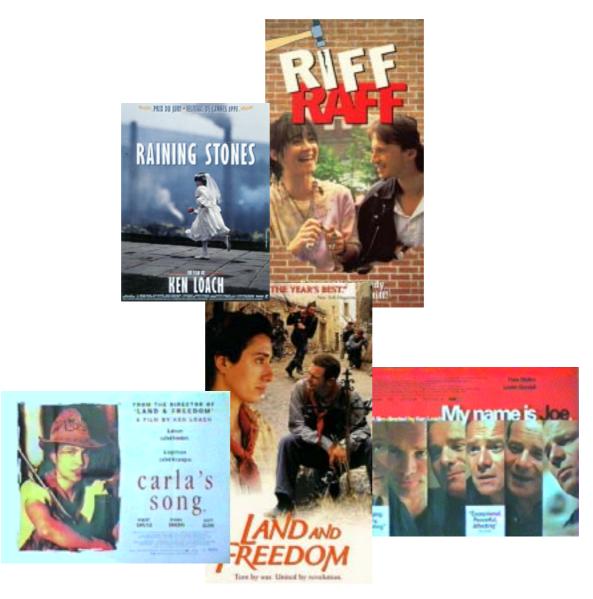
Ken Loach: Constructing Individuals

Questions of existentialism, happiness, gender and individual / collective construction.



TRAVAIL D'ETUDES ET DE RECHERCHES PRESENTE PAR ALEXANDRA BEAUFORT

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INTRODUCTION

The first Ken Loach film I saw was *Land and Freedom*, in 1996. It moved me deeply, and since then, it has always remained one of my favorite films. What struck me most was this ability to move people to tears, and at the same time generate an energy and anger that makes you feel you can change the world.

What interested me from the very beginning was Loach's capacity to link random, individual stories to historical and cultural common realities. These stories are all the more powerful that they are rooted in an environment known to viewers. Loach plays with the limits between fiction and reality. To me, this is what makes his fictions so unique.

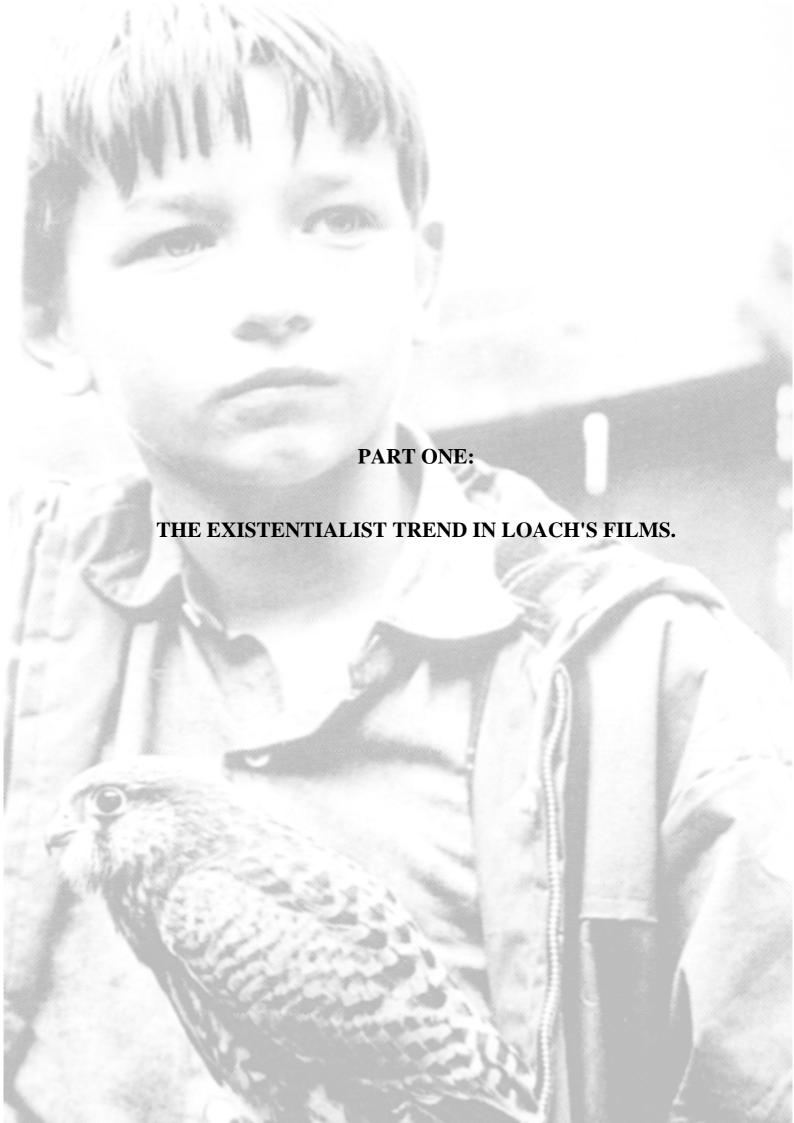
What are Loach's films famous for? For their controversial content, their political implication, their criticism of capitalist societies. Who would feel indifferent at the end of any of Loach's movies? They always give enough material to ponder over the questions that are raised.

He acknowledges that he is very interested in class-struggle, in the evolution of socialism during the course of history. Still, the focus on stories of people randomly picked up betrays a keen interest in individuals. It seems that according to Loach, individuals need to become aware by themselves of the problems that surround them. Thus it becomes clear that Loach considers men as a construction, evolving along with cultures and history. The use of the word "constructing" may seem a little odd when associated with "individuals", but Loach himself uses the metaphor (the building site) in one of his films, *Riff-Raff* (1991), to convey the evolution of the workers. I will not narrow my study to a limited number of films, because this study also aims at showing an evolution in Loach's whole fictional work.

Viewers are often asked, through characters, their opinion about their place in the society they belong to; how they view it, or what they think their role is. I found it very interesting to begin with a confrontation of Loach's films with existentialism. Indeed, existentialist thinkers sought to determine man's position in the world and his active part in it. Once the existentialist trend is acknowledged, I will study the theme of happiness, as it is closely linked with the status men give themselves in their societies: In every Loach's film, characters are struggling for a representation of happiness(a Communion dress, a kestrel...), but they find it hard to reach it because of things that do not always depend on them. In the third part, I will try to show that happiness is also a matter of gender; men and women are depicted in different ways, and yet Loach does not make this issue political. How is it? As he has been making films for almost forty years, how does he show the evolution of both sexes? This will lead to the fourth part: how does Loach link personal memories to cultural, social and historical realities?

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¹ In Fuller, Graham(ed), Loach on Loach, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1998



CHAPTER ONE:

Against systematisation.

The link between existentialism and Loach's work as a filmmaker may not seem obvious at first sight, but the study of some of the most famous Existentialist philosophers will enlighten this. Even if there are many philosophers who belong to the existentialist tradition, I will concentrate on Sören Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre, because they stand for the main tenets of existentialism, and because each of them has explored it in different ways. Sören Kierkegaard(1813-1855) was the first to think individuals' consciousness as an existing entity, which tends to change, because of its very existence. He sought to restore authentic faith and stood against "state servants priests". Martin Heidegger(1889-1976) chose to focus on men's realisation in time, as individuals living in a society. Jean-Paul Sartre(1905-1980) chose to define existence as a project in which men are fully responsible for their actions, thus becoming a very engaged and politicised philosopher. Their writings give an accurate account of what Ken Loach depicts in his movies: the individual caught in the web of an oppressive system, whether embodied by religions, states, or political parties.

Existentialist philosophers all agree on the need to replace men and their authentic needs at the centre of philosophical research. This reasoning is best embodied by the following statement by Kierkegaard: "It would be sensible if thinking

was the least different possible from being a man". When Kierkegaard began to write in 1840, his contemporaries were all studying other writings: those of George Wilhelm Hegel, whose main project was to create systems for everything, to eventually prove that the world could be idealized. What he thought was that reason could explain every phenomenon as a concept, men being phenomena as well. Consequently, every human act could be accountable for, as man had become a rationalized concept.

This is exactly what existentialists denied and rejected, and Kierkegaard was the first to do so, as he lived approximately at the same time as Hegel: "Existence cannot be systematised."3 According to him, men cannot be thought in terms of systems, because systems are abstract constructions, whereas men are singular, unique individuals who face concrete situations, and who experience life in different ways. The problem with excessive systematisation is that it creates uniformity. Generally speaking, existentialism is a reaction against a set of suffocating and oppressive habits, resulting from western culture and institutions.⁴ In many respects, this applies to Loach as well. If we consider Family Life (1971), the schizophrenia Janice develops can be seen as a response to the wish of her family to shape her in a certain "acceptable" way. The fact that her parents (her mother more particularly) do not understand her provokes her refusal to cope with a day-to-day life she cannot stand anymore. Besides, the parents force her into having an abortion, and even if it is true that the movie quite clearly supports legal abortions (as in *Up the Junction*, in 1965), it also means, more symbolically, that the society and the morals they stand for want to get rid of people like Janice, of people who try to secure themselves from an entrapping existence. The baby she is denied stands for the life she is denied to lead, as well.

Emmanuel Mounier, in Introduction aux Existentialismes, suggests that existentialism is, to a certain extent, a philosophical awakening. If not to philosophical, Ken Loach invites his spectators to social and political awakening, to social awareness: in *Raining Stones* (1993), when Bob goes to see his father-in-law, there is a sign that fits just in the middle of the two men who are discussing Bob's financial troubles, and the sign says: "Is there a Socialist alternative?". It is clear that Loach

² Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941. First published

³ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: 2.
⁴ See Emmanuel Mounier, *Introduction aux Existentialismes*. Paris, Gallimard, 1962

wants us to wonder over the question, because he wants us to recognize the world he depicts as ours, and he wants us to provide an answer to the question by ourselves. He clearly requires a certain amount of awareness, if not engagement from us.

CHAPTER TWO:

The engagement of the self.

The social awakening that Loach wants to initiate finds an echo in the existentialist philosophy. Indeed, what is required so that man can live his life fully, in all its dimensions? Facing its own existence, answer Kierkegaard and Sartre.

Man has to make his own choices, or he does not live in terms of what "existence" really means. According to Sartre in particular, existence is a field of possibilities, and Man is responsible for picking up his own direction in life. He cannot hold anyone else responsible for his problems, so he has to play an active role in his life, and not being passive in front of hardships. Kierkegaard reckoned that, above all, it takes bravery. Ultimately, this must lead the "learner" to question the society in which he lives, because he is supposed to have an active part in building it, the way he thinks it will be better for him to live harmoniously with others.

In some of Loach's films, like *Looks and Smiles* (1981), or *Raining Stones* (1993) for instance, what is shown is men and women who are mainly in trouble because of a hierarchical society that denies them their basic needs, but also because they do not realize how it could be different for them. This is where it gets interesting, because if these characters are not aware of what's going on and how to change it, spectators, on the contrary, are made aware of what is wrong-whether it's institutions, unemployment, misunderstandings...In *Raining Stones*, when his father-in-law states that "it's raining stones for those people", Bob answers: "And they're all falling on me". He certainly has a pessimistic, if not fatalistic, perception of his own life. In an

essay entitled "Failure and Utopianism: Representations of the Working Class in British Cinema of the 1990s", the critic John Hill wrote that Loach's latest films are pessimistic indeed:

> While not denying the power of Loach's vision of misery and frustration, there is something remorseless about the way in which the narrative imposes its determinist grip. In comparison to much of Loach's earlier work, the plot is tighter in its construction and the inexorable drive from bad to worse is more pronounced. A sense of pessimism dominates almost completely.¹

This is not true if one considers that what Loach really aims at is to make the spectator wonder how it could have been something else, something more positive and satisfying. Loach does not give any obvious answers, but on the other hand he certainly gives the reasons why he thinks his characters lead an unfulfilling life. There is no doubt that Loach invites the viewers to take the active part that some of his characters do not take in order to face their problems. He also invites the viewer to provide the missing answers that would help explain why institutions are crushing individuals, despite being made to help them in the first place. In that sense, even his saddest films have a very positive aspect and a very positive impact on viewers. Loach was asked about what he sought to achieve with his films, whether it was merely a "case of sadness at the situation", and he answered that "the best thing you can do is to leave people with a question or to leave people with a kind of sense of disquiet."²

Yet Loach does not want spectators to feel only pity or compassion. Even if he certainly aims at getting them emotionally involved, his final and principal aim is to make people aware that they are responsible for the world they live in, and that as such, they are able to change it for the better. Loach's films have been a politically engaged but undoubtedly reliable testimony of Britain's social situation for years, and viewers are always expected to say, at the end of his films: No more Joes, Janices,

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¹ in Robert Murphy (ed), *British Cinema in the 90s* (London, BFI Publishing, 2000): 183 ² Interview with Simon Hattenstone, *The Guardian*, 28 Oct. 1998

Bobs, Maggies...or whoever might be in the same situation. Loach wants his viewers to think about the responsibility they have in what they see. The existentialist theme of people being responsible for their acts and for the world they live in is probably best exemplified by a statement Jean-Paul Sartre made in 1945, during a conference entitled "L'Existentialisme est un humanisme":

Ainsi, la première démarche de l'existentialisme est de mettre tout homme en possession de ce qu'il est et de faire reposer sur lui la responsabilité totale de son existence. Et, quand nous disons que l'homme est responsable de luimême, nous ne voulons pas dire qu'il est responsable de sa stricte individualité, mais qu'il est responsable de tous les hommes.³

Here is now what Loach said, in 1998, when (once again!) asked about what he sought to achieve with his films:

A sense of "That's my world, I'm part of it, and they're part of me"-it's not about some other people, it's about the world I am a part of and a world I am responsible for. And in a way, that knowledge is responsibility, I think. You can't know about that and then walk away from it-I hope.⁴

Even if Ken Loach always puts an emphasis on his belonging and his believing in Marxism, it is really clear that he is very close to the Existentialist thought as well. The theme of responsibility is central to both of them.

On top of the lack of social consciousness as being one of the English society's troubles, Loach also blames excessive capitalist policies for putting working-class people into financial turmoil, and establishes a connection between this and the former

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³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* (Bussière à Saint-Amand, Folio essais, 1996), first published in Paris, Denoël, 1945.

⁴ Simon Hattenstone, *The Guardian*, 28 Oct. 1998

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's conservative agenda that dramatically cut public spending. Thatcher's perfect embodiment of the upper middle class is what Loach has been rejecting for about thirty years, as she widely promoted free-market economy and believed in materialism (in the pejorative sense: possessing as an essential finality in life). Again, this is also a theme widely tackled by existentialists, Martin Heidegger having been the first of them to concentrate his study on the entrapping "bourgeois" middle class society that Loach depicts in *Family Life*. Heidegger thought that in order to part from a systematizing and uniformazing society, individuality was an essential part to become an authentic "existant", a theme later developed by Sartre, when he talked about the notion of project:

Car nous voulons dire que l'homme existe d'abord, c'est à dire que l'homme est d'abord ce qui se jette vers un avenir, et ce qui est conscient de se projeter dans l'avenir. L'homme est d'abord un projet qui se vit subjectivement.⁶

Even if it is present, to a certain extent, in Loach's movies, individuality is not prominent. What matters most to Loach is the focus on the pressures put on working-class people, needing people. These pressures reveal the underlying background that shaped Britain in the 1980s: a huge sense of material need, as well as a rush for spiritual landmarks.

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⁵ See Lester Friedman, *Fires were started: British Cinema and Thatcherism* (London, UCL Press, 1993): 17: "Thatcher vowed to reduce the regulatory role of government and bureaucracy, attacking welfare state dependency by reducing social spending (...). She also aided the wealthy by easing the capital gains tax and cutting the top tax rate on earned income."

⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, L'existentialisme est un humanisme: 30.

CHAPTER THREE:

Question of religion.

It has been made clear in Chapter Two that Loach and Sartre had quite a few things in common, concerning their vision of the world and the role man has to play in it. They have another thing in common which is their belief in marxism, even if Loach was often reluctant to admit it fully, for fear of being easily labelled, whereas Sartre used to claim that he was a marxist, and he studied extensively Marx's works, his criticism of religion and his approach to materialistic history.

Jean-Paul Sartre is the main representative of atheist existentialism, which he thought to be "more coherent" than other branches of existentialism. He thought that there was no point in believing in God, because nothing would be changed as men could not be saved but by their own acts. Besides, if God does not exist, then there is no such thing as human nature, since there is no one to build one... Therefore, men are fully responsible for the meaning they give to their lives, and to themselves:

L'homme, tel que le conçoit l'existentialisme, s'il n'est pas définissable, c'est qu'il n'est d'abord rien. Il ne sera qu'ensuite, et il sera tel qu'il se sera fait. Ainsi, il n'y a pas

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¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Existentialisme est un humanisme: 29

de nature humaine, puisqu'il n'y a pas de Dieu pour la concevoir.²

In many respects, this can be applied to Loach's films. We do not get any sense of spiritual quest or religious belongings, because basically that is not the point. What we have instead is a description of people struggling to live decently, or people failing to cope with hostile or narrow-minded institutions, as in Cathy Come Home (1966) or Ladybird, Ladybird (1994), for instance. The films are deeply settled in a material reality: people don't need spiritual guidance, they need shelter, food, and understanding from their fellow citizens. From a pictorial point of view, Loach hardly ever shots any churches, whereas he provides plenty of outside views of factories, demolished buildings, stations, building sites, and pubs...in other words, symbols of the industrial heritage, of the working class. It is as if he denied religion a part in the industrial landscape. Even when there are some religious metaphors, the metaphor turns out to have a different meaning. In My Name Is Joe (1998), Joe appears to be a Christ figure because he acts as a redeemer when he pays for Liam's debts. He is a sacrificial figure, because his act endangers his relationship with Sarah. But his sacrifice turns out to be vain: Liam commits suicide, his relationship with Sarah is broken, and he goes back to drinking. The question Loach seems to raise is one of wondering what a sacrifice is if people who are concerned by it do not value it the way they should.

