to Loach, Garnett and Mercer that the film should be based on documented evidence, it is also the case that much of the play's force derives from its articulation of more general social conflicts. It is significant that the key flashback occurring prior to Kate's final breakdown involves an argument around sex and Kate's supposed 'promiscuity'. For her parents, therefore, the symptoms of Kate's 'illness' relate primarily to her sexual behaviour which they regard as an affront to their moral standards. Inside the hospital, a similar concern with the policing of sexuality is also revealed in the nurse's reaction to Kate's meeting with another patient, Paul (George Innes). In this regard, Kate's story becomes emblematic of a much more general battle within the wider society between individualism and social conformity and 'permissiveness' and traditional 'morality'. Kate's eventual reduction to a state of passivity, therefore, is portrayed not only as a medical failure but also as a victory for the forces of social repression and control. As such, *In Two Minds*, like *Cathy Come Home* before it, may be read as a 'melodrama of protest' in which a female 'innocent' is seen to fall victim to

236. *In Two Minds*, Audience Research Report, 1 March 1967, BBCWAC T5/1522/1.

237. *The Times*, 8 March 1967, p. 13. Sargant was, in fact, a well-known opponent of psychotherapy who was a strong advocate of physical methods of psychiatric treatment, including ECT which he first employed in the 1940s.

238. *The Times*, 11 March 1967, p. 11.

239. Letter from Mercer to Dr M. Ward, 11 March 1967, BBCWAC T5/1522/1.



A victory for the forces of social control:
the end of *In Two Minds*

oppressive social pressures and institutions (bourgeois morality, the family, the medical establishment).²⁴⁰ Indeed, the shots of Kate from behind the consultant and his colleagues in *In Two Minds* are strongly reminiscent of similar shots in *Cathy* when Cathy is interviewed by the warden and his colleagues at Cumbermere Lodge and experiences the same kind of social powerlessness. Thus, while *In Two Minds* may be focused on mental illness, it also possesses the characteristics of a social allegory critical of the conformity and docility regarded as necessary for the maintenance of the dominant social order, a thesis developed with even greater clarity in the remake for cinemas, *Family Life* (1971) (which is discussed in Chapter 5).

'A new form of television film': *The Golden Vision*

Although there is an element of playful fantasy in Loach's next television drama, it is nonetheless a very different kind of work from *In Two Minds*. For if *In Two Minds* adopted techniques associated with art-cinema narration in order to investigate inner mental states, *The Golden Vision* (tx. 17 April 1968) moved more decisively in the direction of documentary than any previous work. In an interview in 1969, Richard Cawston, the then Head of BBC Documentary, expressed his concern that viewers of *Cathy* could be 'misled' into believing that the play 'wasn't acted, and that these were real people'.²⁴¹ As has been seen, although Loach borrowed techniques from the new forms of observational documentary, and employed 'real people' as extras (or off-screen interviewees), the bulk of his plays, at least up until this point, were performed by professional actors. Indeed, it became a common defence of documentary drama that it was *acted* and therefore could not be mistaken for documentary. As Tony Garnett was to put it later: 'Our shows had a writer credit, actor

240. In her discussion of Laing's influence upon emerging feminist ideas, Elizabeth Wilson suggests how his discussion of schizophrenia 'opened the way for the development of the idea of the patient into the "hero as victim"' in which 'the teenage rebel' is perceived as being oppressed by the family. See *Only Halfway to Paradise: Women in Postwar Britain: 1945-1968* (London: Tavistock, 1980), p. 119.

241. Levin, *Documentary Explorations*, p. 89.

credits, on the screen and in the *Radio Times*. They [the audience] knew it was fiction.²⁴² What made *The Golden Vision* especially distinctive, therefore, was not simply the manner in which it imitated documentary techniques in a fictional context but the way it actually mixed 'genuine' documentary material of real people with fictional characters and situations. Thus, while Loach's work was consistently associated with arguments about 'documentary drama', *The Golden Vision* was particularly unusual in the way in which it made use of documentary footage as conventionally understood. This partly explains why the critic Stanley Reynolds, who was perfectly familiar with Loach's earlier work, still felt able to claim that the production constituted 'a new form of television film'.²⁴³

