

Commodity systems, documentary filmmaking & new geographies of food: Amos Gitai's *Ananas*.

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Abstract:

Introduction:

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid by human geographers to the potential of various styles of documentary filmmaking to represent local senses of place, community and social process (e.g. Burgess 1982; Natter & Jones 1993; Rose 1994; Youngs 1985). In this paper we intend to add to this by discussing one documentary in which a number of such locales, with their own senses of place, community and social process, have been connected through the international trade in pineapples. Adopted by Amos Gitai in his 1983 film *Ananas*, this multi-locale approach has strung together politics of production in Hawaii and the Philippines with corporate concerns in the United States and highlights the struggles which lie behind the reliable, day by day provision of tinned pineapples on supermarket shelves in the industrialised world. In doing so, we argue that this film does not only provide a striking illustration, as David Harvey (1990) has stressed, of the value of tracing out a commodity system in order to get behind the veil of a fetishised final product, but - particularly through the techniques of overlapping and juxtaposing sounds and pictures from different parts of the system to continually highlight a disturbing sense of connection between poverty and wealth, violence and frivolity, and so on - it can also provide valuable lessons for the construction and representation of future studies tracing the displacement of such goods through the world economy.

To make our case, here, we build up to a detailed appreciation of this film through placing it, first, within debates concerning the globalisation of agriculture and food which, among other things, have stressed value of tracing specific foodstuffs between sites of their production and consumption in what has been referred to as 'commodity systems' analyses; second, within related debates in ethnographic theory and practice which have stressed the need for multi-locale research methods which can trace connections between specific localities in the modern world system; and, third, within related debates in documentary film theory and practice in which concerns voiced in these ethnographic debates have been echoed in the theory and practice of the so-

called 'new documentary' movement. Having placed Gitai's film within these three contexts, we provide a detailed outline of the film, describing how this tracing process has been put together and what 'conclusions' can be drawn from it. Finally, we argue that interpretations of this film can provide clues to forms of research and representation that might be taken on in research into the 'new geographies of food'.

1) The globalisation of agriculture and food: four framings:

The past ten years have seen a wealth of academic literatures come to the fore concerning the place of agriculture and food in the modern world. All across the social sciences and humanities - from rural sociology, to development geography, to literary criticism - analyses of what various peoples, at various times, in various places and for various reasons have grown, processed, traded and/or eaten have become increasingly commonplace. Recent reviews of these literatures (e.g. Bonanno *et al.* 1994; Buttel *et al.* 1990; Fine 1994; Jarosz 1996) can, schematically, be used to distil out four broad framings for this work: first, as 'political economy'; second, as 'new political economy'; third, as 'cultural politics'; and, fourth, as 'commodity systems analysis'. Below, we briefly summarise the main features and limitations of each of these approaches in order to later show how Gitai's film tackles many of the same themes and, thereby, how its critical interpretation can contribute to ongoing debates over the globalisation of agriculture and food.

a) Political-economies:

Political economic approaches to the geographies of food can be characterised as focusing on macro-scale processes, events and linkages which constitute the global agricultural and food order. Here, historical studies have examined the development of this 'order' in terms of a series of food regimes which have been central to the development of global economic relations more widely. This approach has also been used to examine the development of these regimes in the post-World War II period

where studies have concentrated on relations between the industrialisation of agriculture and food; the proletarianization of peasant producers; the de-localisation of production and consumption; the increasing diversification and durability of foodstuffs; how these developments can be understood in relation to economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s and recessions in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s; how, together, these can explain global food crises such as that brought about by the US-Soviet grain deals in the early 1970s; how the repercussions of these deals (along with the oil crisis) were central to the massive growth of 'Third World' debt and the large scale development of export agriculture as a means to earn foreign exchange to service that debt; and how these processes, together, have produced global extremes of plenty and want as far as food is concerned (see Bradley & Carter 1989; Dinham & Hines 1983; Friedmann 1992, 1993; Friedmann & McMichael 1990; Raynalds *et al.* 1993; Thrift 1989). In this kind of approach, the 'empirical units' whose constitution and relationships are explored in order to make sense of these situations largely consist of transnational economic and political institutions such as TNCs (e.g. Nestlé, Tate & Lyle, and Del Monte), 'development' agencies (e.g. the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, USAID and the ODA), state governments (e.g. the US, the former Soviet Union, Nigeria, and so on), and trans-national states (e.g. the European Community and NAFTA). But, strict adherents to this kind of approach have been criticised for placing all diversity among agricultural and food systems across the globe along a single continuum of 'progress', for paying relatively little heed to the role of localities and difference - to the dialectic of globality & locality in the structuring of such relations - and for constructing scenarios where logical relations are between institutions, somehow devoid of the people who, day by day, reproduce and transform them.

b) New political-economies:

This approach has grown out of the clear benefits, as well as drawbacks, of the above approach through focusing on relationships between micro- and macro-scale processes,

events and linkages. These linkages can range from ways in which local farming practices are embedded in the social logics of regional, national and international processes; in which human and non-human inputs to crop production are co-ordinated over massive expanses of space and time; in which these inputs are co-ordinated to produce the specification-standard crops demanded by retailers in the advanced capitalist world; in which the cycles and other 'natural' properties of particular crops are dealt with in the organisation of their planting, tending, harvesting and processing; in which peasant farmers negotiate crop and debt cycles through various kinds of borrowings, family obligations, petty 'criminal' activities and so on; in which the interplay of dominance and resistance to proletarianization is negotiated through personal identities, local cultures and wider capitalist relations; and in which agricultural 'development' across the globe cannot be placed along a single linear 'progression', but changes *in situ* through dialectical relationships between local and global forces (see Buttel *et al.* 1990; Carney & Watts 1990, 1991; Clapp 1988; Escobar 1988; Guttman 1993; Jarosz 1996; Luke 1991; Thomas 1985; Watts 1989, 1992; Whatmore 1994). In these studies, often using combinations of ethnographic methods and political-economic theory (Buttel *et al.* 1990), the 'empirical units' brought into focus operate on a variety of scales from transnational political/economic institutions, to national state bureaucracies and business interests, to local representatives of all of the above, to local peasant growers, migrant workers and their families. However, research which has followed this agenda can often be criticised for taking those 'localities' occupied by peasant farmers as the only ones worthy of study in the context of the global agricultural and food system, for not tracing the crops which they produce through their processing, packing and shipping stages to their eventual consumption, and for not being able to address the question of whether these agricultural practices would exist if the final food item did not fit fairly easily into consumption practices elsewhere.

c) Cultural politics:

This third kind of research directly addresses the question of what happens in the realms of food consumption in the industrialised West by focusing on the social and cultural processes through which the meanings of edible (and drinkable) commodities are constructed and contested. The range of research here is both historically and substantively extensive and, for the purposes of illustrating this, has included studies of the sexual politics of consumption (e.g. how heterosexual women's contradictory relationships with food in male-dominated societies are related to bodily standards of sexual attractiveness and motherhood - see Charles & Kerr 1986, 1988; Counihan 1985; McIntosh & Zey 1989), the class politics of consumption (e.g. how industrialisation, poverty, and ideas of the 'rational economic man' have led various social reformers to cast working-class people as 'wasting' their money on 'good' food and have thereby tried to rationalise food consumption in terms of the nutritional science of calorific values, vitamin contents, and so on - see Levenstein 1988); the politics of ethnicity (e.g. the rise of 'ethnic' cuisines in the dominant consumer cultures of the West, their association with 'ethnic minority' communities in these places, and the divisive distinction between 'ethnic' and 'authentic' national foods and peoples which is often promoted in their marketing - see Attar 1985; Cook forthcoming; May 1996); and the ethics involved with certain kind of dietary choice (e.g. the relationship between animal rights campaigns and the rise of mass vegetarianism - Adams 1990; Beardsworth & Keil 1992; Bennett 1993; Fiddes 1991; Observer/RSPCA 1994).