However, there is one film that is problematic if one assumes that Loach never describes religion as potentially being helpful in the lives of those he depicts, and it is *Raining Stones*. It is about a father, Bob, who is on the dole and gets into trouble because he cannot pay back the money he has borrowed from a loan-shark to buy his daughter a communion dress. If the film does show some sympathy for him, Bob is also pictured as stubborn and irresponsible, because he has been offered a second-hand dress and he still wants to buy a new one. Many critics have assumed that religion was his last "luxury". What Loach was aiming at with this movie was showing that on the one hand, religion is all about social conventions, and habits and pride (Bob's wife

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² Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Existentialisme est un humanisme: 29

recognises she had a brand new dress for her communion, so Bob says her daughter must have it the same way): there is the communion dress, but there are also the shoes, the cake, the drinks, the party...It is about appearances (Bob keeps saying: "I will know" when his wife objects that nobody will know if the dress is second-hand), and certainly not about spiritual guidance: Bob's daughter Colleen does not understand a single word of the passage of the Bible she is reading at the church, and Bob is absolutely unable to explain to her the passage about Jesus sharing his last meal with the apostles, because he does not feel concerned. Religion is not helpful for him ("That does not put any bread on the table, does it?") and Loach does not picture it as an entity existing beyond men.

On the other hand, he pictures religion as being made of men, and as belonging to a certain cultural tradition. It is not a priest who "saves" Bob, it is Father Barry, a man who belongs to the Labor priests tradition, a man who knows about working-class people, who knows how tough life is for them. Thus Father Barry does not act as a priest; he is not narrowed by religious considerations about telling the truth. There are other realities that he has to consider as well: loan-sharks should not exist. On top of that, Loach gives his own version of reality: a father should be able to buy a communion dress for his daughter, but capitalist societies do not enable working-class fathers to do so.

Religion is presented as something having to do with men, and not with God. There's no miracle, and there will not be any. Priests are men who stand for a compassionate, understanding figure, trying to support desperate people like Bob.

In this respect, Loach really sets apart from the traditional narrative pattern of "fatum". "Fatum" is the Greek word for "fate", and it has shaped western literature and ways of setting up stories for centuries. Greek mythology is undoubtedly the most famous reference. In Sophocle's *Phedre*, the heroine Phedre is famous for saying that she cannot do anything about the troubles she has caused, because her family has always been cursed, and Gods had decided a long time ago that she had to die anyway. Generally speaking, Greek tragedies are based on the concept of fatum: people struggle against their destiny because they are unhappy, but they cannot escape it.

There is nothing like that in Loach's movies: no pre-established destiny to curse or to hold responsible for one's lot, but people's acts and the possibility to change

things. In any of his films, people are unhappy, but the reason why they are unhappy has a face. It is represented by a man or a woman who usually get the main protagonists into deeper troubles. In *Cathy Come Home* for instance, the family becomes homeless, but there is no curse: the people responsible for their homelessness are those who come to throw them out of the house, who wear grey suits, who seldom have any human facial expression, who eventually stand for lifeless figures. In *Ladybird*, *Ladybird*, Maggie loses her children one after the other, and they are taken away by the authorities. But the spectator gets a sense of Maggie's responsibility: if she had been more cooperative with those authorities, the way Jorge behaved, she may have not lost all of them. What is more, her constant anger is a reason why she loses control of her life, and the spectator knows it even if he understands her anger, because it is legitimated by the situation. One could say of course that this approach is very similar to, if not taken from, Marx's dismissal of religion. Obviously, it would not be the only similarity between Loach's political ideas and Marx's, even if Loach may not deserve to be considered as marxist in every way.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Marxism and Existentialism: question of politics.

Ken Loach has always been recognized as a marxist film-maker by the media

(even if he's reluctant to acknowledge it). Yet, within marxism, he makes a great

distinction between stalinism and trotskism. This is made clear in Fatherland (1986),

in which the issue of politics obviously prevails on the film's aesthetics. At some point,

the main character, Klaus Drittermann, walks past a wall on which is written:

"Stalinism is not Socialism-Capitalism is not Freedom". Even if the marxist criticism

of capitalist countries is present in this movie, Loach explicitly recognizes and even

denounces the excesses of stalinist governments, when Klaus is forced to leave Eastern

Germany because the lyrics of his songs are too critical of its government. Here is

what Ken Loach said in 1994 when he was asked whether it was true he was a

trotskist:

C'est une question délicate. Si je réponds: "Oui, je suis

trotskiste", ça sera utilisé contre moi par ceux qui ne

comprennent pas le trotskisme. Si je dis non, je trahis des

amis et des gens que je connais. Bref, disons que l'on ne

peut pas vraiment comprendre une partie de la politique

internationale actuelle si l'on ne connaît pas la lutte des

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trotskistes contre Staline...Le plus grand héritage de Trotski est probablement le mouvement ouvrier.¹

But his way of picturing the Marxist concept of class is quite original, in that he makes fictions where individual stories prevail on collective didactic actions, except maybe for his last movie *Bread and Roses* (2000), in which collective action is seen as the only way to undermine employers' abuses as well as to make lower-social classes exist in the eyes of those who usually ignore them. The upper classes are best embodied by the skyscraper in which Maya and Rosa work. It is always pictured in low-angle shots, which accentuates its size and makes Maya and her peers look even tinier in front of the massive capitalist American institution it stands for. This is Loach's most marxist film, if one considers that the setting up of the strike takes over the individual stories of both Maya and Rosa.

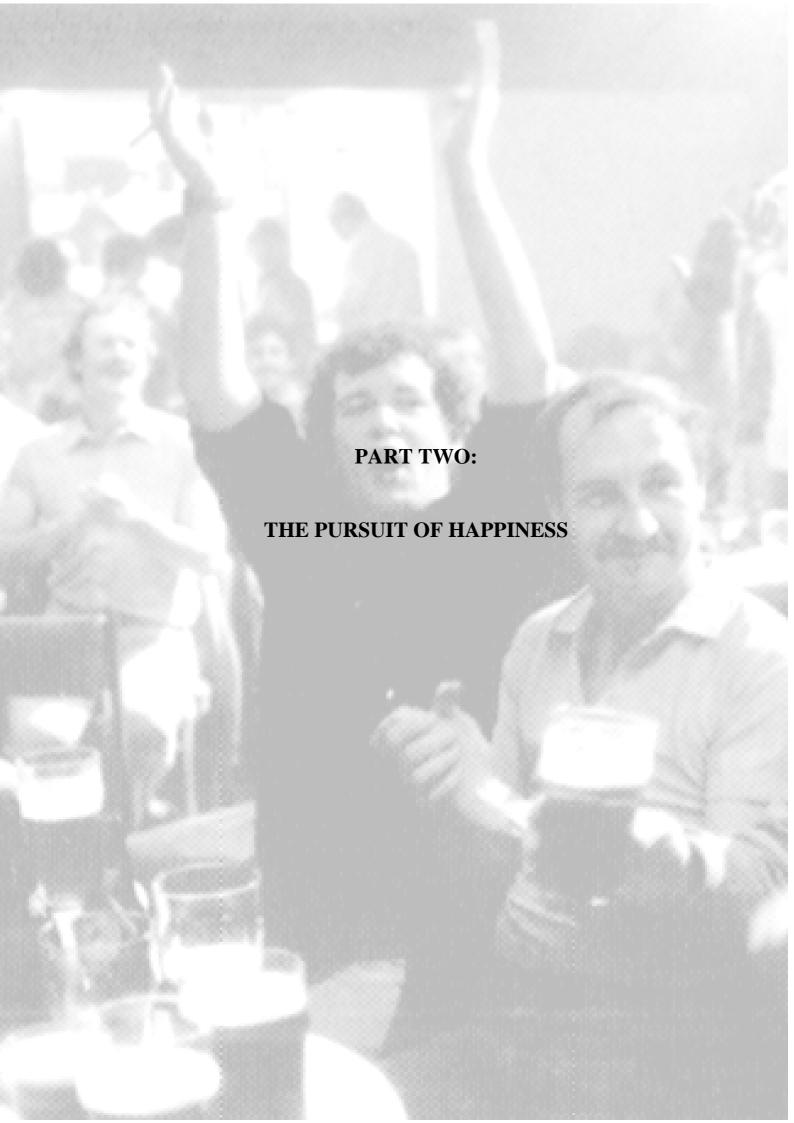
All in all, it seems that Loach is parting away from marxist theses by focalising on individuals, on "small random acts". What is very interesting is that he does so whether shooting a fiction or a documentary. For instance, The Flickering Flame (1996) –about the Liverpool dockers' strike in 1995- is very telling of his concern for individualities: he would be expected, as a marxist film-maker, to film large shots of people waiting on the picket line, with a sound-track explaining why they were doing so. But these expectations are turned down as there are hardly any "mass" shots. Instead, spectators get images of different people, each of them telling their different account of the strike, each of them identified with his name on the left side of the screen. They are talking about the way the strike went on, what they expected from it, what support they expected from the TGWU (the dockers' main union) and how it failed to support them. On top of that, there are shots of the dockers' wives, explaining what consequences the lack of money had on families. What is shown is not only workers, but also human beings who speak about all the consequences on their personal and familial lives. The documentary is not a simple report of facts; it's a reaction to facts.

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¹ Vincent Ostria, "Entretien avec Ken Loach", Cahiers du Cinéma n° 484, Oct 1994: 36

² Simon Hattenstone, *The Guardian*, 28 Oct 1994.

This multi-dimensional account of the Liverpool dockers' strike is also telling of how Loach links the universal to the particular: he takes time to let people express themselves in front of the camera, and their stories build up what is, for Loach, working-class History. In this respect, it seems that Loach is close to the "historical materialism" approach of Marx: a society is shaped by its economic structure and the evolution of this structure. Thus, history is not a matter of men fighting for ideals or ideas, but a set of social rules determined by economic forces that shape individuals. Indeed, Loach's characters are caught in systems in which they are driven to act because of financial or social troubles. Their problem is that they do not fit in the norms. But Loach goes far beyond the Marxist approach. Sticking to stories of individuals, he gives the spectators a sense of how politics affect privacy, and what appears to be an individual tale stands in fact for the story of working-class people. This is his idea of how the universal affects the individual. Loach usually describes people without any specificity, everyday people who are not expected to do anything wonderful, but try to escape a certain kind of Darwinian determinism, as seen by liberal capitalists: Loach shows that what a capitalist society thinks is a weak element can sometimes find a way through, and eventually have its own private victory. What he thinks must be shown are the possibilities of action: Loach undoubtedly admits that men are a product of their own history, but that must not prevent them from playing an active part in it. There is a certain fatalism that he wants to point out as something paralysing and narrow-minded: the feeling that things cannot be changed, that nothing can be done, seems unbearable to Loach, who likes to tell the story of people who struggle in spite of a lot of adversity: in Ladybird, Ladybird, Maggie and Jorge fight in order to keep the guard of their newly-born daughter Zoe. In Riff-Raff, Stevie keeps dreaming of his market business in spite of the lack of money, he keeps working with dignity even if he had to sleep outside for a while. There is much hope in Loach's movies; they invite the spectators to trust themselves through the characters, because they can identify easily with all of them. Again, this is very similar to existentialism; the possibility to act in order to be responsible of one's lot is related, in Loach's films, to the feeling of belonging to a society where action, collective or individual, is possible. As a consequence, preserving one's civic rights is fundamental, and Loach makes it his role to denounce when those rights are baffled. His movies are like pamphlets, with the help of images and "mise en scène".



CHAPTER ONE:

Learning to live

What does Loach like to show? People in trouble, or people who are trying to get out of these troubles, but who cannot, whatever the reason is?

All his movies feature individuals who desperately want and try to get out of situations that make them unhappy, and even if they do not succeed in doing it, the films focus as much on the causes of their failure as on the human efforts to retrieve a kind of dignity. In *My Name Is Joe*, Joe fails to save Liam from the dealer McGowan as he fails to preserve his relationship with Sarah. But Loach shows how hard Joe tries to do his best in both situations: he is often shot running, his body is in constant motion. The physical efforts he makes stand for the amount of comprehension and care he is able to show for others. In this respect, the football team is a device used by Loach to represent a kind of microcosm in which friendship and solidarity are possible. It is seen as a process of socialization: the game has its rules, and players have to respect them if they want to win. They can ask someone for help and advice if they need some (the captain). Admittedly the team keeps loosing; but the act of learning is more important than a sports performance. The viewer is constantly made aware of what it costs to Joe to remain out of drinking, and to prevent Liam from having his legs broken.

It seems that happiness begins when dignity is intact, for Loach. In his movies, happiness is not a matter of great feelings and emotions (or not only that), because the characters are in need of things even more basic than that: their needs stick to a day-to-

day reality: shelter, money, work. This is the case in *Cathy Come Home*, *Raining Stones*, or *Riff-Raff*. But when those basic needs are provided for, Loachian characters are in search of belonging to a community. The uncomprehension faced by characters like Maggie in *Ladybird* or Janice in *Family Life* surrounds them to such a point that it conditions their relations to others. This is clearly what makes most characters unhappy in the end. On top of financial and material difficulties, they do not find any comfort from social services. Loach shows that societies similar to the British society don't play the supporting role they claim to be able to play.

Two films staged the classical learning time, childhood: Kes (1969), and Black *Jack* (1979). In *Kes*, a young boy called Billy lives in a poor northern city, and he finds it hard to be integrated among his schoolmates, because of his extreme shyness, and also because he is not good at playing football. He finds a kestrel and starts to train him. The training becomes a passion, which Billy finds very satisfying and rewarding. He is able to speak about his new experience in front of his classmates. He feels different, almost new to himself. He has become someone from whom others can learn something. In his own way, he has found his place in the world that surrounds him. His close relation with the kestrel could have cut him from the rest of the world, but on the contrary it has enabled him to share something with others. The fact that the kestrel is a symbol of wilderness, of the natural world, is interesting because it means that what has enabled Billy to be more integrated in his class and to get a certain respect from others, is not the help of a man or a woman, whereas it should have been so, if one considers the socializing role school is supposed to have. In this film, school doesn't play the role of socialization it is traditionally supposed to play. The world around Billy is cruel, and stays as such even if he can forget and escape it for a moment. When his brother kills the kestrel, Billy arranges a kind of funerals. This ritualization puts him in the world of adults for good. Yet, he is shot in a close-up frame, with leaves and branches around him. He chooses to bury the animal in the forest where it belongs; he seems to have understood the respect that was due to living beings.

Black Jack is a film that is considered as minor in Loach's filmography. It is quite a shame, because this 18th century social tale is very interesting in many respects. It is full of metaphors: the journey that Tolly and Belle make with the stallholders

represents Tolly's growing up and becoming a man. Moreover, the time this journey takes enables all of the group to understand Belle, and to understand her language. Language is meaningful to Loach; the way people talk is important to him, and he works a lot on regional accents, that define social backgrounds, according to him. It defines a whole culture; that may be why he likes to melt several languages in a movie: German and English in Fatherland, Spanish and English in Land and Freedom (1995), Bread and Roses, or Carla's Song. As viewers may find it hard to understand all of them, they are made aware of the complexity of relationships between people who don't speak the same language, literally or metaphorically...Indeed, some films give the impression that people from the same country do not mean the same things while speaking the same idioms. Going back to *Black Jack*, Belle's problem is not her accent, but the way she thinks and how she signifies her needs. It takes time and understanding from others to be aware that she is not insane nor dangerous. Coming from a bourgeois family, she is very constrained, partly because her family is ashamed of her, and the film is also about the way she frees herself from her background, and how she frees others from their prejudices about different people.

With this film Loach wanted to show that authentic contact and relationships between people could help to change them: Tolly helps Belle but he also helps Jacques (the eponymous villain), who redeems himself at the end of the film. This movie came directly after *Family Life*, interestingly enough. Both of them condemn familial constraint, showing in different ways how far it can go. They also criticize a medical system which whatever the century is more interested in money than in the patient's health (this is very clear in *Black Jack*, in which doctors keep acting according to the money they will be given from Belle's father). In both *Black Jack* and *Family Life*, the relation between doctors and those who are sick and need them is metaphorical of the relation between those who govern and those who are governed. The question of balance of power is very important, because more generally, it raises the question of legitimacy of power in societies: What is the status of those who are governed in the society depicted by Loach? What should it be?

