

Making the past through family movies and found footage films

Irini Stathi, University of the Aegean, Department of cultural technology and communication, Mytilene, Greece

The present paper focuses on the relation between private memories on the one hand and the public representations of the past on the other hand. This is a strained relation, certainly when it concerns a meaningful history, important for the identity of a society, a nation or a specific group. The paper aims as well to deal with the role of images in private memories and public representation of the past, through the found footage films or the family movies and we will discuss fundamental questions as to the processes underlying the construction of private and collective memories and the interactions between by creating family archives as well as a possibility to interconnect them. We will, finally, take under exam the Péter Forgács' *The Maelstrom. A Family Chronicle* (1997) or Angelos' film (1999) and the family archive of Mr. Halios in Mytilene in order to demonstrate a) the challenges in reconstructing public memory through the critical re-composition of film acts and b) how home moviemakers creating these a naive film self-anthropology films, proving for themselves and for later times that they exist: they bring the private and the marginal into the field of documentary. The importance to bring such material in a public use through a National Archive is obvious. The possibilities and facilities such an innovative use of found footage or home movie footage creates for the wider audience, must be examined. Finally, we will discuss about the criteria which we have to take in consideration about how select, elaborate and interpret the content of found footage films and the private family archives.