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## Exploring power and trust in documentary: A study of Tom Zubrycki's *Molly and Mobarak*

### ABSTRACT

*Power represents a problem for documentary, raising questions about the politics and ethics of representation. In this article the notion of power in documentary is explored. The influence of domination as a model for power relations within documentary is challenged and a Foucauldian notion of power relationships suggested as an alternative way of conceptualising the documentary-maker participant relationship. Drawing on empirical research with documentary maker Tom Zubrycki and participant Lyn Rule, this article brings to light the complexities of power and the importance of trust in the context of documentary.*

### KEYWORDS

power  
trust  
documentary  
ethics  
Foucault  
Zubrycki

With tears streaming down her face, a woman clasps the hand of a young man and speaks of the impossibility of his love for her daughter. Although they are sitting close to each other they are clearly a world apart. He does not seem to understand; he says that he comes everyday and does everything he can to win her daughter's love, but it is not enough. He expresses a desire to become a part of her family and to find a home in this new land. Watching this scene closely it is possible to see the woman glance briefly but definitely at the camera as she

wipes the tears from her face. It lasts only a moment, a few frames, but in that moment she reaches out beyond the documentary film connecting with both the documentary-maker and audience. Who is she looking at? What does her glance mean? Is she acknowledging or protesting the presence of the camera?

The scene described is from the documentary *Molly and Mobarak* (Tom Zubrycki 2003). The woman is Lyn Rule and the young man, Mobarak Tahiri, is a refugee from Afghanistan. Mobarak has travelled to the small town of Young in far Western New South Wales searching for work and somewhere to belong. Watching this highly emotional scene I have sometimes felt like an intruder and wondered about the kind of relationship that can withstand the recording and exhibition of such a raw moment. How is the documentary-maker relating to the participant? How was access negotiated? And what do those glances to camera really mean?

Typically, the documentary film itself serves as the site of analysis of the documentary-maker participant relationship. Since the truth of the documentary is no longer guaranteed, the documentary-maker's gaze must be interrogated in order to draw attention to the process by which the social actor is transformed into the documentary subject. The concern of such analysis is to interrogate the power of representation. Who is represented in the documentary, who represents them and with what effect? While these questions are significant and have yielded a valuable body of literature, there are questions about power and documentary yet to be addressed.

One consequence of this focus on the documentary film is that the participant very rarely has a space from which to speak about their involvement in the documentary. While documentary-makers frequently speak about documentary practice (Rosenthal 1980; Stubbs 2002), with the exception of a few regret stories the participant remains silent. In this article I present the results of an empirical study of the documentary-maker participant relationship. Using narrative research methods I have explored the experiences of Tom Zubrycki and Lyn Rule in the making of *Molly and Mobarak*. The complexity of this relationship calls for a re-conceptualisation of power in documentary. It also points to the importance of trust and reveals how trust is established and maintained in this context.

### THE 'PROBLEM' OF POWER

When we think about power in relation to documentary we most often confront it as a problem. Focusing on the representation of documentary participants, the relationship between documentary maker and participant is critiqued as one in which power resides entirely with the former. The powerlessness of the participant constitutes a political problem since what is stake is the 'status, meaning, interpretation, and perhaps even control of history and its narratives' (Rabinowitz 1994: 7) and also an ethical problem since informed consent is undermined (Winston 2000: 146). The documentary-maker's *power over* the participant constitutes a core problem for documentary although the precise nature of power in this relationship has yet to be considered.

It is possible to trace the problem of power through key works in documentary history and theory. Writing about the development and legacy of the Griersonian documentary, Brian Winston (1988; 1995) charts the emergence of a relationship of exploitation between the documentary-maker/exploiter and the participant/exploited. The Griersonian documentary-maker, Winston argues, had very few qualms about putting the aggie before all else, a fact that

he demonstrates with reference to Flaherty's coercion of the Aran fishermen and painful tattooing of Ta'avale for the documentary *Moana*. Increasingly, the Griersonian documentary-maker sought out social victims for their films. The poor, homeless and unemployed were ultimately subjected to the creative treatment of the Griersonian documentarist. The exploitation, or more kindly the exposure, of such suffering is, for Winston, a lasting legacy of the Griersonian era (Winston 1995: 45).

