with a short excursion into how walking helps a writer such as Nietzsche to compose his writings. However, there are also good chapters on philosophers – I particularly liked the one on Thoreau in which Gros shows how walking was central to Thoreau's writings:

> [For Thoreau] Walking is setting oneself apart: at the edge of those who work, at the edge of high-speed roads, at the edge of the producers of profit and poverty, exploiters, labourers, and at the edge of those serious people who always have something better to do than receive the pale gentleness of a winter sun or the freshness of a spring breeze. (p. 94)

I also liked his chapter on Rousseau in which Gros charts the changing significance of walking in Rousseau's life, from the early walks of youthful expectation through his mature years discovering the natural man, and to his later years where 'walking is no longer undertaken to fuel invention, but exactly for nothing: just to connect with the movement of the sinking sun, to echo with slow tread the cadence of the minutes, hours, days' (p. 78).

In my experience, there is a sequential contradiction at the heart of walking. At first, walking amplifies thought and feeling (rather like meditation, of which for me walking is an example) so that whatever is uppermost comes vividly to the surface; then, what lies deeper begins to appear, until finally all such thoughts and feelings reduce in intensity and disappear into nothingness. Gros clearly favours the nothingness of walking – nothing except the sensations of one's body and one's surroundings. Yet in order to have a book, he needs to explore the somethingness of his philosophers.

Unfortunately, this does not make a philosophy of walking, but rather a pot-pourri of thought hurdles to be jumped on the way to the essential nothingness of walking where all the convolutions of philosophy disappear – at least for this walker!

Nigel Armistead

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03060497.2016.1192350

DVD REVIEW

Excuses to kill

The look of silence, by Joshua Oppenheimer, 2015, 1 hr 43 mins, London, Dogwoof, DVD, £12.99

Reviewed by Toby Bull

Joshua Oppenheimer has made two films about Indonesia, a society in which the memory of unresolved collective trauma continues to be lived and suffered as injustice.

Like *The Act of Killing* (2012), *The Look of Silence* ends as it begins: with trucks driving at night down a dirt track through the jungle, surrounded by the constant sea-sounding crash of cicadas. It begins with this shot in the background. The trucks serve as footage incidental to a text that informs the viewer of the historical background behind the film – what's repressively remembered in Indonesia:

> In 1965, the Indonesian government was overthrown by the military. Anybody opposed to the military dictatorship could be accused of being a communist … with the direct aid of western governments, over one million 'communists' were murdered. The army used paramilitaries and gangsters to carry out the killings. These men have been in power – and have persecuted their opponents – ever since.

Adi leads *The Look of Silence*. Adi is Indonesian and Oppenheimer is American. Oppenheimer's stance as an interviewer is non-judgmental, like the therapist's, and he succeeds in constructing a space in which each perpetrator's wish, particularly Anwar's, can show itself in both its positive and negative content: conscious and repressed desire. Adi attempts to reveal the true history by representing it and confronting the representatives of its opposite. His brother Ramli was brutally murdered by Inong and Amir Hasan, who led the local wing of the paramilitary organization supported by the military regime, Komando Aksi. Again and again, Adi confronts the unreality of each perpetrator's 'excuses to kill' with the true history, in which they are implicated personally in the butchery of his brother. He himself confronts Inong, the Speaker of the Regional Legislature, his uncle the prison guard and a leader of 'the top group' of the Komando Aksi. Adi's attempt to reveal the true history is met by some boasts, more looks of silence but mostly outright denial. In both films, the same truth reveals itself in the conflict between fantasy and reality.

Two looks of silence predominate over the title's significance: the silent yet steely conviction of Adi's face and gaze; and the dumb disorder of Inong's nervous agitation. Inong's bespectacled eyes furnish the film's poster with its background: *The Look of Silence* superimposed upon his own anticipates their identification within the film. These eyes open the film: the eyebrow quivers; the eye itself agitates; the cheekbone's musculature gibbers uncontrollably. Inong's look of silence reveals itself over the film's course as the repressive gaze of a dissociative subject whose body communicates the repressed truth. It is confronted both in reality and in the film's montage with Adi's own look of silent, unwavering certainty. Adi tells Inong that he wishes to 'reveal the true history', and he attempts to do so by rooting out those 'excuses to kill' that he takes the perpetrators to use in their attempts to repress the true history. Named Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or not, the dissociative conflict between Inong's I and his body appears to testify to a depth he associates with Adi's 'true history' and dislikes. He meets Adi's questions with the following response: 'I don't like deep questions … Your questions are too deep … much deeper questions than Joshua ever asked'. On the surface are nervous tics, twitching eyes, gibbering lips, rubbery cheeks and a vacant stare; outside the I's remit, Inong's tongue unfurls itself – flops and flounders out of his mouth – when he tells Adi that he drank blood, like coconut milk from the coconut cup of a woman's breast, to stay sane. The representative of historical truth suffers none of the symptoms of this truth's repression, whereas his opponent shakes deeply with unstated meaning. There are two forms of appearance of the same reality: one look of silence tells the truth transparently; the other tells the same truth, repressively, opaquely.