CHAPTER TWO:

The Aristotelian conception of citizenship.

The amount of social criticism is huge in Loach's films. Greediness, the lack of humanity, financial and political interests... all this is responsible for the degradation of the social welfare. According to Loach's mise en scène, working- class people are often put apart or forgotten. What is questioned is their authentic citizenship and the right they have to claim for justice and social help, the right to things that would enable them to be heard. Citizenship is central in Loach's movies because they always try to define what is, or what it should be, and how it is important in order to make a social cohesion: Having a sense of belonging to a community does not only mean having to pay taxes: the community has to give back as much as it receives, in terms of support to those who mostly need it.

Citizenship is thus linked to happiness: a trustful society is able make those who compose it happy. This is very close to Aristotle's concept of men's place in every city/"polis". He states that a city is an association, and that "[...] all associations come into being for the sake of some good-for all men do all their acts with a view to achieving something which is, in their view, a good."

Aristotle wrote the *Politics* after he made a series of observations on different forms of existing governments; from oligarchies to democracies. What he sought to find was the best political system in which, according to him, individuals would be able to be happy, according to their individual needs and status. The *Politics* are a set

¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995:7

of advice meant to describe what an ideal society could be. A parallel can be drawn between the *Politics* and Loach's work: the films describe what a society should not be, how the citizens' expectations can be turned down because of social gaps. This is particularly the case in Ladybird, Ladybird and Cathy Come Home. Viewers have the feeling that the British society and its institutions, and the individuals who compose it come from two different worlds; they do not share the same interests: Loach makes it clear that the interest of those who run the institutions lies in spending the least possible on those who would mostly need them; as a consequence, they have to make those people silent, and everything that's useful in order to make it possible is done: intimidation, threats, getting into others' private lives... In Ladybird, the scenes of opposition between Maggie and police forces are shot so as to signify the gap between a human being and opposing forces: Chrissy Rock, who performs the character of Maggie, is shot in close-ups, whereas the policemen who want to take her baby away are shot from a certain distance, as if the viewer could not get close to them. Moreover, they do not act in natural way: their gestures are mechanical, and so is their way of talking. The film is about people who are not considered valuable enough to be helped the way they should be (this is true for Maggie as well as for Jorge), to whom higher classes will not care to be fair; but the way it is shot features those who are responsible as those who do not deserve the status of citizen. Still according to Aristotle, the city is defined by the freedom its members benefit from: "Those constitutions which consider only the personal interests of the rulers are all wrong constitutions, or perversion of the right forms. Such perverted forms are despotic; whereas the city is an association of free men". In Loach's films, despotic figures often seek to deprive central characters from their original status of citizen, as being a free human being. In this respect, Cathy Come Home is very interesting because it portrays the state servants who evict Cathy and her family in a curious way: they walk up and down the corridor, heads down, all wearing the same kind of clothes, same colors, as if they were coming to spread conformism and uniformisation. In the scene where Cathy's children are taken away from her, at the station, the people from the social services and the policemen look like a mass swooping down on Cathy. The

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² Aristotle, *Politics*, (III, 6).

scene is shot in low angle so that viewers can see Cathy disappear under this mass. Even her lively blonde hair is covered by the dark blue coats.

To loach, being a citizen means caring for others, and he describes exactly what it is: Bob and Tommy may be penniless, but they still give a little money when the bar tenant of the pub where they are trying to sell their meat asks them to give for a boy to go to Lourdes. Loach also shoots people -usually from upper classes-who think they are good citizens and who are not in reality: in *Bread and Roses*, lawyers and directors who work in the building where Maya and all the janitors work keep ignoring them, thus implicitly guarantying their unhappy lot.

What is striking in all Loch's movies is the lack of cohesion in the society he depicts: a society that keeps perpetrating injustices against working-class people. Once again, this finds an echo in Aristotle's *Politics*: "Man is a political animal", because he naturally tends to associate himself with others. But one of the fundamental characteristic of the city he founds with others is justice: "The virtue of justice belongs to the city; for justice is an ordering of the political association, and the virtue of justice consists in determination of what is just".

According to Aristotle, men have a finality only in the city. It is as such, because he states that it is in men's very nature to be part of a city and men cannot be fully satisfied nor happy in another system. Moreover, the city produces benefits that can be shared by all its members, thus directly concurring to their happiness. If we try to link this to Loach's description of British society, we see that the Aristotelian "polis" is criticized because it has lost its beneficent powers, and also because some of its members have been more or less dismissed. As a consequence, it is very important, even vital as it is part of human nature, to fight for civil rights. The message is clear in every movie.

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³ Aristotle, *Politics*: 12

CHAPTER THREE:

The organic city.

The stories filmed by Ken Loach are most often situated in urban areas. This is partly due to most of the script writers he worked with. Jim Allen, for instance, comes from the northern city of Manchester, and he acknowledges that he writes according to what he knows best: the city.¹

The city and the people who live in are central in Loach's movies; the way the city is organized, how it is ruled, how people live in...It really stands for the political and social side of the films. Thanks to its description, viewers can see how it affects, directly or not, the protagonists' lives.

There is a very striking sequence at the very beginning of *Family Life*: ² a close up on Janice's parents' house gets larger to show the other houses of the street, which are all exactly alike. The sequence ends with an overall view of the neighborhood; it shows parallel rows of houses that are the very copies of Janice's parents', and the rows seem never to end in the fog. This sequence can be taken for something that sums up the whole mood of the film. The streets where Janice has grown up do not let any space for change: everything is astonishingly alike. At the same time, this kind of environment is very confining. It reflects the state of mind of its inhabitants, of Janice's parents in particular: narrow-minded and prejudiced. Thus, the streets of the city can be taken for a metaphor for the mind of those who establish the norms. But as the images get blurred by the fog, so is this way of thinking: blurred by normative

² Mike Leigh used the same pattern in his 1996 movie Secrets and Lies.

¹ see in Karim Dridi, *Citizen Ken Loach*, prod Arte, 1995.

behaviors. The sense of uniformisation that gets hold of Janice is unbearable to her, and the only way she finds to escape it is by cutting herself from others. Her incapacity to live in a society embodied by her parents leads her to develop schizophrenia.

In Raining Stones, Bob decides to go from houses to houses to propose his services to clean the drains, to get a little extra money. The priest of his parish, Father Barry, thinks Bob asks him for free, and Bob has no choice but doing it for free. When he goes down the drains, Father Barry flushes the toilets and Bob receives a "shower" of excrements. This sequence is interesting first because it shows Bob going "underground": he goes in a hidden part of the city that no one wants to see even if it is known to be there. He is able to unblock the drains, even if it means being spattered with excrements. Those excrements are products of human bodies, and men are disgusted by them and want to get rid of them; but they can be problematic (block the drains) and remind men that the problem has to be solved. Symbolically, it reminds the viewers that what society considers as easily forgivable still exists, even if no one wants to see it: the social criticism Loach makes concerns abusive politics, upper classes and enterprises, that want to get rid of lower classes. The sequence is also meaningful in the story itself: what Bob wants to hide from his wife comes back to the surface, with traumatic consequences: the loan shark Tansey comes to see his wife to ask his money back. Even if the story ends rather well, Bob is seen as very anxious at the end of the film. He always looks back to check if the police do not come to arrest him; he feels guilty, afraid and cannot be at ease during his daughter's communion.

More generally, it seems that the description of the urban environment where the main protagonists live is a means to picture their problems and inhibitions. This environment is not just a sphere in which people evolve; it is a living mirror that reflects characters their true fears, but also their needs. This is seen through Loach's way of framing his shots: people are rarely shot in close ups, whereas frames are enlarged to show the surrounding location. Thus, characters are always seen in the middle urban locations, or in their houses. Which means that they are very often seen between walls. Walls are often bare, accentuating their whiteness, and their constraining effects. Depths of field are usually high (except in *Cathy Come Home*), to signify the relation between characters and their space. The stress put on the body as a manifestation of moods is important as well, because it goes against a general British

puritan tradition, inherited from Protestantism, that used to deny the body's behavior to focus on the mind only. According to the puritan thought, bodies were only evidence of people's materialization in the world, but faith and minds only could guide believers.³

Consciously or not, Loach stands against this tradition and insists on the importance of bodies: they reveal who people are and where they come from. Space and bodies are thus closely linked. Loach used the zoom figure in his early works such as *Cathy Come Home* or *Up the Junction*, as a means to signify the belonging of characters (especially female characters) to a place. The zoom crushes and erases perspectives, and viewers have the impression that there is no space behind characters, that they literally stick to their background, without any perspective of change. This reminds viewers that they are watching a movie, and that they are enabled to get closer to central characters, but from a far place, because they know that it is the camera that enabled them to do so. As such, viewers are made aware that the way they are made to look at things is also responsible for the characters' incapacity to get back to a safer place, as the zooms always take place in outside sequences.⁴

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³ This is why icones are not found in Protestant churches, because prayers do not worship images.

⁴ For a complete study of perspectives in *Cathy Come Home*, see Laurent Roth, "Le zoom ou l'entrave des corps", in Blangonnet Catherine (ed), *Images Documentaire – Ken Loach*, 27 (1997)

CHAPTER FOUR:

Happiness and Socialization

Every Loach's movie features social relations. Whether this relation is harmful or beneficent, it is at the center of the story. As men are driven to live together, their happiness depends on their capacity to benefit as much as possible from their relation to others. *Riff-Raff* and *My Name Is Joe* are certainly the two films that mostly stage and deal with relations between individuals. Both of them show how people cannot make it without help, that is to say, without socializing or meaning something important to others. To convey this, Loach uses two social patterns: the working team on a building site in *Riff-Raff*, and the football team in *My Name Is Joe*.

On the building site, workers have to get on well together, otherwise they will not be able to get help if they need some. The microcosm they form has its rules, one of which is being fair. When one of them, Joe, accepts to cash others' cheques because they do not have a bank account in exchange with a commission, he finally does not get the commission that was agreed to be given to him, because the others thought it was too high. Joe can do nothing but say: "You gave me your word", implying they were not honest. Within the group, people give each others lessons and take revenge they cannot take on their boss who exploits them. Still, people stay behind each other. The little space they are given to take their meals is so tiny that one would expect them to burst out. Instead, they take advantage of this to know each other better and create social links. Everything is a pretext to laugh: even the presence of a rat in the kitchen, which is a sad piece of evidence of the insalubrity of the place, becomes something of a comedy. Thus the place where they are endangered becomes a place where they can

also find comfort. Little by little, they dare talking of their dreams (one of them wants to go to Africa; Stevie wants to run a little market...). In *Riff-Raff*, beyond the love story between Stevie and Susan, the true stake is the workers, or how men who are constantly beaten up by abusive bosses can still experience a sense of comradeship and hope to better their lot.

In My Name Is Joe, the pattern is slightly different since people are only gathered in a football team, for leisure. Nonetheless, the activity and the fact of gathering help to forget individual troubles: Liam is seen smiling only when he meets his fellow players. Here, the team is used to back up unemployed young men. Each member is supportive of one another, and viewers have the feeling that Joe's work with Liam is more efficient than Sarah's, the social worker. In this respect, socialization is shown as something that cannot really interact between social classes. Joe and Sarah do not come from the same social background: the set of photographs on Sarah's kitchen's wall clearly sets up her background. She went to University, whereas Joe is the kind of people whose family do not have the money to send children to university. This difference, among others, leads them to react to events in a different way. Joe tends to survive, whereas Sarah earns a rather comfortable living. Thus, they do not have the same point of view when it comes to Liam. Sarah rejects Joe when she learns he worked for McGowan, whereas it seems that it was the only way he could save Liam, and even the only way Liam could be saved. People may have inflexible moral values, but when it comes to someone's life, those values are questioned. The picture Loach does of the kingdom in which money and terror reign is partly pessimistic: one can have values when one has money to live. The bad thing is not what Joe did to save Liam, but why he could not do anything else, and why in the first place Liam had to give money back. Socialization is essential, because characters badly need each other, but the insecurity of the suburbs gets in the relations between people, thus endangering their safety. It certainly has a cost.

The society depicted by Loach is an entity able to work by itself, without the working class: instead of helping people to find a job, it has a system of checking on them so as to make sure they don't work "illegally". Isolated, men find it hard to fight back; some of them say they suffer from feeling useless: Maya confesses her despair to Sam, and tells him that she does not know what her future consists in; Tommy feels

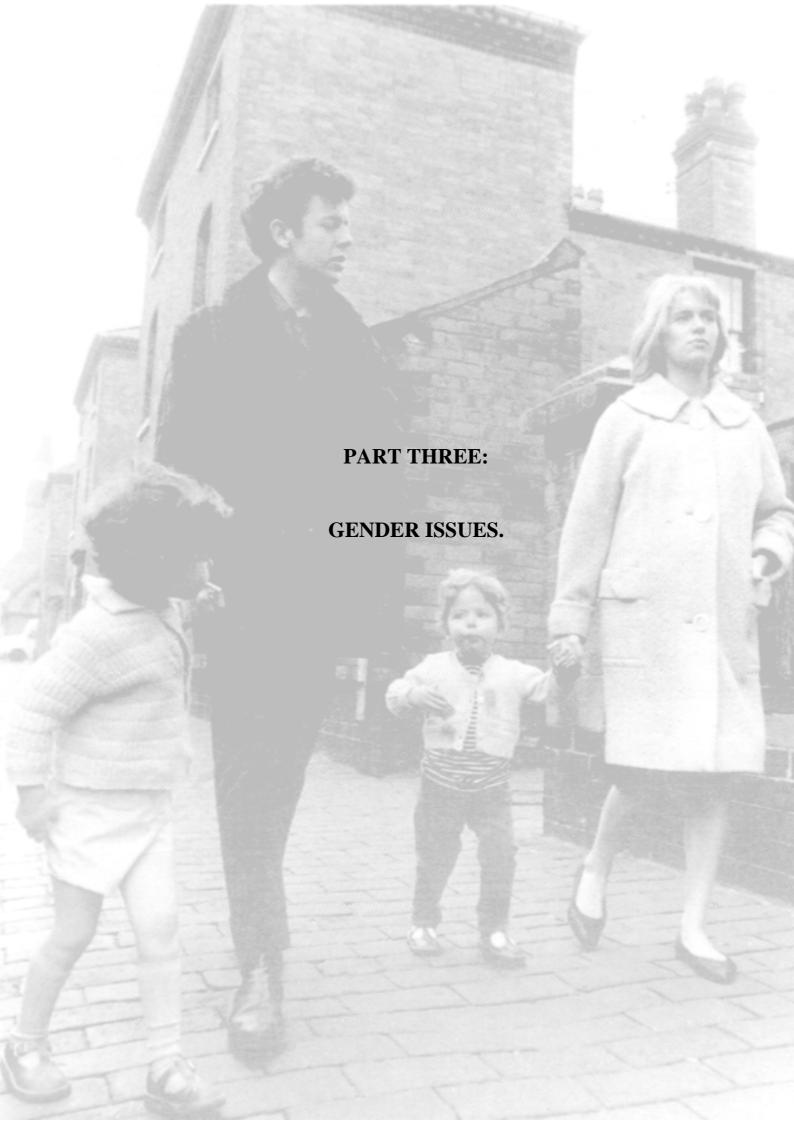
terribly ashamed when her daughter gives him money. But the films suggest that collective thinking and action can lead somewhere: the sign in the Bob's father-in-law's office says: "Is there really a Labor alternative?", inviting protagonists, but also viewers, to think it over. In this respect, Loach likes to make movies which have a sense outside of characters' lives. The sign with the political connotation in *Raining Stones* is very telling of that because it reminds viewers that they are not watching a complete fiction, but a piece of their own world. The documentary side of Loach's fictions-and thanks to which he was first made known- helps to create the interaction effect between what viewers see in the movie and what they know to be their day to day reality. Whereas Hollywood movies do their best to make them forget this reality and confront them with extra-ordinary stories, Ken Loach offers another conception of cinema. His fictions are made to settle viewers in a reality that is theirs: what they watch is meant to enable them to see what surrounds them in a new perspective, more critical. Fictions are meant to create reactions about social realities.

Loach conveys his vision of socialization as a means to be happy through the relations he films. He seems to be very interested in familial relationships. With Family Life, he shows that, within the family itself, societies have consequences because their norms prevent people from having healthy and unprejudiced relationships. This is obvious with the character of Janice's mother, who is obsessed with what is to be done, or not. Here characters are not confronted with financial troubles; they suffer from a narrow-minded and conservative way of thinking. On the contrary, lack of money is at the center of Raining Stones' plot: it clearly rules and divides Bob and Anne. Their conversations are monopolized by money matters, and there is nothing else. According to Jenny Turner, this kind of nothingness between them is due to Julie Brown(Anne)'s amateurism, and "Loach should have known how to put this right". This is not really relevant, since the whole story is based on the consequences of unemployment on a basic working class family: it affects everyone in the familial cell, and everyone becomes obsessed by the lack of money: the film is about how Bob is going to make it with the communion's dress. In this respect, the case of Bob's friend Tommy (Ricky Tomlinson) is very interesting as well: he doesn't have to buy a communion dress, but this does not prevent him from despair because he

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¹ in Sight and Sound, October 1994, p.51

feels he has lost his dignity, as he cannot afford to refuse the money his daughter gives him and it becomes even more meaningful when viewers know where this money comes from. Not only do capitalist societies endanger workers, but they also endanger their familial relationships. They make couples more unstable. In this respect, Loach has done many films in which the relationships between men and women are one of the elements of the narrative. Thus, his movies offer a wide range of masculine and feminine portraits that help to convey the vision of a changing society.