Technological developments fuelled the exploitative fire as documentary-makers trained their observational cameras on the powerless at their most vulnerable. Pryluck (2005) catalogues the many ways in which documentary makers have taken advantage of participants. The practices of documentary production inevitably involve 'conning and manipulation', video equipment is intimidating and the participants themselves are almost never allowed any role in the creative process. In addition, direct cinema filmmakers would search for those moments in which the participant is at his or her most vulnerable, stripped of all defences. Even today, power inequality 'remains the besetting ethical problem of the documentarist/participant relationship even in the most casual, normal and undeviant of circumstances' (Winston 2000: 147). While it is possible for the participant to manipulate the documentary-maker, it is the latter who ultimately wields the enormous power of the media.

Bill Nichols (1991) similarly draws attention to power relations between documentary-maker and participant. For Nichols power is made manifest in the documentary image in traces of the relationship between participant and documentary-maker. The invisibility of the documentary-maker constitutes, for Nichols, evidence of his or her power over the participant. It is this representational distance that transforms the participant into the kind of documentary victim identified by Winston. The participant is victimised, according to Nichols, when they are used to further the documentary-maker's argument and placed into a *mise-en-scene* that is not their own. It is a form of representation that, according to Nichols (1991: 91), has consequences for the participant: 'When both filmmaker and social actor coexist within the historical world but only one has the authority to represent it, the other, who serves as subject of the film, experiences a displacement'. The participant who stands silent but revealed symbolises the power of the documentary-maker.

Ethical documentary practice therefore involves, for both Nichols and Winston, overcoming the power imbalance at the heart of documentary. Winston (2000: 162), for example, calls for a 'renegotiation of the traditional balance of power between filmmaker and participant'. The documentary-maker, he suggests, must give up their controlling position and take the stance of advocate or enabler. Although he admits, almost in the same breath, that such a change is unlikely in a media industry that is set up to exploit the 'powerless'.

If we examine more closely the concept of power assumed by Nichols and Winston we begin to draw attention to its limits. What is meant by power in documentary is, almost exclusively, the documentary-maker's ability to manipulate and control the participant. Power is possessed by the documentary-maker, by virtue of their access to the media, and is used to control the participant through the act of representation. Power is a negative force, a form of domination; it prevents, restrains and commands the participant. That power should be imagined in this way is understandable since, as Litke (1997: 6) demonstrates, the idea of 'power as domination' has been central in the philosophical literature for more than three hundred years.

In recent years, however, alternative ways of thinking about power have emerged. Questioning notions of power in a range of contexts scholars like Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault have suggested that thinking about power in terms of domination actually serves to obscure complex power relationships (Allen 2002). The more we focus on domination, the more we fail to see the way in which power actually operates in the context of relationships (Presbey 1997). In focusing exclusively on the documentary-maker's exploitation of the participant do we conceal the complex power relationships that make documentary possible?

### RE-VIEWING POWER IN THE DOCUMENTARY RELATIONSHIP

Documentary-maker Tom Zubrycki arrived in Young, South-Western New South Wales in 2002 to make a documentary about a group of Afghan refugees who had recently arrived in the town. Zubrycki first met Lyn Rule at a local pub where she was organising a 'poetry in the pub' event. Their relationship developed over time to the point where Zubrycki would stay with Lyn and her family whenever he came to Young to film. In 2008 I conducted lengthy interviews with Lyn Rule and Tom Zubrycki in order to produce 'thick' descriptions (Geertz 1973) that focus on the meaning of documentary production. Interview transcripts were then analysed as narratives in consultation with Zubrycki and Rule (Nash 2009). Close reading of Rule's and Zubrycki's narratives about the making of *Molly and Mobarak* reveals a trusting but contested relationship. Critically, both Zubrycki and Rule are active agents within the relationship. Each has a vision for the documentary and both seek to influence the project. Far from a simple tale of domination their stories draw attention to the web of power relations that exists between documentary-maker and participant.