What you can't see in depth sometimes shows itself on the surface. Inong shows us that. This goes some way to explain a visual rhyme that opens the film, between the nervous psychosomatic agitation of Inong's eyes and what look like rocks, but turn out to be cocoons. They are cut in to follow Inong's face. And there they serve as the apparently incidental background to the film's title, as his eyes did on its poster. They shake from side to side on a stone floor. And before we know what they are, we know they shake with whatever he shakes with.

They are named, by Adi's children, when they reappear after Adi's interview with Inong. As in the beginning, the film cuts straight from Inong's silent shaking surface to that of the cocoons. Over that very same image, Adi's children speak:

> Why are they moving?
> There's a butterfly inside.

The cocoons shake on the surface because something invisible to the viewer deep within them has yet to complete the process, natural and necessary, of bursting forth and becoming, truly and finally, visible as what it is. Inong shakes with the truth of an awful reality his mind escapes at the expense of his body. The surfaces of both shake with a whole truth invisible to the eye apart from the expression of its energy – in becoming what it is – in its glimmering surfacing appearances.

The Look of Silence presents its audience with Snake River. It runs by Adi's village on its course through northern Sumatra. On its banks, thousands of locals were executed during the genocide and dumped unburied in the river's depths. The river first appears without historical context; a continuity-shot shows it running at night beneath a bridge. In its second appearance, Snake River demands attention. Shot at its level, the river's surface runs. As before, the camera presents the non-human reality of the river's appearance. But this affront to meaning must now contend with Snake River's historical reality: the river shot follows in the immediate wake of two scenes that present Snake River's history. The first shows Inong and Amir, commanders who oversaw and participated in the slaughter at Snake River, strolling towards Snake River and telling Snake River's story to the camera. They stop to act out from time to time the sort of murder and quality of terror they achieved. Gleefully, with sticks and penknives as props, they act out the butchery of Adi's brother, Ramli: one bends the other over and places his pretend machete-stick blade-up, from behind, between the other's legs, then he, smiling, pulls the stick down and out in memory of Ramli's lacerated penis and rectum. Then they tear his bowels out for Oppenheimer's camera with their make-believe weapons. Other times they slit the throat, they tell us, and collected the blood in a glass they promptly drank from. That was abnormal, though. Normally they would just behead the victim and kick them into the river. The villagers didn't eat fish for years, they recall, because of Snake River's pollution. This is followed by a scene in which Adi and a survivor of the Snake River massacres tread the same path as Amir and Inong, but dressed instead in a deathly and fearful silence. The survivor's fear reminds us of the power this place and its history holds, in the present, over those who remember. The river follows this in its second appearance, where it carries in its journey from the periphery of the image to its center a marginalized history of the marginalized. Here, the reality of the river's appearance coincides with the appearance of Snake River's reality:

sodden still by the barbarism of Indonesia's recent history; still polluted by the unresolved injustice of those cast off its banks and out of this life.

Snake River's second appearance affirmed the former; the third affirms the whole through the latter. Its image returns as if to answer the Speaker of the Regional Legislature's caged threat against Adi and his questioning: 'If you keep making a problem of the past … sooner or later it will happen again'. This reveals a startling irony that drives deep inside the Indonesian silence: the past is partitioned off from the present by the continued presence of fear that this same past remains presently possible. The past's presence is repressed to the past merely because the memory of past terror remains present in the terrorized objective reality it founded. The pastness of the past depends for its present currency upon an economy of horror that continues to derive its value from the very past it pretends to forget.

Throughout *The Look of Silence*, victims and perpetrators alike speak a phrase they share: 'the past is past'. By attending both to what appears of reality and the reality of what appears, the film admits of the past's pastness while also insisting upon its continued presence. These two opposing forces coincide in the third return of the same earth-level river-running image of Snake River's surface. For while the duration of the shot lets the eye dwell on the contemporary reality of its appearance, its contiguity with the Speaker's threat conditions its significance with the bloody history now flooding, not running beneath its surface. The coincidence of both forces in this shot corroborate, at the level of form, Adi's intention to 'reveal the true history' by revealing within what is present, a past that persists in being. By illustrating its opposite, the film denies the denial that 'the past is past' and thereby contests a history determined by political oppression and its repressive correlative in the psyche. What's past is not past. What presents itself in the present is not present.

When Adi meets the family of the late Amir Hasan, his family tell Adi that because they finally know about one another, they can now put the past to rest and move on. Adi says that he always knew who they were; the families of the victims always knew and never forget who the death-squad leader's families are. This past is new to those who, out of history, won. The past remained present for the victims. The past is present for those who lost.

The trucks are cut to follow the cocoons' third and final appearance. The cocoons continue to shake with the same energy they revealed in the psychosomatic tics of Inong's face: the energy of what is in potentiality and remains unrealized. The cocoons are, this time, held in the hand of Adi's mother. As we watch them, she speaks to them: 'I'm trying to talk to you … You don't want to move. Aren't you tired? I can't see you. Are you there? I want to see you. Come out. Are you really there?' She confronts what shakes with potentiality like her son did when faced with Inong; the comparison is intimated by the cut, as a shot of Adi's still gaze immediately precedes the wobbling cocoons just as it would, during the interviews, confront the pathological agitation of Inong's face. By facing Adi and his mother with these cocoons, the film seems to face them with an as-yet unrealized historical potentiality. Not as distant past, nor as distantly possible future, but as immediate reality.

Toby Bull

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03060497.2016.1167329