Research in this cultural-political vein thus involves the study of foods in terms of how their consumption practices (of marketing, shopping, preparation, {not} eating) fit into wider and deeper social and cultural relations, and how these 'local' processes structure and are structured by more global ones (e.g. patriarchy, capitalism, racism, etc.). In doing this, there has been a drawing together of a great variety of both theoretical traditions (semiotics, iconography, political-economy, and so on) and methodological approaches (textual and visual analysis, ethnography, statistical analysis, and so on), and the kinds of 'empirical units' brought into focus alone or, more often, in

combination have included various groups of 'consumers' (e.g. shoppers, diners, households), texts (e.g. cookbooks, marketing leaflets, magazines, advertising), and institutions (e.g. the 'family', healthcare professions, tourist industries, publishing houses, food and implement importers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers and so on) (see Mennell *et al.* 1992). Mirroring the new political economy work, however, this body of cultural politics research can be criticised for taking those 'localities' occupied by the consumers of foods as the only ones worthy of study in the global agricultural and food system, for not tracing the foodstuffs (not) eaten through their retailing, shipping, packing, and processing to their initial primary productions and, with certain notable exceptions, for very rarely considering the more distant repercussions of such consumption practices 'down the line'.

d) Commodity systems analyses:

In contrast to the place- and process-oriented approaches of the previous three framings, the central organising principle of this fourth one is the passage of single thing from its sites of production to its sites of consumption. This approach can be seen as part of a wider movement across the social sciences where globalised systems of production, provision and consumption have been the subject of study in economic anthropology and rural sociology for some time, particularly with regard to the historical development of trade in commodities as diverse as ships, wheat flour, beverage products (tea, coffee, chocolate, sugar), tobacco, drugs, works of art, carpets and cheesecloth (Appadurai 1986; Marcus 1995; Miller 1995; Mintz 1985, 1993; Smith 1992; Wallerstein 1991) and to more recent developments in the international trade in fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers (Cook 1994, 1995; Enloe 1989; Friedland 1984, 1990, 1994; Jarosz 1996; Mackintosh 1978). In this context, setting out the research foci for 'commodity systems analyses' in the sociology of agriculture, Bill Friedland (1984) has argued that studies of individual crops' "production practices, grower organisation, labour as a factor in production, scientific production and application, and marketing and distribution systems" (222) can provide a means for

understanding the workings of the global (agricultural and food) system more widely (see Appadurai 1986; Beardsworth & Keil 1990; Friedland 1990; Kopytoff 1986; Sack 1988; Wallerstein 1991; Warde 1990). As David Harvey (1990) has explained this:

"I often ask beginning geography students to consider where their last meal came from. Tracing back all the items used in the production of that meal reveals a relations of dependence upon a whole world of social labour conducted in many different places under very different social relations and conditions of production. That dependency expands even further if we consider the materials and goods used in the production of the goods we directly consume. Yet we can in practice consume our meal without the slightest knowledge of the intricate geography of production and the myriad social relationships embedded in the system that puts it upon our table. ... The grapes that sit upon the supermarket shelves are mute; we cannot see the fingerprints of exploitation upon them or tell immediately what part of the world they are from. We can, by further enquiry, lift the veil on this geographical and social ignorance and make ourselves aware of these issues... But in so doing we find we have to go behind and beyond what the market itself reveals in order to understand how society is working. This was precisely Marx's own agenda. We have to get behind the veil, the fetishism of the market and the commodity, in order to tell the full story of social reproduction" (422; Fine 1994; Simmonds 1990).

Where this approach has been taken, it has involved recombinations of various features (theoretically, substantively, methodologically, and so on) of the political economic, new political economic and cultural political approaches outlined above. This can be seen in Cat Cox's study (1992) of the contemporary 'politics of pleasure' through which commodity systems for chocolate have emerged, and continue to emerge, from sites of 'Third world' production to sites of 'industrialised world' consumption; or in Sidney Mintz's (1985, 1993) study of the 'role of sugar in modern history' which, again, traces the emergence of commodity systems linking the 'West Indian' production and European consumption of sugar from the 16th century to the present.

2) New ethnographies in/of the modern world system:

Although not normally associated with the work of Friedland or Harvey, we would argue that some of the most promising agenda setting for commodity systems analysis can be found in the anthropology literature, and particularly in work on 'multi-locale ethnographies' and on 'the social life of things' by George Marcus (1986, 1992, 1995; Marcus & Fischer 1986) and Arjun Appadurai (1986a&b, 1989), respectively.

Although their work has much in common, the former's has most closely explored how global capitalist systems can be studied and understood as distanced social and cultural, and not just economic, systems, while the latter's highlights the importance of the situated geographical knowledges and imaginations which are central to the system's day to day functioning.

Taking Marcus' contribution first, it has drawn upon and contributed to literatures stressing the importance of studying the lives of the people who work (in) these systems as positioned at the intersection of local and non-local forces in *situated* sociocultural practices whose bounds are delimited by:

"'Holding an office', or more generally, occupying a specific place within a complex of social relations, entails particular responsibilities specific to that 'office'. Any individual office holder (agent) may carry out his or her responsibilities with greater or lesser assiduity, but the definition of what those responsibilities are is not decided by the agent" (Hayward 1990:7).

but, at the same time, recognising these offices as embedded in:

"The globalisation of social activity which modernity has served to bring about (and which) is in some ways a process of the development of genuinely world-wide ties ... Globalisation concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations 'at distance' with local contextualities ... (and) has to be understood as a dialectical

phenomenon, in which events at one pole of a distanced relation often produce divergent or even contrary occurrences at another" (Giddens 1984:22; 1991).

The aim of critical ethnographies in/of the modern world system, therefore, is to undertake theoretically informed research into the knowledges, meanings and importances which people (re)produce, day by day, through their situated actions, as well as into the (un)intended consequences that these can have on other places and peoples as they stretch out of each individual's awarenesses through the many tendrils which constitute the systems itself (see Cook & Crang 1995; Giddens 1984, 1991).

Building on previous work on the development of 'multi-locale' ethnographies in and of the world system, George Marcus (1995) has outlined a number of ways in which these have been and/or could be productively done differently by researchers setting out to 'follow the people', to 'follow the metaphor', to 'follow the conflict' and/or, most pertinent in this paper, to 'follow the thing'. Here, in contrast to more conventional modes of multi-locale research in which two or more places/societies/cultures are studied 'separately' and *compared*, he has outlined an alternative process of comparison through the following of systemic tangents *between* places/societies/cultures (see Massey 1991a&b, 1992, 1993). Here, he has argued:

"A life goes on in place A and place B, for example. In the more difficult case, there is very little contact between the two in everyday life, yet they are intimately or powerfully related to one another in that they have mutual unintended consequences for each other. How does one explore this complex relationship without dramatic resolutions, how to give a cultural account of this structure, how to represent it ethnographically?" (1994:50).

Achieving this goal, so he has argued, should not involve drawing on a tightly defined master narrative of colonialism and/or capitalism to plan out the research beforehand but, rather, can and should, first, develop incrementally:

"as a function of the fractured, discontinuous plane of movement and discovery among sites as (s/he) maps an object of study and needs to posit logics of relationship, translation, and association among these sites. Thus, in multi-sited ethnography, comparison emerges from putting questions to an emergent object of study whose contours, sites, and relationships are not known beforehand, but are themselves a contribution of making an account that has different, complexly connected real-world sites of investigation. The object of study is ultimately mobile and multiply situated, so any ethnography of such an object will have a comparative dimension that is integral to it, in the form of juxtapositions of phenomena that conventionally have appeared to be (or conceptually have been kept) 'worlds apart'. Comparison reenters the very act of ethnographic specification by a research design of juxtapositions in which the global is collapsed into and made an integral part of parallel, related local situations rather than something monolithic and external to them" (Marcus 1995:102; Appadurai 1986; Cook & Crang 1995; Marcus & Fischer 1986).

and, second, reflexively because:

"In contemporary multi-sited research projects moving between public and private spheres of activity, from official to subaltern contexts, the ethnographer is bound to encounter discourses that overlap with his or her own. In any contemporary field of work, there are always others within who know (or want to know) what the ethnographer knows, albeit from a different subject position, or who want to know what the ethnographer wants to know. Such ambivalent identifications, or perceived identifications, immediately locate the ethnographer within the terrain being mapped and reconfigure any kind of methodological discussion that presumes a perspective from above or 'nowhere'" (*ibid.*:112).

Following such an approach, first, avoids making any distinctions between 'the economic' (often treated as being about 'reality', profit and loss, exploitation and inequality, all of which are usually localised in realms of 'production') and 'the cultural' (often treated as being about 'representations', images, play and pleasure, all of which are usually located in realms of 'consumption'), second, avoids making propositions that these 'discrete' aspects of the world economy could/should simply be

added together as in studies claiming that 'cultural lives' are being colonised by 'political economic systems', or *vice versa* and, third, working against objectivist accounts, they acknowledge the social constructions, negotiations and outright contestations over ethnographic knowledge (see Crang 1994, 1996).