CHAPTER ONE:

Is there a gender issue in Loach's movies?

Gender questions certainly do not prevail in Loach's movies. What is most important is the social – if not political – analysis that Loach invites the viewer to make. However, if one considers such films as *Cathy Come Home*, *Ladybird*, *Raining Stones*, or *Carla's Song* (1996), the question of gender is nevertheless raised, because the audience can see how men and women react differently to what happens to them. If we consider Bob and Anne in *Raining Stones*, or Maggie and Jorge in *Ladybird*, it is obvious that the emotional response each of them gives to events partly determines the story: Bob's desperate desire to provide a communion dress for his daughter by himself will be the initial cause of his troubles; Maggie's anger which is her way of venting her frustration, is treated as a dangerous example for her children by the judges. So what place does gender hold in Loach's movies? How is it that we, as viewers, can feel that his 1990s films especially feature a growing concern for gender clash, even if the main lines remain the same, that is to say social and political criticism?

Loach has always been concerned by the consequences of bad (and even non-existent) social measures on families, from the very beginning of his work. Yet the films of the last decade have brought to light a focus on lower-class couples and the way they deal with life as it is. John Hill suggests that "romance in these films is shown to offer redemptive possibilities", even if it still "depends heavily on economic and political factors". Indeed, the opportunity for couples to reach happiness depends heavily on their situation within society: in *My Name Is Joe*, Joe and Sarah get on well but their relationship is not stable partly because Sarah's different social background

¹ John Hill, British Cinema in the 1980s, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

prevents her from fully empathizing with him. She cannot understand the real depth of the situation, nor the degree of despair that conditions Liam's life and pushes Joe to do what he did. What the film says is that in particular situations, in a particular society, there is no other choice but turning to illegal activities; that is why Joe is not presented as a criminal. As he says: "We don't all live in this nice tidy world of yours...some of us cannot go the police...some of us cannot go to the bank for a loan...some of us cannot just move out and fuck off out of here...some of us don't have a choice." These lines show that there is a real gap between the middle classes and the lower classes. The lines are even more powerful and challenging that they unveil a reality that might be hard to acknowledge, for Sarah as well as for many viewers, who may find it easier to empathise with Sarah, because she represents a nice, comforting class of people. Viewers do sympathise with Joe, but they frankly would not like to be in his shoes. Joe needs help, and people like him are desperate because they know nothing is done to help them. Loach is trying to represent another level of reality, that is often left aside.

Curiously enough, while most of the social changes brought about by Margaret Thatcher's politics are widely discussed and made a political issue, the position of men and women is not treated in the same way: it has not become political, and one might wonder why. It is true that Loach has never been openly interested in issues like feminism or ethnic minorities, because he concentrates on class experience. To a certain extent, this is a reason why women have been mostly associated with household and family concerns, at least until Land and Freedom, because class experience was traditionally linked to male experience. It is true that such characters as Cathy, Janice, or Joy are very much attached to the domestic sphere, while Reg (Cathy's husband), Dave (Joy's husband in *Poor Cow* (1967), or Mick (*Looks and* Smiles) are defined by their relation to the outside, to the working world. Thus, it seems that Loach establishes dualities in his narratives between domestic/private and political/public matters. This coincides with Hannah Arendt's conception of public and private realms. According to her, gender questions, or feminist issues, have nothing to do with the political sphere, and these issues should not be part of political discourses or analysis. In *The Human Condition*, she explained why she refuses to treat it as a political issue: it is not common to every individual who is part of the city. Her

² Hannah Arendt, Condition de l'Homme Moderne, Paris: Pocket Agora, 1994. first published in 1958.

conception of the city is very close to Aristotle's; that is why it is even possible to use the term "polis". The reference to Aristotle's Politics is constant in The Human *Condition*; his influence over her concept of "via activa" is huge. This term designates the association of "labor", "work", and "action", the three activities that specify and defines human beings. Labor means the activity that enables men to survive, either thanks to the reproduction process or the renewal of the worker's physical forces; Work means all the human activities that enable men to put meaning into life and to sustain it. Only Action enables men to play a satisfying role in their community/polis. It concerns what Aristotle called "eudaimonia", that is to say the good life to lead, which every citizen can enjoy. That's why specific issues like women, race, or sex, do not have their place in the public sphere. This sphere is dedicated to action, as defined by Arendt. She made those distinctions because she feared that issues that did not concern the whole population would interfere with the real concerns of the city. Feminist questions mean, in themselves, that there is an idea of membership, that Arendt absolutely refuses, because it is stigmatising. She prefers the equality of the polis to a feminist insistence on difference. This might explain why she refused to consider herself specifically as a woman, to take part to feminist demonstrations (whereas, and it is quite contradictory, she was very forthright about being Jewish).

This has to do with Loach's movies: it could explain why they do not tackle ethnicity, racism or gender. It would be stigmatising a specific group of people, at a given time and place, and at the expense of the whole population's interests. When asked about gender, Loach says that he finds it "dangerous" to establish distinctions between men and women's "emotional debts", even if he acknowledges that they may emotionally respond to events in different ways. As for ethnic minorities, Loach provides a rather similar pattern: in *Riff Raff*, the building site workers are not individualised by their different nationalities, because it would be risking a very different interpretation from the one Loach wants the viewers to make. If the film presents people coming from different countries, having different cultures, finding it hard to lead a satisfying life or struggling to find a job, it could be taken for a failure of certain cultural minorities to adapt to the British system. Whereas Loach's analysis is entirely the opposite: the British capitalist society (and by extension: its political body)

³ See Appendix 1

is responsible for working class people 's inability to find a decent job, because it does not provide them with a civilised, legal and orderly environment that could prevent the abuses they suffer. If one pays attention to the way the Conservative party treated the question of immigration in April 2001, it is obvious that Loach's views are not shared by everyone. Following the Yorkshire East MP John Townend's statement according to which immigrants were making the British population "a mongrel race", the whole political body expected William Hague, the leader of the Conservatives, to sack him from the party. But he did not. According to Paul Routledge (political commentator at *The Mirror*), this showed how much the Conservatives are "tied to the hard Right-Wing".⁴

Thus, emphasising an issue such as ethnicity or gender seems to be problematic for Loach. Celebrating, or simply acknowledging the sense of belonging to a group can be misused by anyone who wants to blame that group as a source of problems for society. That may be why Loach has wanted to stay away from gender questions, preferring to focus on class politics, which is a theme that really has its place in the political/public sphere.

Moreover, Loach has often insisted on the fact that a movie is created by a team, hence stressing the fundamental role of the script-writer. This is also a reason why gender issues have not really been highlighted in his films until the 1990s. Indeed, Jim Allen, with whom Loach made *Hidden Agenda* (1990), *Raining Stones* and *Land and Freedom*, is reported to be not very keen on writing about relationships between men and women. Loach even said he was rather reluctant:

Jim's also a terrific writer, but his idea of a love scene...[...] And we said, you know, Jim, we should grasp this nettle and we should see what this conflict is doing to their marriage. And he says, "I can't write these scenes". I said "Jim you've got to try, we must deal with the inner life of the characters. It isn't all politics, Jim, for Christ's sake!".⁵

⁴ Paul Routledge, "Hague won't sack racist MP", *The Mirror*, 1 May 2001.

⁵ Interview with Simon Hattenstone, *The Guardian*, 28 Oct. 1998

It would be no exaggeration to say that Loach's collaboration with Jim Allen has prevented him from focusing more on private relationships as something which is also damaged at an emotional level from a certain type of aggressive politics. For instance, *Raining Stones* does not deal with this aspect of Bob's family. Bob and Anne are rarely seen in private, and when they are, the way the scene is shot is rather odd: the sequence in which they are in bed occurs during the night, and there is hardly any light in the room. While they are discussing Coleen's Communion, Bob is seen lying on the bed, in the moonlight, whereas Anne is not seen at all... This scene could have shown that the social situation has an effect on their personal life, but there is no reference to such issues. The whole film lacks a certain degree of intimacy between Bob and Anne, and sometimes it becomes hard for viewers to understand why Bob does all he can to keep his wife out of the family problems, because there seem to be no deep feelings portrayed between them. It is quite the same problem for Fatherland: the film lacks a level of deep personal relations, between Klaus and his wife, or between him and his son. Other writers like Rona Munro or Bill Jesse have succeeded in moving perspectives a bit, even if characters like Maggie or Susan do not have a politicised discourse. In this regard, it is interesting to compare Loach's treatment of women with other directors who share similar political and aesthetic views with him. The work of Paul Carpita, a French director, is strikingly reminiscent of Loach's. Like him, he is very committed to realist aesthetic forms, and he used a lot of unprofessional actors for the main cast of his early movies. Le Rendez-Vous des Quais, made in 1966, described the bad working conditions of the dockers in Marseille, and the strike they made to better their wages.⁶ Not only is this very reminiscent of Loach's 1996 The Flickering Flame, but the film was also censored, like Loach's documentary A Question of Leadership (1980). Nevertheless, and unlike Loach this time, in Carpita's film, women are as central as men in the political realm. Marcelle, the main female character of the movie, is sacked by her employer from the biscuit factory where she has been working for a year. But, thanks to her fellow female workers' action and support, she is taken back in. As the film goes on, she stands more and more for a growing political consciousness, and she encourages the dockers to

⁶ see Appendix 2

demonstrate and face the harbour bosses. On the other hand, the man she is engaged to prefers to remain outside the strikers' movement. He fears the lack of money, as his intention is to save enough money to marry Marcelle; work becomes for him a question of necessity and of honor, whatever it costs. Marcelle wants to marry him as much as he wants to marry her, but she has understood how crucial it was to continue the strike until further negotiations. She has understood that the interests of the group/polis were, in the end, the same as the interests of the couple. What Carpita succeeded in doing in Le Rendez-Vous des Quais, Loach could have done even in his earlier movies. In Riff Raff, for instance, it is a bit of a shame that Susan should not be part of a certain social and political awareness, like the men on the building site. Instead, she is described as dependent and out of touch of social and material realities. It is quite the same for Karen in *Looks and Smiles*. She sticks to household interests; for example, she guits her job at the shoe shop to find her father and she plans to stay with him. At the opposite pole from Susan and Karen, stands Emma in *Fatherland*, the French journalist, for whom it is really too much "all politics". Some of Loach's films clearly lack complexity and qualifying, in terms of the position of women in society.

According to many film critics, the fictional dimensions of Loach's movies are reached through the dramatisation of deteriorated family relationships. Annick Peigné-Giuli, in an article devoted to the place of women in Loach's films, states that women stand for figures of compassion. Her study is very much centred around *Ladybird*. It is true that through Maggie's personality, viewers are made aware of the terrible lack of understanding and compassion that people like her confront. However, it is a little reductive to apply this to women only, because some of the men Loach pictures are figures of compassion as much as Maggie. Consider, for example, Bob in *Raining Stones*, or Liam in *My Name Is Joe*. Moreover, what can we say about Sarah in the same movie? Does she really stand for a figure of compassion? Not really. In that case, Peigné-Giuli' s analysis fails. In fact, Loach's 1990's fictions have been trying to show the evolution of gender roles, in both the private and the public spheres. The social and economic changes that have occurred during the last twenty years have

⁷ for instance John Hill, "Every fuckin' choice stinks", Sight and Sound, Nov. 98, 21

⁸ Annick Peigné-Giuli, "la femme, figure de la compassion chez Loach", in Blangonnet Catherine(ed), *Images Documentaires- Ken Loach*, Paris, Association Images Documentaires, 1997.

radically altered the rules of seduction, and have also challenged the balance of power between men and women.

CHAPTER TWO

Out of home: from Cathy to Sarah

Even if they do not have always embodied the true spirit of political struggle, there is an interesting series of feminine portraits in Loach's filmography. Most of them stand for damaged figures, who find it very hard to cope with the requirements and standards of the society they live in. Along the movies, Loach has shown the evolution of women: in his early ones, female characters were mainly associated with the domestic sphere, with familial concerns. This is the case in Cathy Come Home, Loach's first feature movie. The traditional familial pattern is what matters most to Cathy, and the title itself reveals the basic association between an isolated woman, Cathy, and a more general concept which is attached to women, "Home": indeed, the title does not specify which home place Cathy has to come back to. The only thing that animates her is the perspective of marriage, founding a family, protecting it as hard as she can. The way she holds her children against her, her way of carrying them all the time, picking them up from the ground can be seen as an illusive impression of power and protection over them. Before the story really starts, she is seen on the road, hitchhiking. Because of the zoom, she is more like an image stuck on a determined landscape than like a movie/moving character. One has the impression that she will not make it, because she is associated with a hostile surrounding landscape. She cannot stay long in the first, nice flat with her husband. She has to go back to the kind of landscape she had been first seen in. On top of that, the road is symbolic of the journey between childhood and adulthood. The opening sequence shows her on a road, coming from her parents' house to begin a new life as a woman. She quickly gets married, and viewers have the felling that the film really begins at that point, when she has entered life as a married woman, that is to say when she has entered the private sphere. At the end of the film, she has failed to complete the journey, since she comes back to her parents'. It seems that there is no transitory stage. The type of society she lives in has clearly put her in a state of failure and even regression.

Unable to cope with the standards her family has imposed to her, Janice (Family Life) is seen as a victim, weakened by others' lack of comprehension and narrowmindedness. Like Cathy, she is very linked to the domestic sphere: her mental problems are rooted in her familial background, and she appears to be totally dependent on the amount of affection that is given to her (by her boyfriend), or not given (by her parents). Moreover, she cannot find any other satisfaction, in work for example. For her, otherness becomes a stranger, an enemy that takes her deep into schizophrenia. Characters like Janice or Cathy are confined in spaces where the notion of limits is very present. They reflect an era in which women were quite stereotyped; they were expected to behave as housewives ("taking care" women), or fashionable trendy girls (this is obvious in *Up the Junction*). In both cases, they give an impression of fragility, which is also true of the young boy Billy in Kes. This image is, to a certain extend, at the root of their unhappiness: limited to a certain behaviour, they cannot free themselves from constraints. Thus, Cathy is tied to her husband's Reg's ups and downs, because she depends on him; Janice's life is reduced to family life(hence the title); Karen, Mick's girlfriend in Looks and Smiles, gets so involved in their relationship as well as in the search for her father that she quits the shoe shop. However, little by little, Loach is going to show the changes brought by capitalist societies and the Thatcher government in the 1980s.

In this respect, the characters of Anne (*Raining Stones*) and Maggie (*Ladybird*) are very interesting. They mark a sort a transitory stage between the mother figure and the active woman. Indeed, they are identified as working-class women, but they do not belong to the working world. As far as Maggie is concerned, she is never seen working during the whole movie; her preoccupations still are domestic and familial. This may be partly why she finds it hard to cope with institutional structures, because she is not familiar with the public sphere they stand for. On a critical level, not only does *Ladybird* show the lack of comprehension and communication between administrations and people, but it also holds a certain type of government responsible

for separating those institutions from the people they were initially made for. People and institutions are stranger to one another in the film (this aspect is strengthened by the differences of accents), and as such they cannot fulfil one another's expectations. This lack of contact generates stereotypes. Thus, Maggie is refused her children's custody not only because she was not home when the fire started, but also because of what she was doing when it happened. She was outside, singing in a pub. She is judged because of that, because leisure activities are not considered as part of mothers' schedules. This is why she is considered dangerous, on top of her extreme vulnerability and anger; she does not fit a certain type of social, normative expectations.