The film itself was written by the Liverpool actor Neville Smith (who had previously appeared in some of Loach's plays) with help from the writer and broadcaster Gordon Honeycombe. Organised around three Everton matches (against Manchester City, Arsenal and Sheffield United), the story follows a fortnight in the lives of a fictional group of dedicated Everton fans. However, the production does not confine itself to the activities of the fans but also includes documentary footage of the Everton team training and playing, discussion of team tactics and interviews with players and officials. In the case of the actual games (at Goodison Park and Highbury), this consists of material specially shot for the play as well as telecine material recorded as part of the BBC's normal sports coverage. Given the inclusion of documentary footage, it is hardly surprising that the production should also seek to invest its fictional material, dealing with the football supporters and their families, with the aura of documentary. As in previous examples of Loach's work, many of the scenes, such as those in the pub or the family home, rely upon a combination of loose dramatic structure, ordinary, difficult-to-hear dialogue and apparently casual camerawork that suggest such material could be of a documentary character. In other cases, the production seeks to go one step further and dissolve the dividing line between 'documentary' and 'fiction' by placing actors in real situations. This occurs, for example, in the scenes during the football matches in which actors form part of the actual crowd. It may also be seen in a scene at Euston station when Brian (Joey Kaye) forms part of a group of actual Everton supporters arriving in London (singing 'We are the Goodison gang'). In such examples, it is difficult to disentangle the documentary and fictional elements and it is this interweaving of the two that characterises the production as a whole.

An important tactic in this respect involves the use of montage and overlapping sound. This may be seen, for example, in the way in which the film seeks to draw connections between the interviews with Everton personnel and the fictional material. A key figure in the programme is Alex Young, the Everton centre-forward from Scotland whom the fictional fan Joe Horrigan (Ken Jones) refers to as 'the golden vision' of the play's title. Following footage of the team in training (accompanied by the comments of the trainer Wilf Dixon), there are a series of head-and-shoulder shots of Young, intercut with a shot of his wife and daughter, discussing his career in football. As he continues to talk, the play then cuts to shots of him leaving home and driving to the local school to collect his daughter. This material, involving an actual footballer, is immediately followed by a montage of the play's main fictional characters (Joe, John, Brian, Syd and Vince) shown at their

242. Interview with John Hill and Jonathan Powell, BAFTA, London, 20 October 2008. In an edition of BBC's *Arena*, 'When Is a Play Not a Play?' (tx. 17 April 1978), the director Alan Clarke made fundamentally the same point: 'A documentary is one in which people play themselves ... A drama is one in which actors are paid to portray other people.'

243. *Guardian*, 18 April 1968.



Actors as part of the crowd at an Everton match in *The Golden Vision*

respective places of work (which are themselves actual locations such as the Dunlop Rubber Company but here serving as fictional settings). As in the preceding sequence, the images of the men working are overlaid with the men's descriptions of their jobs and their attitudes towards them. Although these are fictional characters in a fictional situation, the use of documentary-like voiceovers not only invests the scenes with an aura of 'reality' but, by linking together actual documentary material (of trainer and footballer) with staged drama, bestows a degree of equivalence upon them. A similar fusion of the documentary and fictional occurs later when the voice of the Everton director John Moores is heard over a fictional scene involving Syd (Johnny Gee). This leads into a short montage in which interviews with Everton personnel (Moores, the club chairman Jack Sharp, the manager Harry Catterick and Alex Young) are intercut with fictional footage of John (Bill Dean), Joe and Syd, engaged in conversation about the club. In some cases, this involves a further use of overlapping sound (as when Alex Young's remarks are introduced over footage of Syd). As in the earlier montage, the documentary and the fictional are interwoven and the boundaries between the two become indistinct.

While this kind of device may be seen to underwrite the 'authenticity' of the invented material, it also involves the delineation of certain kinds of connection. At the most obvious level, the play suggests the overwhelming significance of football for this particular group of working-class supporters. Such is the prominence of football in their lives that even the most important events of the life-cycle (birth, marriage, death) are subordinated to it. Vince (Neville Smith) misses the birth of his child because of his attendance at the Arsenal game, Syd speeds through his duties as best man in order to make it to another match while the long-term supporter Hagan (Sammy Sharples), who had asked for his ashes to be scattered at Goodison Park, is driven around the stadium in a hearse instead. In this way, there is a suggestion of how football has usurped the role of religion in marking the significant rites of passage in men's lives and it is clearly no coincidence that the local priest should arrive at the Coyne household to investigate the men's poor record of church attendance.

However, while the play affectionately evokes the passions and enthusiasm that football arouses, it also avoids a simple celebration of football as an 'authentic' expression of working-class culture. For, just as religion in the classic Marxist formulation may be regarded as the 'opium of the people', so the play is conscious of the compensatory role that football (as a surrogate religion) may play for men whose lives are otherwise blighted by economic disadvantage and lack of opportunity.