In terms of agricultural and food systems, then, it seems reasonable to believe that such an approach would be well suited to build on arguments that economic and cultural valuations of foods are contextually specific, that these contexts are multiple and that their bounds are always being opened up by, and constituted through, connections into networks which extend beyond the delimiting boundaries of any particular place and that, through these networks flow foods, food technologies, knowledges about foods, and people, not just in one direction, but instead forming much more complex *circuits* of culinary culture whose edges are hard and, perhaps, pointless to define (see Cook & Crang 1996). So this concentration on foodstuffs as things-in-motion must, as a matter of course, involve the integration of 'different' types of geographies, where following a commodity through its circuits can never be reduced to a 'political economy' of that thing, *or* a 'new political economy' of that thing, *or* a 'cultural politics' of that thing, *or* any other discrete academic lens on that thing, but a study of the combined geographies of that thing which are encountered along the way.

Where Appadurai's contribution adds to this kind of approach is its stress on the importance of what situated social actors know and can imagine about these systems and, thereby, the possible consequences of their actions elsewhere. Here, he argued how:

"mythological understandings of the circulation of commodities are generated because of the detachment, indifference, or ignorance of participants as regards all but a single aspect the economic trajectory of the commodity. Enclaved in either the production, speculative trade, or consumption locus of

the flows of commodities, technical knowledge tends to be quickly subordinated to more idiosyncratic subcultural theories about the origins and destinations of things" (1986:54).

Developing these ideas elsewhere, we have approached the globalisation of food provision which, according to the listings magazine *Time Out*, can provide Londoners with "The world on a plate. From Afghani ashak to Zimbabwean zaza, London offers an unrivalled selection of foreign flavours and cuisines. Give your tongue a holiday and treat yourself to the best meals in the world - all without setting foot outside our fair capital" (1995; May 1996). Here, we have suggested that, in a basic way, the various 'geographical knowledges' associated with food, and food-related, commodities - i.e. where they supposedly come from and where they should be eventually situated, encountered, combined and used by consumers - are central to their 'value' on the shelf, a value which is secured by a double fetishism. What we mean by this is that, on the one hand, 'geographical knowledges' about the systems of provision through which food (and food-related) commodities are transported and transformed from their sites of production to their sites of retailing and through which their price is determined - who earns how much, where, for doing what, and why? - are routinely hidden from the consuming public and that, on the other, a different set of 'geographical knowledges' about the purportedly 'authentic roots' of ingredients and the cuisines with which they are associated are often conjured up and attached to them via packaging designs and marketing strategies (Cook & Crang 1996).¹

Thus, accepting the importance of this double fetishism, we believe academics concerned with these 'geographical' knowledges need to ask two kinds of questions. Firstly, what sort of representational politics and poetics mark the commodity systems of food(related) goods? - how much and what do different people know?; where do they get their knowledges from?; what do they do with it or how is it used?; and how are differing knowledges articulated? - and, secondly, what relationship should academic geographical knowledges about foods have to these already existing

geographical knowledges? - should they correct them, deepen them and/or work on and with them?. Again, these are questions which have been addressed in Gitai's film and it is to the literature on documentary filmmaking which we now turn to explain how.

3) Documentary filmmaking & Amos Gitai's *Ananas*:

In reviewing the anthropological literature on multi-locale ethnographies, George Marcus (1995) has made the claim that there are "no ethnographies in the genre traditionally associated with studies of contemporary capitalist political economy that literally take a thing-oriented approach" (107). However, we want to argue that Gitai's film not only fits this description but is also an excellent example of the power and possibility of a commodity systems analysis in the context both of the kinds of 'geographies of food' outlined above and of an approach which has taken on, as well as contributed to, methodological and representational debates associated with the 'new ethnography' just mentioned. Here, Marcus (1994) has directly tied the latter into documentary filmmaking by saying that "those who have done the work of critiquing ethnographic rhetoric, mainly with written texts in mind, either have operated from a cinematic imagination, or are dealing with experiments in form that could easily if not more conveniently be handled in a film medium"(38). In this section, then, our aim is to outline a third contextualisation for Gitai's film by, first, linking what has already been said to some key arguments being made in the literature on documentary film, second, talking more specifically about Amos Gitai as a filmmaker and his intentions in making *Ananas* and, third, thereby building up to our outlining and commentary on the film itself.

Within the literature on documentary film, a dominant genre has been identified in which filmmakers have attempted to impose preferred, singular readings of the issue(s) being represented by reducing the range of possible interpretations for

viewers through constructing an 'objective' account in which all traces of the historical process through which the film was transformed from an initial idea to the finished product have been removed (Rabinowitz 1993). Here, faces and torsos are created as the primary sources of meaning for viewers, first, in the process of filming (where interviewees can be framed to fill up most of the screen, and where no people or objects are allowed to accidentally enter the background) and, second, in the process of editing (where, for instance, filming interviewees against a blue screen means that a 'background' can be later superimposed). After filming has taken place, so the argument goes, inserting these into the narrative of the film is most often done through cutting out all but the most pithy scenes from the primary footage to remove any awkward contradictions, uncertainties and ambiguities in the accounts that *could* be represented, to remove any tangents which might lead the viewer off from the intended point of the film, and to string together what is left through an authoritative narration outlining what the film is 'about' and what conclusions can be drawn from it. Here, as David MacDougall (1992) has pointed out, individual shots are often no more than five seconds long and are cut "automatically at the point where it is assumed audience attention drops, or where there is any suggestion of a pause in narrative flow" (38). As a result, much of the more traditional fare of documentary filmmaking consists of talking heads in comfy close-up, cut and spliced, and interspersed with perhaps a few seconds of interviewer nodding, archive footage or scenic shots of, perhaps, the place/period/process under discussion (*ibid.*; Willemsen 1992).

In contrast to this, a number of independent experimental filmmakers have framed the possible interpretations of their work through adopting styles of filming and editing which leave in, and work with, contradictions, uncertainties, ambiguities and tangents; which leave in, and work with, the possible backgrounds of a shot; which leave in, and work with, the dialogic, contingent process whereby the focus of a film may change and develop through the process of making it; and which leave in the

politics of what can and cannot be shown and heard. So, in place of the quick cutting juxtapositional aesthetic which characterises most documentary film, the main aim in this alternative approach is a *mobilisation* (rather than an imposition) of meaning through the opening out of time and space for audiences to gradually build up their own interpretations from what a film is 'about'. In terms of shooting, one of the main means through which this has been done has been through so-called 'long shots' - uninterrupted scenes which can be up to several minutes long - which, once edited into the final film, allow:

"the characters in it (if there are any) to begin functioning 'in context' as we {as viewers} begin to become aware of the environment within which the character operates and which, precisely because we are given the opportunity to attend to the environmental details, codetermines in important ways the nature and status of the character itself. In such a sequence, individuals are allowed to be seen as social beings existing within and marked by very specific geo-social circumstances. (Thus, the) emotional relation between character and viewer is no longer at the centre of the picture. Instead, the relation between a character and its context ... becomes the focus of attention" (Willemen 1992 p.19; MacDougall 1992; Williams 1993).

As well as being more 'ethnographic', then, this genre of documentary filmmaking also deliberately blurs into more fictional forms as audiences are invited to engage with what unfolds in much the same way as they would with more cinematic forms - to concentrate, to try to work out what is going on, to use the time provided by the slower pace to reflect on the implications of what has been seen and heard, and to make connections with other parts of the film and to knowledge which they have brought to it. Thus, the use of long shots and their juxtapositional and/or montage editing with other shots and sounds can, on the one hand, create spaces in which the viewers can construct, to a large extent, their own meanings of the film while, on the other, can invite critical attention to how the filmmakers have framed such an interpretation through the ways in which they have put the film together (MacDougall 1992; Rabinowitz 1993; Stewart 1985). As Paul Willemen (1992) has explained it,

presenting "a topic in the form of an argument, rather than an order ... (means that the) film does not shrivel into empty rhetoric if we disagree with aspects of the argument: we can still work with the materials presented to formulate other arguments, other 'senses'" (19).