Fitting the norms is not the problem for Anne. She also belongs to the domestic sphere; she is rarely seen outside the house, and when she is, she is with her daughter. Even if she seems more realistic than her husband (she does not want to buy the Communion dress), she does not seem to be very interested in nor concerned with his work. However, the sequence in which she tries to find a job in a textile factory is very representative of the inability of the working-class to meet with the new capitalist expectations. Anne is completely unable to use the sewing machine properly, or at least the way she is asked to. As she belongs to the working-class, viewers expect her to know how to use the sewing machine, which is obviously a symbol of the industrial revolution. The fact that the heirs of such an industrial and cultural heritage should not know how to use it indicates that it has been transformed to meet with other needs. As such, the sequence shows that working-class people have been turned into useless strangers on the employment market. The irony lies also in the fact that the workingclass used to be crushed by the amount of work resulting from the industrial revolution; whereas it is now crushed by unemployment. Loach is certainly not the only one to have pointed out this case of alienation: Eric Zonka chose the same pattern for the opening sequences of La Vie rêvée des Anges (1998). Isa (Elodie Bouchez), is first seen looking for a job in a textile workshop, where all employees are women. Trying hard but failing to do a proper work, she decides to give up with one of the other workers, Marie(Natasha Reynier). In both movies, the sewing machine is an hostile element, standing for casual work. Both Anne and Isa have no training, but they are nevertheless asked to produce a perfect work. Both Loach and Zonka point out the incoherence of such a hiring system: recruiting unskilled employees, and expecting at the same time the work of a skilled one. Situations like these clearly appeal to the viewer's critical sense, asking him not to judge Anne's or Isa's inability to cope with the requirements of the jobs, but the employers' lack of coherence in expectations they have. Such situations call for a change of attitude from workers. Still, the focus is really put on women, and Loach's representation of them in the second part of the 1990s has really changed. Female characters are indeed quite at the opposite of what he had done previously. These films feature single women, who know how to live on their own. As a consequence, they do not fit the traditional pattern of domestic/private sphere, as their concerns go beyond this sphere. Still, they are not revolutionary nor political symbols, as the narrative mingles the affective and socio-political dimensions of their lives. As such, it is certainly one of the reasons why Loach's latest movies are very powerful, much more than the very political Fatherland for instance. With Paul Laverty as script-writer, Loach has made movies in which relationships between people are not totally conditioned by socio-political realities. It is as if characters-especially women-were allowed more space to sort things out. In My Name Is Joe, Sarah represents the fully emancipated, working woman. Even if the social gap between her and Joe prevents her from totally empathizing with him, the end of the film does not provide any definitive end to their relation. Sarah waits for him at the end of Liam's funerals and they leave together. This different approach also enables Loach to give a better account of womanhood in Carla's Song, My Name Is Joe, or Bread and Roses. Sarah, Carla or Maya mark a real transition between women as housewives and women as women. What I mean is that even the female body is shot differently, as to signify a certain emancipation. There is indeed a striking change in the way Loach filmed the love scenes in Raining Stones or Ladybird on the one hand, and Carla's Song or My Name Is Joe on the other hand. Bob and Anne are seen once in bed, talking, and Bob is in the light whereas viewers cannot even see Anne, because she is in the dark. At the opposite, Joe and Sarah are shot getting undressed; Maggie and Jorge are seen on the point of making love, but they turn the lights off and the sequence stops on Jorge's room in complete darkness. On the contrary, George and Carla do it in daylight. The fact that viewers can see part of naked bodies does not mean that Loach's films are getting "sexier", as Simon Hattenstone put it, 1 it just means that sex is presented as something that matters in relationships between couples. Loach's latest films highlight the importance of privacy, as a means to escape for a while an unfulfilling reality. The sequence in which George and Carla go in the Scottish country-side is a peaceful moment in the film, and it heavily contrasts with the second part in Nicaragua, in Maya's native village especially. According to Annick Peigné-Giuli, 2 Carla is a "revolutionary icon", because she stands for the damaged Nicaraguan population. If it is true that she took part in the revolution and that the political impact it has on the content of the film is huge, she is nevertheless very sensitive, and the film is as much about her story as the Nicaraguan revolution. She does not give any explanation nor any analysis of what had happened, partly because it would not help healing her traumas. The only things viewers get are bits of dreams, which are part of her individual experience. The very title of the movie indicates the importance put on her own account of the war, which is a way for Loach to give viewers another perspective of the event.

In *Bread and Roses*, central characters are women, and the film settles them in a political background: Maya and her sister Rosa are Mexican immigrants, and in this respect they are both impregnated with a different culture, as well as a culture of difference. They both know, even if they cope differently with it, that they are considered as different. The duo they form is very representative of all the traumas inflicted by prejudiced and racial politics (see the way janitors are looked at by typical WASP Americans in the scene in the restaurant) and dominant masculine culture. They both suffer from masculine discrimination: First, Rosa, because she has no other choice but to prostitute herself to send money to her family and to survive; because she has to sleep with the manager to get a job for Maya. She stands for the reified woman, and the film implicitly denounces the way she has been treated as much as it explicitly is on the side of the janitors. The confrontation at the end of the movie between Maya and Rosa is eloquent enough to consider Rosa as one of the crucial character of the film. Oddly enough, it seems that this character is secondary, as if Loach wanted the viewers to focus more on Maya and her awakening to class consciousness and union

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¹ Interview with Simon Hattenstone, *The Guardian*, 28 Oct. 1998

² Peigné-Guili, "la femme, figure de la compassion chez Loach"

activism. Nevertheless, Rosa's account of her life sums up the real alienation and sufferings that immigrants like her have to face. Secondly, Maya, because she also faces masculine discrimination: she is nearly raped at the very beginning of the film, and her first job at a bar is not very convincing: she is assaulted by men, as a sexual object. Still, her energy and her youth prevent her from falling into a total and inactive despair. Helped by Sam, the union leader, she gradually becomes able to make a coherent political discourse. Sam is important in the movie, but he does not convey the energy generated by Maya and her fellow immigrants.

Consciously or not, Loach has made movies which show the evolution of women in Western societies: more assertive and independent, they nevertheless add a powerful melodramatic aspect to the movies, helping them to be less "all politics". But this is not a one-way evolution; if times change, so do women, and so do men as well. The next chapter will examine what preoccupies men in the 1990s, and how they cope with a new image of themselves, which contrasts with the traditional "bread winner" image of the 1960s and the 1970s.

CHAPTER THREE

Falling standards, fallen males.

Ken Loach likes to film male friendship. Whether in Riff Raff, Raining Stones or My Name Is Joe, the scenes in which men talk together always have a certain intensity. They truly embody the spirit of working-class workers Loach is so attached to. Their way with words is hilarious, especially in *Riff Raff* in the building-site scenes, and their modesty, when it comes to personal matters, is moving. This modesty, with which they try to hide what is wrong in their lives betrays their willingness to be in control of things. Not being able to have power over things is shameful to them: in Raining Stones, Tommy is seen crying of shame and despair, once her daughter has given him money to go to the pub. He certainly cries because the traditional pattern of money-provider is reversed, but also because he has no choice but to accept it, even if it is not to go to the pub: he cannot refuse this money. Sometimes, this incapacity to be in control of things makes them panic to the point of committing minor thefts(except Maya who steals money in the petrol station in *Bread and Roses*, women never do illegal things), or even punishing themselves: in My Name Is Joe, Joe goes back to drinking, even though he knows it is a regression. But he does so because he feels he has failed. Failed to start a new life, failed in an environment where he had no choice but to do what Sarah quitted him for: "some of us don't have a choice". It is quite the same thing for Liam. He hangs himself because he feels desperately useless, and because he knows he cannot change anything. In Loach's movies, the traditional image of the man as a "bread winner" is not valid; it is turned down by exterior elements that do not depend on the men Loach depicts, such as unemployment, urban insecurity or political turmoil. Such major and massive changes in the environment that surrounds Loachian male characters should consequently change cultural standards, but they do not. Thus, a sense and a fear of failure dominate their lives. Material impossibilities are turned into personal incapacities, and eventually personal failures. This might explain why male characters often tend to isolate themselves, and more generally why Loach's movies are understood as random and individual slices of working-class life. It is true that Loach's political comments lie behind individual stories. The sense of failure becomes so overwhelming for most of Loach's male characters that everyday details become often a question of honour and dignity. Very often, masculinity is associated with the notion of providing. This is obviously criticized as a capitalist approach of humankind: being means also having. This is very true in My Name Is Joe: Joe falls into the trap of stereotyped romanticism, when he uses the extra money MacGowan gave him to buy Sarah a ring and a pair of earrings. What was made and meant to please her was also an attempt at recovering a masculine dignity. The fact that he should hesitate whether to propose Sarah a date, because he is not sure he will have enough money to pay for it, is unbearable to him. As such, the jewellery is as enjoyable for him as it should have been for Sarah. The very title of the film foretells his attempt at recovering an identity he has lost when he started to drink, and more generally it foretells his attempt at recovering his identity as a man (Joe), a lover (able to pay for a date) and a father (he is a father figure for Liam; he once tells him: "tell Uncle Joe"; he tries to sort things for him; his family is the football team, as he tells Sarah when he shows her the photograph he carries in his wallet).

Trough those characters' desperate attempt at keeping up appearances, Loach criticizes a capitalist society that maintains high standards of living as a norm that must be reached in order to achieve social dignity. Those superficial standards, embodied by the Communion dress (which is, above all, only a dress) or a pair of earrings are unreachable for a good deal of the population, because this very capitalist society is also a society in which unemployment rates are very high. Yet the same standards are vehicled for everyone, whereas they are presented by Loach as being a potential danger for authentic things (a Communion, love). The criticism goes even deeper: implicitly, viewers know that these standards are conveyed by different media,

like advertising, television, or a certain part of the film industry. Loach's films are all the more powerful, and even ironical, because he uses one of these media as a counter account of what is usually shown. Life is not about standards, it is about authenticity.

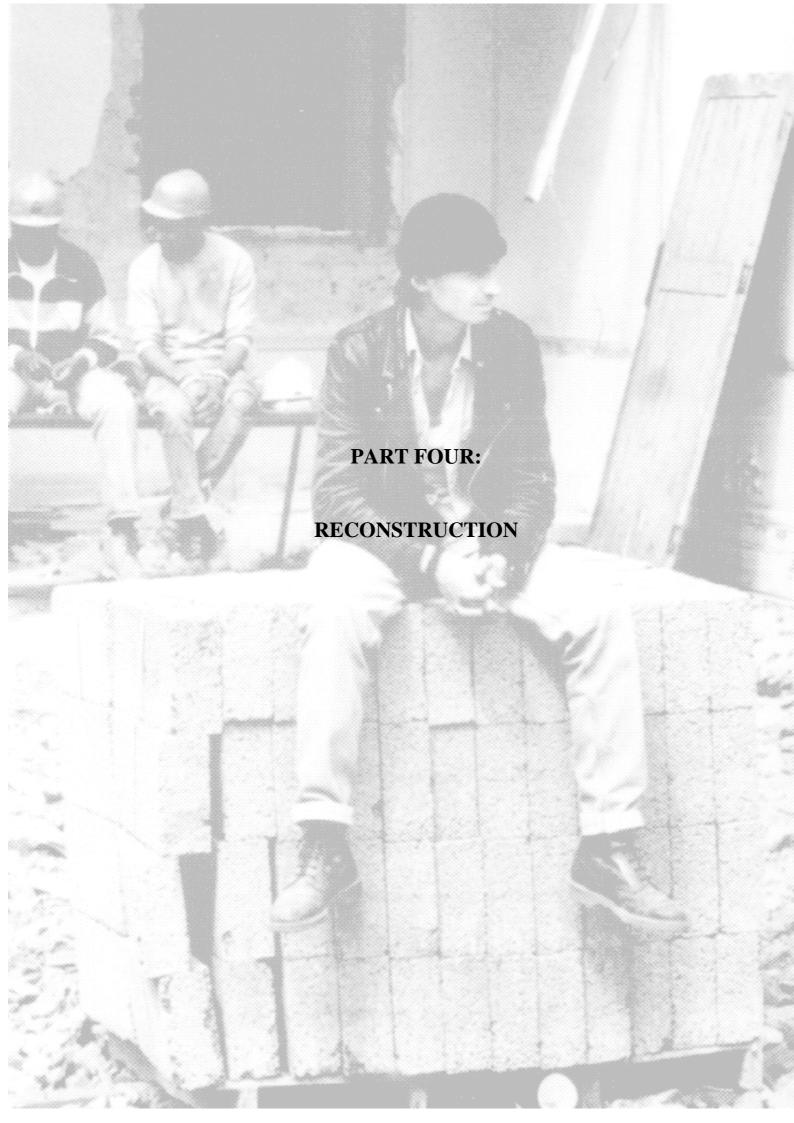
Men stand for the damaged figures of societies which impose standards of living, because they feel guilty if they cannot reach them. The sense of culpability, raised by a discourse to be a consumer, pushes them to act in the oposite way of what should be done: Joe buys a ring to Sarah thanks to the money earned on drugs selling. When he does this, Joe is in a world where the notion of morality is absolutely emptied of its original meaning. The thing about many Loach's films is that they do not have a morality at all, since the traditional patterns of moralities do not exist anymore(MacGowan is not in the least worried by the police; it is never mentioned as a threat for him, nor as a help for Liam; Tommy's daughter is into prostitution, and this does not seem to annoy the manager of the club where Bob works as a bouncer). It is the same for Bob: the troubles he gets into are the very direct consequence of his willingness to buy the dress. It is not so much the spiritual event, the Communion, that matters to him(he is unable to explain Jesus' last meal episode to his daughter), but the reified symbol of this event: the dress. As Jean-François Baillon pointed out, the criticism the film invites to draw is that the type of society Bob lives in does not let him buy the dress, whereas it is quite regardless of drugs businesses. In this society, morality does not condition people's acts, and values have become financial.

What comes out from a study of male and female characters in Loach's movies is that both sexes cope differently with their environment. It has been shown that masculinity is questioned in its traditional social meaning, whereas the image of women is more powerful, multi-dimensional and dynamic. Loach is not the only British director to focus on the decline of masculinity. Peter Cattaneo made in 1998 a very successful movie, *The Full Monty*, which tackled the problem. It is very close to Loach's thematic and even aesthetical patterns, because it features unemployed men who try to better their lots. The central character, Gaz (played by Robert Carlyle, who has done two films with Loach...) faces the possibility of not seeing his son anymore, because he cannot pay the allowances (this is very reminding of a "Ladybird"

¹ Jean-François Baillon, "Vivre et Survivre dans *Raining Stones* de Ken Loach". Colloque Sercia/IEP "Cinéma anglophone et Politique(s)", Bordeaux, septembre 2000.

situation). All male characters in the movie have problems with women, with meeting what they think their expectations are. The film is about getting naked in front of women, and it can be seen as a way to get rid of a male cultural tradition that is not valid anymore at the end of the 20th century. Gaz recognizes himself, quite bitterly, that men are "dinosaurs". The difficulties men have to maintain themselves as "bread winners" reveal the changes, if not the collapse, in the traditional working-class brought by new socio-economic patterns. The locations Loach uses for his films are eloquent enough in this regard: northern British cities were industrial places, but these landscapes betray the abandon of traditional industries. Men described by Loach belong to those industries, and changes are badly needed, for both of them it seems.

The movie calls for a change, the way Loach invites his viewers to call for a change in a broader context: questioning masculinity and femininity is also a means to question the whole background of both men and women. The construction of societies requires an accurate and balanced account of cultural environments, and Loach has provided some rather unusual perspectives about personal stories and history.



CHAPTER ONE:

Perspectives and points of view.

Ken Loach's cinematic style is mostly associated with Free Cinema/Cinémavérité and social realism aesthetics of the 1960s and 1970s. Yet, he uses few cinematic effects, preferring to highlight actors' performance, and not make the camera too visible. He is very famous among those who have worked with him for being very detached from the use of the camera. Trevor Griffiths, with whom he made Fatherland, said that "if Loach could make a film without a camera, he would. He just wants the actors to be themselves so that everything looks as though it has just happened".1 As we have seen earlier, Loach is very attentive to the degree of authenticity his films have. Actors have to look as close as possible to the part, hence the use of unprofessional actors, who may have broader ranges of experiences, who may have done other jobs. Their experience is thus taken as a bonus for the level of reality of the films: Robert Carlyle had worked on a building site before Riff Raff; Elpidia Carillo is a Mexican immigrant, and had to work in clandestine conditions when she first came to America. So her part in *Bread and Roses* is not so much acting, but it is a part of her own life. David Bradley, who played the part of Billy in Kes, actually came from the city where the action of the film is situated. To that extent, one can say that Loach films "the real", as he gives faithful and reliable pieces (some of what is filmed has really happened) of experiences to the spectators. The most striking

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¹ Interview with Christine Aziz, "Shoulder to shoulder", *The Observer*, 22 March 1987.

example is Fatherland, which relates the story of an East Germany dissident, Klaus Drittemann going to the West, because he is forced into exile. Gerulf Pannach, who plays the part of Klaus, is a real dissident; the journalists at the press conference sequence are real journalists who had been asked to ask their own questions: this scene was more than mere improvisation, which is a device commonly used by Loach; it was the real into the fiction. He justifies the use of non-professional actors because he sometimes need something "raw and direct", which reminds of documentary techniques. Loach explains this choice by saying that some of the parts he wants them to do require a certain spontaneity: "I think it works quite well if among experienced actors you put people in who haven't done much, because they make everyone go to the first principles". This device is a means for Loach to make it easier for spectators to appropriate themselves the movie, as limits between fiction and realities are blurred. I am talking of realities, because reality in Loach's movies is not univocal; it has several layers, as many as there are points of views, even if Loach himself stresses the fact that the narration remains a working-class narration: "I am trying to express a point of view, not about working class people, but working class people's point of view". So this is strictly another way to look at things. He is very straight-forward about what he wants his films to be, and according to him, it is a shame that his films should be discussed on an aesthetic level, at the expense of their true stakes, that is to say a social and political criticism meant to generate a debate.⁵ His fictions are rooted in the real, they do not create their own reality. His concern with being as accurate as possible with the "reality effect" leads him to choose very carefully the actors and the locations of the shooting, because it is a guaranty of an optimal realism. If we consider the scenario of Riff Raff, for instance, Bill Jesse, who wrote it, gathered his own experiences as a worker on building sites. To Loach, people and place are things that matter for the level of authenticity: "They have to be as authentic as the place they're in, or the room they're in. Otherwise they become like actors, in somewhere that doesn't belong to them."6

²Interview with Madeleine North, "You've just been Loached", *The Guardian*, 30 Jan 1999.