Throughout her narrative, Lyn Rule emphasises her active agency in the documentary project and in her relationship with Zubrycki. She does not refer to feeling powerless or exploited but focuses on her control over the documentary project and Zubrycki. Describing her early meeting with Zubrycki, Rule says (Nash 2009: 163) that she would 'talk to him and make him talk back to me and he'd then have to answer my questions and tell me about himself and so that's how it was and I actually made an effort to get to know him'. Even in this short description, Rule subverts the traditional questioner-questioned relationship between documentary-maker and participant. Rule is in control; she is asking the questions and demanding a response.

Rule often referred to her ability to control Zubrycki and his camera. When speaking about her decision to participate in the project, Rule said (Nash 2009: 165) that she and Molly and 'spoken about it and said that if we were going to go ahead with it, I had said that I can control that [the filming] that's nothing if it's going to do some good'. Here Rule demonstrates an awareness that the documentary project may need to be controlled as well as a confidence in her ability to control it. On a practical level Rule described (Nash 2009: 165) the techniques that she and Molly used to prevent Zubrycki from filming.

Rule: I think I had more control over what he filmed actually

Interviewer: Can you describe that?

Rule: When Thomas would come out with his camera he'd have it or have it hidden behind the door. He'd always have it hidden in a sneaky little spot where he could pick it up and start filming [...] Once he'd start to get things and we didn't want him to we had little ways of stopping him. Because there are moments of privacy that you just [...] when you've just had enough and you think [...] you're not going to get this whatever you do. You're not going to get it so go away.

Rule then speaks about how she and Molly would put on music, swear or 'threaten to take my clothes off [...] was a good one. He'd stop filming then.' Throughout her description of the filming process Rule continues to emphasise her agency and control over the project.

Rule's narrative also reveals that she had a clear motive for her participation in the documentary. She wanted to make a positive contribution to the refugee debate and felt that focusing on the experiences of the refugees, humanising them through documentary, would be significant. After seeing Zubrycki's earlier documentaries, a turning point in her narrative, Rule describes him as the kind of documentary-maker who shared her values and had the ability to make a documentary that would have a positive impact. Rule feels a sense of ownership over the project; from her perspective it is a collaborative project albeit one in which she is conscious of the need to retain control over her contribution.

However Rule's narrative is complicated by moments where she seems to lose control. Such moments are signalled by Rule's use of key evaluative phrases to describe Zubrycki's behaviour. She describes him as 'determined' or 'tenacious', and says (Nash 2009: 170) that 'you can't shake him off if he decides to be there'. Sometimes (Nash 2009: 175) she suggests that he must feel 'guilty' because, 'he can't hide his betrayal can he?' In attributing negative feelings, particularly guilt, to Zubrycki Rule suggests that some trespass has occurred, a form of documentary 'theft'.

The kitchen scene described earlier is one in which Rule identifies a loss of control. She refers to her glances to camera, suggesting that they represent Zubrycki's intrusion into a private moment. Rule describes (Nash 2009: 173) how Zubrycki, who was staying in the house at the time, came across the discussion with Mobarak and began filming.

Rule: I think Tom just came upon it and filmed it and I think I didn't want to break what I had with Mobarak [...] Because you do have this relationship happening, deep emotional feelings and to break it I would have had to deal with Tom and he probably knew that [...] he probably takes advantage of those situations as a filmmaker, I'm sure he does. He'd be full of guilt.

Interviewer: Do you think so?

Rule: Oh yes, he's racked with guilt, yes as a human being I think he is.

But the play of control and lack of control is complex because, as Rule acknowledges (Nash 2009: 172), 'you can't be intrusive without their [the participant's] permission and then they'll hate you and you'll feel bad about yourself. And he [Zubrycki] must feel bad, I'm sure he feels bad'. Rule acknowledges that she had actively encouraged Zubrycki to stay in her home and that, in doing so, she had given him greater access to intimate moments and to the relationship between Molly and Mobarak. From Rule's perspective the documentary

project is contested. She works to retain control but acknowledges that moments in which control is lost are inevitable.