Of course, this process is by no means an interpretive free-for-all as there is still a politics to the ways in which filmmakers can set out the temporal, spatial and narrative contours of their work. Here, a filmmaker can:

"marshal ... images and sounds to buttress his or her argument, but the presentation of pertinent along with ancillary facets of a set of interconnected issues about which the authorial voice offers a by no means always clear-cut position. The author can thus assume full responsibility for the discourse constructed without having to hide behind a bogus neutrality ... or the pyrotechnics of flashy enunciation strategies ... the two best known alternatives to the routinely authoritarian practices of 'social concern' films" (Willemen 1992:19-20).

As in the 'new ethnography', central to debates in the 'new documentary' movement has been the questioning of filmmakers' right to claim any 'objective truthfulness' in their work. However, for those convinced by these arguments but still seeing it necessary to make interventions in the politics of knowledge about the 'real' world, Lorna Williams (1993) has recently argued that filmmakers need to acknowledge that "films cannot reveal the truths of events, but only the ideologies and consciousness that constructs competing truths. ... (Therefore, i)nstead of careening between idealistic faith in documentary truth and cynical recourse to fiction, we do better to define documentary not as an essence of truth but as a set of strategies designed to choose from among a horizon of relative and contingent truths" (13-14).² And, in doing this, Paul Willemen (1992) has hailed Amos Gitai as a filmmaker who has brilliantly negotiated these pressures, taking on critiques of authorship and authority in documentary filmmaking while still producing work which can powerfully and

critically engage with, and intervene in, viewers' understandings of the worlds in which they live.

Amos Gitai was born in Haifa in 1950, the son of a Bauhaus architect who had left Germany in the early stages of the Nazi era. Like his father, he studied architecture, first in Haifa and then in California at Berkeley. Although documentary filmmaking was something which he initially began to do only in his spare time, from 1973 onwards, he made a series of films which critics have identified as exploring "the symbols and styles of modern culture, political mythologies and their influence and blistering critiques of Israeli policies towards the Palestinians" (Open City quoted in Stewart 1985:3). By the early 1980s, however, he was branching out to explore issues of exile, dislocation, and "the exchanges of goods, services and human beings on the world market" (Rosen 1990:48). Of the two films which Willemsen (1992) identifies as addressing this theme, *Ananas* (1983) was the first and was followed by *Bangkok-Bahrain* (1984) which explored "the physical exploitation of Thai people's bodies, male and female, by different kinds of imperialisms (US, Europe, Arab)" (14).

Funded most often through television money, all of his films have received limited popular attention through both their official censure in Israel (where some have even been censored by the companies which commissioned them) and through the way that he has refused to structure any of them in conventionally understandable ways. His unconventional approach has, however, emerged out of the negotiations of authorial power discussed above. Moreover, it is worth noting how he has drawn on an architectural metaphor to explain the construction of his films and how viewers can journey through them:

"There's the spine, and the walls and the beams ... and you can see them but they don't interfere with the inner spaces of the building or the film. So you have a structure which allows you to read into the building or the film, but it doesn't over-interpret the inner spaces; each one has a kind of cumulative

effect, like when you walk through a space and each corridor or room or window gives you another view of it, but you will know it's a continuous structure" (in Rosen 1990 p.49).

And viewers have, by and large, only been able to 'journey through' his films on the festival circuit and, most recently, in retrospectives of his work which have toured specialist cinemas during 1990 in the US and 1991 in the UK.

Looking through the various production statements and other documents about *Ananas* which were collated by the *British Film Institute* for a booklet sold at the cinemas which screened his films in the 1991 UK retrospective, it is clear that the kind of strategies outlined as central to 'commodity systems analysis', 'to 'new ethnographies in/of the world system', and to the 'new documentary' movement were adopted by Gitai as he set out to make this film. As with the aims of commodity systems analysis, he has revealed his intention to make a wider and deeper sense out of the pineapple trade because the "juxtaposition of major profits on one hand, and political and economic repression on the other, seen through a single delicatessen product - sliced pineapple - will be the theme of this full length documentary film" (*ibid.*: 43). Moreover, having done the necessary background research to establish the economic and cultural importance of trade in this crop and to map out the basic circuits through which it travelled from Hawaiian and Philippino fields to American supermarket shelves, he set out to make a film in a way which echoes Marcus' (1995) advice about how to go about setting up multi-locale ethnographies:

"Although each shot will be complete in itself, the 'capsules' will also cause one or more arguments to emerge through the way they are linked to the preceding or the following shot. In this way, the overall movement and structure of the film will be built up gradually and cumulatively. Through these sequence shots and by establishing a dialectical relation between image and sound, the documentary *Pineapple* will reflect the nature of the subject, attempting to grasp the contradictions inherent in the production process. ... Instead of constructing a linear story, we will juxtapose the elements of the

film. ... For us - the traveller, the film maker, the wanderer in these places - reality is made up from a juxtaposition of various elements occurring in different places. ... Our overall approach is that each time we see something that bears on the subject, we will film it. We will film in the same way that one would use a fishing net: trawling. This method, I believe to be suited to the subject and will allow us to treat events in terms of the context within which they belong and are produced" (Gitai quoted in BFI 1985:40-41).

Thus, although he has stressed the need to do research in preparation for the making of such a documentary, he does not argue that this should rigidly structure its filming or editing as, in chance (and sometimes deliberately structured³) encounters, "sometimes people give you a sort of jewel and they reveal something you didn't know or express it in an incredibly compact way" (*ibid.*:43) and this can lead to unexpected leads and interpretations which can and should be followed up as the filming process develops. This is very much the kind of impression which commentators on the film have identified as central to how it 'works'. Here, according to Dubrule (in BFI 1985), "*Pineapple* addresses its subject with a tone of casual innocence startling the viewer expecting a film about imperialism and exploitation. It pretends not to know the story it is about to unfold. It demands that the viewer watch with the naivety of the supermarket customer" (46; Willemen 1992). Indeed, it could be said that the intended viewer participates in the film as the 'missing link' in the chains of associations represented.

Starting off much like a more conventional documentary where, to begin with, the film follows and illustrates the authoritative account of an American agronomist who has been 'in the business' for most of his life. However, after the film cuts to the home of a descendant of the family who began the pineapple trade in Hawaii, "the film apparently takes a course organised more by visual or aural association, than by any strict narrative link. The hook of an authorised storyline has for the moment disappeared from view" (Dubrule in BFI 1985:47). In its place, Dubrule has argued,

the metaphors and explanations which saturate the 'official' accounts of this trade appear to have been used to structure the editing of the film:

"Like the discovery of the pineapple by Columbus on his voyage to Guadeloupe, mentioned ... by the agronomist, the film will come across its material by chance. ... Chance is the key element by which the corporation represents its history to the consumer, from the 'discovery' of the pineapple to the multi-national Dole of today: it is an innocent journey along a chain of seized 'opportunities'. Rather than deny the Success Story the corporation managers happily identify with, the film actively engages with it and builds from within it, inviting their participation. They all seem to enthuse about what a wonderful fruit it is, how beautiful the plantations are. ... (Thus, the) film narrates neither a simple chronological history of the Company, nor the present process of pineapple production in its various sites, but the dynamic of the development of the productive forces of the corporation. All kinds of other factors are encountered which influenced this course: the histories of colonisation, (the unexpected importance of) religious missionaries, the political economies of nation states, etc." (*ibid.*:47-48).

So, we should ask, how exactly has he been able to do this? Below, we have not attempted to construct the 'plot' of the film, but to represent the 'spines, walls and beams' of its architecture in such a way as to hopefully allow the reader to engage in the meaning-creation process in much the same way that s/he might when watching and listening to the unfolding scenes of the film.⁴

4) "Uh, do you want me to start now?: journeying into the world of pineapples:

Ananas starts in San Francisco near the pool-side of an agronomist. He is filmed sitting in an easy chair, next to a large framed painting of tropical fruits, and holds a fresh pineapple in one hand. After checking with Gitai whether he should start to talk, he begins to tell a story about the economic worth, plantation production of, and historical 'discoveries' of such fruits by European maritime explorers - "In 1972 the per capita consumption of the fruit in the United States was one half of one pound.