³ Interview with Madeleine North, "You've just been Loached"

⁴ HILL, John, "Interview with Ken Loach", 1994, in George McKnight (ed), *Agent of Challenge and Defiance, The Films Of Ken Loach*. Westport, Connecticut, Praeger Publishers, 1997.

⁵ Interview in *L'Humanité*, 13 May 2000

⁶ See Appendix 1

It seems that Loach wants to know as much as possible about the subjects he films, and it certainly is a point of view that is very documented. Nevertheless, his fictions remain powerfully moving, and not necessarily detached from his characters. Realism in Loach's work is more a question of aesthetics than one of social environment that is at the origin of the plots. As such, he is very much an observer of a certain type of politics that generates a certain type of society. This does not correspond to the type of realism described and commented by André Bazin, in What is cinema?.7 According to him, realism is a non-biased point of view, neutral and not committed to the characters' actions. And this is sometimes how Loach's films have been described, especially in the 1980's. However, this does not work in the perspective of Loach's way of describing the locations or the characters. It is true that some scenes give the impression that the camera is held deliberately away from the people, or that it does not choose to take part. This is the case in Riff Raff, in which the scene of confrontation between Stevie and Susan is shot in a very curious way, with a frontal shot, whereas such a climactic moment would be expected to be shot in a shot/reverse shot pattern. Yet, this is chosen by the director, and the choice of staying away from the broken couple is a perspective. It also enables the viewers to take into consideration the place where the confrontation occurs, and shows how the reality of the building site, which is the workers' reality, has deep consequences on the rest of their lives, as the place itself has made them aware, all along the movie, of the instability of the system they belong to. This awareness will finally lead Stevie and one of his mates to set the aggressive symbol of capitalism on fire.

As Roy Armes puts it, 8 Loach practices "an art of the real", which clearly means that his work is to be understood as unique in a broader tradition of realist film makers. What is interesting in Loach's movies is that even if they are known from the beginning to be engaged, uncompromising, and maybe a little didactic, they also have a real sense of characterization, and such characters as Billy, Maggie, Bob, or Joe are unforgettable in the mind of viewers because they embody a general culture, and the heritage of a working class tradition. Loach has often recognized9 that his influences were European, and located in the post-war era. The Italian neo-realist directors like

⁷ André Bazin, *What is cinema?*, Berkeley: CUP, 1971 ⁸ Roy Armes, *A Critical History Of British Cinema*, London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd, 1978, p.307-311.

⁹ Interview with John Hill, in George McKnight(ed), Agent of Challenge and Defiance: the films of Ken Loach.

Rossellini(he makes a direct reference to Paisa), Czech Cinema and French New Wave directors have influenced him more in a way that departed from classical Hollywood frameworks and narrations. What's more, and this is more specific to Italian neo-realism, he was from the beginning interested in lower classes commitment and reaction to political events. Ordinary people thus become his favourite grounds of observation. In the very word "observation", which is according to some critics Loach's "favourite sport", there is something which stands at the opposite of realism: in an interview with Karim Dridi, 10 Loach says that the camera should not be too close to the actors, in order to give them space enough to compose their part and to restore an emotion with the spontaneity that is required from Loach. Nevertheless, that does not prevent him from playing tricks to his actors, so as to test their reaction, and then guide them to sharpen the performance. Ricky Tomlinson, in Dridi's documentary, says of Loach that he is a "practical joker", referring to the shooting of the scene in Riff Raff in which Loach did not tell him that the veiled women would enter the bathroom while he was taking a bath. As a matter of fact, it is obvious that his fictions have become more constructed around characters coping with an hostile environment, whereas his previous films of the late sixties and seventies tended to focus on the environment in itself, hence the more extensive use of documentary techniques. In Cathy Come Home, there are bits of the film where an off-voice gives figures about the homeless in London and in great cities like Liverpool. This typical documentary device is used in his 1965 television work *Up The Junction*, in which a voice gives figures about the number of illegal abortions and the number of resulting deaths. Such devices are absent from his 1990s films, and the focus is narrowed to a more complete analysis of the characters' psychology, their motivation and their choices. Following Julia Hallam's categorization of realism¹¹, what can be considered as expositional realism in the first half of Loach's career has turned to rhetorical realism, meant to dissociate "objective" realism and another realism which uses more conventional devices (like the happy ending in *Raining Stones*, or the dramatic event like the fire at the beginning of *Ladybird*). The films thus became less realist, in the strict sense of the

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¹⁰ Karim Dridi, Citizen Ken Loach, prod Arte, 1995.

¹¹ Julia Hallam and Margaret Marshment, Realism and Popular Cinema, Manchester: MUP, 2000,p.101.

term, than naturalistic: referring to Emile Zola's social novels, Deborah Knight¹² pictures Loach's films as "critical realist", which is quite accurate, if we consider the amount of socio-political analysis and criticism in every movie. In this perspective, the films are to be understood in relation to the viewers, as Zola experimented with his novels the impression that readers must reconceive the purpose of the novel. This is very much true if applied to Loach's work: his films are not cinematic for the only purpose of being cinematic, that is to say, to be an art production completed without the viewers. In fact, Loach is only making films for the very purpose of making people react, of making them rethink the way they are used to seeing what they have just watched in another way. There is something very Brechtian about that, in that Loach often gives unusual perspectives about people. Brecht reacted against a certain type of realism, understood as a depicted reality that people cannot change: if everything is portrayed as static, then it can never be shifted. In Loach's films, characters may find it hard to change their situation, but whatever the price is, they try. As Jim Allen puts it, Loach and himself like "people who shake their fist, who act for change". Thus, Loach does not produce a kind of reality that would be reality in itself, but a set of discourses produce a certain reality. There is a crucial distinction between a set of discourses and a visual discourse that guarantees truth: here there is what is known as a "contradiction of the real", 14 Loach relies heavily on it. Let's have a closer look at Cathy Come Home. Very often, viewers get shots of Cathy and her family, while Cathy's voice comments upon her homelessness, her being pregnant...It is not always clear if those comments belong to the actual moment of the narration (when we see the images) or if they are posterior comments. The narrative thus mingles two kinds of discourses, one of which tries to enlighten the other. The spectator is given two perspectives. In *Up The Junction* as well, off-voices give figures while Rube is seen walking in the woods, whereas viewers know this is the time when she gets the abortion. This ellipse, and its replacement by the figures given by a "objective" and unknown voice clearly set the film in a political and social context: abortion as it was practised, that is to say not chirurgical because it was still illegal at the time, is

¹² Deborah Knight, "Naturalism, narration and critical perspective: Ken Loach and the experimental method", in McKnight(ed), *Agent of Challenge and Defiance: the films of Ken Loach*, 1997.

¹³ Philippe Pilard, "Mémoire ouvrière, parole ouvrière", in *Images Documentaires- Ken Loach*.

¹⁴ MacCabe, Colin, "Theory and Film: principles of realism and pleasure" in Rosen, P. ed., *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: a film reader*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986.

condemned and the political criticism is clear.¹⁵ So reality is not so much an objective set of images given to the spectator to judge by himself of the situation. It is an accurate description of what goes on for some people, from their point of view. As such, memories are central in Loach's movies, because they condition characters' perceptions and reactions to events. The way in which people build themselves individual memories and how they link it to collective history determine their capacity to cope with a present that is sometimes impossible to manage.

¹⁵ When the film was broadcasted on BBC1 in 1965, abortion issues were hugely discussed in the Commons.

CHAPTER TWO:

Memories and realities.

"One of the things that is interesting is the connection between people's past and their present" ¹

When Ken Loach said this, he was talking about the importance of memories, and how they affected people's day-to-day lives. It may seem slightly secondary to study memories, because the films usually concentrate very much on the connection between people and their environment or their social institutions. It is clear, however, that individual memories underlie some characters' acts, like Maggie, Stevie, Joe and Rosa. Some of their acts are not totally conditioned by their environment, which is different from earlier characters such as Cathy or Janice, Mike, or even Bob. These characters act in response to what immediately happens to them: homelessness, unemployment, misunderstandings within families, the lack of money...On the other hand, it seems that the recollection of memories as a painful, or at least problematic experience for characters, adds to the narrative's depth. Where memories are concerned, narratives gain in subjectivity, and viewers are not in front of a distant representation of reality anymore. Moments of recollections are often moments of great intensity, because they give clues about characters' lives and traumas. In addition, such moments help to remove viewers out of a passive state, because of the gravity of the events that is unveiled: this is obvious in Ladybird. Viewers may not

¹ See Appendix 1

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understand Maggie's anger, because they do not have all the clues that would enable them to understand. This point is very interesting because, thanks to this narrative technique, Loach parts from his habit of setting his characters' psychology according to social environments. It becomes deeply personal, and this requires a fine analysis from viewers; they have to combine a social analysis to an understanding of personal events, in which they cannot intervene. Neither can Loach. The scenes of recollection are filmed as if the character himself (or herself) remembered it. These scenes are very subjective, because they try to make the character take control of his own story. Maggie remembers the violence of the relations between her parents, and what viewers see are only fragments of the scene, filmed from a specific point of view: Maggie's, when she was a child. This focalisation is quite unusual in Loach' works, if we consider that he often prefers to do a minimum of camera-work, and allows actors space to fit into the location. It is striking to see that, during the scene in question, it is very difficult to actually see where it takes place, because everything is so quick and confused at the same time. The depth of field is very low, so everything is blurred. Viewers understand that the little girl is Maggie as a child; her face is the only thing in the scene that can be seen clearly, as if the trauma her face expresses stood for the only thing to be remembered by viewers, but also by people who are in power to change the situation she is in, as an adult.

A similar theme is depicted in *My Name Is Joe*: even if Joe shares his memories with Sarah, the actual recollection is clearly made from his point of view: the amount of low angle and high angle shots indicates that the scene if seen through Joe's eyes, going up the stairs, then looking down at his girlfriend from the steps. Again, this is presented as his experience, and Sarah finds it hard to fully understand what really happened. This episode is shameful and painful to him, whereas it becomes frightening to her, as viewers are made aware of, when she asks him whether he is going to hit her or not, in another sequence. This is very telling of Loach's concerns in memories: how are they received and interpreted by others? How are they perceived by those who are concerned in the first place? In *Carla's Song*, Carla re-experiences the atrocities she has witnessed while sleeping, and she just cannot cope with it, hence her attempts at suicide. In *Riff-Raff*, Stevie sets the luxurious building on fire after his mother's funerals, and his encounter with his family. It is also after this that he leaves Susan.

When he tells her that she lives in "a fucking bubble", he also means that he lives in another "real" world, in which he refuses to be crushed by bosses and hard working conditions, as well as by Susan's lies. It is no coincidence that he should do this after viewers have been revealed his true identity. They are made aware that Stevie wanted to erase his former life, and start a new one. But his past catches up with him. As Ken Loach points out, the relation between people's past and their present conditions their acts:

[...] you can never escape the past, [...] it is always present in one form or another, in the way people are prisoners of the past, always, in some form or another; whether you react against it, or try to forget it, or accept it, it's still implicit in everything, in every major thing you do.²

As Stevie sets on fire the building that represents an oppressive symbol of humiliating conditions of working, of living, he also shows he can cope with his present, in his own way. His act does not stand for a constructed political discourse, but at least he escapes social determinism, because he fights back. Having confronted his past, and also his origins, he is able to take an active part in the present. This step from passivity (bearing what is imposed and painful without discussing) to activity, and even activism, is seen as an awakening to social and political awareness. Confronting one's past is always beneficial in the sense that it helps characters to be aware of their own identity and needs. This is truly the case for Carla and Rosa: both of them are damaged by what they had to do in the past, and the recollection of it. Rosa, who seems to be very strong and determined throughout the film, falls apart when she confronts her sister. The fact of revealing her past enables Maya to understand (though not necessarily excuse) Rosa's betrayal. Curiously enough, there are no flash-backs in *Bread and Roses*, whereas it was something Loach seemed to consider as efficient in his four last films, as a means to convey an authentic account of the past, the way it had been felt by his characters. Instead, the intensity is conveyed by Maya's reaction to her sister's revelation, and this is all the more powerful that viewers can identify with Maya, at that point. Indeed, they have to reconsider the

² Interview Appendix 1

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whole story, with what has been presented to them as another level of reality: beyond the janitors' struggle, there are individual tragedies that prevent people coping collectively with a situation that concerns a larger group; more generally, Loach's films deal with the connection between people's past, and its consequences on our present.

CHAPTER THREE:

Past and Present.

Most of Loach's films are about the connections between past and present. According to Loach, it is central because it "builds up a whole nation, a whole state". What many of his movies urge the viewers to reclaim is their cultural heritage, which is often disavowed. There is always something in Loach's representation of the past that echoes contemporary societies, because the concerns are the same, and he encourages viewers to raise lessons of the past to take control of the present. I will concentrate on *Land and Freedom*, which is the most obviously interesting in this particular regard, because the narrative directly mingles past and present. I will also refer to *Carla's Song*, because it also deals with historical knowledge, and how it is transmitted to others.

In these films, central characters have to question their knowledge in order to understand what is really going on in the foreign countries in which the films take place. The questioning of knowledge is a theme that is very telling of several layers of reality in these fictions: George, in *Carla's Song*, thinks he may better understand Carla if he has some general historical background of what happened in Nicaragua. Therefore, he asks his sister who is still at school. But this institutional knowledge does not help him at all, on the contrary: it blurs the limits between what is supposed to have happened and what has actually happened. Bradley, the American journalist, stands as a counter voice to what George's sister learnt at school. Loach implies in

¹ See Interview Appendix 1

both Carla's Song and Land and Freedom that people do not know a certain face of their history, which conditions, to a certain extent, their incomprehension of the present. Metaphorically, Carla does what viewers are invited to do: she has to confront her past, in order to be able to live the present. Past and present are intimately tied, and in this respect Loach is very close to Marx's historical materialism: individuals act in conformity with social forces that determine them, not deliberately. As a product of a certain type of culture, that tends to be more and more defined by the market, freedom is a very relative notion in a capitalist society. Basically, freedom is at the centre of most of Loach's films: being free to decide where to live and where to work, being free to have a baby (Family Life), being free and being protected(Jorge in Ladybird). Freedom is something that is worth fighting for: in Land and Freedom, David joins the Spanish POUM in order to help freeing Spain from the fascists. As usual, in Loach's movies, the central character is going to question his own idea of war by learning about the fight of interests between the POUM and the communist party. What is at the centre of Loach's analysis in this film is that the interests of the people are not best represented by political parties, whether they are left or right wing parties. In this regard, Loach cannot really be accused of being didactic, since he really tackles the theme of power as being a source of conflict in every political party. The death of Blanca, who represents the authentic spirit of revolution, is the ultimate political betrayal: she is shown shot in the back. According to Gérald Collas, her death is absurd, because it is shot in slow motion, and this sets the film out of reality. Yet, it would be a shame to consider this scene like this, because it can be interpreted in another way: it is true that the slow motion effect sets the scene apart in the whole narration, but I would rather understand it as a means to signify betrayal at large. It is as if this betrayal stood for all the others, because it is presented as off time. Debating is presented as a key thing in order to achieve the comprehension of past: the scene where the people from the village that has been liberated by David's group start talking about what should be done of the revolution, and whether the village should be collectivised or not, is very interesting in that it really puts people at the centre of fundamental preoccupations: debating is shown as a fertile activity, that enables men

² Gérald Collas, "Land and Freedom. Le passé imparfait", in Blangonnet Catherine(ed), Images Documentaires-Ken Loach, 1997.

to decide of the type of society they want. This process takes time, and the sequence is quite long. But this is meant to show what is really at stakes in this revolution, and in any revolution. The film suggests all the processes required to organise people, in a democratic way. So the realistic effect rather comes from the people who play a part in the scene. It is a little different from Loach's earlier work. In Up The Junction for instance, or in *Cathy Come Home*, in which he concentrated very much on places: Loach alternated shots of people and shots of ruined industrial landscapes, to signify the impact it had on people. In his 1990s films, it tends to be different. Indeed, characters have gained in complexity, and they cannot be reduced to a place, even if it does condition a part of their behaviour. The part given to the spectator is greater as well, because some of the films do not have a definitive end, in that there still are questions or problems unanswered. For instance, in My Name Is Joe, the end is quite open ended: it is up to the spectator to give them a chance, or not, which is very positive. So there has been a growing concern for people facing a type of society, more than a specific place. This is conveyed also by the variety of places in which Loach has made his films since Land and Freedom. Viewers are made aware that whatever country is concerned, the problems of the people are always the same: struggling for more justice and dignity. The criticism of capitalist societies does not appeal to England only (his first movies were very much settled in traditional British urban areas), it is a reality in the whole world. That may be why Loach chose to make films in foreign countries. Anyway, Loach thus implies that the menace of capitalism, and even fascism, is everywhere. As Jean-François Baillon points out,³ the standing fist at the end of Land and Freedom is meaningful on condition that there is still the same kind of menace in contemporary England. In *Hidden Agenda* already, Loach had given hints of a plot organised by the FBI to destabilise labour government and enable the conservatives to win the 1979 General Elections. In Carla's Song, the character of Bradley explains to George how, again, the FBI helped the counter-revolutionists. One of the most important thing in Loach's regard on events is the need to remember things. He tries to make people retrieve collective memories, especially working class memories. In this respect, the character of Kim, David's grand-daughter, conveys the