A shift into fantasy: Joe (Ken Jones) on the pitch in *The Golden Vision*

As the men's comments reveal, they all lack educational qualifications and occupy dead-end jobs over which they exercise little control. It is therefore significant that John Moores's description of 'the boss on your back at business' is heard over a shot of a factory foreman upbraiding Syd. It is also Moores who comments that football allows people 'to let their steam off' in a way that is preferable to 'having race riots and political riots.' Although the old-timer Hagan recalls a hunger march to London in the 1920s, the play also suggests how football may play a depoliticising role by channelling social discontent (related to work and housing conditions) into fantasy and politically harmless outlets. Thus, it is perhaps no accident that the Everton supporters should have appropriated the Civil Rights song 'We Shall Not Be Moved' as a football anthem. Despite the play's emphasis upon a 'documentary' look, it also breaks with these same conventions for comic effect. The theme of *Z Cars*, the police series for which Loach once worked and which had since become an Everton anthem, is played on two occasions to accompany shots of Everton supporters (including one with a dog wearing an Everton coat and rosette). An actual match commentary is used to accompany a boys' kick-about in the streets while the play ends with Joe's dream of coming on as a substitute and scoring a goal. In this way, such comic devices not only highlight the discrepancy between the characters' wishes and the harsh actualities of their situation but also hint at the element of fantasy – or 'false consciousness' – that the colonisation of the imagination by football may entail.

What the play also appears to propose is how football itself should be understood as a form of capitalist enterprise in which the position of the footballer – in an era of relatively poor pay for players – is not significantly different from that of other workers.²⁴⁴ Thus, the interviews with Moores and Sharp concern the business side of the club (including its investments and property holdings) whereas the comments of the players concern their conditions of employment and lack

244. According to Arthur Marwick, the maximum wage system in football had 'preserved football in aspic as an essentially working-class occupation'. Although he argues that the abolition of the maximum wage in 1961 and ending of 'the Victorian master-servant transfer system' in 1963 permitted 'the best players' to 'join other high-paid entertainers in the world of spectacle', this was a slower, and less extensive, process than he appears to suggest. See *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958–c. 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 478.

of job security. Thus, for all his distinction on the field, Alex Young is identified as a member of an 'ordinary working-class family' who would be 'staying in a council house and working in a mine' had he not become a professional footballer. In this way, the bringing together of Young's comments with the men's voiceovers concerning the monotony and dullness of their work suggests a parallel between these two types of worker. This is further reinforced by the linking of the shots of the men returning to work on Monday morning with the comments of the Everton bosses concerning profits and investments. Thus, while the critic T. C. Worsley felt that the play had ditched the 'propaganda' aspects of *Up the Junction* and *Cathy Come Home*, the production did nevertheless offer the beginnings of an analysis of the role played by football in a class-based society.²⁴⁵ That this was not as apparent as it might have been is partly explained by some of the problems that were encountered during production.

For, although Everton agreed to permit filming, Garnett and Loach were nevertheless handicapped in what they could shoot and were prevented from shooting all the material that they had planned. As a result, many of the scenes described in the pre-shooting script, dealing with the economics of management, do not appear in the final programme. Planned sequences concerned with the treatment of absenteeism, the assessment of players' performance and the valuation of players ('players as objects') all disappeared. Moreover, the production team embarked upon filming without a clear agreement concerning editorial control. This led to a dispute with the club concerning the use of interviews and, in the end, the BBC were forced to concede a number of cuts to the material involving Everton players. While the football club was keen to eliminate material that might be regarded as detrimental to its reputation, it is also striking how much of the cut material concerns the players' criticisms of their employment conditions. Alex Young complains about the requirement to obtain permission to go home to Scotland and the fines imposed by the club for speaking to the press. The defender Ray Wilson goes even further, complaining about players being treated like children and arguing that 'a coal miner or a docker wouldn't stand' for what a footballer has to put up with.²⁴⁶ However, while an element of the players' disillusionment with the game survives in the finished programme, the lack of contextualising material blunted its political significance. However, if the footballer was not quite able to carry the burden of the exploited worker in *The Golden Vision*, this could hardly be said of Loach's next project for television which explicitly turned its attention to the docker. In so doing, it raised the argument about 'documentary drama' becoming more openly political. As has been seen, *The Golden Vision* was, in fact, the Loach film that most effectively blurred the boundaries between documentary and drama. However, because it was held to be 'light-hearted' and 'entertaining', the BBC management felt reasonably relaxed about its hybrid status.²⁴⁷ However, as Loach's work for the BBC became more openly political, the argument about the mixing of 'fact' and 'fiction' became even more intense despite the fact that, formally, Loach's work had become less, not more, 'documentary' in character.

245. T. C. Worsley, 'A False Trail', *Financial Times*, 24 April 1968, p. 30.

246. Letter from John Keeble, Drama Group, Television to W. Dickinson, Secretary, Everton Football Club, 22 March 1968, BBCWAC T5/1446/1.

247. Television Weekly Programme Review Minutes, 24 April 1968, BBCWAC.