Today, it is 1.6 and this 300% increase occurred over a period of ten years." - and, as the picture moves to that of the view out of the side window of a car speeding along the freeway out of the city, we hear him continue:

"First of all, let's talk about its origin, which is not altogether certain but, generally speaking, it is believed that the pineapple group of plants originated somewhere in the area adjoining Colombia and Brazil, perhaps on the Orinoco River. In any case, we do know from history that Columbus, in his second voyage in 1494, came ashore on the island of Guadeloupe in the Caribbean and for the first time discovered the crop for the European world. So that within a hundred years ... pineapple was growing in the Southern part of Africa, Australia and in many other parts of the world where the Portuguese, Spanish and English explorers touched ground. However, it was not until the pineapple came to Hawaii, here in the middle of the Pacific, that it came to become a major world crop. The happy circumstance of having ideal growing conditions in Hawaii, with volcanic soils, and an almost ideal climate, to which can be added the fact that Hawaii was to become part of the United States and thus accessible to this major market, was the beginning of pineapples as a commercial crop. By the early 1900s, Mr. James Dole, for whom the Dole company was named and which is the major pineapple company in the world today, developed the method for processing, canning pineapple and, in Hawaii, made that into a major industry. ..."

As he is saying this, his voice is overlapped by the title shot and the first of the film's intertitles which, at various points, are used to outline chronologies of events which are pertinent to the film:

Late October, we embark on our voyage into the Pineapple Lands. We try to follow a pineapple can: from the plantations in the Philippines, to packaging in Hawaii, to Dole's corporation headquarters in San Francisco, to the labels printed in Japan. Our intention is to look at the kind of control that evolves to secure smooth production.

To begin to trace the contours of this control we move via scenes of American tourists learning to hula dance in a Hawaiian theme village to listen to, and to see, Sanford Dole - a descendent of the man who gave his name to the multinational

corporation whose activities are under scrutiny - who tinkles at his piano in a wood-panelled study. He is invited to share his expertise on his family:

"I'm happy that I was given the name of Sanford Dole because it gives a good stage name, if I'm going to be in the public eye I have a name which is suitable, not 'John Smith' or something. ... (pause) ... As I say, I wish I was heir to the fortune, but I'm not. I'm just a Joe Average on the street ... [But it's not embarrassing to see our name on the supermarket shelf] No, it's just, um, fun. It's kinda, it's neat to see, 'Oh look, there's my name', you know. I have had to bear the brunt of jokes all my life, though, about it, and people refer to me as a pineapple, and that sort of thing, or a banana. These days, you know, the stickers like this that go on bananas, you know, I get given those periodically and, you know, stuck on my forehead - 'You're a Dole banana' - that sort of thing. But, um, it's mostly just fun, it's not embarrassing in any way. I don't see why it would be.

From here, we are taken via a dockside container-loading scene to Hawaii, and these shots are overlapped by a series of intertitles summarising the history of commercial pineapple production on the islands"

In 1838 in Hawaii, S. Castle writes: "God said go ye into all the world and spread the gospel to every creature. I see 600 million of the human race without the light of the blessed gospel to bring them unto salvation." / 1778 - Hawaiian Islands visited by Captain James Cook who names them Sandwich Islands... He supports the founding of a Monarchy based on the British model. 1837 - American missionaries Castle & Cook arrive in Hawaii. They initiate plans for colonisation. / 1893 - Hawaiian Queen Lillooukalani is dethroned by foreign planters. A republic is established with Sanford Dole as its president. 1898 - United States annex Hawaii. Sanford Dole is the first Governor. 1959 - Hawaii becomes the 50th state of the United States.

After this, we hear the story as elaborated upon by an Hawaiian priest speaking from the First Missionary Church in Honolulu:

"1778 is a crucial date because the islands were visited by people from Britain, from Great Britain - captain James Cook - and from that time the life

here began to change. The old ways began to be destroyed, old beliefs and old ways of living. ... Cook was a missionary and the support of the missionaries was very meagre, so Cook and Castle founded a store, and the store was right back here. And now, today, this is a big company, multi-national, called Castle and Cook. But in the capitalist way, it's buy and sell. The old Hawaiians, not be buy and sell, it was share. Yeah. And many people today say, 'Oh the Hawaiians - foolish - they give away their land' (laughs), you know. But that's not completely true. Some Hawaiians have done that, but some have learned the Western way. ..."

We are then moved on to the Dole Fields in Hawaii where we hear and see a field labourer by the name of Petra being asked about herself, her life, her migration from the Philippines to work in Hawaii some decades ago, and so on.

"I'm born in Philippine islands, and my sister too, but my father came 1924. ... [Why did your parents come to Hawaii?] ... Immigration, they're immigrants. [Why did they come over here?] To work. [No jobs over there?] Yeah, my papa have a field of coconuts ... They like it over here because they no go home. Once my sister and me went home in 1946 for a visit just after the war [When you retire, you go home?] I don't think so [You like it here?] Not very good yet in Philippines now. [Why?] Oh Martial Law. Whatever you get they take em. If you not give em, they cut your neck. Yeah, that's right you know. ... [Which part of Hawaii do you like most?] I like Oahu. I haven't been somewhere else, only I been to Oahu. I've no like to go around. You have to look for a job and start again."

At this point, she goes back to her work and we hear the voice of an American man and, still in its long shot from Petra, the camera pans around to focus on him - the ex-general manager of Dole Hawaii - who is standing behind, talking about his involvement in the business:

"I started out here in 1934 on this plantation, worked here for a while, went to the island of Maui, still with the same company, next to Lanai for 5 years, came back here for 10 years, next to Lanai for another 5 years, came back here as a manager, next to the Philippines to start up the operation for 2 or 3 years, came back here ... See we must remember that the Hawaiians are not in

it any more. That was way back, way back there. The Hawaiian was a happy person. 'We' came, the caucasians came, and ruined his place. He didn't want to have today, if he had something to eat, that's all he worried about. He wasn't going to worry about tomorrow. And he lived very well. Now, he was never going to be prosperous, but he didn't give a damn either (laughs). We ruined the whole show for them, in my opinion. ... That's the sad part of the story as far as the Hawaiians, and today they're battling for their rights, claims, of course, that we, 'we' the United States, took all their land away from them. And I guess, in a way, we did. We overthrew the Kingdom, became a territory, and here we are today. ... "

And, as the shot changes to one from a moving car where the camera is pointing upwards through the tree canopy sheltering the road, we hear him reflect on his own involvement in this:

"In the early 30s, many of us recall that there was a depression, and a job was a job. I had been away on the mainland to school for 2 years. I took a job on the old *Erline*, worked as a deckhand back and forth for a couple of trips and then got off because I didn't get home for 2 years. And I came out (here) ... through the contact of a friend who said there might be a job. And I came out because I was hungry and thought it would be a good thing to find somewhere to stay and to eat, which I did."

The next person who we hear and see is the current general manager of Dole Hawaii, a younger man who gives his life story of getting to where he is today from graduate school in Standford, California:

"I was out of Graduate School in Standford, and they hired me to send me to Central America, which was the furthest thing from my mind. I was thinking of settling down in San Francisco (laughs). But, this is a company that takes people like me and throws you into points of operating responsibility very early. And that was quite appealing, and this is an appeal a company like ours has to people that really want to get into an operating slot and try their hand at things. An awful lot of people tend toward staff type positions 'cause it's actually, if you look at consultancy jobs, they're paying very high and they're glamorous and everything else. We don't pay as much and we're not

glamorous, but we, it's a lot more fun. ... [The image of the American is of the lonely cowboy. Is this not the right way of looking at things?] Well, it's really not. We don't 'wing it' as they say. ... This is a corporate farm and it's run under some very very tight internal restrictions."

As the shot cuts to one of a group of women stopping to eat during a break from work in the pineapple fields, we hear him continue:

"I never expected to live in Hawaii. I grew up in the Midwest. And I have to say that, every day, it's thrilling. It's not just a nice place to live, it's a very exciting place to live - with the beauty of the mountains and the ocean we have here, the friendliness of the people, the diversity of the cultures that come together here. Forget the first time, I find it thrilling every day. It's a very special place."

Then the camera takes us into the deafening noise of the canning factory (with its Japanese-American foreman guiding us through), and the voice of the San Francisco agronomist re-appears to champion the pineapple as a commercial crop:

"Perhaps more interesting than all of that is the fact that the pineapple is the most controllable crop in the world. And, ... I like to say that the pineapple is the most sophisticated crop in the world. We are able, and have been able for many years since the 1930s, to induce and crop a pineapple to fruit on command by spraying on or another of several chemicals on the crop. We call that 'induction', in a classical sense, or 'forcing' or sometimes 'hormoning'. But it means that we can make the vegetative plants set fruit on command any time. Therefore, we can produce, and we can actually plan ahead for a crop, throughout the year. In addition to that, once the fruit is produced on the plant in the green stage ... it is possible to spray with another chemical which causes the pineapple to ripen artificially in the field. This latter technique is used particularly for canning pineapple so that harvesting can be done all at one time. For fresh fruit, we do not do that because we want each fruit to be picked individually at maximum quality. We say, then, that this is the most controllable crop and, in fact, I know of no crop that can be induced to harvest at command, other than pineapple."