It is important to stress that Rule and Zubrycki have a close and ongoing relationship and that her narrative of participation is far from a story of documentary regret. Even her evaluative phrases and her attribution of guilt to Zubrycki should not be interpreted as a condemnation of him. While describing her loss of control, Rule is conscious of the fact that Zubrycki, as filmmaker, *must* intrude on the lives of his participants. Rule is actually very sympathetic to this, saying at one point (Nash 2009: 287) that 'I think he's naughty, but that's because he's a filmmaker'. In spite of this, Zubrycki's intrusions are described in Rule's narrative as crossing some kind of complex moral boundary, thus accounting for her attribution of guilt.

Zubrycki's experience of the relationship with Rule also differs significantly from the traditional account of the empowered documentary-maker. In his narrative about the making of *Molly and Mobarak* he highlights the uncertainty and risk inherent in documentary making. Particularly in observational documentary, Zubrycki argues (Nash 2009: 114), there is a significant investment of time and money in the relationship with the participant. The result is an underlying fear that they may simply change their mind and walk away from the project.

Zubrycki: It's actually very stressful because you're not absolutely sure that the person has allowed you into their lives completely because there's always that possibility that they could ring up and say that's it, it's been a great few months but I think that I've reached the end of the road for what ever reason, but touch wood that hasn't happened yet [...] And then you're worried about what they're thinking about you and you're wondering whether you should call them, talk to them, any little thing could be a signal that something's wrong.

Given the predominantly independent nature of documentary production and a climate in which competition for funds and opportunities is significant, the documentary-maker is relying on the participant's continued co-operation.

If power between documentary-maker and participant is not an example of power-as-domination how might we re-conceptualise power and its contribution to documentary? In my analysis of Rule and Zubrycki's narratives both point to the ways in which they were active in the relationship and the ways in which they sought to express themselves and their vision for the documentary. In other words, both Rule and Zubrycki pointed to the way in which they contributed to the flow of power through the relationship. Taking this as a starting point, power can be re-viewed along Foucauldian lines.

In his work *The Subject and Power* (1983), Foucault argues that the focus on power as domination obscures the way in which power flows through relationships. Although an analysis of Foucault's work on power is beyond the scope of this article, his approach to questions of power can usefully guide the study of the filmmaker-participant relationship. Foucault argues (1983: 209) that in spite of his focus on power, transformation of the individual to the social subject is the central theme of his research. Viewing his work in this way highlights its potential contribution to documentary studies since documentary as a form of power/knowledge depends upon the transformation of

the individual participant into the documentary subject. It is a transformation that has been an important site of struggle within documentary given its political and ethical significance.

Rather than trying to grasp this complex transformation as a whole, Foucault draws attention to the importance of localised practices, particularly acts of resistance. Rather than offering a metaphysics of power, Foucault offers his account as a heuristic device with which to approach empirical questions about concrete social practices (Hoy 1986: 137). Foucault therefore draws attention to the everyday appearances of power in terms of its effects on the actions of individuals. In terms of understanding power in the context of documentary, Foucault calls attention to the specific ways in which the actions of the filmmaker and participant affect each other and the ways in which each engages in acts of resistance.

Although Foucault does not offer a complete theory of power he understands it as a modality of action (Rozmarin 2005). His aim is to open up a way of thinking about power that cannot be easily reduced to the idea of domination and this is achieved by focusing on the way in which actions act on actions (Hoy 1986: 135). Power is not a substance or property, nor is it something that dominant classes possess and oppressed peoples lack. Rather, it is a complex strategy spread throughout social systems (Hoy 1986: 134). Foucault (1983: 216–222) argues that individuals exist in multiple power relationships in which the actions of individuals impact on the actions of others. He argues that power is best conceived of as:

[A] total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely, it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of acting.