³ Jean-François Baillon, "Vivre et Survivre dans *Raining Stones* de Ken Loach". Colloque Sercia/IEP "Cinéma anglophone et Politique(s)", Bordeaux, septembre 2000.

link between past and present: she is the one who enables viewers to take possession of Dave's testimony of the Spanish Civil War. Gradually, she makes her grand-father's experience a part of her own culture. This is achieved through the sound track: Blanca's death sequence is followed by a shot showing Kim reading the letters, and the music that had accompanied Blanca's sequence still runs onto the shot of the grand daughter, placing a continuation between the sequences, as if the lessons of Blanca's death had been transmitted. Another interesting thing is the position in which viewers are put towards the film. They really are in the same position as Kim. This way, they are invited to do all the historical journey without being really aware that both narrations (the present embodied by Kim, and the past embodied by Dave) are fictions. In this film, Dave's story is more than a simple fiction; it is history. This is established from the very beginning, when Dave assists to the projection of a documentary on Spain. This projection is in fact a set of compiled archives, but then all the sequences concerning Dave in Spain are considered as such, because for Loach and Allen (who wrote the script), these scenes are the authentic testimony of former fighters of the POUM. Indeed, Jim Allen insists very much on the fact that the script has been written according to different accounts he collected from people he met in pubs: those people had fought for the International Brigades, and they felt quite frustrated because they felt they have been betrayed by the Communist Party when it was over.⁴ Thus, the letters are a device meant to show that history leaves marks and scars, and that it is up to us to notice them. Meanwhile, it is worth mentioning that there is something odd about these letters, especially about the person they were sent to. Loach said that Dave sent them to his girlfriend in Liverpool,⁵ which seems quite doubtful if one considers some of their contents. Indeed, it is quite hard to believe that Dave sent letters to his girlfriend talking about his relationship with Blanca, which is what Loach expects us to believe. This part of the narrative frame is a little problematic, because it challenges the realistic effect Loach wants to initiate.

It is nevertheless true that all Loach's films seek to establish links between past and present, characters' actual lives and their memories, individual knowledge and collective history. The individual awareness Loach wants to initiate in every viewer

⁴ Philippe Pilard, interview with Jim Allen, in Blangonnet, Catherine(ed), *Images Documentaires-Ken Loach*, 1997.

⁵ Graham Fuller, *Loach on Loach*, London, Faber & Faber Limited, 1998.

can lead to the collective action some his characters come to. The transmission of cultural and historical heritage to younger generations seems to be crucial in order to be in control of current and future political issues. Loach's work is a set of working-class cultural testimonies and memories, as well as an accurate account of current occidental economic and social policies.

CONCLUSION

"Most of my generation of British film makers have been influenced by him without doubt; Loach always reminds you that you shouldn't become a film director unless you have something to say."

I think that Alan Parker's statement about Ken Loach is very accurate. We have seen that indeed, Loach has influenced many directors over his career, and not only British ones. It is true that his films always generate debates, even if not as many as Loach himself would like. He has remained thoroughly consistent in his approach of human beings: there is no doubt that he is much influenced by existentialism, which enables him to settle his films in a humanist perspective; it even justifies some of Loach's most activist films, like *Land and Freedom*, because of the importance given to the theme of responsibility. Because of this responsibility, citizenship is a fundamental concept if one wants to understand the spirit in which all his films are rooted.

The link with Aristotle's *Politics* has enabled to make the distinction between a community whose institutions and governors are dedicated to the general good of citizens, and a community in which powers are given to the strongest (or richest),

¹ Alan Parker, in *The South Bank Show*, Meridian TV, 1993.

which resembles very much Hobbes' state of nature, or Darwin's survival of the fittest. This is how Loach sees Thatcherite and post-Thatcherite Britain. This is why he tells stories about working-class people, because they were the ones who mostly suffered from what Loach denounces as "the Thatcherite onslaught". Nevertheless, his films are full of hope, because they feature people who try hard to fight back and evolve, whatever social or economic pressures they have to bear.

The evolution Loach has depicted over his career also concerns men and women's position and roles in society. They are both equal citizens, this is why no particular distinction should be made on behalf of a feminist discourse (unlike what neo-realist Michelangelo Antonioni did in *Blow-up*, in 1966). Loach only films the evolution of both sexes. Yet, it is obvious that the traditional concept of working-class masculinity is challenged, partly because of economic and social changes: it clearly determines the relationships between men and women, because their expectations are not the same. To me, this particular focus adds something else to the narration: Loach's films are not all politics. If they are not all politics, it is also because they mingle individual and collective memories. Thanks to this, Loach reaches a level of authenticity that really moves viewers; thus, the reality he describes is not *ex nihilo*: it is a melting of individual perceptions and historical, social realities. Anyway, what is always at stakes is the ability to distinguish past and present, as well as to draw the lessons of the past to be in control of the present.

² In *The South Bank Show*, Meridian TV, 1993.

APPENDIX 1

Interview with Ken Loach

This interview was made during a phone call from Bordeaux to Ken Loach in London on 17 April 2001 when he was working at the post-production of *The Navigators*, at Parallax Pictures.

I was very interested in the scenes of confrontation between Stevie and Susan in *Riff Raff*, and between Joe and Sarah in *My Name Is Joe*, because you chose to shoot them differently: with a frontal shot for Stevie and Susan, and with a shot/reverse shot for Joe and Sarah. How is it?

Ken Loach: Er...Well, it's different locations, different situations...The first one, the scene in *Riff Raff*, when she comes to the building site...well, the location was...it depends on the location really. I mean, the place where they met, in *Riff Raff*, is quite eloquent. It's a big sort of large, old, wrecked, room, and the place seems to add something to the meeting; whereas the scene in *Joe*, it's in a small room, and I couldn't contain the two in one shot, because you're so close to them... to have them both in one shot would be quite ugly.

I thought there was something under the fact of shooting characters in a neutral way, with a frontal shot...

K.L: It's just what seemed right at the time. I can't rationalize it. Sometimes it seems good to hold characters in a looser frame; sometimes you want the intensity of cutting between them. And also, there's the interaction between the place and the characters, and also, the space you have, because in the scene with Joe and Sarah, it's such a tiny room: I couldn't get the two people in the same shot. It's not to give them equal value; the camera is too close.

You seem to think that place is an important thing, linking the characters where they belong.

K.L: Yes. They have to be as authentic as the place they're in, or the room they're in. Otherwise they become like actors, in somewhere that doesn't belong to them.

You don't like actors, do you?

K.L: Well...No, I like actors. It's just a question of making sense that they become part of the location and not just standing in front of it.

The emotional charge in *Ladybird* or *Carla's Song* is very strong, stronger than in *Raining Stones* or *Fatherland*, even if viewers can empathise as much. I feel, personally, that it's because it's based around women. Do you agree with that?

K.L: Not necessarily. I think *Fatherland* doesn't really work. It's general to the film. I think the emotional charge in something like *Ladybird*, if it works, is strong just because the situation is very strong. I think men and women can have rather equal emotional debts. You can't really generalize in that way.

Do you think that men and women have the same perception of things emotionally?

K.L: Probably not. They may be different but I think they can have equal emotional debts, although their responses may be different. But I think it's very dangerous to generalise, really, about it, because then you'll always find someone who's different, someone who's an exception.

Memories are central in *Ladybird*, *Carla's Song*, or *Land and Freedom*. How do you think it affects people?

K.L:Well...One of the things that is interesting is the connection between people's past and their present; how you can never escape the past, how it is always present in one form or another; in the way people are prisoners of the past, always, in some form or another; whether you react against it, or try to forget it, or accept it, it's still implicit in everything, in every major things you do. So that connection between individuals at large builds up a whole nation, a whole state. The interaction between the present and the past is always interesting, and fascinating to try to deal with.

What about your next film?

K.L:Well, we're just finishing off, and it's about the railways. It's due on release in the autumn, maybe later, it's out of my hands. And it's called *The Navigators*. It's only a little film; we did it very quickly!

APPENDIX 2

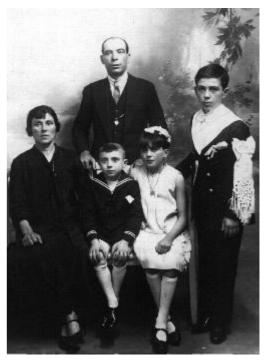
Page disponible sur : http://perso.wanadoo.fr/paul.carpita/censure-rdg.htm

Le rendez-vous des quais : Trente-cinq ans d'oubli ...

A Marseille, dans un de ces quartiers populeux qui descendent en ruelles étroites et colorées, depuis la butte des Acoules, jusqu'au Vieux-Port, un petit garçon vient de naître. On l'appelle *Pèïou*, ce qui signifie, en provençal : "petit poisson". Il a un grand frère et une sœur. Ce "petit poisson", c'est moi!...

Nous sommes pauvres, il est vrai. Mais l'immense amour dont nous entourent nos parents, compense bien des manques.

Mon père est docker, ma mère poissonnière. C'est dire à quel point, la mer, les bateaux, les palanquées tournoyant sur les docks et jusqu'aux cris des mouettes, vont faire partie de ma vie.



J'en ai fait des tours et des tours dans ce Vieux-Marseille des années 30! ... Je me revois, bouillonnant de vie, m'élançant, LIBRE, dans la rue, avec la marmaille dépenaillée et bruyante, à la recherche d'émotions fortes ! Ecoles buissonnières, enrichissantes, sur le Port. Traversées clandestine du plan d'eau, accroché sous la nacelle du Pont-Transbordeur. Ou, encore, cette escalade démente du dôme de la cathédrale, simplement agrippé au câble du paratonnerre!...

Lorsque j'évoque ces souvenirs, mon cœur se serre. C'est comme un ineffable mélange d'âcres odeurs d'iode, de goudron et de cordages qui me prend à la gorge.

Je pense à mes parents. Une image me revient sans cesse à la mémoire :

j'ai six ans. On vient faire ma toilette, dans la cuisine, près de la cuisinière à charbon, à la lueur de la lampe à pétrole. Je ne quitte pas des yeux ma maman. Je la vois vider dans une assiette d'un geste las, la gamelle de mon papa revenu, encore une fois sans travail, du centre d'embauche. Le silence est pesant. Moi, je regarde, avec mes yeux d'enfant.

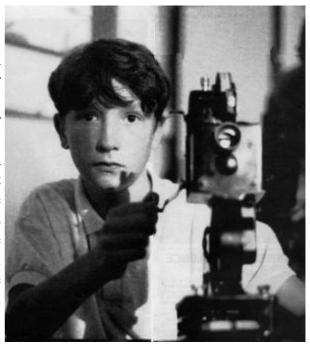
Je grave, à jamais, dans mon cœur, ce geste de toute une vie humiliée. Cette image, je la restituerai intacte, bien des années plus tard, dans *Le rendez-vous des quais*.





J'ai toujours été passionné d'images et de récits. A l'âge de sept ans, déjà, en agençant, astucieusement, dans une boîte à chaussures, un jeu de miroirs, une lampe de poche et une loupe, je fabrique de toutes pièces une lanterne magique! Les enfants du quartier s'entassent dans notre chambre obscure, pour assister au spectacle. Là, tout à mon aise, je raconte... J'invente les histoires extraordinaires de petits bonshommes que je viens de dessiner sur des papiers translucides.

Ma rencontre avec l'image animée, a lieu un an plus tard, à l'école communale de la rue du Poirier. Notre instituteur, Monsieur Forel, un saint-homme, amène un beau jour, en classe, son appareil "Pathé-Baby" pour nous projeter l'un de ses films d'amateur 9,5 m/m. C'est moi qui suis chargé de tourner la manivelle. Alors que tous les regards sont rivés à l'écran, pour suivre les exploits de bébé, je ne peux, moi, quitter des yeux ces petites images, toutes pareilles, en file indienne, qui s'animent mystérieusement, en se superposant par saccades, avant d'être avalées par la griffe du mécanisme. Jesuis fasciné.



Il faudra cependant attendre ma réussite au Certificat d'Etudes, pour que se réalise mon véritable rendez-vous d'Amour avec le cinéma. Connaissant cette passion qui me dévore, mes parents se saignent aux quatre veines pour m'offrir un superbe projecteur pour enfants. On vient juste d'installer l'électricité dans tout l'immeuble.

La puissante lampe pourra être alimentée et donner une image lumineuse. Le film livré avec l'appareil et monté en boucle, représente un dauphin qui renvoie, d'un coup de tête, le ballon lancé par un enfant. Je passe des heures à accélérer ou ralentir le mouvement, figer l'image, inverser le sens de la marche. C'est merveilleux.

Ma mère s'inquiète bien un peu, devant cette grosse lampe qui doit sucer beaucoup de courant. Mais elle me laisse faire. "Je ne peux pas l'empêcher, il en aurait des convulsions mais Bonne-mère, ce pitchoun, il a le cinéma dans le sang "

Je reste là, enfermé dans la chambre obscure, envoûté. Je m'enivre de ce pouvoir magique dont je dispose, soudain, d'intervenir sur la vie des êtres s'animant, par moi, à l'écran.

C'est prodigieux.

Les années passent... Puis, c'est la guerre, la défaite, l'occupation, la résistance que je rejoins dans les F.F.I des rangs .A la Libération, mon frère, devenu mon tuteur après la disparition mes de parents, m'achète une caméra 16 m/m. Il tient à réaliser ainsi un des vœux les plus chers de notre mère.

Avec quelques amis, militants de gauche, issus, comme moi, de la résistance, je fonde le groupe CINEPAX. C'est ainsi que nous réalisons de nombreux reportages sur les sujets les plus divers, tels : la reconstruction de la ville (Equipes de choc...) - la lutte pour la paix (Nous voulons vivre - Les messagers du ciel...) - Les enfants des quartiers pauvres (Pour que nos joues soient roses).



l'instauration de la Guerre froide, deviennent nos reportages CONTREACTUALITES, engagées, offensives. Au début des années 50, l'acquisition, par notre groupe de deux caméras 35 m/m, une BELL et HOWEL à ressort, et une ARRIFLEX électrique, va réveiller en moi ce besoin irrésistible de création, d'expression par l'image. A cette époque, Marseille est en proie à de vives tensions sociales. Notre pays s'enlise, en Indochine, dans une guerre coloniale sans issue. Des manifestations pacifistes, très durement réprimées, éclatent un peu partout dans le pays. L'arrivée du "Pasteur", en rade de Marseille, en provenance d'Indochine, avec sa cargaison, de cercueils et de blessés, bouleverse les dockers, qui, spontanément, refusent d'embarquer tout matériel de guerre. Les marins ne tardent pas à se joindre au mouvement. Les forces de l'ordre investissent alors le Port, totalement paralysé par la grève générale.

C'est dans ce contexte explosif, et pour témoigner de notre époque - puisque le cinéma français demeure désespérément muet sur ces événements - que nous nous lançons dans cette folle aventure de la réalisation, loin de Paris, d'un long métrage 35 m/m de fiction. Nous plantons notre caméra au cœur même de la vie quotidienne des gens, dans les quartiers déshérités, sur le Port, parmi les dockers en colère. J'ai bien, en tête, une fiction, une histoire à raconter, des personnages à créer, mais j'éprouve un besoin impératif de mêler inextricablement FICTION et REALITE. Faire en sorte que ma fiction se nourrisse de la réalité brûlante que nous sommes en train de vivre. Pour ce faire, je me vois contraint de bousculer quelque peu les normes narratives en vigueur. Caméra légère, souvent à l'épaule, (matériel humain). décors naturels et comédiens non professionnels, dont certains jouent leur propre rôle. Scénario modifié au rythme de la vie réelle...





Enthousiasmés par notre expérience, techniciens de haut-niveau nous prêtent leurs concours, d'une manière déterminante. En premier lieu, Marcel Royne, l'ingénieur du son de Marcel Pagnol et de Jean Vigo (L'Atalante) qui nous aide à post-synchroniser tout notre film, tourné en prises de vues muettes. C'est ensuite, Suzanne de Troye, monteuse attitrée de Pagnol et Suzanne Sanberg, spécialiste du doublage. Nous avons un urgent besoin d'une telle spécialiste, car de nombreuses scènes sont tournées sous couvert d'un film publicitaire sur la brandade de morue. A la prise de vue, les interprètes parlent effectivement de morue, mais à la post-synchro, on place le texte relatif à la grève, à l'action pour la paix. Notre merveilleux camarade, Jean Wiener, venu à Marseille avec son épouse, Suzanne de Troye, décide de composer une musique originale pour notre film. Une musique qu'il nous offre, en réglant lui-même les frais d'auditorium et les rémunérations des musiciens.