While his voice continues, we switch to a long shot taken from a light aeroplane flying over the massive expanse of the Hawaiian pineapple fields and then this changes to a shot, on the ground, of pineapple harvesting at night. Here, an intertitle appears on the screen stating that "In 1972, after a long labour struggle, Hawaiian workers earn up to \$3 per hour while workers in the Philippines get less than 18 cents per hour. Dole must seek its fortune elsewhere. Dole sets up its biggest plantation on Mindanao island in the Philippines."

After this, we hear the voice of the San Francisco Agronomist giving his version of events - "because of the rising labour cost, it has been necessary to move the production elsewhere. The most natural source for pineapple is the Philippine islands" and the film then takes us there and, over some lingering shots of small scale rural farming, we hear him advising the camera crew:

"I would say that in the pineapple, the layout of both the very large plantations are beautiful, however both settings are beautiful because mountains are involved and the natural terrain is beautiful to see. I might add that one of the best times to film a pineapple field is relatively early in the morning or late in the afternoon. When the crop is back lighted, it is an absolutely striking picture."

Following this, we are cut to the city of Mindanao where a Philippino Baptist missionary explains her involvement in the Westernisation of her country:

"We don't now believe what the forefathers have believed. ... [Why do you think it is better to have converted into a religion that is European? It's not Philippino originally] ... If they are not converted to Jesus Christ, they will be rebellious. ... but now that they are Christians we have to, they have learned to fear the Lord. ... [Why do you think the old ways are not good?] Old ways are not good because sometimes you cannot talk to them, they are hiding. They are hiding. They are so shy. So we brought them up not to be shy, telling them that we are created by God equally. ... God loves us and he died for us. So then they are brought up not to be shy but to be equally level with other people."

As she says this, the shot cuts to one taken from a car moving slowly through the streets of Polomolok, as some small children run alongside, rolling motorcycle tyres with sticks. She continues:

"I let them know that God loves them, and that God has plans for them, especially in salvation. And then I let them know that, whatever they do, whatever situations in life, God is the ruler of it. And they will accept it."

Then, after moving to a rural settlement, presumably nearer the pineapple fields, to watch a man and a woman engaged in a dance which is presumably 'evidence' of the 'old ways', and intertitle appears stating that "The region is inhabited by the Bikudna, a people who saw themselves as guardians of the earth. At first the Bikunda see no harm in sharing the earth with an American company. Later they realise they are left with mountainous terrain which is difficult to cultivate."

The shot then moves to the massive canning factory on the Philippine estate and, as we watch its female labour force trimming and sorting the processed fruits on a conveyor line, an intertitle appears to explain how "The National Development Agency accords Dole land on exceptional terms: 6,818 hectares, renewable every 25 yrs, surpassing the limit of 1,024 hectares as defined by the Philippine Law. In 1973, President Marcos's Martial Law outlaws strikes in foreign industries and many restrictions on multinationals are overruled by a decree." Then, as the music from the Bikunda ceremony continues in the background, we move into the pineapple fields to meet the 'director of labour relations', who has much to say:

"Our people are fully trained in this. Oh, they are very fast, they average about 12-17,000 plants a day. And some even going up to about 20,000 plants a day on planting. [How would you characterise your relations with the people who work in the fields?] Right now, very very good. We have good labour relations. We have had no strikes in the company whatsoever. The last one being way back in 1966. Since that time, we have had no big labour problem. We have a union which we deal with. ... and this relationship between the union and the company is very, I would say, very very good right now. [What is the average earning of the person?] For our fieldworkers, like those you're

seeing here, they average about, basic pay, basic pay, about 28 pesos a day. However, because they are on incentive pay, they are paid so much more for the number of plants that they put in per 8 hours. Oh, they can reach up to 40, 45 pesos a day easily. And sometimes, in fact, they finish up the quota in less than this, knock off, but we pay them for 8 hours ... because they have already planted their share."

Then, as the shot changes to one panning through the canning factory canteen as the women workers sit across long benches eating and talking, we hear him say:

"It's a very very scenic, panoramic area, see a lot of beautiful places, and the people in the surrounding areas, the natives ... are very hospitable people, very nice people. There were some villages which were moved ... and that movement, that's been probably, mostly misunderstood. Uh, actually it was the people who requested the military to help them out, evacuate for the meantime, while they were having problems up in the mountains. And, uh, because some newspaper people decided that this would be a good story to sell newspapers, they decided to put a story saying that the people were being forced by the military to move out of these places so that the other people can get into their land. No such thing ..."

Then, as we switch back to a shot of him standing in the fields again as workers are planting behind him, he attempts to put these local conditions into a wider context:

"There are places where we have difficulties, up to now. But that's the same around the world, you know. You have demonstrations, here, you have this problem, you have all kinds of guns and all that. So, I would not think that we are peculiar in this sense. Although, if you ask me, I would be a lot more comfortable being here than being in the big cities in the US or Europe. I'd be a lot more scared."

Then, with the shot moves back to one of the picking conveyor as harvesting takes place, we hear him explain:

"We have very very good relations with the government. Our production is mostly for export, and therefore we are able to generate foreign exchange ... which is very much needed by our government and our government has been

very very helpful. They are assisting in our problems ... [In Hawaii, they told us that, actually, the Philippine chapter is the one that kept the company alive] That's correct. Ha! We're sort of lifting them and carrying their weight, you know, right now. Yes, we sort of saved the company."

We then move on to hear the viewpoint of a young male field worker who is asked (through an interpreter) about his job, his pay, his options in life. His responses appear on the bottom of the screen in subtitles :

Our work here is to plant. It depends on how much you plant per day. Sometimes we cannot rest at all. You have to work all the time. If we don't plant the standard amount, they take it off our salary. [Who gets the profit of your work?] They do, only them. They profit, they profit even if they pay us our salary. [Do you agree with the system?] We have to accept. We accept because there's nothing we can do, even if we wanted to. If we go to the office to talk, they chase us. So we just go back to work. [In your opinion, what will be the future of the Philippines?] We can do nothing, they are the strong ones. We, we are nothing. [Can you think of any solution to improve the situation?] Whatever solution you find, still you have to give up. If you don't accept the conditions of the company, you must leave. [There is no way at all?] There is nothing which we can do. We have to work. We're used to it. We carry a load on our backs. We must go on.

After saying this, he does precisely this, returning to his planting. The scene then shifts to our viewing of the subtitles taken from the disguised voices of other workers as, in the background, the camera films a drive through the surrounding worker settlement. Here, the subtitles read:

At night, when we come back and walk around the Bareo, the soldiers see you. They come and ask for identity cards. Sometimes we don't have the papers on us, so we have to give them money. If we don't, they beat us. They ask 'Where are your papers?' 'You are a rebel, give your ID!' Then they take you to Djangos, to the caserna, they beat you with their guns. They shoot in the air with their rifles. They send their dogs after you. When you have an ox or a goat, they catch them with lassoes and you can't complain, because it's the

army. The company and the military are friends, because the company pays the army.

From this fearful scene, we are cut to the Municipal Hall in the city of Polomolok where the American manager of the plantation is making a speech on being made a 'Son of the city'. He talks of his travels around the world with the company, and makes the aside that: "I will say that the Philippines deserves the reputation that they have around the world as being the hospitable country. We've found that from the first day we arrived and will continue to feel it until the day we leave."

We are then taken to see and hear a local Muslim mayor sitting on a tree stump in a rural setting. He takes us back to the issue of military harassment and his people's resistance to this:

"They want to eliminate the Muslim. They want to Christianise the Muslim, or move them out of the way so they can be alone. ... [What do you feel about what was done?] Well, we feel bad about it, but we could not do anything. [Why?] We are helpless. [How does it feel to be helpless?] Well, suppose you are surrounded by people with, fully armed and you have no arms. You are helpless. [Did you see such things yourself?] Yeah, but good that they were not successful in killing us because we prepared some arms without the notice of the government. And they started shooting us, we returned the shooting. We killed, they did not kill any from us. Since that time, they did not repeat again. ..."