Central to Foucault's account of power is a specific notion of freedom. Actions do not prescribe, but rather open up new fields of action for the other (Rozmarin 2005). It is therefore important for Foucault, indeed it is critical given his focus on acts of resistance, that individuals are 'free' to respond to the actions of others. Slavery is not a power relationship for Foucault; neither, presumably, would a documentary relationship in which the documentary-maker had complete control over the participant be a power relationship. Foucault emphasises (1983: 220) that an important feature of power relationships is that the other 'is recognized and maintained to the very end as a subject who acts'. Power can be exercised only insofar as individuals are free since it is a mode of action on the actions of the other.

From a Foucauldian perspective Rule and Zubrycki are engaged in a contested relationship in which each is acting with the goal of influencing the actions of the other. So when Rule puts on music or starts swearing, she is acting in the hope of influencing Zubrycki's decision to continue filming. Zubrycki can decide, either to keep filming, in spite of the music and swearing, or turn off the camera. Rule's exercise of power consists of behaving in such a way that Zubrycki chooses to stop. In the kitchen scene, Rule glances to camera in the hope that Zubrycki will become aware of his intrusion into an intimate moment. Both Zubrycki and Rule have the ability to act on each other in the relationship and the way in which they do so constitutes the power relationship from which the documentary emerges.

### TRUST AND POWER

If Zubrycki is a 'naughty' documentary-maker who 'must feel guilty' for his trespasses, further work must be done to explain why Rule continued to participate in the documentary project. Furthermore, his documentary 'thefts' demonstrate that placing trust in a documentary-maker is more complex than weighing up instances of trustworthy and untrustworthy behaviour. Zubrycki's 'betrayals' might be seen as evidence of his untrustworthiness and certainly call for a more thorough consideration of Rule's decision to place trust in him as a documentary-maker. The fact that Rule is able to incorporate Zubrycki's filmmaking trespasses into what is essentially a positive story of documentary participation, interpreting them as 'naughty' but necessary, points to the multifarious nature of trust in this complex relationship.

Trust is an important part of modern life and we routinely place trust in a range of individuals and institutions. We trust strangers to obey traffic rules, doctors to look after our health and friends to keep their promises. But trusting our fellow drivers is quite a different kind of trust to that underpinning documentary practice. Similarly, there are institutional and legal processes regulating the relationship between doctor and patient whereas the relationship between documentary-maker and participant is largely unregulated. This absence of a regulatory framework has implications for documentary trust.

Trust is a response to the agency of others, a way of continuing to act in spite of our uncertainty about others' behaviour (Seligman 1997). Sztompka (1999: 23) defines trust as a 'policy for handling the freedom of other agents' that permits us to act by essentially 'betting' on the behaviour of others; acting as if their behaviour could be predicted. Trust is an important foundation for documentary precisely because, as we have already discovered, both participant and documentary-maker are free agents acting on the actions of the other, within a web of power relations. The filmmaker makes the assumption that the participant will continue with the project while the participant assumes that they are not being exploited.

Placing trust, taking a bet on the actions of another, involves risk and makes us vulnerable. Trusting involves *en-trusting* something of value to another, knowing that they must decide how best to protect it (Baier 1997). Trusting others with things that we value is an inherent part of co-operating with others. When we trust another with something of value we risk its loss. Thinking about trust in the context of documentary it becomes clear that both documentary-maker and participant entrust something of great value to the other. The documentary-maker, as we saw in Zubrycki's responses, trusts the participant to continue with the project, to provide access to relevant moments and information and to co-operate in making the documentary. The documentary-maker also trusts the participant not to undermine the documentary once completed by casting doubt on its truth claims. The participant on the other hand trusts the filmmaker with their reputation, personal information and relationships with family, friends and community.

Looking at the relationship between Rule and Zubrycki we begin to see not only the importance of trust, but also the ways in which trust is established and maintained in the context of documentary. An interesting discovery of this research is the extent to which documentary-maker and participant understand trust differently. Because Zubrycki and Rule differ in the core goods that they entrust to the other and because each is vulnerable in a distinct way their description of trust varies.