Après plus d'un an de tournage dans des conditions très difficiles, notre film est enfin terminé.

Première representation publique dans un grand cinéma de la Canebière. Le public est des plus chaleureux. Il n'est pas habitué à voir évoluer sur l'écran des hommes et des femmes qui leur ressemblent comme des fréres, avec leur soucis quotidiens, leurs joies et leurs peines. Nous sommes émus, et fiers. Nous décidons d'organiser, dans un cinéma des Quartiers-Nord, une séance spéciale réservée aux dockers et à leur famille et à tous ceux qui nous ont aidés à mener à bien cette extraordinaire entreprise. La fête tourne court. Des camions de CRS prennent position devant l'entrée du cinéma. Accompagnées d'un hussier de justice et d'un commissaire de police, les forces de l'ordre font irruption dans la salle archi-comble. Les bobines sont aussitôt saisies : Le Rendez-vous des quais vient, à Paris d'être totalement interdit par la censure.



Je suis arrêté et conduit au commisariat central. Là, on me signifie que mon film va être détruit, parce que tourné sans autorisation dans une enceinte portuaire "top

secret"... Le rendez-vous des quais va disparaître pendant trente-cinq ans.



Il était mon premier film.

Sa saisie humiliante, dans l'indifférence totale des gens de cinéma, de la profession, de la critique, a ouvert en moi une plaie profonde qui a été longue à se cicatriser.

Paul Carpita.

KEN LOACH' S FILMOGRAPHY

Every movie is directed by Ken Loach, unless stated otherwise.

1/ Television

Catherine

1964 30 minutes Black and white BBC1 BBC production for Teletales series.

producer: James Mac Taggart

script: Roger Smith

production Designer: Robert Fuest

music: Dennis Wilson

Z Cars

1964 50 minutes each Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production

"Profit by Their Example": producer David E. Rose script John Hopkins production designer Frederick Knapman cameraman David Prosser editor Christopher La Fontaine

"A Straigth Deal": producer David E. Rose script Robert Barr production designer Stanley Morris cameraman David Prosser editor Christopher La Fontaine

"The Whole Truth" producer David E. Rose, Ken loach script Robert Barr production designer Donald Brewer

Diary of a Young Man

1964 45 minutes each Black and white BBC

BBC Television production

"Survival", "Marriage", "Life, or a girl called Fred": producer James Mac Taggart script Troy Kennedy Martin, John McGrarth story editor Roger Smith production designer John Cooper, Peter Seddon cameraman John McGlashan editor Christopher La Fontaine music Stanley Myers

Tap on the Shoulder

1965 70 minutes Black and white BBC1

producer: James MacTaggart script: James O'Connor story editor: Roger Smith

production designer: Eileen Diss

cameramen: John MacGlashan, Ken Westbury

editor: Geoffrey Botteril music: Stanley Myers

Wear a Very Big Hat

1965 75 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

producer: James MacTaggart

script: Eric Coltart

story editor: Roger Smith

production designer: Peter Kindred

cameraman: Stanley Speel

editor: Norman Carr music: Stanley Myers

Three Clear Sundays

1965 75 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

producer: James MacTaggart

script: James O'Connor story editor: Roger Smith editor: Pam Bosworth

lyrics: Nemone Lethbridge cameraman: Tony Imi

Up the Junction

1965 72 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

producer: James Mac Taggart

script: Nell Dunn

story editor: Tony Garnett cameraman: Tony Imi

production designer: Eileen Diss

editor: Roy Watts

title music: Paul Jones, arrange by Mike Vickers

main cast: Carol White, Geraldine Sherman, Vickery Turner, Tony Selby, Michael

Standing, Ray Barron, Rita Webb, Hilda Barry

The End of Arthur's Marriage

1965 70 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

producer: James MacTaggart

script: Christopher Logue, Stanley Myers production designer: Robert Macgowan

music: Stanley Myers

title music: Paul Jones, arranged by Mike Vickers

The Coming Out Party

1965 65 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

Producer: Tony Garnett

Script: James O'Connor

Production designer: Michael Wield

Music: Stanley Myers

Title music: Paul Jones, arranged by Mike Vickers

Lyrics: Nemone Lethbridge

Cathy Come Home

1966 75 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

Producer: Tony Garnett

Script: Jeremy Sandford, Ken Loach Production designer: Sally Hulke

Cameraman: Tony Imi Editor: Roy Watts

Sound: Malcolm Campbell

Music: Paul Jones

Main cast: Carol White, Ray Brooks, Wally Patch, Winifred Dennis, Adrienne Framen

Emmetr Hennessy, Ronald Pember

In Two Minds

1967 75 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

Producer: Tony Garnett Script: David Mercer

Production designer: John Hurst

Cameraman: Tony Imi Editor: Roy Watts

Main cast: Anna Cropper, Brian Phelan, George A. Cooper, Adrienne Frame, Helen

Booth

The Golden Vision

1968 75 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

Producer: Tony Garnett

Script: Neville Smith, Gordon Honeycombe Production designer: Malcolm Middleton

The Big Flame

1969 85 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the Wednesday Play series

Producer: Tony Garnett

Script: Jim Allen

Production designer: Geoff Patterson

Cameraman: John McGlashan

Editor: Roy Watts

In Black and White

1969 50 minutes colour not transmitted

Save The Children Fund production by Kestrel for LWT

Producer: Tony Garnett Script: Ken Loach Narrator: Alan Dobbie

The Rank and File

1971 75 minutes Black and white BBC1

BBC Television production for the *Play for Today* series

Producer: Graeme McDonald

Script: Jim Allen

Script editor: Ann Scott

Production designer: Roger Andrews

Cameraman: Charles Stewart

Editor: Roy Watts

Sound: Eoin McCann, Mike Billings

After a Lifetime

1971 75 minutes colour ITV

Kestrel Films production for LWT

Producer: Tony Garnett Script: Neville Smith

Production designer: Andrew Drummond

Cameraman: Chris Menges

Editor: Ray Helm Music: John Cameron

A Misfortune

1973 38 minutes colour BBC2

script: Ken Loach

Days of Hope

1975 Four parts: 95 minutes, 100 minutes, 80 minutes, 135 minutes colour BBC1

BBC Television production, in association with Polytel

Producer: Tony Garnett

Script: Jim Allen

Production designer: Martin Johnson

Cameramen: Tony Pierce-Roberts, John Else

Editor: Roger Walsh

The Price of Coal

1977 Two parts: 75 minutes, 95 minutes colour BBC1 BBC Television production for the *Play for Today* series

Producer: Tony Garnett Script: Barry Hines

Production designer: Martin Collins

Photography: Brian Tufano Editor: Roger Waugh

Sound: Andrew Boulton

A Question of Leadership

1981 50 minutes colour ATV(postponed from 1980)

ATV network production Producer: Ken Loach Editor: Roger James

Cameramen: Chris Menges, John Davey

Sound: Andrew Boulton

The Gamekeeper

1980 84 minutes colour ITV

ATV Network production, based on a novel by Barry Hines

Script: Barry Hines

Production designer: Martin Johnson

Cameramen: Chris Menges, Charles Stewart

Editor: Roger James

Sound: Andrew Boulton, Peter Rann

Main cast: Phil Askham, Rita May, Andrew Grubb, Peter Steels, Michael Hinchcliffe

Auditions

1980 60 minutes Black and white ITV

ATV Network production Producer: Ken Loach

Cameraman: Chris Menges Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Bob Bentley

The Red and the Blue

1983 90 minutes colour Channel 4 Central Television production

Producer: Roger James Cameraman: Chris Menges Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Judy Freeman

Questions of Leadership

1983 Four episodes: 90 minutes each colour not transmitted

Central Television production Executive producer: Roger James

Producer: Ken Loach

Cameraman: James Dibling Editor: Jonathan Morris

Which Side Are You On?

1985 colour Channel 4 not transmitted LWT production for the *South Bank Show*

Executive producer: Melvyn Bragg

Producer: Ken Loach

Cameramen: Chris Menges, Ken Morse, James Dibling

Editor: Jonathan Morris

Sound: Judy Freeman, Terry Hardy

We Should Have Won: The end of the battle, but not of the war

1985 27minutes colour Channel 4

Diverse production for *Diverse Reports* series

Producer: Alex Graham Director: Philip Clark Editor: Ken Loach

Researcher: Roy Ackerman

Time to Go

1989 15 minutes colour BBC2

BBC Television Community Programmes Unit production for Split Screen series

Producer: Gavin Dutton

The View from The Woodpile

1989 50 minutes colour Channel 4

Producer: Ken Loach

Cameramen: Barry Ackroyd, Robin Probyn

Sound: Steve Philips, Derrick Thomson, Ray Bragg

The Arthur Legend

1991 40 minutes colour Channel 4 Clark Productionq for Channel 4 Producer: Lorraine Heggessey

Cameramen: Barry Ackroyd, Stephen Sanden

Editor: Jonathan Morris

The Flickering Flame: A Story of Contemporary Morality

1996 50 minutes colour BBC2

UK/France; Parallax Pictures/AMIP/BBC/La Sept ARTE Executive producer: Rebecca O'Brien, Xavier Carniaux

Assistant producer: Claire Powell

Production manager: Georgina Isherwood Cameramen: Roger Chapman, Barry Ackroyd

Editor: Tony Pound

Sound: David Keene, Chris Tussler

Music: George Fenton

Another City

1998 26 minutes colour HTV Parallax Pictures production Producer: Rebecca O'Brien

Cameramen: Steven Sanden, Nick Jardine Editors: Jonathan Morris, Anthony Morris

Sound: Fraser Barber, Steve Haynes

Research: Julie Faulkner

2/ FEATURE FILMS

Poor Cow

1967 101 minutes colour Vic Films

Producer: Joseph Janni

Script: Ken Loach, Nell Dunn

Production designer: Bernard Sharron

Cinematography: Brian Probyn

Editor: Roy Watts

Sound: Kevin Sutton, Gerry Humphreys

Music: Donovan

Music director: John Cameron

Main cast: Carol White, Terence Stamp, John Bindon, Kate Williams, Queenie Watts,

Geraldine Sherman

Kes

1969 113 minutes colour Kestrel Films/Woodfall Films based on the novel *A Kestrel for a Knave* by Barry Hines

Producer: Tony Garnett

Script: Ken Loach, Barry Hines, Tony Garnett

Production designer: William McCrow

Cinematography: Chris Menges

Editor: Roy Watts

Sound: Peter Pierce, Tony Jackson

Music: John Cameron

Main cast: David Bradley, Lynne Perrie, Freddie Fletcher, Colin Welland, Brian

Glover, Bob Bowes

Talk About Work

1971 15 minutes Black and white Ronald H. Riley Associates for the Central Office of Information and the Central Youth Employment in association with the Department of Employment- rejected by Central Office and never shown

Producer: Michael Barden

Script: Ken Loach

Cinematography: Chris Menges

Editor: Alan Price Sound: Fred Sharp

Family Life

1971 108 minutes Colour Kestrel Films/Anglo EMI, based on the TV play In Two

Minds by David Mercer

Executive producer: Bobby Blues

Producer: Tony Garnett

Associate producer: Irving Teitelbaum

Script: David Mercer

Production designer: William McCrow Cinematography: Charles Stewart

Editor: Roy Watts

Sound: Peter Elliot, Frederick Sharp, Gerry Humphries

Music: Marc Williamson

Main cast: Sandy Ratcliff, Bill Dean, Grace Cave, Malcolm Tierney, Hilary Martyn,

Michael Riddall

Black Jack

1979 110 minutes Colour Kestrel Films in association with the National Film Finance

Corporation, based on the novel by Leon Garfield

Executive producer: Bobby Blues

Producer: Tony Garnett Script: Ken Loach

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Chris Menges

Editor: William Shapter Sound: Andrew Boulton

Music: Bob Pegg

Main cast: Stephen Hirst, Louise Cooper, Jean Franval, Phil Askham, Pat Willis, John

Young, William Moore

Looks and Smiles

1981 104 minutes Black and white Black Lions Films/Kestrel Films/MK2 Productions

for Central Television

Producer: Irving Teitelbaum

Associate producer: Raymond Day

Script: Barry Hines

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Chris Menges

Editor: Steve Singleton Sound: Andrew Boulton

Music: Marc Wilkinson, Richard and the Taxmen

Main cast: Graham Green, Carolyn Nicholson, Tony Pitts, Roy Haywood, Phil Askam,

Tracey Goodlad

Fatherland

1986 110 minutes Colour UK/Frane/West Germany; Kestrel II Films/Films

Four/International/MK2/ZDF/Clasart Film Executive producer: Irving Teitelbaum

Producer: Raymond Day

Associate producers: Ingrid Windisch, Catherine Lapoujade

Script: Trevor Griffiths

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Chris Menges Editor: Jonathan Morris

Sound: Karl Laabs, Kevin Brazier Music: Béla Bartok, Benjamin Britter

Main cast: Gerulf Pannach, Fabienne Babe, Cristine Rose, Sigfrit Steiner

Hidden Agenda

1990 108 minutes Colour Initial Film and TV Productions in association with Hemdale

Executive producers: John Daly, Derek Gibson

Producer: Eric Fellner Script: Jim Allen

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Clive Tuckner

Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Simon Okin Music: Stewart Copeland

Main cast: Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, Brad Dourif, Mai Zetterling, Maurice

Roëves, Robert Patterson, Bernard Bloch

Riff-Raff

1991 95 minutes Colour Parallax Pictures for Channel 4

Producer: Sally Hibbin Script: Bill Jesse

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Barry Ackroyd

Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Bob Withey Music: Stewart Copeland

Main cast: Robert Carlyle, Emer McCourt, Jimmy Coleman, George Moss, Ricky

Tomlinson, David Finch, Richard Belgrave, Ade Sapara, Derek Young

Raining Stones

1993 91 minutes Colour Parallax Pictures for Channel 4

Producer: Sally Hibbin Script: Jim Allen

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Barry Ackroyd

Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Ray Beckett Music: Stewart Copeland

Main cast: Bruce Jones, Julie Brown, Gemma Phoenix, Ricky Tomlinson, Tom

Hickey, Mike Fallon

Ladybird, Ladybird

1994 101 minutes Colour Parallax Pictures for Film Four International

Producer: Sally Hibbin Script: Rona Munro

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Barry Ackroyd Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Ray Beckett

Music: George Fenton, Mauricio Venegas

Main cast: Chrissy Rock, Vladimir Vega, Sandie Lavelle, Mauricio Venegas, Ray

Winstone

A Contemporary Case for Common Ownership

1995 22 minutes Colour Defend Clause Four Campaign

Land and Freedom

1995 110 minutes Colour UK/Spain/Germany; Parallax Pictures/Messidor Films/Road

Movies Dritte Produktionen

Executive producer: Sally Hibbin, Gerardo Herrero, Ulrich Felsberg

Producer: Rebecca O'Brien

Associate producer: Marta Esteban

Script: Jim Allen

Script editor: Roger Smith

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Barry Ackroyd

Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Ray Beckett Music: George Fenton

Main cast: Ian Hart, Rosana Pastor, Iciar Bollain, Tom Gilroy, Marc Martinez,

Frederic Pierrot

Carla's Song

1996 125 minutes Colour UK/Germany/Spain; Parallax Pictures/ Channel Four

Films/Road Movies Dritte Produktionen/Tornasol Films SA

Producer: Sally Hibbin

Co-producers: Ulrich Felsberg, Gerardo Herrero

Script: Paul Laverty

Production designer: Martin Johnson

Art director: Llorenc Miquel Cinematography: Barry Ackroyd

Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Ray Beckett Music: George Fenton

Main cast: Robert Carlyle, Oyanka Cabezas, Scott Glenn, Subash Sing Pall, Stewart

Preston, Gary Lewis

My Name Is Joe

1998 105 minutes Colour UK/Germany/Spain/France; Parallax Pictures/ Channel Four

Films/Road Films/ Vierte Produktionen/Tornasol Films S.A./La Sept ARTE

Executive producer: Ulrich Felsberg

Producer: Rebecca O'Brien

Script: Paul Laverty

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Barry Ackroyd

Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Ray Beckett Music: George Fenton

Main cast: Peter Mullan, Louise Goodall, Gary Lewis, Lorraine McIntosh, David

McKay, Anne Marie Kennedy.

Bread and Roses

2000 110 minutes Colour UK/Germany/Spain/France; Parallax Pictures/Road Movies Filmprodktionen/Tornasol Films/Alta Films, in association with Film Four/ La Sept ARTF

Executive producer: Ulrich Felsberg

Producer: Rebecca O'Brien

Script: Paul Laverty

Production designer: Martin Johnson Cinematography: Barry Ackroyd

Editor: Jonathan Morris Sound: Ray Beckett Music: George Fenton

Main cast: Pilar Padilla, Adrian Broody, Elpidia Carillo, George Lopez, Alonso

Chavez.

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