After this, we move into the busy city centre where Gitai is talking to a woman about her living conditions and opinions about why the rich are rich and the poor, and how this might change. Here, she states:

"Many of us here in Polomolok ... is very poor, because sometimes we need work so that our families will never be surprised, never get angry. [But why are some people rich and some people are poor?] Sometimes the government help poor, sometimes they just is helping also rich one, people. [Do they more often help the rich or the poor?] As I know, here in our town, they didn't need helping poor people. They need helping those 'big stomachs'. That's why we

poor people, sometimes we cry, we are crying. ... We are sometimes angry. Nobody rich help us. ... Sometimes I am asking Lord Jesus why is it that I am poor, and why is it that there are so plenty rich? There is no justice. ... I am so happy that you come here inside Polomolok, so that you can know what is wrong with this town."

After this, we move back into the fields, this time at night as the picking conveyor moves slowly through the fields, lighting up the plants beneath it, as workers pick the fruits and throw them up onto the machine. As they take a break, Gitai talks to one man through an interpreter. Here, the subtitles read:

About problems here, we have a lot. It's not only the lack of money. More than that, but poverty is the biggest problem because people can't afford to buy food, rice, fish, something to live on. That's why, even at night, we Philipinos go on working. Day shift and night shift, we go on working. We Philipinos have many problems (pause) not like Americans. Americans have no problems (pause).

Then, as this pause continues, we again hear the tinkling of Sanford Dole's Piano, before the shot moves to the "Cemetery of first missionaries, Castle & Cook, Honolulu, Hawaii" and we hear him talking, again, about the family history, and how his namesake had migrated from New England to Hawaii to 'civilise the natives'. As he tells this story, more voices, - some already heard and others unfamiliar, some speaking English and others not, some speaking clearly and others whispering or sounding muffled - join in and the shot changes to one taken out of the front of a car as it drives on the freeway back into San Francisco. This scene stretches out for at least five minutes as, it seems, all of the characters encountered on the journey following the fruit out from San Francisco are conjured up in a cacophony of sound, as the crew returns back to where they started. All that remains, is for us to quickly visit the Japanese label plant, where we can see the machinery at work through a small window, or perhaps it is a television screen.

5) Interpretations: Ananas & the new geographies of food.

Having already identified the relationships between the literatures on 'ethnographies in/of the world system' and on the 'new documentary' in the structuring of this film, we feel it is important to revisit the four framings in the literature on the 'globalisation of agriculture and food' to gauge the relevance of this film to what might become of the 'new geographies of food'. First, the point that is perhaps most obvious is that the architecture of Gitai's film allows elements of all of these framings to enter the interpretive process of the viewer: here, historically, we are given information about relationships between exploration, colonialism and export agriculture and, in more up to date terms, are privy to the political-economic manoeuvres of a TNC switching sites of production to reduce costs and the 'problems' which can be caused by organised labour, the need for a 'Third World' government to produce export crops to earn foreign exchange to service its debts, the seizing of land by TNCs apparently in cahoots with the military and police forces of these governments, and the blurring of economic sectors such as 'agriculture' and 'pharmaceuticals' to 'force' crops into predictable production cycles; we are exposed to the agency of people living and working throughout the commodity system who tell us about their lives and how they relate to others whom they do and do not encounter, thus bringing to light the fragmented and often contradictory ideologies, imaginations, excitements, memories, terrors, everyday moralities, clashes of cultures, and outright politics of domination and resistance which are central to the historical development and continued functioning of the system; and, finally, we as viewers are positioned in this text not only as consumers (or, better still, active producers) of the film but also, at least potentially, of the pineapples whose system of production, processing and provision we have been taken through and, here, so the argument goes, our own ideologies, imaginations, and so on, should also get dragged into the frame for (re)consideration. Our task in this final section, then, is to reflect more broadly on the potential that the kinds of connections made in this film might have in the development of 'new

geographies of food'. Here, we discuss two main potentials which could be important, not necessarily in the planning of how such research could and should be done (we believe that this is adequately set out in the 'commodity systems' and 'new ethnography' literatures reviewed above), but in the strategies which can most effectively be employed represent how such systems work. These potentials are in the development of approaches, first, to 'commodity fetishism' and, second, to 'juxtaposition and montage'.

a) Commodity fetishism:

The first way in which Gitai's *Ananas* can be positioned is very much through ideas of commodity fetishism, stressing the movement from the pineapple as a fetishised commodity in worlds of consumption to the interpretations which can be made of it in its worlds of its production. As already mentioned, David Harvey has provided an appropriately edible example of this approach when mentioning the grapes that "sit upon the supermarket shelves mute: we cannot see the fingerprints of exploitation upon them or tell immediately what part of the world they come from" (1990:422-423). So, we might see Gitai as anticipating Harvey's subsequent call to "get behind the veil, the fetishism of the market and the commodity in order to tell the full story of social reproduction" (*ibid.*:423). Here, the importance of not getting trapped into food consumers' worlds when geographies of foods are far more complex is clear.

However, Harvey's use of metaphors of 'lifting the veil of commodity fetishism' to make ourselves aware of the 'full story of social reproduction' relies on a binary in which what consumers know is treated as superficial, masking the hidden 'reality' whose revelation should be the mission of concerned academics. And, although it is perhaps clear in *Ananas* how such a 'behind the scenes' can have such a power, we believe that this film also illustrates possible dangers in such an approach. Here, we suggest the following two in particular: a) in the process of 'unveiling', sites and practices of consumption are abandoned altogether through a focus on production as

the location of 'reality', here witnessed by Gitai's failure to come any closer to the consumption sphere than the Tokyo labelling plant, let alone the supermarket or, most importantly, the home. This, however, is not just an empirical problem in what Harvey has called for and what Gitai has achieved. Rather, it shows the possibility of undercutting the whole critical project of unveiling commodities because, whilst knowing about production can upset consumption and consumers, the failure to make direct connections into the kinds of worlds which they/we inhabit ends up evacuating the latter altogether. As such, it makes it a little too easy for consumers to distance themselves from the lives of others 'down the line'. Perhaps, as Paula Rabinowitz has put this in her recent review of documentary filmmaking, "we are made less uncomfortable by images of cute dolphins bleeding on the deck of the tuna boat or by the emaciated limbs and swollen bellies of hungry children in Somalia than by the codes which allowed the images to make us say 'oh, how awful' and go on about our lives" (1993 p.136).

It may also be worth mentioning here that the assumption made in terms of who the viewers will be, and their absence from the film in terms of their positions in this chain of connections, means that the power of the film as potentially showable to, and equally powerful in the lives of, all those whose are connected through the trade in such a commodity is limited. What, for instance, would be the impact on pineapple pickers of seeing the fruits which they grow as they are used in the home and restaurants of the affluent West, and how these uses are represented in promotional materials in which any trace of their labour has been thoroughly exorcised?. Or, indeed, what of the commodity systems which stretch through alternative sites of production and consumption, crosscutting those bringing foodstuffs from farm to shelf (e.g. those for inputs to farming practices such as petrochemicals, agrochemicals and farm machinery; for inputs to shipping practices such as box and wrapping manufactures, container, shipping and air freighting technologies, or truck manufacture; or for inputs to retailing practices such as computer bar-coding

technologies, or shelving, air-conditioning and chilling technologies) or the more abstract and less tangible systems through which the powerful forces of finance capital travels through a globalised system of commodity markets where these things, and shares in the companies involved in their manufacture, are traded.