Lyn Rule's narrative demonstrates that trust between documentary-maker and participant is not given completely at the outset but develops gradually over time. Lyn refers to the early stages of the project (Nash 2009: 284), for example, as a period in which she had a 'quasi-trusting relationship with Tom'. Trust develops slowly and Rule identifies three points at which her trust in Zubrycki was deepened. The first was as a result of seeing his previous documentaries; the second was meeting Zubrycki's parents and, finally, the circumstances under which Zubrycki came to be staying at Rule's house provided evidence of Zubrycki's trustworthiness. Each of these moments points to an important aspect of the developing trust relationship.

Baier (1997) refers to the importance of shared values in establishing a trusting relationship. Throughout her narrative, Rule refers to her political views as a motivation for her participation in the documentary. In that context, seeing Zubrycki's earlier documentaries represents a turning point since it represents, for Rule, evidence of a shared political agenda. Initially, Rule experienced Zubrycki's arrival in Young as an unwelcome disruption, on seeing his earlier documentaries, however, she re-considers this, pointing to the potential political impact of his current documentary project. Zubrycki's values and his competence as a documentary-maker, both evident in his earlier work, provide a foundation for a collaborative, hence trusting, relationship.

Similarly, Rule's account of how Zubrycki came to be staying with her in Young points to the significance of shared values. She begins by describing the problems Zubrycki was experiencing staying with another family in Young. Rule emphasises her agency, stating that she had actively encouraged Zubrycki to move in to her house. Zubrycki refuses, however, since he feels that he has a duty to his host. His refusal and his determination to act on the basis of a sense of duty serve as additional grounds for Rule to place trust in him as a documentary-maker because they demonstrate shared values. It was only when Zubrycki was asked to leave the other house that he took up Rule's offer, something that became significant for Rule. She links this to trust saying that (Nash 2009: 187):

That's probably as much why I trusted him. He didn't run into my house saying 'I'd love to be there' at the first instance. He didn't [...] he stayed there and stayed there out of duty to those people.

A further ingredient in the trust relationship was a growing interdependence beyond the documentary project. It was particularly significant to Rule, for instance, that Zubrycki introduced her to his family. She described with fondness a weekend during which Zubrycki brought his parents to Young. Rule experiences this as entrusting her with knowledge of his family. Zubrycki makes himself vulnerable by placing trust in Rule, something that Rule acknowledges as an important foundation for her trust in Zubrycki.

When asked to describe trust in the context of documentary, Rule responds with two distinct but related responses. In the first instance, responding to a question asking her to explain what documentary trust is, Rule says (Nash 2009: 285) that:

It's probably to do with knowing that that person that you have the relationship with will not knowingly betray you with the knowledge they have of you. You know when people have knowledge of you and they can turn it around and use it against you.

Here, Rule points to the vulnerability of the documentary participant, noting that core goods such as personal knowledge and reputation are placed in the hands of the documentary-maker. In her second description of trust, Rule elaborates (Nash 2009: 287) on what she means by the documentary-maker's betrayal.

Yeah and knowing that that trust is there that that person will hold your beliefs and feelings as sacred really. And I had that with Tom. I do trust him. I think he's naughty and but that's because he's a filmmaker.

When the participant trusts the documentary-maker, he or she makes a bet and acts as though their beliefs and feelings will be treated as sacred. Trusting the documentary-maker with some of their most cherished goods, the participant takes a significant risk. The participant relies on the documentary-maker to act honestly and not act deceptively. In addition, in her use of the word sacred, Rule suggests that the participant is relying on the documentary-maker's 'fiduciary' conduct, his or her benevolence and generosity which, the participant anticipates, will cause the documentary-maker to place the participant's interests ahead of their own (Sztompka 1999: 54). To trust a documentary-maker is to make an audacious bet since, as Sztompka argues, few are caring enough to put the interests of others before their own.