Finally, here, a related danger in this commodity fetishism approach concerns the positionings of the author, audience and subject matter. Here, the job of the author can be cast as one of 'discovering' the 'reality' and presenting it in an authoritative manner to supposedly ignorant audiences who ought to know better. These are the people whom Dubrule constructs "consumers, *pure and simple*" (in BFI 1985:48). However, done in a thoroughly 'realist' way, this is a stance which risks ignoring multiple, complex, and already existing knowledges within the system which, for consumers in the West for instance, may already include fragments, if not significant chunks, of the picture (see Cook forthcoming). The TV documentaries, books, magazines, ethical consumption literatures and other media with which consumers interact, the education systems, workplaces, shops, meetings, holidays, and other social interactions which they/we enter, the extended networks of families and friends whom they/we make and keep contact with, and so on and so will by no means contain exactly the same version of what happens where to whom. And this situation is perhaps most acute for the many people working in such globalised agricultural and food systems such as agronomists, farm managers, supermarket buyers, pre-packers, and so on, who are likely not only to be highly familiar with what goes on in the production processes for such commodities, but also to be highly familiar with what goes on in their processes of consumption. Supermarket buyers in the UK, for instance, regularly visit farms from which they buy produce but also, no doubt, snack on the same or similar products, use them in meals which they prepare at home for their partners, friends and family, and so on and, therefore, the negotiation of the contradictory moral geographies of their lives is ongoing (see Cook 1994, 1995)

b) Juxtaposition and montage:

Much of the criticism of the above approach can be deflected in Gitai work because of the way that he has not, in the tradition of the 'new documentary', constructed *Ananas* as a single, authoritative, 'realist' interpretation of what lies behind the scenes. We have set out much of the argumentation behind, and illustration of, this point above, but there is more to this film than the juxtapositional jumping from scene to scene, from situated voice to situated voice that we have indicated. To complicate this juxtapositional aesthetics of this film in such a way that it is extraordinarily difficult to represent on paper, Gitai also employed sonic and visual techniques of montage in editing it together, thereby opening out further the possible webs of associations which viewers could make. As George Marcus (1994) has described the possibilities of this form of editing, "Montage lends technique to the desire to break with existing rhetorical conventions and narrative modes through exposing their artificiality and arbitrariness. How montage techniques in themselves establish an alternative coherence, or whether they can, is a major issue in experimentation" (40). Throughout the whole of *Ananas*, however this is precisely what is experimented with, a process is described particularly well by Nick Dubrule (in BFI 1995) in his review of the film which is worth quoting in some detail as:

"The authority of each interviewee's overview of the story is persistently undercut, either by the material which precedes it or follows, or by formal devices within the shot. The whispering vocals of the music track which runs continuously throughout the film interfere with the synchronous sounds, suggesting a voice alternative to the momentum of the Company which is insistent but difficult to hear. Its persistent tropical rhythms link the disparate scenes in a way which emotively contradicts and threatens the Western viewpoint of the Success Story. The spectator is not allowed to accept the documentary evidence at face value. ... These formal effects are manipulated to produce an anti-tourist's eye view: the external determining factors of the evidence must be recognised in order to understand its meaning.

The narrative dynamic is made understandable by an accumulation of these circumstantial interconnections, collected en route by the spectator. The different levels of discourse in the film, whether in the historical data of the

intertitles or in the information presented in the interviews themselves, are juxtaposed with one another to trace a network of overlapping associations far broader in its implications than the simple itinerary proposed at the outset. What emerges is the description of an object which otherwise thrives in its invisibility: the interlocking and interdependent systems of multi-national corporate power. Across histories of agronomics, technology, politics and religion, a logic is seen to operate, shaping the course of events in areas of economy and society which appear mutually independent. The focal point of this Success Story logic is shown to be the extreme exploitation and subjugation of the Filipino workers" (49-50; MacDougall 1992).

Thus, as 'Ananas' is so obviously produced out of the social, it cannot be considered to be a 'realist' documentary, so an alternative point to draw from it is that it is less important with regard to its spatial move towards production, and more important with regard to its juxtapositional and montage aesthetics. Here, what *Ananas* perhaps suggests is less a move behind the 'cultural surfaces' of foodstuffs and more a multiplication and complicating of that commodity's many surfaces, through the kind of constructions which Gitai has employed so successfully.

These kinds of juxtapositional and montage aesthetics have, as hinted at above, already been trumpeted quite widely over the past few years, not only within the 'new ethnography' literature already mentioned, but also by a number of geographers such as Alan Pred (1995) and Michael Watts (1992) in their account of contemporary capitalisms, and by Pred in his account of European, or rather Stockholm's, modernities and their consumer worlds. Moreover, as Marcus (1994) has pointed out, these techniques have also been employed in a wide variety of fictional writing, most notably that in the multi-locale plots of David Lodge's novels. And this has not taken place simply through the influence of intellectual fashion, but because such compositional strategies have all sorts of potential productivities that run counter to those that the juxtapositional aesthetics of dominant consumer cultures allow. To us,

at least, they suggest than a way of working *with* surfaces and fetishes and not dismissing them as simply 'superficial' veils to be brushed aside.

Concluding comments:

At the end of all of this, then, we suggest that geographers interested in studying and representing food systems may have a great deal to learn from Gitai's *Ananas* film. Although his approach can be criticised for its neglect of what goes on in worlds of consumption and more widely that, while commodity systems analyses of fresh fruit and vegetables are perhaps the easiest to undertake as the form of what is traced changes little from field to shelf, this does narrow the scope of the knowledges which could be constructed about the workings of the global agricultural and food system. Concluding his review of this literature, Ben Fine has pointed out that:

"Most notable has been the apparent decline, in theory and practice, of the globalisation of food systems, as attention has focused upon national differences and the rapid growth of new crops such as fresh, 'exotic' fruit and vegetables to serve affluent markets that have exhausted the scope for the mundane and homogeneous, mass products whether cereals, other staples or the traditional meats" (Fine 1994:538).

However, we would like to point out some 'methodological' and 'representational' lessons from Gitai's film which, individually or in some combination, could be built upon to develop work in all of these areas. First, in terms of methodology, we believe that he convincingly demonstrates the value of theoretically-informed ethnographic research which traces and stages complex connections between locales which constitute food(related) commodity systems. This, we believe, can bring together what is worthwhile in all of the four framings of research into the globalisation of agriculture and food outlined at the start of this paper. Here, studies 'following the thing' promise an important means for innovative combinations of methodologies and theoretical stances which can elucidate complex social, cultural, economic, political,

agronomic, and other processes connecting local and non-local events in tangible, rather than abstract, ways. In so doing, this will hopefully widen the potential audience-base for such academic work.

And, second, representations of these processes need to be thought of as much more than a problem of constructing straightforward, authoritative versions of what 'really' happens. These, as we have argued above, make such texts much easier to dismiss by their audiences. Rather, if we accept that geographical knowledges through which commodity systems are imagined and acted upon from within are fragmentary, multiple, contradictory, inconsistent and, often, downright hypocritical, then the power of a text which deals with these knowledges comes not from smoothing them out, but through juxtaposing and montaging them - by undercutting each's authority, whilst acknowledging its powers; by staging the various active voicings (or expressions of knowledge), mufflings (or suppressions of knowledge) and interest constructions (representations of others' interests and knowledges) that make up circuits of culinary cultures - so that audiences can work their ways through them and, along the way, inject and make their own critical knowledges out of them. In these ways, we believe that what 'Ananas' can inspire are the sorts of critical interventions in the political economic and cultural systems of food and agriculture which are in such need of change.

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¹. Only in rare cases are these knowledges even remotely similar. Perhaps the best example of this are 'fair trade' products such as *Café Direct* coffee and *Red & Black* chocolate bars in which the working conditions of peasant growers of coffee and cocoa beans in Central America, as well as the distribution of the wealth generated by the purchase price, are outlined on packaging and in supplementary materials (see, for example, Christian Aid 1993; Fairtrade foundation n.d).

². These issues have been most hotly debated in evaluations of perhaps the most commercially successful of the 'new documentaries', Michael Moore's *Roger and Me*. Here, Moore was criticised for altering the chronology of events in his account of the demise of the city of Flint Michigan at the hands of the General Motors corporation as he was wilfully 'distorting' the 'truth'. However, in a heated exchange with Harlan Jacobson (1989), he explained "It's not fiction. But what if we sat it's a documentary told with the narrative style. I tried to tell a documentary in a way that they don't usually get told. The reason why people don't watch documentaries is they are so bogged down with 'Now in 1980...then in '82 five thousand were called back...in '84 ten thousand were laid off...but then in '86 three thousand were called back...but later in '86 ten thousand more were laid off.' If you want to tell the Flint story, there's the Flint story. ... We are not talking about objectivity. We are talking about a style" (23-24; see also Natter & Jones 1993, Orvell 1995).

³. Here, he has stated, "In documentary cinema, you must produce the situation and at the same time, it must be authentic. For instance, in Hawaii, we interviewed those women planting pineapple while at the same time we brought a few company managers along, and then we could observe the situation which explains their relationship, all in one single shot" (Gitai in BFI 1985:46; Rabinowitz 1993).

⁴. Failing this, in the UK at least, we suggest that readers might better spend their time writing to the British Film Institute to rent their VHS copy of *Ananas*.