When asked to describe documentary trust Zubrycki responded very differently to Rule. This is not surprising since, as we have seen, trust is a response to risk and vulnerability and the documentary-maker's vulnerability is different to that of the participant. For Zubrycki (Nash 2009: 292), trust is linked to the processes of documentary making.

Getting their trust is really getting a person's co-operation. It's them understanding that you're not going to exploit them in any way by being selective [...] If they feel like they can manage their own image and if they feel that you can be a kind of conduit or attentive to their need to come across in a particular way and then they become cooperative and that's the basis upon which trust can be built.

Gaining the participant's co-operation calls for sensitivity to their desire to retain some degree of control over their performance. Zubrycki offered the participants in *Molly and Mobarak* the opportunity to veto the completed documentary, an offer that reflects his belief that the participant's control over their representation is central to documentary trust.

Zubrycki is very aware of the importance of building trust in his relationships with participants. He is conscious also of needing to appear trustworthy, particularly in the early stages of the relationship. For Zubrycki, documentary production includes the performance of trustworthiness, a self-presentation that seeks to provide the participant with a reason to trust (Sztompka 1999:74). He describes the performance of trustworthiness as (Nash 2009: 191):

[I]t's really deciding that you're aspiring to forge a relationship and also get some information and so you're kind of [...] you're focusing on being attentive, you're focusing on being interested, of

understanding, of responding, of being empathetic. And you really are searching for a very strong connection and ways in which to build a connection that is largely artificial and making it as strong as you can, and finding ways of making it stronger through finding things that might be in common with the person that you're working with and relying on those but also making yourself to be an interesting person for the other.

Zubrycki's performance of trustworthiness takes place within a relationship that feels, at times, very fragile. His narrative draws attention to the anxiety that accompanies the need to cultivate the trust of others. Since the documentary-maker entrusts the participant with the documentary project and, consequently, risks failure, it is unsurprising that Zubrycki understands trust as having confidence in the participant's co-operation.

### CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In focusing on the exploitation of the participant by the documentary-maker, power relations between the two have been obscured. The relationship between documentary-maker and participant is contested with each pursuing their own vision of the good in relation to the documentary project. Taking a Foucauldian perspective on power, conceiving of it as a mode of action on the actions of others, the contest between documentary-maker and participant is foregrounded. Approaching power in this way draws attention to documentary as discourse and the structures that shape the documentary film. Although Rule and Zubrycki shared a vision for *Molly and Mobarak* their different roles brought them, perhaps inevitably, into conflict. Zubrycki's documentary-making role requires that he trespass into the participant's experience in ways that are sometimes challenging. Rule's attributions of guilt need not signal a transgression but, rather, point to the chasm that exists between the experience of the participant and documentary-maker.

All documentary is made possible by the establishment of a trust relationship between documentary-maker and participants. Although all documentary participation entails risk, the nature of the risk varies with the maker's mode of engagement with the participant. Nichols (1991) has argued that questions of documentary ethics depend on the filmmaker's mode of engagement with documentary participants. This point has too often been overlooked and we have tended to speak in general about the issues facing documentary filmmakers as though the specific mode of production were not relevant. In observational documentaries such as *Molly and Mobarak* the filmmaker and participant engage in a close, long-term relationship that has significant consequences and meanings for both. Rule's narrative highlights the important goods with which the documentary-maker is entrusted in this form of documentary making. Her story also allows us to explore the nature of trust, revealing the extent to which the participant must act as though the documentary-maker will put their beliefs and values before their own.

Finally I have demonstrated here the importance of engaging with the stories of documentary participants. The documentary literature contains much speculation about the relationship between documentary-maker and participant. Winston (1995: 46) notes that, although this relationship is central to

documentary, very little is known about it beyond the immediate context of filming. Although documentary-makers have sometimes reflected on their relationships with participants, there has been little opportunity to engage with the experiences of participants, excepting perhaps the occasional tale of regret. Much can potentially be learned about documentary and its production through empirical study of documentary practice.

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